

War of the Burning Sky

Tears of the Burning Sky

by Ken Marable and Ryan Nock



A fantasy adventure for 11th-level characters

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An Adventure for 11th-Level Characters
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Note on Rules Content: *This adventure uses Open Game Content as well as material that is in the System Reference Document but is not in the core rulebooks. All the information you need to use this material is presented in this adventure, but if you are interested in learning more, search for the System Reference Document online, available through various sources.*

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the sixth adventure in the *War of the Burning Sky* campaign saga. In previous adventures the heroes have battled the great Ragesian Empire, smuggling military secrets out of the besieged city of Gate Pass, thwarting a conspiracy to use a magical hurricane to destroy the seat of the rebellion in Seaquen, and holding back one of Ragesia's mighty armies from the lands of Dassen. Their slowly-growing force of allies was recently joined by the Monastery of Two Winds, whose wind-worshipping monks have pledged their aid to the heroes after being rescued from the magic of a strange dreamborn creature, and from the blades of a Ragesian garrison.

Now, with the wind at their backs, the heroes set out for Castle Korstull, a canyon fortress in the where Emperor Drakus Coaltongue was slain, and where it is believed the Torch of the Burning Sky may lie. An endless firestorm wracks the surrounding lands, animating as undead all who die to its falling flames, including all those who defended the castle that was to be the emperor's final conquest. The castle holds the clue to the fate of the emperor and the Torch, but the heroes will have to contend with demons, rival treasure hunters, and the survivors of Coaltongue's army to learn it.

BACKGROUND

For years, wealthy noble families throughout the region, especially in Sindaire, suffered under Emperor Coaltongue's rule. In the summer of the last year, Lord Pietr Gorquith organized this disapproval into an outright rebellion. The rebellious nobles were smart enough to realize, however, that Coaltongue's military might surpassed anything they could field, so instead of warring outright, they fought with subterfuge and politics. Shipments were delayed or rerouted from military garrisons to disgruntled peasants, threats were made to Coaltongue's supporters, and pledges were made to stand together when the time came; soon even the Exarch – the national leader installed by Coaltongue's orders – feared that he could no longer tell whom he could trust.

ADAPTING THE ADVENTURE

Tears of the Burning Sky works easily as a stand-alone adventure, where the focus can be on recovering any precious item that several groups would pursue. A break in the firestorm, which divinations show will only last a few days, calls other treasure hunters and even a small army to the perilous castle. The trillith Deception could simply be a unique doppelganger working as an agent for some nefarious group, and the rift could have been created by some sort of magical catastrophe.

The Old Dragon's foes assumed his only strength was in martial warfare, but in truth he was also cunning: he decreed that every noble family would offer up a son or daughter to serve in the armies of Ragesia's heartland, far from the safety of Sindaire. The loyal noble families readily complied, whereas many among the rebellion hesitated or balked. Confident he had weeded out enough of his opponents, the emperor ordered his garrisons to arrest the rebels. Some tried to fight, and they fled in force to the highly defensible Castle Korstull in the badlands of central Sindaire, which had itself once served as a Ragesian fortress when Coaltongue first attacked Sindaire sixty years ago, before the nation pledged fealty to Ragesia.

On a morning in late fall, Emperor Coaltongue called together his loyal First Army and mustered the ten thousand men and their many beasts of war on a broad field outside the Ragesian capital. With him he had brought the son of one of the Sindairese rebels, shackled and held fast in the clawed grip of two skull-masked inquisitors. Holding aloft the Torch of the Burning Sky, the emperor roared to his men that they would put down this challenge to their authority, this insult to their invincible might. The tip of the Torch began to flicker with fire, and then, with a strike that caved in the skull of the rebel son, the flames flared to blinding brilliance.

The sky roared, and an inferno descended upon the army, engulfing them and carrying them through the burning sky to the gates of Castle Korstull.

Emperor Coaltongue dined that evening in the castle's throne room.

That evening, however, as the emperor slept soundly with the satisfaction of his victory, a trio of assassins struck. Avoiding or striking down every guard, defeating every magical and mundane defense that protected Coaltongue, the assassins managed to reach the emperor's bedchambers, located behind the throne room. Vile poison struck down Darius, one of his inquisitor bodyguards, but not before Darius sounded an alarm. The assassins slew the emperor before he woke, and then, bearing the emperor's body and the Torch, they battled their way to within sight of the open sky and activated the Torch, teleporting away.

But somehow the assassins sabotaged the Torch's power: when they vanished, they left behind a rift in the fabric of reality, crossing the Astral Plane, the Plane of Elemental Fire and the Negative Energy Plane. Within moments the castle and miles around it were engulfed in flames, and all those slain by the blaze were infused with necromantic energy, soon to rise as undead. Only Darius survived, protected by the wards on Coaltongue's throne room, but the assassins' poison seared his mind as the rift incinerated his comrades, and he lay in a nightmare-wracked fever for days. Now he survives in the emperor's chambers, barely aware of who he is, or that he alone holds the secret to the Torch's fate.

Now, the firestorm created by the rift drifts for miles in every direction, raining liquid flame upon the land, turning anything it slays into undead. In the months since Coaltongue's defeat, many have tried to reach the heart of the firestorm, where a burning pillar ascends into the heavens, but none have emerged.

Meanwhile, within the castle, a strange heirarchy has emerged. Though most of the undead retain only the faintest sliver of a mind, they still obey the commands of those creatures whose spirits were strong enough to survive their deaths. Now the castle is commanded by Inquisitor Griiat, once one of Coaltongue's bodyguards. Since his death he has

ASSASSINATING AN IMMORTAL MAN

Rumors have said for decades that Drakus Coaltongue is immortal, invulnerable to wounds and to the ravages of age, for in his nearly hundred years of life he has survived hundreds of battles. As the heroes will discover in this adventure, these rumors are true. Decades ago, a young servant of the Ragesian Empire, a priest and mage named Leska Merideus, discovered the location of the Aquiline Heart, a relic of a god-like elemental entity, the blood of which grants immortality to those who drink it. Leska shared this discovery with her emperor, and the two of them became immortal.

Coaltongue, then, is not truly dead. The assassins slew him, impaling his heart and slicing off his head, but they had to bring his body with them to ensure he did not simply regenerate and track them down. In the next adventure, *The Trial of Echoed Souls*, the heroes will follow clues to track down the assassins and recover both the emperor and the Torch.

Who Were the Assassins?

In case the heroes use divinations to learn about the identities of the assassins or ask Darius questions about them, they were, in brief:

- Quillathe Nailo – A dark elf woman with red-violet hair who wields a bladed whip and a rapier. She struck down Darius with a poisoned kiss.
- Yvonne Machuel – A white-haired dark elf woman who wielded a two-bladed sword. She carried off Coaltongue's body.
- Rhuarc Knightsbane – A swarthy half-elf man who could vanish into shadows, and whose charcoal-black scimitar beheaded the emperor.

These assassins had their own motives to kill the emperor – vengeance and a desire to topple a tyrant – but they were given the necessary magic to complete the act by a third party unknown to them. We leave it deliberately uncertain who was behind the assassination so you can choose, but in general it can be assumed that Leska was the mastermind.

learned to draw divine magic from the power of the planar rift, and views it as his maker, almost his god, which he calls the Dark Pyre. Griiat is cursed, however, to remain in the castle until he is released from his duty, which he failed when he allowed the emperor to die, and so without the intervention of those from the outside, the spectral inquisitor and all his undead minions will remain in the castle for eternity.

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

The heroes investigate Korstull to see if they can either find the Torch hidden within, or information about its whereabouts. Their explorations do not win them the Torch itself, but they gain information on its whereabouts as well as the truth behind what happened the night of Emperor Coaltongue's death.

The adventure is divided into three main sections as detailed below.

Act One. The heroes start at a town on the border of the lands ravaged by the planar fire. Ragesian soldiers are raiding the town, alerting the heroes that the First Army may be in the vicinity. Aided by magic from the Monastery of Two Winds, the heroes hold back the firestorm and head to the castle. There, they find countless scorched dead strewn along the canyon that leads to the castle, some of which animate and attack them. They meet a group of intrepid halfling and gnome treasure hunters who are looking to loot the castle, and who might serve as allies or friendly rivals as the heroes delve into the castle and search for the Torch. However, hidden among the small folk is the trillith Deception, who with his flawless disguises will attempt to bedevil and betray the heroes.

Act Two. In this section the heroes explore the lower levels of Korstull, amid which they must find a way to reactivate the mechanical lift that is the only entrance to the bunker-like upper level. Among the threats in this area are a small group of devils who have been sent to secure the area for the Ragesians, the twisted remains of the rebellion leader and his attendants, and of course undead of all sorts. At the end of this act, just after learning that the Ragesian army is

PSIONICS IN THE ADVENTURE

As in all of the adventures in the campaign saga, the psionics rules are not necessary in *Tears of the Burning Sky*. Though trillith abilities are inspired by psionic powers, everything you need is provided in this adventure.

heading for their location, the heroes ascend in the lift, which is a dramatic deathtrap.

Act Three. The upper level of the castle is trapped in a sliver of the Astral Plane, and it is here that Griiat and his minions assault the heroes as they try to reach the throne room and contact Darius. After the heroes reach Darius, the trillith Deception discreetly stabs the heroes in the back: while they try to find a way to escape the Ragesians who are storming the castle, Deception releases a nightmarish trillith from a soul gem he has carried, which chooses as its body the skeleton of a gold dragon that had been mounted as a trophy in the throne room.

The dragon attacks to slay the heroes, Deception tries to escape with the secret of the Torch's location, and there is a good chance the heroes flee the scene in a flying palanquin kept in the castle's imperial banquet hall. Pursued by a nightmarish dragon and attacked by all those in the Ragesian army capable of flying, the heroes race down the canyon to safety, possessing one of the most valuable secrets in the war.

ALLIES AND ENEMIES WITHIN KORSTULL

Several competing groups are active at Korstull, and could be used as allies, or to combat other enemies.

Clan Millorn and Deception

With the fire rain abating for a while, a group of gnomes and halflings from the Millorn Clan in southern Sindaire has traveled here in alchemically treated wagons to explore (read: loot) Korstull. If they manage to find some useful items to take back with them for further study, then all the better.

Their full statistics are included in Appendix One, but general summaries are stated below. Overall, unless antagonized, they look at another group as friendly competition, but expect to be allowed to keep any treasure they recover. Unfortunately, among them is the trillith Deception, whom the heroes previously encountered in adventure two, *The Indomitable Fire Forest of Innenotdar*.

Jorrina Waryeye (NG female gnome diviner 7/ loremaster 2). Jorrina is the unofficial leader of the group, as she was the one who organized the expedition and divined when the storm would reveal a long enough opening. She is initially distrustful of others, but quickly warms up to those who prove their value to their explorations.

Grellfin Flintflindercandle (LG male halfling paladin 9). Bombastic Grellfin is eagerly looking forward to hewing threw masses of undead. He often butts heads with Jorrina, since he is impatient and thinks it ignoble to waste time finding “safe” routes. His attempts to run the group more as a military unity than a band of “grave robbers” (as he often calls the rest of them) has not won him any friends. Depending on how rag-tag or formal the heroes appear, she may be more of less friendly with them.

Oller Pennyteller (NG male gnome rogue 9). Oller is the group’s trapsmith. He jokes and is quite friendly with everyone, but this is actually a façade to get others to lower their guard around him and reveal more than they would otherwise. Years of adventuring in the wilds has left him quietly paranoid. He actually gets along well with Grellfin, and performs the duty of buffer between him and Jorrina.

Kaletia, Rendlas, Reuben, Verane, and Zooten (N male and female gnome and halfling fighter 4). The rest of the group are minor players in the group, working as muscle and assistants, having little initiative in the course of this adventure.

Ernest Wentry (supposedly a N male halfling expert 4). The halfling who appears to be Ernest is actually the trillith Deception, who slipped into the group when they were in a nearby town, just

LORE OF KORSTULL

Knowledge (architecture and engineering):

DC Knowledge

- 15 Aside from the main entrance – which passes through the maw of an enormous statue of a bear skull – if one could breach one of the many bunkers along the walls of the canyon, it would be possible to enter the castle via passages soldiers normally use.
- 20 Many mechanical devices within the castle – from the main gate to dozens of traps – are powered by a complex mechanism powered by the flow of an underground river, deep in the mountain’s interior.
- 25 The shaft that rises from the lower level to the upper bunker utilizes a mechanical lift. Engineers who worked on the shaft were bound by geas never to speak of the defenses they lay inside the lift tunnel.

Knowledge (history) or (nobility and royalty):

DC Knowledge

- 15 Korstull is well known for its many rings of defenses, and though originally built as a fortress for Coaltongue when he originally annexed Sindaire, it was recently used as a final holding for Sindairese rebels, led by the noble Pietr Gorquith.
- 20 The castle consists of a lower section intended for visitors and guests, and a highly defended upper section. The common barracks are located on the lower level, but supposedly many magical defenses protect the upper level.
- 25 It is said the lord of the castle can look into any room within it, and out onto the canyon, though mirrors placed in the war room. Also, many hidden passages allow spying into the suites on the lower level.

before departing on the mission. In his role as Ernest, Deception is exceedingly simple-minded, just obeying orders and performing menial tasks for the caravan. He responds to most questions with a shrug or a confused look, suggesting someone else might know better than him. He plays only a minor role unless the heroes involve him, at least until the third act.

Army Remnants

The undead born from the soldiers in Coaltongue's army are bound in death to serve the duty they were last given, which is to defend Castle Korstull. If the heroes manage to somehow call a cease-fire (such as by speaking with Inquisitor Griiat), they might get the undead to hold off the living Ragesian army that arrives at the end of the third act.

Sindaire Forces

An earth elemental bound to the castle by rebel leader Pietr Gorquith roams tunnels near the battle, and might aid those who claim to be loyal to the rebels. Gorquith himself survives in a horribly twisted state, and can provide detailed information about the castle's layout and defenses.

Devils

A group of devils has taken over the chapel in the lower level. Summoned by the now perhaps familiar inquisitor Guthwulf, their mission is to secure the castle for the arrival of the Ragesian forces, and to aid the forces at the command of its leader when they do arrive. For now, though, the devils just wait in the safe chapel, confident they have secured enough to fulfill the letter of their bargain.

Among the devils is Pilmat, an imp who is very displeased with being on this world. He can act as look-out or as a tiny scout if the heroes defeat the bone devil Luxkamma, who commands him and keeps him here.

Inquisitor Griiat

Though Griiat likely only briefly encounters the heroes in the third act, he becomes aware of their activities in the castle early, thanks to a scrying chamber in the upper levels, and so those defenders of the castle who are not just ignorant undead take an active role, and do not simply wait for the heroes to kick open their door and hack them apart.

General Magdus and Shaloshah of Shahalesti

In Act Three, the survivors of Coaltongue's army who were outside the range of the firestorm when the emperor was assassinated return. Their leader, General Magdus, has already seized this castle once, and he intends not to lose it again. The army serves primarily as motivation and a way to get the heroes out of the castle, not as a combat threat, but the heroes might decide to speak with Magdus, and if they are defeated and captured they have a unique opportunity to bargain with the Ragesians, since by that point they should possess the most important information in the war.

Perhaps a more intriguing presence is Shaloshah, whom the heroes met previously in adventure three, *Shelter from the Storm*. As daughter of Lord Shaaladel, ruler of Shahalesti, Shaloshah and her entourage are accompanying Magdus in an effort to sway the general's loyalties. By helping him retrieve the Torch of the Burning Sky and promising that her nation will support him as new ruler of Ragesia, she hopes to turn Magdus against Leska.

When she sees the heroes again, her reaction will be greatly influenced by what happened to the Shahalesti in adventure three, but if she had a positive opinion of them from that encounter, she is likely to see them as potential allies as well, perhaps more appealing than Magdus.

THE BURNING SKY

As detailed in the *Campaign Guide*, teleportation is hazardous during the adventure due to a strange mishap tied to the Torch of the Burning Sky. Any creature teleporting takes fire damage based on the distance traveled. For more details, see the *Campaign Guide*.

Deception

The lying, scheming trillith has come to Korstull, like everyone else, to locate the Torch, but not to use it as a weapon. Rather, the Torch contains a fragment of a soul of the Mother of Dreams, the creator of the trillith. By retrieving this soul, the trillith will be able to control their mother.

Deception has brought along another trillith, less intelligent but overall stronger, which he carries in a black gem. Aware that he has few ways to fight against undead, Deception will not betray the heroes until they are near the throne room. At that point he'll look to replace one of the heroes who is alone or disabled, intending to release the other trillith to destroy them.

RESCUE MISSION

Although nearly all of the undead within Castle Korstull will fight to the death, they might choose to capture the heroes if they defeat them. Captives are taken to the Dark Pyre to be animated as undead minions in Griiat's personal army. While the heroes await ritual sacrifice to Griiat's "god," a fun side adventure would be to play the Clan Millorn explorers, spurred on by Grellfin to go to the rescue. These explorers are lower level than the heroes, but their size gives them unique avenues for exploring the castle without fighting.

ACT ONE: THE FIRESTORM

In this act, the heroes reach the edge of the scorched lands surrounding Korstull, fight off pillaging Ragesians, and then press into the firestorm. Once they reach the castle they encounter a second group of adventurers, and together the two groups fight against a mass of undead who rise to stop their entrance to the canyon fortress.

Except for creatures present in the core monster book, all combat stats in this and the other acts are presented in Appendix One.

AID OF THE TWO WINDS

If the heroes have completed adventure five, *Mission to the Monastery of Two Winds*, the monastery's masters Pilus and Longinus give the heroes a parting gift: a glass orb within which a storm rages. With this orb, the heroes will be able to hold back the firestorm, conjuring driving winds to push the flames away. This will ensure that the storm stays many miles from the heroes, but an unfortunate drawback is that the storm will not simply close in behind them as they travel, so there is a chance that others might take advantage of the same opening.

Longinus has divined, and knows that remnants of the First Ragesian Army, commanded by General Magdus and accompanied by a contingent of Shahalesti elves, patrol the lands near the firestorm, waiting for just such an opening. All efforts to actually determine the location of the Torch, or of the late emperor, fail outright, but Longinus says such is typical for items of such power.

Longinus tells them that once they reach the firestorm and activate the orb, it will only last for a few days, a week at most. He suggests they bring ample supplies, since they will not have time to retreat and return later. The monks of the monastery can offer magic items of up to 8,000 gp in value, selling them at 70% of market value. The majority of magic items available for purchase are somehow wind-themed, either in function or form, though adventuring staples such as *cure* potions and wands are certainly available.

Before the heroes leave, Longinus casts a *divination* about the heroes' exploration of the castle, and received this reply:

"A perilous climb.
Revelation, Deception.
Horses fly from fire."

Finally, if the heroes did not drive off Pilus, the master of the east wind offers them a gift as well. To whichever member of the party he suspects has the lowest Will save, he presents a platinum earring, which he says he hopes will protect the wearer from the "deception" his brother learned of through *divination*.

New Item – Earring of the Whispering Winds:

This earring (occupies the head body slot) grants the wearer a +5 competence bonus to Listen checks. Additionally, once per day the wearer can will the ring to detect the lies of those around him. This effect alerts the wearer of the ring with a faint buzzing in his ear whenever anyone within 20 ft. of him speaks a lie. The buzzing is only audible to him. Lying creatures are allowed a Will save (DC 13) to avoid having their lies detected. This effect lasts for three minutes.

Additionally, the earring serves as a connection between Pilus and the wearer, granting Pilus a +10 bonus to overcome the save DC of any scrying spells he targets at the ring's wearer.

Moderate *divination*; CL 3rd; Craft Wondrous Item, *zone of truth*; Price 4660 gp.

THE ROAD

Guides from the monastery can escort the heroes to the lowlands on the northern side of the mountain range, and point them to the village of Ronda where they can acquire horses. The Sindairese villagers – mostly humans, halflings, and gnomes, their homes decorated with bear motifs – speak of intermittent visits by groups of Ragesian soldiers demanding supplies. They know that thousands of soldiers are based somewhere east of the firestorm, the survivors of Coaltongue's army.

WITHOUT THE MONASTERY

If the heroes did not complete the previous adventure, they might simply head into the firestorm when divinations say that the storm will provide an opening of several days.

Short of loading up on many many *death ward* and *resist energy (fire)* spells, and then *wind walking* at high speed through the firestorm, it is unlikely heroes of this level will be able to reach the castle without some sort of clearing in the storm. If, however, they come up with a method, it will be difficult to justify the Ragesians following them. Perhaps only a small strike force arrives in Act Three. Clan Millorn, however, could still manage to make it through.

If the heroes ask, the villagers can inform them of the events of the rebellion. As for the aftermath of Coaltongue's defeat, these villagers are far from the main fighting, but they know that the Ragesians are fighting to maintain their hold on Sindaire. Many travelers fleeing from the capital speak of a growing desire to defeat the Ragesians. Depending on how well the heroes protected Seaquen and Dassen in previous adventures, the villagers may also make mention of a fledgling alliance with other nations in the fight, led by some distant group of mages.

Though the heroes will not be getting involved in the larger fight in Sindaire in this adventure, this could be a hook for additional adventures, or simply a sign of how their acts have influenced the lives of even common folk in the war.

A highway leads from the village to the badlands, which has enough traffic that they shouldn't attract much attention from Ragesian patrols, not until they near the firestorm at least. The closest town to the edge of the firestorm is Gathin, sixty miles from Ronda and twenty miles from Korstull.

APPROACHING THE FIRESTORM

Most of Sindaire is lush wooded prairies with villages and farms every mile or so, but when the

heroes have traveled nearly sixty miles, they pass towns from which many have fled, and a mild sense of unease hovers in the air. The clouds in the distant northwestern horizon are dark red even at noon, and as the heroes near the edge of the firestorm's reach the air begins to smell of ash and sulfur.

Eventually the heroes cross the rise of a hill and come upon grounds that have been seared with fire, the result of the firestorm briefly wandering out this far several months ago. The plantlife is mostly dead, but a few farm animals survive on sparse grazing. Two hundred feet ahead the heroes spot a tiny thorp, and beyond it miles of blackened hills. From the village comes shouts, and a group of mounted soldiers can be seen harrasing a muscled farmer.

Gathin (Thorp): Conventional; AL LN; Population 50; 40 gp limit; Assets 100 gp; Mixed (80% human, 12% gnome, 8% halfling).

GATHIN GARRISON (EL 14)

Shahalesti diviners with the army have determined that a group will be attempting to reach the castle, and so a small company of Ragesian soldiers have been ordered to watch this road that leads into the firestorm. They will fight to stop anyone from entering, though their morale is somewhat weak, and the lesser soldiers will break if Commander Rohat is defeated.

Commander Rohat (CR 10). 74 hp.

Bimal, Leena, Nadia, and Marton, Elite Ragesian

Knights (4, CR 8). 65 hp.

Bharat, Nessian warhound (CR 9). 114 hp, MM.

Typical Ragesian soldiers (8, CR 2). 20 hp.

When the heroes come upon the town, the small company of soldiers are arguing with one of the farmers who has been complaining about having to serve the soldiers as guests when he views them as enemies. Within a few minutes the argument will turn bloody when Rohat's right-hand-man Bimal cuts down the farmer as an example to the rest of the tiny village.

If at any point the Ragesians become aware of the heroes, they shout for them to halt, and the normal soldiers run to their mounts while Rohat and the knights ride to the heroes, suspicious of their presence. The rest of the soldiers follows a hundred feet behind, accompanied by the large hellhound Bharat. Unless the heroes manage to get Rohat on their side, the commander eventually orders an attack.

The four knights charge and ride past the heroes in wheeling strafes, trying to keep their distance in case of area attacks, and ignoring enemies who have no mobility or ranged attack options. Meanwhile Bharat the hellhound attempts to harry any spellcasters, and the rest of the soldiers ride in slow circles around the heroes if they can, attacking whichever target Rohat orders. Rohat meanwhile activates his lance's ability to turn him invisible, and takes on whichever warrior looks strongest, preferring other mounted foes.

Terrain: The village itself only has about twenty buildings, surrounded by a 5-ft. stone wall. Rohat much prefers to fight out in the open fields, where aside from a few low fences and sparse goats (sure to panic when combat breaks out) the ground is flat and open. However, the whole area is coated in ash that has blown in from the firestorm, so after a few rounds of combat (longer if foes stay still, shorter if people are running and charging a lot), a dusty haze fills the air, granting 20% concealment against all attacks beyond a range of 30 ft.

Aftermath: Once defeated, the Ragesians can tell the heroes little, other than that several thousand survivors of the First Army are camped less than a day's ride away, and that it will be noticed when no rider reports in from this unit. The soldiers can also tell about their flight from the searing rain when the firestorm first appeared, and how many in the army feel they suffered the first defeat the Ragesian army has known in decades. They believe somehow the rebels booby-trapped the castle to assassinate the king and destroy the Torch, which created the firestorm.

The townsfolk are relieved at any aid, and if they are told that the Ragesians might be coming this

EFFECTS OF THE FIRESTORM

The firestorm stays mostly centered over Korstull, a mass of flaming clouds drizzling blood-red rain drifting eerily over the countryside. Should the heroes for some reason head into the storm without activating the orb from the Monastery of Two Winds (such as to try to evade the Ragesian patrol), they face a slow fiery death.

The rain, blood-red drops that sear like liquid flame, deals 1 point of fire damage and 1 point of negative energy damage each round. Eventually large pools form in burnt-out depressions, which cause 2d6 points of damage (half fire, half negative energy) if one falls in. Objects made of extremely flammable materials (like paper) catch fire, but wood becomes slightly scorched, and does not ignite.

Once the orb is activated, the immediate 30-ft. radius vicinity clears of rain within one minute, and then over the next ten minutes powerful winds drive the firestorm away. Note that the orb does not function if the heroes are transformed with *wind walk*.

One final danger of the firestorm is that teleporting through it is deadly, even more so than usual. In addition to the normal fire damage caused by the Burning Sky effect (see the Campaign Guide), teleporting within the area of the firestorm deals an equal amount of negative energy damage (1d6 per 100 ft. teleported, max 40d6). Any spellcaster using a teleportation effect becomes aware of strange energies just before he finishes his spell, and can choose to end the spell to avoid being harmed by the energy.

way soon in force, they pack up their belongings and flee south.

