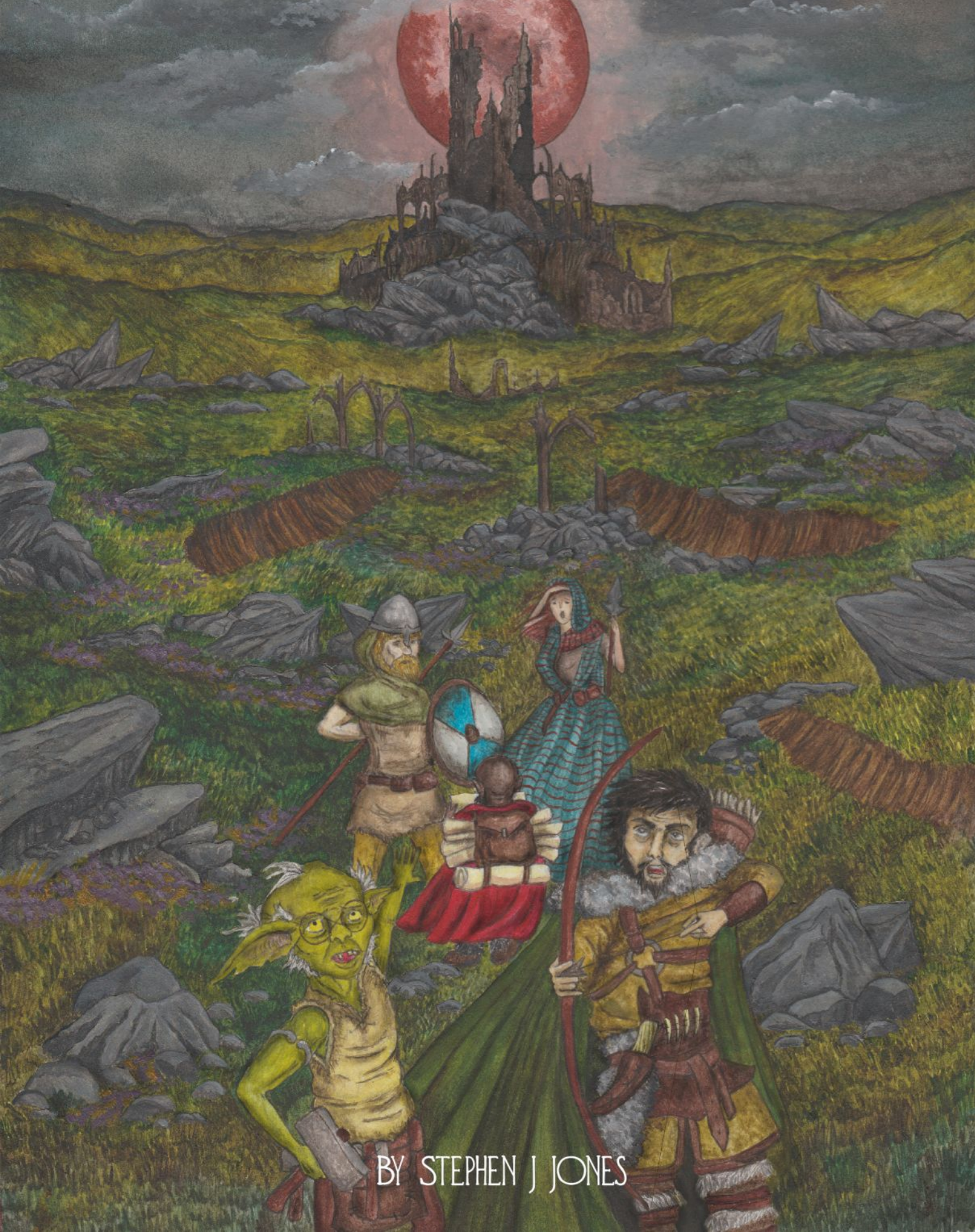


# THE HIGH MOORS



BY STEPHEN J JONES

# The High Moors

A 5E/OSR Weirdcrawl Sandbox

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## **The High Moors**

A Weirdcrawl Sandbox compatible with the fifth edition of the world's most popular role-playing game, and with Old School Revival (OSR) rulesets.

Written by Stephen J Jones

Black and white cartography by Dyson Logos ([www.dysonlogos.com](http://www.dysonlogos.com))

Colour cartography by Stephen J Jones using Inkarnate (<https://www.inkarnate.com>)

Cover art by Georgina Elizabeth Siddle

Inspiration, ideas, and playtesting: Evie Jones, Lee Odlum, Paul Harrington, David Richardson, Steve Connolly, Adam Haworth, Neil Millard, Mike House, Chris Chinoy, Derek Kosky, Giles Warrener.

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For my daughter, Evie

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>5</b>
How to use this book	5
Using the High Moors with your campaign world	6
Using the High Moors setting	6
<b>The High Moors Campaign Setting</b>	<b>7</b>
The High Moors beckon...	7
The World	7
The Known Lands	7
The Southlands	7
The Thornlands	7
The High Moors	8
What scholars know about the High Moors	8
Other lands	8
Random encounters in the Known Lands	9
The people of the Known Lands	10
Why all these restrictions?	10
Human cultures	11
The Avari	11
The Hegemony of Utnapishtim	11
The City State of Magog	11
Halfling culture	12
The Kachina	12
Dwarven culture	13
The Marzani	13
Bearfolk culture	13
The Ursidae	13
Goblin culture	14
The Muki	14
Giantkin culture	14
The Grigorians	14
Brief timeline of the Known Lands	15
Languages in the High Moors setting	16
Currency in the High Moors setting	16
The Planes in the High Moors setting	16

Magic in the High Moors setting	17
Clerics and deities in the High Moors setting	18
<b>The Shining Ones</b>	<b>18</b>
Games Master's background	18
Culture of the Shining Ones	19
Secrets of the Shining Ones	20
Tier one secrets	20
Tier two secrets	21
<b>Optional rules</b>	<b>22</b>
Variant races	22
Use of factions	23
Experience Points for treasure	23
Avoiding the overuse of skill checks	24
Replacing dead characters	25
Reaction table	26
<b>Plot hooks for characters</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Journey to the High Moors</b>	<b>28</b>
Time and distance	28
The Eanna, and Captain Jemdet	29
Incidents on the journey	30
The town of Hob's Lake	33
<b>The High Moors Sandbox</b>	<b>37</b>
Structure of the sandbox	37
Gamesmaster's overview of the sandbox	37
Elven steel	39
Encounter difficulty	39
Random encounters in the High Moors	39
Monsters	43
The High Moors	45
Zone One: The Farms	45
Factions of Zone One	45
Locations in Zone One (locations 1 - 23)	48
Zone Two: The Temple District	80
Factions of Zone Two	80
Locations in Zone Two (locations 24 - 40)	82
Zone Three: The City Precincts	118
Factions of Zone Three	118

Locations in Zone Three (locations 41 - 62)	120
The Shining City	149
The Epilogue	172
<b>Annex A - Statistics for Factions</b>	<b>173</b>
Zone 1	173
Kurigalzu, Emissary of Utnapishtim	173
Ibycus, dwarven priest of Mirrabulous	173
The Northern River Trading Company	174
Zone 2	175
The Cult of Eyes	175
The Boar And Compass Trading Company	176
Zone 3	177
The Company of the Blue Feather	177
Vadim and Borislav, Demonslaying Giants	178
The Men Of The Stag	179
<b>Annex B - Prices and goods</b>	<b>181</b>
<b>Annex C - New Cleric Domain</b>	<b>183</b>
Cleric domain: Freedom	183
OPEN GAME LICENSE Version 1.0a	185

# Introduction

The High Moors is a Weirdcrawl Sandbox for the world's most popular role-playing game. It is written for Fifth Edition, but compatible with earlier OSR rulesets with a little conversion.

Little is known of the ancient elves that once ruled from the northern tableland called The High Moors. Their civilisation is dead, and no one has seen an elf in living memory. The ruins of the High Moors have lain undisturbed for centuries. It was only with news from a successful expedition that people started to consider the treasures that may be waiting to be discovered. This has created a 'gold rush' of sorts and a number of expeditions (such as the characters' own, perhaps) have been recently dispatched to bring back magic and riches. Unfortunately, danger, horror and madness awaits most of them.

Assuming the optional rule (see below) for giving experience points for recovered treasure is used, a party of five 1st level characters (5E) could be expected to reach 4th level by the time that they have completed Zone One (assuming they are reasonably thorough). They could expect to be 7th level after completing Zone Two, and they could reach 9th level after completing Zone Three. This is just to give you an idea, and it is not required that the players play through each zone in turn.

## How to use this book

The High Moors is intended to be an open freeform sandbox campaign. Characters will have some initial motives to journey to the High Moors, but this campaign does not represent a plotted story with a series of scenes that characters are expected to follow.

Instead the campaign comprises a number of adventure locations to be explored, and other

factions that can be interacted with. It will be for the players to decide where to go, what to do, and who to ally with. The theme is exploration of the unknown.

The campaign is presented through hex maps that show the three zones that make up the High Moors. These maps are in-game artefacts and should be provided to the players. (These hex maps can be explained as having been compiled by magical scrying and by earlier scouts.) The players will use the hex maps to decide where to go and what to explore. It will be more manageable if they explore one zone at a time (and you may want to give them a nudge to that effect), but fundamentally they can go wherever they like.

The High Moors represent **The Weird**. The normal rules of time, space and cause and effect do not necessarily apply in the High Moors. It is recommended that you begin with the characters in the normal world. The normal world should follow the usual rules of reality and present a contrast to the High Moors.

If you are using the High Moors campaign outline, then the bustling cities of Magog or Utnapishtim make a good starting place. Otherwise choose somewhere far to the south so that the High Moors are sufficiently isolated.

After they have finished in their starting city, you should then roleplay the character's journey up river to the High Moors. While nothing hugely significant should occur on this journey, it is an opportunity to show the players that their characters are leaving the normal world behind and entering The Weird. Some suggestions for strange events are detailed below. Take as much time as is needed (it is a long journey). It's okay if the characters (not the players!) are bored. But that boredom should be tinged with growing unease.

You should then role-play their arrival at Hob's Lake. Hob's Lake is a ramshackle town of hunters, trappers, escaped killers, drunken

priests, and prostitutes. It is a rough, desperate place that hasn't adapted yet to its changing fortunes. Use Hob's Lake to reinforce that the characters are a long way from home and normality. It also represents a last sanctuary of sorts before entering The Weird.

When they are ready to leave, the characters probably have a day or two's hike to reach the plateau. It is expected that most groups will enter the High Moors via The Stair at Zone One. The alternative is scaling six hundred feet high sheer cliffs. But if your group has equipped itself to scale the cliffs, then let them.

## Using the High Moors with your campaign world

If you would like to integrate the High Moors with an existing campaign setting, there are a few things you will need to take into account.

A major part of the impact of the High Moors is the discovery of the secrets of the Shining Ones (the elves) and their role in shaping the races, cultures and even gods of the characters. This is possible in the High Moors setting because known history only goes back a few hundred years before becoming terribly murky. If your campaign already has a detailed canonical history of the origins of the different cultures and races, then it is going to be a tricky fit. It might still work if you are willing to reveal that the accepted history is a lie, but how possible that is will be a judgement for you.

Assuming it is viable for you to fit the revelations of the High Moors into your campaign, then you need to place it in an isolated northerly location. Civilised cities should be a journey of two weeks or more away to maintain the isolated feel.

Because the elves no longer exist, elven characters should not be available. If you have already established that elves *are* around, then perhaps you can limit them to being Wild Elves/Wood Elves so that the Shining Ones

could be their long dead High Elf relatives. If that isn't possible, you might be able to frame the Shining Ones as Eladrin (magical fey elves) rather than mundane elves. Another possibility is that the Shining Ones are the progenitor race of the current elves.

You will need to tweak the timeline somewhat if you are using standard demi-human races that are generally long-lived. To ensure that the events of the past are far enough out of living memory for even three hundred and fifty year old dwarves and their grandchildren, you may want to say that the cataclysm happened two thousand years ago rather than eight hundred years. This probably doesn't require any changes to the campaign as written.

The High Moors setting assumes that there is at least one moon over your campaign world (see location 20A).

## Using the High Moors setting

The alternative to using the High Moors with your own campaign setting is to use the High Moors campaign setting. This has been designed to be consistent with and support the themes of the High Moors adventure site. It is however only a loose framework.

This is for three reasons: first, it is only presented as a sketch so that you can customise it and make it your own. Second, because the focus of the game should be The Weird of the High Moors rather than the settled lands, and so they don't need to be hugely interesting. (That said, sufficiently establishing 'the normal' is important if The Weird is to have the appropriate impact.) Third, because it is likely that the horrors of the High Moors might destroy or damage parts of the campaign setting, and it is best not to have a massively detailed setting that you might be reluctant to let the characters blow up through their actions.



Another way to use the High Moors setting is to dump your party in it. For example, they can easily arrive in the High Moors via a random portal through the Far Realm, or a crashed spelljammer, or any other magical effect you like. Perhaps a relic of the Shining Ones ends up in their world / universe, and activating it draws the party here (location 44 has something appropriate).

## The High Moors Campaign Setting

### The High Moors beckon...

Far to the north of the civilised settlements, at the source of the Attavar River, lie the so-called High Moors. Isolated and abandoned, the moors were home to the Shining Ones. The Shining Ones were a society of highly advanced elves with great magical and magitek skills. Some great cataclysm befell their civilisation, and its tarnished and broken ruins litter the High Moors.

The Shining Ones were forgotten for a time, and the other folk concentrated on farming and livestock, on petty wars, and on their own humble gods. Ten years ago an expedition went north, funded by the noble coin of Utnapishtim. When the sole survivor of that expedition returned after many weeks to the northern town of Hob's Lake, wild eyed and ranting about monsters, no one thought much of it. But when he showed them a gold idol studded with blue jewels they started to take him more seriously.

In the years since, interest in the forgotten north has slowly increased and has now reached the point that a number of expeditions have recently made the journey, or are being commissioned.

## The World

The world on which the High Moors are situated is a standard Earth-like world of oceans and land. The High Moors are to the north of an area we will call the Known Lands. This is a region on a large continent in the northern hemisphere.

The world has one moon - a dullish red orb - that people call "The Eye". The Eye is tidally locked and always shows the same side. That side has a dark round mark surrounded by lighter red colouration (a crater and ejecta, but looks quite eye-like). It is thought of as the home of the gods.

## The Known Lands

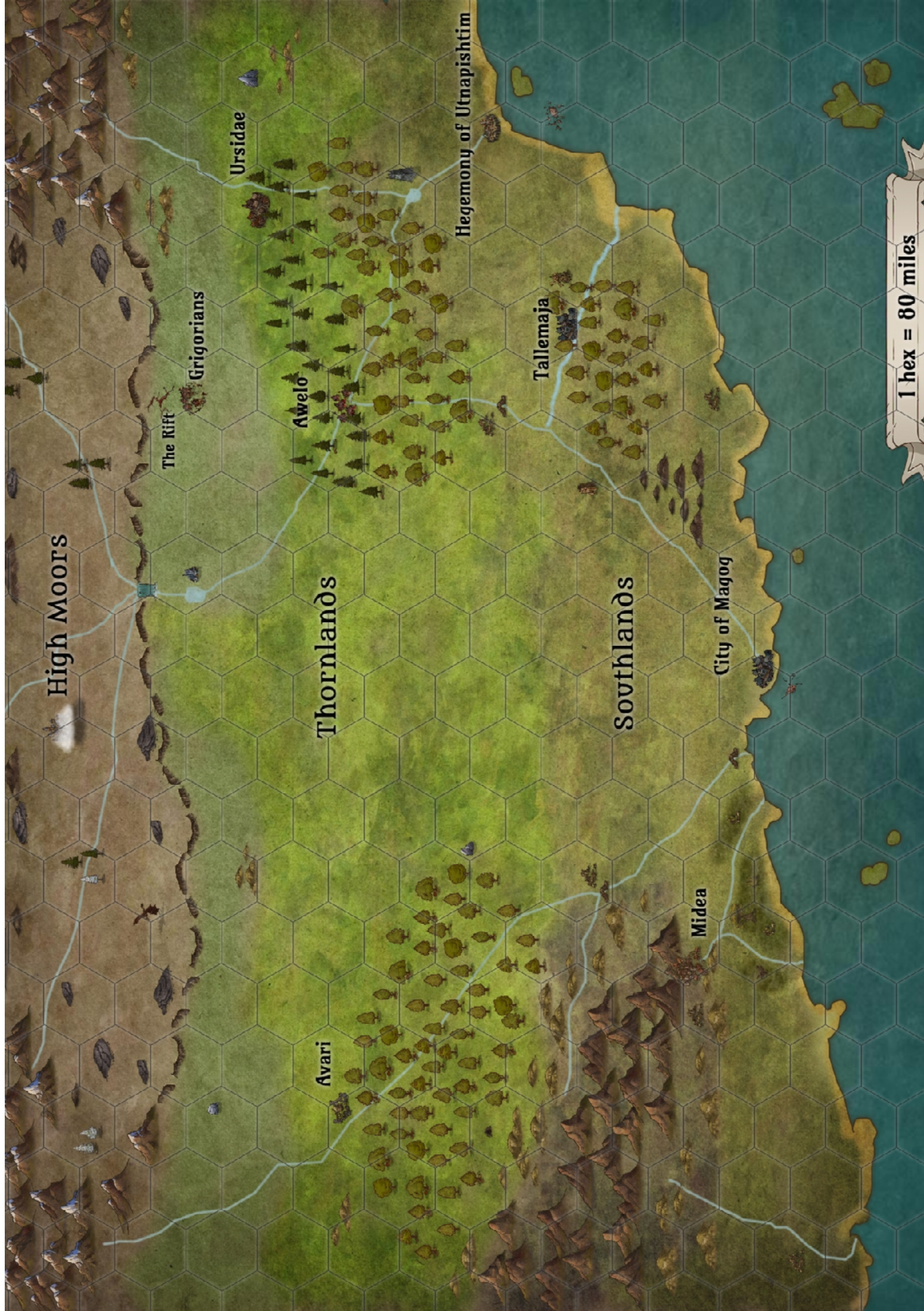
The local region comprises an area that stretches for approximately 900 miles north-south from the warm southlands to the start of the High Moors, and approximately 1600 miles east-west. It is made up of three general regions.

### The Southlands

The Southlands are dominated by the coastline, and the southern sea. The climate is balmy and hot summers and mild winters are common. The land is a mix of scrublands and deciduous broad-leaved woodland. The coast is populated by the city states of Magog and Utnapishtim. To the west in the mountains lies the Marzani city of Midea, and to the east the woodlands are home to the Muki settlements around Tallemaja.

### The Thornlands

Between the Southlands and the High Moors are the Thornlands. This is a region of temperate grasslands and forests. Further south these forests are deciduous broad-leaved trees, shading to coniferous the further north one goes. The Thornland is home to the Avari who live predominantly in a string of settlements



High Moors

The Rift

Grigorians

Ursidae

Awelo

Thornlands

Avari

Hegemony of Utnapishtim

Tallemaja

Southlands

Midea

City of Magog

1 hex = 80 miles

bordering a forest in the western grasslands. To the east in the forests lies the tree-city of Awelo, and further east lie the lodges of the Ursidae. In the northeastern Thornlands lies The Rift - a great valley - and it is here that the Grigorians have their palisaded settlements.

## The High Moors

The High Moors occupy a tableland which is on average 600 feet higher than the surrounding land. This, and the northerly latitude, ought to make the High Moors very cold. In fact the moors are cool (average 0 degrees celsius (6 to -6) in winter and 16 celsius (12-20) in summer), but not as cold as they ought to be, and scholars put this down to the tampering of the elves or a result of the cataclysm.

The terrain is generally grassland, moorland, taiga and coniferous forests, but there are some unusual terrain features as well. To the north of the moors is an icy mountain range. Seasonal glacial melts have formed rivers that flow across the tableland and eventually merge as the Attavar River. The Attavar cascades down from the tableland in an impressive waterfall, and flows south to the coast. A few miles south it forms Lake Tarata (with the misbegotten town of Hob's Lake on its shore). The river flows onward southwards from the lake to the southern sea. Along the way it splits in a few places forming distributaries.

The Attavar River has a number of (unnamed) sources that flow across the High Moors. These are generally around 2 miles (3.2 km) in diameter, although some smaller tributaries are around 1 mile (1.6km). These are averages and there are places where the rivers are twice or half as wide. Crossing the river will generally require the construction of a raft (treat as a rowboat). Swimming is likely to be impossible except in late spring / summer due to the coldness of the water (see Frigid Water in DMG p.110, and Swimming at p.116).

The velocity of the river is generally 3 mph southwards. This makes it impractical to travel upstream by boat unless it is being pulled by horses or oxen. If travelling by boat downstream, you would add the velocity of the current to the vessel's speed.

## What scholars know about the High Moors

The Shining Ones were a highly advanced elven race that had access to very powerful magic and knowledge. The Shining Ones appear to have undergone a terrible cataclysm around eight hundred years ago that wiped out their civilisation. No elves have been seen since and to most people they are just a legend. The cataclysm was most likely magical because it left weird phenomena in its wake, and the High Moors remain a dangerous hostile place. Even the weather there is affected.

## Other lands

There are other lands that might be referenced or reached in the course of play. Approximately 3000 miles west from the borders of the Known Lands are the ruins of **the dragon empire**. The empire was a human empire (with an arabian culture), but ruled by dragons (who were treated as gods) and the dragon's hybrid dragonborn servants. The empire's capital, Hadramaut, lies on the warm southwestern coast of the continent. The trading and exploring ships of the Known Lands have not reached these ruins. When they do they will discover a ruined land inhabited by drakes, wyverns, feral dragonborn, and undead dragons.

Approximately 2500 miles east from the borders of the Known Lands are the ruins of **the orc empire**. The empire was made up of well organised clans (with a germanic culture) united under an emperor. Thankfully a mountain range separates the Known Lands from this zombie infested wasteland. The coasts close to the empire are rocky with high cliffs, and explorers

from the Known lands have yet to return alive from these ill omened shores.

Approximately 600 miles due south of the Known Lands is the northernmost coast of the southern continent. This is a land of jungles and savannahs, and is home to a native population of elephants. The Hegemony of Utnapishtim has established a small colony here called **Eridu**, and they refer to it as **the Land of Kish**.

## Random encounters in the Known Lands

When travelling in the wilderness make a check for a random encounter every 12 hours. An encounter occurs on 1-2 on a 1d12. The encounter occurs 1d12 hours after 6am or 6pm, depending on whether it is day or night.

If the encounter occurs within 24 miles of a major settlement, it will be an encounter with either merchants, travellers or raiders on the table below (equal chance of each). Otherwise roll randomly.

### Known Lands Encounters (1d100)

- 01 - 02 Roll twice and add
- 03 Elemental (earth or water) (MM, p.124)
- 04 - 05 Cannibalistic Trolls (1d3) (MM, p.291)
- 06 - 07 Corpse Crawler (1) (MM, p.37)
- 08 - 09 Worgs (1d6) (MM, p.341)
- 10 Giant Toad (MM, p.329)
- 11 - 12 Ankheg (1d3) (MM, p.21)
- 13 - 14 Giant spider (1d8) (MM, p.328)
- 15 - 29 Weather event (see subtable in Random Encounters in the High Moors)

30 - 34 Bandits (10+1d20) (as Bandit, MM. p.343)

35 - 54 Merchant wagons or boats with 10+1d8 guards (as Guard, MM. p.347)

55 - 69 Travellers (2d10) (type (1d8): 1: Muki, 2: Avari, 3: Hegemonite, 4: Ursidae, 5: Magog, 6: Marzani, 7: Kachina, 8: mixed group - roll twice) (as Tribal Warrior, MM, p.350)

70 - 84 Mishap (see subtable in Random Encounters in the High Moors)

85 - 86 Wolves (2d8) (MM, P.341)

87 - 88 Black bear (MM, p.318)

89 - 90 Wild horses (2d10) (MM, p.336)

91 Transposer Beast (MM, p.81)

92 Manticore (MM, p.213)

93 - 94 Wyvern (MM, p.303)

95 - 96 Owlbear (MM, p.249)

97 - 98 Shambling mound (MM, p.270)

99 - 100 Basilisk (MM, p.24)

## The people of the Known Lands

There are six intelligent races that dominate the known lands. They are: humans, halflings, dwarves, bearfolk, goblins, and giantkin. The different races generally keep to their own and have established separate communities.

Humans are the most numerous of the races and are divided into three distinct cultures. There are no great nations, but some city states exist on the southern coast. The level of development is generally that of the Dark Ages.

All of the known races live for about the same length as humans. In other words they reach adulthood in their teen years and live for less than a century. The six races can interbreed, although the outcome of such a joining will be a child of one parentage or the other rather than a mix.

For each group a “cultural touchstone” is given. This gives a shorthand indicator of the cultural flavour of the group, but these fantasy cultures may differ wildly from their real world counterparts. It’s really just intended as an aesthetic.

### Why all these restrictions?

The world’s most popular role-playing game can be termed a ‘kitchen sink’ fantasy game. Over the decades so many races, classes, spells, planes, and items have accumulated that it has become its own strange genre. You can roll with that and embrace its expansive nature, or you can try to do something a little different. With the High Moors I have tried to do something different. I wanted to create a specific game world with specific goals and moods. Doing that means deciding what to leave out. Leaving things out helps to focus the campaign on the retained elements.

But it is your game and if you want to allow other playable races, then of course you can. The reason that there is a limited pool of playable races is to reinforce the themes of the campaign. Each of the playable races has a deep history linked to the High Moors and the Shining Ones. Each of them can discover meaningful things about themselves through exploration.

In addition, as the party explores and makes contact with new races in the High Moors, then you can make these available as playable races (see Replacing Dead Characters, below). That potentially adds an additional seven playable races that they can “unlock” in play.

Generally the number of sentient humanoid races has been kept to a small number. That is why there are no bugbears, doppelgangers, duergar, genies, gnolls, gnomes, grimlocks, hobgoblins, kobolds, merfolk, and sahuagin. Giants have been rationalised to one type. Demons, devils and daemons have been rationalised to one type (fiends).

If you did want to include more playable races, then animal hybrid races would be the best fit. The Shining Ones experimented with a wide variety of hybrids and some of these could have survived the cataclysm. See location 24 for some options. Many of these are quite familiar (lizardfolk, catfolk, minotaurs (bullfolk) etc). Another option would be orcs or dragonborn. These would be from pockets of survivors of the empires destroyed by the genocide of the Shining Ones.

The set of playable races are listed below. It is assumed that you will use the standard racial traits from the PHB (and goblins from p.119 of VGM). Racial traits for bearfolk are listed below.

As an alternative, you may wish to use the specific racial traits designed for the High Moors campaign setting. These are listed under “Optional Rules”.

## Human cultures

### The Avari

The Avari are a series of human tribes that inhabit dozens of villages scattered across the Thornlands. They are a gruff fur-clad folk known for their skill with the spear and recognised by their horned helmets and brightly coloured round wooden shields each bearing a family crest. The Avari are a warlike people and are principally concerned with honour, oath-keeping, and glory. They consider that 'might makes right' and those who are too weak to defend what they have do not deserve to keep it. This leads them to mount frequent raids on their neighbour and to consider merchant traffic fair game. That said, they are not mindlessly cruel and they would consider hurting women and children a dishonourable act.

Avari society is fairly liberal, and duels to the death, or murdering outlanders and taking their stuff is perfectly fine. The Avari use horses for transport and for food, but they consider using horses in war to be dishonourable. The Avari have some respect for the Magog and consider them worthy opponents, although they frown on their use of horse archers. During the Magog wars the Avari were a highly effective infantry, but were faced by a more mobile force with better tactics, which eventually led to their defeat. The Avari are confident that 'next time' they would find a way to remove the Magog advantage and things would end differently. The Avari are made of a number of tribes with various rivalries, and they have no king. This has generally avoided them becoming a regional threat, although the tribes did agree to cooperate to raid the bearfolk some years ago. Cultural touchstone: the Saxons.

### The Hegemony of Utnapishtim

Utnapishtim is a city-state on the coast of the Southlands. The humans that inhabit it are an olive-skinned people who are recognised by their turbans, robes and magnificent oiled

beards. Hegemonites are principally focused on industry and commerce, and they send regular elephant caravans and trading ships far and wide. The Hegemonites have a love of gifts and the giving of gifts plays an important role in their society. Those who are able to give the greatest of gifts have the greatest social standing. Cultural touchstone: the Babylonians.

The Hegemonites are ruled by a god-king, Hammurabi, who lives in a magnificent ziggurat in Utnapishtim. Hammurabi is served by a civil service that is made up of 12 ranks. Different ranks of officials are identifiable by their different coloured turbans. The ranks and their titles and colours are:

Rank 12 - Lesser Knowledge - dark grey

Rank 11 - Greater Knowledge - black

Rank 10 - Lesser Justice - light gray

Rank 9 - Greater Justice - white

Rank 8 - Lesser Sincerity - light yellow

Rank 7 - Greater Sincerity - dark yellow

Rank 6 - Lesser Propriety - orange

Rank 5 - Greater Propriety - red

Rank 4 - Lesser Benevolence - light blue

Rank 3 - Greater Benevolence - dark blue

Rank 2 - Lesser Virtue - light purple

Rank 1 - Greater Virtue - dark purple

The Hegemonites have no interest in building an empire through war, but the success of the city state, its large population, and its welcoming attitude to immigrants, has led to it growing in power and influence. The Hegemony is on very good terms with the Marzani, and there is frequent trade between them by land and sea (subject to Magog pirates and Avari raiders).

### The City State of Magog

The Magog are historically a nomadic race of humans who are generally short, dark-haired and bearded, and who wear simple fabrics and sheepskins. They traveled the grasslands, kept horses and goats, and lived in yurts. Two hundred years ago, the different tribes of Magog were united under a Great Khan who led them on a crusade to establish dominance over the

Known Lands. Through their use of stirrups, their horse archers, and hit and run tactics, the Magog were the most effective fighting force in the land. As a result they conquered nearly all of the other peoples of the Known Lands, establishing client states and building a short-lived empire.

At the height of that empire, the Magog used their stolen loot and tribute to establish the City of Magog as their capital. Their empire was supposed to last a thousand years. What actually happened is that they descended into in-fighting and squabbling and lost their dominant position. The great buildings of the city were consumed by fire and flood, and the city is now a squalid slum. The city is disorganised with different neighbourhoods ruled over by different tribes. Each tribe has its own Khan and there has not been a Great Khan for many years. Some Magog want to rebuild their empire, but in-fighting prevents progress. Some of the Magog also believe that they should abandon the city and return to a nomadic life, but tradition and rivalry prevents this being taken seriously.

Magog society is focused on rivalry with other tribes, sportsmanship and ritual combat. Wives are bought from other tribes by means of a dowry. The Magog have a fleet of small ships which trade, but are also known to engage in piracy and exploration. The Magog remain excellent horsemen (and horseback bowmen) and keep large herds of horses outside the city.

The Magog have many superstitions about sickness and view it as a taint of evil spirits. Those Magog who fall seriously ill are driven from their homes into the wilderness to die. A small community of the surviving sick lives on an island not far from the city state, but Magog view it as bad luck to discuss illness and so will not talk of them. Cultural touchstone: the Mongols.

## Halfling culture

### The Kachina

The Kachina are a diminutive tribal people. They usually wear tanned hides and leathers, and are famous for their boatmanship. The Kachina are a people obsessed with their ancestor spirits and they strive at all times to act in ways that exemplify their greatest forebears, who they believe watch over them. They perform rituals and trances to seek guidance from their ancestors, and they believe that one day all their ancestors will be resurrected physically by the gods on the Last Day. The Kachina particularly revere the goddess Faenil who they consider to be their maker and mother.

Their culture revolves around a personal narrative of one's predecessors, and personal shrines are ubiquitous. Most Kachina cover themselves, and even their faces, in tattoos depicting the great deeds of their predecessors. One of the ways in which the Kachina honour their ancestors is by sticking to tradition. This includes each child continuing the occupation or role of their father or mother. These traditions are overseen by the elders, and this has caused disaffection amongst some younger Kachina who would like to do things differently or make their own choices.

The Kachina mainly occupy a large settlement, Awelo, in the Thornlands at the confluence of several rivers. Their town is built partly on the ground and partly in the trees with walkways between. The Kachina have many boats and are active in river trade between the Thornlands and the Southland. Cultural touchstone: Native Americans.

## Dwarven culture

### The Marzani

The Marzani are a stocky, dark-skinned people. They are famous for their artisans and they mostly dwell in the marble city of Midea which they have erected in a dormant caldera in the mountains of the Southlands. Midea is surrounded by many fertile plateaus where various crops are grown as well as tobacco. The Marzani are ruled by a Council of the Wise, made up of their most renowned philosophers and intellectuals. Marzani society is liberal and many entertainments take place in the evening including theatre and gladiatorial bouts. The Marzani are a society focused on art and knowledge, and they maintain vast libraries. The Marzani are known for their red togas. The Marzani have a religious reverence for the colour red, and every Marzani wears clothes that are predominantly a shade of red.

During the Magog wars the Marzani's small military was ineffective. Since then they have developed stronger defences around Midea, installing catapults and ballistae to defend themselves from aggression. While strong on defence, they have limited offensive capability. Most Marzani like things that way, feeling that Marzani culture should focus on peaceful pursuits such as art and natural science. But others believe that they should take a more military path and extend their control over a wider area. Such a buffer zone would help against Avari and Magog aggression and help to protect valuable commerce with Utnapishtim. Cultural touchstone: Ancient Greeks.

## Bearfolk culture

### The Ursidae

The Ursidae live on the edge of the forests of the northern Thornland in log-built lodges and organised into clans. They are animal herders

and farmers, and also operate a number of fish farms on the river. Bearfolk are recognised by their spears and colourful woven kilts.

Originally a peaceful farming people, the bearfolk suffered serious losses in past centuries to the depredations of the Avari and Magog, and as a result they have turned somewhat inward. Although they weathered the Magog wars and continued to live as peaceful farmers, the Avari raids led them to become a more military society focused very much on their defense.

As a result all bearfolk enter military service and they also continue to participate in effective militias afterwards. The bearfolk have a fairly rigid society and are formally ruled by a Council of Lairds (elders). Some bearfolk would like to return to their peaceful past, but others take the view that they can never allow themselves to become vulnerable again. Women in bearfolk society have limited freedom and the rules designed to protect them have become a form of social control. Cultural touchstone: Scottish highlanders.

### **Bearfolk traits (5E)**

One of the following: +1 Strength, and +1 to two other ability scores (max +2 to any one attribute), or a feat.

Proficiency: Athletics, Nature and 1 skill of choice

Other proficiencies: one of the following: a culturally relevant artisan kit (smith, leather worker, weaver, carpenter, pottery, brewer, herbalist), a language, light armour proficiency, a gaming set or a musical instrument.

Cultural expertise: expertise in 1 skill you are proficient with.

Typical weapons: spear, pike

Typical armour: scale mail



## Goblin culture

### The Muki

The Muki or goblins are diminutive green skinned people known for their keen intellect. Goblins are expert craftspersons and are behind a number of important breakthroughs including improved mechanical looms and water mills, silk production, glass making, spinning wheels and even crude spectacles. Goblins are also adept wizards and they have a number of organised magical colleges. Goblins tend to dress in finely made linen and woolen clothes, and often have some silver jewelry such as arm torcs. They mostly dwell in various woodland towns in the Southlands. Their major settlement is the woodland town of Tallemaja.

Goblin society is focused on betterment, and on sharing resources. Each goblin belongs to a particular "combine" made up of around one hundred and fifty goblins. All goblins are expected to give all personal wealth away to be shared by their community. Each combine receives a particular share of food, shelter or other resources, and the combine then distributes those resources to its members according to their needs. This can mean that goblins can simply request resources that they need rather than having to buy them. Different combines can have different functions, for example, farming, pottery-making or engineering.

Although the combine system is fair, some goblins are concerned that it undermines productivity and lack of individual effort because everyone gets the same regardless. Some goblins are also frustrated at the lack of freedom because job assignments in the combine are decided by combine leadership and success in exams. Goblins are allowed to request a change in roles once a year, and can also ask to change combines once every five years.

Goblins take an odd approach to death, and any goblin who dies is consumed by their family and combine (unless the body is very decomposed or infected or poisoned, in which case it is burnt). Cultural touchstone: the Celts.

During the Magog wars, the goblins had a number of advantages, including organised cadres of wizards, the cover of the forest, and some defensive inventions. As a result, the Magog did not conquer them, but rather the goblins sued for peace to become a client state rather than continuing the war as it seemed the sensible solution.

## Giantkin culture

### The Grigorians

The giantkin or Grigorians comprise the giantfolk as well as their cousins the ogres. The Grigorians are a rustic folk that dwell in the northern reaches of the Thornland, and survive by herding and farming. A typical giant is 20 to 25 feet tall. They wear furs and live in large log-built palisaded settlements with lodge houses at their centres.

The Grigorians are a monarchy and are ruled by King Dezhnev. The Grigorians view themselves as superior to the "small folk" and will take them as slaves if they can. Grigorian society is focused on what they see as their sacred duty, which is to guard a valley rift that runs from the northern tablelands. This rift valley descends 3000 feet and contains an entrance to the underworld (the catacombs beneath the world). This entrance is guarded by the giantkin, but constantly assaulted by fiends. No Grigorian dies of old age. When they feel their age settling upon them they say goodbye to their family and friends and enter the rift on their 'Final Walk' to die fighting fiends. Cultural touchstone: the Slavs. The giantkin are intended as a Non-Player Character race.

## Brief timeline of the Known Lands

(all dates are approximate)

0 = The present day. A fresh round of expeditions are being sent north to unlock the secrets and riches of the past.

1 year ago - interest in the High Moors reached the point at which it is a regular topic of discussion. A small number of further expeditions were funded, but none returned.

9 ½ years ago - the sole survivor of the expedition returned to Hob's Lake clutching a gold idol.

10 years ago - an expedition funded by the Hegemony headed into the High Moors.

33 years ago - an earth tremor at sea led to a tsunami that caused substantial flooding at the City of Magog and Utnapishtim.

75 years ago - Utnapishtim established a colony on the southern continent (several hundred miles south).

137 years ago - the Massacre of Dunbeath. Avari warriors, infuriated by resistance from the Ursidae, massacred the village of Dunbeath and put it to the torch. The shock of this act caused the Ursidae to reorganise their society and clans along military lines. Over the next few years the Avari raids diminished in the face of stiff organised resistance.

150 years ago - with the yoke of the Magog removed, the Avari began actively raiding against the Marzani, Ursidae, Kachina, and Muki. They aspired to forge their own empire, but had no clear leader.

170 years ago - the Magog civil war ended, but with depleted strength they surrendered their imperial ambitions.

185 years ago - a fire blazed out of control and consumed the finest buildings in the City of Magog before it could be brought under control.

190 years ago - the Magog descended into civil war following the assassination of Great Khan Khagan. They quickly lost effective control over their conquered territory.

200 years ago - village of Hob's lake founded by refugees fleeing the Magog.

200 years ago - drunk on their military supremacy, the Magog founded the City of Magog from which to rule their new empire.

250 years ago - the nomadic Magog tribes united under the warlord Khagan. Over the next fifty years they attacked and conquered the Avari, Ursidae, Muki and Marzani, establishing an empire of tributary client states. Utnapishtim was besieged by Magog forces, but did not fall.

300 years ago - completion of the ziggurat of Utnapishtim.

350 years ago - after a long history of skirmishes, fiends massacred the Grigorian settlement of Moravia. The Grigorians began to establish watchtowers to guard against further incursions by fiends from the Rift.

450 years ago - foundation of the city of Midea.

475 years ago - the Muki adopted the combine system of government.

500 years ago - foundation of the city of Utnapishtim.

600 years ago - the Hegemonites discovered elephants on a southern continent and shipped them back to the Known Lands to breed.

800 years ago - The cataclysm that destroyed the Shining Ones and their empire occurred.

## Languages in the High Moors setting

All cultures know the Common tongue. Each culture also has its own language, although these share a common alphabet with Common, and are more like dialects than entirely separate languages.

There are also a few languages that scholars may know, such as Elvish (a dead language). Other languages that scholars may know are: infernal (the language of fiends), primordial (the language of elementals), deep speech (the language of aberrations), or sylvan (the language of the fey).

## Currency in the High Moors setting

Each culture has its own coinage (of varying quality) struck with their own leaders or symbols, but for the sake of simplicity assume that the values of each coin type are broadly equivalent.

The known lands use a silver rather than a gold-based currency, so convert all 5E rulebook costs and prices as follows:

gold pieces = silver shillings  
silver pieces = copper pennies  
copper pieces = brass farthings

100 brass farthings = 1 silver shilling  
10 copper pennies = 1 silver shilling

So, for example, in 5E a Chain Shirt costs 50 silver shillings, a dagger costs 2 silver shillings, a flask of lamp oil costs 1 copper penny, and a mug of ale costs 4 brass farthings. Coins are small and one hundred coins weighs one pound. No culture uses gold coins, but if they did each gold coin would be worth ten silver shillings. See the annex for a full list of converted prices.

## The Planes in the High Moors setting

In the High Moors setting, the classic planes do not exist. The only “other plane” that exists is the Far Realm, which is essentially an “anti-reality” inimical to our own. It is from the outer dimensions of the Far Realm that hideous tentacled monstrosities descend to infect our reality.

Other “planar” creatures come from places within the world which are strong in particular forces.

**Fey / elemental creatures:** certain places in the world are fey-touched. Fey areas are strong in life, nature and emotion. Where a place is fey touched, aspects of nature come to life or gain a form of self-awareness. Elementals form in fey touched places (high altitudes or mountains, volcanoes or forest fires, oceans or other large bodies of water, or areas high in rare minerals or deep below ground). Other fey creatures represent awakened plants or animals (spirit animals, dryads, satyrs, owlbears, pegasi, unicorns, treants), or emotions given embodied form (hags, redcaps, boggles, meenlocks, redcaps, sprites).

**Shadow:** in places where death energy is strong, such as battlefields or cemeteries, creatures of shadow come to be. Where death and murder has taken place it leaves an imprint, and this can cause undead creatures to arise. Shadow creatures include undead (skeletons, zombies, ghouls, shadows, wraiths, wights, spectres, mummies, vampires etc), as well as shadow creatures such as scarecrows, nightmares, and hell hounds.

**Fiends:** fiends are native to the underworld beneath the Known Lands. Far below, where the earth burns, they live and slaughter one another in endless wars. Fiends cannot survive for long outside this environment. Whether that is due to

their acclimatisation to the heat or pressure, or some strange radiations present below, no one is quite sure.

Fiends are essentially spawned from archfiends as warriors in the way that an ant colony spawns soldier ants. The fiends are created in various shapes and sizes and given different properties to gain a tactical advantage. It is unclear if there is any more to the conflict between the archfiends beyond competition over limited resources. Fiends and archfiends are intelligent and conscious, but lack self consciousness or self identity. They are fully capable of understanding their environment, developing tactics and even speaking in Common, but these are all behaviours rather than the acts and decisions of an individual. As a result of their nature, fiends are immune to charm, and mind-affecting or mind reading magic.

Fiends are at war with the surface, but this is not a war that they started. They considered the formation of The Rift an attack, and entire clades of fiends were lost in the destruction. They then mounted a counterattack, and have continued to attack the surface ever since.

**Celestial:** the Celestials represent law, order and stand in opposition to the chaos of the Far Realm. The Celestials are in essence the ordered universe's immune system. The order of the universe is embodied most strongly in the fundamental forces that hold it together. These energies operate at the subatomic level and represent the microverse of order. The microverse of order is populated by vast battalions of mindless drones that help to reinforce the physical laws of the universe. Self consciousness and magic are forces that transcend strict physical laws, and they are an anathema to the Celestials. The Celestials will generally only manifest at macro scale to counter areas of extreme Far Realm insurgency. Areas strong in celestial energy tend to damp down magic, and spending too long in such areas can turn thinking beings into mindless drones. Swarms of strange mechanical insects

tend to manifest in areas strong in celestial energy.

**The Far Realm:** the plane of madness, the anti-reality, the chaos. The Far Realm is the place that lies outside the ordered reality of our universe. In the Far Realm, space, time, matter, energy, life, death all cease to have a meaning. The Far Realm is "outside" but sits parallel to our universe. In places where the walls of our reality start to fray, the Far Realm intrudes bringing disorder and horror. The Far Realm is also a place where the barrier between the mental and the physical does not exist, and as a result psionic energy has its origin in the Far Realm. Creatures native to the Far Realm include the aboleth, chuul, cloaker, and gibbering moulder.

**The gods:** Ordinary folk believe that the gods dwell on The Eye (the moon), but they are generally ineffable and unseen.

## Magic in the High Moors setting

In the High Moors setting, no class has access to spells above 4th level. This could be a side effect of the Shining Ones or the cataclysm, or simply the current state of magical aptitude. It is believed that the Shining Ones had access to more powerful magics.

For 5E this only really affects spell-casting characters once they reach 9th level. The rationale for this restriction is generally to make the setting lower magic, and to make higher level magics more wondrous. It also avoids the need to re-tool a number of higher level spells where these come with setting implications (e.g. planar travel spells).

Characters that have 5th level or higher spell slots still gain them, but must use them to cast empowered 1st - 4th level spells. Characters who have a class feature that gives them a spell above 4th level must instead choose a spell of 4th level or below.

One side effect of removing 5th level or higher spells is that there is no routine way to raise deceased characters from the dead. If this is something the characters want to do then they will have to search the High Moors for forbidden magic. There are in fact opportunities for bringing deceased characters back. First, a follower of the forgotten god (location 18) can ultimately learn 5th level and higher spells, including Raise Dead. Second, a character could be brought back by a wish made in front of the copper sphere (location 13), or inside the blue coral (location 38). The Baroness (location 46) is also willing to reincarnate a dead character as a beast.

Another side effect of removing spells above 4th level is that characters have no way to reverse petrification. This can be resolved by allowing a caster to cast the 2nd level Lesser Restoration spell using a 4th level spell slot in order to reverse petrification. You could make available other effects of the 5th level Greater Restoration spell in the same way if you so wished.

## Clerics and deities in the High Moors setting

The people of the Known Lands all revere the same pantheon. Different cultures tend to revere one particular god of the pantheon to the exclusion of the others. Belief in the gods is fuelled by faith, and people generally do not expect the gods to be directly involved in the ordinary affairs of mortals. The gods do not manifest directly. The pantheon is:

**Celebrand:** lord of magic, light and the sun, and head of the pantheon. Celebrand is particularly revered by the Hegemony of Utnapishtim, and by some Muki. Suggested domains: Light, Arcana

**Mirrabulous:** god of arts, crafts, music and knowledge. Mirrabulous is particularly revered by the Marzan and the goblins. Suggested domains: Knowledge, Forge

**Nornloth:** a trickster god, and god of death and the moon. Nornloth is particularly revered by the Grigorians. Suggested domains: Trickery, Grave

**Faenil:** a goddess of fertility, agriculture and love. Faenil is particularly revered by the Kachina. Suggested domains: Life, Nature

**Anghalak:** god of war and hunting. Anghalak is particularly revered by the Avari, Magog and Ursidae. (The Ursidae previously held Faenil in great reverence.) Suggested domains: War, Tempest

**Baal-Shugeesh:** tentacled demon god of evil. Only worshipped by those who have taken leave of their senses, of which there is a ready supply. Baal-Shugeesh is served by his emissaries, The Worm Gods. Suggested domains: Death, War

There is no agreement about how each god looks, so, for example, goblins will generally represent Mirrabulous as a goblin, and the Marzani will represent him as a dwarf.

## The Shining Ones

### Games Master's background

The beings known as the "Shining Ones" were highly advanced elves who lived in the north, in the region now called the "High Moors". They were the dominant species on the planet until their empire collapsed approximately eight hundred years ago.

The Shining Ones were descended from The Ancients: a group of highly advanced space-faring elves that crash landed on this planet thousands of years ago. Their ship collided with the star stone (location 50), and crashed, creating the crater now filled by a lake and topped by the Shining City. While their ship was mostly destroyed, the protected engineering section survived, and housed a magitek engine

("The Crucible") that allowed the Ancients to travel between the stars by jaunting through the anti-reality of the Far Realm. Unfortunately The Crucible was damaged and the Ancients were marooned.

The Ancients that survived the crash founded a new society here, and their descendants are the elves known as the Shining Ones. The Shining Ones revered their ancestors, and wanted to once again join their ranks. They mummified their dead (perhaps imitating lost technology of the ancients) in the hope that they would be raised back to life to join the Ancients on the day that their lost brethren discovered their children.

Over the millenia, the Shining Ones mastered powerful magic and many applications of it, such as biomancy or technomancy. They were only challenged by two other empires: the orcish empire in the east, and the dragon empire of the west. But the Shining Ones were ultimately triumphant and destroyed both rival empires.

Intoxicated by their supremacy and their own power, the Shining Ones embarked on a grand project to become living gods. Having learned how to tap into the chaotic energies of the Far Realm through The Crucible, they intended to give themselves the power to alter reality at will. Their project failed, and they unleashed forces that they could not control. The walls between our universe and the outside collapsed. Time and space ran like melted candle wax. Thousands of unspeakable horrors emerged into the world and the elves were destroyed. The celestials eventually repaired the dimensional barriers, but weak spots still remain.

## Culture of the Shining Ones

The rulers of the High Moors called themselves the **leldra**. The leldra were a race of evil, utterly amoral elves. They were fascist supremacists who saw all other races as lesser beings (they considered themselves descended from gods). The leldra were sadists who felt no empathy

towards lesser races. Their focus was domination, knowledge, and magic.

Their society was a rules-based strict magocracy. All elves were magic-users of some kind. The leldra were ruled by the greatest magicians among their number. leldrans had to pass exams to ascend ranks. The highest ranked mages formed a ruling council.

**Alignment:** lawful evil

**Religion:** Each leldran had a private shrine to their ancestor gods, the ancients. They recognised three main deities: Xinen (knowledge and science), Kaed (memory) and Thaizar (magic). leldran priests shaved their scalps and dressed in silver robes. They were also magic-users rather than clerics. The leldra believed that all dead must be mummified. Literally thousands of mummified elves are vaulted away. They believed that one day their space gods would return for them.

**Language:** the elvish language was called leldran.

**Prohibition:** it was unacceptable to speak out loud any of the names of the chaos beings that reside in the Far Realm.

**Favoured foods:** leldrans preferred rich cooked dishes with layers of complex flavours. They appreciated the artistry of a skilled chef. They were interested in new flavours and spices.

**Life span:** leldrans could naturally live for up to eight hundred years. Their mastery of biomancy however allowed them to drain vitality from lesser beings and store it (typically in small crystal baubles) or absorb it. Thus an leldran could in theory live forever.

**Favoured weapons and armour:** leldrans favoured a wand of disintegration if they had to fight and relied on memetic robes that become armour.

**Trade:** They valued a variety of obscure minerals and other ingredients used in their magitek, although they tended to take what they wanted rather than trade for it.

**Enemies:** the leldrans fought wars with an orc empire to the east, and an empire to the west ruled by dragons and their dragonborn servants.

**Currency:** The leldrans used a form of paper money called “the bar”, and also valued jewels.

**Quirks:** The leldrans loved maths and enjoyed math puzzles as a recreation. The leldrans also loved cats. Nearly every elven household had pet cats, and many wild cats still roam the High Moors.

## Secrets of the Shining Ones

In exploring the High Moors the characters have the opportunity to learn about the Shining ones and their own past by uncovering secrets. You should explain to the players that in this game **information is a form of treasure**, and they will receive Experience Points (XP) for uncovering the secrets of the Shining Ones.

The history of the peoples of the Thornlands and Southlands only goes back several hundred years, and beyond that it is entirely murky. People assume it was much the same, but no one really knows for sure. You can explain to your players that exploring the High Moors presents a chance to uncover the past and to answer a number of questions. For example:

**What were the Shining Ones capable of?**

**What was the great cataclysm that destroyed the Shining Ones?**

**How did the Shining Ones become so powerful?**

**Who were the enemies of the Shining Ones?**

**What kind of magical knowledge did the Shining Ones have access to?**

**What role was played by the ancestors of the humans, dwarves, halflings, goblins, giantkin and bearfolk?**

**What caused the Rift?**

Rather than provide a lengthy backstory for you to pick apart, this section breaks down the secrets that can be discovered into two classes.

The first are those that can be easily discovered by physically exploring the High Moors. The second are secrets that may require the characters to put together some clues.

There is not necessarily a specific trigger for each of these. You will need to use your judgment to determine when the characters have reached this conclusion. You may want to get them to explain to you what they think they have worked out, and then award XP accordingly.

### Tier one secrets

(each secret grants each character 100 XP)

(i) The Shining Ones kept slaves, and had human, halfling, bearfolk, giantkin, goblin and dwarven slaves. The Shining Ones controlled their slaves using magical control collars. The Shining Ones had other races that they enslaved, although in much smaller numbers e.g. dogfolk, pigfolk, serpentfolk etc.

(ii) Different slave races had different roles: Human slaves were focused on agriculture and livestock. Dwarven slaves were used as miners or to operate refineries. Halfling slaves were used as domestic household slaves. Bearfolk slaves were used as soldiers and guards. Giantkin slaves were used for construction and other heavy industrial tasks. Goblin slaves were used as technical assistants, and as slave masters.

(iii) The Empire of the Shining Ones was in conflict with an Orc Empire, which lay to the south east. The Shining Ones created an undead army to defeat the Orc Empire. The undead husks deployed by the Shining Ones carried an infection that led to all those that they bit transforming into more husks. This weapon was very effective, and the Orc Empire was essentially wiped out by a zombie apocalypse.

(iv) The Shining Ones used biomancy to create races so as to make better and more specialised slaves. The Shining Ones created dwarves, halflings, giantkin, and goblins for these purposes by modifying humans. The Shining Ones used biomancy to create a variety of hybrid species for various purposes: wolffolk, ratfolk, bearfolk, pigfolk, boarfolk, hyenafolk and others. Some experiments were considered more successful than others.

(v) The Empire of the Shining Ones was in conflict with a Dragon Empire to the south west. The Dragon Empire was an empire of humans ruled by dragons and their dragonborn servants. The Shining Ones used biomancy to create a huge living war machine: seventy-foot high gargantuan reptilian beasts. They unleashed these creatures against the Dragon Empire, and ultimately destroyed it. The beasts were then mothballed.

(vi) When the cataclysm occurred, a tear was created between our universe and the Far Realm. Hordes of mindless gibbering plasmic entities invaded this reality and killed or absorbed the Shining Ones, destroying their civilisation.

## Tier two secrets

(each secret grants each character 500 XP)

(vii) The extant civilisations of humans, halflings, dwarves, bearfolk, giantkin and goblins are all descended from the slaves of the Shining Ones who escaped south following the cataclysm.

(viii) The Shining Ones also controlled slaves by permanently altering them to e.g. be afraid of particular symbols, or to accept the authority of certain symbols or words. Some of the Shining One's slave control programming still affects members of the races once kept as slaves i.e. including the characters.

(ix) The pantheon of gods worshipped by the races of the known world are for the most part based on elven overlords who ruled over their forebears. For example, Celebrand was the Shining Ones' leader, and a powerful archmage. Faenil was the scientist and biomancer Ferranil. Nornloth was the elven lord Narinlath. Anghalak was the general of the Shining Ones' armies Anghareth. Mirrabulous was the elven artist Mirrabalan.

(x) The Shining Ones' great project was to use The Crucible to control large amounts of Far Realm energy to give themselves the power to alter reality at will: effectively to become gods.

(xi) The Crucible was the (damaged) propulsion core of a crashed starfaring vessel beneath the Shining City. The crashed ship had an interstellar propulsion system that operated by tapping into Far Realm energies to warp spatial dimensions.

(xii) Fifteen thousand years ago a starfaring vessel crash-landed in the north of the world's main continent. While most of the crew died, the science staff of the vessel survived. Those survivors were the Ancients or precursors of the Shining Ones. The ship's propulsion system was damaged in the crash and leaked Far Realm energy into the world. This energy had a corrupting effect on the elves, and over thousands of years they became cruel and inhuman.

(xiii) The elves were not the only survivors of the crash. Several slime-based intelligent lifeforms escaped into the natural environment and have bred and survived to this day.



(xiv) The constant influx of Far Realm chaos energy over thousands of years caused the Celestials to manifest. The Celestials are in essence the ordered universe's immune system. The Celestials will generally only manifest at macro scale to counter areas of extreme Far Realm insurgency.

## Optional rules

### Variant races

If you wish, instead of using the official racial attributes for humans, halflings, dwarves, and goblins you can use the versions provided below. These have been changed from the PHB versions to make them a better fit for this campaign, and these traits replace those in the PHB. But if you would prefer to allow your players to use the standard racial attributes in the PHB, then feel free. It should not have any particular detriment to the campaign.

#### **Avari traits (5E)**

One of the following: +1 Strength, and +1 to two other ability scores (max +2 to any one attribute), or a feat.

Proficiency: Athletics, Intimidation and 1 skill of choice

Other proficiencies: one of the following: a culturally relevant artisan kit (smith, leather worker, weaver, carpenter, pottery, brewer, herbalist), a language, light armour proficiency, a gaming set or a musical instrument.

Cultural expertise: expertise in 1 skill you are proficient with.

Typical weapons: spear

Typical armour: ringmail and shield

#### **Hegemonite traits (5E)**

One of the following: +1 Charisma, and +1 to two other ability scores (max +2 to any one attribute), or a feat.

Proficiency: Persuasion, History and 1 skill of choice

Other proficiencies: one of the following: any artisan kit, land vehicle, a language, or a musical instrument.

Cultural expertise: expertise in 1 skill you are proficient with.

Typical weapons: spear

Typical armour: breastplate and shield

#### **Magog traits (5E)**

One of the following: +1 Dexterity, and +1 to two other ability scores (max +2 to any one attribute), or a feat.

Proficiency: Animal Handling, Survival, and 1 skill of choice

Other proficiencies: one of the following: a culturally relevant artisan kit (smith, leather worker, weaver, carpenter, brewer, cooking), water vehicle, a language, a gaming set or a musical instrument.

Cultural expertise: expertise in 1 skill you are proficient with.

Typical weapons: spear, shortbow

Typical armour: hide

#### **Kachina traits (5E)**

One of the following: +1 Dexterity, and +1 to two other ability scores (max +2 to any one attribute), or a feat.

Proficiency: Athletics, Nature and 1 skill of choice

Other proficiencies: one of the following: a culturally relevant artisan kit (smith, leather worker, weaver, potter, carpenter, brewer, cooking, herbalist), water vehicle, a language, a gaming set or a musical instrument.

Cultural expertise: expertise in 1 skill you are proficient with.

Naturally stealthy: you can attempt to hide even when obscured only by a creature that is one or more size larger than you

Size: small

Typical weapons: knife, handaxe, shortbow

Typical armour: hide

#### **Marzani traits (5E)**

One of the following: +1 Constitution, and +1 to two other ability scores (max +2 to any one attribute), or a feat.

Proficiency: Performance and 1 skill of choice  
Other proficiencies: two of the following: any artisan kit, a language, a gaming set or a musical instrument.

Cultural expertise: expertise in 1 skill you are proficient with.

Darkvision 60 feet

Size: medium

Typical weapons: pike, crossbow

Typical armour: breastplate

### **Goblin traits (5E)**

One of the following: +1 Intelligence, and +1 to two other ability scores (max +2 to any one attribute), or a feat.

Proficiency: Investigation, History and 1 skill of choice

Other proficiencies: one of the following: any artisan kit, a language, a gaming set or a musical instrument.

Cultural expertise: expertise in 1 skill you are proficient with.

Darkvision 60 ft

Size: small

Typical weapons: shortsword, spear, sling

Typical armour: leather, shield

Instead of rolling for starting wealth, goblin characters start with any ten items of normal equipment appropriate to their role (GM approval required) and 2d6 silver shillings.

## **Use of factions**

Each zone has several factions that are active. The factions have motivations that are described as well as an outline of the likely actions they will take if the characters don't interfere. The point of these factions is to give each zone additional depth, and to give characters other groups that they can oppose, ally with, or maintain an uneasy truce with.

These factions are also a way to make the environment seem alive and active. Most of the ruins of the Shining Ones lie abandoned and dormant, but the factions are responsive and proactive. Make sure to adapt the factions'

actions to the characters' actions, so that the sandbox feels like a living environment.

The other factions should also create some time pressure on the characters' decisions. The characters should realise that other groups are present and looking to uncover secrets and find the lost treasures of the elves before they do. The characters should be thinking about this when they are working out where to go next, and worry that some other group may get in ahead of them.

While characters can go anywhere and move between zones as they see fit, I recommend that you only treat as active the factions in the zone or zones that the characters are actively exploring. It's impossible for the characters to do everything at once, and there is nothing to be gained by having factions go active in zones they haven't even entered yet.

## **Experience Points for treasure**

To reinforce the themes of exploration, you may wish to adopt a variant rule that Experience Points (XP) are awarded for recovering treasure. In order for such XP to be granted, the treasure must be removed from the adventuring environment or dungeon to a place of safety (for example, the town of Hob's Lake), and it must be spent. For every silver shilling spent on training and instruction, research materials, rare incense and meditative herbs, or lost lore and secret techniques (you can abstract this!), the character receives 1 XP.

This generally implies that the party must return to the safety of the Known Lands in order to spend treasure in this way, but at the GM's discretion you might allow certain Non-Player Characters in the High Moors or in Hob's Lake to offer instruction etc to the characters.

For example, a (5E) party of four adventurers have an average of 3500 XP each and are 4th level. They need 3000 XP each to reach 5th

level, or 12,000 XP in total. During their travels they have secured treasures worth 9000 silver shillings. They decide to take a furlough and return to the city of Utnapishtim to spend their riches. At the end of their two weeks in the city their GM says that they have successfully spent 9000 silver shillings and gained an additional 2250 XP each.

When a party leaves and returns to the High Moors you should consider what the different active factions have been doing in the characters' absence. You should only do this for active factions i.e. those in zones the characters are currently exploring.

*Don't discourage exploration!*

On a related point, the theme of this campaign is exploration. It is therefore important not to discourage players from investigating, exploring, fiddling with things and so on. If the players feel punished every time they explore somewhere they don't absolutely need to, or experiment with something they don't have to, then they will act accordingly. The encounters in this book have been balanced to encourage exploration. Many encounters are dangerous, and taking risks can lead to greater danger, but it also leads to reward.

## Avoiding the overuse of skill checks

This book is intended to be compatible with the 5th Edition (5E) of the world's most famous roleplaying game, and also as compatible as possible with OSR games. 5E relies on a skill check system. This means that players may make a skill check for their character to climb a wall, notice something or to tell if someone else is lying. This generally works well and is a simple way to resolve some actions.

The downside of the skill check system is that it can be used too much, and it can turn the game into a series of die rolls. If you are aiming for a

more Old School feel to this campaign, you could try to avoid skill checks unless they are absolutely necessary. You can do this in several ways:

### **Assume characters are generally competent:**

you don't always have to make players roll. If someone is playing a cleric, then their character will know things about gods and religious lore. If you think that they would reasonably know something, just tell them. Making a Religion skill check could be reserved for trying to remember something obscure or highly technical.

Likewise, if a rogue has lockpicks and the required tool proficiency, then why not just let them pick a standard lock on a door or chest? A skill check could be reserved for complex or unusual locks, or extenuating circumstances such as trying to pick a lock in one round or while on a plummeting airship.

The same goes for other classes and characters with particular Backgrounds. Even if a character doesn't have a specific Background, you may decide that their character's back story means that they will know certain things, or be competent at certain things.

### **Ask them to describe what they are doing:**

rather than immediately calling for a skill check, get the players to describe what their characters are doing. If they are searching for a trap or climbing a sheer surface, and what they have described sounds adequate to the task, then tell them they succeed. Alternatively you could assign the group's efforts a likelihood of success: "you have a solid plan. I'm going to say that you will only fail if you roll an 18 or higher on d20".

If you are trying to work out if the characters notice something (e.g. an ambush) then it can feel difficult to avoid a skill roll. But if the characters said that someone was scouting ahead, or that they were being careful to hide their light sources and so on, you may want to instead give a general likelihood of success in

detecting the ambush or noticing the hidden thing. (But there is a balance to be struck between avoiding a skill check and expecting the players to keep repeating a litany of the precautions that they are taking!).

**Use passive rolls:** if you know your player's characters, then you can make a note ahead of time about their passive checks (their attribute and any proficiency bonus plus 10, plus or minus 5 if they have advantage or disadvantage), and you can then compare these to what you think of as the required DCs. While a skill check is essentially still taking place, it is happening 'off screen' and you can simply narrate what they party do or don't find or understand. The advantage of this mechanic is that it avoids a break in the narrative flow of the game and keeps people at the level of the fiction rather than the mechanics.

**Allow success with setback:** this is a useful technique to use with passive checks above. If the characters will fail at a passive check, then allow them to succeed but with consequences. This is the so-called 'failing forward' technique.

For example, the characters are trying to persuade a guard to let them into a keep. Rather than interrupt the role-playing of the interaction, the GM decides to handle it as a passive check. He notes that the character speaking passively fails their Cha (Persuasion) check, so the GM decides that the characters succeed in fast talking the guard, but after a few minutes he will check with his captain and the alarm will be raised. This won't, of course, be appropriate in all situations. Sometimes the consequence of failure is failure e.g. falling down the pit trap.

## Replacing dead characters

The High Moors is isolated. If characters die you will want a simple way to bring in replacements. You may wish to start out by having a larger initial expedition. For example, each player could start with two characters. Alternatively you

could have one hireling with the party for each character, and they can serve as replacement characters. The 'extra' characters can stay at the party's camp, and can usefully be guarding treasure, defending the camp, hunting for food, and keeping watch. Players can swap between characters if they wish, and you may wish to allow backup characters to gain levels as the main characters do.

If you don't want to have a larger starting party, the party can meet the survivors of other expeditions wandering the Moors and recruit them. You should avoid giving the new character a lot of extra information, but they might be given one or two snippets.

Another option is to allow replacement characters to be recruited from the inhabitants of the High Moors. For example, you may wish to allow players to create a dogfolk fighter or exiled wolffolk rogue. Traits for these races are set out below:

### Serpentfolk traits

One of the following: +1 Dexterity, and +1 to two other ability scores (max +2 to any one attribute), or a feat.

Proficiency: Perception, Survival and 1 skill of choice

Other proficiencies: one culturally appropriate artisan kit (carpenter, cook, leatherworker, potter, weaver, woodcarver, herbalism)

Immunity to poison and poisoned condition

Have an 1d3 bite that inflicts an additional 1d8 poison

### Pigfolk traits

One of the following: +1 Strength, and +1 to two other ability scores (max +2 to any one attribute), or a feat.

Proficiency: Intimidation, Survival and 1 skill of choice

Other proficiencies: one culturally appropriate artisan kit (carpenter, cook, leatherworker, potter, weaver, woodcarver, herbalism)

Frenzied ability: the first hit that would reduce them to 0HP or less reduces them to 1HP instead (refreshes after a long rest).

#### **Dogfolk traits**

One of the following: +1 Charisma, and +1 to two other ability scores (max +2 to any one attribute), or a feat.

Proficiency: Perception, Survival and 1 skill of choice

Cultural expertise: expertise in 1 skill you are proficient with.

Keen scent: have advantage on scent-based tracking or perception tests

#### **Wolffolk traits**

One of the following: +1 Strength, and +1 to two other ability scores (max +2 to any one attribute), or a feat.

