

— BLEEDING EDGE ADVENTURE #2 —

Beyond the Towers



By W. Jason Peck



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Beyond the Towers

- A d20 Adventure for four to six characters of 2nd to 4th level -

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The following text is Open Gaming Content: All statistics in Parts One, Two, and Three. All content in Appendix.

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Introduction

Neca eos omnes. Deus suos agnoset.

The Carrion Swamp is vast and forbidding. Legends abound of bandit kings, wicked men, twisted cults, and worse hidden in the pall of this fetid mire. But something evil stirs in the heart of the gloom... Something ancient beyond all memory of the civilized lands. *Beyond the Towers* puts the characters in charge of a team of explorers set to uncover the secrets of this society. But their first forays into the stinking swamp place them in terrible danger from those who would guard the secrets of the past. Faced with strange bandits, horrid plagues, and monstrous foes, can the heroes survive the horrors of the swamp, unlock the hidden treasures of a crumbling ziggurat, and live to tell the tale?

Welcome to *Beyond the Towers*! Designed to challenge players of all types, this adventure combines roleplaying opportunities with thrilling combats, subtle intrigues, and daring escapes to provide players and GMs with an experience they'll remember. Whether used alone or as the sequel to Green Ronin's *Mansion of Shadows*, this adventure is sure to take your players to the bleeding edge of adventure.

Background

"Esteemed members of the Scholars' Council, I beg you, consider my words. I know what some of you must be thinking: that I, like so many others, have become entranced by the wild tales of the fabulous wealth said to be possessed by this long-lost civilization. Gold-encrusted walls and fountains... roads paved with gemstones... nobles who live forever.

"Rubbish! I am interested neither in fairy tales nor in fireside stories meant to lure the unwary into the wilderness to be robbed. No, like each of you, I am a man of learning. A scholar. Rumors and myth become relevant only when examined carefully by a trained mind to extract the kernels of fact that may hide within. The fact is that a people known to us only as the Hetepkans once flourished in the lands of the southern kingdoms and the wilderness regions beyond. This civilization rose and fell before the rise of any other human kingdom we can currently name. Beyond this, we know nothing.

"Master Scholars, I ask you: is this not the very reason our beloved organization exists? To ask who these people were, what they did, why they did it and, perhaps most importantly, what happened to them? Is not our responsibility as Antiquity Scholars to do our best to find the answers to these questions? I believe that, as historians, we are obligated to learn more concerning this vanished people. They have a story to tell us, if only we take the time to listen.

"I, Abraham Stewart, have devoted the last thirty years of my life to the Antiquity Scholars and the history of our lands and peoples. It has been my pleasure to do so and, Gods willing, I will live out the remainder of my years continuing this work. I can only hope that my years of labor and study have demonstrated my complete dedication to this organization and its quest to enrich our culture by understanding the past.

"The choice, Master Scholars, is yours to make. But, before making your final decision, I implore you to consider all I have said here today. The peoples of the south, indeed of the entire continent, dwell today in at least a portion of the lands once occupied by the ancient Hetepkans. For the sake of our people's future, it behooves us to learn how this civilization rose and why it fell."

The order now known as the Antiquity Scholars can trace its history to the earliest days of the Ivory Ports. The first rulers believed that progress could only take place with secure knowledge of the past, in order to avoid the mistakes of the ancients. They established this august group and entrusted them with the duty to maintain and preserve the lineages and stories of the people. With the defeat of the raiding humanoid armies of the north and the subsequent consolidation of the various city-states making up the Ivory Ports, the Antiquity Scholars became a cornerstone of local culture. The organization was eventually freed from the governments that spawned it and became an autonomous body.

In the present day, the Scholars are powerful and widespread, and can now support research into subjects other than the history of the continent and the

struggle to unite and found kingdoms. In particular, senior scholars are often sent on field expeditions to delve into the histories of other lands and peoples. Funding and support for these expeditions varies, but it is not uncommon for individual members to be assigned a team of between five and twenty assistants. Senior scholars often spend years in the field studying their assigned subject before returning to the south with a detailed report for presentation to the Scholars' Council, the ruling body of the Antiquity Scholars. If the report finds favor with the Council, the senior scholar may be allowed to continue research in the assigned subject, or even be allowed to select a new field of research.

Professor Abraham Stewart

Professor Abraham Stewart has belonged to the Antiquity Scholars since the days of his youth, more than forty years ago. After completing his education, he was assigned to the library in the city of Silverus, where he toiled with his fellows to preserve the family histories and lineages of the nobility. Later, as a professor, he educated neophyte scholars in the methods of historical research. After more than thirty dedicated years, he at last accumulated enough seniority to be assigned a more demanding subject of study.

Free to pursue the topic of his choice, Professor Stewart petitioned the Scholars' Council to fund his research into a civilization whose ruins dot the Carrion Swamp and the wilds beyond. Little is known about these ruins, save that they predate the rise of any extant culture on the continent (more than 20,000 years ago) and that the people who built them called themselves the Hetepkans.

Unfortunately for Professor Stewart, the Scholars' Council considered the ancient civilization to be relatively unimportant. While the Council approved his proposal in the end, he was granted only a small monthly stipend to fund his research and was not assigned trained assistants to accompany him on his expedition. Instead, Professor Stewart was directed to hire assistants from the local populace of wherever his researches took him.

Professor Stewart began his research in the town of Staufendorf. Due to its proximity to both the Carrion Swamp and the mountain range known as the Towers, the region around Staufendorf is a dangerous place, plagued both by bandits and the creatures of evil that slither down from the mountains. Stewart quickly learned that those sites attributed to the Hetepkan culture had been picked clean long ago. What's more, they had been used so often as makeshift camps by goblins that even the ruins themselves had been heavily damaged. After months of fruitless study, he decided that he would need to move to a location deeper within the swamp to make any real progress. After collecting his latest stipend and writing a letter informing his superiors of his plans, Professor Stewart headed through the Narrow Pass toward Lonely Shore, an outpost on the edge of the great mire.

Stewart reached the small wooden fort of Lonely Shore after a perilous journey through the mountains that skirted the edge of the swamps. He quickly learned that there were several small ruins nearby. After renting a small warehouse to establish a field laboratory and hiring a few off-duty garrison soldiers to assist him, the professor spent the next several weeks exploring and collecting artifacts. At this rate, he had hoped to send a preliminary report to his superiors in perhaps a month or two.

Unfortunately, despite its garrison, Lonely Shore is a dangerous place. The roughest trappers, rangers, and woodsmen can be found there... and bandits, too. Amid this unscrupulous lot, Professor Stewart's success did not go unnoticed. Stewart had hired an old laborer named Frank to help him clean and catalog the relics he returned from the ruins. That was his undoing: Frank eventually betrayed him, selling news of the archeological finds to a gang of local bandits.

Two weeks ago, during an expedition deep inside the Demleck forest, Professor Stewart and his three assistants were attacked by sevren and sesheck bandits.

(*Sevren* and *sesheck* are two new kinds of reptilian humanoid; see **Appendix A: New Monsters**) The raiders slew Stewart's assistants and wounded the professor himself, forcing him to flee. Though he was loath to leave behind the artifacts he had uncovered, he knew that they would do him little good if he were dead. (Besides, he had managed to save a few items in his personal backpack.) To make matters even worse, upon his return to *Lonely Shore*, Professor Stewart found his laboratory smashed and looted.

While the ailing professor was recovering from the horrible events, he was visited by Miles Devron, a haughty noble and garrison commander. Devron reported... that his search for those responsible for the destruction of the laboratory had turned up nothing, and a patrol sent to retrieve the bodies of his assistants had failed to track down the raiders. He also added that he believed it likely that these bandits were underlings of a notorious sevren bandit named Krung, who was known to have been in the region recently. Beyond imparting this information, Devron seemed unwilling to pursue the matter further.

Despite these setbacks, Professor Stewart persisted. He returned to his destroyed laboratory, salvaged what he could, and examined the few relics he managed to recover from his last ill-fated expedition. What he found excited him beyond anything he had uncovered before. Carved into the surface of a fragmentary stone tablet was a crude map. The map was incomplete, and the etchings were faded, but after a week of cleaning and examination, Professor Stewart was certain it depicted the local area. What's more, if he interpreted the map correctly, it showed the location of a ruin more than 100 miles inside the Carrion Swamp.

A Vanished Civilization

The vanished culture that once thrived in this region is known to history as the Hetepkan Empire, though many scholars question its existence at all, attributing the ruins to early primitive peoples. Despite the lack of concrete evidence, fanciful tales of the civilization have circulated for years. Legends say these ancients had control over life itself, and that even the lowliest citizens lived twice the lifespan of humans today. It is said that the nobility never died, at least not until the civilization mysteriously disappeared. Still other rumors speak of the great wealth of the ancient culture, with gold, silver, and jewels being so common that they were used to decorate the streets. Whatever the truth, the rumors have drawn hardy adventurers and fortune-seekers. Though some have returned from the mire with treasure, few have found anything of real value. If the secrets of immortality are buried in any of these ruins, no one has discovered them yet.

Professor Stewart is not interested in rumors, only facts. Though his research on the Hetepkan civilization is still in its infancy, there are certain things of which he is certain. First, an ancient Hetepkan civilization did once occupy this region, and Professor Stewart believes even more extensive ruins may yet lay undiscovered. In fact, though he decided to visit known ruins first, it was his firm conviction that the best chances of finding an unspoiled site would lie somewhere within the swamp. Secondly, the ruins he explored are even older than he originally suspected; he now estimates the civilization's fall to have occurred well before the founding of any societies now known on the continent.

He has found no evidence to support the rumored longevity of the people, but he has confirmed they worked with precious metals and they had a written language. Though the few gold and jewel-encrusted objects he has are undoubtedly valuable (and tempting to thieves), Professor Stewart is far more interested in the few samples of the cuneiform writing. He has not yet been able to decipher the language, but he hopes to do so if he can find enough examples.

Adventure Synopsis

Though excited by his new find, if Professor Stewart intends to continue his research, he must try a different approach. Rather than explore the location himself, he has resolved to find a party of adventurers to do the dirty work while he takes the steps necessary to secure his laboratory.

Upon arriving at the frontier outpost of *Lonely Shore* (see **Adventure Hooks**), the PCs are hired by Professor Stewart to investigate this ruin, deep inside the



Carrion Swamp. The PCs will journey through the wilderness, dealing with bandits, strange reptilian peoples, and worse. Once they discover the ruin, they must explore it to find a way inside, and then penetrate its inner levels to uncover the secrets it contains.

The ruin is actually a ziggurat. The large structure has several levels; exploring it fully may take several forays on the part of the player characters. The ruins are protected by an assortment of monsters, guardians, and traps. If the PCs are not careful, they may even release an ancient priestess imprisoned in the bowels of the ziggurat.

In addition to the dangers of the ruins, the surrounding region harbors sevren and sesheck bandits who have learned of Professor Stewart's discovery of the ziggurat (through bribes to his assistant Frank) and have come to loot the place for themselves. It is quite likely this group will learn of the PCs and come to view them as unwelcome competition for the ziggurat's hidden treasures.

Using this Adventure

Beyond the Towers is a stand-alone adventure for low-level characters. The adventure is primarily a location-based "dungeon crawl" set in the wilderness of a vast swamp, though these details can be easily altered to suit your needs. The adventure is designed for 4–8 characters of levels 2–4. A druid or ranger would be useful, especially during the journey back and forth to the ruin, but a rogue is a must. If there is not a rogue in the party, you may want to remove some of the traps, or have the PCs find a few scrolls of *find traps*.

Adapting Beyond the Towers

If you don't use the *World of Freeport*, this adventure can be easily modified for use in other settings. You can modify the background simply by changing names and circumstances. You'll need a sizeable swamp in a remote region, preferably

- Introduction -

near a mountain range. Since the civilization that once occupied this territory is ancient, it can easily have existed and been forgotten by all but a few dusty scholars. Finally, you don't have to use the archeological organization: Perhaps a religious group, a cult, or maybe even a secular benefactor funds the expedition. Given the rumored treasure, it's no great leap to imagine that a wealthy noble might sponsor an expedition out of greed, vanity, or even boredom.

Scaling the Adventure

Beyond the Towers can be played with fewer or greater numbers of PCs of various levels with a few modifications. If you are modifying the adventure, consider the following suggestions:

- Hatshepsut is the main adversary and should be 2 or 3 levels higher than the average party level.
- Krung, the seven bandit chieftain, is the secondary villain and should be one level higher than the average party level.

1st-level PCs

The adventure can be run as written, but you'll need to weaken many of the encounters significantly. In addition to the changes to the primary and secondary villains outlined above, consider reducing the number of sesheck by half in every encounter where they're present, dropping Hurg's level of warrior, removing Glumrock altogether, reducing the total number of seven to one wherever they are encountered, lowering all damage from traps by one die or the next die size down (*i.e.*, 2d4 becomes 1d4 or 1d6 becomes 1d4), and decreasing or eliminating altogether any encounters of EL 5 or greater.

5th- to 6th-level PCs

PCs of this level will find the adventure, as written, quite easy. In addition to the changes to the primary and secondary villains outlined above, double the number of sesheck in all encounters in which they appear, give Glog the fungal ogre a couple levels of warrior, increase the size (and HD) of the slithering abomination in **Room F12**, change the shadow in **Room F14** to a wraith, increase all damage from traps by one die or the next die size up (*i.e.*, 2d4 becomes 3d4 or 1d6 becomes 1d8), and increase either the number appearing or HD of all other monsters in the adventure.

7th- to 8th-level PCs

As written, this adventure is very easy for PCs of this level. Make all the changes mentioned in the previous section, increase the damage dealt by traps and the DCs to avoid them even further, change all sesheck present in encounters to seven warriors, give Hurg and Glumrock one or two levels of fighter or ranger each, make Glog the fungal ogre a hill giant, increase the size and HD of the slithering abomination in **Room F12** to the maximum, change the shadow in **Room F14** to a spectre, and increase either the number appearing or HD of all other monsters in the adventure even further.

Bleeding Edge

Green Ronin Publishing's *Bleeding Edge Adventures* provide challenging and entertaining scenarios that cater to the tastes and interests of the modern gamer. Within, GMs will find a wealth of material designed to take advantage of the intricacies of the d20 system to offer everything necessary to create an exciting experience.

Each adventure in the *Bleeding Edge* line is designed to stand alone, so you need not have them all to enjoy them. However, each book in this series can be linked with future adventures, and when run together, they comprise a complete campaign. Though many of the locations tie directly to the larger *World of Freeport*, you can make use of them with other settings with a few minor changes.

Remember that if you increase the challenge of the adventure, you should also increase the amount of treasure accordingly. This adventure has approximately 33,000 gp worth of treasure. To determine the amount of treasure needed for parties outside the recommended guidelines, multiply the party's average level by 11,000. For example, if you wish to modify the adventure for 6th-level PCs, make sure the adventure includes about 66,000 gp (11,000 × 6) worth of treasure.

Preparation

The adventure is set deep within the unexplored regions of the Carrion Swamp. The adventure begins in the remote outpost of Lonely Shore, a small wooden fort located at the mouth of a river. Beyond Lonely Shore stretches a wild and unexplored swamp. The adventure requires riverboat or overland travel many days to the northwest of Lonely Shore. Because this ruin is quite extensive, PCs may wish to retire to the safety of either a camp or Lonely Shore in order to rest between forays into the ziggurat. The GM should thoroughly read and familiarize himself with the adventure to get a sense of what possible actions the inhabitants of both the ruin and the surrounding wilderness may take when encountering the PCs.

To run this adventure, you'll need the *PHB*, *DMG*, and *MM*. Some of the creatures and rules presented in this adventure derive from other publications. Monsters and information taken from other books are presented here fully, so having those other resources isn't necessary to enjoy this product, though they can certainly enhance your games.

Adventure Hooks

Use the following adventure hooks to draw the player characters into the plot of this adventure. If you intend to use *Mansion of Shadows* as part of an Adventure Path, the best hook is the first.

Mansion of Shadows

If you've played through *Mansion of Shadows*, one of the adventure hooks described was that the PCs had already been hired by the professor and were bound for Lonely Shore to assist in the expedition. Having been delayed briefly in Caldendorf, they are free to continue their journey through the Narrow Pass.

Seeking Adventure

The PCs have come to seek adventure in the wild regions of the swamp. The Towers and the lands beyond are renowned as dangerous wilderness, crawling with evil creatures and lost treasures. Where better to begin a heroic career? As the last civilized outpost before the unexplored wilds, Lonely Shore is a logical place to begin.

Hunting Bandits

The wilderness surrounding Lonely Shore is known to harbor bandits. One such bandit has been reported by the garrison commander to be a seven raider called Krung. This bandit chief and his band are responsible for several particularly brutal raids against two nearby villages and their surrounding farmsteads, as well as the destruction of a merchant caravan passing through from the south. Because the garrison of Lonely Shore seems unable to apprehend Krung, their military superiors have decided to hire professional bounty hunters to seek out and destroy this infamous bandit. The PCs have come to Lonely Shore to track down Krung and his band and destroy them. The price on Krung's head alone is 500 gp, with a total of 250 gp offered for the heads of his lieutenants.

Explorers

The PCs have heard rumors of the ancient civilization said to have once ruled over this region and have come to try their luck at searching for the secrets of this mysterious culture. Lonely Shore is the last chance to provision a group before entering the swamp.

- Part One: Beyond the Towers -

The adventure begins once the player characters emerge from the Narrow Pass, which is the easiest route through the Towers. Travel takes the better part of a day, and while you should feel free to add an encounter or two, the journey should be more or less uneventful. Once the PCs arrive, read or paraphrase the following text:

The great peaks of the Towers give way to rolling hills, debris, and shattered rock as you emerge from the Narrow Pass. The Old Road travels down the hills through a few scattered stands of trees and past the crumbling ruins of some forgotten civilization. In the distance, you can see the vast swamp stretching out before you. An ugly brown haze fills the air above it, fed by its brackish waters. Warped trees of mammoth proportions conceal the depths of this mire, giving it a sinister appearance.

At this point, allow the characters to ask whatever questions they might have, introduce new characters, and sketch out the reasons for being where they are. When you are ready, the characters can head on towards Lonely Shore.

Random Encounters

So long as the PCs stick to the Old Road, they shouldn't have any encounters. However, it's likely the presence of the ruins speckling the countryside may appeal to the more curious members of the party. The wilderness is filled with perilous creatures, dangerous humanoids, and all sorts of unsavory beasts. Any exploration bears the risk of meeting some hungry foe. Each hour that the characters explore the countryside, there is a 10% chance of a random wilderness encounter. If so, roll on **Table 1-1: Wilderness Encounters**, or pick an encounter from those presented.

Table 1-1: Wilderness Encounters

Roll	Encounter	Average EL
01-10	1d4 gnomes plus 1 gnome leader , see <i>MM</i> and Appendix for statistics	4
11-20	1 allip , see <i>MM</i> for statistics	3
21-30	1d3+1 ghouls , see <i>MM</i> for statistics	3
31-40	3 gnolls , see <i>MM</i> for statistics	3
41-50	1 ogre , see <i>MM</i> for statistics	3
51-60	1d6+3 dire rats , see <i>MM</i> for statistics	2
61-70	1 dire weasel , see <i>MM</i> for statistics	2
71-80	1 Large viper snake , see <i>MM</i> for statistics	2
81-90	1d3 lizardfolk , see <i>MM</i> for statistics	2
91-00	1d4+1 orcs , see <i>MM</i> for statistics	2

Gnomes

An alchemist and merchant, Tyben, and his hired guards have just made a delivery to Lonely Shore, selling several doses of antitoxin to help the locals deal with the venomous flora and fauna of the Carrion Swamp. On the way back to the Narrow Pass, a band of orcs attacked their group, slaughtering half of the guards and driving off Tyben and his surviving mercenaries.

