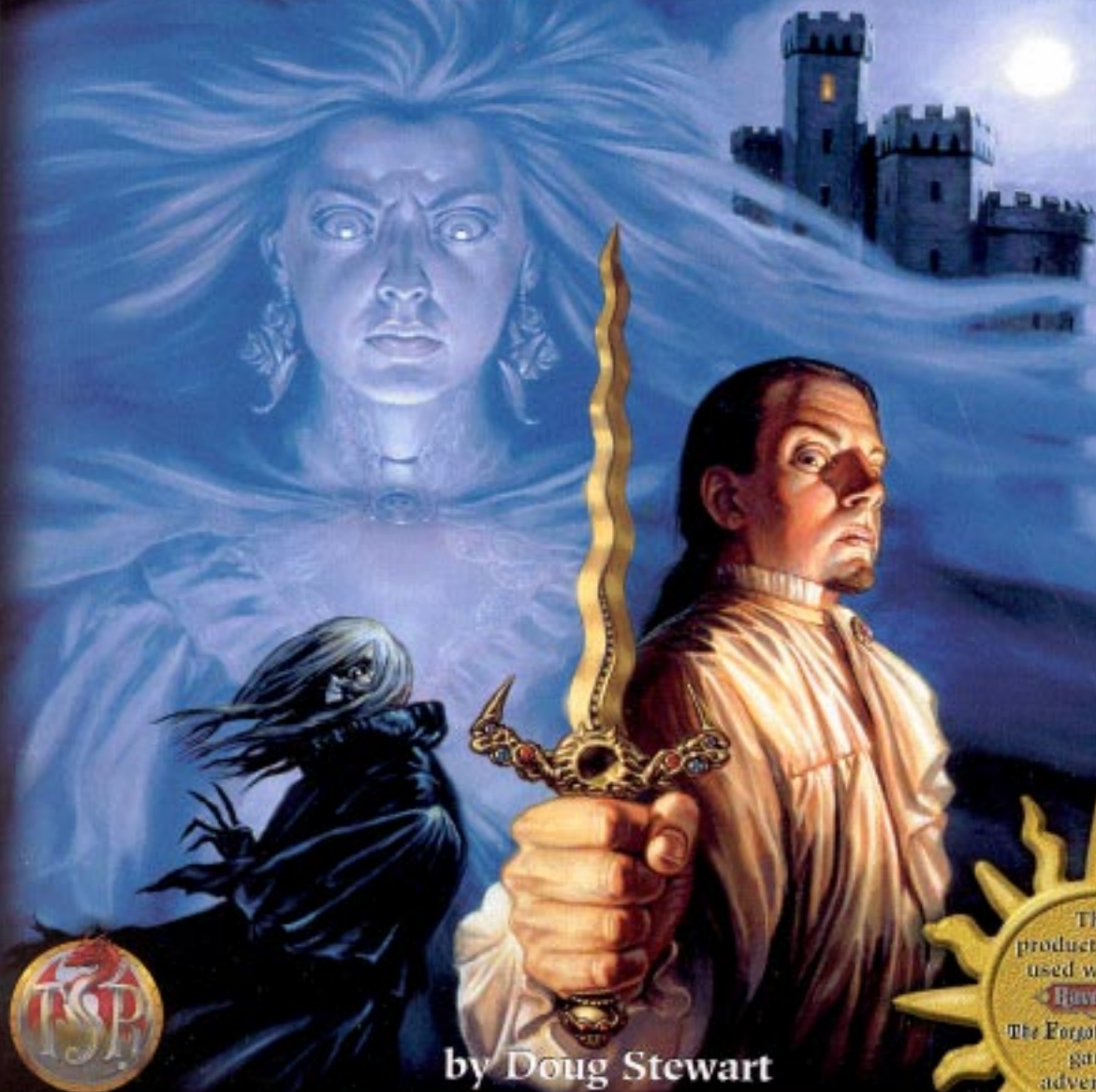


FORGOTTEN REALMS

Official Game Adventure

For 4 to 6 Characters of Levels 8-12

Castle Spulzeer

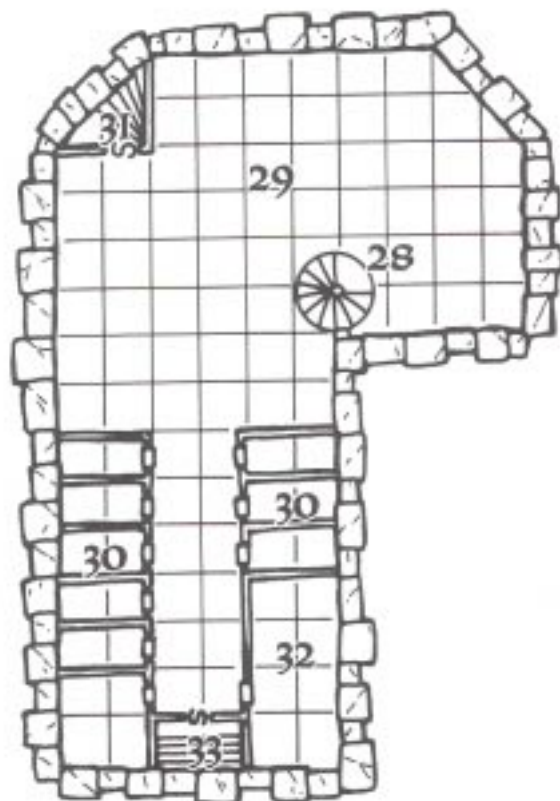
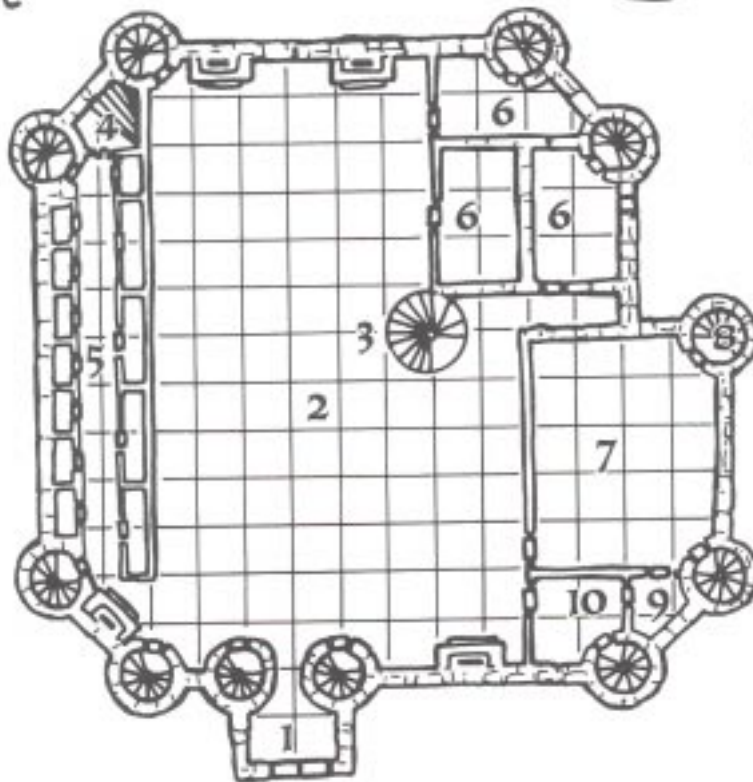


by Doug Stewart

This product may be used with the **Ravenloft** The Forgotten Terror game adventure.

Castle Spulzeer

LEVEL I
GROUND FLOOR



DUNGEON Level



Kartak's Level

Key

-  Door
-  Double Door
-  Secret Door
-  Spiral Stairs
-  Fireplace
-  40 Feet

Advanced
Dungeons & Dragons®



Castle Spulzeer

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As always, this one's for Georgia.

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Introduction

"The Spellseers? Now there was a tribe! Changed their name 'bout three hunert years ago now, I guess. Call themselves "Spulzeer" now. Somethin' to do with using magic. Evil magic, evil tribe, I say. . . . Ye want another ale?"

Saradon Slowtend

Keeper of the Inn of the Brass Djinni, Riatavin

No one in Amn, and few in Tethyr, are unfamiliar with the name "Spulzeer." Fewer, perhaps, recall that the family changed its name from Spellseer after the unfortunate incidents of 830-836 Dale Reckoning. Today, a sinister aura still hangs about the anciently proud ancestral home of this strange clan.

The castle itself, completed in the Year of the Firehawk (795 DR), was once the site of grand carnivals given for the benefit of travelers. Castle Spellseer was a stop not to be missed by any southbound caravan or free merchant. A place of peace and gaiety, food and good ale, the castle and its family grew in wealth, power, and prestige until 830 when jealous merchants turned the crown against the Spellseers. Compounding the accusations leveled at them was Kartak Spellseer, a necromancer steeped in evil. In 836 he was tried and convicted of a horrible series of murders. Kartak escaped, but the damage done to the family appeared too irreparable.

In the year 838, a youthful but wise Spellseer patriarch, Tregas II, changed the family name to "Spulzeer" in an attempt to restore the good name and profits of the clan. He instituted other reforms, dropped a cloak of total secrecy around the family's magical training and practices, and carried favor with the King of Amn by loaning money to the crown without interest. His plan was successful, and by 900 DR, Spulzeer was a family to be reckoned with. "Spellseer" was beginning to be forgotten.

The House of Spulzeer was to know many more highs and lows as its fortunes ebbed and flowed over the centuries. And, as the years rolled by, the family and its castle were on a slow, downward spiral, a descending gyre that finally saw them fall into the sinister pit of their own depravities.

Some claim that the fall was preordained, that the land upon which Tregas I built the castle was cursed, and many chilling tales were told around campfires, stories of why this was so. Others, sages of more rational schools of thought, said that the Spulzeers themselves were cursed by elves or other demihumans who claimed the land occupied by the first Tregas's great manse. In Amn they have a saying, "investments yield the profits they have earned," and they see the Spulzeers' fall as a proper return for the venture. The truth, as it usually does, probably contains elements of all these theories. The external causes, however, are more definite and form the basis of this adventure.

DUNGEON MASTER NOTES

Castle Spulzeer is an adventure for four to six player characters (PCs) of levels 8 to 12. Ideally, the party will contain at least one priest and one wizard; more would be helpful.

This adventure is, of course, complete in itself. However, *Castle Spulzeer* has two possible endings. The first ending sends the heroes and the castle into the RAVENLOFT® setting, where the story continues in *The Forgotten Terror*. The choice of





whether or not to pursue the plot into the Demiplane of Dread is, of course, up to the Dungeon Master (DM), but we encourage you to take advantage of this unique crossover opportunity.

In the second ending, Castle Spulzeer disappears, but the PCs remain in the FORGOTTEN REALMS® setting.

You need only the DUNGEON MASTER® *Guide* (DMG), *Player's Handbook* (PHB), and MONSTROUS MANUAL™ accessory to play this adventure. The FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign setting and *Faiths & Avatars* accessory, however, will enhance your enjoyment of this product and help bring to life the kingdoms found in the Lands of Intrigue.

Plot Synopsis

The adventure begins in the city of Eshpurta. The PCs come upon a fortuneteller being accosted by a hooded man. After they intervene on her behalf, she tells their fortunes—and gives them an unusually shaped ruby that she says they will need.

Later that day, the PCs are approached by Gaspard deLouca, who claims to be an agent of Lord Chardath Spulzeer. In reality, deLouca serves Kartak Spellseer, a 31st-level necromancer and lich, temporarily reduced to 20th level by an angry djinni and Chardath's luck.

Gaspard's master wishes to hire the PCs to retrieve three magical items from Castle Spulzeer. As an afterthought, he mentions a knife that he would also like returned. The PCs are promised great riches as payment if they complete their mission successfully.

The knife, *Aggarath* (described on page 59), is the weapon used in a murder Kartak was involved in 18 years ago. Each year on the anniversary of the slaying, it summons Kartak back to the castle and holds him there for 24 hours. This year, in his weakened condition, Kartak is very vulnerable to this particular magical dagger and wants it back before the anniversary (so he can destroy it or use it in his own defense). Unfortunately for him, there are others who want the dagger to use against him. However, no one can use the dagger until its missing hilt-stone is replaced—the enchanted ruby the PCs received from the fortuneteller.

Castle Spulzeer is more than 200 miles from Eshpurta. The heroes encounter a number of obstacles on the way that cause them to arrive at the castle later than Kartak wished. Their stops do, however, enable them to learn some of the history and rumors surrounding Castle Spulzeer and the family connected to it, and also to obtain several magical items that can aid them when they reach the castle.

Once at the castle, the PCs search for the items they were hired to retrieve. In the process, they encounter ghostly apparitions and learn about the brutal murder that took place years before. The heroes witness a ghostly re-enactment of the killing, in which Chardath sacrifices a woman (his sister, Marble) to raise the lich Kartak from the dead. Then Marble's ghost appears and asks the party to find the knife used to kill her. It is *Aggarath*, the same knife that Kartak asked the PCs to retrieve.

The party also encounters the real Lord Chardath Spulzeer, who has gone mad since murdering his sister. Chardath is consumed by thoughts of revenge against the lich Kartak, who forced him to commit the horrific killing. Lord Chardath behaves erratically, threatening them but then backing off—demonstrating that he can be a serious threat when the heroes face him in the final confrontation.

Because the party arrived at the castle later than it was supposed to, Kartak is in residence, having been summoned by the knife. When the PCs finally locate *Aggarath*, all three of the principal NPCs (Kartak, Chardath, and Marble) appear. Each tries to persuade the heroes to give him or her the knife. The adventurers must choose sides—and no matter which individual they ally with, the decision earns them two very powerful enemies.

A battle ensues. But before it can be resolved, the evil permeating Castle Spulzeer begins to collapse in on itself. Kartak escapes. (If the DM does not wish to pursue the story into the RAVENLOFT setting, the PCs also escape.) A whirlwind engulfs the castle, ultimately drawing the entire structure and its cursed occupants into the Demiplane of Dread.





The Unfortunate House of Spellseer

"No one's history is intentionally written in blood. Mighty houses rise and fall, and this is the way of the world. But some, a small few, whether by curse or ill fortune, find a dark destiny. There is nothing, I submit, nothing, that can turn these families from their fate. Not love, nor money, nor the peace of a green day in the forest—nothing moves these ships from their courses. As an example, I direct you to learn the lament of the Spellseers. . . ."

Professor Dommingart of Hillfort,
The Sand Empires History Lectures

An Ancient Family

Six hundred years ago, the Spellseer family stood as one of the richest and most powerful clans in all of Amn's southeastern frontier. They dealt in cattle, horses, and land, and seemed to have no end to their wealth and luck. Of course, the Spellseers had a secret to their luck: A talent for magic and divination ran through the family's bloodline, affecting one or two children each generation. These special youth were singled out by the family and taught the fine arts of magic and the shrewd skills of trade and negotiation.

Becoming wizards, priests, or diviners, they underwent extensive training concealed from the prying eyes of the Amnians. Usually, promising students were sent away to study, but occasionally mage instructors were hired to tutor the young adepts at home. Education in the crafty arts of trading, finance, and sales fell within the province of the family patriarch.

As the years passed, the Spellseers grew in power, money, and land holdings. They built their first family manor in Riatavin and helped to finance the growth of that city. They also expanded their holdings in both Amn and Tethyr and developed a reputation as horse breeders.

In the Year of the Enigma (755 DR), Tregas Spellseer began building the castle that was to become the family's noblest treasure—and greatest curse. He situated the castle a few miles south of Tethir Road, on the route to Riatavin. Though Tregas died in 783, the structure was completed in the Year of the Firehawk (795). Farkas Spellseer, his heir, moved his family into the castle.

For the next 35 years, Castle Spellseer was a renowned and favorite stopping place for caravans and wealthy travelers on the road to Toralth, Riatavin, and points south. Farkas's hospitality was second to none. He regularly held events to amuse weary travelers—juggling exhibitions, theatrical performances, games of chance, and once even an entire circus. His entertainments were surpassed only by the quality of Castle Spellseer's ale. The fortunes of the family continued to climb, and lives as country gentlemen suited most of the family. But the idyllic, pastoral lifestyle of the Spellseers did not last.

While travelers and caravan masters thought highly of the family, the envy of those less skilled and fortunate culminated in grisly rumors and serious accusations. In the Year of the Whistling Wind (830 DR), envious merchants turned the ruling family of Amn against the Spellseers. Using forged documents and false testimony, they purported to show that House Spellseer used magic, charms, and curses to gain the advantage over their trading partners.





However, the family soon faced even more serious and devastating charges. Kartak Spellseer, self-described as the “All-Seeing,” was arrested at the castle and charged with kidnapping and killing 14 young men and women. Kartak was but a distant cousin of the primary branch of the family, but he bore the Spellseer name, and that was enough for the sheriff. Kartak was accused of “slaughtering the children of Amn during unspeakable acts of evil, while executing heinous rites of necromantic magic.” And the royal sheriff had documents and witnesses to “prove” it. (Ironically, though the evidence was manufactured to injure the Spellseers, Kartak was in fact guilty.) He was tried, convicted on all counts, and sentenced to hang.

Kartak was not without friends, or at least like-minded companions. At midnight on the eve of his execution, Rysellan (the wizard who was Kartak’s mentor) and a company of associates used three charges from Rysellan’s *ring of the ram* to break into the dank stone room in which the necromancer was being held. The magical force blasted an enormous hole in the back wall, freeing Kartak and 15 other miscreants who were held on a variety of charges. Kartak mounted the horse left waiting for him and escaped to the Kuldin Peaks.

In the Year of Twelve Bells (836 DR), Farkas died, leaving Castle Spellseer to his son, Tregas the Younger. While this Tregas had but 20 summers, he possessed a shrewdness and diplomatic ability far beyond his years. In 838 he changed the family name to Spulzeer, a corruption close enough to the original to satisfy the family, but singular enough that the connections (he hoped) with Kartak and the family’s earlier reputation would be broken. At the same time he quietly started to rebuild the family fortunes, using divination but making sure he was on the raw end of business deals often enough to throw off suspicion. He also went out of his way to cultivate a friendship with the royal family, even to the extent of loaning them capital without interest. And his plan was successful: By 900 DR the Spulzeer clan had once again joined the ranks of the mighty.

Meanwhile, in the Year of Thorns (856 DR), Kartak died by his own hand, drinking a potion that would turn him into a lich. No one in the family knew of his transformation at the time; they learned only later, through rumors, gossip, and the tales of servants.

Tregas the Younger had three sons. The eldest son, Tregas III, joined a monastery about the same time his father changed the family name, renouncing all claims as heir. The middle brother, Kelviran, vanished in the Year of the Thistle (885 DR) during a brief flirtation

with adventure in the North. So, when Tregas the Younger died at the age of 82, he was unexpectedly succeeded by his youngest son, Karaine Spulzeer, who had not foreseen his inheritance.

But prepared or not, Karaine exceeded expectations. A wastrel fond of wine, women, and song, he set aside his debaucheries when the weight of his responsibilities fell upon him. He was never a brilliant negotiator, but he did well enough to maintain the improvements effected by his father and even made his own contribution to the family’s wealth.

After the death of Karaine the Wise (as later generations called him), there followed a succession of competent patriarchs, some extremely talented. The Spulzeers enjoyed a new and healthy reputation, and a prominence so high that Castle Spulzeer was a stop not to be missed by southern travelers of the Sword Coast from the Year of Great Riches (920 DR) until the unfortunate rise of Kellamar in the Year of the Cold Soul (1281 DR).

But if things went well for the family during this time, the young nation of Amn did not enjoy such fortune. In the Year of Slaughter (1090 DR), King Imnel IV of Amn was forced into a treaty with King Alemander of Tethyr. Amn was suffering from an overpopulation of monsters and was in such financial straits that it could not afford to rid itself of the plague. Amn ceded all lands south of the Tethir Road to Tethyr in exchange for an undisclosed amount of money and enough military aid to drive away the infestation of monsters. Castle Spulzeer was now in Tethyr.

The treaty had enormous impact on the family and castle of Spulzeer. The political situation became an unknown quantity. Until this point in time, Amn was a peaceful and prosperous nation, blessed with good and noble monarchs. The nation had not yet developed into the great trade state it is today, although the seeds existed. Tethyr, on the other hand, was a bureaucratic kingdom whose laws sprung from royal whims.

Still, the Spulzeers tried to maintain the same loosely decorous Amnian lifestyle they had always practiced. In the Year of the Broken Blade (1260 DR), Marinessa the Cross-Eyed became matriarch of the Spulzeers. Trained in divination, Marinessa took to her lessons in trade and negotiations like a young eagle takes to flight—she soared.

Over a period of two years, as she dealt with the bureaucracy in Tethyr, Marinessa negotiated a series of agreements with King Haedrak II of Tethyr. She gave up very little, agreeing to pay a feu of one bushel of fresh apples per annum, host a royal hunt each fall, and maintain a watch and spy network that reported to Tethyr all mercantile and military activity in Amn. In exchange, she re-



ceived a decree proclaiming Castle Spulzeer a Royal Dependency “permitted its own laws and customs in perpetuity,” and guaranteeing military assistance upon demand.

Freed from political constraints, business flourished. In the Year of the Shattered Altar (1264 DR), Marinessa decided to expand the castle by adding another story. The third floor of Castle Spulzeer, ever after called the “New Level,” was completed four years later. For a time, Spulzeer was the second largest castle in all of Tethyr.

Under Marinessa’s leadership, Castle Spulzeer remained a welcome attraction for travelers, and life in the enlarged structure was comfortable and profitable. But Marinessa died suddenly in the Year of the Cold Soul (1281 DR), of causes still debated by the tellers of tales.

Marinessa had two children. The elder, a daughter named Tamar, ran away with a circus high-wire artist. The younger, a son, she named Kelamar. Unfortunately, Kelamar had an eye for the ladies and the glint of gold, and was even more of a wastrel than his ancestor Karaine had once been. He also was becoming well known in those places where men wager money on the fall of a wren or the survival of a rooster.

Kelamar was motivated by profit and pleasure—and not necessarily in that order. When he became the patriarch, he became bold. Kelamar sought to raise Castle Spulzeer once more to its ancient glory, to feed his own need for risk and to line his pockets by reintroducing the entertainment policies of Farkas. But Farkas never imagined the “entertainments” of Kelamar.

Rumors started to circulate: tales of mismatched fights-to-the-death that pitted half-giants against dwarves or unarmed elves, stories of orcs and maidens armed only with kitchen utensils. As the years went by, the rumors became even darker. There was even a report of a serving wench tied to a wheel and spun while drunken sports threw knives at the wheel and placed bets on her remaining lifespan. The stories reached a climax in the Year of Spilled Blood (1315 DR) when the daughter of Riatavin’s mayor was found in a ditch near the castle, her body pierced with slashes made by what the constable swore were the razor-edged blades of throwing knives.

This time, no one bothered with a trial. Kelamar Spulzeer (who actually knew nothing of the crime, but wouldn’t have stopped it if he had) was captured on the Tethir Road, bound to a tree, and used for crossbow target practice. He lived as long as the healer estimated the mayor’s daughter survived.

At the same time Kelamar died without legitimate issue, Tamar’s daughter Kaisha arrived at Castle Spulzeer with an infant son and daughter in tow. Kaisha simply assumed the position of Lady Spulzeer without bothering to consult with the rest of the clan. Worse, she had no intention of cleaning up her late uncle’s excesses.

Repulsed by Kaisha’s actions, the rest of the family (cousins descended from Marinessa’s siblings) held a council in Riatavin on the 15th of Nightal. They decided to abandon Castle Spulzeer as a liability they could no longer afford. After the council, the family’s focus and money would shift away from the castle, some of it later being used to found the Spellseer Inn on Tethir Road in the Year of the Gulagoar (1316 DR). From that inn emerged the town of Trailstone. The castle was allowed to fall into neglect under Kaisha’s poor management.

Still, the castle was home to Kaisha, her son, Chardath, and a deaf-mute daughter she never named. Without the Spulzeer money, however, the castle’s entertainments became smaller (and some say more evil) affairs. Kaisha and Chardath eked out a living by catering to the bizarre tastes of the jaded until Kaisha died of natural causes in the Year of the Spur (1348 DR).

Chardath became Lord of Castle Spulzeer. His nameless, silent sister, meanwhile, had grown into a beautiful if speechless woman locked away on the top floor of the castle. Chardath called her “Marble” because of her pale skin, raven hair, and inability to speak. Most of Chardath’s acquaintances were unaware of her existence, and he kept it that way. Though he allowed Marble to move freely about the castle, her years of captivity had made her afraid of anyone but her brother. She stayed mainly in the family quarters on the new level, away from guests, though she took pleasure in visiting the rose garden every afternoon.

Chardath respected her reclusive nature and protected her from discovery. She was the one bright spot in his life. From a young age, Chardath had resented the way their mother hid her away, refusing to acknowledge her existence as if doing so would reveal a flaw in Kaisha. When Chardath ascended as the new lord, he hoped the event presaged a new life for them both.

It was not to be. All this time, Kartak had been living his unlife in the Kuldin Peaks and advancing his powers as a lich. He fed his anger over the centuries until it developed into a glowing hatred for the Spulzeers. His formal expulsion from the family, conducted as one of Farkas’s last acts, fueled his hatred. Kartak cursed the castle, the land, and the family of Spulzeer.





Tales of The Recent Past

The manipulations of Kartak the lich and Lord Chardath, related below, form the basis of this adventure. The PCs should piece the story together gradually, perhaps learning bits through rumors or tales told in the dimly lit inns of Trailstone and Toralth, but discovering most of it as they make their way through the castle. In providing the PCs with “rumors,” however, remember that the complete details are known only to Kartak and Chardath.

The Resurrection of Kartak

Kartak was destroyed a second time sometime in the Year of the Soft Fogs (1188 DR). He had been instrumental in founding the Twisted Rune, a secret society of spellcasters. Kartak’s mentor, Rysellan the Dark, was the founder of the Twisted Rune and became head of the organization. The society’s primary goal was to rule the south, and by the Year of the Dracorage (1018 DR), the organization was one of the most powerful power blocks in southwestern Faerûn. Then malaise set in.

Like most large, evil organizations, the Rune fell to infighting. Rather than infiltrate governments and guilds (acts at which they had been extremely successful), members tried to usurp each other and wound up making the Rune its own worst enemy.

In 1188, in an attempt by one faction of the Rune to wrest control from the founder, Rysellan was accused of revealing the society’s secrets to outsiders. The resulting spell war caused the final death of Rysellan the Dark and destroyed two of his apprentices, including Kartak.

But Kartak, well aware of the nascent dangers of his chosen path, had laid plans for just such an eventuality. Shortly after achieving lichdom in 856, he entrusted a certain silver-bound volume to his chief agent and bade her go to the castle as a traveler. When the Spulzeers were distracted (and distractions were many), she was to slip into the library and place the book in a secret wall panel behind an obscure shelf. The more hidden the better. The agent did as she was instructed and so it was that Kartak’s phylactery, secreted in the binding of the book, was safely stored. He also placed all of his agents under a *geas*: In the event of his death, they were to find his remains and place them in a prepared sarcophagus below the castle, sealing the entrance against intrusion.

After Kartak’s destruction in 1188, his consciousness tried to make contact with the folk of the castle. He needed a living person to handle the physical acts necessary to restore his body and form. For over 150 years, he met with continual failure. Either the contacts were for

some reason untouchable (like Marble, who heard and was repulsed by the malevolence of the voice in her mind), or disinclined to visit the library while the castle’s other “amusements” beckoned. Regardless, he was never able to reach anyone to help him—until Chardath.

Chardath had always been weak-willed and shifty. (His own mother called him “Weasel.”) Kartak recognized him as a ship without a rudder, and determined to be that rudder. The young lord was the perfect candidate for what the lich had in mind.

