

The Dark Tribe

Instant Adventure for 4–6 characters levels 3–5



When traveling along the northern frontier, you're always prepared for the worst. But the bitter storm that blew in from the mountains seemed to come out of nowhere, and the bleak landscape offers little protection from the harsh wind, blinding snow, and biting cold.

When you discovered the small vale and quiet village, it seemed like a godsend. A roof over your head, a warm fire, and hearty food have all served to banish the memory of the storm, though you can still hear the wind howling outside.

The Thoruke have lived in peace in their isolated vale for many years. They are an unusual people, with smoky gray skin and rather severe features that are quite at odds with their calm and cheerful demeanors.

There's more to the Thoruke than meets the eye, though. You're sure of it. What secrets hide behind those dark, lively eyes? What painful memory lies buried here? What great tragedy has befallen these simple people that weighs so heavily on their spirits?

Their stories speak of the wrath of an old enemy, of the vengeance of a dark goddess. Outside, the wind and snow still lash the simple timber lodgings of the village. But you wonder...

Is there another storm coming?

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LEGENDS & LAIRS

INSTANT ADVENTURE



The Dark Tribe

by Richard Tomasso

Requires the use of the Dungeons & Dragons® Player's Handbook, Third Edition, published by Wizards of the Coast®



Series II

Number 11


How to Use This Product

This adventure takes place in the world of Mennara, the setting of Fantasy Flight's bestselling *Diskwars* fantasy battle game. This provides a convenient frame of reference, but the adventure is specifically designed to be easily incorporated into any existing D&D campaign. Feel free to alter the names of places and characters and customize the details of the adventure to fit your own world.

You should be able to run this adventure in a single game session. You should read it through at least once and study those sections you will need to know well. In particular, you should familiarize yourself with the features and capabilities of new monsters and magic items introduced in the adventure. You may also wish to photocopy the map on pages 8 and 9, both for your own reference and to show to the players, if appropriate.

Dungeons & Dragons®

This adventure requires the use of the *Dungeons & Dragons® Player's Handbook*, Third Edition, published by Wizards of the Coast.® You won't be able to run the adventure without it.



Traps & Treachery is the definitive resource for traps, puzzles, mazes, and other tricks for d20 System fantasy games. Contains complete descriptions and beautiful illustrations of dozens of traps and puzzles. **Traps & Treachery** is a 176-page hardcover book and retails for \$24.95. It ships in June 2000, so stay alert and watch where you step!

Adventure has just found you!



THE DARK TRIBE

By Richard Tomasso

DM BACKGROUND

Traveling far from civilization, the characters were caught in a storm and sought shelter with the Thoruke, a reserved and somewhat primitive, but very courteous people.

A secret force is arrayed against the peaceful Thoruke, and the characters must decide what to do when trouble comes. The dark goddess Y'llan has corrupted one of the Thoruke, En'karren. It has been a slow process, but Y'llan and her spirits are patient. Y'llan promised En'karren leadership, and many blessings and much power for the clan.

As the storm subsides, a human mob from a nearby village attacks the Thoruke. The PCs discover that the villagers attacked because they believe the Thoruke are really Uthuk Y'llan, the corrupt barbarian servants of the dark goddess. If the characters drive off the mob, the Thoruke admit that they are, in fact, an Uthuk clan, but one uncorrupted by Y'llan.

Seeking peace with the villagers, the Thoruke will ask the PCs to be their emissaries. If they accept, they will discover evidence in the village, Zorel, of a plot against the Thoruke, as well as signs of Y'llan's influence and possibly En'karren's involvement.


HISTORY LESSON

For DMs not familiar with Mennara, the Uthuk were nomadic barbarian tribes that fell on very hard times. To save themselves, they made a pact with the evil goddess Y'llan. But like all such pacts, the price of salvation was very high. Now they are a twisted race called the Uthuk Y'llan, fierce and ruthless clans of raiders who are feared and hated across Mennara. Not all Uthuk fell to Y'llan: Some refused her gifts, while others fled and hid. The Thoruke are one such clan.

