



# THE CLAW OF WINTER

An adventure in Cormyr for  
characters levels 5-10

**A mysterious death could bring trouble to the Forest Kingdom. Battle the elements and solve the mystery in this Tier 2 adventure for the world's greatest roleplaying game.**

# The Claw of Winter

## *An adventure in Cormyr*

Darkness has come to the monastery of Chauntea high in the Stormhorn Mountains. A mysterious death could bring trouble to the monastery, and the Forest Kingdom itself. Battle the elements and solve the mystery before it's too late.

A 4-hour adventure for 5th-10th level characters

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## Introduction

Welcome to *The Claw of Winter*. This adventure takes players on a journey that features true love, unspeakable horrors, and unexpected comedy.

### Version History

- Version 0.5, 6/18/16 - Playtest Version
- Version 1.0 7/9/16 – Initial Public Release

### Content Warning

While *The Claw of Winter* is appropriate for most players, some younger players may not understand all of the key elements. This adventure features the following content that might not be appropriate for all ages of D&D player.

- Acknowledgement that sex occurs
- Frank discussion of pregnancy
- Monsters that kill mothers and expectant mothers

If you think that any of this content may not be a good match for your group, be sure to read the adventure fully to get a good idea of how to handle it.

## About Cormyr, the Forest Kingdom

Cormyr is the setting of some of the most exciting adventures in the Forgotten Realms. It is a realm, primarily agricultural, governed by wise rulers.

Cormyr has a long history, and is peopled almost exclusively by humans. Many great houses trace their lineage back centuries in this great land, and its royal family, the Obarskys, have ruled since the kingdom's founding centuries ago.

Cormyr's army, the Purple Dragons, and its magical academy, the War Wizards, keep the peace and patrol the countryside. In its great cities of Suzail, Arabel, and Marsember, Cormyr is known for its intrigue and misbehaving nobles.

At the time of this adventure, Cormyr has just defeated Shade in a war that devastated Shade and destroyed Shade Enclave, their greatest city.

Cormyr is well-governed, and adventurers are expected to obey laws against murder and brigandry.

## Adjusting the Adventure

Throughout this adventure, you may see sidebars to help you make adjustments to this adventure for smaller/larger groups and characters, of higher/lower levels that the optimized group size.

This adventure is **optimized for a party of five 8th level characters**. To figure out whether you need to adjust the adventure, do the following:

- Add up the total levels of all the characters
- Divide the total by the number of characters
- Round fractions of .5 or greater up; round fractions of less than .5 down.

You've now determined the **average party level (APL)** for the adventure. To figure out the **party strength** for the adventure, consult the following table.

### Determining Party Strength

Party Composition	Party Strength
3-4 characters, APL less than	Very weak
3-4 characters, APL equivalent	Weak
3-4 characters, APL greater than	Average
5 characters, APL less than	Weak
5 characters, APL equivalent	Average
5 characters, APL greater than	Strong
6-7 characters, APL less than	Average
6-7 characters, APL equivalent	Strong
6-7 characters, APL greater than	Very strong

**Average party strength** indicates no recommended adjustments to the adventure. Each sidebar may or may not offer suggestions for certain party strengths. If a particular recommendation is not offered for your group, you don't have to make adjustments.

## Adventure Background

The year is 1487 DR, the Year of the Runelords Triumphant. Cormyr, the Forest Kingdom, is at peace once again, under Her Majesty Queen Raedra Obarskyr. Only a year ago, Queen Raedra rode out on horseback to lead Cormyr's forces to victory over Shade, the evil empire of Netheril.

All is not well, however. Scheming nobles, greedy merchants, and a reconstituted Black Network are known threats to the future peace of the realm. Rumors abound about Resurgent Shade, and many sellswords and Netherese nobles are unaccounted for.

The Winter of 1487 is unusually cold, and sages disagree when and even whether it will end. Pilgrims from Suzail and Arabel make their way to the Monastery of Chauntea at Huthduth, to pray for the blessing of the Earth Mother.

The crown has begun issuing Royal Charters to adventuring companies to escort pilgrims on their dangerous journey.

## Overview

This adventure is divided into five parts, with each part taking place in a different general location.

**Part 1. The Road to Huthduth.** The group has been chartered to lead a group of pilgrims to the monastery at Huthduth in the Stormhorns mountain range, and offer their services to the monks there. During a break in the harsh winter weather, the group and their charges are attacked by Wyverns, natives to the area.

**Part 2. The Monastery.** The party arrives at the monastery and are contracted to investigate a murder. The abbess suspects that a Shade stalks the surrounding forest at night. Investigation of the victim's quarters reveals tantalizing clues of a secret romance

**Part 3. The Village of Huthduth.** The group explores the village in search of clues to solve the murder. Along the way, they meet several of the outcasts that make their

home high up in the mountains. As they are completing their investigations, strange, dangerous beasts escape their pens and must be subdued.

**Part 4. Shades at Night.** Night falls, and the guard captain is up to something. The group follows him to a cemetery and learns his secret. After the captain departs back for the village, the party spots what is unmistakably a Shade, who flees into the forest. The group discovers a grisly scene, and takes the Shade back to the monastery, only to meet a group of armed men demanding the Shade's head.

**Part 5. The Claw of Winter.** The group takes the Shade to the monastery, to meet the abbess. After handing over the Shade to custody, the party meets the Abbess in conference with two other women. After discussion, the Abbess and her confederates reveal their true nature, and it's up to the party to defeat them and their thralls.

## The Mystery

This adventure contains a mystery, and has many different opportunities to explore the environment and find clues. Many of the NPCs, especially those that are actually monsters in disguise, give misleading information. In case the players become stuck or confused, some sections include instructions to the DM on how to "nudge" the group in the right direction.

For the DM's reference, here is an outline of what really is going on in the village of Huthduth. At the end of the adventure, you may wish to reveal the details to players who are interested in the details they may have suspected - or missed.

## The Villains

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The main villains of this adventure are a coven of Penanggalans, hideous creatures that prey on young women who are with child. This coven has come to Huthduth to exploit the pilgrims and monks who come to the monastery to give birth to their children in the good graces of the Mother, Chauntea.

**The Abbess Arisma Luribel** is the ringleader. She has been draining the High Harvestmaster of blood to keep him incapacitated. She has been encouraging the faithful to come on pilgrimage to the monastery to have their children.

**The Barmaid, Pelara Fresk** is the coven's eyes and ears. She has been encouraging the locals to drink, and plays local matchmaker. She ensures that people who are too nose-y stay distracted.

**The Catoblepas Wrangler, Pumfra Cracktooth** makes regular trips to and from Huthduth, giving the coven a cover and a means to dispose of unwanted bodies. Her poor husband is ignorant of her true nature.

## The Villains' Plot.

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**The Crisis.** Leara Truesilver's body was found by a monk at the Monastery before the coven could dispose of it. Abbess Arisma has been in search of a plausible cover for the strange nature of the girl's death.

**The Patsy.** Pumfra Cracktooth is aware of the Shade in the forest, and has been feeding him free Death Cheese and Swamp Roots in case the coven ever needed help.

**The Party.** Pelara Fresk learned of the pilgrims arrival, and suggested that the coven get the characters' chartered adventuring company to apprehend the shade. Pumfra, who knows the Shade is hunting the killer, has her Catoblepas attack the party and makes her way to warn the Abbess.

**Loose Ends.** With the Shade unexpectedly virtuous, the coven is counting on the party killing the Shade on sight. After Pumfra tells

the Abbess that the Shade is trying to surrender himself, the plan has to change quickly.

**The Mob.** At the end of Section 4, The Barmaid escapes to the monastery, while a group of armed men move against the Shade in a last attempt to keep the party from getting to the truth.

## The Final Confrontation

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The final encounter in this adventure is a showdown between the player characters and the coven. This can be brought about a few ways, detailed at the end of Section 4:

**The Shade Survives.** If the shade, Rastic, is alive at the conclusion of Section 4, his presence at the Monastery is enough to trigger the final confrontation.

**The Wayward Bard.** If the party follows the clues of the paper roses, they may end up in confrontation with the bard. He will point them towards the monastery with information that will trigger the confrontation.

