

IN SEARCH OF ADVENTURE



Six level 1 adventures for 4E

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Written by: **Mike Ferguson, Andrew Hind, Ruth Lampi, Ross Payton,
Eric K. Rodriguez, Aeryn “Blackdirge” Rudel**

Edited by: **Ken Hart**

Developer: **Harley Stroh**

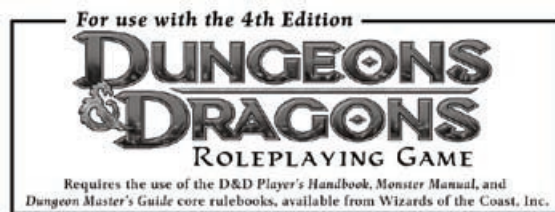
Art Director: **Joseph Goodman**

Cover Artist: **Ben Wootten**

Interior Artists: **David Griffith, Doug Kovacs, Matt Morrow, Grey Thornberry**

Cartographer: **Ed Bouelle**

Graphic Designer/Layout: **Edward Wedig**



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KING DRETCH

By Aeryn “Blackdirge” Rudel

INTRODUCTION

King Dretch is a short adventure designed for five characters of 1st level. While characters can be of any basic character class, a strong melee-oriented group will have an easier time with the encounters in this adventure. See the “Scaling Information” section for ways to tailor this adventure to your group’s unique style of play.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The adventurers are hired to investigate the ruins of a wizard’s tower, or they simply stumble across it in the course of their adventures. Beneath the tower, in a dormitory set up for the wizard’s apprentices, dwell a uniquely powerful dretch, his fiendish allies and servitors, and other deadly creatures. Further, the tower hides a terrible secret, a tiny Abyssal gate called a planar fissure. Fell energies have been leaking steadily through the planar fissure for several years, giving additional foul beings the opportunity to invade the world.

The dretch has been encouraging fiendish creatures to attack travelers on a nearby road, robbing and killing at his whim. It is up to the heroes to put an end to the dretch’s predations. They will need to investigate the tower ruins and find the entrance to the dormitory beneath it. In the dormitory the heroes will battle the dretch’s evil allies and eventually face the demon itself.

If the adventurers can manage to defeat the dretch, they will still need to close the planar fissure, a task that requires the recovery of a number of rare reagents and the casting of a powerful ritual. From the remains of the deceased wizard’s notes, the heroes will be able to compile a list of these reagents; however, the recovery of these bizarre materials may entail a quest even more dangerous than facing a hundred dretches. At the very least, the heroes will need to find a way to seal off the area around the fissure to prevent other demons from emerging to wreak havoc.



GAME MASTER'S INFORMATION

1

To help the GM prepare, we have included a quick reference table showing all encounters at a glance. *Loc* – the location number keyed to the map for the encounter. *Pg* – the module page number that the encounter can be found on. *Type* – this indicates if the encounter is a combat (C), disease (D), hazard (H), puzzle (P), or trap (T). *Encounter* – the key monsters, traps, or NPCs that can be found in the encounter. Names in italics are classed NPCs. *EL* – the encounter level.

ENCOUNTER TABLE				
Loc	Pg	Type	Encounter	El
1-1	7	C	Three abattoir wolves	1
1-2	8	C	Verrekrith, Five dire rats	2
2-1	9	C	Two elite needlefang drake swarms Spitting drake	2
2-2	11	T	Stone bludgeon trap Deafening blast trap	1
2-3	12	C	<i>Senna</i> , advanced ghoul warlock	2
2-5	14	C	Two demonfang crocodiles	1
2-6	15	C	Four shadowfiend spiders	1
2-7	16	C	<i>Kuzgug</i> , advanced demonic acolyte dretch wizard solo	5

SCALING INFORMATION

King Dretch is designed for five characters of 1st level, but may be adjusted to suit parties of different sizes or levels. When adjusting the module to suit your game, consider the following suggestions:

Weaker parties (4 or fewer characters): Remove one un-named creature from each encounter. Remove Kuzgug's advanced nature, making him a Level 3 solo.

Stronger Parties (6 or more characters, or higher than 1st level): Add one additional un-named creature to each encounter. Add two shadowfiend spiders to aid Kuzgug in area 2-7.



4

GETTING THE PLAYERS INVOLVED

King Dretch occurs in a nondescript, forested setting that can be dropped into nearly any campaign world. There should be an established road or trade route nearby, or even a small town or village – something upon which Kuzgug and his allies can prey.

The adventure begins with the heroes emerging from the forest into the clearing that holds the ruined tower and the dormitory beneath it. How they get to this point is largely up to you, but here are a couple of hooks that can get the PCs moving in the right direction.

- If one of the adventurers is a wizard, he may be seeking an apprenticeship with Numeshay, and has brought his companions along as protection or simply for moral support.
- The heroes are hired by one of the small towns that exist on either end of the road Kuzgug has been preying on, and are asked to investigate the disappearance of merchants and other travelers.
- A wizard in the party's town or village hires them to deliver a batch of arcane ingredients to Numeshay at his tower.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The great elven wizard Numeshay Odeken was an eccentric archmage whose passion was the study of extraplanar creatures. From his secluded tower, he would cast rituals to view and communicate with demons, devils, angels, and elementals, all in an attempt to learn more about the native fauna of alternate dimensions. However, Numeshay quickly tired of the limited durations offered by the established rituals, and he had no desire to open a planar portal, which could allow powerful entities from other planes to pass through. Instead, he turned his energies to the creation of a quasi-gate, a tiny crack between dimensional barriers, which he called a planar fissure.

The creation of the planar fissures aided Numeshay in his research immensely. Each rift allowed the fundamental energies of a plan to leak through, yet it was too tiny to permit any creatures to freely pass in either direction – or so Numeshay believed.

With his planar fissures, Numeshay was able to examine the nature of different planes and their inhabitants. He used rituals to communicate with and even summon extraplanar entities for study – tasks that might otherwise require more powerful rituals beyond even Numeshay’s talent. He soon realized that removing the entities was more difficult. Only after containing them and casting another ritual to close the planar fissure did they return to their home plane. Because of the effort this involved, he only summoned minor creatures – imps, dretches, and minor elementals – and with increasingly less frequency.

In addition to his work with extraplanar creatures, Numeshay spent much of his time passing on the knowledge he had accumulated over the centuries. To this end, the archmage mentored up to four apprentices at any one time. He even constructed a dormitory beneath his tower to house them, supplying his students’ living area with all the basic comforts and study aids they would need to progress as wizards. Although he did not teach his apprentices the method of opening a planar fissure, they aided him in his work and studied the planar entities he summoned forth.

Numeshay only took promising scions from noble elven houses as students, and if he had maintained his stringent requirement for selecting his apprentices, he would likely still be alive today. However, Numeshay’s final crop of apprentices included a brilliant young drow elf outcast by the name of Hadrajhast, whom the archmage had taken under his wing at the urging of a fellow wizard. Hadrajhast had fled to the surface to escape the tyrannical oppression of the drow matriarchy, and Numeshay believed that the young dark elf had left the wickedness of his people in the underdark. Unfortunately, Numeshay grossly misjudged his ebony-skinned pupil.

Hadrajhast faithfully studied under Numeshay for a year without incident, learning all he could from the powerful wizard. The young drow was fascinated with the planar fissures, but to his dismay, Hadrajhast found that his master would not reveal the secret of the fissures’ creation. Over the next year, Hadrajhast’s resentment grew to the point that he decided to uncover the fissures’ mysteries on his own.

Unbeknownst to Numeshay, Hadrajhast had been an accomplished thief in the underdeep before he began his training as a wizard, and he used these skills to steal into the tower above the dormitory and copy from Numeshay’s own notes and spellbooks. About five years ago, after he had gleaned enough knowledge, Hadrajhast locked himself in the dormitory’s arcane workshop and attempted to open a planar fissure to the Abyss. Unfortunately, he was successful. And in so do-

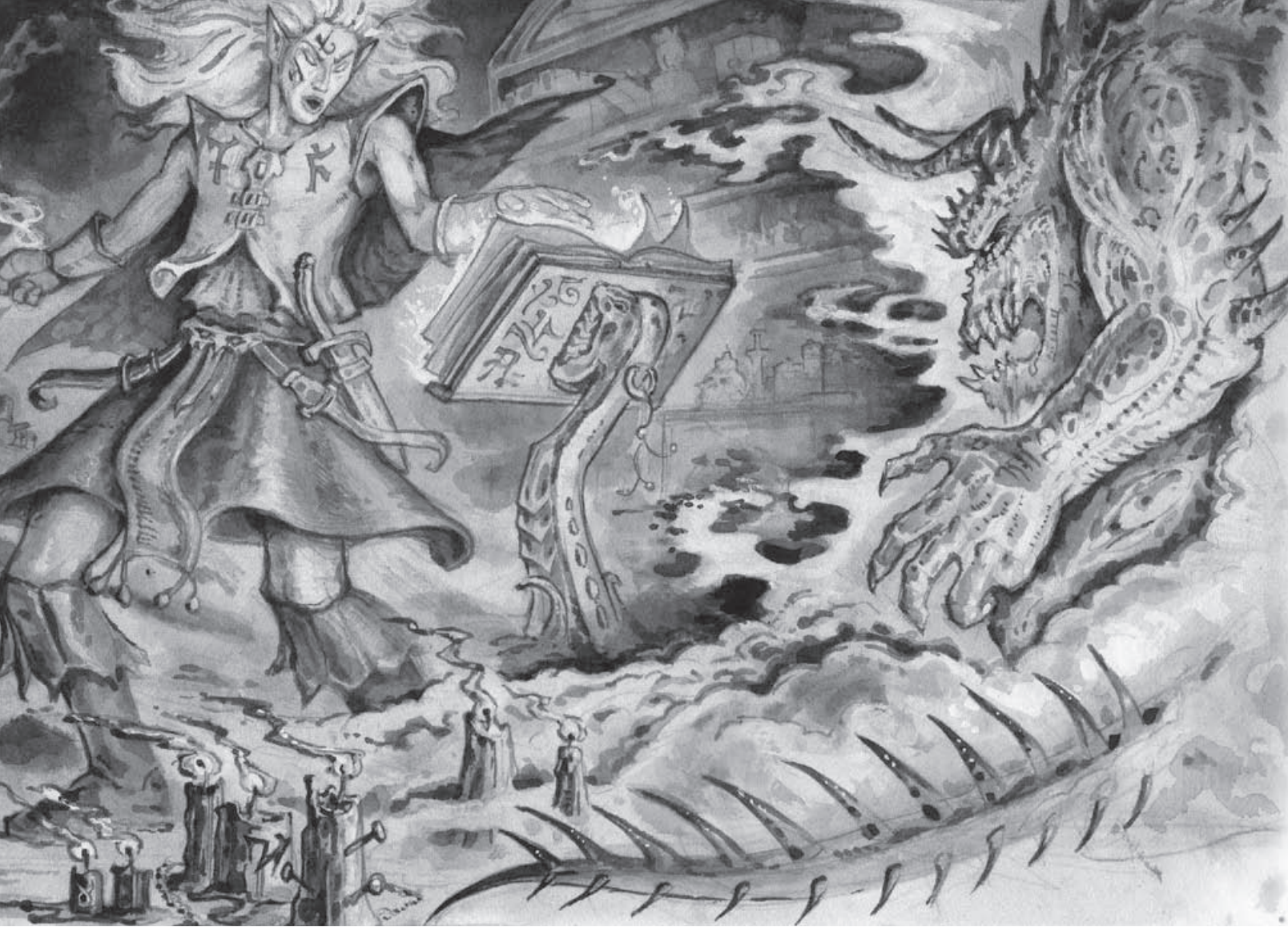
ing, he discovered a secret of the fissures that Numeshay only suspected: On rare and random occasions, creatures *could* push their way across to the other side.

Emboldened by his success, Hadrajhast hastily attempted another ritual to communicate with a minor demon, as he had seen his master do so many times before. But the inhabitants of the Abyss, with the patience born of immortality, had been waiting for just such an opportunity to test Numeshay’s fissures. A hezrou and a supporting force of two dozen dretches quickly assembled against the fissure. The powerful hezrou pushed against Hadrajhast’s fissure and – aided by the drow’s flawed, rushed ritual – burst through! The hezrou and its dretches quickly slaughtered the foolish young mage. The demons then rampaged through the dormitory and slew Numeshay’s remaining three apprentices in short order.

With the dormitory cleared, the hezrou and its dretches assaulted the tower proper. Numeshay, surprised by the demons, had little time to prepare, but still battled the invading fiends ferociously. In the end, realizing that he could not let the demons escape into the surrounding countryside, Numeshay broke the *orb of drastic resolution* that he had modified for just this possibility, triggering a tremendous explosion. The blast killed the archmage and the demons and shattered the tower, raining blocks of stone down upon the clearing in which it stood. Only one creature survived the destruction of the tower; and the ruins and the dormitory below passed into the flabby claws of a very unlikely master.

An exceptional dretch named Kuzgug – well, exceptional as dretches go – was part of the hezrou’s invading force. However, unbeknownst to the other demons, Kuzgug was specially marked by the Hidden Lord, god of forbidden lore and secrets. After helping the hezrou slaughter Numeshay’s apprentices, Kuzgug obeyed the dream messages sent to him by his shadowy master and slipped away from the hezrou and hid within the dormitory, while the remaining fiends ascended the tower to battle Numeshay.

After the explosive climax of the fight, Kuzgug found to his delight that he was the sole occupant of the dormitory; and without more powerful demons to bully him, he could do as he pleased. More intelligent than most of his kind, Kuzgug began to read the compiled arcane knowledge in the dormitory, and after five years of grueling study, he developed some minor wizardly abilities. He also discovered that the planar fissure in the dormitory’s workroom improved the strength of fire spells. More importantly, the Hidden Lord’s power granted him some degree of persuasion over the other demonic creatures that have since come through the fissure, regardless



of whether those fiends stepped through during the fissure's few weak periods or were drawn by Kuzgug's meager magical skills. Kuzgug has placed several of the less intelligent creatures in different rooms of the dormitory, ready to set them loose whenever he has need of them.

Kuzgug now has a small army of fiendish creatures to do his bidding. Although he continues his arcane studies in order to fulfill the Hidden Lord's mysterious goals, Kuzgug has begun to indulge his demonic appetites for destruction and carnage. He has attacked and kidnapped travelers on a nearby road, dragging these unfortunates back to the dormitory to torture and eventually consume. He has become quite the menace of late, and the towns on either end of the victimized road have begun to notice the unexplained disappearances of travelers and merchants making the journey between cities.

PLAYER BEGINNING

The adventure begins with the PCs walking through the forest and emerging into the large clearing that contains the ruins. Read or paraphrase the following to get the PCs started:

You have walked steadily through the forest for what seems like hours, following a trail that has seen frequent and recent use. The tall oaks and elms overhead press in, creating a dense canopy that diffuses the wan sunlight piercing the leafy ceiling above. There is stillness in the air, and the normal, wild sounds of the forest have been replaced by a wholly unnatural silence.

Suddenly, the forest gives way to a rough, circular clearing, spitting you out into a bare patch of forest that for all the world looks like nothing less than a massive scar in the wooded landscape. Squatting in the center of the clearing are the ruins of a stone tower. Only the bottom story of the structure remains, roofless and open to the elements, while

the upper stories appear to be strewn about the clearing in a jumbled mess of masonry and debris.

Even in the bright sunshine of the early afternoon, there is darkness here, and it rakes cold fingers of fear through your heart as you approach the ruined tower.

RUINED TOWER AND ENVIRONS

The clearing is roughly 150 feet across, and the ruins of the tower are situated in its very center. Debris covers the entire clearing, as if the upper stories of the tower simply exploded and scattered their remains over the entire area (which, in fact, is exactly what happened). This means every square in the clearing counts as difficult terrain.

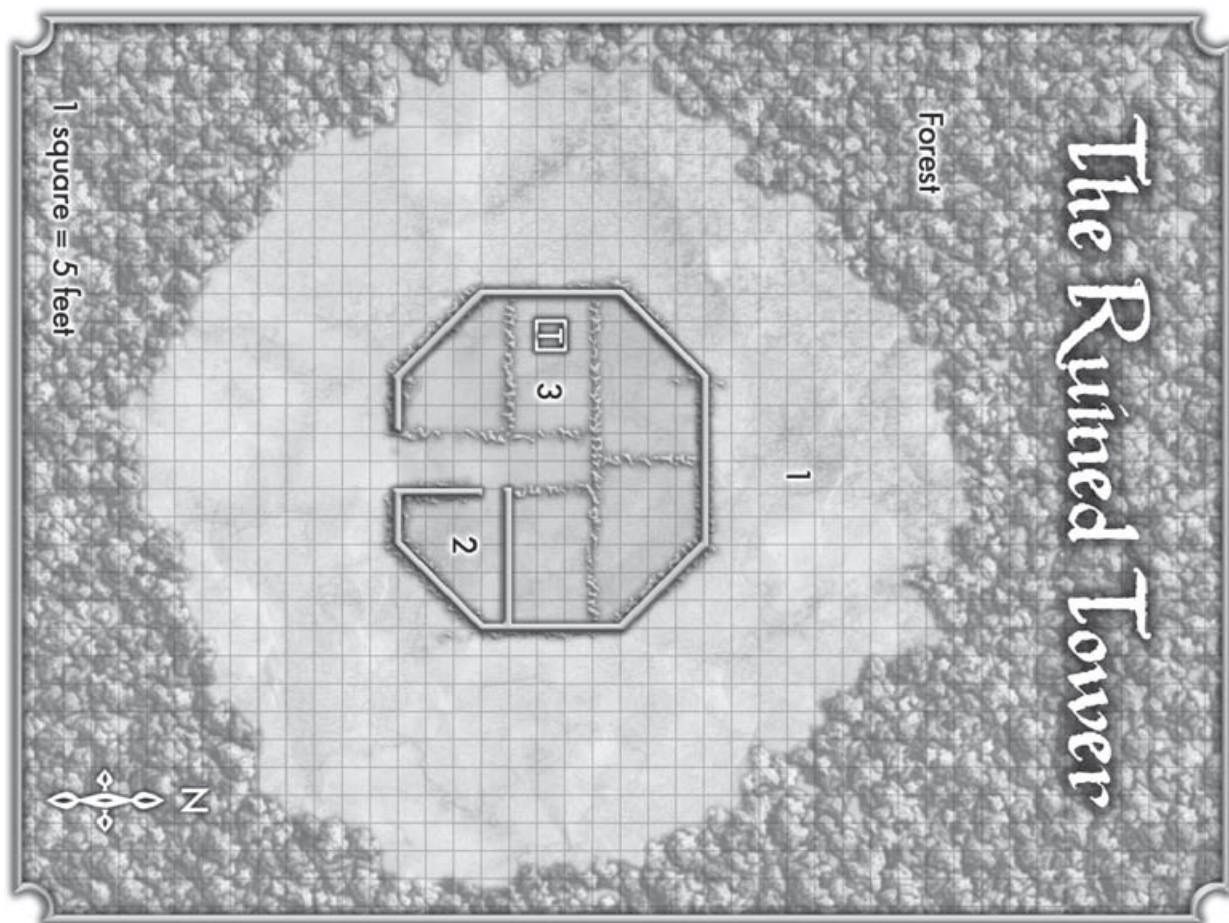
The remains of the tower consist of the foundation and a few crumbling interior walls. Like the clearing, the tower ruins are difficult terrain. A number of fiendish creatures have made their homes in the ruins, and will attack anyone invading their lairs.

Area 1-1 – Approaching the Ruins (EL 1): Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

As you pick your way across the clearing toward the ruins, you notice a peculiar smell hanging in the air. Over the piney scent of the woods there lurks a trace of brimstone, and something else ... a heavy animal musk that grows stronger as you approach the shattered tower. Suddenly, movement within the ruins catches your eye, and three sleek, predatory shapes glide from the deep shadows and out into the bright noonday sun.

At first, these three shapes cause little alarm – wolves are common enough in these parts – but these beasts send a shiver of horror and revulsion down your spine. Each has mottled yellow and gray fur, patchy and mange filled, with flashes of scabrous gray skin poking through in various spots. Their heads are gaunt, almost skeletal, and as their black lips pull back in a snarl, you see a forest of needle fangs, wholly unlike any wolf you’ve ever seen. The three wolves stalk slowly toward you, and you feel the dread chill of evil echoed in their low, hungry growls.

Development: The three abattoir wolves hide in the shadows of the tower ruins (Perception DC 12), waiting for the adventurers to cross half the distance between the tree line and the ruins. They know from experience that humanoids have difficulty negotiating the jumbled terrain of the clearing, and they wait for the heroes to become committed to crossing the clearing before attacking.



If the PCs spot the abattoir wolves from the tree line (Perception DC 22), they may use ranged attacks or powers on the wolves as they wish; however, it is unlikely that the heroes will notice the extraplanar nature of the wolves from this distance.

Tactics: The abattoir wolves are intelligent enough to use simple tactics, and attempt to flank and trip foes whenever possible. They focus their attacks on heroes who strongly radiate a good alignment, such as good clerics and paladins. These Abyss-tainted wolves are wicked and bloodthirsty; they fight to the death.

ABATTOIR WOLVES (3) **LEVEL 4 SKIRMISHER**
Medium elemental XP 175
magical beast (demon)

Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +9, darvision
HP 55; **Bloodied** 27
AC 18; **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 16
Resist 5 fire
Speed 8

⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will)

+9 vs. AC; 1d6+4 damage, or 2d6+4 damage against a prone target.

Combat Advantage: If the abattoir wolf has combat advantage against the target, the target is also knocked prone on a hit.

↔ **Abattoir Breath** (standard; recharge 5 or 6)

Close burst 1; +5 vs. Fort; each target is weakened (save ends)

Alignment Evil **Languages** —
Str 15 (+4) **Dex** 18 (+6) **Wis** 14 (+4)
Con 15 (+4) **Int** 3 (-2) **Cha** 11 (+2)

Area 1-2 – Rat Run (EL 2): Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

As you enter the tower ruins, you notice that the destruction is almost total. The blast that leveled the structure left only charred stone and splintered wood in its wake, and little can be made of the remaining debris. Only one area of the ruins is recognizable for its former use: an alchemy lab by the looks of the shattered beakers, vials, and other twisted equipment that covers the floor. The walls of this area still stand, shielding the room from much of the devastation that claimed the rest of the tower.

The walls of Numeshay's alchemy lab were made of reinforced stone, as his dabbling in the alchemical arts often led to fire, explosions, and other calamities that he did not want to spread to the rest of his abode. This reinforcement shielded the alchemy lab from some of the battle between mage and demons, and some useful equipment still survives.

Currently, a brutish demon called a verrekriith resides within the ruins of the alchemy lab. The dis-

eased creatures relishes the filthy attention of a small pack of dire rats that obey his every whim.

Development: The verrekriith and the dire rats are hiding in the debris of the alchemy lab (Perception DC 18), and wait for the PCs to enter. There is enough combustible liquid remaining in the lab that any use of a fire-based attack (*scorching burst*, *witch-fire*, etc.) in the room has a 50% chance of setting off a small fireball, which deals 2d6 points of fire damage to all creatures in the room and destroys any remaining potions (see below).

Tactics: The five dire rats rush in, using mob tactics on the party and focusing all of their attacks on a single enemy, preferably a paladin or good-aligned cleric targeted by the verrekriith. As soon as they engage that target, the verrekriith's mandibles vibrate to unleash its *concussive drone*. It then utters an Abyssal curse and engages in melee combat. It uses its claws and sting, taking full advantage of its *stench of decay*. All of the creatures fight to the death.

Treasure: Searching the ruins of the alchemy lab will uncover a number of still viable potions. A Perception DC 12 check is needed to uncover a single potion, and there are four intact potions in the room: two *potions of healing* and two *potions of vitality*.

DIRE RATS (5) **LEVEL 1 BRUTE**
Medium natural beast XP 100

Initiative +2 **Senses** Perception +5; low-light vision
HP 38; **Bloodied** 19
AC 15; **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 11
Immune filth fever
Speed 6, climb 3

⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Disease**

+4 vs. AC; 1d6 + 2 damage, and the target contracts filth fever.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** —
Skills Stealth +7
Str 14 (+2) **Dex** 15 (+2) **Wis** 10 (+0)
Con 18 (+4) **Int** 3 (-4) **Cha** 6 (-2)



VERREKRITH**LEVEL 4 CONTROLLER**Medium elemental
humanoid (demon)

XP 175

Initiative +6 **Senses** Perception +7; low-light vision
Stench of Decay aura 1; living enemies in the area take –5 penalty to attack rolls.**HP** 52; **Bloodied** 26**AC** 18; **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 16**Immune** disease**Resist** 5 variable (1/encounter)**Speed** 6Ⓣ **Claw** (standard; at-will)

+9 vs. AC; 1d8+4 damage.

Sting (standard; at will) ♦ **Poison**

+8 vs. Fort; 1d4+4, and the target takes ongoing 5 poison damage and is immobilized (save ends both).

⚡ **Concussive Drone** (standard; recharge 4, 5, or 6) ♦ **Thunder**

Ranged 10; +8 vs. Reflex; 3d6+4 thunder damage, and the target is pushed back 1 square.

⚡ **Dominate Vermin** (standard; encounter) ♦ **Charm**

Close burst 10; targets rats, spiders, scorpions, and insects; +10 vs. Will; the target is dominated, and only the death of the verrekriith can end this domination.

Alignment Chaotic Evil **Languages** Abyssal, telepathy 10**Str** 15 (+4) **Dex** 18 (+6) **Wis** 11 (+2)**Con** 13 (+3) **Int** 9 (+1) **Cha** 15 (+4)

Area 1-3 – The Way Down: The entrance to the tower dormitory is a simple trapdoor. However, Kuzgug has concealed it by gluing leaves, dirt, and other debris on top of it, so that when the door is closed, it blends in with the rest of the mess that fills the ruins. It takes a Perception DC 15 check to find the concealed door. Once the door is found, the heroes will have to get it open. There is no lock, only a bolt that latches the door shut from the other side. However, the bolt is old and rusty, and will snap if sufficient force is applied to pull open the trapdoor (Strength check DC 15).

Once the PCs have the door open, read or paraphrase the following:

The trapdoor opens with a thin, metallic snap, revealing a shadow-filled aperture and a set of stone stairs descending into darkness. The thick, cloying smell of animal musk drifts up from the open trapdoor, and again, fear grips you with icy strength – you are sure that terrible evil lies below.

THE DORMITORY

Numeshay often had up to four apprentices training under him at any one time. These young mages lived in an area specially prepared for them beneath the tower: a dormitory of sorts, complete with a living area, a library, and an arcane workshop. It was here, that Hadrajhast opened the planar fissure to the Abyss, hoping to use it as a tool to quickly achieve the power he craved.

After the hezrou stepped through the fissure, the foolish Hadrajhast was the first to fall beneath the fiend's claws, followed by his fellow apprentices. The demon and his dretches dispatched the novice mages so quickly that very little damage was done to the dormitory, and for the most part, it remains in good condition, despite the passage of time.

There is no light in the dormitory except in the arcane workshop, where the planar fissure illuminates the entire chamber in an unhealthy red glow. The ceilings in the dormitory are 10 feet high, and the hallways are 10 feet wide. The walls are made of worked stone, and the doors are solid wood with good locks.

Also, the dormitory is saturated in Abyssal energy from the planar fissure. For all intents and purposes, the fissure acts as a wide-reaching Font of Power (see the *DMG*), granting a +5 bonus to damage from any attack with the fire keyword that is used within the dormitory.

Masonry Wall: Strength DC 35 to break.

Good Wooden Door: Strength DC 18 to break when door is stuck; if locked, increase DC to 20.

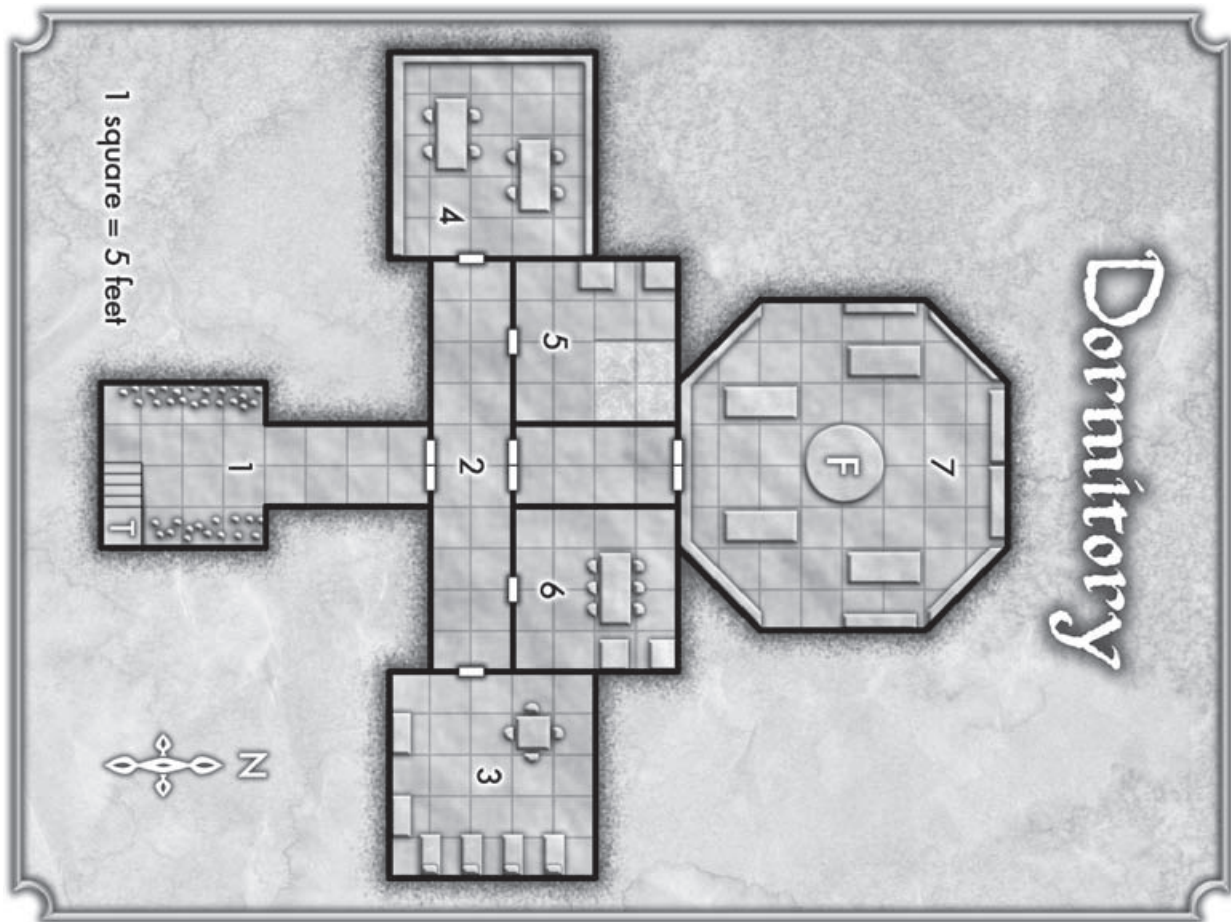
Area 2-1 – The Larder (EL 2): Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

As you descend the stone steps into darkness, the musky smell of beast intensifies, as if you had suddenly entered the lair of a large animal. However, there is another scent, a terrible odor that in your short adventuring career you have mercifully avoided: death – old and rotting death, to be exact.

At the bottom of the stairs, you find yourselves in a large stone chamber, with neatly fitted walls of masonry blocks and a wide hallway heading north into further darkness. Old barrels, crates, bags, and other storage devices line the walls, some of which have disgorged their contents – a collection of rancid cheeses, moldy grain, and dried meat now gray and foul with age. This was obviously a larder for those who once occupied the tower. And while the ancient foodstuffs are no longer usable, the room retains its former purpose, but in a much more ghoulish fashion.

You count four naked human corpses, in varying states of decay, lying on moldy burlap sacks in the center of the

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room. The corpses are missing large chunks from various part of their anatomy, primarily in the “meatier” areas of the buttocks and upper legs.

Suddenly, through the darkness, you hear a low hissing and the ominous scraping of taloned feet on the stone floor.

Kuzgug and his allies have developed a taste for the flesh of men, and the corpses of their victims are brought back to “season” for a day or two before consumption. The four corpses currently in the room are those of a small merchant party that had been on its way to trading cities in the north. All are male, and consist of two merchants and their two hired guards. The cause of death is fairly easy to ascertain, in spite of the terrible wounds inflicted post mortem. The throats of all four corpses have been savagely ripped out, the work of the abattoir wolves above.

Development: Numeshay had kept a spitting drake and a group of specially trained needlefang drakes, and he gave his apprentices the task of taking care of the creatures. When the hezrou first arrived, it ignored the drakes, opting to find and kill any spellcasters first. Kuzgug waited until the drakes were weak with hunger, then he drove them into this room. Not only does he feel that they would prove an obstacle for any intruders, but he delights in watching the slow degradation of these once-proud crea-

tures. Over the years, he has trained them to cover in his presence, and he has starved them to the point where they have become little more than ravenous beasts, eager to please him for scraps of food. Now the drakes act as a convenient disposal unit, greedily devouring the offal left by Kuzgug and his allies after they’ve eaten their fill from a particular victim.

Tactics: The needlefang drake swarms attack the moment the heroes set foot in the larder, rushing forward to attack the nearest target. They make no attempt to hide, so if the heroes have a light source or a member with darkvision, they may see the drakes from the top of the stairs. The spitting drake, meanwhile, has kept to the shadows of the ceiling, fearing for its own life if it gets too close to its hungry needlefang cousins. On the second round of combat, it flies down and strikes at the adventurer who appears least armored. The savage drakes are mad with hunger and will fight to the death.

Treasure: The mundane food in the larder is spoiled, and anyone who actually attempts to eat any of it becomes violently ill. However, some of the equipment carried by the merchants and their guards has been piled in the northeast corner of the room. Kuzgug has already removed any items of obvious value, such as gold, gems, or magical items, but he left the armor and

weapons of the two guards. This equipment amounts to two Medium-sized suits of chainmail, two light shields, one heavy flail, and one short sword. There is also a longbow and a quiver of 20 arrows.

ELITE NEEDLEFANG **LEVEL 2 SOLDIER ELITE**
DRAKE SWARMS (2) XP 250
 Medium natural beast
 (reptile, swarm)

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +7
Swarm Attack aura 1; the needlefang drake swarm makes a basic attack as a free action against each enemy that begins its turn in the aura.
HP 76; **Bloodied** 38
AC 20; **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 14
Saving Throws +2
Action Point 1
Immune fear; **Resist** half damage from melee and ranged attacks;
Vulnerable 5 against close and area attacks.
Speed 7

Ⓣ **Swarm of Teeth** (standard; at-will)
 +8 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage, or 2d10 + 4 damage against a prone target.

Pull Down (minor; at will)
 +7 vs. Fortitude; the target is knocked prone.

Feeding Frenzy: The swarm gains 1 action point the first time it reduces a foe to 0 hit points in an encounter.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** —
Str 15 (+3) **Dex** 18 (+5) **Wis** 12 (+2)
Con 14 (+3) **Int** 2 (-3) **Cha** 10 (+1)

SPITTING DRAKE **LEVEL 3 ARTILLERY**
 Medium natural beast XP 150
 (reptile)

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +3
HP 38; **Bloodied** 19
AC 17; **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 14
Resist 10 acid
Speed 7

Ⓣ **Bite** (standard; at-will)
 +6 vs. AC; 1d6 + 2 damage.
 ✂ **Caustic Spit** (standard; at will) ♦ **Acid**
 Ranged 10; +8 vs. Ref; 1d10 + 4 acid damage.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** —
Str 14 (+3) **Dex** 18 (+5) **Wis** 14 (+3)
Con 14 (+3) **Int** 3 (-3) **Cha** 12 (+2)

Area 2-2 – Central Hallway (EL 1): The double doors that lead from the larder into the central hallway are locked (Kuzgug has the key), but can be opened with a Thievery DC 20 check. On the other side, however, are traps that Numeshay had created for security and for ensuring that his apprentices paid attention. If the deafening blast trap is triggered, the noise will alert Kuzgug to the heroes' presence and he will begin preparing to repel intruders (see area 2-7, under Kuzgug's tactics).

Once the heroes have the door to the hallway open, read or paraphrase the following:

The doors open on a 10-foot-wide hallway running east to west. Another set of double doors lies directly across the hall from those you just entered through. On each side of those double doors, along the north wall, is a silver statue of a beautiful, blindfolded woman with her mouth opened slightly as though ready to sing. Farther down the north wall on each side are two more doors, and another two doors at either end of the hall. A pile of debris blocks the door at the east end of the hall; the heaped detritus looks like it was deliberately placed.

In addition to the doors, the hall contains a number of painted portraits, each depicting an elven man or woman in red, blue, or golden robes. Only one of the paintings truly catches your eye, simply because it is so different from the rest. It depicts a young drow man in gray robes. He is exotically handsome, like most of his race, and he bears the slightest hint of a smirk on his thin lips.

The paintings depict Numeshay's past apprentices, including the last four. The dark elf is, of course, Hadrajhast. The air is thick and humid in this area, and many of the paintings have begun to peel and bubble from the hot, moist air.

If the adventures study the face on the statue, they can make a Religion DC 20 check to determine that the woman resembles Neshti the Stealthmaiden, a patron goddess of vigilantes and peasant heroes, as well as a goddess of thievery and trickery. "Neshti" also happens to be the password to disable the deafening blast trap within each statue. Stepping on the square containing either statue triggers the trap. An Arcana DC 22 check reveals the presence of magic within each statue.

Numeshay expected that some of his brand-new apprentices would detect this magical aura and choose to walk along the southern side to avoid it – thus stepping right into the non-magical trap along that wall. Anyone stepping on the southern square across from either statue triggers the stone bludgeon trap, which thrusts out of the wall and pushes the victim into the northern square, triggering the deafening blast trap as well.



STONE BLUDGEON**LEVEL 4 LURKER**

Trap

XP 44

A large stone shaft thrusts out of a concealed portion of the wall, striking with the force of a sledgehammer.

Trap: The southern wall conceals a stone battering ram that deals damage and pushes a PC.

Perception

- ☒ DC 12: The wall has a portion that slides aside.
- ☒ DC 17: A portion of the floor sinks when depressed. It might be a trapdoor or pressure plate.

Trigger

The stone bludgeon thrusts forward when a creature enters the square.

Attack**Opportunity Action Melee**

Target: targets the creature that triggered the trap.

Attack: +7 vs. Fort

Hit: 1d10+4 damage, and the target is shifted 1 square to the north, potentially triggering the sister trap listed below.

Countermeasures

- ☒ A character standing in the square of a stone bludgeon that missed its target can prevent the trap from resetting by jamming an object in the sliding section of the wall that hid the battering ram, requiring a DC 12 Thievery check.
- ☒ An adjacent character can disable the pressure plate with a DC 17 Thievery check.

DEAFENING BLAST**LEVEL 4 BLAST**

Trap

XP 175

An agonizingly loud burst of sound erupts from the statue's mouth, shaking your bones and nearly bursting your eardrums.

Trap: Each of the two bard statues along the northern wall emits a booming, damaging sound unless a password ("Neshti," after the goddess of trickery and thievery) is spoken by a PC prior to entering the square.

Perception

- ☒ DC 12: The character notices the female bard in the golden statue is kneeling and apparently singing her song to the heavens.
- ☒ DC 22: The character notices the stonework in this section looks a little looser. It isn't about to fall apart, but either it was damaged or was not as well constructed as the previous area. This same information can be gleaned from a DC 15 Dungeoneering check.
- ☒ DC 22: The character spots a pressure plate in that square.
- ☒ Arcana DC 22: The character detects the presence of magic within each statue.

Trigger

The statue emits a deafening sound when someone steps on its square without saying the password.

Attack**Standard**

Target: targets any creature within the burst.

Attack: Close burst 1; +7 vs. Ref

Hit: 2d8 + 4 thunder damage, and the target is deafened (save ends).

Countermeasures

- ☒ A Religion DC 20 skill check will suggest that the statue depicts Neshti the Stealthmaiden.
- ☒ A character can perform a Silence ritual to muffle the damaging effect.

Area 2-3 – Living Quarters (EL 2): In order to access the living quarters of the dormitory, the adventurers will have to remove the piled junk in front of the door. Although the heaped jumble of boxes, crates, broken masonry, and other debris looks haphazard, it serves a very important purpose. When the hezrou and its dretches slew Numeshay's four students, it killed Hadrajhast in the arcane workroom, two more in the kitchen, while the fourth, a young elf girl named Senna Moonshadow, was killed in the living quarters. Senna was slain while she cowered beneath the covers on her bunk.

Needless to say, Senna’s death was a traumatic one, and shortly after her demise, her tormented spirit returned to animate her corpse as an undead horror, a ghoul. In addition, the foul Abyssal taint in the area granted Senna the abilities of a warlock. Kuzgug, unable to slay the vengeful undead, trapped Senna in, ironically, the living quarters, and he barricaded the door to keep her there.

Development: In order to gain access to this room, the heroes need to remove the barricade, a task that will take 10 minutes with four movers. Moving about all of the piled junk will make quite a bit of noise, and will alert Senna to the party’s presence. She will use her shadow veil power to help conceal her true nature. Once the barricade is clear and the door opened, read or paraphrase the following:

The door opens with a puff of stale air, revealing a darkened chamber beyond. As the feeble light of your torches penetrates the gloom, you make out four bunks against the east wall, two large wardrobes against the south wall, and a small table with four chairs near the door. The furniture appears to be in fairly good order, and three of the bunks are neatly made, blankets tucked and folded. The fourth bunk, however, appears to contain a huddled form beneath an old woolen blanket that has been ripped to tatters and stained black with old, dried blood.

The form on the fourth bunk is, of course, Senna. She is playing possum, hoping that one of the heroes will be foolish enough to approach her bunk. Anyone who makes a Perception DC 10 check will realize that the form on the bunk is not breathing – but that person may understandably come to the wrong conclusion that Senna is simply a corpse. The shadow veil conceals any visible sign of her undead nature. As soon as any party member approaches within 5 feet of her bunk, Senna throws back her covers and uses her *avernian eruption* to harm as many of the heroes as she can. If the adventurers are more cautious, Senna’s hunger for the flesh of the living will override any thought of surprising her meal, and she will simply attack within 10 rounds of the party entering the room. Once Senna reveals herself, read or paraphrase the following:

The shapeless form on the bunk suddenly shudders into motion – a jerking and frenetic spasm of unnatural life. The tattered blanket falls away to reveal a grinning, shriveled horror, a mockery of the humanoid form in rotting blue robes. It opens its mouth, lips curling back from ragged fangs, and the room is filled with a high, piercing shriek of pure hunger and rage. The thing leaps off the bed, hands curled into taloned meat hooks, and dashes toward you.

Tactics: Senna attacks with mindless fury, ripping into the closest hero with talons and teeth. If she manages to kill or paralyze a victim, she immediately moves onto the next closest target and attacks every round until that target is killed or paralyzed. Any active target who tries to stay out of her reach will be subject to her ranged powers as a warlock. Senna attacks until destroyed, and she pursues fleeing victims relentlessly.

Treasure: Senna has a gold signet ring on her right index finger bearing the sigil of her elven father’s house. The ring is worth 200 gp by itself, but if it is returned to the Moonshadow family, Senna’s father will pay double that amount for the return of the ring and information on the fate of his daughter.

The two wardrobes are unlocked and hold the personal belongings of the four deceased students. There is little of value here, just piles of folded clothing (still serviceable) and worthless knickknacks and gewgaws. However, a Perception DC 15 check reveals a loose board in the bottom of the wardrobe nearest the door. If the board is pried up, there is a small space beneath containing a bag of 50 gold coins and two *potions of healing*. The gold and the potions both belonged to Hadrajhast and served as an emergency store if his plans went awry. In the end, however, he was unable to reach them before his death – not that a bit of gold and two minor potions would have saved him from the hezrou’s wrath anyway.



SENNA ~ ADVANCED**LEVEL 6 SOLDIER ELITE****GHOUL WARLOCK**

XP 500

Medium natural
humanoid (undead)**Initiative** +6 **Senses** Perception +2, low-light vision**HP** 79; **Bloodied** 35**AC** 22; **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 19**Saving Throws** +2**Action Point** 1**Immune** disease, poison**Resist** 10 necrotic**Vulnerable** 10 radiant**Spd** 8, climb 4⬇ **Claws** (standard; at-will)

+13 vs. AC; 1d6+4 damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).

Ghoulish Bite (standard; at will)

Target must be immobilized, stunned, or unconscious; +11 vs. AC; 3d6+4, and the target is stunned (save ends).

⚔ **Eldritch Blast** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Arcane, Implement**

Ranged 10; +5 vs. Reflex; 1d10+5 damage.

Eldritch Pact (Infernal)**Prime Shot****Shadow Walk****Warlock's Curse**⚔ **Hellish Rebuke** (standard; at-will)

Ranged 10; +5 vs. Reflex; 1d6+10* fire damage. If Senna takes damage before the end of her next turn, the target takes an extra 1d6+5 fire damage.

⚔ **Diabolic Grasp** (standard; encounter) ♦ **Arcane, Implement**

Ranged 10; +5 vs. Fort; 2d8+5 damage, and you slide the target 2 squares.

✖ **Avernian Eruption** (standard; daily) ♦ **Arcane, Fire, Implement**

Burst 1 within 10 squares; +5 vs. Reflex; 2d10+10* fire damage; ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).

Alignment Chaotic Evil **Languages** Elven**Skills** Arcana +8, History +8, Stealth +12**Str** 14 (+5) **Dex** 19 (+7) **Wis** 11 (+3)**Con** 15 (+5) **Int** 10 (+3) **Cha** 13 (+4)

*Includes the +5 bonus to damage for the planar fissure acting as a Font of Power.

Area 2-4 – Library: The door to the library is unlocked. Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs enter the room:

This room is lined with stately bookcases that reach from floor to ceiling, their shelves sagging beneath the weight of hundreds of books. In the middle of this room are two ordinary wooden tables with four chairs each. The smell of dust is heavy in the air, but the room appears to be virtually untouched by the passage of years.

In this room, Numeshay's apprentices studied art, history, mathematics, and all manner of mundane intellectual pursuits, in addition to their arcane studies. The master wizard believed that a firm foundation in traditional education was integral to a budding mage's development. Although the books in this room deal with non-magical subjects, as a collection they are still quite valuable. Anyone researching a traditional subject in this room has a +4 bonus on any relevant skill checks.

Treasure: There are nearly 1,000 books here, and most would sell for around 2-3 gp each. However, if the PCs could somehow manage to transport the library to the surface and get it to market, the entire collections would be worth 5,000 gp.

In addition to the mundane books, Hadrajhast secreted a *wand of vampiric embrace +1* in the library, hiding it within the railing of a stepladder. Numeshay had an intense dislike of warlocks, especially Infernal Pact ones, and the wand had belonged to one such warlock that Numeshay defeated in a duel years earlier. Hadrajhast stole the wand from his master's neglected collection and hid it in the library for quick retrieval if he was forced to make a hasty getaway. Any adventurer who looks for something that seems out of place in the library can make a Perception DC 20 check to find the wand. A successful Arcana DC 20 check to detect magic will also reveal its presence.

Area 2-5 – Lavatory (EL 1): The door to the lavatory is not locked, but it is covered in beads of condensation and is warm to the touch. Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs open the door:

The door opens to a billowing cloud of greasy, gray steam. The stench is beyond description – a miasma of rot, mold, and fecal matter that causes your gorge to rise and your eyes to water. The room beyond is impossible to make out due to the thick steam.