If the characters find this group while exploring the wilderness around the road, Tyben is justifiably suspicious. If the party includes any orcs or half-orcs, or any other members of clearly monstrous races, Tyben and his allies are hostile. They attack, believing the PCs to be in cahoots with the brutal savages the band met earlier in the day. Otherwise, Tyben is indifferent; while he suspects the characters' motives, he reserves judgment until he can discern their motives by speaking with them. Lastly, if the party happens to include any gnomes, Tyben is friendly, instead.

It should be clear that this small group of travelers (and a group of small travelers, for that matter) is tired, hungry, and more than a little frightened. Characters who make an effort to succor the gnomes receive a +4 circumstance bonus on Diplomacy checks. Once the PCs improve Tyben's attitude to Friendly or better, he relaxes and opens up.

Tyben doesn't know too much about the area, though he does know that orcs seem to infest the hills, along with other, nastier creatures. He mentions that on the way to Lonely Shore, his party had a few narrow escapes, "but it seems our luck ran out on the trip home."

The gnome can supply the characters with descriptions of the outpost and any of the important characters (see the **Lonely Shore** description), the general layout of the town, and the rumors of inhuman bandits lurking in the swamp. Tyben is keenly interested in the exploits of the PCs and makes a few notes in a book about the characters' stories. If the party stays with the gnomes for a length of time, Tyben entertains the group with a cheery song that paints the PCs' efforts most favorably. At the mention of Staufendorf, Tyben grows concerned. If the characters played through *Mansion of Shadows*, he grows extremely worried, claiming he has a friend in the village. (He's close friends with Kyl Rosen.) He remarks that things looked grim when he last passed through, but he was in such a hurry that he didn't think to ask what was amiss.

Eventually, Tyben finds the courage to ask the PCs for their help in escorting him and his remaining companions back to the Narrow Pass. He promises to pay them 100 gp for their help (a full third of his earnings). He bears no ill will if they refuse, but if the characters do offer help, they gain a long-term ally to be developed as you see fit.

Weather

Beyond the Towers presumes the season is late autumn or early winter, with temperatures around 50°F (11°C). There's a nearly constant mist in the air near the Pass that turns to light rain as the characters draw closer to Lonely Shore. Each day that the characters spend at this outpost and in the swamps beyond, there's a 60% chance of some precipitation and a 10% chance of a thunderstorm. Otherwise, the days are overcast.

Should the weather turn foul, remember that rain reduces visibility to half and imposes a -4 penalty on Search, Spot, and Listen checks. Unprotected flames are automatically extinguished and protected flames have a 50% chance of guttering out.

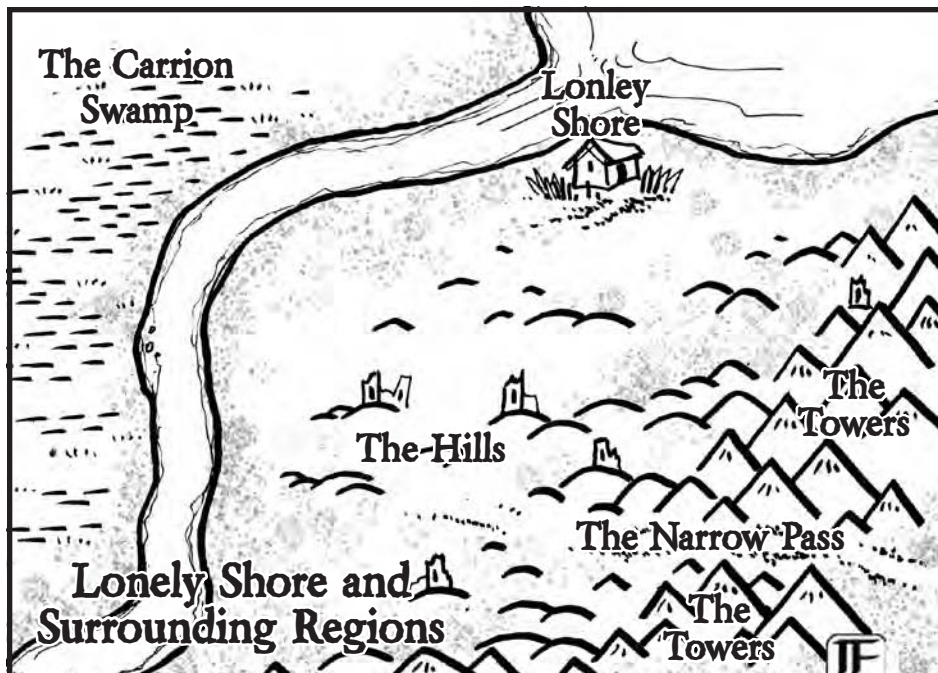
Lonely Shore

Lonely Shore sits atop a low hill that overlooks the vast Carrion Swamp. A wooden palisade surrounds the tiny fortified community, and soldiers armed with spears and bows walk the walls, keeping an eye out for bandits, lizardfolk, or worse. To reach the outpost, the characters must make their way up a road that is little more than a muddy rut that wraps around the hill. At the top, it widens a bit, and ends at the outpost's only entrance, a wide gate.

When the PCs arrive, they are the only travelers on the road. There are a few farmsteads scattered along the sides of the hill, but if they are inhabited, there's little sign aside from a few chickens and the occasional gaunt dog. In truth, there are people about, but the increased activity in the swamp and a natural sense of distrust leads most folks to hide from travelers.

When the characters arrive at the gate, read or paraphrase the following text:

The tall doors of the gate stand open. A mail-clad guard, leaning heavily on a spear, eyes you suspiciously while waving flies away from his face. Beyond, you see the dreary outpost in all its splendor. A hodge-podge mix of log buildings sinking slowly into the muddy earth, it is anything but inviting.



Lonely Shore measures no more than 200 yards in any direction. Inside the palisade are 24 crude log-and-mortar buildings with poorly thatched roofs. Most are single story affairs: rectangular blockhouses more akin to barracks than homes. (In fact, nearly all serve just this function.) The ground is bare earth, and the contours of the hillside have not been reduced, so some buildings stand higher than others, even those just across the street.

Of the jumbled buildings, only two are noteworthy. The first stands just inside the gate. It's a two-story blockhouse with a planked roof. A wooden sign above the door reads "The Last Stand Inn." The second lies at the other end of the compound, where it towers over the other squat structures of the fort. This imposing structure is a wooden keep, fully four stories high and equipped with a gatehouse. Characters succeeding on a DC 12 Spot check notice the silhouettes of patrolling guardsmen walking its ramparts.

Built only five years earlier by the Prince of Silverus, Lonely Shore was meant to be an outpost from which to start exploiting the rich resources of the swamp. Despite its isolated location along the southeastern edge of the unexplored regions of the Carrion Swamp, Lonely Shore serves as the northernmost holding of the Ivory Ports. Each of the city-states has some

vested interest in the area and garrisons the place with a small detachment of troops culled from the various barracks in the south. The fort is primarily a military installation, though about a third of the space within the wooden palisade is given over to support of the small community of merchants, traders, and woodsmen who eke out a perilous living here.

Regardless of its original purpose, Lonely Shore has become the remote outpost to which unruly or incompetent soldiers are sent as punishment. Most of the current garrison, including its commander, Sir Miles Devron, is here for exactly this reason. On the whole, the soldiers are lazy and undisciplined, and morale is poor. Few take their duties seriously, and some are outright corrupt, dealing with bandits or selling information to non-military personnel.

The fort is surrounded by a wooden palisade (Climb DC 15) to protect against raids from the bandits, humanoids, and marauding monsters that dwell in the surrounding wilderness. The people here are tough frontier folk who earn their livings mostly from hunting and river fishing. The

village also hosts the occasional adventurer eager to probe the wilderness or search for ruins along the nearby coastline.

The Last Stand

The tiny community has little in the way of accommodations or entertainment. The Last Stand is the only inn, and its lower floor houses the closest thing to a tavern. The inn rents two rooms (5 cp/night) as well as the "Stewery," a large common room where drunken patrons are dumped to sleep it off (1 cp/night). The bar is open in the evenings from about 5 o'clock until 11, and serves watery ale and cheap wine. During this time, it is crowded with hunters, trappers, and off-duty soldiers.

Things to Do

Depending on their reasons for being here, the PCs may or may not have any pressing needs to address. However, since they are new to the fort, their first order of business is probably to locate lodgings. Aside from the tavern and the keep, the rest of the town serves as barracks or cheap flophouses for the locals. A few smaller huts house grubby locals, the smith, and any other "usual suspects." The characters may snoop around the keep, and while not forbidden, it's unlikely they will make much progress in getting an audience. Still if the PCs press the issue, you should develop the keep and its contents in whatever way you like. In fact, much of the Lonely Shore is left intentionally vague to allow you to seed it as needed, to develop future adventures, plot hooks, and to serve any other purpose you need.

Eventually, the characters should wind up at the Last Stand. There, they can interact with the locals as they like.

If you please...

At some point after the adventurers arrive, preferably during the first night of their stay, a man approaches the party. (If the characters are here to meet Professor Stewart, they may encounter Frank on the road. If so, modify the text appropriately.)

You spy a man casting his gaze about, his eyes taking in the crowd. He walks with a limp, wincing each time he puts pressure on his twisted limb. Finally, his eyes settle on you.

LONELY SHORE (THORP/FORT)
Nonstandard; AL N; 40 gp limit; Assets 200 gp; Population 79; Isolated (77 humans, 1 dwarf, 1 half-elf).
<i>Authority Figure:</i> Sir Miles Devron, garrison commander, male human aristocrat 4.
<i>Important Characters:</i> Fultis, male human commoner 5 (hunter/trapper); Professor Abraham Stewart, expert 5 (representative of the Antiquities Scholars); Gerald One-eye, half-elf commoner 4 (owner and operator of the Last Stand Inn); Grondis the Hammer, female dwarf expert 3 (blacksmith); Whailin the boatman, male human commoner 3 (fisherman); Briam, male human commoner 2 (leatherworker); Frank, male human rogue 2 (Professor Stewart's current assistant/bandit informer); Derrick the Slick, male human warrior 2 (bandit), Corporal Bidwell, male human warrior 2 (garrison second-in-command).
<i>Others:</i> Garrison soldiers, warrior 1 (×30); local trappers and hunters, warrior 1 (×9); fighter 1 (×3); ranger 1 (×5); adept 1 (×1); expert 3 (×1); expert 2 (×2); expert 1 (×2); commoner 3 (×1); commoner 2 (×3); commoner 1 (×12).

Dirty Dealings

If the PCs spend more than a day in Lonely Shore and make inquiries around the fort concerning the bandits rumored to be in the region, they will eventually catch the attention of Corporal Bidwell. Though specific details concerning what the garrison knows about the local bandits are supposed to be secret, Corporal Bidwell is willing to discreetly sell this information to adventurers.

A day or so after the PCs ask around, Corporal Bidwell approaches them and offers to sell all he knows for 50 gp. (He can be negotiated down to 30 gp with a successful DC 15 Diplomacy check.) If the PCs pay his price, Corporal Bidwell reveals that Krung and his band have been seen in the region. It is believed the bandit chief has set up a temporary camp no more than 100 miles from Lonely Shore and that he has at least 20 men, not including his lieutenants. At your discretion, Bidwell may know more about the encampment, and can reveal this information as well. For details, see **Area D. Krung's Bandit Camp**.

Information about Krung and his cronies is heavily guarded, and the PCs can't learn this information from anyone other than Bidwell, not even from Sir Miles Devron. The garrison commander loathes this post and pays little attention to his job, leaving the details to his second-in-command: the corporal. Besides, even if he knew, Devron would not willingly reveal such classified secrets to lowly adventurers.

This is Frank. Believed to be an old woodcutter who suffered an injury from a falling tree a couple of years ago, most folk know he's struggled with the injury ever since. He stands just over five and a half feet tall, with a thin frame and wrinkled features. A crown of greasy white hair sticks to his head. He has a habit of licking his lips.

Frank: hp 10, see **Appendix** for statistics.

If you're using the adventure hook that arranged the PCs employment offstage in Silverus, then the characters should be looking for Professor Stewart. Frank has their descriptions from his employer and finds them with no trouble. He approaches, rounds them up, and takes them to the waiting Stewart.

Otherwise, the professor has sent Frank out to find some mercenaries for hire. When Frank approaches, he asks a few questions about what the PCs are doing in Lonely Shore, about their capabilities, and the nature of their plans. His questions are rather direct, since he hopes to fail, but if the PCs aren't put off by his nosy manner, Frank invites them to speak with his master.

In either case, you can proceed with **Meeting the Professor**. But if the characters pass up the opportunity to meet the man, don't worry: The next morning, the Professor himself seeks out the PCs.

Behind the Scenes

Though Frank gives the impression of being a harmless old man, in truth he's anything but. Up until a few years ago, Frank was a successful thief in Silverus, operating under the moniker of Sly Pete. A notorious crook, he tied himself to various elements of the city's underworld. In his arrogance, he believed he could pit the factions against each other and reap the rewards of the infighting, freeing himself to rob the upper class while the thieves in the city cut each others' throats. Sly Pete's ambitious plan failed and he gained no shortage of enemies—a point driven home when a pair of assassins came calling on him. Rather than risk his neck, he slipped out of the city with the help of the few allies he had left, and fled north to wait for his enemies' memories to dim.

Lonely Shore may have allowed Pete to avoid certain death, but it is a poor substitution for the thriving southern city. Pete tried to maintain contacts through merchants and intermediaries, waiting for word that it was safe for him to go home. Since that seemed unlikely to happen any time soon, he assumed the alter ego of Frank the Woodcutter. He tried his hand at the trade, but swiftly discovered he lacked the skill, a point driven home when he slipped from his harness and shattered his right leg.

Frank seemed to be at his end, but then Professor Stewart came to the outpost, looking for help for an archeological expedition. Frank offered his services, since it was clear he was no woodcutter, and the professor agreed to hire him. However, the pay was poor and if Frank was to die at this sodden fort, he was not going to die a pauper.

It soon became clear that there were other parties interested in this expedition. Frank secretly sold information to a few locals who occasionally came to the outpost to trade furs, herbs, and other goods for finished gear. But his true fortune came from another agent out of Silverus. The man paid good money and promised to protect Frank if he would sabotage the professor's efforts. Frank gladly agreed and has been secretly dismantling the professor's work ever since.

Frank has no idea with whom or what he has become involved. The trappers were actually Krung and his bandits, their forms altered to appear human. With the information Frank sold these "men," he has sabotaged the Professor's mission and put himself and his employer both in danger. Frank now realizes this, and intends to get away as soon as he can. Until an opportunity appears, he hides his betrayal, doing nothing to reveal his treachery.

The other man is actually one of Stewart's rivals. Believing the Professor is onto something "big," the other scholar intends to take credit for the expedition himself. He's working to assemble a team of his own, but he needs time, which Frank will buy for him by sabotaging the expedition.

Using Frank

Throughout the adventure, Frank works against the PCs. He poisons their food, sinks supplies in the swamp, leaves obvious trails for bandits, and anything else he can to disrupt the expedition. Should Frank's duplicity be revealed, he denies everything, sticking to his story of innocence unless the PCs can present incontrovertible evidence. At this point, he makes a crude attempt to distract the PCs, throws his caltrops to slow pursuit, and then hobbles away. He fights with his dagger only if cornered, and even then, only if faced with a single opponent. Otherwise, he surrenders, bribing the PCs with his stashed cash if they agree to let him go.

Meeting the Professor

This scenario assumes the PCs have accompanied Frank to Professor Stewart's warehouse. If they choose not to follow the manservant, they may meet the archeologist in the town later, at which point you should modify the description accordingly.

Frank leads the PCs down a muddy street from the Last Stand toward the eastern end of the fort until he comes to a large dilapidated warehouse that leans against the fort's wall. He knocks twice, pauses, and then once more. A moment passes, and the PCs (DC 15 Listen) hear the sound of a bar being removed from the other side.

Frank opens the door and enters the gloomy warehouse. Crowded with boxes, the place stinks of the swamp, and the sound of dripping water confirms its shoddy construction. Frank gestures to a collection of stools and then disappears behind a jumble of wooden containers. After a moment, a smiling white-bearded man clears his throat as he approaches, claiming one of the stools for himself.

Opposing Team

One way to inject more complexity into this adventure is to have the rival scholar's team already working toward the same goal: finding the ruin. You can handle this in one of two ways. First, generate a band of four adventurers, each about 1 level lower than the PCs. Use Stewart's statistics for the rival professor. As the characters make their way into the swamp, they will not only have to contend with the bandits, but also beat the other team to the ruin. The adventure becomes a race to acquire the Book of Grey Waters, though neither team realizes its importance at the outset. Should the opposing team gain the treasure first, the PCs will have to find some way to recover the ancient manuscript.

The other option is only viable if you have a larger group. Split the players into two groups, each serving a different professor. They must work against each other over the course of the adventure, dealing with the same obstacles, and thwarting the other team's progress. This can be a very exciting experience, but the challenge is running two groups simultaneously and sustaining interest on both sides. If there's another GM in your group, it's best to have him help and manage the other group.

He says, "Hail, friends. Please, sit down. I apologize for the manner of this meeting, but I've had good cause of late to err on the side of caution."

This is Professor Abraham Stewart. Before discussing his situation and the job he wishes to hire them for, he first attempts to sound the adventurers out. He encourages the PCs to have some broth and tries to engage them in small talk, perhaps asking about their journey to Lonely Shore, their previous escapades, or their business here at the fort. The truth is that Professor Stewart is a bit desperate, and has little choice but to get started quickly. Unless the PCs show themselves to be blatantly evil or incompetent, he offers them the job.

Abraham Stewart is an older man in his mid fifties. He stands just under six feet tall, though because he often stoops, he seems much shorter. He wears a long beard and thick mustache, and is balding on top. What hair he does retain is gray.

Professor Stewart: hp 17, see **Appendix** for statistics.



Development

Once it is time to get down to business, Professor Stewart begins by briefly relating who he is, why he is here, and the events involving the recent attack upon himself and the theft of his work. (See the **Introduction** for the details.) He wants to hire the PCs to investigate a ruin deep inside the Carrion Swamp. The professor wishes to hire them to accompany him and his assistant Frank into the swamp to explore the ruin more fully and recover any lore about this lost culture. In exchange for these services, Professor Stewart offers to allow the adventurers to keep all the magical items they uncover in the ruins, as well as half of any precious artifacts or relics, excluding any item covered with or pertaining to the written language of the Hetepkans. If they encounter the bandits who attacked and robbed him, Professor Stewart is uninterested in any items these brigands have that do not pertain to the Hetepkan culture. Lastly, Professor Stewart gladly appraises any valuable artifacts the PCs recover from the ruins, and will buy those pieces that the adventurers retain as part of their cut for half of their appraised value.

Professor Stewart is a reasonable man, and is willing to listen to counterproposals, but he's firm on claiming recovered relics. A DC 15 Diplomacy check gets Abraham to supply the characters with food, water, and general equipment. A DC 20 Diplomacy check gets him to throw in a 100 gp advance, but only if the characters are trustworthy (Sense Motive +2).

If the PCs agree to Professor Stewart's proposal, he suggests they all leave by the next day at the latest. While he has an idea of where the ruin are, he only has a general sense and a rough map cobbled together from his research (see the **Lonely Shore and Surrounding Regions Map** on page 6). He estimates the ruins are roughly one hundred miles to the west and that the journey should take five or six days by skiff, twice if they attempt to journey on foot through the thick swamp. Believing the PCs are experts in this sort of thing, Stewart follows their lead as far as how the expedition will reach the ruin, though he does recommend the characters buy boats from the locals for the journey or hire one to ferry them to the ruins.

Professor Stewart cautions that the ruins are overgrown and probably unrecognizable for what they really are. Fortunately, the tablet he deciphered described a huge rock formation in the center of the swamp that marks the entrance.

Burdensome Companions

The Professor is quite excited about the expedition, seeing it as the culmination of his life's work. As a result, he can be as much of a problem as the threat the PCs must face. He has a tendency to wander, to go off exploring some chamber unmindful of dangers to himself or those he might bring down on the PCs' heads. At first, the Stewart should be all business, but as the journey carries him closer to the ruin, he becomes more distracted, more drawn into his notes, and increasingly oblivious to the world around him.