Other Options: If the heroes have chosen to avoid the main highway, they come upon the group on patrol when they near the edge of the firestorm.

CROSSING THE BATTLEFIELD

There are no foes along the path to the castle, though careful checking reveals occasional tracks in the ash of hooves and booted feet, but no bodies. The sky stays bleak, but no fiery rain falls as long as the heroes keep the orb with them.

At one point during the journey, the heroes pass through an area where the ground sizzles from heat, and noxious fumes waft into the air. The fire rain has created a few pockets of magma that burned pits into the ground. A Spot or Survival check (DC 20) notices the signs of weak ground, where a fragile shell of stone is all that hides a molten death. If no one spots it, the person in the lead of the group cracks through the stone and may be immersed in

lava. The lava is slightly cooled, so damage is less than normal.

Lava Pit Hazard (CR 11). Reflex DC 16 to avoid falling in lava. On success, the character stumbles into the lava but manages to avoid falling in, taking 1d6 points of fire damage upon contact, and 1d6 each round for 1d3 additional rounds. On a failure he is completely submerged, taking 10d6 points of fire damage upon contact and each round he remains submerged, and 1d6 each round for 1d3 rounds after he escapes the lava. Climbing out requires a Climb check (DC 5), and adjacent allies can each grant a +2 bonus, though they take 1d6 fire damage from contact to the lava each round they help.



After the first such pit, the heroes can easily spot similar pits, and are in little danger of stumbling into another.

THE CANYON

After fifteen miles, they spot far in the distance a bright red glow, and as they grow closer they realize they are seeing a towering pillar of flame, hundreds of feet across, rising miles into the heavens. This is the source of the firestorm.

The ground grows craggier as they reach the natural stone outcropping where Korstull is located. The stone mound rises nearly two thousand feet, but low in its slopes begins the canyon that leads to the castle. Originally a natural crack in the mountain, it was expanded by the Ragesians and turned into a highly defensible entrance. Nearly a mile long, the walls of the canyon are hundreds of feet deep, with bunkers built high above the route potential attackers would take. All of these bunkers are now filled with shambling dead, but none are intelligent enough to use ranged weapons to attack intruders. However, as the heroes traverse the canyon they hear a constant echoing murmur of moaning dead and the sound of bone scraping on stone, coming from arrow slits high above them.

Similar bunkers – built directly into the mountains stone – defend the face of the mountain in concentric rings, and the naturally craggy terrain once made it suicidal to attempt to avoid the canyon and try to approach the castle from above.

As the heroes near the castle, they see scattered remains of fallen soldiers, stretching out ahead of them toward a bend in the canyon. There is little left to salvage beyond various mundane or masterwork armor and weapons. A Heal check (DC 25) determines that the marks and breaks on some of the skeletons indicate that they were struck after their flesh was burned away, when all that remained was the skeleton and armor. Furthermore, most of the bodies appear to have weapons in hand, as if they were struck down in the midst of combat.

A Survival check (DC 22) reveals that three wagons came through here within the past few hours. This is the trail of Clan Millorn, and beyond the curve

it leads to the heroes' destination, Castle Korstull.

When the initial firestorm struck the courtyard just outside the castle, it animated both Ragesian soldiers and Sindairese prisoners, and in their undeath they warred and destroyed each other again. The remaining undead withdrew into the castle, but a huge swath of bodies lie at the end of the canyon.

Finally, the canyon cuts a sharp turn, and ahead lies the canyon's end, a hundred feet away. Beyond a huge swath of skeletons, charred siege equipment, and shattered stones, a colossal stone carving of a bear skull stretches out of the canyon wall, and the road into the castle passes into its toothy gullet. A wide open killing field faces the castle's face, with countless arrow slits and siege bunkers looking down from all sides.

The wall of the canyon rises three hundred feet, the last two hundred feet licked with flames, growing ever brighter the higher they rise, until finally they coalesce into the roaring pillar that is the heart of the firestorm, which bathes the whole area in intense red light. Black bolts of lightning crackle along the pillar's surface, but the thunder is eerily muted, like it is traveling an impossibly great distance.

Then, a hundred feet up at the very bottom of the pillar's flames, the fires part for a moment, and you spot what appears to be a window in the solid rock face that is the castle's front. Framed with ornate carvings too small to see from this distance, the window is dark, but you feel a weight pressing down, like someone is watching you. Then the flames intensify again, and the window is gone.

A black bolt of lightning descends from the heavens and strikes the floor of the canyon barely thirty feet away, beside an overturned steel cage that lies atop a vast pile of charred skeletons that must once have belonged to hundreds of men, horses, and stranger monsters, all long dead. You consider the spot the lightning struck, but then movement catches your attention just beyond it.

Amazingly, you see what appear to be a half dozen gnomes and halflings standing beside a trio of strange wagons that are parked in front

of the massive stone bear skull, sixty feet away. They have turned to look back at the sound of the lightning bolt, and they seem shocked to see you.

Then you realize there is more movement, and closer. The spot where the lightning struck shifts, the bone-strewn moving with a chorus of deathly laughter as the skeletons of nearly a dozen men rise, grabbing up weapons from around them, their eyes streaming tears of flame.

BURNING WARRIORS (EL II)

Inquisitor Griiat has spotted the heroes, and he has commanded the Dark Pyre to raise defenders for the castle. The undead begin prone, but they quickly rise and attack.

Sergeant Smash, dark pyre sergeant (CR 9). 52 hp.

Dark pyre warriors (10, CR 4). 20 hp.

Terrain: The canyon, previously just 40-ft. wide, now opens up to a vast area over 200-ft. wide and 100-ft. across, the entire area strewn with bodies that make the ground difficult terrain. The undead rise 30 ft. from the heroes, and the Clan Millorn caravan lies 30 ft. beyond. It is a further 40 ft. to the mouth of the bear carving, through which lies the entrance to the castle.

A 15-ft. square steel cage, once used to transport a trained bullete, lies toppled and open between the heroes and the undead. The steel is still hot enough to deal 1d3 points of fire damage to anyone touching it. The bars are wide enough that anyone can step through by spending just 5 ft. of extra movement, but this deals fire damage to the creature unless it succeeds an Escape Artist check (DC 20). Creatures have cover against attacks coming from the other side of the cage bars.

A Knowledge (the planes) check (DC 15) detects that this area has weakly-enhanced fire and negative energy magic.

Tactics: Although these soldiers are definitely geared towards direct melee tactics, they were well-trained in life, and maintain these tactics in undeath, especially with the direction of their leader, Sergeant

WEAKLY-ENHANCED DEATH AND FIRE MAGIC

Spells with the death or fire descriptor cast within a half-mile of the planar rift are automatically empowered, as are those that channel negative energy, such as *inflict* spells.

Smash, who barks orders in Orcish. The other undead reply only with savage hisses. Smash begins the fight by raising a *wall of fire* behind the heroes, and if any heroes take to the air, he creates a *wall of fire* beneath them and sends his soldiers up into the air with their firewalk ability. If they go above 20 ft., he instead uses his *spined shield*, then hurls handfuls of fire from *produce flame* when he is out of spines.

These are just the first of a great many undead the heroes will face in the course of this adventure. Due to the limited timeframe, the heroes won't have much time to rest and recover magic, so even if the cleric easily turns the first few groups of undead, don't worry. There will be plenty more. Devoted undead turners should enjoy flaunting their power here.

After a round of combat, the warriors of Clan Millorn react and prepare for a fight. Grellfin, the paladin, charges into combat, tearing through the lesser soldiers one by one. The rest of the clan are not very effective against these undead, but they will aid the heroes as best they can.

Aftermath: The undead fight until they are destroyed. When the bone dust settles, the gnomes and halflings of Clan Millorn regard the heroes warily. Grellfin offers healing if needed, and Jorrina addresses them, as detailed below.

FRIENDLY RIVALS

The group of eight gnomes and halflings (and one trillith) were examining the entrance thoroughly, worried that the massive bearskull carving might be trapped. Their three wagons, covered in a thick reddish grease and including a covering for their horses, are parked nearby.

Clan Millorn's Goal: While the castle itself is certain to have many treasures, Clan Millorn's primary target is the treasure vault which lies in the upper levels. Jorrina has studied the architecture and history

of Korstull, and so she knows generally what to look for. She knows the castle has many hidden passages, and her spell selection is geared to take advantage of them. She is aware that the lift to the upper levels – where the treasure vault lies – can only be operated if the water pump is functional, and she has used *locate object* to determine that the water pump lies on the western side of the castle. That is her first objective.

Negotiating: Jorrina hails them, asking if they're from Ragesia, and if they're here to "explore" the castle too. She is concerned about getting into Korstull before the unpredictable fire rain returns, but she's not in a great rush, and wants to make sure things are clear with the heroes. She does not want a fight, but she is not going to simply let these strangers have free reign in the castle they have come so far to plunder.

Assuming the heroes are friendly, Jorrina assumes they are treasure hunters like her own party, and proposes a mutually-beneficial arrangement: the two groups will work separately but not hostilely, each having claim to whatever items they personally recover. When they discover the treasure vault, the discoverers can claim sixty percent, and the other group gets the other forty. If the heroes negotiate, a Diplomacy check (DC 30) gets Jorrina to agree to go to seventy-five and twenty-five (or fifty-fifty, if they prefer). If the heroes don't succeed the check, demand more, or attempt strong-arm tactics, Jorrina promises her clan will fight for their fair share.

Assuming negotiations go well, Jorrina says her people will be willing to lend aid if things get dangerous for the heroes, and she hopes they feel the same way.

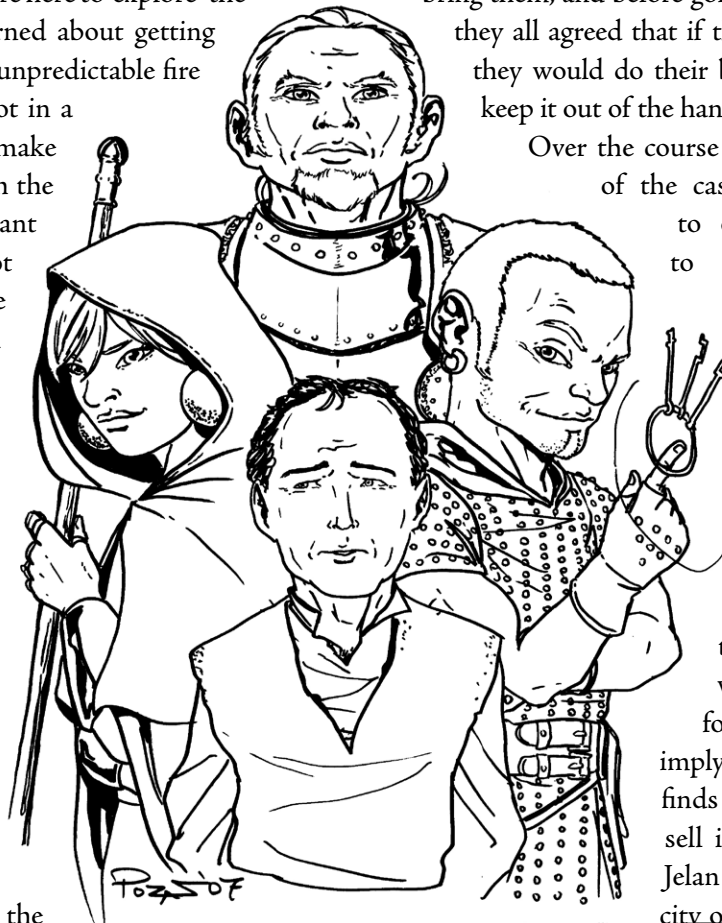
She casually suggests that once they're inside, the heroes take the left side, and her group will take the right. If the heroes suspect she knows something and ask to switch, she'll agree, and simply work quickly to reach the water wheel before the heroes can.

Torch Hunting: Smart heroes should know better than to admit they're looking for the Torch of the Burning Sky, but Jorrina suspects as much. Clan Millorn has no interest in the power the Torch would bring them, and before going on this adventure they all agreed that if they found the Torch, they would do their best to destroy it, to keep it out of the hands of tyrants.

Over the course of their exploration of the castle, Jorrina intends to observe the heroes to determine their progress and listen for clues to their intentions and demeanor.

Toward that end, the first time there is a lull in fighting, she asks Oller to go to the heroes and ask whether they're here for the Torch, and imply that if his group finds it they intend to sell it to a noble named Jelan Ayols in the capital city of Turinn. Then once Oller leaves, Jorrina will use *clairaudience* to listen to what will hopefully be a telling conversation.

If the heroes seem truly noble and well-intentioned, Jorrina may approach them and offer a revised deal. If her group gets the Torch, they'll hand it over to the heroes, in exchange for an ninety percent cut of treasure in the vault, and even if the heroes find it first, Clan Millorn gets a seventy-five percent cut in exchange for not laying claim to the Torch, which, in all fairness, is priceless.



Ad-Hoc Experience: If the heroes come to a polite agreement with the gnomes, reward them for a CR 11 encounter.

GETTING INTO THE CASTLE

There are three paths into the castle that look likely, though only the main entrance actually leads inside.

Archery Bunkers (EL 10+)

The heroes could climb, fly, or teleport up to one of the bunkers around the canyon walls, 60 ft. up. Only narrow arrow slits and holes to drop alchemicals through allow entrance, but at this level this should be little hindrance to the heroes. The bunkers are each 20-ft. by 20 ft., the only light coming in through the arrow slits. They are connected to other bunkers by 30-ft. hallways or 20-ft. ladders going through trap doors.

A typical bunker is occupied by four dark pyre swarms, but unless the heroes have alerted Griat and he has been able to send a spectral agent to put them on watch, they will simply be leaning against the walls when the heroes arrive. They attack if enemies come into sight, but do not investigate sounds of combat. Their preferred tactic is to surround enemies, or to have one grapple while the others sneak attack.

Dark pyre swarms (4, CR 6). 33 hp.

These bunkers all show signs of older battles, and many have cracks in their walls. After exploring three such rooms, the heroes find the passage to any other bunkers blocked by debris. The firestorm's initial blast triggered many failsafes intended to keep the castle from being breached in this method, making the bunkers a dead end.

However, for keen-eyed adventurers this direction is not a total waste. The stone on the walls of these rooms has been scratched by tiny talons, writing in Infernal that basically translates to "Pilmat was here," and a series of highly clever couplets about sinning, with the main emphasis being that it's better to lure mortals into bargains they later regret than

to tempt them into acts of passion. This should be a clue that there are devils about.

Bulette Tunnels (EL 11)

Emperor Coaltongue was not shy about using what magic and creatures he could in his attacks. One powerful tool he had to gain access to castles and other fortresses were his bulettes, trained to create tunnels far faster than any sapper could. Mages controlled the beasts, which were brought to the battlefield in huge steel cages, now lying broken and toppled in the canyon. However, the bulette's tunnels remain.

One bulette went wild and fled during the battle, and it was roaming in the nearby area when the firestorm struck, killed it, and animated it. It now nests in one of the guest suites (Area 9), having been brought inside by the other undead.

The second bulette managed to get into Korstull before being killed. Its tunnel leads from just to the left of the giant bear skull carving, to the barracks (Area 3), even through the iron barrier. However, the bulette was killed and its tunnel collapsed. Sixteen man-hours of work could clear the 20 ft. of loose debris (small creatures count ¼ for this physical labor), but the skeletons in the barracks would hear the heroes coming and prepare an ambush.

The third bulette tunneled in from the other side of the castle face, heading for the equestrian track (Area 5), but was stopped by an earth elemental bound to the area. A 15-ft. wide tunnel plunges into the castle face to the right of the giant bear skull, descending at a 45-degree angle and curving right. It stops after 40 ft., and the heroes discover the battered, all-but skeletal corpse of the creature still lying here.

The guardian elemental lurks nearby, following its last orders to protect the castle. It is dimly aware that a magical event of immense power occurred recently, though it was earthgliding at the time, and was unaffected. If emerges into the tunnel behind the heroes, its attitude is Unfriendly unless the heroes are trying to dig, in which case it is Hostile.

Elder earth elemental (CR 11). 228 hp, MM.

If the heroes reduce it below 40 hit points, it flees into the rock. After that, it will make hit and run attacks against the characters as long as it can. It views the heroes and Clan Millorn as the same group, and the gnomes will be horrified when one night the giant elemental clubs their horses to death, before melting back into the ground. The elemental can only enter the castle via the equestrian track, since the rest of the castle is lined with iron it cannot earthglide through. It will not risk going past the undead, and so will not go into the castle until the equestrian track has been cleared.

If the characters make the elemental Friendly, it warns them that the knights in the stables have

risen as undead, though it is unfamiliar with the rest of the castle. It will not accompany the heroes inside the castle of its own free will, though it may be convinced to stand guard at the entrance. If the heroes bring the ring of Lord Gorquith, this frees the elemental from its service, and it offers to serve them in one fight for their kindness.

Main Entrance

The main entrance, the maw of the great stone bear skull, is a 10-ft. wide, 20-ft. high arch that once held the castle's great doors, which were demolished when Coaltongue retook the castle. What lies within is detailed in the next Act.

ACT TWO: THE CASTLE

In this act, the heroes explore the undead-infested castle, battle devils for precious healing supplies, and meet with the rebel noble who used the castle to resist the Ragesians. At the end of this act, the heroes reactivate a lift that carries them to the upper level, and just before they are about to ascend, a Ragesian scout comes upon them, alerting them that an army is on its way.

GETTING UPSTAIRS

There are three main tasks the heroes must accomplish before they can take the lift to the upper level. First, they must open the dam that slows the flow of water in the underground river (Area 5). Second, they must repair the damaged water pump (Area 12), which provides the power to the lift. Third, the undead Lord Gorquith trapped in the Banquet Hall (Area 14) knows how to avoid the traps in the lift shaft, though he won't be forthcoming.

Additionally, attacks by Inquisitor Griiat's minions harrass them regularly, and the devils in the Chapel (Area 20) will be a danger when the Ragesians arrive if the heroes do not deal with them first.

CASTLE TRAITS

Unless otherwise noted, the walls are stone, though the outer shell of the castle is encased in 1-inch iron sheets, to prevent burrowing and stoneshaping. Unless otherwise stated, hallways and rooms are 9 feet high and all walls are 2 foot thick hewn stone (hardness 8, hit points 260, break DC 45). Single doors are good wooden doors (hardness 5, hit points 15, break DC 18), and double doors are iron doors (hardness 10, hit points 60, break DC 28).

Aside from the great foyer (Area 2), there is no light, except for the flicker of flaming tears on the faces of undead. When the undead see enemies, however, they flare and shed illumination like a torch. Most walls are decorated with carvings of bears and dragons. All doors are magically-treated wood, which managed to survive the initial burst of the firestorm.

The entire castle is equipped with plumbing, pipes with warm water for heated floors, and grated air shafts for ventilation. These passageways are just large enough that a Small creature can wriggle through them with an Escape Artist check (DC 30) every 5 ft., and a Tiny creature can travel through them by squeezing. These effectively allow slow but unhindered access anywhere in the castle's lower level. Such pipes do also run to the upper level, but the 100-ft. ascent is warded with glyphs of dispelling, and making the ascent without magic would be very difficult.

No water runs in the castle when the heroes arrive, as the water pump (Area 12) has been disabled.

In any area, there is usually something within 5 ft. that can be grabbed and used as a makeshift club, such as small statues, sconced torches, or flower vases.

DEFENDERS

Griiat long ago brought most of the undead inside the castle up to the upper level to be with him and bask in the glory of the Dark Pyre, but now the spectral inquisitor needs to drive out the intruders that have reached the castle. His first line of defense is to muster the guards in the barracks and send them hunting for the heroes.

OVERWHELMING ODDS?

Normally a small group of people should not be able to defeat all the defenders of a castle, but if the heroes have a cleric, the defenders' undead condition is a huge liability. A typical single-classed cleric at this level should be able to deal with a swarms of lesser undead by himself. However, if the heroes lack someone who can turn undead, the adventure becomes much more difficult.

In such a case, we recommend reducing the frequency of Griiat's forces' attacks. Without a cleric, the heroes will likely spend longer fighting their way into the castle anyway, so you can afford to spread out the assaults a bit.

Patrols (EL 10+)

Ten minutes after the heroes enter the castle, Griiat sends his dread wraith minion Reddengot to alert the warriors in the barracks. They begin to search the lower level in four groups, each consisting of four dark pyre soldiers and a sergeant. The wraith drifts through the castle stealthily, and if he spots the heroes or Clan Millorn he will alert the warriors, who arrive in waves every four to six rounds. Reddengot does not join in this battle unless attacked.

Single Patrol (EL 10)

Dark pyre sergeant (CR 9). 52 hp.

Dark pyre soldiers (4, CR 4). 20 hp.

Total Barracks Group (EL 14)

Dark pyre sergeants (4, CR 9). 52 hp.

Dark pyre soldiers (16, CR 4). 20 hp.

Reddengot, dread wraith (CR 11). 104 hp, MM. Has the (fire) subtype.

Reddengot was in life an ogre who was studied in the art of torture, having learned from the master, Inquisitor Guthwulf. He orders the undead to strike to subdue against mages, so he can capture and inflict pain on them. Otherwise, their tactics depend heavily on the terrain of wherever the heroes choose to rest. If Reddengot is losing, he'll flee to the lift and ascend incorporeally up the shaft.

Assault (EL 12+)

Assuming the heroes survive the attack by the barrack forces, Griiat is wary of turning off the traps in the lift shaft, and of depleting his defenders on the upper level. Instead he calls upon the power of the Dark Pyre, conjuring a black lightning bolt as he did when the heroes first arrived. These bolts, which Griiat can only evoke once per day, can animate the corpses strewn about the battlefield outside the castle, each raising up to 40 hit dice of undead, which intuitively know Griiat's command.

While the heroes rest, Griiat animates a squad of warriors and directs them to find and kill the intruders. This squad consist of four dark pyre swarmers and two sergeants, led by the dread wraith Reddengot,

who, if he survived the previous attack, has been fully healed by returning to the Dark Pyre.

Dark pyre sergeants (2, CR 9). 52 hp.

Dark pyre swarmers (4, CR 6). 33 hp.

Reddengot, dread wraith (CR 11). 104 hp, MM. Has the (fire) subtype.

After this attack, the heroes can follow the ashen footprints of the undead and see they came from outside. If the heroes simply lock the main gate of the castle, they can prevent further attacks. Alternately, they might go out and systematically obliterate the inert skeletons so none of them can be risen. Otherwise, Griiat sends another group every day.

Ad-Hoc Experience: If the heroes block access by future undead from the outside, or if they otherwise render themselves safe from such attacks, reward them for a CR 14 encounter, since they have saved themselves a great deal of hassle.

Assassination (EL 11)

Eventually Griiat realizes that a direct assault is pointless. He takes eight hours to rest and prepare spells, then uses *planar ally* to call a vrook named Kzyu-nior, whom he sends, along with the two tragedies on the upper level and Reddengot (if the dread wraith has somehow still survived). While the heroes sleep, the incorporeal undead sneak into position and the vrook climbs into the lift shaft, glides down so he leaves the Astral Plane, and then uses *greater teleport* to move within the castle.

Kzyu-nior prepares by using *heroism* and *mirror image* on himself, and takes up a position close enough to hear when combat starts. The undead strike first, gliding in and concentrating their attacks on the same target, and a round later the vrook teleports in and releases spores. The next round he uses his stunning screech, and then positions himself amid as many enemies as possible to take advantage of his reach and combat reflexes.

Kzyu-nior, vrook (CR 9). 115 hp, MM.

Tragedies (2, CR 7). 69 hp.

After this, Griiat holds back the rest of his forces for a final stand when the heroes reach the upper level.

PROGRESS OF CLAN MILLORN

Use your best judgment on where Clan Millorn explores, based on the heroes' activities. If the heroes take the left side of the castle, the gnomes make a beeline for the pump room (Area 12), securing it but not activating it until they have cleared out the bath house (Area 8) to use as a resting area. If the heroes claim the right side of the castle, the gnomes head to the storage area (Area 10) and servants quarters (Area 11) in an attempt to reach the cistern (Area 13), from which they will trek upstream to the pump room, though they will likely get a little lost along the way and end up wandering into the guest suites (Area 9).

It is not necessary to actually play through the encounters between the gnomes and the castle foes, since aside from the weaker sorts of undead in the castle, the gnomes will not be fighting, but rather evading. Clan Millorn's tactics are somewhat unorthodox compared to most adventurers. When they are forced to fight, they let Grellfin tank and turn undead while Oller peppers foes with holy water, and Jorrina traps them with *wall of stone* or turns them against each other with *control undead*. The rest of the clan helps with clean-up and keeping look-out.

If faced with something more challenging than CR 9, the gnomes use Jorrina's array of magic to escape, mostly *passwall*, *invisibility sphere*, and *mass reduce person*. In this way, the gnomes can explore the castle without eliminating foes that the heroes will have to fight. In general, assume that unless the heroes are present, any undead the gnomes defeat do not count against the numbers detailed below.

In a single day, this adventurous band can handle the equivalent of an EL 13 encounter (i.e., two EL 11 encounters, four EL 9, eight EL 7, or some similar combination), after which point they

need to rest. They prefer to stay in the bath house if the water is reactivated, but otherwise stay out with their wagons.