The steam and the smell are due to the large bathing pool in the lavatory. The pool is fed and heated by an underground hot spring; however, the planar fissure has wreaked havoc here as well. The fiendish energies that pervade the ruined tower and the dormitory have increased the heat of the pool to boiling, and have allowed a particularly vile form of lower

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planar bacteria to grow and thrive within the tainted waters. Add to this the fact that the contents of privies on the west wall have leaked into the pool, and you have the perfect environment for one ungodly stink.

Any adventurer within 5 feet of the door when it is opened must make an Endurance DC 12 check or be weakened for 2d6 rounds. Those who make this save are unaffected by the stench for the duration of the adventure. Those who fail must make a new Endurance check each time they come within 1 square of the door until they succeed on the skill check; otherwise, they become weakened anew with each whiff of the horrid odor.

Development: The lavatory is completely enveloped in steam, reducing visibility to only 1 square. It is also brutally hot, and PCs without some form of fire resistance will need to make Endurance DC 12 checks every minute or lose a healing surge. If there are no healing surges left to lose, the character loses hit points equal to his level.

The bathing pool is 10 feet from the door, in the northeast corner of the room. It is 10 feet square and 5 feet deep. The top of the pool is covered in a layer of viscous slime (the lower planar bacteria). Anyone entering the pool or touching the bacterial slime is attacked by the shivers disease. In addition, a pair of demonfang crocodiles from the Abyss have made their home in the vile effluvium, and they lie in wait for the heroes to venture close to the pool. They wait with only their eyes and nostrils exposed, giving them a +10 on Stealth checks.

Tactics: One demonfang crocodile attacks the first PC to come to the edge of the pool, using its keen hearing to locate its target. Give the crocodile a Perception DC 10 check to successfully orient on its target. If the heroes are particularly loud or are attempting to be quiet, you can reduce or increase the DC as appropriate.

The demonfang crocodile’s attack plan is fairly straightforward. It lunges at the first target in range, attempts to grab the unfortunate victim in its jaws, and drag him or her back into the pool to drown. The next adventurer to come to the edge of the pool to assist his ally is then targeted by the second demonfang crocodile. Any adventurers pulled into the bathing pool suffer 1d3 points of fire damage per round from the boiling water and are exposed to the shivers disease from the lower planar bacteria, as detailed above.

Each crocodile attacks until it is reduced to 25% of its starting hit points. It then sinks down to the bottom of the pool, hoping the adventurers will retreat. It does not move more than 5 feet from the edge of the pool for any reason.

Treasure: This room offers brave and hardy heroes the chance to come away with a real treasure. At the bottom of the bathing pool lays the corpse of one Darnak Sundersshield, a wandering dwarven adventurer who had the extreme misfortune of stumbling upon Kuzgug’s domain. The dwarf met his end between the jaws of the demonfang crocodiles, and what is left of his corpse now stews at the bottom of the pool. Most of Darnak’s gear has long since been eaten away by the virulent bacteria, but his enchanted battleaxe remains. The battleaxe, which Darnak called Fearstrike, is a +2 *terror battleaxe*.

DEMONFANG CROCODILES (2) **LEVEL 3 SOLDIER**
Medium elemental beast **XP 150**

Initiative +2 **Senses** Perception +3, low-light vision
HP 49; **Bloodied** 24
AC 19; **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 14
Resist 5 fire
Spd 6, swim 8

Ⓣ **Burning Bite** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Fire**

+10 vs. AC; 1d6+4 fire damage, and the target is grabbed (until escape). The demonfang crocodile cannot make bite attacks while grabbing a creature, but it can use *clamping jaws*.

Clamping Jaws (standard; at will) ♦ **Fire**

If a demonfang crocodile begins its turn with a target grabbed in its jaws, it makes an attack against the grabbed creature: +10 vs. AC; 2d6+4 fire damage

Alignment Chaotic Evil **Languages** —
Str 17 (+4) **Dex** 11 (+1) **Wis** 13 (+2)
Con 17 (+4) **Int** 2 (-2) **Cha** 7 (-1)

Area 2-6 – Kitchen (EL 1): The door to the kitchen is not locked. Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs enter:

This is a fairly standard kitchen and dining area, with racks of pots, pans, and cooking utensils hanging from the walls, a fire pit and hearth, two small cupboards, and a large wooden table with six chairs. A thick layer of dust coats everything, and the ceilings are festooned with a tangle of cobwebs.

Propped up in two of the chairs are a pair of corpses that have obviously been dead for years. They are little more than skeletons now, their yellowed bones held together by a few dry scraps of flesh and the blue robes they wear.

Since Kuzgug and his allies have no need to cook or prepare their grisly food, the dormitory’s kitchen and dining area have been virtually undisturbed for almost a decade. The corpses are two more of Nume-shay’s ill-fated apprentices, elven brothers, Izonay

and Dureshar Greenbow. The two siblings were surprised and killed while they ate their evening meal. Close examination of the corpses reveals horrendous, bone-shattering wounds.

Development: A quartet of creatures from the Abyss, shadowfiend spiders, dwell in the web-covered ceiling. They subsist off of the occasional rat or dire rat that wanders in, or is thrown in by Kuzgug when he desires a bit of sport. The spiders hide in the webs on the ceiling (Perception DC 21).

Tactics: The shadowfiend spiders begin combat by casting acidic webs at three of the heroes. Then they scuttle down and attempt to bite entangled foes. The spiders fight to the death.

Treasure: A careful search of the two elven corpses (Perception DC 12) will find a plain gold ring sewn into a hidden pouch on the inside of Dureshar's robes. The ring is an *amulet of health* +1.

SHADOWFIEND SPIDERS (4) **LEVEL 2 LURKER**
Medium elemental beast XP 125

Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +8, tremorsense +5
HP 31; **Bloodied** 15
AC 16; **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 14
Immune acid
Resist 5 poison
Spd 6, climb 6

⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Poison**

+5 vs. AC; 1d10+3 damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).

✂ **Acidic Web** (standard; recharge 4, 5, or 6) ♦ **Acid**

Ranged 10; +5 vs. Reflex; the target takes ongoing 5 acid damage and is restrained (save ends both).

Shifting Shadows: If a shadowfiend spider moves at least 3 squares on its turn and ends its move 3 squares away from its previous position, it gains concealment until the end of its next turn.

Alignment Chaotic Evil **Languages** —
Skills Athletics +8, Stealth +9
Str 15 (+3) **Dex** 17 (+4) **Wis** 14 (+3)
Con 13 (+2) **Int** 1 (-4) **Cha** 7 (-1)

Area 2-7 – Arcane Workshop (EL 5): If the party sets off the deafening blast trap in area 2-2, the door to the arcane workshop will be locked. If they somehow managed to bypass the trap, Kuzgug will likely be unaware of their presence and the door will be unlocked. When the adventurers enter the workshop, read or paraphrase the following:

This large, octagonal chamber is suffused with a sickly red light. The source of the illumination is contained in what appears to be a ritual circle in the very center of the

room — a jagged line of crimson light that hangs suspended in midair, almost like a crack in the very fabric of the world itself. The terrible glow reveals what appears to be an arcane lab or workshop, with tables piled high with metaphysical equipment, shelves laden with strange substances in vials, jars, and beakers, and bookshelves filled with tomes of arcane research.

You soon realize that you are not alone. Across the room, its face lurid in the bloodied radiance of the strange fissure, a nightmarish creature stands in ill-fitting red robes. Its stubby body is less than four feet tall. Its head is a nightmarish lump of sagging skin, beady eyes, and an ugly slash of a mouth filled with jagged teeth. Its arms, long and double jointed, hang nearly to the ground, a glowing orb gripped in one set of claws. The fiend's flabby lips turn up in a cruel smile when it sees you, and it begins to speak a torrent of strange words in a thick, slobbering voice. The air crackles with energy; and you realize the horrid little beast is casting a spell!

Kuzgug spends the majority of his time in the arcane workshop, attempting to learn more about arcane theory and spellcraft. He hopes to further increase his wizard abilities; however, he doesn't yet realize that what holds him back has nothing to do with study. Despite the Hidden Lord's inspiration, Kuzgug's intellect is still too limited to completely accomplish the goals of his shadowy patron.

Development: If the heroes have managed to enter the dormitory relatively undetected, primarily by bypassing the deafening blast trap in area 2-2, then Kuzgug will be unprepared to face them. Use the first set of tactics listed below for an unprepared Kuzgug. If, however, Kuzgug has been made aware of the heroes' presence, use the second set of tactics.

Tactics (Unprepared): If Kuzgug is caught off-guard by the heroes, his first action is to use his *scorching burst* power and then use an Action Point to use *noxious stench*. Afterward, he uses *fire shroud* and more instances of *scorching burst*, supported by a magical orb he found within the rubble years ago. He is well aware of the planar fissure's effect on fire spells. If any hero continues to attack him after that, Kuzgug uses *wave of fear* to clear some space, and attacks the closest targets with tooth and claw. Sometimes the old ways are best.

Kuzgug is a vicious and chaotic creature, and he fights to the death to defend his realm.

Tactics (Prepared): If Kuzgug is expecting the heroes, he chooses cold as his variable resistance (unless the adventurers have already shown a preference for another damage type) and uses his sleep power as soon as the adventurers open the door. After that, he uses his fire-based attacks and *wave of fear* as described above.

Treasure: Besides the *magic orb +1*, Kuzgug's corpse also contains crude descriptions, written in Abyssal, of the dreams that led him on this path and of the wisdom of the Hidden Lord. (The GM can determine the details of the dreams based on what works for his campaign.) There is also a wealth of arcane knowledge in the workroom. Many of the works written by Numeshay on subjects of planar travel and conjuration were copied for his students and can be found on the bookshelves here. The total collection of roughly 50 books would be worth 1,000 gp, or around 10 gp each if sold individually. In addition, there is a full alchemical lab here, worth another 2,500 gp on the open market.

However, the most important item here is hidden beneath a loose flagstone in the northwest corner of the room. It takes a Perception DC 15 check to find the flagstone. Beneath it is another of Hadrajhast's caches; however, this one holds two very important items. The first is a ritual scroll of *planar fissure*, and the second is a page torn from the journal of Numeshay himself. Both will be necessary to close the planar fissure.

KUZGUG - ADVANCED DEMONIC ACOLYTE DRETCH WIZARD SOLO **LEVEL 4 SOLO CONTROLLER**
 Medium elemental humanoid (demon) **XP 875**

Initiative +1 **Senses** Perception +2, darkvision
HP 125; **Bloodied** 62
AC 19; **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 29
Resist 5 thunder, 10 variable (1/encounter)
Saving Throws +4
Action Points 2
Spd 6

⚔ **Claws** (standard; at-will)
 +9 vs. AC; 1d10+5 damage.

⚡ **Wave of Fear** (standard; recharge 5 or 6) ♦ **Fear**

Close burst 5; targets enemies; +6 vs. Will; the target slides 1 square and takes a -2 penalty to all defenses (save ends).

☠ **Noxious Stench** (standard; daily) ♦ **Poison**
 Area burst 2 within 10; +6 vs. Fort; targets take a -2 penalty to attack rolls and are weakened (save ends both).

☠ **Shield of Abyssal Majesty (aura 5):** Allies in the area gain Kuzgug's resistances.

Area burst 2 within 10; +6 vs. Fort; targets take a -2 penalty to attack rolls and are weakened (save ends both).

Abyssal Might: Kuzgug gains a +2 power bonus to damage rolls with all attacks (already reflected in his stats).

☠ **Consume Soul** (immediate reaction, when an ally within 5 squares of Kuzgug is reduced to 0 hit points): Kuzgug regains hit points equal to one-half his level.

⚡ **Scorching Burst** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Arcane, Fire, Implement**

Burst 1 within 10 squares; each creature in burst; +0 vs. Ref; 1d6+12* fire damage

⚡ **Fire Shroud** (standard; encounter) ♦ **Arcane, Fire, Implement**

Close burst 3; each enemy in burst; +0 vs. Fort; 1d8+12* fire damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).

☠ **Sleep** (standard; daily) ♦ **Arcane, Implement, Sleep**

Burst 2 within 20 squares; each creature in burst; +0 vs. Will; the target is slowed (save ends); if the target fails his first saving throw against this power, the target becomes unconscious (save ends). Miss: The target is slowed (save ends).

Shield (immediate interrupt; utility) ♦ **Arcane, Force**

Triggered when Kuzgug is hit by an attack; Kuzgug gains a +4 power bonus to AC and Reflex defense until the end of his next turn.

Class Features: Arcane Implement Mastery, cantrips, Ritual Casting, spellbook

Alignment Chaotic Evil **Languages** Abyssal
Skills Arcana +5, Insight +7
Str 12 (+3) **Dex** 10 (+2) **Wis** 12 (+3)
Con 17 (+5) **Int** 8 (+1) **Cha** 11 (+2)

Possessions *magic orb +1* (modifier already incorporated), robes

*Includes the +5 bonus to damage for the planar fissure acting as a Font of Power.



CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

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If the adventurers manage to slay Kuzgug and his allies, they still have a very big problem on their hands. The planar fissure in the arcane workshop opens on the Abyss, and not only does it rarely allow travel from that plane, it radiates energy that is both chaotic and evil. The effects of this energy on the surrounding area are impossible to predict, but leaving the fissure open inevitably invites another demon, or even an evil wizard to set up shop and become immensely powerful. PCs trained in the Arcana skill should ask themselves the following question: If a dretch can attain the magical clout that Kuzgug commanded, what could a vrock, or a hezrou, or, gods forbid, a balor do with the power of a planar fissure?

It should be obvious to the PCs that the planar fissure needs to be closed, and closed fast. The scroll and journal page hidden by Hadrajhast should indicate how dangerous the planar fissure can be, and how the PCs might close it. However, the PCs face two very large obstacles if they want to end the Abyssal menace in the area. First, planar fissure is a Level 20 ritual, far beyond the meager abilities of beginning adventurers. Second, closing the fissure requires some very unique and hard-to-come-by material components. The components listed in Numeshay's journal page would certainly work, but the PCs might be able to find other components that would fit the bill.

Needless to say, the PCs have their work cut out for them. They need to gather the unique components necessary to close the fissure, a daunting task that will certainly place them in mortal danger. In addition, they will need to find a powerful arcanist to cast the ritual for them. Can the adventurers trust another wizard with the power to control planar fissures? Can they trust themselves?

MAJOR QUEST: SEALING THE FISSURE

(Level 2, XP 625)

Simply defeating Kuzgug is not sufficient to remove the threat to the area. As long as the planar fissure remains open, it's only a matter of time before more creatures from the Abyss push their way through. In order to do this, the heroes must:

Find the hidden ritual scroll and journal page (area 2-7).

Gather the components listed on the scroll in order to perform the closing ritual.

Gain the cooperation of a spellcaster with the ability to perform the high-level ritual.

The party can try to seal off the area around the planar fissure as a stopgap measure until they find a permanent solution. They could try to physically block all exits from the arcane workshop or create a ritual to prevent any Abyssal creatures from leaving the area.



PLANAR FISSURE

A **planar fissure** is a small rift between dimensions, opened by means of the planar fissure ritual. A fissure is too small for any creature to pass through, however, it does allow a small amount of planar energy to leak into the Prime Material Plane. This energy, which is intensified by the ritual, can have a number of effects upon the surrounding area and creatures within it.

PLANAR FISSURE

You gutturally intone a series of ancient words as you toss the pungent contents of a bowl into the air. You hear an ethereal scream as a thin line of hot, reddish energy cuts across the very air like an invisible knife. The eerie, pulsating line remains fixed in the air, and disturbing sounds emerge from deep within this arcane wound.

Level: 20 **Component Cost:** 5,000 gp
Category: Travel **Market Price:** 50,000 gp
Time: 2 hours **Key Skill:** Arcana
Duration: Permanent; see text

Numeshay's ritual has several key differences from Planar Portal. First, it creates a dimensional "tear" that connects two planes of reality, with no need for an established portal on the other side. Second, the fissure is permanent; it can only be closed by another ritual casting of Planar Fissure.

Third, and most importantly, the fabric of space between the planes is not completely sundered. Creatures cannot travel freely between the two planes. The creation and casting of a summoning ritual is necessary to allow creatures to pass through at will. However, for each day that the fissure remains open, there is 2% chance that the fabric will be porous enough to allow creatures to push their way through the fissure. This window remains open for no more than 1 hour before the fabric of reality temporarily "repairs" the breach for the rest of that day.

When you first learn this ritual, you learn the sigil sequences of two common planar locations, as determined by the DM.

Certain planar locations may result, at the DM's discretion, in the planar fissure becoming a Font of Power.

A planar fissure could have other effects if left open indefinitely. As the planar energies saturate the area over along period, it is possible that local flora and fauna could develop abilities appropriate to the plane the planar fissure opens on.

Closing a planar fissure requires that the spell be cast again, and requires the use of another set of material components (see below).

Material Component: The material components necessary to open or close a planar fissure differ depending on the plane the fissure is keyed to. To open or close a planar fissure, two elements are required. A piece of the plane itself is the first requirement, which can be a bit of soil, water, or even the very air of the plane itself. The second requirement is a piece of a creature native to the plane. Again, that could be many things, from a demon's talon to an angel's feather.

Handout: Numeshay's Journal Page

Today, I successfully opened the first fissure, although, what foolishness possessed me to open a fissure to the Abyss, I may never understand. Once the fissure was opened, I performed a ritual to contact and call forth a vrock. Again, sheer foolishness. In hindsight, a dretch would have been a much wiser choice, but I wanted to test the limitations of the fissure, and I let curiosity override reason.

Vrocks are exceedingly dangerous creatures, but the ritual I used should have placed the fiend under my complete control. This complacency nearly cost me my life.

The vrock answered my summons and seemingly submitted to my control. I did nothing but order it to stand near the fissure, while I observed its reactions. It was a simple ritual I used to call forth the demon, and my hope was that the energies of the planar fissure would extend the duration of the ritual beyond even my calculations. At first, I was elated when that seemed to be case. However, my elation soon turned to horror when a second vrock appeared through the fissure.

There was no time to consider this bizarre event at the moment, as both of the damnablely canny demons sprang at me in a whirl of talons and feathers. Luckily, I had prepared a number of offensive spells this morning – or the vile fiends would have torn me to ribbons.

I thought I had finished the demons, but again, the day was full of surprises. As the fatally wounded vrocks breathed their last breath, a dozen dretches suddenly appeared in a burst of foul Abyssal air, nearly filling my laboratory with the hideous little beasts.

Well, needless to say, I spent most of the afternoon disposing of a horde of minor demons. My apprentices will be days cleaning up all that demon ichor in my laboratory. Because my earlier planar fissures acted exactly as I theorized, I prefer to believe that these multiple demonic appearances were the result of an unknown ability of the vrocks, rather than a flaw in my original ritual. Still, it is an intriguing, if somewhat alarming possibility, and one I will study in further detail. However, I will most certainly open the next fissure on a more hospitable plane, possibly Elysium, or perhaps the Seven heavens.

Although I doubt very much I will use this formula again, the components needed to open and close a planar fissure to the Abyss are as follows.

To open: 1 vrock feather and 1 gram of soil from an Abyssal plain.

To close: 1 ounce of hezrou bile and 1 pint of water from an Abyssal sea.

—Numeshay

CHILDREN OF THE SNAKE GOD

By Eric K. Rodriguez

INTRODUCTION

The Children of the Snake God is designed for five characters of 1st to 3rd level. While characters can be of any basic character class, parties without a strong fighter and a skilled cleric might find themselves particularly challenged. See the “Scaling Information” section for ways to tailor this adventure to your group’s unique style of play.

The Children of the Snake God is a complete, stand-alone adventure. While an abundance of lost treasure and magical items waits to be claimed by courageous and cunning heroes, the adventure’s greatest reward might very well be the map that leads to a larger set of ruins north of this setting.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

Many legends are told of the Lostlands and its many ancient and lost cities that are hidden by steamy, vine covered jungles and rolling deserts. Trekking through the formidable wasteland known as the Xa Deshret, the heroes happen upon the Lost Oasis of Septah-Bashu. The oasis is home to a lost temple of Cynhuara and her brother Axaluatl, cursed ages ago by their father Madrah. An evil priest belonging to the villainous race of serpent men known as the aphyss discovered the oasis two years ago, and has finally convinced its residents to serve him. He plans to use the heroes to break the seals on Cynhuara’s temple and plunder its wealth and artifacts for his own dark purposes.

GAME MASTER’S SECTION

ENCOUNTER TABLE

To help the GM prepare, we have included a quick reference table showing all encounters at a glance. The abbreviations used are: Loc- the location number keyed to the map for the encounter. Pg- the module page number that the encounter can be found on. Type- this indicates if the encounter is a trap (T),

puzzle (P), combat (C), or hazard (H). Encounter- the key monsters, traps or NPCs that can be found in the encounter. EL- the encounter level.

ENCOUNTER TABLE				
Loc	Pg	Type	Encounter	EL
1-A	23	C	<i>Beqai</i> , aphyss priest 3 aphyss temple guardians 4 aphyss acolytes	2
1-2	25	C	5 aphyss temple guardians	1
1-3	26	T	Crossbow trap	1
1-4	26	C	<i>Isbixa</i> , decrepit guardian naga	1
1-5	29	C	8 <i>harlots of Axaluatl</i>	3
1-7	30	T	Crossbow trap	1
1-8	30	T	Poison needle trap	1
1-9	31	C	2 deathrattle vipers 2 deathrattle broodswarms	2
1-10	32	T	Falling debris trap	1
1-11	33	C	<i>Quellatis</i> , aphyss venom-caster 3 zombies	2
1-12	34	T	Razor wire trap	1
1-14	34	C	3 skeletons 3 decrepit skeletons	1
1-15	35	C	<i>Beqai</i> , aphyss priest 5 aphyss temple guardians	4
1-16	37	C	Great serpent of Axaluatl	3
1-17	37	C	5 dune scorpions	1
1-18	38	T	Concealed pit trap	1

SCALING INFORMATION

The Children of the Snake God is designed for five characters of 1st to 3rd level, but it can be easily modified for parties of larger sizes or higher levels. The adventure will be a perilous one, and the strange desert conditions, as well as the creatures that inhabit the Temple of Septa-Bashu, can overtax the heroes and quickly wear down even an experienced group.

With this in mind, consider the following suggestions:

Weaker parties (4 or fewer characters): Replace two of the aphyss temple guardians in area 1-2 with 4 aphyss acolytes. Remove three of the harlots of Axaluatl from area 1-5. Remove one deathrattle viper from area 1-9. In area 1-11, make Quellatis a standard aphyss venomcaster (remove his elite status). Remove 2 aphyss temple guardians from area 1-15. Remove 1 level from the great serpent of Axaluatl in area 1-16.

Stronger parties (6 or more characters, or higher than 3rd level): This adventure should prove challenging for larger or more powerful parties; however, consider the following changes if your party is particularly strong or well equipped. Add two aphyss venomcasters to area 1-2. Add another deathrattle broodswarm to area 1-9. Replace the decrepit skeletons in area 1-14 with standard skeletons. Allow Beqai to summon the great serpent of Axaluatl into the combat in area 1-15.

2

GETTING THE PLAYERS INVOLVED

- One of the adventures is a cleric of the goddess Calchoti, the Rain Goddess. He believes that an ancient artifact of his goddess called *'The Urn of Sky'* was held in the Naga city of Tlalchiac many ages ago. An ancient scroll tells of the return of the urn and the bountiful weather to follow. With the return of his goddess' artifact, a new age of belief and worship will be brought about.
- A relative of one of the heroes is a prophet or seer who has dreamt of the ancient city in the jungle, and has prophesied that a great evil will arise if heroes of good will and intent do not stop it. The prophet has foretold that only by crushing the *'Altar of Scales'* will the catastrophe be averted and the world saved. The heroes take up the task to rid the world of this rising evil.
- A lord of the north has called the adventures to his castle in the hopes of finding a cure for his daughter's illness. Having fought many strange and terrible creatures his whole life, the list of his enemies is long. Recently an evil priest of the god Axaluatl cursed his daughter in retribution for some past slight. Local clerics are barely able to keep the lord's daughter alive, and only a specific potion mentioned in ancient tomes gives any hope of her recovery. The heroes are asked to sail south to the Lostlands and find the ancient ruins of Tlalchiac, where it is said the *elixir of restoration* was once made.

BACKGROUND STORY

Eons past, the god Madrah, angered at the betrayal of his son Axaluatl, destroyed most of his son's temples and sacred worshipping places. However, there was one place that he could not destroy for love of his daughter Cynhuara. The temple of Septah-Bashu was a temple dedicated to both Axaluatl and Cynhuara located at the southern tip of the continent of Lostlands. Madrah's anger at his son could not fully overcome the love he held for his daughter, so he cursed the temple instead of destroying it.

In one night of thunderous magical power, Madrah cursed the lands surrounding the temple of Septah-Bashu, transforming them into a barren and desolate desert filled with sand dunes and quicksand. He also loosed ravenous beasts to roam the desolate land. Madrah hoped that by surrounding the temple with inhospitable wastes, he would prevent anyone from finding it. So was born the oasis of Septah-Bashu.

For hundreds of years, the oasis of Septah-Bashu was inviolate; none knew of its existence, and only a mere two years ago were the sands of the oasis disturbed by the tread of human feet for the first time. An aphyss priest of Axaluatl, Beqai Neb Temu discovered the temple that had been forgotten for so long. Having the power of his god on his side, he entered the temple and made the occupants subject to his will. Several of Axaluatl's children, also aphyss, still survived within the temple dedicated to Axaluatl and waited for the return of their father. The arrival of Beqai gave them the belief that the return of Axaluatl was soon to follow. Only the presence of the aged naga Ishixa stalled Beqai, and forced him to alter his plans somewhat. Ishixa is near death, having spent hundreds of year's guarding Axaluatl's temple. He is weak and has little power left, but the Children of Axaluatl worship him as a father, and they will not turn on him no matter what. Beqai was forced to placate this creature and convince it through lies and trickery that he has come to raise Axaluatl to glory once again. Ishixa is no fool and watches Beqai closely.

Although a follower of Axaluatl, Beqai did not come with the intention of resurrecting his god. In fact, Beqai came to find the lost temple of Septah-Bashu because of the lost knowledge and artifacts he believed resided within the temple of Cynhuara. Realizing that he could not accomplish this robbery without the help of the Children of Axaluatl and the naga Ishixa, he came up with the story that he was sent to raise his god and needed lost lore within the



temple of Cynhuara to complete the resurrection. It wasn't until Beqai tried entering Cynhuara's temple that he realized his mistake. The temple of Cynhuara was warded with powerful dweomers that prevented anyone of evil intent from opening the doors to her temple. However, once opened, Beqai believes the magic will fade and permit entrance to anyone.

So Beqai has been plotting, lying and waiting for some unlucky and unwitting travelers to arrive at the oasis so that he can use them to open Cynhuara's temple.

Area 1-A – Player Beginning (EL 2, XP 624):

Start the adventure by reading the following:

The hot and steamy jungles of Lostlands greet you and your companions as you step off your ship and on to the shore. It is almost two weeks travel to the ruins marked on your map, but the prize will be well worth it. An ancient and forgotten city of the Nagas awaits you at the end of your journey, sure to be filled with treasure and

lost artifacts. Several days into your journey, you notice the weather becoming less humid, and the very moisture seems to dry up before your eyes.

The jungle slowly gives way to hot, dry winds and blowing sands. A dry, burning desert fills your vision and assaults you with blasts of blistering sand. As far as the eye can see, only desert sand dunes greet you. You forge on – you will see the lost city of Tlalchiac or die trying!

Several days' travel through the blistering desert sands wears quickly on you and your companions, and you all soon realize the true hazards of the desert wasteland. Dangerous animals roam about your campfire at night, taunting you with their howls and wails. Mysterious areas of sand seem to swallow whatever or whoever is unfortunate enough to step on them. Your water is slowly depleting, and there is no end in sight. Just as you reach the bottom of your water skins, and it seems the desert will swallow your bones, several tall palm trees appear in the distance. As you arrive at the oasis, a crystal-clear pool can be seen

surrounded by dozens of palm trees. A stone structure with a dark entrance flanked by two large statues is a mere 100 yards from the edge of the water. A band of nomads has set up camp at the edge of the oasis. Their sentries spot you from a distance and wave you in, their bows held down, but at the ready.

If the PCs approach, read or paraphrase the following:

As you approach the nomads, you spy several figures emerging from the dark entrance. They are led by a bald bearded priestly looking figure carrying a wooden staff carved into the likeness of a serpent and wearing several different types of gold jewelry.

The camp is occupied by a total of eight nomads. Their leader, the priestly looking fellow, welcomes the PCs and bids them to rest and recover at the oasis of Septah-Bashu. The priest explains that he and his followers are keepers of the oasis and are honor bound to provide food, drink, and rest to any who stumble across their sanctuary. Several large plates of food and drink are brought out to the heroes, who are encouraged to eat and drink as much as they like.

The priest and his followers are all wicked aphyss, their snake-like forms concealed by an illusion. Their intent is to lure the PCs into complacency, then drug them with poisoned wine and food. The food and wine are laced with silver lotus root, a dangerous sedative (+8 vs. Fortitude; target is dazed [save ends]). Alert PCs can pierce the aphyss' illusion with a successful Insight check opposed by the aphyss' Bluff check. If the PCs see the aphyss for what they truly are, read or paraphrase the following:

You momentarily see the figures for what they truly are: serpent-like humanoids that recoil and hiss.

Tactics: Once the illusion is detected, the aphyss flee into the dungeon, attempting to regroup with their comrades-in-arms. The temple guardians and the acolytes fight to defend the retreat of their master, only following once he is safe.

BEQAI, ELITE APHYSS

PRIEST

Medium natural
humanoid (reptile)

LEVEL 5 ELITE

CONTROLLER

(LEADER)

XP 400

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +9; low-light vision

HP 124; **Bloodied** 62

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

Resist 10 poison

Saving Throws +2

Speed 6

Action Points 1

⊕ **Serpent Rod** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

+8 vs. AC; 1d8+2 damage, and the target suffers a -2 penalty its Fortitude defense until the end of the aphyss priest's next turn.

⚔ **Serpent's Grasp** (standard; at will)

Ranged 10; +9 vs. Fortitude; 1d8+4 damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).

⚔ **Venomous Gaze** (minor 1/round; at-will) ♦ **Poison**

Ranged 5; +8 vs. Fortitude; 1d6+4 poison damage, and the target gains vulnerability 5 poison until the end of the Beqai's next turn.

☄ **Toxis Rain** (standard; recharge 6) ♦ **Poison**

Area burst 3 within 10; +8 vs. Fortitude; 3d6+4 poison damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).

Serpent's Veil (minor; at-will) ♦ **Illusion**

Beqai can disguise himself to appear as normal human. The disguise is always the same; however, a successful Insight check (opposed by the Beqai's Bluff check) pierces the disguise.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Draconic

Skills Arcana +11, Bluff +10, Intimidate +10,

Religion +11, Stealth +9

Str 15 (+4) **Dex** 15 (+4) **Wis** 14 (+5)

Con 14 (+3) **Int** 18 (+5) **Cha** 16 (+6)

Equipment robes, serpent rod, *amulet of protection* +1



APHYSS TEMPLE**LEVEL 1 SOLDIER****GUARDIANS (3)**

XP 100

Medium natural
humanoid (reptile)**Initiative** +3 **Senses** Perception +0; low-light vision**HP** 31; **Bloodied** 15**AC** 18; **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 13**Resist** 5 poison**Speed** 6⬇️ **Battleaxe** (standard; at-will) ⬆️ **Weapon**

+8 vs. AC; 1d10+3 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the aphyss guardian's next turn.

⚔️ **Dagger** (standard; at will) ⬆️ **Weapon**

Ranged 5/10; +6 vs. AC; 1d4+2 damage.

🐍 **Serpent Breath** (standard, encounter) ⬆️ **Poison**

Close blast 3; +4 vs. Fortitude; the 2d6+2 poison damage.

🕸️ **Serpent's Veil** (minor; at-will) ⬆️ **Illusion**

An aphyss temple guardian can disguise itself to appear as normal human. The disguise is always the same; however, a successful Insight check (opposed by the aphyss temple guardian's Bluff check) pierces the disguise.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Draconic**Skills** Athletics +8, Bluff +6, Intimidate +6**Str** 17 (+3) **Dex** 15 (+2) **Wis** 10 (+0)**Con** 15 (+2) **Int** 10 (+0) **Cha** 13 (+1)**Equipment** chainmail, heavy shield, battleaxe, 2 daggers**APHYSS ACOLYTE (4)****LEVEL 2 MINION**Medium natural
humanoid (reptile)

XP 31

Initiative +2 **Senses** Perception +1; low-light vision**HP** 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.**AC** 15; **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 13**Speed** 6⬇️ **Short Sword** (standard; at-will) ⬆️ **Weapon**

+6 vs. AC; 4 damage.

🕸️ **Serpent's Veil** (minor; at-will) ⬆️ **Illusion**

An aphyss acolyte can disguise itself to appear as normal human. The disguise is always the same; however, a successful Insight check (opposed by the aphyss acolyte's Bluff check) pierces the disguise.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Draconic**Skills** Bluff +7, Stealth +7**Str** 14 (+3) **Dex** 12 (+2) **Wis** 10 (+1)**Con** 12 (+2) **Int** 10 (+1) **Cha** 13 (+2)**Equipment** leather armor, short sword**LEVEL 1 ~
TEMPLE OF AXALUATL**

Unless otherwise stated, all passages are 10 feet high and all doors are made of wood bound with iron. Games Masters will note that there are several rooms and chambers that are not detailed. Games Masters are encouraged to use these chambers to add their own flavor to the adventure.

They should also note that there are three marked secret doors within this complex. All three secret doors are identical, needing only a particular stone pushed in to open them. The secret doors can be located with a DC 15 Perception check.

Ironbound Door: Break DC 20.**Area 1-1 – Entrance to Doom:**

Read or paraphrase the following:

Two large statues depicting the god Axaluatl and his sister Cynhuara flank the entrance to the temple. Although hot, dry winds blow against your back, a cool breeze moves across your face from the dark hallway in front of you. Torches set in sconces illuminate and cast shadows further down the passage.

The entrance to the temple of Septa-Bashu is worn but still in good condition, considering its age. The passageway slopes downward at a slight angle. Heroes who make a DC 15 Perception check notice that several drawings and writings are on the walls of the entrance. They have faded with time, but are still recognizable. The drawings and writings depict Madrah destroying temples of Axaluatl, but sparing one temple and cursing it to be surrounded by a lifeless desert. Two small statues, similar to the two larger statues outside, are placed in the corners of the entrance room.

Area 1-2 – Temple Guardian Quarters (EL 1, XP 500):

Read or paraphrase the following:

A large wooden door bound with iron bands stands before you. Two torches set in sconces shed light into this large chamber beyond and into the corridor where you stand. Inside the room several cots line the west and east walls surrounding two large, central fire pits. The two fire pits are lit, but are filled with low burning embers. The flickering light shows two partitioned off areas at the back of this chamber.

The adventures should be wary; there are five aphyss temple guardians in this room waiting to ambush them. One sits in the middle of the room, his back to the adventures as if he is warming his hands. Two of the temple guardians are hiding on opposite sides of the entry door, and the other two are waiting

at the other side of the room behind the partitioned shower area.

Tactics: When the heroes enter the room, compare their Passive perception against the Stealth checks of the temple guardians. If the PCs fail to spot the hiding aphyss, the temple guardians get a surprise round, and spring to attack the nearest PC with combat advantage. If the PCs do detect the aphyss, the temple guardians charge to the attack, leading off with *serpent breath*, and then switching to their battleaxes. The aphyss cannot be reasoned with, and do not retreat. They are fanatical and fight to the death.

Development: There are no boxes or chests with personal effects here; the aphyss do not believe in material possessions. However, a DC 15 Perception check reveals a loose stone on the northeast wall. Hidden behind the panel is a metal flask with a clear liquid inside, a *potion of healing*.

APHYSS TEMPLE GUARDIANS (5) Medium natural humanoid (reptile)	LEVEL 1 SOLDIER XP 100
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Initiative +3 **Senses** Perception +0; low-light vision
HP 31; **Bloodied** 15
AC 18; **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 13
Resist 5 poison
Speed 5

⊕ **Battleaxe** (standard; at-will) ◆ **Weapon**
+8 vs. AC; 1d10+3 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the aphyss guardian's next turn.

⊗ **Dagger** (standard; at will) ◆ **Weapon**
Ranged 5/10; +6 vs. AC; 1d4+2 damage.

↔ **Serpent Breath** (standard, encounter) ◆ **Poison**
Close blast 3; +4 vs. Fortitude; the 2d6+2 poison damage.

Serpent's Veil (minor; at-will) ◆ **Illusion**
An aphyss temple guardian can disguise itself to appear as normal human. The disguise is always the same; however, a successful Insight check (opposed by the aphyss temple guardian's Bluff check) pierces the disguise.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Draconic
Skills Athletics +8, Bluff +6, Intimidate +6
Str 17 (+3) **Dex** 15 (+2) **Wis** 10 (+0)
Con 15 (+2) **Int** 10 (+0) **Cha** 13 (+1)

Equipment chainmail, heavy shield, battleaxe, 2 daggers

Area 1-3 – Crossbow Trap (EL 1, XP 200):

Read or paraphrase the following:

The dark and musty corridor echoes with your footsteps, causing eerie sounds to echo down the hallway. You reach an intersection where a small, dark alcove can be seen toward the west. To the east is a large door made of brass etched with runes and ancient Lostlands writings. The hallway continues north.

Three cords are stretched across the corridor at knee-level. The cords have all been painted black, but a DC 20 Perception check notices a tripwire before triggering the trap. If any one of the three threads is tripped, a crossbow fires out of the darkened alcove. The trap can only be triggered once. The crossbow can be removed from the alcove and detached from the firing mechanism. There are three crossbow bolts sitting on the ledge next to the mechanism, each poisoned with deathrattle viper poison.

CROSSBOW TRAP Trap	LEVEL 5 BLASTER XP 200
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Perception

☒ DC 20: The character notices the tripwire that triggers the trap.

Initiative +5

Trigger

When a character moves across the tripwire, the trap rolls initiative.

Attack

Standard Action **Ranged** 15

Target: One target in range.

Attack: +10 vs. AC

Hit: 1d8+3 damage, and the trap makes a secondary attack on the same target. **Secondary Attack:** +6 vs. Fortitude; 1d8+2 poison damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).

Countermeasures

☒ An adjacent character can disable the tripwire with a DC 20 Thievery check.

☒ A DC 20 Dungeoneering check grants the party a +2 bonus to Thievery checks to delay or disable the trap.

Area 1-4 – Lair of Ishixa (EL 1, XP 500):

Read or paraphrase the following:

A large double door made of brass and etched with runes and ancient Lostlands writing stands before you. The smell of incense, heavy and herb-like, seeps from under the door. Listening at the door, you hear a soft voice chanting or singing in a strange tongue. The door is unlocked and easily opens as you push on it, illuminating the hallway you're standing in with a faint, greenish light.



This is the chamber of Ishixa, a male guardian naga several hundred years old. Ishixa ails under a curse that has removed his immortality, and he has not aged well in the hot, dry heat. Ishixa has prolonged his life with spells and special potions, however they have become less and less effective, and the end of his days is fast approaching. Ishixa is a creature of evil and will not surrender or help the heroes in any way. However he hates Beqai even more, and realizes that when he is gone, Beqai will not try to raise Axaluatl.

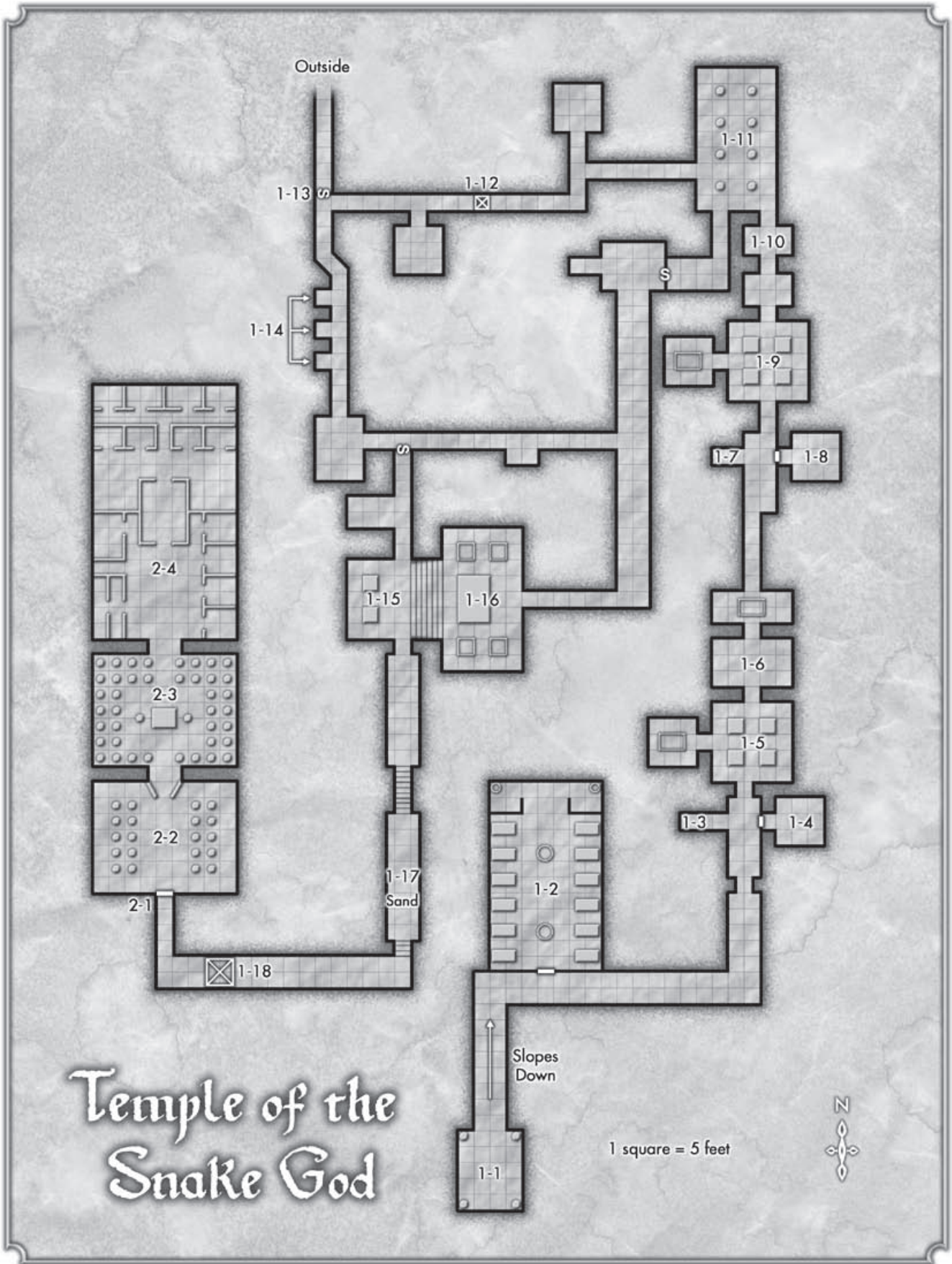
Ishixa will delay the adventures by using lies and guile to appeal to their sensibilities. He tries to convince them he is a prisoner, and when that doesn't work, he plays up the fact that he is old and senile. If none of his other tactics work, Ishixa eventually attacks the group, fighting with as much vigor as he can muster.

Tactics: When combat begins Ishixa uses *word of pain* on the most potent fighter in range, attempting to immobilize a dangerous melee combatant and keep him or her out of the fray. He then spends his action point to use *thunder strike*, and attempts to

catch as many PCs in the blast as possible. As battle continues, Ishixa spews poison and uses *word of pain* to keep PCs from closing to melee range. If forced into melee, he slaps with his tail and attempts to drive his opponent back.

Development: When Ishixa is defeated, he attempts to relate a small piece of information to the PCs, and strike at his hated enemy Beqai. With his dying breath, Ishixa will hiss out the words: "*Beqai needs you... temple to open.*" He will then collapse and expire. The PCs may not understand what this means now, but it may become clear as the adventure progresses.

Treasure: Hidden under Ishixa's nest of pillows, clothing, and refuse is a small iron chest locked with a simple key lock. The key is around Ishixa's neck, requiring a DC 10 Perception check to notice. If the PCs do not find the key, the lock on the chest can be picked with a DC 15 Thievery check. The chest contains the following items: 65 gp, 121 sp, a silver *amulet of protection +1*, a gold necklace with three emeralds (250 gp), a *+1 magic dagger*, and two *potions of healing*.



ISHIXA, DECREPIT**GUARDIAN NAGA**

Large immortal
magical beast (reptile)

LEVEL 6 ELITE**ARTILLERY**

XP 500

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +10; darkvision

HP 110; **Bloodied** 55

AC 20; **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 18

Saving Throws +2

Speed 6

Action Points 1

Ⓣ **Tail Slap** (standard; at-will)

Reach 2; +10 vs. AC; 1d8+1 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square.

✂ **Word or Pain** (standard; at will) ◆ **Psychic**

Ranged 20; +11 vs. Will; 1d10+4 psychic damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).

↔ **Spit Poison** (standard, recharge 5,6) ◆ **Poison**

Close blast 3; +9 vs. Fortitude; 1d8+2 poison damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).

⚡ **Thunder Strike** (standard, recharge 5,6) ◆ **Thunder**

Area burst 1 within 20; +9 vs. Fortitude; 1d10+4 thunder damage, and the target is dazed.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Draconic
Supernal

Skills Arcana +11, History +11, Insight +9

Str 13 (+4) **Dex** 18 (+7) **Wis** 14 (+5)

Con 12 (+4) **Int** 18 (+7) **Cha** 12 (+4)

Area 1-5 – Harlots of Axaluatl (EL 3, XP 800):

Read or paraphrase the following:

The hallway opens into a large chamber with four rough stone pedestals with various pieces of torn clothing and furs piled on top. The room is dark; the only light comes from a large fire pit in an alcove in the western part of the room. The air is stale and humid; a steady stream of dripping water can be seen dropping onto the fire pit making a 'hissing' sound.

This is the chamber of the Harlots of Axaluatl. There are eight female aphyss hidden about the chamber. They are the ones that were with Beqai at the start of the adventure. They are not warriors, but each is armed with a curved dagger. Once the heroes enter the chamber, the harlots attack. They leap from their hiding spots and attack with fanatical abandon. They cannot be reasoned with, and do not surrender. They have no treasure, and their only possessions are a sheer white robe and their daggers.

Tactics: The harlots are hiding in the shadows that fill the room. The PCs should be expecting trou-

ble at this point, so give them a standard Perception check opposed against the harlot's Stealth check of 18. If the PCs do not spot the harlots immediately, the female aphyss use *blinding spittle* in the surprise round, and attempt to blind as many PCs as possible. Then, once combat begins, the harlots attack in pairs, two harlots to a PC, and attempt to flank. If one PC seems particularly dangerous, the harlots use *transfixing gaze* to keep that PC out of the fray. The harlots of Axaluatl fight to the death.

HARLOTS OF**AXALUATL (8)**

Medium natural
humanoid (reptile)

LEVEL 1 CONTROLLER

XP 100

Initiative +3 **Senses** Perception +5; low-light vision

HP 30; **Bloodied** 15

AC 15; **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 14

Resist 5 poison

Speed 6

Ⓣ **Dagger** (standard; at-will) ◆ **Weapon**

+5 vs. AC; 1d4+3 damage, or 1d4+8 against a blinded foe.

