

# THE HAND OF DARKNESS

## A DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® *LIVING FORGOTTEN REALMS* ADVENTURE

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The disorganized creatures that periodically menace the settled edge of Ruinspoke have recently grown bold. Who or what is organizing this force? Lord Tuanek is in need of adventurers to investigate the impetus behind these attacks and remove the threat to Ruinspoke. A *Living Forgotten Realms* adventure set in Tymander for characters levels 4-7. This adventure is the second part of the *Rising Darkness* major quest, which began in TYMA2-1 *Old Enemies Arise* and concludes in TYMA2-4.

Based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® rules created by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson and the new DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game designed by Andy Collins, Rob Heinsoo, and James Wyatt.

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## OFFICIAL D&D PLAY

Most likely you ordered this adventure as part of an event, or you received it from your organizer. To play this adventure and receive rewards for it, you must schedule it as an event. This event could be as elaborate as a big convention, or as simple as a group of friends meeting at the DM's house.

To schedule a game for public play, you must be enrolled in the Wizards Play Network. Information on enrolling in the program can be found at [www.wizards.com/wpn](http://www.wizards.com/wpn). If you are scheduling the game for private play, you do not need to be enrolled in the Wizards Play Network. The person who schedules the event, called the organizer, is in charge of making sure the event is scheduled before play, runs smoothly on the date scheduled, and gets reported back to Wizards in a timely manner. The person who runs the game is called the table Dungeon Master (or usually just DM). Sometimes (and almost all the time in the cases of home events) the organizer is also the table DM. You don't have to be enrolled in the Wizards Play Network to DM this adventure if you are not the organizer.

By scheduling and reporting this adventure you accomplish a couple of things. First, it is an official game, tracked under your play history. Second, DMs gain rewards for scheduled play if they are members of the DM REWARDS program. DMing this adventure is worth one (1) point.

To learn more about event scheduling and DM REWARDS, visit the D&D Events website at [www.wizards.com/dnd](http://www.wizards.com/dnd) and click on "Events."

## PREPARING FOR PLAY

In order to play this adventure, you'll need copies of the following D&D 4th Edition rulebooks: *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and the *Monster Manual*. Any other rules referenced in this adventure will be noted in the **New Rules Items** section at the end of the adventure.

Throughout this adventure, text in bold italics provides player information for you to paraphrase or read aloud when appropriate. Information on nonplayer characters (NPCs) and monsters appear in abbreviated form in the adventure text.

Along with this adventure, you'll find a session tracking sheet. If you're playing this adventure as part of an officially scheduled event, complete and turn in this sheet to your organizer directly after play.

## READING MONSTER STAT BLOCKS

Most of the information should be easy to understand, as it mirrors the information presented in the *Monster Manual*. Attacks may have a letter next to them designating the type: M for melee, R for ranged, C for close, and A for area. A lower-case letter (used only in some melee and ranged attacks) denotes that the attack can be used as a basic attack.

## IMPORTANT DM INFORMATION

As the DM of the session, you have the most important role in facilitating the enjoyment of the game for the players. You take the words on these pages and make them come alive. The outcome of a fun game session often creates stories that live well beyond the play at the table. Always follow this golden rule when you DM for a group:

**Make decisions and adjudications that enhance the fun of the adventure when possible.**

To reinforce this golden rule, keep in mind the following:

- **You are empowered to make adjustments to the adventure and make decisions about how the group interacts with the world of this adventure.** This is especially important and applicable outside of combat encounters, but feel free to use the "scaling the encounter" advice (usually for adjusting to different-sized groups) to adjust combat encounters for groups that are having too easy or too hard of a time in an adventure.
- **Don't make the adventure too easy or too difficult for a group.** Never being challenged makes for a boring game, and being overwhelmed makes for a frustrating game. Gauge the experience of the players (not the characters) with the game, try to feel out (or ask) what they like in a game, and attempt to give each of them the experience they're after when they play D&D. Give everyone a "chance to shine."
- **Be mindful of pacing, and keep the game session moving along appropriately.** Watch for stalling, as play loses momentum when this happens. At the same time, make sure that the players don't finish the adventure too early; provide them with a full play experience. *Living Forgotten Realms* adventures are designed to be played within 3.5 - 4 hours; try to be very aware

of running long or short. Adjust the pacing accordingly.

- **Give the players appropriate hints so they can make informed choices about how to interact with their environment.** Players should always know when enemies are affected by conditions and are bloodied. They should be given clues about how to interact with their surroundings so they can tackle skill challenges, combats, and puzzles without getting too frustrated over lack of information. This helps to encourage immersion in the adventure and gives players “little victories” for figuring out a good choice from a clue.

In short, being the DM for a *Living Forgotten Realms* adventure isn't about following the adventure's text word-for-word; it's about creating a fun, challenging game environment for the players. Chapters 1 and 2 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* are filled with good information about being a DM for a D&D game.

## APPROPRIATE CHARACTER LEVELS

This adventure is designed for player characters (PCs) levels 4-7. Characters that fall outside of the level range may not participate in the adventure. Make certain to check the levels of the PCs before beginning play to ensure that they are the proper level.

Each adventure has a low-level version and a high-level version. The low level is meant for a group whose levels, on average, fall in the lower levels of the adventure's level spread. The high level is meant for a group whose levels, on average, fall in the higher levels of the adventure's level spread.

A group may decide to play the high level when their levels are more suited to the low level if everyone in the group agrees to do so; however, some of the rewards may not be available to them. Conversely, a group may decide to play the low level when their levels are more suited to the high level if everyone in the group agrees; however, some of the rewards may be less than what they'd ideally want from the adventure.

**Reading the Numbers:** Each encounter has a level and sometimes other values (such as XP or skill check DCs) listed with two numbers divided by a slash. The number before the slash is always the value for the low-level version of the adventure; the number after the slash is the value for the high-level version of the adventure.

## FAILING TO DEFEAT AN ENCOUNTER

If a group fails to defeat an encounter - that is, if they have to flee from a combat because it's too tough or they reach the predetermined number of failures in a skill challenge before reaching success - they are only awarded half experience points (round down) for the encounter. If they manage to tackle the encounter later and defeat it, award them the other half of the experience points for the encounter.

## CHARACTER DEATH

If a PC dies during the course of the adventure, the player of that character and the rest of the group have two options, provided that they have access to the Raise Dead ritual (either a PC has it and can use it or the characters return to civilization), they have access to the body, and it is possible to return the dead PC to life.

- **Pay the component cost for the ritual.** If the group chooses this option, the cost should be divided evenly among the group (500 gp for heroic tier, 5,000 gp for paragon tier, and 50,000 gp for epic tier). Using a source outside the group to cast the ritual costs 20% more than the component cost. Total cost when using an outside source is 600 gp for heroic tier, 6,000 gp for paragon tier, and 60,000 gp for epic tier. A PC that dies and chooses this method of return gains full (or half, if the party was defeated) experience points from the encounter in which the character died, but no experience points for any encounters that were missed while the character was dead. If there are encounters remaining, the PC continues to earn experience as normal, and receives a normal cut of the rewards at the end of the adventure.
- **Invoke the Death Charity clause.** If the group cannot afford to pay for the ritual (or doesn't desire to do so), the PC can choose to return to life at the end of the adventure. Doing so forfeits all rewards (including treasure and story rewards) earned for the adventure except experience points gained prior to the character's death (the character receives the experience point award for the encounter in which they died). The PC cannot participate in the same adventure a second time.

## MILESTONES

No matter if the characters succeed or fail in an encounter, they reach a milestone if it is the second encounter they've had since the start of the adventure or their last extended rest. **Encounters that do not give out experience points do not count for purposes of reaching a milestone.** Make certain to mention this information to the players when applicable, as it gives each PC another action point and affects how some magic item powers are used.

## LASTING EFFECTS

Sometimes a PC suffers a lasting effect that isn't easily resolved before the end of the adventure. The two most common lasting effects are the death penalty and diseases.

**Death Penalty:** When a character dies and is brought back to life by the Raise Dead ritual, that character suffers a -1 penalty to all attack rolls, skill checks, saving throws, and ability checks until they have reached three milestones. The player should simply record the adventure where the character died on their adventure log, and then keep a running tally of milestones reached. Once the PC has reached the third milestone since coming back to life, they no longer suffer the penalty.

**Diseases:** Diseases take hold of a character and last until they are cured or they reach their final state. Normally, a PC makes an Endurance check after each extended rest to see if the disease improves, worsens, or maintains its current condition. At the end of the adventure, any character suffering from a disease must resolve the disease to either its cure or final state, using the necessary number of extended rests to do so. Other characters adventuring with the PC may decide to aid the afflicted character during this time. If a disease reaches its final state and the PC can get a Cure Disease ritual cast (and pay the appropriate costs), they may do so.

**Other Lasting Effects:** Other effects that last beyond the scope of the adventure should be resolved at the DM's discretion. Any effects that last for a specific period of time (that end after a certain number of days or a certain number of extended rests) should be resolved at the end of the adventure in which the effect was obtained (unless otherwise specified). Effects that use some sort of adventuring benchmark of unknown duration (such as milestones) should be recorded on the character's logsheet and tracked across adventures.

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Tymanother's abrupt arrival upon the surface of Faerun during the time of the Spellplague ended years of conflict between Unther and Mulhorand by destroying almost everyone and everything in the Untherian territories, as the ripped regions of Tymanchebar appeared in the Realms. What was once a region of chaos and war is now growing into a more ordered and well-established society. A long time has passed since then, but not everyone has forgotten the way things used to be, and not everyone is pleased by the efforts of the dragonborn to tame the wild places of Tymanother.

After a century of patience and observation, Sisay, the Lamia Queen of Unthalass, seeks to exert her influence on the land above. Her opening move is to gauge the strength and resolve of Tymanother by testing the abilities and resources of the dragonborn at the small outpost of Ruinspoke.

In TYMA2-1 *Old Enemies Arise*, a doppelganger organized kobolds and harassed Ruinspoke under the false cover of a dragon. In reality, the doppelganger was sent by Queen Sisay to check Ruinspoke's defenses and example the outpost's possible responses to an attempted conquest. Although the doppelganger's plot was foiled by adventurers hired by Lord Tuanek, Queen Sisay nevertheless considered the mission a success. She learned that Ruinspoke is well-run and able to respond to minor incursions.

Undeterred, she is now carrying out two related plots. First, through a bitter dragonborn wererat named Bragg, she has organized raids against the outlying farms to test the dragonborns' commitment and ability to defend and respond against more powerful threats. In response to this escalation of the attacks against Ruinspoke, the PCs are called in to investigate. However, before the PCs can fully investigate this first plot, Queen Sisay's second and more nefarious plot is revealed.

The true threat in this adventure is an attempt to assassinate Lord Tuanek. Queen Sisay has rightly determined that the dragonborn lord's death would decapitate the outpost's leadership, making Ruinspoke far more vulnerable to a heavy raid that is planned to occur in the near future. The assassination attempt happens on the first night the PCs are in Ruinspoke. Although Lord Tuanek survives the initial attack, he is poisoned. This then becomes the real mission for the PCs. Can the PCs find the alchemist that produced the poison and retrieve an antidote while also destabilizing Sisay's plans for a larger invasion?

## DM's INTRODUCTION

Lord Tuanek has called adventurers to deal with the continuing attacks of humanoids against the outlying areas of Ruinspoke. Lord Tuanek was correct earlier in assuming that a dragon was not uniting the kobold tribes (TYMA2-1) but he has yet to find out who is in charge of the attacks.

As the PCs approach Ruinspoke, they notice that the people of the town seem to be on edge. The townsfolk seem to be slowly wearing down from the seemingly constant raids.

Lord Tuanek has called a council with the Platinum Cadre and Lance Defenders. First, Lord Tuanek needs information and has decided the best way to do this is to hire PCs to collect it. As the adventure opens, the PCs have arrived in town at the lord's request. They wait in the antechamber outside his office after a long journey.

The PCs are hired (hopefully) by Lord Tuanek, but it is late in the day. They are instructed to meet back in the morning to receive more information. The PCs are asked to stay at House Jalt since the inns are full at Ruinspoke.

During the night, a group of assassins attack Lord Tuanek and are successful in poisoning him. The PCs have a chance of encountering and defeating the assassins before they manage to flee.

From there, the PCs track the assassins to their lair and hopefully are able to acquire the antidote to the poison. The alchemist that created the poison is a semi-willing participant that can be convinced to change sides.

### **SPECIAL NOTE: QUEST CARD OPPORTUNITY**

During Encounter 2, the PCs have a chance to fulfill Task 2 of the *In Slumber Remain* Quest Card. In the village of Ruinspoke they may meet the human Flam Yager, who has the tattoo of a flame clearly visible on his chest. If any of the players are on this quest, suggest that they visit Ruinspoke before retiring for the night after Encounter 1 (or else they might miss this opportunity).

## PLAYER'S INTRODUCTION

Read or paraphrase the following:

*The letter you received from Lord Tuanek requesting your assistance with "continuing monstrous humanoid problems" didn't seem that urgent. Now that you've arrived in Ruinspoke and can see the situation for yourself, you realize that only a blind norker would fail to understand that something out of the ordinary is going on here.*

*In addition to the city guard, the Lance Defenders and Platinum Cadre are on the streets in much larger numbers than one would normally expect. Despite this highly visible military presence, there are very few citizens on the streets, and they appear grim and fearful, scuttling from place to place while casting wary glances toward the outskirts of town.*

*Making your way to the manor that serves as both House Jalt's residential compound and Lord Tuanek's personal office, you see that extra guards have been posted and the front gate appears newly reinforced. The soldiers check your letter and direct you to a waiting area consisting of a few cold stone benches.*

*As you await your opportunity to find out what is going on, you see that a number of other adventurers have gathered here. Presumably they have come for much the same purpose as you, but there's only one way to find out....*

Allow the players to introduce and describe their characters. This would also be a good time to find out if any of the PCs have any favors from previous Tymanther regional adventures, and in particular which (if any) of the characters participated in the adventure TYMA2-1 *Old Enemies Arise*. Make sure to reference these favors and events during the PCs' meeting with Lord Tuanek, as he has a keen memory and remembers all those who have aided (or failed to aid) Ruinspoke and its people.

*The afternoon grows long, until finally an elderly dragonborn servant appears and ushers you into Lord Tuanek's office.*

## ENCOUNTER 1: TUANEK'S NEED

### SETUP

#### Important NPCs:

**Lord Tuanek**, male dragonborn lord.

Tuanek is the level-headed Lord of House Jalt in charge in Ruinspoke. PCs who have played any previous Tymanther regional adventures will certainly have met him, and he remembers any such PCs as well as their exploits (good or bad) in Ruinspoke.

**Lord Vikom**, male dragonborn warrior.

Vikom is a young dragonborn of House Belnak. He is training under Lord Tuanek, acting as his second-in-command and learning how to successfully manage a House. Vikom has been sent here to get some experience; it is common among friendly dragonborn Houses to temporarily foster their young nobles with one another in order to broaden their horizons. Vikom is a little bit impulsive and headstrong.

In this encounter, the PCs meet Lord Tuanek and Lord Vikom to learn more about the current situation. Ruinspoke is being increasingly harassed by humanoid incursions, which are no longer limited to kobolds. Lord Tuanek's resources are becoming spread thin and a council soon convenes in Ruinspoke with the Platinum Cadre and Lance Defenders to decide how to deal with the situation. In the meantime, Lord Tuanek would like the PCs to make a search of the area east of Ruinspoke to find what evidence of enemy movements they can.

As the encounter opens, read the following:

*You are shown into Lord Tuanek's office. An elder dragonborn sits behind a desk looking over maps with a younger dragonborn peering over his shoulder. As you enter, Lord Tuanek stands and welcomes you.*

If the PCs have any favors from Lord Tuanek (earned in previous Tymanther regional adventures), read the following:

*"Thank you once again for traveling to see me. Your previous efforts have been much appreciated and I am particularly glad that you have chosen to return to aid us."*

If none of the PCs have earned favors from House Jalt or Ruinspoke in the past, instead read the following:

*"Please, come in and sit down. Food will be served in a moment, but first we must discuss a growing problem in the area around Ruinspoke. I assume your*

*presence here means that you are willing to help, in exchange for a small... token... of our appreciation."*

After the PCs have responded, Lord Tuanek introduces the younger male dragonborn warrior behind him as Lord Vikom of House Belnak, his protégé and currently second in command. Vikom's family sent him to Ruinspoke to earn some experience at the frontier. Vikom is a bit rash and impatient, while Lord Tuanek is much calmer and more levelheaded.