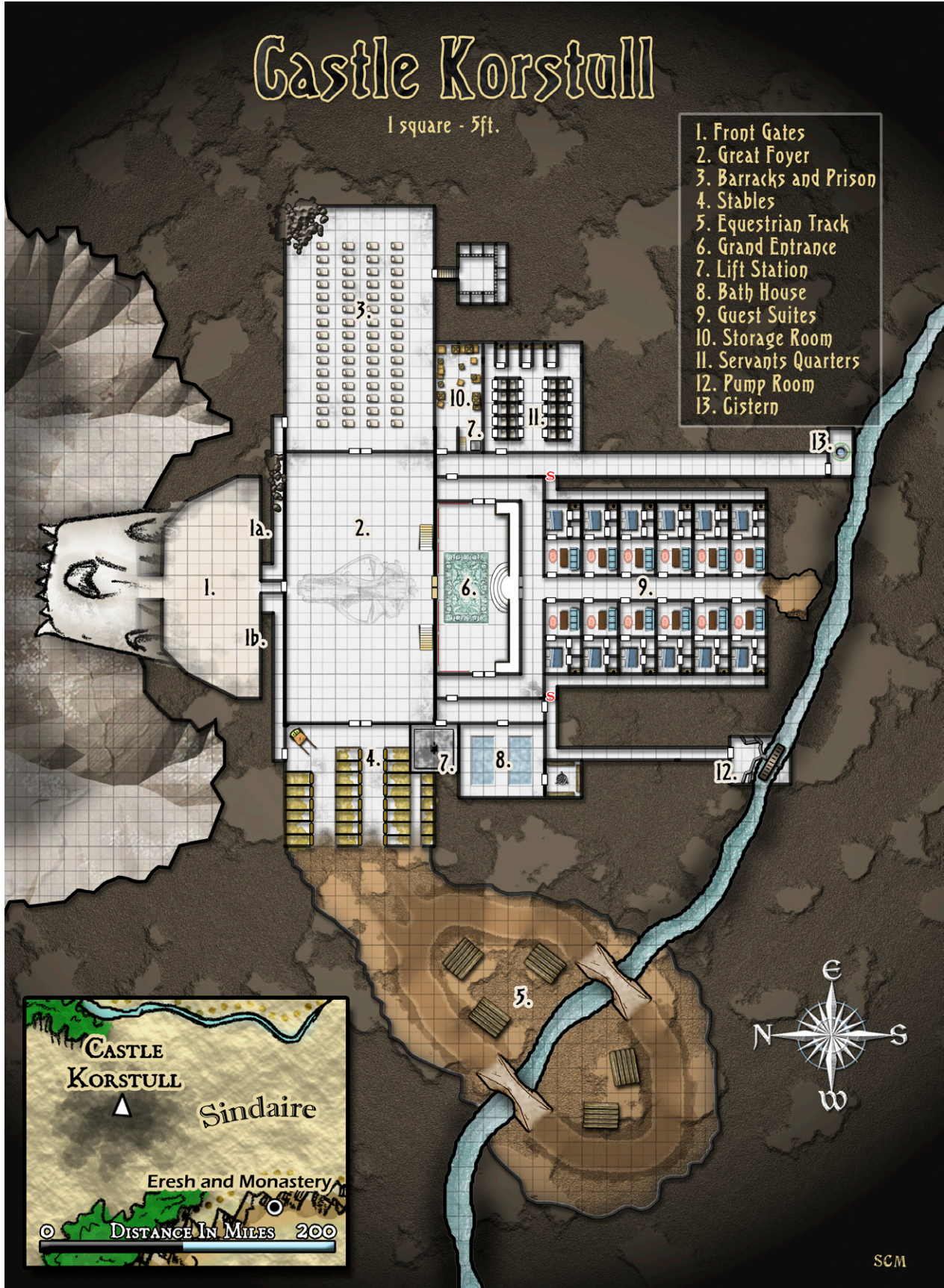
Interactions: To spice up the heroes' explorations, you might have the gnomes flee in the heroes' direction, pursued by a group of monsters, or the heroes might kick open a door to see Oller waving goodbye to them as he crawls into an air vent on the wall, leaving behind a skeleton obliterated by holy water.

It is expected that the heroes will not be able to clear out the entire lower level without resting, and a pause is almost guaranteed before the heroes can ascend to the upper level, because the water pump needs a day to build up sufficient water pressure once activated (see Area 12). During this rest period, members of Clan Millorn keep casual watch while discussing all the treasure they're finding. In general, they do not seem to feel the level of peril a castle full of flaming undead should engender.

Cry for Help: If the heroes avoid going to the chapel, you may want to prompt them a bit, since it is the one major area that can be avoided while still reaching the upper level. A group of gnomes and halflings end up going to the chapel, where they are horribly overwhelmed. One manages to escape, and when Jorrina gets word she comes to the heroes asking for help to rescue her friends before the devils eat them alive.

The Lift: Assuming both groups make it to the end of this act, after encountering the Ragesian scout, Jorrina suggests they take the lift to the upper level together, since she has heard it may be trapped, and time is too short to carefully search and disable all the defenses. The clan warriors and guards will wait behind on the ground floor, which should keep the elevator from becoming too crowded.

If the gnomes *do* take the lift by themselves, they are overcome by its traps, and die. Their anguished screams are audible to characters waiting at the bottom of the lift.



KEYED CASTLE ENCOUNTER AREAS

Ground Floor

1. Front Gates (EL 13)

Inside the arch is a 40 ft. by 90 ft. chamber, 30 ft. high, its walls carved with symbols of Ragesian and Sindairese glory. The inner gate, a 5 ft. wide and 10 ft. tall adamantine door, leads into the castle proper.

Two batteries of arrow slits, 20 ft. up, flank the inner gate, but they are unmanned. However, the walls to either side of the inner gate stand 9-ft. tall sandstone statues of goddesses, each wielding a pair of reinforced red marble swords. They stand upon a pile of dragon and bear skulls, also carved from stone. These are a pair of stone golems.

Additionally, many skeletons are strewn about the edges of the room. These are just normal skeletons, animated from slain soldiers by Griiat, not infused by the dark pyre, and are ultimately little threat at this level, though they provide nice stage dressing. Whenever someone comes within 5 ft. of the inner gate (or otherwise breach the walls), the skeletons rise up, and the stone golems step free from the wall. Stone amulets around their necks with a permanent *magic mouth* begin to sing in infernal tongues as they wade into battle.

Human skeletons (24, CR 1/3). 6 hp.

Stone golems (2, CR 11). 107 hp. Swords +18/+18 (2d10+9), or hurled stone skull +8 (1d8+9).

The inner gate has been locked by the undead (Open Lock DC 30), and is difficult to open because the mechanisms that would normally swing it are nonfunctional due to the lack of running water. Even once unlocked, shoving the door open requires a Strength check (DC 26), which elicits the sounds of a few snapping gears inside the wall.

2. Great Foyer (EL 12)

The forty-foot high domed ceiling of this room contains a mural depicting the countryside with a great bear driving off dozens of warriors. The

mural seems to be dripping blood, and old dried stains spatter the floor. Ribbons of fire randomly dance in the air near the ceiling. They flare and contort for a few moments and then vanish only to be replaced by others elsewhere.

Four sets of double doors face you, one each to the left and right, one straight ahead, and another thirty feet above it. A pair of staircases lead up to a balcony in front of the higher doorway.

On further inspection, the military standard hung by the left doorway suggests a guard station or armory. The right doors are flanked by a pair of rearing horses carved into the wall, and the doorway ahead of you lies beneath a golden arch. The balcony at the top of the stairs is marked with various holy symbols, suggesting a chapel.

If the heroes make a great deal of noise here, the soldiers in the barracks (Area 3) emerge and attack.

Treasure: The golden arch is simply stone coated with gold veneer, which could be pried loose. It is worth 3000 gp, but weighs 60 lbs and is over 12 ft. long.

3. Barracks and Prison (CR 14)

Rows of bunk beds fill this room. The far corner of the room has been partially collapsed, in order to block off one of the bulette tunnels. Rock fills much of the room, and the rest contains shattered beds and personal chests. Most of the bunks are shattered or empty, but several bodies still lie here, skeletal and burnt, as if they were slain while sleeping, except that they are wearing armor and holding their weapons.

The heroes should expect what happens next. Once at least three of them have come into the room, the skeletons roll out of their bunks and attack.

Dark pyre sergeants (4, CR 9). 52 hp.

Dark pyre soldiers (16, CR 4). 20 hp.

If the Clan Millorn explorers enter this room, they will end up fleeing while Grellfin holds the skeletons back at the door. Some might overrun him and pursue the rest of the gnomes, which run to try to find the heroes, or at least a defensible location.

A doorway on the room's north wall leads to the arrow slits overlooking the front gates, but the tunnel is partially collapsed. Also, in the southeast corner, a trap door in the ceiling leads up to the armory. The passage is guarded by a glyph of warding, which can be bypassed by the password: "Gimme."

Glyph of Warding Trap (CR 5). Spell; spell trigger; no reset; spell effect (*glyph of warding*, 10th level cleric; 5d8 cold, DC 16 Reflex save half damage); multiple targets (all targets within 5 ft.); Search DC 28; Disable Device 28.

Nearly all the gear in the small armory is mundane, though it includes nearly every variety of weapon, armor, and shield, with enough swords for forty men. A +1 *heavy mace* and a *horn of fog* hang in a glass case rigged with an audible *alarm* spell.

The prison is accessed by a staircase leading down. The prison cells are all currently unoccupied.

4. Stables

Here you find an underground stable. The air is heavy with the smell of straw and burnt fecal matter, but the stone corrals are empty. A rusted pipe runs along the ceiling and to spigot on the north wall, next to a thick wooden door. There appears to be no far wall, as if the stables extend on into emptiness.

A Survival check (DC 15) reveals that two horses have been there recently, the two nightmares that roam the equestrian track (Area 5) in endless field exercises. A Listen check (DC 10) reveals the sound of trampling hooves echoing from beyond the western end of the stables. The fallen knights note any light and keep their distance, though they attack if the heroes linger for more than a few minutes without coming further. The doorway leads to the arrow slits at the front gates.

If the Clan Millorn explorers come this way, they will leave their animals and wagons here after making sure the knights are dealt with. Otherwise, the wagons and left outside.

5. Equestrian Track (EL 11)

A natural cavern extends into the darkness, the faint sound of running water echoing within. More than 60 ft. wide, 20 ft. high, and at least 100 ft. deep, the ground along the outer edge is beaten smooth, making what appears to be an equestrian track. Stalagmites and columns of stone still jut up from the ground closer to the center of the cavern, along with what looks like the charred remains of bleachers.

Hoofbeats sound in the darkness, and flames suddenly illuminate two charging black horses, and the blood red knights mounted upon them.

Unless they are drawn to the stables, two fallen knights ride their fearsome nightmares along the track, practicing their attacks against the stone columns. They are still recognizable as former Knights of the Aquiline Cross (the order is popular in Sindaire), but their undead nature is readily apparent. They will immediately attack any living being that enters this room.

Fallen Knights (2, CR 7). 62 hp.

Nightmares (2, CR 5). 45 hp, MM.

Terrain: The equestrian track crosses two stone bridges over a dry river. The central area of the chamber is 5 ft. higher than the rest of the room, but aside from the bleachers is difficult terrain. The bleachers rise a further 10 ft. at their highest point, giving warriors a chance to hit the flying nightmares with melee attacks if they can keep their footing (Balance DC 10). The riverbed is 5-ft. deep, and the knights have to land if they want to attack someone hiding down there.

Tactics: The fallen knights ride their flying mounts with very unfair hit and run tactics, often riding out into the darkness of the cave before returning with a diving spirited charge.

Aftermath: The underground river has been dammed by stoneshaping, so that now only the faintest trickle flows through this chamber. The stone, which blocks off the western edge of the room,

must be broken open for the river to flow freely again. (Hardness 8, 80 hit points).

6. Grand Entrance (EL 8)

These doors are heavy and slow to move if the water is not pumping, but they are not locked. Beyond lies the entrance to the guest section of the palace. A broad rug covers the floor, and a rounded staircase ascends to a long balcony. A pair of doors lies on either side of the room. The whole room is lined with marble statues of ancient warriors.

The carpet, though burnt, holds stains easily, and a Search or Survival check (DC 10) detects old tracks of some elephantine creature that came this way. The undead soldiers brought in an undead bulette long ago, which now nests in the hallway of the guest suites (Area 9), treating it as a burrow.

Traps (2, CR 8): The two doors leading out of this room into the rest of the castle are each trapped (Search DC 28). If not disarmed (by flicking a hidden switch in the door frame), as soon as someone steps through the doorway, multiple sheets of blades clamp down from either side of the doorway like teeth (Attack +20, 8d6 damage). A character struck by the trap must make a Reflex save (DC 20) or be immobilized by the clamped jaws, taking 2d6 points of crushing damage each round. A Strength check (DC 24) can pry open the jaws.

7. Lift Station (EL 11)

There are two mechanical lifts in the castle, neither of which works until the pump is fixed. The eastern one ascends a mere 10 ft. to the banquet hall level, used to aid in catering and decorating. It is 5 ft. wide, and a staircase rises beside it to the second floor.

The western lift station is much more elaborate. First, the door to this lift station is locked (Open Lock DC 35). And second, a hungry extraplanar undead known as a feaster of flesh and souls lurks here, cramped and hungry, waiting with eternal patience for someone to enter, or for it to be released by Griiat. Whenever the door opens, it lashes out to grab any creature it sees and traps his soul, then rushes out into the hallway and leaps upon other foes,

gnawing them to death. When initially encountered, it does not have a trapped soul.

Feaster of Flesh and Souls (CR 11). 114 hp.

Inside is a huge 20 ft. × 20 ft. lift, with a complex mechanism in its center, and thick chains in each corner. A shaft ascends 100 ft. to the upper level, and the ceiling appears to be a rippling sheet of silver (actually the edge of where the upper levels blur into the Astral Plane). This area is detailed in full in the section In Case of Firestorm..., at the end of this Act.

8. Bath House (EL 11)

Fine marble tiles line the floor of this bathhouse. The majority of the room is taken up by two empty pools, waist deep on a human at their shallowest, and perhaps chin-level at their deepest. Chained in the far corners are two strange creatures that resemble red hounds with no bodies, but many long legs sprouting from their neck. They begin to whimper when they see you, and suddenly a loud buzzing fills the air, like a bee's hive.

A large hellwasp swarm, which migrated into the castle through the planar rift, lairs here, crawling across the dessicated skeletons of soldiers who were boiled alive when the bath house was caught in the initial burst of the firestorm (treat as two swarms, each occupying one pool). The swarm brought along with it two rast slaves, which are chained on short leashes in the corners of the room. They are trained to use their paralyzing gaze on creatures that come near, giving the swarm a victim to inhabit.

Hellwasp swarm (2, CR 8). 93 hp, MM.

Rast (2, CR 5). 25 hp, MM.

If the water pump is activated (see Area 12), the pool slowly begins to fill up, and the wasps move out of the pools and into the air ducts, to come upon the heroes at some later date while they are exploring.

The door to the south is a spa, currently empty.

Treasure: The hellwasps have created some infernally delicious honey in the pool. If collected before the pools are filled, there are about two gallons of this sweet, viscous blood-red substance. Eating a mouthful of the honey (about an ounce) heals 1 point of damage, as per *cure minor wounds*, but if one eats enough to heal 20 or more points of damage in the span of a day, the trace amounts of hellwasp poison becomes toxic, the equivalent of a dose of hellwasp poison (Fortitude DC 18, initial and secondary damage 1d6 Dex).

There are a total of 220 doses of the honey (each of which heals 1 point of damage). Normally these could be sold for 5 gp apiece, but to the proper connoisseur of extraplanar delicacies, each dose goes for 20 gp.

Also, hidden amid all that gunk is a platinum hairpin which functions as a *hat of disguise*, worn by a wizard who was bathing here when she died.



9. Guest Suites (EL 13)

This hallway, lined with a dozen doors, was where guests of the castle once stayed, consisting of a living room, a bedroom, a closet, and a lavatory. Being one of the deepest parts of the castle, they were relatively unscathed by fire, so some material worth taking still survives. Several of the undead defenders of the castle have taken these rooms as their own, and each of the first ten rooms now holds a pair of dark pyre soldiers, who are too stupid to realize they don't need a place to sleep anymore.

More dangerously, the commanders of the undead forces brought an undead bulette into this area, and it now sleeps at the end of the hall in a small burrowed-out chamber. The hallway is long enough that heroes likely won't spot it before it spots their torches, and if given a chance it crawls down the hallway, squeezing as it goes, in order to attack. The bulette pursues fleeing living creatures, and will ram through stone walls (+20 vs. Break DC 35) if it needs to.

While squeezed, the dark pyre bulette cannot use its leap attack, and it takes a -4 penalty to attack rolls and AC.

Dark pyre soldiers (20, CR 4). 20 hp.

Dark pyre bulette (CR 8). 61 hp.

A pair of hidden tunnels (their entrances marked as secret doors on the map, Search DC 30) pass behind these suites, with spyholes that peer into the bedrooms.

Treasure: The bulette wears a *belt of giant strength +4*, which resizes when taken off. Among the rooms are art objects worth a total of 8,000 gp.

10. Storage Room

This room contains the charred remains of crates full of supplies, now all useless. A small lift and staircase lead to the second floor. The lift only functions if the pump has been activated.

11. Servants Quarters (EL 9)

The small chambers in this room each contain one dark pyre worker, which are practically no threat

to the heroes, even *en masse*. Occasionally undead from here wander the rest of the castle, tidying up.

Dark pyre workers (20, CR 1). 7 hp.

12. Pump Room (EL 11)

The amount of water flowing through this room depends on whether the heroes have opened the dam on the underground river (Area 5). If not, it is only a trickle. If so, a strong stream rushes through the room.

Four bestial skeletons stand between you and a huge piece of machinery that looks to have once been a pump. Three of the guards wear armor adorned with black enamel and silver skulls. The fourth, who appears to command the others, wears a hooded black robe and wields a staff made of iron, with the long skeleton of a snake embedded in it.

"So long as we stand," barks the leader, "the castle's heart shall not beat!"

Thorkrid the Dark, the robed skeletal gnoll, is a necromancer who was drawn to this area in a vision he had the night of Emperor Coaltongue's death. He aspired to lichdom, but found a slightly different fate when he and his guards were slain by the burning rain. After their death, however, they continued their journey, and upon reaching the castle, Thorkrid offered his service to Griiat, in exchange for a chance to study the power of the Dark Pyre.

The other undead gnolls are clerics of a foul death deity who follow Thorkrid's visions wherever they lead. They stand watch over the pump, and will fight to defend it, but do not make the first move. If the heroes do not attack, Thorkrid could be convinced to work with the heroes if they offer to let him control the castle once Griiat is disposed of.

Thorkrid (CR 10). 59 hp.

Dark pyre adepts (3, CR 6). 33 hp.

Tactics: The room is *desecrated*. The benefits of the spell are not included in the creatures' stat blocks.

Additionally, if the gnolls hear enemies coming, Thorkrid casts *stoneskin*, and the clerics channel negative energy to bolster each other.

The three clerics stand in the doorway, with Thorkrid behind them. One cleric battles anyone trying to get into the room, while the other clerics buff and heal him. When one falls, the next takes his place at the door. Thorkrid opens up with a quickened *magic missile* against a spellcaster, and then *web*. Thereafter he uses his magic to weaken enemies and keep it so that the combat is three on one. When Thorkrid is reduced to 10 hp, if the river is flowing and he is within 5 ft. of it, he snarls and leaps back into the water, letting himself be dissolved rather than allowing a living creature to destroy him.

Water Pump: The pump machinery is still in working condition but requires either a Knowledge (architecture and engineering) or Disable Device check (DC 25 on either) to undo the sabotage damage done by Griiat's minions. Characters with 5 or more ranks in either of the skills gain a +2 synergy bonus to the other skill in regards to repairing the machinery. Each repair attempt takes an hour. *Make whole* fixes it instantly. Failed attempts do not damage the pump.

Once repaired, the pump can be activated, and if the river is flowing at normal capacity the pump begins to suck in water and build up the necessary pressure to run the various machinery in the castle and provide water to the sewage and drinking pipes. Within four hours, there is enough pressure to provide water from any faucet, though it takes twelve hours for the machinery to begin working, including the lift to the upper levels.

If the heroes leave the pump unguarded, any remaining undead defenders will come here and disable it again.

13. Cistern

All the sewage pipes from the castle lead here, then flow out into the river. Currently the cistern is dry and clean. A small ladder descends a shaft 10 ft. to the river. If the heroes explore down the river, the half-flooded tunnel flows 200 ft. before opening up into a small chamber with some dry land, which can

serve as a safe haven against all the undead except the ones that can fly. Beyond that area the river dives into a deep waterfall.

Second Floor

14. Banquet Hall (EL 13)

When Emperor Coaltongue took possession of Korstull, he sat upon the throne and ordered Inquisitor Griiat to execute Lord Gorquith and his officers then and there. The noble's execution was most brutal off all – being thrown into a huge ochre jelly.

Lord Gorquith's court minstrel, an elf named Findle, tried to ingratiate himself with the Emperor, but his attempts were servilely annoying, so Coaltongue had him executed as well. Griiat chose to make him beg for death as he had tried to beg for life, and made a game of it, seeing how many pieces of the castle's cutlery he could insert into the man before he perished. The other rebels were forced to watch, and then forced to each take a fork

or knife out of the dead minstrel, and eat whatever was stuck on it.

Later, when the firestorm tore through Korstull, the executed rebels and the massacred bard were animated as ghouls, and Gorquith's skeleton was animated within the ooze, the two being bound together as a unique undead jelly. As Griiat gained control over the undead soldiers that arose from Coaltongue's army, Gorquith quickly realized that they would be slaughtered again rather quickly, so they barred the entrance to the banquet hall. With Gorquith in the depths of despair over his death and return as an abomination, he ordered his minstrel and allies to celebrate what they thought would be their final hours.

Those hours stretched into days and weeks as Griiat felt it was better to let them stay contained than to waste resources trying to destroy them. So Griiat left them alone, only occasionally sending one of the undead gnoll clerics to check on them.

Also of note, since they have remained inside this room away from the firestorm, they have not gained the dark pyre templates.

While approaching this room, characters can clearly hear the sounds of music and general merriment. The undead are currently going through the motions of a dinner party with the highest level of etiquette, eating tiny bits of their own flesh with lobster forks, toasting goblets of slime from Gorquith's new form, and the like. The room is set up perfectly neatly, aside from a few burns and scattered bits of ghouls who were torn apart by the rest of the group, and the barricades at the doors.

Entering: Entering this room is not straightforward. The main entrance has been blocked by what remains of the furniture. Opening the doors wide enough to squeeze through requires a Strength check (DC 30). A second check pushes them open enough to move through normally.

If the characters attempt to force open the doors and fail, the room falls silent for a moment. Then the music starts again with an improvised song to the effect of, "Dumb skeletons can't get



in, got no meat on their bones, got no brains in their heads, they've got no meal for us!" at which the other occupants cheer.

Another option is the secret passage from the Conference Room (Area 16). A Search check (DC 25) detects the passageway.

Once the characters come inside and are spotted, read the following.

The room suddenly falls silent. It appears to once have been a banquet hall, but now a dozen undead creatures in noble finery all turn toward you, holding lobster forks with bits of their own flesh on the ends, or holding up goblets with throbbing ochre fluid brimming at the edges. They have expressions that say, "How uncouth of these strangers to interrupt our party."

Another undead abomination, wearing the tattered outfit of a minstrel, stands on a table, lute in hand, studying you with its dead eyes. Most horrifying of all, however, is the creature at the back of the room draped over a throne. A gelatinous mass of sickening yellow-gray, the ooze creature is filled with the bones of several humanoid skeletons. A small brightly colored stone floats in a circle above the abomination's head.

The silence is broken by the minstrel who smiles a wicked, toothy smile, and says, "They do have a meal for us."

The ghouls are ravenous, and will attack unless the heroes manage some quick diplomacy to convince Gorquith they have a better offer than their own flesh. Gorquith begins as Hostile.

Lord Gorquith (CR 9). 104 hp.

Findle the Minstrel (CR 9). 52 hp.

Sindairese ghouls (12, CR 4). 39 hp.

Tactics: The oozing Gorquith remains in back, letting the warriors charge and swarm over the characters. Findle will first cast *mirror image* on himself, and then do his best to hinder the characters with spells such as *slow* and *hideous laughter*. If harmed at all he casts *invisibility* and moves about

the room, using inspire courage.

Once eight of the ghouls are destroyed, or if Gorquith is dealt more than 70 points of damage, the slimy noble shudders and speaks in a gurgling voice to call off the warriors. It requests a truce with the characters. If the characters do not stop attacking, the ghouls and Gorquith will fight to the death, whereas Flindle attempts to flee or beg for his life. If that's hopelessly, he'll lash out at the nearest character and start feasting. It's best to die while enjoying a meal, he figures.

Truce. If the characters are willing to do a favor for Gorquith, he is willing to aid them. What he asks is that the heroes return him from death, by means of a *scroll of resurrection* that he knows is kept in the Chapel. He tells them that there is a cache of various healing magic in the chapel, in the Healing Hall (Area 25), which can be reached by going through the back of the main chapel, and taking the first door down the left hallway. He can tell them of how the cache is hidden under one of the cabinets, allowing them to automatically find it if they search. He says they can keep the rest of the healing items, but he wants to be freed from his horrible state. *Raise dead* cannot help him.

If the heroes fulfill their end of the bargain (hopefully they have a cleric), he can give them a fully detailed map of Korstull, the bypass sequence for the lift (DAGBHEC, see In Case of Firestorm...), and the full story of what happened to him and his allies. He assumes that the leader of the undead is Coaltongue, but also mentions that it was Griiat who tortured and killed them.

To aid them, he offers to send Findle along, though he wants to keep his ghoulish bodyguards. Flindle, however, is devious and self-interested. If he does join up with the characters, he will look for every opportunity to either convince them to resurrect him instead of Gorquith, or betray the characters to Griiat in hopes of mercy (or at least an opportunity to escape, preferably with the *resurrection* scroll).

Lastly, Gorquith will allow the characters to rest here if they can tolerate resting in a room with 13 ghouls staring hungrily at them all commanded by a skeleton-filled ooze.

15. Kitchen

This room has some preserved food that survived the firestorm in iron cabinets, but otherwise is empty. However, the heroes notice that some of the food cache has been opened lately, and there are washed dishes and silverware in the sink. This is the work of the imp Pilmat, who enjoys the snacks whenever he should be out scouting (see The Chapel, below).

16. Conference Room (EL 4)

Aware of the secret chamber from this room to the Banquet Hall, occasionally dark pyre sergeants come here to check on Gorquith's party. A Search or Survival check (DC 10) detects tracks in the ash leading to the wall, and a Search check (DC 25) locates the mechanism to open the secret passage.

Sepia snake sigil trap (CR 4): A map on the table was left as a trap for the intruders. A creature reading the map is struck by a wispy brown serpent unless he succeeds a Reflex save (DC 14). If he fails, he is paralyzed for one day.