✂ **Transfixing Gaze** (minor 1/encounter; at-will)

◆ **Charm, Gaze**

Ranged 5; +6 vs. Will; the target is immobilized (save ends).

✂ **Blinding Spittle** (standard, encounter) ◆ **Poison**

Ranged 10; +6 vs. Reflex; 1d6+2 poison damage, and the target is blinded until the end of the harlot of Axaluatl's next turn.

Serpent's Veil (minor; at-will) ◆ **Illusion**

A harlot of Axaluatl can disguise itself to appear as normal human. The disguise is always the same; however, a successful Insight check (opposed by the harlot of Axaluatl's Bluff check) pierces the disguise.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Draconic

Skills Bluff +7, Intimidate +7, Stealth +8

Str 14 (+2) **Dex** 17 (+3) **Wis** 10 (+0)

Con 14 (+2) **Int** 12 (+1) **Cha** 15 (+2)

Equipment robes, dagger

Area 1-6 – Birthing Chamber:

Read or paraphrase the following:

On the other side of the last chamber is a short hallway gap followed by another chamber. This chamber is even more humid and wet than the last. Scattered about the floor are piles of moist mud mixed with palm fronds and other plants. On top of the scattered piles are large, light-green oval shapes. The shapes seem to be egg-like, and there are several scattered about the room. Another large fire pit

can be seen on the other side of this chamber, providing a large amount of hot steam that slowly rolls into this chamber.

This chamber was specifically designed to birth the Children of Axaluatl. Although it isn't large, it contains the next generation of serpent-men. A dozen eggs are scattered about the chamber, soaking in the moist, hot air. These eggs will not be ready to hatch for at least another six months. Even if the heroes decide to destroy these eggs, none of the brood will be able to defend themselves. Any adventurer of good alignment should have difficulty with such a course of action, as slaying defenseless infants is hardly honorable or even necessary.

Area 1-7 – Crossbow Trap (EL 1, XP 200):

Read or paraphrase the following:

The dark corridor is clear of any items or drawings on the walls as you move down the hallway. You reach an intersection where a small, dark alcove can be seen toward the west. To the east is a large door, made of teak and bound with bands of iron. Strange writings are painted on the door in a dark red color. The hallway continues north.

Three cords are stretched across the corridor at knee-level. If any one of the three threads is tripped, a crossbow fires out of the darkened alcove. The trap can only be triggered once. The crossbow can be removed from the alcove and detached from the firing mechanism. There are four crossbow bolts sitting on the ledge next to the mechanism, each poisoned with deathrattle viper venom.



CROSSBOW TRAP

LEVEL 5 BLASTER

Trap

XP 200

Perception

- DC 20: The character notices the tripwire that triggers the trap.

Initiative +5

Trigger

When a character moves across the tripwire, the trap rolls initiative.

Attack

Standard Action Ranged 15

Target: One target in range.

Attack: +10 vs. AC

Hit: 1d8+3 damage, and the trap makes a secondary attack on the same target. **Secondary Attack:** +6 vs. Fortitude; 1d8+2 poison damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).

Countermeasures

- An adjacent character can disable the tripwire with a DC 20 Thievery check.
- A DC 20 Dungeoneering check grants the party a +2 bonus to Thievery checks to delay or disable the trap.

Area 1-8 – Beqai's Chamber (EL 1, XP 200):

Read or paraphrase the following:

A large door made of teak wood and bound with iron bands stands before you. Strange runes are crudely painted on the outside of the door in a dark red color. The door is ajar and faint green light can be seen coming from inside the room.

Once the heroes enter the room, they immediately see a strange green light emanating from three candles set at various places around the room. The candles are made with special chemicals and agents that give the candles three times the normal burn time. They are not magical, but are very useful and might be worth something to the right person.

The room is small but filled to capacity with stacks of books, shelves with various bottles and sorcerous paraphernalia, and miscellaneous debris scattered about the floor. This is the chamber of Beqai. Characters making a DC 15 Perception check find several minor but useful items scattered about the chamber. Spellcasters will find 1d6 random components for rituals (GM's choice), as well as such items as papyrus, ink, quills, etc.

Beqai passed through this room quickly after leaving the heroes at the entrance to the temple. He only had enough time to pick up his journal, which records the last two years of his time studying the temple of Septa-Bashu and the sealed temple of Cyn-

huara. He felt that nothing else was of immediate importance. However, what he failed to realize was that his chest still contained several ancient, un-deciphered papyrus scrolls. One of the scrolls has an ancient folklore tale with two rituals written at the end of it: *Secret Page* and *Enchant Magic Item*. The chest is made of teak wood with brass fittings. It is not locked, but is trapped with a poison needle.

POISON NEEDLE TRAP **LEVEL 5 BLASTER**
Trap XP 200

Perception

☒ DC 22: The character notices the needle and poison housing in the lock.

Trigger

A character attempt to pick the lock or open the door without disarming the trap.

Attack

Immediate Reaction **Melee**

Target: The creature opening the door or picking the lock.

Attack: +10 vs. AC

Hit: 1d8+2 damage, and the trap makes a secondary attack against the target. Secondary Attack: +8 vs. Fortitude; 5 ongoing poison damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends both).

Countermeasures

- ☒ An adjacent character can disable the trap with a DC 25 Thievery check.
- ☒ A DC 20 Dungeoneering check grants the party a +2 bonus to Thievery checks to delay or disable the trap.

Area 1-9 – Children of Axaluatl (EL 2, XP 650):

Read or paraphrase the following:

The hallway opens into a large chamber with four rough stone pedestals with various pieces of torn clothing and furs piled on top. The room is dark, the only light coming from a large fire pit in an alcove in the western part of the room. The air is stale and humid, and the disconcerting sound of hissing and scales moving across stone echoes through the chamber.

Serpents are often considered to be the “children” of Axaluatl, and as such they are sacred to the deity. This room is home to a mated pair of deathrattle vipers and their recently spawned brood. The vipers rests in the northwest and northeast corners of the room, while their brood of hundreds of slithering snakelings moves about on the floor of the room in a writhing carpet.

Tactics: The deathrattle vipers and their broodswarms are not hiding, and PCs should have no difficulty spotting them. The serpents will not attack other reptilian creatures, although they sense the

warm flesh of mammals and slither hungrily to the attack. The broodswarms surround the PCs when the heroes enter the room, biting frantically, while the deathrattle vipers attack from either side of the room. The snakes fight to the death.

Treasure: Once all the serpents have been dispatched, the PCs can search the room. A DC 15 Perception check uncovers the revolting, regurgitated remains of a desert nomad unlucky enough to have encountered the temple and its inhabitants. PCs brave enough to search through his remains, however, will be well rewarded. Within the tangle mess of bones and hair there is a pair of *gauntlets of ogre power*.

DEATHRATTLE VIPERS (2) **LEVEL 5 BRUTE**
Medium natural XP 200
beast (reptile)

Initiative +6 **Senses** Perception +7; low-light vision

Death Rattle (Fear) aura 2; enemies in the aura take a –2 penalty to attack rolls.

HP 75; **Bloodied** 37

AC 17; **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 16

Resist 10 poison

Speed 4, climb 4

⬇ **Bite** (standard; at-will) ⬆ **Poison**

+8 vs. AC; 1d6+4 damage, and the deathrattle viper makes a secondary attack against the same target. Secondary Attack: +6 vs. Fortitude; 1d8+2 poison damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –

Skills Stealth +10

Str 12 (+3) **Dex** 19 (+6) **Wis** 10 (+2)

Con 15 (+4) **Int** 2 (-2) **Cha** 14 (+4)





DEATHRATTLE **LEVEL 2 SKIRMISHER**

BROODSWARMS (2) XP 125

Medium natural beast
(reptile, swarm)

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +7; low-light vision
Swarm Attack aura 1; the deathrattle brood-swarm makes a basic attack as a free action against each enemy that begins its square in the aura.

HP 36; **Bloodied** 18

AC 16; **Fortitude** 12, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 12

Resist half damage from melee and ranged attacks;

Vulnerable 5 against close and area attacks

Speed 4, climb 4

Ⓢ **Plague of Fangs** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Poison**

+7 vs. AC; 1d4+4 damage, and the rock viper swarm makes a secondary attack against the same target.

Secondary Attack: +5 vs. Fortitude; 1d6+1 poison damage, and ongoing 2 poison damage (save ends).

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –

Skills Stealth +10

Str 11 (+1) **Dex** 18 (+5) **Wis** 12 (+2)

Con 12 (+2) **Int** 2 (-4) **Cha** 10 (+1)

Area 1-10 – Falling Debris Trap (EL 1, XP 400):

Read or paraphrase the following:

This chamber is empty except for several odd-shaped pieces of masonry and concrete. The ground is covered with a thin lair of white powder and several crushed bones can be seen near the center of the room. The passageway continues north.

A section of the ceiling is designed to fall the moment more than 50 pounds is placed on a certain tile. However, this trap has lain unused for so long that there is a 10% chance that it fails, and does not fall when triggered.

Treasure: Lying amongst the bones and crushed pieces of masonry is a forgotten treasure. A small silver amulet with snake symbols etched into it is wedged into a crack in the floor underneath a shard of rock (Perception, DC 15). The amulet is a *holy symbol of life* +1.

FALLING DEBRIS TRAP**LEVEL 5 BLASTER**

Trap

XP 400

Perception

- ☒ DC 22: The character notices the pressure plate on the floor.
- ☒ DC 22: The character notices that some of the stones on the ceiling appear loose.

Trigger

When a creature enters or begins its turn in a trapped square, the trap attacks.

Attack

Standard Action **Close** burst 1

Target: All creatures in burst.

Attack: +10 vs. Reflex

Hit: 3d8+3 damage, and the target is knocked prone and immobilized (save ends).

Miss: Half damage.

Effect: The burst area becomes difficult terrain.

Countermeasures

- ☒ An adjacent character can trigger the trap with a DC 15 Thievery check (standard action).
- ☒ An adjacent character can disable the trap with a DC 27 Thievery check.
- ☒ A DC 20 Dungeoneering check grants the party a +2 bonus to Thievery checks to delay or disable the trap.

Area 1-11 –Physician of Axaluatl (EL 2, XP 675):

Read or paraphrase the following:

Entering this chamber, the heroes are immediately assaulted by the smell of preservative herbs and the rot of death. Down the center of this large chamber are eight pillars that reach from the floor to the ceiling. Hanging about the pillars are the corpses of dozens of creatures. It is immediately apparent that several of these corpses are missing limbs and seem to have limbs not their own. At the far end of the chamber are several wooden tables and shelves covered in sorcerous paraphernalia. Glass bottles of different sizes and colors line the shelves, each with a different and unique specimen. A figure with its back turned toward you ‘hisses’ in excitement and states in broken common: “Ahh...new bodies for me.”

This is Quellatis, the last Physician of Axaluatl. He has been experimenting for over 50 years with various bodies, both living and dead, in an attempt to create a stronger, smarter Child of Axaluatl. Through various experimentations with both mundane and magical processes, Quellatis is close to creating a potion that will greatly increase his people’s skills. However, the only things he has managed to create so far are zombies, and a number of his “creations” lurk in this room.

Tactics: Quellatis orders his zombies to attack the PCs while he hangs back and uses *venom bolt* and toxic whispers to support his undead. He tries to target spellcasters and PCs with ranged attacks with *toxic whispers* before they can target him with a spell or missile fire. Quellatis saves poison cloud to cover his retreat if the PCs manage to dispatch his zombies quickly.

Development: Quellatis’ knowledge of the temple is second only to Beqai’s, and he knows about the traps in area 1-12 and 1-14. If he is captured, the PCs can get this information through an interrogation, and by succeeding on four DC 15 Intimidate checks before two failures. If Quellatis escapes, he flees to area 1-15 to join Beqai and his guards.

Treasure: Sitting underneath one of his laboratory tables is a small coffer with a key lock (Thievery, DC 15). Inside the coffer is a black velvet bag containing three onyx stones (25 gp each); 23 ancient gold pieces; one necklace made of bloodstone (50 gp); two vials of clear liquid (*potions of healing*); and a set of *bracers of the perfect shot* (lvl 3).

ZOMBIES (3)**LEVEL 2 BRUTE**

Medium natural
animate (undead)

XP 125

Initiative +1 **Senses** Perception +0; darkvision

HP 40; **Bloodied** 20

AC 13; **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 9, **Will** 10

Immune disease, **poison**; **Resist** 10 necrotic;

Vulnerable 5 radiant

Speed 4

⊕ **Slam** (standard; at-will)

+6 vs. AC; 2d6+2 damage.

‡ **Zombie Grab** (standard; at-will)

+4 vs. Reflex; the target is grabbed (until escape).

Checks made to escape the zombie’s grab take a –5 penalty.

Zombie Weakness

Any critical hit on a zombie instantly reduces it to 0 hit points.

Alignment Unaligned

Languages –

Str 14 (+3)

Dex 6 (-1)

Wis 8 (+0)

Con 10 (+1)

Int 1 (-4)

Cha 3 (-3)

QUELLATIS, ELITE
APHYSS VENOMCASTER

LEVEL 3 ELITE
ARTILLERY

Medium natural
humanoid (reptile)

XP 300

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +7; low-light vision

HP 73; **Bloodied** 38

AC 17; **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 18

Resist 5 poison

Saving Throws +2

Speed 6

Action Points 1

Ⓣ **Dagger** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

+7 vs. AC; 1d4+3 damage.

Ⓣ **Venom Bolt** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Poison**

Ranged 10; +8 vs. Reflex; 1d10+3 poison damage.

Ⓣ **Toxic Whisper** (standard, at-will) ♦ **Psychic**

Ranged 10; +8 vs. Will; 1d8+3 psychic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).

Ⓣ **Poison Cloud** (standard, recharge 5,6) ♦ **Poison, Zone**

Close blast 3; +6 vs. Fortitude; this power creates a zone of poisonous vapor that remains in place until the end of the aphyss venomcaster's next turn. The zone blocks line of sight for all creatures. Any creature that enters or starts its turn in the area takes 5 poison damage.

Serpent's Veil (minor; at-will) ♦ **Illusion**

Quellatis can disguise himself to appear as normal human. The disguise is always the same; however, a successful Insight check (opposed by the Quellatis' Bluff check) pierces the disguise.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Draconic

Skills Arcana +8, Bluff +9, Intimidate +9, Stealth +9

Str 13 (+2) **Dex** 17 (+4) **Wis** 12 (+2)

Con 14 (+3) **Int** 15 (+3) **Cha** 16 (+4)

Equipment robes, dagger

Area 1-12 – Razor Wire Trap (EL 1, XP 400):

Read or paraphrase the following:

As you walk down this part of the temple, it seems very old and un-traveled. Cobwebs, dust, and debris litter the passageways. You notice that without a sufficient light source, the hallways are black as night. Faint murals and writings can be seen on the walls.

This part of the temple complex is very old and unused. Most of the temples occupants never set foot here, avoiding it due to ancient superstitions or rumors. The hallway is mostly clear except for one trap that has lain undisturbed for many years. A razor wire trap has been stretched across the passageway

for over five years without being disturbed. The wire is of masterwork quality, and still holds its edge and poses a danger to unwary adventures.

RAZOR WIRE TRAP

Trap

LEVEL 5 ELITE

OBSTACLE

XP 400

Perception

☑ DC 27: The character notices that wire stretched across the passageway.

Trigger

When a creature enters a trapped square the trap attacks.

Attack

Opportunity Action **Melee**

Target: All creatures in trapped squares.

Attack: +10 vs. AC

Hit: 3d6+3 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).

Miss: Half damage.

Countermeasures

- ☑ An adjacent character can attack the razor wire (AC 5, Reflex 5, Fortitude 10; HP 20).
- ☑ An adjacent character can disable the trap with a DC 25 Thievery check.
- ☑ A character can jump over the razor wire with a DC 10 Athletics check (DC 20 without a running start).

Area 1-13 –Secret Exit

Read or paraphrase the following:

When you reach the end of the hallway it immediately turns in a southerly direction. As you turn, you notice a steady stream of sand coming from the corner where the two walls meet. It piles up on the ground and begins to dissipate across the tunnel floor, as if a light wind is blowing it.

A DC 20 Perception check reveals a secret door that is opened by depressing a stud on the wall. The stud is part of an ancient painting that is peeling and fading with time. If the heroes manage to open secret door, they find a narrow tunnel that leads to the surface. It will open up through an old, abandoned well that is about 200 yards from the oasis. The well has worn handholds on the inside, and a DC 10 Athletics check allows the PCs to ascend without difficulty.

Area 1-14 –Skeleton Trap (EL 1, XP 525):

Read or paraphrase the following:

As you move down this tunnel, several large cobwebs cross your path. As you burn or pull them from your path, you discover three alcoves set into the west side of the passageway. Each alcove contains two human skeletons holding ancient spears and shields. As you pass the first

alcove, a strange wind blows down the tunnel and the ‘clacking’ of old bones can be heard.

These unfortunate souls were slain over two hundred years ago by one of the last of the high priests of Axaluatl. He captured these human men, and after having them killed, raised them to be undead guardians. The magic that binds them still holds strong, and forces them to attack all living creatures that pass their alcoves. Their bones are not brittle or worn with age due to the magic that binds them.

Tactics: There is a skeleton and a decrepit skeleton in each alcove. The skeleton is armed with spear and shield, while the decrepit skeleton is armed with a longsword and a shortbow. When the PCs pass the first alcove, the skeletons animate and attack. The skeletons move forward to engage PCs in melee, while the decrepit skeletons fire their shortbows into the fray. The undead fight to their destruction.

Treasure: One of the skeleton warriors’ shields bears the likeness of a striking serpent, and has a spiked central boss. This shield, obviously superior to the other skeletons’ shields, is a *shield of bashing* (5th level). The skeleton that carries this shield, however, is unable to activate its power.

DECREPIT SKELETONS (3) **LEVEL 1 MINION**
Medium natural animate XP 25
(undead)

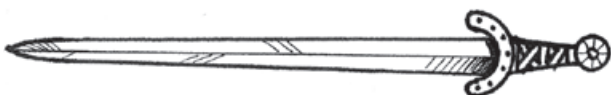
Initiative +3 **Senses** Perception +2; darkvision
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion
AC 16; **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 13
Immune disease, poison
Speed 6

⊕ **Longsword** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
+6 vs. AC; 4 damage.

⊗ **Shortbow** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
Ranged 15/30; +6 vs. AC; 3 damage.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –
Str 15 (+2) **Dex** 17 (+3) **Wis** 14 (+2)
Con 13 (+1) **Int** 3 (-4) **Cha** 3 (-4)

Equipment longsword, shortbow, quiver with 20 arrows



SKELETONS (3)

LEVEL 3 SOLDIER

Medium natural animate
(undead)

XP 150

Initiative +6 **Senses** Perception +3; darkvision
HP 45; **Bloodied** 22
AC 18; **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 15
Immune disease, poison
Resist 10 necrotic
Vulnerable 5 radiant
Speed 6

⊕ **Spear** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

+10 vs. AC; 1d8+2 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the skeleton’s next turn; see also *speed of the dead*.

Speed of the Dead

When making an opportunity attack, a skeleton gains a +2 bonus to the attack roll and deals an extra 1d6 damage.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –
Str 15 (+3) **Dex** 17 (+4) **Wis** 14 (+3)
Con 13 (+2) **Int** 3 (-3) **Cha** 3 (-3)

Equipment heavy shield, spear

Area 1-15 – Priest of Axaluatl (EL 4, XP 900):

Read or paraphrase the following:

Entering this well lit chamber, you see two large black stone altars on one side of the room, a set of stairs on the other, and the hallway continuing further on. Standing in the middle of the chamber is the shaven-headed priest that tried to poison you and your companions earlier. He has dispensed with the illusion that cloaked his features earlier, and you see his horrible, snake-like true form. Five serpent-man warriors armed with battleaxes stand in front of the priest, weapons at the ready.

This is Beqai Neb Temu, priest of Axaluatl. He is prepared for the arrival of the adventurers, and offers to parley with them if they don’t immediately attack. If the PCs agree to speak with the serpent man, he says the following:

“Great treasure lies within the temple of Cynhuara, but I and my brothers are unworthy, and cannot enter that sacred place. If you retrieve this treasure for us, we will gladly share with you.”

Have the Beqai roll a Bluff check opposed by the Insight check of the PC with the highest skill modifier. If the PC succeeds on the check, they know that some of what Beqai says is true.

If the PCs ask why Beqai cannot enter the tomb of Cynhuara, he says the following:

This place is sacred to two gods, the mighty Axaluatl, and his sister Cynhuara. We serve one, but not the other.”



This is technically true, although it is more than a matter of allegiance that keeps the serpent men from their goal. Another Insight check opposed by Beqai's Bluff check reveals that he is, again, only telling part of the truth.

If the PCs ask why Beqai attempted to poison them, he says the following:

"We were unsure of your motives, and merely wished to keep you from attacking us. The drug was harmless, and would have only made you sleep. You are no doubt capable and ruthless warriors to have made it so far into this temple, no?"

This is another half-truth, as Beqai's intentions have never been anything but vile and self-serving. Another Insight check opposed by Beqai's Bluff check reveals this.

At this point the PCs should either realize that Beqai is attempting to manipulate them, or, if they failed the Insight checks necessary to pierce the priest's lies, they may be willing to enter into a temporary alliance. If the PCs rightly deduce that Beqai is up to no good, and refuse his offer of alliance, he and his guards attack.

Tactics: When combat begins, the temple guardians rush forward and use serpent breath immediately. Beqai uses serpent's grasp to keep powerful melee-oriented PCs from advancing, and venomous gaze to make one PC more susceptible to toxic rain. Beqai continues to support the temple guardians with his ranged powers, and only enters melee if the PCs are clearly getting the worst of it.

If the PCs are obviously getting the upper hand, Beqai flees into area 1-16, hoping the PCs will follow and be forced to deal with the great serpent of Axalutl. If the PCs are defeated, Beqai spares the life of at least one of them, likely a PC that is of obvious good alignment (paladin, cleric, etc.). He still needs a person of good alignment to open Cynhuara's temple.

Development: Beqai hopes to lead or trick the PCs into going down the southern passage, and opening the door to Cynhuara's temple. If the PCs agree to do this, Beqai attacks them as soon as the temple is opened, summoning the great serpent in area 1-16 to aid him.

Treasure: This room is barren except for several lit braziers hanging from the ceiling by chains and the two black basalt altars with red striations running throughout them. The altars are made from a rare type of marble that is worth 500 gp per pound if sold to the right person.

**BEQAI,
ELITE APHYSS PRIEST**

**LEVEL 5 ELITE
CONTROLLER**

Medium natural
humanoid (reptile)

(LEADER)

XP 400

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +9; low-light vision

HP 124; **Bloodied** 62

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

Resist 10 poison

Saving Throws +2

Speed 6

Action Points 1

⊕ **Serpent Red** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

+8 vs. AC; 1d8+2 damage, and the target suffers a -2 penalty its Fortitude defense until the end of the aphyss priest's next turn.

⌘ **Serpent's grasp** (standard; at-will)

Ranged 10; +9 vs. Fortitude; 1d8+4 damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).

⌘ **Venomous Gaze** (minor 1/round; at-will) ♦ **Poison**

Area burst 3 within 10; +8 vs. Fortitude; 3d6+4 poison damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).

Serpent's Veil (minor; at-will) ♦ **Illusion**

Beqai can disguise himself to appear as normal human. The disguise is always the same; however, a successful Insight check (opposed by the Beqai's Bluff check) pierces the disguise.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Draconic

Skills Arcana +11, Bluff +10, Intimidate +10, Religion +11, Stealth +9

Str 15 (+4) **Dex** 15 (+4) **Wis** 14 (+5)

Con 14 (+3) **Int** 18 (+5) **Cha** 16 (+6)

Equipment robes, serpent rod, *amulet of protection* +1



APHYSS TEMPLE**LEVEL 1 SOLDIER****GUARDIANS (5)**

XP 100

Medium natural humanoid (reptile)

Initiative +3 **Senses** Perception +0; low-light vision**HP** 31; **Bloodied** 15**AC** 18; **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 13**Resist** 5 poison**Speed** 6⊕ **Battleaxe** (standard; at-will) ◆ **Weapon**

+8 vs. AC; 1d10+3 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the aphyss guardian's next turn.

⊗ **Dagger** (standard; at-will) ◆ **Weapon**

Ranged 5/10; +6 vs. AC; 1d4+2 damage.

↔ **Serpent Breath** (standard; encounter) ◆ **Poison**

Close blast 3; +4 vs. Fortitude; the 2d6+2 poison damage.

Serpent's Veil (minor; at-will) ◆ **Illusion**

An aphyss temple guardian can disguise itself to appear as normal human. The disguise is always the same; however, a successful Insight check (opposed by the aphyss temple guardian's Bluff check) pierces the disguise.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Draconic**Skills** Athletics +8, Bluff +6, Intimidate +6**Str** 17 (+3) **Dex** 15 (+2) **Wis** 10 (+0)**Con** 15 (+2) **Int** 10 (+0) **Cha** 13 (+1)**Equipment** chainmail, heavy shield, battleaxe, 2 daggers**Area 1-16 – Altar of Axaluatl (EL 3, XP 750):**

Read or paraphrase the following:

Entering this large chamber you see a large altar dominating the center of the room. On top of the green marble altar is a statue of a serpent man that can only be the god Axaluatl. His malevolence and hatred can be seen in the features of the statue. Carved about the statue's feet are several giant serpents, their coils wrapped about Axaluatl's legs, the gleam of gold shining from their coils. Four large steam pits are placed about the room in each corner. A steady stream of hot, moist air wafts up from them.

This chamber is dark, oppressive, and radiates evil. The altar of Axaluatl is obviously crafted by a master and is centuries old. Destroying this altar immediately earns the heroes the undying hatred of Axaluatl and his minions, but at the same time grants them the eternal favor of Madrah. Adventures that approach the altar see several coins glittering on top. The first hero to take a coin from the altar is at-

tacked by the great serpent of Axaluatl hiding among the serpent statues.

Tactics: The great serpent of Axaluatl is hiding among the golden serpents at the feet of the statue of Axaluatl. Give the PCs a Perception check opposed by the serpent's Stealth check to detect it. The serpent's tactics are the same whether it surprises the PCs or not. It bites a PC, and then attempts to crush the life from him or her in its mighty coils. The great serpent repeats this tactic until either it, or all the PCs, are dead.

Treasure: Scattered about the altar are 100 gold coins minted with the symbol of Axaluatl on their faces. The coins could be worth as much as 10 gold apiece to the right collector; however, followers of Axaluatl will instantly recognize these coins, and attack anyone carrying them.

GREAT SERPENT OF AXALUATL**LEVEL 3 SOLO BRUTE**

XP 750

Large natural beast (reptile)

Initiative +3 **Senses** Perception +7; low-light vision**HP** 192; **Bloodied** 96**AC** 17; **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 13**Resist** 10 poison**Saving Throws** +5**Speed** 6, climb 4**Action Points** 2⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will) ◆ **Weapon**

+6 vs. AC; 1d8+4 damage, the target is grabbed (until escape), and the great serpent of Axaluatl makes a secondary attack on the same target.

Secondary Attack: +4 vs. Fortitude; ongoing 1d6+3 poison damage, and the target is weakened (save ends both).‡ **Coils of Death** (standard; at-will)

Affects a target the great serpent of Axaluatl has grabbed; +4 vs. Fortitude; 2d6+4 damage, and the target is stunned (save ends).

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –**Skills** Athletics +9, Stealth +7**Str** 18 (+5) **Dex** 15 (+3) **Wis** 12 (+2)**Con** 16 (+4) **Int** 2 (-3) **Cha** 10 (+1)**Area 1-17 – Monstrous Scorpions (EL 1, XP 500):**

Read or paraphrase the following:

The stairs leading down to this chamber are covered in sand, and you soon see why when you reach the bottom. The chamber you enter is dark and filled with sand. There looks to be a light stream of sand spilling down from the ceiling above like a waterfall. The room is half-full, and across the room the passageway continues.

The ceiling in this chamber only recently began to fill with sand. Several large cracks in the ceiling are slowly widening, and over time the entire chamber will fill with sand. Five new residents have found their way into this chamber, and have made it their new home. These dune scorpions are hungry and viciously attack anyone who invades their territory.

Tactics: The scorpions simply attack the nearest PC, and use no sophisticated tactics. They fight to the death.

Treasure: Characters digging around in the sand discover a worn and worm eaten wooden box with a DC 20 Perception check. The box contains four *potions of healing*.

DUNE SCORPIONS (5) **LEVEL 1 SOLDIER**
Medium natural beast **XP 100**

Initiative +3 **Senses** Perception +0; tremorsense 5
HP 32; **Bloodied** 16
AC 16; **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 12, **Will** 11
Resist 5 poison
Speed 6

⊕ **Claws** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

+8 vs. AC; 1d8+3 damage, and a Medium or smaller target is grabbed (until escape).

⊗ **Stinger** (standard; at-will)

Grabbed target only; automatic hit; 1d4+3 damage, target takes ongoing 5 poison damage, and is weakened (save ends both).

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –
Str 16 (+3) **Dex** 12 (+1) **Wis** 11 (+0)
Con 12 (+1) **Int** 1 (-5) **Cha** 10 (+0)

Area 1-18 – Pit Trap (EL 1, XP 300):

Read or paraphrase the following:

This hallway widens and seems less worn than the others you have walked through. Strange mosaics and paintings are on the floors and walls. Two torches are set in sconces, one at each end of the hall. The center of this grand hallway is dark.

A little over half ways down the corridor is a concealed pit trap. Surprisingly, this trap is still in working condition, and has been used several times over the years. Although the wooden spikes at the bottom of the pit have deteriorated over time to nothing but worn stubs, the fall is still dangerous.

Treasure: Among the bones and refuse at the bottom of the pit is a +1 *wand of ray of enfeeblement*. This treasure can be found with a DC 15 Perception check.

CONCEALED PIT TRAP

Trap

LEVEL 2 ELITE

WARDER

XP 300

Perception

☒ DC 22: The character notices the small cracks in the stone floor concealing the trapdoor.

Trigger

The trap attacks when a creature enters one of the trap's four squares.

Attack

Immediate Reaction **Melee**

Target: The creature that triggered the trap.

Attack: +5 vs. Reflex

Hit: The target falls into the pit, takes 2d10 damage, and falls prone.

Miss: The target returns to the last square it occupied and its move action ends immediately.

Effect: After being triggered, the pit is no longer concealed.

Countermeasures

☒ An adjacent character can trigger the trap with a DC 12 Thievery check (standard action).

☒ An adjacent character can disable the trap with a DC 27 Thievery check.

☒ A character who makes an Athletics check (DC 11, or DC 21 without a running start) can jump over the trapdoor.

☒ A DC 20 Dungeoneering check grants the party a +2 bonus to Thievery checks to delay or disable the trap.

LEVEL 2 ~
TEMPLE OF CYNHUARA

Unless otherwise stated, all passages are 10 feet high, and all doors are made of wood bound with iron. Unlike the previous level, the temple of Cynhuara has been undisturbed for ages. The air is dead here, and explorers will find it difficult to breath. While there is no mechanical effect from the bad air, GMs should use the detail to keep the PCs aware and on their toes.

Area 2-1 – Magically Sealed Door:

Read or paraphrase the following:

Standing before you is a bronze door with elaborate scrollwork. The wood seems to be ash, and the door looks to have been crafted by a master carpenter. A large symbol of

Cynhuara dominates the middle of the door, and a feeling of peacefulness emanates from it. Several piles of black ash lie at the foot of the door.

This is the entrance to Cynhuara's temple. For over a thousand years it has stayed sealed and inviolate. The black piles of ash are the remains of evil creatures that have attempted to gain access. This is a simple encounter with a simple solution. Any creature of good alignment that pushes on the door opens it and gains entry. There is no effect if a creature of neutral alignment touches the door. Any creature of evil alignment that touches the door suffers is struck by a bolt of blue lightning (+10 vs. Reflex; 6d10 lightning damage). Once the door is opened, the magical seal is broken and any creature, of any alignment, may enter.

Area 2-2 – Entry Hall:

Read or paraphrase the following:

This large and grandiose hall is lined with several pillars, each ornately carved with friezes and etchings pleasing to the eye. The pillars also look to be chased with silver and gold inlay. Several semi-precious stones are used for the eyes of the carvings. Across this great hall is a set of double doors enormous in size, each nearly 15 feet tall. Lying at the base of these doors is a robed skeleton.

This was the grand entry hall of Cynhuara's temple. Worshippers and guests passed through this room so that they could see the history of Cynhuara carved into the pillars and painted upon the walls. The wealth used to craft this room is enormous, and the time dedicated amounts to dozens of years.

The figure lying upon the ground at the base of the double doors is Astlara, the last High Priestess of Cynhuara. She died sealing the outer door to prevent desecrators or looters from entering Cynhuara's temple. GMs should play up the corpse and how preserved it seems, with skin and hair still attached. However, Astlara is long dead, and only the magic of the temple, along with the dry climate, has preserved her body for so long. Astlara expended most of her spells and items to cast the sealing spell on the outer door; however, she still has a few items left on her body.

Treasure: PCs searching the corpse of Astlara find the following: a silver chain with a white pearl (50 gp), golden tiara with three topaz (200 gp), 4 jade agate stones (40 gp each), a holy symbol of Cynhuara (made of platinum and worth 300 gp), and silver key set with an amethyst stone (150 gp). The key opens the large double doors.

Area 2-3 – Altar of Cynhuara:

Read or paraphrase the following:

Bright light and peacefulness greet you as you enter this chamber. A statue of a human female with some reptile features stands elegantly on a pedestal in the middle of this room. Several stools and small chairs are scattered about the rooms' edge. A crystal high up in the ceiling gives off a soft white light that brightens the chamber.

The altar of Cynhuara is a magical device crafted ages ago by her priests. Any person of good alignment who touches the altar can spend a healing surge. This effect can be used once per day. Any hero who actually had a part in the destruction of Axaluatl's altar receives a special gift when he or she touches Cynhuara's altar. This gift takes the form of a single magical item of level 5 or below, appropriate to the characters class and alignment.

Area 2-4 – Library of Septa-Bashu:

Read or paraphrase the following:

A feeling of antiquity and knowledge pervades every corner of this ancient chamber. You see sitting rooms and shelves full of scrolls as far as the eye can see. Tapestries, ancient with age, hang from walls depicting scenes and stories from times long past. The smell of dust and mold is prevalent.

This is the library of Septa-Bashu, a depository of knowledge and wisdom over one thousand years old. Unfortunately, the magic that kept out creatures of evil did not preserve the items within or prevent them from succumbing to the dry environment. Over time, the dry heat has made the scrolls and books within the library extremely brittle. Some of the scrolls simply crumble to dust if touched. Books can be perused carefully, but soon break apart after being handled for a little while.

A careful search of the library reveals that only a handful of the knowledge stored in here can be salvaged. The one thing of obvious note is a large map, sealed in a glass case, in the center of the library. The map is ancient, but a DC 20 History check reveals that the map shows a clear route to the ancient city of Tlalchiac, and even depicts certain areas of the city in detail (using this map cuts six days travel off the adventurers' journey to Tlalchiac). Actually, this magical map will show the location of any area within the borders of Lostlands, as long as the person holding the map thinks of a location. However, it should be noted that whatever area the map shows, the area will be shown as it was one thousand years ago.

The glass case can be shattered easily, and the map recovered. The map is made of a material that is magically treated to withstand staining, water damage, and fire (resist 5 fire).

Treasure: Although much of the great treasure that was stored here has succumbed to the relentless march of time, a careful search does turn up some valuable items. Every time a PC makes a DC 15 Perception check while searching the room, he or she turns up one of the following items (roll randomly or simply pick from the list):

1. A ritual book bound in sheets of silver containing the following rituals: *Animal Messenger*, *Brew Potion*, *Cure Disease*, *Eye of Alarm*, and *Magic Circle*.
2. A set of platinum wire eyeglasses with crystal lenses (250 gp).
3. A silver and ivory page-turner (50 gp).
4. *A +1 staff of fiery might*.
5. Two sealed bottles of magic ink that can ward up to five pages with Secret Page. Each bottle is worth 250 gp.
6. A pair of large onyx bookends carved to resemble coiled cobras (100 gp).

Conclusion

A fierce wind blows as the heroes step forth from the temple and a maelstrom of wild magic descends upon the oasis. Within moments, the sand is replaced by lush undergrowth and jungle wildlife. With the destruction of the altar of Axaluatl, the curse is lifted, and the stigma of evil vanishes from the temple of Septa-Bashu.



THE SCORPION QUEEN

By Andrew Hind

INTRODUCTION

The Scorpion Queen is an adventure designed for five characters of 1st level. Characters can be of any class, although a well-rounded party will have the best chance of success. The adventure is set in a temperate locale by default, but can readily be moved to any location in the GMs campaign world with a minimum of fuss.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The village of Roblach is under siege by mysterious forces. Sandbars are emerging in the river to block navigation; wells are drying up; fertile fields are being reduced to dust; giant scorpions terrorize livestock; and villagers are going missing. Roblach's citizens ask the PCs to investigate the malediction and save their community from destruction.

Investigating the cause of the drought, the heroes discover a desert in the midst of a once-verdant forest, at the center of which lies a massive pyramid. After liberating a number of slaves from their scorpion-folk overseers, the PCs venture into the monolith itself, overcoming more scorpion-folk, guardian mummies, ancient curses, and deadly traps. Every step of the way, the PCs are harassed and harangued by the mistress of the pyramid, the dreaded Scorpion Queen. Eventually, the PCs confront this timeless monstrosity, an awakened and mummified monstrous scorpion, battling her atop the pyramid itself.

as murky as the life-giving waters of the Set River. Most agree she is a favorite of the Goddess Serqet, whose domains include death, mummification, and scorpions. Some go so far as to claim her to be the daughter of this deity by a mortal man. The Scorpion Queen is most often depicted as a coldly beautiful woman whose timeless youth is a product of her divine heritage. But many people have their doubts, believing she may in fact be an aged crone kept alive by foul magic.

If only her frightened citizens knew the truth, how aghast in horror they would be. The Scorpion Queen is indeed the child of Serqet, but no mortal man can claim to have sired her. How could any earthly being produce a creature as foul as she – a 20-foot-long scorpion with foul poison constantly oozing from her twitching tail, a body husk-like from being mummified within Serqet's womb, and yet blessed with a wickedly keen mind?

Serqet's daughter seized the reins of power in Seshat-Semet and has held on for centuries, her grip on the land as crushing as the massive pincers she uses to destroy her enemies. Of late, however, the Scorpion Queen began to fear the rising tide of discontent among her cowed subjects. Worried that one day they might rise up in a rebellion that would threaten not only her rule but also her existence, the Scorpion Queen sought insurance. To that end, she had her sages and wizards begin work on a magic portal that, when activated, would transport her seat of power to a distant land. It was to be a fallback position, a desperate last-minute escape route. The Scorpion Queen hoped never to have to use it.

Imagine her shock when a minor accident during installation atop the pyramid caused the portal to activate? One minute she was ruling over the endless expanse of her eternal kingdom, the next minute she found herself in a strange and foreign land, a land of forests and fields, hundreds if not thousands of miles from her familiar desert.

In theory, the portal should be able to return the pyramid back again, but the Scorpion Queen is reluctant to try. The artifact is damaged, and just as likely

GAME MASTER'S SECTION

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

In distant Seshat-Semet, the name of the Scorpion Queen is spoken only in hushed tones. She is a bloody tyrant whose rule spans hundreds of miles and perhaps a thousand years; a being that inspires fear and demands absolute loyalty.

Despite her immense power and profile, the Scorpion Queen is shrouded in mystery, her origins

to destroy her fortress as transport it from whence it came. Until such time as repairs can be made and she assured of a safe return, the Scorpion Queen has prudently decided to shore up her power here. This includes enslaving peasants, terrorizing the countryside, and pillaging everything of value.

She has also noticed how the portal, clearly malfunctioning, has begun to seep the aridness of her home into this new land, corrupting and transforming it. Every day, sand dunes creep a few yards farther from the pyramid, engulfing all in their path, blighting a verdant land. The Scorpion Queen contemplates that if all else fails, starting over might not be so bad.

ENCOUNTER TABLE

To help the GM prepare, we have included a quick reference table showing all encounters at a glance. *Loc* – the location number keyed to the map for the encounter. *Pg* – the module page number that the encounter can be found on. *Type* – this indicates if the encounter is a trap (T), puzzle (P), or combat (C). *Encounter* – the key monsters, traps, or NPCs that can be found in the encounter. Names in italics are classed NPCs. *EL* – the encounter level.

ENCOUNTER TABLE				
Loc	Pg	Type	Encounter	EL
1-A	43	C	3 asyr 2 dune scorpions	2
1-1	44	C	2 asyr	1
1-3	46	C	6 asyr	3
1-4	46	C	3 common ushabti 8 lesser ushabti	2
1-8	48	C	2 sentinel mummies	2
1-10	49	C	2 ghouls 10 decrepit ghouls	3
1-12	50	C/T	Scorpion swarm Poison needle trap	1
1-13	51	C	<i>Zenophon</i> , criosphinx	4
1-14	52	T	Trapdoor pit trap	1
1-15	52	T	Caress of Serqet	1
1-16	53	C	Aspect of the Scorpion Queen	4
1-17	54	C/P	Aspect of the Scorpion Queen <i>Ankh portal</i>	1

SCALING THE ADVENTURE

Though designed for 1st-level characters, *The Scorpion Queen* can be adapted to higher-level parties with a few simple modifications.

Weaker parties (4 or fewer characters): Remove one asyr from area 1-A. Remove 2 asyr from area 1-3. Remove one common and four lesser ushabti from area 1-4. Remove 1 ghoul and 4 decrepit ghouls from area 1-10. Make *Zenophon* an elite rather than a solo monster in area 1-13. Remove 2 levels from the aspect of the Scorpion Queen in area 1-16 and 1-17.

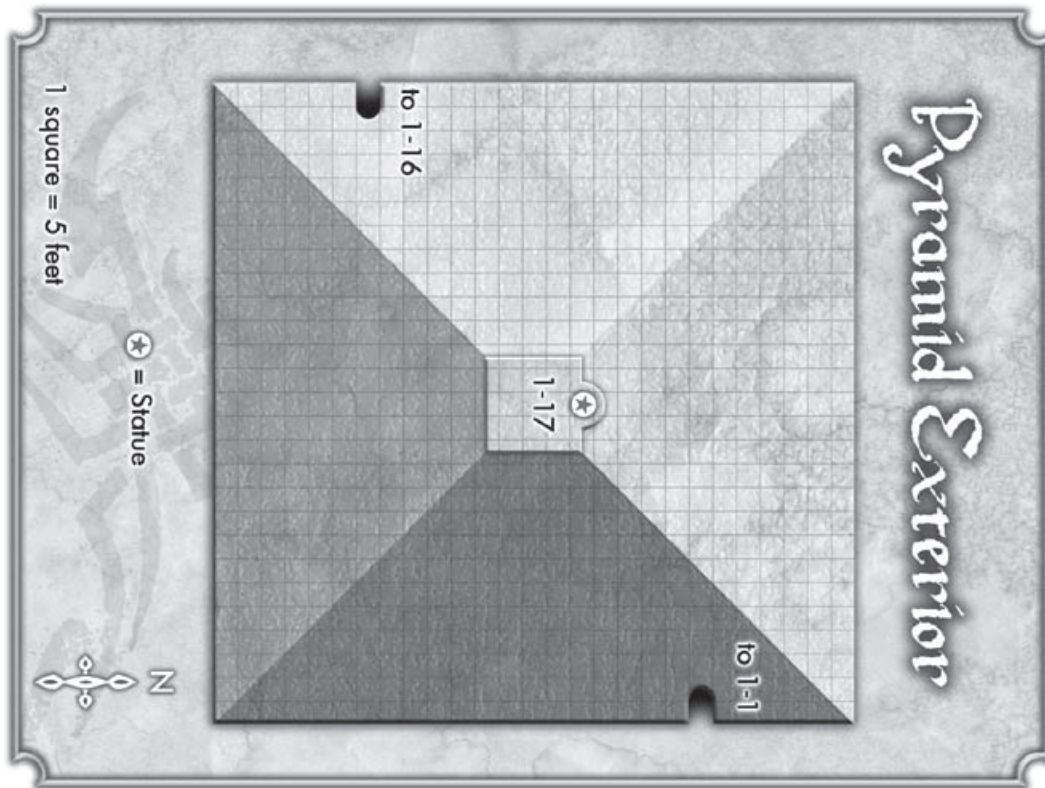
Stronger parties (6 or more characters, or higher than 3rd level): This adventure should prove challenging for larger or more powerful parties; however, consider the following changes if your party is particularly strong or well equipped. Add one asyr to any encounter featuring them. Add another ghoul in area 1-10.

GETTING THE PLAYERS INVOLVED

The simplest way to get the PCs involved is to have them stumble upon the troubled village of Roblach and become the subject of desperate pleas for help. Either moved by the villagers' plight or enticed by a modest financial reward (perhaps 200gp), the PCs agree to investigate.

Alternatively, you can use one of the following hooks to get the PCs into the adventure.

- The PCs receive word that a cultist is lying low in the village of Roblach, masquerading as a humble farmer. The intelligence that can be gleaned from this individual represents an important step in ultimately defeating the threat, so the PCs head off in pursuit. They arrive in Roblach to find the cultist among those farmers who have mysteriously disappeared. In order to complete their longer-term goal of dismantling the cult, they'll have to recover the missing cultist.
- The Baron of Lynford is concerned about troubling news emerging from his northern domains. He hires the PCs to investigate, offering them free homesteads if they determine what ails Roblach, and restore the fields to productive yields.
- A cleric PC hears reports of the ecological changes taking place in the area around Roblach; the PC either chooses to investigate on his own, or his superiors charge him with uncovering the truth.



Area 1-A – Player Beginning (EL 2, XP 575):

Following the directions proffered by the townsfolk, the PCs venture out in search of the source of the drought. They pass empty farms that have been pillaged and show signs (Perception, DC 15) of violence. Characters making a successful DC 15 Nature check notice some of the farmers were killed by giant scorpions, but in most cases, they have been led off in a northerly direction by other humanoid creatures.

With each mile passed, the land becomes more arid, sand replacing soil. After two days of travel, the PCs top a hill and look out upon the valley below. Read or paraphrase the following:

You look down upon a lightly forested valley. Sand dunes wash up against trees and over the verdant ground cover. Already, the trees show signs of distress, their leaves yellowing and thinning. In the midst of the woods is a towering pyramid, its sandstone shape forming a dark shadow that stretches across the land. Atop the pyramid and catching the sun is a metal symbol shaped like a scorpion.

The sound of axes biting into trees pulls your attention from the pyramid and back to the forest floor below. A tree crashes to the ground. Work of some kind is obviously progressing at a frenzied pace.

As the PCs move closer to the pyramid, read or paraphrase the following:

Among the trees you spot a dozen shackled human men chopping furiously at the branches of a downed oak. Sweat drenches their bodies, and their faces are gaunt with exhaustion and hunger. Lurking nearby, shouting

curse in some foreign tongue and occasionally beating the men with the flat of a scimitar, are three skeletally thin humanoids with dried, mottled-red flesh stretched tightly across bone, and scorpion-like tails arched over their backs. One of the frightful creatures holds chained leashes at the end of which strain a pair of scorpions the size of large dogs, their pincers snapping viciously anytime a human happens to come within range.