Once introductions have been made, and drinks and food have been served, Tuanek proceeds:

*"As you may have heard, the kobolds in this area have recently grown much bolder than usual. We are accustomed to periodic raids; indeed such encounters are beneficial in some ways, as they help our soldiers of the Platinum Cadre stay sharp. However, the intensity of the skirmishes has increased far beyond my comfort level. The kobolds have suddenly become courageous, striking at homes and farms that are much closer to edge of town.*

*"In a normal raid, the kobolds do little real damage; they might steal some food, or rustle livestock if they are feeling especially bold. They generally flee at the first sign of organized resistance. But none of these things are true of the recent incursions. The kobolds fight ferociously, and they are far more organized than they have any right to be. Making matters worse, we are now starting to see other monstrous humanoids in the raiding parties, such as gnolls. These creatures are dangerous enough in their own right, but they would never ally themselves with kobolds under normal circumstances. These attacks make me wonder if there is a tactical element, a greater strategy, behind the monsters' activities. In short, I believe our defenses are being probed for some purpose far beyond simple pillage."*

*"Lord Vikom [Tuanek nods to the younger dragonborn] is convinced we need to act quickly, and he is not alone in that belief. Many members of my own House agree with his assessment of the situation. While I appreciate his enthusiasm, I believe we need to have more information before we take action. All of our available units are currently on patrol or dealing with known kobold sightings. As a result, we do not have any spare troops to send out for this reconnaissance.*

*"I would like you to ride out tomorrow and scout the area to the east of Ruinspoke. Do not engage any hostile creatures you discover unless it is necessary for your survival; at this point I need information more than I*

*need a handful of additional kobold corpses. Learning the size, location, and composition of the enemy forces would be helpful to us. As I said, we've seen kobolds and gnolls thus far, but I would like to know if there are other creatures also present. Is something else gathering? Is there more to this threat than what we have seen thus far?"*

*Tuanek pauses and looks at each of you in turn. "This, then, is what Ruinspoke requires. Are you willing to help us?"*

The PCs can respond as they see fit, and ask any questions they might have. In most cases Lord Tuanek remains quiet, and looks at Vikom, expecting him to address the PCs and clearly indicating, through his action, that he is both training and watching the younger dragonborn.

The following information should be revealed during the conversation:

- Over the last week there have been two well-coordinated attacks. We believe that these raids were designed to test Ruinspoke's ability to respond to multiple simultaneous incursions. Several farms were heavily damaged and in one case the entire family was slaughtered before we could respond.
- The first attack included kobolds acting in small scouting parties.
- The second attack involved gnolls and some kind of hyenas or wolves.
- The kobold raiders normally come from the east or south of Ruinspoke, but at least once they have attacked a farm in the north. The most recent attack came within a short distance of the town itself, which is closer than the kobolds have ever gone.
- We have not been purely defensive; we have sent a previous group of adventurers to strike back at the kobolds. We thought we had killed the leader responsible for unifying the kobold tribes (an event which occurred in TYMA2-1, so PCs that played the previous adventure will know of this, but avoid spoilers for those who haven't played TYMA2-1).
- Unfortunately, despite this success, it appears that this leader's elimination has not discouraged either the kobolds or whatever organization the leader was working for. Indeed, things have gotten worse of late, with the addition of the gnolls to the raiding forces.
- Lord Tuanek is planning to convene a meeting of the Lance Defenders, the Platinum Cadre, and

Lord Vikom, along with the civilian leaders of Ruinspoke, three days from now. By that time the PCs should be finished with their scouting mission. The PCs will be expected to attend that meeting to report their findings and give their counsel.

- Lord Tuanek is willing to loan horses to the PCs for their scouting mission, and House Jalt will also provide the PCs with room and board. For tonight, the PCs will sleep in the barracks here, at Lord Tuanek's manor house, since the inns in Ruinspoke are already overcrowded with families from the surrounding area (seeking refuge from the raiders).
- The PCs will be paid 50/75 gold pieces each for their services.

## ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Once the meeting is finished, Lord Tuanek taps three times on a wooden block near his desk. A servant appears to show the PCs to their quarters in the manor house. By the time the meeting ends, it is early evening, but there is still plenty of time for the PCs to visit town if they are so inclined. Lord Vikom reminds the PCs to get a good night's sleep and says that he will brief them more fully on their scouting mission first thing in the morning.

The PCs are free to go into town for a drink, to buy supplies, or to learn what they can from the locals, although Lord Tuanek warns them that there's more rumor than fact to be learned in town these days.

If the PCs want to spend some time in Ruinspoke, proceed with Encounter 2. Otherwise, allow them to settle for the night and proceed with Encounter 3.

**Important Note:** Do not let on to the players that something is going to happen overnight. Act like it is just another boring night before the real adventure begins.

## EXPERIENCE POINTS

The PCs do not earn any XP for this encounter and it does not count towards a milestone.

## TREASURE

There is no treasure in this encounter.

## ENCOUNTER 2: RUINSPOKE IN TURMOIL

### SETUP

This encounter is optional. It provides an opportunity for role-playing and information-gathering.

See Appendix 1 for an overview of Ruinspoke. The PCs have time before and after dinner to scout the town and visit with the locals. There is little more to be learned beyond what Tuanek and Vikom have already shared. The townspeople are worried and there is the usual exaggerated rumor mill in full operation. If the PCs visit either of the inns, they discover the truth of Tuanek's comments about crowded living space in town. The Hammerfell and Home Cookin' are both completely full, with no rooms to spare and all available exterior structures (such as the stables) pressed into service as extra sleeping quarters.

There's a rowdy gathering in progress at the Full Mugs tavern. Several locals argue over what should be done about the raids. One believes that Lord Tuanek is too cautious and has the impression the Vikom has been sent to take over the military operation, while another argues just as vehemently that Lord Tuanek is the only dragonborn for the job.

This is a good opportunity for you to introduce any other rumors that you might find useful; for example, if you are preparing a My Realms adventure of your own, you could drop some hints in this encounter. Even in a frontier outpost at the edge of Tymanther, news and stories of the broader Realms can be found.

#### OPTIONAL: QUEST CARD OPPORTUNITY

At the Full Mugs, characters with the *In Slumber Remain* Quest Card notice a human male watching them quietly from the corner of the room, affecting an air of disinterest. His shirt is open to the waist and his hairless chest is covered with a large tattoo of a flame. His name is Flam Yager. Should a PC approach him and say "The cleansing flame thrives during even the coldest night," then ask when the next conflagration of souls will occur, Flam looks surprised but quickly recovers. He replies quietly, "***In the age of twilight was the keep built that only those who travel from the beyond the stars can open. If you truly seek the conflagration, you will need to ask such a traveler.***" Flam then downs his drink and leaves the inn quietly.

There is no story award for completing individual Quest Card tasks; simply have each player make a note on their logsheet that they have completed Task 2.

## ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

After the PCs finish gathering information, they should go back to the barracks at House Jalt, where they are billeted at Lord Tuanek's request. Lord Vikom looks in on the PCs to make sure they are settled, before heading to bed himself.

Again, you want to present this scene nonchalantly. For example, don't ask the players if they set watches (after all, the manor is heavily guarded). Simply ask if the PCs make any plans before retiring. If the players come up with the idea of setting watches on their own, then of course you should let them do so. Get a schedule so you know who is already awake when the action starts.

During the middle of the night, assassins strike. Proceed with Encounter 3.

### EXPERIENCE POINTS AND TREASURE

The PCs do not earn any XP or treasure in this encounter, and it does not count towards a milestone.

## TROUBLESHOOTING

The main assumption here is that the PCs accept Lord Tuanek's offer to stay at the manor house. There's no real reason for them to decline; all the other lodgings in town are full of refugees. More importantly, it's an honor that the adventurers have been invited to sleep under the roof of House Jalt. This shows Tuanek's level of trust in them and the importance of their mission.

Nevertheless, you might find yourself with a group of players who refuse to go along with the plan and insist on sleeping somewhere other than the manor house. That's fine, but you'll need to improvise a bit.

If the PCs decide to sleep somewhere in town, you can still run Encounter 3. The characters wake up to the sound of the alarm being raised at House Jalt, race through town to the estate, and encounter the fleeing assassins just as they escape over the wall. You can use the same battle map (the only change is that the kenku are heading away from the wall instead of toward it). Since the kenku wing mages can't fly more than 4 squares above the ground, and the assassin can't fly at all, the PCs can still engage them.

If the PCs insist on sleeping completely outside the city, then it might be impossible for you to steer them to Encounter 3 in a plausible fashion. In this case, simply have the PCs learn the important information from Lord Vikom the next morning. The tone of the mission has become much more urgent; instead of reconnaissance, the PCs need to find an antidote for Lord Tuanek. In this case, the PCs fight the kenku in Encounter 6 instead of Encounter 3.

## ENCOUNTER 3: DON'T LET THEM ESCAPE!

### ENCOUNTER LEVEL 3/5 (700/1000 XP)

#### SETUP

This encounter contains the following creatures at the low tier:

- 1 kenku assassin (level 4) (K)
- 2 kenku wing mages (level 4) (W)

This encounter contains the following creatures at the high tier:

- 1 kenku assassin (level 6) (K)
- 2 kenku wing mages (level 6) (W)

During the second watch of the night (around midnight), a group of kenku assassins breach the walls behind the manor. They quietly enter the house and attack Lord Tuanek. The commotion is loud and soon a confused scene results.

Remember to keep track of how many rounds, it takes the PCs to reach the grounds and engage the kenku. The kenku might escape before the PCs engage them.

If the PCs posted a watch, read the following:

*From another room inside the manor, you hear a sudden clatter, followed by a scream of pain. You recognize the voice of Lord Tuanek: "What insult is this! How dare you enter my home? Where are my guards? No matter - I'll dispatch you myself!"*

*Moments later, the manor is engulfed in a commotion of shouted alarms and frenzied movement. Dragonborn soldiers race towards the manor from outside, but they may be too late. The interior guards have apparently been silenced; you are surely the closest to Lord Tuanek's quarters.*

If the PCs did not post a watch, have all the characters make Perception checks at a -5 penalty. Those who get a 15 or higher wake up immediately; those who get a 10 or higher wake up 1 round later; those who get below 10 wake up two rounds later. Read the following:

*Your sleep is interrupted by loud shouting and the confused sounds of battle from somewhere on the grounds. Has someone broken into the manor?*

## THE CHASE

It does not matter if the PCs want to head directly for the sound of Lord Tuanek's voice or try to pursue the sound of the fleeing assassins. Either choice leads them in the same direction. (Assume that Tuanek is also pursuing, so the various sounds all lead to the same place, but the PCs get there first.)

At least one PC must reach the grounds within five rounds. Otherwise, the assassins make their way to the far wall and escape. The PCs do not have time to don armor (which takes 5 minutes), but they have time to grab easily accessible items such as weapons, implements, and shields. Go ahead and put the PCs into initiative order while they are still in their room. Each character must decide how many items to pick up before leaving. Time spent gathering equipment gives the assassins more time to escape, but the PCs probably don't want to rush into battle without their weapons, either. The manor is dark, turning the hallways into a maze.

Rather than making this chase too complicated, you can use a simple "zone" system to track where each character is located and determine who reaches the assassins when. It's easiest to abstract away things like differences in the characters' individual speeds for this brief scene, and rather than tracking positions as specific squares, you simply need to know which PCs are in which zones.

The zones are listed in numerical order, but the PCs actually begin the chase in Zone 1 (their quarters). The listed travel times to move from one zone to the next assume that the PCs are using the entire round for movement (running from Zone 2 to Zone 3 is faster than walking from Zone 2 to Zone 3, but running conveys no advantage when moving from Zone 1 to Zone 2 or Zone 0 to Zone 1).

#### ZONE 0 (LOST IN THE MANOR)

The PCs have gone in the wrong direction. Give the PCs a DC 10 Insight check to realize that something doesn't seem right (for example, the sounds of battle are growing fainter rather than louder, allowing them to make a new Perception check, this time DC 10).

It takes one round of travel to reach Zone 2 from Zone 0 (passing back by Zone 1 on the way, but presumably not stopping). There is no advantage to running back instead of walking; the penalty for going the wrong way is that you lose one round.

#### ZONE 1 (THE PCs' QUARTERS)

All characters start the encounter in this zone.

PCs may choose to spend one or more minor actions in this zone to pick up pieces of equipment. Presumably most PCs (other than unarmed combatants) will need to spend at least one minor action to grab a weapon or implement. Equipping a shield requires a standard action, taken after picking up the shield with a minor action. It's safe to assume that adventurers sleep with their important combat items close to hand, so they don't need to waste time searching. Just ask the player what equipment his or her character is grabbing on the way out the door and calculate the appropriate number of actions to determine how many rounds the character spends getting ready.

Remember that a character can trade his or her standard and move actions for additional minor actions, so a character could get out of bed (move action) and pick up two items (minor action and standard traded for minor action) in a single round, or pick up one item and use the remaining move action to exit the room.

When characters leave Zone 1 for the first time, either individually or in groups, at least one PC leaving must succeed on a DC 15 Perception check. (Each character should roll individually and each believes the result of his or her own check.) On a success, the character or group enters Zone 2; on a failure, they go to Zone 0 instead. If a group of PCs have mixed results (some succeed and some fail) then describe how confident each PC is in his or her opinion, based on the degree of success or failure of their individual checks. Then let the players sort it out. They can all decide to go in one direction (and hopefully they picked someone who succeeded) or each PC can go in the direction he or she thinks is correct.

Each character must use one move action to exit Zone 1 for the first time. It does not matter if the character walks or runs. It takes no additional time to reach either Zone 0 or Zone 2; when a character leaves Zone 1, that character is immediately placed in either Zone 0 or Zone 2, depending on the Perception check result, and his or her turn ends.

### ZONE 2 (RACING THROUGH THE MANOR)

PCs in this zone are moving through the manor, heading toward the assassins. They do not need to make additional Perception checks each round once they are headed in the right direction.

It takes two rounds of travel to reach Zone 3 from here, or one round if the character uses the run action. Warn the player that running will cause the PC to suffer the consequences during his or her first round of combat (-5 penalty to attack rolls and the character grants combat advantage).

### ZONE 3 (END OF THE CHASE)

This is the assassins' location. Different PCs may get here at different times. New combatants enter the battle map at the end of each combat round and may act on their initiative count in the next round. Some characters may still be traveling through the manor while others fight the assassins for an extra round or two.

At least one PC must reach Zone 3 before the end of the fifth round. Otherwise, the assassins are gone. If the first PC gets here within five rounds, read the following:

*Ahead of you, just past a row of sturdy hedges, you can see a group of birdlike humanoids racing for the outer wall. One of them spots you and squawks a warning. They abandon stealth for speed, hustling for the safety of the dark, moonless night.*

### FEATURES OF THE AREA

**Illumination:** The night is moonless and dark. Due to several strategically placed torches on the outer walls, the area is considered dimly lit.

**Hedges:** The hedges are five feet high and count as blocking terrain. However, they are not completely solid; a hedge square can be pushed through using 3 squares of movement. A character moving through the hedges grants combat advantage. A character can leap over the hedges as part of a move action with a DC 20 Athletics check (DC 40 without a running start). On a failure, the character gets caught in the branches and falls prone without clearing the obstacle.

**Walls:** The walls are rough stone, 20 feet (4 squares) high, DC 20 Athletics check to climb.

### TACTICS

Assuming someone makes it through the chase scene in time, you should give the PCs a chance to actually engage the kenku, even though the initial setup makes it relatively easy for the kenku to escape.

The kenku wing mages use *wings of the flock* on their first turn, allowing them to fly and hover for the entire encounter, but they do not immediately fly over the wall unless the entire party shows up at the same time (in which case the kenku realize that they are badly outnumbered). More likely the PCs will arrive a bit spread out, and the kenku are arrogant (since their primary mission to poison Lord Tuanek has already succeeded). In this case the wing mages do not even think about fleeing until they are outnumbered and bloodied, whereupon they try to fly over the wall and disappear into the darkness.

Note that the wing mages have a height limit of 4 squares when flying; this allows them to reach the top of

the wall, but they cannot soar over it. This helps give the PCs a last chance to stop them. A wing mage must fly to the top of the wall with one move action, whereupon it lands atop the wall, ending its move (even if it has squares of movement remaining). The wing mage can then fly off the wall into the darkness with its next move action. Spread this over two rounds (move to fly and land on the wall; standard action to attack with a ranged power from atop the wall; next round, standard action to attack, then move to fly off the wall into the darkness). Even after the wing mages have flown over the wall, PCs with darkvision or low-light vision might be able to make ranged attacks for a round or two from atop the wall as the wing mages fly away. The torch-lit area of dim illumination extends 10 squares from the wall. Once the wing mages are beyond the range of the PCs' senses and any ranged attacks, they have escaped.

The kenku assassin tries to kill itself by drinking a lethal potion (the same poison used on Lord Tuanek) once it is reduced to less than 20 hit points. This requires two minor actions (one to draw the vial, and another to drink it). When ingested, this substance deals ongoing 15 poison damage (save ends).

## SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

Make the following adjustments to the combat based on the number of PCs present.