Proficiency: Athletics, Survival and 1 skill of choice

Regenerate: while the wolffolk lives it regenerates 1HP/round.

Has a bite doing 1d8 and a claw doing 1d6

#### **Owlfolk traits**

One of the following: +1 Wisdom, and +1 to two other ability scores (max +2 to any one attribute), or a feat.

Proficiency: Perception and 1 skill of choice

Cultural expertise: expertise in 1 skill you are proficient with.

Darkvision 120 ft

Keen hearing and sight: owlfolk have advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight or sound.

The Shining Ones created other hybrid races such as ratfolk, catfolk, frogfolk, boarfolk, bullfolk, hyenafolk, insectfolk and lizardfolk. To the east and west of the three Zones described in this book there might be other villages of hybrid creatures from which replacement adventurers could hail.

#### **Uplifted white ape traits**

One of the following: +1 Strength, and +1 to two other ability scores (max +2 to any one attribute), or a feat.

Proficiency: Athletics, Nature and 1 skill of choice

Cultural expertise: expertise in 1 skill you are proficient with.

Climb speed of 30 ft

#### **Devilfolk traits**

- as standard Tieflings

## **Reaction table**

Older tabletop RPGs used some mechanics that have fallen out of favour, but may be useful in a sandbox adventure such as this one. One of these is the reaction table. The point of the reaction table is that not all encounters will lead to hostility. Even generally hostile creatures may not want to attack for whatever reason, and generally friendly creatures may be hostile for some reason.

It is up to you as the GM to think up some reasons behind the creatures' behaviour based on the actions of the party and whatever else might be going on. In some cases the encounter may already specify the creatures' reaction, but the reaction table can be particularly useful for random encounters.

#### **Reaction Table (2d6)**

2: Immediately attacks

3-5: Possible attack (will attack or flee if there are any hostile moves; social checks hard)

6-8: Uncertain

9-11: Possibly friendly (may be tricked and thus attacked by surprise; social checks easy)

12: Immediately friendly

For example, the party have a random encounter with 9 serpentfolk foragers. The GM rolls for reactions and gets a 10 on 2d6. Although usually wary, these serpentfolk may be friendly. The GM decides that the party

encounter a curious serpentfolk child that has wandered away from this group. If they return the child unharmed the group will be warily friendly and grateful.

## Plot hooks for characters

Your players will be more engaged if their characters have good reasons for exploring the High Moors and facing its dangers. It is suggested that each character have some individual mission that they are trying to pursue as well as the general mission. Below are some suggested motivations.

### **Treasure hunting**

It is assumed that their primary motivation will be to explore in order to find riches and magical treasures. They can do this themselves and organise their own expedition (perhaps pooling their starting money). This might be expensive and they will also have to pay for their passage north to Hob's Lake (20 silver shillings for each passenger). If they cannot afford the fee, they can alternatively work their passage north. This is tiring dirty work which involves shoveling dung from the ship's deck and leading and protecting the oxen who walk along the bank and tow the sailing cog up river. The advantage of organising their own expedition is that they can keep everything they find.

Alternatively they can work for a merchant.

**Shamash Nasir** is a senior member of the Merchant's Society of Utnapishtim. He is looking to recruit skilled mercenaries for an expedition. He is a robed, somewhat portly human in his 40s with a dark beard and hair, and a black turban. He has a pet capuchin monkey called Gemek that is always present and stealing fruit. He has a dark robed Wizard called **Nutesh** who is a kind of salaried bodyguard.

Nasir offers to pay for their ship's passage (both ways), and outfit them with riding horses, mules,

saddlebags, animal feed, supplies, and general equipment like ropes. He can also supply 8 herbal healing potions (cure 7 or 2d4+2 HP each). He will also offer to use his influence within the city to get them access to a cleric if they need it (though they would still have to pay the temple).

In return he wants half of everything they find, up until he recoups 5000 silver shillings of treasure. After that he wants first refusal of any other treasure or magic they manage to recover (for which he will pay a fair price).

### **Find a missing relative or friend**

There are a number of other expeditions that have journeyed north and have not returned. Any of these could provide a hook. For example, potential missing people include Aleena or her four companions (location 14), or the two groups taken by Angus's bearfolk (location 26, room 14). Alternatively someone new could be created and trapped in the Petrified Forest location (34).

### **Find a way to save a dead or dying loved one**

The elves were believed to have great magic. For the desperate, exploring the High Moors may be the only way to save someone (perhaps a whole village) dying from an illness. Alternatively they may think it offers the only hope to bring a dead person back, however in vain that may be.

### **Gather power or a weapon**

An explorer may be motivated by wresting from the ruins great magical power, knowledge or weapons. This might be for personal gain, to exact revenge, to recover a birthright, or for the good of mankind.

### **Ursidae: to track down Angus's group**

A bearfolk party member may be given a secret mission to find Angus by the Council of Lairds. They say that there are ill omens from the temple priests that all is not well. In fact a grave danger is sensed and Angus is at the heart of it.

He may need to be stopped (send *Apocalypse Now* vibes!).

**Marzani: recover the lost library**

One of the Council of the Wise has tasked a dwarf with finding the ancient library of the elves and recovering their no-doubt incredible wisdom and knowledge.

**Muki: stop Cartimandus**

A goblin may be given a secret mission by the combine leadership (passed down from the community leaders). They will be told about a 'rogue' goblin who has rejected his combine and now operates out of pure self-interest. He is understood to have travelled to the north to obtain weapons to sell. They are told that they should do whatever is required to protect their community and combine.

**Kachina: stop the Blue Feather Company**

The Kachina elders may be disturbed by the expedition of the Blue Feather Company, and worried about what they might stir up. A halfling character may be given a secret mission to try to get them to abandon their mission and go home.

**Kachina: an ancestor's wish**

A Kachina keeps having visions of an ancestor of theirs. The ancestor seems to want them to travel north. It is unclear why but it appears to be important.

**Magog, or a cleric or paladin: stop the Cult of Eyes**

A church may warn a suitable cleric or paladin about the Cult of Eyes, and that they must be prevented from obtaining anything that will help them to seize control of Magog society. This mission could also be given to a Magog from their Khan, or a shaman.

**Hegemonite: on a mission from the god emperor**

A hegemonite may be tasked by a senior official with a simple mission: ensure no other group obtains a strategic advantage from anything they

find in the High Moors. Use whatever tactics are required.

**Magog: find elven horses**

A Khan or senior clan elder tasks the Magog character with obtaining a small herd of wild horses from the elven lands. They have heard rumours that these "elven horses" may have special properties, and will also give them respect and status.

**Cleric or paladin: strange visions and a calling**

A cleric or paladin keeps on having visions of the High Moors and something is calling to them. Sometimes these visions include a towering statue of Celebrand (a reference to location 18).

**Druid: the land cries out**

A druid has always sensed a great corruption on the periphery of the lands, but now understands that the High Moors are the source of that. The world is in pain from its open wounds and cries out for a champion to save it. (This is about the Far Realm corruption and the continuing influence of The Crucible.)

**A draconic bloodline sorcerer**

They have always been haunted by nightmares of destruction and war, but they have now become much worse. *Something* is calling to them from the High Moors, and they know that they must heed the call. A call from something in agony. (This relates to the Iron Dragon at location 54.)

## Journey to the High Moors

### Time and distance

It is assumed that the characters are heading north from one of the major settlements of the

Known Lands. The easiest route is to head up river from the City of Magog or Utnapishtim, etc.

For example, a journey by sailing cog from Utnapishtim to Hob's Lake along the wide Attavar River would cover 720 miles (9 hexes on the Known World map). In light of the travelling against the 3mph current, the sailing cog would have to be towed upstream by a team of draft horses. (A sailing cog would likely weigh about 150 tons when fully loaded and would probably need two teams of six draft horses.)

There would need to be room aboard for these animals and their feed, and this would reduce the cargo space by 25% (to 75 tons. See DMG p.119). It would also mean that the ship could only travel by daylight. Assuming travel of 12 hours each day at around 2 ½ mph, the cog would cover 30 miles each day. It would therefore take 24 days to reach Hob's Lake. The ship would reach Awelo around the half-way mark, and will probably have an extra day's stopover there.

Their ship will go no further than Hob's Lake, so the characters will have a further hike of 40 miles (1.5 days on foot) before they see the tableland of the High Moors.

For return journeys, the draft animals will be kept abroad and the ship will simply sail downriver. Its normal 2mph speed will be supplemented by the 3mph current, and it can travel day and night. This means that each day the ship will cover 120 miles, and the return journey will take only 6 days. Characters wanting to head south may have to wait for the ship to return. (Only one vessel arrives each month.)

If the characters wanted to travel by foot, they could do so. By following the same route and sticking to the clear tow paths used by the draft horses, they could ensure that the terrain was standard rather than difficult (PHB, p.182). They would therefore travel 24 miles each day, and it

would take 30 days to travel from Utnapishtim to Hob's Lake.

## The Eanna, and Captain Jemdat

If the characters are travelling by ship, there is one vessel that travels all the way to Hob's Lake (other vessels only go as far as Awelo). It is the Eanna, and it is owned by Captain Jemdat.

**Jemdat** is a friendly middle-aged Hegemonite wearing a simple white turban and lots of gold and silver bracelets (bought by his wife as good luck charms). He has a crew of twenty sailors (all Hegemonites), and runs up to Hob's Lake and back once a month to the following schedule:

Day 1: Eanna leaves Utnapishtim at dawn  
Day 4: arrival at Lake Van (+120 miles)  
Day 13: arrival at Awelo (+400 miles)  
Day 14: layover at Awelo  
Day 18: leave cover of the forest north of Awelo  
Day 25: arrival at Hob's Lake (+720 miles)  
Day 26: Eanna leaves Hob's Lake at sunset  
Day 28: Eanna passes Awelo in the evening  
Day 30: Eanna passes Lake Van at dawn  
Day 31: Eanna arrives at Utnapishtim  
Day 32: day's layover in Utnapishtim  
Day 33: Eanna leaves Utnapishtim

Jemdat has a wife (Miako) and three daughters living in Utnapishtim. His brother, Nasria, is a minor official in the civil service (Lesser Justice, rank 10) who deals with the regulation of tea houses. Jemdat likes the freedom that the river gives, and he enjoys being his own boss. He has a good singing voice and occasionally gives voice to it around the campfire in the evening. He is aware that some shady traffic goes by way of his vessel (e.g. Ishibi's poppies), but he makes it his business not to pry. He has a lock box built into the base of his bed, and it usually contains the crews' pay and money from goods sold in Utnapishtim that he is taking back to Hob's Lake (circa 500 silver shillings).



## Incidents on the journey

In order to build on the tone of the journey into The Weird, it is recommended that you use the incidents below during the characters' first journey north.

You can also supplement these incidents with the Known Lands Random Encounter Table if you wish, but it may distract and dilute the intended mood. You may wish to simply use the Random Encounter table for subsequent journeys.

### 1. The Chain Gang

Around lunchtime on the first day (about 15 miles from Utnapishtim), the characters see a group of prisoners from Utnapishtim cutting back undergrowth to keep the tow path clear. There are 12 men (9 Hegemonites, 2 Magog and 1 Avari) in shabby clothes connected by chains and manacles on their ankles. They are being guarded by several Hegemonite soldiers with spears.

One of the Magog (a toothless wretch in his 50s) grins at the characters, and gives them the evil eye (this will upset any Magog characters). If he is roughed up, he slips a stone into the pocket of his attacker that they find sometime later. The stone is a pebble marked with symbols and is considered very bad luck by the Magog.

### 2. The Fortress of Van

When the characters are around 120 miles from Utnapishtim (at the end of 4th day if coming by ship), they see that the grasslands they have been traveling through give way to a dark forest stretching off east and west as far as they can see. Just before the forest the river flows into a lake (Lake Van).

The lake is around 8 miles in diameter. There is a Hegemonite fishing town on the eastern shore overlooked by a large stone fortress. This is the Fortress of Van, and is the northernmost military

outpost of the City State. The Fortress was breached with the help of shamen during the Magog wars, and the defenders were all beheaded. The heads were floated downriver to Utnapishtim as a message. In the 170 years since, the fortress has been rebuilt and garrisoned without interruption.

There is no reason for the ship or the characters to stop here, and the towpath follows the western shore of the lake. As the fortress slips out of sight, it represents a sign that from here on the characters are entering the wilderness.

### 3. The broken stone

Three hundred miles up river in the forest, the characters find a pile of rubble near the river. On closer inspection it appears to have been a stone obelisk, although it appears to have been smashed into pieces quite recently.

If asked, the sailors say that when they have passed previously it looked very old and had carvings on it. The carvings seemed to show giants and humans. There are no visible tracks near the rubble.

The idea of this is to unsettle the characters with something inexplicable. If they do manage to force your hand, then they might learn that the stone was struck by lightning. There have been no recent lightning storms however.

### 4. The halfling child

About five miles from Awelo (395 miles up river), the characters pass a boat wreck in the middle of the river. It looks like a sailing cog hit a sandbar, and rolled onto its side. It looks quite old and has weeds growing out of it. It is about 600 feet to the wreck from the western shore.

Sitting on top of the wreck is a naked halfling child of about 6 years. The child has what look like black tattoos all over his back. He watches the characters and does not speak or respond to them. If he is approached he dives into the water and doesn't come back up.

Any Kachina can say that no child so young would be given such tattoos. No one in Awelo recognises the description. When the party leaves Awelo they see the same child watching from the far bank (about 1200 feet away).

Again, this is about creating an uneasy atmosphere and setting tone. The child is in fact the forgotten god that can be contacted at location 18. It watches the characters and wonders if they will be the ones to find the truth.

### **5. The fog**

The night after leaving Awelo the ship is tied up and the animals are aboard. The sailors have campfires on the shore. Just after dinner a thick fog starts to rise up over the river and the forest. An hour or so later a strange distant noise can be heard coming from the forest. It sounds like a piece of metal being torn in half over and over again.

The noise continues and the horses are very unsettled by it. The sailors put out the fires and stand watch on the deck muttering oaths. If the characters stay put, then after several hours the noise abruptly stops. By dawn the mist has cleared.

If the characters go to investigate, they enter the mist and it closes over them like a diver entering the water. The noise always seems a bit further away, and sometimes its position seems to shift.

Suddenly arrows fly out of the mist towards the party. Make 8 attacks at +4 each with disadvantage. Arrows inflict 8 damage. The arrows have come from a group of Kachina who were investigating the noise and got lost in the mist. They look terrified and shot into the mist when they heard the party approaching. As the characters realise their mistake (or murder them) the noise abruptly stops.

### **Kachina (8)**

Small halfling, neutral good

Armor Class 14 (hide)

Hit Points 9

Speed 30 ft

Str 12 (+1), Dex 14 (+2), Con 11 (+0), Int 11 (+0), Wis 10 (+0), Cha 11 (+0)

**Skills:** Athletics +3, Survival +2, Boats +4

**Save bonus:** +2

**Challenge:** 1/4

### **Actions**

Handaxe: +3 to hit, reach 5 feet, one target. Hit: 7 (1d6+3)

Shortbow: +4 to hit, range 80/320 feet, one target. Hit: 8 (1d6+4)

If the characters insist on searching in daylight, they eventually discover a burnt clearing. The grass and plants have been burnt away in a perfect circle about 20 ft diameter. No other plants appear scorched. A character proficient in Arcana can sense magic and a dimensional incursion of some kind.

### **6. A Body in the Water**

When the characters are within 50 miles of Hob's Lake (670 miles up river), they notice something drifting downriver. It appears to be a body. If anyone wants to use a spear, line or net to catch it, they can.

The body is badly mangled and decomposing. Its head in particular is smashed. The body does not look entirely human. It has a rough pink skin with coarse white hairs, and a head covered in a few scraps of white hair. It also has a curly tail and trotter-like feet. It is dressed in crude furs and hides. The sailors consider it a bad omen and will want to throw it back, but they will allow the characters to bury it if they wish (although the ship will continue).

### **Arrival at Hob's Lake**

If they have come by ship, the characters arrive at Hob's Lake at nightfall on the 25th day. The docks are busy and the ship seems expected. Waiting to meet the ship are the following:

**Obadai** - to collect a shipment of salt, and to deliver some salted fish in boxes

**Ishibi** - to deliver several boxes of dried white flowers

**Paravesian** - with boxes of soil containing lots of small plants

**Mother Linette** accompanied by six miners and **Ivan the ogre** waiting to deliver twenty large sacks of ore.

**Ixisippian** - waiting to load some furs and scrimshaw, and offload some glassware and wine

Captain Jemdat will greet them all and once the ship is unloaded he will load their goods. He then fetches money from his cabin to pay them (for wares sold downriver).

Once business is concluded, the crew will leave. Half will head to the Tap Room, and half will head to the House of Red Lanterns. Captain Jemdat stays with the ship.

At the Tap Room, it is a busy night. Cyric, Griffard (and men), Jassk, Father List, Almayer (and woodmen) are all present as well as the ship's crew.

# Hob's Lake



Church of All Gods

House of Red Lanterns

Therid's Bakery

Jensen's House

Blacksmith

Tap Room

New Bakery

Doctor / Barber

Mayor's House

Woodsmen Lodge

Fisherfolk

Merchant

Docks

## The town of Hob's Lake

The town of Hob's Lake sits on the eastern shore of Lake Tarata. The town has a population of 483. It is independent and does not owe allegiance to any other city state. The town has grown from a village, and is mostly self-sufficient. Its population is mostly human. It produces fish, lumber, and there is a nearby mine. It also has a number of outlying farms. Strangers have become increasingly common with the interest aroused by the High Moors, although they are not entirely welcome. There is a well of freshwater used by all in the town centre, and at night there are lanterns lighting up the main street (which are doused at midnight).

How you use Hob's Lake is up to you and your players. Some players will be keen to get to the main event. That's fine. If they don't bother Hob's Lake, it won't bother them. For those interested, Hob's Lake provides an opportunity to reinforce some of the campaign themes (such as isolation, distance and living on the edge of The Weird). Some characters may want to put down roots, or investigate the town. Many of the inhabitants have a checkered history, but some are worthy of sympathy, and getting to know them may help to increase the stakes of the characters' actions in the High Moors. There are also some potential allies. For example, hirelings might be recruited from amongst the trappers or miners. Heyst could be a useful magical ally, and Father List could be useful if given a way to find faith once again.

### Mayor Margresk

The town mayor is a farm owner, Margresk. Margresk is a 48 year old human (as Noble, MM p.348, LN). He is thin, with short greasy hair plastered to his scalp, a smart black tunic and woollen top coat. He is cunning and craven. His family descend from some of the earliest settlers 200 years earlier. He has the largest farm and controls tax policy with a tame town council. Although the town elects a mayor once every five years, for the last 13 years the mayor has

been Margresk after the death of his father, Vertusk.

Margresk regulates the market (selling at market requires a license), collects taxes, and acts as the judiciary (holding trials and pronouncing sentences, usually backed up by trusted townfolk). Each resident pays a head tax and he also taxes exports and imports. The taxes pay for the principal services of the town, which are street lanterns, maintenance of the water well and the jetties, the pot man, and the reeve. Margresk feels threatened by the arrival of outsiders, and has created a sense of concern about this amongst the other townfolk. The town has recently implemented a "burgher" system and only recognised burghers of the town can own property or run businesses or vote. Registration as a burgher requires two sponsors and a 100 silver shilling fee.

### Cyric the Reeve

An Avari warrior in his late 30s. Originally a mercenary, he fled North after murdering a kinsman. Real name is Drefan. Cyric is a thug and bully. He wears chainmail and furs, and carries a greatsword (mostly for intimidation). He is a 3rd level Fighter (or treat as a bandit captain MM p.344, NE). He is backed up by **ten rough men** (as bandits MM p.343).

### The trappers and furriers (34)

The trappers and furriers are a griff bunch of rough men unused to social niceties. Many are wanted men. Their spokesman is **Griffard**, a burly seven foot human with a ginger beard and long hair, furs, and wild blue eyes. Slightly mad and dangerous (4th level Ranger, Str 18, Con 17, CN, or treat as a veteran MM p. 350). Margresk is scared of him, and will usually find a way to address any concerns he raises. The trappers have a camp on the south side of town.

### The fisherfolk (66)

The fisherfolk have huts, lodges and smokehouses by the lake shore. They sell fish in town, and export some salted fish and scrimshaw, although competition with Awelo is a

problem, so they don't like halflings. They also have keelboats and barges they can rent or sell, although they will insist on coming along for any rentals. They will only sell to people heading into the High Moors ("because you won't come back"). They buy salt from the merchant ships and send goods downriver. Their leader - **Obadai** - is a thin, wiry swarthy human with a mop of dark hair and a pipe in his fifties. Although a little curt, Obadai is reasonably affable belying that he is an ex-Magog pirate and his tattoos could identify him as a wanted killer.

### **The farmers (60)**

There are six farms near to town. Four are owned by humans, one by a halfling, and one by a dwarf. There are around 60 townsfolk that work at the farms

A human (Hegemonite) called **Ishibi** owns one of the farms. He grows a white poppy from which he harvests and dries the sap (a narcotic and pain relief) to ship to Utnapishtim. He keeps a low profile but can call on help from Utnapishtim if threatened (or hire locals). Ixisippian is aware of his business and takes his cut to traffic the goods.

A halfling called **Naval** owns another of the farms. Although he grows crops (mainly for animal feed), he is principally a breeder of horses, ponies and mules and can supply pack animals at standard prices. He also provides stabling and feed for the animals that pull the ship upriver.

A dwarf called **Paravesian**, grows crops to sell locally, but also has a beautiful flower garden he cultivates. He sometimes travels to Midea with a shipment of flowering plants to sell. He is a secret transvestite and lives as a woman behind closed doors. Hippolyta knows and keeps his secret.

### **The miners (40)**

The mine delivers up quantities of silver and copper ore, and this is shipped downriver to be

processed in Utnapishtim. The mine also has a surface quarry which is used to provide any construction stone the town requires.

The miners are mostly young human men. They are led by **Mother Linette**, a stocky Avari woman in her late 40s. Short haired and handy with a pick axe, Linette was the wife of the mine owner but took over when he died in a mine accident five years ago. She has led from the front (going down the mine with the men) and this has earned her the respect of the workers.

Among the miners is an ogre called **Ivan**. He fled the Grigorians and his sacred duty after witnessing his friends getting torn apart by fiends. He's incredibly dim, but has grown to be accepted by the miners who are protective of him. He is not allowed in the tap room or in town unaccompanied. Any other giantkin who knew of him would try to destroy him as a traitor.

### **The woodsmen (55)**

The woodsmen provide the lumber for the town. This ranges from firewood to building materials for new houses. There is no sawmill, but the woodsmen have large crosscut two-man saws to cut logs into long construction planks. As well as felling trees, the woodsmen are also the town's builders and carpenters. Their leader - **Almayer** - can negotiate to supply wood and to construct buildings, but only burghers are allowed to build houses in town. Almayer is a 46 year old bald Avari human with corded muscles and a skill with the fiddle.

Modest house (just big enough for one family, curtained bed space) - build cost 450 silver shillings; build time 2 weeks (potential rental 6 copper pennies a day)

Comfortable house (spacious for a single family, bedrooms) (- build cost 850 silver shillings; build time 4 weeks (potential rental of 12 copper pennies a day)

Wealthy house - build cost 1700 silver shillings (spacious for two families); build time 2 months (potential rental of 24 copper pennies a day)

Note the terms “modest”, “comfortable” etc are linked to the “Lifestyle” levels at p.157 of the PHB.

### **Other people of interest**

#### **Taproom and brewery**

Owned by a gap-toothed Magog in his forties called Orus. He creates two types of ale: light or dark, and both are okay. He gets good custom from the townsfolk. He also serves simple food (stews or bread and cheese). He wants to build an inn annex, but the mayor has refused because it will attract more newcomers. He tells this to people seeking rooms. He can however put people up in the tap room if they don't mind sleeping on the floor. They will be walked on in the night by Whiskers the cat, but it's him or the mice. Orus charges 1 copper penny per night for this privilege. They'll also be awakened at the crack of dawn by Jensen the potman.

*Prices (prices are +25% for non-burghers)*

Mug (⅓ pint or 19cl) of ale (or cider, mead): 1 brass farthing

Tankard (pint) of ale: 3 brass farthings

Bottle of common wine: 4 brass farthings

Meals for a day: 3 copper pennies

Cask (8 pints) of ale: 20 brass farthings

Pitcher (5 bottles) of common wine: 20 brass farthings

N.b. 100 brass farthings = 10 copper pennies = 1 silver shilling

#### **Bloom, blacksmith / armourer**

Bloom is a young human blacksmith who was paid to resettle here from Utnapishtim by the mayor after the last blacksmith died three years ago. The town needed a blacksmith and Bloom was an apprentice. He is of Avari stock, but had lived in Utnapishtim since a child. He sells a variety of standard weapons, but is forced to levy an additional tax of 25% on non-burghers. He keeps a set of ring and chain armour in stock, but heavier armours will need to be commissioned and will take a couple of weeks (50% deposit required up front). Bloom regularly

visits Taya at the House of Red Lanterns and is working up the courage to ask her to marry him.

#### **Ixisippian the Hegemonite, merchant**

Ixisippian arrived in the last few months and is a burgher. He runs his business from a warehouse near the docks. Townspeople used to have to travel downriver with goods and negotiate with merchants in Awelo, Magog or Utnapishtim, but Ixisippian has offered better prices and just pays for cargo space on the ship. He buys furs, ores, salted fish etc and ships those downriver, and imports salt, wine, and finished goods (like glassware). Ixisippian relies on the Reeve, Cyric, for security. Ixisippian has friends in the Utnapishtim bureaucracy and has standing instructions to send word about anything that may pose a significant threat or opportunity for the Hegemony. Ixisippian usually has around 500 silver shillings hidden in a coffer under the floor, and restocks this from money brought up by the ship after sales. He keeps his profits at his guild bank in Utnapishtim.

Ixisippian can be a useful broker for items brought from the High Moors. He has a warehouse where items can be stored, and he can offer some immediate cash (up to 500 silver shillings) or credit notes for items up to 3000 silvers in value. Beyond that, he would need to act as a broker for his guild because they have greater resources. Technically there is a tax on exports of 5% payable to the mayor.

#### **The Church of All Gods**

This church holds shrines to all the main deities and is run by List Ordway, an alcoholic human priest (notionally of Mirrabulous) in his fifties. He's known locally as “Father List - he's always pissed!” (although not to his face).

List is a 5th level Cleric, but has no spells. List lost his faith after his wife died of a canker. He came north to try to redeem himself through missionary work, but failed. He normally sleeps until noon and then heads to the tap room. He holds services in the evening if he feels up to it and if anyone turns up.

### **Heyst, the doctor barber**

Heyst is a blonde stubbled human in his thirties. He is the town's barber and as close as they get to a doctor. He has a pet dog that is always hanging around.

Heyst is actually a 2nd level Wizard (Int 16, NG), although his spellbook was stolen by his criminal friends in Magog. He has three spell slots and the following prepared spells: Disguise Self, Expeditious Retreat, False Life, Find Familiar, Identify. The dog (Rufus) is his familiar. He keeps his magical powers secret. He is proficient with Medicine with a +3 bonus.

### **The bakers**

There are two bakers in town. Therid, a human, is the town's original baker and has a large shop employing ten people. Therid's wares are simple e.g. rye and wheat loaves.

Swallow ("swallow that rises with the dawn") is the town's recently arrived halfling baker. Swallow has paid all the taxes and jumped through the hoops to build a property and open a business. Swallow creates amazing pastries and honey cakes, but is largely shunned by the townsfolk who have simpler tastes.

### **The House of Red Lanterns**

This large house is a brothel run by a grossly fat dwarf lady called Hippolyta. She has seven women working as prostitutes (for the princely sum of 3 copper pennies). Hippolyta's girls are generally girls who got pregnant out of wedlock. At night their kids are put to bed and the mums are working. They all hope to earn enough for their kids to head south when they grow up. During the day, Hippolyta's house offers daycare for some of the town's children, and the back garden is usually full of children playing. The workers comprise:

Taya: human (Avari), 18, Cha 15

Haedde: human (Avari), 21, Cha 13

Yisu: human (Magog), 24, Cha 11

Saran: human (Magog), 17, Cha 9

Chinua: human (Magog), 23, Cha 13

Kai: halfling, 20, Cha 14

Parmenia: dwarf, 19, Cha 16

**Jassk** is a rat-like human from Magog (Rogue 3) who regularly visits the brothel or just hangs around. Has an unhealthy obsession with Kai.

### **Jensen the pot man**

A midden pit outside town where the town's human waste is dumped. This is managed by, Jensen is a 59 year old human (Avari) waste collector. He comes around at daybreak each morning and collects the contents of the "pots" (chamberpots) and takes it on his stinking cart to the midden pit outside town. In growing season he sells it to the farmers. He has a contract with the mayor. Jensen is a cheerful fellow and always whistling or singing a sea chanty. Originally a sailor, he fled north after murdering a prostitute in Magog when her kinsmen came hunting him.

### **Durwyn the miller**

Durwyn runs the flour mill powered by the river. He buys wheat etc from the farms and sells flour to the bakers and townsfolk.

### **Altan, cheesemaker**

Altan is a sprightly old Magog in his seventies. He makes a variety of excellent cheeses, including a fresh cottage cheese, a hard yellow cheese, smoked cheese and goat's cheese. He lives here with his wife, Erdeni. Altan fled north decades ago after deserting from his tribe in the City of Magog.



# The High Moors

## Sandbox

### Structure of the sandbox

The tableland of the High Moors stretches for approximately 140 miles north-south, and approximately 900 miles east-west. The Shining Ones inhabited the central region, an area of approximately 600 miles east-west and 130 miles north-south.

The High Moors campaign area can be broadly divided into three zones. Each zone is mapped separately using 12 mile wide hexes. The zones are:

#### **Zone One: The Farms**

This was where the majority of the elves' human slaves lived as agricultural workers ruled by a mid-ranking elven overseer. It also contained the homes of Anghareth and Mirrabalan, two important elven lords. It now contains relics of the past and three races descended from the elves' scientific experiments: the dogfolk, pigfolk and serpentfolk. Like the whole region, this zone still suffers the aftereffects of the cataclysm, and there are areas of warped space and time, and slumbering elder evils.

#### **Zone Two: The Temple District**

The so-called 'Temple District' was actually the elves' Science District and it is home to a number of laboratories and dangerous relics. In particular, this region was used to mothball some of the elves' most devastating war machines, such as the 'Titans'. This area also holds the elves' 'joining' machine that allowed it to create new races, its interplanetary 'rift gate', and its psychological programming facility. It also contained the homes of Ferranil and Narinlath, powerful elven lords. It also contains the wolffolk race and a group of corrupted dwarves descended from mining slaves.

#### **Zone Three: The City Precincts**

This region contains the Shining City, now shrouded in mist and the source of disrupted space and time. It also holds the tombs in which the elves interred their dead, and some secret facilities such as the beacon. It is the home of the owlfolk, and contains the fae domain of The Baroness, a powerful hag. Also hidden in the west is a community of intelligent slime-based lifeforms who escaped from the ancients.

### Gamesmaster's overview of the sandbox

Your players should be free to cautiously explore the High Moors, and no particular progression or order to events is required. That said, it may be helpful for you as GM to have a summary of the sorts of things that may be uncovered. It is also true that certain areas are simply more deadly and are likely to be unravelled later.

As the characters first explore, they will come to understand that the elves were powerful and evil, and that the other races were in their thrall. This should be obvious from the carvings and inscriptions in Zone One (**loc 1, 18, 20**) and the prevalence of slave collars. Later they may discover the soul draining machines (**loc 11**), the fertilizer machine (**loc 5**), the machine for turning people into brass automata (**loc 19**), the magic to transfer life force (**loc 3**), or the soulbound sentinels (**loc 28**).

It should also become apparent that the cataclysm involved the Far Realm, and that the repercussions of that event destroyed the elves and can still be felt in the number of aberrant creatures that still inhabit the High Moors (**loc 2, 5, 7, 11, 18, 20, 38, 48, 59**), or a variety of strange phenomena (**loc 8, 10, 37, and the Shining City**).

As they characters explore further, they will learn (**loc 20, 54**) about the elves's victorious wars against the dragon and orc empires, and they

will have the opportunity to see first hand some of the devastating weapons that the elves had available to them, such as the zombie plague (**loc 20**), the Titans (**loc 26**), the undead army (**loc 32**), and the Sphere of Annihilation (**loc 33**).

It should also become clear that the elves not only enslaved other races, but were responsible for creating many of the races (**loc 24**) for particular purposes. More shocking should be the revelation that the characters are themselves the ancestors of these slaves, and they still carry psychological programming implanted by the elves (**loc 21, 36, 51**).

A further shock should also come if the characters are able to pull together the clues (**loc 3, 20, 29, 35**) and realise that the accepted pantheon of gods are in fact based on the elven lords and slavers who held their ancestors under their boot heel. But a spark of genuine divinity, a dream given flesh by the devotion of their enslaved ancestors, awaits discovery and service (**loc 18**).

As the characters continue to unravel the mysteries, they will come to hear about The Crucible. They should be able to piece together that the elves planned to use this machine for manipulating Far Realm energy to ascend to godhood. On a more personal note, they can learn (**loc 60**) that the elven leader Celebrand was unhinged, and planned to betray his own people (who he considered decadent and unworthy) and take the power for himself. The catalyst for this was the success of the beacon (**loc 41**) in contacting the offworld ancients (the elves' forebears), leading Celebrand to seek the power for himself.

Several of Celebrand's peers suspected him of treachery, and the three conspirators, Anghareth, Narinlath, and Lady Ferranil created an extra-dimensional space (**loc 20**) where they could meet in private. This still lies accessible in Angahreth's castle dungeons if the three copper keys (each once held by a conspirator, now at **locs 14, 35 and 46**) can be found. Ultimately,

when they heard that Celebrand had descended alone to The Crucible, they correctly suspected the worst. They pursued him to The Crucible (**loc 62**, the engine of the crashed ship of the Ancients, deep under the Shining City). There, a battle ensued. Celebrand was ultimately triumphant and killed the three conspirators, but not before they had critically damaged The Crucible.

The damage to The Crucible created an immensely powerful time dilation effect that was stronger the closer to The Crucible one is. While in the Known Lands these events are 800 years ago, the time dilation is so powerful at The Crucible that for Celebrand a mere eight minutes have elapsed. A party, armed with the information from the extra-dimensional space, could breach the barrier (**loc 61**), descend below and kill Celebrand. In so doing they themselves will be subject to the time dilation effect and when they emerge thousands of years will have passed (**epilogue**).

This can either be an opportunity to start a fresh sandbox, or the characters could use the silver cone (**loc 51**, assuming they stole it from the Mandarians) to travel back to their own time. (If they do that you might want to have the time travel effect accompanied by a sound of tearing metal and weird lights. You could then land them back in the forest during that first journey that they took up river. It provides for a pleasing completeness, although they would have to hide from their earlier selves to avoid destroying the timeline!

Finally, it is worth noting that the motif of the High Moors is "things man was not meant to know". Many of the things that the characters or other factions can find and try to exploit may lead to disaster for the Known Lands. This is exemplified through Angus' battle to contain the Titans (**loc 26**), the potential for spread of a zombie plague (**loc 20**), control of a tyrannical weapon such as the satellite weapon (**loc 51**), zombie army (**loc 32, 60**), or the Iron Dragon (**loc 54, 56**), or the accidental release of the

infesting Vermiss (loc 59) or the Bottled City (loc 51).

## Elven steel

The elves had access to advanced metallurgy, and their dwarven slaves mined many rare substances. One of their discoveries was “elven steel” (i.e. titanium). Harder than steel, elven steel is immune to corrosion in most situations although it does attract a tarnish. (Titanium oxidises in air forming a protective coating that prevents corrosion, even over centuries.) Elven steel can be worked like any metal in a forge (it has a slightly higher melting point than steel), and is not generally magnetic. It is approximately 60% the weight of an equivalent volume of steel. It is valuable in its own right - one pound of elven steel is worth 1 silver shilling. Weapons made of elven steel are slightly better quality than steel equivalents, and can add a non-magical +1 damage bonus. Metal armour made of elven steel has an additional +1 non-magical AC bonus (this bonus does not apply to shields).

Elven steel slave collars can be found throughout the High Moors. These are usually tarnished and marked with runes. The runes are elven markers and indicate which elven family owned which slaves. Each slave collar is closed by means of an Arcane Lock spell, which means that picking the lock or breaking one open has a DC of 35. Each normal slave collar is made of two pounds of elven steel unless otherwise noted.

## Encounter difficulty

The High Moors is intended to be an open sandbox, and thus it is not a story game comprising a series of level appropriate encounters. Characters will need to be cautious and not tackle threats that they cannot handle, and they should be ready to run away. On the other hand, as the GM you need to telegraph that certain creatures seem to be especially fierce, and to give the characters the choice

about whether or not to engage rather than dropping them into situations that are fatal.

To help you to do this each combat encounter lists a difficulty level. This is expressed in terms of “level”. This represents the average level of a party of five characters who would find the encounter challenging, but they could overcome it with some effort (i.e. a standard encounter). This is based on the revised encounter math in XGtE. It can only ever be a rough indicator, but is hopefully of some assistance.

## Random encounters in the High Moors

### Chance of an encounter

There is a 2 in 6 chance of an encounter per hex passed through. There is also a 1 in 6 chance of an encounter for each 6 hours spent at a location.

Not all encounters with living creatures will automatically lead to combat. Make opposed Wis (Perception) checks for both sides to see who spots who first.

### Master encounter table (1d100)

01-12 Weather event

13- 24 People

25 - 37 Monsters

38 - 50 Beasts

51 - 65 Mishap

66 - 80 Geographic feature / challenge

81 - 90 The Weird

91 - 100 Roll twice and combine

### Weather event table (1d100)

01 - 15 Heavy fog: if the characters press on, make a DC 15 Survival check or treat as lost on the mishap table.

16 - 30 Heavy storm: driving rain and gale-force winds batter the party if they don't seek shelter for 1d10 hours. If the party presses on, they must (for each 3 hours the storm lasts) each

make a DC 15 Con check or suffer 1 level of exhaustion.

31 - 45 Heavy rain or snow: lasts 1d8 hours. Muddy or slippery conditions reduce movement speed by 50%.

46 - 55 Electrical storm: as 'heavy storm', but also a 1/20 chance of each character being hit by lightning for 8d6 damage.

56 - 60 Dust storm / sand storm: visibility 10-60 feet, movement reduced to 25%; lasts 1d4 hours.

61 - 80 Drizzle: lasts 2d10 hours. After each day's travel make a DC 10 Constitution save or suffer one level of exhaustion.

81 - 100 High winds: movement reduced to 50% for 1d6 hours

#### **People table for Zone One (1d100)**

01 - 20 Dogfolk patrol: 6+1d6 dogfolk (see location 16)

21 - 40 Pigfolk war party: 12+2d6 pigfolk looking for trouble (see location 14)

41 - 55 Serpentfolk foragers: 6+1d6 serpentfolk out foraging or patrolling (see location 6)

56 - 70 Cartimandus's group: Cartimandus, Fergus, Fion and 10 Avari mercs.

71 - 85 Kurigalzu's group: 8 Utnapishtim warriors (plus 50% chance of an elephant and 50% chance of Kurigalzu (likely riding an elephant))

86 - 100 Ibycus's group: (50%) 6 dwarven warriors or (50%) Ibycus and 10 dwarven warriors (2 more back at camp)

#### **People table for Zone Two (1d100)**

01 -20 Wolffolk pack (one of three packs comprising a leader and 2d6+2 wolffolk)

21 - 40 Verak's warlocks: 4 Warlocks and 10 Magog fighters mounted on horses (50% chance Verak replaces one of the Warlocks).

41 - 65 Group of Angus' bearfolk looking for captives. Will pretend to be friendly. Dougal and 15 bearfolk warriors.

66 - 85 Iron Sentinels (1d10 rebels: see location 28)

86 - 100 Giantkin patrol: see below for statistics.

#### **People table for Zone Three (1d100)**

01 - 30 The Company of the Blue Feather (all 8 halflings)

31 - 60 Vadim and Borislav the giants and their grizzly bear

61-90 The Men of the Stag (50% full group, 50% 1 lieutenant and 6 men)

91-100 Roll twice and combine

#### **Monsters table for Zone One (1d100)**

01 - 10 Roll on Monster Table for Zone Two

11 - 25 Villakorsh is encountered while he is creeping about (see location 20).

26 - 70 Brass automata: 1d6 brass automata (50% chance hostile, 50% chance indifferent): see below for statistics.

71 - 85 1d6 Vespidae flying around looking for prey (see location 11)

86 - 100 Roll on Monster Table for Zone Three

#### **Monsters table for Zone Two (1d100)**

01 - 10 Roll on Monster Table for Zone One

11 - 35 Animal (roll on wild animals entry above) infected with the techno magic virus

36 - 55 Dwarven reavers looking for victims: 20+2d10 (see location 30).

56 - 89 Iron Sentinels (1d6 hostile: see location 28)

90 -100 Roll on Monster Table for Zone Three

### **Monsters table for Zone Three (1d100)**

**Note: If the beacon (see location 41) has been overloaded, treat all rolls between 11 and 89 as a Far Realm Incursor (see location 41 for statistics).**

01 - 10 Roll on Monster Table for Zone One

11 - 35 Reists: The characters encounter a troupe of 5 Reists. These small monkeys are no bigger than 12 inches long, but have skinless faces and powerful telepathic abilities. They will ambush the party with their psychic hallucinations and then try to feed. The Reists are actually native to a different universe, but the first ones were brought here by the elves' experiments at location 44. See below for statistics.

36 - 55 Blind mutated polar bear. It only hunts at night by scent and is very stealthy. If encountered during the day, roll again. It has a mutated bony face that lacks eyes. It has covered itself in dark dirt and filth as camouflage, and attacks at night using its blindsight. It will attempt to kill and carry off either the sentry or a horse. See below for statistics.

56 - 89 Characters see a dead body lying on the ground ahead. It is a dead dogman with their head roughly severed (possibly by a sword) and lying several inches away. The dogman looks several days dead, and wears a shiny silver torc on his arm. This is in fact all an illusion created by a Far Realm ambush predator, the Myopsida. The Myopsida looks like a giant translucent squid, but it buries its body in the ground (mouth upright), and conceals its tentacles in the topsoil. When a creature is fooled by its illusion and comes within five feet, the illusion vanishes and

the tentacles erupt all around the victim. See below for statistics.

90 - 100 Roll on Monster Table for Zone Two

### **Beasts table (1d100)**

01 -10 Wild cats: these are feral domestic cats descended from the pets of the Shining Ones. They don't trust or like humanoids.

11 - 25 1d10 Wild sheep

26 - 40 1d10 wild cattle or caribou

41 - 50 black bear (MM, p.318)

51 - 60 wild boar (MM, p.319)

61 - 70 1d6 wolves (MM, p.341)

71 - 80 mountain lion (MM, p.331)

81 - 90 1d10 wild horses (MM, p.336)

91 - 100 1-2 Behemoths (triceratops) are encountered with blue bodies and orange heads. They are hostile and carnivorous. They escaped from location 44. See below for their statistics.

### **Mishap table (1d100)**

01 - 10 Food spoiled (50% of the party's food is destroyed e.g. by falling into water, falling off a pack animal, disease, insects, or premature rot).

11 - 35 Party lost: roll 1d12 for direction to determine the party's actual location. A character proficient in Nature may be able to determine their actual location.

36 - 46 One character sprains their ankle (e.g. by a fall or stepping in a rabbit burrow). Party movement speed is reduced by 50%. Sprain can be cured with 6 HP of magical curing.

47 - 57 Fall: one character falls (e.g. into a sinkhole, well, old mine, from a tree, or down a

slope) and takes 3d6 damage (half with successful DC 15 Dexterity save).

58 - 68 Plunge: one character falls into cold water (pool, river, swampy ground). Requires 1 hour and a fire to warm up. If they press on regardless, the victim must make a DC 10 Con check every hour or gain a level of exhaustion (until dry).

69 - 74 One character suffers frostbite (or sunburn if appropriate): treat as one level of exhaustion, but it can be cured by 8 HP of curing.

75 - 80 One character breaks their ankle in hole or rabbit burrow: party movement speed reduced by 50% (and character needs a crutch). Can be cured with 20 HP of magical curing.

81-85 Animal (e.g. a bird, bear, monkey, squirrel) steals an item from the party and flees. Animal is otherwise non-hostile.

86 - 90 Party disturb a hornets' nest and are attacked by a swarm (MM p.338)

91 - 100 Mudslide / landslip: while party are travelling down a slope, they trigger a landslip. Dexterity save DC 15 or suffer 3d6 damage and restrained until 20 Str total is used to free them.

#### **Geographic feature / challenge table (1d100)**

01 - 30 Characters encounter a high ridge and need to ascend (50%) or descend (50%). This requires each character to climb with the appropriate equipment (or a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check). Failure leads to a fall inflicting 6d6 damage. The ridge extends 1d6 miles in either direction if the characters would rather circle around. Add the ridge to the map as it is a permanent feature.

31 - 50 Encounter an area of swampy, boggy or peaty ground: movement speed reduced to 50% for 1d10 miles. Add this feature to the map as a permanent feature.

51 - 55 Area infested with swarms of biting midges, mosquitoes or flies.

56 - 60 Party encounters a region of harmful plants / bushes (Nature DC 15 to identify). If moved through, lightly armoured characters must make a DC 10 Constitution save or suffer a bad rash reducing Dex by 3 for 1d20 hours.

61 - 65 Flash flood: a previously minor river has flooded and is now one hundred feet across. It is also moving fast (6mph). It subsides after 1d6 hours.

66 - 75 Path is blocked by a small lake or pool 1d6 miles in diameter. Add this to the map as a permanent feature.

76 - 78 Wildfire: the underbrush and trees are burning up ahead. The fire covers 1d4 miles in diameter, and can be detoured around. If the party press through, then they must make a DC 15 Constitution save or suffer 2d6 damage from fire and smoke inhalation.

79 - 100 Ground split by a crevasse 10-80 feet across. Descends 40+10-40 feet. Crevasse extends 1d3 miles in each direction.

#### **The Weird table (1d100)**

01 - 26 The wall between dimensions ebbs and flows since the cataclysm. The area around the characters suddenly becomes a thin spot between dimensions of 1d6x100 feet diameter: anyone crossing is subject to attack by a ripper shoal (see location 20, room 9)

27 - 40 Strange lights in the sky for 1d10 minutes.

41 - 60 Three dead adventurers with brains cut out (victims of the Bearfolk. See location 26, area 14, for ideas of who these might be).

61 - 75 Dead bodies ((1d4) 1: 1d10 dwarves, 2: 1d4 iron sentinels, 3: 1d10 wolffolk, 4: 1d4 bearfolk)

76 - 100 Massive Far Realm beast appears towering overhead. It's body is Gargantuan, and it walks on stilt-like legs. It will ignore the characters unless attacked. If it attacks it attacks at +9 and doing 33 (6d10) damage with its stilt-like legs. It fades away after 1d4 rounds.

## Monsters

### Brass automata

Medium construct, unaligned

Armor Class 18

Hit Points 30

Speed 30 ft.

Str 15 (+2), Dex 13 (+1), Con 14 (+2), Int 10 (+0), Wis 8 (-1), Cha 5 (-3)

**Damage Immunities:** fire, poison

**Condition immunities:** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralysed, petrified, poisoned.

**Senses:** darkvision 120 feet

**Save bonus:** +2

**Skills:** None

**Challenge Rating:** 1

**Difficulty:** 4th level for a group of 5 automata

**Languages:** understands the leldran language but cannot normally speak

### Actions

Multiattack: automaton makes either two melee or two ranged attacks.

Brass fists: +4 to hit, reach 5 feet, one target.

Hit: 6 (1d6+2)

Melee weapon: +4 to hit. Hit: weapon damage +2

Ranged weapon: +3 to hit. Hit: weapon damage +1.

### Abilities

**Immutable Form:** The automata is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

**Magic Resistance:** The automata has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

### Giantkin patrol

This patrol consists of one twenty five foot tall giant and 4 (1d6) ogres. They are looking for fiends that might have escaped from the Upper Rift. The giant is armed with a huge steel maul. He is also (passive perception DC 13) wearing a silver ring set with a black jewel with a swirling smoky interior.

If the party has the other black jewel ring (location 1A), the giant will stop and parlay. The ring he wears was handed down from his mother, and from her mothers before her. He was told it was one of a pair. He will ask for the ring, and will attack if it is not surrendered. He will be interested in the location of the bones and will go and recover them. He may make a deal for the information, or may consider the characters friends if they help for no reward.

### Morravin

Huge giant, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 200

Speed 40 ft

Str 27 (+8), Dex 10 (+0), Con 22 (+6), Int 12 (+1), Wis 12 (+1), Cha 12 (+1)

**Senses:** Darkvision 120 ft

**Save bonus:** +4

**Challenge:** 9

**Difficulty:** 6th or 7th level, depending on how many ogres are present

### Actions

Maul attack: +12 to hit, reach 10 ft, one target.

Hit: 21 (3d8+8)

Rock attack: +12 to hit, range 60/240 ft, one target. Hit: 30 (4d10+8)

### Ogres (1d6)

Large giant, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 59

Speed 40 ft

Str 19 (+4), Dex 8 (-1), Con 16 (+3), Int 5 (-3),  
Wis 7 (-2), Cha 7 (-2)

**Senses:** Darkvision 60 ft

**Save bonus:** +2

**Challenge:** 2

#### Actions

Greatclub attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target.

Hit: 13 (2d8+4)

Spear attack: +6 to hit, range 30/120 ft, one  
target. Hit: 11 (2d6+4)

### Behemoths (1-2)

Huge beast, unaligned

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 95

Speed 50 ft

Str 22 (+6), Dex 9 (-1), Con 17 (+3), Int 2 (-4),  
Wis 11 (+0), Cha 5 (-3)

**Save bonus:** +3

**Challenge:** 5

**Difficulty:** 4th level or one, 7th level for two

#### Actions

Gore attack: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. Hit:  
24 (4d8+6)

Stomp: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft, one prone target.

Hit: 22 (3d10+6)

#### Abilities

**Trampling charge:** if the behemoth moves at  
least 20 ft and hits with a gore attack on the  
same turn, the victim makes a DC 13 Str check  
or be knocked prone. If knocked prone, the  
behemoth can make a stomp attack as a bonus  
action.

### Reists (5)

Tiny monstrosity, neutral evil

Armor Class 15

Hit Points 10

Speed 40 ft

Str 5 (-3), Dex 16 (+3), Con 10 (+0), Int 16 (+3),  
Wis 12 (+1), Cha 6 (-2)

**Senses:** Darkvision 120 ft, Sense minds 120 ft

**Skills:** Stealth +6

**Save bonus:** +1

**Challenge:** 1

**Difficulty:** 4th level

#### Actions

Bite: +3 to hit, reach 0 ft, one target. Hit: 3 (1d4)

**Drain Intelligence:** one target, range touch. The  
Reist drains 1 Intelligence from the victim.  
Drained Intelligence returns at a rate of 1 per  
long rest.

#### Abilities

**Psychic hallucinations:** as an action, cause  
one target within sixty feet to make a DC 14  
Wisdom save or experience a hallucinatory  
reality while they stand immobile and helpless.  
This can appear as anything, but will usually be  
horrible and drawn from the victim's memories.  
The victim is allowed a further save at the end of  
each of its turns.

### Blind mutated polar bear

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 65

Speed 40 ft, swim 30 ft

Str 20 (+5), Dex 16 (+3), Con 16 (+3), Int 8 (-1),  
Wis 13 (+1), Cha 6 (-2)

**Senses:** Blindsight 60ft

**Skills:** Stealth +6

**Save bonus:** +1

**Challenge:** 3



**Difficulty:** 2nd level

### **Actions**

**Multiattack:** bear makes two claw attacks and one bite attack

**Claw:** +7 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. Hit: 12 (2d6+5)

**Bite:** +7 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. Hit: 9 (1d8+5)

### **Abilities**

**Keen smell:** advantage on any Wisdom (Perception) checks that involve scent.

**Ambush:** when lying in wait, or moving stealthily at night, it has advantage on Stealth checks.

**Sneak attack:** when attacking with advantage, its first attack does an extra 3d6 damage.

### **Myopsida**

Huge aberration, unaligned

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 60

Speed 30 ft burrow

Str 14 (+2), Dex 17 (+3), Con 13 (+1), Int 16 (+3), Wis 14 (+2), Cha 10 (+0)

**Senses:** blindsight 60 feet, sense minds 60 feet

**Skills:** Stealth +8, Athletics +7, Deception +8

**Save bonus:** +5

**Challenge:** 5

**Difficulty:** 4th level

### **Actions**

**Strangle / squeeze:** +7 to hit, damage 11 (2d8+2) and will grapple as a bonus action (+9 opposed by victim's Acrobatics or Athletics).

### **Abilities**

**Swallow whole:** if any victim is grappled, on its following turn it can swallow that victim as an action (if it is medium or smaller). A swallowed victim is incapacitated, and takes 16 (3d10) acid damage per round.

**Manifest illusion:** the Myopsida creates a convincing illusion to lure prey to come to it. If

anyone is trying to notice a flaw in it, they can make a DC 18 Perception check, but it is otherwise convincing. The illusion is not physical and objects go through it.

## The High Moors

### Zone One: The Farms

#### Factions of Zone One

There are three factions currently active in Zone One.

#### **Kurigalzu, Emissary of Utnapishtim**

Ten years ago the first expedition to the High Moors had one survivor. That survivor recovered a golden idol which made its way back to the Hegemony of Utnapishtim. The idol changed hands several times before ending up in the custody of Kurigalzu, a senior official (Greater Propriety, rank 5) responsible for antiquities.

Kurigalzu (lawful neutral) has owned the idol for three years, and over that time he has become increasingly obsessed with it. He started to develop a wish to come to the High Moors, feeling a strange pull. More recently he has started to dream of a strange temple in a red desert and knows that he must come to the High Moors to find it. Using his contacts in the bureaucracy of the city state he has arranged an officially sanctioned and funded expedition, ostensibly to find relics with military or monetary value. Kurigalzu, recognisable in his intricately embroidered red robes and red turban, is accompanied by a small number of servants, and has a detachment of 20 Utnapishtim warriors and 4 elephants. If the characters are friendly he may invite them into his tent for tea to find out what they have seen in the ruins. He may reveal that he is looking for something of red crystal and will pay for information.

Kurigalzu's mission is also in part a cover for the Annunaki. **The Anunnaki** are a secret order of

# Zone One: The Farms



14. Village

13. Old Water Mill

15. Lake and Island

12. Ruined Villa

11. Ruined Town

16. Village

17. Repaired Tower

19. Hall of the Machines

10. Greenhouses

9. Plantation

8. Ruined Town

7. Slaughterhouses

3. Block of Stone

4. Way Station

5. Flooded Factory

6. Village

22. Mist Shrouded Bog

2. Ruined Fort

1. Old Guard Tower

Winding Stair

1 hex = 12 miles

Zone Three: City Precincts

Zone Two: Temple District

20. Ruined Fortress

21. Obelisk with markings

Hegemonites dedicated to protecting the god-king Hammurabi. They view Hammurabi as the divine chosen of the sun god Celebrand. One of Kurigalzu's servants (Iltani, 1st level Paladin of the God King) is in fact an agent of the Annunaki, and is passing messages to them. The Annunaki are interested in anything that poses a threat to the god king. A small team of Annunaki (Uppulu, 3rd level Paladin, and 6 1st level paladins) hide in the forest south of the High Moors plateau.

Likely development:

Weeks 1-2: search of Zone One locations looking for signs of the moongate. Kurigalzu and his men explore mostly the northerly locations, such as the plantations, slaughterhouses, slave residences and the machine. They have a skirmish with some pigfolk, and make friendly contact with the dogfolk.

Week 3: they search the ruined villa (location 12) for the second time and discover the basement and gate. Three men are killed by the glyph of warding. Kurigalzu's men now start searching for the red gem key. They revisit previously searched locations to search more thoroughly. They find all of the items that can be found at the slave residences and plantations (unless already found).

Week 4: Kurigalzu opens the moongate and finds Othiet. He agrees to find the Clave, and comes back through the moongate (closing it) and heads west to Zone Three.

Weeks 5: Kurigalzu reaches the Shining City, and begins searching for the Clave. After several short forays, he has lost most of his soldier escort. Kurigalzu and his 2 remaining soldiers explore the government building (location 59). He is unable to breach the vault defences, and he and his men are infected by the Vermiis. They return to camp and infect their servants, including Iltani.

Week 6: Now aware of the interest of the Annunaki, Kurigalzu and co leave the High Moors and locate the Annunaki camp. They attack the Annunaki and infect all of them, except one paladin who flees.

Week 7+: Kurigalzu and the infected Annunaki travel back to Utnapishtim.

Their plan is to infect more senior officials over the next few weeks until they are able to access Hammurabi the God-King. Hammurabi is also then infected. The Vermiis continue to breed and take over officials, courtiers and guards in the ziggurat. Eventually they begin to assimilate the population of the city itself.

The surviving paladin (Ishtu) will initially look for aid in the High Moors, potentially approaching the characters. It may be that the characters can intercept Kurigalzu and the paladins at Hob's Lake while they are waiting for the ship (the Eanna) to arrive. Failing that, Ishtu will travel back to Utnapishtim and attempt to warn the city.

### **Ibycus, dwarven priest of Mirrabulous**

Ibycus is a dwarven priest (7th level cleric, LN) of Mirrabulous, the god of art and craft. He is here as an agent of the Aegis Society. **The Aegis Society** is a secret society within Marzani society made up of pragmatists. The pragmatists want to find any weapons in the High Moor that may help them to protect Midea. The pragmatists are generally opposed by the idealists in Marzani who are currently in the ascendant and who are opposed to greater militarism.

Ibycus has a cover story which is that the church of Mirrabulous in Midea has purchased fragments of glassware recovered from the High Moors. These fragments display techniques in glassware (mosaic glass, gold glass) that no one understands, and the church wants to recover the knowledge of these techniques for their god. They are searching for one of the elven

glassware workshops, although they have no idea where they may find one. Ibycus is a dark-skinned red robed bearded dwarf with golden mace. He is accompanied by 12 other dwarves in red breastplates and carrying golden-tipped pikes.

Likely development:

Week 1: Ibycus and his group arrive in Zone One and search various locations.

Week 2: Ibycus discovers the Glass House of Mirrabalan (location 3A). Ibycus has his face ripped open by Mirrabalan, and his terrified prayers to Mirrabulous are recognised by the creature as referring to him. The entity 'alters' the dwarf and Ibycus goes mad. Realising his whole life has been a lie, Ibycus becomes a devoted worshipper of Mirrabalan.

Week 3: Ibycus's men guard the earthmote from intruders while Ibycus recovers. Ibycus tells them that he has found the weapon that the Aegis Society needs to protect Midea.

Week 4: Ibycus, who has adopted a mask, leaves the High Moors and heads back to Midea. He and his group travel by foot the 800 miles across the Thornlands (33 days required).

One of his men, terrified by what he has witnessed on the earthmote, runs away. Any subsequently rolled random encounter with Ibycus or his men will be with this dwarf.

Week 8: Back in Midea, Ibycus begins to establish a new secret church to Mirrabalan, dedicated to the destruction of beauty. He has been given access to life transfer magic by Mirrabalan. He uses this to gain influence and followers in Midea. This does not end well.

### **The Northern River Trading Company**

Cartimandus is a goblin trader (LE). He is a member of the **Cult of the Shivering God**, and a demon-worshipper. Cartimandus became sick

of the "combine" system of Muki society, and wanted to achieve personal power and success without having to surrender everything to the collective. He left and established his own trading company. Things didn't go well, and over time he had to make darker choices to avoid failure. Eventually he was recruited by the Cult who offered him support and a shortcut to success. Cartimandus never meant to join a demon-worshipping cult, but is willing to do anything to prove that he can succeed without the combine.

He has been sent here by his cult leaders to unlock the secrets of the brass automatons that roam the High Moors. Indifferent to the human cost, the Cult sees the technology as a means to build an army and to gain influence. He is protected by two other cult members: Fergus, a grizzled bearfolk warrior (3rd level Fighter, CN), and Fion, a female goblin magic user (2nd level Wizard, LE). As Fergus looks down on women, there is no love lost between them. Cartimandus also has a company of 10 Avari mercenaries in his pay.

In fact the demon lord that the Cult of the Shivering God worship does not exist. Real fiends have no interest in being worshipped and have no supernatural powers to grant (see 'Planes in the High Moors' above). But the Cult's self-belief is sufficient to grant them access to Clerical magics. They favour the Knowledge and Trickery Domains.

Likely development:

Week 2: Cartimandus arrives and his group search for examples of brass automata, which are captured and disassembled.

Week 3: the group searches for and manages to locate the original location of the machine (location 19). They move their camp to this location from location 4. They are unsuccessful at tracking the machine.

Week 4: Cartimandus' group head to the serpentfolk village to try to buy access to the machine's location. They are rebuffed. Cartimandus' group continue talking to the serpentfolk and trying to get them to agree. They are camped outside the village.

Week 5: Cartimandus's group attacks the serpentfolk. They destroy a levee causing a flood in the village at night, and attack killing a number of serpentfolk, and taking a number of serpentfolk children as hostages.

The serpentfolk lie, telling Cartimandus that the machine has been hidden in the Mist Shrouded Bog (location 22). The serpentfolk shaman is forced to lead them into the bog. Neither the shaman nor Cartimandus' group ever return.

Week 8: The Cult sends a further party to unlock the secrets of the High Moors. They will begin by attacking any groups that opposed Cartimandus's group, such as the characters or the serpentfolk. They will comprise a Mage (MM, p.347) and 10 Cult Fanatics (MM, p.345). The serpentfolk may seek the characters' aid if they are on good terms.

## Locations in Zone One (locations 1 - 23)

### **The Winding Stair**

At the source of the Attavar River rises the tableland called the High Moor. At the foot of the plateau are coarse grasslands. Next to the roaring waterfall that plummets from above, a stone stair is cut out of the rock of the cliff. It rises up 600 feet to the top of the plateau in a series of switchbacks.

The stair is 10 feet wide, and the stone is slick from spray and somewhat slippery. A crude stone handrail has been cut into the cliff that runs up alongside. Anyone engaged in combat on the stair may slip or fall.

### **1. Guard tower**

At the top of The Stair is an area of grassland next to the river. Fifty feet from the edge of the plateau stands a ruined watchtower. Its roof, windows and door are gone, as are the internal floors, but the tower's walls of well crafted stone blocks are mostly intact. The open doorway leads into a circular space of twenty feet in diameter and the tower rises fifty feet. It looks as if it had four stories originally. It provides a good place to camp and shelter from the elements, and there are signs that it has been used as a campsite in the past. At night, the night sky and stars visible through the top of the tower do not match those outside.

If anyone was minded to climb up the interior walls they will find that twenty feet up the stone walls are marked with carvings. The carvings show bearfolk armed with spears. The bearfolk appear to be the proud protectors of tall slim humanoids in robes or dresses. There are also carvings showing the bearfolk engaged in military activities (duelling, marching). One carving shows bearfolk killing a number of other unarmed humanoids (humans, dwarves, halflings) while a slim humanoid looks on.

A thorough search of the tower floor taking at least an hour (or DC 20 Perception check) may discover a loose stone floor slab. If levered up, the thin stone slab is found to conceal a tarnished silver (elven steel) lever. With a total Strength of 30 it is possible to operate the lever which causes an audible grinding noise from the direction of the waterfall.

### **1A. Cave and tunnel behind waterfall**

The lever hidden in the watchtower causes a stone slab to slide out of the cliff face and interrupt the flow of the waterfall at its edge. The slab forms a sheltering roof that reveals a previously concealed ten feet wide cave mouth. A wet, cliff path leads thirty feet from the stair to the cave.

The cave leads to a ten foot wide natural passageway that travels about fifty feet into the

cliff before widening into a dark cavern. The cavern is seventy feet east-west and fifty feet north-south.

The cavern is occupied by the bones of a giant. The bones appear coated with a mineral deposit and look fossilised (although they just have a mineral coating). The giant appears to have been twenty feet tall, so would have had to have crawled down the tunnel. Around its neck is a huge ring of elven steel marked with runes (weighs 25lbs). On one finger bone it has a **large tarnished silver ring set with a black jewel with a swirling smoky interior** (apparent value 100 silver shillings; requires attunement. One of a pair. Both wearers can sense the health of the other wearer at any distance. Other ring is currently attuned to a living giant). The jewel is strangely warm to the touch. Lying close to the giant is a huge mineral encrusted wooden club.

If the characters take the ring, ask them if they are wearing it openly (e.g. on a chain). It may become significant if they run into the giantkin patrol (see random encounters, above). Carved into the rock wall is a love poem written in Grigorian (giant tongue).

## 2. Ruined Fort (bearfolk barracks)

This was clearly a compound of some kind a long time ago, but there is little to see now. The remains of a wooden palisade or log wall can be seen here or there. There are hints of various outbuildings. At the centre is a large mound forty feet across and twenty feet high of large, moss-covered logs. It appears that the logs may have formed a structure at some point (a fort).

A thorough search of the grounds and a bit of digging about may uncover something: for every two hours spent searching (remember to roll for random encounters) the characters discover something (1d8):

1-2: 2d6 elven steel slave collars (the wearers long having decomposed; 2lbs per ring)

3-4: a gold ring with a semi-precious stone carved like a bear's face (worth 30 silver shillings)

5-6: a drinking horn of bone with a gold rim (worth 5 silver shillings). It has carvings of bearfolk cavorting in scenes of sexual excess along the sides. It has survived by being buried under peaty turf.

7-8: a **bright yellow pennant flag** with a strange symbol on it. It appears to be made from a shiny unknown material. It could be attached to a pole to make a standard. Whoever carries the flag experiences strange and vivid dreams of victorious battle (gain 1 inspiration the first time carried).

### The mound

The central mound of mossy logs could be investigated, but it would take some effort. The logs are too damp and rotten inside to burn very much. Logs could be hacked at with axes and pieces lifted free. By this method explorers could start to excavate the mound, although it would take several hours. If the characters do this, then after 1d6 hours they discover:

Preserved in a pocket of compressed logs they discover the smashed, discolored bones of dozens of bearfolk and rusted spearheads (along with 42 intact slave collars).

After a further 1d6 hours they discover the bones of a giant. The giant appears to have stood about 25 feet tall. The giant's skull appears deformed and twisted and the bones of the spine flare out bizarrely. Many of the bones are broken. It had a huge slave collar (25lbs elven steel) around its neck.

Further exploration of the mound of logs uncovers a spear with a shiny untarnished spearpoint in a leaf shape. This is the **Unerring Spear** and is magical. Any attack made with the spear automatically hits unless the attack has disadvantage. If the attack has disadvantage, then the wielder rolls to hit in the normal way (without disadvantage). The spear counts as a magical weapon, although it has no numerical

bonuses. The player attacking without disadvantage can still roll to hit to see if a critical is scored, although a natural 1 does not count as a miss in this situation. The spear requires attunement.

A few minutes after excavating the giant, the dread outer dimensional spirit that possessed it and led it to attack the Bearfolk barracks awakes. The swirling grey fog-like entity will emerge with burning eyes like stars. It will animate the broken bones of the giant and the bearfolk into a great twisting serpent. It will attack physically until disrupted, and then attempt to possess one of the party members.