THE THORUKE

The Thoruke are slightly taller and stockier than normal humans, with ash-colored skin and slightly pointed ears. Their coloration, now hereditary, is the legacy of ancient ritual magics in which volcanic ash was mixed with the Uthuk blood. The Uthuk believed that this blood magic made them stronger and fiercer, and over the centuries it has become a permanent racial trait. Skin tones range from light gray to the color of dark charcoal.

The Thoruke have abandoned their former lives as hunter-gatherers, turning to simple subsistence-level agriculture and animal husbandry. Their surpluses are few, but they have done a little trading with other towns and villages in the area. While they are reserved, the Thoruke treat any newcomers to their village as friends unless given reason to do otherwise. A few outsiders have



even settled down with the Thoruke and been accepted into the tribe. Likewise, some Thoruke youth have sought their fortunes in the wider world and returned with families.

Only the older Thoruke know their true history, and they guard it carefully. The “Ulanni” of their stories are the Uthuk Y’llan.

MAJOR CHARACTERS

STONEBEARD, SHAMAN

Stonebeard’s name comes from his hard gray beard, which grew in at an early age. He’s 50 years old and has been the clan’s spiritual leader for eight years. His apprentice is Ja’rei.

VED’DREN, ELDER

Ved’dren is more than 60 years old. He’s a counselor, sage, and storyteller. Along with Stonebeard, he knows all their secrets and history. If Stonebeard and Ka’heb were killed or away, he’d be the clan leader.

KA’HEB, HEADMAN

Ka’heb, 34, became headman three years ago. He’s proven himself an able defender and fair enforcer of Thoruke law. He’s traveled to the outside world and would rather it keep its distance. He would give his life to save his people and has little patience for those who would threaten them.

THE THORUKE SETTLEMENT

The Thoruke village is located in a small, isolated vale, with no roads or passes leading into it. Locations of interest include the great hall, and the homes of Ved’dren and Stonebeard. The buildings are huddled amidst fields of various food crops and interspersed with small gardens and orchards.

When the PCs arrive in the village, they will be offered lodging in one of the Thoruke’s homes. Meals are served around a large hearth in the village’s great hall. The time during and after the evening feast is reserved for storytelling and socializing, and the characters are encouraged to participate.

Though the storm rages for two days, the cold and wet are kept at bay with the many tales told by your Thoruke hosts. They’re very polite and encourage you to tell tales of your own heroism and the outside world, especially the children. In their tale-telling, the Thoruke speak of great heroes and great journeys, as well as the “Ulanni,” an ancient enemy who betrayed them.

THE ATTACK

Allow the PCs to get to know their hosts and explore the simple village, then run the following encounter.

You’re enjoying your lunch in the great hall, encouraged by signs that the storm is subsiding. Your meal is interrupted when a boy bursts into the hall, yelling out between gasps, “Attack... outsiders coming... Joran dead...” Ka’heb, the headman, stands and starts giving orders. As he walks by, Ka’heb looks at all of you, hesitates a moment, and says, “You may fight with us or stay here.”

The attackers sweep through the village in groups of three or four. The soldiers from Zorel will be rather surprised to find the PCs defending the Thoruke settlement. While a real conversation isn’t likely in the middle of battle, it’s possible that a soldier will have time to shout a few confused questions or comments. The soldiers are under the impression that the Thoruke are evil Uthuk Y’llan, and will not understand why the apparently “civilized” characters are aiding them.

Thoruke Defenders, Male and Female Human (Uthuk)

Com1 (30): Medium-size Humanoids; HD 1; hp 3; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+2 leather); Atk: +0 melee (1d6, club); AL NG; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 11, Con 11, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills: Craft (various) +2, Handle Animal +2, Profession (various) +2, Spot +2.

Attackers, Male Human War1 (12):

Medium-size Humanoids; HD 1d8; hp 6; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (+1 Dex, +2 leather); Atk: +1 melee (1d6, short sword); AL NG; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Wil +0; Str 11, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 10.

Skills: Climb +2, Handle Animal +2, Intimidate +2, Ride +3.

Regardless of the outcome, at least one attacker should escape, wounded, and return to Zorel.

Even if the PCs don’t fight, the Thoruke defeat the attack and bring in a prisoner. When the prisoner sees the characters, he’ll become belligerent, accusing them of collusion with the Uthuk. Further interrogation reveals that he believes the Thoruke are Uthuk Y’llan and have somehow hidden their twisted appearance, “gaining our trust before they strike.” He won’t say much more. Ka’heb recognizes him as a townsman from Zorel.