On an ominous night in the Year of the Spur (1348 DR), when winds howled through the drafty castle, Chardath had difficulty sleeping. He rose, lit a candle, and began rambling about the place. Eventually he found himself in the hall from which opened the library that hid Kartak’s phylactery. The old, worn hinges groaned as he pushed the door open. A century’s accumulation of dust covered the furniture and floor.

Chardath pulled out a chair, brushed it off, and sat staring at the shelves.

“Chardath,” came a whisper that seemed more inside his head than out of it. “Chardath.”

He looked around the room, but he was quite alone.

“Ah, where are you?”

“I am here, in this room. Be silent and listen.”

Chardath nodded, as if the voice could see him.

“In this house lie vast riches and items of great power—things that could make you a mighty wizard, feared by friend and foe alike. All these things I promise you if . . .”

Chardath sat up abruptly, paying close attention now. “What must I do?”

“Go to the third shelf on the north wall.”

Chardath rose and approached the shelf.

“Go to the center support, reach behind it, and pull the ring you find there.”

He did as he was asked, noticing a gap in the wall. The area behind the support was empty. He pulled the small brass ring. A portion of the wall dropped away, revealing a small, silver-bound book. He took it.

“Now you will do precisely what I tell you,” said the voice, much louder than before.

From that moment, Chardath had little recollection of what followed—no one’s mind could comprehend so much horror without going mad.

He opened the strange silver book and read. As he did so, Kartak took command of Chardath and rode his consciousness like a warrior on a mount. Chardath fought a losing battle for control of his own mind, becoming an observer of his own actions.





When he finished reading the book, Chardath stole into Marble's room as she slept, bound her, slung her over his shoulder, and descended into the castle's lower levels. Kartak guided Chardath into the cellar, through a maze of ancient furniture, oaken cases, and chests of obscure origin, and into the ceremonial chamber.

There Chardath unbound Marble, who was now awake and alert. Her expression clouded with confusion, she tried to read her brother's face for some explanation of his actions. She saw only an unnatural gleam in his eyes.

Kartak's spirit grew more powerful in the presence of his remains. Chardath's hands fluttered, making passes in the air, as his voice chanted low syllables he did not understand. Slowly, the wavering, shimmering image of a huge set of double-doors appeared. Chardath felt his arms raise toward the ceiling, as his mouth cried in a great shout, "Open to me!" The mighty doors took solid form and fell open.

He grabbed Marble roughly, pushing her ahead of him and into the damp gloom beyond the doors. And so Marble entered Kartak's lair beneath the castle. She would never leave alive.

Chardath, powerless to fight off the lich's control, gave up struggling. In this room, in Kartak's presence, only one

being could wield authority. The young lord's hands tied Marble to a chair while Chardath retreated to the back of his mind, a horrified spectator in his own body.

He searched the ancient cupboards of the hidden lair for the components. This night he would restore the pieces of Kartak's remains, then return the spirit from the book into the resurrected body. But the prime component was Marble.

He removed the lid from the coffin that had protected Kartak's carcass all these years. Kartak had been torn into six pieces, the largest being his torso. Chardath arranged the pieces in their proper order and began the ritual. Working late, he cast the spells dictated to him by the phylactery, smeared unguents and ointments on the arranged chunks of the partially mummified corpse. Before his eyes, the body came together. Sinews knit and bonded. Broken, dried sections of skin swelled and flowed together. Even the toenails and fingernails began to grow, as Kartak's bones grew stronger. But there was no life in the now-fresh corpse. That still awaited the final, deadly ritual.

With Kartak's phylactery in such proximity to his body, the lich's strength had grown enough to maintain total control over Chardath's mind during the ultimate





procedure. The part of that mind that was still Chardath huddled in horror as his body, under Kartak's control, led his comatose sister to the side of the stone grave. Kartak forced him to draw the special knife, *Aggarath*, that he had consecrated long ago just for this purpose. (See description, page 59.) Lord Chardath bent Marble over the side of Kartak's still, physical form and slit her throat with the razor-edged blade. Her blood gushed over the side and onto the lich as Chardath screamed the final enchantment and threw Marble's corpse into the rebirth chamber of the newly restored lich.

As the dagger clattered to the floor, its blood-red hilt-stone escaped its setting, flew across the room, and hit the wall. But instead of then dropping to the ground, the ruby disappeared in a flash of red light.

Kartak's body convulsed, spasming into an upright position, and then back down. His eyes snapped open, large and red. Chardath, no longer led by the book or controlled by Kartak, leapt backwards, tripped, and landed on the floor. Kartak pushed Marble off to the side like an old, unwanted blanket and stood up, crimson blood slaking off him like the waters of a cold shower.

He sneered at his distant cousin, whose eyes were now larger than gold pieces. "Thank you." The lich snatched the slim silver volume from Chardath. "You are dismissed. Oh—and take that refuse with you." Kartak pointed at Marble's bloody remains.

Chardath, awed and frightened, picked himself up off the floor. In a trance he would scarcely remember, he went to the sarcophagus and gently gathered his sister in his arms. He left the hidden lair—backwards, stumbling under his burden, never taking his eyes from the terrible image standing before him. Kartak laughed for the first time in centuries. A booming evil rumble of mirth followed Chardath as he went through the doors, turned, and ran.

Hatred for the lich and for himself drove Chardath up the stairs, through the halls and to his room. He laid Marble's still form on his own bed and sprinted to her chambers. He locked the door and threw himself onto the bed.

And that night, he knew final despair. He had killed Marble, his only flesh and blood, his sister. There could be no redemption.

Thus began Chardath's descent into madness.

The Decline of Chardath

Chardath buried his sister the morning after those terrible events. He placed Marble's body in the rose garden beneath her windows—the garden she loved. He turned Marble's room into a shrine of sorts, forbidding the ser-

vants to change anything within her quarters. Everything was left untouched, as if she were merely on holiday.

Soon, Chardath entered a deep state of melancholy. Filled with self-loathing and withdrawn from the world, he grew severely depressed and had not the self-discipline to lift himself out by focusing on other things. He relived that hideous night over and over in his mind until he could think of nothing else. Slowly, his mind began to twist.

Desperate for distraction, Chardath decided to open the castle once again to guests and travelers. But by this time an aura of gloom had settled over the castle, and it attracted only guests of unsavory character and tastes. Soon the activities at Castle Spulzeer rivaled those of Kellamar's days in baseness, depravity, and excess.

By the Year of the Arch (1353 DR) the castle was fully staffed with servants and entertainers, and a gaming hall had been built in the cellar. It took a staff of 15 people two years to clean out the ancient debris and make the place habitable. Other rooms were set aside for "private" (unspecified) amusements. Kartak's level was left untouched, for Chardath could never locate it again without the lich's guidance.

The debauchery twisted Chardath's brain even further, until he began to embrace evil. Though Lord Chardath was a competent warrior and his thoughts often turned toward revenge, he believed himself too weak to take on his undead ancestor. Instead, he simply nursed his hatred for Kartak until it consumed his broken mind.

Kartak's Activities

Kartak, meanwhile, was mostly absent from the castle. After Chardath left with the Marble's corpse that fateful night, Kartak hastily set magical seals on the doors. The room where Marble died was left untouched, the bloody dagger *Aggarath* still lying on the floor where it fell.

Kartak teleported to his secondary lair in the Kuldin Peaks of Tethyr. From there he plotted and exacted his revenge on the rebels in the Twisted Rune, and from there he also sent agents out to find *Aggarath's* missing hilt-stone. The lich essentially left Chardath and Castle Spulzeer alone, occasionally teleporting in briefly to pick up supplies, spell components, or magical items from his lair.

Once per year, however, on the anniversary of Marble's death, Kartak found himself magically summoned to the castle. He was drawn to the room in which Marble died and could not leave the castle by any means, magical or mundane, for 24 hours. He never encountered Chardath during these annual summons, as the melancholic lord could not bear to be in the castle on





the anniversary of his sister's death and always made arrangements to be elsewhere.

Earlier this year, Kartak decided to pay Chardath a visit. It was time, the lich thought, to remind the mortal lord of his master.

Kartak teleported to the cellar, thinking to surprise Chardath by coming in quietly and unannounced. Unfortunately, he had been away from home too long. He materialized on the top of a dicing table, upsetting what the gambler later swore was a winning roll.

Kartak's dignity, though, was intact, as was his formidable appearance. He was dressed in long, flowing black robes and wore close-fitting sable gloves; an ebon velvet hat covered his full, gray hair. He carried a staff that appeared to be an ivory cane with a silver stag's head for a grip.

His appearance created pandemonium. Women screamed, men drew swords, and servants hid under the tables.

Kartak's princely face did not betray the astonishment he felt. As he raised his long arms for silence, the din grew hushed.

"Gentlemen and ladies, please forgive my startling entrance. I am but a humble mage, a dedicated servant of Azuth," he lied, dropping lightly to the floor.

"The last time I returned home, my portal left me in a cluttered cellar. I see there have been changes.

"Please, please continue. Eat, drink, and game away, enjoy my establishment. I apologize if I frightened you in any way." With a deep bow and a flourish of his cape to the crowd, he walked briskly to the stairs and up to the great hall.

Kartak strode into the hall, a false smile on his face, and crooked a long, well-manicured finger at Chardath. Without waiting to see if he was being followed, Kartak turned and continued up the stairs to the library on the third floor.

Rage, hate, and fear seethed in Chardath's mind, but fear won. He straightened his jacket and excused himself to the lady he had been flattering. Sullenly, he followed the abomination that was his master.

Kartak pushed open the door to the library, and shoed out a pair of lovers who had sought refuge there. He motioned to Chardath to close the door.

Stripping off his gloves, he tossed them on the table and turned to Chardath. "It seems you have been busy in my absence."

Chardath's body trembled slightly as he looked at Kartak's shoes. "I am Lord Spulzeer," he mumbled softly. "I—I. . ."

"And I—I—I, yes, I know. Beware mortal. You tread deep water." Kartak slapped the head of his staff into his palm. "It doesn't do to upset me, you know. No matter."

He reached out with the cane and tapped his cousin on the shoulder. "I did not come home to threaten you, and I approve of what you've done with the old place. No, I really do. Just keep your "guests" away from my lab, and we'll do fine."

Kartak picked up his gloves and raised his cane. "You will see that I am not disturbed." And, so saying vanished from the castle.

And unknown to either of them, in the central chamber of Kartak's lair the coalescing form of Marble's ghost dissipated, not having had quite enough time before Kartak's departure to manifest. (See description, page 64.)

Chardath and The Djinni

Chardath, having grown up in the castle, was familiar with all its nooks and crannies, its turrets and its rooms—all of them save one. In the cellar of the castle were a pair of sealed doors. Chardath, thanks to Kartak's mental manipulations, had no recollection of ever having been through them, though he remembered every event that took place behind those doors—Kartak knows no mercy.

No Spulzeer had ever entered those doors, and family legends said that they led to Kartak's lair and laboratory. Some tales hinted at great wealth protected by even greater magic, others told of banshee screams and undead wrapped in chains, forever wandering the halls of the deepest pit of the castle. Chardath's mother, Kaisha, believed the doors merely led to unused storage space, closed off because it was ancient and dangerous.

After Kartak's visit, Chardath became obsessed with the doors, certain that his destiny and the means for killing Kartak waited behind them. He could visualize himself finding a magical item in the lair. Perhaps a ring, a scroll, an orb, or something else that would grant him magical status as a wizard of great power. Something that would enable him to exact his revenge on the lich.

One morning, hung-over but with enough ale still running in his veins to make him foolish, Chardath decided to enter the forbidden domain beneath his castle. He had slept in his clothes, so there was no reason to dress. He pulled on his boots, and went down to the castle's great hall. There he pulled an ancient, rusty blade from its place behind the family crest on the wall and made for the kitchen. He slipped the sword into his belt and grabbed a





torch, lighting it from the smoldering ruins of the previous night's banked cooking fire. Satisfied, in his condition, that he had all he needed, he opened the door to the cellar and went confidently down into the darkness.

The doors to Kartak's lair were sealed, but neither locked nor hidden, as they usually were. Now, two rotting pieces of timber crossed the doors. Chardath easily pulled off the thick boards. With his sword, he broke the seals on the door, not at all noticing the sigil impressed into the wax.

He pushed the twin doors inward, hinges groaning with age and rust. A great fetid wind of dark smoke threw Chardath across the cellar. Undeterred, sword in his right hand, torch in his left, he made his way down creaking wooden steps.

Given the luck of fools, the sword Chardath had pulled from the wall had been enchanted by Kartak himself. Long forgotten, hiding in plain view as a mere wall ornament in the great hall, the sword was *The Key*. It is a *broadsword* +2 specifically enchanted to neutralize Kartak's *ward* magic. (Kartak created it in case he should ever be stripped of his powers and need to get into his laboratory.) So Chardath passed through Kartak's wards and protections as if they'd never been cast. And if dumb luck saved his entrance, more was to follow.

In the small room he found the ancient sarcophagus that once held the mortal remains of his enemy. It was still stained with Marble's blood. The cupboards and tables also were as they had been left on that fateful night so long ago. Even the bloodstained dagger still lay on the floor where it had fallen. The drunken lord moved toward the dagger, but a magical force kept him from picking it up. Sickened by the sight of it anyway, he left the weapon alone and made no further attempts to retrieve it.

On the west wall of the room, an ornate door stood slightly ajar. Chardath hurried across the room and pushed open the tempting door over the screeching protests of the long-unused hinges. Sword in hand, he thrust the torch into the opening.

The first thing that struck him was the sheer size of the place. Another entire level of the castle, this single, mammoth room stretched as far as he could see. Wall sconces every 20 feet held the torches, long since rotted, that once illuminated the work performed here.

There were hundreds of tables, some of them containing skeletons and organic matter of a variety Chardath did not care to learn. Lining the walls were cases holding all manner of goods, magical implements, and devices of torture all thrown carelessly into their receptacles as if to defy any notion of order—with one exception. On a distant shelf sat a single item Chardath would never have





seen if not for the faint blue nimbus that surrounded it.

Chardath made his way to the glowing object, craning his neck to see what other wonders he could find. About halfway to his goal, he spotted a large two-headed battle-axe shaped like a gargoyle. The weapon had a 3-foot haft and looked like it could sever an oak with a single blow. He let his sword drop to the floor and picked up the axe, confident that he was now a match for any foe—and in a way, that was true.

Maleffluent (see description on page 61) kept its mouth shut and began to bond mentally with its new wielder. Chardath made his way to a glowing shelf across the room.

There, on a small metal pedestal, sat an old, battered oil lamp. It was not lit, yet it was the source of the shimmering blue light. Chardath picked it up and, spotting what looked like an inscription on the side, rubbed the lamp against his sleeve to clean it. “At last!” screeched a thunderous voice. A brilliant blue cloud sailed around the room at incredible speed, coming to rest before Chardath and towering above him.

“Little human, even noble djinn are bound by certain rules. You have freed me from the prison Kartak set upon me. Before I, Gentar, find him and kill him, I owe you a wish!” The cloud swished impatiently.

“I—I don’t know what to wish for, Your Greatness, but shouldn’t I get three? In all the tales they get three. I know there’s three . . . sir.”

“Fool!” Gentar thundered. “You waste my time. One, three, what does it matter? All humans know is gold, status, and dead enemies. Pick something and make it quick.”

Chardath could barely conceal his trembling. “Oh, I wish I knew what to what to wish for. . . .”

“Done.”

Lord Spulzeer jumped. “I wish you wouldn’t speak so loud. Sir.”

“Done,” Gentar whispered.

Chardath screwed up his face in concentration, his eyes scanning the room. “I don’t know—I only wish I had half of Kartak’s powers.”

“Done.” Gentar vanished, laughing hysterically.

Deep in the Kuldin Peaks, Kartak the lich felt suddenly weak. He staggered and reached for his work table to steady himself. Then he collapsed in a heap on the cavern floor.

Chardath too, was toppled. When he awoke, he discovered that several hours had passed. He also became aware of a new energy coursing through his body. He was stronger, tougher than ever before. Ready, he thought, for anything—even Kartak.

He climbed the stairs with a new confidence, knowing that the room and everything in it belonged to him. When he reached the door, he reexamined the seals, and now knew that the symbol on them was Kartak’s sigil. *I shall need a sigil*, he thought, hefting his newfound axe. Chardath smiled. A new day was dawning.

The Current Situation

Note that Gentar reduced Kartak’s power (not his level) by half. Kartak, as a 31st-level necromancer, was able to cast several hundred levels of spells. As a result of the djinni’s meddling, Kartak and Chardath can now each cast a total of 162 levels of spells, essentially making them two 20th-level mages. (Full descriptions of these two NPCs can be found on pages 62-63.)

The PCs enter the story just a few weeks after Chardath’s encounter with the djinni. The Lord of Castle Spulzeer, flush with newly acquired power, prowls the castle waiting for Kartak to appear so he can kill him.

Already on the path to insanity, Chardath has slipped further toward madness every day under the influence of *Maleffleunt*—and in the presence of restless spirits now haunting the castle. Kartak’s spells and wards had kept them at bay, but the lich’s weakened state has allowed the unfortunate creatures to run loose. As a Spulzeer, Chardath is immune to harm from the castle’s wandering undead (see table on page 43), but he can still see and hear them—and grows more uncertain each day as to whether they really exist or are figments of his tormented imagination.

Since the incident with the djinni, Chardath has stopped entertaining visitors. His mind (what’s left of it) is focused solely on revenge, and guests probably wouldn’t have a very good time anyway with all the undead running around the place.

Kartak, meanwhile, grows nervous. The anniversary of Marble’s death rapidly approaches, and he fears being summoned to the castle in his weakened condition and facing the mad, vengeful, powerful Chardath. He hopes to increase his chance of survival by returning the hilt-stone to *Aggarath* and using the potent dagger in his own defense.

What neither man nor lich realizes is that a third party anxiously awaits the anniversary: Marble. If both Kartak and Chardath are in the castle at the same time, she will manifest as a ghost (see page 64). And she has her own plans for revenge.

And into this theater of hatred and vengeance enter the unwitting PCs. . . .



ENCOUNTER IN Eshpurta

*While on my way to Eshpurta, whistling up a tune,
While on my way to Eshpurta, a red-haired damsel I did spy,
Her lips a smile, her hair aglow, her eyes as bright as the moon
Saying, "Laddie, mine, won't you come nigh, the army here is wry.
I wouldn't care, but ye look sae fair, laddie don't go to town."*

*The Day I Joined the Army
Amnian Army Ballad*



It is the Year of the Shield (1367 DR). The heroes are resting in Eshpurta, a quiet town off a tributary of Lake Esmel in Amn. After their last adventure, a bit of relaxation is indeed welcome, and they are (or should be) able to afford it.

You are walking down the main street of Eshpurta, learning the lay of the place and taking in the sights. Across the street and just up ahead, you see a smallish man struggling with an old woman dressed rather like a gypsy. They are shouting at each other in front of a place called Bhamm's Herbs. She tries to run from him, but he has hold of her sleeve and she cannot escape. The attacker is trying to snatch her oversized leather pouch with his free hand, his hooded cape fluttering in the breeze.

When the PCs intervene, the assault is broken off and the man runs away. (In the unlikely event that the PCs do not intervene, force the issue and penalize them for cowardice.) The miscreant is Gaspard deLouca (see description on page 62, though he is currently employing an *alter self* spell to disguise his identity). A servant of Kartak Spellseer, he is after a 12-sided blood-red ruby: the hilt-stone from the dagger that slew Marble. The ruby came into the old woman's possession through a string of owners and events too lengthy to be reported here. (That, as they say, is another story.) While unaware of its importance, she is wise enough to keep it from Gaspard.

The old woman straightens, smoothing out her brightly colored skirt. "Thank you, thank you all," she says. "My name is Ellana. I have little money to repay your kindness, but I could buy you a cup of tea and read your fortune." She smiles at you. "I'm very good."

The woman is Ellana of Farhome (LG hm P5 of Selûne), a wandering priest. She never has much in the way of goods, but always seems to have enough to pay her own way and to eat three meals a day. Her clothes are old, but clean and serviceable.

Bhamm's Herbs has outside tables. Customers must go inside to buy their drinks (herbal teas and the like) and return outdoors. Eudhis Bhamm does not allow food or drink in his shop.

After Ellana pays for their tea and all return to the table, she produces a deck of 78 cards. Alert PCs may notice a small man in a hooded cloak watching them from across the street.

You watch as Ellana shuffles the cards and lays them out according to some arcane pattern. As she places the thirteenth and final card, she closes her eyes and passes her hands over them. Suddenly she stops, her face drained of color.



"No, no, that cannot be," she whispers to herself. "Change it, can you change it? Oh!" Her eyes snap open and she stares at you. With a hoarseness in her voice that was not there before, she says, "I am sorry, the cards don't seem to be speaking with me today. That, or they lie, I cannot say. But I can tell you one thing." She stops, reaches into her pouch, and produces an unusually shaped blood-red gem stone, which she hands to you. "You need this far more than I ever will."

As she stands, her eyes betray dread. "I must leave now. Take care my friends, take good care. All is known in time. Guard that stone with your lives, for it may be your life." She hurries away.

The gem is a perfect dodecahedron—a polyhedron with 12 faces, about the size of a 12-sided die. Though the ruby does not glow or look magical in any other way, it is indeed enchanted (as a *detect magic* or similar spell will reveal).

If the heroes follow Ellana and ask her to explain, she tells them that she cannot. She knows only that great danger lurks ahead and that the stone can help them. She will not say more, no matter how hard they press her.

Should the PCs explore Eshpurta or conduct other business that takes them into the streets, from time to time they should catch glimpses of Gaspard deLouca (no longer altered) following them. Eventually, they come to the Hamstrung Giant, an inn and tavern that advertises a warm and friendly atmosphere, good ale, and great food. Prices at the inn are moderate.

As you look around the tavern, the street door opens, swinging almost to the wall in a sudden gust of wind. A small man in a hooded cloak enters and looks furtively about. Seeing you, he nods his head and approaches.

"Would ye be the ones of whom I've heard—noble travelers in search of adventure and profit?"

As Gaspard was magically disguised when he accosted Ellana, the PCs likely won't recognize him as her attacker. If they do, however, he spins a yarn ("I thought she had stolen something"), then introduces himself.

He speaks in a soft voice. "I am Gaspard deLouca, servant to Lord Spulzeer of Tethyr."

Gaspard wishes to determine whether any of the party has heard of the Spulzeers, the Spellseers, or their history. If the PCs tell him to continue or otherwise indicate that they haven't the slightest idea of what he is talking about, he proceeds.

If any of the PCs have knowledge of Kartak, Chardath, or the Spulzeer story and admit it, Gaspard dismisses any unflattering facts as vicious gossip blown out of proportion.

Since failing to wrest the ruby from Ellana, Gaspard has had time to think and to contact Kartak (his true employer). They have decided that, rather than risk running afoul of military law in Eshpurta, it would be simpler to have the PCs take the hilt-stone to Castle Spulzeer themselves—where Gaspard can dispose of them more quietly. Kartak's servant can then replace the stone in the dagger. The gem must be returned before the anniversary of Marble's death for Kartak's plan to work.

"My master wishes to speak with you. I have the means with me, here, in my pocket." So saying, he reaches into his cloak and produces a small crystal ball. "Will ye speak with him?"

Without waiting for your reply, he pulls out a soft cloth and a stand for the ball. Polishing the crystal, he closes his eyes and mutters an incantation you cannot quite hear. He folds the cloth, placing it on the table, and sets the ball on the stand.

Inside the crystal ball, an image begins to take shape, swirling and twisting in a chaos of color. As the whirlpool in the glass subsides, you can make out the features of an elegantly dressed man of about 50 years. He moves his lips, but you hear his words inside your heads.

"Gentlemen, I do not believe in bantering words. I have a proposition for you that should work to our mutual profit. Are you interested?"

The speaker is, of course, Kartak Spellseer (not Chardath). The lich has two worries: (1) that in his now-vulnerable state he could be killed by the dagger *Aggarath* if someone else restores the hilt-stone, and (2) that his newly empowered relative Chardath may gain access to his laboratory and the magical items he stored there and elsewhere in the castle. There are three items in particular that he'd like to keep away from his cousin. Kartak has devised a plan to address both concerns at once, using the PCs.





“My name is Chardath Spulzeer and until a few weeks past, I was the Lord of Castle Spulzeer. A distant cousin, someone I had never met, showed up one day with troops and documents. He claimed he was the rightful heir, and his troops gave me time to pack only a single trunk before removing me from my ancestral home. My anger is now unbounded. The troops have left, but my cousin, Kartak Spellseer, has government connections.”

The image in the glass distorts for a moment, covered with a reddish haze. Then it clears, and the speaker continues.

“There are three items in the castle that I did not have time to retrieve during my swift and supervised departure. If you obtain them for me, I will reward you generously from the modest fortune I have hidden elsewhere. In fact, should you agree to help me, my servant will give you a *glim-gauntlet* now as a partial payment and show of good faith.

“Be advised, however, that I must have the items as soon as possible, as I intend to leave Tethyr to solicit support for reclaiming my birthright. You

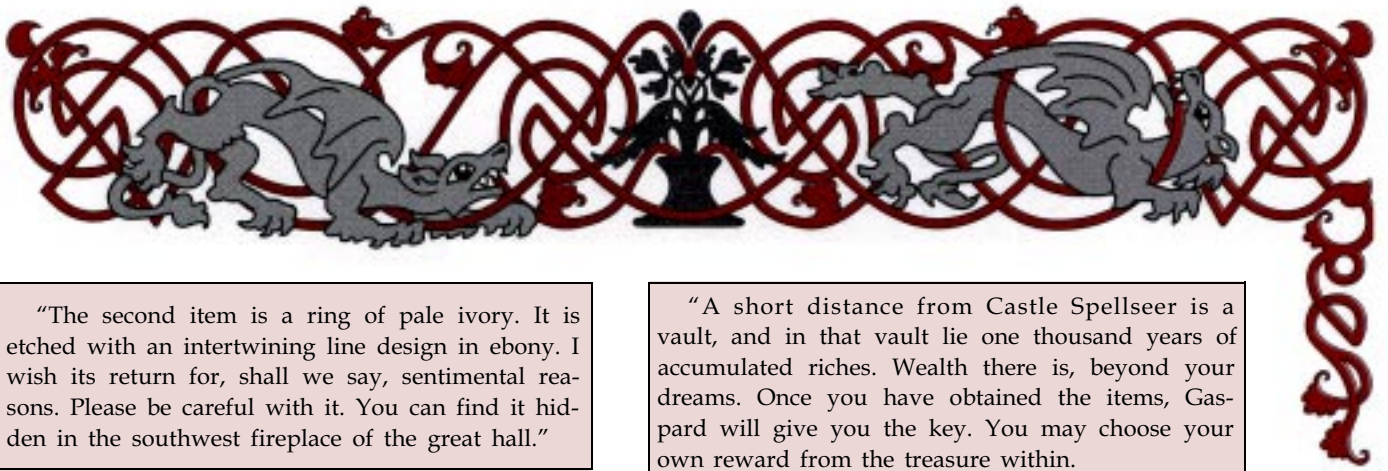
may deliver them to Gaspard at the Spulzeer Inn on Tethir Road once you have obtained them.

“Do we have an agreement, or must I find braver adventurers?”

Assuming the party agrees, he goes on to describe the items:

“The first item is an ancient crown of battered silver, located in a great chamber beneath the cellar level of the castle. You must be very careful with this. Do not touch it directly, and do not cast spells on it, as I believe it may be dangerous. Use the *glim-gauntlet* to pick it up and then wrap it swiftly and tightly.”