**The Love-struck Mercenary.** If the party confronts the mercenary, Drask Millian, they may learn of Leara's condition. Reaching the monastery after this encounter will also trigger the confrontation.

**Cybele's Book.** One of the books contains a clue to the nature of the enemy, and details the Penanggalan's true nature.

## New Monsters

This adventure features three new monsters, the **Shade**, the **Penanggalan** and the **Catoblepas**. The Shade race, and the two strange creatures, may be familiar to more experienced players, especially those who have played earlier editions of Dungeons & Dragons. Use the information below to familiarize yourself with these strange creatures.

**Shade.** Shades are a race of humans who have spent so long in the Shadowfell realm that shadow has infused their very essence.

Long lived, most Shades hail from the empire of Netheril, now destroyed. Shades have grey skin, glowing golden eyes, and sometimes exude a shadowy smoke. There are many legends of Shades and their powers in Faerun.

Most shades are at least casual worshippers of the evil goddess Shar, but their motivations vary.

**Penanggalan.** This type of vampire takes the form of a female humanoid, and lives out its daylight hours indistinguishable from any other creature. At night, however, the Penanggalan's head grows bat wings from its neck and detaches from its body. This is a gory sight: the head brings with it the heart, lungs, stomach, and intestines, which dangle from the neck. Penanggalans feed on the blood of pregnant humanoids, and can often be found in places where their daytime life gives them proximity to their prey.

**Catoblepas.** These solitary, strange creatures dwell in the most miserable swamps of Faerun. Scholars disagree on their origin and ecology, but all agree that the Catoblepas is the ugliest creature in the Realms. With the head of a boar, long neck and legs, and the body of a bison, they are truly strange monstrosities.

The Catoblepas's horrid stench can kill, and it is aggressive when cornered. Catoblepas eat voraciously, and are sometimes carnivorous. They use their tusks and stench to hunt their prey. Natives of the Farsea Swamp, their milk is prized as a dangerous to procure delicacy.

## Adventure Hook

The party has been issued a Royal Charter to take a group of pilgrims to the monastery at Huthduth. The journey will take about a tendays, through dangerous paths into the Stormhorn mountains.

## Part I: The Road to Huthduth

If you have not reviewed "The Mystery" above, for your own reference, take time to do so.

### The Icy Road

The adventure begins as the group find a place to rest on their way to the monastery at Huthduth.

#### General Features

The clearing where the group pauses is on a small shelf surrounded by trees.

**The Stormhorns.** The Stormhorn mountains are a wild borderland to the Northwest of Cormyr. Full of monsters including ettins, wyverns, orcs, and worse, the range is dotted with fortresses.

**Light.** The sun is high overhead, and snow reflects light from nearby peaks; the area is brightly lit.

**Snowfall.** The snow has abated somewhat, the skies are clear.

This high in the mountains, it's easy to lose the path. The Stormhorns, the wild mountain range that borders Cormyr, lives up to its name. High winds and wet, bone-chilling snow have made your passage slow and treacherous. The path is a slurry of freezing mud.

The mountainous landscape is searing white, broken only by stubborn rocks and hardy pine trees. The handful of weary pilgrims with you almost disappear into their bundles of furs as you break the trail ahead of them.

Eventually, you find a clearing to rest, during a calm in the storm, with the sun still high in the sky. The pilgrims with you eat trail rations nervously and huddle around sputtering fires.

Give the players **HANDOUT 1**, the royal charter, and **HANDOUT 2**, the map of Huthduth. Have the players decide on an appropriate name for their adventuring party, and write it in on **HANDOUT 1** in the space provided. This is a good time for the characters to introduce themselves.

## Royal Charters

Royal Charters are a concept specific to Cormyr as a setting. Adventurers can't simply wander the countryside armed and adventuring.

Adventuring companies must receive a Royal Charter to act lawfully within the Forest Kingdom. Sometimes, these are very specific, other times, very broad.

A Royal Charter has an effect on most Cormyreans. Bearers of Charters are seen by some as being "Crown Agents". Others are tougher to impress, and have seen enough adventurers to know that Charters can sometimes be a formality.

Recipients of a Charter are expected, at the very least, to stay true to the letter and intent of the Charter, and behave lawfully while in Cormyr.

Allow a few moments for the players to review the handouts, then continue.

## Wyvern Attack

After the group has had a chance to rest, the party and the pilgrims are attacked.

Several of the pilgrims cry out in alarm. "A dragon! Earth Mother protect us! A Dragon!" The pilgrims scatter out of the clearing in a panic, as several winged creatures dive down into the clearing to attack.

**Two Wyverns** dive out of the sky to attack the characters. These creatures are predators of this region and are unafraid to confront an isolated band of humanoids.

**The Pilgrims.** The pilgrims (6 human **commoners**) are scattering throughout the area and cannot be calmed down until the Wyverns are killed.

## Tactics

The first round of combat, the Wyverns descend to 10 feet above the ground to attack.

When a player character moves adjacent to or attacks a Wyvern, the Wyvern will focus all of its attacks on the player character. It will remain fixed on that character until the character is reduced to 0 hit points.

## Adjusting the Encounter

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter. They are not cumulative.

- **Very weak party** The wyverns have 80 hit points.
- **Weak party** The wyverns have 96 hit points.

- **Very Strong party** Add an additional wyvern.

## Development

After the combat is over, the pilgrims insist on making the last push to the monastery at Huthduth. Without time to take a short rest, the party is able to reach the monastery shortly after noon.

## Part 2. The Monastery

The group arrives at the Monastery, and meets with the Abbess in the Monastery's sanctuary.

The village of Huthduth huddles at the foot of an imposing stone structure - the Monastery of Chauntea. Curious locals and monks stare at your group as you make your way through the narrow, muddy streets.

The doors of the monastery are open, a line of pilgrims and visitors stretches from the main door to the outer gates. The pilgrims in your group depart with goodbyes and embraces, to join the line.

A priestess by the main doors calls your party over. "My name is Arisma Luribel, I'm the Abbess of the Monastery. Your arrival is clearly the bounty of the Goddess, we are in great need here."

The Abbess takes the party up the steps past the waiting pilgrims into the sanctuary.

### The High Harvestmaster

In the main sanctuary of the Monastery is a somber scene. Pilgrims as well as monks are kneeling in prayer surrounding a central dais.

Cold light filters in through the large windows that line an enormous central sanctuary. The air is filled with the sound of muttered prayers. A pungent scent of blood, medicine, herbs, and sweat is inescapable.

Surrounding a central dais are dozens of robed monks, kneeling in prayer. The focus of their attention is a bed where an old man lies unconscious, tended by several monks. Around the bed are small tables with vials of medicinal-smelling concoctions, tinted in a rainbow of colors.

The Abbess gestures, "The High Harvestmaster is very ill. His time to rejoin the Mother is near. Let us pay our respects, then I would speak with you in the garden."

### Abbess and High Harvestmaster

The Abbess and the High Harvestmaster are very important to the Monastery, but have distinct roles.

- **Abbess** is an *administrative* title, given to the person who administers the operations of the Monastery on behalf of the High Harvestmaster. This person is usually, but not always, an avowed of the faith. The role is similar to the role of a *Castellan* in a castle.
- **High Harvestmaster** is a *religious rank*, earned by someone who has ascended to the highest levels of the church of

Chauntea. There is usually only one High Harvestmaster per major city, and most settlements have none.

### Speaking with the Abbess

The Abbess, Arisma Luribel, is overseeing efforts to ease the High Harvestmaster's suffering. A DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals that she is anxious and holding back a secret. She is happy to share details of the High Harvestmaster's treatment. See "The Mystery," above, for more information about Arisma. The Abbess will discuss a few topics, quietly, in a reserved and respectful tone.

- **The Illness.** "The High Harvestmaster fell ill several tendays ago. Though in good health for his advanced age, his condition quickly worsened, and he hasn't spoken since becoming sick."
- **Healing the High Harvestmaster.** "The High Harvestmaster wished to return to the earth, in the 'Mother's Embrace', and has forbidden all magical healing."
- **The Potions and Vials.** "Those are herbal remedies prepared by the monks here. Since the High Harvestmaster has refused prayers of healing, the remedies are the best that we can do"
- **The Weather.** "The winter has been especially hard, and it is all we can do to help the locals and pilgrims with food and drink."