If the soldier is searched, a holy symbol of Y’llan—a circle of faces carved on bone—is discovered. If the bodies of fallen attackers are searched as well, another of the amulets is discovered. This causes a great deal of concern among the Thoruke. None of the attackers have actually met En’karren: Ultimately, they’re just pawns.

If the PCs confront the Thoruke about being Uthuk, a few will scoff, saying it’s preposterous. Some younger ones want to know who these “Uthuk” are. If the PCs helped defend the village, further inquiry will eventually bring Ved’dren.

A small commotion starts as Elder Ved'dren enters. "You ask if we are Uthuk?" Some elders protest, but the elder raises a hand, quieting them. "They have helped us, and should know the truth. Come."

Ved'dren leads you to his home. Ka'heb and some of the other elders follow. Ved'dren gestures for you to sit while a boy stokes the fire.

"Those who attacked have the right of it. We are Uthuk, though not as many today know them.

"Years ago, the dark goddess Y'llan, the Mother with a Thousand Faces, came to the Uthuk with promises of new life and strength when we were hungry and weak. The price was the corruption of the Uthuk spirit, the twisting of the Uthuk body.

"Not all Uthuk fell to Y'llan. Our people were among them. We fled Uthuk lands and hid, making a life for ourselves and continuing the old ways. We settled this place generations ago and have lived here peacefully. Why we were attacked, we do not know. How they discovered our secret, we do not know. Now that it has been revealed, we must protect ourselves."

As you consider the elder's words, a young Thoruke bursts in to the room.

"Stonebeard is hurt!"

Stonebeard was found unconscious after the battle. There's no sign the attackers reached him. He can't be revived.

It is decided that sending out patrols is too dangerous. If the PCs don't offer, but did defend the Thoruke, they're asked to be the Thoruke's emissaries to Zorel, to find out what caused the attack, and how their secret was discovered, before a second attack comes. The elders will ask the PCs to keep knowledge of the Thoruke as secret as possible, as they don't wish any more conflict for their home.

ZOREL

The town looks like many you've seen, with timber-and-stone buildings flanking the narrow streets, common folk going about their business, and well-kept fields in the distance. Ahead, where the road leads into town, two men stand alongside a battered signpost that reads "Zorel." As you approach, they greet you and wave you through.

Zorel is a relatively large town for the area, its people mostly human with a small population of elves and dwarves. The town prospers as a trading area and waypoint for travelers on the edge of the frontier. Travelers are common, and visitors suffer no "outsider" stigma on the streets of Zorel.

When the characters arrive in the town, people are still clearing debris and fixing damage from the recent storm. Zorel has a trading post, a livery and stable, an inn, an apothecary, a blacksmith, merchant offices, and other small businesses and shops.

There's no sign of a military buildup, and no one on the streets so much as mentions the Thoruke. Non-residents are unaware of any plot. Residents who've dealt with Thoruke traders have no animosity toward them.

Given the PCs' many options, this scene is intentionally open-ended. As DM, you may want to prepare encounters with a sense for where your players will take things. Depending on your needs, this could be a quick and simple investigation or an extended political thriller.

Zorel (large town): Conventional; AL NG; 3,000-gp limit; Assets 450,000 gp; Population 3,000; Mixed (human 88%, dwarf 7%, elf 5%).

Authority Figures: Mayor Baldor Glass, male human Ari5; Sheriff Vedrigan Talltree, male elf Ftr3.

Important Characters: Kaleb, male human Clr3; Thayin Redfeather, male human Clr3/Rog2 (merchant); Zacharia, male human Com4 (council member); Gebrelle, female human Com3 (council member).

Others: Town guards, War2 (x30); Exp5 (x5); Exp3 (x25); Com1 (x2,700).

PLACES OF INTEREST

1. LEAPING LION INN

This is a popular and comfortable establishment, where everyone's greeted with a smile. Travelers come for food and rest, locals for wine and gossip. Bards will be invited to stay the night, and "warm our spirits after the storm." The owner is Hiram Goodfall, a large and friendly man. The other barkeeps are Lydia Whiteleaf, a tall elven woman, and Gideon Flint, a dark-featured man with a foreign accent and a sharp eye. Lydia reports anything interesting to Thayin (see below).