Kartak believes that the “ancient crown” may be one of the pieces of the *Regalia of Might*— specifically, the historical artifact known as the *Crown of Evil*. He acquired it from a Calimshanite merchant just before his second death. He has not yet had time to study it thoroughly, but shudders to think what would happen if it is indeed that artifact and it fell into Chardath’s hands. (Fortunately, it is not.)



"The second item is a ring of pale ivory. It is etched with an intertwining line design in ebony. I wish its return for, shall we say, sentimental reasons. Please be careful with it. You can find it hidden in the southwest fireplace of the great hall."

The ring is a *ring of the necromancer*. In the hands of neutral and evil wizards it has great power over undead. In the hands of others, it serves as a *scroll of protection*.

"The third object is a book titled *Legendary of Phantoms and Ghosts*. I need it for some research I am conducting. No special care need be taken with it, just don't damage it. You can find it in the library.

"I must warn you to beware Kartak as you seek these items. He is a powerful wizard, and I suspect he might be quite mad.

"Oh, there is one thing I have forgotten. In a room just off the great chamber that holds the crown, you may find a discarded knife. It's nothing valuable, really, but as Kartak inquired about it specifically, I have a feeling it should be kept out of his hands. If you obtain the knife for me in addition to the other items, I will give you a bonus reward.

"Remember—your payment relies on obtaining these items for me with all haste."

The knife, of course, is Kartak's greatest concern, but he does not want to betray its significance to the PCs. The other items, however, are also important to him, and he'd like to retrieve them without encountering Chardath if he can. He possesses a sage's fear of the mad, and does not want to deal with an insane mage in his current state and level of power.

Kartak does not want the heroes dealing with Chardath for fear he will turn them to his side. By giving them his own name, his fearful reputation (repeated in lore and legend in both Amn and Tethyr) will be passed to the adventurers if they ask questions about the Spellseer lich.

Should the PCs ask for specific details about the amount of their payment, Kartak assures them it will be worth their while.

"A short distance from Castle Spellseer is a vault, and in that vault lie one thousand years of accumulated riches. Wealth there is, beyond your dreams. Once you have obtained the items, Gaspard will give you the key. You may choose your own reward from the treasure within.

"As I said, I have instructed my servant to give you an advance to prove my good faith, for we men of Amn understand the need for such things when entering agreements. Gaspard has a *glim-gauntlet* for you. It is an enchanted glove and no one today knows how to make another. It will fit your hand of its own accord and light your way in the darkness—you can even control the intensity of the light. It will also gleam when touched to a thing of magic, and the strength of its light will reflect the power of the object. These are rare and precious items, worth at least 4,000 danters on the black market. It should also help you with your quest."

Sharp PCs may catch the references to "men of Amn" and "Castle Spellseer," and wonder at "Chardath's" references—references to historical conditions that have changed and clues that the speaker might not be who he claims. If "Chardath" is asked about this, he will smoothly reply:

"I apologize, good gentles. You see, my lands rest upon the border between Amn and Tethyr. Anciently, in fact, we were Amnians of good measure. So do not wonder that I speak as a native of one or the other."

At this point, the PCs must make a decision. If they choose not to accept this apparently lucrative offer, other agents come, following the PCs all over the continent if necessary, with bigger promises and ever increasing amounts of initial payment gold, until they accept. The DM is free to use NPCs of his choice for this, escalating them in power and intensity as the need arises.

If they accept now, Gaspard gives them the *glim-gauntlet*. He pockets the *crystal ball* and rises.

The strange little man heads toward the door. But before exiting, he turns and says, "Do not betray my master's trust, friends. He is not a man to be trifled with."

Gaspard deLouca leaves you with the warning and a small wave of dismissal as he walks out into the damp night. You hear light rain beating on the roof.





Gaspard is not finished with the PCs: He has been assigned to follow them. Kartak wants to ensure that they do not contact Chardath or any of his agents. If the heroes get into serious trouble, Gaspard will assist them, but will reveal himself only if they are about to be killed. The DM should allow the PCs to catch sight of Gaspard from time to time, but he should be presented as a vague, shadowy figure, seen at a distance, unable to be identified with certainty.

Given the rain and the hour, the adventurers may wish to get a good night's sleep and set out early in the morning. The Hamstrung Giant offers comfortable accommodations at a reasonable price and an excellent breakfast featuring rashers of bacon, mounds of pan-fried cakes, and gallons of honeyed molasses syrup.

Should the PCs need to stock up on supplies or see to other business before leaving town, Eshpurta is described below. Even if the party leaves fairly quickly, Namble Swiftleg notes their presence.

DM's Note: Encounters within the city are left to your discretion, based on the party's needs and what the players plan to do.

Eshpurta

The city of Eshpurta has a population of 105,000 citizens, but at the height of the trade season that is just beginning, this figure can swell to 175,000 people. Very few (less than 5%) of the citizens are other than human. In addition, there are 25,000 Amnian troops stationed in the city.

The Shield Council of Eshpurta and its "adviser," General Labak Craumerdaun (N hm F18), control this city. Craumerdaun, a forceful, take-charge general who is the real power in Eshpurta, is the commander-in-chief of the army garrison and dominates the Shield Militia.

The Shield Militia, 2,000 armed, mounted police, keeps internal order. Should the PCs step on any toes or violate any of this rigid society's conventions, they will deal with the militia.

The Golden Fortress acts as the primary garrison for the Amnian Council Army in eastern Tethyr. The garrison holds 18,000 troops, 6,300 officers, 700 instructors, military advisers, support staff (weaponsmiths, armorers, etc.), and 3,000 trainees. All are contained within the city. Either General Craumerdaun or Balacer Macefist (LN hm F14), Commander of the Golden Fortress Military Academy, assigns troops as needed.

While the militia mounties should be avoided at all





costs, some of the military are approachable, especially if there are any veterans among the heroes. Lower ranks and trainees may provide information in exchange for the simple companionship of humans who are not in the service.

A detailed report by a Shield Militiaman (a patron at the Hamstrung Giant) about the party and its meeting with Gaspard rouses General Craumerdaun's curiosity. The general dispatches an army squad to quietly follow the PCs around town. They do not interfere unless the heroes break the law. Strangely, an officer of the Second Battalion of the Amnwater Blues Regiment, having overheard the report, volunteers a squad of his men to watch the strangers. The Second was never known to volunteer for local duty, only for eastern patrols to protect farmers from raids by large bands of trolls.

Army Squad 4, hm/hf F5 (4): AC 6 (brigandine); MV 12; hp 36, 33, 30, 27; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (short sword); SZ M (6' tall); ML fearless (19); Int 8; AL N.

Notes: These four (two men, two women) would follow their squad leader over burning coals and into the Abyss itself if he gave the word.

Namble Swiftleg, Squad Leader, hm R9: AC 0 (plate); MV 12 (6); HD 9; hp 59; THAC0 12 (11, magical long sword); #AT 3/2; Dmg 1d8+1/1d12+1 (magical long sword); SZ M (6'7" tall); ML elite (16); AL NG; XP 1,400.

Notes: Tracking proficiency (17).

S 14, D 13, C 14, I 10, W 14, Ch 12.

Personality: Vigorous, trustworthy, gregarious.

Special Equipment: *Blackflame* (a long sword +1, +4 vs. undead).

Spells (2): 1st—*cure light wounds*, *remove fear* (casts as a 2nd-level priest).

Thief Abilities: MS 70, HS 56.

Places of Interest

All of the following locations are in the general vicinity of The Hamstrung Giant:

Major Cargunn's Military and Equipment Shoppe

Two doors north of the inn is Major Cargunn's Military and Equipment Shoppe. Major Cargunn (N hm F13) is retired from the Shield Militia, and some say he continues to be involved in operations that require his (never specified) expertise. The major's store features items the PCs may require and things they may not have thought of. In fact, he carries every item listed in the *PHB* and *DMG* equipment section priced at 500 gp or less.

Bhamm's Herbs

Across the street and south of the Hamstrung Giant is Bhamm's Herbs. Eudhis Bhamm (N hm W7) is a small, nervous man with an acid tongue. He sells herbs as advertised, but any serious query about spell components is met with contempt and a short, "Agin' the law here, wizard brain." However, persistence persuades Bhamm to lead potential buyers into his "compounding room." Almost every conceivable spell component is for sale here—at 200% the value listed in the *PHB* and the *DMG*, although Eudhis can be haggled down some.

Gray Goose Provisioners

Next door to Bhamm's Herbs sits Gray Goose Provisioners. The establishment is run by an elderly couple, Carn Wittsome (CE hm T10) and his concubine and partner Nethris Perndle (LN hf P4). The two fight constantly on all matter of subjects, but if any of the heroes can get the attention of either long enough to make a purchase, good rations and minor trail supplies can be had here for bargain prices.

Temples

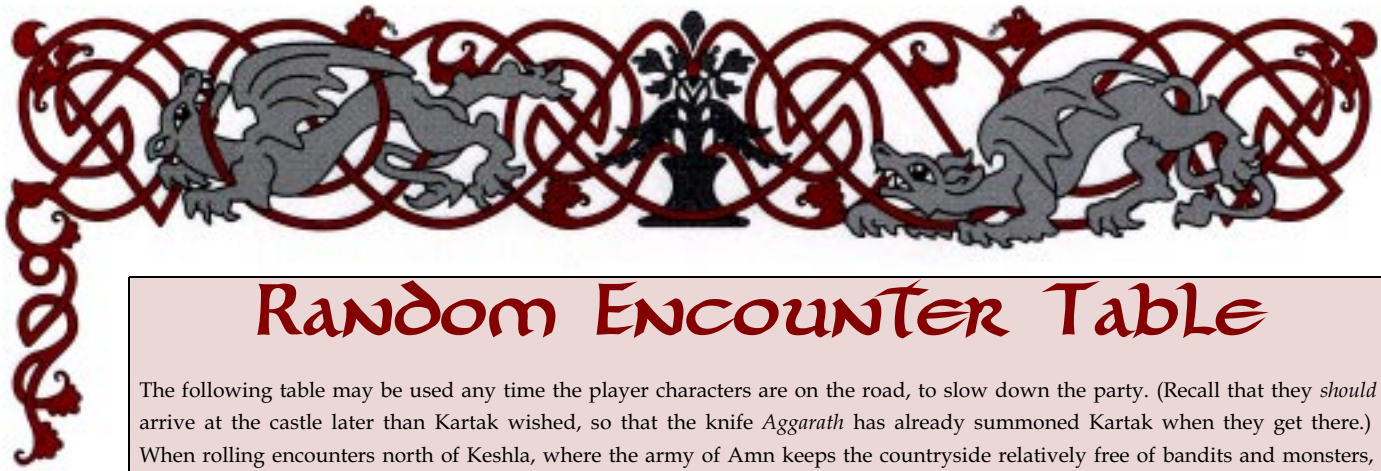
The city is home to several temples. All are within a short distance of the inn.

Imater's temple in Eshpurta is called The Towers of Willful Suffering. Its grounds house a quiet, subdued abbey. The fact that this church exists in Amn at all makes a bolder statement than would any mere physical opulence. The Revered Mother of the House is Heldatha Dhussta (LG hf P18). There are currently 16 priests on staff, along with 48 followers.

The temple to Tempus is named The Towers of the Vengeful Hand. Currently involved in a succession struggle, Lance of the Lord Niskam Tresdaap (NE hm P9) and Battlelady Peris Whallnsor (LN hf P8) vie to be named the heir to the aging prelate, Trusted Sword Jak Errins (N hm P15). Control of this temple and the political support of its fervent following of garrison soldiers is a powerful and lucrative position. There are 10 underpriests here to serve 150 adherents.

There are also small chapels to Tyr, Torm, Helm, and Tempus within the Golden Fortress. Its prelate, the aged Shield Brother Benitus (NG hm C12 of Helm), oversees them all with the assistance of younger priests of these diverse faiths. In addition, there are shrines (some attended, some vacant, served only by itinerant priests) for nearly every god in the Realms. They may be hard to find, but diligent searching should produce results.





Random Encounter Table

The following table may be used any time the player characters are on the road, to slow down the party. (Recall that they *should* arrive at the castle later than Kartak wished, so that the knife *Aggarath* has already summoned Kartak when they get there.) When rolling encounters north of Keshla, where the army of Amn keeps the countryside relatively free of bandits and monsters, reduce by half the number of opponents. (Note that encounter #2 should not occur until after the party has been to Moonhearth.) On the other hand, the closer the party gets to Castle Spulzeer, the more lawless the countryside becomes; increase numbers by 10% to 25%. This increase does not reflect the inability of local officials to control the situation, but rather the darkening influence of Castle Spulzeer, which nurtures evil.

1d20 Result

- Deserters, hm/hf, F3 (3d4):** AC 7; MV 12; hp 13, 12, 12; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; ML steady (12); AL CE; XP 65 each. The deserters, well armed with swords, shields, and leather armor, attack the party. Their leader is a former officer, **Korienna Redarm hf, F6:** AC 0 (plate mail and shield); MV 12; hp 30; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8+1 (*Mordemar*); AL CE; XP 420. She carries sword called *Mordemar* (sword +1/+2 against undead), a gift from her grandfather. The deserters are after horses and plunder, in that order. If they can capture a few (1d4) of the heroes' mounts (assuming the heroes have mounts), they ride off.
- Forest trapper (lurker) (1):** AC 4; MV 3, Br 6; HD 10; hp 74; THAC0 11; #AT see below; Dmg see below; ML steady (11); AL N; XP 3,000. The forest trapper has burrowed beneath the road or path down which the adventurers are traveling. The party has a 75% chance of being surprised and stepping on its barbs. (Druids and rangers have a 5% chance per level of spotting and identifying it or its barbs.) Forest trappers possess 1d20+5 poisonous barbs. Victims must make successful saving throws vs. poison or be paralyzed for 2d20 turns.
- Huge talking raven (1):** AC 6; MV 1, Fl 27 (C); HD 1-1; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d2; ML steady (12); Int Genius (18); AL N; XP 35. The bird swoops down from a high tree, landing on rock in front of the PCs. It says, "Evil may call itself by any name, but it is still evil. Does a black rose bloom in sunny spring or in winter's icy keep? Some lies are true. Learn this or go to your doom."
- The PCs stumble into a forest clearing. They can just make out the mounds of a large foundation; a temple once stood here. They are immediately attacked by 1d10 **baneguards:** AC 7; MV 12; HD 4+4; hp 33; THAC0 15, Dmg 1d6; SA magic missile once every 3 rounds from fingertips for 1d4+4 points of damage; SD blink, as the spell, once per turn; SW turned as wights; armed with swords or maces; ML steady (12) AL NE; XP 975. Baneguards suffer damage from edged weapons, fire, spells, and holy water. Priests of Bane created them to guard this temple. When the structure was destroyed, no one thought to release the skeletons.
- Deserters**, as for a roll of 1, except that they are joined by 2d6 **hobgoblins:** AC 5; MV 9; HD 1+1; hp 7; THAC0 19; #AT 1; XP 35; equipped with leather armor, swords and spears (60%), and morning stars (40%). All are after horses, gold, and weapons.
- A tribal war party of 2d6 **gnolls** (AC 5; MV 9; HD 2; hp 16; THAC0 19; Dmg 2d4; ML steady (11); Int low (5); AL CE; XP 35) with a 3HD chieftain (XP 65) ambushes the party for sport.
- A **farmers' militia party** (4d6), returning from the false alarm of an orc attack, mistake the heroes for deserters and attack them. Half militia party is F1, half F3.
- The party is surprised by 4d6 **goblins:** AC 6; MV 6; HD 1-1; hp 7; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; ML average (10) Int low (5); AL LE; XP 15. The horde includes two sub-chiefs (XP 35 each) and a chief (XP 65). If in bright sunlight, the goblins suffer -1 to their attack rolls.
- A **hobgoblin war band** (2d10) attacks. (See 5 for stats, add whips and bows to weapons.)
- A mixed party of **goblins** and **hobgoblins** (see 8 and 9) attacks the heroes.
- 11-20 No encounter.



The Journey Begins

Kartak needs the player characters to accomplish their quest as soon as possible. He wants the dagger Aggarath safely in his hands before it summons him to the castle on the anniversary of Marble's death.

That is not, however, what you want as the DM. The party should arrive at Castle Spulzeer later than planned—just as Kartak is summoned, because that's when things start getting interesting. His presence in the castle enables Marble's ghost to appear; he is also essential to the final confrontation.

A number of road encounters are included here, as well as a random encounter table (see opposite page), to help slow down the party during its journey. But no matter when the adventurers arrive, it's not soon enough: Kartak is summoned to the castle just before the PCs gain sight of it from the road.

Refer to page 24 for a map of the region the party must travel through to reach Castle Spulzeer.

The Road To KeshLa

The trek to Castle Spulzeer begins on the South Road out of Eshpurta, due south through Trollford and into the gentle, rolling hills beyond the city. The road between Eshpurta and Trollford is known locally as Troll Way and is used for fast military deployment and by troops on maneuvers. It is, therefore, in excellent condition.

At Trollford, the South Road crosses over the Amstel River. This is the only safe ford among the southern hills for 75 miles. The Amstel is deep and fast above and below Trollford. However, the steep hills slow the rushing torrents and shelter this shallow crossing. Every traveling group of more than three persons must be escorted by troops, and a fee of 3 sp is charged for the privilege.

It is said that in ancient times, this area was the center of the trolls' civilization, before they were forced to scatter and flee into the mountains. There are legends of lost magic and buried treasure, artifacts of the trolls, hidden in the Qadim hills. No one has ever found anything, but the tales persist.

Read the following to the players as their party is approaching the southern gate on their way out of Eshpurta:

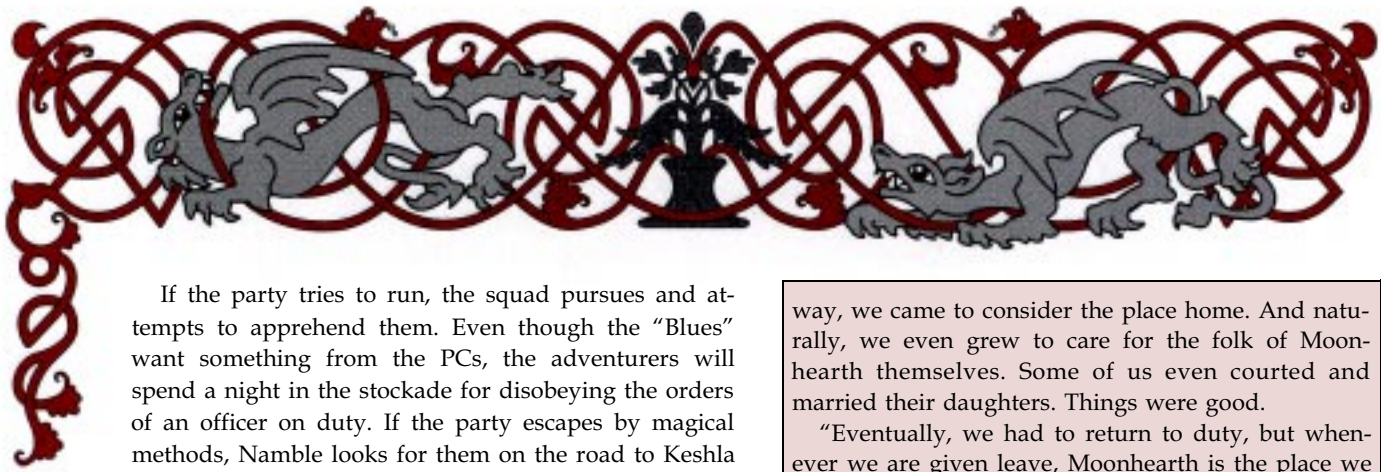
As the southern gate grows near, a squad wearing the military dress of the Amnian Councillor Army approaches on foot. The leader, a handsome if overly tall man, stops in front of you.

He barks a short "Halt!" as he holds up his hand. Staring at you with icy blue eyes, brow furrowed, a small scar on his forehead pulsing like an artery, the leader continues.

"No one may leave this city on the South Road without a military escort. The cost is 3 silver pieces. We are your escort."

This is the same squad, led by Nambale Swiftleg, that has followed the heroes through Eshpurta. However, the soldiers have their own agenda and are about to reveal it to the PCs.





If the party tries to run, the squad pursues and attempts to apprehend them. Even though the “Blues” want something from the PCs, the adventurers will spend a night in the stockade for disobeying the orders of an officer on duty. If the party escapes by magical methods, Namble looks for them on the road to Keshla with a 6th-level mage ready to cast *dispel magic*. If the PCs obey his order, Namble is courteous and pleasant. He is an amiable man, but it does not behoove the characters to trifle with him.

Whether the PCs spend the night in an Amnian military prison or not, Namble needs to talk. Once he is given the opportunity, read the following aloud to the players:

“Ah . . . I am Namble Swiftleg, Squad Leader of the Amnwater Blues, Second Battalion. Have ye a healer in your party?” He says, sudden and harsh, as if the request is painful.

If there are no priests with healing spells in the party, Namble thanks them, escorts them across the ford, collects the fee, and goes on about his business. From here, the party may continue in whatever direction the players desire. Use the random encounter table on page 20 if encounters on the road are desired; then continue with the next section, “The Hillfort of Keshla,” on page 28. If, however, the answer to Namble’s question is “yes,” he begins his tale. Read the following aloud to the players:

“I have a bit of a story to tell. I ask ye to listen to it all the way through and then decide if ye will help us. Five years ago my battalion, the Second Battalion of the Amnwater Blues Regiment, was sent on patrol into the hills about 50 miles east of the city. There had been reports of trolls attacking farmers in the region. When we arrived, we found a village that appears on no map, the village of Moonhearth. And we sort of fell in love.

“Ye wonder at that? ‘Tis not so strange. The troll threat was much smaller than expected, and it took little time to hunt down or drive away the creatures. But what *was* in abundance were sweet, gentle people. Those folk, they kind of fell in love with us, too. While allowing our wounded to heal before returning to Eshpurta, we made ourselves useful; we fixed their broken things, helped bring in their crops, built barns, whatever needed doing. And along the

way, we came to consider the place home. And naturally, we even grew to care for the folk of Moonhearth themselves. Some of us even courted and married their daughters. Things were good.

“Eventually, we had to return to duty, but whenever we are given leave, Moonhearth is the place we go. Many of us now have families there, but even those who don’t appreciate the quiet, relaxed atmosphere. It is truly our home now, even though we might visit there only four weeks out of the year.”

Namble pauses at this point, seeming to gather his thoughts, which are obviously troubled. Describe to the players how he seems to look at the heroes with pleading in his eyes, then continue by reading the following aloud:

“About six months ago, Sharill Beaufort, the younger sister of my fiancée, Arayea, was chosen as the Daughter of Selûne. Moonhearth is a very religious village, and she was selected to fill this position for the coming year. The “Daughter” is believed by the villagers to be the goddess’s avatar and is celebrated as such through the coming year.

“A couple of months after being chosen, however, she began behaving in a most unseemly manner—in an angry rage one moment, weeping penitently the next. Now her complexion is pale, almost colorless, and she seems to have drawn away from the goddess as well as from us. She refuses to wear her holy symbol, screaming if anyone even approaches her with it. Nothing else excites her; she sleeps all day and only seems to come alive at night.

“There are those who say, ‘Well, Selûne is the goddess of the moon, and so Sharill responds to the seasons of the moon,’ but her sister Arayea and I are not so sure; we believe some illness or worse has befallen her, and we need someone versed in the arts of healing to treat her.

“In addition, there have been disappearances. Three people had vanished the last time we visited. My men and I looked into it but found no more than the local constable did. I’m certain the two things are not tied together, but we need outside help with fresh viewpoints. Perhaps heroes such as yourselves might better understand these strange goings on.

“We are simple soldiers, happy with our simple lives in Moonhearth. These events are beyond our understanding. We need your help. Please, come to Moonhearth with us. We can pay you. We have a fund.”





He snaps his fingers and a ledger appears from the brigandine of a subaltern. Reading, he says, "We can afford to pay you 10 gold, 19 silver, and 27 copper pieces. And, of course, we will waive the exit fee. We have mounts, and we will give you an escort as far as the Hillfort of Keshla, although we will not enter there."

Namble has brought enough horses to equip the party in the hopes that he could convince them to aid the village of Moonhearth. If the characters turn him down, or demand more money, he looks at them sadly for a moment, seems about to beg them to reconsider, then snaps his mouth shut in a tight grimace. He does not harass the PCs in any way, but it should be very obvious to the players that he considers the heroes to be cold-hearted, self-centered snobs. He curtly escorts them across the ford, demanding the 3-sp fee, and then rides back across without a look back. Point out to players of any good-aligned characters, particularly priests, that this is not becoming behavior of an adherent of their faith and that their god or goddess certainly frowns on such a lack of generosity. Any actual penalties are at your discretion.

Moonhearth

Moonhearth lies 50 miles east of Trollford, and the journey takes most of the day. Travel is easy over the gently inclining hills and the party arrives at the secluded little village at dusk.

This tiny farming village, nestled in a hidden valley at the foot of lightly forested hills, resembles a street painter's dream. A single road splits a double row of business establishments, each with private living quarters above.

On the south side of Moon Street (the town's only street, actually) are several establishments, including The Red Forge (a blacksmith shop that also makes farm implements), Hampner's (a stable that sells horses and draft animals), Croder's Bakery, The Rusty Well (Moonhearth's sole tavern), and Moon Street Feed and Grain. On the north side of the street is the Temple of the Moonmaiden (dedicated to Selûne), Defna's Apparel (sells tough working clothes), The Hungry Wheel (a potter's shop), By the Yard (offers dry goods), and a freshly painted one-room village hall.

There is no inn, for visitors are rare and the townspeople would rather keep it that way. Members of the Second Battalion who don't have homes of their own,

as well as other guests, are usually put up in villagers' homes. Otherwise, lodging can be had in the stables. There are no competing businesses. This is a place where everyone garners according to what he offers, never asking more, never accepting less. There is no great wealth in Moonhearth, but there is no poverty, either. There are about 250 people in town on any given day.

Law, or at least good behavior, is simply another fact of life in the village. The local clothier, Defna Plasseir (LG hf F8), is also the local constable on the rare occasions law enforcement is needed. Once a month she may have to drag a drunken farmer out of The Rusty Well, but then she just makes sure he's pointed on the road toward home. There is no jail in Moonhearth.

Money is frequently left on shop counters to pay for goods when the shopkeeper is out. The money is always there when the proprietor returns, never even a copper short.

While life seems idyllic, all is not quite well in Moonhearth. For the last quarter year, citizens have been disappearing at the rate of one or two a month. Defna is stumped and does not know what to do. Until now, the most serious crime investigation in the nine years of her tenure involved the Brod brothers moving Clain Warder's outhouse back about 3 feet so that Clain fell in the waste pit in the middle of the night. She fined them for their prank and made them put a fresh coat of paint on the village hall. But these disappearances find her out of her depth, especially when they concern friends. She welcomes any help she can get.