### Other Features

**The High Harvestmaster.** The High Harvestmaster is very ill. If approached, he attempts to speak but his words are unintelligible. Use of telepathic abilities reveals that he is confused and in pain. A DC 15 Intelligence (Medicine) check is enough to determine that he is on his deathbed.

**Potions and jars.** The potions and jars that surround the deathbed smell strongly and are unlabeled. Some of the jars contain red-tinted liquid that a quick inspection reveals has traces of blood.



## The Garden

Snow has begun to fall again, as the Abbess leads you to a small private garden away from the main pathways. The earth here is hard and mostly barren. A wheelbarrow is overturned and its contents strewn about the scene. The abbess checks to ensure you are alone, and gestures to a canvas covering that is thrown over the ground. “See for yourself,” she says. “Please, conduct your investigation fully, then ask questions.”

From under one corner of the canvas covering, a pale arm and hand extends. The lifeless, delicate fingers are clutching a small, black disc.

The Abbess patiently waits until the characters are done with their examination.

**Figure under the sheet.** Under the sheet is the corpse of a beautiful, golden-haired maiden wearing a pilgrim’s robes. Her simple clothing cannot hide her noble features and bearing. Characters investigating the figure can learn the following.

**The body.** The woman’s body is without any marks. She is pale, and looks eerily alive, as if she were just sleeping. She is clutching something in one hand.

**The garden** The surrounding garden shows no signs of a struggle. The Abbess adds that the wheelbarrow was knocked over by the monk that discovered the body.

**The object in the girl’s hand.** A small black stone rimmed with purple. A DC 10 Intelligence (History or Religion) reveals that this stone is the sign of the evil goddess Shar, the goddess of loss, and is carried by Shadovar, the worshippers of the dark goddess.

After the party has time to examine the body, the Abbess addresses them.

The Abbess continues in a low, urgent voice. “This girl is Leara Truesilver, her family will be devastated! She was here in secret, completing the pilgrimage and service to the Mother.

Even my own prayers have not revealed the nature of the Lady Truesilver’s death.” She sighs heavily. “The black disc in Lady Truesilver’s hand is a mark of the Shadovar. I believe that a shade stalks this very town. Maybe on behalf of the Black Network. Maybe Resurgent Shade, trying to reclaim lost glory.”

Her tone becomes more urgent, and tears rise to the Abbess’s eyes. “Please, you must find the Shade!”

The Abbess answers any questions to the best of her ability.

- **Shades.** “Shades are creatures of darkness. Men who gave their souls to Shar, bound to the Shadowfell plane. Enemies of the kingdom.”
- **Leara Truesilver.** “Leara was a kind girl, everyone in the village was her friend. The person who did this to her must be punished.”
- **Leara’s Activities.** “Leara was very devout, but did not have a knack for husbandry in the gardens. She spent most of her free time in the village.”
- **Leara’s Arrival at Huthduth.** “Leara arrived, only giving her first name. Once we discovered she was the daughter of a great house, we made accommodations.”
- **The Body** “This has the look of necromancy. Only a shade could leave a body so drained and without a mark. Whomever killed her must have been close to her.”
- **The Black Disc** “That is Shard’s symbol, the Lady of Loss. Her servants want to bring about the end of everything.”
- **Shade Agents** “I will continue to pray to the Mother to grant me a vision of our tormentor. I believe the Shade to be protected by magic.”

After the party has a chance to ask questions and explore the scene, the Abbess takes them to Leara Truesilver’s room.

### Shortcutting the Adventure

A few key player abilities can shortcut the adventure. Read below for a couple of examples and how to handle them.

- **Divine Sense** and other abilities that can detect undead seem like they would work, but the nature of the

*Penanggalan* is that it appears completely mundane even under magic detection.

- **Truesight** and other abilities that grant special senses or vision cannot pierce the disguise of the *Penanggalan*. This creature cannot be detected unless it has separated its head from its body.
- **Any form of divine assistance** that would allow a character perfect information does not function, due to the nature of divine magic in this region.
- **Speak With Dead** and other similar spells yield no results, due to the nature of the *Penanggalan*'s curse.

## Truesilver's Room

As a noble, Leara's room is private, unlike the rooms of most other pilgrims. It is cramped, and very modestly appointed. The obvious features of the small room are the single bed, a writing desk, and a small closet.

The small apartment is not what you would expect a noble to sleep in. In every way it is the humble accommodation of a simple pilgrim.

In one corner of the cramped space is an unmade bed, tilted at an odd angle from the wall. Across from the bed is a writing desk smudged with ink and a dusting of sand for drying letters. In one corner is a tiny closet.

The Abbess stands outside the door and lets you in. "Please, take your time. I'll wait out here, these rooms are very small."

The party is given full freedom to explore the cramped dormitory room.

**Leara's Bed.** The bed is unmade and looks uncomfortable. It's tilted at an odd angle to the wall. Searching under the bed reveals a few sad pairs of sandals, but also a dagger concealed behind a plank under the mattress.

This dagger is a *+1 dagger*, and may be "borrowed" as needed. It is worked masterfully in platinum and silver, and is reassuringly warm to the touch.

A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals a loose plank in the floor underneath the bed. This check is made at advantage if the party has already searched the writing desk.

**Secret Compartment.** Under the loose plank is a secret compartment containing a writing kit and some correspondence. Perusing the letters reveals information

dependent on the results of an Intelligence (Investigation) check.

- 10 or higher: Leara was corresponding with a close family member in Marsember. She had met someone and was in love.
- 15 or higher: Leara was preoccupied with concern that her father would disapprove of the "nature" of her lover. She didn't care, and believed Chauntea had blessed their union.
- 20 or higher: Leara's correspondent in Marsember warned her against this match. The correspondent implored Leara to confess to the High Harvestmaster or the Abbess. Give the players **HANDOUT 3**, an excerpt from Leara's tear-stained letter from home.

**Writing Desk.** The writing desk has smudges of ink and a dusting of sand. It is otherwise bare and there are no drawers. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals that though the desk appears used often, there are no sign of quill, ink, paper, or any other writing kit.

**Closet.** The closet is bare, with two hooks for hanging robes on the back wall, and a hole where a third hook used to be. On the floor underneath the missing hook the bottom of the closet is dented. In a corner is a small buckle.

A DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check identifies this buckle as a strap for a piece of armor or sword belt.

## Development

After the party is done searching Leara Truesilver's room, the Abbess implores them to head out to the village to search for clues. She emphasizes that the characters must absolutely keep Lady Truesilver's death a secret, until the Shade is found.

**Additional Rewards.** If the party finds the secret compartment, award an additional 50XP per character at the end of the adventure.

## Part 3. The Village of Huthduth

The party has their mission, and is sent down into the village of Huthduth to gather leads on the location of the murderer or their accomplices.

The sun is setting in the west, painting the misty marshes far below in vivid colors. A few pilgrims and villagers are milling about the streets, and most are weary from hard work.

The party has free run of the city, and can explore all of the locations on the map. If the party wishes to head directly to the graveyard, continue with the Catoblepas escape, then continue on to Part 4.

### Shortcutting the adventure

Heading to the graveyard without exploring the village first is possible, but can significantly cut content from the adventure. Ask your players if they are sure that they want to continue to the graveyard before exploring the village.

### 1. Cybele's Curiosities

Cybele Draum's shop is cluttered, and most of the items are junk. She is happy to share rumors and stories to those who are here to buy.

The inside of this junk shop is cluttered with shelves sagging with junk. A small, hand-painted sign is propped up on the proprietor's desk: "All items 5gp. ALL SALES ARE FINAL".

It is freezing cold in here, with only a tiny stove providing heat. The store is lit only by the stove and a few candles.

A middle-aged woman with a lined face, wearing several layers of warm clothing, scowls at you when you enter.

"Are ye going to be buying anything?" she asks in a gruff northern accent.

**Cybele Draum.** Cybele is a middle-aged woman with dark hair, a lined face, and a scowling expression. She speaks common with a northern accent, marking her as a native of the Sword Coast North. Too cheap to pay for fuel to heat her small shop, she wears a heavy coat and mittens indoors.