**Four PCs:** Decrease the kenku assassin's hit points by 32.

**Six PCs:** Add another kenku wing mage.

## ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Any kenku captured in this encounter may be questioned in the next encounter. If any of the kenku escape, the PCs will face them again in Encounter 6. Proceed to Encounter 4 when the fight is finished.

## EXPERIENCE POINTS

The characters receive 140/200 experience points each for defeating the kenku.

## TREASURE

Besides the poison sample carried by the assassin, one of the wing mages has a *whistle of warning* (level 8). The kenku assassin wears a suit of +2 *summoned armor* (low level) or +2 *sylvan armor* (high level).

## ENCOUNTER 3: “DON’T LET THEM ESCAPE!” (LOW LEVEL)

Kenku Assassin (Level 4)	Level 4 Elite Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid	XP 350
<b>Initiative</b> +8 <b>Senses</b> Perception +6; low-light vision	
<b>HP</b> 110; <b>Bloodied</b> 55	
<b>AC</b> 18; <b>Fortitude</b> 15; <b>Reflex</b> 16; <b>Will</b> 15	
<b>Saving Throws</b> +2	
<b>Speed</b> 6	
<b>Action Points</b> 1	
<b>m Venomous Stab</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Poison, Weapon</b>	
+9 vs. AC; 1d6 + 5 damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).	
<b>r Venomous Shot</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Poison, Weapon</b>	
Ranged 15/30; +9 vs. AC; 1d8 + 4 poison damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).	
<b>M Fluttering Attack</b> (standard; at-will)	
The kenku assassin shifts 4 squares and uses <i>venomous stab</i> during that move.	
<b>M Gouging Talons</b> (immediate reaction, when an enemy attacks the kenku assassin; at-will)	
Targets the triggering enemy; +9 vs. AC; 1d6 + 2 damage.	
<b>M Feather Burst</b> (minor; encounter)	
Close burst 2; targets enemies; no attack roll; the target is blinded until the end of the kenku assassin’s turn.	
<b>Flock Effect</b>	
A kenku gains a +3 bonus instead of +2 while flanking, and it grants a +3 bonus instead of +2 while aiding another.	
<b>Mimicry</b>	
A kenku can mimic sounds and voices. A successful Insight check opposed by the kenku’s Bluff check allows a listener to determine that the effect is faked.	
<b>Alignment</b> Unaligned	<b>Languages</b> Common
<b>Skills</b> Bluff +9, Stealth +11, Thievery +11	
<b>Str</b> 13 (+3)	<b>Dex</b> 18 (+6) <b>Wis</b> 9 (+1)
<b>Con</b> 15 (+4)	<b>Int</b> 13 (+3) <b>Cha</b> 15 (+4)
<b>Equipment</b> leather armor, shortbow, short sword, arrow x 20.	

Kenku Wing Mage (Level 4)	Level 4 Artillery
Medium natural humanoid	XP 175
<b>Initiative</b> +3 <b>Senses</b> Perception +3; low-light vision	
<b>HP</b> 44; <b>Bloodied</b> 22	
<b>AC</b> 16; <b>Fortitude</b> 14; <b>Reflex</b> 16; <b>Will</b> 17	
<b>Speed</b> 6	
<b>m Dagger</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Weapon</b>	
+8 vs. AC; 1d4 + 3 damage.	
<b>r Murder of Crows</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Force, Implement</b>	
Ranged 20; +9 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 4 force damage, and the target grants combat advantage to the kenku wing mage (save ends).	
<b>C Hurricane Blast</b> (standard; recharge 5-6) ♦ <b>Force, Implement</b>	
Close blast 3; +7 vs. Fortitude, 1d6 + 6 force damage, and the kenku wing mage slides the target 3 squares.	
<b>A Death Flock</b> (standard; encounter) ♦ <b>Force, Implement</b>	
Area burst 1 within 20; +7 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 6 force damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).	
<b>Flock Effect</b>	
A kenku gains a +3 bonus instead of +2 while flanking, and it grants a +3 bonus instead of +2 while aiding another.	
<b>Mimicry</b>	
A kenku can mimic sounds and voices. A successful Insight check opposed by the kenku’s Bluff check allows a listener to determine that the effect is faked.	
<b>Wings of the Flock</b> (minor; encounter) ♦ <b>Force</b>	
The kenku wing mage gains fly 6 (hover; altitude limit 4) until the end of the encounter.	
<b>Alignment</b> Unaligned	<b>Languages</b> Common
<b>Skills</b> Stealth +8	
<b>Str</b> 9 (+1)	<b>Dex</b> 13 (+3) <b>Wis</b> 13 (+3)
<b>Con</b> 14 (+4)	<b>Int</b> 18 (+6) <b>Cha</b> 15 (+4)
<b>Equipment</b> dagger, orb implement, robes.	

## ENCOUNTER 3: “DON’T LET THEM ESCAPE!” (HIGH LEVEL)

Kenku Assassin (Level 6)	Level 6 Elite Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid	XP 500
<b>Initiative</b> +9 <b>Senses</b> Perception +7; low-light vision	
<b>HP</b> 142; <b>Bloodied</b> 71	
<b>AC</b> 20; <b>Fortitude</b> 17; <b>Reflex</b> 18; <b>Will</b> 17	
<b>Saving Throws</b> +2	
<b>Speed</b> 6	
<b>Action Points</b> 1	
<b>m Venomous Stab</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Poison, Weapon</b>	
+11 vs. AC; 1d6 + 6 damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).	
<b>r Venomous Shot</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Poison, Weapon</b>	
Ranged 15/30; +11 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 poison damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).	
<b>M Fluttering Attack</b> (standard; at-will)	
The kenku assassin shifts 4 squares and uses <i>venomous stab</i> during that move.	
<b>M Gouging Talons</b> (immediate reaction, when an enemy attacks the kenku assassin; at-will)	
Targets the triggering enemy; +11 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage.	
<b>M Feather Burst</b> (minor; encounter)	
Close burst 2; targets enemies; no attack roll; the target is blinded until the end of the kenku assassin’s turn.	
<b>Flock Effect</b>	
A kenku gains a +3 bonus instead of +2 while flanking, and it grants a +3 bonus instead of +2 while aiding another.	
<b>Mimicry</b>	
A kenku can mimic sounds and voices. A successful Insight check opposed by the kenku’s Bluff check allows a listener to determine that the effect is faked.	
<b>Alignment</b> Unaligned	<b>Languages</b> Common
<b>Skills</b> Bluff +10, Stealth +12, Thievery +12	
<b>Str</b> 13 (+4)	<b>Dex</b> 18 (+7) <b>Wis</b> 9 (+2)
<b>Con</b> 15 (+5)	<b>Int</b> 13 (+4) <b>Cha</b> 15 (+5)
<b>Equipment</b> leather armor, shortbow, short sword, arrow x 20.	

Kenku Wing Mage (Level 6)	Level 6 Artillery
Medium natural humanoid	XP 250
<b>Initiative</b> +4 <b>Senses</b> Perception +4; low-light vision	
<b>HP</b> 56; <b>Bloodied</b> 28	
<b>AC</b> 18; <b>Fortitude</b> 15; <b>Reflex</b> 18; <b>Will</b> 19	
<b>Speed</b> 6	
<b>m Dagger</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Weapon</b>	
+10 vs. AC; 1d4 + 4 damage.	
<b>r Murder of Crows</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Force, Implement</b>	
Ranged 20; +11 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 5 force damage, and the target grants combat advantage to the kenku wing mage (save ends).	
<b>C Hurricane Blast</b> (standard; recharge 5-6) ♦ <b>Force, Implement</b>	
Close blast 3; +9 vs. Fortitude, 1d6 + 7 force damage, and the kenku wing mage slides the target 3 squares.	
<b>A Death Flock</b> (standard; encounter) ♦ <b>Force, Implement</b>	
Area burst 1 within 20; +9 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 7 force damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).	
<b>Flock Effect</b>	
A kenku gains a +3 bonus instead of +2 while flanking, and it grants a +3 bonus instead of +2 while aiding another.	
<b>Mimicry</b>	
A kenku can mimic sounds and voices. A successful Insight check opposed by the kenku’s Bluff check allows a listener to determine that the effect is faked.	
<b>Wings of the Flock</b> (minor; encounter) ♦ <b>Force</b>	
The kenku wing mage gains fly 6 (hover; altitude limit 4) until the end of the encounter.	
<b>Alignment</b> Unaligned	<b>Languages</b> Common
<b>Skills</b> Stealth +9	
<b>Str</b> 9 (+2)	<b>Dex</b> 13 (+4) <b>Wis</b> 13 (+4)
<b>Con</b> 14 (+5)	<b>Int</b> 18 (+7) <b>Cha</b> 15 (+5)
<b>Equipment</b> dagger, orb implement, robes.	

## ENCOUNTER 3: “DON’T LET THEM ESCAPE!” (MAP)

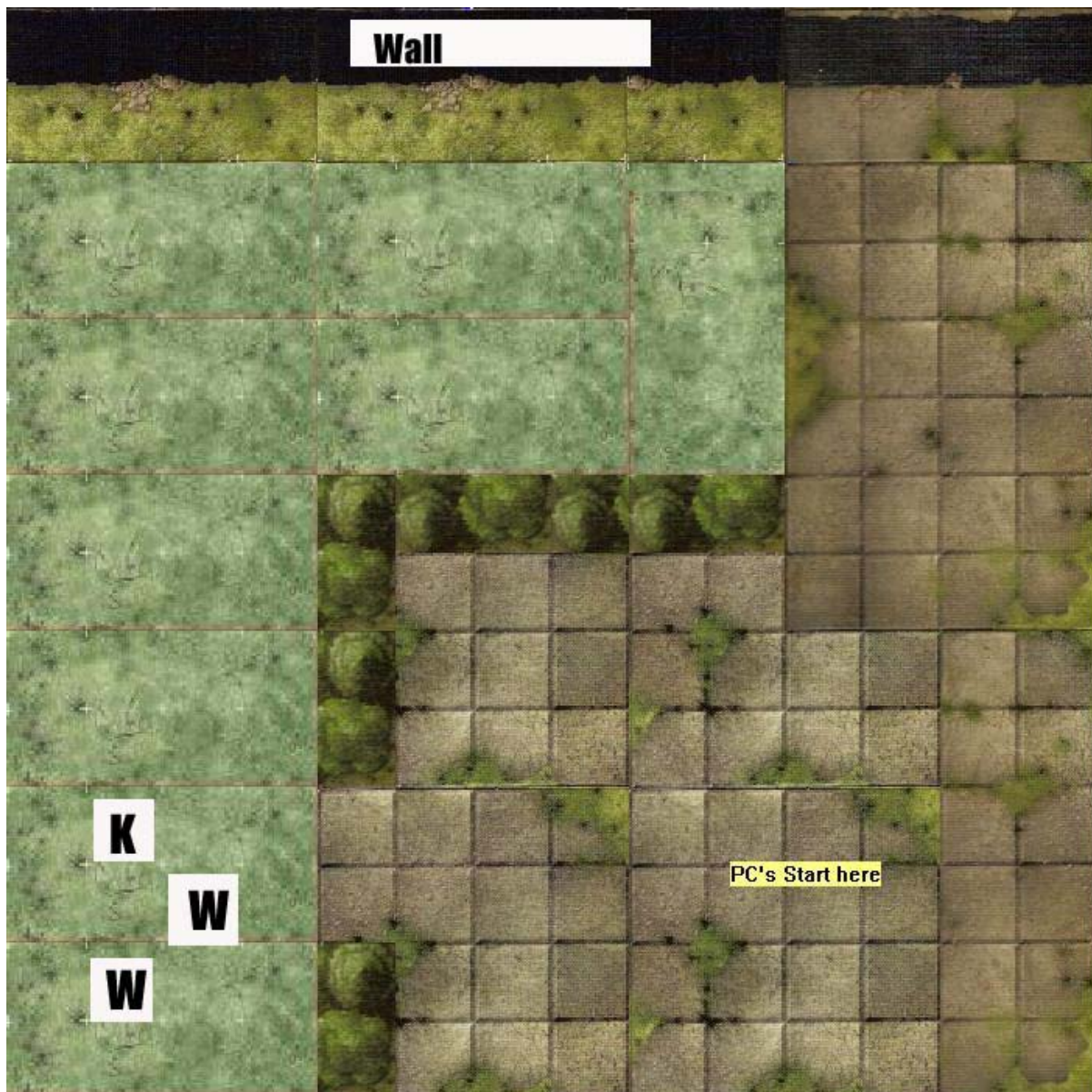
### TILE SETS NEEDED

Ruins of the Wild x2

Sinister Woods x2

Note: The hedge squares are just the bushes/small trees. The light green squares taking up the left-hand side of the map are grassy (normal) terrain. As the PCs may arrive on different rounds depending on how long it took each character to grab his or her gear and get through the darkened manor, new arrivals should enter from the right-hand side of the battle map at the end of each round, and can then participate on their initiative count in the next round.

The start position shown for the kenku assumes that the first PC reaches this area on or before the third round of the chase. If the first PC doesn’t arrive until the fourth round, move the kenku halfway to the wall. If the first PC doesn’t arrive until the fifth round, put the kenku all the way next to the wall. If the first PC doesn’t arrive until the sixth round or later, the kenku have already gone over the wall (the mages fly and the assassin climbs).



## ENCOUNTER 4: POISONED PURPOSE

**SKILL CHALLENGE LEVEL 3/5,  
COMPLEXITY 2 (300/400 XP)**

### SETUP

#### Important NPCs:

**Lord Vikom:** Lord Vikom is very upset and wants to personally lead the way to find the cure for Lord Tuanek.

**Lord Tuanek:** Lord Tuanek is in bad shape, but if the PCs act quickly they can get key information from him and keep him from dying.

The situation is dire. House Jalt is in turmoil. One or more assassins may still be on the grounds, Lord Tuanek has been wounded and is fading fast from poison, and the PCs need to figure out where this attack came from as quickly as possible.

The PCs should be allowed to make their own choices here, but there is a certain urgency to Vikom's demands, and the concern about Tuanek should trump investigation and interrogation of captured assassins. If the PCs don't calm Vikom down and speak with Tuanek before moving on to interrogating the kenku, the DCs for keeping Tuanek lucid increase by 2.

Treat these scenes as story elements and allow the PCs to move the plot along with the skills they choose to use. Each scene requires 2 successes, and they should be completed in order, although Scenes 3 and 4 are interchangeable. A second failure in any scene ends that scene and three total failures ends the skill challenge.

### SKILL CHALLENGE: LOCATING THE KENKUS' LAIR

**Goal:** The PC's must learn the location of the assassins' base of operations so they can go there and retrieve the antidote.

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

**Primary Skills:** Diplomacy, Heal, Intimidate, Perception.

**Secondary Skills:** Arcana, Bluff, Insight, Nature.

**Victory:** The PCs are able to determine where the assassins came from, using the clues left behind and possibly interrogation.

**Defeat:** The PCs are unable to figure out where to go. Eventually, Lord Vikom is able to figure out the location of the base and sends the PCs there. A lot of time is lost though, reducing Lord Tuanek's chance of survival.

### SCENE 1 – VIKOM'S CONCERN (2 SUCCESSES)

Read the following if any of the kenku escaped.

*Lord Vikom bursts from the front of the manor and speeds your way, shouting at the various guards, Lance Defenders, and Platinum Cadre members in the vicinity. His expression suggests that the young dragonborn noble is on the verge of losing control. Then he seems to gather himself (somewhat), and barks a command: "What do you know?"*

The PCs must calm Lord Vikom down and get him to take them to Lord Tuanek.

If the PCs are successful in calming Vikom, he asks them to check on Lord Tuanek, explaining that Tuanek has been injured and seems to be in worse shape than his wounds would indicate. Clerics from the Temple of Bahamut are on their way, but the PCs might have the necessary skills to help stabilize Lord Tuanek sooner.

If the PCs suffer two failures during this initial step of the skill challenge, Vikom loses his patience and brusquely orders the PCs to attend Lord Tuanek and see if they can help stabilize his condition. All DCs in Scene 2 are increased by 2 as a result of the failure.

**Diplomacy or Intimidate DC 16/17** (1 success; 2 maximum)

The PCs can reason with Vikom by appealing to their record, explaining what happened, and pointing him forward to what needs to be done. Or, they can accomplish the same goals with stern words; though he is a noble, Vikom is still young and somewhat unsure of himself. As long as the PCs do not insult him, they can calm him down by being more forceful than he is.

**Insight DC 11/12** (not a success or failure)

The PCs can determine that Vikom is worried that he'll be held accountable for the lapse in security, and that if Tuanek dies his reputation will be forever tarnished. They can use this to improve their diplomatic efforts and gain a +5 bonus on social skill checks with Vikom.