The Chapel (EL 13)

The chapel complex that is now overrun by devils. After the devils are killed, this can actually be a safe haven for the heroes or the Clan Millorn explorers, and it yields quite a cache of useful healing items to fight the effects of so many undead. In total, the devil group consists of:

- ♦ **2 bone devils.** Their names are Luxkamma and Alsau, and they are lovers.
- ♦ **1 erinyes.** Her name is Liselle.
- ♦ **4 bearded devils.** If the heroes did not kill Kazyk in adventure 2, he returns here.
- ♦ **1 imp.** His name is Pilmat. He was not summoned by the Ragesians, but instead was a wizard's familiar in Korstull who survived the firestorm, and fell in with the devils.

Bone devils (2, CR 9). 95 hp, MM.

Erinyes (CR 8). 85 hp, MM.

Bearded devils (4, CR 5). 45 hp, MM.

Imp (CR 2). 13 hp, MM.

PILMAT THE IMP

Pilmat is quite unhappy with the current state of his life. He was familiar to a powerful wizard named Silmarak, but Silmarak was slain by the Ragesians. Although he missed the extra influence and magical abilities granted by the wizard, Pilmat was rather pleased to be free to do as he wished. That would soon change, however, when the Ragesian-summoned devils arrived. They found him, and bullied him into helping, threatening to track him down and dismember him if he betrayed them.

Rather than a direct conflict with the undead, the devils retreated to the fortified chapel and promptly made it clear that they would not leave the grounds, but would tolerate no creatures entering their domain. Pilmat was ordered by Luxkamma to deliver that message to Griiat (and most likely forfeit his life in the process), but he wimped out and instead hid invisibly for a while and then returned saying Griiat accepted the terms. However, their actions were clear enough and Griiat ordered the troops to avoid the chapel area.

Now Luxkamma sends Pilmat out on spying missions to determine the numbers of the undead and their strengths and weaknesses. In all of these instances, Pilmat just hides for a few hours and then returns with varying stories ranging from a nearly vacant fortress to hordes of mindless undead to weak humans retaking Korstull. Although he does enjoy the puzzlement on Luxkamma's face with each new report, Pilmat does this primarily to encourage the inevitable attack Luxkamma plans to make someday (though no one knows when since immortal fiends can be very patient). Pilmat is fed up with his current situation, and if he is either cornered or witnesses the characters defeat any of the other devils, he will attempt to talk to them and offer his help.

Some of the devils' tactics involve teleporting into position. While the devils are immune to fire damage, remember that in the firestorm, teleporting also deals 1d6 points of negative energy damage per 100 ft. traveled.

17. Foyer Stairs

A pair of staircases lead up to the entry doors of the chapel. These beautiful iron-reinforced wooden doors are barred from within by a pair of *immovable rods*, but the doors can be removed from their hinges with about 10 minutes of work. Or they can be bashed down, but this attracts the attention of the devils.

Treasure: The two *immovable rods*.

A character with Track can discover information about who passed through the area according to the chart below – results are cumulative.

FOYER STAIRS TRACKING RESULTS

Survival (Tracking)

DC	Result
20	Dozens of creatures have wandered around in here and passed to and from the next room.
25	Not all of them appear to be typical boots. A few clawed footprints, still about humanoid in size, can be discerned.
30	The clawed feet are definitely fiendish and appear more recent than the boot prints. (Rangers with lawful or evil outsiders as a favored enemy that get this result can identify them as devil footprints.)
35	There are two different devil footprints, and one is a large creature with emaciated, bony feet. In all of the layers of prints, it is impossible to determine how many of each devil were present.
40	Careful examination of the prints that have been subsequently walked over reveal that there was a fight here between the devils and the booted prints (presumably the undead soldiers). The devils won and dragged the soldiers into the next room.

18. Entry Hall

This room's corners are filled with the rotted remains of an old meal, and scorched bits of tables. To the right are a pair of privies, and to the left a hallway leads to the back chamber. That hall's door is locked (Open Lock DC 25). Up ahead are a pair of doors, cracked slightly open. Faint religious hymns (a permanent *ghost sound*) play from within.

If the heroes have been heard entering, the devils set up their ambush (see below), and then Liselle the erinyes sends Pilmat to flit into the room and then flee down the Hall of the Pantheon as a lure.

19. Hall of the Pantheon

The walls of this narrow hallway are lined with statues of eight deities, standing in front of carvings of scenes of battle around Korstull. The faces of the gods have been defaced in obscene, yet creative, ways. The defacement appears, in at least some places, to have been accomplished by carving with clawed fingers.

There are small holes in the floor between each statue's feet, once intended for people to drop offerings in, so they could ask favor of specific gods. Small pads for kneeling lie in front of each statue. Music plays faintly, seeming to come from every direction at once.

The hallway is filled with a strange, sweet-smelling mist. This incense is a mild inhaled poison that seeps into the room through cracks in the wall, coming from a water basin in the offertory chamber (Area 24b). The poison, when inhaled, requires an initial save (Fort DC 15) to avoid a 1d4+2 point Wisdom penalty, and a secondary save one minute later (Will DC 15) to avoid a compulsion to make an offering of coins into one of the offering holes. The Wisdom penalty lasts one hour, and prolonged exposure is not cumulative.

However, anyone who makes an offering (whether or not suffering from the Wisdom penalty inflicted by the incense) receives some small boon, typically a +2 bonus to a single type of check or save appropriate to the deity the offering was made to, lasting one day.

20. Main Chapel

This was once the main chapel sanctuary. The floor is now ankle-deep with ashes from the many pews that lined this large chamber as well as from the wooden archways of which only a few charred remnants behind. Stone columns line the sides of the sanctuary, 10 feet apart. A pulpit lies in the far back of the room, flanked by a pair of purple curtains.

Normally two bearded devils, Liselle the erinyes, and Pilmat the imp remain here on guard. Pilmat hangs onto adornments on the ceiling and scratches pictures, while the barbazu sit on the stairs in front of the pulpit playing bones. Liselle leans on the pulpit, reciting blasphemous parodies of psalms.

21. Priest's Room

This simple room has doors leading out of it to the right and left. Typical furniture fills the room, including a large bed with rumpled sheets, and though it's coated with ash, none of it is burnt. Images drawn in ash on the walls depict vile and profane acts performed by devils on mortals as well as devils on each other that leave no doubt how deep the violence and depravity of a fiendish mind sinks.

The two bone devils spend most of their time here when not on alert.

22. Meditation Chamber

This room is bare except for a cracked mirror lying in ashes, the frame of which has been burnt away. If the heroes touch the mirror, for a moment they see a flickering, fiery image of Griiat's hidden scrying room (Area 34), with dozens of mirrors on the walls. The spectral inquisitor is floating in the room, watching another mirror which shows the main chapel from an overhead perspective. If the heroes watch for more than a few seconds, Griiat senses them and turns to face the mirror directly. The connection is visual not auditory, so Griiat watches for as long as the heroes

remain interesting, or for ten minutes, after which the mirror cracks and loses its power.

23. Library

This small room's bookshelves are scorched, and nothing of value remains. However, a Search check (DC 25) detects the entrance to area 24b. The bone devils have only used the door once. Now they simply teleport in if they want access.

24. Offertory Chambers

These two rooms flank the Hall of the Pantheon.

Room 24a is fairly bare, containing only four glass bowls (worth 20 gp each) that once received offerings.

Room 24b contains similar bowls, as well as a huge golden tub filled with incenses and holy water. The tub is worth 2,000 gp, and it contains the equivalent of 80 vials of holy water. However, this room is also filled with the same misty poison in the Hall of the Pantheon. The fumes are much thicker here, however, and creatures in the room must save each round to resist its effects.

25. Healing Hall

Burnt cots and cabinets of worthless medical supplies fill the room. Beneath one of the cabinets (Search DC 30), the heroes can discover a hidden compartment that contains a cache of healing magic. It contains:

- A scroll of *resurrection*.
- A scroll of *heroes' feast*.
- A *wand of restoration* (10 charges).
- A *wand of cure light wounds* (50 charges).

26. Chapel Kitchen

Two bearded devils rest in here. They are trying to turn poison from the bone devils into useable poison for their weapons, but so far all they have is nasty-tasting gruel in one of the pots.

27. Chapel Storage (EL 8)

The devils managed to capture a dark pyre sergeant, which they keep locked up in this room

(Open Lock DC 25). The skeleton is unarmed, and might fight with against the demons if freed, but will quickly turn on the heroes.

Dark pyre sergeant (CR 9). 52 hp.

Ambush

If the heroes have alerted the devils, they prepare an ambush. Luxkamma the bone devil and Liselle the erinyes waits in the main chapel, and the other bone devil Alsau teleports into hallway to the side of the entry hall. When the heroes open the door to the main chapel, both devils use *wall of ice* to seal them in as best they can. Thereafter two bearded devils take up positions outside each wall of ice, ready to attack anyone who comes through. Liselle takes cover behind the pulpit as she fires arrows.

During the fight, Pilmat hides in one of the offertory chambers. He insults the characters in his cackling and high-pitched, yet powerfully echoing, voice. He will mock their appearance and tell them of the brutal fate that awaits them at the hands of Luxkamma, pretending to be different gods. However, if he sees an impressive display of power from the heroes, he is momentarily dumbfounded, and then he begins offering advice.

Should the devils seem to be losing, Luxkamma calls for a retreat, and all the devils (except Pilmat) teleport to a pre-determined rendezvous in the priest's room (Area 21). One of the bearded devils then goes out scouting, and shouts to his allies which direction the heroes are headed. Optimally the devils want to teleport back in while the heroes are split up in different rooms, perhaps as they are starting to head into the hallway. When any devil is reduced below 12 hit points it teleports to the foyer stairs (Area 17) and tries to flee to a safe hiding place elsewhere in the castle. It's binding prevents it from fleeing further.

To best play the devils in combat, remember that they are intelligent, well trained, and very evil. As with many soldiers, they should make good use of flanking and directing melee attacks at powerful spellcasters.

PRECISE TIMELINE

The Ragesians arrive whenever it is most appropriate dramatically, which likely will be some time between when the heroes defeat the welcome party on the upper level and when they are ready to leave after speaking with Darius, the surviving inquisitor. While it won't ruin anything if the heroes manage to get out before the army arrives, it kills some of the drama.

IN CASE OF FIRESTORM...

Once the water pump is activated, it takes about a day for water pressure to get high enough for the heroes to use the lift to ascend to the upper level. By this point they hopefully will have dealt with most if not all of the encounters in the lower levels, and should be 12th level.

Time is Short (EL 8)

When the heroes are ready to take the lift, any survivors of Clan Millorn are waiting as well, and they recommend going up as a group. In the midst of discussions, a Listen check (DC 3) detects the approach of an elite Ragesian knight.

Elite Ragesian knight (CR 8). 65 hp.

The knight has dismounted and walked into the castle, trying to be quiet but not well. He knows that the First Ragesian Army, led by General Magdus, is on its way, and though they are being aided by Shahalesti mages, they've been having troubles keeping the fiery weather at bay. They might be here tomorrow, or they might be here in a few hours. If the knight spots the two groups of tomb robbers, he flees, but likely won't escape. It should be clear that there is little time to dawdle.

The Ascent (EL 14)

The lift shaft ascends 100 ft. in total. Up 90 ft. is a silver sheet that ripples in the air. This is the entrance to a slice of the Astral Plane. The rest of the shaft is filled with seven sets of traps, set to go off

every 10 ft. the lift ascends, starting at 20 ft. up. Once the lift starts, it cannot be stopped without all but disabling the lift. It is of course possible to climb the shaft (Climb DC 20), and flying can mitigate some of the dangers, but a permanent *wall of force* crosses the shaft 85 ft. up, which can only be disabled by riding the lift up and setting the lever to the proper location at the proper time.

A Spot check (DC 38, including modifiers for distance) detects the invisible *wall of force* by its interference with the rippling edge of the silvery sheet. Have all characters who enter the lift room make a Spot check and note their results. Reduce the Spot DC by 1 per round, and as soon as a character's check result is high enough, alert him that he notices something invisible and solid at the top of the shaft.

Layout: The lift room is 20 ft. by 20 ft. There is a thick chain in each corner (Hardness 12, 60 hp; Break DC 32), and a complicated mechanism in the center of the lift, slightly recessed into the floor. It consists of a short handle fitted into a mass of gears, vaguely reminiscent of a manual transmission gearshift, with a pedal to release it and nine possible positions it can occupy. The handle and all the mechanism rise no higher than the level of the rest of the floor. The mechanism extends down through the floor of the lift and link up to traps in the walls. There is an access hatch on the floor next to the control handle.

Right now the control handle is set in the Park position. Each of the other eight positions (simply labeled A through H) deactivates a given "floor" of traps. It is a standard action to shift the handle. Details of each floor of traps are presented below. The lift starts on the ground floor, and proceeds to 1st, 2nd, and so on to 9th.

A Search check (DC 32) on the handle reveals a magical trap that will trigger *mass hold person* when the lift reaches the 2nd floor (Disable Device DC 32).

Additionally, a Search check (DC 27) locates sections of the floor which will open to pits at the 7th floor. These can be disabled easily (Disable Device DC 18).

A small lever in the doorway of the ground floor recalls the lift if it is on the upper level.

The Ascent: With everyone inside the lift room, the heroes must close the door before they can start the lift. Once the door is closed, if the water pump is active, the lift can be started by pressing the pedal and shifting to any other position but Park. From this point, the lift cannot be stopped without damaging or disabling it. (The control handle cannot be moved if insufficient pressure has built up for the lift.)

The lift takes three rounds to ascend from one floor to the next; then it sits motionless for one round. At the end of that round, if the control handle is not in the proper position, the trap for the next level activates. Each trap is either immediate or lasts three rounds, and then stops for the fourth round as the lift reaches the next level.

Once the lift is more than 20 ft. up, spikes snap up at the bottom of the shaft, making a fall fairly lethal.

Breaking and Disabling: If the heroes want to stop the ascent of the lift, they must break at least two of the chains pulling the lift up.

The mechanism that controls the traps is exceedingly complex, and even accessing it requires opening a locked compartment in the floor (Open Lock DC 35) and climbing under the platform of the lift (Climb DC 15 to hang in place each round). This is the only location where it is possible to reach the mechanisms in order to disable them.

A character hanging under the lift can attempt each round as a full round action to figure out which handle position will deactivate the trap for the next level (Disable Device DC 35). He can then shout it up to whoever is manning the control handle.

Alternately, a character can attempt to manually disable the next floor's trap. This requires two successful Disable Device checks (DC 30), each a full round action. The lift reaches a new floor every four rounds, so the trapsmith must work quickly.

Additionally, the gears and chains under the lift are dangerous. Each round a person on the lift's underside must make a Reflex save (DC 10) to avoid taking 1d6 points of damage.

Magical traps can be dispelled; the caster level for each magic trap is 15th.

Ground Floor: There is no actual trap on this floor. The gears begin to grind, and the water

pump churns in dual blasts of pressure, sounding like a massive heart beating once every two seconds, reverberating the walls and echoing up the shaft.

1st Floor (CR 6): There is no trap on this floor. The two-floor ascent gives the heroes time to get a feel of the pattern of three rounds of climbing, then one round of pause.

2nd Floor (CR 9): Unless the control handle is in the D position, *mass hold person* (Will DC 21) goes off, targeting up to 15 creatures, but it will not target someone holding the control handle.

3rd Floor (CR 6): Unless the control handle is in the G position, a *fireball* goes off (10d6, Ref DC 17). It only triggers in the first round of three. In the second round, however, a *summon monster VI* spell summons a large fire elemental, and then another is summoned in the third round.

Large fire elementals (2, CR 5). 60 hp.

4th Floor (CR 7): Unless the control handle is in the A position, a flurry of jagged balls shoot out from the walls toward every creature, dealing 4d6 damage each round (Reflex DC 17 negates). Thereafter, the floor is considered riddled with caltrops.

5th Floor (CR 5): Unless the control handle is in the B position, *confusion* (Will DC 17) targets everyone on the lift floor. It only triggers once. At this point, an incorporeal tragedy appears at the top of the shaft, sliding out of the wall just beneath the *wall of force*. It descends and attacks for as long as it can. If it notices the hatch is open, it dives through the floor and attacks anyone hanging under the platform.

Tragedy (CR 7). 69 hp.

6th Floor (CR 9): Unless the control handle is in the D position, a jagged fusillade of dozens of spears stab out from every wall, then retract as the lift ascends. For each of the three rounds the trap is active, spears attack every creature in the area (three attacks per target each round, +21 melee, 1d8 damage).

7th Floor: At this level, a *mirage arcana* spell activates. Creatures that make a Will save (DC 19) can see through the glamor. If the control handle is

in the H position, the lift seems to change to a pillow of clouds ascending through the heavens between columns of golden sunlight.

If the control handle is not in the H position, the floor begins to crack and a flaming light rises from below. The whole lift takes on a hellish countenance, and the control handle explodes just as a *summon monster VI* spell summons a chain devil in the center of the lift. A *magic mouth* spell shouts in Infernal, “Destroy them, but stay near the center of the floor.”

The devil happily lays into its foes, preferring clerics and paladins, and it causes sections of chain in the four corners to lash out and attack. These are not part of the main chains pulling the lift, but rather were placed here specifically for this trap.

Chain devil (CR 6). 52 hp, MM.

8th Floor (CR 8): Unless the control handle is in the E position, pits open along the edges of the lift (but not in the four corner squares or in the four central squares). Unless a creature succeeds a Reflex save (DC 20), it is an 80 ft. fall to the spikes below.

9th Floor (CR 9): If the control handle is in the C position, the *wall of force* vanishes. Otherwise, characters are suddenly aware that they are being pressed down, and at the end of the third round any creature in the area is crushed for 12d6 damage.

The lift pauses at this point for one round, and then the *wall of force* vanishes and the lift ascends the last few feet to be even with the upper level. The pumping sound stops, and the floor panels that dropped out rise up. The heroes have survived the trap.

You appear to be standing in a rippling pool of liquid silver. Everything beyond your arm's reach to seem to waver in a sweltering haze – perhaps it is just the intense heat here. Something feels strange in the air, like your senses are about to be overturned. Behind you is a huge room filled with gears and chains that drew up the lift, while in front of you is an elaborately carved door of scorched red marble, set with mighty adamantine hinges. The crackle of flame can be heard from beyond.

ACT THREE: THE DARK PYRE

In this act, the heroes enter the Astral Plane at the center of the planar rift, which is heavily defended by Griiat's forces. After pressing through the last undead guards, the heroes can reach the throne room where a delirious Darius lies, and upon healing him they can learn the fate of the Torch. But the Ragesian army is close behind them, and the heroes will have to find a way to escape when the one route out is watched by dozens of elite warriors.

THE PLANAR RIFT

This whole section of the castle has slid into a slice of the Astral Plane. Additionally, the rift to the planes of fire and negative energy suffuse the area with their power. The following traits are active in the upper level of the castle:

- ♦ **Subjective directional gravity.** As a free action once per round, a Wisdom check (DC 16) lets you choose which way down is for you. If you fail, you gain a +6 bonus in later rounds. There is no gravity for unattended objects and nonsentient creatures.
- ♦ **Timeless.** Age, hunger, thirst, poison, and natural healing don't function here, though they resume functioning when the traveler leaves.
- ♦ **Enhanced magic: quicken.** All spells and spell-like abilities used within this area may be employed as if they were improved by the Quicken Spell feat. Already quickened spells and spell-like abilities are unaffected, as are spells from magic items. Spells so quickened are still prepared and cast at their unmodified level. As with the Quicken Spell feat, only one quickened spell can be cast per round.
- ♦ **Enhanced magic: death and fire.** Spells with the death or fire descriptor cast here are automatically empowered, as are those that channel negative energy, such as *inflict* spells. Additionally, undead in this area gain turn resistance +4. This effect does not extend into Areas 39 and 40.
- ♦ **Inhibited magic: teleportation.** Because the upper levels are in a strange sliver dimension, it is not possible to teleport out of the upper levels.

Teleportation inside still functions (though the Burning Sky is still active), and *plane shift* can allow escape.

- ♦ **Illumination.** Every room is brightly lit by a fiery glow that comes from everywhere at once. Because of gravity here is subjective, often the undead will attack from odd directions, standing on the sides of columns, or firing down from ceilings. When low on hit points, suicidal undead will attempt to fling themselves at the heroes, choosing the heroes' direction as "down."

DEFENDERS OF THE DARK PYRE

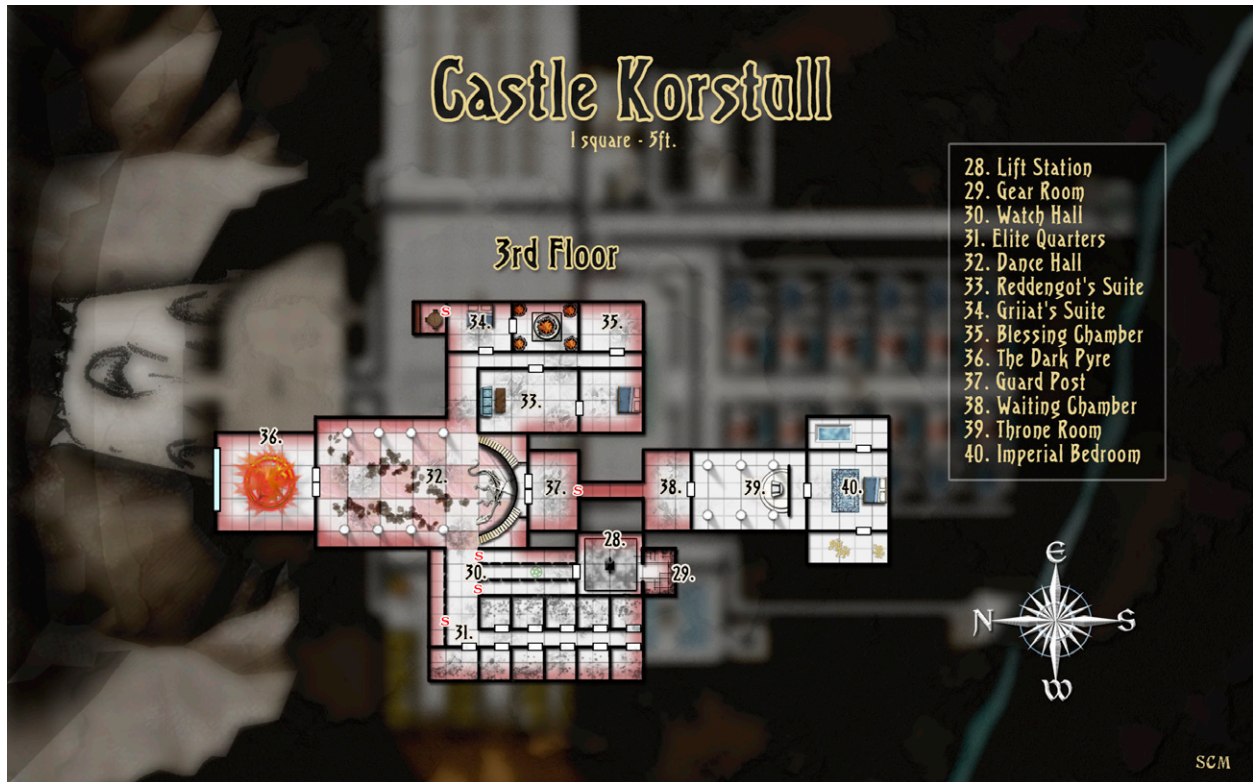
Unlike the lower level, the defenses of the upper level are completely proactive, and the heroes will not likely have a chance to explore rooms individually. Instead, the battle should move from room to room as the heroes are attacked from all sides by waves of enemies. Because of this, the rooms on this level are detailed first, and then tactics and force deployment are presented for the defenders. In total, Griiat's defenses include:

- ♦ Three dark pyre sergeants.
- ♦ Thirty dark pyre soldiers.
- ♦ Eight dark pyre swarms.
- ♦ A hellcat Griiat has called by casting *planar ally*.
- ♦ Two tragedies and the vrock Kzyu-nior, if the heroes arrived before the "Assassination" encounter in Act Two.
- ♦ The dread wraith Reddengot, if he was not defeated in Act Two.
- ♦ Griiat himself.

28. Lift Station

The heroes arrive here at the end of Act Two. If they want to take the lift back down, the control handle must be turned clockwise through a full cycle, and the descent will begin, taking two rounds for every 10 ft. of descent. No traps trigger on the way down, though after descending one floor the *wall of force* returns.

The magical traps automatically reset for future ascents, and the projectile traps have enough ammunition to function for three more ascents.



29. Gear Room

This room is full of machinery. Every square grants partial cover (+2 AC, +1 Reflex saves), and counts as difficult terrain. Ten minutes of work can disable the lift (Disable Device DC 30) so it can only be operated from the upper levels. A more difficult process (DC 35) repairs it thereafter.

30. Watch Hall

This room is lined with arrow slits on each side. A *glyph of warding* on the floor triggers *dispel magic* upon the first person to cross it.

31. Elite Quarters

These were once quarters for soldiers. Now they are filled with naught but ash. The wooden doorways have all been burnt away.

32. Dance Hall

This vast room is 40 ft. wide, 65 ft. long, and 30 ft. high. Columns go from floor to ceiling, but this means little since there is no gravity here. Indeed, over the past few months bits of debris from the

columns, ceiling, and wasted furniture have been left to drift here weightlessly. Because of this, any foe more than 10 ft. away has concealment.

Additionally, in the darkened squares on the map, some sort of large chunk of debris at least 5 ft. across floats somewhere in the air. These are large and heavy enough for a person to stand on without significantly moving them, and should offer great options for combat tricks to mobile combatants.

On the south wall, a pair of staircases rise up to a balcony, where burnt husks of doors lead to the Guard Post (Area 37). Between the staircase, an imposing trophy watches the room – the mounted skeleton of a huge gold dragon, posed menacingly and held in place by unique magical force. Griiat once tried to animate it, but was unable to. The statue's placard – an etched gold dragon scale – reads, “Syana the Celestial, defender of Ycengled, noble foe.”