### Interrogating Cybele

To any character who has bought one of her "curiosities", she will share some of her opinions. Cybele is tough and not easily intimidated.

- **The Temperature in the Store.** "Mayhap ye'll pay for me fuel, then! In Luskan, this would be a fine night for a stroll!"
- **The Monks.** "They're none too friendly to Northerners. I won't be chased out of me business, though! I'll be here f'rever!"
- **Shade.** "Ye'll not surprise me with that talk. The war may be over, but the Shadovar are a crafty kin. I ain't seen none, mayhap check at the tavern"
- **Leara Truesilver.** "Ah, I'd been wonderin' when someone'd come back for the high-nosed girl. If ye're here to take her back home, ye'll earn yer coin, know it! She won't go quiet-like!"
- **Leara's Activities.** "The girl had been here a time or three before. Always looking and never buying. That's a highnose for you. She just asked me if I was a fellow worshipper of Chauntea. I disappointed her, I think."
- **Leara's Lover.** "Aye, there's a bit of juicy gossip! I heard that girl got herself in a tiff with a lover. And her lover is somethin' best not mentioned!"

**Curiosities for Sale.** Cybele has a variety of odd "curiosities" for sale. The items she has for sale cost 5gp each. Feel free to substitute your own items to suit your players.

### Books

- "Grimoire of the Undead" by Hastel Witchquiddler
- "10 Things That Cannot Be" by Vulon Adoreen
- "Pastries of the Reghed Glacier" by Bork Findley

### Other Items

- A rusted dagger with an empty gem socket
- A bronze gauntlet with a lion emblem

- Wooden eating sticks from Kara-Tur
- A Calishite desk lighter depicting an Efreeti

## 2. The Mother's Bounty

The Mother's Bounty is an inn and tavern that serves travelers, traders, pilgrims, and locals.

The common room of the Mother's Bounty is home to just a handful of characters, listening to a bard on stage play a finely-made lute.

"Have a seat, welcome!" a cheery woman's voice calls from the common room's floor. A barmaid with an angelic smile whirls from table to table refilling drinks and invites you to sit in some of the empty chairs. "I'll be with you in a little while!"

After the party enters, they are immediately greeted by the bard, Rory Goodluck, who is entertaining this night's guests.

Rory greets the party with a smile and produces paper roses to put in the hair of female party members. If no women are in the party, he places the paper rose in the hair of the barmaid.

To every girl he gives a paper flower, he says the same line, "You're the prettiest girl in all the realms!"

### The Friendly Barmaid

**Pelara Fresk, the Barmaid.** Pelara is quick to run over to talk to the party. Pelara's age is hard to place, with her angelic features and ready smile.

She has a bit of sparkly jewelry around her neck that is obviously too expensive for a barmaid.

She is happy to make small talk with handsome men or women in the party, and is prone to asking about any romantic entanglements of any party members. See "The Mystery" above for more information about Pelara.

Pelara will give the party information about the notable NPCs below, but is too busy to make introductions. She also has a few tidbits of additional information if asked directly.

- **The Inn.** "Your room's paid for by your charter. If you need anything, come see me."
- **New Arrivals.** "You aren't the ones I saw on the edges of the village, were you? I got such a scare!"
- **Leara Truesilver.** "Never seen a highnose here! It's not our clientele."
- **Her Necklace.** "It's a present, from my bright bird. He doesn't stop by often, but he brings me the nicest things! Of course, he's my secret."
- **The Village.** "People here are friendly, we look out for each other."
- **Rumors.** "I saw a figure skulking about in the graveyard. I swear I saw its eyes glow. It looked right at me! Maybe I imagined it?"

### The Performing Bard

**Rory Goodluck, bard from Berdusk.** Rory is friendly, outgoing, and *especially* friendly with female members of the party. He is a base flatterer, and compliments every girl with the same line, "There's nothing prettier in all the realms!"

Rory conspicuously evades all attempts to ask him questions, preferring instead to launch into his next song. He retires to his room upstairs after he finishes "Mistshore Melody". Rory sings the following songs during his set, but will also take requests.

- "My lady wouldn't take me for a hundred platinum stars"
- "The Strongest Drink"
- "Mistshore Melody".

### The Sullen Mercenary

**Drask Millian, Mercenary.** Drask is unfriendly, and can be seen tucking something inside his shirt as the party approaches him. He has a chip on his shoulder about his low birth and lack of a charter to adventure.

He is too proud to take a job or any assistance from the characters, under any circumstance. He will not discuss Leara, even

if he is directly asked about her. He will, however, begrudgingly answer a few questions if asked.

- **His Attitude.** “Oh look, more highnose types. So full of yourselves. Are you going to lecture me on manners?”
- **Shade.** “I fought in the war, and on the side of the King, may the Mother rest his soul. Look where it landed me!”
- **The Monastery.** “The monks keep their distance, fine with me. I’ll pick up coin here and there killing what needs to be killed.”
- **Nobles.** “Worse than useless. What makes a nobleman better than me? Nothing, that’s what.”

### Development

When the party is ready to leave the inn, they notice that Drask the mercenary is leaving in a hurry. The barmaid cries out to stop him.

”Hey! Stop there, Drask, you haven’t paid up!” Pelara the barmaid calls out after the running mercenary. She stops at the door to hold it open for you as you go by. “I wonder what’s got into him!”

## 3. Farsea Marshes Trading Post

Inside a covered tent, an older man with leathery skin stands behind a table. A sign on the table proclaims, “Cotter Cracktooth’s Farsea Marshes Trading Post: Death Cheese: 5 silver a pound. Plague Milk available by request!”

”Come in!” the man says. “You look like adventurous fellows, have you ever tasted Catoblepas milk? Oh, they’re plenty deadly, but my sweet wife handles them just fine!

A back tent flap opens, releasing a terrible stench. An hideous orcish woman with prominent tusks, wearing protective netting and heavy leather gloves, sticks her head out and grunts before closing the flap and returning to the back room. After several moos and a crashing noise, Cotter laughs.

”Ain’t she a beauty?” the man says, beaming. “I’m a lucky man!”

Cotter Cracktooth is an enthusiastic purveyor of Death Cheese and Plague Milk, dairy products from the Catoblepas. They are safe to eat, but are definitely an acquired taste.

His wife, Pumfra Cracktooth, an orc from the Farsea Marsh, is in charge of wrangling the dangerous beasts. Cotter swaps tales with the party and attempts to sell them on his unusual product. He’s turns every question into an opportunity to try to sell more Death Cheese.

- **Rumors.** “Oh, I’ve heard some wild tales of the forest surrounding these parts. I’ve seen things! Foresting is hungry work, would you care for some Death Cheese?”
- **The Forest.** “Oh, Ghosts live in the forest. Some call your name, just to lead a man to his death in the dark. Better to stay in the village and enjoy a delicious mug of Plague Milk. Do you like yours warm or cold?”
- **His wife.** “She’s gorgeous, ain’t she? How many beauties like her can handle the deadly Catoblepas? Not many!”
- **Catoblepas.** “You haven’t heard of Catoblepas? Fearsome creatures, just to see them is dangerous. That’s why their milk is the greatest delicacy. Why, I bet if you bought 5 pounds of cheese you’d make a hefty profit back in Arable or Suzail!”
- **Shade.** “Who knows what is stalking around out there? Vampires? Shades? Zombies, stalking the hills looking for prey? My wife says she has seen a shadowy figure with glowing eyes by the graveyard.”

If the party asks to see Pumfra, Cotter declines, only saying that she’s needed back in the pens.

### Purchasing Death Cheese

Death Cheese is an unpleasant yellow color and smells terrible.

Cotter does not offer free samples, and all sales are final. He would love nothing more than to sell a few pounds of Death Cheese to the party.

If a party member tries to eat Death Cheese, have that player roll a d6. On a 1, the Death Cheese is the most delicious treat in all the realms, and the character learns that

they have a taste for this exotic delicacy. Otherwise, the character must run outside and immediately vomit.

### Sampling Plague Milk

Cotter keeps some of the “good stuff” under his counter. Plague milk has the consistency of spoiled sour cream, and is largely separated. Cotter will pour the plague milk free of charge, and will warn characters who are about to drink it, “Don’t mix it up! You’ll ruin it!”