2. PA'TREEN'S TRADEPOST

This building is stacked to the ceiling with supplies, durable goods, and a few strange items obtained from travelers. Pa'treen, an elf, arrived 10 years ago after retiring from an adventuring career. He hears a fair bit of news from customers and travelers.

3. COUNCIL HALL

This is a sturdy, two-story structure with a meeting hall and a few small offices.

4. SHERIFF'S OFFICE

This is Talltree's office (see below), guard headquarters, and jail. There's always a guard or two here.

5. APOTHECARY

Kaleb, a cleric of Utaavo, runs this establishment. Kaleb mysteriously went mad years ago, but claims he's feeling better now. He still has his magic, he says, but some days he feels like he's lost his faith.

6. THAYIN'S OFFICE

Thayin manages his merchant business here. There's a secret door in the back, and behind it is a stairway that leads to the basement.

PLOT BACKGROUND

A secret cult of Y'llan is active in Zorel. The cult's goals are to spread the worship of the dark goddess and destabilize existing governments in the area. The cult, and others like it, collaborates with Uthuk Y'llan raiding clans to the north and seeks to prepare the way for a full-scale Uthuk invasion of the civilized lands.

The cult was established by the Thoruke cleric, En'karren. She has long harbored resentment against her people's elders, believing they deny the Thoruke their true destiny and rightful power by shunning the dark blessings of Y'llan. En'karren hopes to use the cult in Zorel to drive the Thoruke down Y'llan's dark path. That's why she organized the attack on the Thoruke village: She planned to corrupt the Thoruke by giving them a taste of blood and a thirst for vengeance.

Not counting any survivors of the attack on the Thoruke village, there are about a hundred people involved in the cult. The vast majority are simple commoners who know very little about what is going on. They are largely downtrodden and desperate, and joined the cult because they were offered wealth and power—things they've never had and could only dream of. Since the arrival of Y'llan's corruptor spirit (see New Monster section), their souls have become more twisted, and most are beyond redemption.

En'karren, Female Human (Uthuk) Clr5: CR 5; Medium-size Humanoid; HD 5d8+10; hp 32; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (+1 Dex, +2 leather); Atk +5 melee (1d8+2, +2 shortspear); SA rebuke undead; AL NE; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +6; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 16.

Skills: Bluff +4, Concentration +4, Diplomacy +4, Heal +4, Knowledge (religion) +4, Scry +4, Spellcraft +4.

Feats: Combat Casting, Dodge.

Spells (5/4/3/1): 0—*detect magic, inflict minor wounds, light, read magic, resistance*; 1st—*cause fear, cure light wounds, doom, obscuring mist*; 2nd—*darkness, enthrall, undetectable alignment*; 3rd—*cure serious wounds*.

Domain Spells (1/1/1): 1st—*protection from good*; 2nd—*death knell*; 3rd—*bestow curse*.

Possessions: +2 shortspear, leather armor, holy symbol, onyx ring (35 gp), belt pouch with 50 gp.

En'karren is a cleric of Y'llan and the leader of the Zorel cult. She is a Thoruke who was corrupted long ago, and she will stop at nothing to do her dark goddess' will. En'karren prefers to work behind the scenes, avoiding the scrutiny of those she manipulates. If forced into combat, she will always make sure she has expendable minions to protect her while she works her magic.

Thayin Redfeather, Male Human Clr3/Rog2: CR 5; Medium-size Humanoid; HD 3d8+3 (Clr) plus 2d6+2 (Rog); hp 26; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+1 Dex, +4 chain shirt); Atk +3 melee (1d6+2, masterwork short sword); SA sneak attack +1d6, rebuke undead; SD evasion; AL LE; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +4; Str 14, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 12.

Skills: Bluff +6, Concentration +4, Hide +5, Innuendo +6, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (Religion) +6, Listen +6, Move Silently +6, Search +5, Spellcraft +5, Spot +5.

Feats: Alertness, Combat Casting.