Tactics: As soon as the asyr become aware of the PCs, they release the scorpions and throw a volley of javelins. Then, two of the asyr charge and use *desert fury* in their initial attack. The third asyr hangs back and hurls javelins at the PCs, but joins the fray if one of the two asyr is killed. The dune scorpions simply attack the nearest moving target, grabbing and stinging a PC repeatedly.

Development: The prisoners are cowed, but not stupid. As soon as it becomes apparent that the PCs have the upper hand, they turn on the final asyr. Unfortunately, they're untrained and sickly, so while they will eventually overwhelm the asyr through sheer numbers, three or four will be cut down...unless the PCs act quickly to intervene. Rather than rolling multiple attack-rolls, simply assume that without PC interference one prisoner is killed every round and that it will be four rounds before the asyr is finally brought down.

ASYR (3)

Medium natural humanoid

LEVEL 2 BRUTE

XP 125

Initiative +3 **Senses** Perception +2; low-light vision
HP 45; **Bloodied** 22
AC 14; **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 13
Resist 5 poison
Speed 6 (earth walk)

⊕ **Scimitar** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
 +5 vs. AC; 1d8+3 damage (crit 1d8+11).

⊕ **Javelin** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
 Ranged 10/20; +4 vs. AC; 1d6+3 damage.

⊕ **Stinger** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Poison**
 +5 vs. AC; 1d6+3 damage, and the asyr makes a secondary attack against the same target.
Secondary Attack: +3 vs. Fortitude; the target is weakened (save ends).

⊕ **Desert Fury** (standard; encounter)
 The asyr makes a scimitar and a stinger attack against the same target.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common

Skills Athletics +9, Stealth +8

Str 17 (+4) **Dex** 14 (+3) **Wis** 13 (+2)

Con 15 (+3) **Int** 10 (+1) **Cha** 8 (+0)

Equipment scimitar, 4 javelins

DUNE SCORPIONS (2)

Medium natural beast

LEVEL 1 SOLDIER

XP 100

Initiative +3 **Senses** Perception +0; tremorsense 5
HP 32; **Bloodied** 16
AC 16; **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 12, **Will** 11
Resist 5 poison
Speed 6

⊕ **Claws** (standard; at-will)
 +8 vs. AC; 1d8+3 damage, and a Medium or smaller target is grabbed (until escape).

⊕ **Javelin** (standard; at-will)
 Ranged 10/20; +4 vs. AC; 1d6+3 damage.

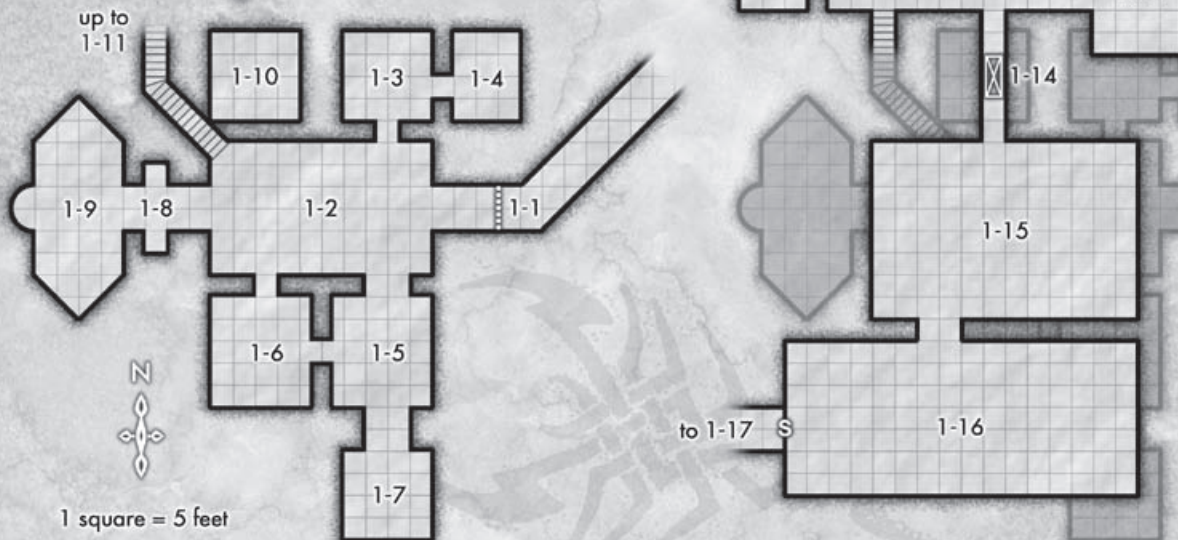
⊕ **Stinger** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Poison**
 Grabbed target only; automatic hit; 1d4+3 damage, target takes ongoing 5 poison damage, and is weakened (save ends both).

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –
Str 16 (+3) **Dex** 12 (+1) **Wis** 11 (+0)
Con 12 (+1) **Int** 1 (-5) **Cha** 10 (+0)

Area 1 – The Pyramid of the Scorpion Queen**Pyramid Features**

The physical appearance of the pyramid interior is dry and forlorn, though remarkably well kept and free of dust or debris. Torches placed at regular in-

Pyramid of the Scorpion Queen



tervals provide fair illumination, though shadows are common. Unless otherwise noted, all doors are locked and of average make.

The walls and floors are crafted from rough sandstone blocks, and are covered with hieroglyphs and exotic symbols. The most commonly seen symbol is an eye, all of which radiate magic. These eyes allow the Scorpion Queen to literally see everything that transpires within her fortress. More over, she is able to use some of her powers through them. This allows the DM to create an adversarial relationship between the Scorpion Queen and the PCs well before the two parties ever meet. She uses her abilities in the following manner:

- While the characters are engaged with an enemy or their attentions occupied by a task, she'll use *sand storm* to blind and further damage them.
- She'll use *dominating gaze* to try to take control of a party member, ideally a spellcaster or rogue. She'll use these pawns to subtly misdirect and undermine the adventurers. A rogue will miss secret doors or fail to notice traps, while spellcasters will errantly cast their spells or defer to use them at opportune moments. This requires a lot of deception on the part of the controlling player to be pulled off effectively, and it should be rewarded as such (perhaps 100 xp every time they successfully act against the party without being discovered).
- Finally, the Scorpion Queen will use telepathy to taunt and intimidate the players. Don't over do this, however; once per level should suffice.

Wooden Door: Break (Strength, DC 16); Locked (Thievery, DC 20).

Rough Masonry Wall: Break (Strength, DC 35), Climb (Athletics, DC 20).

Area 1-1 – Entryway (EL 1, XP 350):

Read or paraphrase the following:

A long hallway plunges into the pyramid at a 45-degree angle, leading into the bowels of this oppressive monolith. Flickering torches set in sconces cast an eerie glow over the sandstone blocks, and reveal a pair of portcullises that block the hallway 60-feet in. Beyond the bars lurks a pair of deathly-thin humanoids with scorpion-like tails and faces etched in malice.

A pair of asyr guards the portcullises and attack anyone approaching them. The asyr use javelins to soften up opponents coming down the long hallway. Since intruders are expected to be tied up dealing with the portcullises, all asyr assigned to protect the pyramid are armed with longspears in addition to javelins and scimitars. These weapons allow them to attack foes through the portcullis bars. The asyr are disdainful of other races, so will not immediately raise the hue-and-cry if the intruders appear weak or

number less than three. Larger parties, or obviously prepared and capable ones, will cause the asyr to call-out for reinforcements. Reinforcements arrive from area 1-3 in 1d4+1 rounds.

Tactics: The asyr attack PCs that approach the portcullises with their longspears. They can easily strike through the portcullis bars with these weapons, but it is awkward, and they suffer a -1 penalty to attack rolls while doing so. If the PCs manage to bypass the portcullises, the asyr switch to their scimitars and stingers in combat.

Development: The pair of portcullises blocking the hallway is intended as a deterrent to attackers. The bars allow Tiny-sized creature to slip through unhindered, but prevent larger-sized creatures from passing. Small-sized characters can squeeze between the bars with with a move action and a DC 10 Acrobatics check, while characters of Medium-size need a DC 20 check to pass. Large-sized characters simply cannot fit through the bars. Lifting a portcullis requires a DC 28 Strength check, and only two PCs can fit side-by-side to lift. Characters on the other side can aid as well, meaning potentially as many as four characters can combine on this task, assuming two of them were able to get through the bars in the first place.

ASYR (2) **LEVEL 2 BRUTE**
Medium natural humanoid XP 125

Initiative +3 **Senses** Perception +2; low-light vision
HP 45; **Bloodied** 22

AC 14; **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 13

Resist 5 poison

Speed 6 (earth walk)

⊕ **Longspear** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

Reach 2; +5 vs. AC; 1d10+3 damage.

⊕ **Scimitar** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

+5 vs. AC; 1d8+3 damage (crit 1d8+11).

⊗ **Javelin** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

Ranged 10/20; +4 vs. AC; 1d6+3 damage.

‡ **Stinger** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Poison**

+5 vs. AC; 1d6+3 damage, and the asyr makes a secondary attack against the same target.

Secondary Attack: +3 vs. Fortitude; the target is weakened (save ends).

‡ **Desert Fury** (standard; encounter)

The asyr makes a scimitar and a stinger attack against the same target.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common

Skills Athletics +9, Stealth +8

Str 17 (+4) **Dex** 14 (+3) **Wis** 13 (+2)

Con 15 (+3) **Int** 10 (+1) **Cha** 8 (+0)

Equipment scimitar, 4 javelins

1-2 – Central Chamber:

Read or paraphrase the following:

This chamber is impressive in size, measuring 50 feet long and 30 feet wide, with a ceiling 20 feet high. The two longest walls curve and meet at the top, giving the entire chamber the shape of a half-cylinder on its side. As elsewhere, the walls are covered in strange markings and symbols. A life-sized statue of a woman stands in each corner of the room. The woman is dressed in tightly wrapped robes, sandals, and an ornate headdress carved with the emblem of a scorpion.

Characters making a DC 25 Religion check recognize the woman depicted by the statues as the goddess Serqet, a powerful deity in the Pharaohic lands. Her portfolio covers death, mummification, poison, and vermin, and her favorite animal is the scorpion. Serqet is the only deity officially worshipped in the Scorpion Queen's empire, and the Scorpion Queen claims to be the divine offspring of the goddess. Whether this is true or not is unknown, but what is certain is the repressive ruler is indeed favored by Serqet.

Area 1-3 – Guards Quarters (EL 3, XP 750):

Read or paraphrase the following:

The heady smell of burning incense reaches your nostrils. You enter the room and discover its origin. The room is a Spartan 20-foot by 20-foot chamber, cold and functional. The walls are lined with weapons racks holding scimitars and javelins by the dozen, and a whetstone for sharpening blades stands in one corner beside a chest. The one item of decoration is a large, golden pedestal-brazier, in which the embers of exotic incense burn, giving off wisps of yellowed smoke and an aroma that causes your eyes to run.

This is the quarters where asyr assigned to defend the Scorpion Queen's pyramid are posted, ready to respond to any threat to the complex. There will be a total of 6 asyr here, unless they've reinforced the guards posted in area 1 or have investigated a disturbance elsewhere in the pyramid.

Tactics: The asyr are completely devoted to their mistress and willingly sacrifice their lives to protect her seat of power. If encountered here or in area 1, they fight toe-to-toe and to the death. In the event that the asyr first learn of the PCs while investigating a disturbance (the sound of combat, for example, or characters noisily plundering the complex), they utilize far more challenging tactics. They'll set up ambushes, fighting for a round or two before rapidly retreating; break into smaller parties to attack simultaneously from multiple directions; attempt to lure or herd intruders into dangerous locations (such as area 1-8 and the trap in area 1-10); and hound the PCs tirelessly, ensuring they have no respite or rest. They

are intimately familiar with the complex's layout, and use that knowledge to its fullest advantage.

Treasure: The pedestal brazier is covered in a decorative layer of gold (worth 75gp). The chest contains some foodstuffs, flasks of water, and packets of incense. The smell of the incense is revolting to most humanoids, and so lacks any monetary value.

ASyr (6) **LEVEL 2 BRUTE**
Medium natural humanoid **XP 125**

Initiative +3 **Senses** Perception +2; low-light vision
HP 45; **Bloodied** 22

AC 14; **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 13

Resist 5 poison

Speed 6 (earth walk)

⚔ **Longspear** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

Reach 2; +5 vs. AC; 1d10+3 damage.

⚔ **Scimitar** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

+5 vs. AC; 1d8+3 damage (crit 1d8+11).

⚔ **Javelin** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

Ranged 10/20; +4 vs. AC; 1d6+3 damage.

⚔ **Stinger** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Poison**

+5 vs. AC; 1d6+3 damage, and the asyr makes a secondary attack against the same target.

Secondary Attack: +3 vs. Fortitude; the target is weakened (save ends).

⚔ **Desert Fury** (standard; encounter)

The asyr makes a scimitar and a stinger attack against the same target.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common

Skills Athletics +9, Stealth +8

Str 17 (+4) **Dex** 14 (+3) **Wis** 13 (+2)

Con 15 (+3) **Int** 10 (+1) **Cha** 8 (+0)

Equipment scimitar, 4 javelins

Area 1-4 – Ushabti (EL 2, XP 623):

Read or paraphrase the following:

This 15-foot by 20-foot room is bare save for the numerous carved, wooden statues lining the walls. These 3-to 6-foot-tall statues depict humans performing various menial tasks: threshing grain, sweeping the floor, skinning animals, making bricks, and so on.

These statues are actually animated servants called ushabti, menial laborers capable of performing simple tasks. They animate at specific, pre-programmed times – the sweepers animate at sunrise, for example, to clean the pyramid of dust and wind-blown sand, while the threshers remain motionless until the harvest season arrives. Ushabti will also animate upon command and follow simple instructions within the general framework of their abilities. They answer only to Abyssal, a

language few PCs are likely to be familiar with.

Ushabti can also serve as guardians against intruders, pummeling enemies with their wooden fists or thrashing them with whatever tools they might be carrying. These ushabti have been given orders to animate and attack anyone entering the room that does not speak a specific phrase in Abyssal. They animate within three rounds of the PCs entering the chamber.

Tactics: The lesser ushabti swarm the PCs, attempting to flank and gain combat advantage. Meanwhile, the common ushabti hang back and use *dire animation* to cause armed PCs' weapons to briefly animate and attack their owners. The common ushabti join the fray in the second round, bashing PCs with their tools and fists. The ushabti fight until destroyed.

LESSER USHABTI (8) **LEVEL 2 MINION**
Small natural animate XP 31
(construct)

Initiative +3 **Senses** Perception +1; darkvision
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.
AC 15; **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 12
Immune disease, poison, sleep
Speed 6; can't shift

⊕ **Slam** (standard; at-will)
+5 vs. AC; 4 damage.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –
Str 13 (+2) **Dex** 14 (+3) **Wis** 10 (+1)
Con 13 (+2) **Int** 4 (-3) **Cha** 6 (-1)

COMMON USHABTI (3) **LEVEL 2 CONTROLLER**
Medium natural animate XP 125
(construct)

Initiative +3 **Senses** Perception +1; darkvision
HP 39, **Bloodied** 19
AC 16; **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 12
Immune disease, poison, sleep
Resist 5 against effects that target AC
Speed 6; can't shift

⊕ **Slam** (standard; at-will)
+6 vs. AC; 1d8+3 damage.

↔ **Dire Animation** (standard; recharge 5.6)

Close burst 3; +6 vs. Fortitude; all enemies in the burst holding a melee weapon make a melee basic attack against their own AC, dealing normal damage on a hit.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –
Str 17 (+4) **Dex** 14 (+3) **Wis** 10 (+1)
Con 15 (+2) **Int** 4 (-3) **Cha** 6 (-1)

Area 1-5 – Early Historical Chamber:

Read or paraphrase the following:

This chamber is devoid of furnishing or décor. The walls are adorned with bas-reliefs depicting various mythological and historic scenes.

This chamber is intended solely to depict the early life of the Scorpion Queen, revealing the divinity of her heritage. Characters making a DC 10 Intelligence check should be able to determine the meaning of the various carvings on the wall. They include the following scenes:

- A sun rises over the desert. Beneath it, in the barren sands, is a single scorpion, the only creature in view. The sun is metaphorically the first sunrise ever to cast its light upon the world, and the scorpion symbolizes the age, and by extension the importance of this animal vis-à-vis other creatures.
- Another image shows mankind building their pyramids while scorpions scatter to avoid being crushed by the labor. The desert, once the sole purview of the scorpion, is now being assumed and tamed by humanity.
- A final image depicts a human recoiling in pain and horror after stepping on a scorpion. Other humans, weapons at the ready, look on. This symbolizes the eternal conflict between man and scorpion.

Area 1-6 – Later Historical Chamber:

Read or paraphrase the following:

Like the one before it, this chamber is devoid of furnishing or decoration. Again, the walls are adorned with bas-reliefs depicting various scenes, though these ones are more martial in nature.

This chamber is intended solely to depict the later life and conquests of the Scorpion Queen, preserving her glory for all eternity. Characters making a DC 15 Intelligence check should be able to determine the meaning of the various carvings on the wall. They include the following scenes:

- The first image on the wall depicts a monstrous scorpion rising from the desert sands. Looking down upon the scene from far above, smiling with obvious pride, is a beautiful woman (the goddess Serqet) that characters will recognize from various statues and imagery throughout the pyramid.
- The second image shows the giant scorpion commanding skeletal humanoids with scorpion-tails in massive, bloody battles against humans. Always, the scorpion-men are victorious.
- The final image shows a gigantic scorpion looming over a pyramid under construction by human slaves, its gaze falling over an expanse encompassing numerous cities arrayed along a meandering river. This final image actually represents

a fairly accurate map of the lands of Seshat-Shemit, and if reproduced, could be quite valuable.

Area 1-7 – Scorpion Chamber:

Read or paraphrase the following:

This room is dominated by a black marble statue of a woman wearing a scorpion headdress, the same woman depicted in statues you've seen prior. An ebony scorpion rests in each of her outstretched hands, and around her throat hangs a necklace shaped like a dart. This darkly beautiful woman watches over scores of glazed pottery scorpion statues that lay in a random fashion across the floor, all are painted with an amazing attention to detail.

This chamber is a shrine to Serqet, a place best left undisturbed by the PCs.

The necklace worn around Serqet's neck is magical, acting in a similar manner as a +1 *wand of magic missiles*, save that the missiles look like darts and inflict poison damage.

The ebony scorpions held within Serqet's hands are worth 120 gp solely for their value as works of art. These divine relics also allow an unaligned cleric to recall an encounter prayer once per day.

Anyone who takes any of these holy relics from the room is cursed. The character in possession of the items becomes vulnerable to poison (-2 on saves), and is plagued by scorpions (they appear in bed rolls, in boots, on dinner plates, and so on). The curse can only be lifted with a *Remove Affliction* ritual performed by a good-aligned cleric. However, after the curse is lifted, the individual must still perform a quest in the service of Serqet. The goddess will visit the infidel in a dream and inform him or her of the task. The exact quest is left to the GM to decide, but should involve Serqet's portfolio in some way – perhaps returning a rampaging mummy to its tomb without destroying it, poisoning an infidel, or recovering an artifact (the *Scorpion Mantra of Khenmut*, for example).

Area 1-8 – Mummy Niches (EL 2; XP 600):

Read or paraphrase the following:

A pair of niches interrupts the smooth lines of the hallway, flanking it from either side. Within each niche is an upright stone sarcophagus.

The sarcophagi contain sentinel mummies, a lesser form of the infamous undead. These mummies were formerly the lieutenants of Shabaka Gorespike, the Scorpion Queen's favorite champion who lies in the tomb just down the hallway. The mummies serve as guardians, protecting the tomb from being defiled.

Tactics: The mummies attack any living creature that passes their sarcophagi. Non-living creatures can pass without notice, allowing Ushabti to keep the tomb clean as befitting a great hero. The mum-

mies initially attack with their falchions, marking their targets with each strike. Once each mummy has marked a target, it will shift out of melee range if possible, and use *curse of the Scorpion Queen*. The mummies repeat this tactic each time *curse of the Scorpion Queen* recharges, using an action point if necessary to immediately bring the ability into the combat. The mummies fight to their destruction, but will not pursue PCs farther than 20 feet from their sarcophagi.

SENTINEL MUMMIES (2)

LEVEL 3 ELITE

Medium natural humanoid
(undead)

SOLDIER
XP 300

Despair (Fear) aura 1; enemies within the aura take a -2 penalty to attack rolls against the sentinel mummy.

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +7; darkvision

HP 98; **Bloodied** 49

AC 21; **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 14

Immune disease, poison

Resist 5 necrotic

Vulnerable 5 fire

Saving Throws +2

Speed 6

Action Points 1

⊕ **Falchion** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

+9 vs. AC; 2d4+3 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the sentinel mummy's next turn.

⚔ **Curse of the Scorpion Queen** (standard; recharge 5,6) ♦ **Poison**

Ranged 5; marked target only; +7 vs. Fortitude; 2d6+3 poison damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).

Alignment Unaligned

Languages Common

Skills Stealth +8

Str 16 (+4)

Dex 14 (+2)

Wis 12 (+2)

Con 17 (+4)

Int 6 (-1)

Cha 12 (+2)

Area 1-9 – Shabaka Gorespike's Resting Place:

Read or paraphrase the following:

This six-sided chamber is dominated by an enormous and elaborately decorated stone sarcophagus in the center of the room, which rests on an even larger slab of black marble. Behind the sarcophagus is a semi-circular niche with a raised dais, upon which rests a life-sized painted statue of a warrior kneeling at the side of a beautiful woman seated on a golden throne with arms sculpted like scorpions. In each corner of the room stands a ceramic jar shaped like a scorpion.

This room is the tomb of Shabaka Gorespike, a great asyr general and also the favorite of the Scorpion Queen in matters other than military. The sarcophagus is sculpted in the form of a mighty warrior, the same



warrior depicted in the statue in the niche. The stone lid requires a DC 25 Strength check to lift. In addition, its seamless fit requires the PCs to chip handholds into the lid with a chisel before attempting the lift. If the lid is removed, Shabaka's mummified body is revealed. He holds a great khopesh sword (falchion) gripped to his chest, carries a sheathed dagger at his waist, and a scorpion sculpted from obsidian rests on his forehead. Shabaka is not undead, and does not move if his sarcophagus is opened or his body disturbed.

The ceramic jars hold Shabaka's vital organs as per his religious beliefs. Opening the jars reveals a lump of tissue still recognizable as one of his major organs (lungs, heart, stomach, kidney, brain, and liver). The wooden statue is nothing more than an elaborate carving of Shabaka as he appeared in life during his service to his queen. It is meant to act as a receptacle for the warrior's spirit, though it is non-magical.

Treasure: The scorpion throne is covered in gold (worth 1000 gp), but is far too heavy to move. The obsidian scorpion is actually an *amulet of protection +1*. Shabaka also wears a gold ring, which is non-magical but worth 100 gp. An ornate golden dagger rests in a sheath at his waist (worth 200 gp). Shabaka's sword is a *+1 flaming falchion*.

Area 1-10 – Ghoul Chamber (EL 3, XP 710):

Read or paraphrase the following:

The air in this long chamber reeks of decay and filth, and dust hangs heavily in the air. Manacles hang limply from the walls, and scattered about are instruments of torture – braziers and branding irons, whips, an iron maiden, and

infernal devices that defy the imagination. Figures shuffle in the shadows at the periphery of your vision, and a chorus of hisses begins to reverberate among the cold stone walls.

Decades ago, the Scorpion Queen crushed a desperate rebellion against her rule. The ringleaders were tortured and then sealed away in this chamber, which became their tomb. Most died, but a dozen survived by feeding upon their compatriots. Since then, the Scorpion Queen has disposed of her victims by having them thrown – dead or alive – into this chamber to keep her playthings fed.

Tactics: The decrepit ghouls attack en masse, attempting to overwhelm the PCs in a tide of ravenous, undead flesh. Meanwhile, the two standard ghouls, circle around the fray, and try to get combat advantage on a PC. Once the ghouls select a target, they rush in and slash with their claws, following up with *ghoulish bite* on immobilized PCs. The starving undead fight to their destruction.

Development: There are only two ways out of this chamber. The first is through the trapdoor above, which is problematic in that it is 30 feet overhead, in the middle of the ceiling, and consists of a heavy stone block that swings downward.

DECREPIT GHOULS (10) **LEVEL 2 MINION**
 Medium natural humanoid XP 31
 (undead)

Initiative +3 **Senses** Perception +1; darkvision
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.
AC 15; **Fortitude** 12, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 12
Immune disease, poison
Speed 6

⬇ **Claws** (standard; at-will)

+5 vs. AC; 3 damage, and the target is slowed until the beginning of the decrepit ghoul's next turn.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common
Str 12 (+2) **Dex** 16 (+4) **Wis** 10 (+1)
Con 13 (+2) **Int** 8 (+0) **Cha** 6 (-1)

GHOULS (2) **LEVEL 5 SOLDIER**
 Medium natural humanoid XP 200
 (undead)

Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +2; darkvision
HP 63; **Bloodied** 31
AC 21; **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 17
Immune disease, poison
Resist 10 necrotic
Vulnerable 5 radiant
Speed 8, climb 4
Action Points 1

⬇ **Claws** (standard; at-will)

+12 vs. AC; 1d6+4 damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).

⬇ **Ghoulish Bite** (standard; at-will)

Target must be immobilized, stunned, or unconscious; +10 vs. AC; 3d6+4 damage, and the target is stunned (save ends).

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common
Skills Stealth +11
Str 14 (+4) **Dex** 19 (+6) **Wis** 11 (+2)
Con 15 (+4) **Int** 10 (+2) **Cha** 12 (+3)

Area 1-11 – False Treasure Room:

Read or paraphrase the following:

Your eyes widen at the site of half a dozen large chests, each one overflowing with coins, jewels, gems, and magnificently crafted decorative items. The room itself is small and unobtrusive, measuring 10-feet by 10-feet, and barren save for the treasure.

This room is an elaborate trap designed to fool would-be thieves. The treasure is in fact worthless; all of it cleverly crafted fakes. Characters making a DC 20 Perception check will notice very faint sigils etched into the doorframe. Any character passing over the threshold of the room is instantly transported to area 1-10.

Area 1-12 – Treasure Room (EL 1, XP 500):

The secret door to this room requires a DC 25 Perception check to locate. The door to this room is made of iron, and is both locked (Thievery, DC 20) and trapped with a poison needle trap. Once the defenses are bypassed, read or paraphrase the following:

The door swings open to reveal a small chamber piled high with all manner of fine silks, gems, jewelry, intricately carved pieces of marble, jade, turquoise, and the like. The walls of the room, unlike elsewhere in the pyramid, have been made of swirling green marble.

While the PCs are likely to question the marble walls, no threat comes from that quarter. The walls are mundane, if attractive. However, robbers will soon find that the Scorpion Queen will not give up her treasure (goods pillaged from captured cities or taken as tribute from frightened vassals) so easily.

The treasure room is guarded by hundreds of tiny, black scorpions, hiding amid the amassed treasure. As soon as any piece of treasure is touched, the scorpions emerge en masse and attack.

Treasure: The haul from this chamber is impressive. The silks are worth a combined 300 gold pieces. There are 20 ambers worth 100 gp, 4 peridot gems worth 200 gp, and sundry statuary worth a combined 1,500 gp. The jewels include a necklace comprising a string of small rubies (worth 500 gp), ten gold rings worth 50 gp, and a +1 *amulet of health*. Also among the treasure is a silver hand mirror set in ivory (worth 75 gp), a box containing 5 sealed vials of perfume (worth 25 gp each), a *potion of healing*, and a suit of +1 *magic scale armor*.

Iron Door: Break (Strength, DC 25); Locked (Thievery, DC 20).



POISON NEEDLE TRAP

Trap

LEVEL 5 LURKER

XP 200

Perception

- ☒ DC 22: The character notices the needle and poison housing in the lock.

Trigger

A character attempt to pick the lock or open the door without disarming the trap.

Attack**Immediate Reaction Melee**

Target: The creature opening the door or picking the lock.

Attack: +10 vs. AC

Hit: 1d8+2 damage, and the trap makes a secondary attack against the target. Secondary Attack: +8 vs. Fortitude; 5 ongoing poison damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends both).

Countermeasures

- ☒ An adjacent character can disable the trap with a DC 25 Thievery check.
- ☒ A DC 20 Dungeoneering check grants the party a +2 bonus to Thievery checks to delay or disable the trap.

SCORPION SWARM

Medium natural beast (swarm)

LEVEL 3 ELITE**SKIRMISHER**

XP 300

Swarm Attack aura 1; the scorpion swarm makes a basic attack as a free action against each enemy that begins its turn in the aura.

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +3; tremorsense 5
HP 98; **Bloodied** 49

AC 19; **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 14

Resist half damage from melee and ranged attacks

Vulnerable 10 against close and area attacks.

Saving Throws +2

Speed 4

Action Points 1

Ⓢ **Stinging Swarm** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Poison**

+8 vs. AC; 1d8+4 damage, the target is weakened, and takes ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends both).

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –

Skills Stealth +10

Str 14 (+3) **Dex** 18 (+5) **Wis** 14 (+3)

Con 17 (+4) **Int** 1 (-5) **Cha** 10 (+1)

Area 1-13 – Sphinx Prison (EL 4, XP 950):

Read or paraphrase the following:

In each corner of this room stands a stone statue set upon a granite pedestal – each one depicting a horse-sized scorpion rising up in a threatening manner, claws outstretched and tail poised to strike. The floor is strewn with cracked bones. In the center of the room, on a raised stone platform, rests a sarcophagus with a transparent glass lid. Inside rests a proud lion-like creature with a ram's head.

Characters making a DC 15 Perception check will notice scars on the beast's hide where its wings once were. PCs may therefore be able to determine the creature to be a sphinx of sorts (Religion, DC 15).

Lifting the lid off the sarcophagus is easy, and awakens the sphinx inside from a magical slumber. Characters may have wished they hadn't...

This criosphinx, a creature named Zenophon, was part of a raiding party sent by the Sphinx Queen centuries ago to wreak havoc on the lands of her mortal enemy, the Scorpion Queen. Zenophon was captured and subjected to the most heinous tortures that could be contemplated, the culmination of which was the excruciating and humiliating severing of his wings by the Scorpion Queen herself. His mind snapped. Crazed, he was placed in a stasis sarcophagus as a dire warning to all sphinx that would dare challenge the Scorpion Queen.

Tactics: In his crazed mind, Zenophon sees enemies in everyone, even those who freed him from his tormented sleep. He attacks with a single-minded ruthlessness, seeking to destroy all living things in as quick and as bloody a fashion as possible. When combat begins, he charges the nearest PC with *goring charge*, then he spends an action point to attack with his claws on the same target. After that he clings to his target and rakes with the terrible talons on his back feet. Once he has dispatched a PC in this manner, he repeats the process on a second, and so on, until either he or the PCs are destroyed.

Development: Characters who recognize that Zenophon is a criosphinx should realize that they are not normally wicked creatures. If such a character that attempts to calm Zenophon, allow he or she to roll a DC 20 Diplomacy check. If the check is successful, the party can then engage in a skill challenge to earn the maddened criosphinx's trust.

Skill Challenge (Calming Zenophon): Level 5 (200 XP); 8 successes before 4 failures; Diplomacy, plus Heal and Religion.

Diplomacy (DC 17): A calm rational approach is the only way to quiet the fear and madness that fills Zenophon's mind.

Heal (DC 10): A character using the Heal skill on Zenophon to soothe his wounds further calms the

injured criosphinx. This does not count as a success or failure, but grants a +2 bonus or a -2 penalty to the next character's Diplomacy check.

Religion (DC 15): When speaking with Zenophon, if one of the PCs reminds the sphinx that his kind are not rampaging beasts, but proud and noble warriors, he seems shamed for a moment, but solemnly nods his head. This does not count as a success or failure, but grants a +2 bonus or a -2 penalty to the next character's Diplomacy check.

Failure: The heroes fail to calm Zenophon, he renews his attack and fights to his destruction.

Success: The PCs manage to break through Zenophon's tortured mind, and convince him that they share a common enemy. Although he is still far too fragile to personally aid the PCs against the Scorpion Queen, he begs forgiveness for attacking the heroes, and offers up any information the GM decides he should have about the pyramid or the Scorpion Queen.

ZENOPHON, CRIPPLE **LEVEL 3 SOLO**
CRIOSPHINX **SOLDIER**
 Large immortal magical beast XP 750

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +7; darkvision
HP 145 (192); **Bloodied** 96
AC 21; **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 16
Saving Throws +5
Speed 6, fly 8
Action Points 2

⊕ **Claws** (standard; at-will)
 +10 vs. AC; 1d8+4 damage, and the target is grabbed (until escape).

⊕ **Goring Charge** (standard; at-will)
 The criosphinx makes a charge attack: +11 vs. AC; 2d6+4 damage, and the target is knocked prone.

⊕ **Ripping Rake** (standard; at-will)
 Grabbed target only; +10 vs. AC; 2d6+4 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common, Supernal

Skills Insight +7, Intimidate +9, Stealth +8
Str 19 (+5) **Dex** 14 (+3) **Wis** 12 (+2)
Con 16 (+4) **Int** 12 (+2) **Cha** 16 (+4)

Area 1-14 – Trapped Hallway (EL 1, XP 300):

This hallway has been trapped with a trapdoor that casts victims 30 feet down into the ghoul-infested chamber in area 1-10.

TRAPDOOR PIT TRAP

LEVEL 2 ELITE

Trap

WARDER

XP 300

Perception

☒ DC 22: The character notices the small cracks in the stone floor concealing the trapdoor.

Trigger

The trap attacks when a creature enters one of the trap's four squares.

Attack

Immediate Reaction Melee

Target: The creature that triggered the trap.

Attack: +5 vs. Reflex

Hit: The target falls through the trapdoor into area 1-10, takes 3d10 damage, and falls prone.

Miss: The target returns to the last square it occupied and its move action ends immediately.

Effect: After being triggered, the trapdoor closes again in three rounds.

Countermeasures

- ☒ An adjacent character can trigger the trap with a DC 12 Thievery check (standard action).
- ☒ An adjacent character can disable the trap with a DC 27 Thievery check.
- ☒ A character who makes an Athletics check (DC 11, or DC 21 without a running start) can jump over the trapdoor.
- ☒ A DC 20 Dungeoneering check grants the party a +2 bonus to Thievery checks to delay or disable the trap.

Area 1-15 – Canopic Chamber (EL 1, XP 500):
 Read or paraphrase the following:

This small dusty room smells of moldy linens. Five clay jars atop a small stone table and a pile of yellowed bandages lying discarded in a corner are the only item of interest.

This chamber is a vault for the Scorpion Queen's most valued possessions –the canopic jars which contain her organs. Unlike with normal mummies, the Scorpion Queen's physical body and organs remained bound together even after the mummification process. Destroying the organs significantly weakens the Scorpion Queen by eliminating some of her damage resistances. Remove one resistance for each canopic jar destroyed, starting with her poison resistance, then necrotic, and then one use of her variable resistances.

Well aware of this weakness, the Scorpion Queen has hidden her canopic jars and thoroughly protected them.

Traps: The canopic jars that contain the Scorpion Queen's organs are protected by a vile magical trap. If the jars are removed from the block (whether by being lifted off or destroyed), the table upon which they rest sinks an inch into the ground, triggering the trap.

When the trap is triggered, a blast of hot, dry air suddenly gusts through the room, followed by the smell of decay and embalming fluid. Then the characters are racked by pain and fever; Serqet has taken an interest in the PCs, and wants to claim them as her own.

CARESS OF SERQET **LEVEL 6 ELITE BLASTER**
Trap XP 500

Perception

☒ DC 22: The character notices a fine

Initiative: +6

Trigger

When one of the canopic jars is removed from the table, the trap rolls initiative.

Attack

Standard Action **Burst 5**

Target: All creatures in the burst.

Attack: +11 vs. Fortitude

Hit: 1d10+3 necrotic damage, and ongoing 5 necrotic damage. In addition, the target contracts the disease blinding sickness.

Countermeasures

- ☒ An adjacent character can disable the trap with a DC 25 Thievery check.
- ☒ A DC 20 Dungeoneering check grants the party a +2 bonus to Thievery checks to delay or disable the trap.

1-16 – Lair of the Scorpion Queen (EL 4, XP 875):

Read or paraphrase the following:

The air in this massive chamber reeks of ruin and decay. The corruption you sense seems to writhe and move, slinking from shadow to shadow, just out of sight. The vaulted ceiling rises to a height of 60 feet, and tall alcoves lining the walls reach nearly to this height. It is within the darkened recesses of these alcoves that you sense the greatest profanities.

An aspect of the Scorpion Queen lurks within one of the alcoves, waiting for the ideal moment to strike. She'd like the party to split up or drop their defenses before springing her ambush, but if the PCs remain cautious and alert, she loses her patience and attacks. When she does, read the following:

Shadows part to reveal a hideously large scorpion darting towards you, easily the size of a draft horse and

far more threatening. The creature's carapace is withered and desiccated, as if scoured by an endless sandstorm, and foul saliva drips with malevolent hunger from its gaping maw. With speed and silence that belies its size, the creature charges, tail high and pincers outstretched.

This is an aspect of the hated Scorpion Queen, the physical manifestation of a creature of untold age and unsurpassed cruelty. It should become immediately apparent that the PCs are in for the fight of their lives, an epic battle to rid the world of a great evil.

Tactics: In the first two rounds of combat, the Scorpion Queen throws herself at her opponents with wild abandon, intending to awe them with her might. She begins combat with *sandstorm*, and then charges in to snap up blinded PCs with her claws. Grabbed opponents will be stung repeatedly, until they either succumb or escape the aspect's grasp. If the PCs don't buckle in the first round, and manage to mount a meaningful counterattack, the aspect uses *dominating gaze* to gain control of a powerful melee PC, whom she then directs to attack his or her allies. The aspect of the Scorpion Queen uses one action point to use *sand storm* again the instant it recharges, but she saves the other one in case she is forced to retreat.

If bloodied, the aspect of the Scorpion Queen attempts to escape. A 10-foot square flagstone near the outer wall is carved with sigils and glyphs. When the aspect puts her weight upon the stone, it creates a tunnel to the outside world large enough for her to squeeze through. She can only use this passage once per day, and the tunnel remains open for either 10 hours, or until such time as she places her weight upon the arcane-marked flagstone again.

If the Scorpion Queen is allowed to escape her lair, she climbs atop the pyramid to area 1-17. The secret door can be located by characters with a DC 26 Perception check.



**ASPECT OF THE
SCORPION QUEEN**Large immortal magical
beast**LEVEL 4 SOLO
CONTROLLER**

XP 875

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +11; darkvision
Poisonous Aura (Poison) aura 1; creatures that enter or start their turns in the aura take 5 poison damage.**HP** 232; **Bloodied** 116**AC** 20; **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 20**Resist** 10 necrotic, 10 poison, 5 variable (3/encounter)**Saving Throws** +5**Speed** 8, climb 8 (spider climb)**Action Points** 2⊕ **Claws** (standard; at-will)

+9 vs. AC; 1d12+5 damage, and the target is grabbed (until escape).

‡ **Stinger** (standard; at-will) ◆ **Poison**

Grabbed target only; automatic hit; 1d8+5 damage, target takes ongoing 5 poison damage, and is weakened (save ends both).

✂ **Dominating Gaze** (standard; at-will) ◆ **Charm**

Ranged 5; +8 vs. Will; target is dominated (save ends).

↔ **Sandstorm** (standard; recharge 5,6) ◆ **Poison**

Close burst 5; +8 vs. Reflex; 2d6+4 damage, and the target is blinded (save ends).

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Supernal, Telepathy 20**Skills** Arcana +10, Intimidate +9, Religion +10, Stealth +9**Str** 21 (+7) **Dex** 14 (+4) **Wis** 18 (+4)**Con** 18 (+6) **Int** 17 (+5) **Cha** 15 (+4)**Area 1-17 – Pyramid Power (EL 5, XP 1,000):**

Read or paraphrase the following:

The hulking scorpion skitters effortlessly up the near sheer sides of the pyramid to its peak. To your right is a scaffolding that leans at an uneven angle. It sways and moans ominously in the wind. From it, ropes and a ladder climb up the sides of the pyramid to its pinnacle. Though from a distance the pyramid seems to come to a point, in fact it culminates in a flat, 20-foot square slab. An ankh-shaped edifice of bronze, standing 10-feet tall and etched in hieroglyphics, juts from the stone atop the pyramid. Sand seeps from cracks in the metal, slowly sifting out and then being carried away upon the breeze.

With one of its massive claws, the massive scorpion rotates the ankh. There is a series of audible clicks, like tumblers turning in a lock. Suddenly, the ankh begins to radiate a strange light and the sky above darkens. The Scorpion Queen opens her maw and a series of sinister



clicks flows out from between saliva-dripping mandibles. It sounds almost like laughter.

The aspect of the Scorpion Queen is attempting to activate the portal on the slim chance that it will teleport her and her pyramid back her native domain. Activating the portal is done by using powerful spells, and from a distance; however, the work on the artifact is yet incomplete. Currently it must be activated by physical manipulation. This involves turning the ankh like a key in a lock. Creatures with a Strength of 20 or more can turn the ankh as a standard action, while those with lesser Strength must make a Strength check at DC 15.

Assuming the aspect of the Scorpion Queen activates the portal, the PCs have ten rounds to prevent certain disaster.

Immediately after the portal is activated, the wind begins to pick up. In the first round it's simply a light wind, hardly dangerous, but it escalates in intensity each round thereafter.

- **Round 1 – Light Wind:** No in-game effects.
- **Round 2 – Moderate Wind:** The wind imposes a –1 penalty on all Acrobatics checks and Athletics checks for climbing PCs.
- **Round 3 – Strong Wind:** The wind imposes a –2 penalty on all Acrobatics checks, Athletics checks for climbing PCs, and all ranged attacks with the weapon keyword. Tiny or smaller creatures must

make an Acrobatics check to take a move action. If the check is failed, the creature is knocked prone.

- **Round 4 and beyond—Severe Winds/Sandstorm:** The wind imposes a –4 penalty on all Acrobatics checks, Athletics checks for climbing PCs, and all ranged attacks with the weapon keyword. Creatures of Medium-size must make an Acrobatics check to take a move action. If the check is failed, the creature is knocked prone. Tiny creatures must make the same Acrobatics check; however, if the check is failed, such a creature is pushed 1d4 squares and knocked prone. In addition, all creatures on the pyramid (except the aspect of the Scorpion Queen) suffer 2 points of damage per round from wind-blasted sand.

Fighting atop and along the sides of the pyramid is challenging, even without the winds. Below is a list of considerations a GM should bear in mind:

- **Climbing the Pyramid:** Scaling the pyramid requires a DC 20 Athletics check.
- **Climbing the Ladder:** This normally doesn't require a Athletics check (DC 0), though once the wind begins to pick up skill checks should be made. The aspect of the Scorpion Queen can knock aside the ladder with a standard action.
- **Climbing the Ropes:** There are a total of 6 ropes dangling from the pyramid's peak, four supporting the scaffolding and two for hauling up materials. Climbing a rope requires a DC 10 Athletics check.
- **The Scaffolding:** The scaffolding is at such a precarious angle that anyone performing any complex actions while standing upon it, such as firing ranged weapons, must make a DC 10 Acrobatics check. It takes four standard actions (one per rope supporting the scaffold) to cut it away. With each severed rope, Balance check difficulties increase by 3.
- **Falling:** Characters who fall can make a single Athletics check (DC 20) to arrest their fall after 3d20 feet. Those who fail, slide all the way to the ground, suffering 10d6 points of damage.

Tactics: Once the PCs reach the top of the pyramid, they will have to deal with aspect again. The manifestation of the Scorpion Queen will fight furiously to keep the PCs from closing the portal. She will attempt to grab and fling PCs off the pyramid rather than poisoning them, and uses *dominating gaze* to keep any PC that gets near the ankh from rotating it or destroying it. Here, the aspect fights to the death.

Development: To close the portal, the PCs have two options. First, they might attempt turn the ankh back to its original position, a task made difficult by

the aspect looming protectively over it. Secondly, they might try to destroy the artifact. However, after ten rounds, a blinding flash erupts from the ankh, like the glare of the sun magnified ten-fold. The portal malfunctions, and fails to transport the pyramid back to the deserts. Instead, the sudden eruption of magic unleashes a sandstorm upon the land with devastating repercussions.

Ankh Artifact: AC 4; Reflex 4; Fortitude 12; HP 80.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

If they failed to stop the aspect of the Scorpion Queen from activating the portal, a sandstorm of epic proportions sweeps over the area, raging for a full week. When at last it subsides, the entire barony is buried under sand. While the devastation is complete, it's possible that people might survive, trapped within basements or the dungeons. Can the PCs rescue some of these victims and make up for their failure at the pyramid?

Ideally, the PCs prevent this disaster and defeat the aspect of Scorpion Queen. If they do so, the people of Roblach can't thank them enough for their act of heroism. The Baron thanks the PCs by giving them some of the ownerless farmsteads in the Roblach area. More significantly, he provides each with golden bracers bearing his ancestral arms, worth 50 gp per pair. In time, with the assistance of powerful magic, the land can be revived.

THE FORBIDDEN CRYPT

By Mike Ferguson

INTRODUCTION

The Forbidden Crypt is designed for five characters of 1st to 2nd level, with a total of 5-10 character levels between party members. At least one rogue character will be critical for good game play, given the traps and mechanical devices scattered throughout the adventure; and a cleric character would be helpful in dealing with the final encounter with the villain Xotxilaha, as well as the other undead creatures found in this adventure. See the “Scaling Information” section for ways to tailor this adventure to your group’s unique style of play.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

While traveling to the Xulmec city of Amoya, a monsoon washes away most of the roads, forcing the player characters to seek shelter in the hills overlooking the Yectlani Swamp. There, they discover a system of subterranean tombs, which serves as the final resting places for a grand vizier of the Mictia Tlahtoanime – the Death Kings, who ruled the long-forgotten Co-chitlan Empire. As they explore the tomb, the PCs encounter a band of gnoll grave robbers, and learn a few ancient secrets of the Xulmecs that might lead to unimaginable treasures – or certain doom ...

GAME MASTER'S SECTION

ENCOUNTER TABLE

To help the GM prepare, we have included a quick reference table showing all encounters at a glance. *Loc* – the location number keyed to the map for the encounter. *Pg* – the module page number that the encounter can be found on. *Type* – this indicates if the encounter is a trap (T), puzzle (P), or combat (C). *Encounter* – the key monsters, traps, or NPCs that can be found in the encounter. Names in italics are classed NPCs. *EL* – the encounter level.

ENCOUNTER TABLE

Loc	Pg	Type	Encounter	EL
1-1	58	C/P	3 gnoll bandits Statue puzzle	1
1-2	60	C	Ankheg	1
1-3	61	C	5 fire beetles	1
1-4	62	T	Gong alarm trap Camouflaged put trap	1
1-5	63	C	3 minotaur skeletons	2
1-6	63	T/P	Fire spray trap Riddle of the three swords	1
1-7	64	C	5 clay scouts	2
1-8	65	C	<i>Tanahuatan</i> , wight 4 zombies	3
1-9	66	C	2 elite phantom warriors	3
1-10	67	C	4 Xulmec worker zombies	1
1-11	67	T	Poison needle burst trap	1
1-12	68	C	<i>Xotxilaha</i> , tiefling mummy warrior	3

SCALING INFORMATION

The Forbidden Crypt is designed for 5 characters of 1st-2nd level, but it can be easily modified for parties of different sizes or levels. Consider adapting the adventure using any of the following suggestions:

Weaker parties (4 or fewer characters): Remove one of the gnoll bandits from area 1-1. Remove two of the fire beetles from area 1-3. Remove one of the minotaur skeletons from area 1-5. Replace two of the zombies in area 1-8 with zombie rotters. Remove the elite status from the phantom warriors in area 1-9. Remove 1 level from Xotxilaha, and don’t allow his *mighty blow* ability to recharge.