### **Animated Bone Serpent**

Huge undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 38 (4d10+16)

Speed 30 ft.

Str 18 (+4), Dex 16 (+3), Con 18 (+4), Int 15 (+2), Wis 12 (+1), Cha 9 (-1)

**Damage Immunities:** poison

**Condition immunities:** charmed, exhaustion, poisoned,

**Senses:** blindsight 30 feet, sense life 100 feet

**Save bonus:** +1

**Skills:** None

**Challenge:** 2

**Difficulty:** 1st level

### **Actions**

Rending bite: +6 to hit, reach 10 feet, one target.

Hit: 8 (1d6+4)

**Break bones** (recharge 3-6): as an attack, cause a victim to make a DC 13 Constitution save or suffer 1d4 broken limbs. Each broken limb causes 4 (1d6) damage. If both legs are broken the creature is prone until healed. If both arms are broken, it cannot make attacks, crawl or cast spells with a somatic component.

### **Abilities**

**Storm of bones** (recharge 5-6). As a bonus action a swirl of jagged animated bones flails a target. Make a DC 14 Dexterity save or suffer an additional 5 (1d8) damage and be knocked back 10 ft.

**Relocate:** as a Move, the bone serpent scatters apart and relocates to a new location up to 30 ft away. This does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

Once its vessel is destroyed the incorporeal rage entity will attack. Its selected victim must make a DC13 Charisma save or be possessed. The possessed character will attack with melee weapons. They can make a fresh save every time they take damage. If they fail three saves in a row then the possession is indefinite, although it can be removed with a Remove Curse or other appropriate spells.

If the entity is removed from its possessed victim (or they are killed or rendered unconscious), it will float above the characters as a visible presence. In its immaterial form it is immune to normal weapons, although it can be driven off (but not killed) by 20 points of damage from spells or magical weapons. If not driven off, it will stalk the characters from this point forward, and feed off the deaths of anything they kill (and it will be obvious about it).

### **3. The Block of Stone**

Characters here see a large stone block with a huge upward facing hook of elven steel covered in tarnish and lichen similar to locations 8 and 11. The hook weighs five hundred pounds. Characters will detect a strange creaking noise near this location.

In fact this mooring point has attached an invisible chain of elven steel that rises one hundred and fifty feet into the sky. It is attached by way of an articulated joint on the last link (like a carabiner), but that has fused shut over the centuries.

Breaking the chain is challenging. It requires 50 HP of damage against AC 19 (and, if it cannot be seen, at disadvantage). The chain is also immune to the first 10 damage from any physical attack. Each 10 feet of the chain weighs 250 lbs.

To free-climb the invisible and relatively smooth chain to a distance 150 feet up is difficult (DC 15). Failure is at the GM's discretion. You might decide they make it but drop something valuable, or get their ankle caught in the chain, or plunge to an untimely demise.

The chain links to a mooring point above on an invisible floating earthmote. Once on the earthmote, it becomes visible, although to those on the ground the climber simply vanishes. The earthmote is approximately three hundred feet across and around sixty feet deep with a domed base. Its top surface is covered in high grasses and weeds. At the centre is a sixty foot diameter building. It appears to be made of metal and glass, although the glass is all clouded with dirt, lichen and god knows what else.

### **3A. The Glass House of Mirrabalan**

There are two sets of double doors on each side of the building that provide entry to the structure. Both sets are locked and must either be forced or picked. The northern doors led directly into a lobby, and the southern doors into an atrium. The glass of the structure is actually Glassteel (glass with the physical qualities of steel: see below).

The air in the building smells humid and like rotten plant material, but it is fresh (there are narrow grills in the roof allowing ventilation).

**The lobby:** 4 large potted plants that have grown utterly wild up and around the contours of the room (the pots are fed water from small pipes leading to the roof). The dirty floor conceals beautiful red marble tiles inscribed with a complex mathematical puzzle represented by sets of dots.

**The atrium:** occupying two thirds of the house, the atrium contains a wild riot of plants, trees and vines that have grown all around the counters of the room and across the floor (again, fed water by small pipes to the roof). One window appears to be of coloured glass, but it is hard to make it out.

Buried under roots are the worm-eaten shreds of what was luxurious hand-crafted furniture. A tarnished easel of elven steel is woven into a nest of vines and hangs in mid air (lifted as the vines have grown). A dirty, plant enshrouded statue is actually an exceptional marble sculpture of a beautiful elven woman (weighs 900lbs, worth up to 1000 silver shillings to a collector). In four different places lie the fragile bones of long dead cats. Doors lead on to the kitchen and to the bedroom.

**The kitchen:** a dark and tarnished chamber with filthy windows. Clumps of weeds grow in random spots, but the room is mostly clear. Everything is covered in a dark patina of filth. There are pots and pans but they have all corroded into a fused lump. In a drawer there is some very beautiful solid silver cutlery with a leaf motif (60-piece set worth 600 silver shillings to a collector. Needs a good clean first). An opening in the ground here reveals a spiral stair cut into the stone and descending into the earthmote. It spirals down twenty feet to the shrine.

**The bedchamber:** This was clearly a beautiful bed chamber, and it still holds a fragile, rotted circular bedframe covered in dried, rigid moldy silk blankets. A full length mirror is tipped over and shattered.

Lying across the bed is a small corpse, now nothing more than bones and rags. Investigation reveals the bones to belong to a dead halfling, rather than an elf, and probably a male. It still wears a circular collar of elven steel. It is covered in dried filth and fused shut, but underneath that it is beautifully decorated with



inlaid red and blue enamel (worth 100 silver shillings).

There are several collapsed wooden wardrobes. Mixed amongst them are the remnants of a number of beautiful garments, all now ruined. Covered in the detritus is a blue robe of an unknown material. It is magitek **memetic armour** and on command as a bonus action, or when the wearer is struck, it transforms into armour that is the equivalent of chainmail (AC16). The wearer will be considered to be proficient in this armour and this item requires attunement.

A chest (unlocked but fused shut) contains a tarnished silver mirror (50 shillings), a hard, dried leather bag of 9 small jewels (each worth 100 silver shillings), a bottle of a cloudy fluid (perfume, now useless), and a wand of elven steel with a rainbow sheen (a Wand of Disintegration, but only usable by an elf).

**The shrine:** The spiral stair descends twenty feet down to an unlit chamber. There is a weird sickly smell from below, and characters feel a chilling sense of dread and foreboding (Mirrabalan is very dangerous for a low level party, so telegraph that).

The chamber is a thirty foot diameter circular room with a floor of white marble tiles. In an alcove is what appears to be a shrine of sorts. There are six statuettes of marble depicting slim elven figures (75 shillings each), the remains of candles, and small porcelain bowls (five at 25 shillings each) stained with offerings and incense.

Hiding in the chamber behind the spiral stair is the remains of the great elven artist Mirrabalan. Mirrabalan was attacked by a Far Realm entity that merged with him. He now appears to be a mutated elf dressed in rags with a bloated lopsided head, unnaturally long arms, claws and a long tongue. Mirrabalan is the root origin of the deity Mirrabulous.

Mirrabalan loved only beauty and hates what he has become. He does not wish to be looked upon, and keeps the shrine in utter darkness. He hides and hates in the darkness, hopelessly insane. He will attack by surprise and attempt to kill the most beautiful people first. Mirrabalan is capable of slurring speech but only speaks his own language.

### **Mirrabalan**

Medium aberration, neutral evil

Armor Class 17

Hit Points 150

Speed 30 ft, jump 15 ft.

Str 18 (+4), Dex 17 (+3), Con 12 (+1), Int 14 (+2), Wis 10 (+0), Cha 6 (-2)

**Condition immunities:** blind, charm, poison

**Senses:** darkvision 30 feet, blindsight 60 feet

**Save bonus:** +6

**Skills:** Perception +6, Stealth +11

**Languages:** Ieldran (elvish)

**Challenge:** 8

**Difficulty:** 5th level

### **Actions**

Multiattack: he makes two claw attacks

Claws: +9 to hit, reach 5 feet, one target. Hit: 18 (2d12+5)

**Blinding attack:** the first time he reaches 50% or less HPs, he can make a blinding melee attack as an action. The target must make a DC 15 Constitution save or take 12 (1d12+5) damage and suffer the blinded condition until they receive a Lesser Restoration spell.

### **Abilities**

**Tongue lash** as a bonus action (recharge 5-6): DC 15 Constitution save or flesh bubbles and warps causing loss of 11 (3d6) HP and 7 (2d6) Charisma. It needs Cure Disease (e.g. Lay on Hands) or Lesser Restoration to restore lost Charisma.

**Spider climb:** as a Move he can Spider Climb as spell

**Legendary resistance:** when Mirrbalan fails a save he can choose to succeed instead.

**Note:** when Mirrabalan dies, the invisibility spell covering the earthmote ends because it was linked to his life force.

In a secret compartment under the shrine is a **book bound in silver**. It has beautifully illuminated pages. The language is Ieldran (elvish), but it may be readable with magic. The book is one of Mirrabalan's spellbooks. It has a number of spells. They can be learned by any Bard, Wizard, Warlock or Sorcerer.

#### **New spells**

**Glassteel**, 6th level, casting time: 10 minutes, Range touch, Components VSM, Duration permanent. The spell can transmute up to a five foot cube of glass into glassteel. Glassteel has the translucent properties of glass, but the hardness of steel. Each casting requires 50 silver shillings worth of crushed gemstones.

**Heighten Pleasure**, 5th level, casting time: 1 minute, Range self, Components VS, Duration 1 hour. Heightens pleasure which can mean increasing one's aesthetic appreciation of an artwork all the way to orgasmic frenzies.

**Drain Essence**, 5th level, casting time: 1 hour, Range touch, Components VSM, Duration permanent. Drains the life force from a living sapient target and stores it in a glass bauble. Victim must make a Con spell save or age 5 (1d10) years.

**Absorb Essence**, 5th level, casting time: 1 hour, Range self, Components VSM, Duration permanent. Channels essence stored in a bauble into the caster. For every two years absorbed the caster becomes one year younger.

**Control Earthmote**, 5th level, casting time: 1 minute, Range 100 feet, Components VSM,

Duration concentration. This spell allows the caster to control an earthmote to which they are attuned. Only one person can be attuned to an earthmote at a time (which requires 24 hours spent inside the earthmote). The spell allows the caster to cause the earthmote to move (at 5mph), or rise or descend at 100 feet per minute.

The presence of the essence spells makes the spellbook very valuable. Any organised group or government that understood and believed what it was would pay a very substantial reward for it (or hunt and kill the owners to take it and silence them). The earthmote, and control over it, is also a very valuable resource.

#### **4. Way Station**

Close to the river is an area of partially ruined structures. The principal structures are 14 stone columns which stand 25 feet high. Originally there were 16 columns in a 4x4 pattern, but 2 have fallen. From notch marks it appears that the structure may have originally had a roof and walls, and low piles of rubble indicate a number of outer structures. Behind the structure is what appears to be a well, but it is choked with overgrown dirt and rubble.

From week 2, this area will be taken over as the temporary headquarters for Cartimandus's group. They are camped inside the columned area and they have tents set up there. There are 3 small tents and two large (5 man) tents, and they have 6 pack mules with them. (They also have two wagons and 6 strong dray horses left with 2 more Avari mercenaries in the woods south of The Stair.) There will usually be 4 Avari mercs on watch duty (one at each compass point), although they won't stray far from the columns.

#### **The well**

It would require substantial effort to excavate (around six hours, depending on the approach taken). It is lined with stones and approximately 15 feet deep. At the bottom is a layer of

compacted rotten grain. Buried in that layer are the bones of an elf. The bones are relatively intact but the skull has been caved in. Buried with it is a **black metal magnetic compass**. The black compass is a magical item and if a character attunes to it they know only that it "finds the path in dark places, but only if you are alone". Once attuned the compass points at all times to the chest at location 13.

In fact the compass is the only item allowing navigation of the dark place reachable by the chest portal at location 13. The elf was trying to get the chest to a senior wizard during the cataclysm, but was killed and swept downriver. Due to the spatial disturbances caused by the cataclysm he was swept into this well (actually a grain silo).

## 5. Flooded Factory.

A large ruined rectangular structure sixty feet long and twenty five feet wide. It stands twenty feet tall. This ruined pile comprises two side walls and a back wall of large blocks that are still intact. The front wall has collapsed, and the roof no longer exists. The remaining walls have openings which may have been windows. There is a small area at the eastern end that has an opening in the wall at ground level like barn doors.

Inside the walls, it is clear that the floor has collapsed into a basement level, which has now filled with brackish water. Occupying the centre of the sunken basement is a large corroded mass of metal. It looks like some kind of machine and is fifteen feet long and ten feet wide and tall. The machine has an opening at one end and pipes emerging from the other end. It is completely rusted and tarnished and it is only the elven steel used in its manufacture that is keeping it held together.

A close inspection of the machine would mean wading into the water. The machine appears to have presses and crushing equipment at the end with the opening. Further into the machine

are progressively smaller blades and spiked rollers. It appears that whatever was fed into one end would have come out the other in a pulped or liquified form. (The machine was actually used by the Shining Ones to turn dead slaves into fertiliser, which was loaded into wagons at the end.)

Under the brackish water is a ten foot deep murky pool. The floor of the pool is lined with bones under a muddy silt. There are approximately 40 skeletons submerged, although it would take considerable effort to count them. There are 25 humans, 8 dwarves, 5 halflings, 1 goblin, and 1 ogre. None of the skeletons are wearing elven steel collars. (These slaves were in fact dead and their collars had been removed.)

Inhabiting the water is a green jellyfish-like entity from the Far Realm. It will attempt to attack and attach itself to any creature entering the water. Once attached it will turn invisible and use its memory erasure power, and it has advantage if attacking creatures in the water.

### Cepheidae

Small aberration, unaligned

Armor Class 12  
Hit Points 60  
Speed 30 ft (swim)

Str 14 (+2), Dex 17 (+3), Con 13 (+1), Int 16 (+3), Wis 14 (+2), Cha 10 (+0)

**Senses:** blindsight 60 feet, sense minds 60 feet

**Skills:** Stealth +8, Athletics +7, Acrobatics +8

**Save bonus:** +5

**Challenge:** 5

**Difficulty:** 4th level

### Actions

Strangle / squeeze: +7 to hit, damage 7 (1d8+2)

Grapple: +7 Strength (Athletics), and has advantage on the grapple if the target is in the water.

**Symbiotic meld:** as an action, join with a grappled living creature by driving fronds into its spine. The victim must make a DC 14 Constitution save or suffer the meld.

#### **Abilities**

**Invisibility:** at will as a bonus action

**Erase memories** (recharge 6): as a bonus action, the creature can cause all entities within 30 feet to lose all memory of the last 1 minute if they fail a DC14 Wisdom save. A melded victim automatically fails this save.

Once the Cephidae is attached to a host it will remain hidden and feed on the host's memories and bodily fluids. The host will keep have periods of forgetfulness, and will have a greater than normal desire to bathe or swim. The host will lose 1 Intelligence per week. The creature can be removed by Lesser Restoration (in which case it will attempt to attack the next nearest victim).

### **6. Village (serpentfolk)**

By the river is a village made up of 25 simple straw-roofed huts. It is home to a settlement of 152 serpentfolk (of which 31 are children). Serpentfolk are humanoid with snake heads and bodies covered in scales. Serpentfolk have a primitive hunter-gatherer culture, and are armed with spears and knives. Serpentfolk wear simple tunics and furs. Their leader - **Skithis** - is a 53 year old male. They are advised by their shaman - **Yithiuk** - a 70 year old male.

The serpentfolk are defensively hostile to strangers. They will respond to strangers by grabbing weapons and forming a 30-strong war party. They will then prepare to defend themselves. They can be parlayed with, but they will be suspicious of strangers (they speak an archaic form of Common).

The serpentfolk are responsible for hiding the machine that creates brass automata (location 19). This was because brass automata following some ancient programming began abducting

them and dragging them off to be turned into new brass automata. The machine was dragged away and is currently buried 3 miles to the northeast of location 19 in the adjacent hex, which is location 23. They will not reveal the machine's location to outsiders voluntarily, although they may confirm that they took it away.

The serpentfolk have an oral history that is kept by their shaman, and once a week they have shadow puppet shows that tell some of their cultural history. They believe that the Shining Ones made their race (true), and that a great enemy - the Drekku - came from the sky and defeated the Shining Ones (true sort of). They also believe that they were created to lead the other hybrid races due to their finer qualities (untrue).

If robbed or defeated they are found to have a large amount of fresh and dried food, plus pickled and salted foods from the bog (pickled frogs, salted fish). They have a small number of good furs (20 x 10 silver shillings). They also have 9 elven steel collars and an elven steel wand that they revere (a Wand of Disintegration: only works for elves).

#### **Serpentfolk (152)**

Medium humanoid, neutral

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 9

Speed 30 ft

Str 13 (+1), Dex 14 (+2), Con 11 (+0), Int 10 (+0), Wis 12 (+1), Cha 9 (-1)

**Condition immunities:** poison

**Damage immunities:** poison

**Skills:** Perception +2

**Save bonus:** +1

**Challenge:** 1/4

**Difficulty:** group of five at 1st, 10 at 2nd level, 20 at 4th level, 40 at 5th level

#### **Actions**

Spear: +4 to hit. Hit: 5 (1d8)

Bite: +4 to hit. Hit: 2 (1d3) and 5 (1d8) poison damage.

## 7. The Slaughterhouses

This area has a variety of ruins. There appears to have been a number of large structures (barns), some of which were made from metal, surrounded by fenced off areas. All that remains are piles of overgrown rubble and heaps of rusting metal and wire. Close to one pile of ruins is a large (ten foot high) mound of animal bones.

The whole area doesn't look right. The lighting keeps changing in different areas of the ruins. In one area it looks like noon, and in another it looks like dusk. Wind also seems to blow in contradictory directions, and frost forms in spots and then disappears.

As the characters get closer, they see a strange entity floating around the ruins. It looks like an eight foot long floating frog with smooth skin and six long pink tendrils radiating from its head. The tendrils have pink frills and quiver gently (show your players a picture of an axolotl!). It keeps disappearing and reappearing the next moment in different places (like a jump cut). If the characters approach within 100 feet, the creature - a Far Realm entity that eats time called a Chronovore - will attack.

This area was in fact an area of barns and livestock paddocks. It was also where animals were slaughtered for meat. There are bones here from cows, sheep and pigs. Amidst the ruins was a pit also filled with bones. Over the years that has become overgrown and topped with soil, while the bones beneath have rotted to fragility. Note where the pit is. Without caution, at least one character is likely to **fall into this pit during the battle** (you may allow them a Dexterity save at DC 13 to hold onto something). Falling into the pit will smash a path 15 feet to the bottom onto lacerating bones inflicting 10 damage (2d6+3).

## Chronovore

Large aberration, evil

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 42

Speed fly 30 ft

Str 15 (+2), Dex 16 (+3), Con 14 (+2), Int 17 (+3), Wis 10 (+0), Cha 13 (+1)

**Condition immunities:** poison, prone, charm

**Damage immunities:** poison

**Skills:** Perception +5

**Save bonus:** +2

**Challenge:** 2

**Difficulty:** 1st level

## Actions

Tendrils barb: +5 to hit. Hit: 5 (1d8) plus the victim becomes 1d3 years older (50%) or younger (50%)

## Abilities

**Time's arrow:** the Chronovore automatically wins initiative.

**Foresight:** the Chronovore experiences the first round of combat (seeing what everyone does), then shifts everyone back in time to the beginning, undoing any attacks and starting the encounter over. It can only do this once.

**Time streams:** as a bonus action the Chronovore calls upon two later versions of itself to aid it, and two additional Chronovores appear. Because these are later versions of the same creature, any damage inflicted on the original Chronovore will apply to all of them. Each Chronovore can make a separate melee attack.

**Rewrite history:** As a reaction, the original Chronovore can ignore one attack by altering the timeline causing it to miss.

**Uncertain location:** as a Move, the original Chronovore can appear at any location within 60 ft without provoking attacks of opportunity.

On its death, the Chronovore releases a shock wave of temporal energy. The shockwave grants each character a minor ability to influence time,

which is represented by them gaining 1 inspiration each. This applies even if they already have an inspiration point.

The Chronovore also exudes a clear brain fluid that could be refined into a potion. This would require a DC 15 Herbalism or Arcana roll. Doing so would create one dose of **Potion of Uncertainty**. When drunk, the imbiber's location in space becomes uncertain. Each round as a move they can choose to be in any visible or known location. They could immediately appear behind an enemy, for example, or they could suddenly appear in their house in Midea and kiss their wife. The user can also, as a reaction, change their location if attacked. This effect lasts for three combat rounds, and there is only one dose.

### 8. Ruined Town (eastern slave residences)

At this location there are the remains of a large number of ruined structures including low walls, and moss-covered piles of rubble. It's clear that this was an extensive series of buildings. A town possibly, but with buildings that are similar and laid out geometrically. It's hard to estimate, but given the scale it may have held several thousand.

There is a large stone block here, and from it comes a very large hook made of elven steel pointing upwards. The hook is tarnished and covered in lichen. It's unclear what could be attached or moored to this huge hook. (In fact this was a mooring site for the floating home of Mirrabalan at location 3). The hook weighs 500 pounds.

When exploring the ruins the characters will start to spot scuttling silver beetles here and there. The beetles are about 3 inches long. Amidst the ruins is a strange phenomenon. It looks like a rip in the air approximately 12 feet across and 3 feet wide. The rip emits light and coruscating rainbow colours. It is hard to look at and makes viewers feel sick. Surrounding the rip are hundreds of the silver beetles scuttling about.

It's not immediately clear what the beetles are doing.

The rip is a tear in reality. If anyone persists in staring at the rip they become confused and forgetful (like temporary dementia). The rip increases chaos and in close proximity and spells or magical effects must roll on the Wild Magic table (p.104 5E PHB), or randomise effects as you see fit. Use of magic in the vicinity of the rip may cause one of the swarms to become hostile (as will attacking lots of them).

The beetles are celestial entities that are attempting to repair the rift. Think of them as reality's guardians. They are elemental forces of Law. They lack self consciousness or creativity. They hate magic. They are a mindless hive that yet runs with perfect order. They are the secret immune system of the ordered universe.

### Silver Beetle Swarm (up to 10 swarms)

Medium celestial, lawful

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 66

Speed 20 ft (crawl), 40 ft (fly)

Str 12 (+1), Dex 18 (+4), Con 16 (+3), Int 17 (+3), Wis 9 (-1), Cha 9 (-1)

**Condition immunities:** immune to magical effects

**Damage immunities:** immune to spells

**Save bonus:** +0

**Challenge:** 6

**Difficulty:** 4th level for one swarm

### Actions

Dismantle on the molecular level: +7 to hit. Hit: 13 (2d8+4)

### Abilities:

**Suppress magic:** as a bonus action, use Counterspell as if cast with a 4th level spell slot; they roll at +9 for any 5th or higher level spell slots.

**Drain magic:** As an action, a target within 30 ft has to make a DC 16 Intelligence save or lose 2d4 spell slots.

For every 1-2 hours spent searching the ruins, the characters can discover one of the following (1d6):

- 1-2: the characters manage to collect 2d6 tarnished elven steel slave collars. They are fused shut and marked with strange runes.
- 3-4: a pile of stones mark a shallow grave of a goblin. The goblin is just rotted bones but wears a tarnished elven steel collar and is buried with a rotting whip.
- 5-6: a tarnished scroll tube of elven steel buried under some rocks. Inside is a fragile paper with strange writing on it (elvish). A Comprehend Languages spell reveals that it is informing the recipient that “200 agricultural drones are needed as test subjects at the Hybridisation Facility. Please send 20 per week.”

## 9. Western Plantation

This region is an area approximately 2 miles across and is a mix of weeds, edible crops and wild plants. The plant growth is quite high and reaches 4 to 6 feet (difficult terrain and hard to see what may be concealed inside). On the southern edge of the plantations are a number of ruined structures. It appears that these used to be a dozen or so brick and wood agricultural buildings. They have all collapsed, and all that is left is some brickwork and floor tiles.

There are double chances of a random encounter while at this location. An appropriate class or Background reveals that this area is unnaturally warm given how far north it is, and its elevation. This area, if properly farmed by sufficient numbers of individuals, would produce sufficient food for thousands of humanoids. It presently has enough food to support a few hundred.

Or every 1-2 hours spent **searching the plantation** the characters can discover one or more of the following:

1-2: there is evidence that some creatures are attempting to work some of the plantation (e.g. clearing weeds, clearing irrigation ditches etc), but in a fairly haphazard way.

3-4: there are recent humanoid tracks leading towards the nearest settlements.

5-6: an innovative metal plough covered in lichen (made of corroded steel. Of interest to farmers).

7-8: an area of spatial distortion 20 feet across through which the world appears like a broken mirror. Entering the area inflicts 1d10 rending damage per round and has a 30% chance to teleport the victim 1d10 miles in a random direction.

9-10: a cluster of 12 lichen covered rings lie on the ground. Investigation reveals them to be slave collars made of tarnished elven steel (2lbs of elven steel per ring). They have strange markings on (elvish marks of ownership). It is impossible to open them as they have fused shut (and they are Arcane Locked). The corpses to which they were attached have long since decayed.

For each hour spent **searching the ruined structures**, roll 1d6 (treat as nothing if the same result).

- 1-3: A variety of intact clay bowls and other vessels, and some corroded steel farming tools
- 4-5: A bronze chain and pendant in the shape of a five pointed star tarnished black and green
- 6: **a red crystal rod** 3 inches long attached by a gold cap to a tarnished gold chain. This is the key to the moongate at location 12A. Note: it was here that the golden idol was found ten years ago.

Characters who wish to forage for food here can do so. Each hour locates 1d4 pounds of edible vegetables (corn, potatoes, turnips, carrots, etc). Each pound will feed a humanoid for 1 day.

## 10. Greenhouses (Eastern Plantation)

This area comprises a large region around 1 mile across which is a mix of weeds, edible crops and wild plants. The plant growth is quite high and reaches 4 to 6 feet.

The area also contains a region dominated by the remains of large structures. The structures (which were greenhouses) are made up of frames of metal and stand twenty feet tall, one hundred feet in length and around thirty feet across. There are 8 large structures but 4 are merely piles of twisted and rotting metal on the ground.

The frames of the structures look corroded and it is unclear how strong they are. Inside the structures the ground crunches slightly because there is a large amount of pulverised grass under the turf and weeds that have grown inside. Each of the 4 remaining structures can be searched more thoroughly:

**First:** growing amidst the weeds and grass in this structure are around a dozen giant mushrooms. They stand about two feet tall and are pale with blue speckles. They appear to be a larger variant of an edible mushroom grown in the south. Each mushroom is edible and delicious and could provide 6 days of food for one person.

This variant has changed due to the effects of the cataclysm. Although it is edible it causes a hallucinogenic effect like dropping acid 1 hour after eating it that lasts 2d6 hours. During this period the victim is at disadvantage to all checks and attacks, but has a WIS in percentage chance of experiencing a vision, prophetic or otherwise.

**Second:** This structure appears overrun with a kind of climbing plant from which sprouts bright blue flowers. There is a central mass inside the structure, but it is completely overgrown with the climbing plant.

The central mass is in fact a large bulb-like mass around 8 feet in diameter. It is the brain of the climbing plant, and is an intelligent but immobile plant creature. The plant creature communicates by scent, and the scents have different meanings. The scents are interpreted by mammals as being familiar smells: vanilla = curiosity, fresh baked bread = interested inquiry, woodsmoke = concern/anxiety, faeces = anger, and stale sweat = fear.

A Speak with Plants spell will enable communication. The plant knows about the pigfolk, dogfolk and serpentfolk, and other creatures that live in the region. It also knows about the “dead things” in the nearby structure, “the living machine”, and that the giant mushrooms are harmless (from its perspective).

If attacked, the plant is AC 13 and has 30 HP. It can defend itself by releasing spores once per round. The spores cause anyone within a ten foot radius to make a DC 14 Constitution save or sleep. The sleeper cannot be roused and will sleep for 2d3 hours.

**Third:** overgrown with weeds and grass in this greenhouse is a golem (passive perception DC 12 to notice). This large golem is hollow and made from glassteel and it is three quarters filled with a green fluid. It will attack if this greenhouse is entered or it is attacked. It will not pursue attackers unless they continue attacking. See location 3A for details of glassteel. Stealth checks are at disadvantage due to broken glass under or in the grass.

### Alchemical Glass Golem

Large construct, neutral

Armor Class 16

Hit Points 60

Speed 30 ft

Str 19 (+4), Dex 9 (-1), Con 18 (+4), Int 3 (-4), Wis 11 (+0), Cha 1 (-5)

**Damage Immunities:** fire, poison



**Condition immunities:** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralysed, petrified, poisoned.

**Senses:** darkvision 60 feet

**Save bonus:** +2

**Skills:** Perception +4

**Languages:** understands the Ieldran language but cannot speak

**Challenge:** 5

**Difficulty:** 4th level

### Actions

**Multiattack:** the golem makes two slam attacks or one poison spray attack

**Slam:** +7 to hit, 5 ft reach, one target. Hit: 13 (2d8+4)

**Poison Spray:** +7 to hit, range 10/30 feet, up to two targets. Hit: 11 poison damage (3d6)

**Grab and douse:** the first time the Golem reaches 50% or less HP, it makes a grapple attack at +7 (opposed by Athletics or Acrobatics). If successful it can then, as a bonus action, douse the victim in poison inflicting 18 poison (4d8) damage.

### Abilities

**Fluid spray:** every time the golem takes 5 or more points of damage from a melee attack, some of the fluid inside of it sprays out at the attacker. The attacker must make a DC 12 Dexterity save or take 7 (2d6) poison damage.

**Unstoppable:** as a Move, the Golem can move 30 ft and knock any enemies who are adjacent to, or in its path, back five feet. Neither the golem's move nor the forced movement trigger attacks of opportunity.

**Immutable Form:** the golem is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

**Magic Resistance:** the golem has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

A thorough search of this structure will uncover a glass longsword entwined in grass and weeds and partially buried. It is the **Prismatic Brand**, a magical elven weapon. The longsword is made

of glasteel and is an enchanted weapon. It provides no attack or damage bonus, but on a natural 20 the longsword reduces any target hit to 0 HP. It requires attunement.

**Fourth:** In this structure there are six shabby humanoid figures dressed in primitive clothes and wearing fierce painted wooden masks. They stand around what appears to be a black jewel hanging in mid air five feet off the ground. Stealth checks are at disadvantage due to broken glass under or in the grass.

The "black jewel" is in fact a small tear in reality leading to a negative energy universe, and it is surrounded by a nimbus of flickering white light. The eight figures are dead pigfolk, and up close their gray rotting skin and wounds become obvious. They immediately attack on sight.

### Zombie pigfolk (6)

Medium undead, evil

Armor Class 8

Hit Points 22

Speed 20 ft

Str 13 (+1), Dex 6 (-2), Con 16 (+3), Int 3 (-4), Wis 6 (-2), Cha 5 (-3)

**Condition immunities:** poison

**Damage immunities:** poison

**Senses:** darkvision 60 ft

**Save bonus:** +0

**Challenge:** 1/4

**Difficulty:** 1st level

### Actions

**Rend:** +3 to hit. Hit: 4 (1d6+1)

### Abilities

**Grapple:** if the zombie hits with a rend attack, it can make a grapple attack at +3 as a bonus action (opposed by Athletics or Acrobatics). If a target is grappled then on the zombie's next action it will drag the victim (at half speed) towards the "black jewel".

**Undead fortitude:** If damage reduces the zombie to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5+the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the zombie drops to 1 hit point instead.

Scattered around the ruins are 6 spears. The dead pigfolk carry only a few trinkets (a dogskin jacket, an obsidian bladed knife, and a raven's skull painted blue).

Anyone touching the "black jewel" will have to make a DC13 Constitution save or have their HP maximum reduced by 14 (4d6). This lasts until they finish a long rest. Reduction to 0 causes death and reanimation as undead after 1d3 rounds.

## 11. Ruined Town (western slave residences)

At this location there are the remains of a number of ruined structures. These are predominantly a series of low walls, but some moss-covered piles of logs are also present. It's clear that this was an extensive series of buildings. A town possibly, but with buildings that are similar and laid out geometrically. It's hard to estimate, but given the scale it may have held several thousand.

There is also a large stone block, and from it comes a very large hook made of elven steel pointing upwards. The hook is tarnished and covered in lichen. It's unclear what could be attached or moored to this huge hook. (In fact this was a mooring site for the floating home of Mirrabalan at location 3). The hook weighs 500 pounds.

Near the centre of the ruins beneath a ruined obelisk is a set of stone stairs leading down. This leads to a warren of tunnels infested by the vespidae - a hive of Far Realm insect creatures.

The vespidae appear to be 9 inch tall skinny eyeless humanoids with membranous wings and face mostly comprising a proboscis. They

appear translucent as if not fully present in our reality. They like shiny things, but are implacably hostile, and there are 23 of them in the nest (although only 3 or 4 will be initially active). They attack by phasing inside their victim and then disrupting them from the inside before exiting. This causes internal damage and bleeding. They take no damage from normal weapons, although they are affected by magic weapons and spells.

### Vespidae (23)

Tiny aberration, neutral evil

Armor Class 15  
Hit Points 7 (1d10)  
Speed 30 ft (flying).

Str 5 (-3), Dex 16 (+3), Con 12 (+1), Int 10 (+0), Wis 13 (+1), Cha 9 (-1)

**Damage Immunities:** normal weapons unless enchanted

**Senses:** darkvision 120 feet

**Save bonus:** +1

**Challenge:** 1/2

**Difficulty:** 5th level for whole hive

### Actions

Phasing attack: victim makes a DC 13 Dexterity save or takes 6 (1d8+2) damage.

Implant egg in host: +6 to hit. Target makes a DC 13 Constitution save or is implanted. Unless a Lesser Restoration or Cure Disease (e.g. Lay on Hands) is used, they lose 1 CON per day for 4 (1d6) days and then die when the larva hatches.

### Abilities

**Flyby:** the vespidae doesn't provoke an attack of opportunity when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

**Phasing movement:** The vespidae can pass through solid objects such as walls and doors.

Once the vespidae are destroyed, the area can be thoroughly searched (taking several hours).

This reveals the intricate honeycomb nest built just below the ruins. This contains a smashed machine into which a medium sized humanoid could be strapped. There are also rusting metal shelves that look like they held small (jewel-sized) objects.

In fact the machine (now inactive) was used to extract the soul from unproductive slaves and store it in a gemstone. The bodies were transported to location 5 to be turned into fertiliser.

Piled up in the vespidae nest amidst animal bones are 94 identical chalcedony gems. They have a value of 50 silver shillings each (total value: 4700 silver shillings). The jewels are warm to the touch. In fact each is a soul gem and holds the soul of a slave. This may not stop the characters selling them, but if they do have a moral quandary about it, the souls can be freed if the gems are crushed. The value of the crushed chalcedony is only half that of the original gemstones.

The nest also contains a silver comb studded with pearls worth 50 silver shillings and a **silver and gold music box**. The music box is locked. Inscribed on it in Ieldran (elvish) are the words "The Melancholy Death of the Temple Dancer". This is the name of a piece of (unknown) elven music. The written musical score for the piece of music is in the elven archives (location 58). If that music is played, the box will open. Inside the music box is a ruby worth 10,000 silver shillings. It cannot be otherwise opened and radiates magic.

## 12. Ruined villa

This structure is a semi-ruined (well constructed) structure about the size of a mansion house built of blocks of white stone. Its roof is completely missing, but its outer walls are mostly intact. Inside there are hints and broken fragments of what would have been luxurious furnishings, all now long since decayed. In a large living area is a damaged mosaic in the floor. It depicts a slim

humanoid in robes on a hill benevolently overlooking fields being worked by many humans.

An hour spent searching reveals a trap door hidden in the hearth of a large room. The iron ring pull has rusted away, and it requires a total Strength of 30 to prise it open if a suitable lever is available (e.g. a crowbar).

Stone stairs lead down to a basement. The air here is foul and, unless it is aired for 1 hour, anyone entering must make a DC 15 Constitution check or suffer the poisoned condition while inside, and for the same time period after leaving.

A **Glyph of Warding** lies halfway down the stairs (requires DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check to notice). The glyph inflicts 22 (5d8) electrical damage to all those within a 20 ft radius (or 11 on a DC 15 Dexterity save) if any living humanoid crosses it. It can be removed automatically by a Dispel Magic spell.

The basement contains:

- **two dead brass automata** lying on the floor covered in green corrosion and lichen. The brain cavities are stained but empty.
- an 8 foot tall **red crystalline archway**. It has a small hole in one side that is 1 inch across and 2 inches deep.
- an **extra large chest** made of black wood and bronze fittings. The inside of the chest appears to have fitted manacles.
- a **locked and rusted steel box**. It contains 3 jewels worth 500 Silver Shillings each, and a **fragile but intact book** (see below).

The **extra large chest** is a magical transmutation device (the Chest of Transmutation). If attuned, the user becomes aware that the chest can convert living humanoids into other organic or mineral objects. The process is obviously fatal and takes five minutes. A living adult human weighing 180lb could be converted into nutritious food for 45 man days, or into 90lb of some other soft

organic matter (such as fish or leather). Alternatively they could be converted into 45 lb of wood or stone, or 5 lb of iron or steel, or platinum worth 100 silver shillings. The chest could also create jewels worth a total value of 100 silver shillings from the same matter (e.g. a single black pearl, or 10 bloodstones). The chest cannot create specific unique items (e.g the copper keys).

The **fragile but intact book** is a testimony by the elven overseer of the plantations and farms, Tanyl Valhana. It is written in Ieldran (elvish) and in a cypher making it incomprehensible. If Comprehend Written Languages was repeatedly cast, it would then take a week to decipher.

*The book reveals that this villa belonged to the elven overseer of the plantations and the slaves that worked them. The elf was a renegade and a cultist. The elves, in one of their experiments, had trapped a powerful outer dimensional being in a crystal to study it. The overseer became obsessed with it, and stole it away. He used a magitech gate to hide the crystal on the moon. Over time the elf became corrupted by the trapped being, and forged a pact with it. In doing so he became a warlock, which was unheard of amongst the elves (who could not countenance serving another being). The overseer constructed a magical golden idol that allowed him to communicate with the being at any distance.*

The overseer died at the western plantation (location 9) from an attack by a Far Realm monstrosity during the cataclysm. His body has withered away, but the red crystal key can be found in the ruins. He was also carrying the gold idol that was found by the first expedition, and which is now held by Kurigalzu.

#### **12A. Special location: through the red gate**

The Red Gate can only be opened by the key at location 9. When activated, the gate shimmers into life becoming a doorway across space to The Eye (the moon). Through the archway a

twilight desert of red sand awaits. The key must remain in the archway for the portal to stay open.

If the characters step through they are immediately hit by the dry warmth of their new environment. The sky is filled with a huge blue and green disc. It appears to have white clouds floating across it. (Characters may think of it as a blue and green sun, the eye of a god etc. It won't be obvious to them that it is the planet they have just left around which this moon orbits.)

There is no companion archway here, but a shimmering portal hangs in the air through which the cellar can be seen. The red desert stretches in all directions. But about 3 miles away a mesa of black rock juts from the ground.

**The mesa:** It takes just over an hour to walk to the mesa. As the characters get closer they can see a stone structure at the top of it, around 500 feet up. A stairway has been cut into the dark rock and winds around the mesa to the top.

**The temple:** At the top of the mesa is what looks like a temple made up of 4 columns supporting a roof. Sitting at the centre of the temple is a 9 foot tall upright white crystal in a bronze stand. Anyone touching the crystal will be able to speak telepathically to the creature within. The crystal is otherwise indestructible.

**The crystal:** Imprisoned inside is a powerful outer dimensional entity called Oethiet. The elves imprisoned it in order to study it, but the overseer became corrupted and stole the crystal and relocated it here. In return for forging a pact, the overseer became a warlock and servitor to the being. Had he been discovered the Shining Ones would have destroyed him.

Oethiet can read human minds fairly easily, and will present itself in a favourable light. It will claim to be a machine created by the elves to help them, and to have a number of special powers. It can, for example, heal the wounds of those touching the crystal. Oethiet may be able to

explain what certain artifacts are, although it will not reveal all of the secrets of the elves. Othiet may also say that it can offer characters the ability to become warlocks, taking it as a patron (treat as Great Old One patron), although it would need to get to know them first. While inside the crystal Othiet is immune to all detection and mind-affecting spells.

Othiet's long term plan is to be released. It is smart and it will wait for an opportunity. For example, if asked if it can raise a character from death, it will say that it could, but unfortunately it has been forbidden from doing so due to certain restrictions placed on it by the elves. It will ask the characters to recover from the capital city of the Shining Ones a device called The Clave that will remove the limits placed on it by the elves. Othiet can give an approximate location for the Clave, which is in the vault of the government building (location 59). In fact the Clave will allow Othiet to break free.

If Othiet is freed, it manifests physically, downloading itself into a form that can operate in three dimensions. In that form it is an epic level monster and characters will do best to run. Use whatever statistics feel appropriate for an aberrant lesser god.

On the character's first return from the mesa to the gate they are attacked by hostile lifeforms. These five-foot long black iridescent insects burrow through the sand and attack (1 per character).

#### **Alien insects**

Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 16

Speed 30 ft, 20 ft burrow.

Str 14 (+2), Dex 16 (+3), Con 12 (+1), Int 8 (-1), Wis 10 (+0), Cha 3 (-4)

**Condition immunities:** charmed

**Senses:** tremor sense 120 feet

**Save bonus:** +1

**Skills:** Stealth +4

**Challenge:** 1/2

**Difficulty:** 2nd to 3rd level

#### **Actions**

Bitey mandibles: +4 to hit, reach 5 feet, one target. Hit: 6 (1d6+2) plus make a DC 10 Constitution save or suffer an additional 5 (1d10) poison damage.

#### **Abilities**

**Dive:** Can burrow into the ground as a Move without provoking attacks of opportunity.

**Erupt:** if burrowed directly under a victim, the bug can erupt from the ground. If the victim fails a DC 10 Perception check, the bug makes its attack with advantage.

Whenever the characters pass this way (in either direction) there is a 40% chance of encountering another 1d6 of these beetles at some stage.

If the party wish to explore the rest of the moon, the details are left to the GM's discretion. You may wish to have them encounter a range of greater and more dangerous insectoid creatures based on the Ankheg, Bulette, Sand Worm (Purple Worm) or Phase Spiders. If the party travels far enough, they may encounter the vast depression of the eye-like crater on the moon's surface. The 600-mile diameter crater is filled with a jungle of dark red vegetation, and inhabited by a race of peaceful yet primitive slothfolk, and an aggressive but dying race of vulturefolk who guard an ancient technology.

### **13. Water-Mill**

This large structure sits alongside the north bank of the river. It lies in ruins with the roof gone, and the wall nearest the river has disappeared completely. A strange withered corpse (skinned dogfolk) hangs from ropes on the western side.

The structure is really just a shell made of three walls. Inside is rubble, some large pieces of

lumber (remains of the water mill), two large millstones (one cracked) in different places, and the corroded remains of two dozen large ovens. It was here that wheat was milled to flour and made into loaves to feed the Shining Ones' slaves.

The pigfolk consider this a potential staging post in any attack mounted against them, and have set a series of traps and snares to kill the unwary. Around the exterior of the structure are six ten-foot deep spiked pits (DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check to spot, 11 (2d10) damage plus DC 13 Constitution save or gain a disease from the faeces-smearred spikes).

Inside the structure there are five spring-loaded or deadweight spike traps (DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check to spot, attacks at +7, 9 (2d8) damage).

Trapped under the river water and beneath a piece of the water wheel is a **black wood chest**. It will not be obvious unless the characters specifically search there (or have the compass from location 4). It will be difficult to dislodge and requires a DC 20 Str check. Success requires a DC 15 Dexterity save or the lumber will move and trap the character under the water (again DC 20 for them or another character to lift).

**The dark place:** Once recovered the chest will be found to be intact but locked (with Arcane Lock). If opened, the characters will find that it is empty, but at the bottom is a set of metal steps leading down into the dark place. The chest can be lifted and moved and the stairs to the dark place will still be visible.

The dark place is very dark, and if characters move more than 100 ft from the entrance (or if the chest is closed), then they will be plunged into total darkness. Darkvision, true sight, and light spells do not function in the dark place. Any normal light source will also be completely ineffectual.

If the characters move more than 100 ft from the entrance, the party needs to make a DC 15 Survival check to find their way back (rolling once for the whole party). They can make the roll again once per hour, but every time they fail it the difficulty goes up by +2. Wandering the dark place will only get characters hopelessly lost.

The only way to navigate the dark place is using the black compass (location 4). The black compass will be visible in the dark place if its attuned owner is alone. It will lead them on a complex and convoluted path through the darkness for what feels like hours, but is in fact an hour and a half. Finally they will come to a room. The room contains an immobile floating copper sphere eleven feet in diameter. The sphere is an artefact from another dimension recovered by the Shining Ones and placed here for safe-keeping. It was never willing to cooperate with the elves, but it will work now.

Standing in front of the sphere, the character can make a Wish. This allows them to change any one fact about the campaign world, and that fact is now true. For example, X didn't die, there are no bearfolk, the Magog didn't win the war against the Avari, dogs can talk, I am rich, I am the king etc. Only the person who made the change knows that anything has changed. Everyone else believes that things have always been that way. The change cannot deliberately relate to game mechanics (e.g. the character can't wish to be higher level). The world will then change. As GM you should decide what impact the change has on the campaign world, and what actions others may take or have taken as a result of the changes.

#### **14. Village (pigfolk village)**

On a rise overlooking the river is a village made up of 40 simple straw-roofed huts that are built around a ruined tower (only the ground floor remains). It is home to a settlement of 260 pigfolk (of which 48 are children). Pigfolk are humanoid with pig heads, trotter-like feet and

tails. The pigfolk have a savage culture and are at war with both the serpentfolk and dogfolk.

Pigfolk are cruel and merciless and will torture, skin and eat any captives in blood drenched rites to their god, Scrofus. Pigfolk wear furs and hides, and when actively patrolling will also wear wooden face masks painted with fierce designs (to terrify their enemies). They also have a large mud pool next to the river which they enjoy using.

The pigfolk's leader is **Hodgkins**, a muscular brute with a two-handed barbed spear. The pigfolk's reaction to strangers will be to grab weapons and attack without quarter. If questioned, they don't know anything about the missing component from the dogfolk's silver machine, but they know that one of their raiding parties failed to return a few weeks ago.

### **Pigfolk (260)**

Medium humanoid, chaotic evil

Armor Class 13 (hide)

Hit Points 11

Speed 30 ft

Str 16 (+3), Dex 13 (+1), Con 16 (+3), Int 8 (-1), Wis 11 (+0), Cha 10 (+0)

**Save bonus:** +1

**Challenge:** 1/2

**Difficulty:** a group of 5 at 2nd-3rd level, 10 at 4th level, or 20 at 5th level

### **Actions**

Spear (2H): +5 to hit. Hit: 8 (1d8+3)

Thrown spear: +5 to hit. Hit: 5 (1d6+1)

Blowgun: +5 to hit, ranged 25/100, one target. Hit: 1 damage (plus poison: DC 9 Constitution save or be poisoned for one minute. While poisoned the victim is paralysed. They can make a further save at the end of each of their turns.)

### **Abilities**

**Frenzied:** the pigfolk are immune to charm or fear.

If the village is searched, a prisoner will be found chained up in the tower. **Aleena** is a 23 year old Avari warrior (level 2 human fighter). She was part of another expedition exploring and treasure hunting, but her group were set upon at night by a pigfolk war party. Aleena has had to watch her four companions be horrifically murdered, and she has been abused by the pigfolk. If rescued she will join the party, but she is traumatised. She will display this by killing any humanoids with whom the party come into conflict (e.g. refusing to accept their surrender or withdraw from combat), and also displaying reckless bravery because part of her wants to die. Ultimately if she can find a way to mourn her friends and accept what has happened to her she may start to recover.

The pigfolk have the following goods if defeated:

- 6 jewels worth an average of 60 silver shillings each (300 total value)

- a **carved wooden box of unknown design**.

Radiates faerie magic. Can only be opened by a creature without a name. When opened, the box allows the opener to change one thing about themselves. They can change their race (to any other humanoid race), class, gender, age, swap stats around, or remove an affliction. The box then vanishes. A creature can surrender their name to the baroness (location 46), or can lose any memory of it in the prison (location 47).

- a platinum **jeweled brooch shaped like a butterfly** (magic: allows the wearer to lucidly dream at will. This enables the user to live out any fantasy while asleep, but it is also addictive. Does not require attunement).

- a **copper key** that radiates magic (see location 20A)

- the gear of Aleena and her companions: 3 spears, 5 longswords, 5 daggers, 5 sets of leather armour, 5 large shields, 4 shortbows, 4 quivers with a total of 48 arrows. Assorted camping and exploring equipment.

- sufficient food to last them a week

- several dozen vials of blowgun poison

- several clay urns of pig milk

## 15. Lake

It is cold here and a wide placid lake stretches for 5 miles east-west and 12 miles north-south. The dark snow-capped mountains loom closeby to the north. Windswept hills rise to the west of the lake and there are dotted stands of pines nearby. In the centre of the lake is a distant island of around a mile in diameter. On the island is a strange rock formation that rises up 200 feet. A mist lies over the surface of the lake.

Unless magic is used, crossing the lake will require a boat or raft to be fashioned. On the island there is a crude raft pulled up onto the shore. It appears to have been there for no more than a few weeks.

Further inland in a cave in the rock formation lie the bodies of five pigfolk. They are decomposed. They are unmarked. Near to them there is a metal box containing a metal tube. The tube appears to slide open and shut. It is currently slid open and a glowing blue substance can be seen through a glass window on the side. It gives off a slight warmth.

The tube is radioactive, and currently the core is exposed. Anyone spending more than five minutes in close proximity must make a Con 16 save every minute thereafter or contract radiation poisoning. If the tube is closed and placed in the closed steel box, then the radiation is contained. The core is the missing component from the tower at location 17.

Radiation poisoning causes 1d10 HP damage per hour which cannot be healed naturally or by a cantrip. Each hour the victim can make a DC 14 Constitution save and if they make the save they stop taking hourly damage. They then take 1d10 damage per week until dead or until Lesser Restoration is used with a 3rd level spell slot.

## 16. Village (dogfolk village)

In a natural basin bisected by a stream is a village made up of 50 wooden and stone buildings. The village is surrounded by a 6 foot high log palisade. The structures are a mix of stone and wood, and the stone looks like it has been re-used from other structures.

It is home to a settlement of 312 dogfolk (of which 71 are children). The dogfolk are a hybrid mix of canines and humans, and have a fairly varied appearance. They are about five feet tall on average, and dress in loincloths, beads, feathers and are armed with knives and bows and arrows. The Dogfolk are a spiritual people and believe that good and evil spirits are all around them. Their leader is a Maltese-breed hybrid called Clattering Blanket.

The dogfolk will be cautiously friendly to visitors. If the characters parlay the dogfolk can explain that they must be careful because they are at war with the pigfolk to the east. They can also explain that these were once human lands but all the humans left. There were also gods (elves) who created wonders. They know of an old human temple under the great god statue (location 18) in the west. But they warn that a demon now lives there.

Clattering Blanket's main concern at present is the failure of the dogfolk females to carry any infants to term. The dogfolk have always had difficulties carrying children to term (some kind of genetic defect), but they have access to a silver machine made by the gods. The machine is always used during the fifth month of pregnancy, but it has been sabotaged by the pigfolk who have stolen a vital piece of the machine. If the characters could recover it they would be immensely grateful and offer them a safe haven and access to the machine.



## **Dogfolk (312)**

Medium humanoid, neutral good

Armor Class 15

Hit Points 12

Speed 30 ft

Str 14 (+2), Dex 15 (+2), Con 15 (+2), Int 10 (+0), Wis 12 (+1), Cha 12 (+1)

**Save bonus:** +1

**Challenge:** 1/2

**Difficulty:** a group of 5 at 2nd-3rd level, 10 at 4th level, or 20 at 5th level

### **Actions**

Knife: +5 to hit. Hit: 5 (1d4+2)

Shortbow: +5 to hit. Hit: 6 (1d6+2)

### **Abilities**

**Keen scent:** have advantage on scent-based tracking or perception tests

If the dogfolk are defeated and their village is searched, the following can be found:

Several bags of beads made of semi precious stones worth 100 silver shillings

A **bright red egg** made of a glassy like substance that is quite weighty (Many hours of study by a Wizard or Sorcerer will discern that it is a time grenade, and how to activate it. When triggered it affects a 20 foot radius area and freezes all living creatures in time for 5+1d6 rounds if they fail a DC 18 Will save. While frozen, creatures are immune to damage, although could be disarmed or chained up. One use only. Does not require attunement.)

9 small jewels worth an average of 50 silver shillings (450 shillings total)

A clutch of 60 chickens

A week and a half's worth of food for the village

## **17. Repaired Tower**

A squat stone tower sixty feet tall. It is mostly intact although shows signs of having been patched up over the years. At the rear are 4 relatively fresh graves (dogfolk protecting the

tower who were killed by pigfolk). It is guarded by six dogfolk with spears (stats at location 16).

The upper floor of the tower contains a strange silver machine with a table (big enough to lie on) that slides in and out. A panel has been pried open and there is an empty space where something appears to have been removed. On the other side are a number of coloured crystals embedded in the side of the machine.

The machine is a magitek medical device, and the different crystals have different functions.

**Green:** repair genetic defects and cancer

**Red:** Cures diseases and poisons

**Yellow:** Uses stored life energy to heal wounds (at the moment it contains 37 HP worth of life energy), and can regrow missing limbs and organs

**Blue:** paralyses (DC 17 Constitution save; can save again every 3 rounds) then drains 2d10 HP per round which is then stored.

The dogfolk know that by putting a pregnant woman inside and pressing the green crystal the mother and child will deliver safely. They don't know how the other functions work, but they will happily capture some pigfolk to put in it.

The machine is very heavy and would be difficult to remove (a wall would need demolishing). But if it could be transported to the southern lands it would be of immense value. Its removal would also lead to the dogfolk's eventual extinction.

## **18. Huge Statue.**

Visible from several miles away, this statue stands at a height of one hundred and twenty feet. It is a representation of a male elf in robes with a stern expression looking east. It looks heavily weathered but essentially intact. It is similar to some depictions of the god Celebrand. The statue stands on a fifteen foot high base.

A secret door (DC 15 Perception) at the rear of the base leads into a musty unlit stone chamber twenty feet in diameter. The air here is foul and,

unless it is aired for 30 minutes, anyone entering must make a DC 15 Constitution check or suffer the poisoned condition while inside, and for the same time period after leaving.

Inside the darkness waits a Far Realm creature that has slept here since the cataclysm. The Shivering Web appears to be a membrane-like entity approximately 15 feet across with a frill of lilac fronds. It will hide until creatures enter, then create darkness and attack with its paralytic fronds.

### **Shivering Web**

Large aberration, evil

Armor Class 15

Hit Points 40

Speed 30 ft, wall climb 30 ft

Str 18 (+4), Dex 17 (+3), Con 16 (+3), Int 15 (+2), Wis 12 (+1), Cha 9 (-1)

**Condition immunities:** charm, fear, mind control

**Senses:** darkvision 60 ft and see through supernatural darkness 60 ft

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

**Save bonus:** +3

**Challenge:** 3

**Difficulty:** 2nd level

### **Actions**

Melt flesh: +5 to hit, reach 10 feet, one target.

Hit: 10 (3d6) and lose 1d6 attribute points (1-2 CON, 3-4 CHA, 5-6 DEX). The attribute damage lasts until the victim has a Long Rest.

### **Abilities**

**Darkness** (as spell): as an action, create 30 foot diameter sphere of darkness (lasts 10 minutes). Creatures that cannot see are at disadvantage to attack, and advantage to be attacked.

**Paralytic frond whip** (recharge when first reaches 50% or lower HPs): as an action, target within 5 ft must make a DC 12 Constitution save or be paralysed for 1 minute. They can repeat the save at the end of each of their turns. Once

paralysed, they will be targeted by Melt Flesh attacks.

In the middle of the chamber lie a pile of black, calcified humans, dwarves and halflings. They appear to be partially burnt or melted together. The bodies appear to have hardened rather than rotting. Each has an elven steel collar around their neck marked with runes. (They fled here for refuge and died here together.)

The stone walls of the interior chamber are intricately carved. There are three sets of carvings in three different styles. One set depicts a human figure - perhaps a god - and human worshippers. The other sets depict a halfling and dwarven god and worshippers. These gods do not appear to correspond to the known pantheon.

It appears that this place was shared by the worshippers of three races. It also seems very old. Underneath the human carvings on a low wall rests a **shiny black stone idol**. It has the appearance of a pregnant human woman.

The idol is a magical holy relic. It has the power to increase fertility in females within 1 mile radius and to drastically reduce the risk of developmental defects in foetuses and to reduce infant mortality. It would be a boon to the dogfolk. It does not require attunement.

### **Special: a new god**

Any human, halfling or dwarven cleric or paladin who visits the temple experiences a dream the next time they sleep. In that dream they meet a being of the same race as them who tells them that they are the true forgotten god of their people. This being asks for their service. The god says its name is dead, and so it will leave it to them to choose a name for them. Their values are friendship between the races and freedom from compulsion. They are the breaker of chains and the dream of the indentured.

If the cleric or paladin chooses to accept this offer, then they will essentially become the

founding force (high priest) of a new religion. They retain their existing cleric or paladin abilities, but they now have access to spells above 4th level when they reach the requisite character level. Followers of the new god also have access to a new cleric Domain: Freedom (see Annex B). If the cleric or paladin rejects the offer, then they never experience the dream again.

If there are no clerics or paladins in the party, then at GM's discretion the god might appear in the dreams of the human, halfling or dwarf with the highest Wisdom. They make the same offer. If the character agrees they will be expected to multiclass as a cleric or paladin at their next level up. Alternatively they can, as a one-time offer, immediately change their current class to a cleric or paladin of the same character level.

## 19. Hall of the Machines

This is a large ruined structure sitting on a low barren hill. It has four wings radiating from a tall central area. The stone structure is strongly built, but is about fifty percent collapsed. Just beyond an opening on the southern side is a pillared hall. Two humanoids made of brass patrol the outside of the structure. Two more stand guard just inside. (note: any random encounters in this area will be with 1d6 hostile brass automata.)

### Brass automata (4)

Medium construct, unaligned

Armor Class 18  
Hit Points 30  
Speed 30 ft.

Str 15 (+2), Dex 13 (+1), Con 14 (+2), Int 10 (+0), Wis 8 (-1), Cha 5 (-3)

**Damage Immunities:** fire, poison

**Condition immunities:** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralysed, petrified, poisoned.

**Senses:** darkvision 120 feet

**Save bonus:** +2

**Skills:** None

**Challenge Rating:** 1

**Difficulty:** 2nd level for a group of 2, and 4th level for a group of 5 automata

**Languages:** understands the Ieldran language but cannot normally speak

### Actions

**Multiattack:** automaton makes two melee attacks.

**Brass fists:** +4 to hit, reach 5 feet, one target.

Hit: 6 (1d6+2)

### Abilities

**Immutable Form:** The automata is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

**Magic Resistance:** The automata has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Searching nearby:** those searching thoroughly nearer to the structure may find signs of disturbed earth. If the graves are excavated they will find the husk-like decomposed bodies of 9 serpentfolk laid out carefully. They appear to have been dead for several weeks or months.

**Searching the structure:** inside the structure there is a large pillared hall that appears to have held something on a raised area, but judging by the drag marks in the floorboards something large and heavy was dragged away. It is littered with 10 smashed brass automata, and dried blood stains.

Further in, there are many storerooms filled with boxes and surgical operating rooms that lie dusty. Behind a rusting steel door is a pit. The pit drops 100 feet down and is filled to the half-way point with bones, and then the desiccated remains of serpentfolk (lacking brains) nearer the top. A twisting set of stone steps inside the structure leads down, and ends at a strong door of elven steel. The door has no lock, but has an indentation in the shape of the hand of a brass automaton.

**Inside the boxes:** these contain the component pieces for approximately 48 new brass automata. The various arm, leg, and torso etc pieces are carefully stored in waxed cloth. There are also 1000lbs of brass ingots (worth a total of 1000 silver shillings).

**The basement door:** the door can only be activated willingly by a brass automaton (just using a body or spare arm won't work), and automata have no reason to open the door. The door is very strong, but not magical. Breaking it down requires a DC 25 Athletics check (one attempt per character only). A Knock spell will also work.

Beyond the door is a cobweb filled dusty laboratory and mechanical workshop. The air is stale and musty. Mounted on a workbench is a **pink crystalline brain** the same size as a human brain.

**The brain:** it is a magitek artificial intelligence prototype. It can be mounted into the body of a brass automaton (either a salvaged one, or one using the parts upstairs) by someone with an appropriate background or a DC 15 Intelligence (smiths tools) or Intelligence (arcana) check. Once complete (takes six hours) it will come online and be ready for orders from its creator. It only understands the Ieldran (elven) language, but is smart and will try to understand what its master wants. It cannot speak, but it is intelligent and could draw pictographs (or write in Ieldran). It has no useful knowledge, but it will serve loyally. It cannot wear armour, but it could use a shield. If taken to 0 HP, it is disabled, but could be repaired (a Mending cantrip can restore 1 HP per casting).

### **Brass automata MK2**

Medium construct, unaligned

Armor Class 18  
Hit Points 30  
Speed 30 ft.

Str 15 (+2), Dex 13 (+1), Con 14 (+2), Int 15 (+2), Wis 12 (+1), Cha 10 (+0)

**Damage Immunities:** fire, poison

**Condition immunities:** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralysed, petrified, poisoned.

**Senses:** darkvision 120 feet

**Save bonus:** +2

**Skills:** None

**Languages:** understands the Ieldran language but cannot normally speak

### **Actions**

**Multiattack:** automaton makes either two melee or two ranged attacks.

**Brass fists:** +4 to hit, reach 5 feet, one target.

**Hit:** 6 (1d6+2)

**Melee weapon:** +4 to hit. Hit: weapon damage +2

**Ranged weapon:** +3 to hit. Hit: weapon damage +1.

### **Abilities**

**Immutable Form:** The automata is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

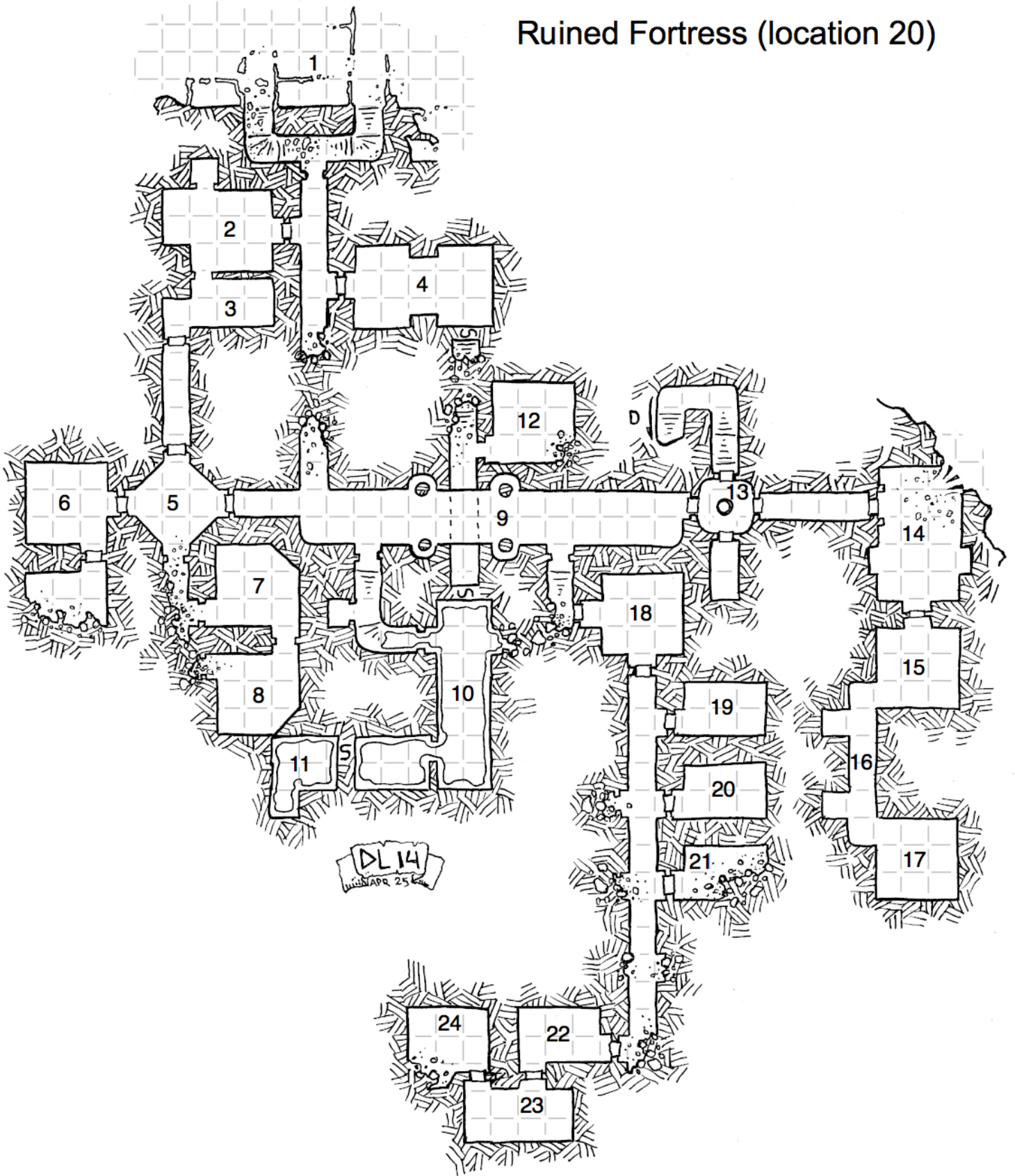
**Magic Resistance:** The automata has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**The missing machine:** The drag marks leading out of the structure peter out outside the structure (they were concealed by the Serpentfolk). It would be very challenging (though not impossible) to follow their trail: three consecutive successful DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) checks would be required. These checks may not be reattempted if failed. The trail leads to location 23.

## **20. Ruined fortress at chasm (mini dungeon)**

Overlooking a chasm are the ruins of a fortress. The fortress was sizable (it looks like it could have held a garrison of perhaps 100 men), and was built of granite faced with a milky marble. Most of the fortress has gone, and it appears to have fallen into the chasm as a result of a

# Ruined Fortress (location 20)



landslip. A corner remains surrounded by rubble, and time has caused the marble to fall away.

The fortress was once the personal home of an elven lord and general called Anghareth (the origin of the war god Anghalak). Like all elves he was an accomplished mage. The lower chambers were used for experimentation and storage. Anghareth played a role in the development of the zombie plague used by the Shining Ones to wipe out the rival orc empire to the east. His personal laboratories are heavily warded, but still hold a sample of the plague.

**Villakorsh:** This area is the haunt of Villakorsh who will be lurking around, and may be spotted. Villakorsh appears to be a ragged, twitchy, dried corpse-like humanoid with a completely bandaged face and head. Villakorsh moves by scuttling on all fours, and can walk on walls and ceilings.