Spells (4/3/1): 0—*detect magic, detect poison, guidance, resistance*; 1st—*bane, cause fear, command*; 2nd—*undetectable alignment*.

Domain Spells (1): 1st—*protection from good*.

Possessions: Chain shirt, masterwork short sword, silver ring (20 gp), belt pouch with 50 gp.

Thayin is En'karren's right hand. He helps to coordinate the conspiracy, recruit new cultists, and conduct rituals and ceremonies. He is a prominent merchant and council member, but his magic and religion are dark secrets. Thayin has big plans and won't let the PCs get in his way. The cult usually meets in his office basement.

Zeff, Male Elf Rog3: CR 3; Medium-size Humanoid; HD 3d6+1; hp 14; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+2 Dex, +4 leather); Atk +5 melee (1d6+2, short sword), or +4 ranged (1d8, light crossbow); SA sneak attack; SD evasion, uncanny dodge; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 14, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 11, Cha 13.

Skills: Disable Device +4, Gather Information +4, Hide +6, Intimidate +4, Innuendo +4, Listen +5, Move Silently +5, Open Lock +4, Search +5, Spot +5.

Feats: Alertness.

Possessions: +2 leather, short sword, light crossbow, 20 bolts, belt pouch with 30 gp.

Zeff plies his trade in town, and has been quite successful. His involvement in the cult is largely opportunistic—conflict is always good for business. He'll be the one to spy on the PCs or set an ambush. He has a small army of enforcers and street urchins to assist him.

Horace Firefoot, Male Human Guardsman: Horace is a town guardsman who has been promised the sheriff's office in return for his commitment to the cult. He'll do what he can to impede any investigation or make the PCs' lives difficult without causing too much suspicion.

GOING TO THE AUTHORITIES

The characters' first order of business after arriving in town will likely be to find out why the Zorel townsmen attacked the Thoruke settlement. No one in town, except for the cultists, knows about the attack. Few people are even aware that the Thoruke exist. Those who are aware of them will demonstrate no animosity: The Thoruke will be described as simple, peaceful folk who sometimes