Stronger parties (6 or more characters, or higher than 3rd level): Add two more gnoll bandits to area 1-1. Add another ankheg to area 1-2. Add an additional minotaur skeleton to area 1-5. Make Tanahuatan an elite wight in area 1-8. Add another elite phantom warrior in area 1-9. Add two corrup-

tion corpses to area 1-10. Add a level to Xotxilaha, increase the range of his despair aura to 5 squares, and allow his mighty blow ability to recharge on a roll of 4, 5, or 6.

GETTING THE PLAYERS INVOLVED

Feel free to use the following plot hooks to get the characters headed straight towards the dungeon.

- A Criestine aristocrat – the Baroness Marie Dietrienne, a rich heiress from the city of Kassantia – hires the player characters to deliver a golden brooch to a sage in Amoya. The brooch is of Xulmec origin, and is covered in strange runes. The Baroness hopes that the sage can translate the runes.
- Renier Lusignan, a promising acolyte in the Beryl Conclave, has vanished into the wilds of the Yectlani Swamp. He was last seen in Fort Montsiang. The mages of the Beryl Conclave hire the party to investigate Renier's disappearance, and to return the young student of sorcery to the city of Voltigeur, should he still live.
- Bandits have been attacking Criestine merchant caravans on the roads between the colonial towns in the region. As rumor has it, the bandits are led by reptilian warriors. The town guard of Fort Montsiang has hired the player characters to travel to the Xulmec city of Amoya to obtain more information about these mysterious reptilian humanoids, and to enlist the aid of the Xulmec military in capturing the bandits.

BACKGROUND STORY

THE LAST DAYS OF THE NAGA

In the final days of the Wrath of Serpents, when the naga of the Zimalan Empire fought the sphinxes of the Khonsurian Empire in a war of annihilation, the human servants of the nagas suddenly found themselves free of their serpent rulers. Although elated by their new freedom, this came with a certain degree of trepidation ... after all, no longer would their lives be given direction and purpose by their naga masters. In the savage jungles of the Southlands, the destiny that mankind would carve upon the world would be solely of his own making.

From the ashes of the Zimalan Empire, dozens of small kingdoms, city-states, and fiefdoms quickly sprung into existence, ruled by heroes and despots alike. Some of these kingdoms would grow and flourish, surviving the tests of time to become formidable powers. These would include Ssorlang, the sinister kingdom of the feared drakon; and the Xulmec City-States, ruled by the human descendants of naga slaves.

But centuries ago ... there was also the Cochtlan Empire.

Humans were not the only creatures to serve the nagas. Jungle elves loyally scouted through the darkest jungles of the Southlands on the behalf of the nagas, hardy dwarves mined gold and mithral for their serpent kings, and sinister tieflings served as spies and assassins.

Following the fall of the nagas, a small group of five tiefling warriors seized control of a large Zimalan city called Tlaneci. These tieflings – who became known throughout the Southlands as the *Mictia Tlahtoanime* (the Death Kings) – were ruthless, ambitious conquerors. They transformed the human slaves still living in Tlaneci into a formidable army, and then swept across the lands, enslaving those who surrendered to them, and obliterating those who would not. For a short time, it seemed the lands conquered by the tieflings – which became known as the Cochtlan Empire – would rule over all of the Southlands.

As quickly as the Cochtlan Empire rose, however, it suddenly fell and crumbled. The precise reasons for this strange and sudden collapse have been lost to time. Some scholars assert that the five tiefling warriors, who all ruled the Cochtlan Empire together, killed each other in a desperate fight to become the sole ruler of the lands they conquered. Others say that the drakon, wary of the growing power of the tiefling kings, arranged to have assassins poison them while they slept. Whatever the true reason might be, the end result was the same – the *Mictia Tlahtoanime* perished, and so did their empire. Their legacy and their empire became a minor footnote in history, of interest only to sages and historians, and the grand city of Tlaneci disappeared in the depths of the Ezentenqui Jungles, swallowed by the trees and the rain.

THE TOMBS OF THE DEATH KINGS

When the *Mictia Tlahtoanime* fell, the humans of the fledgling Xulmec city-states still feared that the tiefling kings might visit vengeance upon them from beyond the grave. To ensure that the five tiefling kings stayed dead – and that their disciples and followers could not resurrect them – the Xulmecs built an elaborate series of hidden tombs for them

and their revered servants, scattered all over the Southlands.

The tombs that were constructed were both elaborate and ornate. While the Xulmec natives feared and hated the Mictia Tlahtoanime, they desired to give “kings” a proper resting place of honor, and also had no desire to invoke the wrath of the gods by disrespecting the fallen tieflings. However, the tombs were also constructed with winding mazes, deadly traps, and vigilant guardians, partly to keep followers of the tiefling kings and tomb robbers from entering the tombs ... and partly to keep anything from leaving.

The fears about the tiefling kings, though, proved to be largely unfounded. Once buried, the Mictia Tlahtoanime remained in their hidden tombs, and the rest of the world eventually forgot them. Their corpses slept through the centuries, undisturbed ... patiently waiting to be awakened once more.

PLAYER BEGINNING

Days ago, your group began its long and arduous journey past the Yectlani Swamp towards the Xulmec city of Amoya. Halfway through the swamplands, a monsoon struck, causing the waters to quickly rise and flood the crude dirt road upon which you tread. With your path towards Amoya obscured beyond all recognition – and with the waters of the Yectlani Swamp rising to dangerous levels – you decided to seek shelter on the hills north of the flooding marshes.

As you reached the top of the hills overlooking the swamps, you made a curious discovery. A series of narrow crevices cut their way across the rocky terrain at the summit of the tallest hill. In addition, crude stairways, leading down into the depths beneath the hill, were carved into some of these crevices. A quick search of these stairways revealed that most led downward towards dead ends. However, the last stairway that you explored ended at a stone door carved with ancient runes.

With swords drawn and spells at the ready, you slowly opened the door, hoping to merely find dry shelter for the night ... but fully prepared to face the dangers of the unknown.

AREAS OF THE MAP

Level 1: The Crypt of Xotxilaha

The former slaves of the naga built this tomb for the Grand Vizier Xotxilaha, chief advisor to the Mictia Tlahtoanime. By exploring his crypt, the player characters could discover the location of the tombs of the kings that Xotxilaha served, provided

that certain rituals are followed, and certain riddles are solved. (See the section on “Further Adventures” for suggestions about adventures in the five tombs of the tiefling kings).

Note to the GM: Should this adventure be intended as a “one-shot” with no plans for finding the other tombs of the Mictia Tlahtoanime, simply adjust the backstory as follows: Xotxilaha was an evil tiefling prince of the Cochtlan Empire, murdered by drakon warriors. His body was hidden in order to keep it away from his crazed, demonic followers. Omit all references to the tombs of the five tiefling kings (and their demise), and the adventure should be quite playable without the background story presented in this adventure.

The ceilings of the crypt are about 10 feet high. The walls are crafted from solid white marble. All doors are made from high quality iron, and all furniture and other trappings are of exquisite craftsmanship.

Marble Masonry Wall: Break DC 35; Climb DC 20.

Iron Door: Break DC 25 (stuck), 20 (locked).

There are no wandering monsters in the tomb.

Area 1-1 – The Angel and the Devil (EL 1, XP 500): Read or paraphrase the following:

The chamber before you is dark and musty. Cobwebs and dust cover much of the floor. A faded likeness of the sun is drawn on the ceiling with flaking gold paint, while a crescent moon is painted upon the floor.

At the far end of the room, two bronze statues stand proudly. One statue resembles an angel with large, feathered wings; the other statute resembles a horned devil with a spiked tail. Both stand nearly five feet tall. Although the statutes remain motionless, it is evident that there is clearly some activity taking place in the room.

Three gnoll bandits sit on the floor in front of the statues, looking intently at a map and some scraps of parchment. Unless the player characters are deliberately noisy while entering the room, the gnolls do not immediately notice their presence – they need to make a passive Perception check to avoid being surprised.

The gnolls works for a human thief and pirate called Médard Therieux, who operates out of the colonial city of Voltigeur. Therieux obtained maps leading to the tombs of the tiefling kings from a wizard called Ulars Bhet, who claimed that the tombs held treasure beyond imagination. Though Therieux did not particularly believe the wizard, he decided to send some of his gnoll henchmen to investigate the tombs.

However, getting past this first room requires solving a riddle ... one that the gnolls are unable to solve. The riddle is written on one of the pieces of parchment being studied by the gnolls. Should the player characters defeat the gnolls in battle (or obtain the parchment through less violent means), give

The Forbidden Crypt

to Ground Above

1-1

to Ground Above

1-2

1-3

1-4

1-5

1-6

1-12

1-7

1-8

1-11

1-9

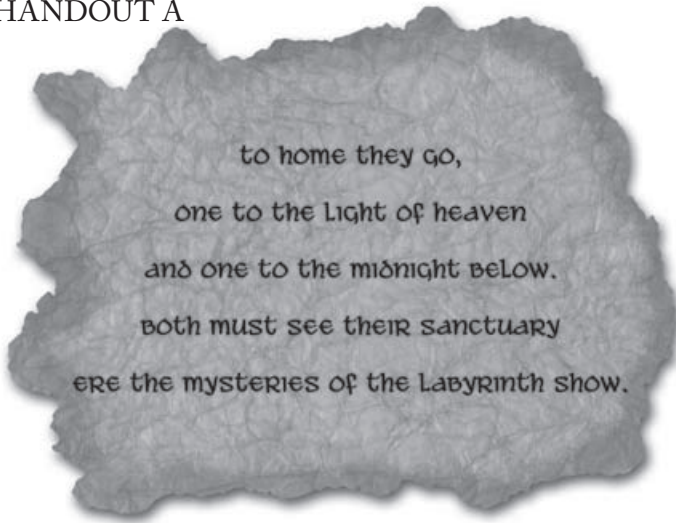
1-10

1 square = 10 feet



4

HANDOUT A



them **Handout A**. Solving this riddle reveals the hidden door behind the statue of the angel.

Solving the riddle is a simple process. If the player characters examine the two statues in the room (a successful Perception check of DC 15 lets them accomplish this task), they notice that the heads of the statues are hinged, allowing them to look both upwards and downwards. By positioning the angel's head to "look" at the sun painted on the ceiling, and the devil's head to "look" at the moon painted on the floor, a secret mechanism activates, causing the hidden door to open and reveal the maze beyond. The hidden door can be found and opened without solving the riddle, but doing so is considerably more difficult (Perception, DC 20 to find the door, and Theivery, DC 20 to open it).

Tactics: The gnolls are primarily thieves, not warriors. They have no wish to engage the PCs in an extended fight. When combat begins two of the gnolls attack with their longswords, while the third attacks with his shortbow. The gnolls' intent is to fight their way through to the exit, so they can escape with their maps and documents. The gnolls certainly presses their attack, though, if they feel they have the upper hand against the PCs.

If two of the gnolls are killed, the third gnoll attempts to surrender, offering the parchment (**Handout A**) in exchange for his life and his freedom. (Of course, if allowed to escape, the freed gnoll returns shortly to the tomb with a band of additional gnoll warriors, looking for revenge ...)

GNOLL BANDITS (3)

LEVEL 2 SKIRMISHER

Medium natural humanoid

XP 150

Initiative +6 **Senses** Perception +3; low-light vision
HP 38; **Bloodied** 19
AC 16; **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 13
Resist 10 necrotic, 10 poison, 5 variable (3/encounter)
Speed 7

⊕ **Longsword** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
 +5 vs. AC; 1d8+2 damage.

✂ **Shortsword** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
 Ranged 15/30; +7 vs. AC; 1d8+3 damage.

Combat Advantage

A gnoll bandit deals an additional 1d6 damage on melee and ranged attacks against any opponent it has combat advantage against.

Pack Attack

A gnoll bandit deals an extra 2 damage on melee and ranged attacks against an enemy that has two or more of the gnoll bandit's allies adjacent to it.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal, Common

Skills Intimidate +6, Stealth +9, Thievery +9
Str 15 (+3) **Dex** 17 (+4) **Wis** 14 (+3)
Con 14 (+3) **Int** 8 (+0) **Cha** 7 (-1)

Equipment leather armor, longsword, shortbow, quiver with 20 arrows, 12 gp.

Area 1-2 – The Ossuaries of Xulmec Slaves (EL 1, XP 400): Read or paraphrase the following:

Shards from shattered clay jars and broken bones litter the floor of this dark, dank room. There are two long and narrow cracks in the far wall of the room – it appears as though something burst through the wall long ago. In the northeast corner of the room, there appears to be a large, noxious pile of refuse and junk.

This room originally held the remains of the Xulmec slave workers who constructed this tomb. Fearing that the slave workers might reveal the location of the tomb to those loyal to the tiefling kings, the leaders of the Xulmec city-state ordered that the builders of the tombs be killed. Their remains were buried in the very crypts that they built.

Long after the tombs were built, an ankheg burrowed down in the vault holding the remains of the Xulmec workers. It destroyed most of the clay ossuaries containing their bones, and transformed the vault into its lair. The few remaining items of value once contained in the room can be found in the refuse pile with a successful Perception check (DC 15). These items include a silver Xulmec funeral mask (worth 400 gp), a silver chalice imbedded with tiny rubies

(worth 300 gp), two intricately carved jade bracelets (worth 100 gp each), and an ancient sacrificial dagger (+1 *magic dagger*).

The two narrow cracks in the wall are tunnels, which the ankheg created. Though narrow, player characters of Large size can make their way through the tunnels at half speed, while player characters of Medium size (or less) can go through the tunnels at normal speed. Any creature of Huge or greater size cannot work their way through the tunnels without some digging. Both of the tunnels eventually wind their way up to the surface, and reach the tops of nearby hills, each about a quarter of a mile away from the tomb's entrance. Nothing of interest or value can be found at the exits to these tunnels.

Tactics: The ankheg fights with one purpose – to get rid of the intruders in its lair. It attempts to drive the player characters back towards the door and out of the room. Should the player characters leave, it makes no attempt to follow them. If bloodied, it attempts to grab one of the smaller PCs and retreat into the tunnels, spitting acid at the remaining members of the party as it withdraws.

ANKHEG

Large natural beast

LEVEL 5 ELITE**SKIRMISHER**

XP 400

Initiative +6 **Senses** Perception +3; tremorsense 10
HP 128; **Bloodied** 64**AC** 21; **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 16**Saving Throws** +2**Speed** 6, burrow 6 (tunneling)**Action Points** 1⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will)

+9 vs. AC; 1d8+4 damage, and the target is grabbed (until escape).

⊕ **Corrosive Grasp** (standard; at-will) ◆ **Acid**

Grabbed target only; +8 vs. Fortitude; 2d6+3 acid damage.

✂ **Spit Acid** (standard; recharge 5,6) ◆ **Acid**

Ranged 10; +8 vs. Reflex; 3d6+3 acid damage, and the target suffers a –2 penalty to AC until the end of the encounter.

Burrow Beneath (move; at-will)

The ankheg moves its burrow speed under the ground. While burrowing it avoids opportunity attacks as it passes beneath squares occupied by enemies.

Alignment Unaligned**Languages** –**Str** 19 (+6) **Dex** 15 (+4) **Wis** 12 (+3)**Con** 16 (+5) **Int** 2 (–2) **Cha** 7 (+0)

Area 1-3 – The Lost Histories of the Cochtlan Empire (EL 1, XP 500): Read or paraphrase the following:

Broken tables, chairs, and bookshelves are scattered along the perimeter of this room. Uncomfortably hot and damp, the center of the room is filled with piles of shredded parchment and small bits of leather. Soft clacking noises can be clearly heard emanating from the piles.

This room once would have been a scholar's dream – it represented the collected libraries of the tiefling kings. They possessed hundreds of books and tomes filled with ancient and evil arcane knowledge, most of which has been lost to history. The Xulmecs, fearing wrathful retribution from the gods, could not bring themselves to destroy these books ... so they decided to seal them away in this hidden tomb, so that no mortal eyes could gaze upon their pages ever again.

Beetles, however, do not fear the gods. A small group of fire beetles made their way down into the tombs through the ankheg's tunnels in area 1-2, and found this room. The books, once properly ripped apart and shredded, made a perfect nest for them, and a few generations of fire beetles have made their home here since the room's discovery. Five giant fire beetles currently lie at rest beneath this nesting pile of parchment – their presence is fairly obvious (a Perception check of DC 10 reveals their location).

Should the player characters decide to look through the shredded remnants of the books, the pieces they examine appear initially to be little more than gibberish – the ruined texts were written in Xulmec. However, should one of the characters cast the *Comprehend Languages* ritual (or if one of the characters is fluent in Xulmec!), they see that much of the remaining pieces of parchment come from two ancient texts: *The Second Dynasty of the Naga Kings* and *The High History of Kültan Isle*. Patient player characters can reassemble portions of both these texts if they decide to take the time to do so (each book takes roughly two hours to reassemble). A boring task, perhaps, but to a Cristine or Xulmec sage, each of these partially reassembled texts can fetch approximately 200 gp.

Tactics: Once any creature comes within 5 feet of the beetles lurking beneath the piles of shredded parchment, they burst out and attack. The beetles begin their assault with *fire spray*, and then simply attack the closest PC with their mandibles. These mindless creatures fight to the death.

FIRE BEETLE (5)**LEVEL 1 BRUTE**

Small natural beast

XP 100

Initiative +1 **Senses** Perception +0**HP** 33; **Bloodied** 16**AC** 13; **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 12, **Will** 11**Resist** 10 fire**Speed** 6⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will)

+5 vs. AC; 2d4+2 damage.

↔ **Fire Spray** (standard; refresh 5,6) ♦ **Fire**

Close blast 3; +4 vs. Reflex; 3d6 fire damage.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –**Str** 14 (+2) **Dex** 12 (+1) **Wis** 10 (+0)**Con** 12 (+1) **Int** 1 (-5) **Cha** 8 (-1)**Area 1-4 – The Sentinel’s Warning (EL 1, XP 225):**

A camouflaged pit trap lies deep in the heart of this twisting maze. However, the pit trap is not just designed to harm or kill intruders entering the tombs. A thin tarpaulin – painted to resemble the surrounding stones of the hallway floor – covers, the pit, and is also attached to a thin wire. This wire leads to a giant gong, hidden behind a nearby wall. When tension is placed on the wire (usually by stepping on the tarpaulin and falling into the pit), the gong sounds with a deafening clang ... and alerts the minotaur skeletons in area 1-5 that intruders are near.

While connected to the camouflaged pit trap, the gong should be considered a separate trap that needs to be found and disabled separately. However, the opposite does not hold true – if the characters find the wire for the gong, they automatically discover the pit trap. (The GM should have searching PCs roll two separate Perception checks for the traps – the first for the gong, then the second for the pit trap if the first check fails.)

GONG ALARM TRAP**LEVEL 1 WARDER**

Trap

XP 100

Perception

☒ DC 24: The character notices the tripwire.

Trigger

The gong alarm trap triggers when the camouflaged pit trap is triggered

Attack**Immediate Reaction**

The gong alerts the minotaur skeletons in area 1-5.

Countermeasures

- ☒ An adjacent character can disable the tripwire with a DC 20 Thievery check.
- ☒ A DC 20 Dungeoneering check grants the party a +2 bonus to Thievery checks to delay or disable the trap.

CAMOUFLAGED PIT TRAP**LEVEL 2 WARDER**

Trap

XP 125

Perception

- ☒ DC 24: The character notices the tripwire for the gong alarm trap.
- ☒ DC 20: The character notices the false stonework that hides the pit.

Trigger

The trap attacks when a creature enters one of the trap’s four squares.

Attack**Immediate Reaction****Melee****Target:** The creature that triggered the trap.**Attack:** +4 vs. Reflex**Hit:** Target falls into pit, takes 2d10 damage, and falls prone.**Miss:** The target returns to the last square it occupied and its move action ends immediately.**Effects:** Whether or not a PC falls into the pit, the gong alarm sounds and alerts the minotaur skeletons in area 1-5. In addition, the pit is no longer hidden.**Countermeasures**

- ☒ An adjacent character can trigger the trap with a DC 10 Thievery check.
- ☒ An adjacent character can disable the tripwire with a DC 25 Thievery check.
- ☒ A DC 20 Dungeoneering check grants the party a +2 bonus to Thievery checks to delay or disable the trap.
- ☒ A character who makes an Athletics check (DC 11m or DC 21 without a running start) can jump over the pit.



Area 1-5 – The Guardian of the Maze (EL 2, XP 600): Read or paraphrase the following:

As you enter this area of the ever-winding maze, it becomes much more difficult to see. Long vines begin to appear out of cracks in the corridor walls, making this part of the maze darker and ominous. A few bones, yellowed and cracked, are plainly visible and scattered along the floor.

A DC 15 Nature check reveals that the bones are those of humans, tomb robbers who were slain by the guardian of the maze ... four minotaur skeletons. These skeletons were created in ancient times by the Xulmec high priest Tanahuatan (whose wight haunts area 1-8) to protect the tomb. They normally stay in this section of the maze, occasionally patrolling the corridors between this area and the entrance to area 1-6. However, if the gong in area 1-5 sounds, the undead minotaurs immediately head to that section of the maze to kill all intruders.

A small pile of treasure is located in plain sight at the end of the corridor in this area, taken from the tomb robbers whose bones litter the floor. The treasure consists of the following: 350 gp, a golden pearl (250 gp), a black pearl (500 gp), 2 *potions of healing*, and a +1 *duelist's short sword*.

Tactics: The skeletons obey the orders given to them long ago by Tanahuatan – kill all intruders, and make sure that they do not reach area 1-6. The minotaur skeletons begin combat with a *goring charge*, and then engage the PCs in melee. If the player characters attempt to flee or get past the minotaur skeletons during combat, the undead attempt to position themselves so that the party cannot reach area 1-6 (or Xotxilha's crypt). The skeleton's fights until destroyed.

MINOTAUR SKELETONS (4) LEVEL 3 SOLDIER
Medium natural animate XP 150
(undead)

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +3; darkvision
HP 46; **Bloodied** 23

AC 18; **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 15

Immune disease, poison

Resist 10 necrotic

Vulnerable 5 radiant

Speed 5

⊕ **Battleaxe** (standard; at-will)

+10 vs. AC; 1d10+3 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the minotaur skeleton's next turn.

‡ **Goring Charge** (standard; at-will)

The minotaur skeleton makes a charge attack: +11 vs. AC; 1d6+3 damage, and the target is knocked prone.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –
Str 17 (+4) **Dex** 15 (+3) **Wis** 14 (+3)
Con 14 (+3) **Int** 3 (-3) **Cha** 3 (-3)

Equipment chainmail, heavy shield, battleaxe

Area 1-6 – The Riddle of the Three Swords (EL 1, XP 500): Read or paraphrase the following:

Three statues face the doorway to this room. They all kneel in homage to a much smaller statue, that of a coiled snake. The three larger statues appear to be of Xulmec warriors, clad in ceremonial garb. All three have their arms outstretched, palms up, as if offering something to the snake. Ornate bracelets are carved onto their wrists.

Along the southern wall, you see three worn leather scabbards hanging from steel hooks driven into the wall. A longsword is sheathed in one of the scabbards, while the other two are empty. Above the scabbards is a strange inscription written in the Common tongue, chiseled crudely into the marble wall. The inscription reads as follows:

*“This hallowed ground holds the last secrets of Five Kings,
Five kings that ruled, Five kings that conquered,
Five kings that served the devils below.
The last secret lies with the traitor Xotxilaha,
He of the silver tongue and serpentine lies,
Who advised the Five Kings and brought doom upon them.
To find the Five Kings, one must seek his counsel,
And offer the swords to the serpents with serving hands.
Know this: Equality brings freedom, and divergence
brings flame.”*

(Note to the GM: Depending on the mix of characters in the party, the inscription can initially be written in ancient Xulmec – the party would then have to either magically or manually translate the words into Common.)

Once the player characters read the inscription (or are able to translate it), provide them with **Handout B**. The riddle references the crypt of Xotxilaha, who was once the chief advisor to the Mictia Tlahtoanime.

Player characters examining the scabbards hanging from the wall notice with a successful Perception check (DC 15) that the two empty scabbards once held swords ... and that the weapons are conspicuous in their absence. The one remaining sword is of high quality, and has a ruby worth 100 gp embedded in its pommel.

Should the player characters examine the statue closely (Perception, DC 20), they find that the ‘bracelets’ of the statues have hinges ... and that each bracelet opens to reveal a small gemstone worth 50 gp. The statue closest to the north wall possesses a ruby, the statue in the middle possesses an emerald, and the statue closest to the south wall possesses a sapphire.

If the lone remaining sword is placed in the hands of the statue closest to the north wall – as if the statue were offering the sword as a gift to the snake – the magically locked door leading to area 1-7 finally opens, allowing the player characters to enter that room (and the rest of the dungeon). The sword and the statue of the servant are ‘equal,’ because both possess rubies ... so ‘equality brings freedom’.

If the sword is placed in the hands of either of the other statues – who ‘diverge’ because these two servant statues possess an emerald and a sapphire, not a ruby – the fire spray trap concealed in the mouth of the snake statue activates, and envelops the incorrect statue and whomever placed the sword incorrectly in its hands in magical fire. If the player character cleverly used a pole, rope, or some other device to drop the sword into the incorrect statue’s hands, and manages to stand more than 1 foot away from the statue while doing so, the effects of the trap may be avoided.

The other two swords were removed from their scabbards several years ago by a group of would-be

tomb robbers. The fates of these swords – and the adventures that can be had by trying to acquire them – are detailed both in area 1-12 and in the “Further Adventures” section at the end of this adventure.

Until the puzzle is solved, the door leading to area 1-7 is sealed by magic, and is essentially inaccessible (along with the other areas beyond that door). However, solving the puzzle also activates the clay scouts that guard area 1-7, and the phantom warriors guarding area 1-9. Should the player characters manage to somehow get past the door leading to area 1-7 without solving the puzzle (either by breaking down the door, or obtaining magic that lets them bypass the door), the monsters in these two areas are not summoned, and these two areas remain free of threats.

FIRE SPRAY TRAP

LEVEL 3 ELITE BLASTER

Trap

XP 300

Perception

- DC 22: The character notices faint scorch marks on the floor.
- DC 25: The character notices a tiny wand-like apparatus in the snake statue’s mouth.

Initiative: +3

Trigger

The trap activates and rolls initiative when the sword is placed in the hands of one of the incorrect statues.

Attack

Standard Action

Close blast 2

Target: All creatures in blast

Attack: +8 vs. Reflex

Hit: 3d8+3 fire damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage.

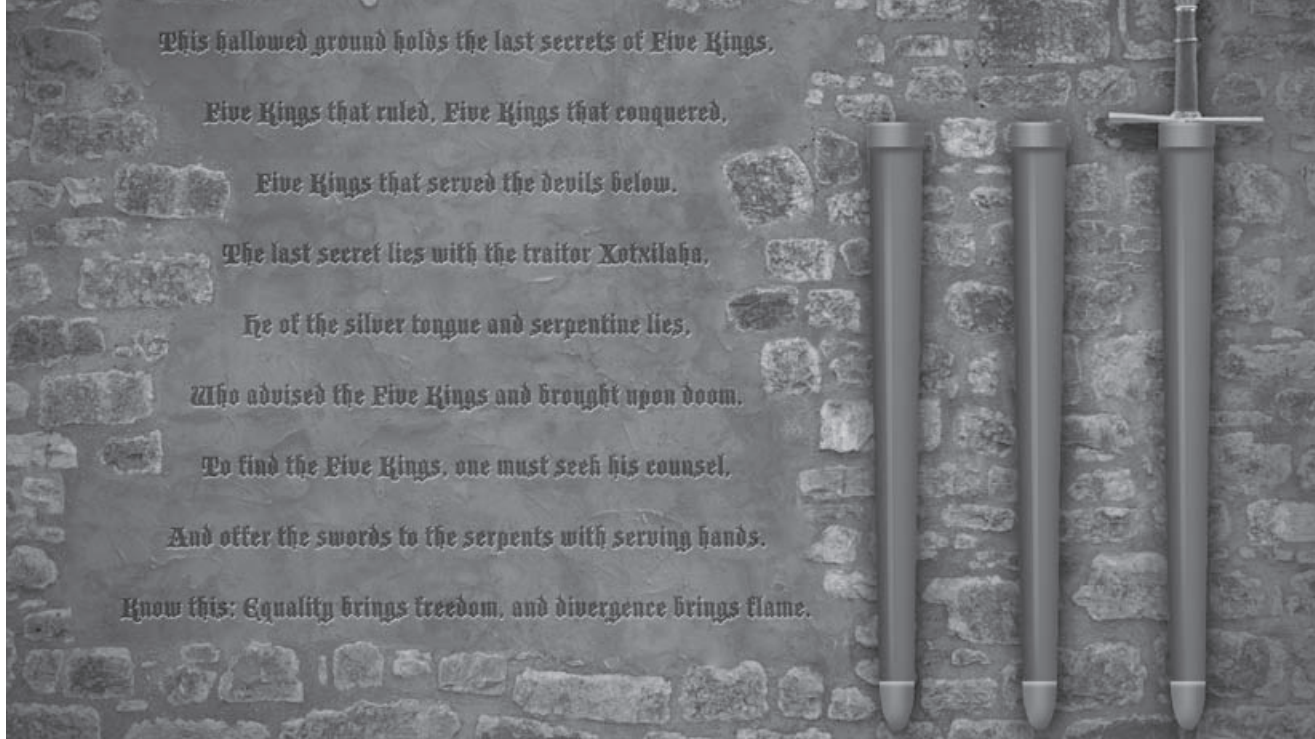
Miss: Half damage, no ongoing damage.

Countermeasures

- An adjacent character can disable the trap with a DC 25 Thievery check.
- The trap can be triggered by a character from a safe distance with a 10-foot pole or some other device with enough reach.

Area 1-7 – Surprise in the Ceiling (EL 2, XP 625): Unless the player characters solve the puzzle in area 1-6, the door leading to this area is firmly shut and magically barred. It cannot be unlocked or opened by conventional means – the door only opens if the puzzle is solved, or if it is forcibly battered down (which is difficult, but not impossible, to do.) Once the door is opened, read or paraphrase the following:

This corridor is long and narrow. Eight pillars, spaced evenly apart, flank the walls, four on each side. At the end of this corridor, there is a stone door. On either side of



the door lies a pile of rusted but sharp weapons – swords, spears, pikes, and the like – presumably left by whomever built this odd and dangerous crypt.

If the PCs manage to open the door by solving the puzzle in area 1-6, they unknowingly activate five clay scouts, bound by magic to defend the area (and the crypt) from intruders. These homunculi have but one purpose – to keep the player characters from reaching Xotxilaha’s tomb (and area 1-12).

Tactics: The homunculi, activated as a result of the door opening in this area, cling to the ceiling (their positions are marked with an “X” on the map). Give the PCs a Perception check against the clay scouts’ Stealth check (DC 18) when they enter the room. If the PCs do not notice the homunculi, they wait until the PCs pass beneath them, and then target one PC apiece with *mind touch*, hoping to daze one or all of their targets. After this they drop down from the ceiling, and focus their attacks on dazed PCs, using *redirect* to cause further chaos and mayhem amongst the heroes.

Once engaged in battle, the clay scouts fight until destroyed. The item the clay scouts were created to guard is the longsword from area 1-6, and the homunculi gains a +4 bonus on attack rolls against the character carrying the sword.

CLAY SCOUTS (5)

Small natural animate
(construct, homunculus)

LEVEL 2 LURKER

XP 125

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +6; darkvision

HP 31; **Bloodied** 15

AC 16; **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 15

Immune disease, poison

Speed 6, fly 3 (clumsy)

⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Poison**

+3 vs. AC; 1d6 damage, and the homunculus makes a secondary attack against the same target.

Secondary Attack: +2 vs. Fortitude; the target is slowed (save ends). See also *guard object*.

✂ **Mind Touch** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Psychic**

Ranged 10; +5 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 3 psychic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends); see also *guard object*.

Guard Object

The clay scout gains a +4 bonus to attack rolls against targets adjacent to or carrying its guarded object (the longsword from area 1-6).

Limited Invisibility ♦ Illusion

The clay scout is invisible to dazed creatures.

Redirect (immediate interrupt, when targeted by a melee or a ranged attack; at-will)

The clay scout makes an attack against the attacker: +4 vs. Will; the triggering attack targets a creature adjacent to the clay scout instead (as chosen by the clay scout).

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –

Skills Stealth +8

Str 10 (+1) **Dex** 15 (+3) **Wis** 10 (+1)

Con 13 (+2) **Int** 10 (+1) **Cha** 16 (+4)

Area 1-8 – The Tormented Priest (EL 3, XP 700):

Read or paraphrase the following:

This large, circular room, which measures approximately 50 feet in diameter, holds a small number of clay jars. Most of them are shattered. Piles of bone and dust lie scattered between the jars. Behind these macabre piles of bone, you notice that something faint has been scrawled upon the wall in blood.

If any of the player characters are able to read Xulmec (or can use a Comprehend Languages ritual), the inscription on the wall is easily translated. It reads “Forgive me for my sins ... I have betrayed you all.”

The writer of this cryptic phrase still resides inside the room, hiding behind a pair of jars that are on the opposite side of the room from the inscription. Long ago, the high priest Tanahuatan, at the behest of the Xulmec kings, was the overseer of the tombs for the tiefling kings, responsible for making sure that no one could ever find the remains of these despots. To ensure secrecy, Tanahuatan employed dark magic, arranging for the tombs to be protected by undead guardians and dangerous constructs. He also arranged for the murder of the workers who built the tombs, thereby ensuring that no living soul could ever give away their location. After he finished burying the remains of these workers in their clay ossuaries, he took his own life in Xotxilha’s crypt, the last of the tombs to be completed.

However, guilt-wracked, the restless soul of Tanahuatan could not pass onward into the realms of the dead. He rose up from death as a wight, seeking to slay all living things. The wight’s mind is gone – it knows dimly that it was once called Tanahuatan, but apart from that, it has no memory of its mortal life. Tanahuatan’s closest servants were also entombed with their master, and they still serve him in undeath as zombies.

Tactics: When the player characters encounter the clay scouts in area 1-7, allow the wight and the zombies to make passive Perception checks. If successful, they hide amongst piles of bones and shattered ossuary jars. (If not, the undead are visible when the PCs enter). If the PCs fail to notice the undead in their hiding spots (Perception, DC 15), they wait until the PCs come within 10 feet of their position before charging the party. Once combat is joined, the zombies attempt to grab PCs, while Tanahuatan uses his mobility to gain combat advantage via flanking or by attacking grabbed PCs. Tanahuatan and the zombies fight until destroyed.

TANAHUATAN (WIGHT) LEVEL 5 SKIRMISHER

Medium natural animate XP 200
(undead)

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +0; darkvision

HP 62; **Bloodied** 31

AC 19; **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 17

Immune disease, poison

Resist 10 necrotic

Vulnerable 5 radiant

Speed 7

⊕ **Claws** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic**

+10 vs. AC; 1d6+4 necrotic damage, the target loses 1 healing surge, and the wight shifts 3 squares.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Xulmec

Skills Stealth +10

Str 18 (+6) **Dex** 16 (+5) **Wis** 6 (+0)

Con 14 (+4) **Int** 10 (+2) **Cha** 15 (-4)

Equipment *amulet of protection +1*

ZOMBIES (4) LEVEL 2 BRUTE

Medium natural animate XP 125
(undead)

Initiative +1 **Senses** Perception +0; darkvision

HP 40; **Bloodied** 20

AC 13; **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 9, **Will** 10

Immune disease, poison

Resist 10 necrotic

Vulnerable 5 radiant

Speed 4

⊕ **Slam** (standard; at-will)

+6 vs. AC; 2d6+2 damage.

‡ **Zombie grab** (standard; at-will)

+4 vs. Reflex; the target is grabbed (until escape). Checks made to escape the zombie’s grab take a –5 penalty.

Zombie Weakness

Any critical hit on a zombie instantly reduces it to 0 hit points.

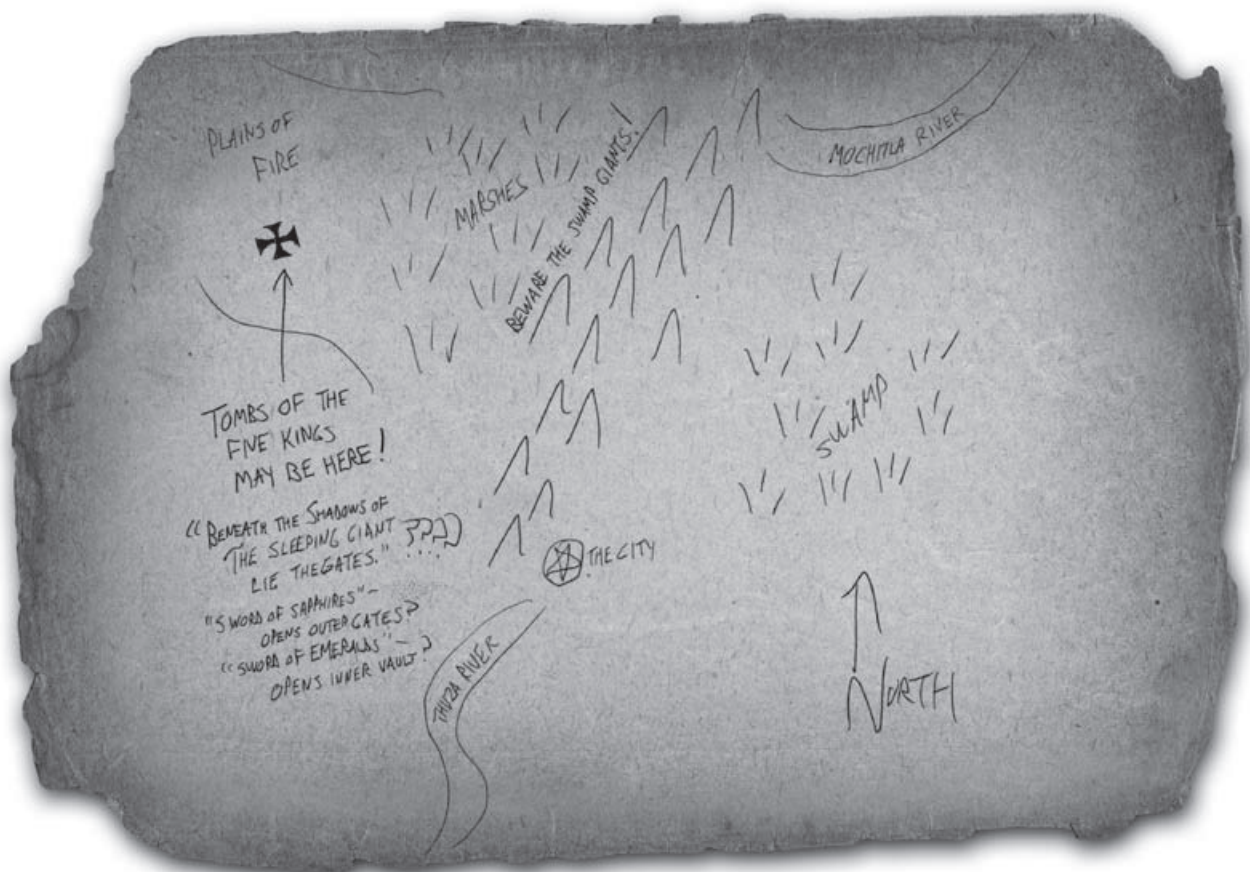
Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –

Str 14 (+3) **Dex** 6 (-1) **Wis** 8 (+0)

Con 10 (+1) **Int** 1 (-1) **Cha** 3 (-3)

Area 1-9 – The Phantom Guardians (EL 3, XP 700): Read or paraphrase the following:

Your eyes sting for a moment as you enter this circular chamber – burning torches evenly line the walls of this strange place, making it a rare haven of light in this underground labyrinth of darkness that you explore. Strange scenes of battle are painted all along the chamber



HANDOUT C

walls, depicting bizarre scenes of battle between snake-men, demonic beasts, and mortal men. It appears that the mortal men – Xulmec warriors, based on their appearance – eventually triumph in the battle, first defeating the snake-men, and then the demonic creatures.

The domed ceiling in this room rises to a height of 30 feet at its center. Painted a bright blue, you see the images of a sun-warrior fighting a moon-warrior drawn upon the ceiling. The two warriors dart between the clouds as they battle one another.

The images on the walls serve as a rough summary of the battles between the drakon, the tiefling kings and their armies, and the Xulmec city-states. Player characters that take the time to look at the details of the painted walls (Perception, DC 10) note that the ‘defeated demonic creatures’ are represented by five hideous demonic humanoids wearing crowns, and a smaller demonic creature that stands by their side. Should any player character successfully make this observation, allow that player character to then make a History check (if applicable), with the following results dependent on the success of the check:

DC 15: The five demonic creatures wearing crowns may be the tiefling kings, who ruled the Co-chitlan Empire many centuries ago.

DC 20: The tiefling kings were despots, known as the Mictia Tlahtoanime, who disappeared under mysterious circumstances, possibly in some sort of civil war.

DC 25: The disappearance of the Mictia Tlahtoanime

was thought to have something to do with a traitorous advisor, who was another tiefling called Xotxilaha.

The eight torches lighting this room are magical everburning torches, which can easily be removed from their wall sconces and used by the party.

Also present in the room (unless the player characters reached this area without having to solve the puzzle in area 1-6) are two phantom warriors, ghostly undead summoned when the ruby sword was placed in the hands of the correct statue in area 1-6. Like the clay scouts in area 1-7, these phantoms are bound to the room by powerful magic, and are compelled to defend the room – and to keep intruders from reaching the crypt of Xotxilaha in area 1-12 – at all costs.

Tactics: The two phantoms hide in the depictions of the sun and moon warrior via their phasing ability. They silently emerge when the PCs move more than 10 feet into the room, gliding down from the ceiling to attack (give the PCs a passive perception check DC 15 to notice the phantoms). The phantom warriors use their phasing ability to maneuver around the battlefield and avoid opportunity attacks. Once battle is joined, one phantom warrior attempts to stay adjacent to the PCs throughout the fight to allow the other phantom warrior to gain combat advantage. The phantoms fight until they are destroyed, eagerly seeking to end their imprisonment in the tomb.

ELITE PHANTOM**WARRIORS (2)**Medium natural animate
(undead)**LEVEL 3 ELITE****LURKER**

XP 350

Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +3; darkvision
HP 80; **Bloodied** 40**AC** 20; **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 16**Immune** disease, poison**Resist** insubstantial**Saving Throws** +2**Speed** 6, fly 6 (hover), phasing**Action Points** 1⊕ **Phantom Sword** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic**

+9 vs. Reflex; 1d8+2 necrotic damage, and the target is marked until the end of the phantom warrior's next turn.

Phantom Tactics

A phantom warrior has combat advantage against any target that has another phantom warrior adjacent to it.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Xulmec**Str** 14 (+4) **Dex** 12 (+3) **Wis** 11 (+2)**Con** 12 (+3) **Int** 10 (+2) **Cha** 14 (+4)**Area 1-10 – The Eternal Workers (EL 1, XP 500):**

Read or paraphrase the following:

In this section of the corridor, part of the marble wall has been torn open. A crude tunnel leads downward into darkness. The hole ripped into the stone wall, while crude, does not seem to have been made haphazardly – tool marks along its edges indicate that the labor of men probably created the tunnel.

Should the player characters head downward into the crude tunnel, allow them a DC 15 Perception check. If successful, they hear the faint sound of metal picks digging slowly but surely into solid rock.

Most of the labor needed to build Xotxilaha's crypt – and the tombs of the tiefling kings – was completed long ago, and came well before the demise of the high priest Tanahuatan (the wight in area 1-8). However, knowing that a few things still needed to be completed well after his death – and the deaths of the remaining Xulmec workers who built the crypt – Tanahuatan turned a few of the dead workers into zombies, so that a few mundane tasks could be completed after the tombs of the tiefling kings were sealed away from the rest of the Known World.

The sounds of digging in the tunnel are those of four Xulmec zombie workers, still laboring centuries later to build a new tunnel for the crypt. Their picks have nearly been worn down to nothing, but they still continue to mindlessly dig.

Tactics: Until the player characters come within 10 feet of the zombies at the end of the crude tunnel, they continue to dig. If the player characters leave them alone, the zombies fail to attack or otherwise bother the party. If the PCs approach the zombies too closely, though, the zombies turn from their digging, and attack them.

The zombies fight until destroyed.

ZOMBIE WORKERS (4)Medium natural animate
(undead)**LEVEL 2 BRUTE**

XP 125

Initiative +1 **Senses** Perception +0; darkvision
HP 40; **Bloodied** 20**AC** 13; **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 9, **Will** 10**Immune** disease, poison**Resist** 10 necrotic**Vulnerable** 5 radiant**Speed** 4⊕ **Worn Pick** (standard; at-will)

+6 vs. AC; 1d6+2 damage (crit 1d6+8).

‡ **Zombie grab** (standard; at-will)

+4 vs. Reflex; the target is grabbed (until escape). Checks made to escape the zombie's grab take a –5 penalty.

Zombie Weakness

Any critical hit on a zombie instantly reduces it to 0 hit points.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –**Str** 14 (+3) **Dex** 6 (–1) **Wis** 8 (+0)**Con** 10 (+1) **Int** 1 (–1) **Cha** 3 (–3)**Equipment** worn pick**Area 1-11 – The Hidden History of the Cochtlan Empire (EL 1, XP 400):** Read or paraphrase the following:*There is a certain feeling of déjà vu as you enter this small room. Immediately, you spot a statue of a kneeling Xulmec warrior, who bows his stone head in deference to a statue of a coiled serpent. Several tapestries depicting Xulmec wizards wielding eldritch energies against bloodied demonic creatures hang from the walls.**The statue of the kneeling warrior also holds a large stone chest in its hands, as if offering it to the serpent. Judging from the expression on the serpent's face, the creature is curious to know what might be inside the chest.*The box contains a few treasures of note – namely, a set of *bracers of mighty striking*, 2 *potions of healing*, a +1 *wand of burning hands*, and 140 gp. However, the box contains a few items more valuable than gold or magic. Inside a slender scroll case made of unicorn bone (worth 100 gp) are a series of ancient writings inscribed on several pieces of fragile parchment. Known collec-

tively as the Cochtlan Codex, these writings provide a partial history of the reign of the five tiefling kings ... and where to find their respective tombs.

In game terms, the Cochtlan Codex represents a chance for the GM to lay the groundwork for future adventures. If *The Forbidden Crypt* represents a one-shot adventure, and if the PCs will not be following up on any of the story elements presented in this adventure, the GM should feel free to either omit the Codex from the adventure, or have it allude to forthcoming adventures that should follow *The Forbidden Crypt* in a campaign. The Codex is meant as an opportunity to provide campaign information to the player characters. It should be used (or ignored) however the GM best sees fit.

If the GM intends to follow up this adventure with further explorations of the tombs of the tiefling kings, it is recommended that the Codex should cover the following information. It should take the PCs two or three hours of perusing the Codex in order to discover all of this information. Some of it may be redundant to the PCs, depending on what they have already discovered in the crypt.