Characters who have a taste for Death Cheese (see above) will find Plague Milk refreshing. Any other character will be unable to swallow, immediately spitting the liquid out.

### Catoblepas Escape!

After the party has had the opportunity to ask around, they may be ready to head towards the graveyard. Before leaving, however, they see Drask hurrying his way towards the graveyard with a large, empty sack. Before they are able to stop him, a loud crash and a cry of alarm comes from the Farsea Mashes Trading Post.

“They’re loose! Watch out!”, cries a voice from underneath the collapsed tent. The tent lurches and enormous, mooing, tusked creatures emerge. The Catoblepas eye your group, whipped into a frenzy, and charge.

Just before the hideous, long-necked, half-pig, half-bison beasts reach you, Cotter Cracktooth emerges from the collapsed tent. “Don’t you hurt our little babies! They’re all we’ve got!”

**Two Catoblepas** charge the party, fighting without regard to their safety. They’ve been whipped into a frenzy by Pumfra, and sent after the party while Pumfra escapes to the Monastery. See “The Mystery” at the beginning of the adventure for more information about Pumfra.

**Adjusting the Encounter.** Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter.

**Strong or Very Strong party** Add an additional Catoblepas.

### Development.

After the fight, Pumfra is nowhere to be seen. Cotter runs to the bodies of the Catoblepas. If they have been killed, Cotter curses the characters and weeps over the Catoblepas corpses. If the party spares the Catoblepas by incapacitating them in some way, Cotter rewards the party (see treasure)

After the commotion, the party spies the mercenary Drask, paused by the path to the graveyard. This time, his pack is full. When he notices the characters have seen him, he retreats into the darkness.

The players do not have an opportunity to take a short rest at this time. Villagers, pilgrims, and monks are in the streets and the players find themselves mobbed by people asking after what happened.

**Additional Rewards.** Award an additional 50XP per character at the end of the adventure if any characters tried Death Cheese or Plague Milk.

### Treasure

If the party managed to save the lives of one or more of the Catoblepas, they are paid a reward of 100gp by Cotter, in the form of 200 pounds of Death Cheese - all the stock he has.

### Giving the Players a Push

If the players haven’t figured out that the graveyard is where they need to go next, Pelara Fresk, the barmaid, runs up to the characters after the fight.

“You! Friends!” Pelara the barmaid calls as she runs towards you through the gathering crowd. “I’m so glad you are alright! Did you see anyone suspicious? I thought I saw lights up at the graveyard! I thought it might be that creature I saw up there. With the glowing eyes.”

Pelara shares whatever information she needs to in order to get the characters to the next part of the adventure.

## Part 4. Shades at Night

In this part, the characters will head to the Graveyard, where they have an opportunity to confront Drask, the Mercenary. This is optional, and is one of the opportunities for the players to learn the “full story” behind the mystery.

### The Graveyard

Characters traveling to the graveyard spot Drask Millian up ahead on the path, with a heavy bundle under one arm.

Characters that sneak closer can notice what he is carrying: a bundle of firs, a half loaf of bread, and a bottle of wine. Drask stops to pray at a small shrine to Chauntea, then walks into the graveyard at the forest’s edge.

Drask is Leara Truesilver’s lover, and he has not seen her in many days. He, of course, doesn’t know that she is dead.

You see the mercenary, Drask Millian, seated on furs in a corner of the graveyard. He warms his hands over a small fire, and looks around anxiously. He appears to have laid out a picnic for two, and is expecting someone.

**Drask’s Picnic.** Drask waits nervously after spreading out furs and a picnic for two. He has two wooden cups, the wine, and the crust of bread. It is cold out, and he is clearly nervous that his company will never show up.

**If Drask knows Leara is dead.** If Drask, for some reason, is aware of Leara’s fate, he is here not to meet his lover, but to grieve her.

### Confronting Drask

If Drask becomes aware of the party, he is defiant, and seems ready for a fight. He is wearing his armor and a sword is at his hip. He will not draw his weapon on the party under any circumstance short of being attacked. He fights as a **veteran** if the party attacks him.

The mercenary gets to his feet and stands in a ready stance. In one hand, he holds his lantern, the other he rests on his sword. His eyes are red-rimmed and wild with grief. His breastplate hangs crooked, one of the buckles has snapped off.

“I knew it!” he cries out. “I knew you would come for me sooner or later. You’d like to keep us apart, wouldn’t you? You can’t. She is with child, my child. We are in love!”

The mercenary is distraught, and is already beginning to suspect something is wrong. He answers questions with defiance. Modify his answers appropriately if the party tells him of Leara’s fate. By the end of the conversation, however it goes, Drask becomes convinced that he needs to leave Huthduth behind.

- **Drask and Leara.** “We are in love, and you can’t stop us. Can’t a man have a bright bird of his choice?”
- **Drask’s Plan.** “Leara is with child. I have enough money saved to take us west. I have friends in Baldur’s Gate. They won’t care about her rank.”
- **Leara’s Pregnancy.** “A noble can sire a bastard, but a man can’t? I intend to do right by her!”
- **Leara’s Whereabouts.** “I don’t get to see her often. Her work at the Monastery keeps her busy. What have you done with her?”

### Development

If Drask learns of Leara’s fate, or already knows, he only answers a few questions before he flees from the graveyard back to the village.

If Drask is still ignorant of Leara’s fate, he instead leaves in disgust, believing that Leara’s family hired the adventurers to separate him from her.

“You must think me a fool,” says Drask with an air of finality. Leaving behind his picnic, he walks towards the path leading back to the village. At the shrine, he stops, and turns back.

“You won’t be seeing me again,” he calls. “There’s nothing for me here. If you can get word to her sister, tell her that I’m sorry.”

**Additional Rewards.** If the party confronts Drask and learns of his and Leara's plans, award each character 100XP at the end of the adventure.

## A Shade in the Dark

Whether or not the party confronted Drask, they are observed by the Shade, Rastic Orberan. Rastic is not a villain, rather, he is interested in his self-preservation. He reaches out to the party.

A voice from the forest calls out. "Adventurers, hear me! I mean you no harm!"

From the forest, two yellow-gleaming eyes shine. A grey-skinned man in torn and stained scholar's robes steps into the moonlight. "My name is Rastic Orberan, I'm a shade, yes, but no enemy, and no danger to you." The shade gives a formal bow.

"If you follow me, I can take you to the bodies. Something hunts the women of your village."

Rastic the shade is beginning to suspect that he is being drawn into danger. He has been surviving off of the Death Cheese that Pumfra Cracktooth has been bringing him, but has had no other contact with the people of Huthduth. He does whatever is necessary to make the party comfortable enough to follow him, including submitting to arrest, gags, anything. To anyone looking at him, he is clearly neither a fighting man nor a spell caster.

### Shortcutting the Adventure

It is very possible the the party chooses to attack Rastic. The adventure allows this, and it will affect the ending significantly.

### What to do if the party attacks the Shade

If Rastic is attacked, he fights as a **noble** and does not fight back, only taking the dodge action. On his turn, all he does is beg for his life and swear to his innocence. If Rastic is still killed, proceed to "Returning to Huthduth" below and consult the section, "If the Shade was killed" for guidance.

### Treasure

If the party killed the shade, they are able to take his belt pouch which contains 6x50gp sapphires.

### Half-Buried Corpses

If the party chooses to follow him into the forest, Rastic leads the party away from the graveyard to a distressing scene. Two more bodies are here, only half-buried.

The shade nervously leads you into the forest, muttering to himself. After traveling for a few minutes, Rastic stops.

"There," the Shade says, pointing to a moonlit patch of dirt and snow on the ground. Reaching out of a thin layer of earth are a few arms, golden hair, and dirty pilgrims robes. "You'll have to dig them up, I didn't touch them."

The party has time to investigate the scene, provided they are will to clear a little soil. They can also interrogate the Shade.

### The Scene

Rastic waits patiently while the party has time to investigate the bodies.

### Shortcutting the Adventure

Keep in mind that many abilities that can speak to the dead or reveal secrets through magical means will not work in this adventure. Consult the sidebar on page 6-7 if you need to refresh yourself.

**The Bodies.** The bodies are half buried, and both are wearing the robes of Chauntean monks. Each of the girls has a red paper rose in her hair.

A DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check notices that there are no signs of struggle on either of them, and that they have the same, pale, lifelike quality as Leara Truesilver's corpse.

The girls are Hesia Gillifoy and Clia Senlon. It is unlikely the characters are able to identify them.

**The Paper Roses.** The roses in the hair of each girl are easily recognizable as the ones that Rory Goodluck gives out at the Mother's Bounty.



### Interrogating the Shade

Rastic Orberan is nervous, but still believes that confessing his presence and turning himself in is the best way for him to stay alive. His speech is polite, but halting, since he has spoken to so few people in the last year. When interrogated, he shares the following.

- **His Origin.** “I had the fortune of not being in Shade Enclave when your people... overcame... mine. I hid for a time in the Anauroch desert to the north, then made my way south once I realized that the war was truly lost.”
- **His Survival.** “An orcish woman has kept me alive, I’m... ashamed... to say. She has fed me an unusual fortified cheese and showed me which roots to eat. I’ve lived like an animal.”
- **The Bodies.** “I found these while digging for roots. I dared not touch them. They both have this paper rose, but I do not know if its significance.”
- **His Surrender.** “You can take me to the Monastery for justice. I will submit to any prayer your priests can devise. My conscience is clear.”

### Development

When the party is finished interrogating Rastic and exploring the scene, he makes a request.

“I’ve told you everything I know,” the Shade says. “If I stay out here, I’m as good as... dead. Please, take me to the Monastery and I will... submit to inquisition there.”

If the party has mentioned the paper rose of Rory the Bard, Rastic makes another suggestion.

“The bard you mentioned, he has to... know something. This is too much of a coincidence. It might further my case to confront him, mayhap we should go there... directly?”

Rastic’s preference is to stay close to the party, for his own protection. Whether the

party wishes to proceed to confront Rory the Bard, or take the Shade to the Abbess directly, Rastic will agree to the party’s decision.

Rastic also has abilities that will allow him to meet the party back at the monastery, if the party trusts him to do so.

### Returning to Huthduth

The party should take a short rest before returning to Huthduth.

Upon return to Huthduth, the villagers and monks are still in the street, even though it is the dead of night. Word has gotten out that girls are missing, and their names: Leara Truesilver, Hesia Gillifoy, and Clia Senlon.

### Shortcutting the Adventure

Read the following paragraphs very closely. Each of the possible outcomes from Part 4 will lead to a different sequence of events.

#### If the Shade was killed.

If the party killed Rastic, they have the option of confronting Rory the Bard (See below), if they pieced together enough clues to implicate him – notably, if they found the other girls’ bodies and the paper roses in their hair.

If the party is ignorant of the connection (likely), a monk from the Monastery runs to meet the adventurers.

A monk runs down the path from the monastery and waves his arms excitedly. “We’ve been looking for you everywhere,” the Monk says. “The Abbess needs to speak with you right away.”

The monk animatedly insists that the party get going to the Monastery. Proceed to Section 5.

#### If the Shade survived and is with the party.

If Rastic is with the party, they have an opportunity to confront Rory the Bard (See Below). When this confrontation is over, or if the party chooses not to, continue to “Mob Rule”, below.

**If the Shade survived and is not with the party.**

If Rastic is not with the party, the party still has an opportunity to confront Rory the Bard (See Below). When this confrontation is over, or if the party chooses not to, continue to “The Coven’s Thralls”, below.

**(Optional) Confronting Rory the Bard**

Only play this section if the party suspects Rory the Bard and chooses to confront him when returning to Huthduth.

Rory is in the common room of the Mother’s Bounty inn, and is alarmed to see the party. He begins making excuses as soon as the party advances on him.

The bard squirms in his chair and winces, as if he’s expecting to be struck. “I know Hesia and Clia! But I didn’t do anything to them! They were my bright birds, the prettiest girls in all the realms!”

When questioned, either in public or in private, he cracks immediately.

**Hesia Gillifoy.** “Hesia, she was a sweetheart, in training to be a monk! Oh, she was quite spry. But very devout, she wanted a child to bear in tribute for the Mother! Who am I to resist?”

**Clia Senlon.** “Clia was Hesia’s friend, the barmaid introduced her to me her. She’s really looking out for me. You don’t think that Pelara is involved in this, do you?”

**Pelara Fresk, the barmaid.** “Pelara is quite the matchmaker, she told me all about the monks’ unusually... free attitudes towards taking lovers. Where she learned this, I don’t know! She’s not really the devout type.”

**Leara Truesilver.** “No, no, no, I’m not *that* crazy! I’d have to be a damned fool to go after a noblewoman! When daddy calls her home, do you think he’ll be happy his daughter keeps a commoner?”

**The Murders.** “That’s not me! That’s not me! Pelara the barmaid, she says the bodies have no markings on them, and that it’s dark magic! Do I look like a dark magician to you?”

Rory professes his innocence, but will not go willingly to the Monastery unless threatened.

**Development.** Regardless of whether Rory is with the party or not, continue with the appropriate section below:

“Mob Rule”, if the Shade is alive

“The Coven’s Thralls”, if the Shade has been killed

**Mob Rule**

Only play this section if the Shade survived and is with the party when they approach the Monastery.

With word out about the murders, Drask Millian has returned with a crew out to avenge themselves on the Shade. Drask and his band of hardscrabble mercenaries block the party’s progress to the Monastery. They fight as a group of **five veterans**.

In the moonlight, Drask and a group of fighting men stand in a line across the main road to the Monastery.

”Give us the Shade. We don’t care about your charter. We’ll take care of this monster and be on our way.” The shade takes a step back to hide behind your group. “I surrendered to you in good faith, adventurers. Don’t let them take me.”

”We don’t care what you did or didn’t do!” Drask calls.

“You’ll die just the same, including those who harbor you!”

**Choice**

The party may hand over Rastic the Shade if they choose to. Continue to “Development” below. Do not award experience for defeated foes in this instance.

If the party chooses to protect Rastic, battle is unavoidable.

**Tactics.** The **five veterans** are determined to kill the shade. They will choose to incapacitate rather than kill any player characters. For all their bluster, these mercenaries are not willing to commit a capital crime in Cormyr. These desperate men fight until the last one is killed or incapacitated.

**Adjusting the Encounter.**

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter. They are not cumulative.

- **Very weak party:** remove two veterans.
- **Weak party** remove one veteran.

- **Strong or Very Strong party:** Add one veteran.

### Treasure

Rastic has a belt pouch with 6x50gp sapphires.

### Rewards

If the party refused to surrender Rastic, award 100XP at the end of the adventure to each character, as a story award.

### Development

The party now has the attention of the entire village. The locals are curious about the shade and walk behind the party as they approach the closed doors of the sanctuary. Continue to Section 5.

## The Coven's Thralls

Only play this section if the Shade survived and is not with the party when they approach the Monastery.

With word out about the murders, and the populace frightened, there is only one loose end for the Coven to tie up - the party. Five men at arms wearing the symbol of Chauntea on their breastplates stand on the steps of the Monastery. They fight as a group of **five veterans**.

In the moonlight, five armed men stand on the steps. One of them is Drask Millian, his breastplate still half-buckled. They stand as if half-asleep, listing from side to side. Drask speaks in a dead, monotone voice.

“Come no further. The Abbess has ordered us to take you inside. Put your hands up and surrender yourselves.”

The men at arms, as one, draw swords and stand at the ready.

“We have dispensation from the Abbess to cut you down if you do not surrender. Chauntea the Mother will forgive us for what we must do.”

### Choice

These ensorcelled men cannot be reasoned with. The party may surrender. If they do, continue directly to Section 5. Do not award experience for defeated foes in this instance. If the party refuses to surrender, battle is unavoidable.

### Tactics.

The **five veterans** are determined to kill the party members. They give no quarter and

accept no surrender. These desperate men fight until the last one is killed or incapacitated.

### Adjusting the Encounter.

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter. They are not cumulative.

- **Very weak party:** remove two veterans.
- **Weak party** remove one veteran.
- **Strong or Very Strong party:** Add one veteran.

### Development

The party now has the attention of the entire village. The locals are afraid, and keep their distance behind the party as they approach the closed doors of the sanctuary. Continue to Section 5.