Zorel Surroundings



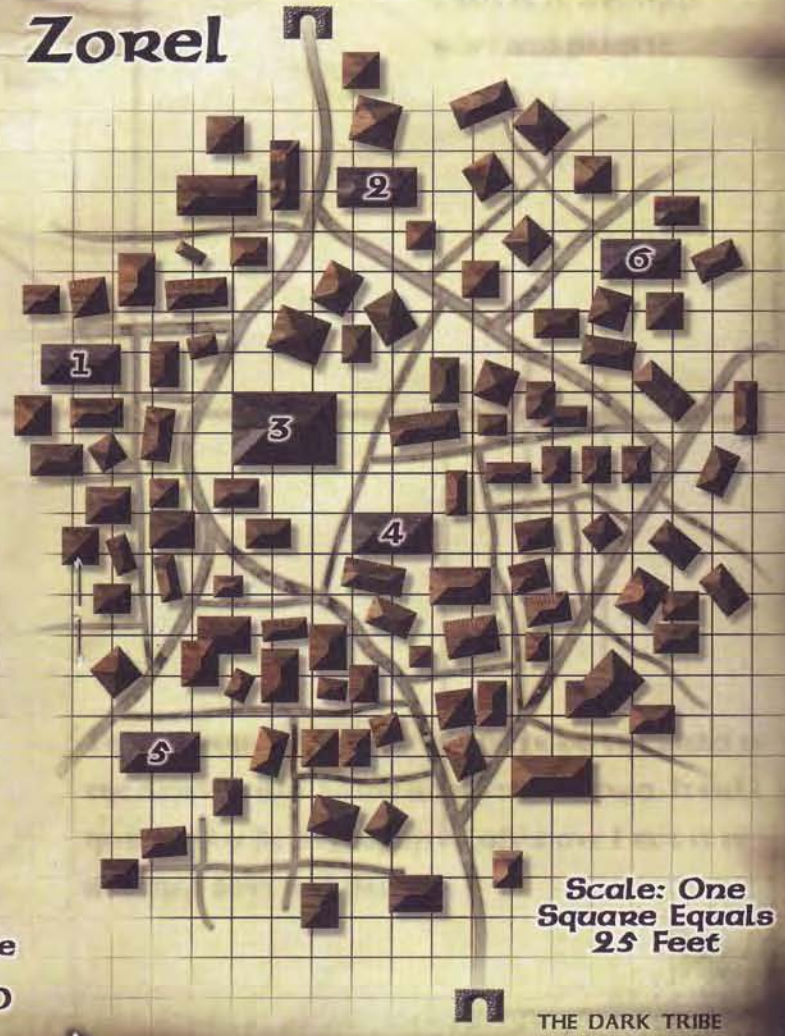
Haunted Woods Shrine



Thoruke Vale



Zorel



trade in Zorel and otherwise keep to themselves.

If the characters arrive in town with a prisoner, they may wish to hand him over to the authorities. The town guards will be cautious, but willing to take the characters to Sheriff Talltree. The sheriff will accept the prisoner and the characters' story as evidence enough that there was an attack on Thoruke, and that citizens of the town were involved. If the characters recovered a holy symbol, this will also convince the sheriff that the Uthuk Y'llan are involved in some way. However, the prisoner will be completely uncooperative, insisting that he was simply one of many "concerned citizens" who participated in the attack on the Thoruke to protect the town from the "evil savages." If asked about the holy symbol, he'll claim that he took it from one of the Thoruke, and that it proves they worship Y'llan.

Whether the characters take their case to the sheriff or the mayor, a council meeting will be scheduled for the following day. The PCs will be asked to speak on behalf of the Thoruke, and also to tell the council whatever they know about the cult of Y'llan (if anything). The town will provide the characters with free meals and lodging at the Leaping Lion as a gesture of good will.

COUNCIL MEETING

The meeting is held in the Council Hall. It is a private meeting attended only by the council members, the sheriff, and the characters.

The mayor, Baldor Glass, begins the meeting by asking the characters to repeat their story for the benefit of the council members who haven't heard it. Glass, of course, is ignorant of the plot, and not so trusting as the sheriff. When the characters have finished their story, he'll ask for proof, arguing that without it the council must dismiss the charge.

In the likely event that the characters are unable to prove their charge, Thayin will press the advantage. If the characters brought a prisoner with them to Zorel, Thayin will demand that the prisoner be brought forward to give his side of the story. When the prisoner has finished testifying, Thayin will stand and speak:

Friends and fellow citizens of Zorel, it is clear to me that this is a dangerous time for our fair town, and we must tread carefully. All agree that these "Thoruke" are in fact Uthuk barbarians, bound by blood to the evil savages who murder and burn all along the frontier. Now, we have two stories that purport to reveal the truth of these people and their aims. These strangers, who by their own admission have been living with the barbarians, claim that the Thoruke are a peaceful people, that they have not been corrupted by worship of the dark goddess. Instead, we are to believe that some of our own citizens—who are not warriors and have never been prone to violence in the past—simply launched an unprovoked attack on this settlement. Moreover, on the basis of the religious symbol recovered, the strangers would have us believe that these same citizens—not the Uthuk—are the ones who worship the dark goddess. Does this not strain credibility? If they are so innocent, why did they not come to us themselves?

Why did they send these strangers to us—as emissaries, or as spies? Is it not much more likely, as our own citizens tell us, that it is these Uthuk who worship the dark goddess, like all their kind? Perhaps, instead of punishing those who sought to protect us from them, we should give some thought to protecting ourselves.

Thayin's speech will be met with a chorus of agreement from the other council members, including the mayor. It will be up to the characters to speak on the Thoruke's behalf. Once they have done so, the speaker or speakers should make Diplomacy checks (or Charisma checks, if untrained) to determine the extent to which they modify the attitudes of the NPC council members. The initial attitude of the council members is *indifferent*, except for Thayin who is *hostile*. The DM should modify the characters' checks depending on how they roleplay their testimony to the council. The modifier could range from a -4 penalty for a very poor effort to a +4 bonus for a brilliantly roleplayed soliloquy.

Once the characters have made their case, the mayor will suggest that they adjourn the meeting for the day, and meet the following morning to vote on their course of action. This will give the characters an opportunity to meet with each of the council members privately, to further influence their attitudes.