- Part Two: Into the Carrion Swamp -

Once the PCs agree to the terms and are properly outfitted, they should be ready to leave the outpost. The Carrion Swamp stretches before them. It is a vast, bleak place of towering trees, spongy earth, and bottomless pools of fetid water. Navigating this place on foot is dangerous, since the dark waters conceal deep holes filled with sucking mud, to say nothing of the hidden horrors.

Hiring a Boat

The best way to reach the ruin is by boat. PCs who inquire around the fort for available transportation find themselves with two options. The first is to buy boats from local fishermen for the trip. Unfortunately, the only boats available are small canoes, which can only hold up to three Medium creatures wearing normal gear or two wearing heavy gear. A canoe sells for about 80 gp and moves about 1-½ miles per hour.

The second option is to hire a local to ferry the PCs up the river to the ruins and back. Once it is known where they intend to go, they find only one fisherman—Whailan, the boatman—who is willing to travel into the swamp. Whailan owns a large canoe capable of transporting up to nine characters wearing normal equipment, or six characters with heavy gear. Whailan doesn't work cheaply. He demands 10 gp/day for the trip, though he can be negotiated down to 7 gp/day with a successful DC 15 Diplomacy check.

Whailan is a young, muscular man with deeply tanned skin. He has short-cropped brown hair and brown eyes. He wears a short beard and thin mustache.

Whailan: hp 10, see Appendix for statistics.

Using Whailan

Whailan is a quiet man who focuses on his work and rarely speaks unless necessary. Unlike almost all the other locals living in the fort, Whailan has no fear of brigands or swamp-dwelling monsters. His reputation for bravery has spread, and he is quite willing to ferry the PCs up to the ruin.

Travelling in the Carrion Swamp

Aside from Lonely Shore, there are no communities on this side of the swamp. Since the region has a mysterious and sinister reputation, it tends not to attract settlers. Those wishing to penetrate the unknown depths of the Carrion must contend with clouds of stinging insects, evade or hack through the creeping vines, and navigate the cyclopean depths of the foul waters. Travel is slow and miserable, at least until the depths of the swamp is reached, at which point the terrain becomes more open, but remains shadowy thanks to the dense canopy of massive trees. Thankfully, the waters are more or less continuous, allowing a skilled boatman to maneuver through the labyrinthine waterways to reach the heart of the mire. It takes about 5 days to reach the ziggurat by boat, assuming 12 hours of travel each day.

PCs who travel into the swamp on foot find the journey slow and arduous. Following the directions described by the professor is the surest method, but because of the thick vegetation that extends at least half a mile on either side of the river, travel is slow. It takes the characters eight to ten days (depending upon armor worn by the group and its racial composition) to reach the ziggurat (Area F).

Those who proceed without a guide invite disaster and likely become lost. You should roll a DC 10 Survival check each hour for the party leader. On a failure, the group becomes lost. See **Getting Lost** in Chapter 3: Adventures of the DMG for details.

Wandering Monsters

The Carrion Swamp is a wild and dangerous place. In addition to those creatures encountered in and around the ruined ziggurat (Areas A through F), there are many creatures that wander the mire. Check for wandering monsters 6 times each day (halve this if the PCs are traveling by boat) and 6 times each night. A 1 on a d12 signifies an encounter. Use your best judgment when adjudicating wandering monsters, as an unplanned encounter can destroy a weakened or fleeing party. As a rule, it is recommended that wandering monsters only be used to enhance the atmosphere of the swamp or to keep the PCs on their toes. If the encounter would unduly hamper the party, ignore the roll.

Table 2-1: Overland Encounters in the Demleck Forest

Roll	Encounter	Avr EL	Source
1-2	1d3 shocker lizards	3	See <i>MM</i> for statistics.
3	1 assassin vine	3	See <i>MM</i> for statistics.
4-6	2 ghouls	2	See <i>MM</i> for statistics.
7	Lakullus	3	See Appendix I for statistics.
8	2d6 Medium monstrous centipedes	3	See <i>MM</i> for statistics.
9	1 ogre	3	See <i>MM</i> for statistics.
10	1 giant crocodile	4	See <i>MM</i> for statistics.

Lakullus

Lakullus is a gruff, no-nonsense swamp ranger. He knows this region of the Demleck like perhaps no one else alive, and considers it his personal duty to do all he can to protect it, despite its dark reputation and the evil creatures dwelling here. When first encountered, Lakullus first demands to know why the PCs are here. If dealt with openly and treated fairly, Lakullus can be befriended, in which case he can give accurate directions to the ruin (Area F) and even warnings concerning the sevren and sesheck bandits encamped nearby. If treated with hostility, Lakullus assumes the PCs are enemies and he attacks. During combat, Lakullus fights fiercely, though he shows mercy and allows the opponents to escape if they flee. If wounded to 10 hit points or less, he flees.

The Carrion Swamp

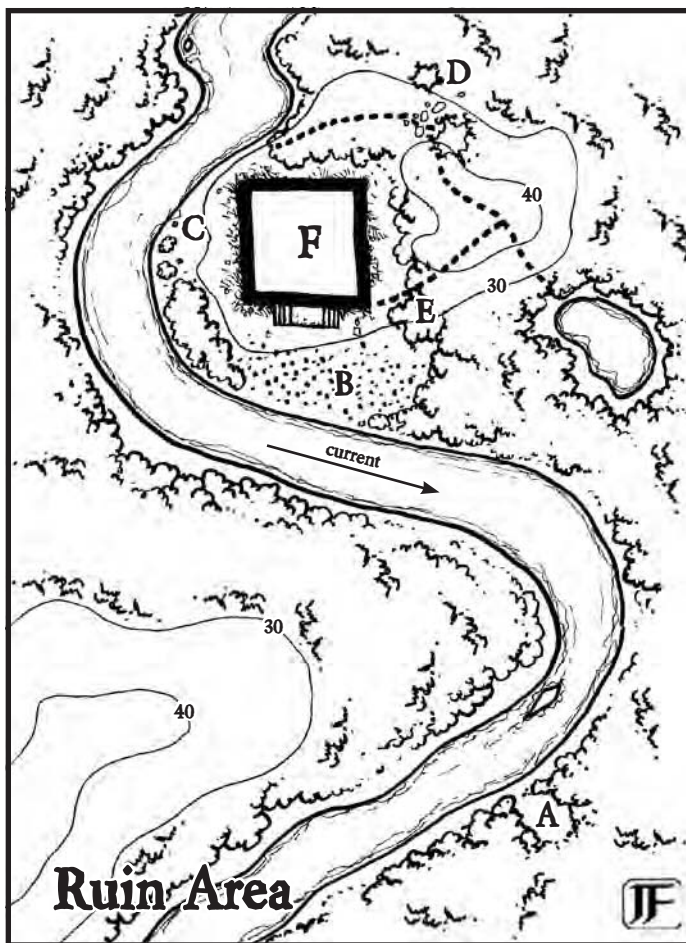
In addition to the random encounters the PCs are bound to face during their journey into the swamp, there are a number of keyed locations that stand between them and their goal.

A. A Fool and His Followers

(This encounter only occurs the first time the PCs reach this location. Thereafter, the clearing is empty.)

As the characters come within 200 feet, have the PCs make DC 20 Spot checks. Those who succeed notice the scent of wood smoke. When within 100 feet, have them make a DC 20 Listen check to hear the sound of guttural grunting. Those who hear it and speak Draconic recognize the language and can translate the words as curses and oaths. Should the characters go to investigate or simply stumble onto the scene, read or paraphrase the following text.

- Part II: Into the Carrion Swamp -



The massive trees give way to a muddy clearing that rises out of the brackish water of the swamp. Tall weeds choke the site and a pile of charred branches and corpses burn fitfully in the center. You see four lizard-like creatures struggling to lift a large wooden chest into a canoe. A fifth reptilian stands on the muddy bank shouting orders. It is much taller than its companions and has a greatsword slung on its back

The PCs have arrived just in time to see the sesheck raiders that attacked Professor Stewart returning from the field to their campsite (see **Area D**). They load their ill-gotten gains onto their craft to transport it back to their lair. Two stand in water up to their knees, the chest lifted over their heads, while two of their companions in the boat split their time between holding the craft steady and helping to load the chest.

This particular raiding party is led by Hurg (the sevren on the river bank), who is a younger cousin of the infamous Krung. Hurg is rather lazy and stupid for a sevren, and the seshek don't think much of his leadership. (Neither does Krung, for that matter; he has sent the stupid sevren on missions purposely under-manned to get rid of him.) Fortunately for Hurg, he is also very lucky. The band's recent spoils are in the chest. Though this band's successful raid was more than two weeks ago, due to Hurg's lackadaisical leadership, it has taken a long time for them to return.

Hurg has left his band in a poor tactical position. Since all of his gang are focused on loading the chest, they are automatically surprised (even if the PCs approach by boat) unless the PCs intentionally give themselves away. Though the characters have the advantage of surprise, they still must deal with the treacherous terrain. The water is shallow enough for Medium characters to stand, but each 5-foot square in the swamp requires 4 squares of movement, and Tumble checks are impossible (DC +20). Small creatures must swim to move. However, the water provides cover for Medium and larger creatures and improved cover (+8 AC, +4 Reflex saves) to Small

creatures. Larger creatures can crouch to gain the benefits of this cover, but creatures with improved cover take a -10 penalty to attack rolls against creatures not underwater.

The shore is clear, but muddy. Each 5-foot square requires 2 squares of movement.

Creatures (EL 4)

The raiders include Hurg, a sevren warrior, and 4 sesheck.

Hurg: hp 16, see **Appendix** for statistics.

Sesheck (4): hp 4 each, see **Appendix** for statistics.

Tactics

The sesheck use their shortbows to fight, but switch to their shields and clubs if forced into melee. The sesheck fight until two or more of their number fall, at which point they flee. Hurg, more the fool, fights to the death.

Characters who stand up in the canoe must succeed on DC 10 Balance checks whenever they make an attack. If they fail the check, they lose the attack and must succeed on a second Balance check against the same DC or fall into the water.

Development

If the PCs somehow manage to take Hurg alive, they find he is a nitwit, full of bluster and self confidence. He gains a +3 circumstance bonus to resist Intimidate checks, and he won't betray his cousin, even if presented with incontrovertible evidence that his kinsman is trying to kill him.

Treasure

The chest is in poor condition and is neither locked nor trapped. It contains 31 ivory statuettes (see **Area F** for details), a pair of golden goblets of ancient Hetepkan design (worth 50 gp each), a stone cat's head 12 inches in diameter (once part of a statue, but worthless now), and half a roasted boar.

B. The Thistle Patch

The text below assumes that the PCs approach this area from the water during the day. If the PCs come across this encounter at another time, modify the descriptive text as appropriate.

The current carries you towards a wide clearing filled with long-stemmed, weed-like flowers with bright white petals. Rising from the tangled mass beyond is a steep hill crowded with exotic trees and brightly colored flowers of red, orange, and blue. Though the hill is covered in thick vegetation, much of the growth appears different from that of the surrounding forest.

The hill beyond the white flowers is actually the ruin the PCs are seeking. Because of the thick overgrowth of thousands of years, this is only discernable by actually climbing or touching it. (See **Area F**.) The dazzling white flowers may appear beautiful, but the clearing is a poor choice for approach, as the flowers are actually a highly resilient form of thistle. Ordinarily, this would be a mere annoyance, but in the numbers appearing here, the plants can be deadly. Movement through the thistle patch is reduced to half normal rates and is dangerous to creatures not protected by medium or heavy armor or with equivalent hides (+4 or greater natural armor bonus to AC).

Hazard (EL 1/3)

White Thistle Patch CR 1/3; Huge patch of thistles (120 ft. × 2,100 ft.); 1d3 points of damage per 30 feet of movement; Search DC 6; Disable Device (automatic if using fire or machete, though time-consuming and possibly dangerous). Creatures who move through the thistles and who are not immune to their affects (by wearing proper armor, or the like) and who are wearing clothes (cloaks, shirts, etc.) or are furred reduce their Dexterity scores by 2 until they spend at least 20 minutes clearing the thistles away.

C. Boulders on the Bank

From this position, the PCs can see the hill described in **Area B**. Despite the nature of the rock formations here, this is a much safer route for approaching the ruin. While the rocks and heavy vegetation here slow movement to half normal rates, there is no serious danger to the party. PCs examining the area who succeed on a DC 8 Search check find the entrance to the drainage tunnel (**Area F21**) that leads into the Fourth Level of the ruin.

D. Krung's Bandit Camp (EL varies, but 9 overall)

This encounter is very dangerous to PCs of the levels suggested for this adventure, and it is unlikely they will defeat the entire bandit gang in a single attempt. You should keep this in mind and make every effort to emphasize to the PCs that the situation gets further out of hand as more and more reinforcements arrive. The PCs should have several opportunities to withdraw and return to fight another day. The bandit camp itself has been designed to help facilitate this. The group is divided not only to keep enemies away from the leaders, but (from the perspective of the gaming table) to keep the PCs from being immediately overwhelmed by the superior numbers of bandits.

In order to defeat the band, the PCs *must* employ hit-and-run tactics, destroying the bandits, one small group at a time. The bandit leaders here are clever; they don't stand idly by while the PCs employ these tactics, but launch retaliatory strikes of their own against the PCs' camp, if they can locate it. It is possible that this will result in a war zone of sorts forming in the region around the ruin.

Should the PCs attempt a direct attack, let them. They will discover shortly that they are outmatched. If they try to retreat, let them.

As the PCs come within 100 feet of the encampment, allow them DC 15 Listen and Spot checks to notice the bandits. If they creep forward (or, foolishly, charge), read or paraphrase the following text.

Ahead the thick trees and mist clear, revealing a small encampment where several small, lizard-like humanoids lounge about eating, sleeping, and maintaining weapons. A few stand watch, but they seem bored and oblivious. The ground is a filthy morass of bones, excrement, and shed skin. Several huts, lashed together from animal skins and logs, provide a sense of semi-permanence.

This area consists of three small clearings connected by a series of trails (see the **Bandit Camp Map** for details). Each clearing is a campsite for part of Krung's band, consisting of a scattering of crude tents, piles of brush, and hanging carcasses of forest animals in the nearby branches. Unless the raiders are away on a mission (see the **Bandit Reactions**), each clearing also contains a specific number of sesheck and sevren. Krung and other bandit leaders are always in **Area D2**, unless responding to an attack or away from the camp.

D1. Guard Post

This guard post contains 4 sesheck, all survivors from **Area A** (if any), 2 tents, a spiked pit trap, and a rope-loop trap.

Creatures EL 2

Sesheck (4): hp 4, see Appendix for statistics.

D2. Main Camp

Contains 4 sesheck, Glumrock, Krung, 5 tents, a fire-pit, and a wooden chest (see the **Treasure**).

Creatures EL 7

Glumrock: hp 19, see Appendix for statistics.

Krung: hp 28, see Appendix for statistics.

Sesheck (4): hp 4, see Appendix for statistics.

D3. Guard Post

Contains 6 sesheck, 3 tents, a spiked pit trap, and a rope-loop trap.

Creatures EL 3

Sesheck (6): hp 4, see Appendix for statistics.

Traps

The bandits here have rigged traps to guard against intrusion.

SPIKED PIT TRAP (CR 1)

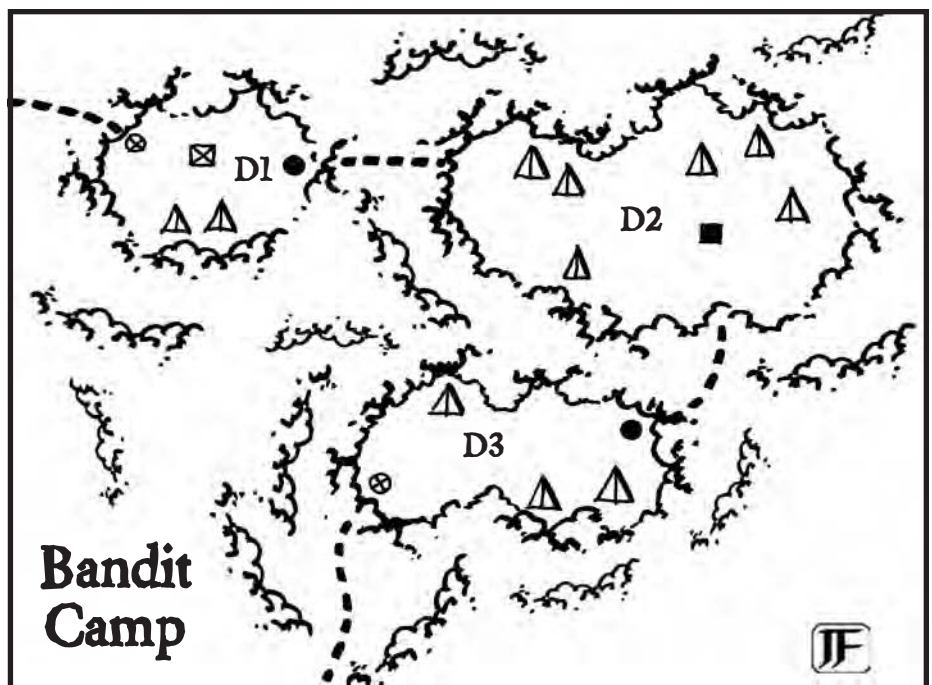
Search DC 16; **Type** Mechanical; **Reset** Manual
Trigger location (Reflex DC 20 negates)
Targets first target in each of two adjacent 5-ft. squares
Effect 10-ft. deep pit (1d6, fall)
Melee 1d4 spikes (1d4+1)
Disarm Disable Device DC 16

This simple trap is concealed by brush and debris. The "cover" cannot support much weight. The "cover" collapses under any pressure greater than 10 pounds, dumping the victim into the pit. At the bottom are a number of sharpened stakes.

ROPE-LOOP TRAP (CR ½)

Search DC 15; **Type** Mechanical; **Reset** Manual
Trigger location (Reflex DC 20 negates)
Target One creature
Effect Entangle, DC 15 Escape Artist to escape.
Destruction AC 5, hp 2
Disarm Disable Device DC 15

Stepping into a trapped area causes the rope to snatch the victim and hold him upside-down in the air.



- Part II: Into the Carrion Swamp -

Krung

Krung is intelligent and ruthless, and has used both these traits to build a reputation for himself as a bloodthirsty bandit. So successful is he that word of his prowess and cruelty has spread for miles around, inviting a sizeable bounty (300 gp) for his head. Efforts to snatch the outlaw have failed, since the sevren are skilled at hiding their appearance. Conflicting reports of these villains suggest they are elven, human, or even goblinoid. Hence, would-be bounty hunters have failed to capture the elusive bandit chief.

Krung and his cronies regularly infiltrate Lonely Shore posing as trappers to steal supplies and gather information, learning what they can to give them a decided advantage for their raiding. Their successes have added to the mystique of their unerring ability to predict the best time and place to attack.

Several months ago, Krung was approached by an agent from a distant land: a lesser noble named Zumarrani Durath. The man offered Krung a commission. In exchange for taking his band north, deep into the wilderness of the Demleck, and stealing a number of artifacts from a scholar named Professor Stewart as he discovered them, Krung was promised power, wealth, and a position of power among Durath's household. Though Krung was at first hesitant to lead his men into such a dangerous and backwater region, the lure of promised power coupled with the increasing bounty on his head convinced him to accept the job.

Krung and his cronies assumed the form of trappers and infiltrated Lonely Shore. There, Krung met "Frank" (Sly Pete) and learned of the professor's plans and movements. Armed with this information, Krung followed up on several leads that the old scholar was working on to locate the ruin. He established this campsite only a week ago and has made several brief forays to explore the ruin. So far, the bandits have had little success in looting, though they have recently begun to negotiate with Glog, an ogre who lives on the lower tier of the structure. These negotiations resulted in the acquisition of several minor

artifacts from the ruins (see the **Treasure**), which the bandits traded for food and a few minor pieces of equipment. As of yet, the bandits have not located an entrance into the ziggurat's inner chambers.