This is the skeleton of the dragon Syana, who was once defender of Ycengled, the icy forest where the assassins fled. She was slain by Coaltongue, and her daughter Trilla was rescued and hidden away deep beneath the earth.

33. Reddengot's Suite

This is where the dread wraith Reddengot spends its time thinking up ways to cause pain. Implements of torture float in the air, since Reddengot cannot even touch them now.

34. Griiat's Suite

Beyond his old bedroom, Griiat has converted his guest room into a small shrine to the Dark Pyre. Fires burn in this room, and if one stares into the fires for more than a minute, he gains the ability to use *contact other plane*. This ability can only be used once per day.

A secret door (Search DC 25) leads to Griiat's scrying room, where dozens of mirrors look into rooms around the castle. The door to this room was once trapped, but the mechanism burnt out. Griiat simply glides through it now.

35. Blessing Chamber

Griiat originally brought all the lesser undead in the castle here to grant them an infusion of power from the Dark Pyre. Should the heroes retreat, any damaged undead come here, healing fully within an hour.

36. The Dark Pyre

This is the location of the planar rift. In the middle of a ring of crackling dark fire and lightning are the burning silhouettes of the assassins as they were standing at the very instant they fled the castle.

The north wall appears to be a huge window looking down upon the canyon, but is in fact an elaborate wall of huge stones that were each made permanently invisible, 10 ft. thick. However, the firestorm cracked the wall and caused huge chunks to fall out (some of which were dragged into the dance hall). A few small holes lead out to the canyon, and the strange fluctuations of heat and pressure cause tongues of flame to lash in and out of these holes. It would be possible to smash open the wall with intense force (Break DC 28).

This room is very deadly. Creatures in here take 1d6 points of fire damage and 1d6 points of negative energy damage each round. A creature actually

inside the pyre's heart takes 5d6 damage of each type each round.

In the southeast corner of this room floats a sky palanquin, a sort of aerial sled that when activated can carry a half dozen or so people through the air. It has survived the fire unharmed, and is detailed in full in *Flight of the Stormchaser*, below.

None of the undead but Griiat go in here. The sound of the crackling flames can be heard from anywhere on the upper level.

37. Watch Post

This room was once where guards stood to defend Coaltongue. Now it is a burnt husk. The secret door is easy to find (Search DC 10) because the undead leave a clear trail in the ash every time they patrol down it.

38. Waiting Chamber

This room is also empty. No undead can pass beyond it into the throne room. The door to the throne room is slightly ajar, but has not been moved for months.

39. Throne Room

In this room, Darius, the surviving bodyguard of Coaltongue, lies on the floor, wracked with fevered visions. The room is richly decorated, and the six ruby-studded *everburning torch* sconces along the columns are themselves alone worth 500 gp each. Little else in the room is convenient enough to be easily looted, with nine tapestries that each weigh 50 lb. (worth 1,500 gp each), gold tracings in the floor (worth 800 gp), and the ceiling painted with a beautiful magical mural that shifts subtly by the mood of the person on the throne, granting him a +5 bonus to Diplomacy and Intimidate checks (worth 5,000 gp, but immovable).

The throne is the focus of the powerful wards in this room. No magical effect can deal direct damage here (though indirect damage, by summoned creatures or hurled objects, still is possible). All illusions and enchantment effects here are suppressed, and nonhumanoid creatures simply cannot enter without permission of whoever is sitting on the throne. Even

then, attempting to take any hostile actions requires a Will save (DC 29); the bodyguards themselves were exempt of this restriction.

The throne itself has a sense of who is worthy enough to sit in it, and any creature that does not have at least a 17 Charisma or 13 ranks of Diplomacy finds it impossible to sit on the throne. There were many other wards once, but they have lapsed. All these effects were created with caster level 19.

40. Imperial Bedroom

A dried mat of blood stains the bed where a golden stake was driven into the emperor's heart, and his head was slashed off. Everything in the room, from the carpet and the bedsheets to the paintings on the walls, are lavish and expensive. The bedsheets, for instance, are enchanted to be supremely comfortable, and are worth 500 gp to a discerning buyer. Beside the bed is a wall mount upon which the Torch was placed when the emperor slept.

The east room is the emperor's bathroom, which includes an extradimensional wardrobe with a half dozen outfits worth 800 gp each. The west room is the castle's treasure vault:

Coins. One wall has a shelf stacked with bags of coins. Forty velvet bags filled with gold coins contain 500 gp each (20,000 gp in total, which is 400 lbs of gold). Additionally, ten gold- and mithral-woven bags contain 500 pp each (worth 50,000 gp, weighing 100 lbs).

Paper. A massive glass display case holds the outer half of every sheet of an ancient spellbook. Few of the spells are extant today, but sadly none are usable. This trophy was given to Coaltongue by Leska many decades ago when she defeated an old arcane foe of the Ragesians. (Market value 8,000 gp).

Arms and Armor. A suit of +1 gold dragonhide plate (market value 4,000 gp) holds a +1 longsword that can use either the *flaming* or *frost* enhancement, though not both at once. Switching between them is a free action. Additionally, the sword's wielder can spontaneously change the energy type of one spell per day that he or she casts, changing its energy type to either cold or fire.

(Market value 15,000 gp).

Game. An enchanted game board of magically bound ice and fire conjures illusions of game pieces for many common strategy games, including Conquest (see adventure three, *Shelter from the Storm*). (Market value 3,000 gp).

Art. A painting (which does not detect as magical) with a name plaque that reads, "The Woman I Love the Most." It normally depicts a proper Sindairese noblewoman, but if the person viewing it says, "I can wait no longer," the image shifts to a young, sultry half-elf Ostalin woman, posing nude. This was not Coaltongue's, but rather a Sindairese nobleman's. Coaltongue kept it as blackmail, threatening to reveal the hidden underpainting to the man's wife. (Market value 2,000 gp).

Mystery. Something that appears to be a block of cheese with one slice cut out of it. It detects as possessing overwhelming necromantic magic, but all attempts to identify its powers fail. (Market value 200 gp as a curio).

Pleasure. A *figurine of wondrous power* – an ashwood dire bear – sits in a dish of neverending white and dark chocolate, with the pieces of chocolate resembling countless types of animals. The figurine is identical to a *marble elephant*, except that it becomes a dire bear. (Market value 17,000 gp for the bear, 5,000 gp for the chocolate).

Music. A small wooden stand has a permanent *programmed image* of a dancing nymph with exotic music, which responds to requests to entertain viewers. (Market value 3,000 gp).

Magic. Eight stones whirl through the air around the dancing nymph. One is a clear spindle *ioun stone*, and four are dusty rose prism *ioun stones*. (Market value 24,000 gp). The other three are massive diamonds which were used to *trap the soul*. Each gem is worth 10,000 gp, and holds the soul of an aged, loyal Ragesian who offered his soul when he was near death, for use with the Torch. The gems glow with inner light, and even if the soul is consumed (such as to power the

sky palanquin in the room of the Dark Pyre), the gem retains its value.

Healing. A unique *elixir of restoration* sits labeled among an emergency kit of healing, including an *elixir of break enchantment*, ten *potions of cure serious wounds*, and four *scrolls of heal*.

The rest of the wealth of the castle was spent paying for Lord Gorquith's rebellion.

Welcoming Party (EL 11)

When the heroes first arrive, they are in the lift station room (Area 28), with the gear room (Area 29) behind them, and the watch hall (Area 30) in front of them. Because of the great noise produced by the ascending lift, Griiat has had plenty of time to get an ambush in place. Once the heroes open the door from the lift room to the hall, they have quite a fight ahead of them. You may want to encourage them to be healed before they go any farther.

First, a *glyph of warding* lies on the ground, and as soon as a non-undead creature passes over its square, *dispel magic* targets the intruder (dispel check +10).

Second, the hallway is *deseccated*. Turn undead checks here are at a -3 penalty, and the undead here gain a +1 profane bonus to attack rolls, damage rolls, and saves. Additionally, remember the Dark Pyre grants undead on the upper level turn resistance +2.

Third, the walls on either side of the hallway are lined with arrow slits, as is the wall beyond the end of the hall. Three dark pyre soldiers hide behind each wall, armed with crossbows, and they attack as soon as they have a clear shot. Their shields lie on the ground beside them, and if they lose sight of the heroes they strap them on, drop their crossbows, and head out to fight in melee. The secret doors can be located with a Search check (DC 25).

Fourth, a pair of dark pyre swarms hide at the entrance of the elite quarters (out of the path of initial turn undead attempts), waiting to rush the first foe who comes out of the hallway. One grapples while the other sneak attacks.

Fifth, a dark pyre sergeant waits at the entrance to the dance hall, blocking the way. When he sees the door open, he targets a *wall of fire* on the far end of the lift room, with the heat aimed so as to drive the

heroes into the ambush. As the heroes advance, he places additional walls of fire behind them to keep them from retreating, with the intent of herding them into the Dance Hall.

Dark pyre sergeants (CR 9). 52 hp.

Dark pyre soldiers (9, CR 4). 20 hp.

Dark pyre swarms (2, CR 6). 33 hp.

Second Wave (EL 11)

Once the heroes have made it through the watch hall, the forces hiding in the elite suites emerge from their rooms, attempting to force the heroes into the dance hall. They simply rush out *en masse*.

Dark pyre soldiers (5, CR 4). 20 hp.

Dark pyre swarms (6, CR 6). 33 hp.

Dance Before the Dark Pyre (EL 14)

When the heroes enter the dance hall, the defenders spring their main trap. Two *walls of fire* appear, blocking the path to the guard post (area 37) and the hallway to the east (to areas 33–35). On the balcony above the stairs, one dark pyre sergeant and four dark pyre soldiers step through their wall of fire, while another sergeant and four soldiers step through the wall of fire to the east. Six dark pyre soldiers standing around the ceiling or on floating pieces of debris slam their weapons upon their shields with a burning hiss. Then, with a dramatic flourish, two soldiers pull open the double doors to the room of the Dark Pyre. Griiat's spectral form casts a cold shadow, and for a moment a large feline figure is faintly visible before him, but then it vanishes. Griiat raises his clawed hand and orders for his forces to attack.

Griiat, High Priest of the Dark Pyre (CR 13). 75 hp.

Dark pyre sergeants (2, CR 9). 52 hp.

Dark pyre soldiers (16, CR 4). 20 hp.

Hellcat (CR 6). 60 hp, MM.

Tactics: Griiat is well familiar with the quickening effects of the Astral Plane, which lets him cast a spell even if he has to counterspell something.

Before combat he will have already cast *spell resistance* to give himself SR 23, and possibly *spell immunity* if Reddengot was able to report particular spells the heroes used.

In combat, he starts with *prayer* and a *quicken blade barrier*, and then in later rounds uses his ghost *telekinesis* ability to fling heroes into the blades, or to hurl chunks of stone into masses of enemies. He might *greater command* enemies to approach, while he retreats into the Dark Pyre, or use *hold person*, then command one of his undead to grapple the hero and will himself to fall into the Dark Pyre. If one of the heroes is using the Song of Forms to make him corporeal, he casts *silence* on the hellcat and sends it to stay near the singer.

During all of this, the dark pyre soldiers move swiftly around the room, leaping along the walls, ceiling, or floating bits of debris. Those near Griiat try to keep enemies at bay, and those on the balcony focus on ranged attacks, but the rest of the undead warriors prefer mobile melee. The hellcat, meanwhile, sprints through the room, all but invisible, with orders to kill any clerics or paladins.

Aftermath: When Griiat is defeated, he appears to burst into flames and turn to ash, and the Dark Pyre bursts with power, destroying all undead left in the battle and banishing any summoned creatures back to their home planes. The room dims noticeably as the pyre's connection to this plane is crippled. Griiat will rejuvenate in 2d4 days unless the rightful ruler of Ragesia returns to the throne of this castle, but for now the pyre's power is weakened, and the heroes are, supposedly, safe.

They can explore the rest of the upper level, but if the heroes look out the window in Area 36 (the pyre is not powerful enough to damage them now), they see an army marching down the canyon to the castle. Hundreds of Ragesian soldiers, and a dozen or more elves in rich regalia, follow behind the leader of the First Army, General Magdus. Some of the soldiers on the ground point up, and it is clear that the heroes have been spotted. Magdus shouts orders, and his forces surge into the castle.

If the heroes watch through the scrying mirrors in Griiat's hidden study, they can see that the soldiers make a bee line for the lift, but they do not move to go up it yet. Other soldiers press through the many rooms the heroes already explored, securing the area. It looks like

the Ragesians are confident the heroes cannot escape, so they are going to take their time to make sure they don't fall prey to any traps. The heroes are not in immediate danger, but they should want to get what they came for quickly.

THE FALL OF THE EMPEROR

The heat of the pyre fades as the heroes near the throne room of Korstull. The wards here kept out the flames and the undead, and – by fortunate fate the castle's departure to the Astral

Plane saved the sole survivor of Castle Korstull, so that its story might be told.

Ten feet from the door lies **Darius** (LN male human cleric 13), curled into a fetal position, his body beaded with sweat, his face clenched in feverish pain. A mace lies beside him, but any other valuable gear he may once have had has been taken away. Two other bodies, long since rotted away, lie against the walls, also completely looted. The floor has strange



patterns in it around him, and the heroes can see that Darius's nails are cracked and bloodied.

When the assassins struck, they hit Darius with violet kesh poison that reduced his Wisdom to 0. Since natural healing does not work on the Astral Plane, he has lain here for months, not dying, but unable to recover. If the heroes explore the throne room and imperial bedroom, they should be able to find an *elixir of restoration* that can restore his faculties.

Darius is disoriented when he comes to, but is thankful of being snapped out of his fever visions. He has taken only minimal hit point damage, and still has a full complement of spells if someone happens to have an inquisitor mask he can use as his divine focus. His fingers are bloodied because in his visions he scratched at the floor, unwittingly transcribing what he saw. Careful reading of the floor reveals the following passages, written in no discernible order.

The bright shadow returns to its homeland, and the sky may burn for its last time.

Five rivers flow, one black, down to sunless seas. Between lives she sees shades chained, warring against the shining one. Golden wings, like branches in winter, shelter them against a thousand scouring eyes.

Bells toll at the gate, and winter grips like a wolf as the fire bleeds from the world. Ursine skulls lead armies against earth, wind, fire, and water.

The devil of the east wind, his mask only a smile, hides a thunder child in a prison upon a tomb.

Serpents writhe in an eight-armed stone, and soldiers shall feast upon the rubble of madness.

The earnest lie deceives, and his grandmother weeps echoes of souls primordial, but the golden ship carries the word to safe shelter.

O wintry song of agony, o longwalking betrayer, as balance shatters like waves against the shore, your vengeful wing guides the motes of the burning sky, strong by search and guile, to seek annihilation at the Heart of History.

Deep beneath the gate of summer's sound where lies sleeping the Mother of Dreams, her nightmares roam unbound. Freedom holds her chains.

The nightmares rise, the tempest stares with ire, the eternal heart falters, and death or life is borne by fire.

Darius can explain what happened. He was standing watch, along with two other guards – Dimha and Lein – when Lein suddenly fell over, his throat slashed open. For an instant Darius saw a swarthy half-elf man holding a black scimitar, but then he vanished into the shadows. The door to the room burst open, and a bladed whip lashed out, held by a beautiful dark elf woman with violet hair. The whip snared Darius by his throat, and he was pulled into the doorway, where the woman grabbed him and delivered a poisoned kiss. He cried out to sound the alarm, and guards in the main hall responded, but a third assassin – a white-haired dark elf woman with a double sword – held them off.

Darius remembers the world bending around him, and he stumbled back into the room. He saw the assassins carry out the body of his emperor, Drakus Coaltongue, and then the world exploded with fire. He recognized the power in the air, and he knew the Torch has been activated. Since then, he is not certain if anything he has seen has been real.

SOLVING THE MYSTERY

The clues of Darius's fevered vision can help the heroes eventually determine where the assassins went to. Scrying simply fails, as does even *discern location*. The only clue that might sound familiar to the heroes is the reference to "echoed souls," which if they spoke with traveling companion Three Weeping Ravens in adventure five, *Mission to the Monastery of Two Winds*, they should know is related to the monk's temple, located in northern Shahalesti.

Careful study of old lore (or a DC 40 Knowledge (history) or Bardic Knowledge check) shows that the visions point to a haunted elvish forest, Ycengled, which conveniently is also located in northern Shahalesti. Likewise, *legend lore* or *vision* can be used to get more information about the passages above. Even if the heroes don't solve anything now, if they record the words, they should easily be able to find answers once they return to Seaquen, at which point their course should become clear.

In particular, the "bright shadow," is Rhuarc's scimitar, *Shaalguenyaver*, crafted of black adamantine and white diamonds. Rhuarc himself was originally

from Ycengled, so it is his homeland. The forest of Ycengled is filled with many trees bound in chains, from when the Shahalesti tortured prisoners by leaving them to hang to their deaths. When the heroes reach Ycengled, of the five rivers that flow through the forest, they will want to follow the river whose waters are black with mourning souls.

The other passages hint of events that have befallen in the war, and some yet to come. One, the “earnest lie deceives,” is about to happen very soon.

GETTING OUT

Give the heroes a chance to discuss their plans, and perhaps to rest. Unless the heroes lie to him, Darius will want to speak with the Ragesian forces who are coming, but he is in no condition to fight the heroes if they want to flee. An exploration of the upper levels should make it clear that the easiest avenue of escape is to activate the *sky palanquin* in Area 26, smash out the window, and fly away through the canyon.

The Sky Palanquin: This flying sled is eight feet wide by twelve feet long, big enough to easily fit four people, though there is seating space to fit eight passengers and one driver. When so filled, however, creatures in the sled are considered squeezed, making combat difficult. Those inside the sled have cover against attacks from outside.

It is also possible to hang onto the side and stand on the runners, providing room for at least two more per side. Because the palanquin grants creatures the ability to fly nearby it, creatures can automatically hang on, though they must have a spare hand.

Normally the sled simply floats slightly above the ground, but it can be activated by placing a soul gem in the mouth of a sun face on the sled’s front. The soul is consumed, and blue-white flames erupt from the front of the sled, coalescing into a team of eight winged horses, hippogriffs. The runners of the sled crackle with cool flames, and for the next hour and a half the palanquin can fly.

The team of flaming hippogriffs can be controlled by a driver, by means of Ride checks. The hippogriffs only pull the palanquin; they do not attack. The palanquin cannot fly any higher than 100 ft. off the ground, and it flies at the leisurely pace of 80 ft. per

round, with clumsy maneuverability. This movement occurs at the end of each round, so if a creature is not inside at the end of the round, he may be left behind.

If no one is controlling the hippogriffs (Ride DC 5 as a free action, though you must control the reigns with at least one hand), they continue flying at full speed for one round, then begin to descend 40 ft. per round.

Any creature riding in or on the palanquin gains fire resistance 30 and DR 10/magic against ranged attacks. Additionally, those in the palanquin or within 10 ft. gain the ability to fly briefly. They can fly at speed 60 (good maneuverability) as long as they are within 10 ft. of the palanquin. If they move beyond 10 ft., a fiery blue nimbus surrounds them, though it fades slowly, and vanishes after 3 rounds, at which point the character *feather falls* to the ground. A character who flies back to within 10 ft. of the palanquin refreshes his flying ability. The protection against fire and ranged attacks also affects creatures flying from the palanquin as long as the nimbus lasts.



STAYING AND TALKING

Even if the heroes want to stay and talk, when Deception calls forth his brother Aggression to assume Syana's form, they should be tempted to flee. Don't try to force them to leave, though.

Because of its size and power, the palanquin has a +30 bonus to Strength checks for the purpose of bursting barriers, such as the wall of the castle window. You shouldn't even bother to roll.

As powerful as the palanquin is, it is difficult to sell it, since it requires soul gems of at least 10 HD creatures to work. The palanquin itself can be sold for 5,000 gp, plus 12,000 gp for each soul gem the heroes can offer along with it.

Pressure (EL 17)

The heroes should have had a chance to rest, or at least to use healing magic to be fairly recuperated, since the next scene is challenging. Then, once the heroes have come up with a plan, or when they have begun to dawdle or grow impatient, they hear a heavy beating sound as the lift begins to descend to the ground level. (If the heroes sabotaged the lift, this event might occur a few hours later, after the Shahalesti mages have had a chance to use *telekinesis* and other magic to re-rig the lift to descend despite the sabotage.)

From this point, the heroes have about ten minutes before the Ragesians and Shahalesti arrive. A fair number of soldiers are still outside the main entrance, watching the window since they suspect the heroes might try to escape that way. However, the firestorm pillar covers the outside of the window, which has kept them from trying to enter that way yet. If the heroes do not flee, however, they will likely be overwhelmed.

Elite Ragesian soldier (6, CR 8). 65 hp.

Master Ragesian archer (4, CR 11). 88 hp.

Elite Shahalesti warrior (4, CR 8). 57 hp.

Elite Shahalesti wizard (2, CR 8). 20 hp.

Solei Palancis dreadnought (CR 12). 73 hp.

Darius will try to call for a surrender if the heroes decide to stay and face this.

Deception Revealed (EL 16)

What the trillith Deception has been up to depends heavily on the heroes' actions. He likely did not go with the heroes up the lift, but since he is incorporeal it is easy enough for him to bypass the *wall of force* and arrive anyway. Unless he is impersonating someone with the heroes, the trillith has been invisibly watching from outside the throne room, listening to Darius's story, and though he might be better served by attacking earlier, for metaphorical reasons that matter deeply to a dreamborn creature like himself, he waits for the heroes to be about to leave or be attacked by the arriving army before he makes his move.

He wants to kill the heroes so they will not be able to get the Torch before him, and he has brought an ally along. The trillith Aggression was specifically crafted for this purpose by the nightmare spinners watching over the Mother of Dreams, which is why he does not function as a typical trillith. Effectively, Deception is using a *true resurrection*, and then binding Aggression to the resurrected Syana, compelling her to fight for him. Syana's new life will be brief and tormented, and within an hour the magic will fade, and the dragon scion will die again.

When the heroes are distracted, Deception goes to the bones of Syana mounted in the dance hall, and releases Aggression's essence from what appears to be a black gem (though it is not really solid, since the trillith are all creatures of dreams). Deception calls out to the heroes to get their attention.

At the end of the dance hall a small figure stands beneath the great mounted draconic skeleton. At first you recognize him as the halfling Ernest, but then his form wavers like the rippling surface of a dark lake, and you feel you have met this creature before when he was disguised as a dark fey in the fire forest. He speaks, and black tendrils reach upward from his body, twisting and writhing, crackling with fire, and the skeleton begins to move.



"Rebels, new longwalkers and songbearers, your blindness has pleased me, but now, with the blessing of my brothers, and with our grandmother as my witness and my destructive hand, you shall be silenced."

The deceptive figure slowly fades from sight, cackling joyously.

Already the flames have begun to fill the hollow body of the dragon, solidifying into golden scales as the dead beast comes back to life. Finally, the only flames that remain are fiery tears streaming from her eyes. Gleaming and majestic, the huge golden dragon tears free from the magical force that once held her, and she unleashes a roar that makes even the castle stone shudder with fear. The walls around you begin to tremble and crack, rocks flying in every direction as the reborn dragon lays her sights upon you.

and flying after the heroes three rounds after they leave the castle. If instead the heroes attack her rather than fleeing, she fights back right away.

The cracking of the castle stones is mostly for flavor and poses no danger should the heroes decide not to flee.

The Flight (EL 16)

Should the heroes take the *sky palanquin* and flee, the Ragesians in the canyon below begin to fire arrows ineffectually. The leader of the Shahalesti contingent, Shalosha, takes charge, ordering her most loyal bodyguards to follow her. She activates a contingent *fly* spell, casts *haste* on herself and her bodyguards, and pursues. The same round, two Ragesian wyvern knights take flight after the heroes. Shalosha's bodyguards follow a round later, having quaffed *potions of fly*.

If the players hate being paralyzed by boxed text, and their characters interrupt Deception's his speech, Syana still returns from the dead.

Deception (CR 12). 97 hp.

Syana, adult gold dragon (CR 16). 264 hp, MM.

Syana uses the default stats of an adult gold dragon presented in the MM, except that because of Aggression's influence, she cannot cast spells. Additionally, instead of a weakening gas breath weapon, Syana's secondary breath weapon requires those caught in the cone to make a Will save (DC 26) or be affected by the *rage* spell. Each round thereafter, affected creatures can make a new save to break free.

Aggression seeks to destroy the heroes. If the heroes decide it is time to run, you can assume it takes Syana a few rounds to get her bearings and clamber through the door so she can pursue, in which case she ends up bursting open the window

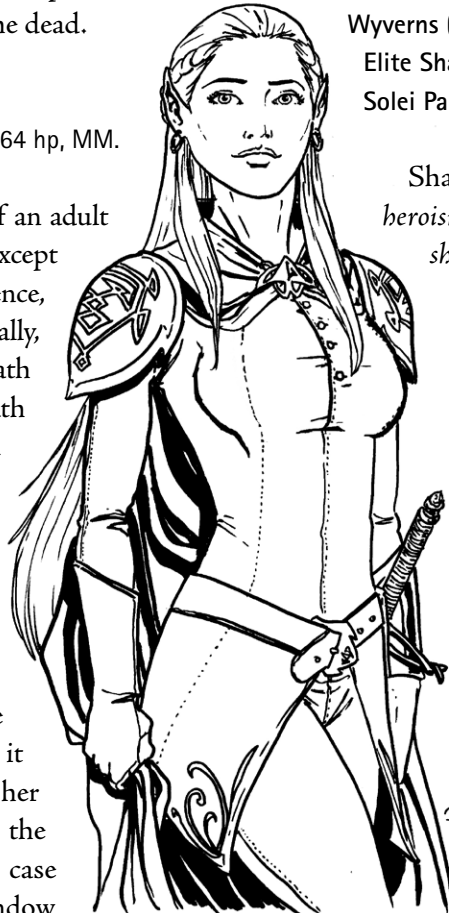
Shalosha (CR 14). 64 hp.

Ragesian wyvern knights (2, CR 6). 50 hp.

Wyverns (2, CR 6). 59 hp.

Elite Shahalesti warriors (4, CR 8). 57 hp.

Solei Palancis dreadnought (CR 12). 73 hp.