- The tomb that the PCs currently are exploring is that of a tiefling warrior called Xotxilaha, who was chief adviser and grand vizier to the Mictia Tlahtoanime, the five tiefling kings who ruled the ancient Cochtlan Empire.
- Xotxilaha betrayed the five tiefling kings to the insidious reptiles known as the drakon, who assassinated the kings with poison. The drakon also betrayed and killed Xotxilaha.
- The tombs of the five tiefling kings can be found beneath a mountain, far to the south. In order to enter these tombs, however, a “sapphire sword” and an “emerald sword” are needed to open them. Based on the text in the Codex, it appears that the swords should have been present in area 1-6 ... but aren’t. (Hints to their locations – which should provide further adventures for the PCs – are alluded to in **Handout C** in area 1-12, and covered in the “Further Adventures” section.)
- The GM should feel free to add in any additional background information from the “Background Story” section or the various areas of the adventure as needed – basically, anything that the GM feels would help add useful information to this adventure, and to future adventures in a campaign.

Of course, the PCs need to open the locked chest in order to reach the Codex (and the other treasures contained in the chest). The lock is trapped with a poison needle burst trap. It is possible to smash open the box in order to avoid the trap, but doing so is extremely difficult, and the destructive act means there

is a 50% chance that the scroll case containing the Codex is destroyed.

Stone chest (locked): AC 5, Fortitude 10, 80 hp, Break DC 32, Unlock (Thievery DC 20).

POISON NEEDLE **LEVEL 5 ELITE BLASTER**
BURST TRAP XP 400
Trap

Perception

- ☒ DC 24: The character notices small holes in the stone chest.

Initiative: +6

Trigger

The trap rolls initiative when a character opens the chest.

Attack

Standard Action **Close burst 5**

Target: All creatures in the burst.

Attack: +10 vs. Reflex

Hit: 1d8+2 damage, and the trap makes a secondary attack against the target.

Secondary Attack: +8 vs. Fortitude: 5 ongoing poison damage, and the target is slowed (save ends both).

Countermeasures

- ☒ An adjacent character can disable the trap with a DC 25 Thievery check.
- ☒ A DC 20 Dungeoneering check grants the party a +2 bonus to Thievery checks to delay or disable the trap.

Area 1-12 – The Grand Vizier of the Tiefling Kings (EL 3, XP 750):

Read or paraphrase the following:
The door to this room opens ... and you hear the faint sounds of dripping water. As you enter the room, you realize that you stand at the top of a balcony. Spiral staircases, located to your left and to your right, descend downward towards an open chamber 20 feet below you. Both sets of stairs end at the foot of a raised dais.

Atop the dais sits an ornate stone sarcophagus. Likenesses of a leering demonic face are carved along the sides and ends of the sarcophagus. A crescent moon is carved upon the lid of the sarcophagus, which appears to be cracked and slightly askew.

Just behind the sarcophagus is a pool of clear water. Towards the eastern end of the pool, you see a skeletal figure lying prone in the water, clutching the scabbards of two swords in its bony hands. The figure wears rusted chainmail armor, and appears to have been hacked in half at the waist.

The sarcophagus once contained the corpse of Xotxilaha, the chief advisor and grand vizier to the five tiefling kings. Xotxilaha, who in life was a greedy and ambitious soul, arranged with the drakon

of the reptilian nation of Ssurlang to assassinate his masters, hoping to claim the crown of the Cochtlan Empire for himself. However, the cunning but foolish adviser did not count on the blades of the drakon being turned upon him as well, and so he perished before he could ascend to the Cochtlan throne.

The Xulmec city-states, unaware of the circumstances regarding the death of the tiefling kings, decided to hide away the bodies of these despotic rulers, as well as their traitorous advisor, in elaborate underground tombs. However, the Xulmec leaders did not realize that the drakon had placed a final curse of Xotxilaha before killing him. Exactly one year after the Xulmecs interred Xotxilaha's corpse, the traitor rose from the dead as a mummy. Trapped within his tomb for centuries, the tiefling advisor went insane.

If the player characters examine the body of the mutilated skeleton (Perception, DC 15), give them **Handout C**. This note alludes to the information contained in the scrolls in area 1-11 – that the missing swords from area 1-6 are needed to reach the tombs of the five tiefling kings. The handout gives a rough location of their tombs, as well as information as to where the swords might have been taken by the adventuring companions of this long-dead tomb robber. (The body is that of an adventuring rogue who entered the tomb decades ago ... he was slain by Xotxilaha, and his companions managed to flee with the swords.)

In fleeing, though, those long-ago tomb robbers failed to discover the treasures placed in Xotxilaha's crypt. Inside the sarcophagus of the undead grand vizier is a golden burial mask, decorated with jade and rubies, worth 2,200 gp. Also inside the sarcophagus are two divine ritual scrolls. One scroll contains the rituals *Gentle Repose* and *Hand of Fate*, while the other contains *Brew Potion* and *Cure Disease*. Finally, there is a +1 *flaming falchion* inside the sarcophagus (unused by Xotxilaha, who prefers his greataxe).

Tactics: Mad and deranged, Xotxilaha lurks beneath the balcony, muttering odd phrases to himself in ancient Xulmec. A successful Perception check (DC 20) gives away the mummy's location to the player characters. Anyone understanding the ancient language muttered by Xotxilaha learns that he is repeating the same phrase, over and over: *"All of this has happened before, and will happen again."*

Once aware of the PCs, Xotxilaha attempts to move up whichever stairway is not being used by the PCs to limit the number of attackers that can face him. He begins combat with *mighty blow* on the first PC to engage him in melee; he then spends an action point to follow up this attack with his greataxe. He repeats this attack routine every time his *mighty blow* ability recharges or

as long as he has action points to spend.

If unable to attack the PCs on the stairs, Xotxilaha uses the same tactics as above; however, he follows up a *mighty blow* attack by moving to the target of the *mighty blow* and delivering a greataxe strike on the downed foe, if he can do so without drawing an opportunity attack. He also attempts to keep as many of the PCs in his *aura of despair* to reduce the effectiveness of their attacks. Xotxilaha relies on his second wind and regeneration to keep him going, and will furiously attack any opponent inflicting fire damage on him.

Xotxilaha fights to his destruction.



**XOTXILAHA, TIEFLING
MUMMY WARRIOR****LEVEL 3 SOLO BRUTE**
XP 750Medium natural animate
(undead)**Despair (Fear)** aura 3; enemies within the aura receive a –2 penalty to attack rolls against Xotxilaha.**Initiative** +3 **Senses** Perception +3; darkvision
HP 160; **Bloodied** 80**Regeneration** 5 (if Xotxilaha takes fire damage, its regeneration doesn't function until the end of its next turn)**AC** 17; **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 20**Immune** disease, poison**Resist** 10 necrotic**Vulnerable** 5 radiant**Speed** 6, fly 6 (hover); phasing**Action Points** 2⬇️ **+1 Vicious Greataxe** (standard; at-will)

+6 vs. AC (+7 against a bloodied target); 1d12+5 damage (crit 2d12+17).

⬇️ **Necrotic Slam** (standard; at-will) ⬆️ **Necrotic**

+6 vs. AC (+7 against a bloodied target); 1d6+5 necrotic damage, and ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends).

⬇️ **Mighty Blow** (standard; recharge 5,6) ⬆️ **Necrotic**

Xotxilaha makes a slam attack against a target: +6 vs. Fortitude (+7 against a bloodied target); 2d6+5 necrotic damage, the target is pushed 3 squares, knocked prone, and takes ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends).

Infernal Wrath (standard; encounter)

Xotxilaha gains a +1 power bonus to its next attack roll against an enemy that hit it since its last turn. If the attack hits and deals damage, Xotxilaha deals an additional 3 damage.

Second Wind (standard; encounter) ⬆️ **Healing**

Xotxilaha spends a healing surge and regains 40 hit points. Xotxilaha gains a +2 bonus to all defenses until the start of its next turn.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Xulmec**Skills** Bluff +11, History +7, Insight +8, Intimidate +9, Stealth +5**Str** 20 (+6) **Dex** 14 (+3) **Wis** 14 (+3)**Con** 16 (+4) **Int** 13 (+2) **Cha** 17 (+4)**Equipment** hide armor, +1 vicious greataxe**CONCLUDING
THE ADVENTURE**

The threat of Xotxilaha and other the denizens of his tomb end once the mummy is slain or defeated in combat. Once this occurs, read or paraphrase the following:

The evil mummy falls to the ground, his body crumbling to dust before your very eyes. You have conquered the tomb of the foul, undead tiefling! Its treasures are yours ... as well as its secrets. Many of its rooms held strange riddles, some of which might lead to further treasures ... or, perhaps, certain doom. Has a more sinister evil been awakened by your heroics? Only time will tell ...

THUS ENDS THE FORBIDDEN CRYPT**FURTHER ADVENTURES**

Here are some ideas for further adventures to be run following the events of “*The Forbidden Crypt*”:

- The note found on the body of the skeletal thief in area 1-12 makes reference to his two companions – Ceralt and Terelic – and indicates that they intended to head to the colonial town of Voltigeur with the swords they found in the tombs. Should the PCs head to Voltigeur, they discover that Ceralt and Terelic were local adventuring heroes who lived in the town decades ago. Their treasures are rumored to still be in the Keep of Thirteen Eyes, an abandoned ruin just outside Voltigeur where the two – and other local adventurers – kept their base of operations. Should the player characters head to the Keep, they may indeed find the swords, as well as further clues leading to the tombs of the tiefling kings ... and, perhaps, other ghosts from the past best left undisturbed.
- Also present on the note is a rough map and a hand-drawn route leading from Fort Montsiang to the base of Mount Huicatl, the tallest peak of the Nahualli Mountains. Should the player characters travel there, they find the ruins of a lost city, which seems to be patrolled by drakon savages, and is ruled by a fearsome green dragon. Five small ziggurats sit in the heart of this ruined city. Are these indeed the lost tombs of the tiefling kings? Only by exploring them will the player characters find out ...

LEGACY OF THE LABYRINTH

By Ruth Lampi

INTRODUCTION

Legacy of the Labyrinth is designed for five players of 1st through 2nd level. It is recommended that the party include 5-10 total character levels between members. While the characters can be of any basic character class, a good mix of character classes is helpful. A cleric, a fighter, a rogue and a wizard would be handy and benefit from the treasure found in the adventure. This adventure involves unique treasure that can be customized to best suit your party. See the “Scaling Information” section for ways to tailor this adventure your group’s unique style of play.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

Centuries past, a wicked agent of the fey was exiled from the Feywild. Cait-Maahes has wiled away the years in his prison on the prime material plane ever since, awaiting the day that he might be freed from his torment. His nightmarish powers have infected the land and creatures surrounding him, down to the very stones that make up his prison.

Stumbling upon the ruins of Cait-Maahes’ prison, the PCs are lured into the mad fey’s labyrinth, and then down into his prison below. Happening upon the magical weapons that serve as seals imprisoning the fey, the PCs mistakenly release the ancient power. Descending deeper into the dungeon, they discover the source of the labyrinth’s enduring mystery, finally coming face to face (of a sort) with the master of the labyrinth, and the master’s sinister pet.

GAME MASTER’S SECTION

ENCOUNTER TABLE

To help the GM prepare, we have included a quick reference table showing all encounters at a glance. *Loc* – the location number keyed to the map for the encounter. *Pg* – the module page number that the encounter can be found on. *Type* – this indicates

if the encounter is a trap (T), puzzle (P), or combat (C). *Encounter* – the key monsters, traps, or NPCs that can be found in the encounter. Names in italics are classed NPCs. *EL* – the encounter level.

ENCOUNTER TABLE				
Loc	Pg	Type	Encounter	EL
1-1	72	C	4 Grigs	1
1-3	75	C	2 puppeteer vines	1
1-4	75	C	Swordbreaker toad	3
1-6	76	C	3 giant trapdoor spiders	3
1-7	77	C,T	5 grigs Labyrinth trap	2
3-2	80	P	Ice grub hazard	2
3-3	80	T	Spiked pit traps	2
3-4	81	C,T	Shadow orb	varies
3-6	81	T	Skeletal limb hazard	2
3-8	82	C	Salt goblin 4 straylight orbs	3
4-3	84	T	Pit trap	1
4-4	84	T	Poisoned coins	1
4-5	85	C	Stone Dragon	3

SCALING INFORMATION

Legacy of the Labyrinth is designed for five players of 1st through 2nd level, but it can be easily modified for parties of different sizes or levels. Consider adapting the adventure using any of the following suggestions:

Weaker parties (4 or fewer characters): Remove one grig from area 1-1. Remove 1 puppeteer vine from area 1-3. Make the swordbreaker toad elite rather than solo in area 1-4. Remove one giant trapdoor spider from area 1-6. Remove the spikes from the pit traps in area 3-3. Remove 2 of the straylight orbs in area 3-8. Remove 1 level from the stone dragon in area 4-5.

Stronger parties (6 or more characters, or higher than 2nd level): Add another puppeteer vine to area

1-3. Increase the depths of the spiked pit traps in area 3-3 to 20 feet. Add another salt goblin to area 3-8. Add one level to the stone dragon in area 4-5.

GETTING THE PLAYERS INVOLVED

Use the suggestions below to craft a hook that best suits your PCs.

- Answering the summons of the Ghaele of Summer (see Background below), the PCs are sent to investigate the prison of a Feywild exile. If the PCs can ensure that the outlaw is still captive, they will be handsomely rewarded by the eladrin noble.
- The party rogue or mage has come into possession of an ancient treasure map scrawled in chalk on a sheet or parchment. The map reveals the location of the labyrinth, but gives precious little information about the dangers lurking in the ruins below.

BACKGROUND STORY

Ages past, in the timeless twilight of the Feywild, the Ghaele of Winter fell desperately in love with the lovely, sun-drenched daughter of the Ghaele of Summer. Rallying ambitious and greedy fey to his frigid throne, the Winter King set steaming sacrifices of blood and jewels upon his altar of ice, ample reward for the one that succeeded in stealing away his beloved aelf.

Many yearned after the Ghaele's reward, but few were willing to risk the ire of the Ghaele of Summer. After all had turned away – leaving the blood and jewels untouched – but one remained: a dusky skinned fey named Cait-Maahes, the Catlord and master of madness.

Donning the skin of a cat, Cait-Maahes slipped into the Summer Palace in the dead of night. Finding the princess' chambers, he sat mewling on her windowsill, until the princess awoke.

Seeing that the cat regarded her with a strange sort of intelligence, the princess followed him to the window, and then down into the courtyard below. Every ten steps, the cat would turn to see that she followed, and the princess obliged, following the cat out into the fields beyond the high walls. Beyond the reach of the Summer Ghaele's dominion, a horde of

wicked fey swept down upon the princess, proudly bearing her back to the lair of their master.

When the Summer Ghaele awoke and learned what had happened, she summoned all the armies of her siblings and marched upon the lands of the Winter King. Seeing the forces arrayed against him, the Winter King ceded the field, agreeing to return the daughter to her mother. But the damage had already been done: the summer princess, as fragile as a flower, was a withered, frostbit shadow of her former beauty. Ashamed, she refused to leave the icy palace of the Winter King, and resides there to this day.

Seeking to appease the Summer Ghaele's blood lust, the Winter King offered up the life of his servant, Cait-Maahes. At the Ghaele's decree, Cait-Maahes was exiled from the Feywild for 6 score and 60 centuries.

Now Cait-Maahes wiles away the centuries in his prison on the Prime Material Plane. Though an outcast, he still retains a strong connection with the Feywild, and his mere presence is enough to corrupt the creatures and lands around him. The fey aims to lure foolish PCs into his lair, and once freed, will return to the Feywild, restore the princess' youth and beauty, and regain his place at the right hand of the Winter King.

PLAYER BEGINNING:

To begin the adventure, read or paraphrase the following:

It is twilight when you sight the crossroads. Four white standing stones mark the corners, glowing a faint pink and orange in the light of the dying sun. A forest rises to the northeast, not quite hiding the tumbled shapes of overgrown ruins. Some small creatures buzz and flutter about the tree line. Fireflies begin to blink and fade amid the deepening shadows.

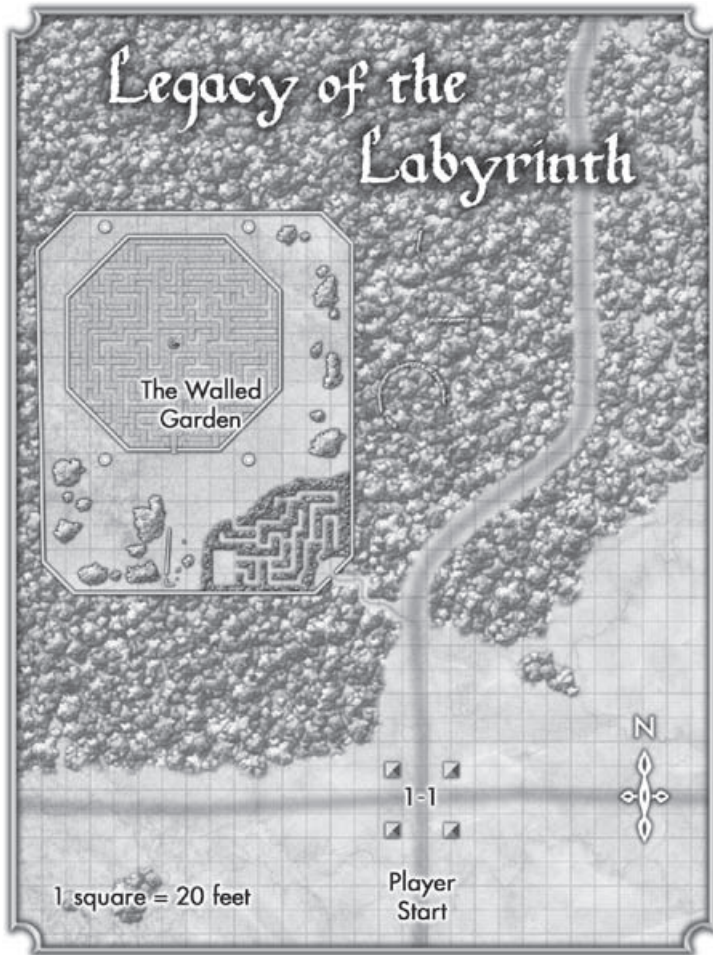
AREAS OF THE MAP

Area 1-1 – Crossroads of Fate (EL 1, XP 500):

As the PCs approach the crossroads, read or paraphrase the following:

Small darting humanoid forms with leathery little wings, crumpled like last year's leaves, dip and hover in the air around the standing stones, making odd shadows across the rock. They move too quickly to make out details beyond an impression of bright, bead-like eyes, long branchy limbs, and the gleam of teeth.

The small forms are grigs, cruel sprites loyal to Cait-Maahes. The grigs have but one goal: lure the



GRIGS (4)

LEVEL 2 SKIRMISHER

Tiny fey humanoid

XP 125

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +2; low-light vision

HP 37; **Bloodied** 18

AC 16; **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 15

Immune charm

Speed 4, fly 7 (hover)

⊕ **Short Sword** (standard; at-will)

+5 vs. AC; 1d4 damage.

⊗ **Short Bow** (standard; at-will)

+7 vs. AC; 1d4+4 damage, or 1d4+8 against an immobilized target.

‡ **Snatch** (standard; at-will)

+5 vs. Reflex; the grig steals a small item from the target, such as a coin, dagger, potion, etc., and the grig shifts 3 squares.

↔ **Fiddle Dance** (standard; recharge 6) ◆ **Charm**

Close burst 5; +3 vs. Will; target is dazed and immobilized (save ends both).

Alignment Unaligned

Languages Common, Elven

Skills Nature +8, Stealth +10

Str 10 (+1)

Dex 18 (+5)

Wis 12 (+2)

Con 13 (+2)

Int 14 (+3)

Cha 16 (+4)

Equipment short sword, shortbow, quiver with 20 arrows, fiddle

5

PCs into the Twilit Garden. They hover around the PCs, before sweeping down to snatch away any small item, like a purse of coins, map, dagger, or wand, before fleeing into the ruins.

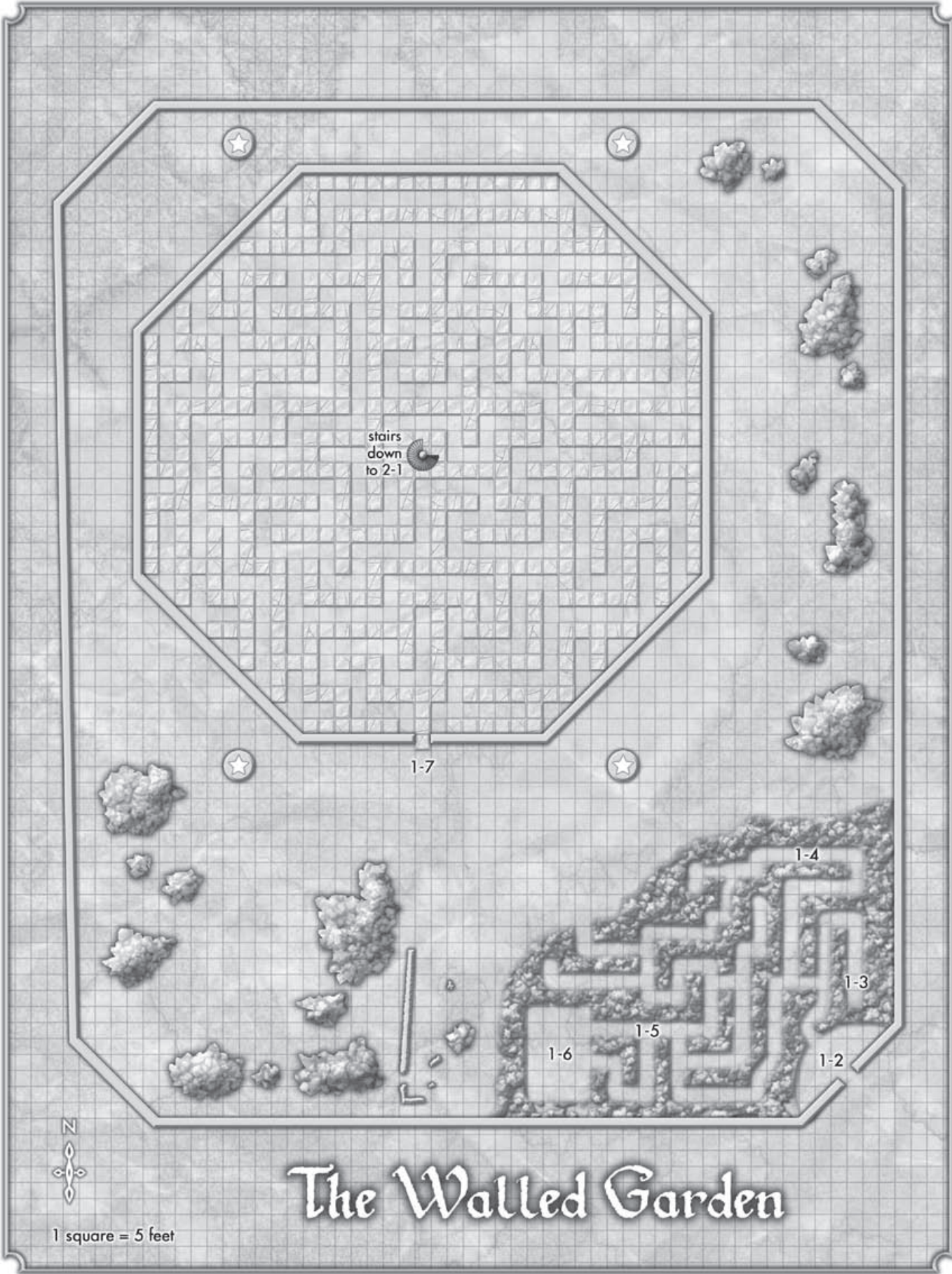
Tactics: The grigs' goal is to lure the PCs into the hedge maze. To do this they try to steal an item from one or more PCs, and then retreat toward the entrance of the maze. They avoid protracted combat, although defend themselves with their bows if the PCs are particularly aggressive or bloodthirsty. If the PCs manage to kill two of the grigs, the others use fiddle dance to immobilize the heroes, allowing the tiny sprites to flee into the hedge maze.

Encounter Area 1: The Twilit Garden

The walled garden contains a hedge maze at its entrance, and beyond that, an open area with a flat-floored labyrinth and four statues. The garden has only one entrance, the concealed entrance to the south. There is no ceiling in this area, but the garden's flying grig guardians fiercely attack any adventurers attempting to climb either the hedge maze walls or the stone walls of the garden. The grigs leave the party alone once they return to the ground.

The garden and the dungeons beneath it are home to Cait-Maahes, the Catlord. His presence lends the land peculiar characteristics: No matter how long the party stays within the open garden area, the light does not change; within the garden, it is always twilight.

Hedge Maze Walls: The hedge maze walls are 15 feet high and fairly easy to climb (Athletics, DC 15); however, the sharp thorns and the grig guardians make doing so extremely dangerous. Characters attempting to climb the hedge are attacked by its thorns (+8 vs. AC; 1d10+3 damage) for each 5 feet climbed. In addition, the grigs pelt anyone reaching the top with arrows, making the climb a deadly proposition, even for heroes of the PCs' caliber.



The Walled Garden

1 square = 5 feet

Garden Walls: The garden masonry walls are 20 feet high, and are also relatively easy to climb (Athletics, DC 20). However, climbing these walls incurs the wrath of the grig guardians, who snipe at a climbing PC until he or she climbs down or is slain.

10 Grigs Guardians: (see area 1-1 for stats.)

Area 1-2 – Entrance to the Hedge Maze:

If the PCs discover the concealed entrance to the garden (Perception, DC 10), read or paraphrase the following:

You discover an entrance into the ruins! Squeezing through a narrow opening in the stone wall, you find yourself in a small clearing, facing a thick hedge. A single portal in the hedge forms a path that leads about ten feet before turning right. The hedge itself is dense and full of sharp brambles.

The hedge is covered in sharp thorns that make it very dangerous to climb (see encounter area 1 for details). A close inspection (Perception, DC 15) reveals that the thorns are actually tiny bones, whittled to needle-sharp points, growing out of the hedge.

Area 1-3 – Dead(ly) End (EL 1, XP 500):

Read or paraphrase the following:

You round the corner only to discover a dead end. Hanging from the brambly wall are the remains of a dead man. Though his flesh is long since rotted, his clothing still hangs on his bones in shredded strips.

The skeleton is held in place by a sinister puppeteer vine. There are two of them growing in the hedge, one in the five-foot square dead end, and another at the opposite end of the corridor, in the north wall. The intelligent plant monsters are using the skeleton as bait, and wait for the PCs to approach before attacking.

Tactics: The two puppeteer vines can cover the entire maze corridor with their vines. They wait for a PC to close within 5 feet of the skeleton, and then launch their attack. The vines begin combat with *lashing burst*, attempting to grab and dominate as many PCs as possible. The vines use dominated PCs as human shields, forcing them to attack allies and intercept incoming attacks. The vines fight until bloodied, or if the PCs use sustained fiery attacks against them. They retreat into the hedge to escape.

Treasure: PCs searching the ground beneath the skeleton discover 1d20 pp and a silver ring cast in the shape of a curled serpent (worth 5 gp).

PUPPETEER VINES (2)

Medium natural animate
(plant)

LEVEL 2 ELITE

CONTROLLER

XP 250

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +2; blindsight 5

HP 80; **Bloodied** 40

AC 18; **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 13

Saving Throws +2

Vulnerable 5 fire

Speed 2 (forest walk)

Action Points 1

⊕ **Grasping Vines** (standard; at-will)

Reach 3; +5 vs. AC; 1d6+3 damage, and the target is grabbed (until escape). The puppeteer vine can attack and grab with up to three vines.

‡ **Lashing Burst** (standard; recharge 6)

The puppeteer vine makes three grasping vine attacks.

‡ **Puppet Master** (minor; at-will) ♦ **Charm, Poison**

Grabbed target only; +6 vs. Fortitude; the target is dominated (save ends). The puppeteer vine can only dominate one target at a time, and it must maintain contact with the target at all times.

Alignment Unaligned

Languages –

Skills Stealth +9

Str 15 (+3)

Dex 17 (+4)

Wis 12 (+2)

Con 16 (+4)

Int 10 (+1)

Cha 7 (-1)

Area 1-4 – Hedge Maze, North Loop (EL 3, XP 750):

Read or paraphrase the following:

A large shape squats on the path ahead: a baleful-eyed toad the size of a large dog. The creature's thick hide is mottled green and brown, slick with some kind of fluid and covered in varying sizes and shapes of warts. It opens cavernous jaws, emits a deep croak, and blinks at you.

The horned toad was once one of the Catlord's servants, a particularly unpleasant fey. For amusement, the Catlord had the servant transformed into an equally unpleasant creature: the swordbreaker toad.

Tactics: If left undisturbed, the toad watches the PCs with bored, glazed eyes. But if the PCs disturb the toad in any way, it leaps to the attack. Given the option, the toad snatches weapons from the PCs, snapping them in two; but in a pinch, the toad settles for simply grinding its bony gums down on a hero.

Treasure: Heroes searching the toad's gullet (an exceedingly disgusting DC 15 Perception check) discover a pair of small rubies, each worth 15 gp. The toad's stomach acid is potent, causing 5 points of on-going acid damage for every round spent searching (save ends).

SWORDBREAKER TOAD **LEVEL 3 SOLO BRUTE**
Medium fey magical beast XP 750

Initiative +1 **Senses** Perception +2; low-light vision
HP 168; **Bloodied** 84
AC 17; **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 13
Saving Throws +5
Resist fire 5, thunder 5
Speed 4; see also *leaping charge*
Action Points 2

⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will)

+6 vs. AC; 2d6+4 damage.

‡ **Leaping Charge** (standard; recharge 5,6)

The swordbreaker toad shifts 8 squares and makes a bite attack; +7 vs. AC; 4d6+4 damage, and the target is knocked prone.

‡ **Swordbreaking Bite** (immediate interrupt 1/round, when attacked in melee with a power or attack with the weapon key word; at-will)

+3 vs. Reflex; the attacker loses the use of the weapon used to make the attack until the end of the encounter.

↔ **Doomcroak** (standard; recharges when first bloodied) ◆ **Thunder**

Close blast 3; +2 vs. Fortitude; 2d10+4 thunder damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the swordbreaker toad's next turn.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –

Skills Athletics +10 (+15 jumping)

Str 18 (+5) **Dex** 10 (+1) **Wis** 12 (+2)

Con 18 (+5) **Int** 4 (-2) **Cha** 8 (+0)

Area 1-5 – Blood Diamonds:

Read or paraphrase the following:

Just ahead, the paths branch in several directions. At the center of the intersection is a short, peculiar tree. Jewels hang like fruit from the tree, glistening in the soft light. A sickening odor assaults your sense of smell, as if corpses were buried nearby.

The bloodbough tree is uncommon, even in the Feywild. The tree exists to stop violence, and does so in a very peculiar fashion. When blood is spilled within 30 feet of the tree, it causes the bloodbough to flower and bear fruit. The bloodbough fruit takes the form of magical gems. On close inspection, the gems are sticky with blood – the nectar of the bloodbough.

The gems are valuable, and can be sold as normal jewels. However, the sticky bloodbough fruit also gives off a foul odor, making it impossible for anyone carrying a gem to succeed on Stealth checks. There are 10 gems in all hanging from the tree, each worth 25 gp.

Area 1-6 – Hedge Maze Clearing (EL 3, XP 750):

Read or paraphrase the following:

Before you a large clearing opens up from the tight corridors of the hedge maze. The ground here is covered in a large amount of leaf litter and other natural detritus. It is eerily quiet.

This clearing is home to a trio of giant trapdoor spiders. They lurk here beneath the grassy floor, concealing their burrows with leaves and other organic litter. Spotting the flip-up trapdoors requires a DC 20 Perception or Nature check. The spiders attack when a PC wanders within 5 feet of one of their burrows.

Tactics: The giant trapdoor spiders use tremorsense to detect the presence of the PCs. When a PC moves within 5 feet of a burrow, the spider springs out and attacks. The spiders' tactics are simple, they attempt to bite and weaken a PC, and then drag the unfortunate hero down into their burrow. The spiders are exceptionally quick, and if one misses on its initial bite attack, it can scamper back into the shelter of its lair.

The spiders' lairs are simple burrows lined with webbing, which are then capped with a camouflaged trapdoor. Each is 15 feet deep and ends in a 20-foot chamber where the spider makes its lair. It requires a DC 15 Athletics check to climb up or down the webbing. The webbing in the tunnels is highly flammable, and clever PCs can set the webbing alight to flush the spiders to the surface. The webbing burns for 3 rounds, inflicting 10 fire damage on anything in the burrow.

Treasure: If the PCs manage to kill the giant trapdoor spiders, they can climb down the burrows and investigate the small chamber at the bottom each one. Each burrow holds the remains of the spiders' past victims and the following treasure:

Burrow 1: The PCs find the desiccated remains of three grigs, 21 sp, 8 gp, and a *potion of healing*.

Burrow 2: This burrow holds the remains of a dwarven adventurer and his gear. There is an ordinary battleaxe, a heavy shield, and a dwarf-sized suit of scale mail. In addition, the dwarf wears an *amulet of protection* +1, and has a coin purse containing 17 gp.

Burrow 3: This burrow contains the corpse of a human wizard. The corpse is quite old, and most of the human's garments have rotted away. However, a DC 20 Perception check reveals +1 *magic wand* half buried in the webbing and other detritus in the lair.



GIANT TRAPDOOR**LEVEL 3 ELITE****SPIDERS (3)****LURKER**

Medium natural beast

XP 250

Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +6; tremorsense 10**HP** 78; **Bloodied** 39**AC** 19; **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 12**Saving Throws** +2**Speed** 6; climb 6 (spider climb)**Action Points** 1Ⓣ **Bite** (standard; at-will)

+8 vs. AC; 1d10+3 damage, the target is grabbed (until escape). If the giant trapdoor spider misses, it shifts 3 squares.

Ⓣ **Envenoming Grasp** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Poison**

Grabbed target only; +6 vs. Fortitude; 1d8+2 poison damage, and the target is weakened (save ends).

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –**Skills** Stealth +9**Str** 17 (+4) **Dex** 16 (+4) **Wis** 11 (+1)**Con** 15 (+5) **Int** 1 (-4) **Cha** 6 (-1)**Area 1-7 – The Labyrinth (EL 3, XP 750):**

Read or paraphrase the following:

The hedge walls give way to a wide courtyard, surrounded by a rough stone wall, but open to the twilight sky. Before you, the intricate pattern of a labyrinth is inlaid in the flagstones in dark and light marble. The pathways are easily traceable, all in flat stone, and leads unerringly to a central point.

Four statues stand watch over the labyrinth. Each statue is seven feet high, and carved of aged, worn stone. The statues are of a cat holding a mouse, a lion holding a heart, a mastiff gnawing a large club, and a wyvern clutching a wand.

The labyrinth serves as both key and lock to the second level of the Catlord's lair. The only way to open the portal to level two is to walk the pattern of the labyrinth all the way to the center. When a character begins to walk the labyrinth, the centermost section of the labyrinth begins to fall away, revealing a spiral staircase leading down. If the party lost any belongings to the grigs, they rest atop the bottommost stair, along with a piece of chalk, which detects as magical.

A close inspection of the statues (Perception, DC 15) reveals that their jaws are hinged to open. If the party sets out across the labyrinth without walking the pattern, a trap is sprung, and the jaws of the statues open, releasing 5 grigs. With a successful Thievery check (DC 15), a character can wedge the jaws shut so that the grigs do not appear.

Tactics: The grigs only attack PCs that have strayed from the labyrinth pattern. Two of the grigs

play their fiddles, while the remaining three fire their bows at immobilized PCs. The grigs flee if more than two of them are slain; they do not follow the PCs down the steps.

GRIGS (5)**LEVEL 2 SKIRMISHER**

Tiny fey humanoid

XP 125

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +2; low-light vision**HP** 37; **Bloodied** 18**AC** 16; **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 15**Immune** charm**Speed** 4, fly 7 (hover)Ⓣ **Short Sword** (standard; at-will)

+5 vs. AC; 1d4 damage.

Ⓣ **Short Bow** (standard; at-will)

+7 vs. AC; 1d4+4 damage, or 1d4+8 against an immobilized target.

Ⓣ **Snatch** (standard; at-will)

+5 vs. Reflex; the grig steals a small item from the target, such as a coin, dagger, potion, etc., and the grig shifts 3 squares.

Ⓣ **Fiddle Dance** (standard; recharge 6) ♦ **Charm**

Close burst 5; +3 vs. Will; target is dazed and immobilized (save ends both).

Alignment Unaligned**Languages** Common, Elven**Skills** Nature +8, Stealth +10**Str** 10 (+1) **Dex** 18 (+5) **Wis** 12 (+2)**Con** 13 (+2) **Int** 14 (+3) **Cha** 16 (+4)**Equipment** short sword, shortbow, quiver with 20 arrows, fiddle**Encounter Area 2 – Tomb of the Exiles**

The tomb is a level consisting of a single area, entered by descending the labyrinth stair. The same stair continues down into the lower reaches of the ancient ruin. The tomb is carved from the surrounding stone, circular, and has a diameter of 120 feet. The tomb serves as the seal to Cait-Maahes' prison here on the Prime Material Plane, and houses the remains of 5 fey warriors that gave their lives to keep Cait-Maahes from the Feywild. So long as the tomb remains undisturbed, Cait-Maahes is trapped and cannot return to the Feywild. However, one casket is already destroyed, and if 2 or more are opened, Cait-Maahes is freed from his prison.

Area 2-1 – The Tomb:

Read or paraphrase the following:

Soft natural light illuminates a round chamber of white marble. The light seems to be coming from places within the niches where the roots of trees have broken

through cracks in the stone, allowing light and lush growing vines to creep inside.

Empty niches line the walls. Arranged about the center of the room are five stone caskets. There is a scattering of dried leaves upon the floor, but otherwise this place seems as if it has been undisturbed for centuries. One of the caskets lies broken, charred, and empty, but the others stand intact. The same spiral staircase you descended continues beyond this room, leading down.

The intact stone caskets are closed, but can be opened with DC 20 Strength checks. The five caskets once contained the bodies of fey warriors. The bodies have long since fallen into dust, but the five's magical weapons remain. The proximity to Cait-Maahes, and the dread fey's connection with the nightmarish qualities of the Feywild, has rendered these ancient weapons mutable – they change according to the one wielding them. For the particular abilities of the relics, and for details on their evolving nature, see the text below.

If the PCs open the westernmost casket, read or paraphrase the following:

When the lid of this casket is moved, the light in the room seems to glow brighter. A clean smelling breeze flows through the chamber and you can almost hear the sound of clear trumpets in the distance. The casket is half filled with swan feathers, which cradle a worn and battered shield. Barely discernable on the shield's surface are the faded images of a heart and a lion.

The *Lionheart Shield* begins as a worn and battered shield in area 2-1, gaining an additional shield bonus in area 3-2. The first time the character holding the *Lionheart Shield* performs a selfless act – perhaps as simple as walking first down a dangerous hall or giving away a healing potion – a suit of armor the character is proficient with spreads from the shield arm and over the character. The armor is a permanent new item, separate from the shield. Should the wielder of the *Lionheart Shield* subsequently proceed to do something very selfish or evil, at the GM's discretion, the armor may turn to dust and be lost forever.

If the PCs open the northernmost casket, read or paraphrase the following:

Opening this casket, you find a large gray ash club. It lies in state on an almost entirely moth-eaten cloak, which nonetheless has ancient ale stains. For a moment the club flickers with a metallic gleam, and then it is just a very plain sturdy club again.

This simple club is an eldritch weapon known as *Grayblade*. It begins the game in area 2-1 as a +1 club. In area 4-1 it takes on the shape of whatever bladed weapon most suits the wielder.

If the PCs open the southernmost casket, read or paraphrase the following:



This casket glides open silently. Quite suddenly, there is a clicking sound, and a desiccated mouse corpse pops up to bob back and forth on a wire from within the casket. Inside the casket, there is also a small, bright dirk, with a silver cat on the grip.

The dirk is known as *Cat's Paw*. It begins in area 2-1 as a +1 magic dagger that adds a +2 item bonus to the wielder's Stealth checks. Finally, in area 4-1 *Cat's Paw* can transform into a +1 magic rapier with the same item bonus on Stealth checks.

If the PCs open the easternmost casket, read or paraphrase the following:

This casket opens with a sound like a sigh. For just a moment, the temperature in the room drops, and the light momentarily dims. The casket is clean and bare save for a single small bone set directly in its center. Looking at it you feel for a moment a current of energy, the memory of unspoken incantations, echoes of arcane secrets, a smell of amber and blood, and then nothing but the still ordinary air of the quiet chamber again.

The *Eldritch Wand* begins in area 2-1 as a small bone, transforms into a key in area 4-1, and into a wand in area 4-2. Once per day, the wand allows a PC warlock or wizard to spend an action point to recast a daily spell. The *Eldritch Wand* exacts a terrible

price for its services, dealing 1d12 points of damage to the user if used in area 4-1.

The items can at first be shared between party members, but will imprint on certain people as their rightful bearers. *Cat's Paw* wants a rogue or ranger; *Grayblade* seeks a fighter; the *Lionheart Shield* wants a paladin, warlord, or good aligned fighter; and the *Eldritch Wand* will be best in the hands of a warlock or wizard. The items do not retain their special bonuses for people who are not their wielders, or at the very least companions of their wielders. If the party attempts to sell the items, they will revert to relatively simple and useless objects upon leaving their bearer's hands. If circumstances in area 4-5 deprive an item of its wielder, it may imprint on a different party member.

Breaking the Seal: By disturbing two or more caskets, the PCs have unwittingly released Cait-Maahes from his prison. A tremor shakes the chamber, causing dirt and leaves to fall from above, and a nightmarish black mist begins to drift up the from the staircase below, filling the chamber to knee height. This mad-dening mist is a taste of the horrors to come...

Heroes inspecting the mist see faint shapes of horrified faces, caught in silent screams. Anyone perceiving this feels his or her sanity torn away (attack; +6 vs. Will). A successful attack causes the PC to go mad for 1d6+3 rounds. Ask the player to role 1d4 and consult the table below:

Roll (1d4)	Madness
1	Homicidal Mania: The PC attacks his allies with deadly force for the duration of the madness.
2	Fear: The PC flees down the steps into the darkness below. For the duration of the madness, the PC does everything in his power to outrun his allies.
3	Catatonia: The PC falls to the ground, gibbering like a demented child and clawing at his face. Unless retrained, the PC does 1d12 points of damage to himself each round until the madness lifts.
4	No effect.

Level 3 – The Lower Halls

The lower halls are a maze of trapped and untrapped corridors of smooth, chiseled stone, winding back and forth between a pair of staircases leading up and down. There is a single locked door on this level, made of sturdy wood. The floors, like the walls, are made of smooth stone. There is no natural illumination on this level, except where noted in area 3-8.

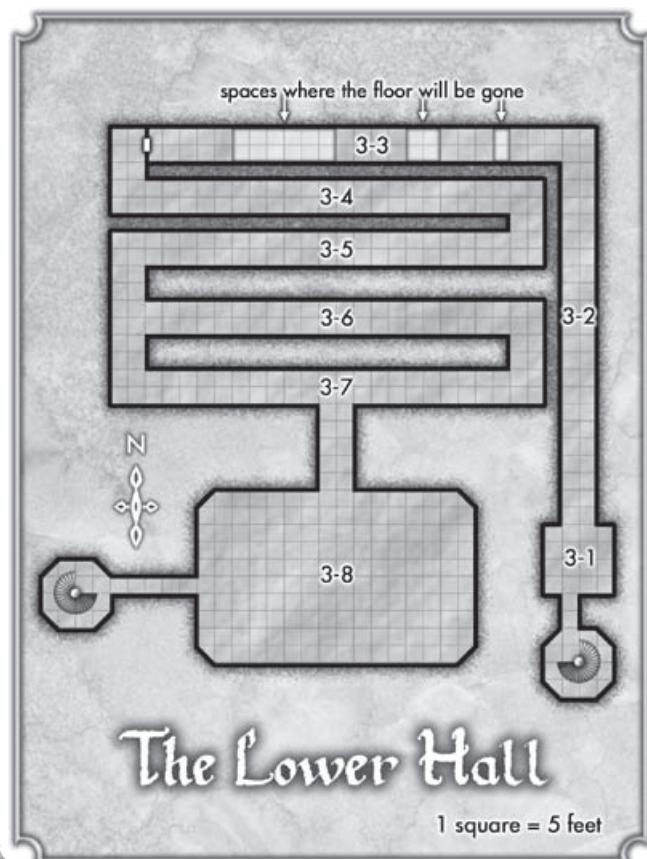
The reality of the maze has been “unmade” by the Cait-Maahes’ powers, creating a nightmarish jumble of challenges sure to unnerve the bravest of explorers.

Area 3-1 – Tapestry Chamber:

Read or paraphrase the following:

Faded and threadbare tapestries cover the walls of this wide, dark chamber. Bringing light near the tattered threads reveals scenes of long ago battles. In one tapestry, a large man with a sword and a small man with a knife fight guards within a huge, hive-like city. Another tapestry bordered by swans and roses depicts a man in armor raising his shield against an ogre. In a dark tapestry with tarnished silver threads, a pale man shoots lightning from a wand at a horned creature with wings. The final tapestry shows all four men fighting side by side, directing their attacks toward a single point, but the enemy they are fighting is obscured by burn marks and ash. Pieces of this last tapestry are burned away and missing. There are bare places on the wall where other tapestries may once have hung, and one particularly notable empty spot where marks of fire have darkened the wall.

This chamber serves to torment Cait-Maahes by constantly reminding him of the heroism of the 5 that gave up their lives for his punishment. The last tapestry depicted this sacrifice, and Cait-Maahes had it burned long ago.



Area 3-2 – Living Ceiling (EL 2, XP 625):

Read or paraphrase the following:

A chill air fills this stone hallway, and there is an acidic odor here. As your light falls upon the hallway, you see that the entire length of the ceiling is alive with a pale writhing mass of tiny shapes. Every so often one falls to lie squirming on the passage floor.

On entering the hall, a few small stray maggot-like creatures fall from the ceiling, followed by an increasing shower of them as the party progresses down the hallway. These are 10-foot by 20-foot patches of ice grubs, 5 in total, which can sting and numb the flesh, slowing and freezing a character beneath them.

The maggots ignore and do not sting whichever party member is holding the magic bone from area 2-1.

The party member carrying the *Lionheart Shield* may use it to block the fall of maggots for himself and for one other if the two heroes share a space. By the end of the corridor, the shield will have become brighter and sturdier looking, granting a +1 item bonus to AC. When the party has reached the end of the corridor, read or paraphrase the following:

The once dull and tarnished shield is bright now, gleaming with reflected light. The image of a heart and a lion are clear upon it, then fade, leaving an empty space on the bright shield for a new coat of arms.

ICE GRUBS (5)

LEVEL 2 OBSTACLE

Hazard

XP 125

Perception

- ☒ DC 10: The character notices the ice grubs on the ceiling.

Initiative +3

Trigger

A patch of ice grubs rolls initiative when a PC moves beneath it.

Attack

Standard Action Melee

Target: The creatures beneath the patch of ice grubs.

Attack: +4 vs. Reflex

Hit: 1d8+3 cold damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).

Special: A patch of ice grubs continues to attack as long as there is target beneath it.