THE COUNCIL

Mayor Baldor Glass: The mayor is a weak figure, rather easily manipulated but very likeable and basically honest. He just wants peace and prosperity in Zorel. If provided with real evidence of the conspiracy, he'll be a staunch supporter of the characters, but he won't be easily convinced. He leads the council meetings, and his vote counts twice in the case of a tie.

Sheriff Vedrigan Talltree: Talltree leads the town guardsmen and is responsible for law enforcement in Zorel. He is an elf, and one of the few of his kind to hold a position of authority in the town. He'll lead any official investigation into the conspiracy. Talltree assumes everyone is telling the truth at first and gathers evidence impartially.

Zacharia: An older resident, he's on the council mostly because everyone knows and respects him. Something of a curmudgeon, if an argument or debate gets too esoteric, he'll try to cut to the chase or just tell everyone to shut up. He doesn't like the idea of Uthuk Y'llan hiding nearby, but likes starting a needless conflict even less.

Gebrelle: A weaver, seamstress, and new grandmother, she's new to the council and makes an effort to hear all sides of the story. Her gentle demeanor often makes people overlook her perceptiveness and keen mind. She's afraid of the Uthuk, but is also reluctant to involve the youth of Zorel in a pointless war.

Maximus Mardok: A bit rough around the edges, Mardok is a former miner and mercenary. He prefers the quiet, prosperous Zorel to his old life. While he can rub some people the wrong way, he has Zorel's best interests at heart. He's not fond of magic, or of religious zealots. He respects paladins, but not their evangelism. He'll be suspicious of the characters' claims unless offered proof.

Berrit Goldstone: A dwarven scholar and wizard, Berrit settled here years back and started a school. She quickly gained popularity and was awarded a seat on the council. Despite her bookish background, she still has a strong practical streak, easing any misgivings Mardok had about her.

THE SPY

During the remainder of the day and into the evening, the characters should be encouraged to pursue their investigation and speak further with the council members. They will be shadowed throughout the day by Zeff and his street urchins, as the elf tries to keep abreast of their activities. The DM should make opposed Hide and Spot or Move Silently and Listen checks for Zeff and the PCs as he follows them around town. If discovered, he will always attempt to flee rather than risk an overt confrontation. If captured, he will reveal nothing about the cult unless offered a very healthy bribe—at least 500 gp—and an opportunity to leave town. In that event, he'll tell what he knows about En'karren and her plans, including the attack on the Thoruke. Under no circumstances will he willingly stick around to testify to the council.

THE TRAP

That night, on En'karren's orders, the guardsman Horace Firefoot will approach the characters. He will tell them that the sheriff has discovered evidence of great importance in the woods near town and requests their assistance. If pressed, Horace will tell the characters that the sheriff believes he has discovered the site where a cult of Y'llan has been conducting secret rituals. Whether or not the characters guess it is a trap, it's pretty likely that they'll follow the guardsman anyway—it's the cleanest way to finish their business in Zorel.

THE HAUNTED WOODS

As you walk over a slight rise, you see the dark woods spread out before you. The ancient trees are thin and scattered in some places, very dense in others. There are several footpaths leading through the woods, though they are overgrown and do not look as if they've been used for years. Odd shapes and deep shadows move amongst the trees, and there is an almost tangible shroud of evil and corruption hanging over the place.

This unnamed grove of trees is about an hour from town, and the locals generally stay away from it, believing the stories about ghosts and evil spirits. There is an ancient shrine to Utaavo in the grove, though it has stood in ruins for as long as anyone in Zorel can remember. The corruptor spirit, a foul minion of Y'llan, has inhabited the woods, and En'karren has indeed been using the site for her rituals and ceremonies.

THE SHRINE

En'karren, the corruptor spirit, and a band of Uthuk Y'llan lurk amongst the standing stones, broken columns, and weathered statues that litter the shrine area. The Uthuk lie in ambush and will attack when the characters approach the shrine. En'karren and the

Uthuk Y'llan, Male Human (Uthuk) Bbn3 (4): CR 3; Medium-size Humanoid; HD 3d12+6; hp 25; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 14 (+2 Dex, +2 leather); Atk +6 melee (1d12+2, greataxe); SA rage; AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Wil +1; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills: Intimidate +4, Intuit Direction +4, Listen +4, Ride +6, Spot +4, Wilderness Lore +4.