## Part 5. The Claw of Winter

This section is the final showdown between the party and the coven of Penanggalan.

### Entering the Sanctuary

When the party enters the sanctuary they find a grisly scene. Pilgrims bodies cover the floor, and several monks pace over the corpses. At the dais, the coven waits for the party. Read the following, then continue with the appropriate section, depending on whether the party enters on their own, or under armed escort.

The dimly lit sanctuary is a vision out of a nightmare. The groaning, broken bodies of a dozen pilgrims cover the floor.

Wet blood covers the scene. A handful of monks, dead-eyed, pace the sanctuary and lash out with cudgels to deal killing blows to the pilgrims that are still alive.

Atop the dais is the still-breathing figure of the High Harvestmaster surrounded by three figures. The Abbess, the Barmaid, and the Orc.

**If the party is brought in under armed escort.**  
Read the following then continue to “The Showdown.”

The doors close behind you, and a heavy thud echoes through the chamber as the way back has been barred from the other side.

**If the party comes in on their own.**  
Read the following then continue to “The Showdown.”

The doors close behind you, and a heavy thud echoes through the chamber as the way back has been barred from the other side.

### The Showdown

The coven has nothing to lose, as they seek to wreak the most destruction they can before fleeing to re-establish their coven in a new place.

”You’re either very clever or very foolish. Either way, you’re too late,” the Abbess crows. “We will be gone from here before the sun rises!”

The monks pacing the hall turn towards your group, and emit a chorus of croaking, rasping, laughs. Their mouths elongate, revealing fangs. Blood covers the monks mouths and necks.

Only their fangs are gleaming white.

Pelara the Barmaid cries in exultation, then begins to shudder. The other two women begin as well, as blood pours from open slits on their necks. Tiny batwings grow out of their open throats, and with a tearing, smacking sound the heads separate from their bodies.

The heads strain for just a moment, then pull the rest of the women’s internal organs out of the chest cavities. The entrails, stuck to the flying heads, reach out like grasping tentacles to push off from the now useless bodies.

The separated heads take flight, and laugh maniacally as they swoop towards you.

The final showdown has begun! The **three penanggalans** attack the party, while the monks stand silently.

### Tactics

The **three penanggalan** seek to kill the characters, and prioritize spell casters and characters that can deal magic damage. If any of the monks participate in the battle, (See Adjusting the Encounter), they seek to surround the melee characters first, focusing their attacks on one target at a time. They fight as **thugs**. If the Penanggalan are killed, any monks participating in the fight are automatically incapacitated.

### Adjusting the Encounter.

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter. They are not cumulative.

- **Very weak party:** The Penanggalan each have 44 hit points, and add 2 monks (thugs).
- **Weak party:** The Penanggalan each have 44 hit points, and add 3 monks (thugs).
- **Strong party:** Add 3 monks (thugs).
- **Very Strong party:** Add 4 monks (thugs).

### Treasure

Pellara’s diamond choker is worth 500gp.

### Development

At the end of the battle, the villagers run into the sanctuary a begin the work of helping the surviving pilgrims. The High Harvestmaster recovers, and the party may

head back home to redeem their charter reward.

## Epilogue

Because of the many possible outcomes to the adventure, and the natural curiosity of players, this adventure has a special epilogue.

Read the Epilogue below out loud, starting with Epilogue Introduction, then reading only the following sections that apply, based on what the party learned in the adventure. Be sure to end with the Epilogue End section.

Some parties may have “unlocked” all of the paragraphs. Others may only get a few details.

After you are done reading the epilogue, the adventure is ended and experience and treasure awarded.

### Epilogue Introduction

When you return from your charter, you are awarded your promised reward: 500 gold pieces to split. The gold is little consolation for the horrors you witnessed, and for some time you think back and wonder if you could have learned more.

### If the party confronted Drask Millian

Drask Millian was a mercenary who fell in love with the wrong woman. Leara Truesilver was a poor match, but love could not be denied. The Truesilvers denied any of the details, of course, only willing to admit that their daughter died in “an accident” at the Monastery.

### If the party confronted Rory Goodluck

The bard, Rory Goodluck, thought he had found a lifestyle that was too good to be true. It was. The creature posing as a barmaid brought willing worshippers of Chauntea to his bed, only to kill them later when the women were with child.

It was the one thing the victims had in common. The horror of creatures that would do such a thing is almost too much to bear, and it is awhile before you can sleep through the night.

### If the party interrogated Rastic Orberan

The shade Rastic was a patsy. The monster posing as an orc woman, Pumfra, had kept him fed in the forest as an escape plan. He was only allowed to live as a convenient excuse. And your party almost walked into the plan.

### If the party killed Rastic Orberan

It seemed a good idea at the time to kill the Shade. You think back on the choices you made and wish you had heard him out more. Perhaps more lives could have been saved.

### If Rastic survived the adventure

Rastic Orberan was brought to justice, finally. His sentence was exile, predictably. The nobles in Cormyr were too scared of Shades to allow them to live free, but too honorable to execute or imprison a man who had done nothing wrong.

### If the party killed any of the armed men (including any monks in the monastery) upon return to Huthduth from the graveyard

The crown pardoned your group for the murders you committed on your quest. It seemed like a small thing next to the destruction of the hideous monsters. Still, you won't be welcome in the Stormhorn passes. It's a big world, and maybe you won't need to go there again.

### If the party spared all of the armed men (including any monks in the monastery) upon return to Huthduth from the graveyard

The men you had to fight upon return to Huthduth have no memory of the events. They must have been under the charm of the hideous creatures in the Monastery. To think you had come so close to murdering them.

If a member of the party bought the book,  
“Grimoire of the Undead” by Hastel  
Witchquiddler

Whether it was chance or fate, the book you bought at Cybele’s Curiosities had some answers. The creature you killed have a name - Penanggalan. The foul creatures are a type of vampires from Kara-Tur, with a particular appetite. They live off of the blood of women who are expecting to give birth, consuming the life essence of both mother and unborn child. The knowledge doesn’t comfort, rather, you find yourself flipping through the other pages of the Grimoire wondering what other evil could be out there.

Epilogue – End

Pocketing the reward for the charter, you exit the crown Exchequer’s office a little bit richer, but changed forever.

## Rewards

Make sure the players park their rewards on the character sheets.

## Experience

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Total up all **combat experience** earned for defeated foes, and divide by the number of characters present in the combat. For **non-combat experience**, the rewards are listed per character. Give all characters in the party non-combat experience awards unless otherwise noted.

### Combat Awards

Name of Foe	XP per Foe
Catoblepas	1,800
Noble	25
Penanggalan	1,800
Thug	100
Veteran	700
Wyvern	2,300

### Non-Combat Awards

Task or Accomplishment	XP per character
Found Leara's letters	50
Tasted Death Cheese or Plague Milk	50
Learned of Drask and Leara's plans	100

The **minimum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is **4,500 experience points**.

The **maximum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is **7,500 experience points**.

## Treasure

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The characters receive the following treasure, divided up among the party. Characters should attempt to divide treasure evenly whenever possible. Gold piece values listed for sellable gear are calculated at their selling price, not their purchase price.

### Treasure Awards

Item Name	GP value
200 lbs. of Death Cheese	100
Rastic's gems	300
Pellara's choker	500
Charter reward	500

### Leara's Dagger +1

*Weapon, uncommon*

This fine dagger is worked masterfully in platinum and silver, and is reassuringly warm to the touch.

### Renown

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**All characters earn one renown point** for participating in this adventure.

### Downtime

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Each character receives **ten downtime days** at the conclusion of this adventure.

## Appendix: Monster/NPC Statistics

### Wyvern

Large dragon, unaligned

**Armor Class** 13 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 110 (13d10 + 39)

**Speed** 20 ft., fly 90 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	5 (-3)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)

**Skills** Perception +4

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

**Languages** --

**Challenge** 6 (2,300 XP)

---

#### Actions

**Multiattack.** The wyvern makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its stinger. While flying, it can use its claws in place of one other attack.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage.

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) slashing damage.