Countermeasures

- ☒ A character with a heavy shield gains a +4 bonus to his Reflex defense against the grubs' attacks.
- ☒ A character can attack a patch of ice grubs (AC 5, all others 10) with fire-based attacks. A patch is destroyed if 10 points of fire damage are inflicted upon it.

Area 3-3 – First Hall (EL 2, XP 600):

Read or paraphrase the following:

A long straight hall leads away into darkness. There are wooden beams crossing the corridor ceiling at regular intervals. On the nearest beam, a carved wooden cat is chasing a wooden mouse. The floor here has been worked to a bright polish.

The corridor can be traversed no more than 10 feet before a 5-foot section disappears ahead, leaving only a spiked pit, 10 feet deep. The next 15 feet of corridor are solid and safe, but after that, 10 feet are missing. After another 20 feet of solid corridor, 35 feet of the hallway ahead are gone, again revealing a 10-foot deep spiked pit.

Upon encountering the first missing bit of floor, the wielder of the *Cat's Paw* will notice the weapon changing. Read or paraphrase the following: *The small dirk grows warm in your hand, almost as if it is a living thing. The silver cat on its grip stands, stretches, and claws the grip. As its claws come out, the shape of the dirk changes into a grappling hook.*

With the use of the grappling hook and rope, the PC can swing over the pits (Athletics, DC 10, 15 and 20, respectively). The floor in between the pits is incredibly slick, and any PC landing on the floor must succeed on a DC 15 Acrobatics check or slide into the next pit.

Once the third pit is crossed, the hook reverts to a dirk. Thereafter, once per day, the owner can command *Cat's Paw* to transform into a grappling hook as a minor action.

The door at the end of the corridor is locked, and can be opened with a DC 15 Thievery check, or broken down with a DC 20 Strength check.

SPIKED PITS (5)

Hazard

LEVEL 1 ELITE**OBSTACLE**

XP 200

Perception

☒ DC 0: The pits are open and obvious.

Trigger

A character can only fall into a pit, if he fails to cross it by jumping or swinging across via rope and grappling hook.

Attack**Standard Reaction****Target:** A creature failing to cross the pit.**Attack:** Can't miss.

Hit: The target falls into the pit, takes 1d10 falling damage, and the spike pit makes a secondary attack against the same target: Secondary Attack: +4 vs. Reflex; 1d10+3 damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).

Countermeasures

- ☒ A character can jump the first pit trap with a DC 6 Athletics check, or DC 11 without a running start. Landing on the other side requires a DC 15 Acrobatics check, or the character slides forward 1d6 squares.
- ☒ A character can jump the second pit trap with a DC 11 Athletics check, or DC 21 without a running start. Landing on the other side requires a DC 15 Acrobatics check, or the character slides forward 1d6 squares.
- ☒ A character can jump the third pit trap with a DC 36 Athletics check, or DC 71 without a running start. Landing on the other side requires a DC 15 Acrobatics check, or the character slides forward 1d6 squares.
- ☒ A character can swing across the pits via a rope and grappling hook. It takes a DC 15 Athletics check to seat the grappling hook firmly in the ceiling, and then a DC 5 Athletics check to swing across the first pit; a DC 10 Athletics check to swing across the second pit; and a DC 20 Athletics check to swing across the third pit.

Area 3-4 – Hall of Mirrors (EL Varies, XP Varies):

Read or paraphrase the following:

Rounding the corner, you see that this hall is smooth stone without rafters, empty and featureless. Ahead, you spy shadows flitting about in the darkness.

This hall exists in a nightmare space created by Cait-Maahes' connection with the Feywild. In order to adjudicate this encounter, the GM should have one copy of each of the PCs' character sheets, numbered in order.

After a moment or two, the shadows at the end of the hall coalesce into a small orb of darkest shadow. The orb floats down the hall at the rate of 15 feet per round, leaving a patina of frost on the walls, ceiling, and floor. Reaching the PCs, the orb moves to touch the lead PC (attack; +5 vs. Reflex). If the attack succeeds, the orb erupts in an icy blast of shadow, inflicting 1d12 points of cold damage to the target. A blast of utter darkness washes over the chamber, and when the darkness recedes, 3 identical replicas of the target stand in the chamber. Instantly, the shadow replicas move to attack.

Determining which of the four is the true PC and which are the replicas is difficult (DC 20 Perception or Insight), as the replicas are accurate down to the smallest detail. The GM should use the PC's sheet in combat; the replicas have stats identical to the original, save for 10 fewer HP.

If the PCs succeed in eluding the orb, it will follow them no further than area 3-2 or 3-5.

Area 3-5 – Hall of Blood:

Read or paraphrase the following:

This is another long straight hall. A slow dripping sound echoes from the darkness.

Cursory investigation reveals that blood seeps from the ceiling, collecting in shallow pools on the floor. Heroes can avoid stepping in the pools by scaling the walls, flying, or simply leaping over them. The blood itself is not harmful, but the DM should note anyone coming into contact with the blood for the encounter in area 3-6.

Area 3-6 – Grasping Hall (EL 2, XP 625):

Read or paraphrase the following:

The walls in this passage are of a much paler stone than the others. Bloody handprints, smeared across the stones, dot the corridor.

As the PCs enter the hall, it triggers a rush of bony hands and arms that claw their way out of the walls. The limbs, anchored on the walls, reach out to grasp, claw and gouge the PCs as they pass by. The limbs receive a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls against any character that came into contact with the blood in area 3-5.



GRASPING SKELETAL**LEVEL 2 OBSTACLE****LIMBS (5)**

XP 125

Hazard

Perception

- ☒ DC 20: The character notices the faint outline of skeletal hands pressing against the surface of the wall.

Initiative +3**Trigger**

A square of skeletal limbs rolls initiative when a PC moves in front of it.

Attack**Standard Action** Close blast 1**Target:** All creatures in blast.**Attack:** +5 vs. AC

Hit: 1d6+3 damage, the target is grabbed (until escape), and takes 5 damage for each round it remains grabbed. A square of skeletal limbs can grab up two Medium creatures at once.

Countermeasures

- ☒ A character that notices the skeletal limbs before they attack, can make a DC 20 Acrobatics check to tumble through a square without harm.
- ☒ A cleric can use *turn undead* on a square of skeletal limbs (13 Will defense), and if successful, the limbs remain dormant for the duration of the encounter.
- ☒ The limbs can be attacked with mundane weapons. They have an AC of 15, and are destroyed once 30 points of damage has been dealt.

Area 3-7 – Fifth Hall

Read or paraphrase the following:

A grim pall hangs over this hall. All is silent and still – not even a breeze disturbs the cobwebs that hang from the ceiling and in the corners of the walls.

This area has no monsters or hidden dangers.

Area 3-8 – Sea of Salt (EL 3, XP 700):

Read or paraphrase the following:

Floating orbs cast a bluish glow on this room and everything within it. The floor of the chamber is covered in glittering white dust. A small crystalline creature darts about the chamber, tracing dizzying patterns in the dust. As you watch, the creature dives, trailing a small handful of the same crystals, and draws a new line in the intricate mandala covering the floor. A pair of desiccated corpses sit against the far wall, their blackened skin stretched tight across their bones.

Characters may make a DC 10 Insight check to notice and recognize the taste of salt in the air.

The creature drawing mandalas in the room is a salt goblin. The creature was summoned here ages past and has since been forgotten. Unable to escape the fey prison, the goblin instead occupies itself with drawing in the salt that covers the floor of the chamber. Bored from years of inactivity, the salt goblin leaps at the chance to attack the PCs. As the salt goblin darts about the room, the orbs move in to flank, crackling bolts of electricity passing between them.

Tactics: The salt goblin teleports next to an obvious spellcaster once combat begins and makes a double attack. On the next round, it teleports adjacent to another PC if *dusty disappearance* recharges, otherwise it continues to attack the same target. Once the salt goblin is bloodied, it uses *desiccating burst* to regain some hit points. It uses its action point to use *desiccating burst* again, once the power recharges.

The straylight orbs support the salt goblin in battle with *shocking bolts*, and avoid melee until the salt goblin is killed. Once in melee, the orbs flank PCs to make use of *arcing attack*. The orbs fight to the death.

Treasure: The goblin and the straylight orbs have no use for treasure. Heroes searching the goblin's previous victims (Perception, DC 10) find that all of the corpses' clothing is eaten through with salt. The heroes find a salt-grimed suit of +1 *magic chainmail* on the first skeleton, along with a mundane dagger and longsword. The second skeleton still wears an emerald ring (worth 15 gp), and carried a +1 *magic wand*.

STRAYLIGHT ORBS (4)**LEVEL 1 ARTILLERY**

Small elemental magical beast (air)

XP 100

Initiative +7 Senses Perception +1; darkvision

HP 24; Bloodied 12

AC 13; Fortitude 12, Reflex 15, Will 12

Speed fly 6 (hover)

Action Points 1⊕ **Shocking Touch** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Lightning**

+5 vs. AC; 1d6+3 lightning damage.

⊕ **Shocking Bolt** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Lightning**

Ranged 10; +7 vs. Reflex; 1d8+3 lightning damage.

Arcing Attack

A straylight orb deals an additional 1d6 lightning damage on any attack against a target that has another straylight orb adjacent to it.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Primordial**Str** 9 (-1) **Dex** 17 (+3) **Wis** 12 (+1)**Con** 12 (+1) **Int** 6 (-2) **Cha** 10 (+0)

SALT GOBLINSmall elemental humanoid
(earth)**LEVEL 3 ELITE****SKIRMISHER**
XP 300**Initiative** +7 **Senses** Perception +2; darkvision
HP 96; **Bloodied** 48
AC 19; **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 13
Saving Throws +2
Speed 6; fly 8 (hover)
Action Points 1Ⓣ **Claw** (standard; at-will)

+8 vs. AC; 1d6+3 damage.

Ⓣ **Double Attack** (standard; at-will)

The salt goblin makes two claw attacks. If both attacks hit the same target, the target suffers a –2 penalty on attack rolls (save ends).

↔ **Desiccating Burst** (standard; recharge 6) ♦
Healing

Close burst 3; +6 vs. Fortitude; 3d6+3 damage, and the salt goblin regains 10 hit points.

♦ **Dusty Disappearance** (minor, recharge 4,5/6) ♦
Teleportation

The salt goblin teleports 6 squares. The salt goblin vanishes in a puff of salty dust, and reappears elsewhere.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Primordial
Skills Stealth +9**Str** 14 (+3) **Dex** 17 (+4) **Wis** 12 (+2)**Con** 16 (+4) **Int** 12 (+2) **Cha** 13 (+2)**Level 4 – The Deep Caverns**

The areas in this final level are twisting natural cave tunnels, with uneven floors and ceilings rather than the smooth sculpted stone of the upper reaches. Cait-Maahe's nightmarish connection with the Feywild is at its strongest here, producing bizarre encounters without equal.

There is no illumination here, though area 4-4 has brackets with unlit torches. There are two locked doors on this level, set into the natural stone walls.

Area 4-1 – Cave of Signs and Sigils:

Read or paraphrase the following:

This room is only partly constructed from the smooth carved stone of the higher halls. Within ten feet of the stairs, the walls bend out in the uneven contours of a natural cave system. There are many bright paintings on the rough walls of this room, from simple handprints to oddly elegant, stylized images of beasts and monsters. You see images of warriors wielding clubs and arrows against amazing creatures, and farther in, more sophisticated and detailed paintings of warriors with axes and swords.

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The gray club changes shape in this area, becoming any +1 *magic weapon* in the light or heavy blade group suitable to its wielder's proficiency and preference.

There are pots of pigment on the floor. The party may or may not choose to add marks to the wall. Anyone attempting to use paints discovers that they render something of their own accord—a chained skeletal creature under a flattened spiral shape, reaching claws up through the spiral.

The door to the next area is locked. Any real or improvised thieves' tools melt in the lock. Once this occurs, or if the party instead tries to bash down the door, the magical bone transforms into a key. Using the bone key opens the lock and inflicts 1d12 points of damage on the user. Afterwards, once per day, the wielder of the *Eldritch Wand* can command it to turn into a skeleton key, granting the user a +5 item bonus to Thievery checks to open locks.**Area 4-2 – Hall of Carvings:**

Read or paraphrase the following:

The cave walls here are covered with carvings. The elaborate and intricate images range from bas-relief to forms almost breaking from the stone. In them, eerily familiar-looking adventurers are striking at long arms



reaching at them from the sides of a corridor. There are more and more carvings further in.

Closer examination of the carvings reveals the features and equipment of the party, along with images of their last several encounters. The next carving is a depiction of the party examining carvings. As the PCs enter the chamber, the *Eldritch Wand* transform from a key to a +1 magic wand, and *Cat's Paw* transforms from a dirk to a +1 magic rapier.

Area 4-3 – Winding Passage (EL 1, XP 300):

Read or paraphrase the following:

Leaving the hall of carvings, the cave narrows and slopes down at a steep angle. A distant dripping sound breaks the silence.

The slope here is steeper than it appears and the stone is slick with dripping water and black algae. Heroes descending the slope unaided must succeed on DC 20 Acrobatic or Athletics checks or lose their footing, sliding to the base of the slope. At the base of the slope is a 40-foot pit filled with 10 feet of water. Heroes sliding to the base of the slope must succeed on a second DC 20 Acrobatic or Athletics check or tumble into the pit, falling 30 feet into the water below for 2d10 points of damage. Heroes succeeding on the check manage to catch the lip of the pit, but other PCs tumbling after them may knock them free.

Area 4-4 – Treasure Room (EL 1, XP 300):

Read or paraphrase the following:

This is a ransacked treasure chamber. Oddly, most of the treasure still seems to be here. Boxes and chests lay ripped apart, and coins are strewn across the floor. There are brackets with half-burned torches, now cold and unlit. A locked door on the other side of the chamber is secured with rusting chains. Planks torn from the broken treasure chests are nailed across the doorframe. There are stacks of treasure chests piled up against the door, spilling their contents across the cave floor, and into a small pool of dark liquid that seems to be coming from the door.

On closer examination, crimson blood and black bile are seeping from beneath the door. The foul admixture has tainted all the coins lying on the floor – anyone picking up a coin is stained by the fetid, sticking gore.

The blood and bile works like a contact poison. Any party member exposed to the blood is struck by a compulsion to get into the next room. The affected PC hurls the empty treasure chests aside, wrenches down the planks, and then begins to claw at the door through the chains. Unrestrained, the PC claws his way into the next chamber in a mere 3 rounds.

Treasure: There are 300 gp, 1,263 sp, and 4,304 cp littering the floor of this room.

POISONED COINS

Trap

LEVEL 3 ELITE**WARDER**

XP 300

Perception

- ☒ DC 20: The character notices the sticky blood and bile on the coins.

Trigger

A character picks up or handles a poisoned coin.

Attack**Immediate Reaction Melee**

Target: The creature handling the coin.

Attack: +8 vs. Will

Hit: 1d8+3 psychic damage, and the target falls under a compulsion to open the barred door (save ends).

Countermeasures

- ☒ A character can safely handle the tainted coins with metal gauntlets, but the poison seeps through leather in one round.
- ☒ A character can remove the poison from 100 coins with a flask of wine or other liquid containing alcohol.

Area 4-5 – Hall of Binding (EL 3, XP 750):

Read or paraphrase the following:

This natural cave has a sloping, basin-shaped floor carved with a roughly hewn stone spiral. On the end of the spiral, looking as if it has crawled up out of the stone, stands a still stone dragon. The floor is pitted, cracked, and bubbled around the center of the spiral.

Entering the Hall of Binding triggers the secondary effect of the blood poison from area 4-4. Upon entering area 4-5, open wounds break out wherever the blood and bile touched a PC's flesh, causing 5 points of ongoing poison damage (save ends). This dripping blood immediately winds its way into the grooves of the spiral.

Any PC affected by the poisonous blood and bile slips into trance for a brief moment, and the voice of Cait-Maahes fills his or her mind.

"You would become the champions with the power to bind me? No. Your fate ends here. You are not those who fought me in the glory of past ages. You are pale shadows, imitations of true strength. This time it is I who shall return to glory and legend, and you shall all die here, forgotten. I have had long ages to give a form to my endless, welling hate. Destroy them, my vengeance."

The last sentence awakens the stone dragon. Read or paraphrase the following:

The stone dragon coiled on the floor raises its head, and unfurls wide stone wings. It raises itself up on stony claws, and opens a dark mouth of jagged rocky teeth. A

hiss like the sound of sliding gravel and sand comes from its throat.

Tactics: The stone dragon opens combat with its breath weapon, a spray of gravel and sand. It then spends an action point and charges a blinded PC; using *stony rage* to make a bite and a tail slap attack. It continues to attack the same PC until faced with more than two enemies, at which time it uses *stone shift* to move to better tactical position. The stone dragon uses its breath weapon again as soon as it recharges, spending its remaining action point to combine a barrage of physical attacks with its stony breath.

The stone dragon fights to its destruction. Once the PCs defeat the dragon, read or paraphrase the following:

The stony behemoth splits in half with a ear-shattering crack. Inside you see a large violet stone surrounded by wisps of black smoke. Suddenly, the smoke coalesces into a wavering man-like shape, and a thundering voice fills the chamber.

"FOOLS!" The voice howls, beast-like and feral. "Your unwitting hand has dealt the stroke that I could not. I am FREE!" The room quiets, and when the voice speaks again, it is in a sultry, mocking tone. "But fear not, I shall leave my heroes to ponder their actions; although, I may yet seek you out to offer proper gratitude. In the meantime, enjoy the days ahead. They may be short indeed."

Laughter fills the air, and the chamber shakes violently. A wide crack appears in the high ceiling, raining dirt and grit down upon you. The wavering, smoky shape rises into the air and out through the cleft in the roof, quickly becoming lost in the dark night sky beyond.

The ceiling is 50 feet over head, and the cleft created by the fleeing essence of Cait-Maahes is the only exit. The walls, luckily, are fairly easy to scale, requiring only a DC 15 Athletics check to climb.

Treasure: The violet stone inside the stone dragon functions as a +2 *magic orb*.

STONE DRAGONLarge natural animate
(construct)**LEVEL 3 SOLO****SOLDIER**
XP 750**Initiative** +7 **Senses** Perception +8; darkvision**HP** 160; **Bloodied** 80**AC** 21; **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 15**Resist** 10 acid**Saving Throws** +5**Speed** 7**Action Points** 2⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will)

Reach 2; +10 vs. AC; 1d10+4 damage.

⊕ **Tail Slap** (standard; at-will)

Reach 2; +10 vs. AC; 1d8+4 damage, and the target is knocked prone.

⊕ **Stony Rage** (standard; at-will)

The stone dragon makes a bite and a tail slap attack.

↔ **Breath Weapon** (standard; recharge 5,6)

Close blast 5; +6 vs. Reflex; 3d6+3 damage, and the target is blinded (save ends).

Stone Shift (move; at-will)

The stone dragon sinks into the stone floor and moves its speed beneath its targets, avoiding opportunity attacks from those it passes beneath.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common, Elven**Skills** Athletics +10**Str** 18 (+5) **Dex** 18 (+5) **Wis** 15 (+3)**Con** 16 (+4) **Int** 12 (+2) **Cha** 10 (+1)

If you want to add a twist to this adventure, you can play with how much time has passed while the party was adventuring in the magic labyrinth. Have years passed? Decades? Perhaps Cait-Maahes has already returned to the Feywild and has dispatched nightmare assassins to clean up “the mess” left behind.

5

WRAPPING UP

Once the PCs escape the Hall of Binding, read or paraphrase the following:

Cold stars shine down on the labyrinth and its ruins. A tiny winged shape flutters somewhere in the night, but does not approach. It is very quiet now, and a chill has taken to their air. You are not sure how much time has passed while you were underground, only that the world above seems colder now.

The characters now have a decision before them about their destiny. With the weapons of champions, and certainly a sense of responsibility for having woken the great evil, they might choose to track down their new nemesis.

TIDES OF DOOM

By Ross Payton

INTRODUCTION

Tides of Doom is designed for five characters of 1st level, with a total of 5-7 total character levels between party members. See the “Scaling Information” section for ways to tailor this adventure to your group’s unique style of play.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The Ancient One, a long forgotten god of evil, stirs from its slumber. Unwitting pawns – simple villagers – have discovered the Icon of Corruption and now worship the evil deity.

At present there is merely a handful of cultists and their inhuman allies. If the PCs act quickly, they can end the cult before it acquires a foothold in the town’s populace. But if the cult is allowed to grow from its few members, and the Icon is permitted to unleash a tidal wave of unholy energy across the region, death will not be far behind. The adventurers must destroy the Icon to save the village, while contending with the nascent cult.

GAME MASTER’S SECTION

ENCOUNTER TABLE

To help the GM prepare, we have included a quick reference table showing all encounters at a glance. The abbreviations used are: *Loc* the location number keyed to the map for the encounter. *Pg* the module page number that the encounter can be found on. *Type* this indicates if the encounter is a trap (T), puzzle (P), or combat (C). *Encounter* the key monsters, traps or NPCs that can be found in the encounter. *EL* – the encounter level.

ENCOUNTER TABLE

Loc	Pg	Type	Encounter	EL
1-1	91	C	Phantom Corpus	1
1-2	92	T	Pit Trap	1
1-3	92	C	5 Corruption Hounds	1
1-4	93	C	4 Sea Ghouls	2
2-1	93	T	Flooding Trap	1
2-3	94	T	Collapsing tunnel trap	1
2-5	95	C	Seaweed Guardian	2
3-1	96	C	Corrupted Angler Fish	1
3-2	97	C	Cultist Archer Cultist Spearman	1
3-3	97	T	Corruption Trap	1
3-4	98	C	Sebastian 3 Skrum	3

SCALING INFORMATION

The *Tides of Doom* is designed for 5 characters of 1st level, but it can be easily modified for parties of different sizes or levels.

Consider the following suggestions:

Weaker parties (4 or fewer characters): If you think your party will have a tough time with the adventure, consider making the following changes. Remove 2 sea ghouls from area 1-4. Make the seaweed guardian in area 2-5 and elite rather than a solo. Remove the elite status from the corrupted anglerfish in area 3-1. Remove one skrum and Sebastian’s elite status in area 3-4.

Stronger parties (6 or more characters, or higher than 2nd level): If your party is a bit tougher than average, consider making the following changes. Add another sea ghouls in area 1-4. Add one level to the seaweed guardian in area 2-5. Add another cult archer and cult spearman in area 3-2. Add two more skrum to area 3-4.

GETTING THE PLAYERS INVOLVED

The adventure begins in Craffhaven when the characters arrive, drawn to the village in search of treasure or rumors of the evil plaguing the community. A rare and valuable fungus called fireheart has been found in the ruins underneath Craffhaven, and many have flocked here to collect as much of it as possible. Furthermore, rumors of a great evil brewing in the ruins have also spread far and wide.

Use the following plot hooks to lure the PCs into the adventure, or as inspiration for hooks tailored to your home campaign.

- Cultists kidnap one or more characters to be used as sacrifices in their evil rituals. However, some other villain gets to the cultists before they can complete their vile sacrifice. The characters awake in the quarantined section at night, with their equipment on the bodies of the dead cultists.
- Gustav, the town elder of Craffhaven, sends for the heroes and demands that they destroy whatever is interfering with his fireheart operation. Not a man to be trifled with, Gustav has little patience for haggling with the PCs. They are offered a flat fee of 100 gp for their services, but if the heroes decline, they are marched to the entrance of the quarantined section and ordered to clean out the ruins.
- A pious villager in Craffhaven prays for deliverance from the evil plaguing the community. The next morning, the characters wash up on shore, with no memory of the journey. Their equipment is stored in nearby chests that washed up with them. The villager finds them and takes them to the quarantined section, believing they are the miracle he asked for.
- The patron of the player characters sends them to investigate the ruins in order to determine if they pose a threat to the kingdom.

BACKGROUND STORY

The ruins of an ancient city have been found underneath the small port village of Craffhaven. Some villagers found great treasure in the ruins shortly after its discovery. However, those living directly above the ruins soon grew ill from a mysterious plague. The afflicted section of Craffhaven was evacuated and the villagers have left the ruins alone. However, stories of the ruins spread and treasure hunters began to arrive.

A few treasure hunters found some trinkets and gold coin; a few disappeared, but the boom didn't start until Gustav the Trapper discovered the presence of fireheart, a bioluminescent mold worth its weight in gold. Incredibly rare throughout the world, fireheart is prized as an ingredient in magical inks of all types. Gustav organized a fireheart harvesting company, but soon after the harvest began, the first monsters in the ruins were discovered.

Little did the villagers or harvesters know that an evil cult was using the ruins as a base of operations. The icon of an ancient, elder evil was found by the villagers weeks ago. The villagers' minds were easily warped by the artifact, and now they have dedicated themselves to the worship and service of the Ancient Ones.

In order to protect the fragile icon, the cult has built a tunnel from Craffhaven's docks to the ruins. Every day, at high tide, water pours in, filling the ruins. Soon, the water will completely flood the icon's chamber in the lowest level making it nearly impossible to reach. Furthermore, the cult has summoned many monsters to attack anyone who enters the ruins. Finally, the cultists, who are villagers themselves, try to drive off, sabotage, and even assassinate anyone who seems too interested in the ruins.

CORRUPTION OF THE DAGIY'THA ICON

The Dagi'y'tha Icon is a metallic cube with strange organic tendrils growing out of it. It floats in the air, slowly rotating and emitting an unearthly blue glow. The Icon's power already affects anyone who spends time in the ruins. It corrupts the mind and body, and eventually transforms a victim into a mindless savage beast. However, it is a subtle effect, and most believe it is a mundane illness. A priest can heal the corruption, but the cultists make healers a top priority when it comes to assassination.

BECOMING TAINTED

For every 2 hours spent in the ruins, a character must make a saving throw. If the character fails his saving throw, he begins to show signs of Mild taint (roll 1d12 or select an effect from the table). Characters failing the saving throw a second time show Moderate effects (again, roll 1d12 or select from the table). Characters so unlucky to fail a total of three saving throws over any period of time begin to show Severe effects (roll 1d12 or select from the table).

A character that fails four or more saving throws takes on additional symptoms, and must make an additional saving throw or die.

Roll (1d12)	Mild Symptoms
1	Occasional nausea or vomiting
2	Pain in joints
3	Hair goes white
4	Mild paranoia
5	Skin thickens, cracks, and turns leathery
6	Increased aggressiveness
7	Mild hallucinations – character sees deformity where there is none
8	Phlegmy, wracking cough
9	Eyelid swells, obscuring vision
10	Pale, grayish, dead complexion
11	Sunken eyes, cracked lips
12	Skin seeps greasy, yellowish “sweat”

At this stage, the Taint of Dagi’ytha has no in-game effects, but should be played up to add tension and a sense of dread to the adventure. Remind the player of his affliction when he interacts with NPCs; have them stare or even shun the player.

Roll (1d12)	Moderate Symptoms
1	Bones begin to warp and thicken
2	Black, lichen-like growth across skin, itches incessantly
3	Reddened, burn-like sores and scars
4	Eye clouds or blood vessels break, obscuring vision
5	Lips shrink back from gums
6	Gums swell, bleed, and rot
7	Bleeding from eyes, nose, mouth, ears, or lips
8	Fits of uncontrollable, disturbing laughter
9	Uncontrollable seizures that wrack the body with spasms
10	Eruption of painful sores
11	Sores ooze blood, pus, foul-smelling ooze, spiders or insects
12	Sores ooze thick pasty substance, maggots, or acidic green slime

The Taint of Dagi’ytha begins to have in-game effects at this stage of corruption. An afflicted character suffers a –1 penalty to attack rolls and Fortitude defense, and loses a healing surge. In addition, the dramatic and grotesque symptoms of the taint at this stage should make interacting with NPCs very difficult.



Roll (1d12)	Severe Symptoms
1	Flesh of nose rots away, leaving skull-like openings
2	Mutated, deformed fingers, toes, leg, arm, head, ear, eye, or teeth begin to grow on inappropriate parts of the body, then shrivel, rot, and eventually fall off
3	Spine twists, back hunches
4	Severe warping of skeleton; skull enlarges and deforms
5	Great swollen growths on the body
6	Lungs eaten away from inside—wet, labored, and painful breathing
7	Eye falls out, leaving a gaping socket that glows with eerie green light
8	Skin peels off in papery sloughs at the slightest touch, leaving raw, red flesh beneath
9	Fingers or toes begin to web and fuse
10	Irresistible murderous urges
11	Reduced to primitive behavior
12	Eats inedible or still-living things

Now the Taint of Dagi'ytha severely affects a character's abilities in the game. An afflicted character suffers a -2 penalty to AC and Fortitude defense, loses two more healing surges, and is weakened. PCs at this stage of corruption are hideous monstrosities that will likely be attacked on sight by NPCs.

CLEANSING TAIN

The sole way to remove the taint is to destroy the Icon in area 3-4.

Player Beginning (EL 1, XP 150):

Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs enter the Crafthaven town square:

As your group steps into the town square of Crafthaven, you see a large crowd gathering around a makeshift platform. A tall man, wearing leather armor customized with exotic beadwork from far-off lands, speaks to the crowd, and is flanked by several burly guards. He gestures to the corpse of a skrum, a grotesque humanoid monster dangling from a nearby pole. The slain creature looks like a horrid mix of amphibian and human, and has several prominent stab wounds in its torso, the obvious cause of its death. The man continues to speak.

"I, Gustav, the famous trapper, renowned throughout these lands for my expertise in hunting, herbalism, and mercantile matters, solemnly promise to protect anyone

who works for me. As you can see, this foul abomination was no match for my cunning. Don't believe the rumors of drunken cowards in the tavern! Think of your families and the wages you can earn harvesting the fireheart!"

As Gustav speaks, the carcass swaying in the wind twitches then jerks upwards. The animated corpse wrests itself from the rope with a single swipe of its claws and drops to the ground. Screams erupt from the crowd and chaos engulfs the scene. Villagers run everywhere, men accuse Gustav and brandish weapons, while his bodyguards step forward in front of their employer. What do you do?

Calming the crowd is impossible until the skrum zombie is destroyed. Once the undead has been stopped, the player character who dealt the killing blow may make a DC 15 Diplomacy skill challenge (2 successes before 1 failure) to calm the crowd. The DM may award a circumstance bonus from +1 to +5 if the monster was killed in a spectacular matter. Gustav's bodyguards are of little help, only serving to defend their master.

If the adventurers stop the monster and save the day, they gain a +1 bonus to all Charisma-based checks when dealing with the citizens of Crafthaven. Furthermore, the cult will now target the players as potential threats.

Once the scene settles, Gustav approaches the PCs with a proposition:

"I want to make this clear first. Do not repeat what I am about to tell you to anyone else, or I can promise you dire consequences. As you can see, I have set up a very profitable business here, harvesting fireheart. However, the men who spend too much time down below get sick. Some have even died. Now, I am not a callous man, and I do care for my employees.

"I hired a priest, Dragur, to remedy this malady. Recently, though, he has ranted and raved about evil omens, and it's all I can do to keep him here. He has around-the-clock guards, and his behavior has unsettled the men. Rumors are already flying about the ruins. There is something...unnatural going on down there and I will pay you handsomely if you can get rid of it. I would hate for this opportunity to disappear."

Gustav is willing to pay up to 500 gold plus free healing from Dragur if the player characters can stop the evil soon. Gustav isn't sure what's going on, but he will only pay if Dragur stops receiving visions of doom.



SKRUM ZOMBIE **LEVEL 3 BRUTE**
 Medium aberrant undead XP 150
 humanoid (aquatic)

Initiative +3 **Senses** Perception +6; darkvision
HP 54; **Bloodied** 27
AC 15; **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 13
Speed 6, **Swim** 8

⊕ **Claw** (standard; at-will)
 +6 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage.
 † **Claw of the Corruptor** (standard; encounter) ♦
Necrotic
 +6 vs. AC; 2d8 + 3 necrotic damage.

☞ **Poison Spit** (standard; recharge 5,6) ♦ **Poison**
 Range 10; +4 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 3 poison damage, and
 the target is blinded until the end of the skrum's next
 turn.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common
Skills Athletics +9
Str 17 (+4) **Dex** 14 (+3) **Wis** 11 (+1)
Con 14 (+3) **Int** 9 (+0) **Cha** 6 (-1)

AREAS OF THE MAP

Encounter Area 1: Ruined Crafthaven

A strong wooden fence separates this section from the rest of the village and 12 guards watch the walls to make sure nothing gets out. Armed characters are allowed entry, as the guards just want to protect the villagers against whatever lurks in the ruins.

Unless otherwise noted, harvesters or cultists have long since looted every shack in this neighborhood.

Area 1-1 – The Phantom Corpus (EL 1, XP 400):

The corruption of the Icon has created a unique undead spirit that roams this level. It creates a crude body out of debris and attacks any living creature in a futile attempt to complete itself. Whenever the characters first enter the level, the corpus detects them and immediately rushes to them.

Read or paraphrase the following:

The village guards reluctantly unbar and open the gate, permitting you to enter the quarantined section of Crafthaven. They quickly shut and bar the gate after you enter.

Behind you, the distant sounds of village life can still be heard: women calling out to their children, the fishermen working at the docks, the sounds of life. Ahead of you, nothing stirs. Scattered huts fall apart, as their owners have abandoned them for fear of the plague. This must have been the poorest part of the village. A few moments pass as you survey the surroundings. A curious scraping noise quickly grows stronger. It sounds like someone dragging loose garbage along the ground.

Allow the characters one round to react, after hearing the noise. Once they have reacted, read or paraphrase the following.

A shambling heap of debris and detritus rolls around the corner of a shack. It stops and raises itself up, taking a roughly humanoid shape. It is composed of mud, rotting plants, shards of metal and wood, and several mutilated sea gull corpses. Two eyes – one a tinted piece of glass, and the other a real human eye – gleam at you. A deep maw opens and it utters, “I can’t feel my body...help me...HELP ME...my body...why...”

Tactics: The phantom corpus is a determined foe and does not stop until the characters flee the quarantined section or find the entrance to level 2. Once destroyed, it reforms in 1d6 days and resumes its endless search for a complete body.

PHANTOM CORPUS **LEVEL 5 ELITE BRUTE**
Large nature animate XP 400
(undead)

Initiative +1 **Senses** Perception +9; darkvision
HP 154; **Bloodied** 77
AC 19; **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 15
Resist 5 necrotic
Vulnerable 5 radiant
Saving Throws +2
Speed 6
Action Points 1

⊕ **Engulfing Slam** (standard; at-will)

Reach 2; +8 vs. AC; 2d6 + 4 damage, and the target is grabbed (until escape).

‡ **Hurl** (standard; at-will)

Grabbed target only; +6 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 4 damage, the target slides 3 squares and is knocked prone.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common
Str 18 (+6) **Dex** 9 (+1) **Wis** 10 (+2)
Con 17 (+5) **Int** 7 (+0) **Cha** 5 (-1)

Area 1-2 – Pit Trap (EL 1, XP 300):

This pit was formed during a small collapse of the ruins. Now, cultists have concealed it and use it as a trap. It drops 20 feet and opens to area 2-4 on level 2 of the map. Jagged glass and metal spikes have been placed at the bottom of the pit by the cultists. Some

cultists use the pit as a secondary entrance to level 2, but only in emergencies, as falling from the rope can have fatal consequences.

LARGE CONCEALED PIT **LEVEL 3 ELITE**
TRAP **WARDER**
Trap XP 300

Perception

☒ DC 22: The character notices concealed pit.

Trigger

The trap attacks when a creature enters one of the trap’s six squares.

Attack

Immediate Reaction Melee

Target: The creature that triggered the trap.

Attack: +5 vs. Reflex

Hit: The target falls into the pit, takes 3d10 damage, and falls prone.

Miss: The target returns to the last square it occupied and its move action ends immediately.

Effect: After being triggered, the pit is no longer concealed.

Countermeasures

- ☒ An adjacent character can trigger the trap with a DC 12 Thievery check (standard action).
- ☒ An adjacent character can disable the trap with a DC 27 Thievery check.
- ☒ A character who makes an Athletics check (DC 16, or DC 31 without a running start) can jump over the trapdoor.
- ☒ A DC 20 Dungeoneering check grants the party a +2 bonus to Thievery checks to delay or disable the trap.

Area 1-3 – Burned-Out Hulk (EL 1, XP 500):

Read or paraphrase the following

The charred remains of a wooden building lie at your feet. The smells of a recent fire linger in the area. Only parts of the foundation remain standing. Someone has written a message in the ashes. It reads: “The Tides rise, Dagi’ytha awakens”

A careful search of the ashes reveals the charred skeleton of two cultists, each slain by an arrow. One cultist has a gem worth 50 gold, and the other has a silvered short sword. Searching through the ashes draws the attention of 5 corruption hounds – ferocious, tainted predators that have learned that many harvesters search this area for easy treasure.

Tactics: The corruption hounds swarm the PCs, attempting to flank and use *wolf pack* to deal extra damage. They are vicious, but cowardly, and flee if two or more of their number are slain.

CORRUPTION HOUNDS (5) LEVEL 1 SKIRMISHER

Small natural beast XP 100

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +6; low-light vision**HP** 26; **Bloodied** 13**AC** 15; **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 13**Speed** 6⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will) ◆ **Necrotic**

+6 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage, and ongoing 2 necrotic damage (save ends).

Wolfpack

A corruption hound deals an additional 1d6 damage on melee attacks against a target that has one or more corruption hounds adjacent to it.

Alignment Evil **Languages** –**Str** 13 (+1) **Dex** 16 (+3) **Wis** 13 (+1)**Con** 10 (+0) **Int** 2 (-4) **Cha** 10 (+0)**Area 1-4 – The Knife and Gullet (EL 2, XP 600):**

Read or paraphrase the following

A glum rotting building takes up the corner of this lot. A sign reading, “The Knife and Gullet,” swings above its door. This used to be the roughest tavern in Crafthaven. Now, only rats and cockroaches fill its rooms.

A careful search of the exterior (Perception, DC 15) reveals a slightly muddy, but perfectly usable dagger and 5 silver. Once the characters enter the Knife and Gullet, read or paraphrase the following:

The dusty floorboards creak heavily when you step inside the abandoned tavern. The dim interior is cluttered with the broken remnants of the common room. Shattered glass crunches under foot, while the remains of the furniture are either broken or about to fall apart. The stench of decaying flesh overwhelms you for a moment.

The cult’s guardians, four sea ghouls, stir 1d4 rounds after the PCs enter the tavern. The sea ghouls rest underneath the floorboards of the tavern. They will attempt to grab one of the characters by the ankles and drag him or her under. The crawlspace underneath the tavern is very cramped, and characters can go prone to attack the ghoul, tear up the floorboards, or attack through them.

Behind the counter of the tavern, several floorboards have been torn up, revealing a hole that leads to level two.

Tactics: The sea ghouls attack the PCs through the floorboards of the tavern. In order to do so, a ghoul must use a minor action to tear away a section of the floor to reach a PC. The ghouls and the PC have cover relative to each other (-2 penalty to attack rolls) in this scenario. If a ghoul manages to immobilize a PC, it spends a minor action to grab the PC (no attack roll required), and attempts to drag him beneath the floor (standard action, +5 vs. Fortitude).

All four ghouls attack a PC pulled beneath the floor. The ghouls fight to the death.

SEA GHOULS (4)**LEVEL 3 LURKER**Medium natural humanoid
(undead)

XP 150

Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +8; darkvision**HP** 35; **Bloodied** 17**AC** 17; **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 14**Immune** disease, poison**Resist** 5 necrotic**Vulnerable** 5 radiant**Speed** 8, swim 8⊕ **Claws** (standard; at-will)

+8 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).

⊕ **Ghoulish Rend** (standard; at-will)

Target must be immobilized, stunned or unconscious; +8 vs. AC; 2d6 + 3 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common**Skills** Stealth +9**Str** 14 (+3) **Dex** 16 (+4) **Wis** 14 (+3)**Con** 17 (+4) **Int** 5 (-2) **Cha** 11 (+1)**Level 2: The Sunken Villas**

This level contains four ancient villas. Crafthaven was originally built over them, but after several centuries of neglect, only these four structures remain intact. They were the first ruins discovered by the villagers, but few dared to explore them for fear of the plague.

Read or paraphrase the following when the characters first enter level two:

*As you descend to the next level, you find yourself in an ancient villa, long since forgotten by time. The architecture is hard to place, but it is obviously well engineered to have survived countless centuries without collapsing. The air is heavy and choked with the dust you kick up as you move around. You also notice signs of recent excavation: buckets filled with dirt, crude hand tools, and wooden planks scattered about. You can see the glow of fireheart scattered around the villa.***Area 2-1 – Flooding Trap (EL 1, XP 300):**

Read or paraphrase the following when the characters enter this corridor:

The walls of this tunnel are smooth stone and slightly damp to the touch. No fireheart grows in this corridor, and it seems free of dust. Water occasionally drips in the distance.

This long corridor conceals a deadly trap. A massive reservoir of water is concealed in a chamber directly above the corridor. A trap door is poised to unleash the water. A tripwire strung across the midway point of the corridor triggers the trap.



FLOOD TRAP

Trap

LEVEL 3 ELITE BLASTER

XP 300

Perception

- ☒ DC 22: The character notices the trapdoor in the ceiling.
- ☒ DC 25: The character notices the tripwire.

Trigger

The trap attacks as an immediate reaction when a creature trips the tripwire.

Attack

Immediate Reaction **Blast** special

Targets: All creatures in the corridor

Attack: +8 vs. Reflex

Hit: 2d6+3 damage, and the target is picked up and carried to the end of the corridor.

Miss: Half damage, but the target is still swept down the corridor.

Countermeasures

- ☒ An adjacent character can disable the tripwire with a DC 25 Thievery check.
- ☒ A DC 20 Dungeoneering check grants the party a +2 bonus to Thievery checks to delay or disable the trap.

Area 2-2 – Concealed Stash:

One of the cultists has been hoarding treasure. Every time he finds a gem or a gold coin, he hides it here, unwilling to give it to Sebastian. It is buried under a few inches of dirt and requires a DC 20 Perception check to find. Inside the cache are a single amber stone (worth 100 gp), 53 gp, 33 sp, and 30 cp.

Area 2-3 – Collapsing Tunnel (EL 1, XP 300)

The cultists have rigged the ceiling to collapse in this tunnel. The trap is triggered via a trip wire strung across the tunnel.

Area 2-4 – The Pit Trap Floor:

Read or paraphrase the following:

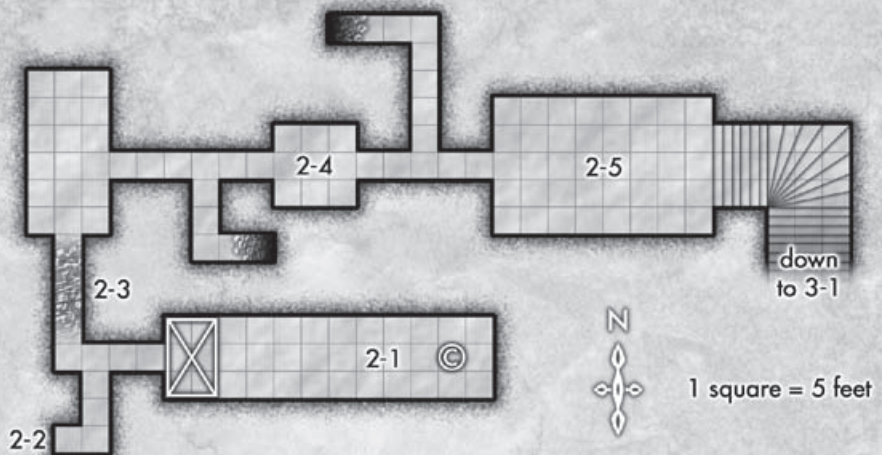
The floor of the muddy chamber is littered with jagged glass shards and rusted spikes. Faint light glimmers from above.

This is the bottom of the pit trap from area 1-2. Jagged glass and rusted spikes are embedded in the ground. A careful search of the pit (Perception, DC 15) reveals 15 gold coins.

6

Below Crafthaven

Level 2



Area 2-5 – The Seaweed Guardian (EL 2, XP 625):

Read or paraphrase the following

As you enter the room, you see a massive amount of decaying seaweed hanging from the ceiling. Bones and bits of flesh hang from its strands. At the opposite side of the room, a staircase leads to the next level. A human skeleton hangs limp directly over the staircase. It jerks up and two red orbs glow in the eye sockets. An inhuman cackle erupts from the skeleton, and it buries itself into the mass of seaweed, swimming through it.

The seaweed guardian is one of the cult's experiments. The cultists kidnapped a villager, wrapped him in a net of seaweed and tortured him to death with necromancy. When the harvester arose as an undead creature, it fused with its seaweed net and remained trapped, guarding the entrance to level three.

The seaweed guardian can move through the seaweed instantly, effectively allowing it to teleport to anywhere in the room. The seaweed is permanently wet, so fire will not burn it effectively.

Tactics: The seaweed guardian begins combat by using *briny step* to teleport next to a PC. It then spends an action point to make a double attack, hoping to grab the PC and pull him into its smothering embrace. Once a PC is grabbed, the seaweed guardian continues to flail at the rest of the party with *seaweed lash*, while draining the grabbed PC of vital life energy. The seaweed guardian fights to its destruction.

SEAWEED GUARDIAN

Large natural animate
(plant, undead)

LEVEL 2 SOLO

SKIRMISHER

XP 625

Initiative +6 **Senses** Perception +9; darkvision

HP 156; **Bloodied** 78

AC 18; **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 15

Immune disease, poison, sleep

Resist 10 fire, 5 necrotic

Vulnerable 5 radiant

Speed 6

Action Points 2

⊕ **Seaweed Lash** (standard; at-will)

Reach 2; +7 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage, and the target is grabbed (until escape).

‡ **Double Attack** (standard; at-will)

The seaweed guardian makes two seaweed lash attacks. If a target is hit by both attacks, it is grabbed (until escape). The seaweed guardian can only grab one creature of Medium size or smaller.

‡ **Smothering Crush** (minor 1/round; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic**

Grabbed target only; +5 vs. Fortitude; 1d6+2 necrotic damage, and the target loses a healing surge.

Briny Step (move, recharge 5,6) ♦ **Teleportation**

The seaweed guardian teleports 6 squares. Any creature it is currently grabbing is also teleported.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common

Str 19 (+5) **Dex** 16 (+4) **Wis** 16 (+4)

Con 15 (+3) **Int** 8 (+0) **Cha** 10 (+1)

Level 3: The Flooded Prison

This level is almost completely flooded. The water is cold and permeates every crack and crevice. This area is filled with the steady drip of water and the distant drone of the tide. The air is thick with the smell of rotting seaweed.

Area 3-1 – The Lurker Below (EL 2, XP 625):

Read or paraphrase the following when the characters first enter the flooded prison:

You find yourself standing in a small arched alcove built into the wall of a vast chamber. A row of identical alcoves lines both walls, with a massive water-filled pit separating both walls. Wooden planks have been lashed and nailed together to form crude bridges linking one side of the chamber to the other, but they are only a few feet across and slippery. The alcoves are 20 feet above the pit. The waters below you are still and deep.

This area was built as a prison, but the bars have long since disappeared. Each cell was built into one of the level's walls, but the main floor has fallen away. The cultists have set up wooden bridges to connect the cells from one side of the level to the other, but they are little more than boards lashed with rope and nailed together.

The cult's greatest success in corrupting animals has come with the monstrous anglerfish that lurks in the watery pit. It is now twice the size of a man and insanely aggressive. Even the cultists aren't safe from its hunger.

Any character making a DC 15 Perception check or specifically states that he is looking at the watery pit notices a golden glow emanating from water. It looks like a sphere made of solid gold near the surface. In reality, this is the anglerfish's lure.