Read the following to the players as their characters ride into Moonhearth for the first time:

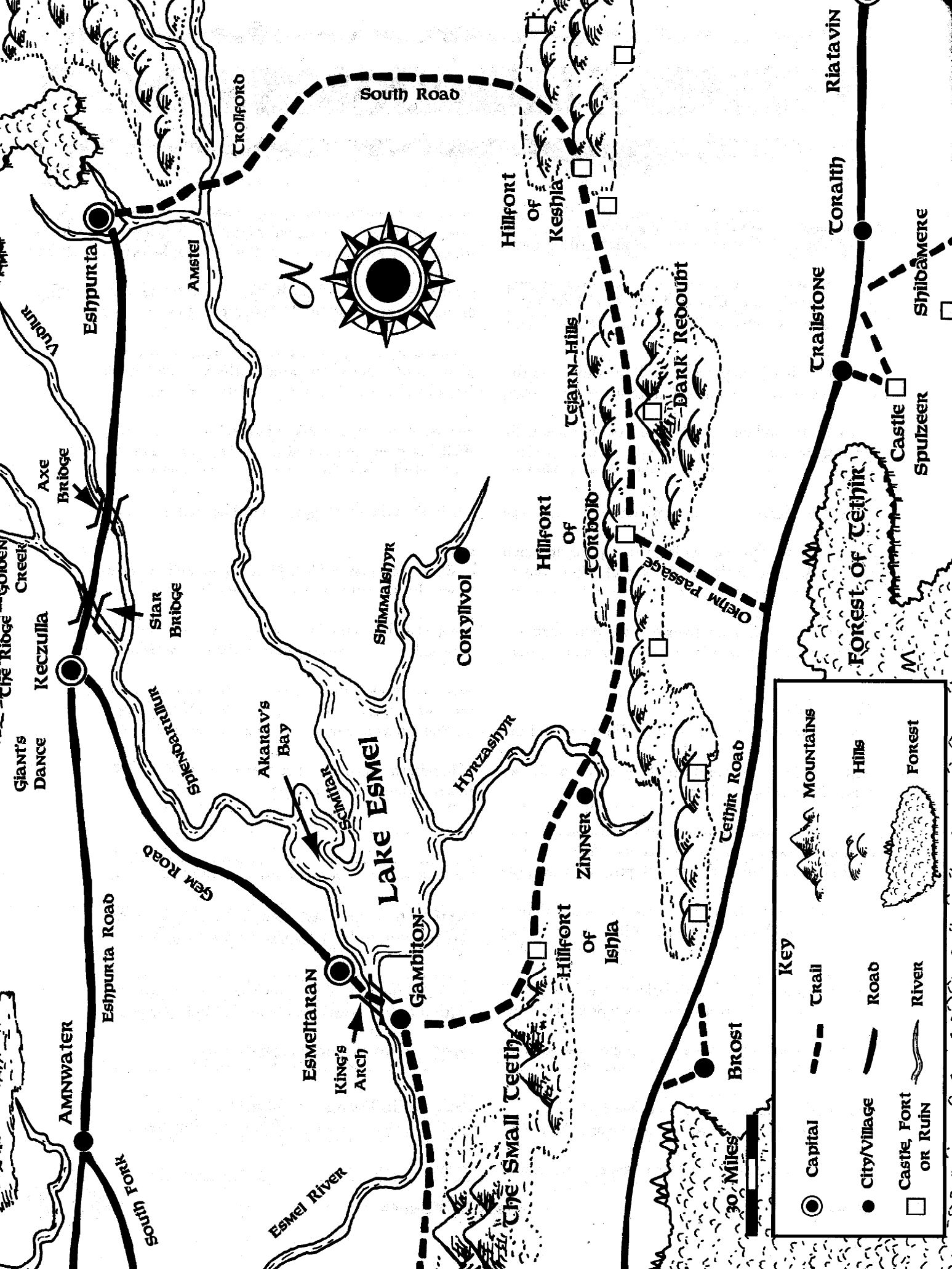
Perhaps the most striking feature of Moonhearth is the diminutive size of the place. Namble rides straight to Defna's Apparel. As he dismounts he gives a nod to his troopers, dismissing them to whatever personal lives they may have. Namble enters the store and waits for you to follow.

Inside the shop, Defna is a small, smiling woman with a craggy, well-worn face. She bids you good day and Namble makes introductions all around, giving her your names and professions.

"At last, Selûne smiles," she says. "Thank you, Namble. Why don't you all follow me into the back; we'll all be more comfortable."

In the back room, Defna waves her hand at chairs surrounding a large work table. "Please be seated."

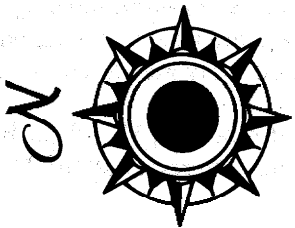




Key

- Capital
- City/Village
- Castle, Fort or Ruin
- - - Trail
- Road
- ~ River
- ▲ Mountains
- ⌒ Hills
- Forest

30 Miles



South Road

Eshpurta

Amstel

Corloford

Hillfort of Keshja

Hillfort of Keshja

Riatavin

Toralth

Shildamere

Trailstone

Forest of Cethjir

Spulzeer

Hillfort of Corbo

Hillfort of Corbo

Tejarn-Hills

Dark Redoubt

Oym Passage

Corylivoi

Shimmalslyr

Akarav's Bay

Lake Esmel

Hyrzashyr

Cethir Road

Hillfort of Zinner

Hillfort of Zinner

Hillfort of Ishla

Hillfort of Ishla

Brost

Esmeltaran

King's Arch

Gambiton

Eshpurta Road

South Fork

Amnwater

Giant's Dance

Keczulla

Axe Bridge

Spenerarriur

Golden Creek

Votur



Allow the PCs a chance to ask questions about anything they have seen so far in Moonhearth, but once they begin to query Defna about the strange events, she begins her tale. Read the following aloud to the players:

“Each month, for the last three, in the week before the full moon, someone disappears. No trace is left, no clues remain, he is simply gone. The first was a farmer who had gone to bed with his wife one night and was simply not there in the morning. The second was a double vanishing. Gard Poulter, owner of The Hungry Wheel, had gone fishing for a few days, leaving his kiln tender, Rafn Harck, and Harck’s son Nerin, Gard’s apprentice, in charge. When he returned, the kiln was hot and fresh leatherware, ready for firing, sat on the shelves, but of Rafn and Harck, there was no sign.”

She concludes, “The third incident happened three nights ago. A wandering Enstarred Priestess was seen entering the Temple of the Moonmaiden, but has not been seen since.” She sighs and looks at the group. “I am not a puzzle solver. I’m a dressmaker. I hope you have some ideas.”

The players may or may not immediately ask for more information about the temple, Sharill, and her strange activities. Once they do, read the following aloud:

Defna frowns as Sharill is mentioned, and waves her hand in dismissal.

“Oh, that. Sharill has been acting strangely, to be sure, but I think it’s nothing more than a fever. Nothing a competent healer shouldn’t be able to cure, then she’ll be good as new.” Defna’s worried look seems to belie her words.

Of course, the two sets of events are tied together, a fact it shouldn’t take the PCs long to discover. The villagers have never seen a vampire, let alone an eastern vampire. They think Sharill is ill with an unknown malady. She was made an eastern vampire when a man claiming to be an itinerant Moonbathed Priest of Selune attacked her in her own quarters in the cellar under the temple. When he finished his grisly deed, he shouted gleefully, cackled “Hear the laughter of Shar,” *shape-changed* into the form of a bat, and flew out of the temple.

Regardless of what the heroes do to investigate all the strange happenings in Moonhearth, there are no clues to be found other than at the Temple of the Moonmaiden and Sharill’s tomb, which is the entire cellar beneath the temple—for the whole was consecrated with her spattered blood when she died.

Sharill’s condition when the characters discover her is dependent on the time of day. At night, of course, Sharill is at the height of her power. Further, eastern vampires, a type the PCs may not have had contact with previously, cannot use *charm* or *gaseous form* abilities, but they can simply fade into invisibility. The PCs, Namble, and his troops may waste a lot of time avoiding her eyes when there is nothing to fear. She will just fade away.

During the day, Sharill is easier to deal with, but the townspeople are a strange lot (200+ hm/hf F0-F3 LG, NG, and CG). If the PCs simply “stake” Sharill during the day, the townspeople, far from grateful, come after them with hoes, rakes, pitchforks, and any other implements at hand. Depending on circumstances, Namble and his troops might be able to restore some calm and allow the characters to explain their actions or at the very least leave town unmolested, but they are certainly never going to be welcome in Moonhearth again; none of the citizens appreciate the PCs’ short-sighted approach to solving the problem.

In either case, Defna insists on accompanying the heroes. The temple is a simple structure, 100 feet long and 50 feet wide. There is a double row of pews separated by a wide, center aisle. At the west end of the aisle, under a skylight that is open to the moonlight whenever the weather is clear, is an altar. Off the altar and at angles to it to the right and left are doors. The right one leads to the Daughter’s Vestry, the left to the cellar quarters.

Within the vestry is a small library of ritual notebooks, liturgy sheets, three scrolls, and some sacred texts. Two of the three scrolls contain one priest spell each, *resurrection* and *stone tell*. The third is a recipe for song bird consomme from Sharill’s mother.

Since the Daughter is chosen annually by the village and has no formal training, most of the texts prepare her for her role and are used as constant references. (The Daughter’s 3rd-level status as a priestess is a secret gift from the goddess herself, a reward to the faithful, guileless farmers of Moonhearth.)

In one of the cupboards, hidden behind some aging books belonging to a previous “Daughter,” is a small bottle labeled “*Inc. Potion of Undead Control*.” The po-





tion is incomplete because it is a specific potion, and what is needed to activate it is a piece of the undead it is intended to be used against—a hair, a fingernail, a scrapping of skin.

The left-hand door leads to a flight of stairs so narrow that large individuals need to tuck in their elbows as they descend. At the base of the stairs, a dirt-floored cellar that is as long and wide as the temple above stretches away into gloom. On the west end, below the altar, is a small, comfortable kitchen. A bare table and chairs stand in front of a large cast-iron cook stove that looks too big to have been brought down the stairs. Flanking the stove are cupboards. A search of the cupboards reveals dishes and the Enstarred Priestess's holy symbol, which is hidden under an overturned dinner plate.

Daylight Search

If the PCs come in here in the daytime, they have no trouble finding Sharill sleeping on a straw pallet just beyond the kitchen. If *Blackflame* (Namble Swiftleg's sword) comes within 10 feet of her, the sword bursts into broiling, black flames, even if it is still in the scabbard. The flames are cold and cannot harm either Sharill or the party, but the sword's action should alert the adventurers to what they are confronting. Even Defna and Namble are convinced, looking at the pale, sleeping creature with bloodstains on her white chemise.

The decision about what to do lies with the PCs. They can stake her, but if they discuss this possibility, Defna warns them with the following, to be read aloud to the players:

"These are simple people, good sirs. Ye and I and Namble, we know what she is, we can feel the corruption rising from her. But what proof have we? Where are the bodies of those who disappeared? What we have is a strange sword that seems to emit some kind of evil, black fire, and a sleeping girl with bloodstains on her gown that might have been the result of executing a chicken for dinner."

If the heroes decide to stake her anyway, Defna feels duty-bound to tell the villagers, and within an hour the PCs are chased out of town by a mob. The mob probably is led by Namble's fiancée, Arayea, Sharill's older sister, and Defna, who has to live with these people.

Namble and his men keep their promise and ride with the PCs to the Hillfort of Keshla, assuming they survive. If they do not, or if there are fewer than three of them left, they collect the horses they loaned the adventurers and return to Eshpurta.

Nocturnal Quest

If the PCs decide to visit Sharill at night, Namble and Defna, along with half a dozen torch-carrying villagers, go with them (unless circumstances prevent this, in which case the encounter must be altered accordingly). Read the following aloud to the players when the characters first enter the cellar:

Upon entering the dark temple, the villagers with torches spread themselves out to light the entirety of the place. Namble insists on taking the lead, sword drawn.

As he starts down the center aisle, he gets no more than 30 feet when *Blackflame* ignites in a dancing ebony blaze. Standing at the edge of the torchlight is a female in simple clothing.

"Why have you come? Why do you bear weapons in this sacred place? Do you dare bring Shar's evil here?"

If anyone responds, she continues in a similar vein, with regret in her voice, playing the role of the Daughter of Selûne. She asks if they intend to desecrate "her Mother's Temple," or if she has been unfaithful to the village, or any other questions designed to play on the guilt of the villagers—some of them even listen and leave, while others turn angry eyes on the PCs. Remember that she is doing all she can by playing upon the villagers' love of Selûne; she has no *charm* ability, regardless of what the adventurers might believe.

Spellcasters have the best chance at this stage, for if the party tries to rush her, or attack with *Blackflame*, she simply vanishes, reappearing some 15 feet behind her original location. Sharill does not assume bat form unless she is in danger of being destroyed (nearing 0 hit points). She is still very confused and a part of her wishes to defend her temple against those she believes would destroy it—the other, newer side of her personality, is hungry.

Sharill Beaufort, "Selûne's Daughter" (eastern vampire): AC 1; MV 12, fl 18 (C); HD 8+3; hp 51; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+4 (crushing)





blow); SD +1 or better weapon to hit, regenerates 3 hp per round, immune to *sleep*, *charm*, *hold*, *poison* and *paralysis*; SZ M (4'9" tall); ML champion (16); AL CE; XP 9,000.

S 18/76, D 14, C 14, I 11, W 11, Ch 5.

Notes: Sharill can fade from sight at will, becoming invisible and gaining all the bonuses such a state normally provides, including a -4 penalty to attacks against her. She casts no reflection and no shadow, and moves in complete silence. She receives an attack bonus of +2 and a damage bonus of +4. Cold and electrical spells cause only half damage. She can *shape change* and also has a spider-climb ability that allows her to scale sheer surfaces, like walls.

If reduced to 0 hit points, she will "die," unless she dies on or is taken to her grave. Sharill's "grave" is the entire dirt floor of the cellar.

Sharill was one of those homely people with a heart so large it shines through her features. Most of the people of Moonhearth would call her beautiful, in spite of her pendulous nose and too large ears. Short and thin, she looks like a waif, although she is nearly 20 years old. Her childish appearance only enhances the beauty the villagers see in her and why she was selected as "Daughter." Sharill is not happy with her new existence; in fact, she would rather that Shar's priest had killed her outright. She is not suicidal,

however, and will defend herself if attacked.

Once she begins to exhibit her unusual powers, even if she escapes, the villagers now know what Sharill has become. If the party must return to the temple the next day, she can be dispatched or even restored. It is possible to return Sharill to the villagers as their priestess if she is first staked (she must be dead) and the 7th-level priest's spell *resurrection* is cast or the *scroll of resurrection* (found in the vestry upstairs) is used.

However, since the entire cellar is her "tomb," if she is merely staked, she regenerates after 12 hours, even with the stake in her heart. Sharill must be decapitated, and ideally, her body and head removed from the cellar and buried in different locations.

If she is not resurrected or if she has not been properly disposed of, Avadreal Beaufort, her doting father who doesn't believe in vampires, won't bury his daughter with a stake in her heart. He removes the shaft from Sharill's breast. After she recovers, she attacks her father and the two of them go hunting the adventuring party.

Regardless of the outcome, the villagers are relieved and satisfied with the PCs' efforts, assuming





they witnessed Sharill's true nature first. If Sharill was merely destroyed, the citizens raise 15 gp as a thank-you for the group. If the heroes succeeded in restoring their priestess instead, the villagers willingly open their coffers and the adventurers leave town showered with 150 gp, the eternal friendship of the people of Moonhearth and the Blues, and the gratitude of Selûne.

Namble and his squad are true to their word and turn over their modest collection of battalion coins. They also escort the heroes to the Hillfort of Keshla. If they have restored Sharill to life, Namble also presents *Blackflame* to them with his profound thanks.

The Hillfort of Keshla

Keshla is about 90 miles from Moonhearth. If you wish, use one or two of the confrontations listed on the Encounter Table on page 20 during the trip there. Two full days of travel (barring wilderness encounters) find the party about a mile from the gates of Keshla. Read the following aloud to the players upon their characters' arrival, assuming Namble and his troops are still with the PCs:

The gates of Keshla are visible about a mile away. Namble, in the lead as always, raises his hand to halt the entire party.

Dismounting, he says, "This is as far as we go. We must return, with the horses, I'm afraid, to Eshpurta. You may be able to find mounts for sale in the hillfort."

If any of the PCs ask why these troops don't enter the fort themselves, since it's all the same military, Namble mumbles that the Second Battalion is not welcome in Keshla and thanks them again for their aid. If the party asks him for information about the rest of their journey, he simply shrugs and suggests they ask in Keshla. Remounted, he reigns his horse to stand on its hind legs, waves his hat in farewell, and gallops off to the north, his squad racing to catch him.

The truth is, no military personnel voluntarily enter the fort at Keshla. This is the place to which bungling recruits, inadequate soldiers, and corrupt officers are sent for punishment. Once assigned to

the Keshla Hillfort, there is no recall. The garrison troops are male and female humans who are the dregs of the army, ranging between 0 and 6th level. The irony is that this fort is the outermost defense post for Amn. It houses 400 soldiers and 35 officers with room for 900 more troops when needed.

To make matters worse, the officer in command is Captain Arbas Rosznar (CE hm F9). Arbas is a rigid, brutal officer, roundly hated by everyone who has had contact with him. Rumor has it that he was a promising officer, rising from the ranks by virtue of his merit. One day, while on leave, he killed the lover of a very influential lady. His life was spared, but he was banished to Keshla and has led a bitter, angry existence ever since.

The hillfort itself is what anyone would expect, a fortified structure of solid timbers, chinked with mud and reinforced by earthworks. The walls of the fort are 15 feet high and 3 feet thick—and in constant need of repair.

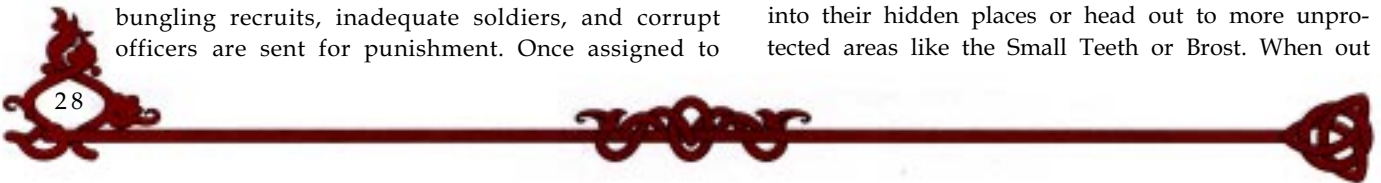
If the characters ask the right people (in other words, some of the few individuals here who aren't constantly spoiling for a fight, especially with outsiders), they can glean a few tidbits of information about each of the routes to Trailstone that may help them determine which way is the better choice:

The South Road

The South Road swings to the west, out to Torbold, and the distance is about 100 miles. While the South Road takes the party about 75 miles out of its way (the distance from Torbold to Trailstone), it is at least a road through the rocky hills. It can actually be faster than the direct route.

The South Road to Torbold is smooth but fraught with danger. The secluded Dark Redoubt of Cyric lies 35 miles due east of Torbold, and neither that hillfort nor the one at Keshla is aware of its existence. Each believes that the particular territory the Redoubt occupies is defended by the other fort. On the other hand, Cyric's priests in the Redoubt wish to remain veiled and may leave the heroes alone.

There are also Skullgnasher giants dug into the central Tejarn Hills, which, due to the inaction and refusal of the Council of Six that rules Amn to reinforce Torbold, remain a real threat. The soldiers of the fort have won victories over these hill giants, but when they are beaten, the giants simply disappear into their hidden places or head out to more unprotected areas like the Small Teeth or Brost. When out





of range of the army, they recruit new members into their tribe. In fact, most members of the Skullgnashers were originally members of three different tribes of hill giants that formed a loose federation. These tribes originated in the Small Teeth. Because of the chaotic nature of their comings and goings, the odds of an attack appear to be slim.

The Direct Route

This shorter route is a more physically demanding journey. If the party heads due south from Keshla, it is about 75 miles down to Toralth, which is on the Tethir Road, and then a journey of some 30 miles west to Trailstone, before heading south again to Castle Spulzeer. For all the talk over the centuries about building a new road from Keshla to Toralth to join the South and Tethir Roads, nothing has yet been done. This is unfortunate, for it means an overland hike that is bad on horseback, worse on foot.

If the adventurers do not own or acquire mounts and are forced to march on foot instead, they lose 1 Constitution point per day due to the hilly, rocky terrain. One day of rest regains 1 point of Constitution. Even with horses, there is a 10% chance per day that an animal comes up lame from a slip on the rocks or a fall into a ravine. The most sure-footed of mounts are in great danger in the stony hills. After that the hills become less rocky but steeper and more exhausting to climb.

Topography is not the only problem. The lack of a road from Keshla to the south also means few (if any) military patrols or even reconnaissance. Even in the countryside further south, farmers have learned to fend for themselves. They have established a system of Torchriders, mounted men who carry the alarm to everyone in the area when anyone is attacked. And there are attacks; hordes of hobgoblins infest this area, as well as tribes of gnolls, goblins, and even deserters from the hillforts—malcontents who prefer a life of brigandry to military service.

Deserter bands frequently ally with humanoid tribes for a common purpose—killing and plunder. The hill giants ignore them, in spite of overtures made by certain bands. The Dark Redoubt does occasionally use them as spies or assassins, but otherwise, they hold the deserters in contempt.

The South Road to Torbold

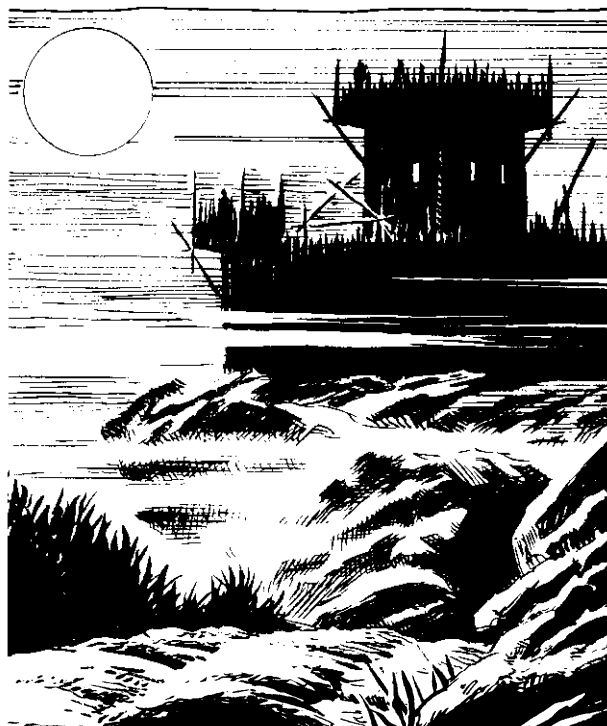
Trouble is likely to plague the party no matter which route they select. If the party decides to take the South Road to Torbold, you may choose to run some or all of the encounters from this section. If the heroes elect to go cross-country, turn to “The Overland Route” on page 33. In either case, additional conflicts may be added or substituted from the random encounter table on page 20 if you choose.

The Strifeleaders

Read the following aloud to the players when the heroes are about 30 miles from Torbold:

The pace has been quick on this military road, although there have been no other travelers seen since leaving the hillfort. There is a lot of game in the surrounding forests, and the gurgling of a small stream can be heard somewhere just off the road.

Suddenly, about 100 yards down the road, a large sphere appears and drifts closer. As it comes nearer, a skull with flaming eyes becomes visible on it. Black flames cascade from the crown of the skull like a long, evil cockscomb.





What the adventurers are seeing is the result of a *skull of secrets* spell (see description on page 31). The sphere and the skull can be destroyed by a *dispel magic* spell or by touching the *glim-gauntlet* to it. If the heroes take no action at this point, the skull delivers a message, then fires a magical cone of fire straight at the party.

The sphere and the hideous skull stop about eight feet away and a voice begins speaking. "Here is death. Be ye warned." A jet of flame shoots from the skull directly at your position.

Have each PC in the line of fire roll a saving throw vs. spells; heroes who save are untouched; those who failed are struck by the fire bolt for 3d4 points of damage and all of their flammable equipment (including clothing) bursts into flames. The sphere continues to drift eastward, down the road, until it dissipates into streamers of black smoke.

The PCs have stumbled upon a band of strifeleaders, specialty priests of Cyric. Hand of Cyric Tennar Jorfe leads the small band of Venial Doom strifeleader novices who are on a field mission to gather herbs and other items for spellcasting components. Dressed inconspicuously (they did not want to call attention to themselves out here), they look more like rangers than servants of an evil god.

Jorfe hopes that the terror of the *skull of secrets*, especially for those who've never seen it before, is enough to drive off the party. It is imperative that the very existence of the Dark Redoubt, let alone its location, remains a total secret. The strifeleader reasons that he was fortunate to see the party before they saw him. What might have happened if these strangers had followed him back to the dark tower of the Redoubt? And so, Hand of Cyric Jorfe cast his favorite spell.

The Redoubt priests are concealed behind a small rise about 75 yards away from the PCs. If the party runs in either direction, the priests continue with their original tasks and harass the party no further. If the party decides to investigate, there is a 50% chance that one of the heroes notices a glint of sunlight reflecting off the silver bracers worn by one of the Venial Doom priests. If the adventurers challenge the Cyricists, they are in for a fight both magical and physical. All of these priests carry swords—and know how to use them.





Tennar Jorfe, hm P(Sp)7 of Cyric: AC 4 (*bracers of defense AC4*); MV 12; hp 38; THAC0 16 (15 with Str bonus, 13 with *long sword +2*); #AT 1; Dmg 1d8+2 (*long sword +2*); SD +1 to saving throws against illusion/phantasm magic, unaffected by *fear* and other emotion-altering magic; SZ M (6' tall); ML fanatic (17); AL LE; XP 2,000.

S 17, D 9, C 10, I 13, W 14, Ch 8.

Personality: Shifty, devious, proud.

Special Equipment: *long sword +2*, *bracers of defense AC4*, *ring of mind shielding*.

Spells (3/3/2/1): 1st— *command*, *cure light wounds*, *remove fear*; 2nd— *aid*, *black talon*, *spiritual hammer*; 3rd— *cure disease*, *dispel magic*; 4th— *skull of secrets*.

Venial Doom novices, hm/hf P(Sp)2 of Cyric (2d6): AC 6 (*bracers of defense AC6*); MV 12; hp 30 each; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (*long swords*); SA fight as F6; SD +1 to saving throws against illusion/phantasm magic, unaffected by *fear* and other emotion-altering magic; SZ M (6' tall); Int very (12); ML champion (15); AL CE; XP 120 each.

Special Equipment: *bracers of defense AC6*.

Spells (2 each, DM's choice of the following):

1st— *bless*, *combine*, *command*, *cure light wounds*, *detect evil*, *faerie fire*, *light*, *magical stone*, *remove fear*.

The strifeleader novices, while only 2nd-level priests, are formidable swordsmen. Selected for strength as well as wisdom, their training includes three hours of sword and weapons work each day. The Venial Doom priests therefore function as 6th-level fighters in combat.

The adventurers should be able to survive this encounter more or less intact. If they get in over their heads, however, and it looks like they are about to be killed or captured, Gaspard deLouca comes to their aid.

If Gaspard appears during the battle, he takes his leave of them immediately when the fight has ended. He calls his appearance a "happy accident" and claims pressing business in the east. He trots off in an easterly direction until out of sight, then doubles back on the road and continues to follow. If the PCs were successful without Gaspard's help, he continues to follow, a burgeoning respect for them growing in his mind.

Cyricist Spells

The following spells used in this encounter are from the FORGOTTEN REALMS accessory *Faiths & Avatars*. They are detailed here for the DM's convenience.