**Heal or Perception DC 16/17** (1 success; 1 maximum)

The PCs see blood on Vikom's clothing and draw his attention to it. He hasn't even noticed his own injuries because of his intense anger at the attack and his worry to save Lord Tuanek. This moment of clarity causes Vikom to take a deep breath, calm down, and refocus on solving the problems at hand. He waves away any attempt by the PCs to heal him, asking them to save their resources for Lord Tuanek. (If the PCs use Heal instead of Perception, they can determine that Vikom

has not been poisoned, but that fact isn't relevant to the skill challenge.)

## **SCENE 2 – THE POISONED PURPOSE (2 SUCCESSES)**

Read the following as the PCs enter Lord Tuanek's quarters:

*Lord Tuanek's normally well-ordered room is a bloody mess. The bed is torn to shreds and there is blood everywhere. Tuanek himself lies on a makeshift pallet, drifting in and out of consciousness while speaking to people who aren't there. His servants hover anxiously, tears streaming openly down their faces at the sight of their stricken Lord.*

The PCs must restore enough lucidity to help Tuanek reveal important information the kenku let slip during the unsuccessful attempt on his life. In this part of the skill challenge, each success allows Tuanek's condition to improve and each failure causes it to deteriorate. Two successes allow him to relate key information; two failures cause him to fall into a nearly comatose stupor. Feel free to allow this scene to go on until Tuanek is either well enough to talk or has lapsed into delirium.

### **Arcana DC 11/12 (not a success or failure)**

The PC recognizes the alchemical and arcane nature of the poison, even recognizing some of its magical components. A successful Arcana check provides a +5 bonus on the Heal check. (If the PCs also gain a bonus from using the Nature skill, the two bonuses stack.)

### **Diplomacy or Intimidate DC 16/17 (1 success; 1 maximum)**

The PCs speak kindly and with purpose, or address Tuanek, with forceful words, but in either case the result is the same. On a success, they draw Tuanek's attention back toward the world of the living. On a failure, their efforts only seem to make things worse.

### **Heal DC 21/22 (1 success; 1 maximum)**

The PCs provide physical aid and this allows Tuanek's condition to improve. The PCs determine that the poison is spreading, but that he has some time before it will kill him. The check is harder than normal because of the unusual nature of the poison used. A successful check lessens the effects of the poison, but without the original poison and/or antidote it is impossible to cure the poison. The normal rituals will not suffice due to the arcane components that were used in the poison, although these rituals might buy extra time before Lord Tuanek succumbs.

### **Insight or Nature DC 11/12 (not a success or failure)**

The PCs remember that kenku can mimic other creatures and ask Tuanek if he remembers anything they might have said or any voices they used. This sparks Tuanek's memory and helps him clear his mind enough to relate what he heard. This provides a +5 bonus on the Diplomacy and/or Intimidate check.

### **Nature DC 11/12 (not a success or failure)**

A PC can use Nature to gain some of the same information as can be gained with the Arcana skill, studying the natural components of the poison instead of the magical components. The Heal bonus is only +2 instead of +5 in this case, however, as the main element making the poison so deadly is a magical ingredient.

If the PCs bring Tuanek to lucidity, read the following:

*Tuanek gains strength as he responds to your ministrations. He looks at you and Vikom and with great effort relates what he saw. "I thought I heard your voice [speaking to Vikom] in the hall and I rose and opened the door. There were at least three of them, those black bird-like men."*

*They attacked without a word until I heard one say "get him with the poison before it dries, you fool. The alchemist said we haven't got much time once it's exposed to the air."*

*When they stabbed my leg the pain was horrendous and the assassins immediately turned to flee. I heard one say as they ran like the cowards they are, "Hurry up. We've got to get to the field!"*

If the PC's fail to bring Tuanek around, read the following:

*Lord Vikom looks at you with increasing frustration as Tuanek fades into meaningless delirium. "I don't think that Lord Tuanek is going to be able to help us," he says, "and frankly your ministrations only seem to be making things worse. You'd better check the grounds and see what you can figure out. We've got to find out who's behind this, immediately!"*

## **SCENE 3: MAKE THE BIRD SQUAWK! (2 SUCCESSES)**

Note that this scene is only possible if the PCs captured at least one of the kenku in Encounter 3. The PCs only need six successes total for the overall skill challenge, so they can still achieve victory without using this scene.

In this scene the PCs interrogate the kenku, who are unlikely to reveal much, but with the right motivation they might reveal the location of the alchemist or the

unique nature of the poison. Each success reveals one of the following facts:

- They were sent by a "dragonborn rat" who hired an alchemist to make the poison.
- Their base is an underground cave, accessible through a hidden tunnel in a hay field east of Ruinspoke.

PCs who specifically ask about any defenses and creatures they can meet at the hideout and who succeed at a DC 21/22 Intimidate check learn about both the troglodytes in Encounter 5 and the traps in Encounter 7.

**Bluff or Insight DC 11/12** (not a success or failure)

By coming up with convincing lies, or realizing what motivates the kenku, the PCs gain a +5 bonus on the next check made to reveal information.

**Diplomacy DC 21/22 or Intimidate DC 16/17** (1 success; 2 maximum)

The PC's are able to convince the kenku it will be far better for them if they talk. They can achieve this persuasion through means either gentle or harsh, but in this case, the stick is more effective than the carrot. After two failures, however, the kenku refuse to say anything else and the scene is over.

**Nature 11/12** (not a success or failure)

The PC draws on knowledge of kenku anatomy or psychology during the interrogation. This grants a +5 bonus on the next check made to reveal information. This does not stack with the Bluff/Insight check; each of the secondary skills can be used once, to affect a different primary skill check.

**PART 4: INVESTIGATING THE GROUNDS (2 SUCCESSES)**

The PCs might want to look around the grounds or search Lord Tuanek's room. They can find a few important clues. These lead in the same direction as Scene 3 and can either confirm what the PCs learned from the kenku or replace that scene if the PCs did not manage (or did not choose) to take any prisoners.

**Perception DC 11/12** (1 success; 1 maximum)

In Tuanek's room, they can find bits of wheat that fell from the kenku's shoes. This draws attention to a small amount of mud. Perhaps someone knows where this type of soil would be found? The estate's groundskeeper can relate that there are hay and wheat fields east of town, and the color of the loam matches the mud. Perhaps the kenku traveled through those fields on the way here. This success unlocks the final Perception check.

**Streetwise DC 11/12** (1 success; 1 maximum)

The PCs talk to the guards who were on watch when the kenku infiltrated the manor. Based on where the dead guards were found and what noises different people heard, the PCs determine that the kenku came in over a specific section of the wall. This is where the PCs should go to search for the assassins' tracks. This success unlocks the final Perception check.

**Perception DC 16/17** (unlocked by either the first Perception check or the Streetwise check; 1 success; 1 maximum)

Once the PCs have identified the direction from which the kenku approached the manor, this final Perception check allows them to spot a trail leading east into the fields. The kenku wing mages can fly from time to time, so they don't leave as many tracks, but the assassin is not so fortunate, and the PCs can backtrack his trail.

After successfully following the tracks, the PCs arrive at the hidden tunnel entrance described in Encounter 5.

## ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

The PCs have a lot of work to do and they must do it quickly. Regardless of success or failure, they find the lair of the assassins. Proceed with Encounter 5.

**Success:** If the PCs succeeded in garnering the location of the assassin's base of operation, Vikom requests they go quickly and capture whoever is there so they can be brought to justice. The PCs can save Tuanek simply by recovering the antidote in this case, even if they fail to kill or capture the alchemist.

**Failure:** If the PCs fail the skill challenge, Vikom is upset and worried about Lord Tuanek. After some questioning, it is determined that one of the recent attacks on a farm east of town was unique in that there were few tracks to follow leaving the farm (suggesting flying creatures, like the kenku wing mages). Perhaps there is something more to that place and the PCs can go investigate there next. The characters have wasted a lot of time, though, and Lord Tuanek falls into a coma. Simply recovering the antidote will no longer be enough; they need to bring the alchemist back alive or Lord Tuanek will die.

## EXPERIENCE POINTS

The characters receive 60/80 XP each for succeeding at the overall skill challenge.

## TREASURE

There is no treasure in this encounter.

## ENCOUNTER 5: FOUL GUARDS

### ENCOUNTER LEVEL 5/7 (1050/1550 XP)

#### SETUP

This encounter includes the following creatures at the low tier:

- 3 troglodyte maulers (level 4) (M)
- 2 troglodyte impalers (level 4) (I)
- 1 troglodyte thrasher (level 4) (T)

This encounter includes the following creatures at the high tier:

- 3 troglodyte maulers (level 6) (M)
- 2 troglodyte impalers (level 6) (I)
- 1 troglodyte thrasher (level 7) (T)

Whether the PCs found their way here through their own successful investigations or were led by others, they have discovered a poorly-concealed tunnel entrance in the middle of a hay field. The kenku assassins did not do a very good job hiding the entrance, because they were expecting to return quickly.

When the PCs enter the tunnel, read the following:

*The hastily covered tunnel is muddy but short, leading to a narrow underground passage. There are recent signs of travel, but the passage itself appears to have been undisturbed for many years, which probably explains why the people of Ruinspoke have never discovered that there is a natural cave system underneath their eastern fields.*

Get a marching order (assuming a 10-foot-wide tunnel of indeterminate length) and ask what the PCs are going to use for light, as the tunnel is unlit. If the PCs carry a visible light source, then the troglodytes (who all have darkvision) have an easier time noticing their approach.

*Ahead, the narrow passage widens into a large underground cave. A foul odor wafts toward you on a stale breeze.*

The PCs can make Nature checks (DC 15) to identify the stench as troglodyte musk, and it seems fresh. Compare the PCs' Stealth check results to the troglodytes' passive Perception scores. The troglodytes get a +10 bonus to Perception checks against any group of PCs carrying a visible light source. If the troglodytes notice the PCs coming, they begin making preparations for battle.

Perception DC 13/14:

*You hear a guttural voice up ahead, issuing commands.*

If any of the PCs speak Draconic, they understand the command as an order to get ready for intruders.

If the troglodytes do not notice the PCs coming, then the PCs gain a surprise round. If the troglodytes notice the PCs but the PCs do not notice the troglodytes, then the trogs gain a surprise round. Otherwise, there is no surprise and combat begins when the first PC enters the starting area shown on the battle map.

#### FEATURES OF THE AREA

**Illumination:** The cave is completely dark, which is how the troglodytes like it.

**Ridge:** The ridge that runs from the northeast to the southwest is 10 feet high (DC 15 Athletics to climb).

#### TACTICS

The troglodytes are not geniuses, but they know how to defend their territory. The troglodyte thrasher charges the front-most PC to clog the cave entrance.

The troglodyte impalers use *impaling shot* to restrain PCs and keep them bottled up. They throw javelins until they run out, then enter melee with spears.

The troglodyte maulers throw javelins on their first turn unless directly engaged. They then move up to help support the thrasher in melee.

The troglodytes do not retreat or surrender.

#### SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

Make the following adjustments to the combat based on the number of PCs present.

**Four PCs:** Remove a troglodyte mauler.

**Six PCs:** Add another troglodyte thrasher.

#### ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Assuming the PCs defeat the troglodytes they are free to continue through the cave. The passage resumes on the far side, but the nature of the wall changes from rough to worked stone. After about 100 yards, the characters discover the entrance to a small room on one side of the passage. Proceed to Encounter 6.

#### EXPERIENCE POINTS

The characters receive 210/310 experience points each for defeating the troglodytes.

#### TREASURE

There is no treasure in this encounter.

## ENCOUNTER 5: "FOUL GUARDS" (LOW LEVEL)

Troglodyte Mauler (Level 4)		Level 4 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid (reptile)		XP 175
Initiative +5	Senses Perception +4; darkvision	
Troglodyte Stench aura 1; living enemies in the aura take a -2 penalty to attack rolls.		
HP 58; Bloodied 29		
AC 20; Fortitude 19; Reflex 16; Will 17		
Speed 5		
m Greatclub (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+10 vs. AC; 2d4 +3 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the troglodyte mauler's next turn.		
m Claw (standard; at-will)		
+8 vs. AC; 1d4 + 3 damage.		
M Bite (minor 1/round; at-will)		
Requires combat advantage; +8 vs. Fortitude; 1d6 + 3 damage, and until the end of the troglodyte mauler's next turn, healing on the target restores only half the total amount.		
R Javelin (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
Ranged 10/20; +10 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage.		
Alignment Chaotic Evil	Languages Draconic	
Skills Athletics +11, Endurance +11		
Str 18 (+6)	Dex 12 (+3)	Wis 15 (+4)
Con 18 (+6)	Int 6 (+0)	Cha 8 (+1)
Equipment: greatclub, javelin x2		

Troglodyte Thrasher (Level 4)		Level 4 Brute
Medium natural humanoid (reptile)		XP 175
<b>Initiative</b> +4 <b>Senses</b> Perception +5; darkvision		
<b>Troglodyte Stench</b> aura 1; each living enemy within the aura takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls.		
<b>HP</b> 70; <b>Bloodied</b> 35		
<b>AC</b> 16; <b>Fortitude</b> 16; <b>Reflex</b> 12; <b>Will</b> 14		
<b>Speed</b> 5		
<b>m Claw</b> (standard; at-will)		
+7 vs. AC; 3d6 + 3 damage.		
<b>M Tooth and Claw</b> (standard; at-will)		
+7 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage. If this attack bloodies the target, the troglodyte thrasher makes a claw attack against the target as a free action. Effect: Make one more attack against the same target or a different one.		
<b>Alignment</b> Chaotic Evil	<b>Languages</b> Draconic	
<b>Str</b> 18 (+6)	<b>Dex</b> 15 (+4)	<b>Wis</b> 16 (+5)
<b>Con</b> 20 (+7)	<b>Int</b> 4 (-1)	<b>Cha</b> 11 (+2)

Troglodyte Impaler (Level 4)		Level 4 Artillery
Medium natural humanoid (reptile)		XP 175
Initiative +4		Senses Perception +8; darkvision
Troglodyte Stench aura 1; living enemies in the aura take a -2 penalty to attack rolls.		
HP 51; Bloodied 25		
AC 19; Fortitude 19; Reflex 16; Will 16		
Speed 5		
m <b>Spear</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Weapon</b>		
+8 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage.		
m <b>Claw</b> (standard; at-will)		
+6 vs. AC; 1d4 + 3 damage.		
r <b>Javelin</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Weapon</b>		
Ranged 10/20; +9 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage.		
R <b>Impaling Shot</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Weapon</b>		
Requires javelin; ranged 10; +9 vs. AC; 3d6 + 3 damage, and the troglodyte impaler makes a secondary attack against the same target. <i>Secondary Attack</i> : +7 vs. Fortitude; The target is restrained (save ends).		
Alignment Chaotic Evil		Languages Draconic
Skills Athletics +11, Endurance +12		
Str 19 (+6)	Dex 14 (+4)	Wis 12 (+3)
Con 21 (+7)	Int 7 (+0)	Cha 9 (+1)
Equipment: spear, javelin x6		

## ENCOUNTER 5: "FOUL GUARDS" (HIGH LEVEL)

Troglodyte Mauler		Level 6 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid (reptile)		XP 250
<b>Initiative</b> +6 <b>Senses</b> Perception +5; darkvision		
<b>Troglodyte Stench</b> aura 1; living enemies in the aura take a -2 penalty to attack rolls.		
<b>HP</b> 74; <b>Bloodied</b> 37		
<b>AC</b> 22; <b>Fortitude</b> 21; <b>Reflex</b> 18; <b>Will</b> 19		
<b>Speed</b> 5		
m <b>Greatclub</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Weapon</b>		
+12 vs. AC; 2d4 + 4 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the troglodyte mauler's next turn.		
m <b>Claw</b> (standard; at-will)		
+10 vs. AC; 1d4 + 4 damage.		
M <b>Bite</b> (minor 1/round; at-will)		
Requires combat advantage; +10 vs. Fortitude; 1d6 + 4 damage, and until the end of the troglodyte mauler's next turn, healing on the target restores only half the total amount.		
R <b>Javelin</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Weapon</b>		
Ranged 10/20; +12 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage.		
<b>Alignment</b> Chaotic Evil <b>Languages</b> Draconic		
<b>Skills</b> Athletics +12, Endurance +12		
<b>Str</b> 18 (+7)	<b>Dex</b> 12 (+4)	<b>Wis</b> 15 (+5)
<b>Con</b> 18 (+7)	<b>Int</b> 6 (+1)	<b>Cha</b> 8 (+2)
Equipment: greatclub, javelin x2		