Shalosha has already has cast *greater heroism*, *protection from energy (fire)*, *shield*, and *stoneskin* on herself, anticipating a fight. She flies after the palanquin, attempting to catch up and grab onto the back, casting quickened *magic missiles* along the way at anyone who attacks her. She doesn't initiate combat, and before attacking she yells to the heroes, "Land and speak with us, and you will not be harmed."

Once combat begins, she casts *greater invisibility*, then begins fighting with her sword, moving around the palanquin to avoid being located. If her invisibility ends, she uses her Shining Warrior feat to make her sword flare

dazzlingly, after which it deals additional damage. If a particular foe is giving her trouble, she backs away and uses *lightning bolts* to try to remove the threat.

Meanwhile, the dreadnought flies circles around the palanquin, fighting with agile grace, and the elite Shahalesti warriors fly alongside firing arrows. The wyvern knights also use archery, though they each try once to swoop in and have their wyvern snatch someone and throw them free of the palanquin.

The canyon is sixty feet wide, and more than two hundred feet high, too tall for the palanquin to fly up and out, so for now the heroes will have a straight flight to

freedom. Two rounds after the Shahalesti reach the palanquin, however, Syana bursts out of the window of the castle, and spends her round closing within 100 ft. She strafes on her first round, and her fire breath should be enough to make the Ragesians and Shahalesti temporarily turn their attention away from the heroes to the dragon.

Syana ignores the elves, focusing her attacks on the heroes, using her superior speed and Wingover feat to strafe back and forth, trying to stay at least 50 ft. away from the palanquin. Every few rounds the canyon curves slightly, and if no hero is controlling the palanquin's reins, Syana will slam into the palanquin into a wall, forcing those inside to make a

Reflex save (DC 15) to avoid taking 4d6 damage and being knocked out of the palanquin. Those who succeed take half damage.

If the heroes fare poorly, have the other forces attack Syana and divert her attention temporarily to give the heroes a chance to regroup. This also makes it easier to ensure that once Syana is defeated, the fight is over.

When Syana is reduced to 0 hit points, her body begins to dissolve spontaneously in mid-flight, until only her skeleton remains, which proceeds to crash into the ground and join the bodies of all the others who died at this castle. Shalosh, if she has survived, tries to stay to talk to the heroes, even if it means leaving the army. Any other survivors break off to report to General Magdus.



CONCLUSION

If Deception is still alive after the heroes leave, he will do his best to destroy the visions Darius scribed, then go deliver the news to Leska. The campaign saga presumes Deception survives, but there's no problem if he doesn't.

Darius is still loyal to Ragesia, but not to Leska, and could possibly be an ally. General Magdus feels much the same, should the heroes speak with him, though he expects to rise to rule Ragesia in the wake of the war.

Any surviving Clan Millorn explorers thank the characters for their help, and may join the resistance if they are impressed with the heroes.

The Ragesian forces eventually manage to thoroughly explore Korstull. They soon realize their failure and believe the characters now possess the Torch. They retreat quickly, barely escaping before the firestorm returns.

The planar rift remains a blight upon Sindaire, but it may be healed before the end of the campaign.

Eventually the palanquin runs out of power and descends. Too big to carry or teleport, the heroes will likely have to just abandon it.

Shalosha wants to speak with the heroes, and even if they part ways, she will try to contact them via *sending*. She still wants an alliance between her people and Seaquen, though she knows her father will demand the Torch for himself.

Though the heroes have barely had a chance to talk to anyone before fleeing Korstull, they have had a brush with many with great power, and may cross paths with them again before the war is over. Now, though, their course should take them back to Seaquen to unravel the mystery of Darius's visions, and to finally retrieve the Torch of the Burning Sky.

APPENDIX ONE: COMBAT STATS

This appendix contains all the statblocks from the sixth adventure of the War of the Burning Sky, *Tears of the Burning Sky*, to make it easier to find the combat stats you need for a particular encounter without having to flip between pages. Some characters

possess new feats, which are marked with an asterisk and detailed in Appendix Two. A new spell is listed in Appendix Three.

These stats are divided into three sections: Clan Millorn, Castle Foes (including Deception), and Ragesian Forces (including the Shahalesti).

CLAN MILLORN

Jorrina Waryeye

CR 9

This gnome woman's wide, canny eyes watch you from beneath the hood of her pale robes. She carries a short staff, and she smells of strange spell components.

Female gnome variant diviner 7/lore master 2 (UA)

CG Small humanoid (gnome)

Init +1; Senses Listen +2, Spot +4, low-light vision

Languages Common, Gnome, Orc, Terran

AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 11 (+1 Dexterity, +1 size)

hp 32 (9 HD)

Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +10 (+14 vs. illusions)

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)

Melee +3 quarterstaff (1d4–2)

Base Atk +4; Grp –2

Combat Gear scroll of *break enchantment* ×2, *wand of magic missile* (caster level 5th, 20 charges), *potions of cure moderate wounds* ×6, *potion of resist energy (fire)* ×2, *dust of dryness* ×2 (in pellet form, storing 100 gallons of water each)

Special Actions spells

Spells Prepared (CL 9)

5th – *passwall*, *telepathic bond*, *wall of stone*

4th – *arcane eye*, *mass reduce person*, *remove curse*, *stone shape*

3rd – *clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *halt undead*, *haste*, *invisibility sphere*, *secure shelter*

2nd – *command undead* ×2, *knock*, *levitate*, *locate object*, *spider climb*

1st – *alarm*, *detect undead*, *detect secret doors*, *floating disk*, *identify* ×2, *magic missile*

0 – *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *light*, *message*, *open/close*, *read magic*

Prohibited School Enchantment

Abilities Str 6, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 20, Wis 14, Cha 10

SQ enhanced awareness, instant mastery (Appraise), lore (+5), Waryeye family traits

Feats Brew Potion, Craft Wondrous Item, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (Knowledge [architecture and engineering]), Skill Focus (Sense Motive)

Skills Appraise +10, Concentration +8, Knowledge (arcana) +16, Knowledge (architecture and engineering) +19, Sense Motive +16, Spellcraft +16

Possessions *hooded cloak of intellect* +2, quarterstaff, a dozen 100 gp pearls

Enhanced Awareness (Ex): Jorrina needs only 10 minutes to prepare an item for *identify*. An *arcane eye* she casts travels 20 ft. per round (instead of 10) when examining its surroundings. The save DC of her divination spells increases by +1.

Waryeye Family Traits (Ex): Jorrina has variant gnome racial traits. These grant her +4 on saves against illusions, a +2 bonus to Spot checks, and the ability to use *see invisibility* as a spell-like ability 1/day. She does not have the normal gnome bonus to Listen checks and save DCs of illusions she casts, nor the ability to speak with burrowing animals.

Grellfin Flintflindercandle

CR 9

Toweringly tall for a gnome, this warrior's silvery plate armor and shield shine with holy power, and his expression beams stern confidence. He wears his hair in a pale red pony-tail, and is armed with a golden warhammer etched with turquoise.

Male gnome paladin 9

LG Small humanoid (gnome)

Init +1; Senses Listen +1, Spot –1, low-light vision

Aura courage (allies within 10 ft. gain +4 vs. fear)

Languages Common, Gnome

AC 24, touch 12, flat-footed 23 (+1 Dexterity, +1 size, +9 armor, +3 shield)

hp 68 (9 HD)

Fort +11, Ref +7, Will +5 (+7 vs. illusions)

Immune disease, fear

Speed 15 ft. (3 squares)

Melee +15/+10 +1 *undead-bane small adamantine warhammer* (1d6+4, crit x3), or vs. undead +17/+12 (3d6+6); or +14/+9 *masterwork small longsword* (1d6+3, crit 19–20/x2)

Base Atk +9; Grp +8

Combat Options lay hands (27 hp), smite evil 2/day (+3 attack, +9 damage), turn undead (10/day, 1d20+3, 2d6+10 HD)

Abilities Str 16, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 16

SQ aura of good (strong), detect evil, divine health, remove disease 2/week, summon companion 1/day (see below)

Feats Cleave, Extra Turning, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (warhammer)

Skills Heal +11, Knowledge (religion) +12

Possessions *gauntlets of ogre power*, +1 *small full plate*, +1 *undead-bane small adamantine warhammer*, +1 *small heavy shield*, *masterwork small longsword*.

Summon Companion (Sp): Once per day as a full-round action, Grellfin can call from the celestial realms Sheshma, a celestial wyrmling white dragon. Sheshma serves for up to eighteen hours at a time.

Sheshma, Celestial Companion

CR –

Wyrmling celestial white dragon

LG Tiny dragon (cold, extraplanar)

HP: 37 (5 HD)

Initiative: +0

Speed: 60 ft. (12 squares), burrow 30 ft., fly 150 ft. (good), swim 60 ft.

Armor Class: 18, touch 12, flat-footed 18

Base Attack/Grapple: +5/–2

Attack: Bite +9 melee (1d4+1) and two claws +3 melee (1d3+1)

Special Attacks: Smite evil 1/day (+5 damage), *cone of cold* (15 ft., every 1d4+1 rounds, 1d6 cold, Ref DC 12 half)

Special Qualities: Low-light vision, darkvision 120 ft., blindsense 60 ft. scent, icewalking, immune to cold, sleep, and paralysis, vulnerability to fire, acid and electricity resistance 5, SR 10, DR 5/magic, empathic link

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +4; improved evasion

Abilities: Str 12, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 6

Skills: Intimidate +4, Knowledge (the planes) +4, Listen +6, Spot +6

Feats: Flyby Attack, Weapon Focus (bite)

Oller Pennyteller

CR 9

Small and skinny, even for a gnome, this bug-eyed picklock is burdened with many tools, and wears a bulging satchel that hangs near his hip.

Male gnome rogue 9

NG Small humanoid (gnome)

Init +3; Senses Listen +2, Spot +0, low-light vision

Languages Common, Gnome

AC 20, touch 14, flat-footed 20 (+3 Dexterity, +1 size, +4 armor, +2 shield), improved uncanny dodge

hp 50 (9 HD)

Fort +5, Ref +9, Will +3 (+5 vs. illusions), evasion

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)

Melee +9/+4 +1 *small heavy mace* (1d6+2)

Ranged +11/+6 ranged touch grenade-like weapon (varies)

Base Atk +6; Grp +3

Combat Gear acid vial ×10, alchemist fire ×5, holy water vial ×20, tanglefoot bag ×5, thunderstone ×5, *wand of cure light wounds* (50 charges)

Combat Options sneak attack +5d6,

Abilities Str 12, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 12

SQ trap sense +3, improved uncanny dodge

Feats Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Quick Draw, Weapon Focus (grenade-like weapon)

Skills Disable Device +11, Escape Artist +15, Hide +15, Move Silently +15, Open Lock +15, Search +11, Use Magic Device +13

Possessions +1 *buckler*, +1 *studded leather*, +1 *small heavy mace*, masterwork thieves' tools, *handy haversack* filled with combat gear, from which he can quick-draw weapons.

Clan Millorn Warrior

CR 4

These gnome warriors proudly carry the ridiculous dire flail as their primary weapon.

Male and female gnome fighter 4

N Small humanoid (gnome)

Init +2; Senses Listen +3, Spot +1, low-light vision

Languages Common, Gnome

AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 16 (+2 Dexterity, +1 size, +5 armor) hp 30 (4 HD)

Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +2 (+4 vs. illusions)

Speed 15 ft. (3 squares)

Melee +9 masterwork small dire flail (1d6+4) or +7/+7 (1d6+4/1d6+3)

Ranged +8 masterwork small heavy crossbow (1d8, 19–20/×2)

Base Atk +4; Grp +2

Combat Options Combat Reflexes

Abilities Str 14, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8

Feats Combat Reflexes, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (dire flail), Two Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (dire flail), Weapon Specialization (dire flail)

Skills Handle Animal +6, Ride +9

Possessions masterwork small chainmail, masterwork small dire flail, masterwork small heavy crossbow with 40 bolts, 100 gp

Clan Millorn Guard

CR 4

These halfling guards each have a half dozen bolas on their belts.

Male and female halfling fighter 4

N Small humanoid (halfling)

Init +2; Senses Listen +1, Spot +1, low-light vision

Languages Common, Gnome

AC 19, touch 15, flat-footed 15 (+4 Dexterity, +1 size, +4 armor) hp 26 (4 HD)

Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +2 (+4 vs. fear)

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)

Melee +7 masterwork small heavy flail (1d6+1)

Ranged +10 small bola (1d3+1, range increment 10 ft.)

Base Atk +4; Grp +2

Combat Options improved trip (+1)

Abilities Str 12, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 8

Feats Combat Expertise, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bola), Improved Trip, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot

Skills Climb +10, Jump +4

Possessions masterwork small chain shirt, masterwork small heavy flail, six bolas, 100 gp

CASTLE FOES

Dark Pyre Sergeant

CR 9

Clad in spiked plate armor and a spiny shield, this skeletal warrior stands tall, his massive frame and tusked skull marking him as once having been an orc. Liquid flame pours from his empty eye sockets like tears, but as he raises his weapon his body flares with fire, until his entire form is engulfed in a blazing nimbus. He points at you with a long axe and orders an attack, then advances with unnatural speed, his bones clattering within his blackened armor.

Male dark pyre skeleton orc fighter 8

LE Medium undead (augmented humanoid, orc, fire)

Init +8; Senses Listen +0, Spot +0, darkvision 60 ft.

Aura unnatural aura (30 ft., animals frightened)

Languages Common, Orc

AC 26, touch 11, flat-footed 25 (+9 armor, +3 shield, +1 Dexterity, +3 natural)

hp 52 (8 HD); dark pyre healing; DR 10/bludgeoning and magic

Immune fire

Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +2

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares)

Melee +1 dwarven waraxe +18/+13 (1d10+11 plus 1d6 fire and 1d6 negative energy, crit x3)

Ranged shield spine +13 (1d10+1, crit 19–20/x2, range increment 120 ft., 3/day)

Base Atk +8; Grp +12

Special Actions dark pyre corona, firewalk, improved bull rush, power attack, spell-like abilities

Abilities Str 22, Dex 18, Con —, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 10

SQ dark pyre healing, dark pyre strike, power critical, unnatural aura, water vulnerability

Feats Elite Training (dwarven waraxe)*, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (dwarven waraxe), Great Fortitude, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative^B, Quick Draw^B, Power Attack, Power Critical (dwarven waraxe), Weapon Focus (dwarven waraxe), Weapon Specialization (dwarven waraxe)

Skills Intimidate +11

Possessions +1 spiked full plate, spined shield, +1 dwarven waraxe

Dark Pyre Corona (Su): Once every 5 rounds, as a standard action, a dark pyre sergeant can release blast of black fire, dealing 4d6 points of fire and 4d6 points of negative energy damage to each creature within 5 ft. (Reflex DC 14 negates). This heals 4d6 points of damage to any undead in the area, including himself.

Dark Pyre Healing (Su): Dark pyre skeletons heal 1 point of damage for every 10 points of fire damage they would take from a given attack. Attacks that do less than 10 damage do not heal them.

Dark Pyre Strike (Su): Each of a dark pyre skeleton's melee attacks deal +1d6 points of fire damage and +1d6 points of negative energy damage. The dark pyre skeleton's natural weapons and any weapons it wields are treated as evil-aligned for overcoming damage reduction.

Firewalk (Su): A dark pyre skeleton can climb an object on fire as though it had a climb speed equal to its highest speed. Furthermore, it can fly at its highest speed with perfect maneuverability so long as it remains in contact with fire, and it can walk on flames at its highest speed, as though walking on air via the *air walk* spell.

Power Critical (Ex): When using his dwarven waraxe, the sergeant gains a +4 bonus on the roll to confirm a threat.

Spell-Like Abilities (Sp): 3/day – *wall of fire* (DC 14). At will – *produce flame*. Caster level 8th.

Unnatural Aura (Su): Any animal within 30 feet of a dark-pyre skeleton must make a Will save (DC 14) or become frightened. It only needs to flee beyond 30 ft. from the skeleton, at which point it is only shaken.

Water Vulnerability (Ex): A dark pyre skeleton takes damage from any sort of water as if it were acid. Holy water deals an additional 1d6 damage.

Dark Pyre Soldiers**CR 4**

The armor and charred remnants of military uniforms show these creatures to have once been among Emperor Coaltongue's army. Now, however, nothing remains of them but their skeletons which burn with an unholy fire.

Half-orc dark pyre skeleton fighter 3

LE Medium undead (augmented humanoid, orc, fire)

Init +7; Senses Listen -3, Spot -3, darkvision 60 ft.

Aura unnatural aura (30 ft., animals frightened)

Languages understand Common, Orc

AC 23, touch 13, flat-footed 20 (+5 armor, +2 shield, +3 Dexterity, +3 natural)

hp 20 (3 HD); dark pyre healing; DR 5/bludgeoning and magic

Immune fire

Fort +5, Ref +4, Will -2

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares)

Melee masterwork longsword +9 (1d8+4 plus 1d6 fire and 1d6 negative energy, crit 19-20/x2)

Ranged masterwork light crossbow +7 (1d8, 19-20/x2)

Base Atk +3; Grp +7

Special Actions dark pyre corona, firewalk, improved bull rush, power attack

Abilities Str 18, Dex 16, Con —, Int 1, Wis 4, Cha 10

SQ dark pyre healing, dark pyre strike, unnatural aura, water vulnerability

Feats Great Fortitude, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative^B, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword)

Skills Jump +8

Possessions masterwork longsword, masterwork light crossbow w/20 metal bolts, breastplate, heavy steel shield

Dark Pyre Corona (Su): Once every 5 rounds, as a standard action, a dark pyre skeleton can release blast of black fire, dealing 2d6 points of fire and 1d6 points of negative energy damage to each creature within 5 ft. (Reflex DC 11 negates). This heals 1d6 points of damage to any undead in the area, including itself.

Dark Pyre Healing, Dark Pyre Strike, Firewalk, Water Vulnerability (Ex or Su): As dark pyre sergeant, above.

Unnatural Aura (Su): As dark pyre sergeant, above, except the save DC is 11.

Special: While typical creatures with such low Intelligence cannot have class levels or feats, dark pyre skeletons retain combat knowledge they possessed in life.

Dark Pyre Swarms**CR 6**

This flaming skeleton scuttles toward you, wielding a pair of black blades.

Half-orc dark pyre skeleton fighter 4/rogue 1

LE Medium undead (augmented humanoid, orc, fire)

Init +7; Senses Listen -3, Spot -3, darkvision 60 ft.

Aura unnatural aura (30 ft., animals frightened)

Languages understand Common, Orc

AC 23, touch 13, flat-footed 20 (+5 armor, +2 shield, +3 Dexterity, +3 natural)

hp 33 (5 HD); dark pyre healing; DR 5/bludgeoning and magic

Immune fire

Fort +6, Ref +6, Will -2

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares)

Melee masterwork shortsword +10 (1d6+6 plus 1d6 fire and 1d6 negative energy, crit 19-20/x2) or two swords +8/+8 (as above, but 1d6+2d6+4 for off-hand)

Ranged masterwork heavy crossbow +8 (1d10, crit 19-20/x2)

Base Atk +4; Grp +12

Special Actions dark pyre corona, firewalk, improved bull rush, power attack, sneak attack +1d6

Abilities Str 19, Dex 16, Con —, Int 1, Wis 4, Cha 10

SQ dark pyre healing, dark pyre strike, unnatural aura, water vulnerability

Feats Improved Grapple, Improved Unarmed Strike, Improved Initiative^B, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (shortsword), Weapon Specialization (shortsword)

Skills Tumble +3

Possessions two masterwork shortswords, breastplate, masterwork heavy crossbow w/20 metal bolts

Dark Pyre Corona (Su): Once every 5 rounds, as a standard action, a dark pyre skeleton can release blast of black fire, dealing 3d6 points of fire and 2d6 points of negative energy damage to each creature within 5 ft. (Reflex DC 11 negates). This heals 2d6 points of damage to any undead in the area, including itself.

Dark Pyre Healing, Dark Pyre Strike, Firewalk, Water Vulnerability (Ex or Su): As dark pyre sergeant, above.

Unnatural Aura (Su): As dark pyre sergeant, above, except the save DC is 12.

Special: While typical creatures with such low Intelligence cannot have class levels or feats, dark pyre skeletons retain combat knowledge they possessed in life.

Dark Pyre Worker

These burning skeletons bear no weapons or armor.

Human dark pyre skeleton commoner 1

LE Medium undead (augmented humanoid, fire)

Init +6; Senses Listen –3, Spot –3, darkvision 60 ft.

Aura unnatural aura (30 ft., animals frightened)

Languages understand Common

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13 (+2 Dexterity, +3 natural)

hp 7 (1 HD); dark pyre healing; DR 5/bludgeoning

Immune fire

Fort +0, Ref +2, Will –3

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares)

Melee claw +2 (1d4+2 plus 1d6 fire and 1d6 negative energy)

Base Atk +0; Grp +2

Special Actions dark pyre corona, firewalk

Abilities Str 14, Dex 14, Con –, Int 1, Wis 4, Cha 6

SQ dark pyre healing, dark pyre strike, unnatural aura, water vulnerability

Feats Improved Initiative^B, Skill Focus (Profession (worker))

Skills Profession (worker) +4

Dark Pyre Corona (Su): Once every 5 rounds, as a standard action, a dark pyre worker can release blast of black fire, dealing 1d6 points of fire damage to each creature within 5 ft. (Reflex DC 8 negates).

Dark Pyre Healing, Dark Pyre Strike, Firewalk, Water Vulnerability (Ex or Su): As dark pyre sergeant, above.

Unnatural Aura (Su): As dark pyre sergeant, above, except the save DC is 8.

CR 1

Dark Pyre Bulette

NE Huge undead (augmented magical beast, fire)

Init +7; Senses Listen +0, Spot +0, darkvision 60 ft., scent, tremorsense 60 ft.

Aura unnatural aura (30 ft., animals frightened)

AC 26, touch 11, flat-footed 23 (+3 Dexterity, +15 natural, –2 size)

hp 61 (9 HD); dark pyre healing; DR 10/bludgeoning and magic

Immune fire

Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +6

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares), burrow 10 ft.

Melee bite +17 (2d8+12 plus 1d6 fire and 1d6 negative energy) and two claws +11 (2d6+6 plus 1d6 fire and 1d6 negative energy)

Base Atk +4; Grp +24

Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft.

Special Actions dark pyre corona, firewalk, leap

Abilities Str 35, Dex 17, Con –, Int 1, Wis 6, Cha 6

SQ dark pyre healing, dark pyre strike, unnatural aura, water vulnerability

Feats Alertness, Improved Initiative^B, Iron Will, Track, Weapon Focus (bite)

Skills Jump +22

Possessions masterwork longsword, breastplate, heavy steel shield

Dark Pyre Corona (Su): Once every 5 rounds, as a standard action, a dark pyre bulette can release blast of black fire, dealing 5d6 points of fire and 4d6 points of negative energy damage to each creature within 5 ft. (Reflex DC 12 negates). This heals 4d6 points of damage to any undead in the area, including itself.

Dark Pyre Healing, Dark Pyre Strike, Firewalk, Water Vulnerability (Ex or Su): As dark pyre sergeant, above.

Unnatural Aura (Su): As dark pyre sergeant, above, except the save DC is 12.

Leap (Ex): A dark pyre bulette can jump into the air during combat. This allows it to make four claw attacks instead of two, each with a +16 attack bonus, but it cannot bite.

CR 8

Fallen Knight

CR 7

This red knight bears the symbol of the Order of the Aquiline Cross on his plate armor, but his entire form is smeared with blood, and his eyes are merely scabs.

Male blood knight paladin of slaughter 5

CE Medium undead (augmented humanoid, human)

Init +1; Senses Low-light vision; darkvision 60 ft., Listen +1, Spot +1

Aura Debilitating Aura (10 feet, –4 AC)

Languages Common

AC 19, touch 11, flat-footed 18

hp 62 (5 HD); DR 10/bludgeoning

Immune disease (magical and mundane)

Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +5

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)

Melee +1 *greatsword* +11 (2d6+8 plus 2 bleed/19–20), or slam +10 (1d6+5)

Base Atk +5; Grp +10

Atk Options Smite good (2/day, +2 attack, +5 damage)

Special Actions Blood drain, blood slick (Reflex DC 14), deadly touch (+10 melee touch, Will DC 14, 10 points damage), fountain of blood (Reflex DC 14), improved grab, rebuke undead (5/day)

Paladin Spells Prepared (CL 2)

1st (1/day) – *doom* (DC 13)

Abilities Str 21, Dex 12, Con –, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 15

SQ blood body, bonded armor, poison blood, special mount, detect good

Feats Mounted Combat⁸, Ride-by Attack, Spirited Charge

Skills Escape Artist +11, Handle Animal +10, Ride +11

Possessions +1 *greatsword*, *cloak of resistance* +1, military saddle, full plate armor.

Bleeding Wounds (Ex): Each time a blood knight damages a living foe with a piercing or slashing attack, whether with a natural or manufactured weapon, the resulting wound continues to bleed. The bleeding deals 2 points of damage each round until the victim either heals at least 1 point of damage or receives a successful DC 20 Heal check. Multiple blows result in cumulative damage from blood loss.

Blood Body (Ex): Because its body is entirely composed of blood, a blood knight can store items within its form. It can retrieve any item stored in its body as a move action or as a free action that is part of a move. An item to be stored must be of a size and shape that fits within whatever portion of the blood knight's armor it is placed.

Blood Drain (Ex): Any living creature damaged by a blood knight's natural attack take 1 point of Constitution damage in addition to the normal damage. This Constitution damage is subject to the multiplier for a critical hit, just as normal damage would be. In a grapple, a blood knight deals 1d4

points of Constitution damage to a living foe each round that the grapple is maintained. On each such successful attack, the blood knight gains 5 temporary hit points.

Blood Slick (Ex): A blood knight constantly drips slippery blood in a 10-foot radius spread around itself. Any creature that is in this area at the start of its turn must succeed on a Reflex save (DC 14) or fall prone. Furthermore, a creature moving through the area at more than half its normal speed falls prone. To move at half normal speed, the creature must succeed on a DC 10 Balance check. A creature that fails this check by 5 or more falls prone; one that fails by less than 5 makes no progress that round. Blood knights and their mounts (in this case, the nightmares) are immune to the slipperiness of any blood knight's blood slick.