Black Talon (Alteration, Necromancy)

Sphere: Necromancy Level: 2
 Range: 0 Components: V,S
 Duration: 1 round/level Casting Time: 5
 Area of Effect: One of caster's arms
 Saving Throw: None

This spell temporarily transfigures the caster's arm into a retractable, rubbery limb that he can extend to a length of 10 feet and use to strike at foes with a +1 bonus to normal attack rolls. The arm ends in a slashing talon that inflicts 1d4 points of physical damage and 1d4 points of magical cold damage (total damage 2d4) when its attack succeeds. (A successful saving throw vs. spell yields half the chilling damage; undead are immune to cold damage.) The caster cannot cast other spells involving somatic components with his arm in this condition. Can be cast once per day.

Skull of Secrets (Invocation/Evocation)

Sphere: Guardian Level: 2
 Range: 5 yards/level Components: V,S
 Duration: Varies Casting Time: 7
 Area of Effect: Special
 Saving Throw: None

This spell creates the intangible image of a floating skull trailing black flames. The skull has a movement rate of 18(A) and floats within a 20-foot-diameter sphere. It can be destroyed only by *dispel magic*.

The skull delivers a message of 22 words or fewer and can spit a tongue of real flame, in a cone 1 foot wide and 10 feet long. The cone inflicts 3d4 points of damage to any exposed flesh it touches and ignites all flammables. The message and tongue of flame occur when triggered by a condition stated at the time of casting. Once both actions are performed, the skull slowly fades away.

The Hillfort of Torbold

The Torbold hillfort is the same size and contains the same elements as the one at Keshla, but this one is very different. In the first place, even from a mile away, the fort looks clean and new. Snappy banners fly from its corner towers. The gates are guarded by



proud men with clean uniforms. The guards are cheerful and exhibit an obvious pride in themselves and their units.

The difference between Torbold and Keshla is due to the commander. Major Tharundar Olehm (LN hm dual-F15/C2 of Waukeen), an adventurer who used his own money and his family's influence to get this post, has acquitted himself well as a leader of men and fighter of great prowess. While his methods have been unorthodox ("Unmilitary, most unmilitary," grumbles Captain Arbas of Keshla), his results have been spectacular.

For over a decade now, Olehm and his men have fought the hill giants, slowly gaining the advantage. The giants' summer raids continue, but the major's troops win more battles than they lose. Slowly, the giants are being pushed back to the Small Teeth Mountains. Major Olehm has done this almost single-handedly, receiving no help from Keshla nor from the Hillfort Ishla. Receiving only his regular allotment of Golden Fortress graduates every year, Olehm has managed to subdue stronger forces by making his own soldiers better. His troops are well

trained; most are fighters of 4th to 7th level, and his officers are all 8th-level fighters.

Rare is the request for transfer out of Torbold. The Council of Six has even accused Olehm of creating a private army loyal only to himself. This is not true. He has achieved his current rank through the observations of others; Major Olehm just wants to do his job.

There is one large inn within the walls of Torbold, Bruder's Waystop. The inn serves excellent food at reasonable prices, has good rooms with clean sheets, and nightly entertainment in its tavern. A temple provides religious services: the large Hall of the Guardians, built under the influence of Major Olehm and dedicated to Helm. This is one of the few places left on Faerûn where Helm is still strong. The Hall of the Guardians is an army temple and many of the troops have followed their major into the Companions of the One True Vision, the Helmite order of clerics, fighters, and crusaders.

There is also a combination blacksmith and stables in the fort, two supply shops, a tailor who serves primarily Amnian officers, and an herbalist who sells spices and herbs for all purposes along with spell components at a small 10% mark-up.





While there is no road to connect Torbold with the Tethir Road, there is a well-developed trail. One of Major Olehm's first actions when he took command of the hillfort was to order his troops to cut a wide swath through the rock and stone to the hills. This served two purposes. First, it built strong soldiers because the work was hard. Secondly, it permitted him to respond to attacks from that side of the fort with considerably more speed than had been possible previously. Once past the rocky terrain, he continued the coarse road, smoothing out the rough spots, all the way to the Tethir Road, about 45 miles. Locals refer to it as the Olehm Passage, and it has saved caravans much time and many coins.

The heroes and anyone else traveling this trail may ask for an escort. Escorts are provided freely to single citizens and small parties, and at reasonable rates for caravans. If the adventurers do elect to have an escort, there will be 2d8 soldiers (LN hm/hf F4) led by a sergeant (N hm F6) who see them all the way to the Tethir Road.

The Gnashing Skulls

For more than a decade, the troops at Torbold have been engaged in continual battles with the Skullgnasher Tribe of hill giants. Their king, a certain Fedduk, is a bit of a genius, at least for a hill giant. He managed to unite the hill giant tribe of the Small Teeth into a loose federation of raiders under his personal standard.

Once he enjoyed the advantage of knowing every inch of the Tejarn Hills as well as he knew his own scars. But after years of war, Major Olehm has learned this terrain almost as well, and his troops have found and destroyed most of the giants' hiding places in the hills. Olehm and his forces are beginning to drive the giants back to the Small Teeth.

Regardless of whether or not the characters have an escort, a raiding band of 2d10 Skullgnasher hill giants and 2d4 dire wolves attack them as soon as they are out of sight of the hillfort. The Skullgnashers are cunning but not very intelligent. This particular group, however, is led by King Fedduk, who is caught in the act of executing a small feint to the weaker southern side of Torbold to test Olehm's defenses there. Neither side should be all that surprised by the encounter: The giants could see the party coming, and the heroes can hear the giants' clumsy stomping in the woods.

King Fedduk (giant, hill): AC 0 (plate); MV 12; HD 13; hp 99; THAC0 7; #AT 1; Dmg 2d6+7; SA hurl rocks for 2d8 points of damage; SZ H (16' 10"); ML Champion (16); Int average (10); AL CE; XP 4,000.

Special Equipment: Fedduk's plate armor was made for him by a captured group of dwarven metalsmiths.

Hill Giants (1d8): AC 3 (animal hides); MV 12; HD 12+2 hp; THAC0 9, #AT 1; Dmg 2d6+7 (assorted weapons); SA hurl rocks for 2d8 points of damage; SZ H (16' tall); ML Elite (13); Int low (7); AL CE; XP 3,000.

Dire Wolves (2d4): AC 6; MV 18; HD 4+4; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 2d8; SZ L (12' long); ML Average (10); Int semi (4); AL N; XP 175.

Gaspard again watches from the weeds, helping with discreet spells if needed. If things begin to go badly for the hill giants, Fedduk wastes no time retreating from the scene. He has come here to reconnoiter the troops, not battle with them to the death. He is smart and knows not to personally engage his foes, so unless the PCs have some extraordinary means of capturing or killing the hill giant leader, he should escape and continue to make life miserable for the troops.

Once the party finishes its encounter with the hill giants, proceed to "On the Tethir Road," on page 34.

The Overland Route

If the adventurers decide to take the direct route from Eshpurta to Toralth (and then head west on the Tethir Road to Trailstone), they will have their hands full. The first 20 miles are over extremely rough, rocky territory, reducing movement by 50%. After that, the rolling hills take their own toll, hampering movement to 25% of normal.

This is a lawless region; the lack of a road and the excessively rough terrain prevents caravans from coming this way. No caravans translate into no profits for the Council of Six, so there are no military patrols here. The only thing approaching a force of order is





the loosely organized farmers' militia and their early warning system, the Torchriders. Even given the sparse militia, this part of the country is unsubdued, uncontrolled, and dangerous. In fact, there is a saying in Keshla that accurately describes this region: "Do not go south without 30 armed companions. Better still, do not go south."

The Gynosphinx

When the PCs emerge from the most rocky terrain (the first 20 miles or so), they are standing on a hill looking south. The ground may be softer, but it is no less challenging. They can see for quite a distance, and what they see is nothing but hills. Most of the terrain is forested, but there is the occasional farm terraced into the side of a hill. A small trail meanders from here in a generally southern direction. Let the heroes travel for a good 10 miles unmolested, then read the following aloud to the players:

Standing in the middle of the barely visible path is a most unusual creature. The sleek lion's body is tense, as if it were about to spring, while its wings are outstretched. While the face is that of an attractive human female, it is drawn tightly. Clearly this beast has known her share of hardships. She does not appear to be overly friendly. A soft sound comes from her throat, something halfway between a growl and purr.

Any characters who know about gynosphinxes will know that she is far north of her usual stalking grounds. Should any ask her, she mutters something about "an unwarranted exile" but reveals no details. She stares at the characters with doleful, sardonic eyes and says, "If you give me an *ioun stone*, I'll tell you a secret."

If anyone in the group surrenders one of the magical stones to the gynosphinx, she tells them her "secret" and lets them pass: "He who is one thing is quite the other, and so the reverse is true." She is referring here to Kartak and Chardath.

If the party has no *ioun stone* to give her, the heroes must barter. She will not accept any other gemstone or bauble, but she does ask for and accept a poem (which must be recited), some lore she does not already know, or a riddle. If the party gives her any one of these, she gives them her piece of knowledge about their plight and allows them to pass. She does not answer questions.

If the heroes give her nothing, she gives them one last chance by permitting them to answer a riddle of her

own. Read the following aloud to the players if their characters cannot provide anything to trade with her:

"Very well then," she sniffs. "I will riddle you a riddle, and you must answer. If you are wrong, I have not yet had lunch, so I will eat you." Her eyes flash as she asks the riddle: "There is a box without hinges, key, or lid. Yet deep inside, a golden treasure's hid. What is it?"

The answer, of course, is an egg. If the adventurers guess correctly, she allows them to pass on south. If they do not, she loses her patience and attacks with her full fury.

Andeeyloplardii (sphinx, gyno-): AC -1; MV 15 Fl 24(D); HD 8; hp 59; THAC0 13; #AT 2; Dmg 2d4/2d4; SA spell-like abilities; SZ L (7' tall); ML fanatic (17); Int genius (18); AL N; XP 3,000.

Notes: Due to her high intelligence, she uses spells in creative ways. For example, if the party backs off to huddle and discuss plans, she eavesdrops by casting *clairaudience*.

Spells (each usable once per day): detect invisibility, detect magic, read magic, read languages, locate object, dispel magic, clairaudience, clairvoyance, remove curse, and legend lore.

ToralTh

It should be nightfall when the adventurers enter ToralTh. This is a dark and lonely town, a place of night images, of shadows that take the shapes of gargoyles, and other, more distressing shapes. As the heroes first arrive, a gentle rain begins to fall. The town is dark and seemingly deserted, save for the reddish glow of light coming from the windows of a dreary inn.

The inn is named Maskar's Alehouse. It offers a few rooms to let, bread and stew ("Served anytime!"), and a large public room. If the PCs enter the public room, they overhear the following conversation between the innkeeper and a group of rough-hewn farmers quaffing ale.

"They say the ruckus at Riatavin killed 30," says the first, taking a pull on his glass. "And not only that," his voice drops to a whisper, "They say Kartak's sigil was carved into the door of Mystra's Temple."

Another, a graybeard, nods. "An evil omen, that." "Aye," interjects a grandfatherly type. "It may be time to put an end to the Spulzeers."





“And how d’ ye propose to do that?” The first man laughs. “One o’ ‘em’s a dead sorcerer who walks and the other’s a live terror who doesn’t.” He chuckles. “Elminster hisself would have a time o’ it. They say there’s nasty ghosts in that castle as well.”

The innkeeper, silent until now, looks over the tops of his square-cut glasses. “I wouldn’a be sae sure. About the raid on Riatavin, I mean.” He speaks slowly, but with authority, “I saw Kartak that night, ‘bout the same time as Riatavin was hit.”

The farmers look incredulous. “Nah, I know what you’re thinkin’, but I saw him plain as I see you dirt-scrabbers. He was trying tae get some leather strapping, said it was fer a harness. I sent him down tae Cluny’s. It weren’t Kartak what bit Riatavin, but the mayor o’ the place don’t want to hear that.”

If the adventurers join the men and buy a round, they learn that there was an attack on the town of Riatavin in which monsters and undead of several breeds descended on that place, destroyed and killed those they could, harassed and wounded the rest, and then vanished with the morning dew.

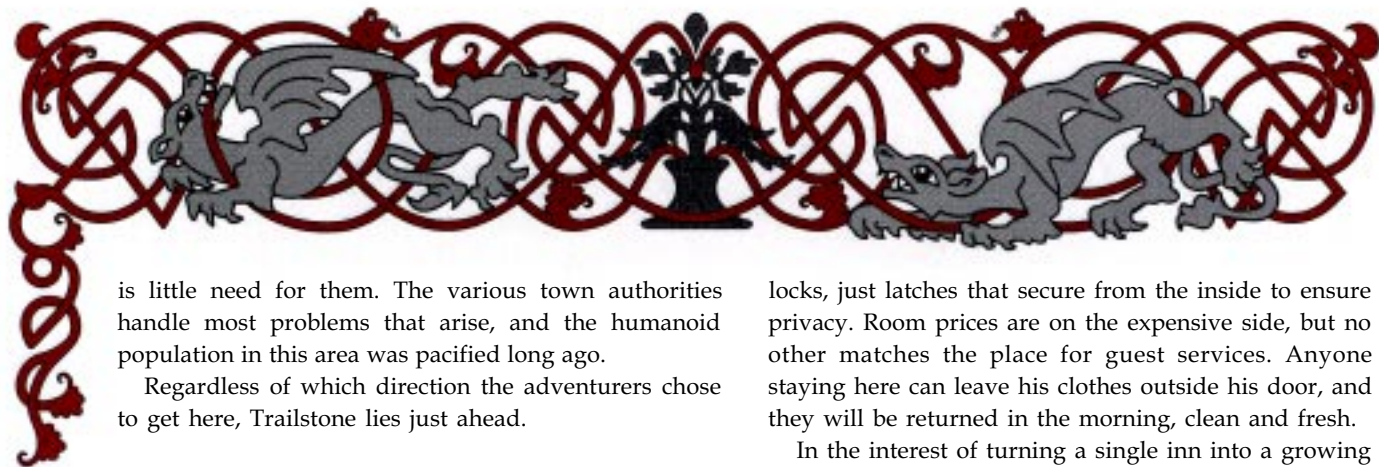
In point of fact, the raid on Riatavin was Chardath’s doing. Unable to seek nonevil allies through normal channels, he staged the incursion in Kartak’s name, calling evil undead to do his bidding with his new powers. As he and his war party were about to leave the town, he had a brainstorm. To drive home the identity of the people’s tormentor, he used a lightning bolt to sear Kartak’s name in the doors of Mystra’s Temple. (Fortunately for Chardath, the spell worked without mishap.) It was an act designed purely to anger the folk of Riatavin—and raise the whole countryside against the lich.

Nothing else eventful takes place in Toralth.

On The Tethir Road

The Tethir Road was built over a thousand years ago and remains one of the best highways on all of Faerûn. The road also defines the border between Amn and Tethyr. It has been a major point of Amnian pride to keep this ancient thoroughfare open and in good repair all year round. Although few military patrols pass this way, save for the occasional inspector’s escort, there





is little need for them. The various town authorities handle most problems that arise, and the humanoid population in this area was pacified long ago.

Regardless of which direction the adventurers chose to get here, Trailstone lies just ahead.

Trailstone

Trailstone marks the last stop before Castle Spulzeer. This place is a true town; a young one, to be sure, but a far cry from Eshpurta and the hillforts. Pride shows in the windows of the well-maintained shops and the clean boards and stone of the walkways.

The town of Trailstone was built around the Spulzeer Inn. The inn was established in the Year of the Spur (1348) by the Spulzeer family, down on their luck and diminishing both in size and influence. Rafe Spulzeer had spearheaded the family decision, convinced and conning others that without the castle, the family needed a base of operations from which to rebuild their fortunes. What better place than an inn on the Tethir Road, a natural stop for caravans and traders heading south?

While most in Amn consider Trailstone as nothing more than a “water hole” on the way to Riatavin and Tethyr, the town has prospered and grown, primarily due to its location. The attitude of their Amnian neighbors has done little to endear Amn to the citizens of Trailstone. The townsfolk have developed an independent outlook concerning citizenship. The population is currently about 420 people, including the outlying farms.

Trailstone is a town of modest architecture and small shops. There are no major landmarks here, but several establishments show promise. Anything the adventurers want can be found in Trailstone. What follows is a quick list of the most notable establishments there.

The New Spulzeer Inn

The New Spulzeer Inn is a sprawling, two-story building that caters to wealthy travelers, traders, and caravan merchants. After almost 20 years, it is still run by its primary founder, Rafe Spulzeer (NG hm F8). Its specialty, one of Rafe’s better ideas, is a collection of nine windowless, private meeting rooms where deals are made, goods are bartered, contracts are signed, and secrets are traded like the marbles of small boys. Orbs suspended from the ceiling and enchanted with *continual light* provide illumination for the business conducted between these walls. The meeting rooms have no outer

locks, just latches that secure from the inside to ensure privacy. Room prices are on the expensive side, but no other matches the place for guest services. Anyone staying here can leave his clothes outside his door, and they will be returned in the morning, clean and fresh.

In the interest of turning a single inn into a growing community, Rafe decided not to include a tavern room in his building plans. He left that possibility up for grabs, hoping to interest others in building near the inn.

The Trail’s End Inn

The Trail’s End Inn is a reflection of the Spulzeer. Carnat Trender (NE hm R6) is a retired adventurer with little imagination. The Trail’s End vaguely resembles the Spulzeer, but at less than half the size of the original. Carnat doesn’t offer a lot of services. Still, the place is clean and moderately priced.

The Dragon Turtle Inn

The Dragon Turtle Inn is the largest structure in Trailstone, next to the rambling corridors of the Spulzeer. In fact, if the third floor of the Turtle is taken into consideration, it is the greatest building in Trailstone.

The Turtle is actually the original Spellseer Inn, founded in 1316. A fire in 1326 damaged much of the building, causing the owners to build a new inn nearby. Several years later, an entrepreneur restored the building and reopened it as the Dragon Turtle Inn.

The Turtle strives to create a nautical atmosphere in the landlocked center of south Amn, and it works. The shutters on the first floor windows, for example, are actually made of cemented chips of dragon turtle shell. The swinging sign in front of the inn was taken from a wharfside tavern in Athkatla, repainted with its new name, and then weathered to appear salt-stained.

Despite the contrived mood of the place, it is quite comfortable with many amenities. There are even two rooms on the second floor dedicated to hot baths. The prices here are moderate, the food excellent.

Shaundakul’s Tavern

Shaundakul’s Tavern is a comfortable, well-appointed roadhouse that serves what is reputed to be the best rabbit stew on Faerûn. The name of the place is derived from the lodestone slab that serves as the counter top for the bar. It is said to have come from a ruined temple of the god of caravans. The owner is Mier Ompson (N hm F0), the food quality is good, and the prices are low enough to appeal to caravan drivers and officers of the guard.



The Badger's Den

The Badger's Den tavern is on the seedy side. While the prices are inexpensive, the quality of the food and drink are fair at best. This place is probably best left avoided, even if it is the largest rumor mill in Trailstone. The Badger's Den is frequented by hard-bitten caravan drivers and brutish guards who love to administer beatings. Still, the atmosphere is friendly. This is usually the tavern of choice for hard-bitten caravan drivers and guards. The peg-legged Colis Goldsfall (N hm R1) runs this place with the help of his daughters, Jehan (N hf F1; STR 18/27) and Marila (N hf F1; STR 18/40) both over 6 feet tall and just 16 years old. If the heroes visit the Badger's Den, they hear disgruntled caravan guards discussing the poor quality of Sir Ossid's arms and armor (see below).

Nastral's Provisioners

The Vinson family runs the largest outfitters in Trailstone, which is to say, it's not that big. But Nastral Vinson (NE hm T4) tries to offer a wide variety of goods. The Vinsons are quiet people, staying out of the limelight as much as possible. There are rumors about Nastral's father, now dead, and some unpleasantness he was involved in with the Amnian Council of Six, but here, no one cares. Still, the Vinsons prefer the comforts of tranquil obscurity.

Bear Claws and Baby's Breath

Hidden behind a respectable front as an herbalist and midwife, Raseckel Ansteler (LN hf W5) sells spell components, alchemical paraphernalia, and supplies at 150% of standard prices. Raseckel doesn't like people much, so she chose a name that would mystify, trusting that her few acquaintances would spread the word in the magical community. They did, but she charges so much that people rarely shop there—which is fine with Raseckel. Any supplies that magic-using heroes need can be found here.

Arms of the Noble Knight

There is an armory, Arms of the Noble Knight, run by an elderly, massively muscled graybeard who calls himself Sir Ossid (LN hm F16) and doubles as a weaponsmith. His upper body appearance, however, is merely a remnant of his youth: Those massive muscles have long since withered, leaving in their place only the image of strength. His weapons and shiny plate armors feel light, fit perfectly, and look wonderful. Unfortunately, his weakness forces him to use substandard steel alloyed





with a fine, bright metal he discovered in the Tejarn Hills. He keeps the location, and the very existence of the metal, a closely guarded secret. Osis does all the mining himself.

Osis's prices are inexpensive. In fact, most warriors think they are stealing from him—until the purchases are put to the test. Sir Osis's swords have a 50% chance of breaking on first impact and a 25% chance each strike thereafter. His armor is not much better, except that there is more surface area to spread the force of the blows. It provides an Armor Class that is 1 point worse than normal, but this cannot be known until the first time the armor is struck. Sir Osis's helms, breast and back plates, leg and arm harnesses all have a 35% chance of failure the first time they are struck, and a 10% chance each hit after that.

If the heroes visit the Badger's Den, they hear disgruntled caravan guards discussing the quality of Sir Osis's arms. Otherwise, let buyers beware.

Other Places of Interest

There are roughly fifteen other small shops in Trailstone, although this number fluctuates as businesses fail and new ones are established to take their places. Currently, there are three bakers, four barbers, two clothiers, and an odd assortment of potters, glaziers, jewelers, and herbalists. There is even a cartographer.

Rumors

Trailstone is an ideal place to glean information about the Spellseer/Spulzeer family and the castle. The DM can sprinkle rumors throughout the town, and encourage the party to ask questions of local residents (though too many questions could raise suspicion among people who think the topic is best left alone).

The DM should use the details found in "The Unfortunate House of Spellseer" to create rumors, gossip, and local tales. Some stories should be accurate, others skewed, so that the party receives valid information mixed with outright lies. Different locations and people have different explanations and "truths." A few examples follow.

If the heroes visit Rafe Spulzeer in expectation of obtaining substantial recent information, they are in for a disappointment. The family has been out of touch with those at the castle for a generation, and he knows nothing. Lately, given the rumors, Rafe has been thinking that it might be a good idea to change the family name again—to something like Bakerkinde or Smithkinger or Innsteward. Anything but Spulzeer.

At Shaundakul's Tavern, the PCs may chance on more meaty tales. If they ask the owner, Mier Ompson, they receive a noncommittal shrug; Mier keeps out of local problems, as he is interested only in profit. His bartender, though, is more forthcoming.

"Aye, ye buy more of me ale, an' I'll tell ye. Truth too, straight from the lich's mouth." The old man laughs maniacally. "Kartak? He's evil, that one. Went to lich, I heard. Jumps about with a ring of some sort. Bounces from here to there and back again. Ought to really die, that one.

" 'Course, he's no worse than his cousin, maybe even better. Cousin, descendent, or whatever he is. Lord Chardath Spulzeer, he calls hisself. Fer my dough, that's the one who's the problem."

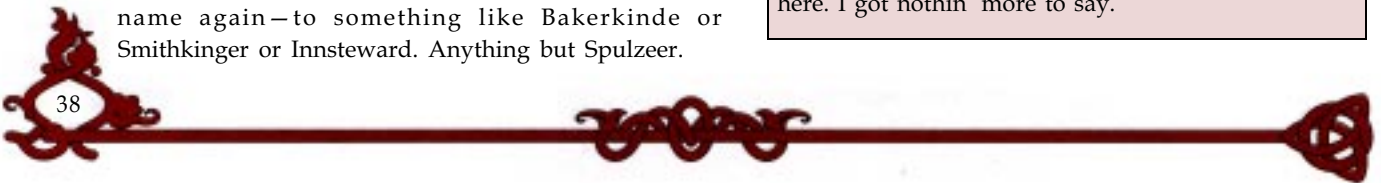
If any of the adventurers ask why, the bartender responds. If they do not, he polishes glassware until the next query.

"Chardath, he's mad—mind of a lemurbird and gone 'round the bend, which is to say, not very bright, not very rational. Envy, I think, and obsession. He came in here a few times, Chardath. Frankly, I hope he never does again.

"He was in his cups, ye see, a moanin' and groanin' 'bout Kartak. Then he says, laughing, he says, 'I got 'im, I got his power from 'im. Now I gotta keep it.' Then he loses his composure, if you know what I mean, starts a cryin' game, weeping that 'is sister (I never knew he had one), was dead and he did it 'cause Kartak made him do it. And on, and on, and on.

"Maybe, and maybe not. Liches don' care about us. They do their lich thing, they do their magic, but they usually jes' kill within their own club, ye know? Poor mortals like me and you are not important in their scheme of things. I mean, immortals think immortal thoughts, hey?

"Wanna know what I think?" Inspecting a glass and wiping an imaginary stain from the rim, he holds it up to the light, squinting. "Do ye?" He continues without prompting, "I think Chardath staged the raid on Riatavin to throw suspicion and rancor onto Kartak. Kartak ain't that stupid, carve his sigil in the temple doors, right. Liches are smart, Chardath ain't, and that's the name of that particular ditty. Castle Spulzeer? Ye don't want to know. Now get out o' here. I got nothin' more to say."





The story is much the same in the other taverns. There should be enough contradictions built into the tales heard by the PCs that they aren't entirely sure what to expect when they reach the castle. If they reveal their destination, they will be met with mixed awe and contempt. Those who seek Castle Spulzeer these days are evil—or courageous fools.

The Road of Destiny

The decaying road from Trailstone to the castle is an unkempt remnant of former days. And the road isn't the only thing that has changed: The closer the party gets to Castle Spulzeer, the more twisted and ruined the landscape becomes. The plants that grow and the creatures that breed here are warped, mutated into something not quite right in the natural scheme of things.

You are heading south on what was once a well-maintained road. It is now little more than a pair of wagon wheel ruts holding stagnant water and a central knoll of corrupted, greenish-black grass.

The surrounding countryside is strange, almost otherworldly. Just a mile outside of Trailstone, the trees have lost most of their leaves, or perhaps they never had them. Mists rise from the forest, and the sun seems to have lost its warmth. A definite chill lingers in the air.

Suddenly, a dozen or so creatures leap at you from the ground, the dead trees, the dusky rocks. They attack once, nipping with eroded but still sharp teeth. Perhaps they were once squirrels or stoats—their long tails retain a few bristled patches, their mangy body hair hangs in sparse clumps on their lumpy frames. As quickly as they appeared, they vanish.

The creatures sink their teeth into any flesh not covered by at least leather armor, and are gone as swiftly as they appeared. Each unarmored character suffers 1d2 points of damage (no saving throw), but in no case should a single character suffer more than two bites. The attack is over so quickly that any response on the part of the characters is too little, too late.

The further the heroes travel, the more deviant and bizarre nature becomes. At two more points along the road, the PCs are attacked by grotesque freaks, though without injury. The next attack comes from a huge flock of hideous butterflies beating stumpy wings. They dive at the characters, squirming through any and all openings in their garments. The butterflies are a sickly shade of white with large knobby antennae and long black tongues that dart in and out of their almost human lips. They cannot cause any damage, but the sheer horror of these ugly creatures crawling around inside the PCs' clothing, clouding the vision of those who have donned helmets, and flopping onto the faces of all characters, should be shock enough to make them all want to bathe.

A final cloud of dreadful pests descends on the party as it approaches the edge of the barren ground surrounding the castle. It is unclear what these creatures once were; perhaps they were pixies or some diminutive form of elf never encountered before.