**Stinger.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage. The target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 24 (7d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

### Catoblepas

Large monstrosity, neutral evil

**Armor Class** 17 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 102 (12d10 + 36)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	3 (-4)	11 (+0)	4 (-3)

**Skills** --

**Senses** passive Perception 10

**Languages** --

**Challenge** 5 (1,800 XP)

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#### Traits

**Stunning Ugliness.** When a creature that can see the catoblepas starts its turn within 30 feet, the Catoblepas can force it to make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. A creature that fails the save is stunned, and begins vomiting uncontrollably. The stunned creature may repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success.

Unless surprised, a creature can avert its eyes to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If the creature does so, it can't see the catoblepas until the start of its next turn, when it can avert its eyes again. If the creature looks at the catoblepas in the meantime, it must immediately make the save.

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#### Actions

**Multiattack.** The catoblepas uses *gore* and then uses *sweeping tail* against up to three separate targets.

**Gore.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 17 (2d12 + 4) piercing damage.

**Sweeping Tail.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage.



## Noble

Medium humanoid, neutral evil

**Armor Class** 15 (breastplate)

**Hit Points** 9 (2d8)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

**Skills** Deception +5, Insight +4, Persuasion +5

**Senses** passive Perception 10

**Languages** any two languages

**Challenge** 1/8 (25 XP)

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### Actions

**Rapier.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage.

## Veteran

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

**Armor Class** 17 (splint)

**Hit Points** 58 (9d8 + 18)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

**Skills** Athletics +2, Perception +2

**Senses** passive Perception 12

**Languages** any one language (usually Common)

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

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### Actions

**Multiattack.** The veteran makes two longsword attacks. If it has a shortsword drawn, it can also make a shortsword attack.

**Longsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage, or 8 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage if used with two hands.

**Shortsword.** *Melee weapon attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

**Heavy Crossbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d10) piercing damage

## Penanggalan

*Tiny undead, chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 61 (11d4 + 33)

**Speed** 10 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)

**Skills** Perception +4, Stealth +6

**Damage Resistances** necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

**Languages** the languages it knew in life

**Challenge** 5 (1,800 XP)

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### Traits

**Regeneration.** The penanggalan regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point and isn't in sunlight. If the penanggalan takes radiant damage or damage from holy water, this trait doesn't function at the start of the penanggalan's next turn.

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### Actions

**Multiattack.** The penanggalan uses its *Frightful Presence*. It then makes two attacks, only one of which can be a bite attack.

**Grasping Entrails.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 20 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 14 (3d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage, the target is grappled, and the penanggalan may choose to move to a space adjacent to the target. This movement does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one willing creature, or a creature that is grappled by the penanggalan, incapacitated, or restrained. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage, plus 9 (2d8) necrotic damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an

amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and the penanggalan regains hit points equal to that amount. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

**Frightful Presence.** Each creature of the penanggalan's choice that is within 60 feet of the penanggalan and can see it must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself as a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to any penanggalan's Frightful Presence for 24 hours.

## Thug

*Medium humanoid (any race), any non-good alignment*

**Armor Class** 11 (leather armor)

**Hit Points** 32 (5d8 + 10)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

**Skills** Intimidation +2

**Senses** passive Perception 10

**Languages** any one language (usually Common)

**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

**Pack Tactics.** The thug has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the thug's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

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### Actions

**Multiattack.** The thug makes two melee attacks.

**Mace.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

**Heavy Crossbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

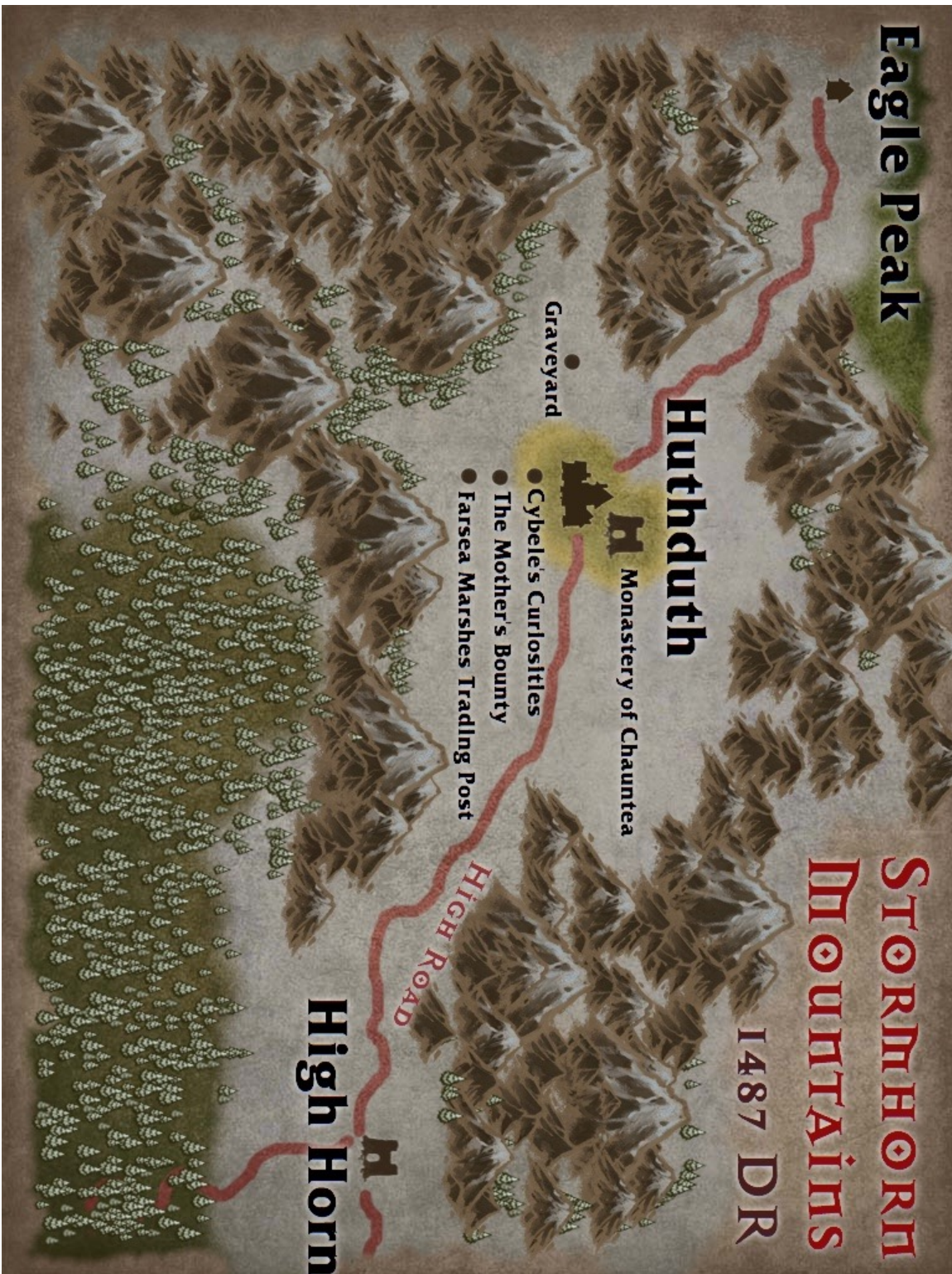
## Handout I – Royal Charter

*On this day, 4 Alturiak 1487 DR, the company, \_\_\_\_\_, is expressly empowered by Her Royal Majesty Raedra Obarskyr, until 1 Ches, 1487 DR, to grant a limited charter of the right to bear arms within the territories and protectorates of Cormyr, the Forest Kingdom.*

*The Company, \_\_\_\_\_ is relied upon to act in the best interest of the Kingdom of Cormyr. Know ye, by this good and true document, that members of the Company are entitled to bear arms within the lands under our writ and hand, for the express purpose of escorting pilgrims to the monastery at Huthduth.*

*This writ applies to the following certain lands: Calantar's Way from Suzail to Arabel, the High Road from Arabel to Eagle Peak, the settlements of Eveningstar, Tyrluck, and Huthduth, the Stormhorn Mountain Range, the fortress at High Horn.*

## Handout 2: Map of Huthduth and Region



### Handout 3: Excerpt - Leara's Tear-Stained Letter From Home

*"Father led soldiers in the war against Shade. He knew their depraved and violent nature. He would never approve of such a match."*