Tactics

Krung is a shrewd leader and his men are well disciplined, at least while a sevren is present. If the camp is attacked, sesheck sentries in either **Area D1** or **D3** (there are always at least two on watch in every clearing) shout an alarm while their comrades gather up weapons and gear (1d6 rounds). The basic plan is for those sesheck in **Areas D1** and **D3** to stand and fight, stalling enemies using the traps and their shortbows until reinforcements can be sent from **Area D2**. Even if no enemies show up in one of these locations, the sesheck have been ordered to stand ready to guard against a rear attack unless a leader comes and gives orders to the contrary.

Once an alarm has been sounded, Krung orders a sevren to take all but two of the sesheck present in **Area D2** and proceed to the source of the attack to reinforce the troops. Krung keeps 2 sesheck bandits and Glumrock with him. Krung readies his remaining bandits and waits 4 rounds to be sure the initial attack is not just a feint. If nothing else develops, Krung and his bandits proceed to reinforce the others. If another attack comes from another direction, Krung leads his bandits to meet that attack. Both Krung and Glumrock fight valiantly in battle, but withdraw and regroup if their immediate forces are reduced by half. The sesheck flee if reduced to 50% of their starting numbers. If Krung is killed, all remaining bandits flee the region. If Krung lives, and either his total force is reduced by half or Glumrock is killed, he gathers his remaining bandits and attempts to flee back to northern realms.

Krung and his bandits may become aware of the PCs well before the bandit camp is discovered, either from survivors from an attack on **Area A** or by being spied by the guards at **Area E**. In this event, Krung orders Glumrock to take 5 sesheck and reconnoiter, seeking out the PCs' current position or their base camp and stealing any boats, pack animals, or equipment left unattended. The success of this scouting mission should be based upon what precautions the PCs take and the whims of the GM, though it should be noted Glumrock is cautious and is not looking for a fight on this mission. In addition, the guards at **Area E** are to watch the ruin to see if the PCs find a way in. If Krung learns where the PCs' camp is or is informed that they have entered the ruin through a specific entrance, he takes two-thirds of his bandits to ambush them. Flesh out the details of such an ambush using the tactics already provided as a guide.

Treasure

The chest is little more than a latched crate containing all of the Hetepkan artifacts the bandits have collected so far from the ruins. This meager trove includes: 13 ivory statuettes (see **Area F**); a clay tablet covered in Hetepkan runes (an ancient personal letter, worth 10 gp to a collector); a badly corroded bronze dagger of Hetepkan design (worth 1 gp); and a gold ring worked with writhing serpents with tiny garnets for eyes (worth 500 gp). In addition, there's a vellum map of this region, with the ruin's location clearly shown in relation to the huge rock formation in the Bundroch River. This map was made by Frank and then sold to Krung.

E. Watch Post

Krung and his minions constructed and camouflaged a crude platform amidst the trees. **Two sevren warriors** are always posted here, hiding amid the foliage and watching over the ruin for anything out of the ordinary.

Creatures (EL 4)

Due to the camouflage, the 2 sevren here gain cover (+4 AC bonus, +2 Reflex save bonus). If they sight the PCs exploring the ruin, one sevren runs to warn Krung (see **Area D**), while the other keeps an eye on the adventurers.

Sevren (2): hp 11 each, see **Appendix** for statistics.



- Part Three: The Ruin -

This chapter describes the ruin (**Area F**) in detail. As the characters draw closer to the structure (**Areas B or C**), they can get a peek at the exterior. When they come within 20 feet, read or paraphrase the following text:

What appeared to be an old shaggy hill reveals itself, as you draw near, to be a ruin of some pyramidal structure. You can make out sheer walls and grand sweeping steps constructed from tightly fitted gray stones. It has three ascending tiers, each covered in wild vines and undergrowth. Aside from the occasional cry of a marsh bird, the ruin is quiet.

In the long-gone days of the Heteptkan Empire, this ruin was known as the Hanging Gardens. The remote temple complex lay on the southern fringes of the Empire, serving as a retreat where the nobility could worship in private, away from the masses. The temple's outward beauty was as much for the pleasure of the rich and powerful as it was for the glorification of the many gods who were revered therein. The monastic priests who maintained the Hanging Gardens were charged with guarding the "Book of Gray Waters," a sacred stele used in rituals that prepared the nobility for their journey into the afterlife. (See **Room F13**)

The ziggurat was constructed from thousands of huge blocks hewn from grayish-black stone. Each block measures three feet by three feet by one-and-a-half feet, and weighs thousands of pounds. The blocks were smoothed, shaped, and fitted together perfectly without need for mortar.

The two lower tiers of the ziggurat were built to accommodate an extensive garden, complete with flowing fountains and well-tended trails. An ingenious series of pumps and channels drew water from the swamp through a system of internal pipes near the top of the structure. These pipes, in turn, irrigated the gardens and fed the pools on the lowest tier before being channeled back into the bog. Though there are places where it has broken down over the centuries, for the most part the ruin still circulates water as it was designed to do.

Ruin Features

Unless otherwise noted, ceilings inside the ziggurat are 8 feet high, and all interior chambers are dark.

Bas-reliefs

The priests who tended the Hanging Garden set out to make it the most beautiful structure in their empire. The priests decorated the walls inside and below the building with colorful friezes of the gods, priests performing rituals, and other idealized depictions of Heteptkan life. Though most have faded or been eroded by age, all passages and rooms inside or below the ruin contain such décor, unless otherwise noted.

Doors

Most doors inside the ruin are stone. Hallway doors always open into rooms, while doors that join two rooms always open into the smaller room.

Stone Doors: 4 in. thick; Hardness 8; hp 60; Break DC 28.

Secret Doors

Secret doors are hidden from both sides and require DC 20 Search checks to detect. Unless otherwise noted, secret doors pivot on a central axis, with 2 feet of space to either side when the door is open.

Secret Stone Doors: 4 in. thick; Hardness 8; hp 60; Break (DC 28); Search (DC 20).

Entrances

Although the ruin's separate tiers are easily accessed via the main stairways on the front and sides of the structure, the entrances into the interior complex are well hidden. There are, in fact, five different entrances:

- A submerged shaft leading from the southwestern pool (**Room F1**) to the southern fountain pool in **Room F15**.
- A secret door along the eastern wall of the lower tier (**Room F3**).
- A secret door along the northern wall of the middle tier (**Room F4**).
- A trapdoor/shaft dropping from the upper tier (**Room F5**) to the sacrificial pit (**Room F12**).
- The drainage channel amid the rocks on the riverbank (**Area C**) that leads to the Fourth Level.

Each entrance presents its own dangers; see the appropriate Room for details. Note that, at present, neither Glog the ogre (**Room F2**) nor the seven/sesheck bandits (**Areas D and E**) are aware of any of these entrances.

Ivory Statuettes

Scattered throughout the complex are an assortment of tiny ivory statuettes, each 3 to 4 inches high and weighing ¼ lb. These carvings served as offerings to the gods from those Heteptkans of lesser status who would visit the Hanging Gardens. The figures are crudely carved to depict a god or hero of the ancient Heteptkan Empire. Many have animalistic features, such as a lion's head. Each is worth 5 gp to the right buyer. In addition to those described in specific areas of the complex, any successful DC 15 Search of a room not described in the text turns up another 1d3 statuettes. (Each room yields statuettes only once.)

Outer Walls

The outer walls of the ziggurat are made from the same well-fitted stone blocks. Each wall measures 10 feet high and is capped by a stone parapet about 2-½ feet tall (Climb DC 18). Stone pillars support these parapets and are spaced every 10 feet evenly along the wall.

Outer Tiers

The following locations are found on the outer tiers of the ruin.

Fl. Garden Pools

Light: Depends on time of day.

Sounds: A DC 5 Listen check enables a character to hear the sound of running water.

An unusually shaped pool of gurgling water stands at each corner of the lower tier. Each is like a pair of 10-foot-by-10-foot squares diagonally joined at one corner and surrounded by a ledge of blue tile about one foot high. Beneath the surface of the churning water you see several large orange and white fish. The garden path widens around the edge of the pool that faces the interior of the ruin.

Each of these pools contains freshly circulated water and is 4 feet deep. Each pool is also the home of 2d4 large goldfish (1d4 feet long). These fish are not dangerous and shy away from creatures approaching the pool's edge. PCs who succeed on a DC 10 Search check on the bottom of each pool locate the **Treasure** under inches of accumulated silt.

Those who search the southwestern pool and succeed on a DC 20 Search check locate a circular metal grille covering a shaft. This submerged shaft drops 60 feet before doubling back on itself for 40 more feet, finally emerging in the southern fountain pool of **Room F15**. Swimming through this shaft requires at least 7 rounds and a DC 10 Swim check for most characters; double this time for characters that cannot see in the dark. (See the **Swim** skill in **Chapter 4** of the *PHB* and **Drowning** in **Chapter 8** of the *DMG* for more details on swimming and the dangers of drowning.)

Treasure

Each pool contains 1d6 ivory statuettes hidden in the silt.

F2. Glog's Lean-to

Light: Depends on time of day.

Sounds: If Glog is present (90% chance), a DC 10 Listen check reveals the sounds of off-tune humming.

This is the lair of a fungal ogre named Glog, who has recently moved to the ruin. Read or paraphrase the following text.

The northern face of the lower tier is almost clear of overgrowth. Jagged stumps of trees protrude from the soil, and broken branches and shrubs litter the ground. The cleared area now houses a large, crude lean-to, little more than several logs propped against the southern wall and draped over with ragged animal skins. A pile of animal bones and foul-smelling meat lies next to an open slit along the lean-to's northwest side.

Glog enjoys the abundant resources that surround the ruin, including fish from the river and pools as well as deer and other forest game. He has negotiated a deal with the bandits from **Areas D** and **E**: The bandits provide Glog with food, animal skins, and the occasional tool or trinket, while the ogre allows them to explore the ziggurat and collect relics from it. This arrangement suits Glog fine, as he is very lazy and prefers not to have to do his own hunting.

Creature (EL 2)

If the PCs have not already dealt with Glog, there is a 90% chance that the ogre is here in his lean-to. Otherwise, Glog is out fishing or hunting. If the PCs approach within 20 feet of the lean-to while Glog is present, the ogre gets a Listen check opposed by the PCs' lowest Move Silently check. If the PCs were not attempting to Move Silently, then treat the party's lowest Move Silently skill rank as the DC. If Glog hears intruders, he emerges from his lair to see who's about.

Glog, fungal ogre: hp 29, see **Appendix** for statistics.

Tactics

Glog is a foolish fungal ogre and fights a straightforward fight. He attacks the closest PC with his greatclub, moving on to the next opponent once he drops the first. If reduced to 7 hit points or less, he surrenders.

Development

Glog pauses long enough to hear the PCs out—about 1 minute. If the PCs can improve his attitude to Unfriendly by succeeding on a DC 20 Diplomacy check, he lets the characters go on their way if they give him at least 1 weeks worth of food or 100 gp worth of coins.

Treasure

Glog's personal possessions are foul. He has smelly hide armor, a tree branch (greatclub), and a large sack that holds a dead pig, a half-eaten wheel of cheese, 14 gp, 42 sp, and a gold necklace adorned with green sea shells (worth 350 gp).

Lying atop a heap of decaying leaves and vegetation inside the lean-to is a large sack made from the pelts of four beavers crudely sewn together. (Once cleaned and unstitched, these pelts could bring as much as 10 gp apiece.) The crude sack contains the bodies of 5 wild pheasants, 3 catfish, 2 goldfish, 7 ivory statuettes, 512 cp, 301 sp, 157 gp and one clay tablet (as a scroll) with the divine spells *remove fear* and *endure elements* (CL 3rd).

F3. Lower Tier

Light: Depends on time of day.

Sounds: A DC 5 Listen check enables a character to hear the sounds of chirping birds.

Everywhere you look, the pathways, walls, and parapets are overgrown with an abundance of shrubs, vines, and green foliage. Birds shriek and flit from the tops of the trees that grow here. There are two sorts: the first are tall trees with palm-like fronds and oblong fruit of a deep purple hue, while the second are squat and bushy with branches choked with round, yellow-orange fruit the size of a child's fist.

In the several millennia since the fall of the Hetepkan Empire and the abandonment of this temple, the garden has run wild. The rosebushes that once grew here are gone, but the fruit trees remain. The fruit is safe to eat, which is what attracts birds to both this tier and the one above. These birds pose no threat to the PCs.

The areas below the trees are choked with thick vines, brush, and giant weeds. Even the pathways are partially blocked by such foliage. Movement along the pathways is at half speed, while movement in all other areas of this tier is reduced to quarter speed. Glog has cleared the space immediately around his lean-to to a distance of 20 feet, so movement is normal in that area.

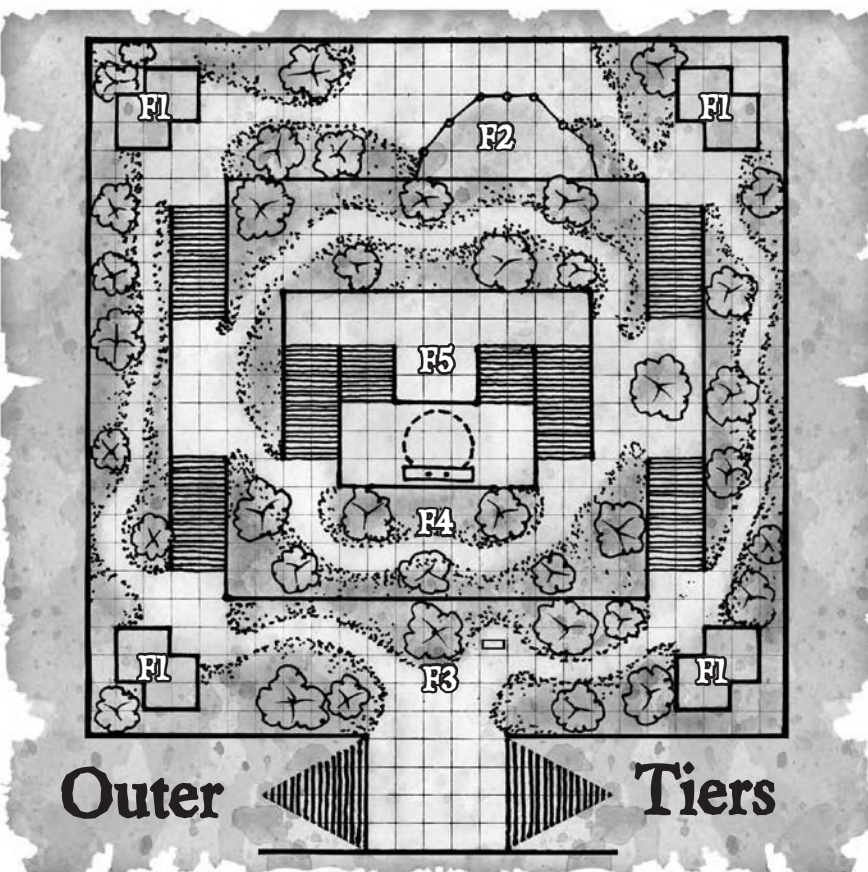
A secret door (see the **Dungeon Features** for details) that allows entrance to the Second Level of the complex is set in the eastern wall of this level.

F4. Middle Tier

Light: Depends on time of day.

Sounds: A DC 5 Listen check enables a character to hear the sounds of birds chirping.

The middle tier of the ruin is overgrown with a wild garden that must have once been well tended. The pathways now lie mostly overgrown, while those areas surrounding them are so choked with growth as to



- Part III: The Ruin -

completely hide the ruin's features. This green vegetation is sharply contrasted by the many small trees with bright red blossoms that grow in its midst.

Like the lower tier, the garden here has overgrown to such a degree as to become a virtual jungle. For purposes of movement, this tier is treated exactly like the lower tier (see F3). The short trees with red blossoms are pomegranate trees, though the thick foliage here hides most of the heavy fruit. In addition, three small berry bushes grow at the area marked with an 'A' on the map, along the north side of the tier. These berries are magical, and are detailed under Treasure.

A secret door in the northern wall of the level (see the **Dungeon Features** for details) grants access to the **Upper Tier** of the complex.

Treasure

The foliage in the massive garden conceals three magical berry bushes—the last survivors of the hundreds that once grew here as a boon granted by the ancient Hetepkan gods. Berries from these bushes are treated exactly like those affected by a *goodberry* spell. The bushes currently hold 37 magical berries that are worth 10 gp each, though if more than half are picked at one time, the bushes perish by the end of the day and are gone forever. Picked berries are restored at a rate of 1d4 per day, with a maximum of 25 per bush.

F5. Upper Tier (EL 4)

Light: Depends on time of day.

Sounds: None.

The uppermost tier has been divided into two levels, each separated by a pair of short stairs. A few feet beneath the upper level, the lower tier faces the north side of the tier and is bare stone. Above, the uppermost level is a small platform, on which stands an altar carved from gray-black stone. Set into the floor directly before the altar is a huge circular bas-relief in greening bronze that depicts the face of a bald man, his mouth open in a howl.

This upper tier of the ziggurat is where the Hetepkan priests once offered sacrifices of food, wine, animals, and people to their gods. All were sacrificed upon the altar and then thrown down the shaft below the bas-relief.

Trap (EL 4)

The bas-relief face conceals a trapdoor. Any weight over 50 lb. placed upon it will cause it to spring open, dropping everything upon it down a shaft to **Room F12**. Unless the locking mechanism hidden within the altar is activated, the trapdoor resets itself.

PIT TRAP

(CR 4)

Search DC 15; **Type** Mechanical; **Reset** Automatic (3 minutes)

Trigger location, 50 lb. or more (Reflex DC 18 negates)

Targets first target in each of two adjacent 5-ft.

Effect 60-ft. deep pit onto soft earth (3d6, fall)

Disarm Disable Device DC 22; **Bypass** hidden locking mechanism, Search DC 20, Disable Device DC 15 or Intelligence DC 18 locks trap door in place.

First Level

This level consists of just one room.

F6. First Level / Changing Room

Light: None.

Sounds: None.

This 10-foot chamber is empty save for a jumbled pile of rotting cloth piled against the middle of the north wall. Faded bas-reliefs cover every wall of the room. A steep flight of stairs exits the room in the southwest corner, directly opposite a small alcove in the northeast corner.



This chamber once served as a dressing room for the priests of the temple, as the bas-reliefs reveal, depicting bald priests adorning themselves in a variety of clothing, costumes, and masks. They clothed themselves in bright costumes and animal masks to appear as the gods before the nobility that attended the ceremonies that were performed on the temple's outside tiers. When the temple was abandoned, a few of the costumes and masks were left behind. Over the years, the cloth costumes have rotted away, along with the wooden pegs that held them.

The stairs take several turns downwards until they come a blank stone wall. A DC 15 Search check reveals a secret door that opens to **Room F8**.

Treasure

Characters who examine the rotting cloth and succeed on a DC 8 Search check uncover 7 bronze masks in the form of such animals as lions, eagles, and wolves. Each mask is adorned with lapis lazuli and is worth 30 gp.

Second Level

This level consists of four chambers.

F7. Intruder's Tomb

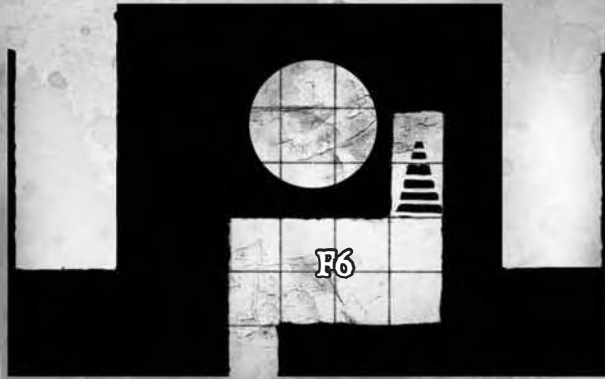
Light: None. Clouds of dust reduce the effectiveness of light, reducing the visibility of bright areas by half.

Sounds: None.