Tactics: Give the PCs a Perception check opposed by the anglerfish's Stealth check to notice the giant fish in the murky water below the bridge. If they do not notice the anglerfish, it uses its surprise round to lure one of the PCs off the bridge with *mesmerizing lure*. A PC that plunges into the water has all the problems of trying to fight out of his or her element, plus a very hungry anglerfish to deal with.

PCs attacking the corrupted anglerfish from the bridge suffer a -2 penalty to attack rolls due to the cover granted the beast by the water. The anglerfish fights to the death.

Development: A pair of cultists watch from the far side of the bridge (area 3-2). If one of the PCs is pulled into the water, they attack the remaining PCs on the bridge with missile weapons.

CORRUPTED ANGLER

LEVEL 5 ELITE

FISH

LURKER

Large natural beast

XP 400

Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +4; darkvision
HP 114; **Bloodied** 57

AC 21; **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 17

Saving Throws +2

Speed 6 swim 6

Action Points 1

⊕ **Fanged Bite** (standard; at-will)

+10 vs. AC; 2d6 + 4 damage.

⌘ **Mesmerizing Lure** (standard; recharge 5,6) ♦
Charm

Ranged 10; +8 vs. Will; target is pulled 3 squares and dazed until the end of the corrupted anglerfish's next turn.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –

Skills Stealth +9

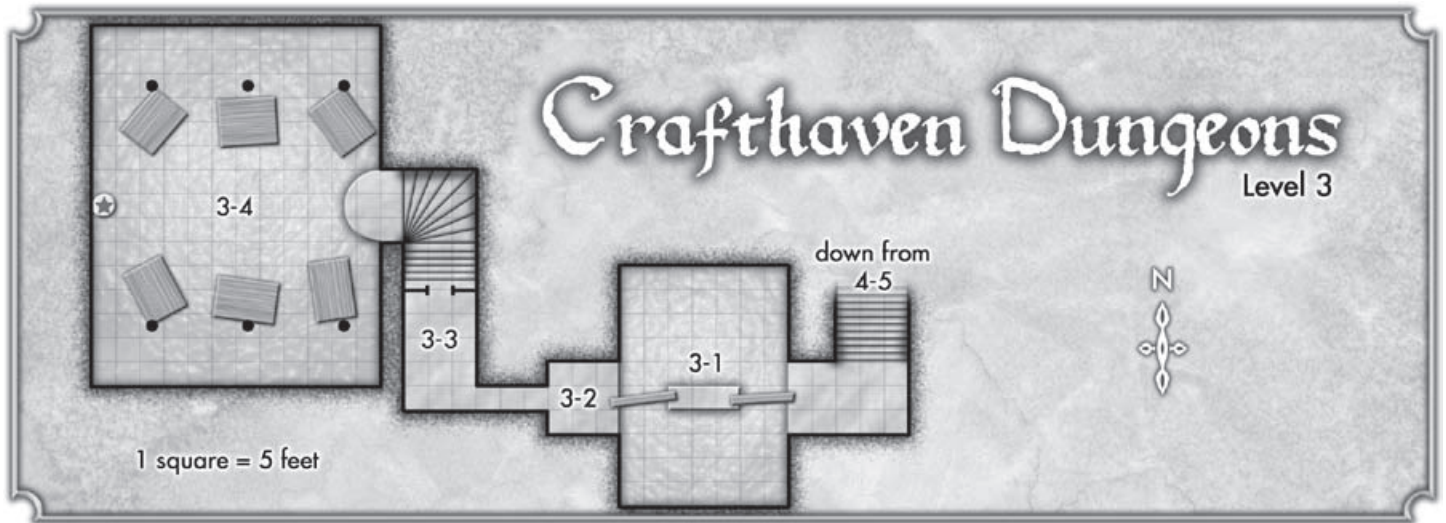
Str 19 (+6) **Dex** 14 (+4) **Wis** 13 (+3)

Con 16 (+5) **Int** 2 (-2) **Cha** 15 (+4)

Area 3-2 – Sniper and Spearman (EL 1, XP 300):

Two dedicated cultists guard this area. Both wait in concealed positions (Stealth vs. PCs' perception), but keep an eye on the bridge at all times.

Tactics: Unless the PCs are taking pains to be silent, the two cultists hear them when they enter area 3-1. Once the PCs are on the bridge, the two cultists open fire with bow and javelin. They focus their attacks on PCs actually on the bridge, letting the anglerfish deal with any hero unlucky enough to fall into the water. Once the PCs make it across the bridge to area 3-2, the cultists switch to melee. They fight to the death.



CULTIST ARCHER LEVEL 3 ARTILLERY

Medium natural humanoid XP 150

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +6
HP 38; **Bloodied** 19
AC 15; **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 13
Speed 6

⊕ **Short Sword** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
+10 vs. AC; 2d6 + 4 damage.

⊕ **Shortbow** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
Range 15/30; +10 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage.

⌘ **Deadeye** (standard; recharge 4,5,6) ♦ **Weapon**
Requires shortbow; +8 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 3 damage

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common
Skills Stealth +9

Str 14 (+3) **Dex** 17 (+4) **Wis** 11 (+1)
Con 14 (+3) **Int** 10 (+1) **Cha** 10 (+1)

Equipment leather armor, short sword, shortbow, quiver with 20 arrows, 1d20 gp.

CULTIST SPEARMAN LEVEL 3 SOLDIER

Medium natural humanoid XP 150

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +6
HP 46; **Bloodied** 23
AC 19; **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 13
Speed 6

⊕ **Longspear** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
Reach 2; +10 vs. AC; 1d10 + 3 damage.

⌘ **Javelin** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
Range 10/20; +8 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage.

⚔ **Impaling Strike** (standard; recharge 5,6) ♦ **Weapon**
Requires longspear; +8 vs. Fortitude; 2d10 + 3 damage

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common
Skills Athletics +9, Stealth +9

Str 17 (+4) **Dex** 14 (+3) **Wis** 11 (+1)
Con 14 (+3) **Int** 10 (+1) **Cha** 10 (+1)

Equipment leather armor, longspear, 4 javelins, 1d20 gp

Area 3-3 – Corruption Trap (EL 1, XP 200):

Read or paraphrase the following when the characters first see the corruption trap

You see a massive bas-relief above the staircase leading to the next level. It depicts an unholy ritual of mass sacrifice. Men and women, chained together by the neck, stand in mute horror as the tides rise around them. Their faces are exquisitely portrayed, their fear and anguish very real. Towering above the victims is a glowing box covered in occult sigils. Holding the icon is a monstrous and deformed priest, his hands raised high. You can't help but study the carving, as you realize an inhumanly skilled artisan must have spent years in its creation. It almost

seems as though you are watching the real ritual unfold. A moment later, your body is wracked with pain as dark energies course through your veins.

An ornate stone bas-relief of occult symbols greets the characters as they near the entrance towards the cistern. This terrible series of carvings acts as a magical glyph, smiting the PCs with the raw power of chaos and evil.

EVIL GLYPH TRAP

Trap

LEVEL 5 WARDER

XP 200

Perception

☒ DC 25: The character notices a strange pattern within the bas-relief.

Arcana

☒ DC 22: The character spots the magical pattern and provides a +2 bonus to Thievery checks made to disable it.

Trigger

When a creature enters the square beneath the bas-relief.

Attack

Immediate Reaction Close burst 3

Targets: All creatures in burst

Attack: +8 vs. Will

Hit: 3d4+3 psychic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).

Countermeasures

☒ An adjacent character can disable the glyph with a DC 25 Thievery check.

Area 3-4 – The Cistern of the Dagiy'tha Icon (EL 3, XP 800):

Read or paraphrase the following:

The scent of seawater hits you as you enter the chamber. The stairs end in a landing. Beyond that, only water fills the cistern. At the opposite end of the chamber a small metal Icon hovers, suspended by a powerful magic. A man in robes levitates over the water near the Icon. He says nothing and only points at your group. Dark shapes dart through the water.

Sebastian, the leader of the cult, and three skrum guardians spend all of their time here, basking in the corruption of the Icon. The staircase ends with a small stone landing. The rest of the chamber is a massive cistern, with many pillars supporting the ceiling. Six simple rafts have been tied to various pillars around the room, used by the cultists to worship the Icon.

The PCs are presented with a serious problem: in order to get to Sebastian and the Icon, they have to negotiate the floating rafts. The rafts are sturdy, and are close enough together that an Athletics check

is not necessary to jump from one raft to another. However, getting to the icon from the third raft on any side does require a DC 11 Athletic check to reach (or DC 21 without a running start).

Fighting on a raft requires a PC to make a DC 10 Acrobatics check at the end of his turn are fall prone. The water in this chamber is eight feet deep, which means that PCs will have to swim if they fall off a raft.

Tactics: Sebastian uses *arcane blast* to force PCs off the rafts, and saves his more powerful abilities when confronted by multiple PCs in melee. The skrum leap onto the rafts and enter melee with their claws or blind PCs with their poisonous spittle. In addition, the skrum can swim under a raft and shake it violently (standard action), forcing all PCs to make a DC 15 Acrobatics check or fall prone.

SKRUM (3)

Medium aberrant humanoid (aquatic)

LEVEL 3 BRUTE

XP 150

Initiative +3 **Senses** Perception +6; darkvision

HP 54; **Bloodied** 27

AC 15; **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 13

Speed 6, **Swim** 8

⊕ **Claw** (standard; at-will)

+6 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage.

‡ **Claw of the Corruptor** (standard; encounter) ♦ **Necrotic**

+6 vs. AC; 2d8 + 3 necrotic damage.

✂ **Poison Spit** (standard; recharge 5,6) ♦ **Poison**

Range 10; +4 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 3 poison damage, and the target is blinded until the end of the skrum's next turn.

Alignment Chaotic evil

Languages Common

Skills Athletics +9

Str 17 (+4)

Dex 14 (+3)

Wis 11 (+1)

Con 14 (+3)

Int 9 (+0)

Cha 6 (-1)


SEBASTIAN, CULT MAGE

Medium natural humanoid

LEVEL 4 ELITE
ARTILLERY

XP 350

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +5

HP 84; **Bloodied** 42

AC 18; **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 7, **Will** 6

Saving Throws +2

Speed 6, fly 3 (hover)

Action Points 1

 Ⓣ **+1 Magic Quarterstaff** (standard; at-will) ◆

Weapon

+9 vs. AC; 1d8 + 2 damage.

 Ⓢ **Arcane Blast** (standard; at-will) ◆ **Force**

Range 10; +9 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 4 force damage, and the target is pushed 1 square.

 ⚡ **Hellfire** (standard; recharge 4,5,6) ◆ **Fire**

Close blast 3; +7 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 4 fire damage

 ☠ **Acid Rain** (standard; encounter) ◆ **Acid**

Area burst 1 within 10; +7 vs. Fortitude; 1d8+4 acid damage, and ongoing 5 acid damage (save ends).

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common

Skills: Arcana +11, Religion +11 Str 13 (+1)

Dex 14 (+4) **Wis** 15 (+4)

Con 12 (+3) **Int** 18 (+6) **Cha** 12 (+3)

Equipment +1 magic quarterstaff, tin crown (worth 56 gp), coin pouch with 2d20 sp, 1d20 gp and 1d12 pp, belt pouch with 3 large, uncut gems worth 50 gp each.

Conclusion: Once Sebastian and the skrum are dealt with, the PCs are left to deal with the Icon. The Icon is physically vulnerable (AC 5, HP 30), and fairly easy to destroy

However, the evil artifact does not go quietly and simply let the PCs destroy it. Once per round, the Icon makes an attack on a PC's mind (+10 vs. Will). If the attack is successful, the PC is dominated (save ends), and the Icon will direct its new minion to slay his former allies.

Appendix A NEW MONSTERS

ABATTOIR WOLVES

These scavengers of the Abyss are drawn to battlefields of death and pain, as though able to sniff suffering across the Planes.

Description: An abattoir wolf resembles an ordinary wolf at first glance, but its mottled yellow and gray fur, patchy and mange filled, quickly mark it as something unearthly. Scabrous gray skin shows through the fur in various spots. Its head is gaunt, almost skeletal, and its mouth is full of needlelike fangs.

ABATTOIR WOLF LORE

A character knows the following with a successful Arcana check:

DC 15: Abattoir wolves are demonic scavengers that sniff out devastating battles or massacres, seeking to feast on the wounded. They tend to stay close to large, powerful demons, knowing that those demons often leave tasty, screaming morsels in their wake.

ABATTOIR WOLF

LEVEL 4 SKIRMISHER

Medium elemental
magical beast (demon)

XP 175

Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +9, darvision

HP 55; **Bloodied** 27

AC 18; **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 16

Resist 5 fire

Speed 8

Ⓣ **Bite** (standard; at-will)

+9 vs. AC; 1d6+4 damage, or 2d6+4 damage against a prone target.

Combat Advantage: If the abattoir wolf has combat advantage against the target, the target is also knocked prone on a hit.

↩ **Abattoir Breath** (standard; recharge 5 or 6)

Close burst 1; +5 vs. Fort; each target is weakened (save ends)

Alignment Chaotic Evil **Languages** —

Str 15 (+4) **Dex** 18 (+6) **Wis** 14 (+4)

Con 15 (+4) **Int** 3 (-2) **Cha** 11 (+2)

ABATTOIR WOLF TACTICS

Abattoir wolves usually attack in packs of three or more, using their heightened sense to stealthily approach and surround their prey. They typically work together to bring down one target at a time, then leaving one of the pack to finish off that victim while the rest encircle the next target.

ASYR

Asyr are evil, scorpion-tailed humanoid that wander the desert wastes in loose tribes. Asyr are primarily nocturnal, and are strictly carnivorous, eagerly feeding on anything from vermin to other humanoids. They hate other races, seeing them as little more than food or slaves.

Description: This emaciated humanoid is covered in leathery, red skin, with a gaunt face, and a wide mouth full of yellowed fangs. A long scorpion tail juts from the creature's lower back, arcing up over its head in a threatening posture. It is armed with a curved, slashing sword and a brace of iron javelins.

ASYR LORE

A character can learn the following with a successful Nature check.

DC 15: Most asyr serve the infamous Scorpion Queen, who rules over dozens of tribes, her author-

ity unquestioned and her word sacrosanct. However, there remain many tribes that wander the deserts beyond her sway. These are the most dangerous asyr, for they are entirely unpredictable and nothing more than savage predators.

ASYR **LEVEL 2**
Medium natural humanoid
XP 125

Initiative +3 **Senses** Perception +2; low-light vision
HP 45; **Bloodied** 22
AC 14; **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 13
Resist 5 poison
Speed 6 (earth walk)

⊕ **Scimitar** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
+5 vs. AC; 1d8+3 damage (crit 1d8+11).

⌘ **Javelin** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
Ranged 10/20; +4 vs. AC; 1d6+3 damage.

‡ **Stinger** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Poison**
+5 vs. AC; 1d6+3 damage, and the asyr makes a secondary attack against the same target.
Secondary Attack: +3 vs. Fortitude; the target is weakened (save ends).

‡ **Desert Fury** (standard; encounter)
The asyr makes a scimitar and a stinger attack against the same target.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common
Skills Athletics +9, Stealth +8
Str 17 (+4) **Dex** 14 (+2) **Wis** 13 (+2)
Con 15 (+3) **Int** 10 (+1) **Cha** 8 (+0)
Equipment scimitar, 4 javelins

ASYR TACTICS

An asyr fights with a scimitar and its stinging tail. It begins combat by throwing javelins at a foe, and then closes for melee with its scimitar and poisonous stinger.

ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Asyr live in loosely organized tribes, and are usually encountered in small raiding parties numbering three to five individuals. Asyr are fond of monstrous scorpions, and are often encountered with them.

Level 2 Encounter (XP 675)

- ♦ 3 asyr (level 2 brute)
- ♦ 3 stormclaw scorpions (level 1 soldier)

ANKHEG

Ankhegs are large predatory insects that burrow beneath the ground, sometimes creating vast networks of tunnels. They are highly aggressive, bursting up through the ground to grab anything that passes too close to their tunnels.

Description: This large beetle-like insect has a dull-brown carapace and huge, jagged mandibles. A greenish fluid drips from the beast's mouthparts, sizzling viciously when it contacts the stony ground.

ANKHEG LORE

A character can learn the following with a successful Nature check.

DC 15: Ankhegs detect prey on the surface through tremorsense, and are likely to attack anything that moves above their lairs. They have the ability to produce a highly acidic enzyme that can be squirted at enemies, or simply used to slowly dissolve anything caught in their massive mandibles.

ANKHEG **LEVEL 5 ELITE**
Large natural beast
SKIRMISHER
XP 400

Initiative +6 **Senses** Perception +3; tremorsense 10
HP 128; **Bloodied** 64
AC 21; **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 16
Saving Throws +2
Speed 6, burrow 6 (tunneling)
Action Points 1

⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will)
+9 vs. AC; 1d8+4 damage, and the target is grabbed (until escape).

‡ **Corrosive Grasp** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Acid**
Grabbed target only; +8 vs. Fortitude; 2d6+3 acid damage.

⌘ **Spit Acid** (standard; recharge 5,6) ♦ **Acid**
Ranged 10; +8 vs. Reflex; 3d6+3 acid damage, and the target suffers a -2 penalty to AC until the end of the encounter.

Burrow Beneath (move; at-will)

The ankheg moves its burrow speed under the ground. While burrowing it avoids opportunity attacks as it passes beneath squares occupied by enemies.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –
Str 19 (+6) **Dex** 15 (+4) **Wis** 12 (+3)
Con 16 (+5) **Int** 2 (-2) **Cha** 7 (+0)

ANKHEG TACTICS

An ankheg waits below the surface for potential prey time to come close enough to be detected by its tremorsense. The ankheg then burrows up beneath the target, grabs it, and attempts to retreat back into the earth with its prize. An ankheg can squirt a caustic stream of stomach enzymes at foes, but generally does not do this unless it is confronted by multiple opponents, or has been reduced to bloodied.

ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Ankhegs often dig vast networks of tunnels where up to a dozen of the monstrous insects make their lairs. They are also frequently encountered with other giant insects.

Level 7 Encounter (XP 1,400)

- ◆ 3 tangler beetles (level 5 controller)
- ◆ 2 ankhegs (level 5 elite skirmisher)

result of an experiment that bred true drakon with promising human slaves; however, the aphyss were not the docile servants that the drakon had hoped for. In a short and bloody uprising, a large number of aphyss broke away from their drakon masters and fled to the desert. They now thrive as a secret society of thieves, assassins, and snake-worshipping cultists.

DC 20: Aphyss are able to disguise their normal appearance with magic, and can appear as normal humans. This allows them to easily infiltrate and exist unmolested among races that would likely shun or seek to eradicate them. Most aphyss can generate some form of venomous attack, either through poisoned weapons, or through dire, toxic magic channeled directly from the evil snake gods they worship.

APHYSS ACOLYTE

Description: This tall, thin humanoid has green, scaled skin and an angular, noseless face with deep-set reptilian eyes. It grips a short, stabbing sword and wears leather armor dyed a black and green.

APHYSS ACOLYTE

LEVEL 2 MINION

Medium natural humanoid (reptile)

XP 31

Initiative +2 **Senses** Perception +1; low-light vision
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.
AC 15; **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 13
Speed 6

⊕ **Short Sword** (standard; at-will) ◆ **Weapon**
+6 vs. AC; 4 damage.

Serpent's Veil (minor; at-will) ◆ **Illusion**

An aphyss acolyte can disguise itself to appear as normal human. The disguise is always the same; however, a successful Insight check (opposed by the aphyss acolyte's Bluff check) pierces the disguise.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Draconic
Skills Bluff +7, Stealth +7

Str 14 (+3) **Dex** 12 (+2) **Wis** 10 (+1)
Con 12 (+2) **Int** 10 (+1) **Cha** 13 (+2)

Equipment leather armor, short sword

APHYSS ACOLYTE TACTICS

An aphyss acolyte attacks with a short, stabbing sword, and attempts to flank enemies with allies. It uses *serpent veil* to appear non-threatening, dropping the illusion once the first blow is struck.

APHYSS

The aphyss are a race of serpent-folk that dwell in hot, desert climates. In appearance, they resemble a human/serpent hybrid, with scaled skin, angular features, small pits instead of noses, and deep-set reptilian eyes. Aphyss have vestigial fangs, but these are too small to use in combat. Master infiltrators, aphyss can mask their monstrous appearance with illusion, appearing as normal humans.

The aphyss are rumored to be an offshoot of the feared serpentine drakon, likely bred from the multitude of human slaves kept by the evil snake men. However, centuries ago the aphyss broke away from the drakon and fled into deserts, where they have flourished and built a clandestine society of assassins and snake-worshipping cultists.

APHYSS LORE

A character can learn the following with a successful History or Nature check.

DC 15: The aphyss are a race of serpent-folk that once served the drakon as a slave race. They were the

APHYSS TEMPLE GUARDIAN

Description: This human man is armored in archaic chainmail, carries a large round shield, and hefts a single-bitted battleaxe. Suddenly, the air around his body shimmers, and his features twist into that of a gaunt, scaled nightmare, an abominable hybrid of serpent and man.

APHYSS TEMPLE GUARDIAN **LEVEL 1 SOLDIER**
XP 100

Medium natural humanoid (reptile)

Initiative +3 **Senses** Perception +0; low-light vision
HP 31; **Bloodied** 15
AC 18; **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 13
Resist 5 poison
Speed 6

⊕ **Battleaxe** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
+8 vs. AC; 1d10+3 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the aphyss guardian's next turn.

⌘ **Dagger** (standard; at will) ♦ **Weapon**
Ranged 5/10; +6 vs. AC; 1d4+2 damage, or 1d4+5 damage against a blinded foe.

↔ **Serpent Breath** (standard, encounter) ♦ **Poison**
Close blast 3; +4 vs. Fortitude; the 2d6+2 poison damage.

Serpent's Veil (minor; at-will) ♦ **Illusion**
An aphyss temple guardian can disguise itself to appear as normal human. The disguise is always the same; however, a successful Insight check (opposed by the aphyss temple guardian's Bluff check) pierces the disguise.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Draconic
Skills Athletics +8, Bluff +6, Intimidate +6
Str 17 (+3) **Dex** 15 (+2) **Wis** 10 (+0)
Con 15 (+2) **Int** 10 (+0) **Cha** 13 (+1)

Equipment chainmail, heavy shield, battleaxe, 2 daggers

APHYSS TEMPLE GUARDIAN TACTICS

An aphyss temple guardian chooses a single foe in combat and focuses its attacks on that enemy, marking the target to keep it from escaping or attacking the temple guardian's allies. It uses thrown daggers to engage foes at range, and *serpent breath* to damage multiple enemies.

APHYSS SERPENTFANG ASSASSIN

Description: This furtive looking human man is armored in hardened leather dyed black, and clutches a long, curved dagger in each hand. An unstrung shortbow and a quiver of arrows are strapped across his back, as he moves serpent-like from shadow to shadow.

APHYSS SERPENTFANG ASSASSIN **LEVEL 2 LURKER**
XP 125

Medium natural humanoid (reptile)

Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +7; low-light vision
HP 31; **Bloodied** 15
AC 14; **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 15
Resist 5 poison
Speed 6

⊕ **Dagger** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
+7 vs. AC; 1d4+4 damage.

⌘ **Shortbow** (standard; at will) ♦ **Weapon**
Ranged 15/30; +7 vs. AC; 1d8+4 damage.

‡ **Serpentfang Strike** (standard; recharge 5,6) ♦ **Poison, Weapon**

The serpentfang assassin makes two dagger attacks against the same target. If both attack hit, the target suffers ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends), and the serpentfang assassin shifts 2 squares.

⌘ **Spit Venom** (minor, recharge 5, 6) ♦ **Poison**
Ranged 5; +5 vs. Fortitude; 1d6+2 poison damage, and the target is blinded until the end of the serpentfang assassin's next turn.

Combat Advantage

The serpentfang assassin deals an extra 1d6 damage on melee and ranged attack against any target it has combat advantage against.

Serpent's Veil (minor; at-will) ♦ **Illusion**

A serpentfang assassin can disguise itself to appear as normal human. The disguise is always the same; however, a successful Insight check (opposed by the serpentfang assassin's Bluff check) pierces the disguise.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Draconic
Skills Athletics +8, Bluff +8, Stealth +10, Thievery +10
Str 14 (+3) **Dex** 18 (+5) **Wis** 12 (+2)
Con 13 (+2) **Int** 14 (+3) **Cha** 15 (+3)

Equipment leather armor, two daggers, shortbow, quiver with 20 arrows

APHYSS SERPENTFANG ASSASSIN TACTICS

An aphyss serpentfang assassin attempts to gain combat advantage against its foes whenever possible. At range it hides, and snipes enemies with its shortbow. In melee, it attempts to flank with allies, or blind a target with caustic spittle.

APHYSS VENOMCASTER TACTICS

An aphyss venomcaster avoids melee and engages foes at a distance with *venom bolt* and *toxic whispers*. It uses *poison cloud* to obscure the battlefield and inflict poison damage on multiple opponents.

APHYSS VENOMCASTER

Description: This human man wears deep green robes and carries a curved dagger sheathed at his waist. A deep hood shadows his face, but there is something ominous and predatory about the cut of his jaw and the yellowish gleam of his eyes.

APHYSS VENOMCASTER **LEVEL 3 ARTILLERY**
Medium natural XP 150
humanoid (reptile)

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +7; low-light vision
HP 38; **Bloodied** 19
AC 15; **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 16
Resist 5 poison
Speed 6

⚔ **Dagger** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
+7 vs. AC; 1d4+3 damage.

⚡ **Venom Bolt** (standard; at will) ♦ **Poison**
Ranged 10; +8 vs. Reflex; 1d10+3 poison damage.

⚡ **Toxic Whisper** (standard; recharge 5,6) ♦ **Psychic**
Ranged 10; +8 vs. Will; 1d8+3 psychic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).

☁ **Poison Cloud** (standard, recharge 5, 6) ♦
Poison, Zone

Close blast 3; +6 vs. Fortitude; this power creates a zone of poisonous vapor that remains in place until the end of the aphyss venomcaster's next turn. The zone blocks line of sight for all creatures. Any creature that enters or starts its turn in the area takes 5 poison damage.

👁 **Serpent's Veil** (minor; at-will) ♦ **Illusion**

An aphyss venomcaster can disguise itself to appear as normal human. The disguise is always the same; however, a successful Insight check (opposed by the aphyss venomcaster's Bluff check) pierces the disguise.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Draconic
Skills Bluff +9, Intimidate +9, Stealth +9
Str 13 (+2) **Dex** 17 (+4) **Wis** 12 (+2)
Con 14 (+3) **Int** 15 (+3) **Cha** 16 (+4)

Equipment robes, dagger

APHYSS PRIEST

Description: Tall and regal this scaled humanoid wears a green robe and carries a thick, wooden rod carved to resemble a striking cobra. Its face is decidedly serpent-like, down to a flickering tongue and slitted, reptilian eyes.

APHYSS PRIEST **LEVEL 5 CONTROLLER**
Medium natural **(LEADER)**
humanoid (reptile) XP 200

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +9; low-light vision
HP 63; **Bloodied** 31
AC 19; **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 17
Resist 10 poison
Speed 6

⚔ **Serpent Rod** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
+8 vs. AC; 1d8+2 damage, and the target suffers a -2 penalty its Fortitude defense until the end of the aphyss priest's next turn

🐍 **Serpent's Grasp** (standard; at will)

Ranged 10; +9 vs. Fortitude; 1d8+4 damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).

🐍 **Venomous Gaze** (minor 1/round; at-will) ♦ **Poison**
Ranged 5; +8 vs. Fortitude; 1d6+4 poison damage, and the target gains vulnerability 5 poison until the end of the aphyss priest's next turn.

☁ **Toxic Rain** (standard, recharge 6) ♦ **Poison**
Area burst 3 within 10; +8 vs. Fortitude; 3d6+4 poison damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).

👁 **Serpent's Veil** (minor; at-will) ♦ **Illusion**

An aphyss priest can disguise itself to appear as normal human. The disguise is always the same; however, a successful Insight check (opposed by the aphyss priest's Bluff check) pierces the disguise.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Draconic
Skills Bluff +10, Intimidate +10, Religion +11, Stealth +9
Str 15 (+4) **Dex** 15 (+4) **Wis** 14 (+5)
Con 14 (+3) **Int** 18 (+5) **Cha** 16 (+6)

Equipment robes, serpent rod

APHYSS PRIEST TACTICS

An aphyss priest opens combat with *toxic rain*, inflicting lasting poison damage on numerous opponents. It then supports its allies with *venomous gaze* and *serpent's grasp*. However, an aphyss priest does not shrink from melee, and will vigorously engage foes with its serpent rod, making them even more susceptible to its other, poison-laced abilities.

ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Aphyss are usually encountered in small groups, infiltrating various levels of human society. In their hidden temples and shrines that can be found in larger numbers, and may even be encountered with giant serpents and other snake-like monsters.

Level 1 Encounter (XP 505)

- ◆ 1 aphyss venom caster (level 3 artillery)
- ◆ 2 aphyss temple guardians (level 1 soldier)
- ◆ 5 aphyss acolytes (level 2 minion)

Level 4 Encounter (XP 900)

- ◆ 1 aphyss priest (level 5 controller)
- ◆ 2 aphyss venomcasters (level 3 artillery)
- ◆ 4 aphyss temple guardians (level 1 soldier)

Level 6 Encounter (XP 1,200)

- ◆ 1 aphyss priests (level 5 controller)
- ◆ 1 aphyss venomcaster (level 3 artillery)
- ◆ 2 aphyss serpentfang assassins (level 2 lurker)
- ◆ 4 aphyss temple guardians (level 1 soldier)
- ◆ 1 deathrattle viper (level 5 brute)

DC 15: Demonfang crocodiles possess an innate resistance to fire. Some demon lords train and treat them as loyal pets and hunters, much like a human would train and treat a hunting dog.

DEMONFANG

LEVEL 3 SOLDIER

CROCODILES

XP 150

Medium elemental beast

Initiative +2 **Senses** Perception +3, low-light vision

HP 49; **Bloodied** 24

AC 19; **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 14

Resist 5 fire

Spd 6, swim 8

⊕ **Burning Bite** (standard; at-will) ◆ **Fire**

+10 vs. AC; 1d6+4 fire damage, and the target is grabbed (until escape). The demonfang crocodile cannot make bite attacks while grabbing a creature, but it can use *clamping jaws*.

Clamping Jaws (standard; at will) ◆ **Fire**

If a demonfang crocodile begins its turn with a target grabbed in its jaws, it makes an attack against the grabbed creature: +10 vs. AC; 2d6+4 fire damage

Alignment Chaotic Evil

Languages —

Str 17 (+4)

Dex 11 (+1)

Wis 13 (+2)

Con 17 (+4)

Int 2 (-2)

Cha 7 (-1)

DEMONFANG CROCODILE TACTICS

Demonfang crocodiles are patient hunters, preferring to wait just under the surface of the water until prey approaches. Then they strike quickly and attempt to drag their struggling victim down to the bottom of the water.

DEMONFANG CROCODILES

7 **These fiendish animals** combine the savagery of normal crocodiles and the cunning of demons.

Description: Demonfang crocodiles resemble normal crocodiles in shape and size, but their hide is the color of darkest ash and their incisors glow like burning coals.

DEMONFANG CROCODILE LORE

A character knows the following with a successful Arcana check:

DC 15: Demonfang crocodiles are the byproduct of normal crocodiles infused with demonic blood. They behave similarly to their mundane counterparts, although they are more clever and discriminating.

DRETCH

Dretches are pathetic creature that serve more powerful demons as slave labor, rank-and-file warriors, or cannon fodder – whatever is needed. Beneath their wretched exterior, however, is a powerful thirst for malice.

Description: A dretch stands about 4 feet tall, with a squat, blubbery body and very pale skin. Massive, oversized claws drag along the floor as it moves, but the sharp talons swing forward with surprising speed when it charges into combat. Flattened, almost-comically long ears thrust out from either side of its bulbous head.

DRETCH LORE

A character knows the following with a successful Arcana check:

DC 20: Dretches are dim-witted minions of the Abyss, often used in mass numbers by more powerful demons in combat. Although vicious, they are also ready to flee whenever the battle turns against their master. Because of their depressing station in the Abyss, the typical dretch doesn't live long.

DC 25: They can communicate telepathically, but only to creatures that speak Abyssal.

DRETCH LEVEL 3 CONTROLLER

Medium elemental XP 150
humanoid (demon)

Initiative +1 **Senses** Perception +2, darkvision
HP 49; **Bloodied** 6242
AC 17; **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 14
Resist 10 variable (1/encounter)
Spd 6

⊕ **Claws** (standard; at-will)

+8 vs. AC; 1d10+3 damage.

↔ **Wave of Fear** (standard; recharge 5 or 6) ♦ **Fear**

Close burst 5; targets enemies; +5 vs. Will; the target slides 1 square and takes a -2 penalty to all defenses (save ends).

✱ **Noxious Stench** (standard; daily) ♦ **Poison**

Area burst 2 within 10; +5 vs. Fort; targets take a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends).

Alignment Chaotic Evil **Languages** Abyssal (telepathy 10 only)

Str 12 (+2) **Dex** 10 (+1) **Wis** 12 (+2)

Con 17 (+4) **Int** 5 (-2) **Cha** 11 (+1)

DRETCH TACTICS

The typical dretch is too stupid to survive in single combat with most skilled opponents. They rely on sheer numbers to wear down their enemies. When possible, they employ their *wave of fear* to shake their foes' confidence and weaken their resistance at the start of combat.



GIANT TRAPDOOR SPIDER

Giant trapdoor spiders are immense predatory spiders that construct elaborate hidden burrows in forest and desert environments. These burrows are capped with a trapdoor, allowing the spider to spring out and surprise prey, as well as avoid its own enemies.

Description: A section of the forest floor suddenly flips up, revealing a 10-foot wide hole in the ground. Before you have time to react, a massive spider bursts from the hole, huge fangs glistening with deadly poison.

GIANT TRAPDOOR SPIDER LORE

A character can learn the following with a successful Nature check.

DC 15: Giant trapdoor spiders dwell in forests and deserts where they build elaborate burrows lined with webbing and concealed with a trapdoor. They have a poisonous bite, and use their venom to weaken prey, making it easier to drag a meal back into their lair.

GIANT TRAPDOOR SPIDER LEVEL 3 ELITE LURKER

Medium natural beast XP 250

Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +6; tremorsense 10
HP 78; **Bloodied** 39
AC 19; **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 12
Saving Throws +2
Speed 6; climb 6 (spider climb)
Action Points 1

⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will)

+8 vs. AC; 1d10+3 damage, the target is grabbed (until escape). If the giant trapdoor spider misses, it shifts 3 squares.

‡ **Envenoming Grasp** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Poison**

Grabbed target only; +6 vs. Fortitude; 1d8+2 poison damage, and the target is weakened (save ends).

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –
Skills Stealth +9

Str 17 (+4) **Dex** 16 (+4) **Wis** 11 (+1)

Con 15 (+5) **Int** 1 (-4) **Cha** 6 (-1)

GIANT TRAPDOOR SPIDER TACTICS

A giant trapdoor spider uses its tremorsense to detect prey on the surface. Once prey is detected, the spider will spring out of burrow and attempt to seize a single target, inject it with venom, and then drag it back into the burrow. If the spider misses, it scoots back into its burrow to avoid return attacks.

ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Giant trap door spiders are usually encountered in small groups, building their lairs about 15 feet apart from one another.

Level 3 Encounter (XP 750)

- ◆ 3 giant trapdoor spiders (level 3 elite lurker)

Giant Trapdoor Spider Lairs

Giant trapdoor spiders construct burrows lined with webbing, which are then capped with a camouflaged trapdoor. It requires a DC 25 Perception check or a DC 20 Nature check to notice a trapdoor when it is shut. A typical web funnel is 30 feet deep and ends in a 20-foot chamber where the spider makes its lair. It requires a DC 15 Athletics check to climb up or down a web funnel.

GRIGS

Grigs are tiny winged fey that are more mischievous than malignant. They are prone to playing pranks and stealing from larger humanoids, and can be a terrible nuisance to those traveling through deep sylvan woods. However, if their forest homes are threatened, grigs can turn deadly in an instant, using their charming fiddles and flights of tiny barbed arrows to devastating effect.

Description: This sprite combines humanoid and insect, possessing the upper body of a finely proportioned, albeit tiny, elf; and the lower body and wings of a cricket. It is armed with a tiny sword and bow, and carries a fiddle slung across its back.

GRIG LORE

A character can learn the following with a successful Arcana check.

DC 15: Grigs are mischievous fey that are usu-

ally not dangerous to those passing through their forest homes. However, once their ire is aroused they can charm foes with a magical fiddle or simply feather them with dozens of tiny, barbed arrows.

GRIG

Tiny fey humanoid

LEVEL 2 SKIRMISHER

XP 125

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +2; low-light vision

HP 37; **Bloodied** 18

AC 16; **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 15

Immune charm

Speed 4, fly 7 (hover)

Ⓣ **Short Sword** (standard; at-will)

+5 vs. AC; 1d4 damage.

Ⓝ **Short Bow** (standard; at-will)

+7 vs. AC; 1d4+4 damage, or 1d4+8 against an immobilized target.

Ⓡ **Snatch** (standard; at-will)

+5 vs. Reflex; the grig steals a small item from the target, such as a coin, dagger, potion, etc., and the grig shifts 3 squares.

⚡ **Fiddle Dance** (standard; recharge 6) ◆ **Charm**

Close burst 5; +3 vs. Will; target is dazed and immobilized (save ends both).

Alignment Unaligned

Languages Common, Elven

Skills Nature +8, Stealth +10

Str 10 (+1)

Dex 18 (+5)

Wis 12 (+2)

Con 13 (+2)

Int 14 (+3)

Cha 16 (+4)

Equipment short sword, shortbow, quiver with 20 arrows, fiddle

GRIG TACTICS

A grig begins combat with *fiddle dance*, and then fires its bow at immobilized targets. It avoids melee combat at all costs, only getting within striking distance of a foe to snatch a shiny bauble or magic item.

ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Grigs often cooperate with other fey creatures to drive off or kill evil monsters and humanoids encroaching into their forest homes.

Level 3 Encounter (XP 700)

- ◆ 2 grigs (level 2 skirmishers)

- ◆ 2 elf archers (level 2 artillery)

- ◆ 1 dire wolf (level skirmisher)

PUPPETEER VINE

A **puppeteer vine** is an intelligent, semi-mobile plant that lurks in swamps and jungles. It is carnivorous, and seeks out animal prey for sustenance; however, it has a bizarre defense mechanism that gives the dreaded vine its name. A puppeteer vine can control the actions of sentient creatures through a chemical secretion injected through tiny thorns on its three tendrils. In this way it can use its victim's body to attack its enemies and defend it from harm.

PUPPETEER VINE LORE

A character can learn the following with a successful Nature check.

DC 15: Puppeteer vines are found in dense swamps and jungles, where they prey on the abundant animal life found in these habitats. A puppeteer vine's three lashing tendrils secrete a chemical that allows the plant to assume control of a sentient creature's actions. The rather dry and brittle leaves of a puppeteer vine are quite vulnerable to fiery attacks.

PUPPETEER VINE

Medium natural animate
(plant)

LEVEL 2 ELITE

CONTROLLER

XP 250

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +2; blindsight 5

HP 80; **Bloodied** 40

AC 18; **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 13

Saving Throws +2

Vulnerable 5 fire

Speed 2 (forest walk)

Action Points 1

⊕ **Grasping Vines** (standard; at-will)

Reach 3; +5 vs. AC; 1d6+3 damage, and the target is grabbed (until escape). The puppeteer vine can attack and grab with up to three vines.

‡ **Lashing Burst** (standard; recharge 6)

The puppeteer vine makes three grasping vine attacks.

‡ **Puppet Master** (minor; at-will) ♦ **Charm, Poison**

Grabbed target only; +6 vs. Fortitude; the target is dominated (save ends). The puppeteer vine can only dominate one target at a time, and it must maintain contact with the target at all times.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –

Skills Stealth +9

Str 15 (+3) **Dex** 17 (+4) **Wis** 12 (+2)

Con 16 (+4) **Int** 10 (+1) **Cha** 7 (-1)

PUPPETEER VINE TACTICS

When faced with sentient humanoids, a puppeteer vine begins combat with *lashing burst*, seeking to grab up to three enemies at once. It then attempts to assume control of the grabbed targets' bodies and turn them against any remaining foes. Unable to move swiftly, a puppeteer vine fights until it is destroyed.

ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Puppeteer vines often cooperate with other intelligent plant creatures living in their environment.

Level 3 Encounter (XP 700)

- ♦ 2 puppeteer vines (level 2 controller)
- ♦ 1 vine horros (level 5 controller)

SHADOWFIEND SPIDER

These stalkers of the Abyss spin their webs in the shadows.

Description: Shadowfiend stalkers have smooth bodies that seem to absorb the light. In darkness, the crimson glow of their many eyes is often the first – and only – feature seen by their victims.

SHADOWFIEND SPIDER LORE

A character knows the following with a successful Arcana check:

DC 15: Shadowfiend spiders are silent, stealthy hunters from the Abyss. Despite their lack of intelligence, they're very good at hiding in the shadows.



SHADOWFIEND SPIDER**LEVEL 2 LURKER**

Medium elemental beast

XP 125

Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +8, tremorsense +5**HP** 31; **Bloodied** 15**AC** 16; **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 14**Immune** acid**Resist** 5 poison**Spd** 6, climb 6⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will) ◆ **Poison**

+5 vs. AC; 1d10+3 damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).

⚡ **Acidic Web** (standard; recharge 4, 5, or 6) ◆ **Acid**

Ranged 10; +5 vs. Reflex; the target takes ongoing 5 acid damage and is restrained (save ends both).

Shifting Shadows: If a shadowfiend spider moves at least 3 squares on its turn and ends its move 3 squares away from its previous position, it gains concealment until the end of its next turn.**Alignment** Chaotic Evil **Languages** —**Skills** Athletics +8, Stealth +9**Str** 15 (+3) **Dex** 17 (+4) **Wis** 14 (+3)**Con** 13 (+2) **Int** 1 (-4) **Cha** 7 (-1)**SHADOWFIEND SPIDER TACTICS**

Shadowfiend spiders use the shadows to their advantage. As their unsuspected victims walk by, they cast their entangling acidic webs and then scuttle down to secure their meal.

SWORDBREAKER TOAD

7

Feared by warriors across the land, the swordbreaker toad can grab and crush swords, axes, spears, and nearly anything else placed in the vicinity of its gigantic maw. It also enjoys biting and grinding up the wielders of said weapons, and many a swordsman has followed his blade down a swordbreaker toad's gullet.

Description: This humongous toad has slimy gray skin, and a prodigious mouth filled with blunt, crushing teeth.

SWORDBREAKER TOAD LORE

A character can learn the following with a successful Nature check.

DC 15: Swordbreaker toads are found in dank swamps, underground ruins, and other equally dismal places. They are active predators, relying on a stunning croak and the ability to leap prodigious distances to make up for their slow movement rate. Although slow moving, swordbreaker toads can bite at adjacent foes and their weapons with astonishing speed.

SWORDBREAKER TOAD**LEVEL 3 SOLO BRUTE**

Medium fey magical beast

XP 750

Initiative +1 **Senses** Perception +2; low-light vision**HP** 168; **Bloodied** 84**AC** 17; **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 13**Saving Throws** +5**Resist** fire 5, thunder 5**Speed** 4; see also *leaping charge***Action Points** 2⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will)

+6 vs. AC; 2d6+4 damage.

⚡ **Leaping Charge** (standard; recharge 5,6)

The swordbreaker toad shifts 8 squares and makes a bite attack; +7 vs. AC; 4d6+4 damage, and the target is knocked prone.

⚡ **Swordbreaking Bite** (immediate interrupt 1/round, when attacked in melee with a power or attack with the weapon key word; at-will)

+3 vs. Reflex; the attacker loses the use of the weapon used to make the attack until the end of the encounter.

↔ **Doomcroak** (standard; recharges when first bloodied) ◆ **Thunder**

Close blast 3; +2 vs. Fortitude; 2d10+4 thunder damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the swordbreaker toad's next turn.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** —**Skills** Athletics +10 (+15 jumping)**Str** 18 (+5) **Dex** 10 (+1) **Wis** 12 (+2)**Con** 18 (+5) **Int** 4 (-2) **Cha** 8 (+0)**SWORDBREAKER TOAD TACTICS**

A swordbreaker toad starts combat with *doomcroak*. It then follows up by spending an action point and make a *leaping charge* at a dazed opponent. Once engaged in melee, it simply bites at its enemies and their weapons. The swordbreaker toad uses *leaping charge* when it recharges to bring down fleeing opponents, and spends its remaining action point to use *doomcroak* immediately when reduced to bloodied.

ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Swordbreaker toads are often encountered with other dangerous monsters dwelling in the same area.

Level 5 Encounter (XP 1,050)

- ◆ 1 swordbreaker toad (level 3 solo brute)
- ◆ 2 spitting drakes (level 3 artillery)

VERREKRITH

A brutish, foul-smelling demon, the verrekriith is considered unpleasant even by its own kind. It prefers the company of vermin to any other creature, and it abhors other forms of mortal life.

Description: Verrekriiths seem to be some sort of cosmic jest on demonkind. The features are mix of those of various vermin. They have leathery brown skin covered with pustules and thin hair. Massive mandibles, like those of a giant beetle, clamp together in its rodent-like face, and a large, segmented, scorpion stinger curves toward you from its lower back. Verrekriiths stand over 6 feet tall, but their continual rat-like crouch makes them appear a foot shorter.

VERREKRITH LORE

A character knows the following with a successful Arcana check:

DC 15: Verrekriith are among the vilest of demons, repulsive even to each other. They are able to bring rats, spiders, and other vermin under their control. The foul odor of decay from their bodies can bring the strongest man to his knees.

DC 20: At times, the mandibles of a verrekriith can vibrate together to create a narrow burst of destructive force.



VERREKRITH

Medium elemental
humanoid (demon)

LEVEL 4 CONTROLLER

XP 175

Initiative +6 **Senses** Perception +7; low-light vision
Stench of Decay aura 1; living enemies in the area take –5 penalty to attack rolls.

HP 52; **Bloodied** 26

AC 18; **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 16

Immune disease

Resist 5 variable (1/encounter)

Speed 6

⊕ **Claw** (standard; at-will)

+9 vs. AC; 1d8+4 damage.

‡ **Sting** (standard; at will) ◆ **Poison**

+8 vs. Fort; 1d4+4, and the target takes ongoing 5 poison damage and is immobilized (save ends both).

⚡ **Concussive Drone** (standard; recharge 4, 5, or 6) ◆ **Thunder**

Ranged 10; +8 vs. Reflex; 3d6+4 thunder damage, and the target is pushed back 1 square.

↔ **Dominate Vermin** (standard; encounter) ◆ **Charm**

Close burst 10; targets rats, spiders, scorpions, and insects; +10 vs. Will; the target is dominated, and only the death of the verrekriith can end this domination.

Alignment Chaotic Evil

Languages Abyssal, telepathy 10

Str 15 (+4)

Dex 18 (+6)

Wis 11 (+2)

Con 13 (+3)

Int 9 (+1)

Cha 15 (+4)

VERREKRITH TACTICS

A verrekriith sends its dominated vermin ahead to attack, targeting whomever the demon believes may be a paladin or good-aligned cleric. It follows up by using the powerful *concussive drone* from its mandibles on that enemy, and it then engages in melee with its claws and stinger.



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