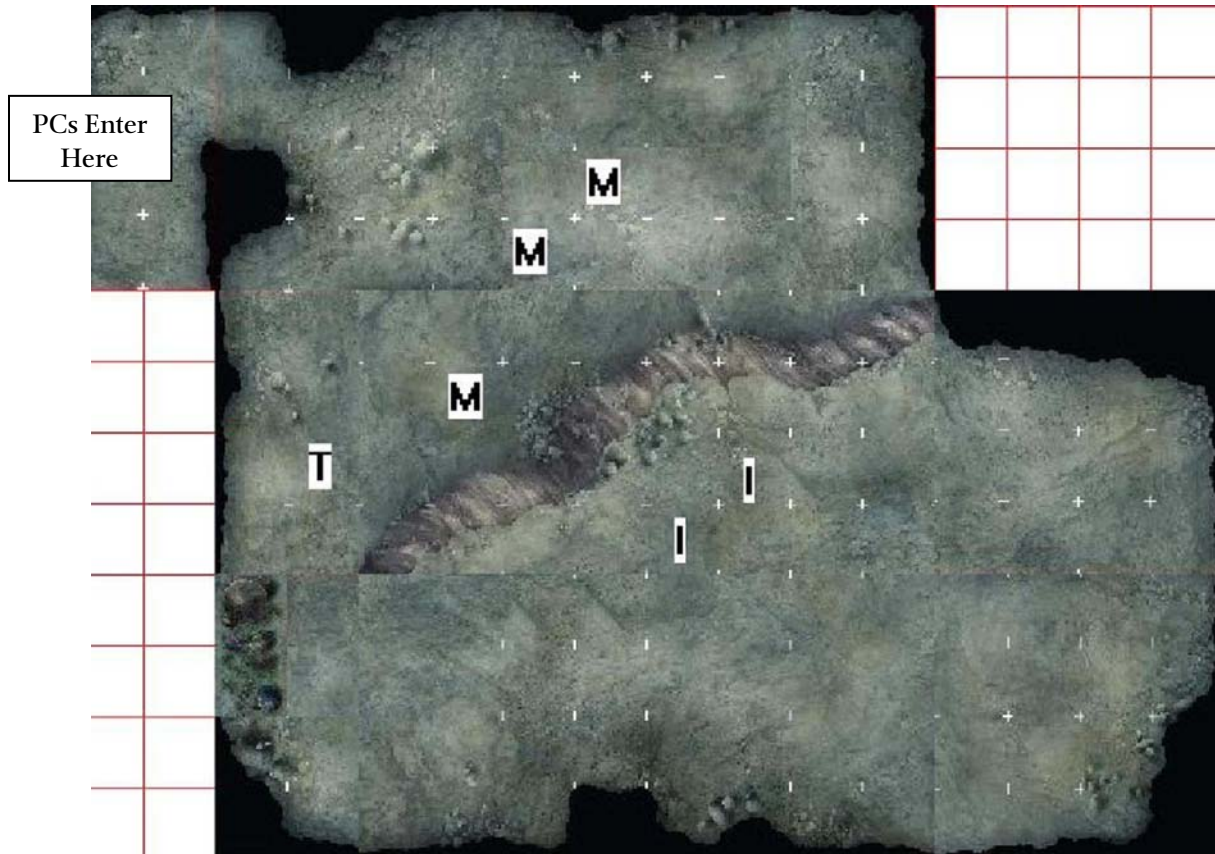
Troglodyte Thrasher		Level 7 Brute
Medium natural humanoid (reptile)		XP 300
<b>Initiative</b> +5 <b>Senses</b> Perception +6; darkvision		
<b>Troglodyte Stench</b> aura 1; each living enemy within the aura takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls.		
<b>HP</b> 100; <b>Bloodied</b> 50		
<b>AC</b> 19; <b>Fortitude</b> 19; <b>Reflex</b> 15; <b>Will</b> 17		
<b>Speed</b> 5		
m <b>Claw</b> (standard; at-will)		
+10 vs. AC; 3d6 + 4 damage.		
M <b>Tooth and Claw</b> (standard; at-will)		
+10 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage. If this attack bloodies the target, the troglodyte thrasher makes a claw attack against the target as a free action. Effect: Make one more attack against the same target or a different one.		
<b>Alignment</b> Chaotic Evil <b>Languages</b> Draconic		
<b>Str</b> 18 (+7)	<b>Dex</b> 15 (+5)	<b>Wis</b> 16 (+6)
<b>Con</b> 20 (+8)	<b>Int</b> 4 (+0)	<b>Cha</b> 11 (+3)

Troglodyte Impaler (Level 6)		Level 6 Artillery
Medium natural humanoid (reptile)		XP 250
<b>Initiative</b> +5 <b>Senses</b> Perception +9; darkvision		
<b>Troglodyte Stench</b> aura 1; living enemies in the aura take a -2 penalty to attack rolls.		
<b>HP</b> 63; <b>Bloodied</b> 31		
<b>AC</b> 21; <b>Fortitude</b> 21; <b>Reflex</b> 18; <b>Will</b> 17		
<b>Speed</b> 5		
m <b>Spear</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Weapon</b>		
+10 vs. AC; 1d8 + 4 damage.		
m <b>Claw</b> (standard; at-will)		
+8 vs. AC; 1d4 + 4 damage.		
r <b>Javelin</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Weapon</b>		
Ranged 10/20; +11 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage.		
R <b>Impaling Shot</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Weapon</b>		
Requires javelin; ranged 10; +11 vs. AC; 2d6 + 4 damage, and the troglodyte impaler makes a secondary attack against the same target. <i>Secondary Attack</i> : +9 vs. Fortitude; The target is restrained (save ends).		
<b>Alignment</b> Chaotic Evil <b>Languages</b> Draconic		
<b>Skills</b> Athletics +12, Endurance +13		
<b>Str</b> 19 (+7)	<b>Dex</b> 14 (+5)	<b>Wis</b> 13 (+4)
<b>Con</b> 21 (+8)	<b>Int</b> 7 (+1)	<b>Cha</b> 9 (+2)
Equipment: spear, javelin x6		

## ENCOUNTER 5: "FOUL GUARDS" (MAP)

### TILE SETS NEEDED

*Lost Caverns of the Underdark x2*



## ENCOUNTER 6: KENKU HIDEOUT

### ENCOUNTER LEVEL 3/5 (700/1000 XP)

#### SETUP

This encounter is a combat encounter only if the PCs failed to defeat all the kenku in Encounter 3. Those that escaped (or were never encountered) are here. The surviving kenku have not taken an extended rest, but they have taken a short rest, allowing each kenku to regain its encounter powers and spend its one healing surge (which may or may not fully heal it).

This encounter contains the following creatures at the low tier:

- 1 kenku assassin (level 4) (K)
- 2 kenku wing mages (level 4) (W)

This encounter contains the following creatures at the high tier:

- 1 kenku assassin (level 6) (K)
- 2 kenku wing mages (level 6) (W)

**Note:** Stat blocks for the kenku are found in Encounter 3. They are not reproduced in this encounter.

The passageway leading from the guard area leads about 100 yards down the cave to the kenku sleeping area.

Read the following when the PCs enter the area:

*The tunnel leading from the troglodyte guard post has been smoothed out, although the quality of the stonework is nothing any self-respecting dwarf would willingly claim as his own.*

*Unlit torches in rust-free sconces line the hallway and the floor is clean of any dust or debris. The corridor is straight and reasonably wide. Although it angles down, leading ever deeper into the earth, the footing is not treacherous. Up ahead you see an open archway on the right-hand side of the passage.*

*[Only if there are kenku present] Torchlight spills into the hall from somewhere beyond the archway.*

If the PCs decide not to investigate the side opening at this time, proceed to Encounter 7 (although if the kenku are present and hear the PCs pass by, they come out to investigate). If the PCs explore the opening, continue with this encounter.

The room's floor is smooth and there is no furniture. There are a few blankets and some rough bedding

thrown down. (Kenku tend to create nest-like sleeping areas.)

#### FEATURES OF THE AREA

**Illumination:** If there are no kenku present, the room is dark except for the light the PCs bring with them. If there are kenku here, lit torches on the walls provide bright illumination.

**Ceiling:** The ceiling is 15 feet high, allowing the kenku wing mages to fly above PCs who lack reach weapons or ranged attacks.

#### TACTICS

The kenku do not surrender or flee. They fight to the death. The assassin enters melee, while the wing mages activate *wings of the flock* and try to stay airborne so that they can use their *murder of crows* and *death flock* powers. If forced to the ground or engaged by a PC with a reach weapon, a wing mage can use *hurricane blast* to extricate itself.

#### SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

If the PCs fought the kenku in Encounter 3, then there is no scaling for this encounter. Only the survivors of the previous encounter are present.

If the PCs did not fight the kenku in Encounter 3, then make the following adjustments to the combat based on the number of PCs.

**Four PCs:** Decrease the kenku assassin's hit points by 32.

**Six PCs:** Add another kenku wing mage.

#### ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Captured kenku can be interrogated to reveal what they know about the rest of the dungeon (vaguely describe the layout of the remaining rooms, and/or give the players a few hints about the monsters in Encounters 7 and 8).

There are no other exits from this room other than back to the main hallway. Proceed to Encounter 7.

#### EXPERIENCE POINTS

The PCs receive XP for any kenku they defeat here, to a maximum of 140/200 XP per PC.

#### TREASURE

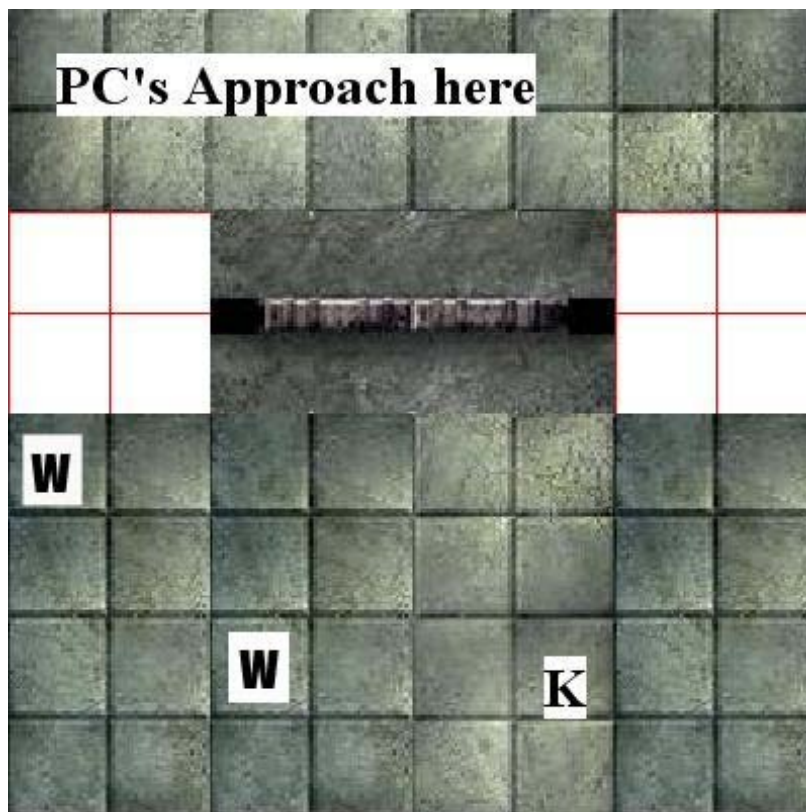
Whether the kenku are present or not, a search of this room reveals a bag containing 20/25 gold pieces per PC. If the kenku are encountered here, they have the same magic items listed in Encounter 3.

## ENCOUNTER 6 "KENKU HIDEOUT" (MAP)

### TILE SETS NEEDED

*Arcane Corridors* x1

The door shown on the map is actually an open archway; there is no actual door. If the kenku are present, the PCs will be able to see torchlight flickering into the passageway, which is likely to cause the PCs to want to sneak up rather than approaching the room openly. If the PCs are stealthy, they may be able to gain a surprise round, but the kenku are awake and alert, so the PCs do have to beat the monsters' Perception checks. Since the kenku are in a lit room and their own light spills out, they do not notice any light sources being carried by the PCs in the main hallway.



**Note:** These are tight quarters for a battle with a large party. Consider making the room a bit deeper (8 squares by 6 squares, or even 8 squares by 8 squares, instead of 8 squares by 4 squares) if there are 5 or 6 PCs in the party.

## ENCOUNTER 7: THE DEAD SPEAK

### ENCOUNTER LEVEL 1/3 (425/700 XP)

#### SETUP

It is recommended that you set up a combined battle map for both this area and the area of Encounter 8. Because of the hallway between the two areas, the PCs cannot see from this area into the area of Encounter 8. There is a decent chance that the PCs will avoid one or both of the traps in this area, but when the battle starts in Encounter 8, these traps will come back into play if the dragonborn wererat manages to escape into this room.

This encounter includes the following traps at the low tier:

**1 gibbering head (level 4) (H)**

**1 burning adhesive trap (level 6) (B)**

This encounter includes the following traps at the high tier:

**1 gibbering head (H)**

**1 burning adhesive trap (B)**

This room is in total disarray, with bodies strewn about. All of this is done to hide the gibbering head hidden among the bodies in the southwest portion of the room, and the adhesive fire trap occupying the rest of the wall. The kenku and others who use this room know that you must travel along the west wall south until you're within the middle of the room, then move over to the eastern side to avoid the gibbering head. It is possible for the PCs to avoid both traps if they follow this path.

As the adventurers enter the area, read:

*You smelled this room before you arrived. A disgusting and disrespectful display is scattered before you. Decayed and rotting corpses of formerly happy farmers and Tymantheran soldiers litter the room. At the far end is a partially open door, through which you can see light spilling from a corridor that heads east.*

At this point you can either check the PCs' passive Perception scores and reward the highest (assuming they beat the listed DCs) with the following information, or the players' own paranoia may compel them to want to make active Perception checks to see if there is anything lurking amidst the grisly debris.

Perception DC 17/19:

*You see movement from the southwest corner of the room. One of the dead bodies twitches slightly, and then you realize that its lips are moving!*

Perception DC 17/19 (ideally a different character):

*A thin tripwire stretches across part of the room. [Reveal one of the trapped squares to each individual PC who succeeds on this check.]*

*Visually tracing the wire to its source, you spot a vat of some sort attached to the ceiling.*

#### FEATURES OF THE AREA

**Illumination:** Light spilling in from the hallway provides dim illumination.

**Dead Bodies:** The entire room is considered difficult terrain, owing to the foul rotting bodies strewn everywhere.

#### TACTICS

There is nothing subtle about this room. If the burning adhesive trap goes off, don't forget to announce the gong sounding. If it is triggered, the gibbering head slings a constant stream of insults, interlaced with warnings of death and destruction to come. The gibbering head tells the PCs that they are going to die at the hands of the "giant animated statue" in the next room. The whole thing is a lie. Any PC with a passive Insight of 15/17 or better realizes the head is just spouting off. The gibbering head is insane; it knows nothing of what waits.

#### SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

This encounter does not need to be scaled for larger or smaller parties.

#### ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

If the PCs avoid setting off the traps, they can get a surprise round at the start of the next encounter, but if they set off the traps, an ambush is waiting for them. Proceed with Encounter 8.

#### EXPERIENCE POINTS

The PCs receive 85/140 experience points each for disabling, destroying, or bypassing the traps.

#### TREASURE

The dead body to which the gibbering head is attached wears a pair of *gorilla gloves*. Of course, to get this item, they probably have to come within 2 squares of the head...

## ENCOUNTER 7: "THE DEAD SPEAK" (LOW LEVEL)

Gibbering Head (level 4) Trap	Level 4 Blaster XP 175
<b>Trap:</b> This cursed head scours its target's mind for memories that it incorporates into horrifying psychic threats.	
<b>Perception</b>	
DC 17: The character notices that the head twitches, and its lips move every so often.	
<b>Trigger</b>	
When a character comes within 2 squares of it, the head begins to gibber and yell, and it attacks.	
<b>Attack ♦ Psychic</b>	
Immediate Reaction or Standard Action	Close burst 2
<b>Targets:</b> Each living creature in burst	
<b>Attack:</b> +7 vs. Will	
<b>Hit:</b> 2d8 psychic damage. After the initial attack, the gibbering head repeats the attack each round as a standard action at an initiative count one higher than the highest PC initiative.	
<b>Countermeasures</b>	
♦ The head can be destroyed. It has AC 10, Fortitude 5, Reflex10, and 30 hit points. It is immune to necrotic damage and has vulnerable 10 radiant.	

Burning Adhesive (level 6) Trap	Level 6 Warder XP 250
<b>Trap:</b> Tripwires hidden in the contours of the stone floor dump a vat of acidic and highly sticky goo upon those in the target area. Only a character standing in a darkly shaded square risks triggering the trap, but anyone in a dark or light shaded square can be attacked by it. In addition to releasing the adhesive, the trap sounds a great gong when triggered.	
<b>Perception</b>	
♦ DC 17: The character notices a tripwire, which allows him or her to bypass one of the trapped squares.	
<b>Dungeoneering</b>	
♦ DC 12: The character recognizes that some of the contours of the earth have been deliberately chipped and expanded. The party gains a +2 bonus to Perception checks to spot the tripwires.	
<b>Trigger</b>	
When a creature enters or begins its turn in a trapped square, the trap attacks.	
<b>Attack</b>	
Opportunity Action	Burst Special (see map)
<b>Targets:</b> All creatures in shaded squares.	
<b>Attack:</b> +9 vs. Reflex	
<b>Hit:</b> 1d10 + 4 acid damage and restrained (save ends).	
<b>Aftereffect of hit:</b> Slowed (save ends).	
<b>Countermeasures</b>	
♦ Athletics DC 5 or Athletics DC 10 (without a running start). An adjacent character who spots a tripwire can jump over the trapped square with a successful check.	
♦ Thievery DC 16: An adjacent character can delay the trigger, of that square only, with a successful check.	
♦ Thievery DC 18: An adjacent character can disable the trigger, of that square only, with a successful check.	