It is what is left of a Shining One possessed by a Far Realm entity. Villakorsh has the memories of its victim, and knows that the elves had a "beacon" (location 41, Zone Three) that they were developing, and which could be used to open a portal to the Far Realm. Villakorsh wants to find the beacon and tear a hole in this reality. It believes that there is a clue to the location of the beacon in a laboratory here, but the lab has wards against aberrations that even now Villakorsh cannot breach.

Villakorsh will follow any party entering the ruins and spy on them hoping that they breach the wards. He will then ambush them when they reach the office and attempt to steal the scroll tube containing information about the beacon's location. If Villakorsh cannot do that, he will also stalk the characters and attack at night. He will try to drag one away or take a hostage in return for the beacon information.

### **Villakorsh**

Medium aberration, chaotic evil

Armor Class 18

Hit Points 170

Speed 40 ft scuttling, 30 feet wall or ceiling crawling

Str 18 (+4), Dex 20 (+5), Con 17 (+3), Int 12 (+1), Wis 14 (+2), Cha 12 (+1)

**Condition immunities:** blind, charm, poison

**Senses:** Darkvision 60 feet, Blindsight 60 feet

**Save bonus:** +8

**Skills:** Stealth +13

**Languages:** Ieldran (can communicate telepathically in words or images up to 10 feet distant)

**Challenge:** 10

**Difficulty:** 7th level

### **Actions**

**Multiattack:** he makes two claw attacks, or a vomit black goo and claw attack.

**Claws:** +9 to hit, reach 5 feet, one target. Hit: 13 slashing (2d12+2) plus 7 (2d6) necrotic damage.  
**Vomit black goo:** 20 feet range, DC 18 Dexterity save or Restrained (can make DC 18 Str check each round to break free)

### **Abilities**

**Magic resistant:** advantage on saves against spells or magical effects

**Scuttle attack** (recharge 6): as a Move, Villakorsh scuttles up the wall and drops on his victim from above gaining advantage on his attacks this round.

**Scuttle away** (recharge 3-6): as a Move, Villakorsh scuttles across walls and ceilings disengaging from enemies and then taking a double move away.

### **The Cellars**

(1) Entrance: Stairs lead down from the rubble of the fortress into what was once the cellars. The

passageways are choked with creepers and weeds and unlit.

(2) Guard Room: The door of this room is rotted away. The room beyond appears to have been a guard room. Bits of wood on the floor and walls look like the remains of tables, chairs and a weapon rack. An alcove in the north wall appears to be a latrine with a hole in the floor leading down. The room is damp and has weeds and lichen growing everywhere.

Originally staffed by bearfolk warriors, the west wall still shows carvings of bearfolk armed with spears. The bearfolk appear to be the proud protectors of tall slim humanoids in robes or dresses.

(3) Barracks: The southern door has rotted away. Judging by what looks to be bits of bed frames lying around, this room has the appearance of a barracks. It contains carvings of phalanxes of spear-wielding bearfolk marching against brutish figures with piggy faces and prominent lower tusks (orcs).

(4) Pantry and wine cellar: The western door is rotted away. Inside the room are what appear to be the remains of shelves and barrels. There are traces of foodstuffs here (fossilised bread, black egg shells), and quite a bit of broken glass.

In the southeast of the room there is a secret door (DC 15 Perception). It is operated by a concealed lever, but it has rusted away and will break. If forced open, a descending stair is visible, but the stair is choked with rubble after a few feet.

(5) Hallway: This diamond shaped room has a decorative glass lantern hanging from the ceiling (mostly intact 200 silver shillings) and a mosaic floor. The mosaic shows slim elven figures illuminated by stars handing out bread and other gifts to humanoid figures.

The mosaic is stained and damaged in places, but if removed carefully by an artisan and

transported south, the component pieces could be sold for 1000 silver shillings.

(6) Goblin workshop: A flimsy wooden door (half falling apart from age) leads to two chambers. They contain the remnants of furniture and some workbenches and tools. In the first chamber there are two pottery urns with the stain of long-dried wine inside. They are decorated with distinctive Muki (goblin) designs (worth 50 silver shillings each to a collector). There are also two tarnished tools made of elven steel that have survived, although only an engineer would recognise what they were for (two sizes of screwdriver).

(7-8) Domestic slave chambers: These rooms contain the remains of wooden furniture, although everything seems sized for a child (these were chambers for halfling slaves).

In area 8 there is a large area where soil spills through the stonework and a large patch of (harmless) mushrooms grow. Also in area 8 is a partially rotted chest of wood and corroded iron. Inside are a few child sized rags in bright colours and a fine chess set with pieces made of some kind of polished bone or tusk (worth 150 silver shillings).

(9) Long hallway: This long hallway would once have been grand. It has wall sconces for lamps and shreds of once fine tapestries. At the centre stand 4 statues of elves: 2 male and 2 female.

The walls between the dimensions are thin here. In a strange dim light the characters can see all manner of worm- and jellyfish-like creatures floating, flopping and swimming through the air. The creatures are transparent, almost as if they are insubstantial. The creatures appear to have a variety of sense organs and many teeth. The creatures appear to pass through each at times, and to attack each other at others.

If characters move slowly and carefully and douse their light sources they may be able to pass unharmed (a DC 15 group Dexterity

(Stealth) check: at least half of the party need to succeed). This roll must be repeated each time they pass. If they fail, use bright light, or attack, then they will attract the attention of the entities (treat as one entity).

### **Ripper Shoal**

Large aberration swarm, evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 90

Speed 30 ft (flying).

Str 13 (+1), Dex 17 (+3), Con 14 (+2), Int 7 (-2),  
Wis 12 (+1), Cha 6 (-2)

**Damage resistances:** resistant to non-magical weapons (half damage)

**Condition immunities:** immune to mind-affecting magic

**Senses:** darkvision 120 feet

**Skills:** Perception +4

**Save bonus:** +3

**Challenge:** 5

**Difficulty:** 4th level

### **Actions**

Multiattack: the Shoal makes four up to Blizzard of Teeth attacks against four different targets

Blizzard of teeth: +8 to hit, reach five feet, one target. Hit: 12 (1d12+5)

### **Abilities**

**Feeding frenzy** (recharge 5-6): if a victim is reduced to half HP, it is immediately subjected to an additional bite attack (roll to hit as normal).

The Ripper Shoal will lose sight of any opponents that leave line of sight of the hallway, and cannot pursue beyond that point.

**The statues:** One of the male elves is dressed in strange bulky armour of a style the characters do not recognise (they represent the Ancients and wear stylised spacesuits). The statues are

good quality but not particularly remarkable (each: 500lbs, 50 silver shillings to a collector).

(10) Meat storage room: It gets colder as the characters descend the stairs, and at the bottom of the stairs the doorway is half filled with ice. The lower steps are also icy and the first character descending without precautions must make a DC15 Dexterity save or go careening into the room on their back.

The main room appears to have been a meat storage room, but it is freezing cold. (The room's walls magically emanate cold.) It appears also to have been flooded to a height of 3 feet at some stage, and the top 2 or 3 inches of that water is frozen. Rusting frozen hooks hang from the walls in various places, as does a central rail. All food is gone, but the bones of animal carcasses are visible on the floor of the room under the ice and water. The top 4 feet of the doorway are above the ice, so the room can be entered by crouching.

Anyone walking, crawling or sliding out onto the ice has a 2 in 6 chance of breaking it (roll again for each person). Anyone breaking the ice falls through and takes 1d6 cold damage per round from being submerged in ice water. In order to take any action the victim must succeed at a DC 15 Constitution save (+1 DC per round) to overcome the cold shock. Climbing out requires a DC 20 Dexterity save, although assistance from another can give advantage to the roll. Alternatively someone could be pulled out with a rope. Once removed from the ice water, characters need to remove wet clothes and try to dry themselves or they will continue to suffer damage at 1HP/round.

**Secret door in main room:** There is a secret door on the north wall of the main room. It is mostly underwater, and covered in ice. Operating the secret catch will not work, so it will need to be forced. That will be difficult to do while submerged in ice water or standing on the ice above. If the characters do somehow open it, the ice floor immediately shatters as the water



pours out into the corridor and area 12. This will lower the water level in both areas to around 2 feet deep.

**Further chamber:** The further chamber to the southwest (off from the main room) has a secret door on its west wall. The door appears to require a key in the shape of a rod to be inserted (the rod is long gone). If the heavy stone door is broken open by some plausible means, it reveals another cold room.

(11) Cold storage room: This chilled room has the remains of shelves and lots of smashed glass on the floor. There are what appear to be 3 intact potion bottles on the floor. One clear, one green and one purple.

This room was actually used to store biological samples and bioweapons. None of the potions can be identified using an Identify spell. The first **purple potion** is an orc blood sample (salty and yuck, no effect). The second **green potion** is a gene-editing experiment (1d12 hours after imbibing the character has a 50% chance of permanently increasing each statistic by 1d3 points. Roll for each statistic.). The third **clear potion** is an earlier version of the zombie plague used to commit genocide against the orcs. Anyone drinking it must make a DC 20 Constitution save or take 4d8 damage. Anyone dropped to 0 HP by the damage dies and comes back to life 1d6 rounds later as a 30 HP ghoul (MM, p.148).

(12) Secret room: This room is lit by two torches upon which has been cast the Continual Flame spell. In the east wall is a door made of rosewood with three keyholes in a copper plate. The door appears remarkably timeless compared to the rest of the ruins.

The door is magical and immune to damage. The door can only be opened by inserting the three copper keys. When this is done the door opens into a pocket dimension. See location **20A**. The three copper keys are at the Pigfolk Village (Zone 1, location 14), the Ubershroom

(Zone 2, location 35), and the Rose Garden (Zone 3, location 46).

(13) Hall and well: the south room contains the mouldering remains of what were water barrels. North are stairs that once ran up to the fortress kitchens, but are now choked with rubble. The well is unremarkable.

(14) Private chapel: This room appears to have been a disused chapel of sorts. It appears to have had a beautiful window overlooking the chasm, but the window and most of the frame has gone. It is now the site of a nest of two Giant Vultures. They are a mated pair and the nest contains 3 eggs which they will protect.

### **Giant Vultures (2)**

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 22

Speed 10 ft walking, 60 ft flying

Str 15 (+2), Dex 10 (+0), Con 15 (+2), Int 6 (-2), Wis 12 (+1), Cha 7 (-2)

**Skills:** Perception +3

**Challenge:** 1

**Difficulty:** 2nd level

### **Actions**

Multiattack: the vulture makes a beak and talon attack.

Beak: +4 to hit, one target. Hit: 7 (2d4+2)

Talon: +4 to hit, one target. Hit: 9 (2d6+2)

### **Abilities**

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

**Keen sight and smell:** advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight or smell.

Where the window was is a hole overlooking the chasm (100 foot drop).

(15) Storage room: This room contains the cobwebbed remains of what was spare furniture. Several tables and two dozen chairs are in pieces and mostly rotted away (the room is a little damp). There are signs of rats.

(16) Two cells here, but the bars and manacles are nearly completely rusted away.

(17) Storage room: This room appears to have contained wardrobes and spare clothes and boxes of blankets or other materials. They are all in pieces and reduced to rotted shred by time and damp conditions. There are several nests of rats here.

Buried in the filth is a **small wooden model of a keelboat**. It radiates magic. On command it can grow to a full size keelboat in one round. It can transform 20 times before losing its magic. It requires attunement.

#### *The laboratories*

(18) Warded door and airlock: The elven steel door (250 lbs of elven steel if removed) of this room is covered in silver glyphs. The glyphs look strange and seem almost hyper-real. No magic functions in proximity to the door. It is also an effective ward against Far Realm entities.

The door has a complex mechanical lock, but it is very old and has furred up with lichen. Picking the lock requires a DC 30 Dex (lockpicks) check. Breaking the door down requires a DC 25 Strength check. Alternatively the door has AC 19 and 50 HP and ignores the first 10 damage of any attack.

Breaking the door down destroys the ward (the ward is otherwise immune to damage). Opening the door doesn't destroy the ward, but renders it ineffective.

The room beyond was bisected by a glass wall and a strange curved glass door, but it has

shattered as a result of earth movements (it was an atmosphere seal, and rotating airlock door).

(19) Cell: This room has a solid elven steel door bolted from outside. Inside are tarnished elven steel manacles that could hold up to six humanoids. The floor slopes towards the middle of the room to a drain.

If the drain is searched a tarnished gold ring is found. It is quite chunky and decorated with a strange glyph in embedded red topaz. The ring is worth 150 silver shillings. It belonged to an orc prisoner. If a Comprehend Languages spell is used to read the glyph it says "Death Moon Clan".

(20) Cell: This room has a solid elven steel door bolted from outside. If it is opened, the party will see a heavysset creature with piglike features and prominent lower tusks sitting hunched on the floor. If the characters have a light source it can be seen to have milky eyes and greyish skin and looks dead. The creature will react to light, noise or movement and if the door is opened it will seek to attack.

A quick thinking character might be able to slam the door shut again if they win initiative. The creature is an orc plague zombie, and still carries the bioweapon used by the elves to commit genocide against the orc kingdoms. If Villakorsh is stalking the party and the zombie is still alive, he will open the cell door as he escapes and release the zombie to slow / prevent any pursuit.

#### **Orc Plague Zombie**

Medium undead, unaligned

Armor Class 11  
Hit Points (special)  
Speed 30 ft

Str 18 (+4), Dex 12 (+1), Con 16 (+3), Int 6 (-2), Wis 6 (-2), Cha 4 (-3)

**Damage Immunities:** immune to any damage not targeting the head, poison, cold

**Condition immunities:** immune to mind-affecting magic, poisoned

**Senses:** darkvision 60 feet

**Save bonus:** +3

**Challenge:** 5

**Difficulty:** 4th level

### Actions

**Multiattack:** the zombie makes a grapple and bite attack

**Grapple:** Strength +6 versus opponent's Strength (Athletics) or Dex (Acrobatics). If the zombie succeeds in the grapple, its bite attack is at advantage.

**Bite:** +5 to hit, one target. Hit: 5 (1d6+2) plus infection

### Abilities

**Aggressive (recharge 5-6):** as a bonus action the zombie can move up to its speed to a target it can see.

The zombie cannot be killed by any attacks that do not target the back of its head. Ordinary sword etc attacks will hit but be seemingly ineffective. Characters can deliberately target the head, but such attacks are at disadvantage. Inflicting 5 damage to the back of the head will kill the zombie. Spells that inflict area effect damage are potentially effective at DM's discretion.

If anyone is bitten they may be infected by the zombie plague. They must make a DC 25 Constitution save or die in 1d6 hours and reanimate as another plague zombie (use their normal stats but add +2 Strength and use the zombie's damage and condition immunities). Please note that this infection cannot be cured with Lesser Restoration or a Paladin's Lay on Hands (but a Paladin's immunity to disease will protect them).

(21) Bio-laboratory: This room is partially collapsed. It appears to be an alchemist's chamber and has the remains of workbenches and shattered glassware.

(22) Bio-laboratory: The door to this room is rotted away and falling apart. This room appears to have been an alchemist's workshop. There are the remains of wooden furniture and smashed glass. There are also two collapsed rusting trollies big enough for a person to lay on. In a small bone box buried under detritus are **5 small crystal baubles**. (they radiate magic and are warm to the touch. Each contains 5 years of life that can be used in conjunction with the Absorb Essence spell - see location 3A).

(23) Surgical room: The door to this room is falling apart. This room contains a central table or altar made of corroded steel. There are also a number of smashed and corroded steel lanterns, and some small rusting tables and broken glass and pottery. There are ten small sharp knives made of tarnished elven steel that are intact (treat as 1d3 damage daggers, total weight 1lb).

The central altar has the remains of rusting fittings that look like someone could be tied or chained to the steel altar.

(24) Office: This room is noticeably warmer than the others (It has a permanent enchantment to remain at 18 celsius), and the hardwood door is relatively intact. It contains a desk, chair and bookcases (the books are all rotted away) and shreds of a once fine rug. Inside the drawer desk are three scroll cases made of tarnished silver, bone, and elven steel, and a black and white skull mask.

**Once this room is entered, Villakorsh (if alive) will attack and attempt to grab the elven steel scroll case and then flee with it.**

The scroll cases are difficult to open and somewhat fused shut. Their contents are as follows.

**Elven steel case:** contains a vellum scroll written in Ieldran (elvish). It is addressed to Lord Anghareth, and provides an update on work to construct the “beacon” which appears to be a means of signalling the Ancients (the gods of the Shining Ones, apparently). The scroll reveals that the beacon is being constructed approximately 100 miles south west of the Shining City (location 41 in Zone Three).

**Bone case:** contains a vellum scroll written in Ieldran. The scroll appears to be an essay by an elf called Lortian addressed to Lord Anghareth. Lortian refers to two recent wars in which the elves were victorious. The first against the Dragon Empire which was only won decisively by deploying “Titans”. The more recent against the Orc Kingdoms won by “releasing the scourge”. Lortian notes that both weapons have been mothballed and he cautions against putting them beyond use. He uses various arguments including the possibility of “hostile races from other spheres” and their vulnerability if the newly developed “rift gate” were used as an enemy beachhead.

**Silver case:** contains a vellum scroll with a copy of the spell Teleportation Circle (5th Bard / Sorcerer / Wizard spell) and it is annotated with the sigil sequence for a permanent circle. (See ‘spell scroll’ in DMG p.200 for any necessary roll required, and mishaps table at p.140). If the characters cast the spell successfully and target the listed sigils, they arrive inside location 33 (The Basalt Pyramid) in Zone Two. This will consume the scroll.

A **black and white skull mask made of bone** gives the wearer an undead appearance. They will appear to have rotting / skeletal features and people will respond to them as they would if confronted with a zombie or similar. The mask also allows the wearer to make a Charisma (Deception) check with advantage to fool undead creatures (DC 15 unintelligent undead, DC 20 for smart undead). This item requires attunement.

## **20A. Special location: extra-dimensional space**

This room can only be opened with the three copper keys. The three copper keys are at the Pigfolk Village (Zone 1, location 14), the Ubershroom (Zone 2, location 35), and the Rose Garden (Zone 3, location 46).

Beyond the door is what appears to be an elegant wood-panelled study. It contains a table and 6 high-backed dining chairs, and also three leather chairs around a low table. In the east wall is a beautiful stained glass window letting in bright sunshine (illusion), and fresh roses in a vase.

This space was jointly created by three elven lords: Anghareth, Lady Ferranil and Narinlath. Each held a copper key, and they could only enter the space when together. The space is outside the normal timestream (time does not pass outside for those inside this space) and is proof against any detection or scrying spells.

Hidden inside the frame of one of the chairs is a weird slug-like creature. The slug is actually a bio-magical audio recording device and was installed by Lady Ferranil as insurance in case she was double-crossed. It can be accessed by placing it over one’s ear.

The recordings are in Ieldran (elvish) speech. If the characters can understand it, then they can learn that this space was required because the three elves were conspirators. They had doubts about the Great Work, and they were concerned that Celebrand, the elven leader, may have been intending to elevate only himself as a god rather than all of the Ieldra. The conspirators planned to sabotage the Great Work to prevent this (the characters may speculate that this may have brought about the cataclysm). The recordings include a magical passphrase that Narinlath has obtained to give them access to the Crucible (it is the key to the barrier at location 61).

## 21. Obelisk with markings

Visible from several miles away (from anywhere within its 12 mile hex), this smooth marble obelisk rises 200 feet and is 30 feet in diameter.

Engraved into each side are symbols. From a distance of 500 feet away they are clearly visible. As soon as they become visible the characters feel a powerful wave of revulsion, fear and nausea. Each character must make a DC 20 Wisdom save. Failure means that the character cannot force themselves to continue heading westwards, and this continues even if they head out of sight of the obelisk. This effect lasts 8 hours. If the save is successful, the character can continue west, but is at disadvantage to all checks while within sight of the obelisk.

The symbols are not magical. The effect is psychological. The fear associated with the symbols is an ancestral memory programmed into their ancestors by the soul surgery of the Shining Ones. It is encoded into their genetic memory. Once the symbols are seen their effect cannot be avoided, but characters averting their gaze are not affected. The symbols however have a subconscious pull, so averting one's eyes requires a successful DC 15 Intelligence save.

## 22. Mist Shrouded Bog

The bog is a wetland of between 3 to 6 feet in depth of murky brown water populated mostly by weeds and grasses, and dotted with the occasional mossy cypress. It is usually obscured by a low hanging mist, and visibility is not more than fifty feet once inside.

Originally an area of carefully irrigated and managed paddy fields, the bog is a swampy region stretching nearly 50 miles northeast to southwest, and between 2 to 10 miles north to south. The area suffered at the hands of the cataclysm, and time and space throughout the swamp is warped. The bog is difficult terrain (so

1.5 mph at normal pace, and probably closer to 1 mph given the fog).

Once the bog is entered, it is difficult to find the way out (DC 20 Wisdom (Survival) check; one try per hour). For each hour spent in the bog, the characters will encounter an anomaly. Roll on the table below and add +1 per hour spent in the bog.

01 - 10 They hear a strange whooping cry from several directions, but it is impossible to identify the source (it sounds a bit like a bird's cry).

11-16 They hear bells, as if from a church, ringing in the distance.

17-25 They notice that it is getting either light or dark earlier than expected (treat as +6 hours)

26-40 They hear a baby crying (shrieking), but it is always from somewhere just ahead. After an hour it abruptly stops.

41-55 They find the corpse of one of the serpentfolk floating in the water. It appears to have died within the last few hours and has a large (crocodile) bite wound in its side. It wears a distinctive blue and red bead necklace. If the beads are returned to the serpentfolk they are frightened. They belonged to Sissarak who disappeared five years ago.

56-70 A random character in the party goes missing without explanation.

71-85 A freshwater crocodile (MM, p.320) with milky white eyes attacks. It can be driven away with fire. (AC 12, HP 19, Stealth +2, +4 to hit. 7 or 1d10+2 damage bite. Anyone bitten is grappled and restrained (escape DC 12). If this is rolled again, they are attacked by what appears to be the exact same croc (same scars etc).

86-100 They see themselves through the mist about 70 feet away. They appear to be running and one of the characters is injured and being

carried. They are accompanied by a brass automaton. Their counterparts do not react to them, and disappear after 1 round.

101-120 One of the characters at random (whether actually missing or not i.e. they might be a duplicate) stumbles out of the fog. They cannot remember where they have been, but... (roll 1d6) 1: their left arm has been severed and cauterised, 2: they have a large diamond worth 5000 silver shillings, 3: they now have a weird multicolored geometric tattoo on their back that appears to move if anyone looks at it for too long, 4: they have aged by 6+1d6 years and their normal equipment is gone or worn out, 5: they no longer speak any languages known to the party and only speak and understand Ieldran (elven), 6: they have a blanket wrapped around them in which is swaddled an apparently normal 3 month old male baby (the same race as a random party member).

121-135 They arrive at a wooden shack built on a small hillock which barely rises from the surrounding bog. The shack is damp inside and has mildew and moss growing in places. There is a bed and a child's cot. The utensils are rusted and the food is rotted away to nothing.

**Lying under the bed is an important non-perishable item that belongs to one character (such as a trinket).** It is functional but appears tarnished, marked or faded with age (whatever is appropriate for several decades of age).

136-150 They find a body lying face up under the water. It appears to be perfectly preserved and is an attractive pale skinned human woman with shoulder length dark brown hair. She looks in her early 20s and wears a simple skirt and tunic and has an elven steel collar around her neck marked with runes. (This is a version of Meelita from one of the many fractured realities.)

151-165 They find a crude stone mausoleum overgrown with moss and creepers. The single sealed stone door leads to a small chamber ten feet long and six feet wide. It is occupied by a

stone sarcophagus. Inside the sarcophagus are the bones of a woman in a few tattered pieces of a dress, and a corroded steel box. Inside is a book. It is written in the hand of one of the characters (not necessarily one who vanished!) and appears to be a diary of sorts covering a thirty year period. It recounts that character becoming separated and meeting a similarly lost woman called Meelita. Ultimately they remained with Meelita, unable to locate their allies or find a way out of the swamp, and had a child. The final entry is in a different handwriting and Meelita notes that the character vanished one day and she was never able to locate them. She waited for the rest of her life for them to return and constructed this tomb.

### 23. The moors (not shown on map)

This location is the adjacent hex to the hex containing location 19. It is three miles from location 19. After dragging the automata machine for several miles the serpentfolk excavated a pit and buried the machine here. It would take at least two or three days for a small party to excavate the machine. It is about ten feet in diameter. If a ramp was excavated and it was hauled up, it could be dragged elsewhere. It is very heavy. With access to materials (including freshly extracted brains) the machine can produce a new brass automaton in 1 hour. The default orders of new brass automata are: patrol Zone One and destroy any interlopers (defined as any humanoid who is not an elf or wearing a slave collar); to collect more materials (including brains); and to protect the machine.

## Zone Two: Temples

Zone One: The Farms

24. The Red Door

35. The Ubershroom

26. The Circle Lake

31. Ruined Dome

36. Creepy Ruins

25. Sheltered Dell

37. The Crystal Woods

32. Iris Door in Hill

33. The Basalt Pyramid

28. The Metal Tree

34. The Petrified Forest

27. Giant Spiny Plant

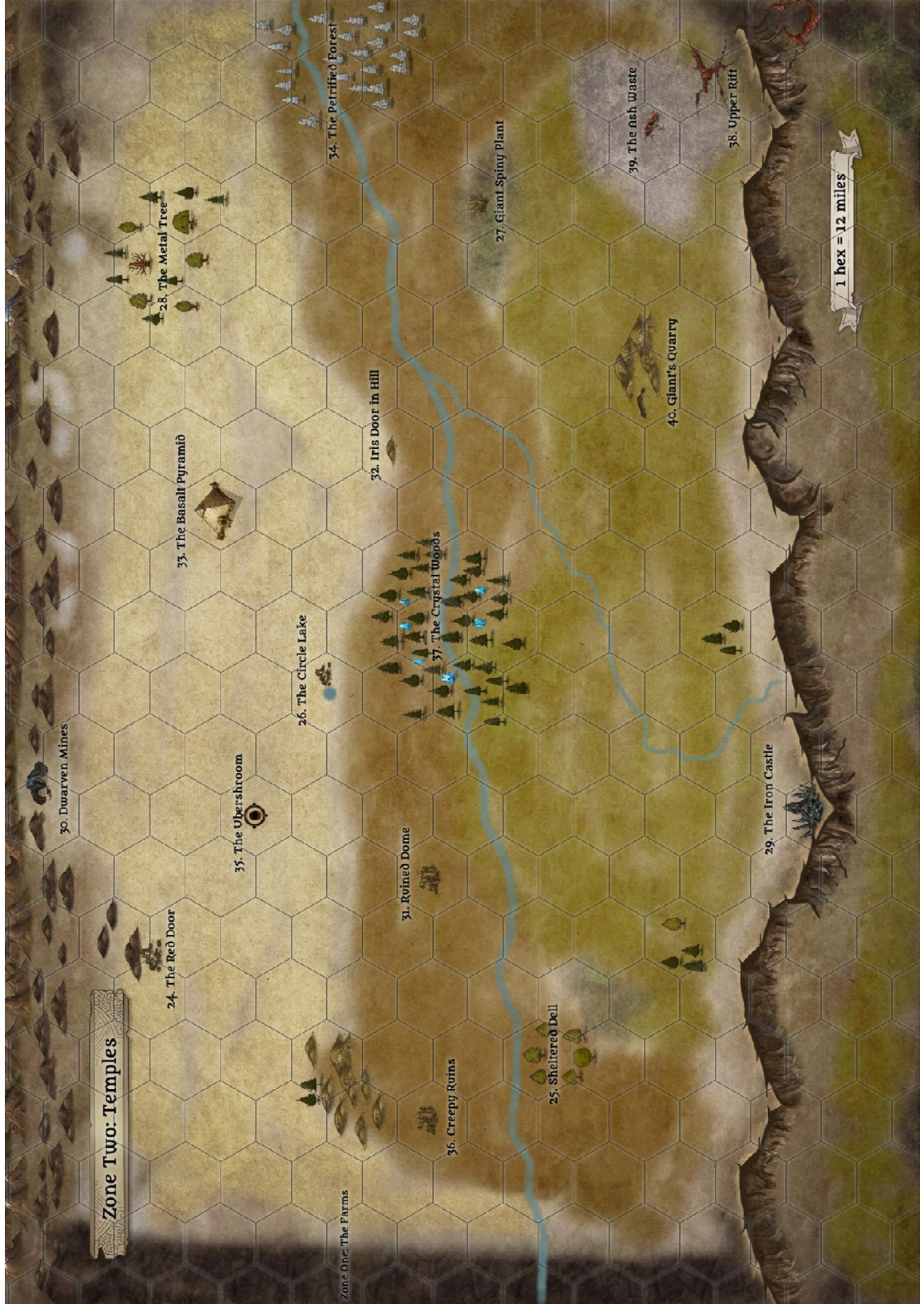
39. The Ash Waste

38. Upper Rift

40. Giant's Quarry

29. The Iron Castle

1 hex = 12 miles



## Zone Two: The Temple District

### Factions of Zone Two

There are three factions currently active in Zone Two.

#### The Cult of Eyes

The Cult of Eyes is a group of Magog warlocks who have all taken as a patron The Worm Gods. They are led by Verak. Verak was the firstborn son of the Sunud tribe. When he was 16 his younger brother framed him for stealing from his father, and he was banished. Seething with resentment he found his way to the Cult of Eyes, entered into a pact, and rose through the ranks. Verak wants to find an army that he can use to conquer and/or destroy the Magog and his own family. He has heard rumours from his dark masters of the lost 'joining' magic of the Shining Ones. It is through the 'joining' process that the Shining Ones created lesser races such as the dogfolk and serpentfolk. Verak hopes to harness the technology. Their expedition comprises Verak (6th level Warlock), 7 warlocks (average 2nd level), and 20 Magog warriors. The Cult has access to more Warlocks and soldiers which it will deploy if it needs to.

Likely development:

Weeks 1-2: Cult searching the western side of Zone Two searching for the joining facility.

During this time they meet the Iron Sentinel rebels, but have no interest in helping them.

Week 3: Cult fights the wolffolk at location 24, but are driven off by them. The Cult decides to cut a deal with the Iron Sentinel rebels. They search and track them down. In return for aid in fighting the wolffolk, Verak agrees to destroy the metal tree.

Week 4: a large group of 40 Iron Sentinels and Verak's remaining people attack the wolffolk and drive them off. Vagreb is killed and they take her yellow amulet.

Week 5: Verak's people explore the facility and decide that they need experimental subjects. They start searching for groups to kidnap.

Week 6: The Iron Sentinels press Verak to keep his side of the bargain. He travels to the metal tree and betrays the Sentinels. A civil war breaks out between the Iron Sentinels. There are about 60 rebels and about 120 loyal Sentinels. The rebels are eventually wiped out.

Verak and his group continue capturing victims to use in their experiments with the joining machine.

#### The Boar and Compass Trading Company

The Boar and Compass Trading Company is a bearfolk mercantile enterprise. It is led by Angus Iomair (5th level Fighter), an accomplished negotiator and smooth talker. He is accompanied by his son Dougal (3rd level Fighter), five bearfolk servants/cooks, and a company of 30 kilt-wearing bearfolk warriors.

Angus brought his people north to find great riches. Unfortunately he and his men chose to explore the Circle Lake (location 26). Sickened by what they found, they damaged the network of living brains that maintain the dream world that keeps the Titans subdued. After the resulting earth tremors, Angus came to realise what they had done. He does not want to be responsible for releasing the Titans and the destruction that would bring. As an immediate measure he has ordered his troops to patrol and capture any living creatures they find. Their brains are then removed, placed in the Ieldran transport flasks, and plugged into the dream web. The web is however suffering a cascade failure, and this is only a short term measure. But by studying the Ieldran (elvish) language he



has learned that the elves had a way to destroy Titans - a failsafe. The so-called 'god weapon' is hidden somewhere in the High Moors, but Angus does not know where.

Likely development:

Week -1: Angus's people locate the Titan facility.

Weeks 1-2: Raiding to feed brains into the Titan machine. Also searching for the "God Weapon".

Week 3: Douglas and his men attack Verak and some of his group, but end up fleeing after losing five men.

Week 4: Angus reads reference to Ferranil's living home. They search the Ubershroom and see the painting of the giant spiny plant. Dougal heads to the plant and recovers the God Weapon. He opens the box and he and all his men are killed by the wards. Meanwhile Angus discovers the secret areas in the Titan facility.

Week 5: Now Angus (mad with grief) and 6 bearfolk have the God Weapon and access to symbionts. Angus forces his own staff to use the God Weapon on two of the Titans. Angus accepts the symbiont and takes control of the last Titan.

Week 6: Angus uses the Titan to attack Verak's people (if he can find them). Angus then marches south to attack the Avari to get revenge for the Massacre of Dunbeath.

### **The Iron Sentinels**

The Iron Sentinels are black iron golems that are crafted to appear like skeletons. Each Sentinel has bound into it the soul of a slave to give it life. The elves used the Sentinels as guards for their scientific complexes, and they can be found all over the zone on patrol. There are a total of 182 surviving Sentinels. The Sentinels are controlled from a tree-like metal construct (location 28).

While Sentinels do not remember their lives from before, some of them have regained a degree of autonomy. The rebels identify each other by a row of three scratches on their shoulder. This rebel faction wants the Sentinels to be released from their enslavement and to be allowed to die. To do this the control construct must be destroyed. It is however always well guarded by Sentinels, and the rebels cannot attack it (or if they do they will immediately come under the construct's direct control).

The rebel faction is looking for a group of creatures to destroy the control construct on their behalf. They realise it is well guarded, but they are aware of a weapon at the Iron Castle (location 29) that disrupts the Sentinels and makes them go temporarily dormant while exposed to it (they are under orders to avoid the area). If whatever was causing that effect could be recovered and brought to the tree construct it would remove the Sentinel guards from the equation. They will be willing to make a deal - for example carrying out a service in advance - if the characters agree to help them.

## **Locations in Zone Two (locations 24 - 40)**

### **24. The Red Door (joining facility)**

This is a cave entrance on a hillside, and the cave leads to a red tiled door. In front of the hill is a metal building mostly covered by an ancient landslip. A narrow tunnel has been excavated into the metal building. In front of the cave entrance are a number of campfires, bedrolls, a few tents, and drying hides. There are bones, sticks and skins in places hung as crude fetishes.

The wolffolk live here in the open, and have a primitive life and survive by hunting. There are 41 wolffolk, and they are divided into three packs. At any time there will be 1-3 packs

present here, with the others out hunting or patrolling and returning in 1d12 hours. They are aggressive and hostile by inclination, and present a strong threat. The three packs are:

**Bloodpack** - a 15 strong pack led by a hulking one eyed make called Kreeg. Kreeg wears a red amulet on a thong around his neck.

**Sunpack** - a 13 strong pack led by a muscular female called Vagreb. Vagreb wears a strange yellow amulet on a thong around her neck.

**Skypack** - a 10 strong pack led by a wiry male called Streck. Streck wears a strange blue amulet on a thong around his neck.

The metal building was originally surrounded by fenced off areas containing wild animal pens, but very little remains.

### **Wolffolk (41)**

Medium humanoid, neutral evil

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 22

Speed 40 ft

Str 18 (+4), Dex 16 (+3), Con 18 (+4), Int 10 (+0), Wis 13 (+1), Cha 10 (+0)

**Senses:** +4 to scent based Perception tests

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

**Save bonus:** +3

**Challenge:** 1

**Difficulty:** 5th level for a group of 10

### **Actions**

Multiattack: wolffolk makes one claw and one bite attack, or two claw attacks

Claw: +5 to hit. Hit: 8 (1d6+4)

Bite: +5 to hit. Hit: 9 (1d8+4)

### **Abilities**

**Regenerate:** while the wolffolk lives it regenerates 1HP/round.

**Howl:** as a bonus action a wolffolk can howl. Every member of the pack that can hear it can make a fresh save against any effect they are currently subject to.

**In for the kill:** wolffolk have advantage on any shove action to knock a target prone.

**Keen nose:** wolffolk have advantage on any scent-based Perception checks.

**The surface building:** a narrow tunnel 3 feet wide leads into the hard-packed soil. It runs about ten feet to a tarnished metal wall pierced by a door. Inside are several metal rooms about 20x20 or 30x30 feet. These rooms are dirty and dusty and have no natural light. They smell of animal musk. They comprise:

(a) (lab) a room with broken rusting tables, and a heap of shattered glass piled up in two of the corners.

(b) (store room) contains weird floor stains and crude wall paintings of wolffolk killing humanoids while tall slim people look on.

(c) (test subjects) a room with both walls covered in small rusting cages, most of which have broken doors. Inside several of the cages are piles of teeth, bones or beads (offerings)

(d) (operating theatre) room contains a large metal table or altar and some rusting metal tables and smashed glass.

(e) (security room) room contains a rusting weapons locker, smashed pieces of wood, and an elven steel chest fixed to the wall. The chest is broken open, and inside there are just three indentations with nothing inside (the indentations match the amulets worn by the pack leaders).

**The cave mouth (red zone):** the cave is twenty feet in diameter. It leads to a twenty foot wide tunnel that slopes steeply down and runs for one hundred and twenty feet (descending about thirty feet). At the bottom is a round metal door surrounded by broken red tiles. The area is lit by a round lamp fixed to the wall (a glasssteel dome containing a core on which Continual Flame has been cast). The door is made of elven steel and twenty feet in diameter. Next to the door is a metal slot. If any of the 'amulets' carried by the pack leaders is placed in the slot

the door will slowly roll open. (It will close one minute after the key is removed, but there is a similar slot on the other side.)

The door opens to a vast illuminated vault. The vault is approximately five hundred feet in diameter. It is occupied by rows of large glass pillars with metal mounts and caps. The pillars are mostly six feet tall and three feet across. The pillars contain clear fluid, and floating in it are humanoid creatures of various sorts. Most of the creatures appear to be deformed in some way, and some of the deformities look unsurvivable. Nearest to the door are pigfolk. Further away there are dogfolk, bearfolk, wolffolk, serpentfolk, ratfolk, birdfolk, catfolk, frogfolk, boarfolk, bullfolk, hyenafolk, insectfolk and lizardfolk.

These creatures are all dead. They were failed experiments using the joining machine (below), but eventually the elves succeeded in creating stable hybrids. If removed from the preservative fluid the creatures will quickly rot (in hours). There are also several side rooms. These contain 60 empty glass pillars, and rusting trollies that appear to be used to move them. There is also a large rusting steel vat that used to contain the preservative fluid but that has all leaked away now.

On the far side, a smooth twenty foot diameter tunnel slopes steeply down and runs one hundred and twenty feet to a round twenty foot diameter metal door surrounded by blue tiles. The area is lit by a round lamp fixed to the wall and next to the door is a metal slot. If the blue or yellow amulet is placed in the slot the door will open. The red amulet will not work.

**Blue zone:** the door opens into a similar vault to that above. This one contains similar glass pillars as above but the ones in the centre of the chamber are much larger. Nearest to the door are what appear to be dwarves in various mutated shapes. Some of the dwarves look too tall, or to have disproportionately human sized limbs. Further away there are pillars containing halflings (again some look too big), goblins

(some look like halflings or too large and brutish).

In the central area there are a number of very large pillars containing giantkin. These appear to be mutated ogres and giants. The far side of the chamber has pillars containing a race of humanoids with red skin, horns and sometimes small wings (devilfolk or tieflings).

The party may correctly surmise that the elves created these races. That is correct, and it should be played up for the horrifying truth that it is. The elves created halflings, dwarves and giantkin by experimenting with humans using their joining machine. These changes operated at the genetic level and once sufficient numbers were created they could continue through natural breeding. Goblins were a second order experiment and were created by joining halflings with captured orcs. Giantkin were created by merging multiple humans (2 or 3 to create an ogre, 6 or more to create a giant). Captured fiends were used to create the tiefling devilfolk.

As before, another tunnel slopes down (they are a full 90 feet deep underground at this point) to a similar round door surrounded by yellow tiles. Only the yellow amulet will open this door.

**Yellow zone:** this door opens into another large vault. To the left and right flanks are an array of steel cages (some huge) which appear in reasonable repair. In the centre of the chamber are 4 pits spaced cardinaly. Each pit is thirty feet across and forty feet deep. The pit walls are veined with a strange glowing material that seems to pulse.

Above and around the pits are stairs and a gantry. The gantry overlooks the pits and includes several platforms linked by chains. It appears that these could be used to raise or lower things into the pits.

On the far side of the pits is a large machine covered in jewels and strange protruding crystal rods. This is the control device for the life forge.

It is highly complex and impossible for the untrained to use effectively. It controls the joining process in fine detail, and can be adjusted in a myriad of ways to try to create a successful joining. Any serious political power would be very interested in this facility and the prospect of creating their own super soldiers irrespective of the human cost.

If anyone decides to experiment by putting life forms in the pits and activating the machinery, roll 1d20 for the outcome:

1-6 Both creatures are torn apart from internal trauma. Messy.

7-13 Both creatures die in agony but don't explode

14-19 the creatures are merged but cannot survive

20 the creatures are merged forming a new creature. They are 75% likely to have some kind of serious deformity.

The machine is made of elven steel and contains an array of energy crystals. Attempting to pry loose a jewel will inflict an electrical shock (2d8, half with successful DC 15 Constitution save). Destroying the control system would be difficult. It is AC 16, ignores the first 10 damage of any attack, and has 200 HP. Any melee attack has a 50% chance of inflicting a shock as above if a metal weapon is used. Destroying the control machine triggers a chain reaction in the buried machinery and causes an overload. The complex will begin to shake and collapse and after 3 minutes.

(From the middle of the final chamber to the cave entrance is 1600 feet or about 500 metres. A top athlete could run that distance in 1 minute, but it is likely to take a laden adventuring party longer. If the doors have been closed, they take 30 seconds to cycle open. Characters who fail to get clear must make a DC 15 Dexterity save. They take 21 (6d6) damage and are trapped (pinned under rocks etc requiring 30 Strength points to lift). On a successful save, they take half damage and are not pinned, but they are still trapped inside the collapsed complex.

## **25. Sheltered Dell**

This low wooded valley area has been taken over by the Cult of Eyes as a basecamp made up of 7 large yurts. They have 10 mountain ponies and 10 yaks here (yes, they dragged them all up The Stair), along with their usual mounts. There will usually be 4 soldiers on watch if the Cult are all present (50% chance). Otherwise there will be Verak (50% chance), 3-4 Warlocks, and 10 Fighters.

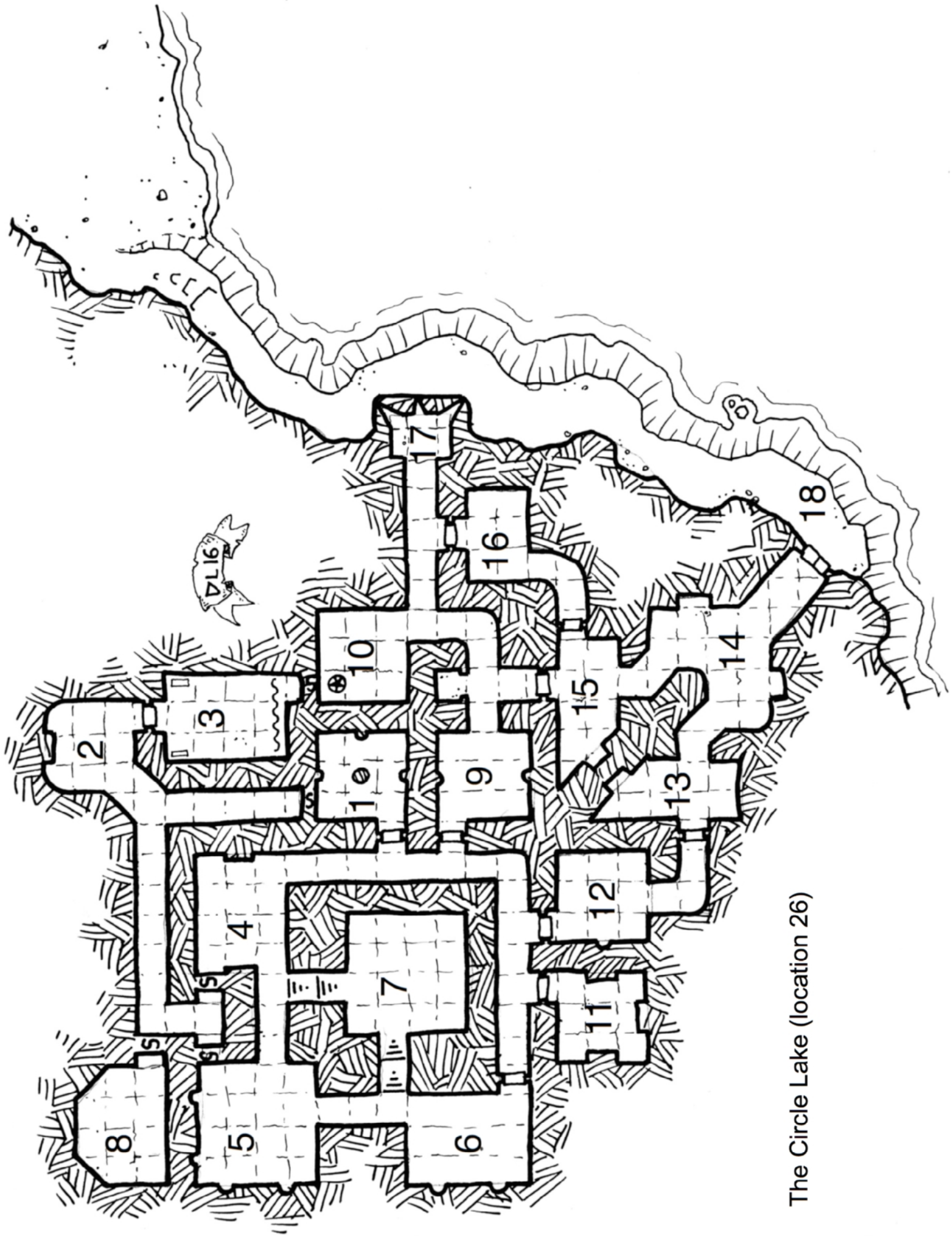
## **26. The Circle Lake (The Dream Web) (mini dungeon)**

This 300 foot diameter circular freshwater lake is placid and cold. At the side of the lake stands a set of ruins. The ruins comprise a series of external walls pierced by holes and lacking a roof or any internal structure.

The ruins are guarded by six kilted bearfolk warriors who are staying out of sight. If they see a party approaching one will run below to gather reinforcements. Within 10 rounds (1 minute) the rest of the bearfolk will arrive.

There is only a 25% chance that all of the bearfolk will be in the complex. It is much more likely that a war party will be out looking for victims (Dougal and 15 bearfolk warriors will be out). The bearfolk war party carry with them several brain flasks. These are enchanted metal containers that open at the top. If a brain is removed from a recently dead body (10 minutes max.) and placed in the flask, the flask will keep the brain alive in a kind of stasis for up to a week.

The area is the current headquarters of the Boar and Compass Trading Company, and it is here they bring any brains that they can capture. The crater was originally a depression where two massive stone doors could slide back to allow the Titans to enter or exit. Over the centuries, the crater has filled with water forming a strangely round lake (20 feet deep at the centre).



The Circle Lake (location 26)

Tied up at the ruins are 10 mules used as pack animals. In the ruins is an opening with a ten foot wide metal spiral staircase heading down. It drops thirty feet to a stone room (area 1). Around 90 feet from the ruins observant characters may notice a wisp of smoke. This is coming from a chimney opening in the ground that leads to room 11. Unless the bearfolk servants are cooking, the fire is banked low and entry that way is possible, but difficult (like to suffer 1d3 damage for each round it takes to descend the thirty foot chimney).

(1) Entrance room: a steel spiral staircase rises 30 feet to the surface. Lit by torches. It has large cracks running across the walls.

A secret door in the north wall has a secret stud that opens it, but it is broken. The door can however be forced. It has not been discovered by the bearfolk.

(2) Communicator: This unlit area has not been discovered by the bearfolk. The room contains a bank of machinery against the north wall (radiates magic). The machine has a round slot (the perfect size for a brain flask) and small levers. If a brain flask is slotted in, the machine allows the brain inside to be spoken to (and tortured).

Left lever - activates the link allowing a brain in a flask to speak through the machine (see below).  
Middle lever - delivers a painful shock to any slotted-in brain in a flask.  
Right lever - allows the brain in the flask to hear what is said by those standing next to the machine.

All three levers can be engaged simultaneously if desired. If a random brain flask is attached to the machine, roll to determine the reaction:  
1-80 screams endlessly  
81-86 babbles incoherently in leldran  
87-90 can speak in leldran but insane  
91-95 can talk normally in leldran  
96-100 repeats a hostile meme (see below)

The inhabitants of the original flasks are all slaves (mostly human, but some dwarves, halflings and goblins). These slaves believe that they were created by the Shining Ones. They believe that the Shining Ones are gods. They know that the gods are opposed to by evil forces: the beast men (orcs) and the great serpents (dragon empire), but that the gods are powerful and have destroyed their enemies. They may be able to explain the original purpose of some of the locations in Zone One, but they are unlikely to be familiar with the other zones. They can provide other information at the GM's discretion.

A small number of the brains from the dream web have been infected by Far Realm energy leaking from the Crucible. This causes the occasional nightmare element to appear in the dream web's virtual reality, but it is (currently) not sufficient to awaken the Titans. These brains will repeat a hostile meme exploiting the genetic programming used by the elves: "ITHILLIEL MINTURIEL KATHURIEL GWIRIN EDREGIL ULANOR". Anyone hearing this must succeed at a DC 15 Wisdom save or they will become convinced that the brain flasks must be destroyed and they will head straight for room 14 (even if they haven't been there yet). This save can be re-attempted every hour thereafter.

(3) Door control: This unlit area has not been discovered by the bearfolk. This long room contains two large elven steel levers on the floor in the northern corners. The levers emerge from the floor and are about six feet long.

At the south end there is a beautiful tapestry of linen and silk threads. It depicts 4 Titans attacking a strange city which is defended by several dragons and small dragon men. The tapestry is fragile, but if looked after it would be worth 500 silver shillings.

Moving a lever requires 30 Strength, although multiple people can try, but the levers only move simultaneously. If both levers are pulled at the

same time (each requiring 30 Strength), this operates the two doors in the roof of the Titan cavern. The party will hear a cracking noise and feel a sound like thunder reverberating all around them. They will then hear a roar as tons of water forming the circle lake pour into the Titan cavern. This water will rise to a height of 10 feet in the cavern. This isn't enough to rouse the Titans, but it will disturb them and place a severe strain on the Dream Web burning out 40 brains in room 14.

Behind the tapestry is a secret door, but it is obvious from this side and operated by a stone handle.

(4) Barracks: This room is a bare stone chamber and has been taken over as a barracks for the bearfolk soldiers. It is dimly lit by a torch. There are ten bedrolls on the floor and personal effects (trinkets, water casks, food), and the walls are cracked. The room will be mostly empty (50% chance of 1d6 bearfolk) unless it is night time. The secret door in the northwest corner has not been discovered by the bearfolk. It was opened by a concealed stone stud, which has broken off, but it can be forced.

(5) Barracks: This room is another barracks for the bearfolk soldiers and holds twenty bedrolls and personal effects. It is dimly lit by a torch. The secret door in the northeast corner has not been discovered by the bearfolk. The room will be mostly empty (50% chance of 1d6 bearfolk) unless it is night time.

(6) Dougal's room: This room has been taken by Dougal as his abode. It has a crude table cut from logs and two log seats, a lantern and a bedroll on the floor. There is a wooden coffer containing clothes, and several wine bottles. If Dougal is at the complex he is 75% likely to be here brooding and drinking.

(7) Dining room: Stairs lead down to this square room. This room has been taken as a dining hall for the soldiers and is lit by torches, lanterns and a brazier. Crude log-cut tables and benches

have been newly fashioned and installed here. There are some packs of cards and a plain stone chess board here. The bearfolk soldiers who are off duty will be here unless it is night time.

(8) Control symbiotes: This unlit area has not been discovered by the bearfolk. It contains metal cupboards and atop those are six large glass vessels. Each of the vessels contains a floating creature which looks like a cross between an octopus and a moon jellyfish. The cupboards contain 11 small gold jars (20 silver shillings each) that contain a narcotic sleep powder (gives dreamless sleep, but user becomes dependent after two weeks which leads to nightmares if drug withdrawn). Each jar holds 20 doses.

The creatures are the living control interfaces for the Titans. They are created via biomagical engineering from harvested Titan brainstem tissue combined with a Far Realm psychic invertebrate. They are alive and if placed on a living creature they will form a symbiotic link. The symbiotes will graft themselves to the back of their host. This is painful, takes 10 minutes and costs 1d3 CON unless a DC 15 Constitution save is made. A Titan pilot requires a minimum INT of 19. For each point of INT below 19, a Titan has a 10% cumulative chance of ignoring orders. The pilot can attempt to reassert control, once lost, once per hour. The interface has a range of five miles. Once bonded, a pilot must be drugged when asleep or they may inadvertently give the Titan orders in their dreams. The symbiotes will be ineffective while the Titans are under the control of the dream web. A symbiote cannot be removed once bonded with a host, and doing so will be fatal.

(9) Brain flask storage room: This unlit room has metal shelves and appears to be a store room. There are fifty empty and functional brain flasks on the shelves. There is a large crack across the ceiling. A corridor leads east and has an alcove to the north holding a toilet with a bench seat.

(10) Statue Room: Originally a dining room for entertaining visitors who had come to view the Titans, this wall has cracked marble walls and contains a 9 foot tall black marble statue of a Titan. The statue is magical and is hollow and open at the back. A humanoid can step inside the statue. Inside, at face height, are two jewelled 'eyes'. Peering into these jewels will enable the user to see as if through the eyes of the nearest Titan. (The Titans' eyes are currently all closed, but any user will see the Titan cavern from the perspective of one of the Titans.)

A concealed button in the base of the statue opens the secret door in the north wall, but the bearfolk have not discovered this.

(11) Kitchen: This room has a fireplace and a chimney that has been cleared by the bearfolk. It has been taken over as a kitchen by the bearfolk, and there are bedrolls for the six bearfolk servants. Most of them will be here unless they are doing washing by the shore or hanging it up.

(12) Angus's room: This room contains a bedroll, crude log cut table and two stools, and a lantern. It also has a wooden coffer containing clothes, a fire brazier and a crate of 9 wine bottles. On the table is an ink pot, quill, several old vellum scrolls and a notebook.

The book is Angus' journal and it relates his company's journey to the High Moors to find fame and fortune, and their discovery of this complex. It relates how they were horrified to find the living brains and set about destroying them until the earth shook, and an alarm sounded and a Titan started to awaken. They realised too late their mistake, and they have been making up for it since. Their first act was to track down another group of adventurers they had met on the way here and to kill them and place their brains in the machine. That, and the capture of several pigfolk, enabled them to stabilise the situation. Unfortunately brains have started to die, and Angus thinks that by removing so many at once his men have broken

something. He has been studying the elven scrolls they found here and thinks he has found reference to something called "the god weapon" - a failsafe of some kind.

(13) Nutrient room: This room contains a number of machines made of glass and elven steel that radiate magic. The machines feature three large (ten foot diameter) glassteel flasks containing bright green matter. Pipes emerge and appear to be circulating some kind of fluid in the direction of the southeast passageway.

These machines are essentially bio-engineered sealed hydroponic systems that provide nutrients to the brains installed in the dream web in room 14. If these machines were somehow destroyed the brains installed in the dream web will begin to die rapidly after 3 days (10+1d10 deaths per hour thereafter).

(14) The dream web: This room is lit by two Continual Light (not Flame) spells cast on the ceiling.

It contains banks of steel boxes that cover the walls from floor to ceiling which are connected by machinery. There are 300 round slots big enough for a brain flask. Slotted into the banks are 220 flasks. Pipes carrying a green fluid come from the southernmost passage. Humming wires come from the northernmost passage.

The banks of brain flasks are the 'dream web' - a network of living brains fed by ancient machines. It is the dream web that creates the dream world in which the Titans spend their slumbering centuries.

In order to keep all three Titans asleep the dream web must have around 200 functioning brains. At 180 brains one of the Titans will start to awaken. At 120 brains, two of the Titans will awaken, and at 50 brains or fewer all three Titans will awaken. Any Titan that awakens will (unless piloted - see room 8) eventually break out through the roof which will cause the same



effect as pulling the levers in room 3. Because of the damage previously caused by the bearfolk the dream web is undergoing a cascade failure, and this is bringing about the spontaneous loss of 1d6 brains each week.

Most of the brains are ancient, but some of the more recent brains are groups that Angus' men have captured. These include:

Group one

Makru - Hegemonite priest (m human Cleric 1)

Quenna - Avari warrior (f human Fighter 1)

Khenbish - Magog scout (f human Rogue 1)

Group two

Zosimus - Marzani merchant (m dwarven noble)

Theron - Marzani scout (m dwarven Bard 1)

Kaya - Kachina scout (f halfling Barbarian 2)

These could be communicated with using the communicator in room 2. Brains in the flasks could be placed into brass automata using the machine that produces them hidden at location 23. They would however be imprinted with the automata mind control programming.

(15) Power room: This room contains strange looking machines that hum and illuminate the room. At the centre of the machinery is a glassteel flask twelve feet in diameter and etched with sigils. Inside the flask is a strange ball of lightning and twists and flashes around inside (bouncing off the glass walls). Wires run from the machine down the southern corridor.

The room provides the power system for the dream web. This is fuelled by a bound lightning elemental. The elemental wants its freedom, and if released it will take the nearest path to the surface and disappear into the sky to find the nearest storm. At the GM's discretion it might return the favour at some later point by delivering a bolt from the blue against the party's enemies. Unfortunately releasing the elemental will also cause the collapse of the dream web one week later when power reserves are exhausted.

### Lightning Elemental

Large elemental, neutral

Armor Class 16

Hit Points 75

Speed 90 ft fly

Str 14 (+2), Dex 22 (+6), Con 12 (+1), Int 6 (-2), Wis 10 (+0), Cha 6 (-2)

**Damage resistances:** lightning, thunder, non-magical weapons

**Damage immunities:** poison

**Condition immunities:** exhaustion, grappled, poisoned, paralysed, petrified, prone, restrained, unconscious

**Senses:** darkvision 60 ft

**Save bonus:** +5

**Challenge:** 5

**Difficulty:** 4th level

### Actions

Multiattack: Lightning elemental makes two blast attacks

Lightning blast: +8 to hit, reach ten feet, one target. Hit: 14 (2d8+5) lightning damage

### Abilities

**Shockwave** (recharge 3-6): one target must make a DC 14 Constitution save or take 14 (2d8+5) lightning damage (half on save) and be paralysed until the end of its next turn.

**Lightning step:** as a Move, elemental can instantly travel up to 60 ft without triggering opportunity attacks, or can travel along a conducting material any distance.

**Illumination.** Elemental shed light in a 30 foot radius.

(16) Monitoring room: This unlit room holds 4 large crystals embedded in the floor. One is dark. The other three glow and pulse in green, blue and red respectively. These crystals indicate the status of the Titans. As a Titan starts to awaken their corresponding crystal starts to glow brighter and pulse faster. If awakening is imminent the crystal will emit a loud pulsing

noise. The crystals can be destroyed with 20 damage each. They have no monetary value.

(17) Observation chamber: This unlit room contains three windows looking out onto the Titan cavern (see 18).

(18) Titan cavern: Beyond the double doors from room 14 lies a vast cavern. The cavern is approximately 100 high (dropping 70 feet from the double doors), and 300 feet across. It is dimly lit by red light from multiple Continual Light (not Flame) spells.

The three surviving Titans stand silently. The Titans are a feat of bio-magical engineering and powerful magic mixed with dragon blood and tissue. They are huge, muscular bipedal scaled creatures that stand 70 feet tall. They were engineered to kill dragons, and succeeded very effectively in that task.

From the doors a ramp descends to the bottom of the cavern. Below the ledge on the floor of the cavern are two dozen smashed brain flasks, and the rotting remains of fifty brains. There is also a heap of detritus (broken glass, broken wood and rusted steel cleared out by the bearfolk).

### **The Titans awaken...**

If the characters kill the bearfolk, then the dream web will continue to degrade and eventually the Titans will be freed. If the characters read Angus' journal they may end up swapping roles with the bearfolk and capturing victims to feed into the machine...for the greater good. Alternatively they can try to find the 'god weapon' hidden at location 27 or use the sphere of annihilation from location 33 to end the threat.

Once awakened, one Titan will head southwest through Avari lands and will destroy the city of Midea. It will then head west along the coast towards the old (long dead) Dragon Empire. A second will head southeast, and will pass close to the Rift and encounter the Giantkin. It will then continue on and destroy bearfolk settlements

before disappearing into the eastern lands of the dead Orc Empire. The third will head south, passing through the Thornlands until it encounters the city of Magog. After destroying the city it will disappear into the ocean.

### **Titans (3)**

Gargantuan monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 25

Hit Points 676

Speed 40 ft

Str 30 (+10), Dex 11 (+0), Con 30 (+10), Int 3 (-4), Wis 11 (+0), Cha 11 (+0)

**Damage immunities:** fire, poison, non-magical melee weapons

**Condition immunities:** charmed, frightened, paralysed, poisoned

**Senses:** blindsight 120 ft

**Skills:** +0

**Save bonus:** +1

**Challenge:** 30+

### **Actions**

**Multiattack:** The Titan can use its Frightful Presence. It then makes five attacks: one with its bite, two with its claws, one with its horns, and one with its tail. It can use its Swallow instead of its bite.

**Bite:** Melee Weapon Attack: +19 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 36 (4d12 + 10) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it is grappled (escape DC 20). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the Titan can't bite another target.

**Claw:** Melee Weapon Attack: +19 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. Hit: 28 (4d8 + 10) slashing damage.

**Horns:** Melee Weapon Attack: +19 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 32 (4d10 + 10) piercing damage.

**Tail:** Melee Weapon Attack: +19 to hit, reach 20 ft., one target. Hit: 24 (4d6 + 10) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 20 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

**Frightful Presence:** Each creature of the Titan's choice within 120 feet of it and aware of it must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, with disadvantage if the Titan is within line of sight, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours.

**Swallow:** The Titan makes one bite attack against a Large or smaller creature it is grappling. If the attack hits, the target takes the bite's damage, the target is swallowed, and the grapple ends. While swallowed, the creature is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the Titan, and it takes 56 (16d6) acid damage at the start of each of the Titan's turns. If the Titan takes 60 damage or more on a single turn from a creature inside it, the Titan must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw at the end of that turn or regurgitate all swallowed creatures, which fall prone in a space within 10 feet of the Titan. If the Titan dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse by using 30 feet of movement, exiting prone.

#### Abilities

**Legendary Resistance (3/Day):** If the Titan fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

**Magic Resistance:** The Titan has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Reflective Carapace:** Any time the Titan is targeted by a magic missile spell, a line spell, or a spell that requires a ranged attack roll, roll a d6. On a 1 to 5, the Titan is unaffected. On a 6, the Titan is unaffected, and the effect is reflected

back at the caster as though it originated from the Titan, turning the caster into the target.

**Siege Monster:** The Titan deals double damage to objects and structures.

#### Legendary actions

The Titan can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The Titan regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

**Attack:** The Titan makes one claw attack or tail attack.

**Move:** The Titan moves up to half its speed.

**Chomp (Costs 2 Actions):** The Titan makes one bite attack or uses its Swallow.

### 27. Giant Spiny Plant

This is a gigantic 90 tall spiny plant similar to a cactus. It is covered in sharp spines between four and eight feet in length. Towards the top of the plant are several soft looking fruits. Scuttling over the plant are insects that look like giant ticks. They seem to be feasting on the juice from the fruits. At the base of the plant is a dark opening that seems to lead inside. Anyone getting close to the plant may attract the attention of the tick creatures.

#### Giant Plant Ticks (22)

Small beast, unaligned

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 6

Speed 30 ft scuttle / wall walk

Str 10 (+0), Dex 12 (+1), Con 11 (+0), Int 4 (-4), Wis 6 (-2), Cha 3 (-4)

**Senses:** tremor sense 30 feet

**Skills:** +0

**Save bonus:** +1

**Challenge:** 1/4

**Difficulty:** 4th level

### Actions

Bite: +4 to hit, one target. Hit: 4 (1d4+2) plus 2 (1d3) blood drain

### Abilities

**Nimble:** Immune to plant spines

**Leap:** the plant tick can leap 30 ft as a Move. This action does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

Reaching the opening without being stabbed by the many spines is difficult - a DC 20 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check is required or 1d4 damage is taken. The spines also carry a disease requiring a DC 15 Constitution save. Failure causes small spines to start piercing the skin as plant nodes grow under the dermis. This starts with itching after 1 hour, and after 24 hours it inflicts 1d6 damage. The damage is 2d6 on the second day and 3d6 on the third, after which the plant will shed spores and then die off. The damage cannot be healed while infected.

The opening is only big enough for one person at a time. Anyone entering finds a narrow crawl space that leads up. Wriggling through the fleshy moist tunnel will trigger the plant's acidic digestive juices which will inflict 2d6 damage per round and may (GM's discretion) damage equipment. Crawling all the way requires 2 successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) checks.

If successful, the characters emerge into an unlit internal space with moist fleshy walls. The space contains a long metal box. The box is black with age and made from elven steel, and seven feet long and six inches wide and deep. The box radiates obvious strong magic to anyone who is a spellcaster.

The box is protected by the following:

- Arcane Lock (cast at 18th level)
- Glyph of Warding (explosive runes trigger on opening: inflicts 11d8 fire damage in 20 foot radius; DC 18 Dexterity spell save for half). This requires a DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check to notice.

- Symbol of Death (trigger on opening: all creatures in 60 foot radius take 10d10 necrotic damage or half on a DC 18 Constitution save). This requires a DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check to notice.

These traps can be bypassed through a Knock spell, and also opening the box using an Unseen Servant or a patsy, or pulling it open from a distance with some string, or something similar. If the box is punctured in any way, that will meet the trigger conditions of it being opened.

The box contains a **black adamantine spear** six feet in length (the 'god weapon'). Any attack with the spear is at advantage. Any creature struck by the spear dies. The wielder of the spear also dies (even if the spear was thrown). This item requires attunement.

### 28. The Metal Tree

Visible from a mile away, this massive grey metal tree rises 100 feet. It has long overhanging branches in all directions (it looks like a metal banyan tree). The tree is surrounded by several dozen skeletal looking metal golems (around 50). Some are walking around, but most are standing still. Half of those are facing outward and appear to have one of the smaller branches connected to the back of their heads.

The tree is the control construct for the Iron Sentinels. It will protect itself and order its Sentinels to warn off, then attack, any trespassers.

#### Iron Sentinels (50)

Medium construct, neutral

Armor Class 16

Hit Points 55 (10d8+10)

Speed 30 ft.