Now a third menace comes at you, out of the sky. Creatures the color of mud, they appear to be humanoid, although malformed with distended bellies and uneven, mismatched limbs and wings. Each is 52 to 56 inches long and has a set of dirty ivory horns on its head. The horns seem to grow in a manner opposite to the natural order of such things: The narrowest point of the horns is at the base of the forehead, the widest part at what would be the tip of the horn. Strangely, the creatures are covering their mouths with both hands.

And then you hear it: A high-pitched screaming that feels like it will shatter your skull and drive you mad. The painful noise comes from all quarters as the creatures swoop and dart around you.

The screams of the unfortunate creatures cause no damage, but are painful to hear. Quick-witted PCs may stuff cloth or thin leather into their ears to muffle the noise; the simplest course of action, however, is to just endure the wails and let the tiny monsters pass, or to charge ahead to the dead zone that surrounds the castle.





Castle Spulzeer

Once the characters enter the castle, refer to the map on the inside covers of this book. Before beginning this part of the adventure, the DM should thoroughly read the “Ongoing Encounters” section below.

No matter when the heroes arrive, they have just missed the deadline set by Kartak. They enter the castle on the anniversary of Marble’s death—when events start getting really interesting at Castle Spulzeer. Furthermore, if the party arrives at night, all effects, points of damage, and saving throw penalties double.

Ongoing Encounters

Any castle worth its battlements has a spirit or two who fuel local ghost stories and adventurers’ dreams. Castle Spulzeer, however, has witnessed so many atrocities that its rooms virtually hum with magical activity and unlife. Location-specific incidents are noted under individual area descriptions; a few surprises, however, exceed room boundaries.

The DM should encourage the heroes to explore the rest of the castle before reaching Kartak’s level, as the adventure’s conclusion takes place there in **area 41**. Assuming the adventurers thoroughly tour the castle before reaching the ceremonial room, they should encounter most of the following entities and situations more than once.

Lord Chardath

The insane Lord Spulzeer lies in wait for Kartak—and any allies the lich might have. While the djinni granted him a substantial amount of Kartak’s magical ability, he does not fully understand it, nor can he hold onto it for much longer. He is, therefore, the most frightening of enemies: one with incredible powers who cannot control them or rationally decide when to use them.

Chardath begins this section of the adventure with a 23% chance of spell failure (the spell not working at all) and a 40% chance of spell mishap (the spell not working as intended). Both these percentages increase by 7% with each spell cast until he loses casting ability altogether and remains only an 8th-level fighter. See page 63 for more information about Chardath’s spellcasting abilities.

The party should encounter Chardath three times before the final confrontation. Each meeting should be a little more harrowing than the next. The first encounter takes place in **area 26**, the library, although the DM may move it elsewhere in the castle at his discretion.

The location and action of the second and third encounters are left to the DM. We suggest that each occur on a different floor. Use the first encounter as a model, escalating the violence with each scene. Perhaps Chardath shouts to the adventurers in the second scene, and lobbs a spell or two at them in the third.

Refer to page 63 for a full description of Chardath.

Kartak

Kartak is summoned to the castle just before the PCs spot it from the road. (No matter what time they arrive, their approach coincides with the anniversary of Marble’s death.) The lich waits for the heroes in **area 41**, the ceremonial room. He hopes to





persuade them into picking up the dagger *Aggarath*, replacing its hilt-stone, and giving it to him before Marble or Chardath appears.

Note that Kartak gains back his stolen magical powers as Chardath loses them. Each time Chardath's spell failure percentage goes up by 7% (see above), Kartak has one level of experience restored to him. When the hapless Lord Spulzeer has lost all spellcasting ability, the lich is once again a 31st-level necromancer.

Gaspard deLouca, Kartak's servant, has been instructed to meet his master in the ceremonial room after ensuring that the adventurers enter the castle. Refer to page 62 for a full description of Kartak.

Marble

Marble's spirit will coalesce into a ghost when the PCs witness the spectral re-enactment of her murder. In the meantime, the party should spot apparitions of her in various parts of the castle.

The first encounter with Marble's apparition takes place in **area 3**, the staircase in the great hall (**area 2**). Afterward, the DM should use his discretion in scattering more sightings as the PCs make their way through the building. In all the apparitions, Marble beckons the party up to her room on the third level (**area 21**). Should the adventurers follow (or come upon the room in the course of their own exploration), they witness a replay of Marble's abduction and murder there.

If the adventurers do not follow her, she should appear (in addition to whatever else is there) in every room and hall they enter. If the party continues to ignore her, she harasses the PCs until they comply with her summons.

After witnessing the scene in **area 21**, the adventurers may investigate other locations in the castle so long as they are making progress toward Kartak's level and the dagger Marble seeks. Marble wants the PCs to restore the hilt-stone and relinquish the dagger to her so she can use it as the instrument of her revenge on Kartak and Chardath—it seems only fitting. For a complete description of Marble, see page 64.

Other Apparitions

Each level is permeated by a residue of the evil deeds that took place on that floor. The residue takes the form of endless ghostly recreations of torments endured by the castle's victims. These apparitions are keyed to specific areas, as noted in room descriptions.

Staircase Traps

The hidden staircase in the northeast corner of every level was originally the idea of Tregas Spellseer. In a flash of prescient insight, he realized that there might be times in the future when family members would need to travel about their home without the knowledge of servants or guests. When Marinessa the Cross-Eyed added the third floor, she continued the plan and added a secret staircase up to that level. These stairs can be found by searching for secret doors.

Two traps on every floor protect the staircase. The first is an illusion, something to frighten unwanted visitors should they stumble on the hidden stairwell. The other, a physical trap on the second stair of each level, is more serious: a slide that leads to a pit of sharp wooden stakes at the very center of the deepest hole in the castle. *Dispel magic* can eliminate the illusion, and a successful find traps roll will reveal the death slide. A successful saving throw vs. spell will spare a hero, but failure means certain death.

Every member of the family, from early childhood onward, has been taught that "Spulzeers skip the second step." That is not a philosophy, but a warning.

Wandering Undead

Note that in any room in Castle Spulzeer the adventurers might encounter undead. These restless spirits are mostly victims of atrocities committed in the castle by Kartak and the Spellseer/Spulzeer family over the centuries (some may even be the spirits of evil ancestors). Kartak's magical wards previously kept the creatures at bay, but the lich's weakened condition now has enabled them to rise and walk. Though Chardath can see and hear them, his status as lord of the castle has so far protected him from physical harm. (The creatures have, however, exacted their revenge—on his mental state.)

The DM should roll 1d8 when the party enters the castle: The result is the number of rooms the PCs will visit before encountering an undead resident. (The DM can use his discretion to vary the number of creatures appearing according to the party's strength.) When the adventurers get to the appropriate room, the DM rolls again to determine the next, and so on.

The table on page 43 indicates the type of undead encountered. Should the room already be occupied, the random creature is added to those already in residence.

Castle Spulzeer

Exterior View

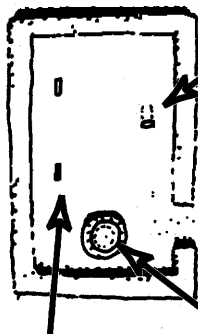
Brambles

Brambles

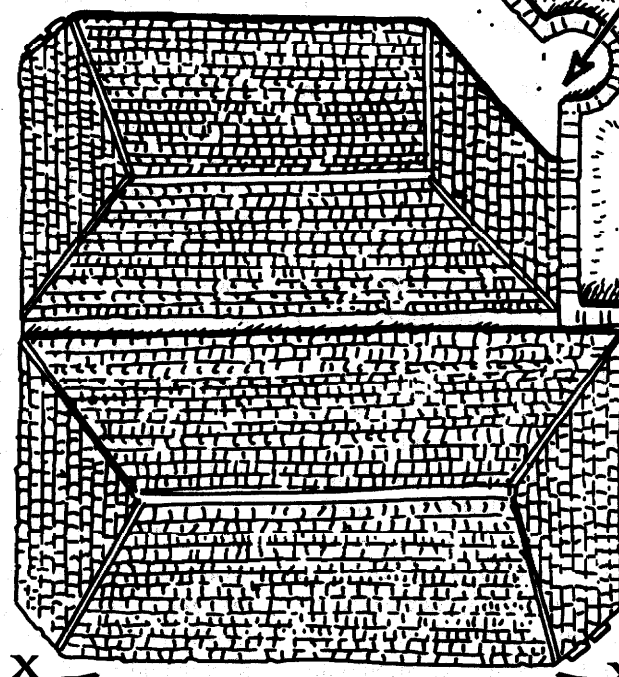
Rose Garden

Marble's Grave

Guard Towers



Benches Reflecting Pool



WYVERNS

Brambles

Brambles

Main Entrance

Castle Drive

112 Feet



Brambles



1d8 **Creature**

1 **Geist:** AC 10; MV Fl 12 (A); HD 0; SA panic; SD invulnerable; MR see below; SZ M (6' tall); ML fearless (20); Int varies; AL varies; XP 0.

Notes: A geist is the relatively harmless undead spirit of a person who died traumatically, a transparent image of the victim at the moment of death. Geists can speak, move through objects, and decide when and to whom they will be visible. They cannot be struck ("hits" pass through their bodies) nor can they strike others. Often mistaken for ghosts or haunts, geists cause all who see them to save vs. paralysis or flee in panic.

MR—*True seeing* reveals a blurred white image of an invisible geist. *Dismissal, banishment, wish, abjure, or holy word* sends a geist to its final resting place. It is immune to all other spells and magic.

2 **Skeletons (3d6):** AC 7; MV 12; HD 1; hp 7; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; SZ M (6' tall); ML fearless (20); Int non (0); AL N; XP 65 each.

Notes: These skeletons are the result of Chardath's experimentation with his newfound magical powers. They never need to make Morale checks, as Chardath has commanded them to fight all intruders to the death.

Skeletons are immune to *charm, fear, hold* and *sleep* spells; cold-based attacks are ineffectual. Slashing and piercing weapons inflict only half damage. Holy water inflicts 2d4 points of damage per vial.

3 **Wraith:** See page 52.

4 **Crypt thing:** See page 52.

5 **Banshee:** AC 0; MV 15; HD 7; hp 53; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (touch); SA death wail; SD +1 or better weapon to hit; MR 50%; SZ M (6' tall); ML elite (13); Int exceptional (16); AL CE; XP 4,000.

Notes: Can sound death wail once per day; any creature within 30 feet must save vs. death magic or die.

6 **Ghost:** AC 0 (8 on Ethereal Plane); MV 9; HD 10; hp 76; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg age 1d4x10 years; SA *magic jar*; SD only silver weapons (for half damage) or +1 or better magical weapons (for full damage) can strike; SZ M (5' tall); ML fearless (20); Int high (13); AL LE; XP 7,000.

Notes: The sight of a ghost causes humans and humanoids to age 10 years and flee in panic for 2d6 turns unless they succeed at a saving throw vs. spell. Priests above 6th level are immune to this effect; others above 8th level add +2 to their saving throws. Creatures within 60 yards of a ghost are subject to its *magic jar* attack; if the ghost fails, it attacks with its touch. Ghosts can be turned by priests of level 7 or higher and damaged by holy water when in semimaterial form.

7 Roll again; the result is double the undead selected.

8 Roll twice more, each result produces a monster in that room. If a 7 is rolled, double the results.

The Castle's Exterior

One hundred yards from the castle, nothing grows. The barren perimeter stands as mute witness to the brutal deaths so many have found within the castle walls. None of the unnatural wildlife will come inside this sterile belt; the only life here is in Castle Spulzeer.

Refer to the map on page 42 and read the following text aloud to the players.

The approach to the castle looks almost as if one of the southern deserts had been defiled and then transplanted here. The barren, sandy ground holds no life, though a few thin, dead trunks that once belonged to trees struggle to show a presence.

The moat, long since dried, is coated in places with a slimy green growth of uncertain origin. The drawbridge sits permanently fixed in its lowered position, and it appears not quite safe for wagons, or creatures larger than human size.

The castle itself has started to crumble. The south tower lies partially collapsed, leaving a remnant that looks like a giant fang. Some of the windows are broken, letting the chill, damp weather into the castle.

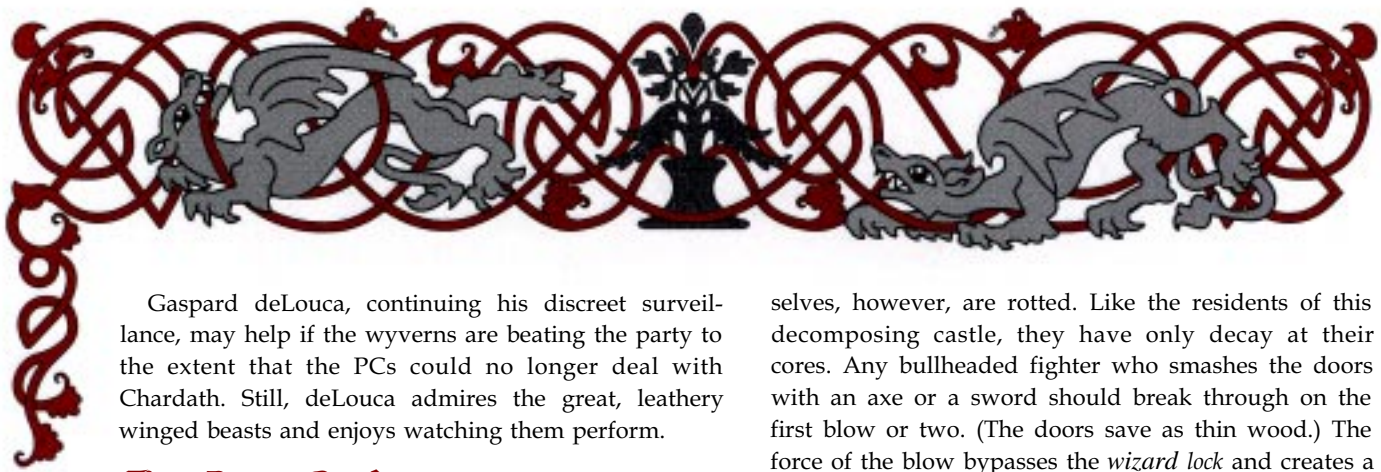
A high screech, joined by another, breaks the unnatural silence. The sound comes from above, where two wyverns strain against chains that hold them to the roof gables. The chains break, and down they plunge—straight for you.

The wyverns were captured and shackled to the roof by Lord Chardath in one of his first tests of the magical power he stole from Kartak. The creatures function as an early warning system: Somehow, Chardath thought that if ever Kartak returned, he would simply walk up the drive. He enchanted the wyverns' manacles to release if a lich ever came within 300 yards of the castle. However, he didn't count on the natural strength of the beasts, who have now broken loose. They are hungry, for Chardath kept them half-starved in the belief that they would attack Kartak for sustenance.

Wyverns (2): AC 3; MV 6, Fl 24 (E); HD 7+7; hp 60; THAC0 13; #AT 2; Dmg 2d8/1d6 (bite/stinger); SA stinger injects poison (type F); SZ G (35' long); ML elite (14); Int low (7); AL NE; XP 1,400.

Notes: Stinger victims must succeed at a saving throw vs. poison or die. In a dive attack, a wyvern will try to snatch the enemy off the ground, inflicting 1d6 points of damage with each claw. Once airborne with a victim, it receives a +4 bonus to attacks.





Gaspard deLouca, continuing his discreet surveillance, may help if the wyverns are beating the party to the extent that the PCs could no longer deal with Chardath. Still, deLouca admires the great, leathery winged beasts and enjoys watching them perform.

The Rose Garden

If the PCs explore the exterior, they find the castle walls show signs of age, the grounds are overgrown with weeds and brambles, and a stench of decay hangs in the air. The only area of interest is the rose garden, Marble's burial place.

This walled terrace, once a peaceful refuge, now seems a nightmare. Stunted black roses survive at the tops of withered, long-dead stems. Brambles cover the dead grounds like a grotesque carpet. A stone bench sits cracked and crumbling in the center. Where once the sunlight danced across the crenelations of the ivy-sheathed walls, now mists hide decomposing masonry, and alien images dance in the haze.

There is nothing of value here. If the DM wishes, however, he may move the first encounter with Marble's apparition (see **area 3**) to this location instead. The staircase image in **area 3** would then become the party's second sighting of Marble as she leads them through the castle.

Ground Level

The first floor of the castle was once its most opulent, featuring an audience chamber, a great hall, a hall of honor, and guests rooms of various sizes and comforts. All this has changed over the years, though the great hall remains.

1. Entrance

Two enormous doors set on swivels open into the great hall.

You stand before the doors to the castle. The massive oak slabs are not secured, for the locks have long since rusted and the keys are lost to time. One door looks slightly ajar, as if in invitation. . . .

In fact, the doors are *wizard locked*, and an *illusion* creates the image of the open door. The doors them-

selves, however, are rotted. Like the residents of this decomposing castle, they have only decay at their cores. Any bullheaded fighter who smashes the doors with an axe or a sword should break through on the first blow or two. (The doors save as thin wood.) The force of the blow bypasses the *wizard lock* and creates a new entrance.

Failing brute force, the *wizard lock* can be broken, but only by 20th-level magic.

If the adventurers found the *stone tell* scroll in the Temple of the Moonmaiden, they can use it to learn the entire history of the castle and its current residents and secrets. The stone walls at the entrance or anywhere within the castle can relate nearly all information detailed in the "Unfortunate House of Spellseer" section (pages 5-13), and the specific locations of the items they have been hired to find. The walls cannot, however, reveal that Kartak is the party's true employer, or relate activities that took place outside the castle grounds.

Obviously, this is a lot of information for the adventurers to digest at once. The DM should "parcel out" the details, perhaps by having the stones answer only specific questions

Gaspard observes the PCs' entrance through *clairaudience* from his hiding place in the woods. Though anxious to enter the castle (he is to meet his master in **area 41**), he will make no move until the party penetrates those cold stone walls.

2. Great Hall

Once the party passes through the entrance, read or paraphrase the following text.

You have gained entry to the ground floor of the castle. This is no ordinary keep, now or at any time. Yes, weapons and shields adorn the walls, but though they once boasted courage, heroism, and life, in their tarnished state they now seem to represent cowardice, dishonor, and death.

From where you stand, entrance at your back, you can see that once this was a great estate. You are in the great hall, which has a ceiling almost 20 feet high. Four huge fireplaces rest at cardinal points of this massive room, all large enough for a human to walk into. Doors in the distance lead to other locations on this floor. At the center of the room is a wide, twisting staircase that spirals to the floor above and down to the one below.



The ring the party seeks is in this room, hidden inside a false brick behind the andirons of the southwest fireplace. Unfortunately for the heroes, a full fire blazes away on the hearth—and a golem harpy named G'nell squawks at the heroes.

G'nell, golem harpy (flesh golem): AC 9; MV 8; HD 9; hp 40; THAC0 11; #AT 2; Dmg 2d8/2d8 (fists); SA song; SD magical weapon to hit; SZ L (4' 6" tall); ML fearless (20); Int semi (4); AL N; XP 2,000.

Notes: G'nell's harpy song can *charm* humans and some demihumans who hear it. Elves are immune; dwarves have a 10% chance of resisting it. On hearing her song, victims must save vs. spell at a +2 bonus (the golem's song isn't quite as powerful as that of a true harpy). Those who fail are drawn to her bosom and pommelled. Fire- and cold-based spells slow G'nell for 2d6 rounds; electrical attacks restore 1 hit point.

The harpy of Castle Spulzeer is a unique flesh golem created in an experiment by Kartak and now controlled by Chardath. Designed to look like the harpy of legend, she has the upper body of a woman and wings. Her features are youthful, if grotesque, with disheveled, dirty hair, and moldering, pointed teeth. The creature

weighs a solid 350 pounds, but shows no fat. She wears a filthy brown rag of a dress and exudes a vile odor.

G'nell is not posted to protect the *ring of the necromancer*, but rather as Chardath's first line of internal defense. (He is unaware of the ring.) If the adventurers defeat or disable G'nell, they can use the *glim-gauntlet* or a *reveal magic* spell to pinpoint the brick behind which the ring is hidden.

After about 225 feet, the great hall narrows. The old audience chamber and the hall of honor were torn out in order to expand the great hall (more room for paying guests to play). Should the adventurers pass into the narrower northern end of the hall, they trigger an apparition:

Ghostly music fills the room. All around you, pale figures shrouded in dense mist dance through the room. The dancing couples wear the courtly garb of another century, another era.

As the dancers float across the floor, it seems that something is not quite right. All of their heads appear to be tilted at an angle impossible for normal human necks. . . unless they were broken.





Though startling and eerie, the apparition is otherwise harmless. It continues so long as anyone remains in the room.

3. Public Staircase

This elegant, spiral staircase is broad enough for six people to walk side by side without crowding. During the height of the castle's last entertainment phase, traffic here was heavy. (It is said that Chardath once rode a horse to the dining level above just to prove he could ride.) The stairs lead up to **area 16** and down to **area 28**.

Read or paraphrase the following text to introduce Marble. The DM might want to limit this initial sighting to one or two particularly observant characters.

The ghostly image of a woman stands on the upper part of the staircase. Her arm reaches out to you, her hand beckoning for you to follow as she gently drifts higher up the stairs, disappearing from your sight.

If the PCs follow Marble's apparition up the stairs, she leads them to her room on the third level (**area 21**). Rather than allow the party to follow Marble straight there, the DM should have Marble's apparition disappear and reappear several times as the PCs move around the upper levels of the castle.

If the PCs do not follow her, she appears, in addition to whatever else is there, in every room and hall they enter. She always beckons to them but does not speak. If the heroes continue to ignore her, eventually (once her ghostly form coalesces), she will grow angry and attack them.

4. Private Staircase

The staircase on this level is guarded by the illusion of a bebilith: a hideous, 15-foot misshapen arachnid from the Abyss. Just the sight of this fanged "barbed horror" requires characters to pass a morale check or flee the stairwell. The physical trap is the same slide that exists on all levels. (See page 41 for more information about the private staircase's traps.)

The stairs lead up to **area 17** and down to **area 31**.

5. Guest Rooms

The guest rooms are decorated to suit the jaded tastes of the castle's most recent guests. There is nothing in them of interest, but if they are entered, a chorus of sorrowful wailing fills every room. The exact location of the voices cannot be pinpointed.

6. Special Guest Chambers

These three rooms were reserved for "high rollers" on the gambling table and certain others who valued their anonymity. If anyone makes a thorough search of these rooms, 15 gems worth 75 gp total (baubles left or lost by former occupants) can be found in drawers and cushions.

7. Kitchen and Storage

The kitchen looks like it has not been used in weeks. Chardath had servants who performed various duties around the castle, but once the undead started roaming the halls, they all fled.

8. Dumbwaiter

This device, large enough for four people to stand in, is raised and lowered by ropes attached to a pulley system. The large platform leads to the second level, where great banquet facilities once entertained large crowds. The dumbwaiter shaft is haunted by a weeping spirit. (Weeping spirits have no powers, but hearing one requires a successful morale check. Those who fail the check run screaming in random directions for one round.)

9. Guard Room

Though once this room held guards, now it holds mostly dust and grime. A tarnished suit of human-sized full plate armor (value 7,000 gp) stands in the corner, forgotten.

10. Armory

This room is empty.

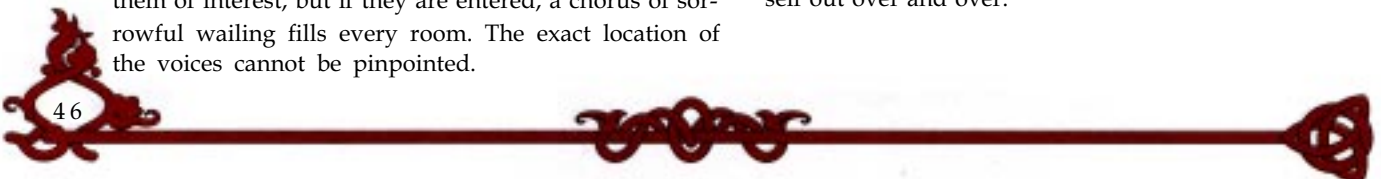
Second Level

The second floor was originally the family's private chambers and quarters for guards and servants. It had its own great hall and an outer guardwalk that encompassed the castle.

11. Dining Area

Most of this level has been given over to a large feasting hall. The meals served here were among the finest (and most unusual) on Faerûn.

The ghostly apparition of one such banquet plays itself out over and over:





Semi-transparent feasters sit at round tables everywhere you look, soundlessly pounding the tables with fists, knives, and two-pronged forks. From behind the tables, seemingly at all sides and corners of the room, three ghostly, shuffling elves, covered only by expensive cloaks, are prodded forward by orc guards. A half-giant, butcher knife and carving cutlery in hand, stands passively behind a pair of horizontal arm and leg stocks mounted on a 10-foot long table. The table is cut with deep channels and has a funnel leading to an open barrel at each end.

The first elf, a young male, is led to the stand without struggle, his eyes glazed. The cloak is stripped from him; he is pushed into the stocks, which are then closed around his ankles and wrists. The butcher sets to work as spectral waiters stand ready with platters to receive the main course. Phantom wine stewards fill pitchers from the barrels as the ghostly guests roar their approval. The next elf is brought forward. The image fades, then begins again.

12. Dumbwaiter

The large dumbwaiter (see **area 8**) raised food, trays, and servers up to this level.

13. Balcony

The balcony still looks over the great hall below. Char-dath found it useful when looking for people he did not want to meet in person.

14. Promenade

Virtually nothing was done to the guardwalk except to change its name. Once there was a beautiful view from any vantage point along its length. It is the sole romantic touch in the castle. It now has a roof, due to the overhang of the third level.

15. Guard Towers

Never really necessary, the guard towers were part of the original structure—Tregas Spellseer thought they looked impressive. Now they are crumbling, like much of this structure.

16. Public Staircase

These broad steps lead down to **area 3** on the ground level and up to **area 18** on the third floor.





17. Private Staircase

On this level, the illusion is a red dragon, claws extended, ready to attack. The trap is the same slide that exists on all levels. (See page 41 for more information about the staircase illusions and traps.) The stairs lead up to **area 19** and down to **area 4**.

New (Third) Level

No one knows quite why Marinessa added the third floor. When asked, she muttered something about wanting a new home, but was never more specific. It is to this level that she moved the library and family living quarters.

18. Public Staircase

Not very public, this is the route taken only by those privileged to enter the private quarters of the master, Chardath. The stairs are narrow, allowing just one person at a time to mount them. Marinessa constructed this flight with an eye toward final defense.

The stairs lead down to **area 16**.

19. Private Staircase

This level's illusion is that of a solid, brick wall. The trap is the same slide of death that exists on the other levels, but closed. Chardath, during the heyday of the freewheeling circus of Castle Spulzeer, nailed down the second step; he was afraid one his favorites, whom he brought here often, would fall into it. The staircase leads up from **area 17** and terminates inside the master's quarters (**area 20**).

20. Master's Quarters

Chardath has horrible tastes in decorating and an appalling lack of respect for art. This room is stuffed with the exquisite entangled with the banal. Bad paintings hang atop beautiful tapestries, nails driven right through the fabric and into the wall behind. Vases and low tables clutter the floor; the bed is a huge four poster affair with tapestries surrounding each side. Each of the 20 large wall sconces (five per wall) is different and mismatched.

21. Marble's Room

If the PCs followed Marble here from the great hall, read the following:

With a final beseeching glance, the figure glides through a door and disappears, leaving no trace.

Describe this chamber, then read the boxed text below, regardless of when the party arrived.

This is a simple room, coated now in dust, that reflects Marble's simple tastes when she was alive—a plain bed, a wooden chair, a modest chest.