## ENCOUNTER 7: "THE DEAD SPEAK" (HIGH LEVEL)

Gibbering Head Trap	Level 7 Blaster XP 300
<b>Trap:</b> This cursed head scours its target's mind for memories that it incorporates into horrifying psychic threats.	
<b>Perception</b>	
♦ DC 19: The character notices that the head twitches, and its lips move every so often.	
<b>Trigger</b>	
When a character comes within 2 squares of it, the head begins to gibber and yell, and it attacks.	
<b>Attack ♦ Psychic</b>	
Immediate Reaction or Standard Action	Close burst 2
<b>Targets:</b> Each living creature in burst	
<b>Attack:</b> +10 vs. Will	
<b>Hit:</b> 2d10 psychic damage. After the initial attack, the gibbering head repeats the attack each round as a standard action at an initiative count one higher than the highest PC initiative.	
<b>Countermeasures</b>	
♦ The head can be destroyed. It has AC 10, Fortitude 5, Reflex10, and 30 hit points. It is immune to necrotic damage and has vulnerable 10 radiant.	

Burning Adhesive Trap	Level 9 Warder XP 400
<b>Trap:</b> Tripwires hidden in the contours of the stone floor dump a vat of acidic and highly sticky goo upon those in the target area. Only a character standing in a darkly shaded square risks triggering the trap, but anyone in a dark or light shaded square can be attacked by it. In addition to releasing the adhesive, the trap sounds a great gong when triggered.	
<b>Perception</b>	
♦ DC 19: The character notices a tripwire, which allows him or her to bypass one of the trapped squares.	
<b>Dungeoneering</b>	
♦ DC 14: The character recognizes that some of the contours of the earth have been deliberately chipped and expanded. The party gains a +2 bonus to Perception checks to spot the tripwires.	
<b>Trigger</b>	
When a creature enters or begins its turn in a trapped square, the trap attacks.	
<b>Attack</b>	
Opportunity Action	Burst Special (see map)
<b>Targets:</b> All creatures in shaded squares.	
<b>Attack:</b> +12 vs. Reflex	
<b>Hit:</b> 1d10 + 5 acid damage and restrained (save ends).	
<b>Aftereffect of hit:</b> Slowed (save ends).	
<b>Countermeasures</b>	
♦ Athletics DC 5 or Athletics DC 10 (without a running start). An adjacent character who spots a tripwire can jump over the trapped square with a successful check.	
♦ Thievery DC 19: An adjacent character can delay the trigger, of that square only, with a successful check.	
♦ Thievery DC 21: An adjacent character can disable the trigger of that square only, with a successful check.	

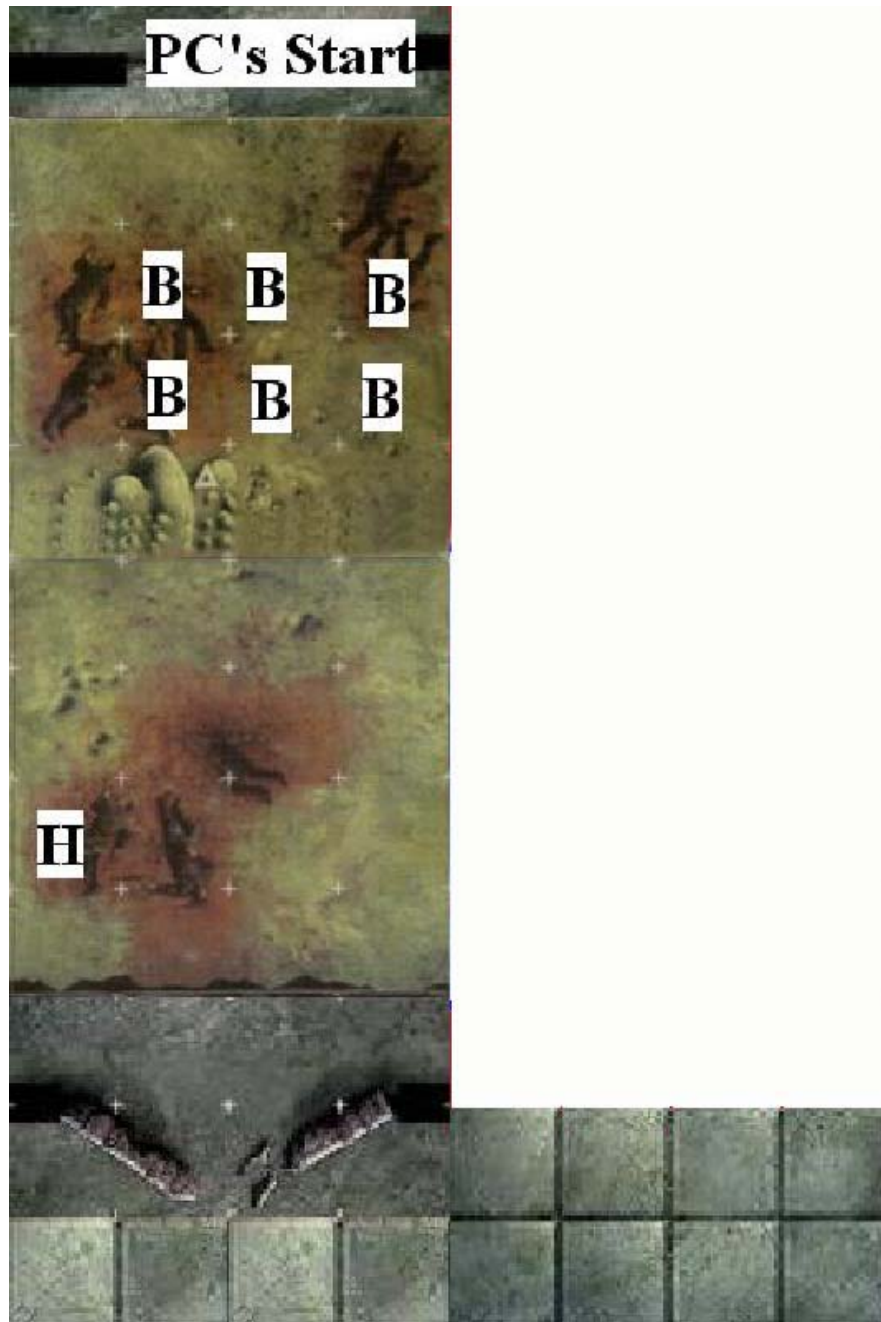
## ENCOUNTER 7: "THE DEAD SPEAK" (MAP)

### TILE SETS NEEDED

*Arcane Corridors* x1

*Caves of Carnage* x1

*Dungeon Tiles* x1



## ENCOUNTER 8: THE ALCHEMIST'S MASTER

ENCOUNTER LEVEL 4/6 (900/1250 XP)

### SETUP

This encounter includes the following creatures at the low tier:

1 captive alchemist (level 5) (A)

1 Bragg, dragonborn wererat (level 8) (B)

This encounter includes the following creatures at the high tier:

1 captive alchemist (level 6) (A)

1 Bragg, dragonborn wererat (B)

If the PCs set off the traps, Bragg and his “employee” are ready and attack the PCs as soon as they turn the corner and head into the hall. Bragg will probably get a surprise action on the PCs.

On the other hand if the PCs avoided the traps in the previous encounter, they can try to sneak up on Bragg and the alchemist as both are comfortable that any intruders will set off the traps. In this case the PCs may get a surprise round, assuming they are careful!

If the PCs set off the traps read:

*The silence in the hall leading out to the south is overwhelming after the gongs and epithets of the previous room's traps. You head east and turn right to see an unusual-looking dragonborn with a ratlike tail watching you as you round the corner.*

*“Meddlers!” he sneers and then with a scowl of contempt adds, “You won’t kill me as easily as the others, but even if you do you’ll only be pricking the finger of the Hand of Darkness!” Before you can respond he looks behind him and shouts “You idiot! Don’t just stand there listening to me! BURN THEM!”*

If the PCs avoided the traps read:

*The hallway leads a short distance east before turning south. Around the corner, you hear a low voice complaining bitterly. “Where in darkness’ name are those idiot kenku? Are you sure the poison was made correctly this time?”*

If a PC attempts to peer around the corner without being detected, have the character attempt a Stealth check and compare it to the NPCs' passive Perception scores. Read:

*You see a 15-foot-long hallway ending in an open door. Through the door is a well-lit room filled with lab tables and alchemical equipment. An unusual-looking dragonborn with a ratlike tail faces a short human clad in a leather smock. The human wears a belt containing several flasks.*

If the PCs successfully sneak up on Bragg and the alchemist, they gain a surprise round.

### FEATURES OF THE AREA

**Illumination:** Bragg keeps this area brightly lit so that the alchemist can do his work.

**Bookshelves and Cabinets:** These objects are blocking terrain. They can be dragged with a DC 17 Athletics check (DC 19 for the 4-square bookcase) or toppled over (see below).

**Lab Table:** The lab table is difficult terrain. It can be used to trigger a terrain attack (see below).

**Books and Papers:** The room is strewn with books and loose paper. These squares are difficult terrain. Any close or area attack that deals fire damage will destroy the books and papers in the squares it targets, clearing those squares. (The PCs may be afraid that doing this could destroy the alchemical formula they seek, since they have no way of knowing where it is written down, but fortunately for them, the formula they need is stored in Bragg's desk.)

**Ceiling:** The ceiling is 15 feet high.

Falling Bookshelf / Cabinet	Single-Use Terrain
<i>This object is ready to topple over with just the right application of force.</i>	
<b>Standard Action</b>	
Requirement: You must be adjacent to the object.	
Check: Athletics check (DC 17 / 19) to topple the object.	
Success: The object collapses. Make the following attack:	
<b>Attack: +9 / +11 vs. Reflex</b>	
Targets: creatures in a close blast 2 in the direction the object fell.	
Hit: 1d10 + 3 / 1d10 + 4 damage, and the target is knocked prone.	
Miss: Half damage.	
Effect: The space the object covered and the area of the blast become difficult terrain.	

Table of Combustibles	Single-Use Terrain
<i>A table holds beakers and vials containing volatile combustibles that have a violent reaction when mixed together or thrown to the ground.</i>	
<b>Standard Action</b>	
Requirement: You must be adjacent to the table.	
Check: Athletics check (DC 17 / 19) to topple the table. You may drop prone as part of the standard action to avoid the attack.	
Success: The table is overturned. Make the following attack:	
<b>Attack: +9 / +11 vs. Reflex</b>	
Targets: Each creature in a close burst 2 centered on the table.	
Hit: ongoing 5 fire and poison damage (save ends).	
Effect: The space the object covered and the area of the blast become difficult terrain.	

## TACTICS

Bragg tries to block the door and beat up on any character that comes his way. He prefers to target lighter-armored characters, as he assumes they will be easier to hit. Throughout the battle, Bragg shouts orders in a way that makes it obvious that the alchemist is being forced to participate. He uses *slayer's leap* to move around the battlefield (and can jump obstacles as part of this movement). He may try to topple the bookshelf or a cabinet on top of one or more PCs (see the *falling bookshelf* terrain power under Features of the Area). If the PCs did not trigger the traps in Encounter 7, he attempts to move the battle into that area. He knows where the tripwires are and is immune to the effects of the gibbering head. He prefers to fight in hybrid form but shifts to rat form if he decides to flee.

The alchemist first throws his *alchemist's frost* to slow intruders, or his *jolt flask* to daze them and give Bragg combat advantage. He attempts to stay out of melee until he is totally out of alchemical items. If one or more PCs move up to engage him in melee, the alchemist attempts to overturn the table (see the *table of combustibles* terrain power under Features of the Area).

PCs with a passive Insight score of 17/19 or higher (or who use a minor action to make an active Insight check to study the alchemist's demeanor) realize that it is possible to persuade the alchemist that they've come for Bragg and not him.

Once they have realized that the alchemist is here under duress, the PCs can engage in a mid-combat skill challenge to try and talk the alchemist out of the fight. With a successful DC 17/19 Diplomacy or DC 19/21 Intimidate check, made as a standard action, a character can persuade the alchemist to hold off his next attack. If four such successes are achieved before three failures, the alchemist puts his hands up in surrender. Such an achievement infuriates Bragg, and he begins attacking the alchemist instead of the PCs, trying to kill the alchemist so that the PCs cannot learn the secret of the poison that was used on Lord Tuanek.

## SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

Make the following adjustments to the combat based on the number of PCs present.

**Four PCs:** Reduce Bragg's hit points by 32.

**Six PCs:** Increase Bragg's hit points by 32.

## ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

If the PCs are victorious, they can search through the papers strewn about the lab and Bragg's desk (not shown on the map). They discover an alchemical

formula detailing the creation of an unusual poison, based on a mixture using the blood of a roper. The characteristics match those of the poison that was used on Lord Tuanek. If the PCs can get this information back to Vikom in time, the clerics at the Temple of Bahamut will be able to use the formula to fashion an antidote.

However, the formula alone may not be sufficient. This depends on whether or not the PCs succeeded or failed at the skill challenge in Encounter 4. If the skill challenge was successful, then the formula is all they need. If the skill challenge was a failure, then the PCs must bring the alchemist back alive, as only the man who created the poison can fashion the antidote quickly enough to save Lord Tuanek.

If the PCs captured the alchemist, or even better if they saved him from Bragg's wrath, he can easily be persuaded that it is in his best interest to help them save Tuanek's life. He quickly turns on his former master and willingly travels to House Jalt to atone for his crime. With his help, or the papers from his formulae books, Tuanek is restored and the PCs earn the trust of Vikom as well, who apologizes sincerely for his hasty judgment.

The alchemist has no idea who is behind the assassination plot, but various letters in Bragg's desk are signed in a strange script, and the name "Queen Sisay" features prominently. This is the second time that this Queen's name has cropped up in conjunction with the attacks on Ruinspoke (the first time was in TYMA2-1, so PCs who played that adventure may already have the story award **TYMA16 Notice of Queen Sisay**). The papers reveal no new information about Queen Sisay's future plans or even why she is so bent on destroying Ruinspoke, but it is clear that Bragg's operation is only one facet of a much larger plan. The PCs can be certain there will be more to be heard from this dark force.

One phrase is particularly disturbing: "**Tuanek's death is not the ultimate goal, but simply a test.**"

There is nothing more for the PCs to do here. Proceed to Encounter 9 when they are ready to return to Lord Tuanek's manor.

## EXPERIENCE POINTS

The PCs receive 180/250 experience points each for defeating Bragg and the alchemist. (The alchemist is worth full XP even if the PCs complete the skill challenge to cause him to stop fighting.)

## TREASURE

The PCs discover a +2 *harsh songblade* and an +2 *earthfall totem* in a chest behind the desk. Bragg was saving these for himself as his own personal reward. The PCs also find enough coin to provide each of them with 30/50 gp.