Str 15 (+2), Dex 13 (+1), Con 15 (+2), Int 10 (+0), Wis 10 (+0), Cha 10 (+0)

**Damage Immunities:** fire, poison.

**Condition immunities:** charmed, exhaustion, paralysed, petrified, poisoned.

**Senses:** darkvision 60 feet

**Save bonus:** +2

**Skills:** Perception +2

**Languages:** Common, Ieldran

**Challenge:** 2

**Difficulty:** 5th level for a group of 5 sentinels

#### Abilities

**Immutable Form:** The sentinel is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

**Magic Resistance:** The sentinel has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

#### Actions

Multiattack: sentinel makes two fist attacks

Iron fists: +5 to hit, one target. Hit: 9 (1d8+4)

#### The Iron Tree

Huge construct, neutral

Armor Class 16

Hit Points 300

Speed 0 (cannot move)

Str 20 (+6), Dex 10 (+0), Con 18 (+4), Int 18 (+4), Wis 16 (+3), Cha 14 (+2)

**Damage Immunities:** fire, poison.

**Condition immunities:** charmed, exhaustion, paralysed, petrified, poisoned.

**Senses:** darkvision 120 feet and can see through the eyes of all sentinels within 5 miles.

**Save bonus:** +5

**Skills:** Perception +8

**Languages:** Ieldran

**Challenge:** 5

**Difficulty:** 4th level as a solo monster

#### Abilities

**Immutable Form:** The tree is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

**Magic Resistance:** The tree has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

#### Actions

Multiattack: tree makes four branch attacks (against four different targets) or two roots attacks

Metal branch: +6 to hit, reach 30 feet, one target. Hit: 15 (2d8+6)

Roots: the tree sends roots out through the ground to grapple a character (at any distance). Make an opposed grapple check at +6. Targets grappled are dragged 30 feet closer to the tree (escape DC 16).

If the Iron Tree is destroyed, the souls bound to the Iron Sentinels are released, and they collapse to the ground. Inside the core of the tree is a cluster of **red power crystals**. These six crystals can be used as a magical battery of sorts and each holds the equivalent of six levels worth of spell slots usable by any caster (up to any level of spell that they can normally cast). Once used up the crystals cease to function. These items do not require attunement.

#### 29. The Iron Castle

The Iron Castle is a small fort comprising a single unwallled keep. The keep appears to be made of black metal, and it gives off a strange vibration. The castle's windows are sealed, and there is only one way in. Two large doors stand open at the main entrance. Beyond the entrance, a corridor stretches into the distance. The corridor is lit by a strange diffuse yellow light. A ringing sound can be heard in the distance from within.

The Iron Castle was the home of an elven lord called Narinlath. He was an accomplished mage and assassin, and known for being a trickster (Narinlath is the origins of the deity Nornloth. You may want to drop some hints if relevant.) The vibration emanates from a Far Realm object that became lodged here during the cataclysm. The vibration of the object temporarily

deactivates Iron Sentinels, and also disrupts any other soul trapping magic or technology.

**Entrance:** The entrance corridor is spatially warped. It runs in identical fashion for 10.3 miles. At the end of the corridor is a pair of double doors. The ringing sound is still audible and louder.

**The lobby:** Beyond the double doors is a large carpeted hallway. It appears not to have aged. An ornate wooden door leads onwards, but flanking it is a zombie giant. A second giant skeleton lies on the other side of the door (a second guardian whose magic unravelled). The zombie guardian will attack if anyone touches the exit door, or if it is attacked.

### **Zombie Giant**

Huge undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 120

Speed 40 feet

Str 26 (+8), Dex 6 (-2), Con 20 (+5), Int 3 (-4), Wis 6 (-2), Cha 5 (-3)

**Damage immunities:** poison

**Condition immunities:** poisoned

**Senses:** darkvision 60 ft

**Save bonus:** +7

**Challenge:** 7

**Difficulty:** 5th level

### **Actions**

Multiattack: giant makes two slam attacks

Slam: +11 to hit, reach ten feet, one target. Hit: 22 (3d8+8) damage

### **Abilities**

**Undead fortitude:** if damage reduces a zombie to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution save with a DC of 5 + the damage taken (unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit). Success means the zombie stays at 1 hit point instead.

**Trample** (recharge 6): as an attack, the zombie giant can overrun a medium or smaller creature. They must make a DC 15 Dexterity save or suffer 22 (3d8+8) damage and be knocked prone.

**Toss** (recharge 5-6): as an attack the zombie giant can attempt to grab and throw a medium or smaller target within ten feet. The target must make a DC 15 Strength save or be thrown 30 ft, take 11 (3d6) damage and be knocked prone.

**The castle:** Beyond the door is the rest of the castle, but it suffers greater spatial warping effects than the outer castle. When the party moves around, determine what they encounter by rolling randomly. Do this even if they backtrack because the maze will change as they explore it. The map need not make sense (i.e. corridors and rooms can overlap). **Tip:** you may want to roll some of this in advance so it is not obvious what is happening.

In these areas the ringing is loud and will grate on the nerves of the characters and make it impossible to properly rest while in the maze. All of these areas are lit with the same dim yellow light unless otherwise noted.

1d100

01-05 The entrance room

06-18 A corridor runs 1d6x100 feet

19-23 The black room

24-35 Stairs lead up 1d6x50 feet

36-40 The cat room

41-52 A corridor runs left and right 1d6X100 feet in each direction

53-65 Stairs lead down 1d6x50 feet

66-77 A corridor turns left and runs 1d6x100 feet

78-82 The statue room

83-96 A corridor turns right and runs 1d6x100 feet

97-100 The source

**The black room:** The corridor ends at an archway. Beyond the archway is total blackness. The darkness is magical and impenetrable. In the middle of the 100 diameter chamber is a

stone lectern bonded to the floor. On the lectern is a book.

The book is written in Ieldran. It contains a beautiful purple silk bookmark with thread of gold (25 silver shillings). If read (using a Comprehend Languages spell) it tells a story about the reader that infects the reader with a hostile meme. The first person to read it gains a permanent belief that (1d8): 1-2: they believe they are dying of an illness for which there is no cure, 3-4: they believe that they are madly in love with an entirely fictional person (they will moon over them, identify keepsakes to give them, keep talking about them and relaying fictional life events), 5-6: they believe that they are on an important secret mission (and will keep copious notes, act suspiciously, leave notes in imaginary dead drops, think that people they meet are secret contacts), 7-8: they have a child (they will worry about them, ask about them, talk about them and make plans about them).

They may, with some effort, be temporarily persuaded that this belief is false, but they will fall back into the belief within a few minutes.

If the book is removed from the room, within a few minutes it will vanish and appear back in the room.

**The cat room:** The corridor ends at a large vaulted chamber supported by pillars. The room contains a beautiful tiled swimming pool filled with fresh water. Beyond the pool the room is filled with a wildly growing garden bearing strange purple fruits. The ringing noise seems distant here.

If the characters enter and explore they will, after a few minutes, be met by a delegation of cats. The cats are intelligent and can speak (they understand, and can be understood by, any humanoid). They are the descendants of Narinlath's uplifted cats. Their leader is an elderly white cat called Tivian. She is flanked by

ten cats wearing a kind of armour made from green leaves.

The cats believe that where they live is Eruk (paradise) and they were brought here by Narinlath (the two-legged god). It was Narinlath who gave them this place as a reward for their service. They are aware of the maze and the rooms, though they avoid the source and have never made it outside the castle. They will ask if the characters are also gods. There are around 200 cats living here, and one of them (a tom called Pluvian) will ask if he can accompany the characters. Pluvian craves adventure and wants to see more of the world (he will be very excited by any talk of 'outside'). He may be useful as a translator because any humanoid can understand him.

The water and garden magically regenerates. The garden produces nutritious fruit on a daily basis. The cats have adapted to a vegetarian diet. The vaulted chamber extends for 1000 feet beyond the swimming pool and contains shrines and artworks, and lots of sleeping places.

**The statue room:** A room decorated with floor to ceiling mosaic tiles, predominantly in green. At the centre sits a beautiful stone statue of a cat made of a black stone and approximately 6 feet tall. It has large green emeralds for eyes.

The emeralds are worth 1500 silver shillings each. If they are taken the first person doing so suffers a curse. They, and only they, will see a kitten appear. The kitten is, for them, indestructible and physical (although it is a delusion). The kitten will follow the character and will always catch up with them within a few minutes. They will generally be a nuisance (waking them up in the middle of the night, mewling distractingly, tripping them up). None of this is life threatening but it is annoying and frustrating at times. There is no way to remove the kitten short of a Wish.

**The source:** The ringing in this room is deafening. In the centre of the room is a

shimmering, blurry orb around 18 inches in diameter. It coruscates with weird colours and floats in mid air.

The orb is an "object" brought from the Far Realm and it is alien to the normal universe (it is in fact a three dimensional manifold of a higher dimensional phenomenon.) It can be moved, but it exerts an unhealthy influence. It is this object that has, over the centuries, created the spatial distortions here, and created the strange resonance in the Iron Castle. Removing the orb will not immediately remove these effects, but they will begin to diminish over the following years.

The orb also acts as a beacon attracting the attention of Far Realm entities. Every six hours it is in the possession of the party roll for weird phenomena (1d6) 1: Lost time: party cannot recall the last 1d6 hours, 2: one character must make a DC 10 Constitution save or suffer random mutation (see location 30), 3: one party member suffers insanity for 1d6 hours (see p.260 DMG), 4: spatial warping causes travel distances to expand or compress, 5: one party member gains telepathy and can read all nearby minds (whether they want to or not) for 1d6 hours, 6: strange rainbow bubble appears around the party. They then find themselves moved 1d6 x 12 miles in a random direction.

### 30. Dwarven Mines

This mine entrance is the lair of a group of mutated dwarven reavers. The dwarves are a savage and violent tribe that relish murder, and enjoy torturing, abusing and eating prisoners. They have also been changed by exposure to Far Realm energies and every one of them has a mutation or disfigurement of some sort. Their leader - **Smiler** - is a albino male with a braided white beard, multiple scars, and a tentacle growing out of the back of his bald head.

Deep in the mines is a weird black spike that rises from the floor of a cavern 20 feet. The spike emits a constant humming vibration. The

effect of the vibration is to suppress higher brain functions (an effect which is permanent over time) and to encourage violence, lust and fear.

The dwarves call it The Carrion God. They like to chain victims to it before engaging in nauseating and bloody rites. The spike is in fact part of a higher dimensional Far Realm being. Due to a rupture in the fabric of reality caused by the cataclysm, this being has intruded into our universe and, compressed into three dimensions, it appears as a spike. The spike is immune to damage and spells short of artefact level magic.

Prolonged exposure to the spike's vicinity (or each hour chained to it) will cause a mutation unless a DC 15 Constitution save is made. The possible mutations include: (1d12) 1-3: lose 6 INT, 4: limb mutates into a tentacle, 5: mouth seals shut, 6: lose all hair and skin turns white, or grow long hair, 7: grow 1d3 new eyes in random places, 8: gain ability to speak telepathically at 100 feet range (MM, p.9), 9: Eyes seal over but gain blindsight 30 feet, 10-12: lose 6 WIS. Mutations are permanent, but can be removed with a Lesser Restoration spell cast with a 4th level spell slot.

Originally the dwarves were created to mine for valuable minerals used by the elves in their magitek. The mines contain veins of elven steel (titanium), aluminium, quartz, and tourmaline. There are 79 combatant dwarves, but also 15 mutated dwarven children.

#### Dwarven reavers (79)

Medium humanoid, chaotic evil

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 9

Speed 25 feet

Str 14 (+2), Dex 11 (+0), Con 14 (+2), Int 5 (-3), Wis 5 (-3), Cha 6 (-2)

**Damage resistances:** poison

**Condition immunities:** poisoned



**Senses:** darkvision 120 ft

**Save bonus:** +1

**Challenge:** 1/4

**Difficulty:** 5 at 1st, 10 at 2nd-3rd, 20 at 4th, 40 at 5th.

### **Actions**

Machete or Pick: +4 to hit, reach five feet, one target. Hit: 7 (1d8+2)

**Frothing bite** (refresh on short rest): +4 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. Hit: 5 (1d4+2) damage and target must make a DC 10 Constitution save or suffer the disease Cackle Fever (DMG, p.257).

**Tentacle warp** (refresh on short rest): +4 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. Hit: make a DC 10 Constitution save or suffer disadvantage on Constitution saves for 1 minute.

**Vomit goo** (refresh on short rest): +2 to hit, ranged 5/10 ft, one target. Hit: 6 (1d10) poison damage

### **Abilities**

**Resilience:** advantage on saves against poison, spells, illusions, charm and paralysis.

## **31. Ruined Dome (The Rift Gate)**

This ruined surface building was originally a dome, but it is now a few low walls in a square shape with a large central mound of rubble.

The central rubble pile contains a twenty foot diameter tunnel excavated down through it. Close inspection will reveal that the tunnel appears to have been created by something burrowing out rather than in. The excavated tunnel does not look recent. (This ruin is in fact home to an interplanetary gate created by the elves using magitek knowledge that dates back to the ancients.)

Navigating the tunnel leads to a series of dusty chambers around 40 feet beneath ground level. These contain natural mould and lichen. At the

back of this area, a round passageway thirty feet in diameter slopes downwards. In front of it stands a large round vault door made of steel. The door is buckled and rusting, and appears to have been torn or blown off some time ago.

The round tunnel slopes down for 300 feet (descending another 100 feet as it does so). In several places along the way parts of the tunnel have collapsed. At one point the tunnel only has a three foot clear space above rubble.

**The rift gate cavern:** The bottom of the tunnel opens into a large natural cavern. The cavern is around 500 feet in diameter and 60 feet high. It is illuminated by what looks like a shimmering vertical pool of water thirty feet in diameter. Visible hazily in the water as if reflected is a rocky coastline above a white sea with a city in the distance. A sun hangs in the sky, but looks more orange than the sun outside.

Surrounding the shimmering interplanetary portal is a weird black metal mesh like framework rising from two pillars of the same material. The metal seems to twist and move unnaturally making it hard to look at or focus on for long. (A side effect of the spatially warping Far Realm energies deployed in the gate.) Anyone touching the gate framework must make a DC15 Wisdom save or take 1d20 psychic damage. The gate has AC 18, ignores the first 15 damage, and has 150 HP. Destruction of the gate releases magical and Far Realm energy that inflicts 1d100 psychic damage to anyone in the cavern (DC 20 Wisdom save for half) and will cause the cavern to collapse.

Around seventy feet in front of the gate is a large stone and black metal pedestal. The top of the pedestal is covered in dust, but if cleared off reveals a matrix of rectangular black metal buttons. Each button has a raised symbol in elvish. Each symbol represents an elven name for a pulsar (taken from the Ancients' records). There are 182 buttons arranged in a 13x14 matrix. Next to the buttons is a black glass orb half embedded in the pedestal. The orb can be

depressed. There are 3 buttons currently depressed. A Comprehend Languages can translate the meaning of the buttons. Those currently depressed are: ELUSIVE SIGH, RED SMILE and TOPAZ SEA. (These essentially represent the address for the planet currently targeted. The stellar bodies are used as part of the targeting system for the interplanetary portal. It uses a form of magitek science way beyond the understanding of the characters and, frankly, most of the elves who created it).

**Operating the rift gate:** Depressing the orb (difficult; it's jammed with dust) shuts down the current portal and causes the three buttons to undepress. The gate can be re-established by pressing the same buttons in any order. Given that the symbols can be in any order, and that repetition is not possible, there are approximately 988,000 different three-symbol combinations. Random combinations of three symbols will mostly fail to connect, but at the GM's discretion some of the symbol sets will connect to new worlds. The description of the new worlds falls outside the scope of this book.

As a rule of thumb, assuming the gate is capable of reaching 100 planets, then there is one live address for every 9880 possibilities. Assuming an average of one attempt each 30 seconds, it would take on average around 3.5 days to locate a new address by random dialling if attempts were made continuously, but this could reasonably take 50% less or more time (roll a 1d10).

If you do wish to allow new destinations, you may want to have portals opening to some of the following strange worlds (also available where you bought this book):

The Slumbering Ursine Dunes (copyright Hydra Cooperative)

Deep Carbon Observatory (copyright False Machine Publishing)

Castle Gargantua (copyright Kabuki Kaiser)

Fever Swamp (copyright Melsonian Arts Council)

The Gardens of Ynn (copyright Dying Stylishly Games)

### **Through the gate**

If the characters pass through the portal, they experience a moment of utter chaos. At that moment neither space nor time appear to exist, and they do not appear to have a body, mind or identity. It lasts for a few seconds or all eternity: it is impossible to say. This is extremely unpleasant, but causes no actual harm.

They find themselves standing on green grass next to some barren cliffs that overlook a viscous milky sea. The air feels thick and tastes of aniseed. In the distance jellyfish-like creatures gracefully float in the sky. A ruined city stands by the sea 1.5 miles distant. Above the city float grey clouds. Behind the characters the portal is mostly invisible, but still detectable as a sort of heat haze effect.

The jellyfish critters are cow-like grazers of airborne aphids and midges and are harmless. An astute observer may notice that they do not float anywhere close to the city. The air has a lower proportion of carbon dioxide than the character's home planet. This means that rain is less acidic, and there is therefore less salt in the ocean. This has led to the viscous milky sea that is filled with bacteria. At night the whole ocean glows with an eerie bioluminescent light.

**The city:** It takes around thirty minutes to reach the edge of the city on foot. The city is around two miles in diameter, and made of a grey stone. The buildings are predominantly fluted towers with high windows and ledges. At the centre of the city is a single tower taller than all of the others (rising up one hundred and fifty feet). The city is gloomy and overcast due to grey clouds that float above.

The city appears to be abandoned, dusty and has (harmless) white fungus growing in places. Many of the buildings are damaged, crumbling or collapsed. A search of the city leads to the discovery of some calcified bones, and some

wall inscriptions. The former inhabitants appear to have been a humanoid pteranodon race that had the natural ability to fly.

**The central tower:** If the characters keep heading towards the tall tower, they find it in the city centre surrounded by a plaza. The tower is fifty feet in diameter and has a large entrance at ground level, and no windows except at the very top. Inside it is hollow and open with two stone staircases attached to the walls that zig zag upwards. One of the staircases is mostly collapsed, and the other is mostly intact, but missing a twenty foot section.

**The top chamber:** After one hundred and twenty feet, both sets of stairs emerge into a room at the top of the tower. The room is fifty feet in diameter and thirty feet high. There are six window openings (the frames and glass have rotted away), and cold wind whips through the room. This room contains the holy of holies of the pteranodon race, and worshippers were forced to walk rather than fly here as an act of respect. There were separate staircases for coming up and going down. At the centre of the room on a stone plinth is **a shiny silver egg**. The egg is approximately three feet tall, and weighs three hundred pounds, so it is clearly not solid silver. Carrying it is a two-person job, and doing so down the stairs is difficult.

**The silver egg:** The egg radiates magic. The egg stores memories. When physically touched memories can be stored in the egg, accessed or deleted. The egg holds hundreds (maybe thousands) of years of memories and knowledge of the dead pteranodon race placed there by its priesthood. (This item does not require attunement.)

The pteranodons called themselves the Skittari. The egg holds a detailed history of their people, their religion and gods, and their rulers (things the priesthood considered important). The egg also contains a great deal of information about their world which they call Chitiak. They are apparently one of three sapient species on the

planet, with a peaceful saurial race (the Brodak) to the mountainous west, and an aggressive insect race (the Thissk) to the jungles of the south.

The egg records the visit of the Shining Ones. They arrived one day and approached the city and sought to open diplomatic relations. Their leader was an elven warrior called Anghareth. He was accompanied by several robed elves, one hundred bearfolk soldiers, and a massive armoured giant. The elves appeared powerful but peaceful, and were interested in any magical knowledge the Skittari possessed.

The most recent memory of the egg is from a few weeks later. It records the day of the cataclysm as experienced by the Skittari. Although it happened on the other side of the gate, the open portal allowed the collapse of the walls between the real world and the Far Realm to bleed through, and thousands of hideous creatures appeared in the city at once and space and time began to collapse. The final memory is of a member of the priesthood touching the egg as he appears to hallucinate reality peeling away like layers of tissue while something from behind him wraps its tentacles around him. (Think about whether this is sufficient for the characters to unlock some of the secrets of the Shining Ones and gain XP.) The egg was guarded by the priesthood and there are therefore no spells stored inside it. It could however be used as a spellbook by the characters if they think of that.

The egg has AC 16, ignores the first 5 damage of any attack, and has 30 HP before it breaks. If it breaks it loses its magic, but continues to be three hundred pounds of silver with a value of 30,000 silver shillings.

**Getting out alive:** The grey clouds floating five hundred feet above are actually huge dreaming Far Realm beings that entered this world during the cataclysm and destroyed this civilisation. At any point after they enter the city, the characters

may be attacked by the clouds (after they have visited the central tower would be best).

A rain of black tendrils descend and attempt to catch characters and pull them up into the clouds where they are consumed. This effect covers the entire city making it into a death trap. The tendrils can be attacked, but the cloud creatures are too vast and alien to be destroyed. Assume one tendril attacks each exposed character, and severed tendrils are immediately replaced by new ones.

### **Tendrils of doom**

Huge aberration, evil

Armor Class 16

Hit Points 25

Speed 30 feet

Str 18 (+4), Dex 16 (+3), Con 11 (+0)

**Save bonus:** +1

**Challenge:** 1

**Difficulty:** 4th level

### **Actions (special)**

Grapple: tendril makes a Str (Athletics) check at +5 opposed by the target's Str (Athletics) or Dex (Acrobatics).

Any character successfully attacked is grappled by the tendril. On the tendril's next action it will use both its move and action to lift the character into the air 60' (a dash move effectively). The tendril will continue lifting the character up 60 feet each round thereafter until the cloud 500 feet above is reached, where they will be devoured.

A grappled character can attempt to escape by making an opposed Str (Athletics) or Dex (Acrobatics) check against the tendril's Str (Athletics) check at +5. They will also be released if their tendril is brought to 0 HP, but they are at disadvantage to attack a tendril that is grappling them.

Any character falling will take 1d6 damage for every ten feet fallen. Characters who fall and are unconscious will continue to be attacked by fresh tendrils.

The best defence is for the characters to run and hide in the buildings and wait for 6+1d6 hours after which the clouds cease probing and become quiescent again. Stealthy characters should be able to reach the edge of the city without further attack, but it should be a tense and frightening journey.

### **32. Iris Door in Hill (Mothballed Zombie Army)**

This is a ten foot diameter metal iris door in a rock outcropping. Next to the door is a green gemlike opening (big enough for a gem key, but this key is lost). The elven steel segments of the doors have fused shut over the centuries. It requires several hours' work to force open one segment which will allow a character to crawl through.

Behind the door a ten foot wide ramp leads down into the darkness. The ramp descends 300 feet (dropping 100 feet) and ends at a similar metal iris door. This one is a bit easier to open and pulling open a segment takes around an hour.

Beyond the door is a vault 1500 feet across. Inside the vault, standing in silent ranks, are nearly ten thousand zombie warriors. How many are visible will depend on how much light the characters have. They stand in 100 ranks of 100 zombies ten feet apart.

In places the ceiling has collapsed and crushed some of the zombies (258 are crushed). The zombies are made mostly (80%) from dead humans, but there are some dead bearfolk, goblins, halflings, dwarves and other hybrids. Zombies all wear green verdigris-stained bronze chestplates with runes (+10 to Wisdom save against turning).

If a zombie is attacked, that zombie and the nearest 1d20 zombies turn hostile. If other zombies from that group are attacked, then an additional 1d20 zombies are activated.

Removing a zombie's chestplate requires a Dexterity (Stealth) check to avoid the zombie perceiving that as an attack.

### **Zombie soldiers (9742)**

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 8

Hit Points 22

Speed 20 feet

Str 13 (+1), Dex 6 (-2), Con 16 (+3), Int 3 (-4), Wis 6 (-2), Cha 5 (-3)

**Damage immunities:** poison

**Condition immunities:** poisoned

**Senses:** darkvision 60 ft

**Save bonus:** +0

**Challenge:** 1/4

**Difficulty:** 5 at 1st, 10 at 2nd-3rd, 20 at 4th, 40 at 5th.

#### **Actions**

Rusting steel sword or rend: +3 to hit, reach five feet, one target. Hit: 5 (1d6+1)

#### **Abilities**

**Undead fortitude:** If any attack reduces to 0 HP, zombie makes a DC 5+damage taken Constitution save to be on 1 HP instead (unless damage is radiant or a critical).

The zombies are a mothballed army stored here by the elves. The zombies require a control sceptre to command them (which is at location 60 in the Shining City in Zone Three). The sceptre provides control over the zombies at a range of 5 miles and allows orders to be issued telepathically. Once given orders zombies will continue following them until they receive new orders.

At the rear of the vault is a **teleportation platform / machine**. The platform is 20 ft by 20ft

and reached by a ramp. It can hold up to 16 medium sized creatures at a time. At the base of the machine are controls. The controls include two very large dials and a lever. If the lever is pulled, then anything on the platform is teleported.

The first dial indicates a distance in miles east or west from this location. The second dial indicates a distance north or south. The dials run from 0 to 5,000. The dials are currently set to a position 3655 miles west and 1040 miles south (3800 miles east by southwest in a direct line).

You should hint to the characters that the teleportation may be one way, and there is no way to retrieve anyone or anything teleported. If the characters decide to teleport themselves, the precise details fall outside the scope of this book, but they will arrive in the overgrown ruins of a city. This is in fact **Hadramaut** - the ruined capital of the long-dead dragon empire destroyed by the elves. The ruins contain drakes, wyverns, feral dragonborn (savage warring tribes based on scale colour), and undead dragons. Outside the city are bands of dark ages humans. It will be a long walk home.

The dials on the teleporter can be adjusted, and it can be used as a shortcut to Utnapishtim, Midea or other places. It is also a way to send goods to another location without travelling. While the machine will always teleport consistently to the same spot within 1 mile of the targeted destination, given that the characters do not have perfect maps, arrival will usually be within 2d6 miles of the intended destination (or more at GM's discretion). The machine will always teleport travellers to ground (or surface) level, and this is automatically adjusted for.

### **33. Basalt Pyramid (Sphere of Annihilation)**

This structure is a large pyramid made of a black stone. It has four sides, stands five hundred feet at the base, and rises to a height of three hundred and fifty feet. The pyramid is dusty and has soil and weeds growing in various places,

and on the side opposite to the door there appears to be a hole near the top where part of the pyramid has collapsed.

Reaching the hole requires a three hundred foot climb up the pyramid. This either requires a good plan involving rope and pitons, or a DC 15 Str (Athletics) check. At the top there is a fifty foot wide hole. The hole is directly above the Sphere of Annihilation, which appears to be a massive featureless and unreflecting black orb eighty feet below.

The pyramid has only a single large entrance at its base. A single ten foot wide set of **golden double doors decorated with closed eyes of differing sizes cast in gold** stand closed.

If the door is attacked, the lids open and attack with eye rays. The door (initiative of +2) fires three of the following rays at anyone attacking the door:

1: Paralyzing ray. DC 16 Constitution save or be paralyzed for one minute. Victim can save again at the end of each of its turns.

2: Fear ray. DC 16 Wisdom save or be frightened for 1 minute. Victim can save again at the end of each of its turns.

3: Petrification ray. DC 16 Dexterity save or restrained. Victim must save at the end of each of its turns and a second failure means petrification.

4: Death ray. 36 (8d8) necrotic damage, but half on a successful DC 16 Constitution save.

5: Disintegration ray. 45 (10d8) force damage, but half on a successful DC 16 Dexterity save.

6: Blindness ray. DC 16 Dexterity save or be blinded for 1 minute. Victim can save again at the end of each of its turns.

The door has AC 18 and has 100 HP. Once destroyed the eye rays cease to function. The eye rays have a maximum range of 600 feet. Treat the door as a Challenge rating 12 creature for XP purposes (**Difficulty**: 9th level). The doors are thickly gold plated rather than solid gold, and 15lbs of gold can be recovered (value 15,000 silver shillings).

Beyond the door is a vast hollow pyramid. The floor is fifty feet below floor level and stone steps lead down. The pyramid is fully occupied by a huge three hundred foot diameter featureless and unreflecting black orb. This is a doomsday weapon created by the elves: **a massive Sphere of Annihilation**.

The pyramid contains three other features:

a) A black iron box on a stone pedestal. The box contains a hand print marked in silver. If touched for ten seconds the entire roof of the pyramid will be shifted out of phase with this universe and appear ghostly. This was intended to allow for the egress of the Sphere. Anyone on the roof at the time will most likely fall into the Sphere.

b) A permanent Teleport Circle marked in inlaid lapis lazuli runes on the floor. (The lapis lazuli is worth 1000 silver shillings.)

c) A **golden throne** floating five feet off the ground.

The floating throne is the control interface for the Sphere. The throne flies (as a permanent Fly spell; one creature only - requires concentration) and has a psychic bond to the Sphere (the Sphere cannot be controlled in any other way). Using the throne to control the Sphere requires a DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check to control it for 1 minute (a natural roll of 20 extends this to 1 hour). One check can be made per minute.

Controlling the Sphere requires a minimum Intelligence of 18. If the user is under the Intelligence requirement, they must make a DC 20 Wisdom save each round they are using it or suffer 5 psychic damage per point of Intelligence under 18. The Sphere cannot be made to consume the throne, and throne cannot be made to fly into the sphere. When under control, the Sphere can move at a maximum speed of 3 miles per hour (or 30 feet/round i.e. walking speed). The throne has a maximum control range of 1 mile. The golden throne requires

attunement and would be worth 5000 silver shillings if sold solely for its flying properties.

### 34. The Petrified Forest

This forest is made up of petrified (fossilised) trees created as a result of Far Realm energy released during the cataclysm. The trees are covered in a grey lichen or mould.

The mould appears harmless, but prolonged exposure (for example spending considerable time in the forest) will have a toxic and hallucinatory effect. How quickly a character deteriorates will depend on them making DC 15 Constitution saves at the times listed below, and every hour thereafter. **Tip:** to maintain mystery it would be better for you to have rolled these checks in advance and simply narrate the effects.

After three hours, characters may experience auditory hallucinations. After six hours, they will experience visible hallucinations. After nine hours they will suffer extreme confusion and will find it difficult to find their way out of the forest or understand which way they are heading. Ultimately they may wander aimlessly until their food and water run out and they die. Once they are fully dosed, making a rational decision or doing something (like casting a spell) that requires concentration requires a DC 15 Wisdom save at disadvantage. Characters can reduce their toxicity (restart the contamination clock) through a Lesser Restoration spell, Lay on Hands, or Protection From Poison spell.

Twelve hours' travel into the forest there are ten foot tall hives on the ground. The hives are home to blood coloured ambrosia beetles. The ambrosia beetles are as big as a man's hand, but generally harmless. Each beetle has a **strange bulb of fluid on their backs**. The fluid functions as a healing balm that cures 2d8 HP (per bulb), and can also regenerate missing limbs and organs. Unfortunately it has no effect on fungus poisoning. The balm can be harvested but it only lasts a week.

The fungus can be scraped from the trees and stored. If a **jar of fungus** was thrown at a target and they inhaled it, they would need to make a DC 16 Constitution save or suffer hallucinations for 1d10 minutes (suffering the poisoned condition).

### 35. The Ubershroom

This is the domed cap of a one hundred and twenty feet in diameter and fifty foot high mushroom. It sits upon a stalk that is twenty five feet in diameter and forty feet tall. The Ubershroom's exterior is white, but has blue gills under the cap. There is an eight foot tall slit at the base of the stalk.

This is the Ubershroom: a huge magically bio-engineered mushroom. It was created by the elven archmage Ferranil. Lady Ferranil was the genius behind the creation of the Titans, and the Ubershroom is another example of her art. Ferranil is in fact the origin of the fertility goddess Faenil and the characters may be able to piece that together.

The Ubershroom is alive and intelligent. It cannot speak, but understands humanoid languages. It is achingly lonely and its overriding objective is to have company. If the characters seem to be rational explorers rather than ruthless brigands, the Ubershroom will make them welcome. If they start damaging the Ubershroom or stealing all the furniture, the Ubershroom will turn hostile. It will start by changing the bioluminescent internal lights to a red colour, and then make that pulse. If that fails it will attack with spore clouds. The Ubershroom can deploy a number of spore clouds inside or near to itself:

- a) fear spores (DC 15 Wisdom save or suffer frightened condition)
- b) hallucination spores (DC 15 Constitution save or hallucinate)
- c) paralysing spores (DC 15 Constitution save or paralysed)

- d) choking spores (3d8 choking damage per round; DC 15 Constitution save for half).
- e) happiness spores (DC 15 Constitution save or feel relaxed and uplifted).

The spore clouds persist for at least 1 minute and exposure results in the same effect each round. To encourage friendly groups to stay, the Ubershroom will release happiness spores which have a relaxing and uplifting effect. The characters will notice an uplift in their mood and will feel like they really like it here, but won't know why. Over time the happiness spores create a dependency.

**Entrance:** The slit in the stalk can flex open and closed like a muscle. If the characters appear to be about to cut their way in, the Ubershroom will open the entrance. Beyond the entrance is a spiral stairway that leads up inside the stalk forty feet to the cap of the Ubershroom. This leads through another slit like opening into a central reception room.

**Reception:** There is a large central reception room at the top of the stairway. It has attractive divans and soft furnishings and polished wood tables. There is a pleasant fragrance in the air, and it is a comfortable temperature (five items of furniture worth on average 300 silver shillings each). It is lit by soft bioluminescent light. (The ancient furnishings and decor are largely intact as a result of the Ubershroom carefully controlling the internal atmosphere.)

Coming off from the main room are six other rooms. The wall at the end of each room is translucent from the inside and acts as a discrete window.

**1. Dining room:** This large room is dominated by a long table of white wood which appears to have an intricate and unusual grain in the wood. It is surrounded by eight chairs made of the same wood. The table is set with eight porcelain plates and platinum cutlery.

The table weighs 190lbs and is worth 500 silver shillings in good condition; chairs are worth 50 silver shillings each; plates are worth 40 silver shillings total; the platinum cutlery (24 pieces) is worth a total of 600 silver shillings.

**2. Kitchen:** This room contains wooden worktops, cupboards and an iron stove.

Living in this room is a pet creature created by Ferranil. It looks like a five feet high rolling mass of pink protoplasm (a baby shoggoth basically). It is as intelligent as a dog, and similar in attitude. It can shape itself into mouths, eyes or appendages or roll along. It will bound up to the characters in a friendly way, but it may be perceived as an attack. If it is attacked it will flee, and attack if approached again threateningly.

### **Baby shoggoth**

Medium aberration, neutral

Armor Class 16

Hit Points 66

Speed 40 feet

Str 22 (+6), Dex 14 (+2), Con 18 (+4), Int 3 (-4), Wis 8 (-2), Cha 13 (+1)

**Damage resistances:** fire, cold, poison

**Condition immunities:** prone, poisoned, restrained, blinded, deafened

**Senses:** darkvision 120 ft, tremorsense 60 ft

**Save bonus:** +5

**Challenge:** 5

**Difficulty:** 4th level

### **Actions**

Multiattack - makes two attacks

Claw/spike: +6 to hit, reach ten feet, one target.

Hit: 10 (1d10+4)

Bite: +6 to hit, reach ten feet, one target. Hit: 12 (1d10+6)

### **Abilities**

**Amorphous:** can squeeze through small spaces



**Plasmic form:** can create appendages and attack forms

The creature is happy to leave the Ubershroom, but won't go far. It may create appendages to demonstrate features of the Ubershroom, but it cannot talk.

There is a bundle of cloth on the floor which is the protoplasm's nest. Buried under the clothes are the bones of a halfling and an elven steel slave collar. (Once a favoured domestic slave.) The kitchen also contains porcelain (80 silver shillings) and platinum cutlery (12 pieces, 300 silver shillings).

**3. Bedroom:** This room contains a round bed covered in silk sheets. The bed is part of the Ubershroom, and it moves to shape itself to anyone who lies down. It also has a gland that can be manipulated that causes the bed to undulate providing a massage.

The room also contains several wardrobes containing silk and satin robes, dresses and other clothes for a slim female (value 250 silver shillings). There is a dressing table and chair with a silver mirror atop it (100 silver shillings). On the dressing table are several crystal perfume bottles (the perfume has evaporated). In a secret compartment in the leg of the dressing table is a **copper key**. This is one of the keys required to access area 20A. The shoggoth knows where it is if the characters ask about a key.

There are five framed oil paintings on the walls (200 silver shillings each):

- Four huge reptile creatures tower over a forest and emerge from mist (the Titans at location 26)
- A painting showing a strange land with barren cliffs, a milky sea and an orange sun. A city by the coast lies in the distance. Strange jellyfish-like creatures float through the skies (the world reachable by the Rift Gate at location 31).

- A tall black tower with a metal spike that rises into the sky. The background is a star-studded nighttime sky (the beacon at location 41).
- A huge towering spiny plant with strange fruit growing from the top (location 27).
- A group of glowing white slim beings that appear to be descending from the sky (the ancients)

**4. Guest bedroom:** This room contains a similar bed to that in the main bedroom. It also contains empty wardrobes and a dressing table, mirror and chair. On the dressing table is an attractive vase of red crystal glass (80 silver shillings).

The red vase is in fact another of Ferranil's creations: a **mimic**. This small life form has the ability to polymorph into any ordinary object. It is domesticated and not hostile. After the vase is seen here (even if they take it), it will be found in the reception room the next time the characters enter. It will next appear as a black iron cauldron in the kitchen, a model ship on the dining table, a childrens' doll in the bedroom, and a bar of soap in the bathroom. If it is attacked, it will immediately shift into its natural blobby form and go whizzing into an adjacent room and change shape to hide. The mimic is not automatically adhesive, but can become so at will. It can understand Ieldran, but no other languages, and it cannot speak, but can imitate sounds.

#### **Domesticated mimic**

Medium aberration, neutral

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 58

Speed 40 feet

Str 12 (+1), Dex 17 (+3), Con 15 (+2), Int 5 (-3), Wis 13 (+1), Cha 8 (-1)

**Damage immunities:** acid

**Condition immunities:** prone, restrained, blinded, deafened

**Skills:** Stealth +5

**Senses:** darkvision 60 ft

**Save bonus:** +2

**Challenge:** 2

**Difficulty:** 1st level

### Actions

Pseudopod: +5 to hit, reach five feet, one target.

Hit: 6 (1d8+1)

Bite: +5 to hit, reach five feet, one target. Hit: 6 (1d8+1) plus 5 (1d8) acid damage

### Abilities

**Amorphous:** can squeeze through small spaces

**Shapechange:** can change into any small or medium inanimate object totally convincingly

**Adhesive:** at will can stick to any creature of Huge size or less: escape DC 13 and checks are at disadvantage.

**Grappler:** has advantage on attacks against any creature it has adhered to

**5. Bathroom:** This room contains a raised bathtub made of the Ubershroom, and filled by adjusting two nodules. There are also sinks, a toilet (any waste is eaten by the Ubershroom), and a silver mirror (worth 100 silver shillings).

**6. Laboratory:** This room has worktops, cupboards, shelves, and various odd pieces of equipment. It also has a strange shiny metal pod with a hinged door (about 7 feet tall and 3 feet in diameter).

The shelves and cupboards contain various flasks of dried out residues (originally containing various biological samples). It's unclear what the purpose of the equipment is but it may be worth something to an alchemist (microscope, flask, eye dropper, glass pipework, copper vessel, alcohol burner, tongs, tubes, dishes).

Some of the cupboards contain elven steel scroll cases. The scrolls within (written in Ieldran) detail some of Ferranil's bio-magical experiments and inventions, such as the Titans, Mimics and Ubershroom. Only a 16th or higher level Wizard could really grasp the details, and much of the content is unintelligible otherwise.

The silver pod radiates magic. It can be opened from the outside. Opening it breaks the suspended animation spell on the occupant. (If the door is slammed shut again, the characters will hear tapping from inside). The occupant is an 18 year old human male dressed in simple peasant's garb (HD 1, HP 8). The human's face looks strange and a little deformed around the eyes. The human is wearing a **bracelet made of silver chain and blue jewels**. This is a magic item, and when worn it allows the wearer to understand spoken Ieldran (elven) fluently.

The human is the result of an experiment to create psychic soldiers, but the process was not perfected and the subject has some brain damage. The human cannot speak, but can grunt, and is not hostile. They like eating and sleeping, and will follow simple instructions, but they have no social awareness, and will strip naked or defecate in public without a shred of self-awareness. They may accept weapons, but will probably lose them, and have no interest in fighting. The characters may decide to look after the human, but they will receive no gratitude and his behaviour will be difficult to manage.

If the human is hurt or attacked, he will instinctively call upon his psychic defences. These are considerable, and the resulting psychic shockwave will cover a one hundred foot radius area. Those inside the area of effect will take 2d20 psychic damage. They can make a DC 20 Wisdom save for half damage. If the save is failed by 10 or more, then the victim suffers a stroke (lose 1d6 Str, 1d6 Con, and 1d6 Dex until they can receive a Lesser Restoration cast with a third level spell slot). At the GM's discretion, those reduced to 0 HP by the psychic attack are placed into a coma lasting 1d10 days rather than killed.

### 36. Creepy Ruins (psychological programming facility)

This was clearly once a well-built single storey structure, but all that remains is rubble and a series of partial walls. The characters find this

place frightening, but have no idea why. Inside the ruins there is a ramp that leads underground to a long, ten foot wide passageway. The passageway is choked with weeds and rubble.

When a sufficient viable population of creatures was perfected at the joining facility (location 24), they would be sent here for psychological programming. Through their study of instinctual knowledge passed on in animal and insect species, the Shining Ones perfected a bio-magical technique of implanting ancestral memories into their slaves. The elves used this to implant in their subject races particular control words and symbols. These have continued to be passed down through the generations to the characters.

**The labs:** Coming off from the main passageway near the entrance are a number of labs. These contain dead and empty bee hives and insect mounds, and other animal remains from various research. There is also a cracked porcelain toilet, bathroom, and room with some broken bits of furniture. A search will reveal an **intact potion bottle**, a **tarnished blue metal helmet**, and a **glass wand**.

**Intact potion bottle:** This bottle has a metal stopper that was covered in wax. It contains pheromones that were being developed to trigger reactions from slaves in a way similar to the visual and auditory stimuli. As soon as it is unstoppered everyone within a 20 foot radius must make a DC 15 Constitution save or experience utter hopelessness and despair for 6+1d6 minutes.

**Tarnished blue metal helmet:** A helmet that floods the wearer with combat emotions. This gives them the ability to 'rage' as an equivalent level Barbarian. However the helmet causes brain damage and each time it is used they must make a DC 10 Wisdom save or lose 1 Wisdom.

**The glass wand:** The wand radiates strong enchantment magic. When activated the victim (one target within 60 feet) believes that words

are real things. Under the influence of the wand they would perceive a label saying "king" to be an actual king and would behave appropriately. Likewise they would perceive a paper saying "your worst fear" as being that. Resisting the wand requires a DC 15 Wisdom save. The wand has 6 charges and each charge lasts for 5 minutes.

**The holding areas:** Coming off the middle of the main passageway are three holding areas. These are large rooms with rusting steel bars and toilet holes in the floor (each could have held about twenty people). In two of the rooms there are scraps of calcified fabric and small pieces of bone. Nearby are storage rooms with the fragments of shelves.

**The therapy room:** At the end of the passageway is a therapy room. At the entrance to the room there is a side chamber that overlooks the therapy room through a (cracked, but intact) thick glass window. A ramp leads through a steel door down to the floor of the room proper.

This side chamber contains a raised plinth on which there are several gems embedded. There is also a metal cabinet that contains small glass bottles and a set of thin metal pins attached to glass tubes (hypodermic needles). The content of the bottles has dried up. (These were drugs administered to facilitate the imprinting process).

The main room has cracked walls with weeds growing out of them. There are twenty rusting reclining steel chairs with restraints. In three of the chairs some human bones remain. The roof of the chamber appears to be covered in a tracery of magical runes (illusion magic) picked out in a silvery mineral. Other magical runes (enchantment magic) are inscribed on the floor of the room.

**The cracks:** anyone investigating the weeds or cracks will find that there are several tunnels leading from the room into the surrounding

ground. These are about four inches wide. They look a bit like rat runs.

**The plinth:** there are several jewels that are magical and can be used to trigger permanent spell effects in the room. Red: activates the imprinting process. Blue: selects from several different imprinting routines. Yellow: deactivates the imprinting process.

If the imprinting process is activated, the following will happen at the same time:

- The floor runes will activate and anyone in the lower room will be overwhelmed with strong emotions (see below). Resisting each of these emotions requires a DC 25 Wisdom save. This is a magical effect intended to create instinctual associations at an ancestral level.
- The ceiling illuminates. It then displays certain symbols, sounds and simple pictures (like line drawings). If any party member can see or hear these, then they will evoke in them the reactions below even if they are not in the room. Resisting these emotions requires a DC 15 Wisdom save. (This is being caused due to the characters ancestors having been previously imprinted in this room.)

The first programme activated evokes these in order (each lasts 1 minute): joy, happiness, anxiety, fear, terror, calmness, pain, joy, fear, lust, shame, joy, joy, joy. The pattern will then repeat.

### **Oh god, the ants**

The lightshow and noise of the training programme will disturb a nest of huge ants that lies just beyond the walls of the therapy room. These ants will pour into the room from the cracks and attack. Each ant is about six inches long.

### **Swarm of huge ants (up to 6 swarms)**

Medium swarm of tiny beasts, unaligned

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 22

Speed 20 feet, climb 20 feet

Str 3 (-4), Dex 13 (+1), Con 10 (+0), Int 3 (-4), Wis 7 (-2), Cha 1 (-5)

**Damage resistances:** bludgeoning, piercing, slashing

**Condition immunities:** charmed, frightened, paralysed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned

**Senses:** blindsight 10 feet

**Save bonus:** +0

**Challenge:** 1/2

**Difficulty:** 2nd-3rd level

### **Actions**

Bites: +3 to hit, reach 0, one target in swarm's space. Hit: 10 (4d4) (o5 5 once swarm is at half HP or lower)

### **Abilities**

**Swarm:** can occupy another creature's space and move through tiny openings.

Once the ants are defeated, it would be possible to trigger multiple programmes and witness the associated feelings or meanings. Some of these are clearly meant to evoke awe and fear of the elves. Others are communicating concepts. A character witnessing these requires a DC 15 Wisdom save or acts as if under the Confusion spell for 1d10 minutes.

With sufficient fortitude and many hours of uncomfortable study, ambitious characters might be able to grasp the rudiments of the implanted programming. This could then be used to some effect on any of the ex-slave races of the Shining Ones. When using the command programming they must make a DC 20 Int check. Doing so gives them advantage on any Deception, Intimidation, Persuasion or Performance checks made in that encounter. If used with mind or emotional control magic, a

successful check gives disadvantage on saving throws against the caster's spell.

### 37. The Crystal Woods

These woodlands are a mix of 25% deciduous and 75% pine. They stretch about 35 miles east-west and about 25 miles north-south. The woods should be treated as difficult terrain which means that most parties will only cover 12 miles (1 hex) in a day.

The woods seem fairly normal until one wanders inside. For every 3 miles the party pass through, roll on this encounter table (and continue making normal random encounter rolls as well):

01-50: no encounter  
51-60: infected deer  
61-70: blue crystal growths  
71-80: infected black bear or boar (50% either)  
81-90: grave marker  
91-100: an immobile deer/caribou covered in blue crystal growths

The wild animals have blue glowing crystals growing out of their skin, as well as weird tumors. They appear to be out of their minds. Anyone struck by one of these creatures risks infection (see below).

Black bear: AC 11, HP 19, speed 40, advantage on scent-based Perception checks, ATTs: 1 bite (+3, 1d6 damage) and 1 claw (+3, 2d4 damage), challenge 1/2 (MM. p.318)

Boar: AC 11, HP 11, Speed 40, charge (if move and hit, target knocked prone if fails DC 11 Str check), Relentless (reduced to 1 HP instead of 0 once), ATT: 1 tusk (+3, 1d6 damage). (MM, p.319)

Deer / Caribou: AC 13, HP 4, speed 50, ATT: 1 gore (+2, 1d4 damage). (MM, p.321)

The blue crystal growths are in small clusters on the grass or on trees. The crystals form complex webs and patterns and pulse with lights. They

are just as infectious as those at the centre of the woodlands (see below).

The grave marker is a weathered stone pillar. It is inscribed in Ieldran. A Comprehend Languages spell reveals that it says: *Here lies Darach, loyal and faithful warrior in service of the shining lords. Regard his example and serve well.*

The grave was a shrine to a bearfolk warrior. It was created by the elves to enhance the loyalty of their ursidae soldiers. Selected commanders were allowed a pilgrimage here as a reward. There is in fact a set of bones buried six feet down. The coffin has long since disintegrated, but some of the larger bones remain in this dry ground. Also preserved is a (bearfolk-sized) **solid gold slave collar** marked with runes. The collar is enchanted and turns any critical hit inflicted against the wearer into a normal hit. It is Arcane Locked closed. It has a gold value of 3000 silver shillings.

#### The heart of the woods

In the centre of the woods there is a transdimensional rift caused by the cataclysm. This appears to be a small 5 inch "rip" in the air that glows with bright light and a myriad of rainbow colours. Looking at it causes nausea. Near the rip is a very dense outgrowth of blue crystal in all directions.

The rip leads to a hostile alien dimension. The blue crystals have emerged through the rift to infect plants and trees in the immediate vicinity. The crystal is a kind of alien techno-magic that repurposes living material into a useful information-processing substrate.

#### The disease

Anyone injured by an infected animal, or touching a crystal outgrowth, must make a DC 10 Constitution save or become infected. The infection progresses as follows:

Week 1: victim feels hot all the time and has a strange 'skin crawling' feeling. Towards the end of the first week they see lights under their skin.

Week 2: Their skin is darkened by creeping veins which flicker with lights. They feel their mind expanding: +4 Intelligence, +4 Wisdom

Week 3: the crystal growths emerge from the skin and their body weakens as their mind continues to expand. Lose 4 Strength, 4 Dexterity, 4 Constitution, 4 Charisma, but gain an additional 4 Intelligence and 4 Wisdom.

Week 4: at this point the pain, tumours and changes overwhelm the victim causing madness. They will actively attempt to infect others. They continue to lose 4 Strength, 4 Dexterity, 4 Constitution, 4 Charisma but gain an additional 4 Intelligence and 4 Wisdom for each subsequent week.

When a physical stat reaches zero, the victim will remain stationary. They will continue to progress, and will start to infect their local area.

If or when their Intelligence reaches 25, they reach a threshold and become networked with the rest of the crystal. At this point they will become an NPC. They will speak only in nonsensical sentences (a side effect of the data they are processing). For example: *"rainbows trip seven zeta blue. Inordinate rubicon alarm three delta. Inevitable web mirrored four spectre indulgence."*

The infection is difficult to cure once it sets in, but a Lesser Restoration spell cast with a 4th level spell slot every day for 7 days will eradicate it. The machine at the tower (location 17) could, if working, cure the infection, but the victim would need to spend 24 hours in the machine.

### **38. The Upper Rift**

The Rift is a huge canyon torn open as a result of the cataclysm. It stretches seventy miles from the High Moors into the Thornlands. The Rift

valley is on average 1500 to 3000 feet across, and steeply descends 3000 feet. The rock walls are predominantly grey and black igneous rock or a sparkly grey schist.

The lower regions of the Rift are riddled with entrances to the underworld. These regions are the native home of fiends. While the fiends cannot survive for long outside the strange radiations of their underworld environment, they do mount attacks against the surface. The Grigorians have dedicated themselves to patrolling the Rift and ensuring that "the evil" cannot escape.

Here in Zone Two the Rift erupts into the tableland of the High Moors creating the "Upper Rift". The Upper Rift runs around twelve miles in length, and splits off in various directions. The canyon here is around 2000 feet wide, and descends around 1000 feet. Near the bottom of the Upper Rift are caves and openings leading into the underworld.

Standing lonely in the middle of the Upper Rift there is what appears to be a natural column of stone 150 feet in diameter that rises up nearly level with the top of the Upper Rift. At its top is a strange blue coral growth sixty feet in diameter and eighty feet tall. The column is approximately 900 feet from the edge of the canyon. It could be reached by a winged creature or by use of magic such as "Fly".

#### **The haunter of the rift**

The Upper Rift valley here is inhabited by a Far Realm energy creature. This creature is naturally invisible but appears as an obvious large blur in the air (its natural form is moth-like). It manifests an extremely powerful magnetic force. The characters have a good chance of attracting its attention if they spend time at the edge of the chasm near the coral. Note: the magnetic attacks of the creature do not affect elven steel (titanium) which has no magnetic properties.

## Far Realm Energy Beast

Large aberration, neutral evil

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 158

Speed 70 ft fly

Str 18 (+4), Dex 16 (+3), Con 12 (+1), Int 9 (-1),  
Wis 11 (+0), Cha 6 (-2)

**Damage immunities:** poison

**Condition immunities:** grappled (unless with metal), poisoned, petrified, prone, unconscious

**Senses:** darkvision 60 ft

**Save bonus:** +4

**Challenge:** 6

**Difficulty:** 4th level

### Actions

Metal bludgeon: +5 to hit, reach ten feet, one target. Hit: 15 (3d6+4)

### Abilities

**Grab:** as a bonus action, the beast can seize one metal object held or carried by a character within 30 feet. The character must make a DC 15 Strength save to keep it. If removed it hovers around the beast and can be used as a bludgeon.

**Magnetic body:** any attack by a metal weapon is at advantage. If it hits, it sticks to the creature. A wielder of a melee weapon can wrest it clear (as a bonus action) by making a DC 17 Strength save.

**Push:** one target wearing metal armour must make a DC 17 Strength save or be pushed 30 feet in a direction of the beast's choice. Any character pushed over the edge of the Rift can make a DC 15 Dexterity save to grab a handhold. If they fail, they fall 50 feet and take 5d6 falling damage from hitting the rift wall. They can then make a further save to grab a handhold. If they fail again they fall to the bottom of the rift one thousand feet below (which takes about 8 seconds, so they impact on the following round).

**Smush** (recharge 3-6): as an action, one target wearing metal armour must make a DC 17

Strength save or take 21 (6d6) bludgeoning damage from being lifted up and smashed into the ground repeatedly

### The floor of the rift

If the characters descend to the floor of the Upper Rift, they see a variety of cracks and caves leading into darkness. Many of these connect to the main Rift, and onwards to the underworld. For every hour spent at the floor of the Upper Rift or in the tunnels, there is a 1 in 6 chance of encountering 1d6 Fiends. The fiends appear to be of different shapes and sizes, but all look monstrous and dangerous with horns, claws, scales and fangs. They will silently attack without mercy.

### Fiends (1d6)

Large fiend, unaligned

Armor Class 16

Hit Points 130

Speed 40 ft

Str 20 (+5), Dex 15 (+2), Con 21 (+5), Int 9 (-1),  
Wis 12 (+1), Cha 10 (+0)

**Condition immunities:** immune to mind-affecting and mind-reading magic

**Damage resistances:** cold, fire, lightning

**Skills:** Stealth +6, Perception +5, Survival +5

**Senses:** blindsight 30 ft, darkvision 120 ft

**Save bonus:** +4

**Challenge:** 8

**Difficulty:** 13th level for 3 fiends

### Actions

Multiattack: makes two claw and 1 bite attack

Bite: +7 to hit, reach five feet, one target. Hit: 16 (2d10+5)

Claw: +7 to hit, reach five feet, one target. Hit: 12 (2d6+5)

## Abilities

**Magic resistance:** the fiend has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Track by scent:** fiends have advantage on Perception or Survival checks based on scent.

**Savage:** after dropping a foe to 0 HP, a fiend will continue attacking them until they are dead and feast on their juicy organs.

## The blue coral

The blue coral is a Far Realm entity, but a relatively harmless one. It is fleshy and there is a way to enter past its waving fronds and polyp body. Inside, the coral glows with a tremulous light and shivers gently. Wending ones' way inwards through five foot wide folds allows ingress to the inner sanctum.

Any character who enters the heart of the coral, nested in flickering bioluminescence, will make contact with the being. Each character so entering will find themselves alone in a psychic mindspace of trickling blue lights and strange echoing noises. The character will become aware that they are in the presence of a god. A strange alien god. It is vaguely aware of them. It is curious about what they want.

The being will interpret the wishes of the character (spoken or merely thought) and will change them. The character or characters will find themselves suddenly outside the coral on the stone column. The coral being is alien and only passingly understands human minds. It will attempt to interpret and act reflexively on whatever wishes are expressed to it. For example, if a character wishes for:

**Protection:** the character is transformed and has a rigid carapace and a crab-like head. They gain a natural AC of 22, Con 18, and immunity to poison and disease.

**Knowledge:** the character is transformed to opaque living crystal. They know all languages, and have expertise (double proficiency) in all

skills and tools, and their Intelligence is raised to 20.

**Strength:** the character becomes hulking and muscular with an oversized hairy gorilla-like body. They gain Str 22 and Con 20.

**Magic:** the character becomes a 7 ½ foot tall unnaturally thin elf-like humanoid. If not a magic-user, their class is changed to Sorcerer (wild magic). If they are a magic-user, they gain twice the number of spell slots.

**Healing:** the character is fully healed and all their bodily apertures (eyes, ears, mouth etc) close over. They gain regeneration of 1 HP/round unless dead. They do not need to breathe, eat, drink, urinate or defecate. They gain blindsight 60 feet, and immunity to airborne toxins and diseases. They can hear normally. They gain advantage on Intimidation checks against humanoids.

**Treasure / wealth:** the character finds themselves outside with a heap of 500 large (living) purple snails with sparkly shells. The snails (which are considered highly valuable in the coral's native universe) are poisonous to eat, but their shells are very pretty and could fetch 1 copper penny each.

If a second wish for treasure is made, there is a 50% chance of more snails. Otherwise (particularly if the desire is for precious metals), the character finds themselves outside holding a silver metal orb (7 pounds in weight). The orb is warm to the touch, and its bright shiny exterior quickly oxidises grey in the air. The orb is about as hard and brittle as cast iron.

The orb is plutonium - the rarest stable metal element. It is radioactive, but most of the alpha radiation is blocked by the skin, and it only travels a few inches in the air. But if any is inhaled or swallowed the victim will die of radiation poisoning within hours. Carrying the orb for months will also cause the character to begin experiencing slow radiation sickness. The



metal is also highly toxic as well as its radioactive properties. It is an insufficient amount to reach criticality.

**Something relating to someone else not present:** they are transformed into a physical duplicate of the other person. At GM's discretion their statistics may be changed to be more similar to the other person.

**For a dead body present to be restored to life:** the Coral creates a living duplicate of that person (original is still dead). Duplicate has all the memories of the original and can be played as a character.

If a second resurrection is requested (for the same or a different person), there is a 50% of the same thing happening (a duplicate being created).

Otherwise the coral transforms the body into: 1: a cloud of living butterflies, 2: a swarm of flies, 3: flowers, 4: moss

**Nothing:** the character has their memories erased. Their alignment becomes "unaligned". Any curses or insanities are removed. They retain their class and XP. They may use some abilities instinctively at the GM's discretion.

### 39. The Ash Waste

The Ash Waste is a region of grey ash and black igneous rock that is around 30 miles in diameter. It was the result of the forces and energies unleashed through the eruption of the Upper Rift during the cataclysm.

The Ash Waste is patrolled by a xenophobic group who call themselves The Waste Walkers. They appear wrapped in loose robes with faces covered with leather masks with an elephant like breathing tube that emerges from the front. They are armed with curved swords and gas bombs.

The Waste Walkers are in fact devilfolk (tieflings). They patrol the Ash Waste principally

to protect the crashed skyship, and to watch for giantkin (who kill devilfolk on sight). A patrol comprises ten devilfolk, with a further ten back at the skyship. Their leader is **Malvo**, a 36 year old male with a shaved head. The devilfolk protect the crashed skyship because they know it holds a portal to another world. That world is where most of the devilfolk have migrated too, although it is not without its dangers. The devilfolk believe that they were created by the elves, but they don't know why. Possibly to use as soldiers capable of surviving in the underworld. The devilfolk do not worship any gods, but believe that there are spirits in all things that must be honoured (they are aware of the elemental at location 40, which they feel helps prove their point).

### Waste Walkers (20)

Medium devilfolk, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 15

Hit Points 16

Speed 30 ft

Str 14 (+2), Dex 15 (+2), Con 15 (+2), Int 10 (+0), Wis 12 (+1), Cha 12 (+1)

**Skills:** Stealth +4

**Senses:** darkvision 60 ft

**Damage resistances:** fire

**Save bonus:** +1

**Challenge:** 1/2

**Difficulty:** 4th level for a group of ten

### Actions

Curved sword: +5 to hit. Hit: 7 (1d8+2)

Shortbow: +5 to hit. Hit: 6 (1d6+2)

Hurl gas bomb: +5 to hit, range 20 feet, creates 10 foot radius gas cloud. Anyone in the gas must make a DC 14 Constitution save each turn or do nothing but choke and gasp for breath. The gas lasts 5 minutes.

### Abilities

**Thaumaturgy cantrip:** at will

### **The crashed skyship**

Here lies a large, dusty darkwood galleon. It is listing to one side. The top deck is strewn with tarnished elven steel cables (which were once connected to a balloon). A dozen or so small, gaily-coloured tents shelter to one side of the vessel.

The galleon was an experimental skyship created by the Shining Ones. It was powered by a Far Realm engine, and when the cataclysm struck the engine exploded. The galleon plummeted to the ground, but was also spatially fractured. The galleon now exists in several locations on several worlds, and it is possible to pass between these by entering the galleon. The galleon is indestructible and immovable in all worlds because it isn't fully present at any one location. It can be entered and explored. The upper deck is immediately below the top (uncovered) deck. The lower deck is below the upper deck towards the bottom of the ship.

**Upper deck (front):** cracked portholes look out onto an ocean world with three moons (visible night or day), and stormy seas. No land is visible. The porthole can be opened and a character could crawl through. They find themselves clinging to the side of the listing galleon, a fixed point in a churning ocean. This ocean world has no land masses, so exploration will be difficult, but may have undersea civilisations at the GM's discretion.

On this side of the porthole the rest of the ship fully exists, but it is a different version. Climbing up the side and onto the deck of this version allows the ship to be explored. The captain's cabin on this version of the ship has a sealed door secured by an Arcane Lock spell cast at 18th level. Behind the door a skeletal elf in tattered satin garments sits in a high-backed chair. This was Illuvial, the mage responsible for the experimental skyship. The elf has a **blue metal key** on an elven steel chain around his neck.

The key (requires attunement) allows the user to create (with a bonus action) a magic door and briefly step outside reality. The door leads to a pulsing, oozing fleshy red and purple corridor with an exit at the end. The key user can use a dash or move action and then reappear at that location in the real world, bypassing barriers, enemies or obstacles. This item may not work as expected in areas of high spatio-temporal or transdimensional disruption, and cannot be used to bypass the barrier at location 61.

Every time the item is used the user feels like something is watching them. There is a 1 in 20 chance each time it is used that a guardian creature notices and follows the user back to the real world. The guardian creature appears to be a pale hairless monkey about four feet tall. The shape of its mouth makes it appear to be smiling, although its eyes are just silvery black dots. If it manifests it stares at the wearer of the blue metal key. If attacked, it moves any physical weapon into another dimension before it makes contact. When it attacks it runs and jumps inside its victim, phasing into them. Once inside it starts (agonisingly) breaking bones. After it has broken the victim's arms and legs, it exits and disappears, taking the blue metal key with it.

### **Key Guardian**

Small aberration, lawful evil

Armor Class 15

Hit Points 33

Speed 40 ft

Str 16 (+3), Dex 18 (+4), Con 15 (+2), Int 16 (+3), Wis 12 (+1), Cha 11 (+0)

**Damage resistances:** cold, fire, lightning, bludgeoning, slashing and piercing

**Condition immunities:** prone, restrained, petrification, fear, charm, grappled, paralysed

**Senses:** true sight 120 ft

**Save bonus:** +4

**Challenge:** 9

**Difficulty:** 6th level

## Actions

Wound (when phased inside a victim): +7 to hit, Hit: one broken limb and 12 (2d8+3) damage. This attack is made with advantage.

## Abilities

**Phasing defence (at will):** as a reaction, guardian can send any physical weapon used to attack it to another dimension before weapon strikes. It can only do this for attacks it is aware of, but it can have any number of these reactions.

**Phasing attack (at will):** as an action, the guardian leaps into a medium sized or larger creature and phases inside them. Victim must make a DC 16 Dexterity save to jump clear. Once inside the creature can only be removed via a Protection from Evil and Good or Banishment spell.

**Magic resistance:** the guardian has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Upper deck (rear):** the captain's cabin has windows that look out onto another world. This one appears to be a burning sea of magma under a dark smoky sky. The window can be opened, but that would allow choking smoke and awful heat into the cabin (2d6 heat damage/turn). Anyone exiting fully would take 4d6 damage/turn from heat, and 2d6 damage/turn from the poisoned air. There is another version of the ship here, but there is nothing to discover.

**Lower deck (front):** portholes open onto a pitch black, barren rocky world. This world is cold and it is perpetually night there. Strange stars twinkle above. This world is a dark and hostile world of predators which will immediately be attracted to any light sources or loud noise (think: Ankheg, Cloakers, Darkmantles, Violet Fungus, Gricks).

**Lower deck (rear):** portholes lead to a sunlit world which has a sea of tall green grass stretching in all directions. Two hundred yards from the galleon there is a bleached skeleton of

an absolutely gargantuan dragon (300 feet long).

This is the world in which the rest of the devilfolk live, and they have hidden valley (concealed from the air) where there are 209 devilfolk (including 44 children). A well worn trail may be followed 3 miles from the galleon to their settlement. The leader of the devilfolk is a 65-year old female called **Tianna**. They cook inside caves to avoid their fires being seen, and their camouflage netting and thick foliage protects them from casual discovery by air. The devilfolk harvest a particularly poisonous pear which is fermented and then sealed into flasks with an accelerant. Over several weeks the organics break down and convert completely into noxious vapours.

This world is dominated by huge saurial dinosaurs and unintelligent dragons of all sizes. The devilfolk believe that they are the only sapient humanoids alive here. They have found some old ruins which appeared to belong to a slug-like intelligent race, but no living specimens have been encountered.

## 40. Giant's Quarry

Nestled in the meadow-grass covered hills is a large open cast quarry. The quarry stretches for six miles from one side to the other, and the sides of the quarry reach up one hundred and twenty feet. The upper thirty feet appears to be a black rock (basalt). The lower ninety feet appears to be a speckled grey rock (granite).

### The western side

The western side of the quarry is home to an earth elemental. The elemental appears as a huge worm made of rock and soil and studded with gems. It is around twenty feet long and five feet in width.

Its area of the quarry is decorated with strange piles of stones piled up upon one another precariously. Some of the piles are twelve of fifteen feet high, and look somewhat improbable.

They are easy to knock over, although this will immediately attract the elemental's ire.

The elemental is bound to the quarry by the magic of the elves, and is slightly crazy as a result. It will attack interlopers by surprise using its earth glide power to attack by surprise. If it is addressed by someone that speaks Primordial (the elemental tongue), it will stop attacking and parlay. It would be willing to make a deal in order to be freed from its binding. Freeing it requires a Dispel Magic spell against an 8th level spell (DC 18), or a Banishment spell (treat Charisma save as caster's +10). Once free the elemental will either (50%) head to the northern mountains or (50%) descend into the Upper Rift.

### **Earth elemental**

Large elemental, neutral

Armor Class 17

Hit Points 114

Speed 30 ft

Str 20 (+5), Dex 16 (+3), Con 18 (+4), Int 9 (-1), Wis 8 (-1), Cha 9 (-1)

**Damage vulnerabilities:** Thunder

**Damage immunities:** Poison

**Condition immunities:** prone, restrained, petrification, poisoned, paralysis

**Senses:** darkvision 60 feet, tremor sense 60 feet

**Save bonus:** +5

**Challenge:** 5

**Difficulty:** 4th level

### **Actions**

Slam attack: +8 to hit, reach 10 ft, single target.