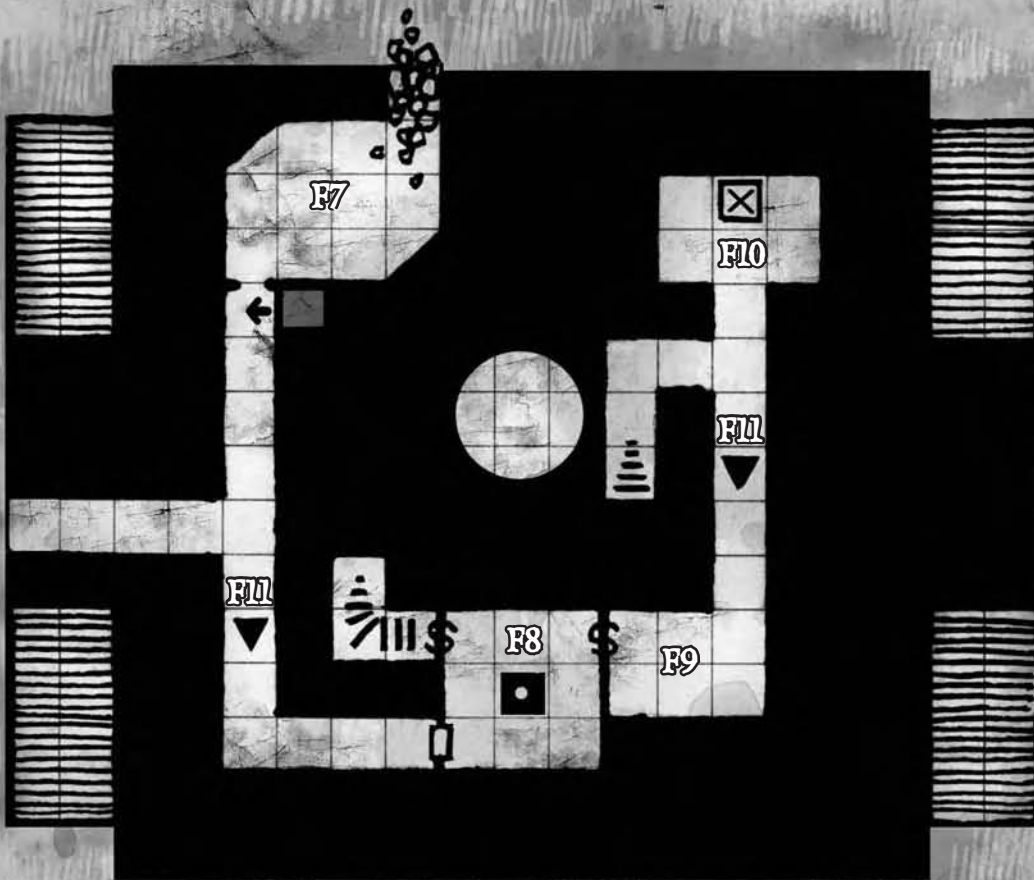
This room is trapped.

Beyond the low archway, this irregularly shaped room is empty except for a stone chest standing against the center of the west wall. A pile of broken masonry fills the southwest corner, where the wall has crumbled into the room.

First Level



Second Level



- Part III: The Ruin -

This room serves no other purpose than to entomb unwanted intruders inside the complex. A thick layer of dust covers everything. The stone chest is set into the floor as a lure for potential thieves. It is unlocked, though the latch is stuck (DC 15 Strength check to force open). The chest contains the Treasure.

Trap (EL 3)

Set into the floor directly in front of the chest is a wide pressure plate that automatically activates whenever anyone approaches it from the front.

SHIFTING WALL TRAP	CR 3
Search DC 20; Type Mechanical; Reset Repair	
Init —	
Trigger Location (50 lb.)	
AC 4, touch 4, flat-footed 4 (–1 size, –5 Dex)	
hp 1,000; Hardness 8	
Melee stone block +0 (7d6)	
Disarm Disable Device DC 25	

PCs who become trapped in this room will not die from lack of oxygen, since the crumbling wall in the southwest corner allows air to seep in from outside. The rubble of the wall can be cleared away to allow trapped characters to escape to the tier outside (Area F3, south side). Creating a space large enough for a Medium creature to crawl out through requires a team of three people working 4 hours. This time increases by +1 hour for each fewer person (7 hours maximum). The job takes 30 fewer minutes for each character with Strength of 15 or greater that assists in the digging.

Treasure

The chest contains one clay tablet (as arcane scroll) that holds the *undetectable alignment* spell (CL 3rd).

F8. The Offering Bowl (EL 1)

Light: None.

Sounds: None.

This room is trapped.

A squat pedestal of pink stone with deep blue swirls stands in the center of this room. It holds a large, wide-mouthed bowl of gleaming gold embellished with rows of raised nodes. The carvings on the walls show bald priests bowing in supplication, tossing coins and gems into a bowl, then passing the bowl around to worshippers at a ceremony in a garden.

This room houses the ceremonial bowl used by the Hetepkan priests to collect monetary offerings from the nobility. A DC 20 Search check of the north wall reveals hundreds of tiny holes. The golden bowl is detailed in the Treasure.

Trap (EL 2)

As no one except the ancient priests could be trusted to handle the bowl, the resting place of this relic has been trapped. The bowl rests atop a small pressure plate. Should it be disturbed without this plate first being deactivated, a cloud of tiny needles showers the room from hundreds of holes in the north wall. Though each of these needles was once dipped in poison, the passing of the years has rendered the toxin useless. Nevertheless, the needles themselves can still be deadly.

SHOWER OF NEEDLES TRAP	CR 2
Search DC 20; Type Mechanical; Reset automatic (5 minutes)	
Init –5	
Trigger Touch	
AC 4, touch 4, flat-footed 4 (–1 size, –5 Dex)	
hp 20; Hardness 10	
Ranged needles +20 (3d4)	
Disarm Disable Device DC 22	

Treasure

The golden bowl is 18 inches in diameter and weighs 3 lb. It is worth 350 gp. The bowl contains 2 inches of brackish water; beneath which can be found 13 ancient gold coins. Both sides of the coins depict a silhouette of the temple. Each coin is worth as much as 15 gp to a collector.

F9. False Perceptions

Light: None.

Sounds: DC 15 Listen check reveals scratching noises coming from the rubble.

Stacked bricks and piles of rubble fill this room.

This room was purposefully arranged to appear in an incomplete state before the temple was abandoned. Amidst the rubble, characters can pick out mixing buckets, rotten wooden objects, and corroded bronze tools. The walls are carved with images of men and women, but what they're doing is unclear since the bas-relief was never completed. The idea was to deceive intruders who entered the complex through Room F6 into believing the complex was still under construction and never completed. It was hoped this would keep intruders from discovering the secret door in the east wall (see the **Dungeon Features** for details) and discourage them from further attempts to penetrate the temple's interior. All objects here are decayed and useless.

Creatures (EL 1)

Hiding in the rubble are two Medium monstrous centipedes that tunneled into the room through a small crack in the lower west wall. They mindlessly attack anyone who enters the room.

Medium Monstrous Centipedes (2): hp 4, 7, see *MM* for statistics.

F10. Star Chart

Light: None.

Sounds: None.

This room is trapped.

Aside from the elaborate mosaic on the walls and ceiling, this room is bare. The tiled walls and ceiling depict the night sky, with tiny points of paint showing the positions of the stars. At the center of the south wall, the painted stones give way to sparkling gemstones.

The murals accurately show the positions of the stars as they were thousands of years ago, during the height of the Hetepkan Empire. A successful DC 15 Knowledge (religion) or Knowledge (history) check reveals that the mural on the south wall depicts the constellation Hephrenus, the Serpent, which was sacred to the Hetepkans. Each star in Hephrenus represents an ancient god or goddess from the Hetepkan pantheon, though the true purpose of the constellation's positioning on the wall is lost. Each of the gems mounted on the wall can be pried loose using a knife or similar instrument by making a successful DC 15 Dexterity check. Failure indicates that the gem is damaged (with its worth reduced by 1d10 × 10%), but still comes loose. All of the gemstones are mounted in the wall next to the trapdoor, and those who attempt to steal them risk setting off the ancient trap.

Trap

EL ½

There is a 1 in 6 chance per gem pried loose of tripping the trapdoor, which dumps everyone on it down a chute to Room F17 before resetting itself the following round.

CHUTE TRAP	CR ½
Search DC 20; Type Mechanical; Reset Automatic (1 round)	
Init —	
Trigger Touch (gemstone 1 in 6 chance)	
AC 4, touch 4, flat-footed 4 (–1 size, –5 Dex)	

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hp 30; Hardness 5

Targets All creatures in trapped 10-ft. square.

Effect Drops characters to **Room F17** (Reflex DC 20 negates)

Disarm Disable Device DC 20

Treasure

There are 14 total gemstones mounted in the star chart on the wall. Thirteen of these gems are large, circular amethysts (worth 50 gp each), while the last is an iridescent spindle *ioun stone* (sustains life without food or water).

F11. Scything Blade Trap

Three of these traps have been placed in corridors throughout the complex: two on the Second Level, and one on the Fourth Level. Each consists of a pressure plate (2 feet by 2 feet) positioned in the middle of a corridor. Any creature that passes over the plate has a 1 in 4 chance of activating the trap. Once activated, a long blade of iron arcs across the corridor in a wide arc before resetting itself the following round.

SCYTHING BLADE TRAP

CR 1

Search DC 19; **Type** Mechanical; **Reset** Automatic (1 round)

Init -5

Trigger Location (1 in 4 chance)

AC 5, touch 5, flat-footed 5 (-5 Dex)

hp 15; **Hardness** 8

Melee scything blade +8 (2d4/×3)

Disarm Disable Device DC 20

Towards the southern end of this hall is a short corridor that leads to east and then turns north where it descends to the Third Level, at **Room F17**.

Third Level

The lower level of the ruin comprises several rooms.

F12. The Sacrificial Pit

Light: None.

Sounds: None.

Thick shadows pool in the corners of this large chamber. To the north, the walls angle to form a large alcove, and some fifteen feet overhead, you see a circular shaft piercing the ceiling. On the center of the southern wall stands a set of bronze double doors while another stands inside the alcove. Oddly, chalk drawings of stick-figures cover the walls. The floor is covered with loamy soil, heaped in low mounds.

This chamber once served as the disposal area for victims sacrificed at the ziggurat's top. Even after thousands of years, the monster that devoured such victims slumbers here. The shaft in the ceiling drops 50 feet from the ziggurat's uppermost platform (see **F5** for details) and the walls of the shaft are fitted so well as to be virtually smooth. Aside from the shaft, the only other features of the room are the dirt floor and the two sets of double doors. The dirt covering the floor averages 5 feet in depth and, though churned at the surface, is tightly packed 2 feet below.

Characters who examine the room and succeed on a DC 15 Search check find the Treasure.

The double doors are made of stone with bronze plating, and are barred with iron bars from the outside (the corridor to the east and **Room F14**). The doors have no handles on the surfaces facing into this room. Beyond the double doors there is a wide corridor and a staircase that descends to the Fourth Level, connected to the staircase south of **Room F27**.

Double doors: 3 in. thick; Hardness 15; hp 50; AC 5; Break DC 28.

Creature

EL 4

This monstrosity is slow to awaken, only doing so once the PCs begin to search the chamber or make a lot of noise, such as through trying to open the double doors. Once awake, the slithering abomination attacks immediately.

Slithering Abomination (1): hp 38, see **Appendix** for statistics.

Tactics

This creature is quite hungry and fights to the death.

F13. Stele of Life and Death

Light: None.

Sounds: None.

This room smells of stale air and dust. The frescoes along the walls show tall, elongated, man-like figures with the heads of lions performing various rituals on the corpses of the dead, such as immersing them in water and wrapping them with bindings. As many of the tiles have fallen off to shatter on the floor, the details are unclear. A small stone pylon, about 2-feet tall and covered in runes sits atop a pedestal directly opposite the door.

This room once served as a library of sorts, though it housed but one text in its place of honor. The stone stele stored here is actually an ancient Hetepkan text called "The Book of Gray Waters" (see **Treasure**) and it was last placed here more than 2,500 years ago by the priests. Only when a priest of their order died did they take the stele from this hallowed place in order to perform the proper rituals.

The frescoes here are too vague and eroded to provide any real information, though any PC who studies them and then later sees the contents of **Room F19** may recognize (Intelligence check DC 15 required) the implements there as pertaining to funeral rites.

Treasure

"The Book of Gray Waters" is finely carved from cream-colored marble and covered on all sides with tiny runes. It measures 8 inches by 8 inches by 24 inches and weighs 250 lbs. The runes describe a variety of rituals concerning the extension of life, laying the dead to rest, and mummification. To an historical scholar or collector, such as Abraham Stewart, the stele is worth 800 gp.

F14. The Fountain of Shadows

Light: None.

Sounds: A DC 5 Listen check reveals the sound of running water.

This large, T-shaped chamber is built on a massive scale, and a huge circular fountain in the center fills much of it. A statue of a leaping lion rears from the middle of the fountain, a stream of water cascading from its mouth into the basin below. Dark shadows cloak the high ceiling and seem to drip down in places, pooling beneath the lip of the fountain and in the corners of the room. Three sets of bronze-plated double doors provide entrance, though the northern set is barred from this side with an iron beam. Deep green tiles checker the floor.

The fountain is fed by the river waters that enter through the plumbing and circulate throughout the structure. The water is cool and clean, but otherwise the fountain is unremarkable. Since this room serves as a main through-junction for this level of the ruin, a shadow lurks here as a guardian. When the PCs first enter the room, this creature hides in the shadows collected beneath the eaves of the fountain and its leaping lion statue (shadow's Hide check opposed by the PCs' Spot checks to detect).

Creature

EL 3

Once the PCs fully enter the room, the shadow attacks.

Shadow (1): hp 24, see **MM** for statistics.

Tactics

The shadow fights until destroyed or the PCs flee. The shadow cannot leave this room.

F15. The Fountains of the Gods

Light: None.

Sounds: A DC 0 Listen check reveals the sound of running water.

The corridor here echoes with the rumble of running water as it angles between two fountains. A thin mist hangs in the air, fed by jets of water spilling into both basins from the mouths of stone faces mounted on the walls behind them. The entire area glistens with moisture.

Though the floor is a bit slick due to the mist, it is safe to tread. Each fountain basin is 4 feet deep and contains fresh water pumped from the nearby river. The water comes in through the open mouths of 12 animal faces: six depicting lions for the northeast fountain and six depicting jackals for the southwest fountain. Other than these fountains and their animal-face stonework, this room is unremarkable.

Hidden below the churning waters of the southwest fountain is an open shaft (3-½ feet in diameter) that drops 40 feet before doubling back on itself to rise another 60 feet to emerge in the southwest pool of F1.

F16. Slime Pool

Light: None.

Sounds: A DC 10 Listen reveals the sound of dripping water.

Water droplets cling to the walls, ceiling, and floor of this foul-smelling chamber. The dampness has partially damaged the painted walls, making them appear to be dark smears and disembodied heads and appendages. A large pool of bright green, gooey slime, more than 12-feet long, covers most of the floor. Four bottle-like objects lie partially covered near the center of the morass.

This was once a meditation room, where nobles and priests alike used hallucinogenic drugs to help them experience visions of the spirit world. The room was never fully sealed against the dampness caused by the running water from the adjacent fountains (Room F15). Over many years, the damp attacked the furnishings here, resulting in the formation of a large patch of green slime. The slime has devoured all the room's contents except for four stone vials used to store the vision-inducing drugs. (These are detailed in the Treasure.)

Hazard

EL 4

The green slime is quite dangerous. Anyone attempting to cross the room or retrieve one of the stone vials must make a successful DC 12 Dexterity check or come into contact with the slime. Those contacting the green slime take 1d6 points of Constitution damage for each round of contact. It may be scraped off a creature (only on the first round of contact) or a stone object (such as one of the vials), though doing so may destroy the object used to scrape it off. The slime can be destroyed by sunlight, a *cure disease* spell, or anything that causes fire or cold damage. See **Dungeon Ecology** in Chapter 3 of the DMG for more details on green slime.

Treasure

Each vial is made from a single piece of carved stone that is 10 inches high and weighs 5 pounds. Elaborate runes cover the surface of all four vials, detailing the contents once held and their general effects. Each vial has a stone stopper, though only one still contains a potion (a *potion of darkvision*). Aside from the intact potion, the vials are each worth 25 gp to a collector.

F17. The Watching Sphinxes

Light: None.

Sounds: None.



This rectangular room is crowded with five darkly colored stone statues of lion-like creatures with the faces and upper bodies of humans. The features of the statues have been elongated, so their heads scrape the ceilings some 8 feet overhead. The three monstrous statues on the north wall depict females, with necklaces, earrings, and bare bosoms. The two statues on the south wall depict males, with curly beards, well-defined muscles, and elaborate headdresses.

Except for the statues, this room is empty. The statues, each weighing more than 20 tons, are carved from a dull gray stone. The two westernmost statues are mounted on hidden rollers (Search DC 20) and hide secret doors. These doors can be opened like all other secret doors in the complex, which causes the statues before them to slowly slide aside. (This takes 3 rounds.)

Statue Secret Stone Doors: 4 in. thick; Hardness 8; hp 60; Break (DC 28); Search (DC 20); Secret Catch (Search DC 20)

Trap (CR 1)

Unless a separate hidden catch is located and depressed before opening the secret doors, the mouths of all the statues snap open and release poisonous gas into the room.

POISONOUS GAS TRAP

CR 1

Search DC 22; Type Mechanical; Reset No reset

Init -6

Trigger Touch

AC 5, touch 5, flat-footed 5 (-1 size, -5 Dex)

hp 60; Hardness 8

Targets All creatures in the room.

Effect Room floods with red thoyule gas. Inhaled, Fortitude DC 13, initial damage unconsciousness (1d6 minutes), secondary damage 1d4+1 Str.

Disarm Disable Device DC 27; Bypass Hidden catch (Search DC 22)

F18. Upper Gallery

Light: None.
Sounds: None.

This chamber is a gallery above a large, sand-covered room. The walkway, which appears in good condition, features a low stone wall. The walls of the gallery are covered with frescoes showing ritual combat between armed men, beasts, and monsters. One image that appears multiple times is that of a hideous red demon wielding a black sword. The demon has long, curling horns and a forked tongue.

The nobility and temple priests used this gallery to view the ritual combat that served to settle disputes. The red demon is a demonic servant used by the evil gods of the Hetepkan pantheon to punish their enemies; it is the same demon that appears in **Room F26** if the door there is disturbed.

The walkway descends 10 feet to the sandy floor of **Room F26**. Since the statues there are used to support the walkway, it is possible to climb down to the floor without the use of a rope, though it is very difficult (Climb DC 25).

F19. Mummification Chamber

Light: None.
Sounds: None.

The potent odor of brine fills your nostrils as you turn the corner. The chamber contains two stone slabs, one to the left of the entrance and the other standing in the center. The left slab is cluttered with ceramic jars and pots, wooden boxes, and rotting piles of cloth. The central slab's surface is concave, forming a shallow depression that runs its entire length. Three inches of a brownish liquid stands in this depression. Beyond this central slab, a stone stairway on the east wall leads down into the darkness. The walls depict bald priests performing various rituals upon corpses, including removing their organs, immersing them in liquids, and wrapping them in cloth.

Here, the temple priests mummified select members of the nobility and the priesthood before they were taken to their tombs beyond the complex. What remains of the instruments and equipment necessary for the ritual lies upon the stone slab at the west end of the chamber and is detailed in the **Treasure**. The central slab was used to immerse the dead body for extended periods, and the 18-inch-deep depression still contains a portion of the alchemical compound employed for this purpose. Though the liquid is composed largely of brine, it is slightly acidic—enough to cause a stinging sensation to exposed skin, but not enough to cause damage.