## ENCOUNTER 8: "THE ALCHEMIST'S MASTER" (LOW LEVEL)

Bragg, Dragonborn Wererat (lvl 8) Level 8 Elite Skirmisher	
Medium natural humanoid (shapechanger)	XP 700
<b>Initiative</b> +11	<b>Senses</b> Perception +9; low-light vision
<b>HP</b> 180; <b>Bloodied</b> 90	
<b>Regeneration</b> 5	
<b>AC</b> 22; <b>Fortitude</b> 20; <b>Reflex</b> 21; <b>Will</b> 18	
<b>Immune</b> filth fever	
<b>Vulnerable</b> silver (if Bragg takes damage from a silvered weapon, his regeneration does not function on his next turn)	
<b>Saving Throws</b> +2	
<b>Speed</b> 6, climb 4 (in rat form)	
<b>Action Points</b> 1	
<b>m Bite</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Disease</b>	
<b>Requirement:</b> Bragg must be in rat form	
+13 vs. AC; 2d4 + 6 damage, ongoing 3 damage (save ends), and the target is exposed to filth fever.	
<b>m Fullblade</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Weapon</b>	
<b>Requirement:</b> Bragg must be in dragonborn or hybrid form	
+13 vs. AC; 1d12 + 6 damage (crit 1d12 + 18), and ongoing 3 damage (save ends).	
<b>M Double Attack</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Disease or Weapon</b>	
Bragg makes two basic melee attacks.	
<b>M Bloodletting Leap</b> (standard; recharge 5 6) ♦ <b>Weapon</b>	
<b>Requirement:</b> Bragg must be in dragonborn or hybrid form	
+13 vs. AC; 2d12 + 6 damage (crit 1d12 + 30), and ongoing 5 damage and the target is slowed (save ends both).	
<b>Effect:</b> As a free action after the attack, Bragg uses <i>slayer's leap</i> .	
<b>C Enlarged Dragon Breath</b> (minor; encounter) ♦ <b>Lightning</b>	
<b>Requirement:</b> Bragg must be in dragonborn or hybrid form	
Close blast 5; +11 vs Reflex; 1d6 + 8 lightning damage.	
<b>Slayer's Leap</b> (move; at-will)	
Bragg jumps to shift 3 squares. He ignores difficult terrain and can move over obstacles 1 square high.	
<b>Dragonborn Frenzy</b> (only while bloodied)	
Bragg gains a +1 racial bonus to attack rolls and a +2 bonus to damage rolls.	
<b>Combat Advantage</b>	
Bragg increases ongoing damage by 5 against any creature granting combat advantage to him.	
<b>Change Shape</b> (minor; at-will) ♦ <b>Polymorph</b>	
Bragg can alter his physical form to appear as a dire rat, a unique dragonborn, or a hybrid creature. The form lasts until he uses <i>change shape</i> again or until he drops to 0 hit points (whereupon he assumes dragonborn form). Bragg retains his statistics in his new form. His clothing, armor, and possessions do not change.	
<b>Alignment</b> Evil	<b>Languages</b> Common, Draconic
<b>Skills</b> Acrobatics +14, History +7, Intimidate +8, Stealth +14	
<b>Str</b> 14 (+6)	<b>Dex</b> 21 (+9) <b>Wis</b> 10 (+4)
<b>Con</b> 18 (+8)	<b>Int</b> 12 (+5) <b>Cha</b> 15 (+6)
<b>Equipment</b> fullblade, leather armor	

**Notes:** Bragg is based on "Cartha, Head Rat" from the Compendium. Race changed to dragonborn and appropriate traits added; daggers replaced with fullblade.

Captive Alchemist (level 5)		Level 5 Artillery
Medium natural humanoid		XP 200
Initiative +5		Senses Perception +4
HP 48; Bloodied 24		
AC 17; Fortitude 14; Reflex 17; Will 16		
Speed 6		
m Shortsword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+9 vs. AC; 1d6 + 2 damage		
R Alchemist's Acid (standard; at-will) ♦ Acid, Consumable		
Requires alchemist's acid flask; ranged 5/10; +8 vs. Reflex; 1d10 acid damage and ongoing 5 acid damage (save ends).		
A Alchemist's Fire (standard; at-will) ♦ Consumable, Fire		
Requires alchemist's fire flask; area burst 1 within 10; +8 vs. Reflex; 1d10 fire damage. Miss: half damage.		
R Alchemist's Frost (standard; at-will) ♦ Cold, Consumable		
Requires alchemist's frost flask; ranged 5/10; +8 vs. Reflex; 1d10 cold damage and the target is slowed until the end of the alchemist's next turn.		
Miss: half damage, and the target is not slowed		
A Jolt Flask (standard; at-will) ♦ Consumable		
Requires jolt flask; area burst 1 within 10; +9 vs. Fortitude; on a hit, the target is dazed until the end of the alchemist's next turn		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages Common
Skills Arcana +11		
Str 10 (+2)	Dex 16 (+5)	Wis 14 (+4)
Con 12 (+3)	Int 16 (+5)	Cha 12 (+3)
Equipment 3 alchemist's acid flasks, 3 alchemist's fire flasks, 3 alchemist's frost flasks. 1 jolt flask, leather armor, short sword		

**Notes:** Stone Bear Alchemist, lower level

Filth Fever	Level 3 Disease
<b>Endurance</b> improve DC 21, maintain DC 16, worsen DC 15 or lower	
<b>Improve:</b> The target is cured.	
<b>Initial Effect:</b> The target loses 1 healing surge.	
<b>Worsen:</b> The target takes a -2 penalty to AC, Fortitude, and Reflex.	
<b>Final State:</b> The target loses all healing surges and cannot regain hit points.	

## ENCOUNTER 8: "THE ALCHEMIST'S MASTER" (HIGH LEVEL)

Bragg, Dragonborn Wererat	Level 10 Elite Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid (shapechanger)	XP 1,000
<b>Initiative</b> +12	<b>Senses</b> Perception +10; low-light vision
<b>HP</b> 212; <b>Bloodied</b> 106	
<b>Regeneration</b> 5	
<b>AC</b> 24; <b>Fortitude</b> 22; <b>Reflex</b> 23; <b>Will</b> 20	
<b>Immune</b> filth fever	
<b>Vulnerable</b> silver (if Bragg takes damage from a silvered weapon, his regeneration does not function on his next turn)	
<b>Saving Throws</b> +2	
<b>Speed</b> 6, climb 4 (in rat form)	
<b>Action Points</b> 1	
<b>m Bite</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Disease</b>	
<i>Requirement:</i> Bragg must be in rat form	
+15 vs. AC; 2d4 + 7 damage, ongoing 3 damage (save ends), and the target is exposed to filth fever.	
<b>m Fullblade</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Weapon</b>	
<i>Requirement:</i> Bragg must be in dragonborn or hybrid form	
+15 vs. AC; 1d12 + 7 damage (crit 1d12 + 19), and ongoing 3 damage (save ends).	
<b>M Double Attack</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Disease or Weapon</b>	
Bragg makes two basic melee attacks.	
<b>M Bloodletting Leap</b> (standard; recharge 5 6) ♦ <b>Weapon</b>	
<i>Requirement:</i> Bragg must be in dragonborn or hybrid form	
+15 vs. AC; 2d12 + 7 damage (crit 1d12 + 31), and ongoing 5 damage and the target is slowed (save ends both).	
<i>Effect:</i> As a free action after the attack, Bragg uses <i>slayer's leap</i> .	
<b>C Enlarged Dragon Breath</b> (minor; encounter) ♦ <b>Lightning</b>	
<i>Requirement:</i> Bragg must be in dragonborn or hybrid form	
Close blast 5; +13 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 9 lightning damage.	
<b>Slayer's Leap</b> (move; at-will)	
Bragg jumps to shift 3 squares. He ignores difficult terrain and can move over obstacles 1 square high.	
<b>Dragonborn Frenzy</b> (only while bloodied)	
Bragg gains a +1 racial bonus to attack rolls and a +2 bonus to damage rolls.	
<b>Combat Advantage</b>	
Bragg increases ongoing damage by 5 against any creature granting combat advantage to him.	
<b>Change Shape</b> (minor; at-will) ♦ <b>Polymorph</b>	
Bragg can alter his physical form to appear as a dire rat, a unique dragonborn, or a hybrid creature. The form lasts until he uses <i>change shape</i> again or until he drops to 0 hit points (whereupon he assumes dragonborn form). Bragg retains his statistics in his new form. His clothing, armor, and possessions do not change.	
<b>Alignment</b> Evil	<b>Languages</b> Common, Draconic
<b>Skills</b> Acrobatics +15, History +8, Intimidate +9, Stealth +15	
<b>Str</b> 14 (+7)	<b>Dex</b> 21 (+10) <b>Wis</b> 10 (+5)
<b>Con</b> 18 (+9)	<b>Int</b> 12 (+6) <b>Cha</b> 15 (+7)
<b>Equipment</b> fullblade, leather armor	

**Notes:** Bragg is based on "Cartha, Head Rat" from the Compendium. Race changed to dragonborn and appropriate traits added; daggers replaced with fullblade.

Captive Alchemist (level 6)	Level 6 Artillery
Medium natural humanoid	XP 250
<b>Initiative</b> +6	<b>Senses</b> Perception +5
<b>HP</b> 54; <b>Bloodied</b> 27	
<b>AC</b> 18; <b>Fortitude</b> 15; <b>Reflex</b> 18; <b>Will</b> 17	
<b>Speed</b> 6	
<b>m Shortsword</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Weapon</b>	
+10 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage	
<b>R Alchemist's Acid</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Acid, Consumable</b>	
Requires alchemist's acid flask; ranged 5/10; +9 vs. Reflex; 1d10 acid damage and ongoing 5 acid damage (save ends).	
<b>A Alchemist's Fire</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Consumable, Fire</b>	
Requires alchemist's fire flask; area burst 1 within 10; +9 vs. Reflex; 1d10 fire damage. <i>Miss:</i> half damage.	
<b>R Alchemist's Frost</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Cold, Consumable</b>	
Requires alchemist's frost flask; ranged 5/10; +9 vs. Reflex; 1d10 cold damage and the target is slowed until the end of the alchemist's next turn.	
<i>Miss:</i> half damage, and the target is not slowed	
<b>A Jolt Flask</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Consumable</b>	
Requires jolt flask; area burst 1 within 10; +10 vs. Fortitude; on a hit, the target is dazed until the end of the alchemist's next turn	
<b>Alignment</b> Unaligned	<b>Languages</b> Common
<b>Skills</b> Arcana +12	
<b>Str</b> 10 (+3)	<b>Dex</b> 16 (+6) <b>Wis</b> 14 (+5)
<b>Con</b> 12 (+4)	<b>Int</b> 16 (+6) <b>Cha</b> 12 (+4)
<b>Equipment</b> 3 alchemist's acid flasks, 3 alchemist's fire flasks, 3 alchemist's frost flasks, 1 jolt flask, leather armor, short sword	

**Note:** Stone Bear Alchemist, lower level.

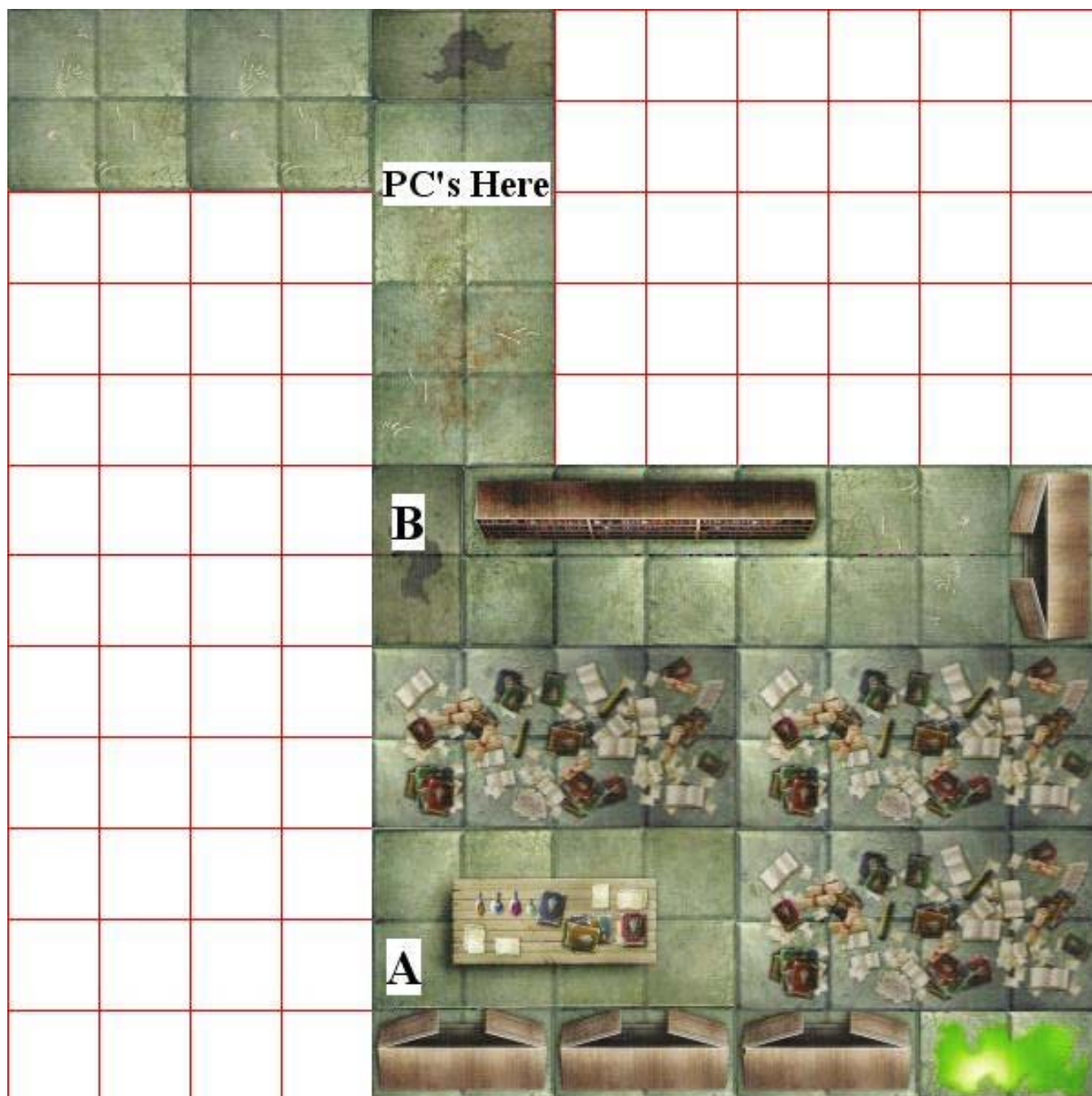
Filth Fever	Level 3 Disease
<b>Endurance</b> improve DC 21, maintain DC 16, worsen DC 15 or lower	
<b>Improve:</b> The target is cured.	
<b>Initial Effect:</b> The target loses 1 healing surge.	
<b>Worsen:</b> The target takes a -2 penalty to AC, Fortitude, and Reflex.	
<b>Final State:</b> The target loses all healing surges and cannot regain hit points.	

## ENCOUNTER 8: "THE ALCHEMIST'S MASTER" (MAP)

### TILE SETS NEEDED

*Arcane Towers x2*

**Notes:** The bookshelves, cabinets, and lab table can be used in conjunction with terrain powers (see Features of the Area). The green slime in the lower right-hand corner is noxious, but has no game-mechanical effect (it's where the alchemist disposes of his failed creations).



## ENCOUNTER 9: LENDING A HAND

### SETUP

**Important NPCs:** Lord Tuanek, Lord Vikom

The PCs have either foiled the assassination attempt and were able to retrieve the antidote, or they failed in their attempt.

### SUCCESS

Read the following if the PCs successfully returned an antidote.

*It has been two days since you returned from the underground caves where the dragonborn wererat and his enslaved alchemist operated. Lord Tuanek and his second-in-command, Lord Vikom, have called you back to the estate to thank you and share with you what they have been able to learn.*

*Lord Tuanek is still recovering from the recent assassination attempt, but smiles tiredly as he addresses you. "My friends, I thank you for aiding me in my hour of need. The antidote you brought sped my recovery and quite likely saved my life. Vikom and I have begun conducting research to learn what we can of this enemy who seems determined to destroy Ruinspoke."*

*"Although we still have much to learn, we believe that this 'Queen Sisay' may be a creature of legend, a being that held this land even before the Spellplague. If so, then these events involving Ruinspoke may be but a play in a much larger game, a game that threatens all of Tymanther. Our foe has struck twice and there is no reason to believe that she is finished playing. I believe she will attack Ruinspoke again, and when she does, I intend to be ready for her. I would be most honored if I could again call upon your aid when that time comes."*

*"But, there is little more we can do for now, other than to remain vigilant. Lord Vikom and I give you this token as a recognition of my personal debt to you, and the deep gratitude of both our Houses."*

### STORY AWARDS

All PCs earn the story award **TYMA18 Token of Two Houses**. PCs who do not yet have story award **TYMA16 Notice of Queen Sisay** earn that story award. Those PCs who already have TYMA16 instead earn **TYMA19 Anger of Queen Sisay**. (Both of these story awards denote progress on the Rising Darkness Major Quest, but the rewards for completing the Major Quest will differ depending on how many of the appropriate Story Awards the character has earned.)

### TREASURE

The PCs receive the base pay they were promised (50/75 gp each). If they spared the alchemist's life, he offers to teach them what he knows (this unlocks a selection of alchemical formulas). For saving his life, Lord Tuanek offers the PCs magic items from the stores of House Jalt. Each PC has the option to select either a +2 implement (level 6) or a +2 weapon (level 6).

### FAILURE

Read the following if the PCs failed to return with the antidote, or if they needed the alchemist alive and returned with only the written formula.