Hit: 14 (2d8+5)

### **Abilities**

**Petrification (recharge 3 in 6):** as an attack, the elemental can grapple a target (grapple roll: +5 vs target's Str (Athletics) or Dex (Acrobatics)). If successful, the target must make a DC 13 Constitution save or be restrained. On the following round they must

repeat the save. Failure leads to petrification, or the effect ends on a save. Once the grapple succeeds, the elemental will let go and move on to a new target.

**Earth Glide:** can burrow through non-magical earth and stone and does not disturb the material it is moving through

**Siege monster:** does double damage against objects and structures

If slain (or bargained with) the elemental can provide 20 gems with an average value of 50 silver shillings each.

### **The eastern side**

The eastern side of the quarry has the remains of a number of stone structures. These are just piles of stone, but they were once simple, but massive stone structures. They appear to have been formed mostly of simple stone columns thirty to forty feet tall. It's unclear what purpose these tall structures had. One of the largest of these structures near the quarry wall is buried under a slope of scree. Most of the uncovered structures are just piles of stones. There are signs that large logs were slotted into them in various places as perhaps walls or roofs, but these have all decayed away.

The buildings were in fact the residences and workshops of the giants created by the elves as construction slaves. All of the exposed equipment and bodies have rotted away over the centuries. The buried structure does contain some surviving relics if the scree can be excavated. By hand this is a lot of work: for every 24 man hours spent excavating the scree, the following can be discovered (1d10):

1-2: The crushed bones of a twenty five foot tall giant. A huge (25lbs) tarnished slave collar of elven steel rings his neck.

3-4: A huge runed slave collar of elven steel (weighs 25 lbs)

5-6: A basalt carving of a female giant holding a baby (10 silvers as a curio, but weighs 20lbs).

7-8: A leather bag (contains 2 nuggets of gold ore worth 50 silver shillings each, and an

unpolished lump of chalcedony worth 60 silver shillings, or twice that if cut and polished).  
9-10: Amongst giant bones there is a hefty chess board of polished granite and basalt (weighs 80lbs). Nearby are large chess pieces (10lbs each) made of polished grey granite or polished black basalt: elven kings and queens, giant rooks, goblin bishops, bearfolk knights, and human pawns. If the whole 32-piece set and board is recovered, it weighs 400lbs, and would be worth 400 silver shillings.

## Zone Three: The City Precincts

### Factions of Zone Three

There are three factions currently active in Zone Three.

#### **The Men of the Stag, Avari Raiders**

This group of Avari (humans) are recognisable by the White Stag emblem on their round shields. They are led by Godric and his lieutenants Horsa and Alwin, and comprise a company of 12 Fighters and a female druid called Karsyn. They belong to the important Helvetii Tribe. They have been sent here by Chieftain Maedoc, although mainly at the urging of the druid, Karsyn. Karsyn has persuaded the chieftain that there are weapons and riches here that the Avari should not leave to others. Such treasures would increase Maedoc's status, and could even help him become High King of the Avari. Godric and his men are mainly interested in glory (including trophies), and riches, and are a prideful bunch. Godric is in charge, although Karsyn thinks he is an idiot.

Likely development:

Week 1: they investigate the island (45), but don't know how to get across. They also visit the Rose Garden (46) and speak to the Baroness. They are unwilling to trade with her, but also decide against attacking her for now.

Week 2: they decide to try the village in the woods to get information about the city. They refuse to give up their weapons, and kill the sentries (it's daytime). They then locate the owlfolk settlement and attack by surprise. They move house to house and force the owlfolk to fight in melee, and they succeed in killing nearly 40 owlfolk before retreating. They escape using Pass Without Trace and camp far away.

Week 3: Godric's men return to the woods and carry out another daytime raid. The owlfolk are better prepared this time, but they still lose 25 owlfolk, and only 2 of the Avari fighters are killed. The Avari set fires to cover their escape and the smoke may be seen from a distance.

Around this time the Avari run into the Company of the Blue Feather. They threaten and intimidate the halflings into helping them to kill the owlfolk.

Week 4: The Avari sneak into the woods and get close to the settlement and then the halflings attack, and then flee. A large group of owlfolk fighters (45 males) follows them, but this leaves the village with a reduced defence (80 females). The Avari attack in earnest, and kill 30 females and capture a number of females and children. They then force the owlfolk to hand over all their belongings and any information they have. Seeking revenge, the owlfolk tell the Avari how to reach the island.

Meanwhile all of the halflings except Honan and Sikya are killed by vengeful owlfolk. The pair flee towards the Shining City to try to avoid the Avari.

Week 5: The Avari reach the island (loc 45). The golem attacks and Horsa is disintegrated. The remainder of the fighters are killed before Godric, Alwin and Karsyn flee. Recognising this was a trap, they head back to the woodlands and attempt to burn the woods down creating multiple fires to get revenge on the owlfolk.

### Zone Three: City Precincts

42. The Tombs

50. The Star Stone

44. Ruined Shell Keep

51. Obelisk with markings

The Shining City

48. Weird Rock

49. Treehouse village

Zone One: The Farm

45. Forbidden Island

46. The Rose Garden

43. Black Lake Fen

41. The Beacon

47. The Prison

1 hex = 12 miles



Week 6: Desperate for a win, Godric, Alwin and Karsyn head to the City. They immediately encounter a spectral elf but dispatch it. After a couple of hours Alwin falls through a spatial rift into the lake, meanwhile Godric and Karsyn are attacked by 6 spectral elves. Godric destroys 3 of them, but succumbs and dies, and Karsyn turns into a bird and flies away. Shortly thereafter Godric is raised as a spectre. Alwin flees and heads south on his own. Karsyn remains near the city, and may seek to join up with the characters.

### **The Company of the Blue Feather**

This group of eight young Kachina (halflings) are led by a brother, Honani, and sister, Sikya. Honani is a 2nd level fighter, and Sikya is 3rd level rogue. They are accompanied by six friends. The Company is a group of friends from Awelo. Despite being warned off by their elders, they have come to the High Moors to learn the truth of their ancestors (Kachina revere their ancestors), and will be interested in anything the characters can tell them (although they may not like it!).

Their plan is to explore this area, and they are happy to join forces with the characters and split anything found. The Kachina elders in question are actually a secret society called **The Seal**, and they are committed to preventing the truth of the past from getting out. They may task a Kachina character with a mission to prevent this, and they will be willing to take direct action should any of the Company return to Awelo with unwelcome discoveries.

Likely development:

Weeks 1-2: see "Men of the Stag" above

Week 3: Honani and Sikya reach the ruins at location 44. They head inside but then are attacked by the blue mould. They both barely escape with their lives. Later they try to investigate the obelisk, but are unable to get close.

Week 4: The head north and stop at the Star Stone. They stay there for a couple of days before heading to the Weird Rock. At night they are attacked by the mutated polar bear. It sneaks up on Sikya, kills her and carries her off. Honani pursues, but the bear loses him. He eventually finds her remains and buries her. Utterly defeated, he decides to return home and heads south.

### **Vadim and Borislav, demonslayers**

Vadim and Borislav (both male) are a pair of giants who are searching the area looking for weapons that their kin might use against the fiends of The Rift. The Grigorians (giantkin) consider the High Moors a dangerous and cursed place, and the pair know that they shouldn't be here. Indeed, the other giants would be concerned by them 'stirring up' things best left alone. But the giants have it in mind to recover something valuable to the cause and become heroes. They are accompanied by a pet grizzly bear called Ragnak.

Like most of their folk, they look down on the "little people", and are easily provoked to violence. But they also don't really know what they are doing, and they may parlay to get information or clues. A clever party might find it useful to point them in a particular direction to clear a threat, although the giants won't be fooled twice.

Week 2: the giants arrive in Zone Three, and try to get to the Forbidden Island (location 45), but they can't reach it. They head west and decide to try the city.

Week 3: They enter the Shining City. They are lucky and wander around without mishap or encounter for several hours. They visit the temple and the government buildings, and are attacked ineffectively by some of the Vermiis. They then get displaced to different places outside the city, but are able to join up again.

Week 4: they decide to try their luck elsewhere. They head to the Weird Rock (location 48), but can't do anything, and then south to the Fen (location 43). There they end up fighting Grey Oozes and Ochre Jellies, and are eventually forced to retreat.

Week 5: Re-entering the city, they encounter the Iron Dragon. The Dragon uses its ballistae, and rises out of range after being by a rock. The dragon then creeps up at ground level and attacks. It succeeds in killing Vadim, but a wounded Boraslav delivers a killing blow. Mourning Vadim, Boraslav takes the dragon's power core and heads home back to The Rift.

## Locations in Zone Three (locations 41 - 62)

### 41. The Tower (The Beacon)

This squat tower is made from blocks of black stone and rises about sixty feet high. The top of the tower has a tarnished elven steel roof mounted with a metal spike that rises a further sixty feet. A set of double dark wood doors give entry to the tower at ground level. They appear to be intact (they are magically preserved and under an Arcane Lock spell cast at 18th level. DC 25 to break open or pick locks). The tower has no windows.

This tower was designed by the elves as an interstellar transmitter. It was intended to send a signal to the Ancients (the elves' forebears) to bring them to this world. When active, it opens a portal to the Far Realm and transmits the signal via that dimension to its destination. (This is similar to how the Ancients' hyperdrive technology functioned.) The beacon has been shut down and silent ever since the cataclysm. If reactivated correctly the outcome is at the GM's discretion. A response could come never or after some time. It may not necessarily come from the Ancients.

The beacon can however be activated incorrectly. This would create an unstable portal to the Far Realm. Villakorsh (location 20) wants to do precisely this to travel back to the Far Realm. But opening a portal in this way will cause an incursion of Far Realm entities. If the characters have tracked Villakorsh, his trail leads here. If the characters let him go, then he will, given enough time, work out how to overload the portal and do so. Whether this has already happened or not is at your discretion.

**First level:** The ground floor of this 40 foot diameter square tower contains dust choked cobwebs. There are several pieces of broken furniture and against the far wall is an intact metal box. The box has a variety of levers and different coloured semi-precious gemstones embedded in it. Stone steps lead up.

**Red lever (down):** powers on the box. Nothing works until this lever is thrown.

**Blue lever (down):** switches on power to the beacon. Loud humming noise from upstairs.

**Yellow lever (up):** extends or retracts the sixty foot aerial and makes a loud grinding noise

**Pink gem:** lights up and opens the transmission portal into the Far Realm if beacon is powered up

**Red gem:** dimly lights up and increases portal size with each touch and thus boosts transmission range. It glows brighter with each touch. The normal range is 1-10, but higher than that risks the portal destabilising and ripping open a rift to the Far Realm.

**Green gem:** Lights up and begins transmitting the message on the inserted crystal

**Blue gem:** Switches green gem off, and switches the beacon from transmit to receive.

This is theorised to work, but was not fully tested. It could lead to a Far Realm entity communicating with the operators with effects at the GM's discretion.

**Yellow crystal:** this is a removable piece of yellow translucent crystal. It radiates illusion magic. It contains a recorded audio message in elvish that invites the Ancients to follow this signal to meet their descendants.



**Second level:** This level of the tower contains 4 huge copper barrels which have been tightly wrapped with blue metallic wire. If struck the attacker will take 2d10 electrical damage. These are the batteries that store chemical energy to power the beacon. Stone steps lead up. When active the barrels hum loudly and there is a coppery taste in the air.

**Third level:** This level of the tower contains a large machine. Pipes lead down to the batteries below and up to the aerial. Stone steps lead up. This machine contains crystals, silver wire and mirrors. When powered up it opens a portal to the Far Realm. It could be raided for 400 silver shillings worth of valuable components.

**Fourth level:** This level of the tower contains a three foot high elven steel pillar in the centre of the room. Fixed to the top of the pillar is a dusty glass orb (which radiates divination and illusion magic). A metal ladder leads to a roof hatch.

When the beacon is active, the orb projects an illusion of a glowing cloud filled with tiny lights. One tiny light glows red. When the beacon transmits, the illusion shows waves flowing from the red light into the nearby area. The waves cover a wider and wider distance if the red gem on the ground floor is repeatedly touched. After ten touches the waves cover most of the glowing cloud. (The image depicts the visible galaxy, and the waves indicate the range of the beacon's transmission.)

#### **Far realm incursion**

If the portal is overloaded it creates an unstable gateway to the Far Realm that is large enough for creatures as well as information to pass through. Between 12-24 of the entities below arrive in Zone Three. Several remain in the vicinity of the Beacon. Others will range wider (see notes below on the random encounter table for Zone Three). The creatures look like semi-ethereal deformed cuttlefish approximately twenty five feet in length (including tentacles). They naturally float and can fly.

#### **Far Realm Incursor**

Huge aberration, evil

Armor Class 16

Hit Points 160

Speed 30 ft (fly)

Str 18 (+4), Dex 16 (+3), Con 16 (+3), Int 12 (+1), Wis 10 (+0), Cha 6 (-2)

**Damage Immunities:** poison

**Condition immunities:** charmed, exhaustion, poisoned,

**Senses:** blindsight 60 feet, sense minds 60 feet

**Skills:** Stealth +4, Perception +4

**Save bonus:** +6

**Challenge:** 7

**Difficulty:** 5th level for one incursor

#### **Actions**

Tentacle grab: +9 to hit, reach ten feet, one target. Damage 15 (2d10+4) and on a successful hit will drain the victim's fluids (DC 12 Constitution save or take 9 (2d8) damage).

#### **Abilities**

**Psychic attack** (recharge 5-6): ranged attack with 30 foot range: DC 14 Wisdom save or take 2d6 psychic damage and be stunned until the end of the Incursor's next turn.

**Scintillating burst** (recharge 6): as a bonus action, the skin of the incursor ripples and flashes rapidly in colours never before seen in this universe. All enemies within a 15 ft radius must make a DC 14 Constitution save or be blinded until the end of the Incursor's next turn.

**Frenzy:** when the Incursor reaches less than 50% HPs, it hoes into a frenxy anf gains multiattack. It is now able to attack twice per turn.

**Telepathic:** communicate telepathically at will with other Far Realm entities with a range of 10 miles.

## 42. The Tombs

These dark and barren hills are home to the catacombs of the elven dead. The entrance is blocked by a huge black gate of meteoric iron.

The gate is protected with Arcane Lock (cast at 18th level), and a permanent Symbol of Fear. The Symbol activates every time a non-elf humanoid comes within thirty feet of the gate. It affects everyone within a sixty foot radius who must make a DC 18 Wisdom save or be frightened for 1 minute (moving away from the gate).

Beyond the gate are catacombs cut into the rock. They are lit with dim permanent magical lights. The tunnels have shelves or alcoves cut into the sides, and each houses a mummified body. The tombs appear to be inhabited by (normal sized) cats made of living golden metal. They prowl around and watch, but do not attack the characters unless they start despoiling the graves of the elves (damaging the bodies or stealing grave goods).

Each of the bodies is an aged withered elf (a few are younger and show violent injuries). The bodies seem older and in a poorer state of preservation nearer the entrance gate. The tunnels stretch on and the deeper areas contain better preserved bodies. It appears that the elves simply excavated deeper and further when they needed more space. Each of the elves has jewellery or gems or magical looking objects about their person. There are nearly two thousand mummified elves in the miles of catacombs.

If the characters want to steal from the dead elves, they can grab 1d3 items of jewelry each and they have a 30% chance of also grabbing a magical item (see below). They are then attacked by 6 cat golems. 7-12 (1d6+6) more cat golems arrive each round. There are an effectively unlimited number of cat golems available. When hostile, the cats' mouths become as hot as molten gold.

### Cats of liquid gold

Tiny construct, unaligned

Armor Class 18

Hit Points 15 (6d4)

Speed 40 ft., climb 30 ft

Str 10 (+0), Dex 15 (+2), Con 10 (+0), Int 6 (-2), Wis 14 (+2), Cha 7 (-2)

**Damage resistances:** resistant to non-magical weapons

**Damage Immunities:** fire, poison, necrotic

**Condition immunities:** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralysed, petrified, poisoned.

**Senses:** darkvision 120 feet

**Save bonus:** +2

**Skills:** Perception +6, Stealth +7

**Languages:** understands the Ieldran language but cannot speak

**Challenge rating:** 2

**Difficulty:** 5th level for a group of 5

### Actions

Molten bite: +5 to hit, reach 5 feet, one target.

Hit: 12 (2d8+3) fire damage

### Abilities

**Immutable Form:** The cat is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

**Magic Resistance:** The cat has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

### Treasures

Each item of jewelry is worth 1d6 x 100 silver shillings.

Roll randomly (1d6) to determine the magic item recovered:

1: **Wand of banishing:** each charge causes a target to make a DC 15 Intelligence save or to be banished to another dimension. The dimension creatures are banished to is actually a dream dimension. Once a creature is so banished it appears as a hostile force in the dreams of the user of the wand causing

disturbed sleep. Each creature banished creates a cumulative 1 in 20 chance that any attempt to have a Long Rest will be disrupted. The wand is indestructible by normal means. Requires attunement. If someone else attunes to the wand the original owner remains afflicted with any creatures they banished while the user.

2: **Wand of Disintegration** (only usable by elves)

3: **Golden tiara**: when worn everyone within 30 ft must make a DC 20 Wisdom save or think the wearer is a prince or princess of their race even if they are not. They will act appropriately based on alignment (e.g. bow and scrape, kidnap them for ransom etc). This effect only lasts while the wearer is in their presence. Requires attunement.

4: **A leather and gold book**. Initially appears blank, but once attuned it becomes filled with the life story of the owner from their point of birth. It is written in the third person and describes matters factually. It may be useful to recall lost facts, and it may give the owner a different perspective on past events (GM's discretion). It also continues to be filled with the life story of the owner so long as they live. It might be helpful in clarifying a situation where the character isn't clear what is happening (GM's discretion). It is written in the owner's primary language and can be read by anyone who gets hold of it, which could be a liability. It would give an enemy for example an unerring way to locate the character.

5: **A gold potion bottle**. The potion contains a form of mimic. The mimic can take the form of any drink or potion, but when it has been drunk it will leave the body in the most painful way possible without being fatal. It can become any potion listed in the DMG, but it can only become a particular potion or liquid once.

6: **Pair of eyeballs of some monster**. When attuned, the owner can see through the eyes wherever they are at will while on the same

planet. The side effect is that the Far Realm creature to whom they belong can see through the owner's eyes...

#### 43. Black Lake Fen (Slime Kingdom)

This is an area of swampy woodland approximately 18 miles in diameter. It is home to several species of intelligent Oozes. On entering the swampy woods the characters will have to wade through hip-high mucky water unless they have a boat. The swamp counts as difficult terrain for those walking, making progress slow.

There are approximately 45 Grey Oozes and 20 Ochre Jellies roaming the swampy woods. The Grey Oozes are indistinguishable from the fetid water, and every mile travelled there is a 1 in 6 chance of simply blundering into one (causing 2d6 acid damage and damaging armour as below). The Ooze will defend itself if attacked.

After journeying for 4 miles into the swamp, the characters will see that some of the trees are covered in a yellowish slime. These are Ochre Jellies and they will not attack unless they are attacked.

If the characters end up in a fight, all of the grey and ochre slimes start to converge on them and attempt to herd them to the Black Puddings at the centre of the swamp. These Oozes have a form of telepathic link.

#### Gray Ooze (45)

Medium Ooze, unaligned

Armor Class 8

Hit Points 22

Speed 10 ft., climb 10 ft

Str 12 (+1), Dex 6 (-2), Con 16 (+3), Int 6 (-2), Wis 6 (-2), Cha 2 (-4)

**Damage resistances:** acid, cold, fire

**Condition immunities:** blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, prone

**Senses:** blind sight 60 ft

**Save bonus:** +0

**Skills:** Stealth +2 (see below)

**Challenge rating:** 1/2

**Difficulty:** group of 5 at 3rd level

### Actions

Pseudopod: +3 to hit, reach 5 feet, one target.

Hit: 4 (1d6+1) plus 7 (2d6) acid damage.

Victim's non-magical armour is reduced by -1

AC. Destroyed at AC 10.

### Abilities

**Amorphous:** move through a space as narrow as one inch without squeezing

**False appearance:** while motionless the ooze is indistinguishable from an oily pool or wet rock

**Corrode metal:** any non-magical weapon that hits the ooze corrodes taking a permanent and cumulative -1 to damage (destroyed at -5). Can eat through 2 inch thick non-magical metal in 1 round.

### Ochre Jelly (20)

Large Ooze, unaligned

Armor Class 8

Hit Points 45

Speed 10 ft., climb 10 ft

Str 15 (+2), Dex 6 (-2), Con 14 (+2), Int 8 (-1),

Wis 6 (-2), Cha 1 (-5)

**Damage resistances:** acid

**Damage immunities:** Lightning, slashing damage

**Condition immunities:** blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, prone

**Senses:** blind sight 60 ft

**Save bonus:** +2

**Challenge rating:** 2

**Difficulty:** group of 2 at 4th level

### Actions

Pseudopod: +4 to hit, reach 5 feet, one target.

Hit: 9 (2d6+2) plus 3 (1d6) acid damage.

### Abilities

**Amorphous:** move through a space as narrow as one inch without squeezing

**Spider climb:** the ooze can climb difficult surfaces and ceilings with ease

**Split:** when a Medium or Large jelly is struck by lightning or slashing damage it splits into two jellies (dividing the HP between them) one size smaller. Both attack and do the damage as below.

If the characters enter peaceably, or fail to evade the oozes herding them, they find themselves at the centre of the swampy woods (about 9 miles in). Waiting for them is a Gargantuan pool of black oil or slime. It is composed of ten merged Black Puddings, and covers a 30 ft x 30 ft area. The centre of the pool quivers and rises up in a roughly humanoid shape. It forms a crude face and mouth and speaks in a gurgling voice.

The puddings unfortunately only speak Ieldran and their own language. If the characters cannot converse, then the oozes open a pathway and allow them to leave. If the characters are aggressive, then the oozes will eat them.

If they can converse (e.g. with a Tongues spell), then the creatures parlay. The oozes explain that they are not native to this world. Their ancestors were brought here by the elves (actually the Ancients, but they don't make that distinction) thousands of years ago. They would like to return home and would be willing to render a reward if the characters could help them. They may admit that their race was much smarter when it originally arrived, but their intellects have degraded over the generations away from their own world.

The characters could suggest the Rift Gate (location 31), but the oozes do not know what the coordinates of their world are in the elves' system. If asked, the oozes suggest consulting the elves's archives in their city (the information can be found at location 58).

As a reward for helping them the oozes can perform a service, or they can offer some of their undigested waste i.e. 26 gems worth a total value of 9000 silver shillings.

It may be possible to glean other facts by talking to the oozes. For example, they know that they escaped the elves (Ancients) because of an accident, and that the (more recent) cataclysm was caused by something beneath the Shining City, and that something is still active. They may be able to provide additional information at GM's discretion.

### **Black Pudding (10)**

Large Ooze, unaligned

Armor Class 7

Hit Points 85

Speed 20 ft., climb 10 ft

Str 16 (+3), Dex 5 (-3), Con 16 (+3), Int 10 (+0), Wis 6 (-2), Cha 1 (-5)

**Damage immunities:** acid, cold, lightning, slashing

**Condition immunities:** blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, prone

**Senses:** blind sight 60 ft

**Save bonus:** +4

**Challenge rating:** 4

**Difficulty:** 13th level for all 10 puddings

### **Actions**

Pseudopod: +5 to hit, reach 5 feet, one target.

Hit: 6 (1d6+3) plus 18 (4d8) acid damage.

Victim's non-magical armour is reduced by -1 AC. Destroyed at AC 10.

### **Abilities**

**Amorphous:** move through a space as narrow as one inch without squeezing

**Spider climb:** the ooze can climb difficult surfaces and ceilings with ease

**Corrosive form:** any creature that touches the pudding, or strikes it with a melee attack while within five feet takes 4 (1d8) acid damage. Any non-magical weapon that hits the ooze corrodes

taking a permanent and cumulative -1 to damage (destroyed at -5). Can eat through 2 inch thick non-magical wood or metal in 1 round.

**Split:** when a Medium or Large pudding is struck by lightning or slashing damage it splits into two puddings (dividing the HP between them) one size smaller. Both attack and do the damage as below.

### **44. Ruined Shell Keep (interdimensional probe facility)**

This is a large ruined stone structure built from large blocks of granite. It comprised strong outer walls, a large entryway into a courtyard, and three internal floors. The internal floors and roof have long since rotted away, and it is merely a shell with several large holes in the outer wall.

This was in fact an important research facility used to send probe devices through the Far Realm to random other universes. Once probes encountered intelligent life, they brought it back to the facility for study. Several odd creatures were brought here and some escaped into the wild (the Reists and the Behemoths on the random encounter tables).

In the courtyard a wide ramp leads downwards. The slanting tunnel is unlit. After twenty feet there is the skeleton of a bear (a brown bear died escaping the mould). Its bones seem intact.

After forty feet the walls of the tunnel appear to be covered with a blue mould. The blue mould appears to cover most of the walls and ceiling as the tunnel goes further in. The blue mould appears harmless (and areas can be burnt clean with a flaming torch without incident).

After a total of one hundred and twenty feet the tunnel levels out (about forty feet underground). It expands into an unlit dusty underground complex. The blue mould is pervasive.

**a) the utility rooms.** The outer chambers of the complex appear to have been storage rooms,

guard rooms and wash rooms. The blue mould is everywhere.

**b) gate machinery.** This series of rooms contain magitek machinery comprising large elven steel vessels, coils of wire, moving pistons, and pipes. The machinery appears intact and is slightly warm. (It is inactive but still powered.) The blue mould is present here too. Pipes appear to run through the walls towards the travel room.

**c) the holding cells.** There are ten (60 x 60 ft and 20 ft high) rooms coming off a central chamber. Each room is sealed by tarnished elven steel bars and layered on top with an elven steel mesh. They appear to be cages or cells. There is a pair of grooves cut into the floor and lined with metal, and the grooves lead deeper into the facility.

The blue mould is intense here, and it seems to originate in one of the cells. Scattered around the central area there are dozens of animal skeletons (rats, mice, birds, a wolf, bugs, a rabbit etc).

The blue mould is a predator entity from another universe. It is immobile and so it will remain passive until the characters reach this point. It will then **attack**. It does this by draining the life force from any creature within twenty feet of the mould (inflicting 4 (1d6) damage per round to all present). It will not be immediately apparent what is causing the life drain.

From here it is 220 feet back to the top of the tunnel (where the bear skeleton is). If the characters flee they will take damage each round until they are clear of the mould.

The mould can be removed from an area with fire (10 fire damage for each 10x10 foot area), but it will continue to harm any living creature within twenty feet.

The rest of the holding cells:

Cell 1 - the blue mould cell

Cell 2 - empty

Cells 3 and 4 - the cell bars are torn open and bent as if by great force (from the inside out). (These cells contained a mated pair of Behemoths which escaped the facility. Their descendants are represented on the random encounter table below.)

Cell 5 - empty

Cell 6 - empty except for the bones of a small monkey. The cell mesh is ripped open from the outside.

Cells 7 and 8 - empty

Cell 9 - contains a dusty metal box about two and a half feet square (see below). The cell is securely locked (DC 20 lockpick check).

Cell 10 - empty

The **metal box** is slightly warm, and has an array of bumps, lines and indentations. If it is moved, shaken or struck, it begins to tremble and wake up. It is in fact a strange artificial life form. Spindly arms and legs extend and a face appears on the middle side of the box. The creature can speak and hear, but it is only familiar with the Ieldran language (which it learnt after its capture). It can however learn any other language it hears (like Common) within a week or two. It says it is "a Monad", which appears to be the name of its race. If treated in a friendly way it will happily join the party. It comes from a machine world where it is part of the great harmony. It is unclear what the machine world actually achieves because he is only a small part of it, but he knows it must be important. He has no name, but will happily accept one.

If questioned about the other cells it can explain that the smashed cells contained two very large orange and blue reptiles, and the other cell contained six small monkeys. The blue mould was originally growing on an unfamiliar tree. It was placed in the cell and a magical barrier spell was erected around it. He had been here for several weeks when (shortly after the blue mould tree arrived) the cataclysm occurred. Monad describes it as "a collapse of the local topological supersymmetry", but if pressed he

clarifies that as a “transdimensional irruption”. He went into shut down.

### **Monad**

Medium construct, lawful neutral

Armor Class 16

Hit Points 24

Speed 30 ft.

Str 12 (+1), Dex 14 (+2), Con 12 (+1), Int 14 (+2), Wis 9 (-1), Cha 11 (+0)

**Senses:** darkvision 30 feet

**Save bonus:** +2

**Skills:** Perception +2

**Languages:** leldran

### **Actions**

Melee weapon: +3 to hit. Hit: weapon damage +1

Ranged weapon: +4 to hit. Hit: weapon damage +2

### **Abilities**

**Rapid fire:** When using a missile weapon without the “loading” property, the Monad can make 4 attacks in one action

**Immutable Form:** The Monad is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

**Magic Resistance:** The Monad has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**d) probe storage.** This large room contains four large obsidian slabs (12 ft high x 8 feet wide, and 2 feet thick) engraved with intricate runes in a blue enamel. They are mounted on metal pallets with small metal wheels. Grooves in the floor lead from here to the travel room. The slabs radiate conjuration magic.

There are 6 further slabs lying in a stack, but their runes are all burnt out. Above them is a pulley and winch system. The blue mould is present here.

**e) the travel room.** Both the grooved tracks from the cells and the probe room lead to this large circular chamber two hundred feet across. In the centre of the chamber is a raised dais (30x30 ft) surrounded by a huge cage (120 ft in diameter). There are sturdy double gates that would allow the probe to be wheeled in, and any captives to be wheeled to the cellblock. (There is no blue mould here.)

A bank of machinery has a control panel with complex dials and glowing semi-precious stones. The dials can theoretically be used to target a particular universe, but the elves never worked out how. The machine is still functional, and if an active probe was placed on the dais, and the system activated, it would transport the probe via a short hop through the Far Realm to another (random) parallel universe. The probe would remain there until it detected intelligent life, and then would return bringing with it all creatures within a sixty foot radius.

To see how long it would take for a probe to return, roll 1d100:

01-50: 1d6 hours

51-75: 2d6 days

76-95: 4d6 weeks

95-100: never

To determine what is brought back, either decide yourself, or grab the most obscure monster book you own (for any game system) and turn to a random page.

### **45. Forbidden Island (weapons cache)**

Here where rivers converge and flow to the south east, a small island sits at the confluence of the rivers. The island is about 3 miles in diameter and sits 2 miles from the nearest shore. The island appears to have a single structure.

Magic (conjuration) permeates the area around the island right up to the bank. Any attempt to swim, sail or fly etc closer than 1 mile to the island is foiled by this magic and those

attempting find themselves heading in the opposite direction away from the island. (This is powerful ritual level magic designed to protect the island from Far Realm creatures.)

Access to the island is possible by simply standing on the shore and willing oneself across. This only works for those with sane, humanoid minds. Any character possessed or substantially mentally compromised by a Far Realm entity (GM's discretion) won't be able to cross.

At the centre of the island is a blocky metal structure with heavy doors. It is accompanied by a large silver sphere. Both the building and sphere are tarnished and moss covered.

If any creature approaches within two hundred feet, the sphere activates and unfolds into a huge metallic spider golem with glowing green eyes. The golem will attack any non-elf present. It will only pursue targets five hundred feet from the bunker (unless it is attacked from further away).

### **Titanium Spider Golem**

Huge construct, unaligned

Armor Class 17  
Hit Points 180  
Speed 40 ft.

Str 22 (+6), Dex 12 (+1), Con 20 (+5), Int 10 (+0), Wis 12 (+1), Cha 6 (-2)

**Damage Immunities:** fire, poison, psychic

**Condition Immunities:** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

**Senses:** True Sight 200 ft

**Save bonus:** +8

**Skills:** Perception +8

**Languages:** Ieldran

**Challenge Rating:** 10

**Difficulty:** 7th level

### **Actions**

Multiattack: the golem makes two melee attacks

Stabbing leg: +13 to hit, reach 10ft, one target.  
Hit: 20 (3d8+7)

### **Abilities**

**Web attack** (action: at will): range 60 ft, one target; DC 14 Dexterity save or incapacitated (can save again every round).

**Disintegrate eye beam** (action: recharge: 6): range 60 ft, one target; DC 16 Dexterity save or 10d6+40 force damage. If target is reduced to 0 HP, they are disintegrated. (Their magical gear remains.)

**Magic Weapons:** The golem's weapon attacks are magical.

**Immutable Form:** The Golem is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

**Magic Resistance:** The Golem has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

The bunker doors are marked with law runes barring Far Realm entities (see below). The doors are also Arcane Locked at 18th level, and can only be opened by a long lost passphrase. The doors have 200 HP and ignore the first 15 damage of any attack.

Beyond the doors, stairs lead down sixty feet to a one hundred foot by one hundred foot room lit by Continual Light spells. Inside is a cache of anti-aberration weapons. While the elves had these ready in case of a limited incursion, the cataclysm happened everywhere at once and they were overwhelmed by Far Realm entities before anyone could think to use them.

The cache comprises:

100 x elven steel shields with law runes

(disadvantage to attacks from aberrations)

100 x elven steel longswords with law runes

(advantage to hit aberrations, and extra die of damage against aberrations)

100x bunches of 4 arrows with law runes

(advantage to hit aberrations, and extra die of damage against aberrations)

70 spell scrolls in elven steel scroll cases:

10 x Protection from Evil / Good



10 x Magic Circle versus aberrations  
10 x Banishment  
10 x Greater Restoration  
10 x Dispel Evil and Good versus aberrations  
10 x Heal  
10 x Mind Blank

There are also arcane books which contain information about the Far Realm. The text explains that the Far Realm is a dimension outside our universe where time, space and our reality ceases to apply. The books also talk about the Crucible, which is apparently a machine for manipulating energy from the Far Realm. The Crucible apparently came from the Ancients, who appear to be the ancestors of the elves. Study of the Crucible has given the elves the knowledge of how to open portals to distant worlds by creating passageways through the Far Realm. But the text warns that the Far Realm contains powerful and malignant creatures that are inimical to our universe, and defenses are needed against them in the event that they breach a portal. Theoretically if Far Realm energy could be harnessed correctly, it could be used to alter our reality at will granting god-like powers.

The books also contain instructions on how to cast law runes that hold off aberrations. Treat as the Antipathy spell (8th level Wizard spell) but only effective against aberrations. The spell can be copied to a spell book or cast once like a scroll.

#### 46. The Rose Garden

Ten foot high brick walls surround this extensive rose garden. An ornate wood and brass gate provides access (and is unlocked and unguarded). Inside is a garden of roses, leaf-bearing deciduous trees (in any season), fruit trees, green grass, shrubberies and wild flowers. It is filled with mayflies, bees, rabbits and deer. Characters with good Arcana may sense that magic flows freely here and the taint of the cataclysm is held at bay.

Tending over the garden or generally pottering about are white furred apes (gorillas, orangutans, chimpanzees or bonobos). The apes are dressed in clothing, using tools and walking on two legs (mostly). Anyone entering will soon be intercepted by talking apes. Visitors will be asked (in archaic Common) if they are here to see "the Baroness", and will be asked to leave any "cold iron" (iron or any iron alloy like steel) outside the realm. (Elven steel being titanium does not qualify, but the apes will not be aware of that.) The apes were uplifted to human intelligence by the Shining Ones as a magical experiment. After the cataclysm they were taken in by the Baroness, and they helped her to build this haven.

#### **White Ape Servants (108 total - 1d10 appearing initially)**

Medium beast, neutral

Armor Class 12  
Hit Points 19  
Speed 30 ft, climb 30 ft

Str 16 (+3), Dex 14 (+2), Con 14 (+2), Int 10 (+0), Wis 12 (+1), Cha 10 (+0)

**Save bonus:** +5

**Skills:** Athletics +5, Perception +3

**Challenge Rating:** 1/2

**Difficulty:** group of 10 at 4th level, 20 at 5th level

#### **Actions**

Multiattack: the ape makes two fist attacks or one rock attack

Fist: +5 to hit, reach 5ft, one target. Hit: 6 (1d6+3)

Rock: +5 to hit, 25/50 ft, one target. Hit: 6 (1d6+3)

Peaceful visitors will be escorted to a large brick built house at the centre of the Rose Garden. The six-bedroom house is wrapped in ivy, and has a tiled roof and an ornamental pond out front. This is the home of the Baroness.

The Baroness appears to be a beautiful human female of approximately 35 years with long dark hair wearing a beautiful red (or green etc) dress. She is regal and elegant and will invite visitors to sit and have some home-made lemonade and sweetcakes (both delicious).

Accompanying the Baroness is a slim, silent figure wearing red platemail and a full face helm (elven steel). He appears to be a bodyguard and stands close by at all times. The Baroness introduces him as "my husband" and apologises: "he doesn't say much these days". An ape dressed as a butler and another as a maid stand nearby.

The Baroness is in fact a powerful fey hag, and is nearly a thousand years old. She was once a prisoner of the elves, and her "husband" is an undead bodyguard created from one of her elven captors.

### **The Baroness**

Medium fey (15th level hag druid), neutral

Armor Class 17  
Hit Points 160  
Speed 30 ft.

Str 18 (+4), Dex 12 (+1), Con 16 (+3), Int 18 (+4), Wis 16 (+3), Cha 16 (+3)

**Damage vulnerabilities:** fey nature - damage from iron or iron alloy (e.g. steel) weapons. This does not apply to elven steel weapons (which are titanium).

**Condition Immunities:** nameless protection - charmed, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, and immune from Dominate or mind control spells

**Senses:** darkvision 60 ft

**Save bonus:** +5

**Skills:** Arcana +7, Deception +5, Perception +5, Stealth +3

**Languages:** Common, Beast, Ieldran

**Challenge Rating:** 15

**Difficulty:** 11th level (just her)

### **Actions**

Elven steel rapier: +9 to hit, 5 ft reach, one target. Hit 9 (1d8+4)

### **Abilities**

**Charm (recharge: 5-6):** as an action, charm a humanoid target within 30 ft; target must make a DC 16 Wisdom save or be charmed as the Charm Person spell.

**Invisibility:** as an action turn invisible until she attacks, casts a spell or ends her concentration. While invisible she leaves no physical evidence of her passage.

**Wild shape (2/day):** as a bonus action, can transform into a Huge White Ape (see below). Once the ape form's HP's reach 0 she transforms back into her humanoid form on her previous HP.

**Legendary resistance (3/day):** the Baroness can choose to succeed at a failed save.

**Alter self (at will):** as spell.

### **Legendary actions**

The Baroness can take 3 legendary actions and she can take one at the end of another creature's turn. She regains her legendary actions at the start of her turn.

- 1) She makes an immediate melee attack
- 2) Thorny roots burst from the ground and entwine a target: DC 16 Dexterity save or restrained until the end of their next turn.
- 3) One of the orchids growing nearby spits pollen in the face of an attacker: they make DC 16 Constitution save or suffer Confusion (as spell) until the end of their next turn.

**Druid spells (spell attack +8, save DC 16):** 1 x Cure Wounds, 1 x Detect Magic, 1 x Faerie Fire, 1 x Detect Poison / Disease, 1 x Heat Metal, 1 x Animal Messenger, 1 x Lesser Restoration, 1 x Call Lightning, 1 x Dispel Magic, 1 x Speak with Plants, 1 x Hallucinatory Terrain, 1 x Freedom of Movement, 1 x Blight, 1 x Scrying, 1 x Reincarnate (as a non-giant beast), 1 x Wall of Thorns, 1 x Regenerate

### **The Baroness in huge white ape form**

Huge beast, neutral

Armor Class 14  
Hit Points 85  
Speed 30 ft, climb 30 ft

Str 23 (+6), Dex 14 (+2), Con 17 (+3), Int 18 (+4), Wis 16 (+3), Cha 16 (+3)

**Damage vulnerabilities:** fey nature - damage from iron or iron alloy (e.g. steel) weapons. This does not apply to elven steel weapons (which are titanium).

**Condition Immunities:** nameless protection - charmed, frightened, paralyzed, petrified

**Senses:** darkvision 60 ft

**Save bonus:** +5

**Skills:** Athletics +8, Arcana +7, Deception +5, Perception +5, Stealth +3

#### **Actions**

Multiattack: the ape makes two melee attacks

Rend: +8 to hit, reach 10ft, one target. Hit: 21 (3d10+5), and the target is grappled (escape DC 16). A rend attack against a grappled target is at advantage. This attack counts as a magical weapon attack.

The Baroness cannot cast spells or use her Charm power while in ape form.

### **The Baroness's husband**

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 18  
Hit Points 65  
Speed 30 ft, climb 30 ft

Str 15 (+2), Dex 14 (+2), Con 16 (+3), Int 10 (+0), Wis 13 (+1), Cha 15 (+2)

**Damages resistances:** necrotic, non-magical weapons that are not silvered

**Damage immunities:** poison

**Condition Immunities:** exhaustion, poisoned

**Senses:** darkvision 60 ft

**Save bonus:** +3

**Skills:** Perception +3, Stealth +4

**Challenge rating:** 5

**Difficulty:** 4th level on his own

#### **Actions**

Multiattack: he makes two longsword attacks

Longsword: +4 to hit, reach 5ft, one target. Hit: 11 (2d6+4) plus 9 (2d8) necrotic damage.

#### **Abilities**

**Protection:** when a creature attacks a target friendly to him within five feet, as a reaction he can impose disadvantage on the attack. He will use this to protect the Baroness.

**Second wind:** as a bonus action he regains 13 (1d10+6) HPs

**Improved critical:** he crits on a natural 19 or 20

**Action surge:** once per encounter he can take an additional action.

As a fae, the Baroness is interested in protecting nature and wild animals from the depredations of monsters or humanoids. She places little value on human life, although she does not kill without a reason. She is whimsical and inhuman, and will seem dangerous and powerful. She may help the characters, but only if they do something for her in return. Her price may be high. If she is attacked, she will destroy the characters without remorse.

Originally the Baroness and her sister hag were prisoners of the elves and held at location 47. They were subject to torture and experiments to help the elves unlock and steal their fae magic. When the cataclysm happened she escaped her prison. She subsequently killed one of her jailors and stole the "name magic" of the elves. Using that magic she has hidden her own name (it is stored in a bone carving buried ten feet deep in the roots of a tree in this Rose Garden) which makes it impossible to control her. She has founded this domain close to her prison, and she considers it her realm. Following the cataclysm she found the white apes fleeing from tentacled horrors, and placed them under her protection.

Possible services that the Baroness may provide:

- she holds one of the Copper Keys needed for area 12 of location 20 (see 20A).
- she could reincarnate a deceased character, but will only agree to bring them back as a beast (“an improvement”), although she may let them choose which kind. (Treat as a permanent druidic Wild Shape, but they lose previous racial features).
- she could regenerate a missing limb
- She could grant them the power to speak the language of beasts (i.e. all animals could understand and be understood by a character)
- she can provide some knowledge about the elves (she knows many secrets, but not all).

In return she will want one of the following:

- the name of one of the characters. If they agree of their own free will, she binds the name into a small wooden carving. Then the character and everyone else forgets that character’s name and it disappears from all written texts. While without a name, the character has immunity to charm, fear, dominate or mind control spells from anyone other than the Baroness. In addition, in holding the name, the Baroness exercises control over the character like an automatic Dominate Human spell. She won’t explain this, but she also will not immediately use this power.
- she wants an item that is hidden in the old prison (location 47). She cannot remember what it is, but she knows it belonged to her sister. It is hidden in one of the cells. She will warn the characters about the amnesia magic.
- she wants four live ambrosia beetles from the petrified forest (location 34)

- if the Baroness learns of the cats at location 29 (for example, if the characters have Pluvian with them), she wants the cats escorted safely to her Rose Garden

- the cataclysm was caused by misuse of a magical device called The Crucible. The Crucible remains semi-active beneath the Shining City. She will provide a service if the characters agree to destroy the machine so that the land can recover. She will expect them to act on this promise reasonably quickly (perhaps they would need to submit to the Geas spell).

#### 47. The Nameless Prison

**Exterior:** This is a dark and looming ruined structure of black stone. One heavily corroded iron gate hangs across the entrance; the other lies on the ground. This was once a prison designed for the fey so the elves could study them and steal their magic. The elves therefore used ordinary steel and iron (‘cold iron’) to help to bind their prisoners, and much of it has now corroded away.

**Interior:** Inside there are more rusting gates and bars. The upper levels of the structure no longer have any floors, and it looks to have once contained kitchens and guard barracks. Stairs also lead down to a series of dripping tunnels and rusted gates to the basement prison (see below).

What was the courtyard has a large circular glazed area covering the floor. The glazed area is made up of rusting steel and panels of magical glassteel (see location 3). The network of steel spars holding the panels are rusted and many are broken with their glassteel panels lying (intact) down below.

Under the glazed area is a one hundred foot diameter circular basement room thirty feet below containing broken tables and chairs. The basement room is lit by a Continual Flame spell. There are twenty open doorways leading off from the central chamber (to cells) and two other

doorways holding rusted and collapsed steel gates.

Anyone moving around on the glazed area (to reach one of the holes for example), must move extremely carefully and slowly. If more than one hundred pounds of weight is placed on the glazed area there is a 1 in 20 chance per round of a spar breaking and the panel giving way (roll for each character on the glazing). This causes 3d6 damage from the fall and a DC 13 Dexterity save to avoid being struck by debris for a further 6d6 damage. This also dumps the unfortunate into the prison area below (see below).

The glassteel panels are potentially valuable. There are 78 ten foot by ten foot panels half an inch thick. Each weighs 280 pounds. They can be worked like steel into different shapes. A smith would pay around 300 silver shillings for each panel, although that would mean getting them shipped to civilisation.

### **The basement prison**

Dank, dripping tunnels lead from above down through a series of rusting gates. These tunnels are flanked by what appear to be torture rooms or experimental chambers with rusting iron torture weapons, small cages, iron masks and manacles. Buried under a collapsed table are the bones of a goblin. The goblin has a tarnished slave collar and a belt of rusting scalpels.

The tunnels end at the basement prison area visible from above. Entrance to the prison is via one passage that was once secured by a steel door, but the door has now collapsed and rusted to pieces. Beyond that is the circular "circulation space" one hundred feet in diameter that holds a few broken and mildewed tables and chairs. Leading off from the central chamber are twenty cells. Above is the glassteel roof in the courtyard. It is lit by a Continual Flame spell.

The basement prison still remains subject to a **powerful amnesiac magical effect**. Any creature inside the prison area immediately

forgets who they are, their friends, why they are here, and what their abilities are. They retain their languages and any weapon, tool or physical skill proficiencies, but they are unaware that they have them. The loss of one's entire personal history lasts as long as they remain inside. Once they leave the affected area, their memories return over 1d10 minutes. The affected area covers the central prison room (up to a height of thirty feet), the twenty cells, and the kitchen area.

Each dimly-lit cell contains a wooden pallet bed, a bucket, a warped wooden box, and a small hole in the ground (toilet). A further rusted door from the prison circulation space leads to a kitchen area with a mould covered dining table and benches. A narrow chute appears to rise into the structure above, but it is now blocked by rubble (it led to the kitchens above). A verdigris covered brass water pipe also descends to a tap here.

Anyone entering the prison is subject to attack by Sluagh - shadowy immaterial undead of the fae tortured and killed here. They will hide in the dimly lit cells and then swarm anyone entering the cells. (The Baroness is not aware of these creatures being here.)

### **Sluagh (6)**

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 36

Speed 40 ft

Str 6 (-2), Dex 14 (+2), Con 13 (+1), Int 6 (-2), Wis 10 (+0), Cha 8 (-1)

**Damage vulnerabilities:** radiant

**Damages resistances:** acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder, non-magical weapons

**Damage immunities:** necrotic, poison

**Condition Immunities:** exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralysed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

**Senses:** darkvision 60 ft

**Save bonus:** +1

**Skills:** Stealth +4 (+6 in dim light or darkness)

**Challenge rating:** 1/2

**Difficulty:** 4th or 5th level

### **Actions**

Strength drain: +8 to hit, reach 5ft, one target.

Hit: 13 (3d6+2) necrotic damage, plus victim's Strength is reduced by 3 (1d4+1). Strength drain lasts until a short rest is taken. If a character is reduced to 0 Strength, they die and rise as a Sluagh after 1d4 hours.

### **Abilities**

**Shadow flit:** in dim light or darkness the Sluagh can teleport, as a bonus action, from one shadow and reappear in another shadow up to 30 ft away

**Amorphous:** can pass through a space as small as one inch without squeezing

**Sunlight weakness:** suffers disadvantage on all rolls in sunlight

Hidden in the ninth cell behind a stone removed from the wall is **a ruby cut like a rose on a gold chain**. This was left by the Baroness's sister and is one of the items she may send the characters on a quest for. It is of pure sentimental interest for her, but is otherwise worth 500 silver shillings.

## **48. The Rock**

Here in a meadow is a large boulder made of a glassy orange mineral. It is about nine feet in diameter. It is semi-translucent, and inside a small figure can be hazily seen.

If bright light is brought to bear, the figure can be made out to be a halfling. The halfling appears to have been encased while running to the northeast (towards the Shining City). They are dressed in a simple white tunic and sandals. Around their neck is a metal collar marked with runes. Their facial expression looks calm.

The mineral is in fact a magical amber, and the halfling is trapped inside a variant of the 9th

level Wizard Imprisonment spell. The spell can be collapsed with a Dispel Magic spell cast using a 9th level spell slot, or by touching the caster's wand to it (see below). The halfling was a domestic slave aboard an elven airship (literally a sailing ship, but held aloft by a gas bag) that was airborne during the cataclysm. A Far Realm entity possessed the halfling and through him laid waste to the crew, causing the airship to crash. An elven wizard who survived the crash imprisoned it, but then succumbed to his wounds.

**The nearby area:** If the characters search around the rock, then they may find some large pieces of metal and wood buried fifty yards to the west. The pieces all seem to have come from the same object. More and more pieces can be discovered spread over a one hundred foot area. Devoting several hours to the search uncovers tatters of buried silk, and masts. It appears to have been a sailing cog, but it's unclear how it ended up this far inland.

A thorough search of several hours also uncovers an elven steel scroll tube and a Wand of Disintegration with a rainbow sheen buried under a few inches of soil. This Wand can only be used by an elf, but was the release trigger chosen by the elven wizard who imprisoned the halfling (to whom it belonged). The scroll case contains a parchment with **a spell scroll of the spell Dimensional Incursion** (see below).

The halfling is called **Thorn** (neutral good, stats as Scout MM p.349), and speaks Ieldran and also an archaic form of Common (Slave Tongue). Thorn remembers serving drinks aboard the airship (called The Flayed Dragon) of his master Melenbrimbor who was entertaining a number of other Shining Ones. Then the sky changed and weird shapes started to appear all around. The Shining Ones seemed frightened, which Thorn had never seen before.

Thorn considers the Shining Ones to be gods, and may take some time to accept that they are not, or that 800 years have passed. Thorn

actually has some useful information, although that won't be immediately apparent. He knows the passphrase (in Ieldran) to get through past the magical defences around the vault at the government buildings in the Shining City (location 59).

Hidden inside Thorn and assessing the characters' strength is an ethereal Far Realm monster. At an appropriate moment Thorn will collapse and it will emerge from him. It appears to be a fifteen foot diameter black ethereal spider- or crab-like creature (it has features of both). It will start by attempting to possess a character, and if that fails it will use its psychic attacks.

### **Spider-Crab-Ghost Thing**

Huge aberration, evil

Armor Class 16

Hit Points 160

Speed 30 ft (fly)

Str 18 (+4), Dex 16 (+3), Con 16 (+3), Int 12 (+1), Wis 10 (+0), Cha 6 (-2)

**Damage Immunities:** attacks from non-magical weapons, poison, cold,

**Condition immunities:** charmed, exhaustion, grappled, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

**Senses:** blindsight 60 feet, sense minds 60 feet

**Skills:** Stealth +4, Perception +4

**Save bonus:** +6

**Challenge:** 7

**Difficulty:** 5th level

### **Actions**

Psionic assault: +9 to hit, ranged 30/60 ft, one target. Damage 20 (3d10+3) psychic damage.

Psionic blast: +9 to hit, ranged 1/30 ft, up to three targets within 15 ft of each other. Damage: 10 1d12+3 psychic damage.

### **Abilities**

**Possession** (recharge 5 or 6): as an action, one humanoid within 15 feet of it must succeed on a

DC 15 Charisma saving throw or be possessed. The creature then enters the target. As a bonus action, the entity can cause the creature to move and take any action it is capable of performing normally. The target gains the creature's damage and condition immunities, and the creature's HP (any damage is subtracted from the creature's HP total). The creature can also continue to use its own actions to carry out psychic attacks.

The possession ends if the victim drops to 0 HP, or if a Dispel Evil and Good vs aberrations (see location 45) is cast.

**Psychic static** (recharge 5 or 6): as an action the creature radiates psychic static in 30 ft radius. Any enemy in the area must make a DC 15 Intelligence save or be frightened and unable to cast spells. This effect lasts until the end of the creature's next turn.

The Dimensional Incursion spell is a Wizard spell: 7th level Conjuration, Casting Time: 1 action, Range: 300 feet, Components: V, S, Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute.

The caster collapses the dimensional barriers between the normal universe and the roiling chaos of the Far Realm in a 30 ft radius from the designated point. Inside that hellish area time, space, energy, matter and consciousness run like melted candle wax and cease to have meaning.

Any creatures inside the area of effect must make a Constitution save. A creature takes 5d12 force damage and 5d12 psychic damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful save. A creature must also take this damage if they enter the area of effect for the first time on a turn or end its turn there.

Creatures killed by this spell are turned into mangled corpses that look like they have been cut to pieces and reassembled by a mad man. Sometimes they are partially transformed into some other kind of life form, material or object. This spell is ineffective against aberrations.

#### 49. Woods and village (owlfolk woods / village)

These woods are home to the owlfolk. They are humanoids covered in a down of feathers and with an owl's head and beak. They do not have wings. They are nocturnal and have excellent night vision. At night they will be active and lights will be visible from their settlement from several miles away. During the day they will be resting, but they will still have guards placed on all approaches.

Any characters entering the central hex of the woods will soon find three arrows hitting the ground in front of them. These are a warning from well concealed (DC 17 Perception) owlfolk pickets twenty feet up three different trees. They will parlay if the party seems peaceful, but will only agree to take them to their leaders if they agree to leave their weapons here. It will be a two hour walk to reach their settlement six miles further in.

The owlfolk will use loud birdcalls to summon assistance if necessary, or to warn their people that they are approaching. By the time the characters arrive at the settlement the owlfolk will be alert and ready to receive them.

The owlfolk live in raised wooden houses built high up in the trees. These are thatched and connected by wooden platforms and walkways. Access from the ground is via rope ladders that are dropped fifty feet down to the ground and then retrieved. The owlfolk leader is an elderly owlfolk male called **Yaffle**. His son, **Hedwig**, is a scholar and keen to understand more about the elves.

The owlfolk can trade information. They know how to get onto the island (location 45), but they also know it is guarded. They know of the Baroness and her apes (location 46), and they have never had any problems with her. They are aware of the slimes (location 43) and that they are not generally hostile, but you have to watch

out for the gray ones because they are hard to see. They are also aware of the star stone (location 50) which they revere as a holy object. They know it contains voices, but it is not safe to touch because they can overwhelm. They know that the city is largely deserted, and they tend to avoid it because weird things happen there and people have disappeared.

#### Owlfolk (221)

Medium humanoid, neutral

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 11

Speed 30 ft

Str 11 (+0), Dex 14 (+2), Con 11 (+0), Int 11 (+0), Wis 14 (+2), Cha 11 (+0)

**Senses:** darkvision 120 ft

**Skills:** Perception +3. Stealth +3

**Save bonus:** +1

**Challenge:** 1/4

**Difficulty:** group of 10 at 2nd-3rd, 20 at 4th, 40 at 5th

#### Actions

Shortbow: +5 to hit, range 80/320. Hit: 6 (1d6+2)

Knife: +3 to hit. Hit: 3 (1d4)

#### Abilities

**Keen hearing and sight:** owlfolk have advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight or sound.

If the owlfolk are robbed or slaughtered, the following can be found:

Fifty wire cages each containing 10 juicy mice  
10 pounds of dried mushrooms

Six intricately carved musical instruments of wood (worth 40 silver shillings each)

10 Pouches of herbs (give advantage to any Medicine check once, or +2 to a Cure spell)

A dressing table mirror in a tarnished silver frame (worth 500 silver shillings) (actually platinum and worth 5000 silver shillings)

Three weeks worth of food for the village



## 50. The Star Stone

This barren crater is eight miles in diameter and ancient. It dates back to the era of the Ancients. The crater is fairly lifeless. Digging in the dirt soon uncovers hardened lava. Mixed into the soil are small beads of melted rock and ore.

At the centre of the crater is a brightly glowing red crystal sixty feet tall and around fifteen feet in diameter. It is standing on end and pointing upwards. The crystal is filled with flickering rainbow lights which are fascinating and restful to watch.

The crystal belongs to a race even more advanced than the Ancients. While it appears to be a glowing crystal it is in fact a complex nested set of energy fields. It houses several billion alien minds in a simulated environment. It is indestructible (even the Sphere of Annihilation will be held at bay by energy fields), and unmovable.

When a sapient creature “touches” the “crystal”, they can faintly sense the minds within. They hear in their mind the faint rustle of a million unintelligible voices all speaking at once. This also causes some of the information stored inside to bleed across their nervous system. This causes 1 HP damage per minute of contact, but it also grants 1 XP. Any number of characters can touch the crystal at the same time.

After a character spends a cumulative 50 minutes in contact with the crystal they must make two DC 13 Wisdom saves. If they fail the first save, then they suffer a “Long Term Madness” (DMG p.260) which lasts indefinitely. If they make the second save, then they gain 1 level in a random class (give them sufficient XP to reach their next character level; treat new level as a multiclass ignoring prerequisites; roll randomly to determine class from all available options). This will only happen once for any given character no matter how long they spend with the crystal.

If characters decide to stay with the crystal to gain XP, roll random encounters as normal. If they do have an encounter, determine at random how many HPs down they are at that time (based on how many that they are intending to sacrifice). You can impose a limit on the maximum number of XP that can be gained by each character if you wish.

## 51. The Obelisk (orbital defence control) (mini dungeon)

This obelisk looks similar to that at location 21. It is visible from anywhere within its 12 mile hex, and it is a smooth marble obelisk that rises 200 feet and is 40 feet in diameter. This obelisk however has a door at ground level which is visible from a distance of 500 feet. Also visible from a distance of 500 feet are the engraved symbols.

The engraved symbols causing any character failing a DC 20 Wisdom save to feel revulsion, fear and nausea and be unable to continue past the obelisk or approach it for 8 hours. If the save is successful, the character can continue, but is at disadvantage to all checks while within sight of the obelisk. Averting one’s eyes requires a successful DC 15 Intelligence save, but also prevents the character seeing the door.

**GM:** This obelisk was used by the Shining Ones to conceal something important. At the top was a device recovered from the Ancients’ wreckage that provides control over a defence satellite they placed in geo-synchronous orbit. The defence satellite is armed with a powerful particle cannon capable of targeting the surface. To protect this device, the upper room was under powerful magic that effectively warped space to seal it off. During the cataclysm those potent defensive magics were corrupted, and the obelisk now acts as a nexus point between many different places. Every ten minutes, anything inside the obelisk other than permanent features (like the satellite control device) is shunted into a superficially similar structure on

another world (or parallel universe if you prefer). This will also affect the characters if they are inside when the shunt occurs.

After the shunt, the characters will find themselves in a different location but a similar structure. If they stay inside that similar structure, then after ten minutes they are shunted again to a new world. If they leave the structure and the shunt occurs, they will be marooned on an alien world with no obvious way back. You should telegraph this to the players, particularly after the first shunt when they may not realise what is happening (for example arcane spellcasters may be able to sense the magical effect building in power again). If the characters hang in there and ride out a series of shunts, then they will eventually pass back through the High Moors and will be able to escape out of the obelisk.

#### **Inside the obelisk**

The stone door is faced with white marble and has an elven steel ring pull. It opens reasonably easily. Inside is an empty 30 x 30 ft unlit stone room with a spiral stair in the corner leading up. The spiral stair is only big enough for one person at a time, and runs up 180 ft to a single windowless room at the top of the obelisk.

#### **The upper room**

The spiral stairs lead to a 30 x 30 ft windowless unlit room. In the centre of the room is a large shiny silver machine. It has a glowing yellow gem and an unlit red gem. If the yellow gem is touched, it turns green and a translucent image appears horizontally in the air above the machine (a holo screen). The image appears to be the Known Lands but seen from very high up in the sky. It appears to be a live image, and clouds are visible moving across the landscape.

Touching the image with a single digit will bring up a screen with writing on in Ancient (saying "Target Designated Location?") and a green and red square, both with a weird symbol inside. If the green square is touched then there is a white flash on the screen for a second, and

black smoke can be seen rising from the location targeted.

The view can zoom in or out by using a gesture (two fingers moving apart or together). At maximum zoom it is similar to a view from 300 ft above the ground.

Pressing the red gem will bring up a picture of a "potion vial" that appears filled with red liquid. Each time it is pressed the red fluid lowers (indicates power level of the blast from 10% to 100%. 10% is like an 8d6 Fireball covering a 100 ft diameter area. 100% is like a 1 megaton nuclear blast. It starts out set at 100%.).

A one megaton detonation will destroy all structures and life within a 1.5 mile radius, and do heavy damage to everything within a 3 mile radius (20d6), and moderate damage (8d6) to anything within a 6 mile radius.

#### **The dimensional shunt**

Once the characters have been in the obelisk for ten minutes the shunt occurs and they are carried away. Every ten minutes they will be shunted to a new location so long as they stay in the new structure.

#### **Shunt 1 - Black Iron tower over a volcanic crater**

The characters find themselves inside a black iron room. It is oppressively hot and chains hang from the walls. Stairs lead down. An open window reveals them to be inside a black iron tower. The tower appears to be standing on a huge piece of rock suspended by 4 huge chains over an active volcano.

If they descend the stairs they see that the lower room (60 x 60 ft) contains a ritual room with an inlaid magical diagram. Standing around the diagram are the black charred rock-like remains of what look like eleven wizards. A door leads out from the tower onto the suspended rock. (The diagram appears intended to grant the wizards the power of greater demons.)

Anyone entering the lower room will attract the ire of a creature made of black smoke and ash. It may look like the harried souls of the dead wizards, but is in fact a form of air elemental.

### **Black smoke choking air elemental**

Large elemental, neutral

Armor Class 15  
Hit Points 90  
Speed 90 ft fly (hover)

Str 14 (+2), Dex 20 (+5), Con 14 (+2), Int 6 (-2),  
Wis 10 (+0), Cha 6 (-2)

**Damage resistances:** lightning, thunder, fire, non-magical weapon attacks

**Damage immunities:** poison

**Condition immunities:** exhaustion, grappled, paralysed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious

**Senses:** darkvision 120 ft

**Save bonus:** +2

**Challenge:** 5

**Difficulty:** 4th level

### **Actions**

Multiattack: the elemental makes two slam attacks or one choke attack

Slam: +8 to hit, reach 5ft, one target. Hit: 14 (2d8+5)

### **Abilities**

**Smoke form:** can enter and stop in a hostile creature's space (as a Large creature it can encompass up to 4 medium sized creatures). The spaces the elemental covers are heavily obscured, and any creatures within are blinded as condition. Can move through tiny spaces without squeezing.

**Choke:** each creature in the elemental's space must make a DC 13 Constitution save or take 15 (3d8+2) choking damage from the elemental pouring smoke and ash into their lungs.

### **Shunt 2 - Flesh-palace of the toad demons**

The characters find themselves in a windowless room (50 x 50 ft) with red fleshy walls. An aperture leads down, and the room is lit by dim lights from several orbs. In the room is a toad-like humanoid creature standing over a cauldron. It looks alarmed to see the characters.

The toad creature will attack the intruders. It will try to stay mobile taking advantage of its *Misty Step* ability. If any creature enters a space adjacent to the cauldron, they will be attacked by the spawn within.

### **Toad demon**

Medium aberration, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 16  
Hit Points 127  
Speed 30 ft

Str 18 (+4), Dex 15 (+2), Con 16 (+3), Int 11 (+0), Wis 8 (-1), Cha 12 (+1)

**Damage resistances:** acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder

**Senses:** blindsight 30ft, darkvision 60 ft

**Skills:** Arcana +3, Perception +2

**Save bonus:** +3

**Challenge:** 8

**Difficulty:** 5th level

### **Actions**

Multiattack: the toad demon makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with claws. Alternatively it uses hurl acid twice.

Bite: +7 to hit, reach 5ft, one target. Hit: 11 (2d6+4)

Claw: +7 to hit, reach 5ft, one target. Hit: 7 (1d6+4)

Hurl acid. Ranged spell attack +4, range 60 ft, one target. Hit: 10 (3d6) acid damage.

### **Abilities**

**Magic Resistance:** advantage on saving throws against magical effects

**Regeneration:** regains 10 HP at the start of its turn if it has 1 HP

**Misty Step (at will):** as a bonus action Misty Step as spell

### **Innate spellcasting**

- Invisibility  
- Contagion: if melee spell attack +4 succeeds target suffers Flesh Rot (disadvantage Cha checks and vulnerability to all damage) (Save DC 12)

### **Maggoty tadpoles (3)**

Tiny aberration, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 10

Speed 30 ft

Str 7 (-2), Dex 15 (+2), Con 10 (+0), Int 3 (+-4), Wis 5 (-3), Cha 3 (-4)

**Damage resistances:** acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder

**Senses:** darkvision 60 ft

**Skills:** Stealth +4

**Save bonus:** +1

**Challenge:** 1/8

### **Actions**

Bite: +4 to hit, reach 5ft, one target. Hit: 5 (1d4+2)

### **Abilities**

**Magic Resistance:** advantage on saving throws against magical effects

If the characters descend below, they find an exit. Looking outside they find that it is nighttime, that they are surrounded by a swamp filled with gargantuan plants, and that they have just exited a humongous orchid.

### **Shunt 3 - the lighthouse overlooking an ocean**

The characters appear in a comfy living room, with a stuffed sofa and chairs, a painting of an

elderly lizardman in a yellow coat, a fireplace, and a collection of books in an alien language.

There is also a window, and it is daylight.

Outside is a normal looking ocean, but there is a large pinky blue world in the sky.

Stairs lead up and down. Upstairs is a glass room containing a huge lamp powered by oil (making clear that this is a lighthouse).

Downstairs is a small bedroom, and a kitchen containing a kettle, loaf of bread, and sweetcakes.

There is no threat here. PCs can take the opportunity to rest. The inhabitant is not present.

### **Shunt 4 - the curiosity shop**

The characters arrive in a cluttered storeroom.

There are shelves and boxes covering most of the floor space. Stairs go down. A dirty window looks out onto a bustling city.

Outside is a sprawling city under a blue sky.

Steam powered airships \*phut phut\* through the sky. There are a wide variety of creatures moving around the streets: a race of penguinfolk (The Auk) dressed in smart jewelled waistcoats, a muscular leopard race (The Pandara) in leather armour, an ambulatory mass of vines (The Hortensia) that people seem to give a wide berth to, humans with mantid heads (The Vatini), and grotesquely fat tamarin monkeyfolk (the Mystax) being carried in a palanquin by several other monkeyfolk.