However, a unicorn tapestry hangs on one wall opposite the door. Made by the almost mythical elven weaver Lady Menillia Goldenmoon and signed by her, it is worth 5,000 gp on the open market in any city large enough to attract people who can recognize its true value. If Marble sees the tapestry in the possession of the PCs, however, she will attack them for stealing the one treasure of her childhood. She will know they have it, even if it's hidden in a pack or rolled up in clothing.

A semi-transparent woman sleeps soundly in the bed. She looks like the beckoning apparition you saw earlier. A ghostly figure, well dressed but obscure, creeps into room. He steals softly to the bed and lifts the sleeping woman over his shoulder.

Your surroundings appear to change, as the figure moves through different parts of the castle while you remain in place. You see him descend several flights of stairs, then skulk into a cellar. He passes through a maze of ancient furniture, oaken cases, and chests until he reaches a wall.

He stands the woman, who is awake and alert, upright. The kidnapper's hands flutter, making magical passes in the air, his lips move silently in a chanting motion. Slowly, the wavering image of a huge set of double-doors appears. The man's arms rise toward the ceiling, as his mouth opens in what must have been a great shout. The doors take solid form and fall open.

The man grabs the woman roughly, pushing her ahead of him and into the dusk beyond those mighty doors. He ties the woman to a chair.

The figure then walks to a great stone coffin and removes its lid. Though the body inside shows little signs of decay, it is in six separate pieces: head, torso, and four limbs. The man arranges the pieces and begins a strange ritual that involves smearing unguents and ointments on the partially mummified corpse.

The body begins to come together. Sinews knit and bond. Broken, dried sections of skin swell and course together. Even toe- and fingernails begin to grow, as bones increase in strength.

The kidnapper leads the listless woman to the side of the coffin and draws a knife with a bright-red gemstone in the hilt. He bends her over the side



of the sarcophagus, and slits her throat with the razor-edged blade. Her blood gushes over the side and onto the quivering corpse. The dreadful act consummated, he throws the knife to the floor as she falls to the ground.

The corpse in the coffin convulses, spasming itself into an upright position. It wears the face of the man you know as “Chardath.”

Give the players a few minutes to react to these revelations before continuing:

The scene begins again, but faded now. And superimposed on it is a ghostly figure—the slain woman.

“Help me,” she says, holding her right hand out to you. Above her hand, an image forms. It is the ornate silver knife used to kill her. It rotates slowly, then stops, its hilt pointing toward you.

“You must get the knife, restore its power, and bring it to me. I will help you deal with those two.” She nods at the violence taking place silently in the background.



Marble wants to lead the PCs to Kartak’s level in order to get the knife. She knows where it is, but (like Kartak and Chardath) cannot touch it unless the stone has been returned to the hilt. If the PCs agree to follow her, they will likely encounter Chardath en route. The mad, unpredictable lord could have any kind of reaction to seeing his sister floating through the castle, but if the adventurers betray any hint of where they are headed, he panics and tries to get there first.

The adventurers may investigate other locations in the castle so long as they are making progress toward Kartak’s level and the dagger Marble seeks. If they do not move quickly enough for her, she will encourage them, pleading until they continue.

22. Chardath’s Former Room

This room remains as it was when Kaisha died, and mementoes of various stages of Chardath’s life lie scattered about. None have any great value, but there is a crossbow and a quiver of quarrels that may prove useful.

23. Spare Bedroom

The usual boudoir appointments dot this sparse room. There is nothing here of value. However, a note has long since fallen between the wall and a chest of drawers. It reads:

Don’t forget Marinessa’s birthday. Ring? Tregas proof? Cameo?

24. Spare Bedroom

Strangely, while this bedroom holds a washbasin and stand, a chest of drawers, and a small settee, there is no bed. This room once belonged to Dunslan, a wizard who was an aide and confidante of Marinessa. He teleported in and out of this room, in the name of discretion, but he never slept here.

If the adventurers carefully check the chest, they may discover the false bottom in the second drawer. From time to time, the wizard left things here. Inside the hidden compartment is a wide gold ring and a note. The note reads:





To Marinessa,
From ghosties and ghoulies, and things that go bump
in the night, this will defend you. Remember me.
Always, D.

The ring is *Dunslan's ring of protection from undead* with 3d8+3 charges remaining.

25. Balcony

The balcony encircles the castle, and its floor provides a roof for the promenade below. Marinessa used to walk here when she could not sleep. Chardath has not been onto the balcony since he became lord of the manor.

26. Library

There is little order here. Chairs sit scattered, left where they were when the last user pushed himself away. Many spell books rest on the shelves, mixed with ancient accounting records and travel journals of Spellseers who journeyed abroad. There are even some notes on Maztica, that strange and foreign land across the sea. At one time, the Spulzeers wished to create a trading company to exploit those new lands.

Mixed in with all the other books is the *Legendary of Phantoms and Ghosts*. The *glim-gauntlet* can help the heroes find it.

Once the party fully enters the room, read or paraphrase the following text:

A crash sounds behind you. In the doorway stands a disheveled man with a wild look in his eyes. His uncombed hair sticks up at odd angles, and he looks as if he has slept in his clothes for weeks. He carries a great axe that he seems only too willing use.

With a wordless scream he charges you, axe raised high—but before he reaches you, he stops. He shakes his head in bewilderment, turns, and leaves muttering something you can not quite make out.

If the party has already been to Marble's room (area 21), they might recognize Chardath as the kidnapper from the apparition—though years of debauchery, misery, and madness have transformed him into a shell of the man he once was.

In his weakened mental state, Chardath is not sure whether the adventurers are normal, living people or just some of the undead spirits that have been haunting him. If the PCs attack, he will defend himself with *Mal-effluent* or fire a couple of spells at them. If they do not attack, he simply wanders off in a random direction.

27. Staircase To Roof

There is nothing on the roof, unless the wyverns escaped the party earlier. They were used to being fed here.

DUNGEON LEVEL

The lower, dungeon level of the castle has seen the most changes. At one time it held a large ceremonial chamber, torture room, prison cells, workshops, and store rooms.

Chardath considered this level his greatest achievement as Lord Spulzeer. From a dim, filthy storage area, he had his workers create a magnificent room of gambling tables, "entertainment cubicles," and long bars at which anything consumable was available. He created a "den of iniquity" unparalleled in Faerûn.

28. Public Staircase

This staircase leads down from the great hall on the ground floor (area 2). Ornate wall sconces keep it brightly lit.

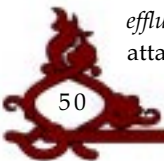
29. Gaming Hall

No expense was spared on this huge room. It boasts tables for dice games and card games, and a giant wheel of fortune. Every game of chance was played here: games with stones, games of chess, games of life and death. At the head of it all, against the east wall by the secret staircase (area 31), stands a throne on a raised dais. It is here that Chardath Spulzeer held court and watched over his "empire."

Elaborate oriental wall hangings cover the wood veneer Chardath placed over the cold stone. Opulence is everywhere: hand-crafted tables and plush chairs scattered throughout the room, candle-lit chandeliers to provide light for gaming and the other activities that took place here. Several decoratively carved bars offered anything the mind can imagine or the imagination can describe. The whole room looks like a Calishite fantasy come true.

30. Entertainment Cubicles

The less said about the "entertainments" that took place here, the better. Few humans have ever been so perverse or malevolent as those who played, and fewer still have ever been so tormented as those with whom they played.





A silent, grotesque performance takes place in this room. A wheel of fortune spins, shimmering in ghostly light. Stretched out on the wheel, lashed and bound with leather thongs, is the apparition of a struggling young woman. A spectral, masked knifewielder is throwing target blades as a small crowd looks on. The knifeman teases, throwing close enough to slice the woman's white gown, outlining the revolving woman with the hilts of his weapons.

Now he starts to make his kill. The first dagger pierces her thigh. The audience cheers each time a blade pins her flesh to the moving circle. The drama plays itself out until she hangs limply, mouth open, soaked in crimson, as each of the onlookers picks up a blade and adds his score to that of the knife master.

The scene fades, then begins again.

31. Private Staircase

On this level the illusion is a dark naga, poised to strike. While harmless, the illusionary naga helps send drunks and overactive gamblers screaming from the stairwell. The trap is the same slide that exists on all levels. (See page 41.)

The stairs lead up to **area 4**.

32. Treasure Room

This room is hidden by a secret door that is always kept locked. The family's ancient wealth is stored here in casks, trunks, and barrels. They hold approximately 1d100x250 in gold and silver coin, jewels, and precious gems.

A vicious surprise, however, awaits anyone who opens the door. Yargdaar, a guardian yugoloth, stands on the other side guarding the entrance. Kartak summoned him years ago to keep the rest of the Spulzeer family from accessing the treasure he considered justly his. His plan worked—the family allowed itself to become impoverished rather than tangle with the boar-like creature.

Yargdaar (yugoloth, guardian—lesser): AC 1; MV 9; HD 8; hp 51; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1d6/1d12/1d12 (bite/claw/claw); SA breath weapon; SD +2 or better weapon to hit, immune to *charm*, *hold*, *sleep*, *polymorph*, *fear*, and fire-based attacks; SW must remain within 90' of the treasure room; SZ M (7' tall); ML champion (16); Int very (12); AL NE; XP 4,000.



Notes: Can breathe fire 3 times per day, in a cone 30 ft. long with a base 10 ft. in diameter, for 5d6 points of damage per attack. A saving throw vs. breath weapon reduces damage by half.

33. Secret Entrance To Kartak's Lair

This section of wall hides the double doors to Kartak's lair. The false wooden facade is not magical, but the doors themselves have wards on them.

Kartak's Level

Kartak's magical laboratory lies beneath the R dungeon level. A false wall built by Chardath seals the entrance, in addition to the magical wards the lich placed there. Just inside the enchanted doors are stairs that lead down to an entry room (area 36). Beyond that lies the central chamber (area 38), where the necromantic lich conducted his research, and the ceremonial room (area 41), where Chardath resurrected Kartak using Marble as a sacrifice.

Kartak can teleport into these chambers as he pleases and without Chardath's knowledge. However, today he was teleported involuntarily, as happens every year on the anniversary of Marble's death. He and his servant Gaspard wait for the adventurers in **area 41**.

This level hides an enormous fortune—even Kartak has no idea of the total value of the things stored here. Jewels and precious metals abound, but the magical items he has accumulated are worth far more than all the precious stones, gold, and silver.

Note: If the adventurers succeed in getting into this treasure house of magic, anything they take could result in unbalancing the DM's campaign. Therefore, with the exception of the dagger they came for and the DM's choice of 1d4 other items, any items removed from this place burst into flames (if flammable), shatter, or simply vanish the moment they leave the castle.

34. Hidden Entrance

Chardath had this entrance covered years ago. The facade is simply a thin wooden panel that hides the doors from casual observation. It has no magical properties.

35. Double Doors

These doors were resealed by Kartak from the inside before he teleported to his lair in the Kuldin Peaks. Each door is *wizard locked* with *hold portal* cast over the whole entrance.

36. Entryway and Door To Laboratory

Though the room at the bottom of the stairs sits empty of tangible objects, an aura of evil pervades the place. Indeed, it hangs so thick in the air you can almost touch it, almost feel it press against your chest.

The door to the central chamber is *wizard locked*.

37. Cells

This area contains 10 cells. Each has manacles suspended from chains welded to plates. The plates have been driven into the solid stone wall with inch-wide, foot-long bolts of solid steel.

Inanimate skeletons lie in two of the cells; in all of the cells linger spirits of those who died here—2d6 wraiths and 1d100 weeping spirits who have no power save the voice of their tears, still enslaved within these walls by the horror of their deaths. (Weeping spirits have no powers, but hearing one requires the victim to roll a successful saving throw vs. death magic or run around in random directions screaming for one round. Make one roll for every 20 spirits.) In addition, 15 crypt things haunt the area, guardians of the many bodies buried beneath the floor.

Because it is always dark here, these spirits always remain active.

Crypt things (15): AC 3; MV 12; HD 6; hp 45 each; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (claw); SA teleport; SD immune to *charm*, *hold*, *sleep* spells, cannot be turned; SZ M (6' tall); ML fanatic (18); Int very (11); AL N; XP 975.

Notes: A crypt thing will first attack with its teleport ability, which can be used only once per adventuring party. Victims must save vs. spell or be teleported out of the castle and dropped from a height of 25 feet into the dry moat.

Wraiths (2d6): AC 4; MV 12, Fl 24 (B); HD 5+3; hp 39 each; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (chilling touch); SA energy drain; SD silver or +1 or better magical weapons to hit, immune to poison and paralyzation, *charm*, *hold*, *sleep*, *death*, and cold-based spells; SW holy water causes 2d4 points of damage per vial, *raise dead* will destroy if save vs. spell fails; SZ M (6' tall); ML champion (15); Int very (12); AL LE; XP 2,000.

Notes: Each touch inflicts 1d6 points of cold damage (even to creatures immune from such damage) and drains one level of experience from the victim (including hit points and abilities). The cold damage can heal but, save for magical restoration, the experience points have to be earned again.



38. Central Chamber

Some of the magical items formerly held in common by the Twisted Rune are stored here, as well as centuries of Spellseer/Spulzeer magical paraphernalia, equipment, and books. The room appears to be a mess. There are bottles and weapons strewn about, jars of spell components, glass retorts—a complete alchemical laboratory for those who know how to use its equipment.

In the center sits a large work table with a polished, black granite top. Next to the table are three furnaces. The first is an athanor, a furnace critical to the slow, even heating required in some magical processes. A separate mid-sized furnace (a descensory furnace), used for heating liquids, stands alongside it. The final furnace is a heat bath. The small furnace contains a deep pan of water with metal rings, sized for various flasks and tubes, affixed to it. A substance to be dissolved is placed in one of them and gently heated until it liquefies. On the table itself is an analytical balance scale, a hand centrifuge, and an alchemist's globe.

An apparition exists in this room:

A hazy, cloaked figure moves through the chamber, pouring strangely colored liquids into various bottles and retorts. On one of the tables lies what appears to be the fresh corpse of a young woman. Every once in a while, the cloaked figure walks to the body, removes bits of skin, hair, or fingernails, and adds them to his concoctions. At one point during his gruesome experiment, he turns toward you enough that you can see his face. He looks like Gaspard de-Louca's master, the man who hired you to come here.

The figure is Kartak. The PCs, however, may still believe him to be Chardath (as he originally identified himself to them), depending on who they've spoken to and what clues they've put together by this point.

39. Storage Shelves

In spite of the apparent chaos of these shelves, Kartak knows the precise location of every single element, every object, every stone, every piece of glassware, no matter how seemingly insignificant. These shelves hold things better left alone, harmless articles, and at least one artifact (among the several pieces Kartak believes may be artifacts).

The crown the PCs seek lies here. Though not the magical *Crown of Evil* Kartak thought it to be, the headpiece is worth about 10,000 gp for its gold and jewels alone.

But among the exotic lies the mundane. Alembics, retorts, beakers, and flasks share shelf space with books, spent candles, and stones of uncertain origin. Hundreds of glass tubes in metal and wooden holders lie scattered about, some of them are even clean. Other contain residues of ancient alchemy.

Books abound on these shelves, spell books for priests and wizards, tomes on hundreds of subjects, books for clerics, librams for mages, and manuals for fighters and thieves. The library on the upper level of the castle pales in comparison with the treasures here.

40. Private Staircase

While it is doubtful any stranger would find this level, the illusion here is an angry werewolf, and the trap, like all the traps on the upper levels, is a slide.

Previously, only Kartak knew that the private staircase extends to this floor. The weakening of his magical powers, however, broke down the wards and illusory wall that blocked this flight from view.

41. Ceremonial Room

This is the location of Kartak's sarcophagus. On the floor nearby lies *Aggarath*, the ceremonial dagger that slew Marble. All three of the principals (Marble, Kartak, and Chardath) want to get their hands on it—after the heroes have restored the ruby hilt-stone they received from Ellana.

This is the place in which the adventure's climax occurs. Once the PCs arrive, go to "The Final Confrontation."





The Final Confrontation

When the adventurers enter the ceremonial room (area 41), they find Kartak and Gaspard waiting for them. By this point they may or may not realize that Kartak is the lich (rather than Lord Chardath, as he claimed when speaking to them through the crystal ball).

Kartak assumes they still believe him to be Chardath, and he addresses the party as such.

“My friends! I am relieved that you made it here safely. The lich Kartak captured me and magically holds me here with my servant Gaspard while he prowls the castle in search of you. But now that you are here, you can rescue us all.”

If the PCs question Kartak’s identity, he’ll use his charisma and suave demeanor to persuade them to side with him, resorting to a *charm* or *suggestion* spell if necessary (though he wants to reserve as much of his reduced spellcasting power as possible in case he encounters Chardath before making good his exit). Kartak may use one or more of the following stories (or another of the DM’s design) to win the PCs as allies:

- “Kartak” (really Chardath) cast a spell to switch their appearances, making him (Kartak, claiming to be Chardath) look like the lich in the apparitions.
- Kartak deceived the PCs about his identity because he thought they would be afraid to work for a lich. But they have proven themselves brave heroes and now he needs their help against Chardath, the real threat to the region.
- Chardath is an evil necromancer and Kartak is simply the cursed result of one of his experiments (which the PCs witnessed in Marble’s room). Kartak wants only to break the curse and leave the castle in peace.

Kartak tells any lie necessary to get the adventurers to do what he wants: restore the hilt-stone to *Aggarath* and give the knife to him. But even if he can’t get his hands on the knife, once the ruby is replaced, Kartak is freed of its hold over him and regains his ability to leave the castle before the usual 24-hour period is up.

His persuasive efforts continue:

“I believe that knife on the floor there could help all of us escape from this house of horrors—if only the hilt-stone wasn’t lost to time. I’ve heard the weapon once held a ruby magically enchanted to fight evil.”

While the PCs consider how to respond, Chardath enters the room. Hair and clothing still disheveled, he carries the great axe *Maleffluent*. His eyes seem wild until they focus on Kartak—they then narrow with single-minded purpose.

“Kartak,” he says, practically spitting out the name, His hands brandish the axe. “This day has been too long in coming.”

“Aye—it has, brother,” says a female voice. The ghostly figure of a woman materializes. She is the woman who beckoned to you earlier, dressed in a long white chemise stained with blood flowing from her neck. Her face contorts in fury.





Chardath backs against the wall, his eyes wide. He grips the axe against his chest tightly. "You speak, Marble?" he whispers.

Marble ignores him, instead turning toward you. "Have you found the knife?"

The Drama Unfolds

Each of the principals—Kartak, Chardath, and Marble—wants the knife *Aggarath*, but none can touch it until the hilt-stone has been replaced. All three of them will encourage the PCs (using every tactic from pleading to threats, depending on the party's resistance) to return the ruby to the hilt, if they have not already done so.

Once the ruby is restored, the dagger becomes the weapon to which all three of the major NPCs are most vulnerable—and each wants to use it on the other two, or at the very least, to keep it out of their hands. The PCs are caught in the middle. Kartak, Marble, and Chardath each use different tactics to get *Aggarath* from them, but each grows angry if the knife is given to one of the other two.

If Marble has already won the adventurers' sympathy through the apparition of her death, she will play upon it to keep the PCs as her allies.

The ghostly figure of Marble looks at you, her beautiful face now set hard in anger. "You have seen the foul murder these two committed," she says. "Give me the knife, for I claim the right of their blood for the shedding of mine!"

Chardath pleads innocence to both the PCs and Marble, claiming that the evil was all Kartak's doing.

"Forgive me, Marble," Chardath cries. "I knew not what I was about." He turns to you, his eyes as sane as you have yet seen them. "I swear I didn't. That foul lich forced me to commit the heinous act. It has haunted me ever since. Please, give me the knife, so that I can at last take revenge on the despicable creature. I beg you."

Kartak tries to convince the adventurers that Chardath is the greater evil, pointing to *Maleffluent* and Chardath's use of spells as evidence. (In order to seem less threatening, the lich holds off casting any spells of his own—except in defense—until the PCs decide to whom they will give the knife.) He also claims that Marble is Chardath's ally.

"He lies. The experiment was his idea alone," Kartak says, pointing to Chardath. "Look at him. Lord Chardath is a dangerous madman. He'll destroy us all—he and his sister. They will work as a pair. He'll use every spell he's got and then set upon the survivors with that axe. Then he and the ghost will terrorize all of Tethyr."

He turns to you. "But I can stop them. The knife you hold can bring them down. But only I know how to use it. Give it to me, and we can all get out of here safely."

The Consequences of Choice

Once the knife leaves the PCs' hands, the room erupts as powerful foes conclude old hatreds—and involve the party in their battle. The DM should let the fight rage for a while, but turn to "Resolution" (page 56) before Marble, Kartak, or Chardath get killed. (See pages 59 to 64 for statistics on Chardath, Kartak, Marble, and *Aggarath*.)

The dynamics of the battle will vary according to who has the knife.

The Party

Should the party delay making a choice or decide to keep *Aggarath* for themselves, Marble, Chardath, Kartak, and Gaspard all attack the PCs—it's easier to wrest a knife from a dead hand than a live one.

Blackflame (if they obtained the sword in Moonhearth) and *Aggarath* will prove strong defensive weapons, but the heroes likely can't overcome four such powerful foes. If, once the battle begins, they change their minds and give the knife to one of the principals, the fight continues as described below.

Kartak

If the heroes give Kartak the knife, he mostly ignores them unless they attack him or Gaspard. He and his servant concentrate on battling Chardath and Marble, trying to weaken them with spells before closing in with *Aggarath*.

Marble and her brother fight back with equal fury, attacking not only Kartak and Gaspard, but also the PCs. (Because the heroes gave Kartak the knife, they consider the PCs allies of the lich.) They will fight as a team: Chardath foolishly trusts Marble, who intends to turn on her brother after their other enemies are dead.





Resolution

Suddenly, above the sounds of battle, you hear an eerie, sinister laughter. The sound of Marble's voice etches chills in the already cold air of the castle. This is no ordinary ghost. Marble floats up toward the ceiling, looking down at all of you below.

"I grow impatient for vengeance!" She screams and throws her head back. A low moan issues from her mouth and begins its rise up the scale, increasing to ear-shattering volume.

Kartak looks to Gaspard. "Run!" he cries. "She's keening!" The lich then disappears in a flicker.

Kartak teleports to his lair in the Kuldin Peaks, leaving his faithful servant—and the adventuring party—to the effects of Marble's keening.

The keening has a range of 30 feet. When Marble hits her peak note, the top of her scale, all who are still within 30 feet (even nonspellcasters) suffer the effects of a *feeblemind* spell that only a *heal* or *wish* spell can cure. Characters who succeed at a saving throw vs. spell (with a +1 bonus for priests, a -4 penalty for human wizards, and a -2 penalty for all others) avoid the keening's effect.

Chardath succeeds at the saving throw but loses any remaining magical power he might have had. He is left with only his abilities as an 8th-level fighter.

Chardath

Should the PCs give the knife to Chardath, he lunges at Kartak with it. Gaspard will aid Kartak. Marble, who wants revenge on both the lich and her brother, will let them weaken each other. She takes occasional shots at one or both of them, but mostly concentrates on Kartak's ally Gaspard and those she now considers Chardath's allies—the PCs. Kartak also considers the adventurers to be allies of Chardath and will attack them (and instruct his servant to do so) as the opportunity arises.

Marble

The adventurers are probably best off relinquishing Aggarath to Marble (especially if they enter this area already suffering serious damage from other encounters). Of the three principals, only Marble will make an effort to protect the PCs if the knife is given to her.

Marble will first set upon Kartak and Gaspard. Chardath will aid her efforts, not realizing that his sister plans to attack him next. Kartak and Gaspard will consider everyone in the room their enemies.

Chardath, with *Malefluent* held in high-strike position, bellows unintelligibly at Marble and swings the great axe at his undead sister. The ghost counters by hurling the knife straight at her brother's heart.

At this point, if the DM wishes to transport the party to the RAVENLOFT setting and continue the adventure in *The Forgotten Terror* (a sequel product), he should proceed to the "RAVENLOFT Ending." If he prefers to keep the campaign in the Realms, he should turn to the "FORGOTTEN REALMS Ending."

RAVENLOFT® ENDING

This ending takes the castle and all within it to the Demiplane of Dread.

Neither blow lands.

The blades of the two weapons clash in mid-air, sending out an unearthly "clang" that echoes through the chamber. Marble howls a sharp laugh that hurts your ears.



The room wavers as the ground beneath your feet begins to tremble. The walls seem to shimmer, like a desert mirage or heat rising from a summer pond. The temperature in the room plummets by 30 degrees, and the hideous knife *Aggarath* floats a few feet above the floor.

The knife begins to spin, slowly at first, then picking up speed. Then you realize it is not the knife that spins, but you, and Chardath, and the room—indeed, it seems, the whole castle. You are caught up in a whirlwind, a tornado with *Aggarath* at its center, that sweeps faster and faster.

The whirlwind rises into the air, leaving the knife floating below. Then, poised over *Aggarath*, it descends, seemingly sucked into the hilt-stone of the dagger. The sounds of wailing spirits, so long trapped inside the castle, fills the air—and the loudest voice of all is that of Marble.

The maelstrom that was Castle Spulzeer enters the blood-red stone, carrying along all those caught inside. You are moving so fast that you see only whirling blurs. And all you can hear is an orchestra of discordant sound—anguish, laughter, and screams.

Castle Spulzeer—with the PCs inside it—is transported to the Land of Mists, leaving only a great gaping hole in the ground. It, and the knife *Aggarath*, cease to exist on Faerûn.

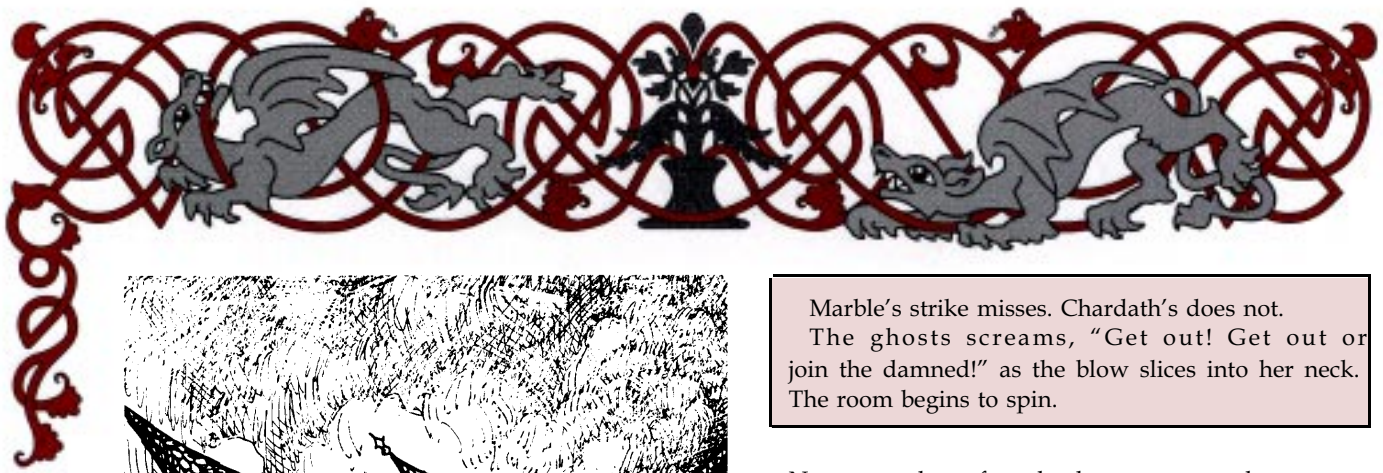
FORGOTTEN REALMS® ENDING

“’Twas the last night of Eleint, I was chasin’ one of my hogs, so I was there. Castle Spulzeer didn’t just disappear all of a sudden. For days, there was a whole lot of weird activity and signs all over, and I know this cuz’ I watched from the road! Then, this weird fog started hissing out of the foundations of the castle. Then a bunch of people came runnin’ out the front door like Bane hisself was after ‘em. After that, the mist grew to the top of the towers, it all pulled together into a great hand that closed around the castle and crushed it to nothingness! I swear by Tyr’s right hand I’m telling the honest truth!”