Treasure

Most of the materials once used to perform mummifications are now ruined. The following items of value can still be salvaged, however: a wooden box containing 24 delicate bronze tools (hooks, saws, etc.) used for the removal of organs, worth 250 gp for the set to a collector; 4 canopic jars (4 inches in diameter and 6 inches high) made from alabaster and worked with lapis lazuli, worth 50 gp each; and a small wooden coffer (5 inches by 10 inches by 4 inches) limned with polished bronze. The coffer has runes worked into the surface of its lid that, if translated via magic or a successful Decipher Script check (DC 25), read as "Master of the Beasts." This is a *coffer of tricks*, equivalent to a *gray bag of tricks*.

F20a. Antechamber

Light: None.
Sounds: None.

Steep narrow steps lead down to a square antechamber. The floor is checkered in green and blue tile, each measuring perhaps 5 inches across. The eastern end of the room opens into a larger chamber, though a delicate curtain of shining of red, blue, and green glass beads distorts any view of its interior.

This antechamber was a waiting area for those wishing to meet privately with the high priestess of the temple. Through the curtain of glass beads, she could

see when visitors were waiting and call them into her private sanctum when she was ready. The curtain is very fragile and has a 30% chance of collapsing to the floor and breaking for every PC who passes through it. If this happens, the glass beads are scattered across the stone floor for a distance of 10 feet in any direction. Everyone who remains in the area of affect is treated as flat-footed.

F20b. Private Sanctum of the High Priestess

Light: None.
Sounds: None.

The room opens into a circular chamber with a domed ceiling more than 15 feet overhead. The floor here is tiled with the same green and blue pattern as the antechamber, but these walls are adorned with numerous detailed bas-reliefs, depicting animal-headed gods and goddesses commanding the elements, creating the world, pronouncing judgment upon bowing mortals, and so on. The only other feature of interest is a large black altar of polished stone set at the eastern end of the room. Curiously, a dark purple cloth bearing no signs of age or wear covers some object on the surface of the altar. Whatever it is, it is no wider than 1 foot and stands no taller than 2 feet high.

This chamber was once the private sanctum of the high priestess, Hatshepsut, and it is here that she chose to await the coming apocalypse. During the last days before the fall of the empire, she foresaw the coming doom and took steps to ensure the empire would rise again. Before the priests and underlings abandoned the temple, Hatshepsut came to this room and spoke an incantation to entrap herself inside a magical mirror, which is now hidden beneath the purple cloth. When someone uncovers the mirror and gazes into its depths, she will wake from her stasis and be free to rebuild the fallen empire. She never dreamed it would take so long.

The black altar is constructed of a single piece of stone and weighs over thirty tons. In the presence of a *detect magic* spell, the mirror faintly radiates transmutation magic.

Anyone who uncovers the mirror must make a successful DC 19 Will save or swap places with Hatshepsut. The PC is sucked into the mirror, while Hatshepsut is released to the PC's position. If Hatshepsut successfully trades places with a PC, it seems to the others in the chamber that their comrade simply transforms into the woman. (PCs viewing the swap are allowed a DC 15 Spot check to detect a blurry wisp of mist seeping into the mirror's surface behind the manifesting woman.) If the PC resists the priestess's attempt to trade places, he is aware only of seeing the eyes of his own reflection flash for an instant in the mirror. If the PCs continue to look into the mirror, Hatshepsut tries to trade places with the closest PC once each round until she is successful or they refrain from looking into the mirror.

Trap (EL 4)

Unlike most *mirrors of life trapping*, this mirror contains but one non-spatial extradimensional compartment. If the mirror is destroyed, any creature trapped inside is free just as if they had traded places with a victim gazing into it—though, obviously, no one can then be trapped inside ever again.

MIRROR OF LIFE TRAPPING

CR 4

Search DC 10; **Type** Magical; **Reset** Automatic (instantly)

Trigger Visual

AC 5, touch 5, flat-footed 5 (–5 Dex)

hp 4; **Hardness** 1

Target Creature staring into mirror.

Effect The target must succeed on a DC 19 Will save or exchange places with the inhabitant trapped in the mirror.

Creature

EL 4

Until the *mirror of life trapping* is uncovered, Hatshepsut is in stasis within and completely oblivious to everything. Only when awakened by someone uncovering the mirror does she become aware of her surroundings. Hatshepsut is no fool. When she appears, she quickly takes in her environment to assess those around

- Part III: The Ruin -

her. She claims the priests imprisoned her and left her to languish in the mirror. She has no intention of going back in, and plays the part of a hapless victim. If the PCs are having none of it, she tries to flee, attacking only if she must.

The high priestess never anticipated her condition would last as long as it has. Over the thousands of years that have passed, her essence has decayed, corroding her memory and being. When finally released, she has but a fraction of her former might.

Hatshepsut is a dark-skinned woman in her thirties with deep green eyes. She keeps both her head and body closely shaven, with her eyebrows the only visible exception. Her muscular frame is scantily clad, and she moves with fluid, purposeful strides.

Hatshepsut (1): hp 32, see Appendix for statistics.

Tactics

Once free, Hatshepsut takes the surprise round to get her bearings. On the following round, she'll either cast *summon monster I* on the defensive to conjure a fiendish dire rat, or fling herself at the closest spellcaster. If the rat's present, she commands it to keep the warrior-types at bay while she uses *Stunning Fist* to incapacitate her foes. If she's reduced to half hit points or less, she flees.

Hatshepsut is more interested in driving opponents away than destroying them, as she still needs to regain her senses. If possible, she attempts to capture at least one opponent in order to interrogate them concerning the conditions of the world outside. Only if wounded to half her hit points or fewer and outnumbered by at least two to one does she attempt to withdraw or surrender. If given the choice between these two, she prefers to run away.

Development

If combat doesn't immediately break out, Hatshepsut urges the PCs to help her escape the place, lest her masters return. She remains with the PCs for as long as they remain in the ruin. Once free, she begins to plot how to slaughter these fools.

If captured, Hatshepsut tries to bluff her way to freedom, perhaps lying about the contents of some chamber in the complex and then using her familiarity with the temple and its protections to escape. Whatever the ploy, she prefers to feign weakness until the moment of her escape attempt and then trust to suddenness and fury to win her way through.

Fourth Level

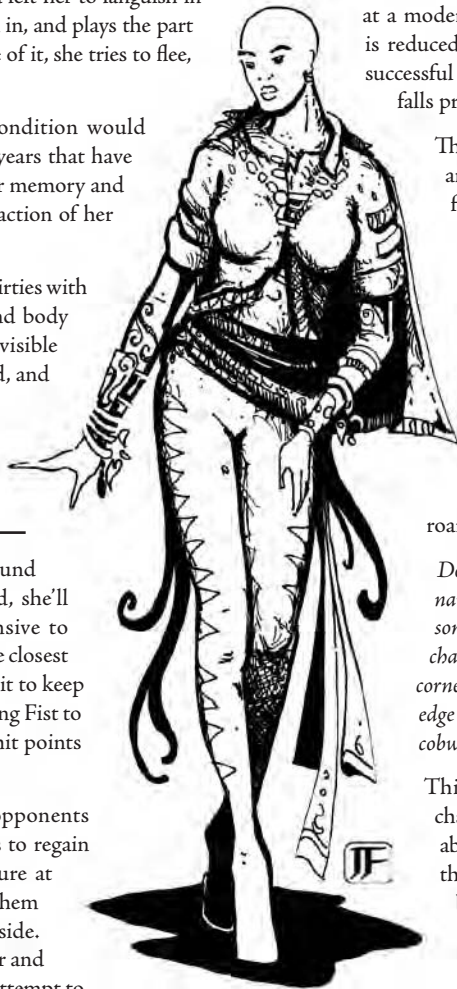
This level consists of seven adventure locations.

F21. Drainage Tunnel

Light: None.

Sounds: A DC 0 Listen check reveals the sound of running water.

The sound of running water reverberates through this low, stone-lined tunnel. A stream of water about a foot deep flows rapidly down its length, from east to west. The walls and ceiling are rounded, giving the impression that the whole passage is the inside of a giant pipe. Rocks, broken rubble, and the occasional patch of thick moss choke many areas, making footing treacherous. The eastern end of the passage is blocked by a set of vertical iron bars.



The ceiling here is 6 feet high, and the water flows through this passage at a moderate rate (7 mph). Normal movement through this tunnel is reduced to half speed and any attempt to move faster requires a successful DC 15 Balance check. Failure indicates that the PC slips and falls prone. (The fall deals 1d2 points of nonlethal damage.)

The bars at the eastern end of the tunnel are made from iron and remain intact despite their exposure to water. If checked for magic, they radiate strong transmutation magic. The bars are evenly spaced 1 foot apart, though one of the middle bars has been bent aside enough to allow one Medium creature to pass per round.

Iron Bars: 2 in. thick; Hardness 10; hp 50; Bend (DC 25); Break (DC 40).

F22. Spiders' Nest

Light: None.

Sounds: All Listen checks take a -5 penalty due to the roar of the water.

Dominating this large chamber is a fifteen-foot square pool. A narrow stair rises out of the pool, leading to a stone walkway, some three feet above the floor, in the northeast corner of the chamber. The walkway leads to an open doorway in the southeast corner, where a narrow stream of water emerges, spilling over the edge and cascading into the pool. Above, the ceiling is concealed by cobwebs, most of which hang like disturbing curtains.

This room once allowed temple priests access to the main channels that drained the circulated water from the temple above, in case they required repairs or became clogged. Despite the flowing water, the floor of this area is clogged with rocks, bones, and other rubble and should be treated exactly like **Room F21** for purposes of movement (including the raised walkway).

Creatures (EL 3)

The real danger here, however, is that the cobwebs on the ceiling are the nest of 4 Small monstrous spiders.

Small monstrous spiders (6): hp 4 each, see *MM* for statistics.

Tactics

The spiders drop from their webs using silky strands and attack any creature that attempts to move across the pool. The web nest is more resistant to fire attacks than normal, due to the dampness caused by the water. (Note that the spiders are not particularly adept at navigating the water. If immersed for any reason, they are automatically swept 15 feet to the west in addition to suffering the same movement penalties as the PCs.)

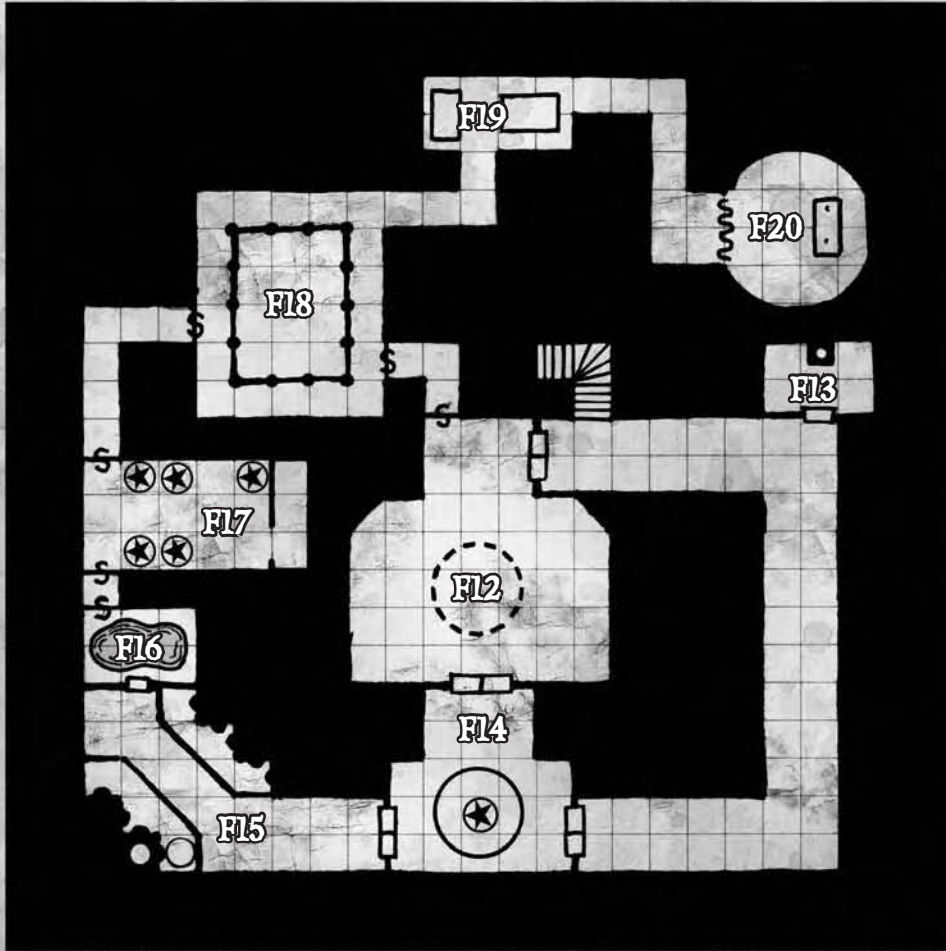
F23. Drainage Block

Light: None.

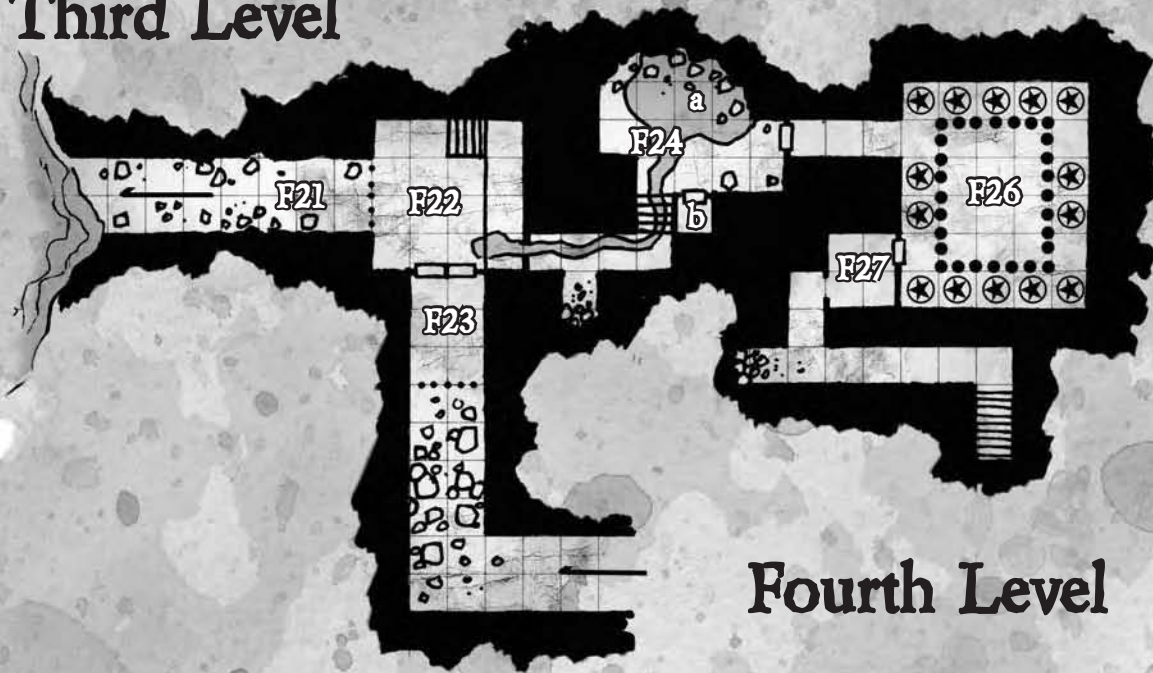
Sounds: A DC 0 Listen check reveals the sound of rushing water.

The southern tunnel is low and cramped, with only a few feet of clearance between the surface of the flowing water and the ceiling. After 15 feet, the passage is blocked by a set of vertical iron bars. Beyond the bars, you can just make out a jumble of large stones and debris that almost entirely blocks the passage. Because the water continues to flow from this area, it is clear that there must be at least small crevices between the rocks.

This drainage passage is only 4 feet high and, as in **Room F21**, the footing is very treacherous. In addition, the iron bars blocking this passage are identical to those in **Room F21**, except that these are shorter and not bent. For details concerning the iron bars or the movement penalties caused by the



Third Level



Fourth Level

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wet environment, see **Room F21**. The rocks and debris clogging the passage beyond are the remains of a partial collapse that occurred several decades ago. The cave-in, extending about 25 feet, blocks progress by all creatures larger than Tiny. Excavation of this area would be a major undertaking and is beyond the scope of this adventure, though you are encouraged to expand the ruined complex as you like.

F24a. Leaking Ceiling

Light: None.

Sounds: A DC 5 Listen check reveals the sound of dripping water.

Rubble litters the floor of this oddly shaped chamber, and earth is exposed where huge blocks have fallen from the collapsed north wall. In two separate places, a steady trickle of water pours from holes in this exposed area, falling in small streams into a large pool that has formed at the north end of the room. A tiny rivulet from this pool winds its way across the rubble-strewn floor before vanishing down a set of stairs on the south wall. Two stone doors enter the room: one on the south wall next to the stairs, the other on the east wall in the northern corner.

This room once served a variety of purposes: a guard post, a rallying point for fighters wishing to fight in the arena to the east, and a storage room for items used to maintain the underground drainage tunnels. In the last few centuries, the ceiling and north walls have collapsed, leaking a small portion of water from some of the upper pipes into the chamber. The resulting pool is not deep (7 inches at the deepest), but is rife with cave life, such as sightless fish, crustaceans, and numerous mushrooms that grow around its perimeter. None of this wildlife is dangerous, and most is even edible. Two feet inside the western end of the pool is a small gold ring (see **Treasure**). This ring can only be located by PCs on the west side of the pool with a successful DC 15 Spot or DC 12 Search check.

The room is covered in debris and rubble, slowing all movement through it to half the normal rate. In addition, moving across the room causes it to shift slightly, displacing small pebbles and dust from the ceiling. (Emphasize these warnings so PCs understand the chamber may be unsafe.) Despite this, the chamber is structurally sound as long as it is not treated overly roughly. Any serious attempts to dig into the north wall, for example, result in more rocks, dust, and rubble falling from the ceiling. If the PCs ignore these warnings and persist in digging or expose any portion of the room to a powerful explosion or magical effect, such as a *fireball* spell, the rest of the ceiling caves in. In this event, the entire chamber is buried and PCs of this level are likely killed. (See **Chapter 3** of the *DMG* for details on cave-ins.)

Treasure

The gold ring lying in the pool is a simple gold band with no adornments of any kind. It is a *ring of clumsiness*.

F24b. Storage Closet

Light: None.

Sounds: None.

This closet is piled high with the jagged remains of hundreds of broken clay tablets. The pile covers the floor entirely to a depth of 2 or 3 feet and is covered with a thick layer of white dust.

This closet once contained an assortment of clay tablets, upon which were written a host of topics. The room served as a storage area for all of the written works of lesser importance that had been gathered by the temple. When the ceiling partially collapsed in the adjacent room (**Room F24a**), all the tablets were thrown to the floor and smashed. Of the hundreds of tablets once housed here, only one survived, though it is now buried under the remains of the rest. PCs who rummage through the broken tablets for at least 5 minutes, and make a successful DC 15 Search check, locate the intact tablet (see **Treasure**). It takes 20 minutes to take 10 on this Search roll; taking 20 stretches that to more than six hours.

Treasure

The one surviving clay tablet, unlike the other mundane tablets, holds several spells. Treat the tablet as an arcane scroll of *blindness/deafness*, *darkness*, and *rainbow pattern* (caster level 8th).

F25. Collapsed Tunnel

Light: None.

Sounds: A DC 10 Listen check detects the sound of creaking rubble.

Rubble fills this narrow passage. Broken masonry, piles of rock, and heaps of dirt mingle with a thick layer of cobwebs, making it nearly impossible to see more than 10 feet down its length.

Like many sections of the Fourth Level, this passage has undergone a partial collapse in the last few centuries. The damage here is extensive, making it impossible to traverse without climbing. Even by climbing, traveling through this area is dangerous. A PC who makes a successful DC 15 Climb check can pass through the corridor without harm, though numerous pebbles and small chunks of dirt are dislodged from the ceiling in the process. A failed Climb check means that the PC makes no progress through the tunnel, and a check that fails by 5 or more means that the PC has inadvertently taken a tumble or caused a large rock to fall on him and takes 1d4 points of damage. In addition to these dangers, this passage is even more unstable than **Room F24a**. Any rough disturbance may, at the GM's discretion, cause a complete cave-in. In the event of a cave-in, consult **Cave-ins and Collapses in Chapter 3** of the *DMG*.