The room contains a huge variety of knick knacks. If the characters want to search, they can do so. Anyone searching must each make a Stealth check opposed by the shop owner's Perception +2. If he hears noise, he will come up and investigate. The shop owner is **Barabazon**, a human with a mantid head. He will shout at them in an alien language, antennae twitching. He poses little threat and has stats as a Commoner (MM, p.345).

If the characters can converse, Barabazon can tell them that the city is called **Kerzuhulimon**. It is ruled by seven liches (the Eternal Council). It is a melting pot of different races from a huge earth-like world.

### Searching the junk

If the characters do search the junk, make them roll 1d20. The first roll will always be the bottled city (see below), but make it look like a random pick. Subsequent rolls use the table below.

### Random junk (1d20)

- 1: A stuffed cuddly wombat
- 2: A jar of green face cream (+1 Charisma for 3 hours)
- 3: A framed photograph of a blue newtman explorer standing in front of a pyramid.
- 4: A revolver with six bullets (ranged 40/120, 2d8 damage)
- 5: An obsidian knife (1d4, breaks first time used)
- 6: A sealed tin jar of ground coffee
- 7: A small glass jar containing a pickled fairy
- 8: A polaroid camera (can take 4 instant photographs)
- 9: A large round of blue cheese (delicious!)
- 10: An ear trumpet
- 11: A ventriloquist dummy of a green frogboy
- 12: A jar of honey from demon bees with narcotic qualities
- 13: A saddle for a human
- 14: A mechanical typewriter with keys in draconic
- 15: A monocle on a chain that translates all written text into an alien language
- 16: A snow globe containing a miniature sled pulled by eight reindeer.
- 17: A mirror that always shows the back of the head of anyone reflected
- 18: An intelligent talking potted plant (but it only speaks an alien language)
- 19: A stone book containing a recipe for making a Potion of Longevity
- 20: The character finds a scroll containing a message addressed to an unknown person from themselves in their own handwriting (perhaps a future or past version, or a version from an

alternative timeline). The message says "You're going to need the silver cone!".

### The bottled city

This appears to be a largish clear bottle that contains a miniature city. It is magical and anyone can touch the bottle and transport themselves (and any other willing or unconscious individuals that are touching them or the bottle) to the city inside.

Once inside they will find themselves standing in a large empty city built from glass. The city has beautiful but unfamiliar architecture and many tall spires. It is daylight inside (whatever it is like outside), and the temperature is mild. There is limitless clean air.

The characters arrive at an open plaza, and in front of them is a large (ten foot diameter) orb that shows a hazy view of a green and blue world. Touching the orb allows a character to will themselves out of the city to wherever the bottle is. The orb cannot be moved and is indestructible.

The city appears completely empty and unoccupied. There are no signs of personal items, bodies or detritus. The city is 1.5 miles in diameter and it appears that it could hold up to 10,000 people, although there is nowhere to grow food. A deep groove runs through the city centre crossed by arched bridges. It looks like a river could run there.

**GM:** The city may appear to be a useful item. It could serve as a useful refuge or hideout, and it appears at first like a strange but empty place. The city is in fact alive and aware. It wants to be released from the bottle. It will bide its time, but once a character is left in the city alone and with their guard down (e.g. asleep), the city will change, trapping them (such changes take a few minutes). The character will simply find that the windows and doors are gone and they are trapped in a glass room. The city will attempt to capture other characters before making its demand. It communicates by means of words

appearing written upon a glass wall: "FREE ME". The city will hold its hostages as long as its demands are not met.

If it is released (by destroying the bottle with 100 magical damage), then the city will appear full sized wherever it was released. It will then release its hostages. Everything will seem fine for a while then, but after a few weeks the characters will notice or hear that the city appears to be growing. It will grow by 100% every 4 weeks (diameter: after each month 1: 3 miles, 2: 6 miles, 3: 12 miles, 4: 24 miles, 5: 48 miles, 6: 96 miles, 7: 192 miles, 8: 384 miles, 9: 786 miles, 10: 1536 miles etc).

The city can only be stopped by finding its heart. Deep in its centre there is a door. The door leads to the original world of the city. If the characters search for the centre of the city, they find the streets and alleyways become increasingly convoluted. This is a defence and although the city cannot completely cut off the door, it can make it very hard to reach by closing and opening walls, and placing it in an obscure location. Reaching the door requires five successful consecutive DC 20 checks (one per hour). These can all be Survival, but alternatively each character may have something they can contribute to the task (Perception, for example).

The door leads to a barren and jagged obsidian (volcanic glass) plateau with a blue sky. High above a series of coloured bands seem to cross the sky like a rainbow (a ringed world). Far away a number of smoking volcanoes can be seen. In the distance are several similar glass cities. If they are approached they are found to be infested by shiny orange beetles. The beetles appear to be eating the glass structures. If sufficient numbers could be captured and brought back through the door, then they will breed and the city's growth could be kept in check, or reduced.

### Shunt 5 - the leviathan

The characters find themselves floating inside an empty bone-white tower. The tower is filled with clear liquid, but they can breathe. A hole leads down to a lower level. The lower level has a hole that leads outside.

Outside the "tower" is a vast cavernous space with the sky slowly expanding and contracting. They appear to have exited from the rib of a gargantuan creature (the pleural cavity). A \*thump thump\* can be heard and felt distantly. Strange clear blobs move around. About 200 ft away is a small round vehicle made of green metal jammed next to a rib. It looks like some kind of boat, but is completely covered and has round windows.

If the characters swim to the sub, they are attacked by immune cells. They see in the distance strange five foot diameter yellowish blobs that suddenly pivot towards them.

### Immune Cells (6)

Medium aberration, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 11  
Hit Points 35  
Speed 60 ft swim

Str 15 (+2), Dex 12 (+1), Con 14 (+2), Int 6 (-2), Wis 6 (-2), Cha 3 (-4)

**Damage resistances:** acid

**Condition immunities:** blinded, charmed, deafened, exhausted, frightened, prone

**Senses:** blindsight 60ft

**Skills:** Perception +4, Athletics +4

**Save bonus:** +2

**Challenge:** 2

**Difficulty:** 5th level

### Actions

Dissolve: +4 to hit, reach 5ft, one target. Hit: 7 acid damage (2d6)

## Abilities

**Bind:** as a bonus action immune cell exudes sticky strands that constrict one target. Target must make a DC 10 Dexterity save or be constricted and lose 3 Dex. At 0 Dex the target is paralysed.

## The submersible

The "boat" is made of green metal and has round windows on each side. A damaged propeller is fitted to the rear, and it has suffered some acid damage. The sub is flooded and a hatch at the rear is open. The two-seat sub is inoperable. Inside are a map and a large metal flask.

The map is an outline map on a shiny waterproof paper that shows a black silhouette of the creature and its internal cavities (it looks like an immense plesiosaur). A point near the heart has been marked. The creature must be 80 miles long.

The five foot long metal flask has three red bands around it. This is in fact a large tank of very powerful poison (100 doses; injury, DC 14 Constitution save or take 21 (6d6) damage, or half on a successful save).

**GM:** the party is on a gigantic water planet (a superplanet composed entirely of water). The sub belongs to a race of seal-like humanoids that were trying to reach the creature's heart and kill it. Killing it from the inside was the only option.

## Shunt 6 - the catacombs beneath the world

The characters find themselves surrounded by demons. They are black skinned with a rubbery, reptilian hide. They are curled up against the walls and appear to be sleeping. The characters appear to be at the bottom of a 25 ft wide shaft or pit, and the demons are attached to the walls like a colony of bats. The area above the pit is lit with a reddish light from somewhere else, and a massive spherical ruby (big as a fist) is hanging on a chain directly above the pit (the ruby is just at the top of the pit, forty feet above).

Anyone who has seen fiends before may recognise that these appear to be immature versions. This is in fact a pod of siblings who have not yet reached maturity. They are currently in a sleep cycle. The characters can remain quiet and motionless and wait for ten minutes, and they will be carried away to the next location. If the characters do want to try to recover the ruby, then they can try to climb past the demons (requires two successive DC 15 Athletics and DC 15 Stealth checks). Magic may also be a way (such as Levitate), but the demons have magical senses and a DC 15 Stealth check will be required by the caster. If they awaken, they will all attack.

The characters may also think that this might be their only way to return to their world. If they do consider leaving the pit, you may want to remind them that they actually don't know for sure what world they are on, and even if they are in the underworld of their own world, they would still have potentially miles to travel to the surface through demon-infested tunnels.

The spherical ruby is an artefact stolen from the elves centuries ago. It contains raw magic. Any Wizard, Bard, Sorcerer, Artificer or Warlock attuning to it can learn any 5 Wizard spells of any level. They can choose these from a rulebook like the PHB or XGtE, or they can create their own spell with the GM's approval. They can still only cast the spells if they have spell slots of the appropriate level. Once used by one person, the magic is exhausted.

## Immature Fiends (19)

Large fiend, unaligned

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 60

Speed 40 ft

Str 18 (+4), Dex 15 (+2), Con 18 (+4), Int 9 (-1), Wis 12 (+1), Cha 10 (+0)

**Condition immunities:** immune to mind-affecting and mind-reading magic  
**Skills:** Stealth +5, Perception +5, Survival +5  
**Senses:** blindsight 30 ft, darkvision 120 ft  
**Save bonus:** +2  
**Challenge:** 2  
**Difficulty:** 13th level for whole group

#### Actions

Bite: +6 to hit, reach five feet, one target. Hit: 15 (2d10+4)

Claw: +6 to hit, reach five feet, one target. Hit: 11 (2d6+4)

#### Abilities

**Magic resistance:** the fiend has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Track by scent:** fiends have advantage on Perception or Survival checks based on scent.

**Savage:** after dropping a foe to 0 HP, a fiend will continue attacking them until they are dead and feast on their juicy organs

#### Shunt 7 - mandrils in spaacce!

##### *Deck seven: the Maintenance Room*

The characters find themselves in a square metal room. It is dimly lit by small glass boxes on the walls. They immediately notice that they all appear to be under a Levitate spell, and they drift off the ground (in fact, they are in a microgravity environment aboard a space vessel). Floating characters can only move by pulling along a solid surface, or by pushing off from other characters (treat as difficult terrain).

The room has three exits: a hatch in the floor lit with a red light, a door in the corner lit with a red light, and a ladder leading up. The room also contains:

- a huge white crossbow bolt (9 ft long) mounted on a frame bolted to the floor (a photon torpedo)
- three strange suits of armour with see-through glass helmets (if the characters have seen the

statues of the Ancients in area 9 of location 20, and locations 55 and 59, then these look similar to the armour they are wearing). The armour has an AC equivalent to padded armour, and imposes disadvantage on all saving throws, ability checks, attack rolls and makes spell-casting impossible. It cannot be worn with other armour. It has an internal air supply and is proof against vacuum or submersion. The suits also have magnetic boots which can be separated and worn. This would allow the wearer to move normally in the microgravity.

- various metal containers. These contain various strange pieces of metal or a shiny material of no discernable purpose.

The exit door has a window in it and leads to a small room with another door on the far side. This is in fact an airlock, and the doors are secured. If opened with brute force (DC 25) or a Knock spell, the ship will be explosively decompressed. Anyone near the door must make a DC 15 Dexterity save or be swept outside the ship (those further away need only make a DC 10 save). If the doors are not sealed within 1 minute, then a hatch closes the exit in the ceiling leaving anyone in this room trapped and doomed to suffocate.

The floor hatch is sealed and cannot be opened by any means. The ladder leads through a hole into the room above: level six - the tech lab.

##### *Deck Six - the Tech Lab*

This room has a hole in the floor and ceiling and a ladder (leading down to Deck Seven - the Maintenance Room, and up to Deck Five - the Organics Laboratory).

The room contains workbenches, strange banks of machinery with flickering coloured lights, and a square on the wall that seems to show a map or diagram in different colours. A window looks out into starry space, and in the distance is a cloud-covered purple sphere.



The room is inhabited by what look like monkeys wearing white jackets over tunics and trousers. They appear to be working on a silver cone (1 foot tall) on one of the workbenches. They seem alarmed to see the characters. Standing silently against one wall is what appears to be a metal golem.

The monkeys are an intelligent alien species of mandrils called **the Mandarians**. They will use their communication devices to raise the alarm, draw weapons and activate their golem (a robot). They will shortly be joined by reinforcements from the Organics Laboratory and Refectory above.

### **Mandarians (11 total)**

Small space mandril, neutral evil

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 13

Speed 30 ft (wearing magnetic shoes)

Str 10 (+0), Dex 12 (+1), Con 10 (+0), Int 16 (+3), Wis 10 (+0), Cha 10 (+0)

**Skills:** Insight +2, Perception +2

**Save bonus:** +2

**Challenge:** 1/2

**Difficulty:** 4th level

### **Actions**

Laser Pistol: +3 to hit, ranged 40/120 ft, one target. Hit: 12 (3d6+1) radiant (ammo: 20)

### **Utility Robot**

Medium construct, unaligned

Armor Class 18

Hit Points 33

Speed 25 ft (wearing magnetic shoes)

Str 14 (+2), Dex 11 (+0), Con 13 (+1), Int 9 (-1), Wis 10 (+0), Cha 1 (-5)

**Damage immunities:** poison, psychic

**Condition immunities:** poisoned, exhausted, charmed, petrified, paralysed, frightened

**Save bonus:** +1

**Challenge:** 1

**Difficulty:** see above

### **Actions**

Multiattack: it makes two melee attacks

Slam: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. Hit: 5 (1d6+2) plus 3 (1d4) electrical damage

### **Abilities**

**Immutable Form:** The robot is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

**Magic Resistance:** The robot has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

The square with the diagram is a wallscreen, and the diagram is showing a real time analysis of the silver cone. **The silver cone** is a complex magitek device that requires attunement. It is a time machine, and when activated it transports itself, and any persons touching it, 1d100 years into the past (it's random because the Mandarians hadn't finished working on it). The cone can be used for repeated jumps to go further and further back in time. Any time travel is one way, and the cone provides no mechanism to return to the present. Anyone travelling back in time must not change their own history or they will wink out of existence. They can change other events, but if they stop themselves doing something that led up to them travelling back in time then the paradox will destroy them. The person attuned to the cone will know this.

### *Deck Five - the Organics Laboratory*

This room has a hole in the floor and the ceiling and a ladder (leading down to Deck Six - the Tech Lab, and up to Deck Four - the Refectory).

This room has workbenches, cabinets, and samples of strange looking crystals, bones and plants. It is usually staffed by 3 Mandarin scientists.

If anyone wants to take some of the alien organic material, roll 1d8 to see what effect it has: 1 inflicts Slimy Doom as per the Contagion spell (Constitution save DC 18), 2 as Potion of Growth for 1d4 hours, 3 DC 18 Constitution save or gain a level of exhaustion, 4 as Potion of Vitality, 5 DC 18 Constitution save or causes the poisoned condition for 1d4 hours, 6 as permanent See Invisible spell, 7 as wyvern poison (DC 15 Constitution save or take 24 (7d6) damage, or half on a save, 8 bright light pours from every orifice for 1d4 days.

#### *Deck Four - the Refectory*

This room has a hole and ladder descending to Deck Five - the Organics Laboratory. It also has a locked hatch in the ceiling (leading up to Deck Three - Computers, Deck Two - Command Deck, and Deck One - the Bridge). This hatch cannot be opened by any means.

The room contains a number of food dispenser machines, tables and chairs, and is essentially the staff canteen. Eating here will be a further 6 Mandarians, who will head downstairs if the alarm is raised. There are a large number of green bananas.

#### **Shunt 8 - the sunken tower**

The characters find themselves inside a ruined tower which is underwater. As they didn't know to take a deep breath, they are at immediate risk of drowning. The ruined tower is part of a sunken city. On exiting the tower they see a bright surface of the ocean 150 ft above. This would normally take five combat rounds to swim at full speed (dash/difficult terrain). If a character is helping another character, it takes 10 rounds.

The characters must each succeed at a DC 15 Athletics check to swim to the surface. If they are wearing metal armour, they make this roll at disadvantage. (n.b. It takes 1 minute to remove medium armour, and 5 minutes to remove heavy armour.)

Failure requires a DC 10 Constitution save or they take 5 recurring drowning damage per round until they reach air. They can then make the Athletics check again. (If they fail again they take 10 recurring damage and can try a third time etc.)

Once at the surface, they see a barren rocky coast, and a sky which appears to be on fire. It would take several minutes to swim to shore. This world is suffering the aftereffects of an apocalypse caused by a war between the local gods. Dead gods rained down on the planet from the firmament, causing extinction level impacts and contaminating the world with raw godstuff (causing mutations and spontaneous life).

The shunting effect is due to take place after ten minutes inside the sunken tower. It should be clear to the characters that in order to leave this world, they need to swim back down to the tower near the end of the ten minutes. When it gets close to time to leave, then can swim back down. There is clearly a matter of timing, and the characters should decide how many combat rounds (10 rounds = 1 minute) they are allowing themselves. Too little time, and they miss their window. Too much time and they won't be able to hold their breath.

A character who has taken a deep breath can hold their breath for 1 minute +1 minute per CON bonus. After that they can survive for 1 round per CON bonus, and then their HP are reduced to 0 and they are dying.

When the characters swim back down, they see a group of six-foot long black and red striped sharks swarming around the tower. During underwater combat, any character using a weapon other than a spear, javelin, trident, dagger or short sword attacks at disadvantage. Any non-spell ranged weapon attack is at disadvantage.

#### **Alien Shark (4)**

Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class 12  
Hit Points 22  
Speed 40 ft swim

Str 14 (+2), Dex 13 (+1), Con 13 (+1), Int 1 (-5),  
Wis 10 (+0), Cha 4 (-3)

**Skills:** Perception +2

**Save bonus:** +2

**Challenge:** 1/2

**Difficulty:** 2nd-3rd level

#### **Actions**

Bite: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. Hit: 7  
(1d8+2)

#### **Abilities**

Pack tactics: the shark has advantage on an attack if at least one of the shark's allies is within 5 ft of the target

#### **Shunt 9 - the sanctum of Severin Dumont, Le Grande Magicien**

The characters appear inside a tower. The room is lit by diffuse light and beautifully furnished in 17th century style with a divan sofa, two stuffed leather chairs, a fireplace, and a plush light brown carpet. The walls are covered by black and gold intricate paper. There are two gilt standing oil lamps, a glass cabinet, and a single dark wood door leads out.

**The glass cabinet:** is locked with a keyhole, and contains an unsettling looking book. The covers appear to be formed from a squashed and reshaped aberrant monster of some kind. The monster's face is smeared across the front cover, and its purple-irised eye moves following the characters around. The glass is protected by a ward: breaking it will release a Glyph of Warding that will inflict a Finger of Death spell at the culprit (DC 17 Constitution save or take 61 (7d8+30) necrotic damage, or half on a save). The Glyph requires a DC 17 Int (Investigation) check to notice. The cabinet can be opened

safely however by picking the lock (finely made so DC 20, and each attempt takes 3 minutes).

The book itself has a second Glyph of Warding upon it, and if touched it will deliver a Flesh to Stone spell (the Glyph will sustain it for the full concentration period). The spell will fail if the target makes three DC 17 Constitution saves, or turn them indefinitely to stone if they fail three saves. The book will not turn to stone with the victim.

**The Book Monster:** this is a sentient magic item that calls itself "Book". It is immune to harm, and can translate itself to anyone who attunes, and book's pages teach a new form of magic to any arcane spellcaster. This form of magic allows blood-letting in lieu of spell slots, and any prepared spell (other than healing spells) can be cast without a spell slot if the caster takes 5 HP damage per level of spell. Alternatively the caster can inflict that damage to an alive but helpless target.

Book's objectives are: (i) to teach blood magic to whoever will learn, (ii) to encourage the regular use of blood magic, and (iii) to bring forth his master, the Outer Chaos Caacrinolaas, through getting people to use blood magic (somehow, every time it is used, power is channeled to Caacrinolaas. Book will be quite candid about this). Book has Int 13, Wis 11 and Cha 14. It will be happy so long as its owner learns blood magic and casts at least one blood magic spell per week. Otherwise it will have conflict with its owner and may try to take control (DMG, p.214). It has telepathy with an attuned user, can see and hear out to 30 ft, and is lawful evil.

**The wooden door:** The door leads to a dressing room with an oil painting on the wall, and a fine red rug. The painting depicts a late middle-aged goat-like humanoid wearing an embroidered frock coat, white knee tights, and an elaborate white wig. They are holding a walking cane and looking imperious. A small brass plate identifies this as "Severin Dumont, Le Grande Magicien".

This dressing room also contains a beautiful dark wood harpsichord covered in a gilt floral motif, a brass bust of an elderly goat man (on which sits a large powdered white wig like that in the painting), and a wooden armoire and some gilt chairs.

**The brass bust:** magical, talks and possesses the knowledge of Alexandre Dumont, Severin's father and a fellow Wizard. Alexandre only speaks French, but is quite knowledgeable and can make a knowledge Arcana check at +9.

**The armoire:** contains various clothes and a gold pocket watch on a chain. It is in full working order and has a second hand, and is worth 5000 silver shillings to the right buyer (probably a goblin).

**The harpsichord:** a form of early piano. Fully functioning, but otherwise unremarkable. If it could be retrieved (by, for example, four characters holding a corner each during the shunt), it would be worth 1000 silver shillings.

**The red rug:** finely made and worth 50 silver shillings. Underneath is a triangular magical diagram on the floor (a form of "Teleport Circle").

**The oil painting:** fairly bulky and unremarkable although good quality. Worth 100 silver shillings.

### **Shunt 10 - back in the obelisk control room**

The characters find themselves back in the obelisk where this all started. They can sense the dimensional shunt building again, but so long as they leave in the next ten minutes they can escape back to the High Moors.

If they re-enter and are shunted a second time, they will arrive at a new series of locations all over the universe. You can either make this up yourself, or roll for the characters on the "I Got Marooned..." table below.

### **The "I got marooned on an alien world" table (1d100)**

Some characters may be unlucky, reckless or just pig-headed, and may find themselves outside the tower or tower analog when the dimensional shunt occurs. This will lead to them being lost on an alien world, and the table below is a quick way to determine their fate.

01 - 11 Character is captured as a slave by the dominant species. After a short time they lead a slave uprising, but are unfortunately defeated and executed as an example.

12 - 22 While drunk on some unexpectedly intoxicating alien wild flora or fauna, the character is killed by indigenous life or the dominant species.

23 - 35 Character's natural cunning allows them to rise to power and eventually rule over the alien world as an omnipotent god king.

36 - 50 Character somehow manages to find their way back to their own world / the High Moors after 1d6 months. They have quite a tale to tell.

51 - 56 Character manages to find a way home, but unfortunately arrives 1d100 years in the past or future.

57 - 67 Character is unfortunately infested by a parasitic mind control organism, and ultimately helps to bring about the destruction of a civilisation.

68 - 78 Character's ill fated experiment with a stolen time machine leads to them living out the same day over and over again until they go mad.

79 - 89 Character rescues a space prince / princess, falls in love and helps them to save their realm. They get married and live happily ever after.

90 - 100 Character arrives home after 1d6 months, but their brain has been transplanted into another humanoid life form by a friendly scientist (or they are transformed permanently). For example, a construct, a sasquatch, an elephantfolk, an ent or ghoul.

## The Shining City

The Shining City is a large settlement built from white stone. The city is built on an island surrounded by a lake formed in a 25 mile diameter crater. The city is surrounded by a mist rising from the lake (a side effect of the spatial and temporal disturbances emanating from the Crucible deep below the city).

The city is reached by a bridge to the northwest which leads to it via a smaller island. There is also a dock to the southeast if the characters have a boat, although that may be obscured by mist. The city buildings are partially ruined. Many towers still stand, but about half of the buildings have obvious signs of part-collapse. Some of the buildings have tarnished metal roofs which occasionally catch the sunlight.

**Tip:** I suggest that you keep the map of the city to yourself and simply sketch out areas as the characters discover them.

### Random encounters in the Shining City

The Shining City uses its own encounter tables. Roll once per hour on both tables with a 1 in 6 chance of an encounter. These encounters represent the closeness of the city to the Crucible's reality distorting energies, and the fact that it is haunted by the phantoms of some of the deceased elves.

#### Table 1: Weird Phenomena (1d100) - 1 in 6 chance per hour

01-30 Spatial rift: one character accidentally steps through a rift and ends up in a random

location in the city alone (1d10: 1: Orchards, 2: Garrison, 3: near the House of Pleasure, 4: near the Archives, 5: near the Temple, 6: near the Government Building, 7: at the Docks, 8: On Celebrand's island, 9: in the lake to the north of the city, 10: in the lake to the south of the city). The rift then immediately closes. Roll random encounter checks for this character separately from the main party.

31-60 Temporal tremor: one character becomes 6+1d6 years older (50%) or younger (50%). You can either make this permanent (in which case the minimum character age is 16), or you can make it last 1d20 hours, in which case there is no minimum. For each year below 16 reduce Str and Con by 1 (minimum 1). For every five full years over 55, reduce Str, Dex and Con by 1 (minimum 1).

61-75 Spatial tear: the entire party falls through a spatial tear and each of them ends up at a random location in the city. Roll random encounter checks for each character separately. Make at least one random encounter check for each character even if they quickly rendezvous.

76-100 Temporal quake: each character becomes 10+1d12 years older (50%) or younger (50%) (see above).

#### Table 2: Spectral inhabitants (1d100) - 1 in 6 chance per hour (+1 in 6 per encounter)

If the party makes excessive noise the chance of an encounter on this table increases by +2 in 6.

After any successful encounter check for spectral inhabitants, increase the chance of a subsequent encounter by 1 in 6 (cumulatively), and add +10% (cumulatively) to the roll to see what the encounter is. This represents the fact that the longer the characters stay in the city, the more attention they attract from the spectral inhabitants. If the characters leave the city for 24 hours, then this resets.

01-20 1d6 Spectral Elves (during daytime time this encounter will be indoors)

21-40 The Iron Dragon: the dragon can be seen flying overhead, or perching on a nearby building. If the characters are being excessively noisy, the dragon may simply swoop down and grab one of them up. See location 54 for game statistics.

41-60 2d6 Spectral Elves (during daytime time this encounter will be indoors)

61-80 The Iron Dragon is aware of the characters and attacks. See location 54 for game statistics.

81-100 Elven Wraith with 1d6 Spectral Elves (during daytime time this encounter will be indoors)

101-120 Elven Wraith with 2d6 Spectral Elves (during daytime time this encounter will be indoors)

121+ Elven Wraith with 10+1d6 Spectral Elves

### **Spectral Elves**

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 12  
Hit Points 22  
Speed 50 ft fly

Str 1 (-5), Dex 14 (+2), Con 11 (+0), Int 10 (+0),  
Wis 10 (+0), Cha 11 (+0)

**Damages resistances:** acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder, non-magical weapons

**Damage immunities:** necrotic, poison

**Condition Immunities:** charmed, exhaustion, grappled, paralysed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious

**Senses:** darkvision 60 ft

**Save bonus:** +1

**Challenge rating:** 1

**Difficulty:** group of 5 at 4th level, 10 at 5th level, 15 at 7th, 20 at 8th, 25th at 10th

### **Actions**

Life drain: +4 to hit, reach 5ft, one target. Hit: 10 (3d6) necrotic, plus make a DC 10 Constitution save or maximum HP are reduced by the same amount. Reduction lasts until a long rest. If reduced to zero the victim dies.

### **Abilities**

**Incorporeal Movement:** can move through objects and people, although can't end its turn inside an object.

**Sunlight sensitivity:** disadvantage on attack and perception rolls while in sunlight.

### **Elven Wraith**

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 13  
Hit Points 67  
Speed 60 ft fly

Str 6 (-2), Dex 16 (+3), Con 16 (+3), Int 12 (+1),  
Wis 14 (+2), Cha 15 (+2)

**Damages resistances:** acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder, non-magical weapons that aren't silvered

**Damage immunities:** necrotic, poison

**Condition Immunities:** charmed, exhaustion, grappled, paralysed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

**Senses:** darkvision 60 ft

**Save bonus:** +1

**Challenge rating:** 1

**Difficulty:** see above

### **Actions**

Life drain: +6 to hit, reach 5ft, one target. Hit: 21 (4d8+3) necrotic, plus make a DC 14 Constitution save or maximum HP are reduced by the same amount. Reduction lasts until a long rest. If reduced to zero the victim dies.

### **Abilities**

**Incorporeal Movement:** can move through objects and people, although can't end its turn inside an object.

**Sunlight sensitivity:** disadvantage on attack and perception rolls while in sunlight.

## 52. The Orchards

On the banks of the lake there are a number of ruined wood and stone structures. These appear to be agricultural buildings, but built to a better standard than those in Zone One. Close by are what appear to have been a number of orchards (apple, orange, pear) but these are wildly overgrown and unkempt. Some fruit can still be salvaged from them.

A search of the structures reveals a few human bones in sheltered places and several dozen tarnished slave collars in more exposed places. In a wooden box stuck into the rafters of a stone building is a threadbare blanket and a cloth doll of a human girl with button eyes.

## 53. The Garrison

From the banks of the lake, a wide low bridge without a rail slopes up to the intermediary island. On the smaller island before the city lies an imposing white stone fortress which guards a huge pair of gates. The gates are fallen (one either side of the gateway), and the fortress is partially ruined. Steel ballistae sit rusting atop the fortress's towers.

Inside the fortress there are kitchens, armouries, smithies and many barracks. From the carvings, rusting spears and armour and bones left lying around it appears to have been staffed by three hundred bearfolk soldiers. On the far side of the small island a similar wide stone bridge slopes up to the main island and the city.

## Inside the Shining City

The city was home to several thousand elves and their slaves. There are approximately six hundred separate dwellings in the city. Although these vary with wealth and status, they are all spacious and pleasant by Known Lands standards. They had glass windows, underfloor

heating, plumbing, indoor bathing and toilet facilities.

The glass windows are broken or gone, and the remnants of the fine interior furnishings and art have rotted away leaving weeds, moss, and the fragments and residues exposed to the elements. The shreds of cloth and broken wood are accompanied in many of the homes by the bones of dead elves lying in a more sheltered corner. Every home also appears to have had several halfling slaves and the bones of house cats are also ubiquitous.

If the characters want to thoroughly search all of the residences, they can do so. For every 3 hours spent searching they discover one of the following (1d100):

01-20 water-damaged but legible spell book page (random Wizard spell of level 1d8)

21-35 tarnished silverware worth 1d6 x 100 silver shillings

36-45 1d3 baubles each holding five years of life (see location 3A)

46-60 box containing 1d4 jars of herbal poultice (each heals 6+3d6 damage)

61-80 jewelry worth 1d10 x 100 silver shillings

81-100 a cache of fine wine (2d6 bottles in good condition worth 200 silver shillings each at auction)

## 54. Arena (Iron Dragon's lair)

The arena is a large low round white stone structure. Four gates give access to the outer structure, which contains rooms for entertaining, counters and bars for food and drink, bathrooms and offices. Further inside, the building opens to wide stands that curve around an open sandy arena floor. It looks like it could have seated three thousand people in comfort.

Beneath the arena are tunnels and a number of cells and cages. The cells contain the skeletons of several dozen humans, ogres, and dwarves. There are also a few bearfolk, goblin and halfling skeletons, and one brutish looking humanoid with tusks (an orc). The cages contain the skeletons of bears, wolves and some stranger looking creatures (a hydra and manticore).

The arena is the lair of the Iron Dragon. The Iron Dragon appears to be an adult dragon construct. It is made from a tarnished grey metal and cogs and gears are visible in places beneath its armoured shell. It has wings and crackles with lightning. It looks to be a crude (deliberately so) example of elven craft. The construct appears very old and in poor condition: its body is covered in dents, tears and rust spots from centuries of activity.

The Iron Dragon is in fact a prison for **Amina al Ansariyah - the last empress of the defeated Dragon Empire**. After falling against a Titan in the defence of her capital, the elves harvested her brain and installed it in this crude construct body. The construct is essentially a golem that follows orders, although the Empress can exercise some control (if that does not conflict with orders) and can speak. The construct was a cruel amusement of the elves, and they kept her here in the arena to perform or tear apart traitorous slaves.

When the cataclysm happened, Amina's handler ordered her to "protect the city". While he was consumed by the aberrant invaders, she has been bound to continue to follow her last order. She has succeeded in keeping the city relatively free of aberrations, although she has suffered considerable damage over the years which she has no way to repair. Amina cannot attack the spectral elves that haunt the city, and they ignore her.

When the dragon appears to the characters, it will say (in Ieldran) "I will protect the city from you". Amina is hoping that the characters will say that they mean no harm to the city, and that

her orders will allow her to cease attacking. If she is able to parlay with the characters she will explain who she is and her predicament. Amina's greatest wish is to die. She cannot "self terminate" however. But she is aware of a **magical purple gem** that can override her orders and take control of her. It was held by the City Governor, Kythanariel, but she does not know where his body lies (but is presumably somewhere in the city). (Amina realises that she may be placing herself at the mercy of the characters, but even that is better than her current existence.)

If the characters attack Amina she will be forced to defend herself. If she is destroyed then her power core can be harvested (and she may offer this to the characters). The power core is a warm white crystal rod (24 inches long) with lightning crackling inside. The core can supply ten spell levels of casting to a magic-using class each day (of any spell level that the caster can cast).

If the characters want a further sweetener, Amina can offer them detailed instructions on how to find a concealed dragon horde in the mountains near to Hadramaut, the old imperial capital to the far west (3500 miles west of the Shining City). Whether such a horde exists, and any adventures the characters encounter in the ruins of the Dragon Empire, fall outside the scope of this book.

### **The Iron Dragon (Amina al Ansariyah)**

Gargantuan construct, lawful neutral

Armor Class 22

Hit Points 103 (originally 800)

Speed 40 ft, climb 40 ft, fly 80 ft

Str 30 (+10), Dex 10 (+0), Con 29 (+9), Int 18 (+4), Wis 16 (+3), Cha 27 (+8)

**Damage Immunities:** fire, necrotic, poison  
**Condition immunities:** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralysed, petrified, poisoned.  
**Senses:** darkvision 60 ft



**Save bonus:** +1

**Languages:** Draconic, Ieldran, Orcish

**Challenge rating:** 20

**Difficulty:** 16th level

### Actions

**Multiattack:** it can use its Frightful Presence. It can then either make one bite and two claw attacks, or two ballistae attacks against up to two different targets.

**Claw attack:** +17 to hit, reach 10 ft, one target.  
Hit: 17 (2d6+10 slashing)

**Bite attack:** +17 to hit, reach 15 ft, one target.  
Hit: 21 (2d10+10)

**Tail attack:** +17 to hit, reach 20 ft, one target. Hit: 19 (2d8+10)

**Ballistae** (6 total, take one minute to reload): +17 to hit, range 120/480 ft, one target. Hit: 17 (3d10)

### Abilities

**Immutable Form:** The dragon is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

**Magic Resistance:** The dragon has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Frightful Presence:** each creature within 120 ft must make a DC21 Wisdom save or be Frightened for 1 minute. Can save again at end of each turn. Once a save is made they are immune to this Frightful Presence for 24 hours.

**Legendary Resistance (3/day):** if the dragon fails a saving throw it can choose to succeed.

### Legendary Actions

The dragon can take 3 legendary actions and she can take one at the end of another creature's turn. She regains her legendary actions at the start of her turn.

**Detect:** dragon makes a Wisdom (Perception) check

**Tail attack:** the dragon makes a tail attack

**Wing attack:** the dragon beats its wings. Each creature within 15 ft must make a DC 25

Dexterity save or take 7 (2d6) damage and be knocked prone.

### Lair Actions

If fighting in the arena, the Iron Dragon can take one of the following lair actions each turn on initiative count 20:

**Rock attack:** the dragon bats a huge lump of masonry towards a target. Dexterity save DC 15 or they take 17 (5d6) damage.

**Floor smash:** The dragon smashes the ground causing the floor of the arena to collapse into the catacombs below. One target must make a DC 15 Dexterity save or fall 20 feet and take 11 (3d6) damage.

**Dust cloud:** the dragon flaps its wings kicking up a dust cloud 50 feet in diameter that lasts until the start of the following round. During this round any ranged spell or weapon attacks are at disadvantage unless within 20 feet.

## 55. The Temple

This central plaza is dominated by a large domed structure of white stone with a tarnished metal roof. The plaza is ringed by columns of white stone, half of which have fallen.

The domed building is covered in a shimmering mass of small silver beetles. There are literally thousands of them all over the outer surface of the building. The beetles appear to move in an organised way (like a flock of swallows), and a strange shimmering pattern in their movement passes around the building.

Beneath the swarming beetles there is a pair of tall stone double doors. These could be carefully pulled open. The beetles are not hostile unless attacked, and they don't perceive being nudged out of the way as an attack.

The beetles are celestials, and the same creatures encountered at location 8. They are elemental forces of Law in direct opposition to the Far Realm. They lack self consciousness or creativity. They hate magic. They are a mindless hive that yet runs with perfect order. They are

the secret immune system of the ordered universe. The silver beetles will respond with agitation to the use or attempted use of magic near them. They are here because they sense that the source of the chaotic aberrant energy lies below.

### **Silver Beetle Swarm (up to 100 swarms)**

Medium celestial, lawful

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 66

Speed 20 ft (crawl), 40 ft (fly)

Str 12 (+1), Dex 18 (+4), Con 16 (+3), Int 17 (+3), Wis 9 (-1), Cha 9 (-1)

**Condition immunities:** immune to magical effects

**Damage immunities:** immune to spells

**Save bonus:** +0

**Challenge:** 6

**Difficulty:** 4th level for one swarm

### **Actions**

Dismantle on the molecular level: +7 to hit. Hit: 13 (2d8+4)

### **Abilities:**

**Suppress magic:** as a bonus action, use Counterspell as if cast with a 4th level spell slot; they roll at +9 for any 5th or higher level spell slots.

**Drain magic:** As an action, a target within 30 ft has to make a DC 16 Intelligence save or lose 2d4 spell slots.

Inside the temple is unlit. It has rows of stone benches and an altar at the far end. There is a metal hatch on the floor behind the altar. There are eight fifteen foot tall statues of very thin elves wearing odd bulky armour. Three of these statues are arrayed at the end and look more important. Scattered around the floor are the bones of around thirty dead elves. They appear to have been protecting a group of around forty elven children, but only bones remain. A few

smaller chambers lead off from the main temple, but don't contain anything of note.

**The statues:** the three more prominent statues are of two male and one female elves.

One: male elf holding a scroll. Has a picture on his shoulder of a triangle with a star at each corner.

Two: female elf holding a brain. She has a picture on her shoulder that looks like a spiral with 4 lines radiating from the centre.

Three: male elf holding a wand. Has a picture on his shoulder that looks like a square with a diagonal stripe across it.

These are the Ancients, and the main gods of the elves, comprising Xinen (knowledge and science), Kaed (memory) and Thaizar (magic), although they are not labelled as such.

**The hatch:** behind the altar is a blue metal iris door mounted on the floor. It is about ten feet in diameter. It radiates magic. It provides access to the catacombs beneath the temple. It is controlled by the altar.

**The altar:** the altar is made of a large chunk of twisted and partially burnt blue metal around twelve feet long and eight feet wide. On the far side of the altar there is a glass window. The window is illuminated from within and has writing in Ieldran. If a Comprehend Languages spell or similar is used it says "Word of Passage". Underneath the window are metal buttons with elvish letters and numbers written on them. If they are pressed, a corresponding symbol appears in the window.

The console and altar are from the Ancients' ship. The console "Word of Passage" is "Xinen". That allows access to two functions. First, the altar displays a holographic image of stars (a navigational array), and one of the stars glows red (this world). Second, it can open the iris door behind the altar. To find the password the characters can either use the city archives

(location 58), ask the Iron Dragon (54) or see the similar labelled statues at location 59.

Beyond the iris door is a staircase leading down. This leads to several dusty vaults containing worm-eaten furniture and other debris. At the end of these catacombs is a stone room with a flickering force field (see location 61).

## **56. House of pleasures (large white building)**

This is a palatial four storey white building which still bears faint paint marks in bright colours. Inside there are numerous rooms and salons. All four floors contain entertaining spaces and torture chambers of various dimensions, some of which have observation windows or galleries. There are stages for musicians, gaming (casino) and puzzle rooms, dining rooms, and a theatre within. In various sheltered places lie the skeletons of dead elves. Searching the whole building thoroughly will take at least an hour, so make a random encounter check. Areas of particular note:

**Ground floor salon:** the room is dominated by a huge trombone type device that functions like a brazen bull. It appears that the victim was locked inside a chamber (strangely shaped to amplify sound), and then a fire was lit underneath to roast the victim to death. The item is presently clean and ready for use.

**Ground floor kitchens:** these are partly burned, and the fire seems to be focused around a large oven. The far wall is burned black, but the fire appears to have burnt itself out against the stone walls. There about a dozen halfling skeletons wearing slave collars here.

**First floor salon:** there are several glassteel boxes of different sizes on pedestals with secured metal lids with air holes. They are choked with rot and dark staining. Opening them reveals that they contain the mouldering bones of contorted victims (humans, halflings, dwarves, goblins) squeezed into agonising spaces for the elves' amusement.

**First floor theatre:** on stage are three iron maidens pierced by long elven steel needles from different angles. Inside are the bones of two humans and a dwarf that clatter out when they are opened. The bones of several dead elves lie around nearby. In a cupboard there are **6 minor healing potions** (cure 2d6) for use on victims.

Backstage to the theatre there are a number of costumes in different sizes and rusting steel short swords and shields. (Prisoners were forced to act out battles to the death.)

**Second floor bedroom:** outside this room are six golden belts lying on the floor under several pegs. Inside the large room is filled completely with a large circular bed covered in a tattered sheet. There are several skeletons in the room also wearing belts (ten in total). The **golden belts** are magical (no attunement required) and while worn they reverse the sex of the wearer (fully, so a male becomes obviously a female and visa versa).

**Third floor chamber:** This room is locked. In the centre of the nicely decorated room is a pedestal on which sits a **large clear crystal with gold flecks**. The skeleton of an elf lies on the floor (in her pocket is the key to the room).

The crystal is a magic item (no attunement required). On contact the user finds themselves in a virtual reality of whatever they desire. For example, they can imagine themselves in a meadow having a picnic, drinking fine wine, ruling over a kingdom etc. They can experience any fantasy or pleasure and it feels entirely real. The crystal is however tainted and after using it a few times unwanted darker and violent elements appear in the simulated reality. These darker elements become more intrusive and disturbing over time. If the user does not reject these elements or cease using the crystal their alignment will start to move towards evil.

**Third floor bedroom:** This room contains the bones of an ogre and a human on the tattered

remains of a bed. The skeletons of several elven voyeurs lie scattered on the floor. In the pocket of one of the dead elves is a **purple gem** (This was the city governor, and the gem is the gem of control for the Iron Dragon: attunement required).

**Basement:** Beneath the building are several passageways and around fifty cells. The cells are mostly human size or smaller, but a few are larger. There are twenty four skeletons in chains (15 humans, 4 dwarves, 3 halflings, 1 goblin, 1 ogre).

### 57. The Docks

The docks comprises seven stone jetties that extend out into the lake sufficient to dock a dozen or so ships of cog size. There are the remains of about ten stone warehouses next to the jetties. These are mostly collapsed into rubble, but the largest warehouse is still reasonably intact, although its wooden roof has collapsed. There are also other ruined structures that appear to have been smithies and smelting facilities.

A wide gloomy tunnel slopes up from the docks up into the city. A large portcullis over the tunnel is fused in an open position. Either side is a wall and gatehouse. Atop the gatehouse are the rusting remains of ballistae. At the southern end of the gatehouse is a tower. The tower has openings and platforms at the top.

**The largest warehouse:** inside the largest warehouse are the splintered and rotted remnants of crates and barrels. Some of their contents remain, although these are hard to access or remove due to the fallen roof timbers around them. Much of what remains is useless e.g. barrels full of fused fishbones, great heaps of corroded iron and steel ingots, and wet rotted lumber. But the following can be found:

- a stack of ingots of tarnished elven steel (one thousand 25-pound ingots). These have a value of 25,000 silver shillings, but they weigh 25,000

lbs (12.5 tons), and buyers with deep enough pockets would need to be found.

- there is 20,000 pounds of gold ore. Once refined, this would provide approximately 600 silver shillings worth of precious metals.

- rare earth elements: these can be used to replace any material spell component with a listed price. There are 9000 silver shillings equivalent worth of elements, although if simply sold they would only fetch a tenth of that. They weigh 80 pounds.

Removing any of the heavier items is difficult time consuming work taking many hours if not days. If not careful the fallen roof timbers could collapse (DC 14 Dexterity save or 6d6 damage). If the characters do set about removing this material, don't forget to make random encounter checks.

**The gatehouse:** contains armouries, kitchens and barracks for around two hundred bearfolk soldiers. Bearfolk bones and rusting spear-points still lie in some of the more sheltered areas.

**The tower:** this was a docking tower for airships. At the top are calcified ropes and rusting hooks for securing ships. A staircase spirals down inside the tower with a tarnished pulley and broken chain etc for a cargo platform in the centre of the tower.

### 58. The archives

This is a large white stone building studded with long thin stained glass windows that are intact. At night the windows are lit from within. Polished wooden doors lead inside. A wide marble staircase leads up. The entire building is protected by an Anti-magic Shell. Inside the Shell, spells and spell-like effect cease to function, magic items become mundane, and magical creatures (e.g. constructs) cannot function.

The upper floors contain an extensive library on two floors with large skylights. When the characters arrive they may be shocked to find a clean and well-looked after library. Occupying the library are six elves. Some are reading, some are wheeling around a book trolley and some are manning a reception desk. They look unsurprised to see the characters and the one behind the desk smiles and says (in elvish) "how can I help you?".

The elves are in fact mimics. They are immortal bio-engineered protoplasmic creatures that can change their shape at will. These particular mimics can perfectly imitate a medium sized object or creature. They were created as servitors of the elves and have continued to perform that function over the centuries and to protect the archives.

The elven wraiths and specters can and do enter the archives, although they ignore the mimics, so roll Spectral encounters as normal. But due to the Anti-magic Shell don't bother to roll for weird phenomena while the characters are in the library. If the undead attack the characters, the mimics won't intervene and will simply ask them all to be quiet.

The librarians are happy for the characters to consult the archives, but they will need a library card. To be issued a library card the characters will need to show citizen papers with their citizen identification number. If the characters ask where to get one, they are directed to the government building (location 59). If the character successfully return with citizen papers the mimic librarians will be delighted to issue a library card for a "five bar fee" (they won't have mentioned this earlier). Bar was the paper currency used by the elves. Some can be found in the vault at the government building (59).

If the characters decide they have had enough of this or attack, the mimics shift into their combat forms. These comprise massive fanged mouths on legs (a bit like a Xorn).

### **Mimic librarians (6)**

Medium monstrosity, neutral

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 58

Speed 15 ft

Str 17 (+3), Dex 12 (+1), Con 15 (+2), Int 10 (+0), Wis 13 (+1), Cha 8 (-1)

**Condition immunities:** prone

**Damage immunities:** acid

**Sense:** darkvision 60 ft

**Save bonus:** +2

**Challenge:** 2

**Difficulty:** 5th level

### **Actions**

**Bite:** +5 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. Hit: 14 (3d6+3)

**Pseudopod:** +5 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. Hit: 8 (1d8+3) and subject to Adhesive trait

### **Abilities:**

**Amorphous:** can squeeze through small spaces

**Shapechange:** can change into any medium inanimate object or creature totally convincingly

**Adhesive:** at will can stick to any creature of Huge size or less: escape DC 13 and checks are at disadvantage.

**Grappler:** has advantage on attacks against any creature it has adhered to

The library itself comprises individual scrolls sealed into scroll tubes (mostly elven steel, but some bone or other materials). The tubes are shelved and have a number marked at the end. There is a card index in a set of small drawers which has a card for each subject and that card lists the numbers of the relevant scrolls. The archives are extensive and quite a lot of interesting stuff can be found here with perseverance, including:

- the names of the elven gods (the Ancients) takes 1 hour (relevant to the password at location 55)
- a labelled map of the city takes 1 hour

- an alternative rift gate dialling code (see location 31. This can include the dialling code for the homeworld of the oozes at location 43). A code can be discovered with 1d10 hours of searching.
- spells: finding a copy of any specific spell of any level takes 1d6 hours. Treat as a scroll that can be copied into a spellbook or cast. Only one copy of each can be found.
- specific information about the Far Realm or aberrations takes 1d10 hours (there is a lot of it). For example, looking for any mention of Othiet (location 12A).
- information about a specific elven facility (e.g. The Beacon) takes 1d8 hours.
- information on the celestials takes 1d6 hours
- information on the fiends takes 1d6 hours
- the musical score for "The Melancholy Death of the Temple Dancer" (which opens the music box at location 11) takes 1d6 hours

The Archive does not contain the passphrase for the force wall (location 61).

## 59. Government buildings

This large complex of buildings was the administrative centre of elven society. It also functioned as their parliament, magic school and law courts. The buildings are defended by walls and several strong towers. Rusting ballistae occupy the roof, and the complex had a garrison of five hundred bearfolk soldiers. Inside there are offices, lecture theatres, classrooms, exam halls, rooms full of filing, kitchens, offices for Celebrand and for the city governor and also a grand debating chamber. It is a large complex and will take several hours to search unless the characters split up. It has the following features of note:

- there are three large statues of elves inside the complex. These look the same as those at The Temple (location 55), but they have their names carved into the statue bases (useful if looking for a clue to the password)

- a search through the offices may find some intact citizen papers that can be used to obtain a library card at the Archives (location 58).

- there is an overgrown ornamental garden at the rear. It is overrun with weeds and high grasses. There is a clogged fountain of white marble depicting a strange arrow like shape pointing upwards.

- there is a locked metal door on the ground floor behind some stairs. Beyond it a staircase descends into some basement passageways. At the far end of these behind another door is the vault.

The complex is however infested with aberrations, the Vermii. Nesting here are small worm entities that look like clusters of tangled weeds, and which have a yellow skin which turns luminescent at will. They are eyeless but can detect living minds at a distance. They will stalk the characters and attack. Characters may be attracted by the luminescent glow of a Vermii on the ground only to be attacked from above.

### Vermii (20)

Small aberration, evil

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 10

Speed 20 ft jump, 15 ft crawl

Str 5 (-3), Dex 16 (+3), Con 12 (+1), Int 14 (+2), Wis 13 (+1), Cha 9 (-1)

**Damage immunities:** poison

**Condition Immunities:** poisoned, exhaustion, charmed, frightened

**Senses:** blindsight 120 ft, detect minds 1000 ft

**Skills:** Acrobatics +7, Stealth +7

**Save bonus:** +1

**Challenge:** 1

**Difficulty:** 8th level (for all 20)

### **Actions**

Tentacles: +6 to hit, one target. Hit: 5 (1d6+1) and the victim must make a DC 12 Constitution save or be incapacitated for 1 minute as a result of poison.

### **Abilities**

**Infest:** the Vermiis can burrow into a victim and take complete control of them. This takes 1 minute. A Vermiis can only be removed by a Lesser Restoration, Paladin's Cure Disease or a Remove Curse spell. While controlled, the Vermiis can cause the still-conscious victim to use all their powers and spells.

**The Vault:** The vault was used as a storage facility and bank vault. It lies at the end of a thirty foot long and ten foot wide corridor. It ends in a huge round ten foot diameter door of elven steel. The door is sealed and has magical protections. Anyone walking down the corridor is subject to a magical shrinking effect. The further they walk down the corridor the more the vault door appears to them to grow in size. By the time they get next to it, they have been reduced to six inches in size. Walking back up the corridor reverses the magical effect.

The magical defence can be suppressed by a Dispel Magic spell (DC 18 to dispel), or an Enlarge spell cast at the far end will break the shrinking effect completely on that creature. Other options include Stone Shape (to bypass the corridor), Dimension Door, Gaseous Form etc. Thorn (location 48) also knows the passphrase to get through because he visited the vault with his master.

The vault door is Arcane Locked using an 8th level spell slot. It has 200 HP, AC 18, saves at +6, and ignores the first 15 damage. The shrinking effect reverses once the threshold is crossed into the room beyond.

On the other side the vault is lit by Continual Light. It contains hundreds of lockers. Lying in the middle of the room are the skeletons of several dead elves draped in rags. It looks like

they sought shelter here during the cataclysm and perished.

Many of the lockers are filled with paper money ("bar" was the name of the paper currency). Some contain important documents such as land deeds or exam certificates. One of the cupboards contains a beautiful musical instrument - a **clavichord** (a medieval stringed keyboard instrument). This item is magical and it is the Clave that can free Othiet (location 12A). Playing the correct sequence of notes will release the creature from its imprisonment.

### **60. Celebrand's island (mini dungeon)**

The island, which lies 1500 feet from the shore, is covered in grass and scrub, and has a gravel beach on the northwest side and high cliffs on the eastern side. There are the ruins of 14 buildings near the beach, and the island slopes up to a white stone fortress on the high ground overlooking the lake.

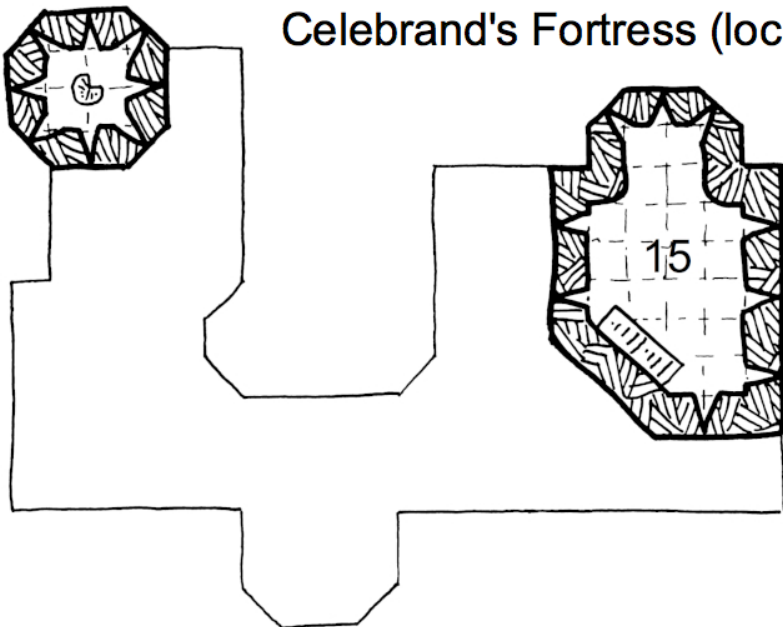
The 14 buildings appear to have been mostly small residences, although there is a larger structure that may have been a boat shed. The roofs and internal structures have gone, and only the outer walls partially remain covered in moss and ivy.

A thorough search (2 hours: remember random encounters) through the ruins may reveal some rusted away gardening implements, a carved wooden doll in the shape of a human girl, a comb made from fishbone, some shards of pottery, and around 30 tarnished elven steel slave collars.

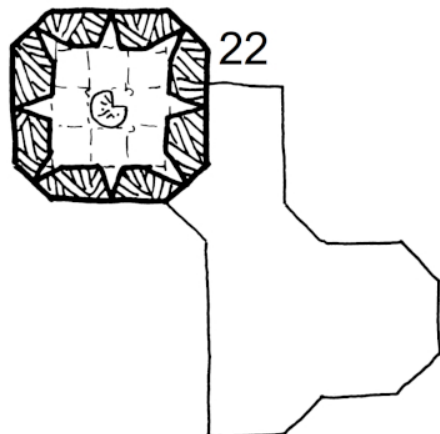
This island was the private retreat of the elven ruler, Celebrand. It is still inhabited and at night time lights will be visible from inside the fortress. The fortress of white stone is entered by a causeway, and the entryway leads through two portcullises of elven steel, both of which are raised. The fortress radiates magic if anyone checks.

# Celebrand's Fortress (location 60)

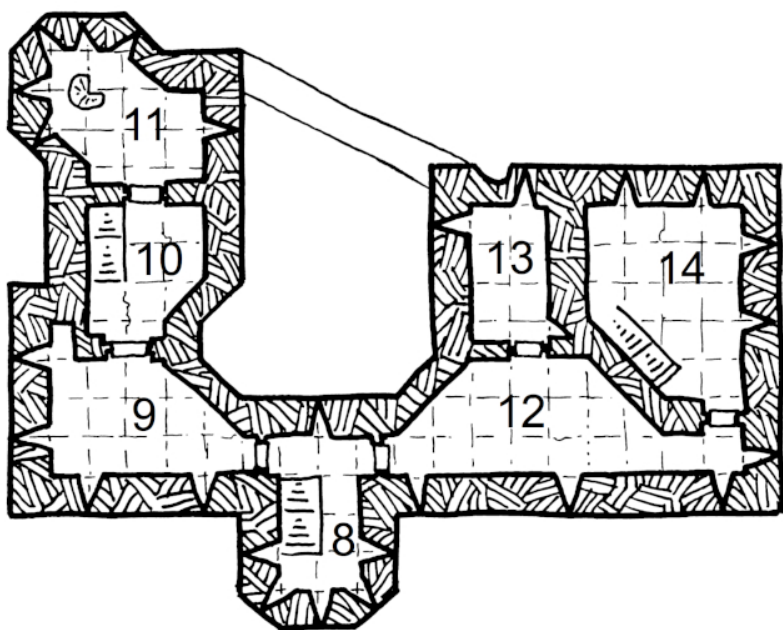
16



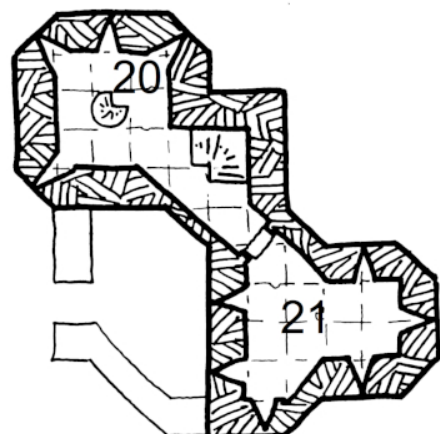
## Towers



22

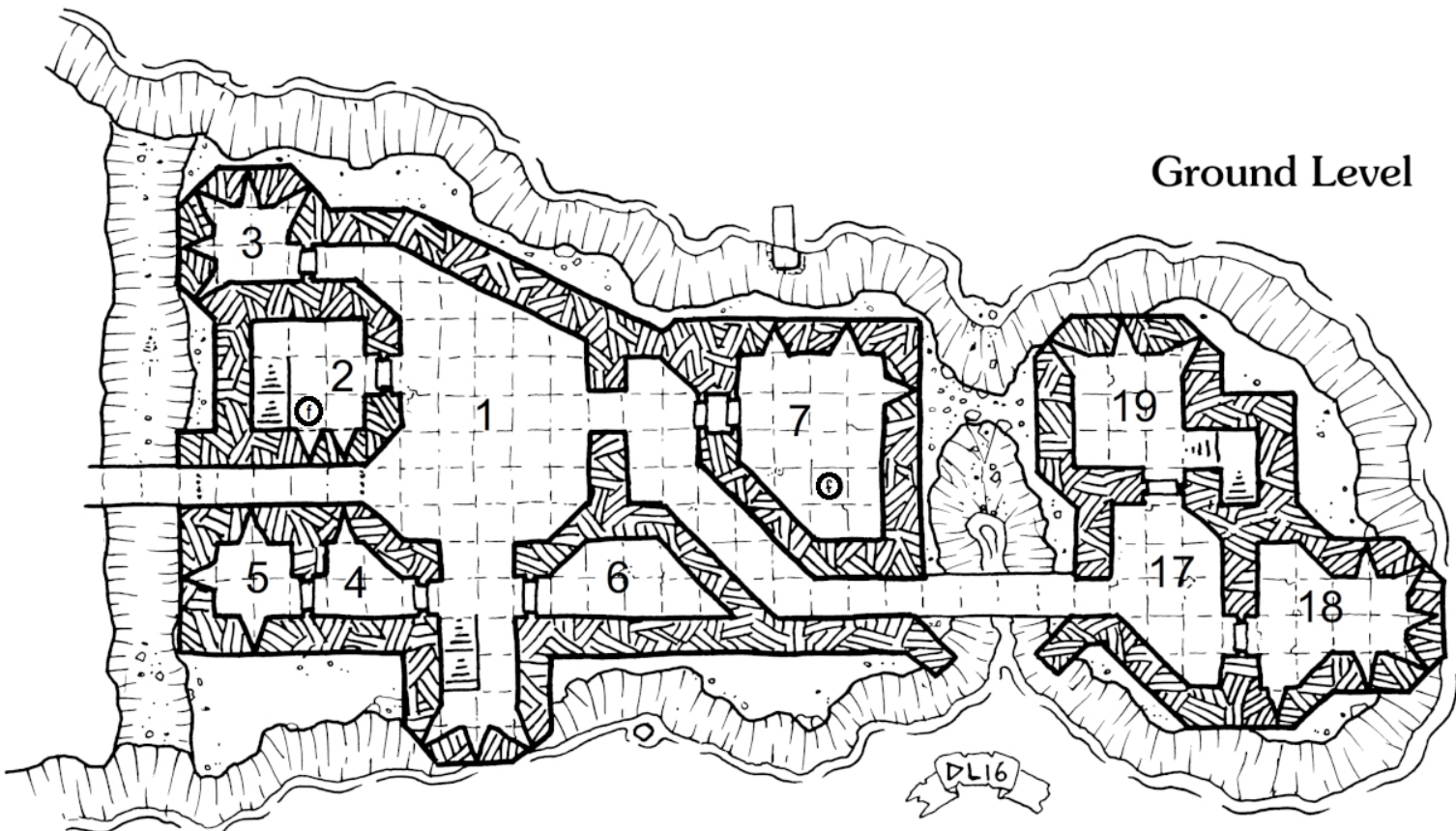


## Upper Levels



21

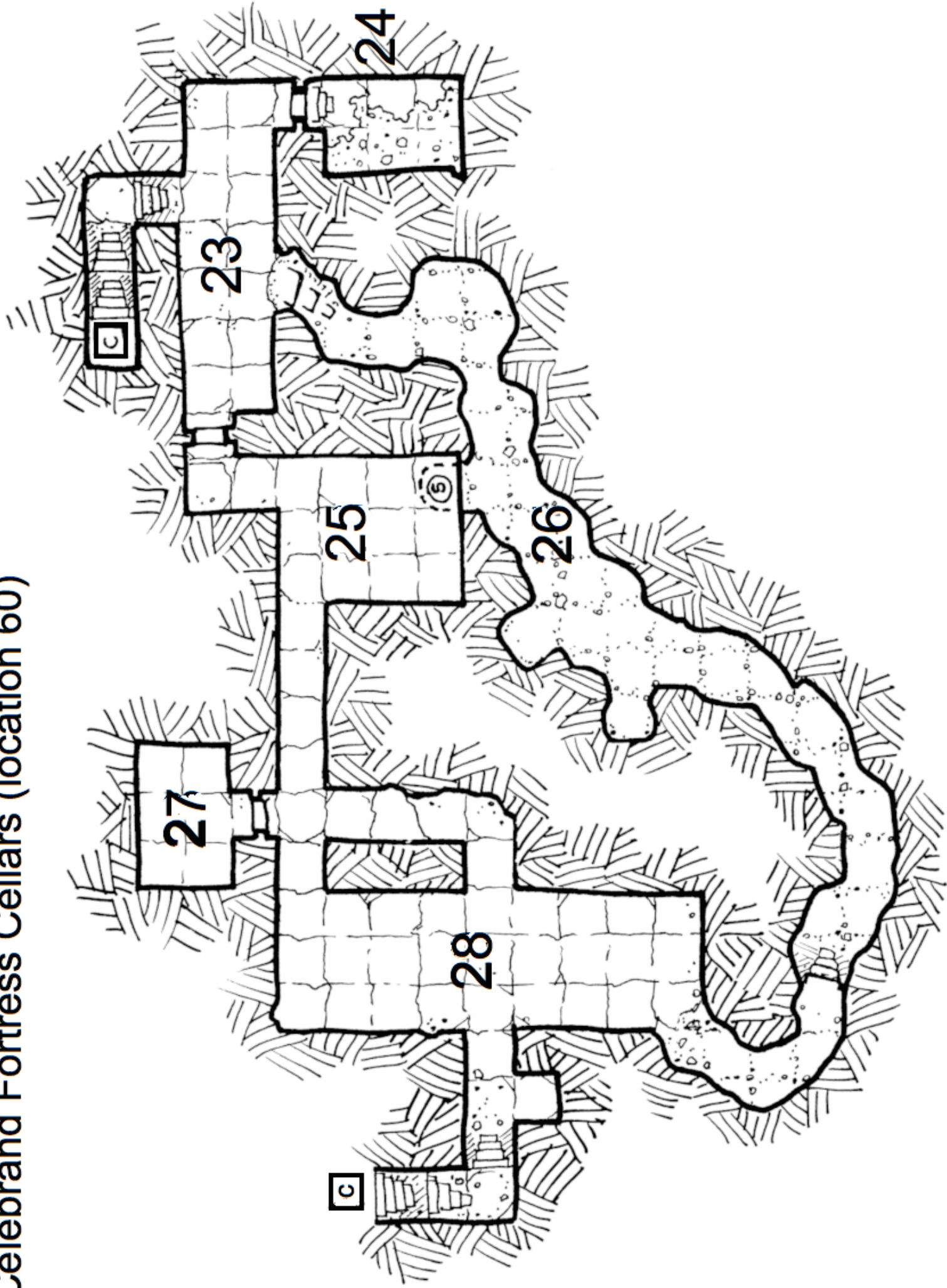
## Ground Level



DL16



# Celebrand Fortress Cellars (location 60)



## The fortress of Celebrand

The fortress home of Celebrand remains inhabited by his servitor golem, Idril. Idril can sense the presence of interlopers in the vicinity of the castle, and will go to greet them in the courtyard (or wherever they have entered, if they have scaled a wall for example).

Once the party has entered the castle, they will **trip a magical defence** placed on the fortress by Celebrand. This defence will have no obvious effects at first, but any attempt to leave the castle in any direction and by any means will fail. The character will simply reappear ten feet back inside the boundaries of the fortress. This magical effect is not susceptible to Dispel Magic or Anti-magic Shell (having been reinforced with a Wish spell).

The magical defence is powered by a magitek heart in area 21 (Celebrand's bedroom). Further details are given below, but in order to leave the characters must search the fortress to discover six secrets about Celebrand. Only when armed with these secrets can the magical spell of the heart be unwoven allowing the characters to leave.

The magical defence was intended to entrap any interlopers and hold them until Celebrand could arrive to deal with them. As well as doing this, the magic also summons an Invisible Stalker which will stalk and attempt to kill any intruders. The Stalker may not attack immediately, but will attack at the most advantageous moment. If destroyed, the magic spawns another Invisible Stalker after five minutes and will keep replacing them as they die.