Bonded Armor (Ex): A blood knight always wears the suit of full plate armor in which it died. It cannot remove this armor or exchange it for another suit. If the armor is destroyed, the blood knight is destroyed as well. The blood knight has a +5 bonus on saving throws made on behalf of its armor.

Fountain of Blood (Ex): As a full-round action, a blood knight can spray blood from its armor in a great cascade. Each creature within a 15-foot radius is covered in blood and must succeed on a Fortitude save as though it had ingested the blood knight's poisonous blood. The blood fills the area until the blood knight's next turn. Creatures entering the spray while it persists are subject to its effects, but a creature can be affected only once per round.

The area covered by the blood spray becomes coated as though by a blood slick and remains slippery for 2 rounds or until the blood is washed away with at least 5 gallons of water or other liquid, or burned away with normal or magical fire as a full-round action. Creatures and objects within the area that do not have total cover are coated with the blood, and a creature wishing to use, pick up, or cling to an item coated in the blood must succeed a Reflex save (DC 14) to do so. Failure means the item is immediately dropped. A creature coated in blood gains a +10 on Escape Artist checks.

Once the blood knight has used its fountain of blood attack, it must wait 1d4 rounds before it can do so again. Blood knights are immune to the slipperiness of any blood knight's fountain of blood.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a blood knight must hit a creature of any size with a natural attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity.

Poison Blood (Ex): Ingested, Fortitude DC 14, initial damage 1d6 Con, secondary damage nausea 1 minute. Any opponent that strikes a blood knight with a bite attack is subject to this attack, as is any creature in the area of the fountain of blood attack.

Feaster of Flesh and Souls**CR 11**

This cadaverous creature's limbs are lined with rows of gnashing teeth. It reaches out hungrily, its ribcage cracking open like a devouring maw.

NE Medium undead (Extraplanar)

Init +4; Senses Listen +3, Spot +3, darkvision 60 ft.

Languages Common

AC 24, touch 10, flat-footed 24 (+14 natural)

hp 114 (12 HD)

Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +11

SR 21

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee two claws +16 (1d6+9)

Base Atk +6; Grp +19

Special Actions trap soul, spell-like abilities, gnaw

Abilities Str 28, Dex 10, Con —, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 17

SQ spell deflection, unholy toughness

Feats Ability Focus (trap soul), Improved Grapple, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (claw), Weapon Focus (claw)

Skills Climb +24, Concentration +18, Jump +24, Listen +18, Move Silently +15, Spot +18

Trap Soul (Su): As a standard action, the feaster of flesh and souls may attempt to snatch the soul out of a living creature. It makes a claw attack, but if it hits it deals no damage. Instead, the creature must make a Will save (DC 21) or have its soul removed from its body. The creature's body collapses to the floor, but remains alive as long as the trapped soul survives. If either the soul or the body is slain, the other dies as well. *Death ward* protects against this attack.

A trapped soul appears within the feaster's ribs as a tiny figure with the victim's features. A feaster can hold only one soul at a time. The trapped soul can take no actions other than to scream horribly as it is consumed.

The trapped soul provides the feaster with enough power to use five spell-like abilities for each Hit Die

or level of the trapped creature. As this energy is expended, the soul fades away until it evaporates completely. The trapped essence gains one negative level for every five times the feaster uses one of its spell-like abilities. When the soul's number of negative levels equals the creature's total Hit Dice or level, the soul is extinguished.

When the feaster is slain, the trapped soul returns to its original body if it was not completely consumed. Any negative levels it gained fade after one hour, and do not cause permanent level loss. If *death ward*, *dispel evil*, or *protection from evil* are cast on the trapped soul and they beat the feaster's spell resistance, the soul is expelled and returns to its body.

Spell-Like Abilities (Sp): At the start of any encounter, the trapped soul within a feaster of flesh and souls is assumed to have 3d4+3 levels (enough fuel for thirty to seventy-five uses of a spell-like ability). Once per round, a feaster can use one of the following abilities: *ghoul touch* (DC 15), *inflict critical wounds* (DC 17), *mass inflict light wounds* (DC 18), *ray of enfeeblement*, *see invisibility*, *spectral hand*, *suggestion* (DC 16). Caster level 12th.

Gnaw (Ex): While grappling, the feaster automatically deals 4d6 points of damage each round to one other creature in the grapple, as the teeth along its body gnaw into its flesh.

Spell Deflection (Su): The trapped soul provides a measure of magical protection to the feaster. Any spell that targets the feaster and requires a Fortitude or Will save affects the trapped soul instead if it beats the feaster's spell resistance. In many cases, this deflection effectively neutralizes the spell. Some of these effects might eliminate the trapped soul, depriving the feaster of its spell-like abilities until it can consume another victim.

Unholy Toughness (Ex): The feaster gains a bonus to its hit points equal to its Charisma modifier x its Hit Dice.

Tragedy

A shadowy, incorporeal creature swoops toward you, its body composed of smoldering shrouds. Twisting, roiling faces push up from within its form, faces of men consumed by the flames of the dark pyre, wailing mutely at their tragic end.

CE Medium undead (Incorporeal)

Init +7; Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Listen +14, Spot +14

Languages Common, Gnome, Orc

AC 15, touch 15, flat-footed 13

hp 69 (7 HD); 50% miss chance (incorporeal)

Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +7

Speed 40 ft., fly 80 ft. (perfect)

Melee +6 incorporeal touch (1d8 plus negative level)

Base Atk +3; Grp –

Abilities Str –, Dex 16, Con –, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 15

SQ energy drain, incorporeal traits, +2 turn resistance, undead traits, unholy toughness

Feats Alertness, Improved Initiative, Track

Skills Hide +13, Intimidate +12, Listen +14, Search +12, Spot +14, Survival +12 (+14 following tracks)

Energy Drain (Su): A creature struck by the tragedy's touch gains a negative level, and the tragedy gains 5 temporary hit points. These negative levels go away after one hour, and never cause permanent level loss.

Unholy Toughness (Ex): The tragedy gains a bonus to its hit points equal to its Charisma modifier x its Hit Dice.

CR 7**Thorkrid the Dark****CR 10**

This dark-robed mage's face is the skull of a jackal, traced with streaks of ash and lit from within by unholy fire. A red stone orbits his head like a halo of blood.

Male dark-pyre skeleton gnoll* necromancer 9

NE Medium undead (augmented humanoid, gnoll, fire)

Init +7; Senses Listen +2, Spot +2, darkvision 60 ft.

Aura unnatural aura (30 ft., animals frightened)

Languages Common, Gnoll, Orc

AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+3 Dexterity, +3 natural, +1 insight)

hp 59 (9 HD); dark pyre healing; DR 10/bludgeoning and magic

Immune fire

Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +8

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares)

Melee spectral hand touch +9 (varies), or melee touch +7 (varies)

Ranged ray +7 (varies), Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot

Base Atk +4; Grp +7

Combat Gear wand of subdual lightning bolt (CL 9, 17 charges, market value 6,885 gp)

Special Actions dark pyre corona, firewalk, spells

Necromancer Spells Prepared (CL 9th)

5th (2/day) – quickened *magic missile*, quickened *ray of enfeeblement*

4th (3/day) – *bestow curse* (curse of the stilled heart, see below), empowered subdual *scorching ray*, *stoneskin*

3rd (4/day) – subdual *lightning bolt*, empowered *ray of enfeeblement*, empowered subdual *shocking grasp*, *vampiric touch*

2nd (6/day) – *flaming sphere*, *scare*, subdual *scorching ray* x2, *spectral hand*, *web*

1st (6/day) – *chill touch*, *magic missile* x3, *ray of enfeeblement* x2

0 (5/day) – *open/close* x5

Specialty School Necromancy; Forbidden Schools
Enchantment, Illusion

Abilities Str 16, Dex 16, Con –, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 8

SQ dark pyre healing, dark pyre strike, unnatural aura, water vulnerability

Feats Empower Spell, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Subdual Substitution

Skills Concentration +11, Knowledge (arcana) +14,
Knowledge (religion) +14, Spellcraft +16

Possessions spellbook, dusty red ioun stone

Dark Pyre Corona (Su): Once every 5 rounds, as a standard action, Thorkrid can release blast of black fire, dealing 5d6 points of fire and 4d6 points of negative energy damage to each creature within 5 ft. (Reflex DC 13 negates). This heals 4d6 points of damage to any undead in the area, including itself.

Dark Pyre Healing, Dark Pyre Strike, Firewalk, Water Vulnerability (Ex or Su): As dark pyre sergeant, above.

Unnatural Aura (Su): As dark pyre sergeant, above, except the save DC is 13.

Subdual Substitution (Ex): Several of Thorkrid's spells are listed as "subdual." These spells deal nonlethal damage instead of lethal. Nonlethal damage does not harm undead.

Curse of the Stilled Heart (Ex): Thorkrid has devised a unique curse that prevents the victim from healing naturally. He no longer heals lethal or nonlethal damage, nor ability damage, except by magic. This curse can be broken if the victim is targeted with a turn undead attempt sufficient to turn undead with 9 or more Hit Dice.

Special: * These gnolls are a variant without racial Hit Dice.

Dark Pyre Adepts

CR 6

Male dark-pyre skeleton gnoll* cleric 5

NE Medium undead (augmented humanoid, gnoll, fire)

Init +7; Senses Listen +2, Spot +2, darkvision 60 ft.

Aura unnatural aura (30 ft., animals frightened)

Languages Common, gnoll, orc

AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 18 (+2 Dexterity, +3 natural, +5 armor)

hp 33 (5 HD); dark pyre healing; DR 5/bludgeoning and magic
Immune fire

Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +7

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee +1 *falchion* +9 (2d4+7, 18–20/x2), or death touch +7 touch (if foe's hit points are 5d6 or less, he dies)

Base Atk +3; Grp +7

Combat Gear *scroll of restoration, wand of inflict light wounds* (50 charges)

Special Actions dark pyre corona, firewalk, spells, bolster undead (2/day, 1d20+1), improved trip, death touch (5d6)

Cleric Spells Prepared (Caster level 5th)

3rd (3/day) – *magic vestment, prayer, protection from energy*

2nd (4/day) – *death knell, desecrate, hold person, silence*

1st (5/day) – *cause fear, command, hide from undead, obscuring mist, shield of faith*

0 (5/day) – *detect magic* ×5

Domains Death, War

Abilities Str 18, Dex 14, Con –, Int 13, Wis 16, Cha 8

SQ dark pyre healing, dark pyre strike, unnatural aura, water vulnerability

Feats Combat Expertise, Improved Trip, Martial Weapon Proficiency (falchion), Weapon Focus (falchion)

Skills Concentration +7, Knowledge (religion) +9, Spellcraft +9

Possessions +1 *falchion, chainmail*

Dark Pyre Corona (Su): Once every 5 rounds, as a standard action, a dark pyre adept can release blast of black fire, dealing 3d6 points of fire and 2d6 points of negative energy damage to each creature within 5 ft. (Reflex DC 11 negates). This heals 2d6 points of damage to any undead in the area, including itself.

Dark Pyre Healing, Dark Pyre Strike, Firewalk, Water Vulnerability (Ex or Su): As dark pyre sergeant, above.

Unnatural Aura (Su): As dark pyre sergeant, above, except the save DC is 11.

Special: * These gnolls are a variant without racial Hit Dice.

Lord Gorquith

CR 9

Wretched skeletal limbs stretch out from within this viscid mass of brown ooze, and sizzling pseudopods lash out toward you.

Male undead aristocrat 6

LE Huge undead (augmented ooze)

Init -5; Senses Blindsight 60 ft.; darkvision 60 ft., Listen +2, Spot +2

Languages Common, Gnome, Orc

AC 3, touch 3, flat-footed 3 (-2 size, -5 Dex)

hp 104 (16 HD - 10 undead, 6 class)

Fort +5, Ref +0, Will +14

Immune cold

Speed 10 ft. (2 squares), climb 10 ft.

Melee slam +13 (2d4+6 plus 1d4 acid and 1d6 cold)

Space 15 ft.; Reach 10 ft.

Base Atk +9; Grp +23

Special Actions cold, constrict, improved grab

Abilities Str 23, Dex 1, Con -, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 18

SQ ooze traits, undead traits

Feats Negotiator^B, Persuasive, Skill Focus (Intimidate), Skill Focus (Sense Motive)

Skills Bluff +15, Climb +22, Diplomacy +19, Forgery +11

Gather Information +6, Intimidate +20, Knowledge (Local) +11, Sense Motive +16, Sleight of Hand -3

Possessions *pink & green sphere ioun stone* (+2 Charisma)

Cold (Ex): Gorquith constantly emits an aura of cold around himself. His melee attacks deal additional cold damage, in addition to his oozy acid damage.

Constrict (Ex): Gorquith deals automatic slam, acid, and cold damage with a successful grapple check.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, Gorquith must hit with his slam attack. He can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If he wins the grapple check, he establishes a hold and can constrict.

Ooze Traits (Ex): Because of his oozy form, Gorquith is immune to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, polymorph, and stunning. Because it has no clear front or back, it is not subject to flanking or critical hits.

Blind (Ex): Gorquith is immune to gaze attacks, visual effects, illusions, and other attack forms that rely on sight.

Findle

CR 9

Ghoulishly smiling and garishly dressed, this undead man holds a lute in one hand and a silver rapier in the other.

Male dread ghoul bard 8

CE Medium undead (augmented humanoid, elf)

Init +3; Senses Low-light vision, darkvision 60 ft., scent; Listen +14, Spot +14

Languages Common, Dwarven, Elven, Orc

AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+2 armor, +2 natural, +4 Dex)

hp 52 (8 HD)

Fort +2, Ref +10, Will +9

Turn Resistance +2

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares), climb 30 ft.

Melee +1 *silver rapier* +11/+6 (1d6+1, 18-20/x2), or bite +10 (1d6+1 plus paralysis) and 2 claws +5 (1d3 plus paralysis)

Base Atk +6; Grp +6

Special Actions Command ghouls, create spawn, paralysis

Bard Spells Known (CL 8th)

3rd (2/day) - *charm monster, displacement, slow* (DC 17)

2nd (4/day) - *alter self, invisibility, mirror image, silence* (DC 16)

1st (4/day) - *alarm, charm person, grease, hideous laughter* (DC 15)

0 (3/day) - *detect magic, lullaby, mage hand, message,*

prestidigitation, summon instrument (DC 14)

Abilities Str 10, Dex 18, Con -, Int 16, Wis 17, Cha 19

Feats Persuasive, Skill Focus (Perform (lute)), TrackB, Weapon Finesse

Skills Appraise +14, Bluff +17, Climb +7, Diplomacy +19, Intimidate +8, Listen +14, Perform (lute) +18, Sense Motive +14, Sleight of Hand +6, Spot +14, Survival +11, Use Magic Device +15

Possessions +1 *silver rapier, ring of feather fall*, leather armor, masterwork lute.

Command Ghouls (Su): A dread ghoul can automatically command all normal ghouls within 30 feet as a free action. Normal ghouls never attack a dread ghoul unless compelled.

Create Spawn (Su): In most cases, dread ghouls feast on the bodies of the fallen. However, any creature killed by a dread ghoul that lies undisturbed until the next midnight rises as a dread ghoul at that time. The new dread ghoul is not under control of its creator. A *protection from evil* or *gentle repose* spell cast on the corpse prevents this.

Paralysis (Ex): A creature damaged by a dread ghoul's natural attack must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 18) or be paralyzed for 1d4+1 rounds.

Griiat, High Priest of the Dark Pyre CR 13

Dark and foreboding in a priest's robes, this figure watches you from behind a carved bear skull that is etched with runes. A three-clawed black gauntlet stretches along his right arm, serving as both a weapon and a light shield. Though his form is intangible, fire seems to burn in his skull-sunken eyes.

Male ghost cleric 11

LE Medium undead (augmented humanoid, incorporeal)

Init +3; Senses Listen +11, Spot +11, darkvision

Languages Common, Infernal, Orc

AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10, manifested 14 (+4 deflection)

hp 75 (11 HD)

Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +11

Turn Resistance +4

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares), fly 30 ft. (Perfect)

Melee +8 incorporeal melee touch (varies)

Base Atk +8; Grp +7

Special Actions reactive counterspell, rebuke magic (7/day, 1d20+11), turn water creatures or bolster/command fire creatures (7/day, 1d20+4, 2d6+15 HD), corrupting gaze, telekinesis

Spells Prepared (CL 11th, DC 14 + spell level)

6th – *antimagic field*^D, *blade barrier*

5th – *greater command*, *overmaster*^{*}, *spell resistance*^D

4th – *dismissal* ×2, *divination*, *spell immunity*, *wall of fire*^D

3rd – *bestow curse*, *blindness/deafness*, *dispel magic*^D, *glyph of warding*, *prayer*, *protection from energy*

2nd – *hold person* ×2, *produce flame*^D, *resist energy*, *silence*, *sound burst*

1st – *bane*, *bless*, *burning hands*^D, *cause fear*, *command*, *endure elements*, *sanctuary*

0 – *create water*, *detect magic* ×4, *guidance*

D Domain spell Domains Fire, Magic

* Detailed in Appendix Three

Abilities Str 8, Dex 10, Con —, Int 12, Wis 18, Cha 18

SQ rebuke magic (see below), spontaneous casting (inflict spells), dark pyre healing, water vulnerability

Feats Improved Counterspell, Improved Initiative, Reactive Counterspell, Skill Focus (Concentration)

Skills Concentration +19, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (arcana) +13, Knowledge (the planes) +15, Spellcraft +17

Possessions none that are corporeal

Reactive Counterspell (Ex): Griiat can counterspell even when he has not readied an action, as long as he is aware of a spell being cast. If he does so, he gives up his standard action on his next turn, having effectively already used it.

Rebuke Magic (Su): Seven times a day, Griiat can attempt to counterspell or dispel, as if with *dispel magic*. He rolls 1d20+11 against DC 11 + caster level of the targeted effect. A given use of Rebuke Magic can dispel no more than one magical effect. See Campaign Saga Overview for more details.

Corrupting Gaze (Su): Creatures within 30 ft. that meet Griiat's gaze must make a Fort save (DC 19) or take 2d10 points of damage and 1d4 Charisma damage.

Telekinesis (Sp): Griiat can use *telekinesis* as a standard action, though once he uses it he must wait 1d4 rounds before using again.

Dark Pyre Healing (Su): Griiat heals 1 point of damage for every 10 points of fire damage he would take from a given attack. Attacks that do less than 10 damage do not heal him.

Water Vulnerability (Ex): Griiat takes damage from any sort of water as if it were acid. Holy water deals an additional 1d6 damage. Though he is incorporeal, water thrown at him affects him normally (as long as it is not in a container).

Sindairese Ghouls (12)

Male ghoul fighter 4

NE Medium Undead (augmented humanoid, human)

Init +3; Senses Low-light vision; darkvision 60 ft., Listen +1, Spot +1

Languages Common, Gnome

AC 19, touch 13, flat-footed 16; Dodge, Mobility hp 39 (6 HD)

Turn Resist +2

Fort +4, Ref +7, Will +10

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee Bite +9 (1d6+4 plus paralysis) and 2 claws +4 (1d3+2 plus paralysis)

Base Atk +5; Grp +9

Atk Options Great Cleave, Power Attack

Special Actions Ghoul fever, paralysis

Abilities Str 18, Dex 17, Con —, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 14

Skills Balance +6, Climb +8, Hide +6, Intimidate +9, Jump +8, Move Silently +6, Spot +7, Tumble +2

SQ Undead traits

Feats Cleave, Dodge, Great Cleave, Mobility, Multiattack, Power Attack, Toughness

Possessions chainshirt

Ghoul Fever (Su): Disease — bite, Fortitude DC 15, incubation period 1 day, damage 1d3 Con and 1d3 Dex.

Paralysis (Ex): Those hit by a ghoul's bite or claw attack must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 1d4+1 rounds. Elves have immunity to this paralysis.

CR 4

Deception

Dozens of squirming tentacles struggle to hide beneath the surface of this creature's oily black body, giving its skin the appearance of a writhing underground sea. Though vaguely humanoid, with its four longest tentacles having the impression of arms and legs, this creature's head is expressionless, its intentions impossible to perceive.

NE Medium aberration (incorporeal, trillith)

Init +0; Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Listen +2, Spot +2

Languages Telepathy 100 ft.

AC 20, touch 16, flat-footed 14; 50% miss chance (displacement); dodge, mobility

hp 94 (17 HD); DR 10/stealth

Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +12

Speed Fly 30 ft. (perfect)

Melee +18 four tentacles (1d6+1, 10 ft. reach)

Base Atk +12; Grp +13

Combat Options Combat Expertise, Improved Feint; improved grab, lead astray, sneak attack +3d6, spring attack

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 17th)

At will – *invisibility* (self only)

1/hour – *greater invisibility* (self only)

Abilities Str 12, Dex 22, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 16

SQ guarded thoughts, dark double, displacement, change shape, embody, incorporeal, deceptive spirit, trillith traits

Feats Combat Expertise, Dodge, Improved Feint, Mobility, Spring Attack, Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +23 (+53 for lying)*, Disguise +20 (+22 to act in character)*, Hide +23, Move Silently +23.

Lead Astray (Su): Deception can cause a foe's actions to go astray. As an immediate action, Deception forces a phantasm into the mind of a foe within 150 ft. If that creature fails a Will save (DC 19), Deception chooses two creatures other than the target itself. During its turn, the affected creature perceives the world around it as if those two creatures had switched places. The creature does not realize its perceptions have changed, and if it intended to take an action against one of the creatures, it instead acts upon the other, perhaps attacking an ally, healing a foe, or yelling orders at confused bystanders. The creature realizes its error as soon as its turn is over.

This is a mind-affecting illusion (phantasm) effect.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, Deception must hit with a tentacle. He can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If he wins the grapple check, he establishes a hold and can use its dark double ability as a free action.

Dark Double (Su): If Deception is grappling with a foe, it can assume that foe's appearance as a free action as long as the creature is roughly humanoid of either Small or Medium size. Onlookers must succeed a Spot check opposed by Deception's Hide check to keep track of which one of the grapplers is real and which is the trillith.

Detect Thoughts (Su): Deception can continuously use *detect thoughts* as the spell (caster level 17th; Will DC 19 negates). This ability is always active.

Guarded Thoughts (Ex): Deception is immune to any form of mind reading.

Displacement (Su): Deception's image is not where he actually is. Melee and ranged attacks against Deception have a 50% miss chance unless the attacker can locate him by some means other than sight. *True seeing* negates this miss chance, but *see invisibility* has no effect. Deception can activate or suppress this ability as a free action.

Change Shape (Su): Deception can assume the shape of any Small or Medium humanoid. In humanoid form, Deception loses his natural attacks. He can remain in his humanoid form until he chooses to assume a new one. A change in form cannot be dispelled, and the Song of Forms does not keep Deception from changing its form (though it does keep him from being incorporeal). *True seeing* reveals Deception's natural form.

Damage Reduction (Ex): Deception has DR 10/stealth. This damage reduction can only be bypassed by weapons that are invisible, or that strike Deception when he is denied his Dexterity bonus to his AC, or attacks of similar poetic significance. Deception, as clever as his lies are, has little defense against others' trickery.

Deceptive Spirit (Su): Deception gains a +30 bonus to Bluff checks made to convince another of the truth of his words. Effects that would detect his lies or force him to speak the truth require a caster level check (DC 27) to work against him.

Embody (Su): Deception is naturally incorporeal and so cannot do much to harm his foes. However, as a full round action, Deception can animate nearby objects in order to create a corporeal form for himself which closely resembles his monstrous appearance.

While embodied, Deception loses the incorporeal subtype, and loses his fly speed. Deception can leave this body as a standard action. Any damage dealt to the embodied form affects him normally, and stays with him even once he returns to incorporeality.

If Deception is affected by the Song of Forms (see adventure two, *The Indomitable Fire Forest of Innenotdar*), he spontaneously embodies. If he is already embodied he cannot leave his body.

Rejuvenation: As Deception is a creature of dream and not of flesh, he is hard to kill. While incorporeal or while embodied, if Deception is destroyed he does not die, but instead reforms 1d6 days later.

Deception can only be truly slain two ways. If his body dies while he is trapped by the Song of Forms or similar magic, he dies, and his corpse remains even after the magic ends.

Alternately, if Deception is destroyed and all the damage is caused by mind-affecting or negative energy effects, the trillith's spirit is obliterated. In this case, no creature gains the benefits of Deception's boon.

Trillith Traits: All of the traits of trillith that are likely to be pertinent to this adventure are detailed here. You can see the Campaign Saga Guide for more details.

Skills: When using his change shape ability, Deception gets a +10 circumstance bonus on Disguise checks. If he can read an opponent's mind, he gets a further +4 circumstance bonus on Bluff and Disguise checks.

DECEPTION'S BOON

While endowed by or when granted a boon by Deception, a creature gains a +5 competence bonus to Bluff checks. He can grant his boon to only one creature at a time, and it is equivalent to 2,500 gp of character wealth.

RAGESIAN FORCES

Commander Rohat

CR 10

Male human commander 1/cleric 1/fighter 8

LN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; Senses Listen +4, Spot +4

Languages Common, Dwarf, Elf, Gnome, Halfling, Orc

AC 21, touch 11, flat-footed 20 (+8 armor, +2 shield, +1 Dex)

hp 74 (10 HD)

Fort +12, Ref +3, Will +6

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares); Ride 35 ft. (7 squares)

Melee +15/+10 +1 lance (1d8+8, x3), or +14/+9 masterwork heavy pick (1d6+5, x4)

Ranged +11 heavy crossbow (1d10+2, 19–20/x2)

Base Atk +8; Grp +11

Combat Gear *wand of cure moderate wounds* (10 charges), *wand of cure light wounds* (50 charges)

Combat Options leadership performance, mounted strafe, power attack, spirited charge

Spells Prepared (Caster level 1st)

1st – *bless*, *magic weapon*^D

0 – *detect magic*, *light*, *mending*

Deity Lord of Horses; Domains Animal, War

Abilities Str 16, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 11, Cha 8

Feats Elite Training (lance)*, Equine Stalwart*, Jousting Blow, Leadership Performance, Maneuver Leader, Mounted Combat, Mounted Strafe*, Primal Leader, Spirited Charge, Trample, Weapon Focus (lance), Weapon Specialization (lance)

SQ speak with animals 1/day

Skills Handle Animal +12, Heal +4, Intimidate +2, Knowledge (history) +4, Listen +4, Perform (oratory) +12, Ride +16, Sense Motive +4, Spot +4

Possessions full plate, cold iron heavy shield, masterwork heavy pick, *inviso-lance*, silver short sword, four daggers, two javelins, net, heavy crossbow with 20 bolts, 2 days of rations, stalwart heavy warhorse [7 HD], military saddle, banded mail barding, 50 gp

Leadership Performances (Ex): Three times per day, Rohat can inspire or direct his allies (within 30 ft.) in one the following ways.