F26. The Arena

Light: None.

Sounds: None.

This large chamber is rectangular with a high ceiling. The floor is covered with sand. Fourteen stone statues that depict animal-headed men and women dressed in fine garb of ancient design stand along the walls of the chamber, their arms uplifted to support a stone walkway that encircles the room. This walkway rises 10 feet above the sands of the floor and is surrounded by a low stone wall. Four dark alcoves stand among the towering stone statues: two on the west wall and two on the east. An open archway gapes from the wall in the northwest alcove, while a bright bronze door stands on the wall in the southwest alcove.

Long ago, this arena was used by the priests and nobles that attended the temple to settle intractable disputes. Though it was rarely called upon, personal combat before a crowd of one's peers was viewed as an honorable alternative to having the royal family decide the matter. In addition, the arena was occasionally used to dispense divine justice upon transgressors or important heathens. In such cases, a demon known as a crimson horror was summoned to slay the intended victim while both priests and nobles watched from the safety of the walkway above.

Though the chamber has not been used in thousands of years, a pervading sense of unease hangs in the air. The entire chamber seems unnaturally silent, and all noises made inside the room seemed muffled. PCs that remain in this room for more than 5 rounds must make a successful DC 12 Will save or be treated as shaken as long as they stay in the chamber.

The door in the southwest alcove is made of stone overlaid with plates of bronze. The door retains its bright sheen due to the magical protections that have preserved it against the ravages of time. (If checked, it radiates strong transmutation magic.) The door is not locked, though it is barred from the other side. The bar can be disengaged by flipping a hidden switch (Search DC 20) from either side.

Bronze-plated door: 4 ½ in. thick; Hardness 15; hp 50; Break DC 28.



Depictions of bald priests arming well-dressed men with an assortment of weapons appear on the walls of this small, virtually empty, room. Other than a generous layer of dust, the only items of any interest are an assortment of ancient weapons and shields hanging from pegs along the north wall.

This chamber served as a storage chamber for weapons and other equipment used in the ritual combats that occurred in **Room F26** to the east. For such combats to be considered fair before the gods, the contenders were allowed to use only weapons taken from this room. All personal weapons and equipment was left behind in this room before the duel began. At present, ten ancient weapons and two shields hang from small stone pegs on the north wall.

Treasure

The following weapons hang on the wall: 2 falchions, 2 kukri, 2 shortspears, 2 kopeshes (shortswords), a spiked gauntlet, and a +1 *falchion*. There are also 2 round, bronze heavy shields with visages of snarling lions embossed upon them that hang next to the weapons, though the straps of these have long rotted away. (They can be repaired for 5 gp each.) In addition to their inherent value, each of these items would be worth up to three times its listed value to a collector of Hetepkan artifacts. Note that all these items are made from bronze, and are not as durable in combat as modern weapons. On a natural 1 in combat, the weapon breaks.

Concluding the Adventure

Once the PCs have explored and documented the ruin to their satisfaction, they are free to return to Professor Stewart and divide their spoils. From the professor's point of view, the most important treasures to be gained from the ruins are the "Book of Gray Waters" from **Room F13** and all the broken tablets from **Room F24b**. If the PCs manage to turn these objects over to Professor Stewart, he is quite pleased. Realizing the potential of these objects, the professor rewards the PCs beyond the agreed upon sum, offering his expertise whenever they may need it in the future at no charge.

With these objects in his possession, he is able to confirm the legitimacy of his work to his superiors, though the complete translations will take him almost two years. In this case, within a mere few years, Professor Stewart becomes famous, eventually taking a seat upon the Scholars' Council. He always remembers those who helped him build his career and the PCs will have made a powerful friend for the future.

In addition to meeting the obligations of their contract with Professor Stewart, the PCs may have several loose ends to tie up:

- Krung and his bandits may still be at large. If Krung escaped a previous encounter with the PCs, he flees north with whatever bandits he has left. Can the PCs catch him before he has time to refortify his band?
- Professor Stewart's assistant Frank is a traitor, as he is responsible for passing on vital information to Krung and his bandits. If his treachery is not discovered, Frank steals some of the more important finds (such as the "Book of Gray Waters") once they turn them over to the professor. Can the PCs ferret out this troublemaker before he absconds with their hard-won treasure?
- As was hinted in the description, there may be ruins associated with the Hetepkan Empire located in the swamp and beyond. The PCs may wish to seek out these ruins, either in association with Professor Stewart or on their own. Non-player characters like Professor Stewart and Lakullus would be perfect allies to help locate such ruins.
- The actions of the PCs may have inadvertently loosed a diabolical priestess from the ancient Hetepkan Empire upon the world once more. Hatshepsut soon acclimatizes to this new timeframe and begins pursuing her plans to resurrect the Hetepkan Empire. What will she do and how can the PCs stop her?

Trap (EL 2)

In addition to being barred, the bronze door here is magically trapped. Anyone who attempts to force the door, or otherwise open it without first switching one of the hidden catches, summons a crimson horror. The horror takes two rounds to materialize. On the first round, the room fills with the sulfurous odor of brimstone. On the second round, the crimson horror materializes in whichever room contains the PCs who attempted to force the door, and attacks.

DEMON SUMMONING TRAP

CR 2

Search DC 27; Type Magical; Reset Automatic (1 minute)

Init —

Trigger Touch

Effect Summons a crimson horror

Disarm Disable Device DC 27; Bypass hidden switch Search DC 20.

Creatures (EL 2)

If the PCs trigger the trap, a crimson horror appears.

Crimson Horror (1): hp 16, see **Appendix** for statistics.

Tactics

The crimson horror attacks mercilessly and fights to the death. It pursues fleeing enemies.

F27. Weapons Room

Light: None.

Sounds: None.

- Appendix: Collected Statistics -

This appendix gathers all of the statistics for creatures and NPCs encountered in *Beyond the Towers*.

ABRAHAM STEWART	CR 4
Male human expert 5 LG Medium humanoid Init +2; Senses Listen +2, Spot +2 Languages Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven	
AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 11; Dodge (+2 Dex, +1 deflection) hp 17 (5 HD) Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +8	
Spd 30 ft. (6 squares) Melee dagger +1 (1d4–2/19–20) Base Atk +3; Grp +1	
Abilities Str 7, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 15, Cha 14 Feats Dodge, Iron Will ^B , Skill Focus (Knowledge: history) Skills Appraise +7 (+9 Craft), Concentration +6, Craft (tools) +9, Decoder Script +11, Diplomacy +8, Gather Information +6, Heal +4, Knowledge (geography) +9, Knowledge (history) +14, Knowledge (local) +9, Knowledge (religion) +7, Listen +2, Profession (scholar) +8, Search +11, Spot +2, Survival +2 (+4 avoid hazards and getting lost, follow trails) Possessions dagger, <i>ring of protection</i> +1, explorer's outfit, backpack, flask of oil, scroll case, inkpen, vial of ink, bullseye lantern, archeologist's toolkit, 3 leather-bound journals and 38 gp. Abraham also has a line of credit with his organization and has funds enough to purchase most treasure recovered from the ruin.	

FRANK	CR 2
Male human rogue 2 NE Medium humanoid Init +2; Senses Listen +5, Spot +5 Languages Common, Elven	
AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10 (+2 Dex) hp 10 (2 HD) Resist evasion Fort +0, Ref +5, Will +0	
Weakness limp Spd 20 ft. (4 squares) Melee dagger +2 (1d4/19–20) Ranged dagger +4 (1d4/19–20) Base Atk +1; Grp +1 Atk Options sneak attack +1d6	
Abilities Str 11, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 7 SQ trapfinding Feats Alertness ^B , Toughness Skills Appraise +5, Balance +2, Bluff +2, Climb +4, Disable Device +5, Disguise +2, Forgery +5, Gather Information +3, Hide +6, Listen +5, Open Lock +8, Profession (scribe) +1, Search +3, Sleight of Hand +4, Spot +5 Possessions combat gear plus masterwork dagger, backpack, caltrops, peasant's outfit, artisan's tools, masterwork thieves' tools, 9 gp, 12 sp, 18 cp. Frank has buried a small coffer in the swamp that holds 127 gp and 320 sp. Limp Due to his injury, Frank takes a –4 circumstance penalty to Balance and Jump checks. In addition, he takes a –10 foot circumstance penalty to his speed.	

GLOG	CR 3
Male fungal ogre N Large plant (augmented ogre) Init –2; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +2, Spot +2 Aura poison spore cloud (1/day, 15-ft. radius, DC 14) Languages Giant, Sylvan	
AC 13, touch 7, flat-footed 13 (–1 size, –2 Dex, +3 armor, +3 natural) hp 29 (4 HD); rejuvenation Fort +6, Ref –1, Will +1	
Spd 20 ft. in hide armor (6 squares), base speed 30 ft. Melee greatclub +8 (2d8+7) or slam +7 (1d6+5) Ranged javelin +0 (1d8+5) Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft. Base Atk +3; Grp +12 Combat Gear <i>potion of bull's strength</i> , <i>potion of cure light wounds</i>	
Abilities Str 21, Dex 6, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 7 SQ create spawn, fungal metabolism, poisonous blood Feats Toughness, Weapon Focus (greatclub) Skills Climb +5, Listen +2, Spot +2 Possessions combat gear plus hide armor, greatclub, 3 javelins, sack of 5d10 × 10 gp, 3 pearls (100 gp each) Poison Spore Cloud (Ex) 1/day, 15-ft.-radius spread, 10 rounds, initial and secondary damage 1d2 Constitution, Fortitude DC 14 negates. The save DC is Constitution-based. Rejuvenation (Ex) While resting and in contact with moist earth, the fungal ogre regains 12 hit points per day of rest. Create Spawn (Ex) Creatures slain by Constitution damage from a fungal ogre's spore cloud are transformed into a fungus creature in 24 hours. (See <i>Advanced Bestiary</i> page 131 for details. If you don't have this book, use the zombie template instead.) Fungal Metabolism (Ex) So long as the fungal ogre is in contact with moist earth, it does not need to eat or sleep. Poisonous Blood (Ex) Ingested (such as by a bite attack), Fortitude DC 14, initial damage 1 Strength and 1 Dexterity/secondary damage 1d6 Strength and 1d6 Dexterity. The save DC is Constitution-based.	

GLUMROCK	CR 3
Male sevren ranger 1 LE Medium humanoid (reptilian, shapechanger) Init +6; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +3, Spot +4 Languages Common, Draconic	
AC 21, touch 12, flat-footed 19; Dodge (+2 Dex, +3 armor, +6 natural) hp 19 (3 HD) Immune poison Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +3	
Spd 30 ft. (6 squares) Melee mwk longspear +6 (1d8+4/×3) or 2 claws +5 (1d4+3/18–20/×3) and bite +0 (1d6+1) Ranged dart +5 (1d4+3 plus poison) Space 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft. (10 ft. with longspear) Base Atk +2; Grp +5 Atk Options Point Blank Shot, favored enemy (humans) +2, poison (bloodroot, Fortitude DC 12, initial damage 0, secondary damage 1d4 Con and 1d3 Wis) Special Actions change shape Combat Gear 6 doses of bloodroot poison, <i>elixir of hiding</i> , <i>elixir of sneaking</i> , <i>potion of cure moderate wounds</i>	

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Abilities Str 16, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 10
SQ hold breath, razor claws, wild empathy +1 (–3 magical beasts)
Feats Dodge, Iron Will^B, Point Blank Shot, Track^B
Skills Bluff +3, Disguise +5, Hide +5, Listen +3, Move Silently +5, Sense Motive +8, Spot +4, Survival +2
Possessions combat gear plus masterwork studded leather armor, masterwork long spear, 8 darts, 8 gp, 12 sp, 36 cp, and 2 freshwater pearls worth 50 gp each.

HATSHEPSUT CR 6

Female human cleric 3/monk 3
 LE Medium humanoid
Init +2; **Senses** Listen +4, Spot +4
Languages Ancient Heptekan, Draconic, Infernal
AC 17, touch 15, flat-footed 15; Deflect Arrows, Dodge, Mobility (+2 Dex, +3 class, +2 armor)
hp 32 (6 HD)
Resist evasion
Fort +8, **Ref** +7, **Will** +11 (+13 against enchantment)

Spd 40 ft. (8 squares); Spring Attack
Melee unarmed strike +5 (1d6+1) or unarmed strike +3/+3 (1d6+1) with flurry of blows
Base Atk +4; **Grp** +5
Atk Options Stunning Fist
Special Actions rebuke animals (reptiles) 7/day (+4, 2d6+2, 2nd), rebuke undead 7/day (+4, 2d6+3, 2nd)
Combat Gear 2 *potions of cure moderate wounds*

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 2nd):
 2nd—*bull's strength*, *darkness*, *greater magic fang*^D
 1st—*cure light wounds*, *protection from chaos*^D, *summon monster I*
 0—*detect magic*, *guidance*, *read magic*, *resistance*
 D: Domain spell. Domains: Law and Scalykind
Abilities Str 12, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 18
Feats Combat Casting, Deflect Arrows^B, Dodge^B, Improved Unarmed Strike^B, Mobility, Spring Attack, Stunning Fist^B
Skills Balance +6, Bluff +8, Concentration +6, Diplomacy +9, Jump +8, Knowledge (history) +7, Knowledge (religion) +7, Listen +4, Spellcraft +7, Spot +4, Tumble +9
Possessions combat gear plus *bracers of armor* +2, *cloak of resistance* +1, tight-fitting sleeveless over-shirt, sandals, belt, spell component pouch.

HURG CR 2

Male sevren warrior 1
 LE Medium monstrous humanoid (reptilian, shapechanger)
Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +1, Spot +1
Languages Draconic
AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16 (+1 Dex, +6 natural)
hp 16 (3 HD)
Immune poison
Fort +6, **Ref** +1, **Will** +2

Spd 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee +1 *greatsword* +5 (2d6+4/19–20) or 2 claws +4 (1d4+2/18–20/×3) and bite –1 (1d6+1)
Ranged javelin +3 (1d6+2 plus poison)
Base Atk +2; **Grp** +4
Atk Options Power Attack, poison (bloodroot, Fortitude DC 12, initial damage 0, secondary damage 1d4 Con and 1d3 Wis)
Special Actions change shape
Combat Gear 3 doses of bloodroot poison, *potions of cure moderate wounds*

Abilities Str 15, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 7, Wis 10, Cha 11
SQ hold breath, razor claws
Feats Alertness, Iron Will^B, Power Attack
Skills Bluff +2, Jump +3, Listen +1, Sense Motive +5, Spot +1, Swim +6
Possessions combat gear plus +1 *greatsword*, 2 javelins, 40 cp, 22 sp and 11 gp.

KRUNG CR 4

Male sevren fighter 2
 LE Medium humanoid (reptilian, shapechanger)
Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +4, Spot +5
Languages Aquan, Common, Draconic

AC 22, touch 12, flat-footed 20 (+2 Dex, +4 armor, +6 natural)
hp 28 (4 HD)
Immune poison
Fort +8, **Ref** +2, **Will** +2

Spd 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee +1 *longsword* +8 (1d8+7/19–20) or 2 claws +7 (1d4+4/18–20/×3) and bite +5 (1d6+2)
Ranged dart +5 (1d4+4 plus poison)
Base Atk +3; **Grp** +7
Atk Options Cleave, Power Attack, poison (bloodroot, Fortitude DC 12, initial damage 0, secondary damage 1d4 Con and 1d3 Wis)
Special Actions change shape
Combat Gear 4 doses of bloodroot, *potions of eagle's splendor*

Abilities Str 18, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 10
SQ hold breath, razor claws
Feats Alertness, Cleave^B, Iron Will^B, Multiattack, Power Attack^B
Skills Appraise +3, Bluff +5, Diplomacy +2, Disguise +3 (+5 acting), Intimidate +3, Listen +4, Sense Motive +8, Spot +5, Survival +2, Swim +9
Possessions combat gear plus chain shirt, +1 *longsword*, 6 darts, belt pouch containing 15 gp, 25 gp, 25 sp, 2 rubies worth 100 gp.

LAKULLUS CR 3

Male wild elf ranger 3
 CG Medium humanoid (elf)
Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +7, Spot +7
Languages Common, Elven

AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15; Dodge, Mobility (+3 Dex, +4 armor, +1 shield)
hp 19 (3 HD)
Immune sleep
Fort +5, **Ref** +6, **Will** +2 (+4 against enchantments)

Spd 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee mwk longsword +5 (1d8+1/19–20)
Ranged mwk composite longbow (Strength +1) +7 (1d8+1/×3) or mwk composite longbow (Strength +1) +5/+5 (1d8+1/×3) with Rapid Shot
Base Atk +3; **Grp** +4
Atk Options Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot, favored enemy (reptilian humanoids) +2
Combat Gear *potions of cure moderate wounds*, *potions of sanctuary*, 2 tangle-foot bags

Abilities Str 12, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 13, Cha 8
SQ able to notice secret or concealed doors, wild empathy +2 (–2 magical beasts)
Feats Dodge, Endurance^B, Mobility, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot^B, Track^B
Skills Hide +11, Knowledge (nature) +4, Listen +7, Move Silently +11, Search +4, Spot +7, Survival +9 (+11 aboveground natural environments)

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Possessions combat gear plus +1 studded leather armor, masterwork buckler, masterwork longsword, masterwork composite longbow (Strength +1) with 20 arrows, explorer's outfit, backpack, 3 days dry rations, waterskin

TYBEN, GNOME LEADER CR 3

Male gnome bard 3
CG Small humanoid
Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +4, Spot +2
Languages Common, Gnome

AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 14; **Dodge**, +4 AC against giants (+1 size, +2 Dex, +3 armor)

hp 16 (3 HD)
Fort +4, **Ref** +6, **Will** +3; +2 on saves against illusions

Spd 20 ft. (4 squares)
Melee mwk cold iron short sword +2 (1d4–1/19–20)
Ranged mwk light crossbow +5 (1d6/19–20)
Base Atk +2; **Grp** –3
Atk Options +1 on attacks against kobolds and goblinoids
Special Actions bardic music 3/day (inspire competence, inspire courage +1, fascinate 1 target, countersong)
Combat Gear oil of bless weapon, potion of jump, potion of sanctuary, scroll of blur, scroll of cure light wounds, scroll of invisibility

Spells Known (CL 3rd, 15% chance of spell failure):
1st (3/day)—charm person, lesser confusion (DC 13), sleep (DC 13)
0 (3/day)—daze (DC 12), flare (DC 12), lullaby (DC 12), mage hand, prestidigitation, read magic
Spell-like Abilities (CL 1st):
1/day—dancing lights, ghost sound (DC 13), prestidigitation, speak with animals (burrowing mammal only, 1 minute)
Abilities Str 8, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 15
SQ bardic knowledge +4
Feats Blather (see sidebar), Dodge
Skills Appraise +1 (+3 alchemical objects), Bluff +8, Craft (alchemy) +9, Diplomacy +6, Disguise +2 (+4 acting), Hide +12, Intimidate +4, Listen +4, Move Silently +8, Perform (sing) +8, Sense Motive +5, Spot +2
Possessions combat gear plus masterwork studded leather armor, masterwork cold iron short sword, masterwork light crossbow with 10 arrows, cloak of resistance +1, explorer's outfit, 300 gp (earnings from antitoxin sale)

WHAILAN CR 2

Male human commoner 3
NG Medium humanoid
Init +2; **Senses** Listen –2, Spot –2
Languages Common

AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10 (+2 Dex)
hp 10 (3 HD)
Fort +1, **Ref** +3, **Will** –1

Spd 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee shortspear +2 (1d6+1) or dagger +2 (1d4+1/19–20)
Ranged sling +3 (1d4+1)
Base Atk +1; **Grp** +2

Abilities Str 13, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 7, Cha 13
Feats Simple Weapon Proficiency, Skill Focus (Profession: boatman)^B, Toughness
Skills Craft (boats) +3, Craft (fishing gear) +3, Listen –2, Profession +7, Spot –2, Survival +0, Swim +4, Use Rope +3
Possessions shortspear, dagger, sling with 20 bullets, backpack, peasant's outfit, 30 fishhooks and 50 feet of fishing line, 20 feet of rope, fishing net, jug of whiskey, bedroll, large canoe and a belt pouch containing 12 cp, 14 sp, and 2 gp.