### Invisible Stalker

Medium elemental, neutral

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 104

Speed 50 ft, fly 50 ft (hover)

Str 16 (+3), Dex 19 (+4), Con 14 (+2), Int 10 (+0), Wis 15 (+2), Cha 11 (+0)

**Damage resistances:** melee or ranged non-magical attacks

**Damage immunities:** poison

**Condition Immunities:** exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious

**Senses:** darkvision 60 ft

**Skills:** Perception +8, Stealth + 10

**Save bonus:** +4

**Challenge:** 6

**Difficulty:** 4th level

### Actions

Multi-attack: the stalker makes two slam attacks

Slam: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. Hit: 10 (2d6+3)

### Abilities

**Invisibility:** the stalker is invisible. Attacks against it are at disadvantage, and its attacks are at advantage.

**Faultless tracker:** the stalker knows the distance and direction of any interlopers at all times.

Idril the golem is a faithful if unimaginative servitor of Celebrand. She appears to be a lithe and beautifully designed golem made of a hard silvery metal. Her appearance is that of a slim young elven woman. Her facial features do not move, but she can speak with a pleasant voice. She has guarded the fortress and tried to keep it in repair for centuries, and still awaits the return of her master.

She will greet the characters warmly and offer them food and drink, and will generally attempt to be a charming hostess. Unfortunately the food and drink is all dried and calcified residue. She does not know any details of how the magical defences work, any of Celebrand's secrets, or how the characters can escape. She simply says "You must await the master's return", although concedes that he "has been away a

considerable time.”. She will not attack the invisible stalker, and will simply say “oh dear, that is one of the master’s defences.”. She will be entirely harmless unless she is attacked, whereupon she will defend herself until anyone who has attacked her is dead or incapacitated.

### **Idril the silver golem**

Medium construct, neutral

Armor Class 20

Hit Points 210

Speed 30 ft (spider climb at will, 30 ft)

Str 24 (+7), Dex 19 (+4), Con 20 (+5), Int 6 (-2), Wis 10 (+0), Cha 13 (+1)

**Damage immunities:** fire, poison, psychic

**Condition Immunities:** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

**Senses:** darkvision 120 ft

**Save bonus:** +4

**Challenge:** 16

**Difficulty:** 12th level

### **Actions**

**Multi-attack:** Idril makes three unarmed attacks, or one open palm strike

**Unarmed attack:** +13 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. Hit: 20 (3d8+7)

**Open palm strike:** +13 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. Hit: 20 (3d8+7) and the target must make a DC 21 Strength save or be knocked back 20 ft and fall prone (and taking an additional 2d6 damage if they hit a hard surface before 20 ft).

### **Abilities**

**Reposition (recharge 5-6):** as a bonus action Idril can take a dash move using spider climb without provoking an attack of opportunity

**Throw:** as an action Idril can grapple a target (+13 vs targets Athletics or Acrobatics). If she succeeds, she then throws that target as a bonus action 20 ft. The victim takes 2d6+7 damage, and ends up prone (4d6+7 if they hit a hard surface).

**Immutable Form:** Idril is immune to any spell or effect that would alter her form.

**Magic weapons:** Idril’s attacks are magical weapons.

**Catch missiles:** Idril uses her reaction to catch up to two missiles targeted at her.

**Magic Resistance:** Idril has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Evasion:** she takes half damage from area effect attacks and takes no damage on a successful save.

### **Fortress locations**

#### (1) The Courtyard

This courtyard is encircled by stout walls, and to the south stairs lead up. There is a line of moss and weeds growing in what appears to be a seam running from north to south across the courtyard. There are the remains of archery targets along the north wall.

Although it is not obvious, the floor of the courtyard opens like a sliding door allowing the airship in the hangar at area 28 to take off, but it hasn’t been used for eight centuries.

#### (2) Hallway

A stout wooden door bound in verdigris-stained bronze bands fills this doorway to this room. The door is not locked, but can be barred from within. There are torch brackets on the walls but no torches. Several buckets lie around. Stone stairs lead up, and there is a stout wooden hatch in the floor.

The hatch leads to a set of stone stairs that descend down to the hangar (passing on the way an alcove with a freshwater well).

#### (3) Armoury

This room has a stout locked wooden door bound in verdigris-stained bronze bands (DC 20 to break down; DC 20 to pick (the key is in area

10)). Beyond the door is an armoury. Held on rickety shelves and racks are various arms and armour all made of elven steel: 700 crossbow bolts, 16 heavy crossbows (50% chance of being operable), 14 pikes, 16 longswords, 48 spears, 12 sets of (bearfolk-sized) plate armour, and 15 shields.

#### (4) Portcullis controls

A stout wooden door bound in verdigris-stained bronze bands fills this doorway to this room. The door is not locked, but can be barred from within. The room contains two large elven steel levers in the wall. These control the portcullises. If a portcullis was dropped onto someone it would inflict 8d6 damage and potentially pin them (DC 25 to lift).

#### (5) Guard room

A stout wooden door bound in verdigris-stained bronze bands fills this doorway to this room. The door is not locked, but can be barred from within.

This room contains a (much-repaired) table and 4 large chairs. There are also the bones of 4 bearfolk clad in the remains of elven steel plate armour which is plated with tarnished silver (1600 silver shillings per set). They wear elven steel collars, and are armed with elven steel spears and non-functioning heavy crossbows with 80 bolts.

#### (6) Storage

This room has a normal and slightly warped wooden door. Inside is a strange musty smell. There are shelves holding wrapped parcels and boxes. All contain completely desiccated or fossilized foodstuffs. There are also several barrels and casks, but all are empty. The shelves show signs of repeated repair.

#### (7) Kitchen

A stout wooden door bound in verdigris-stained bronze bands fills this doorway to this room. The door is not locked, but can be barred from within. This room holds a large double oven and fireplace, worktops and cooking pots and cooking utensils. A metal bar hangs from the ceiling on which are hung various pots. Lying on the floor are the bones of three halflings wearing slave collars.

The kitchen looks tidy but unused. There is no sign of food here. On the floor is a stout wooden hatch leading to the cellars.

#### (8) Upper hallway

This is a drafty wood panelled hallway. Stairs lead down to the courtyard. On the east wall hangs an oil painting (250 silver shillings) depicting a ball of fire descending upon a green and blue sphere. There is a cabinet against the south wall that is stuffed with candles and torches.

#### (9) Guard sleeping area

This room contains 6 large (much repaired) bunk beds, footlockers, several lanterns, side tables and some chairs. There are the bones of two bearfolk (with slave collars) tucked up in two of the beds. There is an alcove in the northwest corner that used to have a curtain draped across and contains a commode seat (a privy).

The lockers contain various moth-eaten clothes and blankets. Some of these appear to be in a clan tartan (Clan MacBain). They also contain a crudely carved wooden chess set, a wood carving of a bearfolk female child (age 8), a hunting horn, a multicoloured glass bead necklace, and a silver brooch (worth 30 silver shillings).

One of the footlockers contains a bone scroll case. Inside is a sheaf of parchments. The parchments are written in an archaic form of

Common. They appear to be notes from the Captain of the Guard. Mostly they are training rosters and discipline reports. But there is one note of interest (perhaps intended for a senior officer):

*"[date] Escorted Master to Beacon by airship. Me plus 5 laddies. Spent night. Place gave us creeps. Weird lights. Master ordered Beacon steeked doon (shut down) immediately until further notice. I dinnae why. Told to crock (kill) five gobo teks. Poor wee buggers. Two deid Masters taken aboard airship. Giric Dunghail"*

This is a **secret** and required to unlock the heart in area 21. The secret is that Celebrand successfully received a message from the Ancients using the Beacon, but kept this to himself and killed all witnesses.

#### (10) Guard living area

This room contains two small tables, 12 large chairs, and some shelves. Lying on the floor are the bones of 4 bearfolk wearing slave collars. A stone staircase leads down to area 2. One of the bodies is holding a set of keys (for area 3)

There are a few pottery bowls, a lantern, a jug, and a bowl filled with 62 black beads and some bone dice. There are torch brackets on the wall but no torches.

#### (11) Arming room

This room contains weapons and armour. There are places for 12 sets of armour, but only 6 sets of silver-plated bearfolk-sized plate armour are present (1600 silver shillings per set). Five sets are hung on posts set into the wall, but one set has fallen to the floor. There are also 6 heavy crossbows, 120 bolts, and 6 spears (all elven steel). A stone spiral staircase leads up to area 16.

#### (12) Lounge

This is a large wood-panelled room furnished with low tables and stuffed armchairs and padded divan couches. The floor is spread with a beautiful blue and gold rug with an abstract design (15x30 ft, weighs 400lbs, 600 silver shillings). There are small tables, and two display cabinets, and a fireplace. It is warm in spite of the fire not being lit (magical warmth).

The cabinets contain an array of small but beautiful objects made of porcelain, glass or silver (12 items, total value 6000 silver shillings). There are also a set of crystal glasses and a (empty) decanter (worth 250 silver shillings as a set).

On the wall are two oil paintings. One depicts slim figures kneeling before a column of blue light (250 silver shillings). The other depicts a burning city of onion-shaped domes defended by dragons, but being successfully attacked by airships and Titans (1000 silver shillings).

#### (13) Guest bedroom

This wood-panelled room contains a double bed, bedside table, wardrobe, washstand and (behind a curtain) commode cabinet toilet. This room is kept magically warm.

The wardrobe contains a variety of moth-eaten silk and satin dresses suitable for a young woman. The bedside table has a lamp and candle tray. The washstand has a large porcelain bowl, jug and a towel.

Hidden behind the commode is a piece of parchment. Written on it in charcoal in elvish is the following: *"He was very reassuring and told me that my memory would return soon. He said he understood that I was keen to know exactly what had happened to me, but I needed to be patient. He seems so kind and strong. I am sure things will be okay. I just wish I remembered who I was. He is apparently very important and this castle is his. He was completely charming at*

*dinner and told me that out of all of the Ieldran he is special. He has been chosen by the ancients for some great task. He didn't tell me the details, but it was thrilling to be taken into his confidence."*

This was written by one of the clones of Celebrand's sister whom he created and later murdered. It contains one of the six **secrets** needed to unravel the magical spell holding the characters here. Rather than making a roll, have the characters actually describe where and what they are searching. If they look behind or pull out the commode they will find the parchment.

#### (14) Dining room

This wood-panelled room is occupied by a long dark wood dining table surrounded by 12 high-backed chairs (full set: 220 silver shillings). A chandelier (125 silver shillings) hangs above the table. To the sides of the room are cabinets. A stone staircase leads up to area 15. This room is kept magically warm.

There are 4 oil paintings hanging on the walls: (1) a finely dressed middle-aged male and female elf with two elven children (Celebrand's parents. The girl looks like a child version of Idril the golem, and the boy looks like a young Celebrand) (150 silver shillings), (2) A somewhat stylised depiction of the Shining City in its glory (500 silver shillings), (3) An impressionistic riverside scene with an elven maiden bathing while an elven woodsman looks on (500 silver shillings), and (4) A battle scene between an army of humans, dwarves, ogres and giants versus brutish green skinned creatures with spiked armour. Slim figures watch the battle from a silhouetted airship (1000 silver shillings).

The cabinets contain fine porcelain plates and bowls with a leaf design (192 items, total value 200 silver shillings) and a set of silver cutlery with a star design (120 items, total value 1200 silver shillings).

#### (15) Meeting room

This wood-panelled room is occupied by a long dark wood dining table surrounded by 12 high-backed chairs (full set: 220 silver shillings). A chandelier (125 silver shillings) hangs above the table, and a fireplace occupies a corner. A full height wooden cabinet stands against the wall. There is a stout bolted hatch in the ceiling 14 ft above, but no means to reach it (Arcane Locked - DC 25 to break).

The full length cabinet contains fine crystal bottles and glasses (full set: 200 silver shillings) but these are empty. Lower down the cabinet contains several piles of parchments and nine elven steel scroll tubes. The parchments turn to dust if disturbed.

The scroll tubes contain communications addressed to Celebrand from officials. There are several papers per tube, and the writing is small and in elvish. They all appear to be about plans for an event described as "the ascension". It appears that the ascension involved using something called the Crucible to bring about the ascension of all of the elves.

If the characters take the time to study these documents (at least one hour required), then they will see that there are some strange discrepancies. The papers show Celebrand continuously deferring certain decisions to prepare for the city's ritual of ascension, and asking for further work to be done. Simultaneously he appears to be pressing the arcane priesthood to make "the Crucible" ready immediately. Celebrand also appears to have requested a personal inspection of the Crucible without any other elves including priests being present. This inspection was to be kept completely confidential. This is evidence of one of the **secrets** needed to unlock the heart: that Celebrand was intending to ascend himself and without the other elves.

(16) Guard tower

This room contains the bones of a bearfolk still clad in silver-plated plate armour (1600 silver shillings) and a slave collar. Also present is a heavy crossbow, 20 bolts, a hunting horn, a stool and a small spyglass (1000 silver shillings). This is the fifth of the six bearfolk who were on duty. The sixth was carried off by something hideous during the cataclysm. There is a stout bolted hatch in the ceiling 14 ft above, but no means to reach it (Arcane Locked - DC 25 to break). It is warm in spite of the fire not being lit (magical warmth).

**Celebrand's Suite**

(17) Courtyard

This open courtyard stands before the southern wing of the fortress. It is reached by a bridge over a chasm that drops thirty feet onto rocks sticking up out of the lake.

The bridge is actually removable and there are four large elven steel pins secured at each corner (Strength (Athletics) DC 20 to remove). If these were removed, the bridge could be pulled (40 combined Strength required) to one side or tossed into the chasm.

(18) Private shrine

This room has a stout wooden door bound in verdigris-stained bronze bands and is locked. It is Arcane Locked (DC 25 to break down, DC 30 to pick). The keys at area 10 do not open this door.

The room contains an altar at the far end. There are also five narrow multicoloured stained glass windows. A kneeling cushion rests in front of the altar.

On the altar are a variety of objects: many statuettes of male or female elves, including a gold statuette of a male elf in robes (1000 silver shillings value); bowls of dried incense or

incense sticks, candles, and wooden or silver objects with engraved designs representing elves.

Hidden in this room is one of the six **secrets**. Bored into the top of the entrance door is a vertical hole. Slipped into the hole is a narrow scroll tube of elven steel. The tube contains parchment written in elvish. The papers appear to transcribe a message in what looks like an archaic form of elvish into Ieldran. The message reads "Welcome kindred. Find us at AMBER FIRE, HESITANT PENUMBRA, EXPECTED HALO."

This is the message, ostensibly from the Ancients, that Celebrand received at the Beacon. It provides a gate address that can be fed into the rift gate at location 31. If the characters use the address it opens to a destination, albeit 800 years after the invitation was sent. The full details of what awaits the characters falls outside the scope of the book.

But I suggest that the gate opens to a large dark room with metal walls, floor and ceiling. Leading away are several narrow passageways. This is in fact a large spacecraft of the ancient elves and progenitors of the Shining Ones. It is adrift in space and has been overrun, perhaps for centuries, by a powerful enemy of the ancient elves: for example, squid-headed psionic brain eaters.

(19) Office

This room has a stout wooden door bound in verdigris-stained bronze bands and locked (DC 15 to break down, DC 20 to pick). Inside is a wood panelled room containing a large wooden desk and high backed chair, a tall cabinet, a beautiful stained glass chandelier lit by a Continual Light spell (500 silver shillings), and a large blue and green rug with an abstract design (20ft x 20 ft, weighs 350 lbs, 500 silver shillings). Stone stairs lead up to area 20.

The desk drawers contain dried up ink pots, quills, pencils, and sheets of blank parchment that crumble when touched. The desk drawer also contains the **zombie control sceptre** related to location 32 (requires attunement).

The cabinet contains two dozen scroll tubes made of various materials heaped up on shelves. About half of the tubes have papers that turn to dust when disturbed. But there are about ten scrolls that are intact. These cover a variety of subjects and they are written in elvish. Each scroll takes ten minutes to read.

When a character finishes reading a scroll, they can ask one question about the Shining Ones. Whether the scroll provides an answer is at the GM's discretion. None of the ten scrolls provides any information or assistance about the characters' current predicament, spells, or information about the six secrets needed to unlock the heart in area 21.

#### (20) Study

This wood-panelled room is furnished with a number of comfortable stuffed chairs, low tables, a small cabinet and a fireplace. The floor is made of beautiful polished tiles of different shades of hardwood. An artist's easel stands in one corner. A stone spiral staircase in the centre leads up to area 22. It is warm in spite of the fire not being lit (magical warmth).

The cabinet contains several board games. There is a chess board made of inlaid onyx with colourful pieces depicting elves carved from ammolite (800 silver shillings), another board inlaid with circles of coloured porcelain and using lots of small coloured glass pebbles (50 silver shillings), and a jar containing lots of white polished bone tiles marked with various dots (25 silver shillings).

#### (21) Bedroom

This wood-panelled room contains a large bed with moth-eaten silk sheets, a small fireplace, a

wooden wardrobe, a full length mirror, and several wooden coffers stowed under the bed. An odd thumping sound can be heard coming from under the bed.

Buried in one of the coffers is a **beautiful mechanical heart**. The heart is made of a variety of metals including silver, gold and platinum. With the magical defences active, its internal cogs whirr, and the heart beats. A character who is proficient with Arcana and who studies the heart for ten minutes can tell that the heart is the power source and origin of the magical defences that are protecting the castle. The heart is immune to all attacks, and cannot be removed from the castle by any means. Further study of the magical spells woven through the heart reveal that the enchantment is a unusual form of magic, and it has been sealed with six secrets. Only by knowing the six secrets can a magician access the weave of magic powering the defenses and unravel them.

The six secrets can be uncovered by searching the fortress. The secrets are:

- (1) That Celebrand considers himself the "chosen one" and somehow better than the other elves (see the guest bedroom - area 13)
- (2) That Celebrand received a message from the Ancients via the Beacon and told no one (see the guards' room - area 9)
- (3) That Celebrand has a rift gate code given to him by the Ancients (see the private shrine - area 18)
- (4) That Celebrand intends to perform the ritual of ascension alone (see meeting room - area 15)
- (5) That Celebrand harbours an unnatural love for his deceased sister, Idril (see bathroom - area 22)
- (6) That Celebrand has been growing clones of his deceased sister and murdering them (see the cellars - area 26)

Once all these secrets are known, a spellcaster can reach inside the heart and unravel the threads of magic holding the defences in place. This will allow the characters to leave and dismiss the Invisible Stalker.



In addition, the mechanical heart will become available for attunement. If attuned, the heart sinks into the chest of the owner. It grants an immediate +2 Constitution bonus, and once ever will restore its owner to life if they die. Once the heart has restored its owner to life, it cannot be de-attuned without its owner dying.

The wardrobe contains a variety of fine clothes for a tall male, but they are nearly all moth-eaten and ruined. The coffers contain blankets and more clothes, and these too are in a poor state.

#### (22) Bathroom

This room has a white tiled floor and walls. It contains a large four-footed bathtub, a water cabinet and mirror, a fireplace with a large rusting cauldron, a basket full of towels, and a commode toilet. There is a stout bolted hatch in the ceiling 14 ft above, but no means to reach it (Arcane Locked - DC 25 to break).

Inside the water cabinet are rusted shaving razors, dessicated soap, and bottles of evaporated cologne. Hidden (DC 20 Perception) behind a hollow wall tile is a cubby hole. It contains a velvet drawstring sack. Inside is a pair of silky women's undergarments wrapped around a platinum locket. The locket contains a small painted picture of a beautiful eleven female in her 20s. It is inscribed "to my dearest brother, Celebrand". This is one of the six **secrets**, and should be enough for the characters to draw the necessary conclusion.

### Cellars

#### (23) Cellar (unlit)

This cold room is carved out of the stone of the island. It has a number of torch brackets with unlit torches.

#### (24) Wine cellar (unlit)

This cold, dank room was the wine cellar. Lake water has infiltrated through the rock over the centuries and the room is three feet deep in cold water. The wine racks have rotted and collapsed, and the floor is covered in broken glass.

Near the door to this room a patch of **green slime** hangs on the ceiling. Anyone entering without checking the ceiling (or making a DC 18 Passive Perception check) will be struck automatically. Anyone struck will be killed by the slime at the end of the third round thereafter. This fate can be delayed if the slime has to eat through armour (taking three rounds to eat through plate armour). Slime can be scraped off by someone other than the victim, although the scraping tool will be melted. Alternatively 15 fire or cold damage will kill it (though the same damage will be inflicted on the victim). A paladin's cure disease or a Lesser Restoration will also kill the slime.

#### (25) Cloning lab (unlit)

This large stone room contains a workbench covered in alchemical equipment (in a poor state of repair), and several shiny metal devices of no obvious purpose (a blood pressure sensor, a heart rate sensor, and a magnifying device for examining eyes). A small wooden box on the bench holds a glass bead with Continual Light cast on it, which will illuminate the room if taken out.

At the far end is a large elven steel "pod" about eight feet long and three feet wide. The pod top opens on a hinge, and has a strange chemical smell from inside. Judging by the straps and headrest inside it looks like it was intended to hold a person. At the back corner of the room is a metal bin with a swing lid.

The pod is part of Celebrand's magical process for growing a clone of his sister, Idril. He also used the pod to dissolve the flesh of murdered

clones before disposing of the bones in the bin. The bin drops the bones through a narrow chute to a rough earthen passageway below (area 26).

(26) Buried bones (unlit)

This rough passage runs through hard-packed soil rather than rock. Apart from a few pebbles and some luminescent centipedes, this passageway is empty. In the roof part-way along is a small hole (passive Perception DC 15; a chute that leads up to area 25).

If anyone excavates the floor of the tunnel, after 3 feet of digging they will discover bones. The bones appear to be those of a slim elven female. In fact there are more than one set. If the characters excavate anywhere along the corridor they will find bones. All told there are 29 identical sets of bones buried here. The woman appears to have died in different ways. Some sets have obvious skull damage, while others have smashed in ribs.

This is one of the six **secrets**. Celebrand was obsessed with his dead sister, and recreated her again and again, and subjected the clones to abuse. After a while he would murder them, dispose of them and bury the bones here. Celebrand was compelled to repeat the actions he took towards his real sister, Idril.

(27) Cloning stores (lit by Continual Light).

The door to this room is rotten and damaged but locked (and Arcane Locked). With the Arcane Lock spell in place, the DC to break it is 20, and to pick the lock is 20.

Inside is a small room with shelves and clothes rails. The shelves contain 64 small stoppered bottles. Each contains a small stone lump. The clothes rails hold what were three dozen fine dresses and outfits styled for a young woman along with shoes, scarves and other accessories. The clothes are all the same size. The clothes are in a very poor state having been

eaten by beetles and suffered from damp over the centuries, and many will fall apart if touched.

The pieces of stone are pieces of the flesh of Celebrand's deceased sister on which he has cast Flesh to Stone to preserve them. He used one of these to create each clone. The outfits were stored here so that Celebrands could dress each clone how he saw fit before awakening them.

(28) Airship hangar and hangar door controls (unlit)

This very large room is dominated by a **full sized airship**. The airship appears similar to a sailing cog, but is supported by a large metallic looking balloon. Against the north wall is a machine with a large lever.

**The lever:** the lever and machine it is connected to operate the door in the roof above. This opens the seam in the courtyard (area 1) and allows the airship to cleanly exit. It makes a lot of noise, but is still operational.

**The airship:** lying on the deck of the airship are the rag-clad bones of three goblins wearing elven steel slave collars. Near to them are boxes containing metal tools now rusted together into one solid lump.

The airship is controlled by the ship's wheel on the rear castle area. By holding the wheel you can exert control over the ship and cause it to fly and maneuver. The airship uses the stats in the DMG p.119 i.e. crew: 10, passengers: 5 spacious cabins (could hold up to 20 people), cargo: 1 ton, speed: 8 MPH, AC: 13, and HP: 300. Weapons: 4 ballista (range 120/480, damage 3d10) and one catapult (range 200/800, 5d10 damage). The airship is a marvel, and worth at least 20,000 silver shillings.

The captain's cabin holds a locked elven steel chest under Arcane Lock (DC 35 to break open, DC 25 to pick). Inside are three black catapult stones. Each is an enchanted one-use item that

casts Disintegrate on impact. DC 19 Dexterity save).

### **61. The Underworkings - the Force Wall**

This is a stone room around forty feet square. On the far side is a wide doorway is filled with flickering mauve energy that illuminates the room.

It is a powerful force barrier and prevents access by any means to the passageway that descends to the Crucible. The barrier can only be opened with a passphrase. The passphrase can be obtained from the secret room (20A) of the elven conspirators Ferranil, Narinlath and Anghareth, and accessing that room requires the three copper keys.

### **62. Descent to the Crucible**

The roughly cut and unlit tunnel runs for nearly a mile under the crater lake. It takes approximately **twenty minutes** to reach the end of the tunnel. As the characters descend they can detect a thrumming vibration that gets more intense as they descend.

As the characters descend they experience the following weird phenomena caused by the intensifying time distortion effect created by the Crucible:

(1) The party sees themselves hazily proceeding down the passageway about thirty feet ahead. They see several of the characters glance back towards them. (A future echo.)

(2) For a moment one character appears to be following themselves and looking at the back of their own head.

(3) One character visibly ages 10+1d10 years.

**The crashed ship:** The tunnel emerges into a cavern approximately six hundred feet across. The far side of the cavern is intersected by a wall of shiny metal (The remains of the Ancients'

crashed ship). The wall is heavily buckled and blackened. On the lower right hand side of the wall a roundish hole appears to have been melted through the wall (disintegrated, in fact). A Continual Light spell illuminates the area around the opening, and casts a little radiance on the rest of the cavern.

Beyond the hole are more buckled metal walls. A passageway through the twisted metal leads inwards. In places it looks as if the metal has been burnt away to create the tunnel. The metal walls thrum with the vibration. The tunnel leads for about three hundred feet in a twisting path until opening into a brightly lit metal room (the engine room: see below).

### **The time dilation field**

At the time of the cataclysm the Crucible went out of control during a major ritual to grant the elves god-like powers to alter reality at will. The ritual had in fact been altered by the elves' leader, Celebrand, so that only he would gain this power. Suspecting Celebrand's plot, Lady Ferranil, Lord Anghareth, and Lord Narinlath intervened during the ritual to stop him.

The battle between these elves and the attempt to stop the Crucible is the cause of the disaster. The huge amount of Far Realm energy that Celebrand was drawing through the Crucible became unstable and led to the cataclysm, although he succeeded in killing his attackers.

The barriers between our universe and the Far Realm collapsed and time and space ceased to have a meaning. For a period of time Far Realm creatures manifested all over the High Moors and tore apart the Shining Ones where they stood. Their empire died that day. Eventually the barriers between our universe and the Far Realm were re-erected by the Celestials, although the damage continues to this day, eight hundred years later. The surviving slaves fled south and formed the communities that now form the Known Lands.

Here, closest to the source of the chaos, the time is completely distorted. This has created a time dilation effect that extends from the Crucible for about a 1 mile radius. As the characters descend closer to the Crucible, each minute they experience becomes a longer period of time in the outside world. At the outer edges, for each minute that passes an hour passes in the outside world. As they descend further, each minute will be a day, a week, a month, a year, a decade and finally at the Crucible itself each minute will be a century.

This means that for Celebrand only eight minutes have passed since the cataclysm. The arrival of the characters will be a surprise to him. For the characters their descent this deep into the time dilation field means that centuries have already passed in the High Moors above. While they may suspect what has happened, they will not be able to verify that until they return to the surface (see **Epilogue**).

### **The Engine Room**

Beyond the metal tunnel is a large room, two hundred feet across, which is filled with machines. In the centre is a column of glass that appears to contain a coruscating rainbow fire. The glass column appears to be damaged and cracked. The machines are covered in twinkling lights, although most are pulsing an angry red. The room is lit, but it is unclear how.

Between the tunnel and the machines is an open area with metal floors. The floor has been covered in intricate magical designs marked in a metallic powder or sparkling paint (Arcana: this is beyond the characters and looks complex enough to be a 10th level spell).

Lying dead in the room are three elves: two male and one female. One of the males is heavily armoured, the other is wearing lighter armour. The woman is unarmoured, but the side of her body and left arm are gigantic and deformed.

A fourth elf in blue robes is leaning against the base of the rainbow fire column. He looks

bloodied and sweaty, although a strange rainbow fire seems to dance in his eyes and beneath his skin. (He is empowered by the Crucible, but hasn't completed the ritual to gain god-like powers.)

The elf - Celebrand - is unaware of the time dilation field. He is surprised to see "armed slaves" here, although won't feel any particular threat from them despite his wounded state. He assumes they were brought here as backup by one of his attackers. He will address the characters (first in Ieldran, then using the Tongues spell if they don't seem to understand):

"Whose slaves are you?" "Who sent you here?" "Why are you not wearing collars?"

Celebrand thinks he is at the height of his power and will not explain himself or debate important matters with mere "slaves". If the characters fail to give meaningful answers he will simply decide to kill them. If they come up with a convincing story (unlikely but not impossible), he may refer to being "attacked by traitors", and tells the characters to return to the surface and alert his personal guard or their leader Timmenuel. If the characters attack the Crucible then he will try to kill them.

**Use of magic:** any use of magic this close to the Crucible will be difficult to control. Every spell or magical item or feature effect by a character (Celebrand doesn't need to roll) will be subject to a "Wild Magic" effect on the below table (1d100):

01-25 the spell has the opposite effect intended or targets the caster instead

26-50 the spell is twice as effective as expected (e.g. double damage or any saves are at disadvantage)

51-75 everyone within sixty feet of the caster (including the caster) takes 3d10 psychic damage (DC 16 Intelligence save for half)

76-100 the spell is replaced by a random Wizard spell (roll 1d8+1 to determine level, then roll to determine randomly). Spells that would not normally work in this campaign setting do work

on this occasion e.g. so it is possible to Gate in a type 6 demon because they are being called from a different reality. If the spell is above a level that the caster can normally cast, treat it as if being cast by the minimum level character that can cast such spells.

### **Celebrand**

Medium elf, lawful evil

Armor Class 16 (memetic armour robes)

Hit Points 162

Speed 30 ft

Str 10 (+0), Dex 14 (+2), Con 12 (+1), Int 20 (+5), Wis 15 (+2), Cha 16 (+3)

**Damages resistances:** damage from spells, non-magical weapons

**Senses:** darkvision 60 ft

**Save bonus:** +4

**Skills:** Arcana +13, Perception +6

**Challenge rating:** 12

**Difficulty:** 9th level

### **Actions**

Programmed slave command (e.g. kneel): requires a DC 15 Wisdom save or they will obey.

Spell (see below)

Wand of Disintegration: range sixty feet, one target, DC 15 Dexterity save or suffer 10d6+40 force damage.

### **Abilities**

**Magic resistance:** due to his various wards, Celebrand has advantage on saving throws against spells or other magical effects

**Legendary resistance (3/day):** Celebrand can choose to succeed at a failed save.

### **Legendary actions**

Celebrand can take 3 legendary actions and he can take one at the end of another creature's turn. He regains his legendary actions at the start of his turn.

1) Celebrand uses Counterspell as a reaction (rolls +11 with DC of 10+spell's level)

2) Celebrand uses Misty Step to teleport up to 30 feet

3) Celebrand casts Chill Touch: Ranged spell attack to inflict 4d8 cold damage and prevent target healing until his next turn

**Spells** (spell attack +11 , spell save DC 19)

**Sleep:** 90 ft, 5d8 HP worth of creatures in a 20 ft radius fall asleep for 1 minute (no concentration)

**Magic Missile:** 120 ft, 8 darts do 1d4+1 damage each

**Blindness:** 30 ft, one target, Constitution save or blinded for 1 minute or until save at end of each round (no concentration)

**Hypnotic Pattern:** 120 ft. all within 30 ft area, Wisdom save or charmed (hypnotised and inactive) (up to 1 minute, concentration)

**Phantasmal Killer:** 120 ft, one target, Wisdom save or be frightened. At start of each turn make Wisdom save or take 4d10 psychic damage. Spell ends on a save (concentration up to 1 minute).

**Dominate Person:** 60 ft, one target, Wisdom save or be charmed ("protect me!"). Lasts up to 1 minute (concentration).

**Flesh to Stone:** 60 ft, one target, save or be restrained. If fail three saves, petrified. If Celebrand maintains concentration for 1 minute then Petrification is permanent.

**Forcecage:** 100 ft, one target is trapped inside a box cage ten feet square (no save). No attacks or spells can pass the cage. Leaving by teleport magic requires a Charisma save. Lasts 1 hour (no concentration).

**Feeblemind:** 150 ft, one target, 4d6 psychic damage, plus Intelligence save or reduce Int/Cha to 1.

**Power Word Kill:** 60ft, one target, instantly kills a target with less than 100 HP (no save)

Note that Celebrand has access to more spells than these, but he will not want to damage the Crucible or the machinery, so will not use certain spells (e.g. Meteor Swarm) in the engine room. He will initially underestimate the characters assuming them to be simple slaves. If they prove more formidable he will start to use more deadly spells.

### **Targeting the Crucible or machines**

The machinery is well protected: assume it has an AC of 18, saves at +5, is resistant to non-magical attacks and ignores the first 15 HP damage of non-magical attacks. But it is also fragile: for each 10 damage inflicted Celebrand takes 10d6 damage (due to being linked and channelling the Crucible's energy).

If the machinery takes 100 damage then the Crucible ceases to function and the glass column shatters or goes dark. This begins to remove the ongoing time dilation effect and allows the High Moors to start to heal from the cataclysm.

### **Looting the place**

The four dead elves carry a number of magical items, but some have been damaged by the battle and some (like Wands of Disintegration) can only be used by elves. Each character can take one item from the dead elves and they can design the item to their specifications (with GM's approval). They should have substantial magical benefits, but also a drawback or limitation that forces the character to think about whether to use it or not. They should not simply provide mechanical (e.g. +3) benefits. For example, a simple example would be a lantern that allows the owner to use True Sight for ten minutes three times per day, but while active also broadcasts their location to any undead in the area.

## **The Epilogue**

In descending into the time dilation field around the Crucible, the characters have in effect travelled a long way into the future. For each minute that they spent in close proximity to the Crucible (e.g. in the engine room), a century passed above. Added to that is the twenty minutes each way that the characters spent travelling down from the barrier at the top of the tunnel.

As a rule of thumb you should assume that at least 1500 years has passed in the world above (40 minutes x average time rate of 25 years/minute = 1000 years, plus 5 minutes near the Crucible at 100 years / minute).

As they get close to the surface the characters find that, beyond the barrier at location 61, the tunnels are overgrown and partially collapsed. When the players near the surface, they find the exit blocked by ice. If they can burrow through fifteen feet of ice and snow, they will eventually emerge into a snow-covered landscape.

Robbed of the elves's protective magic, the High Moors has reverted to a subarctic wilderness. The more extreme conditions have taken their toll - over the subsequent centuries - on the city and the temple, and these are now nothing but piles of low snow-covered ruins. The lake is frozen. Snowflakes drift down from the iron-grey sky. It should be obvious that substantial time has passed.

This is a good place to leave the campaign on hiatus. You may wish to start afresh after a break with the players given a new sandbox map and allowing them to explore from here and try to determine what has happened to the world in the interim.

What has happened is up to you. Partly that will depend on what the characters did. For example, if the beacon (location 41) was activated, the Ancients could be here (as either a beneficial or hostile force). If the plague zombie (location 20) escaped, the Known Lands may now be a zombie-infested wilderness. If the Titans (location 26) were released then the cities could all lie in ruins. The only limit is your imagination.

Alternatively, if the characters recovered the silver cone (location 51), they have a choice. Using the silver cone they can travel back in time in a series of hops. While this is somewhat random, it will eventually allow them to return to their own time.

## Annex A - Statistics for Factions

### Zone 1

#### Kurigalzu, Emissary of Utnapishtim

**Kurigalzu** (human, lawful neutral, treat as Noble, MM p.348). He has six servants (treat as Commoners MM p.345)

##### **Hegemonite Warriors (20)**

Medium human, lawful neutral

Armor Class 17 (breastplate and shield)

Hit Points 12

Speed 30 ft

Str 16 (+3), Dex 13 (+1), Con 15 (+2), Int 10 (+0), Wis 10 (+0), Cha 9 (-1)

**Skills:** Animal Handling +2, Athletics +5

**Save bonus:** +2

**Challenge:** 1/2

**Difficulty:** a group of 5 at 2nd-3rd level, 10 at 4th level, 20 at 5th level

##### **Actions**

Spear (1H): +5 to hit, reach 5 feet, one target.

Hit: 7 (1d6+3)

Spear thrown: +5 to hit, ranged 20/60 ft. Hit: 7

(1d6+3)

##### **Abilities**

**Protection:** when someone other than them is targeted within 5 feet they can use their reaction to impose disadvantage on that attack if they have a shield.

##### **War Elephants (4)**

Huge beast, unaligned

Armor Class 15 (chain barding: weighs 40lb and costs 200 shillings each)

Hit Points 76

Speed 40 ft

Str 22 (+6), Dex 9 (-1), Con 17 (+3), Int 3 (-4), Wis 11 (+0), Cha 6 (-2)

**Save bonus:** +2

**Challenge:** 4

**Difficulty:** 3rd level for one

##### **Actions**

Gore: +8 to hit, reach 5 feet, one target. Hit: 18 (3d8+5)

Stomp: +8 to hit, reach 5 feet, one prone target.

Hit: 21 (3d10+5)

##### **Abilities**

Trampling charge: if moves 20 ft and hits with gore attack, target must make a DC 12 Strength save or be knocked prone. If target is prone, elephant can make one stomp attack as bonus action.

#### Ibycus, dwarven priest of Mirrabulous

##### **Ibycus**

Medium dwarf (7th level cleric), lawful neutral

Armor Class 14 (breastplate)

Hit Points 59

Speed 30 ft

Str 13 (+1), Dex 11 (+0), Con 16 (+3), Int 11 (+0), Wis 15 (+2), Cha 13 (+1)

**Senses:** darkvision 60 ft

**Skills:** Religion +5, Medicine +5, Flute +3, Glassblower +3

**Save bonus:** +3

**Challenge:** 3

**Difficulty:** 2nd level (just him)

### **Actions**

Golden mace (as maul): +4 to hit, reach 5 feet, one target. Hit: 11 (2d6+4)

### **Abilities**

#### **Channel Divinity (x2):**

(1) **Turn Undead** (Destroy Turned Undead (PHB p.59))

(2) **Heal** (cure 35 hp to anyone within 30 ft)

Spellcasting (spell attack +5, save DC 13)  
1st: Bless, Cure Wounds, Create or Destroy Water, Detect Magic  
2nd: Lesser Restoration, Spiritual Weapon, Zone of Truth  
3rd: Magic Circle, Speak with Dead, Stone Shape, Tongues  
4th: Banishment, Guardian of Faith

Spell slots: 1st (4), 2nd (4), 3rd (3), 4th (1)

#### **Dwarven Escort (12)**

Medium dwarf, lawful neutral

Armor Class 14 (breastplate)  
Hit Points 13  
Speed 30 ft

Str 16 (+3), Dex 11 (+0), Con 16 (+3), Int 11 (+0), Wis 11 (+0), Cha 11 (+0)

**Senses:** darkvision 60 ft

**Skills:** Athletics +5, Perception +2

**Save bonus:** +2

**Challenge:** 1/2

**Difficulty:** a group of 5 at 2nd-3rd level, 10 at 4th level, 20 at 5th level

### **Actions**

Pike: +5 to hit, reach 10 feet, one target. Hit: 9 (1d10+3)

Light crossbow: +2 to hit, ranged 80/320. Hit: 5 (1d8)

## The Northern River Trading Company

### **Cartimandus**

(small goblin, lawful evil, treat as Cultist, MM p.345. AC 12, HP 9, Curvy Knife +3, 1d6+1 damage, advantage on saves vs. charm or fear, +1 Dex bonus).

### **Fergus**

Medium bearfolk (3rd level fighter), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 17 (Splint)  
Hit Points 25 (34 with second wind)  
Speed 30 ft

Str 17 (+3), Dex 14 (+2), Con 12 (+1), Int 9 (-1), Wis 12 (+1), Cha 8 (-1)

**Skills:** Athletics +5, Survival +3

**Save bonus:** +2

**Challenge:** 2

**Difficulty:** 4th level for just Fergus and Fion

### **Actions**

Greataxe: +5 to hit, reach 5 feet, one target. Hit: 13 (1d12+6)

### **Abilities**

**Improved critical:** inflicts a critical on a 19 or 20

**Second Wind:** as a bonus action regain 9 HP (refresh on short rest)

**Action Surge:** on additional action (refresh on short rest)

### **Fion**

Small goblin (2nd level Wizard), lawful evil

Armor Class 10  
Hit Points 12  
Speed 30 ft

Str 9 (-1), Dex 11 (+0), Con 12 (+1), Int 17 (+3), Wis 9 (-1), Cha 8 (-1)



**Skills:** Arcana +5, Investigation +5  
**Save bonus:** +2  
**Challenge:** 2  
**Difficulty:** 4th level for just Fergus and Fion

#### **Actions**

Staff: +1 to hit, reach 5 feet, one target. Hit: 5 (1d6+1)

#### **Abilities**

Spellcasting (spell attack +5, spell save DC 13)

Spells prepared:

1st: Sleep, Magic Missile, Charm Person, Witch Bolt, Expeditious Retreat (also knows Detect Magic, Identify, Burning Hands)

Spell slots: 1st (3)

#### **Avari Mercenaries (10)**

Medium human, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 18 (chainmail and shield)

Hit Points 12

Speed 30 ft

Str 17 (+3), Dex 13 (+1), Con 15 (+2), Int 10 (+0), Wis 10 (+0), Cha 10 (+0)

**Skills:** Athletics +5, Survival +2

**Save bonus:** +2

**Challenge:** 1/2

**Difficulty:** a group of 5 at 2nd-3rd level, 10 at 4th level, 20 at 5th level

#### **Actions**

Spear (1H): +5 to hit, reach 5 feet, one target. Hit: 7 (1d6+3)

Spear thrown: +5 to hit, ranged 20/60 ft. Hit: 7 (1d6+3)

**Avari fighting style:** Avari warriors will engage enemies one on one. Other Avari will hang back to await the outcome (if they are not attacked).

## Zone 2

### The Cult of Eyes

#### **Verak**

Medium human (Magog) (6th level Warlock), neutral evil

Armor Class 12 (studded leather)

Hit Points 45

Speed 30 ft

Str 13 (+1), Dex 11 (+0), Con 14 (+2), Int 16 (+3), Wis 9 (-1), Cha 16 (+3)

**Senses:** devil's sight (see in all darkness 120 ft incl. Hunger of Hadar)

**Skills:** Arcana +6, History +6, Animal Handling +2

**Save bonus:** +3

**Challenge:** 2

#### **Actions**

Multiattack: Verak makes two attacks with his pact weapon or two eldritch blasts

Pact weapon (flail): +4 to hit, reach 5 feet, one target. Hit: 9 (1d8+4)

Eldritch blast: +6, 120 ft, one target. Hit: 12 (1d10+6)

#### **Abilities**

**Awakened Mind:** communicate telepathically with one creature within 30 feet any language

**Entropic Ward:** use reaction to impose disadvantage on one attack. If the attack misses, your next attack against them has advantage.

**Spellcasting** (spell attack +6, spell save DC 14)  
Cantrips: Mage Hand, Eldritch Blast, Friends

Spells known:

1st: Comprehend Languages, Unseen Servant, Arms of Hadar

2nd: Crown of Madness, Hold Person

3rd: Hunger of Hadar, Vampiric Touch

Spell slots: 3rd level (2)

### **Verak's Warlocks (7)**

Medium human (Magog), neutral evil

Armor Class 12 (studded leather)

Hit Points 15

Speed 30 ft

Str 11 (+0), Dex 11 (+0), Con 12 (+1), Int 12 (+1), Wis 9 (-1), Cha 14 (+2)

**Senses:** devil's sight (see in all darkness 120 ft incl. Hunger of Hadar)

**Skills:** Arcana +3, Animal Handling +1

**Save bonus:** +2

**Challenge:** 1/4

#### **Actions**

Eldritch blast: +4, 120 ft, one target. Hit: 10 (1d10+4)

Chill Touch: +4, 120 ft, one target. Hit: 7 (1d8+2)

#### **Abilities**

**Awakened Mind:** communicate telepathically with one creature within 30 feet any language

**Spellcasting** (spell attack +4, spell save DC 12)

Cantrips: Eldritch Blast, Chill Touch

Spells known:

1st: Arms of Hadar, Hellish Rebuke, Charm Person

Spell slots: 1st level (2)

### **Magog Warriors (20)**

Medium human, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 14 (hide)

Hit Points 11

Speed 30 ft

Str 16 (+3), Dex 15 (+2), Con 13 (+1), Int 9 (-1), Wis 11 (+0), Cha 9 (-1)

**Skills:** Athletics +5, Animal Handling +2, Survival +2

**Save bonus:** +2

**Challenge:** 1/2

**Difficulty:** a group of 5 at 2nd-3rd level, 10 at 4th level, 20 at 5th level

#### **Actions**

Spear (2H): +5 to hit, reach 5 feet, one target.

Hit: 8 (1d8+3)

Shortbow: +6 to hit, range 80/320, one target.

Hit: 6 (1d6+2)

### **Magog Riding Horses (30)**

AC 10, HP 13, Speed 60 ft (can dash or disengage on rider's initiative; no action required)

## The Boar And Compass Trading Company

### **Angus Iomair**

Medium bearfolk (5th level fighter), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 16 (breastplate) (AC 12 unarmoured)

Hit Points 49 (60 with second wind)

Speed 30 ft

Str 17 (+3), Dex 14 (+2), Con 16 (+3), Int 14 (+2), Wis 10 (+0), Cha 15 (+2)

**Skills:** Nature +3, Persuasion +5, Insight +3, Perception +0

**Save bonus:** +3

**Challenge:** 3

**Difficulty:** 5th level solo

#### **Actions**

Multiattack: Angus makes two claymore or dirk attacks

Claymore: +6 to hit, reach 5 feet, one target. Hit: 13 (1d12+6)

Dirk: +6 to hit, reach 5 feet, one target. Hit: 9 (1d4+6)

#### Abilities

**Second Wind:** as a bonus action regain 11 HP (refresh on short rest)

**Action Surge:** on additional action (refresh on short rest)

**Sweeping attack** (x2 day): when attack hits, can inflict same attack on another creature within 5 feet of the first

**Precision** (x 2 day): add 1d8 to an attack roll

#### Dougal Iomair

Medium bearfolk (3rd level fighter), lawful neutral

Armor Class 16 (scale mail)

Hit Points 28 (37 with second wind)

Speed 30 ft

Str 16 (+3), Dex 14 (+2), Con 14 (+2), Int 11 (+0), Wis 10 (+0), Cha 12 (+1)

**Skills:** Athletics +5, Insight +2, Perception +2, Deception +2, Nature +2

**Save bonus:** +2

**Challenge:** 2

#### Actions

Spear (2H): +5 to hit, reach 5 feet, one target.

Hit: 10 (1d8+5)

Spear thrown: +5 to hit, range 20/60 ft, one target. Hit: 9 (1d6+5)

#### Abilities

**Second Wind:** as a bonus action regain 9 HP (refresh on short rest)

**Action Surge:** on additional action (refresh on short rest)

**Riposte** (x2 day): when creature misses Dougal, he can use his reaction to make a melee attack against them

**Trip attack** (x2 day): attack does an extra 1d8 damage, and target must make a DC 13 Str

saving throw or be knocked prone. (Attacks against a prone target have advantage; their attacks are disadvantage; takes half movement to stand up)

#### Bearfolk Warriors (30)

Medium bearfolk, lawful neutral

Armor Class 15 (scale mail)

Hit Points 11

Speed 30 ft

Str 16 (+3), Dex 12 (+1), Con 12 (+1), Int 10 (+0), Wis 10 (+0), Cha 10 (+0)

**Skills:** Athletics +5, Survival +2, Nature +2

**Save bonus:** +2

**Challenge:** 1/2

**Difficulty:** a group of 5 at 2nd-3rd level, 10 at 4th level, 20 at 5th level

#### Actions

Spear (2H): +5 to hit, reach 5 feet, one target.

Hit: 8 (1d8+3)

Spear thrown: +5 to hit, range 20/60 ft, one target. Hit: 7 (1d6+3)

## Zone 3

### The Company of the Blue Feather

#### Honani

Small halfling (2nd level fighter), chaotic good

Armor Class 14 (hide)

Hit Points 18 (26 with second wind)

Speed 30 ft

Str 14 (+2), Dex 16 (+3), Con 13 (+1), Int 11 (+0), Wis 9 (-1), Cha 13 (+1)

**Skills:** Athletics +4, Survival +1, Boats +5

**Save bonus:** +2

**Challenge:** 1/2

**Actions**

Handaxe: +4 to hit, reach 5 feet, one target. Hit: 8 (1d6+4)  
 Shortbow: +7 to hit, range 80/320 feet, one target. Hit: 9 (1d6+5)

**Abilities**

**Second Wind:** as a bonus action regain 8 HP (refresh on short rest)  
**Action Surge:** on additional action (refresh on short rest)

**Sikya**

Small halfling (3rd level rogue), neutral good

Armor Class 16 (studded leather)  
 Hit Points 18  
 Speed 30 ft

Str 12 (+1), Dex 18 (+4), Con 11 (+0), Int 12 (+1), Wis 13 (+1), Cha 12 (+1)

**Skills:** Acrobatics +6, Athletics +3, Stealth +8, Perception +3, Thieves Tools +8  
**Save bonus:** +2  
**Challenge:** 1

**Actions**

Handaxe: +3 to hit, reach 5 feet, one target. Hit: 7 (1d6+3)  
 Shortbow: +6 to hit, range 80/320 feet, one target. Hit: 10 (1d6+6)

**Abilities**

**Expertise:** Thieves Tools and Stealth  
**Sneak attack:** +2d6 damage when have advantage with Dex-based weapon  
**Cunning action:** take extra bonus action each turn to Disengage, Dash, Hide, use Sleight of Hand, Use an Object, or use Thieves Tools  
**Second storey work:** climbing does not cost extra movement

**Kachina (6)**

Small halfling, neutral good

Armor Class 14 (hide)  
 Hit Points 9

Speed 30 ft

Str 12 (+1), Dex 14 (+2), Con 11 (+0), Int 11 (+0), Wis 10 (+0), Cha 11 (+0)

**Skills:** Athletics +3, Survival +2, Boats +4

**Save bonus:** +2

**Challenge:** 1/4

**Actions**

Handaxe: +3 to hit, reach 5 feet, one target. Hit: 7 (1d6+3)  
 Shortbow: +4 to hit, range 80/320 feet, one target. Hit: 8 (1d6+4)

**Vadim and Borislav, Demonslaying Giants****Vadim and Borislav (2)**

Huge giant, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 14  
 Hit Points 200  
 Speed 40 ft

Str 27 (+8), Dex 10 (+0), Con 22 (+6), Int 8 (-1), Wis 12 (+1), Cha 9 (-1)

**Senses:** darkvision 120 ft

**Save bonus:** +4

**Challenge:** 9

**Actions**

Multiattack: the giant makes two maul or one rock attack

Maul attack: +12 to hit, reach 10 ft, one target. Hit: 21 (3d8+8)  
 Rock attack: +12 to hit, range 60/240 ft, one target. Hit: 30 (4d10+8)

**Ragnak the grizzly bear**

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 62  
Speed 40 ft, swim 30 ft

Str 19 (+4), Dex 10 (+0), Con 16 (+3), Int 2 (-4),  
Wis 13 (+1), Cha 7 (-2)

**Skills:** Perception +3

**Save bonus:** +1

**Challenge:** 1

### **Actions**

Multiattack: bear makes one claw attack and one bite attack

Claw: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. Hit: 11 (2d6+4)

Bite: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. Hit: 8 (1d8+4)

### **Abilities**

**Keen smell:** advantage on any Wisdom (Perception) checks that involve scent.

## The Men Of The Stag

### **Godric**

Medium human (7th level Ranger), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 18 (chainmail and shield)

Hit Points 60

Speed 30 ft

Str 17 (+3), Dex 15 (+2), Con 15 (+2), Int 11 (+0), Wis 11 (+0), Cha 14 (+2)

**Skills:** Athletics +6, Survival +3, Stealth +5

**Save bonus:** +3

**Challenge:** 4

**Difficulty:** 3rd level (him alone), 5th level for Godric, Karsyn, Horsa and Alwin

### **Actions**

Multiattack: Godric makes two spear or two thrown spear attacks

Spear (1H): +6 to hit, reach 5 feet, one target.

Hit: 12 (1d6+8)

Spear thrown: +7 to hit, ranged 20/60 ft. Hit: 10 (1d6+6)

### **Abilities**

**Avari fighting style:** Avari warriors will engage enemies one on one. Other Avari will hang back to await the outcome (if they are not attacked).

**Slayer:** if target injured, inflict an extra 5 (1d8) damage once per turn on a hit

**Multiattack defence:** when a creature hits Godric, he gets +4 AC to any further attacks from them on that turn

**Primeval awareness:** spend 1 spell slot to detect nearby (1 mile) fey, elementals, fiends, aberrations or undead

**Favoured enemy (Magog and Avari):**

advantage to track, recall facts

**Favoured terrain:** grasslands, forest

**Spellcasting** (spell attack +3, save DC 11)

Spell slots: 1st (4), 2nd (3)

Spells known: (1st) Hail of Thorns, Hunters Mark, Fog Cloud, (2nd) Darkvision, Silence

### **Horsa and Alwin**

Medium human (5th level Rangers), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 16 (ringmail and shield)

Hit Points 44

Speed 30 ft

Str 17 (+3), Dex 15 (+2), Con 15 (+2), Int 11 (+0), Wis 10 (+0), Cha 12 (+1)

**Skills:** Athletics +6, Survival +3, Stealth +5

**Save bonus:** +3

**Challenge:** 2

**Difficulty:** 4th level (for both of them)

### **Actions**

Multiattack: They make two spear or two thrown spear attacks

Spear (1H): +6 to hit, reach 5 feet, one target.

Hit: 12 (1d6+8)

Spear thrown: +5 to hit, ranged 20/60 ft. Hit: 9 (1d6+5)

### Abilities

**Avari fighting style:** Avari warriors will engage enemies one on one. Other Avari will hang back to await the outcome (if they are not attacked).

**Slayer:** if target injured, inflict an extra 5 (1d8) damage once per turn on a hit

**Primeval awareness:** spend 1 spell slot to detect nearby (1 mile) fey, elementals, fiends, aberrations or undead

**Favoured enemy (Magog):** advantage to track

**Favoured terrain:** grasslands

**Spellcasting** (spell attack +3, save DC 11)

Spell slots: 1st (4), 2nd (2)

Spells known: (1st) Hail of Thorns, Hunters Mark, Fog Cloud, (2nd) Pass Without Trace

### Karsyn

Medium human (5th level Druid), neutral

Armor Class 14 (hide)

Hit Points 28

Speed 30 ft

Str 14 (+2), Dex 15 (+2), Con 10 (+0), Int 13 (+1), Wis 16 (+3), Cha 13 (+1)

**Skills:** Nature +6, Animal Handling +6, Athletics +5, Survival +6, Herbalism +6

**Save bonus:** +3

**Challenge:** 4

**Difficulty:** 4th level (her alone)

### Actions

Two-weapon fighting: when making a sickle attack, she can make a offhand sickle attack as a bonus action

Main hand Sickle: +5 to hit, reach 5 feet, one target. Hit: 8 (1d4+5)

Offhand Sickle: +5 to hit, reach 5 feet, one target. Hit: 6 (1d4+3)

Darts thrown: +5 to hit, ranged 20/60 ft. Hit: 8 (1d4+5)

### Abilities

**Wild Shape** (x2, 2 hours max, as Black Bear, MM, p.318)

**Spellcasting** (spell attack +6, save DC 14)

Spell slots: 1st (4), 2nd (3), 3rd (2)

Spells prepared: (1st) Animal Friendship, Cure Wounds, Faerie Fire (2nd) Animal Messenger, Darkvision, Heat Metal, Pass Without Trace, Invisibility (3rd) Wind Wall, Call Lightning

### Avari Warriors (12)

Medium human, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 16 (ringmail and shield)

Hit Points 12

Speed 30 ft

Str 17 (+3), Dex 13 (+1), Con 15 (+2), Int 10 (+0), Wis 10 (+0), Cha 10 (+0)

**Skills:** Athletics +5, Survival +2

**Save bonus:** +2

**Challenge:** 1/2

**Difficulty:** a group of 5 at 2nd-3rd level, 10 at 4th level, 20 at 5th level

### Actions

Spear (1H): +5 to hit, reach 5 feet, one target. Hit: 7 (1d6+3)

Spear thrown: +5 to hit, ranged 20/60 ft. Hit: 7 (1d6+3)

**Avari fighting style:** Avari warriors will engage enemies one on one. Other Avari will hang back to await the outcome (if they are not attacked).

## Annex B - Prices and goods

This table sets out the prices of standard goods in the PHB converted to the currency of the Known Lands. SS = silver shillings, CP = copper pennies and BF = brass farthings.

**Light Armour**

Padded 5 silver shillings  
 Leather 10 silver shillings  
 Studded leather 45 silver shillings

**Medium Armour**

Hide 10 silver shillings  
 Chain Shirt 50 silver shillings  
 Scale mail 50 silver shillings  
 Breastplate 400 silver shillings

**Heavy Armour**

Ring mail 30 silver shillings  
 Chain mail 75 silver shillings  
 Splint 200 silver shillings  
 Plate 1500 silver shillings

**Shields**

Shield 10 silver shillings

**Simple Melee Weapons**

Club 1 copper penny  
 Greatclub 2 copper pennies  
 Quarterstaff 2 copper pennies  
 Javelin 5 copper pennies  
 Sickle 1 silver shillings  
 Spear 1 silver shillings  
 Dagger 2 silver shillings  
 Light hammer 2 silver shillings  
 Handaxe 5 silver shillings  
 Mace 5 silver shillings

**Simple Ranged Weapons**

Dart 5 brass farthings  
 Sling 1 copper penny  
 Light crossbow 25 silver shillings  
 Shortbow 25 silver shillings

**Martial Melee Weapons**

Whip 2 silver shillings  
 Pike 5 silver shillings  
 Trident 5 silver shillings  
 War pick 5 silver shillings  
 Battleaxe 10 silver shillings  
 Flail 10 silver shillings  
 Lance 10 silver shillings  
 Maul 10 silver shillings  
 Shortsword 10 silver shillings

Longsword 15 silver shillings  
 Morningstar 15 silver shillings  
 Warhammer 15 silver shillings  
 Glaive 20 silver shillings  
 Halberd 20 silver shillings  
 Rapier 25 silver shillings  
 Scimitar 25 silver shillings  
 Greataxe 30 silver shillings  
 Greatsword 50 silver shillings

**Martial Ranged Weapons**

Net 1 silver shillings  
 Blowgun 10 silver shillings  
 Heavy crossbow 50 silver shillings  
 Longbow 50 silver shillings  
 Hand crossbow 75 silver shillings

**Miscellaneous Gear**

Candle 1 brass farthings  
 Chalk 1 brass farthings  
 Sack 1 brass farthings  
 Torch 1 brass farthings  
 Whetstone 1 brass farthings  
 Chicken (live) 2 brass farthings  
 Flask or tankard 2 brass farthings  
 Ink pen 2 brass farthings  
 Jug or pitcher 2 brass farthings  
 Loaf of bread 2 brass farthings  
 Soap 2 brass farthings  
 Sling bullets (20) 4 brass farthings  
 Mug of ale 4 brass farthings  
 Animal feed (per day) 5 brass farthings  
 Bucket 5 brass farthings  
 Piton 5 brass farthings  
 Pole (10 feet) 5 brass farthings  
 Signal whistle 5 brass farthings

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 Cheese (hunk) 1 copper penny  
 Dice set 1 copper penny  
 Ladder (10 feet) 1 copper penny  
 Oil flask 1 copper penny  
 Parchment (one sheet) 1 copper penny  
 Common wine (pitcher) 2 copper pennies  
 Mess kit 2 copper pennies  
 Paper (one sheet) 2 copper pennies  
 Meat (hunk) 3 copper pennies  
 Basket 4 copper pennies

Blanket 5 copper pennies  
Common clothes 5 copper pennies  
Lamp 5 copper pennies  
Pouch 5 copper pennies  
Playing card set 5 copper pennies  
Rations (1 day) 5 copper pennies  
Sealing wax 5 copper pennies  
Tinderbox 5 copper pennies  
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Arrows (20) 1 silver shilling  
Blowgun needles (50) 1 silver shilling  
Ball bearings (1000) 1 silver shilling  
Bedroll 1 silver shilling  
Bell 1 silver shilling  
Block and tackle 1 silver shilling  
Crossbow bolts (20) 1 silver shilling  
Caltrops (20) 1 silver shilling  
Cook's Tools 1 silver shilling  
Crossbow bolt case 1 silver shilling  
Dragonchess set 1 silver shilling  
Druidic focus (mistletoe) 1 silver shilling  
Druidic focus (totem) 1 silver shilling  
Fishing tackle 1 silver shilling  
Goat (live) 1 silver shilling  
Hammer 1 silver shilling  
Iron spikes (10) 1 silver shilling  
Robes 1 silver shilling  
Rope (hempen, 50 ft) 1 silver shilling  
Scroll case 1 silver shilling  
Three dragon ante set 1 silver shilling  
Quiver 1 silver shilling  
Vial 1 silver shilling  
Weaver's Tools 1 silver shilling  
Woodcarver's Tools 1 silver shilling  
Abacus 2 silver shillings  
Backpack 2 silver shillings  
Barrel 2 silver shillings  
Bottle, glass 2 silver shillings  
Crowbar 2 silver shillings  
Grappling hook 2 silver shillings  
Iron pot 2 silver shillings  
Flute 2 silver shillings  
Manacles 2 silver shillings  
Miner's pick 2 silver shillings  
Shovel 2 silver shillings  
Shawm 2 silver shillings  
Sheep (live) 2 silver shillings

Sledge Hammer 2 silver shillings  
Traveller's clothes 2 silver shillings  
Tent (two person) 2 silver shillings  
Waterskin 2 silver shillings  
Horn 3 silver shillings  
Pig (live) 3 silver shillings  
Portable ram 4 silver shillings  
Saddlebags 4 silver shillings  
Arcane Focus (staff) 5 silver shillings  
Chain (10 ft) 5 silver shillings  
Chest 5 silver shillings  
Clothes (costume) 5 silver shillings  
Cobbler's Tools 5 silver shillings  
Druidic focus (wooden staff) 5 silver shillings  
Healer's Kit 5 silver shillings  
Herbalism Kit 5 silver shillings  
Holy symbol 5 silver shillings  
Hunting trap 5 silver shillings  
Hooded lantern 5 silver shillings  
Leatherworker's Tools 5 silver shillings  
Merchant's scale 5 silver shillings  
Perfume (vial) 5 silver shillings  
Steel mirror 5 silver shillings  
Signet ring 5 silver shillings  
Drum 6 silver shillings  
Carpenter's Tools 8 silver shillings  
Mule 8 silver shillings  
Arcane Focus (crystal) 10 silver shillings  
Arcane Focus (rod) 10 silver shillings  
Arcane Focus (wand) 10 silver shillings  
Bullseye lantern 10 silver shillings  
Calligrapher's Tools 10 silver shillings  
Cow (live) 10 silver shillings  
Druidic focus (yew wand) 10 silver shillings  
Explorer's Pack 10 silver shillings  
Ink (1 ounce bottle) 10 silver shillings  
Lock 10 silver shillings  
Mason's Tools 10 silver shillings  
Painter's Tools 10 silver shillings  
Potter's Tools 10 silver shillings  
Riding saddle 10 silver shillings  
Rope (silk, 50 ft) 10 silver shillings  
Dungeoneer's Pack 12 silver shillings  
Pan flute 12 silver shillings  
Cartographer's Tools 15 silver shillings  
Cart 15 silver shillings  
Fine clothes 15 silver shillings  
Ox (live) 15 silver shillings



Forgery Kit 25 silver shillings  
 Burglar's Pack 16 silver shillings  
 Priest's Pack 19 silver shillings  
 Arcane Focus (orb) 20 silver shillings  
 Brewer's Tools 20 silver shillings  
 Sled 20 silver shillings  
 Smith's Tools 20 silver shillings  
 Acid (vial) 25 silver shillings  
 Book 25 silver shillings  
 Climber's kit 25 silver shillings  
 Component pouch 25 silver shillings  
 Disguise Kit 25 silver shillings  
 Dulcimer 25 silver shillings  
 Holy water (flask) 25 silver shillings  
 Hourglass 25 silver shillings  
 Jeweller's Tools 25 silver shillings  
 Mastiff 25 silver shillings  
 Navigator's Tools 25 silver shillings  
 Thieves Tools 25 silver shillings  
 Bagpipes 30 silver shillings  
 Glassblower's Tools 30 silver shillings  
 Lyre 30 silver shillings  
 Pony 30 silver shillings  
 Viol 30 silver shillings  
 Lute 35 silver shillings  
 Wagon 35 silver shillings  
 Diplomat's Pack 39 silver shillings  
 Entertainer's pack 40 silver shillings  
 Scholar's Pack 40 silver shillings  
 Alchemist's Tools 50 silver shillings  
 Alchemist's fire (flask) 50 silver shillings  
 Antitoxin (vial) 50 silver shillings  
 Draft horse 50 silver shillings  
 Potion of healing 50 silver shillings  
 Poisoner's Tools 50 silver shillings  
 Rowboat 50 silver shillings  
 Spellbook 50 silver shillings  
 Tinker's Tools 50 silver shillings  
 Riding Horse 75 silver shillings  
 Carriage 100 silver shillings  
 Magnifying glass 100 silver shillings  
 Basic poison (vial) 100 silver shillings  
 Elephant 200 silver shillings  
 Warhorse 400 silver shillings  
 Spyglass 1000 silver shillings  
 Keelboat 3000 silver shillings  
 Longship 10,000 silver shillings  
 Sailing cog 10,000 silver shillings

Warship 25,000 silver shillings  
 Galley 30,000 silver shillings

## Annex C - New Cleric Domain

### Cleric domain: Freedom

See location 18 for the background to this new domain.

#### *Freedom domain spells*

Cleric level	Spells
1st	Expeditious Retreat,
Sanctuary	
3rd	Calm Emotions, Knock
5th	Haste, Counterspell
7th	Freedom of Movement,
Aura of Purity	

#### **Liberty's Blessing**

At 1st level you can use your action to touch one willing creature other than yourself to give it advantage on Dexterity saving throws. This blessing lasts for 1 hour or until you use it again.

#### **Breaker of chains**

Starting at 2nd level you can use your channel divinity to cast a mass *Knock* spell against any locks, chains or bars within a 10 ft radius. This power does not include a loud noise.

#### **Divine strike**

At 8th level, you gain the ability to infuse your weapon strikes with divine energy. Once on each of your turns when you hit a creature with a weapon attack, you can cause the attack to do an extra 1d8 radiant damage. At 14th level the extra damage increases to 2d8.

#### **Self Sovereignty**

At 17th level you can as an action remove any paralysis, or mind or emotion control spells or magical effects from all allies within 30 ft.

You can also use this ability as an action to free a single creature within 30 ft from any spell or

magical effect that imprisons them (e.g. Entangle, Web, Hold Person, Flesh to Stone, Magic Jar, Forcecage, Maze, Imprisonment). This ability cannot be used again until you have taken a short or long rest.

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Little is known of the ancient elves that once ruled from the northern tableland called The High Moors. Their civilisation is dead, and no one has seen an elf in living memory.

The ruins of the High Moors have lain undisturbed for centuries. It was only with news from a successful expedition that people started to consider the treasures that may be waiting to be discovered in the forgotten north.

This has created a gold rush of sorts and a number of expeditions have been recently dispatched to bring back magic and riches. Unfortunately, danger, horror and madness awaits most of them.

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