Feats: Weapon Focus (greataxe).

corruptor spirit will support the Uthuk with magic, though the spirit will attack if the barbarians are defeated. See the New Monster section for complete stats and a description of the corruptor spirit.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Assuming the characters survive the attack, they'll have enough evidence to convince the council that there was a cult of Y'llan in Zorel and that it was responsible for the attack on the Thoruke. The council will want to make arrangements with the Thoruke to retrieve the bodies of those who fell in the attack, but will also pursue friendly relations with the settlement.

Thayin and the other conspirators will lay low, unless they have somehow been exposed. They will attempt to rebuild the cult once the characters have left town and things return to normal.

When the characters return, the Thoruke will be grateful for the assistance. The revelation that En'karren, a Thoruke, was involved will cause great concern, and they will be saddened by her fate. Stonebeard will regain consciousness shortly after the characters return; the night of the attack, he says, an evil spirit sent by Y'llan appeared in his home and attacked him. He is grateful to the characters, because he believes the spirit would have returned to finish him if it had not been destroyed.

The Thoruke have little material wealth, but they will reward the characters as best they can. They will heal injuries, provide training in skills with which they are proficient, repair damaged equipment, and provide them with all the provisions they can carry. They are invited to stay as long as they like and encouraged to return when they pass this way again.

NEW MONSTER

CORRUPTOR SPIRIT

Medium-Size Spirit

Hit Dice: 7d10+7 (53hp)

Initiative: +2 (Dex)

Speed: 50 ft.

AC: 17 (+2 Dex, +5 natural)

Attacks: Bite +8 melee, 2 claws +7 melee

Damage: Bite 1d8+1 and paralysis; claw 1d6+1 and 1d6 cold

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Paralysis, cause fear

Special Qualities: Incorporeal

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +7

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 19

Skills: Bluff +4, Diplomacy +5, Escape Artist +3, Gather Information +6, Hide +10, Intimidate +8, Listen +6, Move Silently +9, Search +8, Spot +8

Feats: Combat Reflexes, Multiattack, Weapon Finesse (bite)

Climate/Terrain: Any

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 6

Treasure: Usually none

Alignment: Always chaotic evil

Advancement: 8–9 HD (Medium-size)

Corruptor spirits are the incorporeal servants of the dark goddess Y'llan. Their hatred of living things is legendary, and they exist only to twist and corrupt all that is good and pure.

Wraithlike creatures of shifting shadow, corruptor spirits usually materialize in a vaguely humanoid form. Baleful red eyes glow from the spirit's dark visage, and its ghostly limbs end in razor-sharp talons. Corruptor spirits inspire stark terror in most mortal beings.

Its dark mind mirrors the corruptor spirit's shadowed form. Clever, shrewd, and perverse, it will use intimidation, flattery, false promises, cruelty, sympathy, or over threats to manipulate those it is sent to corrupt. The corruptor spirit is a consummate survivor, fighting if confronted but always favoring the sacrifice of others.

COMBAT

Corruptor spirits rarely engage in melee combat, but their natural attacks and supernatural abilities make them fierce opponents.

Paralysis (Ex): A victim bitten by a corruptor spirit must make a Fortitude save (DC 15) or be paralyzed for 1d6+4 minutes.

Fear Aura (Su): Corruptor spirits emanate a terrifying aura of evil and corruption. Creatures of less than 5 HD in a 60-foot radius that look upon the spirit must succeed at a Will save or be affected as though by a *fear* spell as cast by an 8th-level sorcerer.

Incorporeal (Su): Corruptor spirits can only be harmed by other incorporeal creatures, +1 or better magic weapons, or magic, and have a 50% to ignore any damage from a corporeal source. They can pass through solid objects and their attacks pass through armor. Corruptor spirits always move silently.

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CREDITS

Publisher: Christian T. Petersen

Writing: Richard Tomasso

Editing: Greg Benage

Graphic Design: Brian Schomburg

Cover Illustration: Scott Schomburg

Cover Colorist: Ben Prenevost

Cartography: Brian Schomburg

Special Thanks: Tod Gelle