New Feat: Blather

You can speak a string of nonsense to confuse your enemies.

Prerequisite: Bluff 5 ranks.

Benefit: As a standard action, you may make a special Bluff check opposed by an opponent's Sense Motive check. If you win the opposed check, your silver tongue and wit renders your opponent dazzled for 1 round. You can blather a number of times per day equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum once per day).

New Creatures

The following new creatures appear in this adventure.

Crimson Horror

This horrid creature vaguely resembles a man, but has bright red skin, yellow slits for eyes, exaggerated muscles, and a pair of large curving horns spreading from its brow. Its facial features seem unnaturally stretched, with a sharp chin and a large mouth filled with black pointed teeth. Its long, forked, purple tongue slips from its maw eagerly.

CRIMSON HORROR CR 2

Always CE Medium outsider (Chaotic, Demon, Evil, Extraplanar)
Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +5, Spot +5
Languages Abyssal

AC 17, touch 10, flat-footed 17 (+0 Dex, +7 natural)
hp 13 (2 HD); **DR** 5/magic
Immune electricity and poison
Resist acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 13
Fort +5, **Ref** +3, **Will** +5

Spd 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee falchion +5 (2d4+4/18–20) or gore +5 (1d6+4)
Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
Base Atk +2; **Grp** +5
Atk Options frightful presence

Abilities Str 16, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10
Feats Improved Initiative, Iron Will^B
Skills Balance +7, Climb +8, Intimidate +5, Jump +10, Listen +5, Move Silently +5, Spot +5, Tumble +7
Possessions falchion

Frightful Presence (Su) A crimson horror can inspire terror by charging or attacking. Targeted creatures must succeed on a DC 11 Will save or become shaken for as long as they remain within 10 feet of the crimson horror. A creature that successfully saves against the frightful presence cannot be affected by the same crimson horror's frightful presence for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.

A crimson horror is an evil demon that serves the wicked gods of the Hetepkan pantheon, usually as a foot soldier or executioner.

Tactics

A crimson warrior is a reckless and relentless foe. It always charges into the thick of combat on its first action, hacking at its foe with its weapon. Crimson warriors always fight to the death.

Encounters

Most crimson horrors are summoned, so they appear in numbers as appropriate for the *summon monster* spell used. In the Abyss, crimson horrors gather in



small groups called fists (1d3+1, EL 4–6). However, when a demon prince uses them in war, they collect in squads under the command of a succubus (1 succubus plus 1d8+4 crimson horrors, EL 9–10).

Ecology

Crimson horrors are native to the Abyss. There, they exist only to kill, prowling through the various layers in search of damned souls to tear apart. As outsiders, they have no need for food or drink, but they delight in feasting on the marrow of the innocent when they make forays into the Material Plane.

Physical Characteristics

A crimson horror stands six and a half feet tall and weighs in excess of 250 pounds. It has dull red skin and sharp black horns that curl from its forehead.

Crimson Horror Lore

Characters with ranks in Knowledge (the planes) can learn more about crimson horrors.

DC	Knowledge (the planes) Result
15	This creature is a crimson horror, a vile demon from the Abyss.
20	These creatures are brutes: killing machines fit only as foot soldiers or executioners.

Crimson Horrors & Player Characters

A chaotic evil spellcaster may permanently replace a fiendish wolverine with a crimson horror for *summon monster III* spells.

Its face is more bestial than human, with black lips pulled back in a permanent sneer that exposes rows of black teeth.

Society

Crimson horrors have little that might be called a society. Strength and audacity are the only values they prize, and even then, other horrors regularly try to kill those they see as the best specimens of their kind. As with all bullies, though, crimson horrors respect and fear those who are more powerful than they are, so they willingly serve other demons that prove their mettle.

Treasure

Crimson horrors do not keep treasure aside from their weapon, usually a falchion.

Advanced Crimson Horrors

Few crimson horrors live long enough to become more powerful than the average member of their kind, but those with cunning or strength can grow mighty indeed. Advanced crimson horrors with 4–6 HD are Medium size, but those with 7–9 HD expand in size to become Large creatures.

Sesheck

This short humanoid creature has green, bumpy skin. A bone ridge runs down its spine. Its pointy teeth and the slits of its yellow eyes suggest a frightening malevolence.

SESHECK	CR ½
Sesheck warrior 1	
Usually CE Small humanoid (reptilian)	
Init +8; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +1, Spot +1	
Languages Draconic	
AC 16, touch 15, flat-footed 12 (+1 size, +4 Dex, +1 natural)	
hp 4 (1 HD)	
Fort +2 (+4 against poison), Ref +6, Will +0	
Spd 40 ft. (8 squares)	
Melee 2 claws +1 (1d3–1)	
Ranged shortbow +6 (1d4 plus poison/×3) or shortbow +2/+2 (1d4 plus poison/×3) with frantic fire	
Space 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.	
Base Atk +1; Grp –4	
Atk Options frantic fire	
Combat Gear 3 doses of bloodroot	
Abilities Str 9, Dex 18, Con 10, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 7	
Feats Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes ^B	
Skills Hide +8, Listen +1, Spot +1, Swim +3	
Possessions combat gear plus shortbow with 20 arrows, 3d6 cp, 2d6 sp and 1d6 gp.	
Frantic Fire (Ex) A sesheck gets one extra attack per round with a longbow or shortbow. The attack is at its highest base attack bonus, but each attack made takes a –4 penalty. This ability stacks with the Rapid Shot feat.	
Poison (Ex) Bloodroot, Injury, Fortitude DC 12, initial damage 0/secondary damage 1d4 Con and 1d3 Wis.	

A sesheck is a small reptilian humanoid famed for its malevolence and speed.

The sesheck presented here had the following ability score before racial adjustments: Str 13, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 9.

Tactics

Not being the bravest creatures, sesheck attack their enemies from ambush with overwhelming numbers. They use their bows whenever possible, resorting to claws if forced. When the odds are not clearly in their favor (the numerical

Sesheck Lore

Characters with ranks in Knowledge (nature) can learn more about sesheck.

DC	Knowledge (nature) Result
15	This creature is a sesheck, a curious breed of reptilian humanoid.
20	Though these creatures are small and somewhat frail, they are fast for their size. Also, they are quite fast with a bow, rivaling trained archers.

superiority drops below 3 to 1 in their favor), they flee. Sesheck sometimes employ guerrilla tactics, ambushing enemies with a blast of arrows and then vanishing after the initial barrage.

Encounters

Sesheck are rarely encountered individually, since they are a skittish race. Instead, they group into patrols (1d4+4, EL 3–4) to monitor their hunting grounds and murder anyone they come across who's not a part of their tribe. On occasion, a powerful sevren takes control of one or more patrols and forms a warband (2d4+8 plus 1d3 sevren, EL 5–7).

Ecology

The origins of the sesheck are unknown, but it has been suggested by scholars that they are the result of a magical experiment gone wrong. Others speculate that the sesheck were created by the nagas of old as a slave race, as the sevren were, though perhaps the sesheck were an earlier, failed attempt. Whatever the case, these foul little creatures infest the wilder places of the world, particularly the temperate and warm marshes or underground.

Physical Characteristics

The typical sesheck weighs about 50 pounds. Standing just under 3 feet tall, one could be mistaken for a human child from a distance. Up close, it's easy to make out its warty, toad-like skin and the scaly ridge that runs down its back to the tip of its sinuous tail. The sesheck has a natural grace; even its lazy or unpracticed movements seem terribly quick.

Society

The sesheck, whose name means "us" in Draconic, do not seem to have much of a society, instead acting like little more than savage animals. The limit of their technology seems to be primitive rags, the bows they are so fond of, and the occasional animal-skin shield. Even when able to steal better equipment from others, they seldom use it.

Sesheck do not appear to have leaders of their own, perhaps because none of them seems to have an attention span long enough to put in the effort necessary to try to lead. Sesheck sometimes serve as slaves or underlings in sevren warbands, though even in such cases they are unruly and difficult to control.

Treasure

Sesheck have standard treasure for their CR, but have little use for valuables. Instead, they invest their wealth in bloodroot poison, which they harvest in their swamps.

Sesheck as Characters

Sesheck characters possess the following racial traits.

- -4 Strength, +8 Dexterity, -2 Constitution, -2 Intelligence, -2 Charisma.



- **Small size:** +1 bonus to Armor Class, +1 bonus on attack rolls, +4 bonus on Hide checks, -4 penalty on grapple checks, lifting and carrying limits 3/4 those of Medium creatures.
- A sesheck's base land speed is 40 feet.
- **Darkvision** out to 60 feet.
- **Frantic Fire:** see description.
- +2 racial bonus to Fortitude saves against poison.
- +4 racial bonus to Swim checks.
- Lightning Reflexes as a bonus feat.
- **Automatic Languages:** Draconic. Bonus Languages: Aquan, Common, Goblin, Gnoll, Orc.
- **Favored Class:** Ranger.
- **Level adjustment:** +1.

Sevren

This creature is about the same size as a human, with a broadly built frame, muscular limbs, and a powerful tail that extends about 3 to 4 feet from the base of the spine. Its head resembles a lizard's, with a series of spiny ridges that run from the crown of its head down its back before fading into knotty bumps along the tail. Its body is covered in greenish-gray scales.

SEVREN

CR 2

Usually LE Medium humanoid (reptilian, shapechanger)
Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +4, Spot +4
Languages Common, Draconic

AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 16 (+0 Dex, +6 natural)
hp 11 (2 HD)
 Immune poison
Fort +4, **Ref** +0, **Will** +2

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Spd 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee longspear +2 (1d8+1/×3) or 2 claws +2 (1d4+1/18–20/×3) and Bite –3 (1d6)
Ranged dart +1 (1d4+1 plus poison)
Space 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft. (10 ft. with longspear)
Base Atk +1; Grp +2
Atk Options poison (bloodroot, Fortitude DC 12, initial damage 0, secondary damage 1d4 Con and 1d3 Wis)
Special Actions change self
Combat Gear 3 doses of bloodroot poison, <i>potion of cure moderate wounds</i>
Abilities Str 13, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 11, Cha 12
SQ hold breath, razor claws
Feats Alertness, Iron Will ^B
Skills Bluff +4, Concentration +4, Disguise +4, Listen +4, Sense Motive +6, Spot +4, Swim +5
Possessions combat gear plus longspear, 6 darts
Poison (Ex) Bloodroot, Injury, Fortitude DC 12, initial damage 0/secondary damage 1d4 Con and 1d3 Wis.
Change Shape (Su) A sevren can assume the form of any Medium humanoid.
Hold Breath (Ex) A sevren can hold its breath for a number of rounds equal to ×4 its Constitution score before it risks drowning (see Suffocation in the <i>DMG</i> for details).
Razor Claws (Ex) A sevren's claw attacks threaten a critical hit on an 18–20 and deal triple damage on a successful critical hit.

The sevren are a sinister race of highly intelligent reptilian humanoids with the ability to assume the form of other humanoids.

Tactics

Sevren are smart combatants and employ tactics that favor surprise and take advantage of the terrain. In battle, half of their numbers lob poisoned darts,



while the rest use their longspears to protect their comrades. Once one group has exhausted their supply of darts, they switch positions and continue the barrage. Though cautious, they don't shirk from hand to hand combat, and tear into their foes with their razor sharp claws and teeth.

Encounters

Sevren may be found individually or in pairs (EL 4), but most times they form up into teams (2 to 4 sevren, EL 4–6). Patrols (2 to 7 sevren plus 1 2nd-level ranger, EL 5–8) monitor movement at the edges of their encampments. Sevren that live near or share lands with the sesheck enslave the lesser breed and use them as support.

Ecology

The sevren are descended from the ancient empire of the Hetepkans that thrived millennia ago. Since the fall of their civilization, they have withdrawn to the remote places in the world, dwelling in swamps, jungles, remote hills, and even deep underground. Like their distant kin, the serpent people, they have no intention of accepting the fate they face, and plot and connive to regain the glory of their lost culture.

Physical Characteristics

The average sevren stands 6 feet tall and weighs 200 pounds. Sevren have yellow, reptilian eyes, which they protect with two sets of lids. (One is nearly transparent, and allows them to see well enough to act even while closed.) Females are slightly smaller and lighter, and have dull green scales.

Society

Ages ago, when the world was young, the naga created the sevren as a slave race through their foul sorcery. Used primarily as soldiers and enforcers, the sevren were more intelligent than were others of their civilization and thrived in a variety of roles. But nothing lasts forever, and after some ancient calamity, the naga civilization waned and its servants languished. The “lesser races”—humans, dwarves, and others—hunted them nearly to extinction, threw down their cities, and razed their lands, forcing the sevren to withdraw to remote corners of the world.

Today, the sevren are split into two distinct orders, though each retains a similar culture and operates in much the same way. A small number of sevren still serve the nagas. In these societies, the nagas rule as god-kings, and the sevren obey without question. Most sevren, however, have been free of naga rule for some time. The sevren replaced their worship of the naga with the foul god Subreshtha, the lord of pain and torture. The difference is almost imperceptible. Both groups of sevren employ dark magic, practice foul rites, and scheme against humanity and the other “younger races.” In addition, sevren enslave the weak-willed sesheck, using these lesser creatures as the sevren were once used by their serpentine masters.

Sevren Lore

Characters with ranks in Knowledge (nature) can learn more about sesheck.

DC Knowledge (Nature) Result

- | | |
|----|---|
| 15 | This creature is a sevren, a cunning monstrous humanoid gifted with some magical power. |
| 20 | Sevren make vicious opponents. Their claws can flay the flesh from the bone and they are not above using poison to incapacitate their foes. |
| 25 | Don't trust your senses around these creatures. They have the ability to conceal their true appearance. |

Treasure

Sevren have typical treasure for their CR, about 600 gp. Since they rely on poison to undo their enemies, most invest half of their wealth in a variety of toxins, though bloodroot is favored. The rest of their wealth is invested in potions, coins, and jewelry.

Sevren as Characters

Sevren characters possess the following racial traits.

- ♦ +2 Strength, +2 Constitution, +2 Intelligence, +2 Charisma.
- ♦ **Medium** size.
- ♦ A sevren's base land speed is 30 feet.
- ♦ **Darkvision** out to 60 feet.
- ♦ **Racial Hit Dice:** A sevren begins with two levels of humanoid, which provide 2d8 Hit Dice, a base attack bonus of +1, and base saving throw bonuses of Fort +3, Ref +0, and Will +0.
- ♦ **Racial Skills:** A sevren's humanoid levels give it skill points equal to $5 \times (2 + \text{Int modifier, minimum } 1)$. Its class skills are Bluff, Disguise, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot, and Swim.
- ♦ +4 bonus to Sense Motive and Swim checks.
- ♦ **Weapon and Armor Proficiency:** A sevren is automatically proficient with all simple weapons.
- ♦ **Racial Feats:** A sevren's humanoid levels give it one feat.
- ♦ Sevren gain Iron Will as a bonus feat.
- ♦ **Natural Weapons:** 2 claws (1d4) and bite (1d6).
- ♦ **Change Shape (Su):** A sevren can assume the form of any Medium humanoid. See the *MM* for details.
- ♦ **Hold Breath:** see entry.
- ♦ **Razor Claws:** see entry.
- ♦ Immunity to poison.
- ♦ +6 natural armor bonus.
- ♦ **Automatic Languages:** Draconic. Bonus Languages: Aquan, Common, Elven, Goblin, Orc.
- ♦ **Favored Class:** Fighter.
- ♦ **Level adjustment:** +3.

Slithering Abomination

This horrid creature looks like an enormous worm with two long, writhing tentacles that frame a hideous face at one end. Tiny spines that leak dark green ooze cover the tentacles. The face consists of a huge maw filled with jagged black fangs, surrounded by a half-circle of seven round eyes. Its hide is dark brown.

SLITHERING ABOMINATION	CR 4
Always NE Large aberration	
Init -2; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +4, Spot +4	
AC 15, touch 7, flat-footed 15 (-1 size, -2 Dex, +8 natural)	
hp 38 (5 HD)	
Immune disease and poison	
Fort +4, Ref -1, Will +4	
Weakness light sensitivity	
Spd 20 ft. (4 squares), burrow 20 ft., climb 20 ft.	
Melee 2 tentacles +6 (1d6+4 plus disease) and bite +4 (1d8+2)	
Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.	
Base Atk +3; Grp +11	
Atk Options constrict, disease, frightful presence, improved grab	
Abilities Str 18, Dex 7, Con 16, Int 3, Wis 11, Cha 7	
Feats Alertness, Multiattack	
Skills Climb +14, Hide -2*, Listen +4, Spot +4	



Light Sensitivity (Ex) A slithering abomination is dazzled in bright sunlight or within the radius of a *daylight* spell.

Constrict (Ex) A slithering abomination deals 1d6+4 points of damage with a successful grapple check, in addition to damage from its tentacle attack.

Disease (Ex) slime blight—tentacle, Fortitude DC 15, incubation period 1 day, damage 1d3 Con. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Frightful Presence (Su) A slithering abomination can inspire terror by charging or attacking. Target creatures must succeed on a DC 10 Will save or become shaken for as long as they remain within 10 feet of the slithering abomination. A creature that successfully saves against the frightful presence cannot be affected by the same slithering abomination's frightful presence for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Improved Grab (Ex) To use this ability, a slithering abomination must hit an opponent of up to Large size with a tentacle attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can constrict.

Skills: Slithering abominations have a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks and always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened. In addition, slithering abominations gain a +8 racial bonus to Hide checks made in muddy or earthen areas.

Slithering abominations are terrible, worm-like monsters spawned eons ago when the world was young.

Tactics

Slithering abominations are slow, lethargic creatures. When first encountered, they are often found lying curled up asleep amid heaps of garbage or mounds of dirt. Once roused, however, a slithering abomination attacks anything that moves. It always attacks until either it has devoured all foes or it is killed itself.

Encounters

Slithering abominations are always encountered singly, though intelligent creatures often use these creatures as guardians or devourers of refuse.

Ecology

Usually shunned due to their vicious tempers and the horrible contagions they carry, some human cultures of the distant past worshipped them as the living embodiments of their own twisted deities. Today, slithering abominations are only found deep underground or in the vaults beneath ancient ruins, where they slumber the centuries away.

Physical Characteristics

Slithering abominations are large wormlike creatures, equipped with four tentacles that they use to snatch their prey. In the center of the tentacles is a large maw, filled with jagged black fangs. The creature sees by the seven eyes that encircle its orifice. The hide of a slithering abomination is quite thick and rough to the touch, not unlike granite. An abomination measures about 12 feet long and weighs nearly 3,000 pounds. There are reports of far larger specimens.

Advanced Slithering Abominations

Slithering abominations grow larger over time. Most advanced abominations, though, are Large (6–10 HD), with the oldest specimens growing to Huge size

Slithering Abomination Lore

Characters with ranks in Knowledge (dungeoneering) can learn more about slithering abominations.

DC Knowledge (Dungeoneering) Result

- | | |
|----|--|
| 15 | This creature is a slithering abomination, a strange aberration that sleeps for years at a time, only stirring to eat. |
| 20 | It uses its tentacles to grab and crush its prey before devouring the strangled gobbets of flesh with its foul maw. |
| 25 | The surest way to deal with a slithering abomination is to blind them with bright light. |
| 30 | The slithering abomination is a carrier of a lethal disease that leaches away life and energy from its prey. Once infected, it doesn't take long for the ailment to unravel a victim's constitution. |

(11–15 HD). Slithering abominations seem to sustain themselves on dreams, growing bigger and bigger the longer they are allowed to slumber.

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