*Your efforts to retrieve an antidote for Lord Tuanek were in vain. By the time you returned to the manor, the leader of Ruinspoke was dead. His body has been taken to Djerad Thymar, where the most powerful clerics in Tymanther work to purge him of the magical toxin in hope that he may still be returned to life. In the interim, Lord Vikom has been placed in charge of Ruinspoke.*

*Vikom summons you to a brief meeting to review the mission. After listening to your report, he slams a clawed fist into Lord Tuanek's desk. "We still don't know who is truly behind this plot, or why they wanted Lord Tuanek out of the picture. Ruinspoke is hardly a strategic outpost. There must be a reason for the continued attacks here. Are we truly the target, or is this just a feint, a distraction to disguise some bigger play?"*

*Lord Vikom looks out the window and sighs. "Only time will tell. One thing I do know is that Ruinspoke will need all the help it can get in the months to come. Although I am disappointed by your failure, I know Lord Tuanek would not hold you personally responsible. Many of us, including myself, failed him. I will NOT let that happen again, and I hope that when the time comes, you will be eager to redeem yourselves. You are dismissed."*

### STORY AWARDS

The PCs do not earn story award TYMA18. If they killed Bragg, then they have at least thwarted Queen Sisay's current operation, even though they were not able to save Lord Tuanek. Therefore, those PCs who do not yet have story award TYMA16 do earn that story award. PCs who already have TYMA16 instead earn TYMA19.

### TREASURE

The PCs receive only their agreed-upon payment, 50/70 gold pieces each. They do not receive access to the alchemical formulas or the additional magic items.

## REWARDS SUMMARY

At the conclusion of the adventure, the PCs earn experience points, treasure, and possibly story awards. All totals listed here are per PC. A number before the slash is the low-level value; after the slash is the high-level value.

### EXPERIENCE POINTS

Give PCs a full award for each encounter they successfully completed, and a half award if they were unsuccessful. Give no award if the characters did not play the encounter at all.

**Encounter 3: Don't Let Them Escape OR**

**Encounter 6: Kenku Hideout**

**140 / 200 XP**

**Encounter 4: Poisoned Purpose**

**60 / 80 XP**

**Encounter 5: Foul Guards**

**210 / 310 XP**

**Encounter 7: The Dead Speak**

**85 / 140 XP**

**Encounter 8: The Alchemist's Master**

**180 / 250 XP**

**Total Possible Experience**

**675 / 980 XP**

**Note:** The XP award in this adventure slightly exceeds the normal maximum for a levels 4-7 adventure plus a Minor Quest award. The PCs may keep the extra XP.

**Gold per PC**

**100 / 150 gp**

(Encounter 6: 20/25 gp, Encounter 8: 30/50 gp, Encounter 9: 50/75 gp)

### TREASURE

Each PC receives treasure in the form of gold pieces as well as one share from a treasure bundle. The treasure bundle may give the PC more gold, a magic item, or something else of value. Each player makes one and only one selection for their character; players may choose the same treasure bundle. Note that it is possible (and likely) that some characters will not select a bundle for each session of play.

If characters buy or sell magic items or other gear during the adventure (or pay for services) add or subtract that amount from the total gold the PC receives at the end of the adventure. If a player selects an option that gives their character more gold, add that amount to

that character's base gold award. It is possible and permissible for a character who spends more gold than he or she earns to have a negative total for the adventure. PCs receive 20% of the item's market price when they sell any magic item or consumable. They receive 50% of the market price for ritual books and alchemical formulas.

If a player selects a magic weapon or suit of armor for their PC that is not specific on the type of item listed, they must select the exact item at the time they choose that bundle. For example, if a *duelist's weapon +1* is listed as a choice in a bundle, a player selects the form of the weapon amongst the choices possible for that magic item (light blades). If the player selects the item as a *+1 duelist's dagger*, the player writes that information down on the PC's adventure log and the item is forever after that specific weapon.

An asterisk next to a magic item means that it is an item that appears in the **New Rules** section.

**EACH PC SELECTS ONE OF THE FOLLOWING BUNDLES:**

**Bundle A:** *whistle of warning\** (level 8; AV2)

Found in Encounter 3 or Encounter 6

**Bundle B:** *summoned armor +2\** (low-level only) (level 6; AV)

Found in Encounter 3 or Encounter 6

**Bundle C:** *sylvan armor +2* (high-level only) (level 8; PH)

Found in Encounter 3 or Encounter 6

**Bundle D:** *gorilla gloves\** (level 6; *Dragon Magazine* 378)

Found in Encounter 7

**Bundle E:** *harsh songblade +2\** (level 8; PH2)

Found in Encounter 8

**Bundle F:** *earthfall totem +2\** (level 7; AV2)

Found in Encounter 8

**Bundle G:** *magic implement +2* or *magic weapon +2* (level 6, PH)

Found in Encounter 9 (only if Lord Tuanek lives)

**Bundle H:** One or more alchemical formulas with a total market price of up to 200/450 gp from any allowable player resource.

Found in Encounter 9 (only if the alchemist lives)

**Consumable plus Gold:** If a player doesn't want to select one of the bundles listed above for their character, they can choose to add a *potion of clarity* (level 5)\* plus 75 / 200 gp to their rewards from this adventure. The

player should write the consumable gained on their adventure log. That character (and only that character) then receives the consumable plus the listed amount of gold (if any) instead of any other treasure bundle. Consumable items obtained in this fashion do not take up found magic item slots.

**More Gold:** If a player doesn't want to select one of the bundles listed above for their character, they can choose to add 125 / 250 gp to their rewards from this adventure. That character (and only that character) receives more gold instead of any other treasure bundle.

## STORY AWARDS

Award these if the PC completes the condition for the award in the adventure. Pass out certificates to the players for their story awards. In this adventure, every PC can earn TYMA18 and one (but not both) of TYMA16 and TYMA19. See Encounter 9 for details.

### TYMA18 *Token of Two Houses*

You saved the life of Lord Tuanek of House Jalt. In so doing, you not only aided the town of Ruinspoke, you also helped save Lord Vikom of House Belnak from disgrace. The two leaders have presented you with this token. It is a thin sheet of platinum in the shape of a dragon's head, with two swords crossed beneath. The workmanship is exquisite. Carved on one side is the word "Jalt" and on the reverse is the word "Belnak." This charm can be worn on a necklace or bracelet if you so choose.

This story award counts as a favor with both House Jalt and House Belnak, and grants you a measure of notoriety. Any loyal dragonborn citizen of Tymanthor who sees the token and understands its import will regard you more favorably. Should you ever require a character reference in Djerad Thymar, both Lord Tuanek and Lord Vikom will personally vouch for you, so long as your subsequent actions have not brought you into disrepute.

### TYMA16 *Notice of Queen Sisay*

You have earned the notice of a certain Queen Sisay by defeating one of her agents. Who is this enigmatic creature, and what are her goals? You are not sure, but the question will probably answer itself in a short time.

This story award allows you to begin the *Rising Darkness* Major Quest even if you have not played TYMA2-1 *Old Enemies Arise*. If you earn this award a second time, the second award is upgraded to TYMA19 instead.

### TYMA19 *Anger of Queen Sisay*

Twice now you have thwarted the efforts of the mysterious Queen Sisay. Although it remains unclear what her ultimate goal is, or why she seems so determined to destroy Ruinspoke, there can be no doubt that your name has reached her ears.

This story award represents the continuation of the *Rising Darkness* Major Quest. You began this quest in the adventure TYMA2-1 *Old Enemies Arise* and you may have the opportunity to complete it in a future adventure. The greater Queen Sisay's anger grows, the greater the risk to you will be; but also, the greater the satisfaction and reward you may earn when you finally defeat her.

## ADVENTURE QUESTIONS

Mark the answers to the following adventure questions on the tracking form.

### 1. Did the PCs save the alchemist?

- a. Yes and he was persuaded to stand down during the battle.
- b. Yes, but he was knocked unconscious first.
- c. No, he was killed in the battle.
- d. No, the PCs were defeated.

### 2. Did the PCs save Lord Tuanek's life?

- a. Yes
- b. No

### 3. As the DM, how do you rate this adventure?

- a. 1 star (worst possible rating)
- b. 2 stars (below average)
- c. 3 stars (average)
- d. 4 stars (above average)
- e. 5 stars (best possible rating)

### 4. How do the players rate this adventure?

- a. 1 star (worst possible rating)
- b. 2 stars (below average)
- c. 3 stars (average)
- d. 4 stars (above average)
- e. 5 stars (best possible rating)

## NEW RULES

### Earthfall Totem +2

**Price:** 2,600 gp

**Implement (Totem)**

**Enhancement:** +2 attack rolls and damage rolls

**Critical:** +1d6 damage per plus

**Property:** When you use a primal attack power through this totem that pushes or slides a creature or knocks a creature prone, you deal 1d6 extra damage to each creature that was pushed, slid, or knocked prone.

**Source:** *Adventurer's Vault 2*.

### Gorilla Gloves

**Level:** 6

**Price:** 1,800 gp

**Item Slot:** Hands

**Power (Daily):** Standard Action. Strength + 2 vs. Fortitude; targets a creature grabbed by you; you throw the target, pushing it 3 squares. The target then takes 2d10 damage and falls prone.

**Source:** *Dragon Magazine 378*.

### Harsh Songblade +2

**Level:** 8

**Price:** 3,400 gp

**Weapon:** Heavy blade, light blade

**Enhancement:** +2 attack rolls and damage rolls

**Critical:** +2d8 damage

**Property:** Bards can use this blade as an implement for bard powers and bard paragon path powers.

**Power (Daily):** Free Action. Trigger: You hit an enemy with a bard thunder power using this blade. Effect: Each enemy within 2 squares of the triggering enemy is dazed until the end of your next turn.

**Source:** *Player's Handbook 2*.

### Potion of Clarity

**Level:** 5

**Price:** 50 gp

**Potion**

**Power (Consumable):** Minor Action. When you drink this potion, you must spend a daily magic item use. Once, before the end of the encounter, when you make an attack roll with an encounter or a daily attack power of 5th level or lower, you can reroll the attack roll but must use the second result.

**Source:** *Adventurer's Vault*.

### Summoned Armor +2

**Level:** 6

**Price:** 1,800 gp

**Armor:** Any

**Enhancement:** +2 AC

**Power (At-Will):** Minor Action. You banish this armor to a secure extradimensional location. At any point in the future, unless you are wearing armor, you can use another minor action to recall the armor. The armor appears on you as though you had donned it normally.

**Source:** *Adventurer's Vault*.

### Whistle of Warning

**Level:** 8

**Price:** 3,400 gp

**Wondrous Item**

**Power (Encounter):** Minor. Each ally within 10 squares of you who can hear the whistle can shift 1 square and draw a weapon or retrieve an implement as a free action.

**Source:** *Adventurer's Vault 2*.

## APPENDIX 1: RUINSPOKE

Ruinspoke is not detailed in the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Guide*; the outpost was created specifically for *Living Forgotten Realms*. However, the Tymanther entry in the FRCG contains a great deal of useful information about the region for both players and DMs.

Ruinspoke is a frontier village located near the border of Tymanther and Mulhorand. Ruinspoke was settled by House Jalt a few years after the dragonborn came to Faerun. The House decided to charter a settlement here to serve as a border outpost for dragonborn travelers, allowing them to rest and resupply before heading out of Tymanther. The village has grown ever since then.

**Population:** 758; Dragonborn make up roughly 60% of the population. Tieflings make up a small percentage and the rest is pretty evenly divided among dwarves, humans, halflings, eladrins, elves, and half-elves.

**Government:** **House Jalt** is in charge of Ruinspoke and **Lord Tuanek** is in charge of House Jalt so in turn Lord Tuanek is in charge of Ruinspoke. Tuanek is an older dragonborn. He came here to “retire” and help train the young ones. He is kind but firm. He doesn’t especially like mercenaries (he worries about their changing loyalties) but does understand that they are needed, especially out here on the frontier. Recently his opinion of adventurers has been improving, as many brave heroes from across the Realms have come to Ruinspoke to lend their aid against various threats.

**Defense:** The town boasts a limited number of defenses but they are formidable. House Jalt has a small garrison stationed here and they serve as the city guard. The town has two squadrons of Lance Defenders assigned to it, each led by a Lance Scout. There is also a small contingent of Platinum Cadre members. (See the Tymanther entry in either the FRCG or the *Forgotten Realms Player's Guide* for more information about these military organizations.)

**Entering Ruinspoke:** There are three main roads out of Ruinspoke and each has a gate which is normally watched by a member of the Garrison. Walls have been built up around the gates and over time these have been extended to protect more of the city. However there has never been a serious military threat so large sections of planned walls are yet incomplete and most of the people in Ruinspoke are content with that. It allows easy access to farms and outlying areas. Thus, the “gates” are not a true defense for the town, as any raiding force could easily attack an open section where the walls have not yet been constructed.

The three gates are named the Homeward Gate, Tuanek’s Gate, and the Ruins Gate.

The **Homeward Gate** on the west side of town is the most direct path to Djerad Thymar, the capitol city of Tymanther. This path connects to a large and well-maintained road a couple of days’ travel to the west.

The northern gate is called **Tuanek’s Gate** in recognition of his ability to create and enhance trade with High Imaskar. Three days’ travel north, this path connects with a main road that leads to High Imaskar. Trade is slowly growing, though anyone who takes goods along this route still needs to hire guards for the trip.

The **Ruins Gate**, on the southeast side of town, leads to a rocky and unsettled area. This gate is the most heavily guarded, for many hundreds of unexplored ruins lie in this direction. A well-known local dwarven explorer named Dirnth can often be found entering or leaving Ruinspoke through the Ruins Gate, and there is almost always a steady stream of treasure-seekers setting out in search of new, unexplored ruins. Fortunately, there is a wide plain immediately outside the city, which gives a good view of any approaching creatures.

**Economy:** The town is quite prosperous for its size, owing its success to the growing trade with High Imaskar, successful farming and ranching in the outlying lands, and the strong, orderly leadership of House Jalt. No one who desires to succeed will fail in Ruinspoke, and the slow but steady growth can be seen in the newer homes being built near the Ruins Gate. Recently the Gem Assayers Union found a successful vein, and as a result House Travek and

House Treg (the two most successful Houses when it comes to fine art and jewelry in Tymanther) have established small offices here in anticipation of future finds. There is a sense that this may herald the beginning of a new phase for Ruinspoke, but many do not want Ruinspoke to become a boom town that fades again. Lord Tuanek is aware of this and has pledged to prevent wild, unsupported development in the area.

**Estate and Training Grounds:** Just to the east of Tuanek's estate and office (which is far and away the largest building in Ruinspoke) lies a large open field, cleared and level. Here the garrison trains and holds contests. House Jalt also makes this field available for town celebrations, festivals, and gatherings. Simple wooden viewing stands have been constructed on the east side for the convenience of spectators. To the south of the manor, the main barracks sits just across the road. Tuanek has a smaller office at the barracks which he sometimes uses for meetings with his officers and lieutenants, but he is most often found at his walled estate. Over the last few years, many adventurers have approached House Jalt looking for opportunity - or in response to one of Lord Tuanek's many letters.

**Inns:** Several inns cater to travelers. During this adventure, there is no room at either of the inns, due to an influx of farmers and other "residents" who normally dwell in the outlying areas, but who have come here seeking shelter and safety from the ever-increasing monster raids.

**Hammerfell** - the proprietor of this clean but barebones inn is **Olket**, a no-nonsense, male dragonborn.

**Home Cookin'** - the proprietor is **Imiere**, a gregarious female half-elf. She is very talkative, loves a good story and treats customers more like family. The furniture has seen better days, but the food is the best in Ruinspoke.

**Taverns:** The best tavern in Ruinspoke is the **Full Mugs**. Its proprietor is **Temget**, a male dwarf whose pride in his homebrewed beer is justifiable. Bring your own mug and the first one's free. Just don't cause any trouble.

**Supplies:** There are a number of places where supplies and essential items can be purchased.

**General Store** - Hikath's General Provisions. The proprietor is Almer Hikath, a male human and the second generation of Hikaths to operate this family business. Heavier weapons and armor, as well as foodstuffs and building supplies, are the focus of this store. Almer is professional and helpful, but does not haggle.

**Traveling Gear** - Spoke in 'Spoke. The shop is owned and operated by a quiet elderly halfling couple, **Jiran and Kelsa Wheelfixer**. They used to be wilderness guides, but a bad wagon accident left this couple sidelined a few years back. They loved helping people travel and decided to open a store. Traveling supplies, light weapons, and armor are their specialties. Their son, Wielfan, operates the adjoining stables.

**Stables** - Trusty's Stables. The proprietor, **Wielfan Wheelfixer**, has only been in business a few years. Originally named Trusty's Rest, after his beloved dappled pony, he changed the name after too many visitors entered the stable and asked for a drink and a bed.

**Temples:** The **Temple of Bahamut** is the most prominent, of course. The **High Priest is Dauret**, a male dragonborn. He has a reputation of being firm yet helpful. There is also a small temple to Ilmater. The High Priestess is Tihaket, an elderly human woman, whose family moved to Tymanther from Mulhorand. She is a skilled midwife and an excellent healer.

**Outlying Areas:** Most of the outlying areas are not heavily patrolled. The people that live out in the outlying areas tend to be farmers, ranchers, woodsmen, hunters, or trappers. Adventurers often go out to explore the many ruins that dot the area. About as many of them return as don't.