Local legend, one of several versions

This ending will leave the heroes in the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting. Chardath, Marble, Gaspard, *Aggarath*, and the castle itself disappear.





Marble's strike misses. Chardath's does not. The ghosts scream, "Get out! Get out or join the damned!" as the blow slices into her neck. The room begins to spin.

No matter how fast the heroes move, they are not moving fast enough for Marble. She swoops after them, fresh blood running from her neck, screeching at the party to run faster.

If the heroes flee, with or without any treasure they have accumulated in the castle, they can survive. The PCs have two turns to get out. If they are still in the castle when the maelstrom rises and picks up speed (during the third turn) they must each roll a saving throw vs. breath weapon. Any who fail are torn apart by the forces of the vortex; those who succeed are thrown from the whirlwind and drop 100 feet to the ground for 10d6 points of damage.

If the heroes survive, they witness the end of Castle Spulzeer from the road:

The castle spins in the air, screeching laughter coming from within. It rises into the sky as wind whips around it. Below, the knife *Aggarath* floats in the air.

Then the whirlwind funnels down, like a tornado, its narrow point directly above the dagger. Faster than the bolt of a heavy crossbow, the mass is drawn into the hilt-stone of the knife.

A thunderous report nearly shatters your eardrums. The knife vanishes from view—taking the castle and all inside with it.

All that is left of Castle Spulzeer is a gaping hole in the ground. Down the road, birds begin to sing.





Appendix

This section contains descriptions of important characters and magical items compiled here for the DM's ease of reference.

Magical Items

The magical items listed here are either new or detailed in sources the DM may not have. They have therefore been collected here for the DM's convenience. The only magical items named in the adventure that are not described in this section are those from the DMG.

Aggarath

XP Value: N/A

GP Value: N/A

Aggarath is the silver dagger Chardath used to sacrifice Marble. It was made from a single piece of a strange meteoric metal by a master of great skill. A legend in the Twisted Rune has it that Bane himself caused it to be created for use in sacrifices to him. Others, however, such as the Red Wizards of Thay, believe the dagger might be older still.

Aggarath has but one power: to administer justice. Once used for an unjust act, the dagger becomes lethally empowered to avenge the victim(s). When used against someone involved in the crime, *Aggarath* functions as a *sword +2, nine lives stealer*.

On that horrible night when Marble met her death, *Aggarath* was empowered by her blood and her will. It can steal life from any of the principals: Kartak, Chardath, and Marble. (If used against Marble, it delivers justice by granting Marble the rest she has denied herself.) The knife has this power only if used against one of the principals. If used against anyone not involved in Marble's murder, it is an ordinary silver dagger.

Aggarath's power comes from an enchanted blood-red dodecahedral (12-sided) ruby set in its pommel. The dagger cannot be used as an instrument of justice unless the hilt-stone is in place. It was the dagger itself, on the night of Marble's murder, that sent the hilt-stone on its 18-year journey to find a champion for Marble. Only an outsider can replace the stone in the hilt; none of the principals can touch the dagger unless the stone is in place.

Kartak is summoned by the knife once a year, on the anniversary of Marble's death. He is automatically teleported to the ceremonial room of Castle Spulzeer and cannot leave the castle grounds by any means, magical or mundane, for 24 hours. This bind can be broken only if the hilt-stone is replaced in the dagger.

At the start of the adventure, *Aggarath* lies in the ceremonial room (area 41) of Castle Spulzeer. The hilt-stone is in the possession of Ellana of Farhome, whom the party encounters in Eshpurta.

Blackflame

XP Value: 4,100

GP Value: 27,500

Blackflame is black *sword +1/+4 vs. undead*. When the sword is within 10 feet of an undead creature, it ignites and becomes enveloped in cold black flames. The flames themselves cause no damage, but serve as a warning to the sword's owner.

At the start of the adventure, *Blackflame* is in the possession of Namble Swiftleg, leader of the squad that approaches the party as they leave Eshpurta.





Crystal Ball, Clairaudial

XP Value: 2,000

GP Value: 10,000

Kartak's *crystal ball* is unusual in that it allows for two-way conversations. Otherwise, it is the same as the one described in the *DMG*.

At the start of the adventure, this *clairaudial crystal ball* is in Gaspard's possession. He uses it when approaching the party in Eshpurta.

Dunslan's Ring of Protection from Undead

XP Value: 2,500

GP Value: 7,500

The ring was fashioned by the wizard Dunslan as a gift for Marinessa when she thought she was being haunted by Tregas Spellseer for daring to put a third floor on "his" castle.

The simple, wide white gold band is void of any decoration. When the ring is worn in the presence of undead it will speak its command word, "Dunslan," to the owner. If the wearer repeats the command word, the ring will prevent the wearer from being struck by any undead in that round (regardless of number) and remains active, using one charge per round of protection, until the undead are destroyed or leave the area. The ring will cease its defense if removed. It contains $3d8+3$ charges.

At the start of the adventure, this ring is located in one of the spare bedrooms (area 23) of Castle Spulzeer.

Glim-Gauntlet

XP Value: 1,000

GP Value: 4,000

Once common items in Waterdeep, *glim-gauntlets* are rare and unusual articles these days, for the secret of their manufacture has been lost. This enchanted glove fits whatever hand dons it. Woven of metallic fibers, it can handle sharp objects and pass through flame and intense heat without injury to the hand encased within. On the command of the user, the *glim-gauntlet* will glow, lighting dark passageways as brightly as the wearer wishes them to be lit. If touched to any magical item, the *glim-gauntlet* will glow; the brighter its intensity, the greater the power of the item. The glove's abilities are activated by mental command.

The party receives the *glim-gauntlet* from Gaspard at the start of the adventure as a gesture of good faith for accepting Kartak's offer.

Incomplete Potion of Undead Control

XP Value: 700

GP Value: 2,500

This potion is not ready to use when it is found. A specific potion, it must be targeted against a specific type of undead by adding a tiny portion of the creature's body to it. This may be a bit of hair, a fingernail, or a skin scraping. The piece should not be added until just before it is ready for use.

Once the ingredient has been added, the potion functions as a *potion of undead control* as described in the *DMG*. It will work on any successfully targeted undead, and the creatures receive no saving throw. However, the effects wear off in 2d4 turns and a second dose is ineffectual.

The party can find this potion among the belongings of Sharill Beaufort, the eastern vampire in Moonhearth.



TL





The Key

XP Value: 2,200

GP Value: 11,000

The Key is a broadsword +2 specifically enchanted to neutralize Kartak's ward magic. Ancient and covered with rust, it hardly looks like the valuable magical item that it is.

Centuries ago, Kartak enchanted this sword, then "hid" it in plain view on one of the castle walls. He created it to dispel his own magical protections in case he ever found himself weakened and needed to gain entry to his secret laboratory below the castle.

This sword can be found on the floor of Kartak's central chamber (area 38), where Chardath dropped it in favor of *Maleffluent*.

Legendary of Phantoms and Ghosts

XP Value: 2,000

GP Value: 20,000

This spell book was written by the wizard Evard. It contains the following spells: *phantom armor*, *phantom steed*, *phantom wind*, *Evard's black tentacles*, and *wraithform*. How it came into Kartak's possession is unknown.

The book can be found in the library (area 26) of Castle Spulzeer.

Maleffluent

XP Value: N/A

GP Value: N/A

Maleffluent is an intelligent battle axe +2/+5 against spirit creatures of any alignment. A vorpal weapon vastly superior to any type of blade of sharpness, *Maleffluent* delights in severing heads. Use the table below to see if an attack roll is good enough to separate a head from its owner's shoulders:

Opponent is:	Modified Score to Sever
Normal/armored	18-23
Larger than human size	19-23
Solid metal or stone	20-23

As an intelligent weapon, *Maleffluent* has an Intelligence of 17, speech and telepathic capabilities, an ego of 21, and a chaotic-evil alignment. It speaks common, elvish, and orc; can detect good 10' radius, detect magic 10' radius, and detect traps within a 10-foot radius. The axe is telepathic to a 60-foot radius. It also has two extraordinary powers: it can create illusion 120 yards range as a wand of illusion twice per day, and it can cast strength on its wielder once per day (eight-turn duration).

Who made this monstrously evil weapon is unknown. If asked, *Maleffluent* will say only that it is a self-created being. Only death or a 30th-level wizard can separate this weapon from the unfortunate being who picks it up.

This use of this weapon is a decidedly evil act. In the RAVENLOFT setting, a powers check must be made each time it is used.

At the start of the adventure, Lord Chardath Spulzeer possesses *Maleffluent*. (And it possesses him.)

Ring of The Necromancer

XP Value: 2,000

GP Value: 11,000

If used by anyone other than a neutral or evil wizard or priest, this ring (once per week) creates a sphere of protection equal in effect and duration to that created by a scroll of protection. The ring must be worn for one full week before each use and cannot be removed. If it is removed, the user must start over, wearing the ring for a full week before he can access its power.

When worn by a neutral or evil wizard or priest, however, the ring functions as a *potion of undead control* once per day, and the undead it is used against get no saving throw. Once a week it will animate dead. Once per month the ring can summon any single undead creature to serve the wearer for one day (excluding liches). However, before this power can be used, one conscious, living, intelligent, aware being must be ritually sacrificed to the ring. The act must be repeated each time this final power is used.

When the adventure begins, this item is hidden behind a brick in the southwest fireplace of the great hall (area 2) of Castle Spulzeer.

Ring of Teleportation

XP Value: 2,000

GP Value: 15,000

The ring of teleportation Kartak wears is his emergency escape tool: When all else fails, he vanishes. (Of course, he rarely has to use it.) The ring currently contains 27 charges, but he would never allow it to fall below 5.

The ring's stone is a spindle worth 500 gp as an ordinary gem stone. The ring works when the stone is separated from the ring's setting and left in a place to which the user may want to be transported later. Kartak has left the spindle in his lair in the Kuldin Peaks. By expending one charge, he can teleport without error to within 5 feet of the stone. The spindle must be replaced in the ring and then removed before it can be used again.



Major NPCs

The following nonplayer characters play major roles in the adventure. Their detailed descriptions appear here for the DM's convenience.

Gaspard deLouca

Game Data: LE hm W(N)10; AC 5 (*bracers of defense* AC 5); MV 12; hp 30; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (*dagger*); SZ M (5' 6" tall); ML champion (15); XP 3,000; S 9, D 8, C 12, I 11, W 10, Ch 9.

Spells: 1st— *charm person, chill touch, detect undead, read magic*; 2nd— *alter self, Melf's acid arrow, spectral hand, web*; 3rd— *clairaudience, feign death, hold undead*; 4th— *contagion, fire shield*; 5th— *animate dead*.

Description: Short and pudgy, bald with an unusual toothbrush mustache, Gaspard seems a grandfatherly sort of man. His demeanor hides his dark side, just as his bright blue eyes hide the core of his evil personality.

Notes: Gaspard has been in Kartak's service for only a month. However, he both fears and respects the lich. Fanatically loyal once his allegiance is given, Gaspard will betray nothing of his master, for he is a member of the Twisted Rune.

Kartak Spellseer

Game Data: CE lich W20 (W31); AC 0; MV 6; HD 31; hp 143; THAC0 9; #AT 1; Dmg 1d10 (*chill touch*); SA; SD +1 or better weapon to hit, immune to *charm, sleep, enfeeblement, polymorph, cold, electricity, insanity, death spells*; SW can be turned by 8th-level priests or 10th-level paladins; SZ M (6' tall); ML fanatic (17); S 10, D 11, C 16, I 18, W 16, Ch 14.

Spells (those not stolen by Chardath): 1st— *charm person, chill touch, phantasmal force, read magic, spook*; 2nd— *darkness 15' radius, flaming sphere, improved phantasmal force, spectral hand, summon swarm*; 3rd— *clairaudience, feign death, hold undead, spectral force, suggestion*; 4th— *contagion, detect scrying, fear, shadow monsters, wall of fire*; 5th— *dismissal, magic jar, sending, hold monster, summon shadow*; 6th— *death fog, enchant an item, legend lore, reincarnation*; 7th— *Bigby's grasping hand, control undead, power word stun*; 8th— *clone, mass charm, permanency*; 9th— *energy drain, weird*.

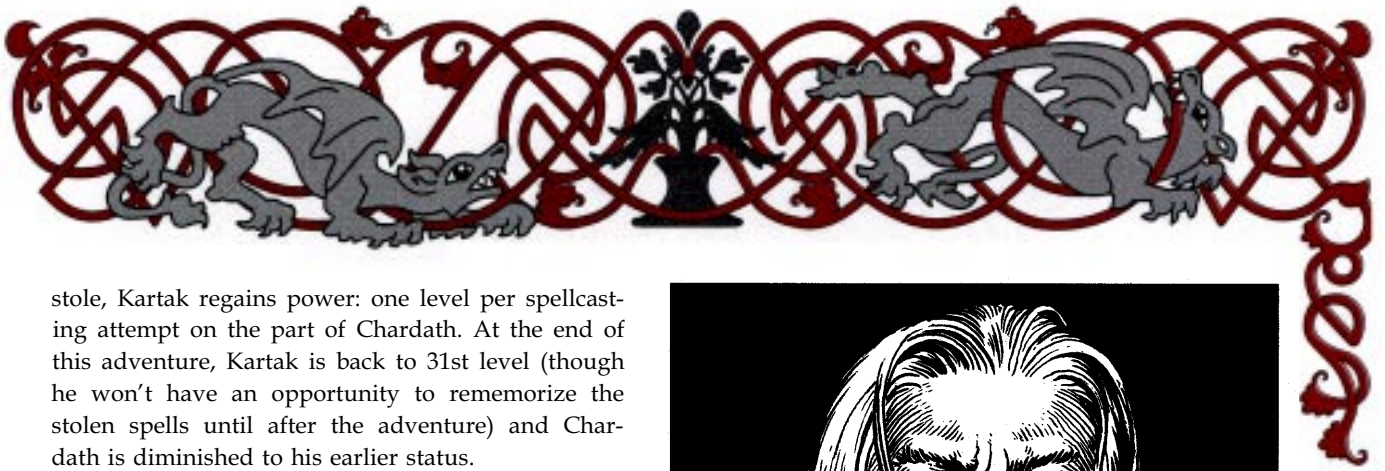
Special Equipment: There are two magical items Kartak is never without: a *ring of spell turning* and a *ring of teleportation*.



Description: Kartak was only 54 when he gained his present form. Handsome in life, he retains his good looks in unlife. His most distinguishing feature is his nose, which is noble, proud, and patrician. There is an air about him that belies the evil creature he is— an air of dignity and aristocracy. He dresses the part well, and has been mistaken for royalty, even in good light. Kartak does not appear desiccated, but appears as a newly created lich. He generally does not associate with other undead. Proud and haughty, he wants people to be impressed with him for his bearing and importance.

Notes: As a lich, Kartak has an aura of magical power so strong that, when encountering him in person, any character of lower than 5th level (or creatures below 5 Hit Dice) must succeed at a saving throw vs. spell or flee in terror for 5d4 rounds. In addition, victims of Kartak's chill touch must succeed at a saving throw vs. paralysis or be unable to move until the effect is somehow dispelled.

Kartak dropped from 31st to 20th level when Chardath stole his power with the djinni's aid. However, as Chardath uses (or attempts to use) the spells he



stole, Kartak regains power: one level per spellcasting attempt on the part of Chardath. At the end of this adventure, Kartak is back to 31st level (though he won't have an opportunity to memorize the stolen spells until after the adventure) and Chardath is diminished to his earlier status.

Chardath Spulzeer

Game Data: CE hm F8/W20 (F8); AC 7 (*ring of protection* +3); MV 12; hp 48; THAC0 11 (*Malefluent*); #AT 3/2 (melee), 1 (spell); Dmg 1d8+2 (see additional bonuses under description of *Malefluent*, page XX); SZ M (6' tall); ML steady (12); S 14, D 9, C 12, I 16, W 6, Ch 8.

Spells (stolen from Kartak): 1st— *cantrip, detect undead, enlarge, magic missile, ventriloquism*; 2nd— *flaming sphere, glitterdust, levitate, minor globe of invulnerability, mirror image, stinking cloud*; 3rd— *fireball, fly, lightning bolt, missiles, vampiric touch, wraith-form*; 4th— *enervation, illusionary wall, improved invisibility, monster summoning II, wall of ice*; 5th— *animate dead, avoidance, cone of cold, major creation, shadow magic*; 6th— *chain lightning, contingency, death spell, guards and wards*; 7th— *finger of death, forcecage, spell turning*; 8th— *binding, polymorph any object, trap the soul*; 9th— *imprisonment, meteor swarm*.

Description: Chardath bears the vague likeness of a weasel. His pointed nose, small mouth, and narrow, upturned chin all combine to create this resemblance. His small, deep-set eyes, tangled, bushy brows, and scraggly goatee merely enhance his bestial image.

Chardath has long, sandy-colored hair, which cascades over his jutting ears and flows down his collar to the center of his back. His nails are long, chipped, and scarred from years of abuse. His sunken eyes permanently squint when he looks out on the world, for years of living in the dark places of the spirit will do that to a man.

Notes: Chardath's status as a 20th-level wizard was bestowed upon him by Gentar, the djinni he unintentionally freed. Because the spells were magically obtained, he does not need to memorize them each day—but once he casts one (even if the attempt is unsuccessful), it is lost forever.



When the PCs first encounter him, Chardath has a 23% chance of spell failure (the spell not working at all) and a 40% chance of spell mishap (the spell not working as intended). The DM should roll once to see if the spell is cast; if so, a second roll is made to determine whether a mishap occurs (the nature of the mishap is up to the DM.) Both these percentages increase by 7% with each spell cast until Chardath loses casting ability altogether and remains only an 8th-level fighter. Chardath will likely fire spells in a barrage, hoping at least one will work.



CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any
FREQUENCY:	Unique
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVE CYCLE:	Triggered (see below)
DIET:	None
INTELLIGENCE:	Exceptional (15)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	LE
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	-2/4 (see below)
MOVEMENT:	9, Fl 30 (B)
HIT DICE:	9 (69 hp)
THACO:	11
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d2
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Aging touch (1d4x15 years), keening (death range 30')
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Hit only by +2/+1 or better weapons (see below)
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	30%
SIZE:	M (5' 8" tall)
MORALE:	Champion (16)
XP VALUE:	14,000

On that horrible night years ago, when Marble's life blood spewed onto Kartak's reconstructed corpse, she willed herself to avenge her murder. So strong was her hatred of the lich and her brother Chardath, so powerful was her will, that she actually recreated herself into a unique ghost of tremendous power.

Marble is a mutable ghost. Her consciousness can manifest structural firmness in selected limbs. In other words, she has substance on demand and can pick up objects, fight, and use touch abilities. She can also become incorporeal at will, gliding through walls and doors or simply vanishing before startled eyes.

Marble is anchored to the castle until her death is avenged—whether by herself or someone else. Afterward she will be free to leave or to find the peace of the grave. Unless the PCs interfere with her mission or anger her, she will not turn on them. Should the heroes do something to enrage her, however, they will have made a powerful enemy.

Marble appears as she looked on the night of her betrayal. Her long white gown is stained with blood that flowed from the gash on her neck. The stain and the wound still look as if they have just been made.

Trigger: Though Marble's consciousness has permeated Castle Spulzeer since her death, she can materialize as a ghost only when Chardath and Kartak are both in the castle at the same time, for a period long enough to enable her to coalesce (approximately an hour). Such an event has never happened—until the day the PCs arrive. Once materialized, however, she stays so until her death is avenged.

Combat: Marble has an Armor Class of either -2 or 4, depending upon the situation. She is AC -2 when ethereal and being attacked by nonethereal foes like the PCs; under these conditions, only +2 or better magical weapons can hit her. She is AC 4 when corporeal or if attacked by a foe who is also ethereal; in these circumstances, she can be hit by +1 or better magical weapons.

Marble attacks with her icy touch. Victims who fail a saving throw vs. spell age 1d4x15 years. Priests at or above 9th level are automatically succeed the saving throw. Other characters at or above 11th level receive a +2 bonus to their savings throws. Should she actually attempt to strike someone, her blow does a mere 1d2 points of damage.



The most formidable weapon in Marble's arsenal is her keening ability. Twice per day she can emit a horrendous, unearthly screech that causes feeble-mindedness (like the spell), in all creatures within 30 feet who fail a saving throw vs. spell. Because of her passionate hatred for Kartak, this focused ability does affect the lich.

She can become invisible at will, and is able to focus her energies to affect changes in physical objects and her surroundings. (This ability functions like a hybrid of the *polymorph object* and *illusion* spells. She needs only to think about the desired change: No components are required; duration lasts for as long as she is present.)

Marble is immune to all spells that affect biological creatures. She also has the ability to rejuvenate. That is, she can heal her own wounds instantly, but then must rest for 20 minutes before using any other ability except for becoming incorporeal again.

Vulnerabilities: One of the most effective weapons against Marble is holy water, which causes 1d6 points of damage per vial. An attack roll is required (always against AC 4).

Marble can be turned by priests, but with a -1 penalty to the cleric's 1d20 turning roll. If other undead are present, the roll to determine how many Hit Dice worth of undead creatures are affected also receives a -1 penalty.

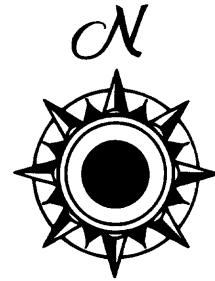
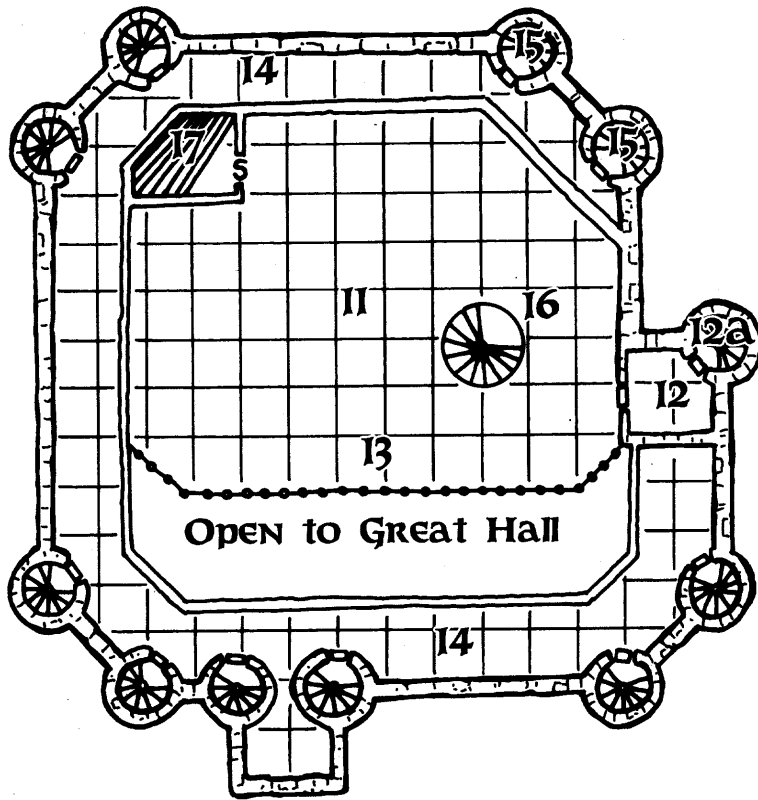
Holy symbols are useless against her.

Allergen: *Aggarath*, the knife which took Marble's life, still lies in the ceremonial room (**area 41**) of Kartak's lair beneath the old dungeon level of the castle. Marble cannot come within 10 feet of the dagger, which is missing its hilt-stone, a 12-sided blood-red ruby.

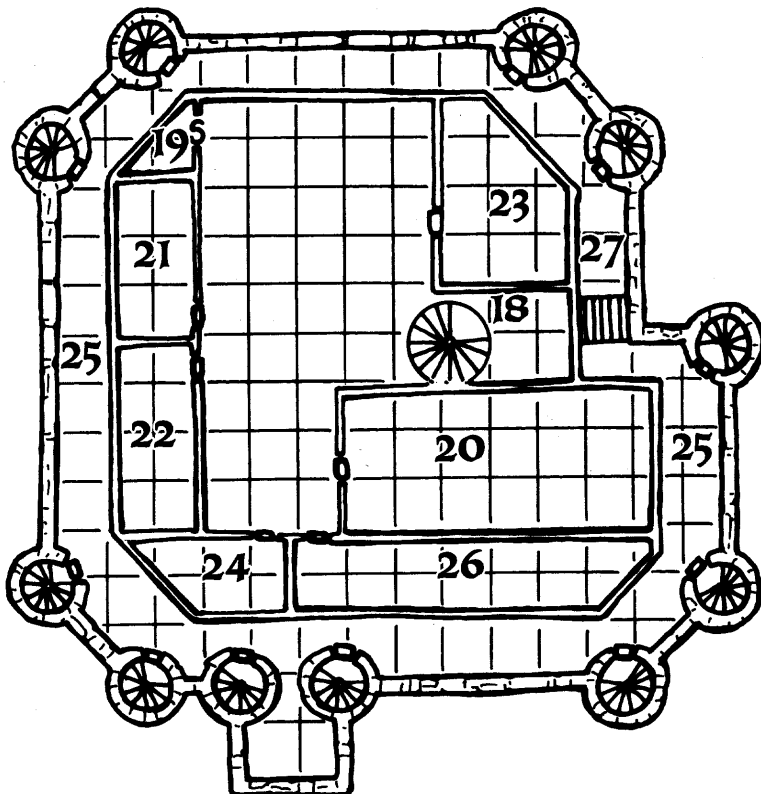
Once the hilt-stone is replaced, however, Marble can touch and use *Aggarath*. Though it remains a powerful weapon against her, it is also the most powerful weapon she can use against Chardath and Kartak. (For a complete description of *Aggarath*, see page 59.)

Castle Spulzeer





Level 2



Level 3 "New Level"



Key

-  DOOR
-  Double DOOR
-  Secret DOOR
-  Spiral Stairs

 40 Feet

FORGOTTEN REALMS

Official Game Adventure

Castle Spulzeer

by Doug Stewart

An ominous encounter with a fortuneteller sends a party of adventurers on a 200-mile journey across the Lands of Intrigue. While traveling through the towns and terrain (detailed here for the first time) that lie in their path, they hear rumors and obtain clues about their mission. Their ultimate destination is Castle Spulzeer, a once proud stronghold that has become a den of terror.

When the heroes enter the haunted keep, they meet a terrifying trio of residents: a madman armed with stolen magical power, a lich whose secret laboratory houses untold horrors and treasure, and a furious ghost bent on revenge. These three ensnare the party in their fight over an ancient weapon. Each will stop at nothing to keep it from the other two. The heroes must choose with whom they will ally—and the wrong choice could lead to their doom.



Castle Spulzeer is an adventure complete in itself. However, as a crossover story, it offers every Dungeon Master a choice between two endings. The first leaves the party in the Realms. The second transports the characters to the Demiplane of Dread, where the plot continues in the RAVENLOFT® adventure *The Forgotten Terror*.

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