- Give a one-minute speech to grant himself and allies who hear it +2 to attack and weapon damage rolls and saves against fear effects, lasting for the first 5 rounds of combat in the next hour.
- As a standard action, grant every ally within 30 ft. an immediate move action. This does not affect Rohat himself.

These benefits apply to creatures that understand his language, as well as animals.

Atreya, Equine Stalwart

CR —

N Large animal (horse)

HP: 52 (7 HD)

Initiative: +1

Speed: 35 ft. (7 squares)

Armor Class: 20, touch 10, flat-footed 19

Base Attack/Grapple: +5/+13

Attack: Two hooves +8 melee (1d6+4) and bite +3 melee (1d4+2)

Special Qualities: Low-light vision, scent

Saves: Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +3; evasion when within 5 ft. of rider

Abilities: Str 18, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 6

Skills: Listen +6, Spot +6

Feats: Endurance, Run

Tricks: Combat Riding, plus attack unnatural creatures and perform

NEW ITEM

Inviso-Lance: This +1 lance grants its wielder the ability to use *greater invisibility* once per day while he is mounted, affecting both him and his mount. The invisibility lasts 7 rounds, and ends if the wielder dismounts. The entire lance is made of glass that has been magically treated to be as strong as steel.

Moderate illusion, faint transmutation; CL 7th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *greater invisibility*; Price 7350 gp.

Elite Ragesian Knights**CR 8**

Male or female human fighter 8

LN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; Senses Listen +0, Spot +0

Languages Common, orc

AC 21, touch 11, flat-footed 20 (+8 armor, +2 shield, +1 Dex)

hp 65 (8 HD)

Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +2

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares); Ride 35 ft. (7 squares)

Melee +15/+10 +1 lance (1d8+8, ×3), or +14/+9 masterwork heavy pick (1d6+5, ×4)

Ranged +11 heavy crossbow (1d10+2, 19–20/×2)

Base Atk +8; Grp +11

Combat Gear 2 *potions of cure light wounds*, 2 *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *oil of magic weapon*

Combat Options improved mounted strafe, power attack, spirited charge

Abilities Str 17, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 8

Feats Elite Training (lance)*, Equine Stalwart*, Improved Mounted Strafe*, Mounted Combat, Mounted Strafe*, Spirited Charge, Trample, Weapon Focus (lance), Weapon Specialization (lance)

Skills Handle Animal +10, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (history) +6, Ride +14

Possessions full plate, cold iron heavy shield, masterwork heavy pick, +1 lance, silver short sword, four daggers, two javelins, net, heavy crossbow with 20 bolts, 10 +1 bane bolts (4 human-bane, plus 2 each elf-bane, orc-bane, and dwarf-bane), 2 days of rations, stalwart heavy warhorse [5 HD], military saddle, banded mail barding, 10 gp

Equine Stalwart**CR —**

N Large animal (horse)

HP: 37 (5 HD)

Initiative: +1

Speed: 35 ft. (7 squares)

Armor Class: 20, touch 10, flat-footed 19

Base Attack/Grapple: +3/+11

Attack: Two hooves +6 melee (1d6+4) and bite +1 melee (1d4+2)

Special Qualities: Low-light vision, scent

Saves: Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +2; evasion when within 5 ft. of rider

Abilities: Str 18, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 6

Skills: Listen +5, Spot +5

Feats: Endurance, Run

Tricks: Combat riding, attack unnatural creatures

Typical Ragesian Soldier**CR 2**

Male half-orc fighter 2

LN Medium humanoid (orc)

Init +1; Senses Listen –1, Spot –1, darkvision

Languages Common, orc

AC 19, touch 10, flat-footed 19 (+7 armor, +2 shield)

hp 20 (2 HD)

Fort +7, Ref +1, Will –1

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)

Melee +7 masterwork battleaxe (1d8+3, ×3)

Ranged +4 masterwork composite shortbow (d6, ×3)

Base Atk +2; Grp +5

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds*, *potion of cure serious wounds*

Abilities Str 17, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 10

Feats Great Fortitude, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (battleaxe)

Skills Intimidate +2, Ride +3

Possessions half-plate, heavy shield, masterwork battleaxe, masterwork composite shortbow with 20 arrows, 5 days of rations, light warhorse, studded leather barding

Elite Ragesian Soldier

CR 8

Male half-orc fighter 8
 LN Medium humanoid (orc)
 Init +5; Senses Listen -1, Spot -1, darkvision
 Languages Common, orc

AC 21, touch 11, flat-footed 20
 hp 65 (8 HD)
 Fort +10, Ref +3, Will +1

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)
 Melee +16 +1 battleaxe (1d8+9, x3) or +14 silver
 shortsword (1d6+5, 19-20/x2)
 Ranged +10 masterwork composite shortbow (1d6+4,
 x3)
 Base Atk +8; Grp +12
 Combat Gear 3 *potions of cure light wounds*, 3 *potions of
 cure serious wounds*, *potions of fly*
 Combat Options power attack

Abilities Str 19, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 10
 Feats Elite Training (battleaxe)*, Great Fortitude,
 Improved Initiative, Point-Blank Shot, Power Attack,
 Precise Shot, Weapon Focus (battleaxe), Weapon
 Specialization (battleaxe)
 Skills Intimidate +4, Ride +7
 Possessions full plate, cold iron heavy shield, +1
battleaxe, masterwork composite shortbow [Str +4]
 with 20 arrows, 10 +1 *bane arrows* (specify bane type,
 typically human or elf), silver shortsword, 5 days of
 rations, heavy warhorse, chain shirt barding, 200 gp

Master Ragesian Archer

CR 11

Male half-orc ranger 1/fighter 10
 LE Medium humanoid (orc)
 Init +9; Senses Listen -1, Spot -1, darkvision 60 ft.
 Languages Common, orc

AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 18 (+3 Dexterity, +6 armor,
 +2 shield)
 hp 88 (11 HD)
 Fort +13, Ref +9, Will +2

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)
 Melee +14 cold iron battleaxe (1d8+3, x3) or +14 silver
 shortsword (1d6+2, 19-20/x2)
 Ranged +20/+15 +2 *composite longbow* (1d8+7, 19-
 20/x3)
 Base Atk +11; Grp +16
 Combat Gear 10 *potions of cure light wounds*, 12 +1
human-bane arrows
 Combat Options rapid shot, volley shot

Abilities Str 16, Dex 20, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 8
 SQ favored enemy (humans +2)
 Feats Elite Training (longbow)*, Improved Critical
 (longbow), Improved Initiative, Improved Precise
 Shot, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot,
 Track, Toughness, Weapon Focus (longbow), Weapon
 Specialization (longbow)
 Skills Climb +3, Handle Animal +3, Jump -3, Ride +19,
 Survival +3
 Possessions +1 *breastplate*, +1 *buckler*, +2 *composite
 longbow* [Str +3] with 40 arrows, *gloves of dexterity* +2,
 cold iron battleaxe, silver shortsword

Ragesian Wyvern Knight**CR 6**

Male human fighter 6

LN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; Senses Listen +0, Spot +0

Languages Common, draconic, orc

AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15

hp 50 (6 HD)

Fort +8, Ref +5, Will +2

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares); Ride 60 ft. (flight, poor, 12 squares)

Melee +8/+3 masterwork shortsword (1d6+1, 19–20/x2)

Ranged +11/+6 masterwork light crossbow (1d8+2, 19–20/x2), rapid reload

Base Atk +6; Grp +7

Combat Gear 2 *potions of cure light wounds*, 2 *potions of cure moderate wounds*, *oil of magic weapon*

Abilities Str 12, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 8

Feats Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Mounted Strafe*, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Reload, Weapon Focus (light crossbow), Weapon Specialization (light crossbow)

Skills Handle Animal +8, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (history) +5, Ride +14

Possessions mithral chain shirt, buckler, masterwork shortsword, masterwork light crossbow with 60 bolts (40 normal, 10 cold iron, 10 silver), wyvern mount, exotic military saddle, Ragesian dragonbomb

NEW ITEM

Ragesian Dragonbomb: This weapon is dropped by wyvern riders, functioning as a grenade-like weapon. Because the weapon simply drops, the rider makes a ranged touch attack, with a –2 penalty per 20 ft. of altitude. If the attack misses, the bomb strikes in a random direction, and the distance from its intended target is equal to half the speed the attacker flew that round (minimum 10 ft.).

A dragonbomb is 10 flasks of oil, 5 alchemist fire flasks, and a thunderstone in a clay shell that shatters on impact. When it strikes, it creates a deafening boom as a normal thunderstone. Alchemist fire coats everything within 5 feet of the target, dealing 1d6 fire damage for two rounds. Additionally, burning oil spreads a further 5 ft., dealing 1d3 fire damage for two rounds. The alchemicals typically last long enough to set fire to flammable objects, which burn on their own.

Cost 150 gp. Weight 20 lb.

Wyvern**CR 6**

N Large Dragon

Init +1; Senses Listen +13, Spot +16, darkvision 60, low-light vision

Languages Draconic

AC 18, touch 10, flat-footed 17

hp 59 (7 HD)

Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +6

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares); fly 60 ft. (poor)

Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.

Melee +10 sting (d6+4 plus poison) and +8 bite (2d8+4) and 2 wings (d8+2). If using flyby attack, 2 talons (2d6+4)

Base Atk +7; Grp +15

Combat Gear hurling bracers

Combat Options flyby attack, improved grab

Abilities Str 19, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 18, Wis 19, Cha 19

SQ poison

Feats Ability Focus (poison), Alertness, Flyby Attack, Multiattack

Skills Hide +7, Listen +13, Move Silently +11, Spot +16

Possessions *hurling bracers*

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability the wyvern must hit with its talons. 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 stings.

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fort DC 17, initial and secondary 2d6 Con.

Rake (Ex): +11 melee, 1d6+2 damage.

NEW ITEM

Hurling Bracers: These items can be activated as a swift action once per day. For one round, the wearer is treated as one size category larger for purposes of lifting capacity, grappling, and what sort of weapons the creature can wield. If being treated as larger would be a detriment for any given effect, it may use its normal size instead. (For instance, a human would not suddenly be unable to use a Medium dagger just because he counts as being Large). Typically wyverns use these bracers to pick up enemies during a flyby attack (taking a –20 penalty to their grapple check so they can keep moving), and then drop them before the bonus wears off.

Moderate transmutation; CL 7th; Craft Wondrous Item, *polymorph*; Price 2000 gp; weight 1 lb.

Elite Shahalesti Warrior**CR 8**

Male elf fighter 8

N Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +4; Senses Listen +3, Spot +3, low-light vision

Languages Common, Elf

AC 23, touch 12, flat-footed 21

hp 57 (8 HD)

Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +3 (+5 vs. enchantment)

Immune sleep

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)

Melee +12/+7 mwk longsword (1d8+2, 19–20), or
+12/+7 shortsword (1d6+4, 19–20)Ranged +16/+11 +1 longbow (1d8+7, x3), point blank
shot, precise shot

Base Atk +8; Grp +10

Combat Gear 2 thunderstones, 2 potions of *cure
moderate wounds*, 2 oils of *magic weapon*, potion of
resist energy (fire), potion of *fly*

Abilities Str 14, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8

Feats Combat Reflexes, Elite Training (longbow)*, Point
Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Weapon Focus (longbow),
Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization
(longbow)

Skills Climb +11, Ride +15

Possessions +1 full plate, +1 buckler, masterwork
longsword, shortsword, +1 composite longbow [+2 Str]
with 40 cold iron arrows and 20 silver arrows**Shahalesti Wizard****CR 8**

Female elf wizard (evoker) 8

N Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +3; Senses Listen +3, Spot +3, low-light vision

Languages Common, Celestial, Draconic, Elf

AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14

hp 20 (8 HD)

Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +7 (+9 vs. enchantment)

Immune sleep

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee +3 longsword (1d8–1, 19–20)

Ranged +7 longbow (1d8–1, x3)

Base Atk +4; Grp +3

Combat Gear *elemental gem* (air), two *potions of cure
moderate wounds*, *potion of fly*, *potion of invisibility*,
potion of cure light wounds, *wand of magic missile* (1st
level, 25 charges)

Spells Prepared (CL 8th, +7 ranged touch)

4th – *greater invisibility*, *ice storm* (DC 17), *wall of ice*3rd – *haste*, *lightning bolt* x2 (DC 16), *protection from
energy*, *sonic lightning bolt*2nd – *flaming sphere*, *minor image*, *invisibility*, *sonic
scorching ray*, *still magic missile*1st – *alarm*, *magic missile* x3, *protection from evil*,
*shield*0 – *detect magic*, *light* x2, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost*
x2Prohibited Schools Conjuraton, Enchantment,
Necromancy

Abilities Str 8, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 17, Wis 13, Cha 10

SQ mageknight (*Player's Guide*, pg 14), hawk familiarFeats Armor Proficiency (light), Energy Alteration (sonic),
Spell Penetration, Still SpellSkills Concentration +10, Diplomacy +5, Knowledge
(arcana) +14, Knowledge (the planes) +9, Spellcraft
+16Possessions spellbook (contains listed spells plus
cantrips and *daylight*, *dimensional anchor*, *fly*, *jump*,
scorching ray, *shocking grasp*, and *spider climb*), spell
components, +1 chain shirt, +1 mithral buckler, mithral
gloves worth 200 gp, 10 pp, two doses of silversheen,
hand of the mage

Solei Palancis Dreadnought**CR 12**

Male elf fighter 8/wizard (transmuter) 2/rogue 2
 N Medium humanoid (elf)
 Init +3; Senses Listen +2, Spot +2, low-light vision
 Languages Common, Celestial, Elf

AC 19, touch 13, flat-footed 16 (+6 armor, +3 Dexterity);
 dodge, mobility
 hp 73 (12 HD)
 Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +6 (+8 vs. enchantment); evasion
 Immune sleep

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
 Melee +20/+15 +2 *greatsword* (2d6+13, 17–20/x2)
 Base Atk +10; Grp +15
 Combat Options combat expertise, combat reflexes,
 power attack, sneak attack +1d6
 Combat Gear *potion of fly* x2, *potion of invisibility* x2,
potion of heroism x2
 Spells Prepared (CL 2nd)
 1st – *enlarge person*, *shield*, *true strike*
 0 – *detect magic*, *ghost sound*, *light*, *mage hand*
 Prohibited Schools Conjuraton, Enchantment,
 Necromancy

Abilities Str 20, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 8
 SQ mageknight (*Player's Guide*, pg 14), hawk familiar
 Feats Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Elite
 Training (*greatsword*), Improved Critical (*greatsword*),
 Mobility, Power Attack, Spring Attack, Weapon Focus
 (*greatsword*), Weapon Specialization (*greatsword*)
 Skills Climb +16, Intimidate +13, Jump +18, Spellcraft
 +7, Tumble +20
 Possessions spellbook, spell components, +1 *mithral*
breastplate, +2 *greatsword*, *cloak of resistance* +1,
gloves of dexterity and strength +2

Darius, Ragesian Inquisitor**CR 9**

Male human cleric 9/expert 1
 LN Medium humanoid
 Init +3; Senses Listen +3, Spot +3
 Languages Common, Orc

AC 9, touch 9, flat-footed 9
 hp 77 (10 HD)
 Fort +8, Ref +2, Will +11

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
 Melee none
 Base Atk +6; Grp +8
 Special Actions reactive counterspell, rebuke magic
 (3/day, 1d20+9), turn water creatures or command fire
 creatures (3/day, 1d20)
 Spells Prepared (CL 9th, DC 13 + spell level)
 5th – *flame strike*, *spell resistance*^D
 4th – *divine power*, *sending*, *wall of fire*^D
 3rd – *animate dead*, *create food and water*, *dispel*
magic^D, *invisibility purge*, *searing light*
 2nd – *hold person*, *produce flame*^D, *resist energy*,
silence, *sound burst*
 1st – *bane*, *bless*, *burning hands*^D, *cause fear*, *command*,
endure elements
 0 – *cure minor wounds* x4, *detect magic* x2
 D Domain spell Domains Fire, Magic

Abilities Str 14, Dex 8, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 10
 SQ rebuke magic (see below), spontaneous casting
 (inflict spells)
 Feats Improved Counterspell, Improved Initiative,
 Reactive Counterspell, Skill Focus (Concentration)
 Skills Concentration +18, Craft (alchemy) +7, Knowledge
 (arcana) +12, Spellcraft +14
 Possessions masterwork light mace

Reactive Counterspell (Ex): Darius can counterspell even
 when he has not readied an action, as long as he is
 aware of a spell being cast. If he does so, he gives up
 his standard action on his next turn, having effectively
 already used it.

Rebuke Magic (Su): Three times a day, Darius can
 attempt to counterspell or dispel, as if with *dispel*
magic. He rolls 1d20+9 against DC 11 + caster level
 of the targeted effect. A given use of Rebuke Magic
 can dispel no more than one magical effect. See the
Campaign Guide for more details.

Shalosh**CR 14**

Regal and beautiful, by the sword at her hip and her silvery chainmail this blond elfwoman looks prepared for combat, but her demeanor is genuinely peaceful. Her elegant and rich attire – a cloak, long gloves and high boots, all brilliant silver and blue – mark her as nobility, but the gleam in her sapphire eyes hints at something otherworldly in her blood.

Female elf commander 1/wizard 6/eldritch knight 7

CG Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +1; Senses Listen +5, Spot +5, low-light vision, celestial sight

Languages Celestial, Common, Draconic, Elf, Orc

AC 25, touch 12, flat-footed 24 (+8 armor, +4 shield, +1 Dex, +1 deflection, +1 natural)

hp 61 (14 HD)

Fort +10, Ref +5, Will +8 (+10 vs. enchantment)

Immune sleep, blinding or dazzling from bright light

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee +15/+10 +1 *merciful longsword* (1d8+1d6+4 nonlethal, 19–20/x2)

Ranged +12/+7 masterwork composite longbow [Str +2] (1d8+2, x3)

Base Atk +10; Grp +13

Combat Gear 8 potions of *cure light wounds*, 2 oils of *bless weapon*, potion bracer.

Special Actions combat expertise, direct orders +1, shining strike, spring attack

Spells Prepared (CL 12, ranged touch +11)

6th – *freezing sphere* (DC 20), *greater heroism*

5th – quickened *magic missile* x2, *wall of force*

4th – *dimension door*, *fire shield*, *greater invisibility*, *stoneskin*

3rd – *fly*, *haste*, *lightning bolt* (DC 17) x2, *protection from energy*

2nd – *glitterdust*, *hideous laughter* (DC 16), *invisibility* x2, *resist energy*

1st – *magic missile* x2, *protection from evil*, *shield*, *true strike*

0 – *detect magic*, *detect poison* x2, *prestidigitation*

Prohibited School Necromancy

Abilities Str 17, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 18, Wis 8, Cha 12

SQ mageknight, celestial sight

Feats Combat Expertise, Dodge, Mobility, Quicken Spell, Shining Strike, Shining Warrior, Spring Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword)

Skills Concentration +17, Diplomacy +16, Listen +5, Knowledge (arcana) +20, Knowledge (nobility & royalty) +10, Knowledge (the planes) +10, Ride +4, Sense Motive +5, Spot +5, Spellcraft +22, Swim +3 [+7 without armor].

Possessions +1 *merciful longsword*, +3 *elven chain*, +3 *mithral buckler*, *ring of protection +1* and *counterspells* (currently holds *dispel magic*), *amulet of natural armor +1*, *earrings of intellect +2* (as headband), *gauntlets of ogre power*, masterwork composite longbow [Str +2] w/40 arrows, royal outfit, spellbook (listed spells plus *break enchantment*, *bull's strength*, *charm person*, *contingency*, *daylight*, *disguise self*, *disintegrate*, *dispel magic*, *identify*, *scrying*, *sending*, *sleep*, *summon monster I*, *teleport*, *wall of force*, and *cantrips*)

Direct Orders (Ex): Each round as a swift action, Shalosh may choose one of the following types of rolls. She grants every ally within 30 ft. a +1 bonus to rolls of that type for one turn: attack rolls to confirm critical hits, attack rolls while charging, caster level checks, disarm attempts (make and resist), Fortitude saves, grapple checks, Reflex saves, sunder attempts (make and resist), trip attempts (make and resist), Will saves.

Celestial Sight (Su): Shalosh is of a royal elvish bloodline with a distant celestial heritage. She has a unique form of vision in which all living things shine with an inner light, and all inanimate objects and non-living creatures appear as gleaming crystal. In this vision, she can see regardless of light conditions, since the inner light of any living creature effectively illuminates a 60-ft. radius. This does not allow her to see invisible creatures, but she can detect the presence of creatures behind cover or concealment by noticing their glow.

Celestial sight functions just as well in well-lit areas as it does in dark areas. However, magical darkness blocks her line of sight for this ability, and a shadowdancer using its hide in plain sight ability does not appear to emit light.

Shalosh cannot be blinded or dazzled by bright light.

Shining Warrior (Su): Shalosh can choose to intensify the light shed by her longsword, increasing from the strength of a *light* spell to that of a *daylight* spell (60 ft. radius, with shadowy light another 60 ft.) as a swift action once a day, lasting 10 minutes. While so illuminated, her sword deals an extra 1d6 points of light damage with each hit, or an extra 2d6 damage against creatures particularly vulnerable to light. Whenever she inflicts a critical hit on a creature with the longsword, that creature must make a Fortitude save (DC 14) or be blinded for 1 round. On a successful save, the creature is merely dazzled for 1 round.

While in an area that is brightly illuminated, Shalosh gains a +2 bonus to saves against fear and negative energy effects.

APPENDIX TWO: NEW FEATS

Several of the characters in this adventure have new feats.

Elite Training [Fighter]

Choose a weapon you have weapon specialization in. You are elitley trained with weapons of that type.

Prerequisite: Weapon Focus, Weapon Specialization, Fighter level 8th (or Fighter level 4th and base attack bonus +10).

Benefit: With the chosen weapon and all weapons with the same damage type, you gain a +2 bonus to attack and damage. If the weapon has multiple damage types, choose one of its damage types.

Equine Stalwart [Fighter]

Your skill with horses is masterful, and your preferred mount stands above other horses because of how you have trained it.

Prerequisite: Handle Animal 4 ranks, Ride 9 ranks, Mounted Combat

Benefit: If you spend at least one day training with a warpony or light or heavy warhorse, that steed becomes more stalwart and attains an exceptional connection to you, like a druid's animal companion. You can only have one stalwart mount at a time.

You can handle your stalwart mount as a free action, and push it as a move action. You gain a +4 bonus to all Handle Animal checks with it.

Additionally, based on the number of ranks you have in Ride, your stalwart mount gains additional hit dice, similar to advancing an animal, so that its total hit dice is equal to the number listed in the table below. Your ranks in Ride also grant your mount

Table: Stalwart Mount Hit Dice

Ride Ranks	Total HD	Bonus Tricks	Special Ability
9-11	5	1	Evasion
12-14	7	2	
15-17	9	3	
18-20	11	4	
21+	13	5	Improved evasion

bonus tricks, and it gains evasion (or improved evasion) as long as you are within 5 ft. of it.

For example, a rider with 9 ranks in Ride could give a stalwart light warhorse 2 extra hit dice, or a stalwart heavy warhorse 1 extra hit die, for a total of 6 either way. These extra hit dice grant new feats, skill points, and ability score increases, as normal for adding hit dice. Your horse does not increase in size.

Improved Mounted Strafe [Fighter]

You can cut down foe after foe as you ride past them.

Prerequisites: Ride 8 ranks, Mounted Combat, Mounted Strafe

Benefit: When mounted, you may make a full attack while moving. Your attacks can each come at any point during your mount's movement, though if your mount moves more than 5 ft. you must move at least 5 ft. between each attack.

Normal: You can only make melee attacks while mounted at the beginning or end of your mount's movement. You can only make ranged attacks while mounted at the beginning, end, or precise middle of your mount's movement. You cannot make more than one melee attack in a round if your mount moves more than 5 ft.

Jousting Blow [Fighter]

Your charges knock your foes flying.

Prerequisite: Str 13, Ride 8 ranks, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Ride-By Attack (or Mounted Strafe), Spirited Charge.

Benefit: When you use a charge action to attack while mounted, you may take a -4 penalty to your attack roll and deliver a jousting blow. If you hit a corporeal opponent that is smaller than your mount, that creature must succeed a Reflex save (DC = damage dealt) or be knocked flying 10 ft. in the direction of your charge, falling prone. If an obstacle prevents the completion of the opponent's move, both the obstacle and the creature take 1d6 points of damage, and the opponent stops in the square adjacent to the obstacle.

A mounted opponent may substitute a Ride check in place of his Reflex save to resist being dismounted, and he gains a +2 bonus if he is using a military saddle.

Mounted Strafe [Fighter]

You can attack as you ride past your foe.

Prerequisites: Ride 5 ranks, Mounted Combat

Benefit: When mounted, you may perform a standard action at any point during your mount's movement. When you attack a creature in melee when mounted, for the movement to and from that creature, neither you nor your mount provoke attacks of opportunity from that creature.

If you perform a charge action while mounted, you can attack any creature adjacent to or along the line of your movement. Your mount must still move in a straight line, but you can choose to attack a creature as you pass it by.

Normal: You can only make melee attacks while mounted at the beginning or end of your mount's movement. You can only make ranged attacks while mounted at the beginning, end, or precise middle of your mount's movement.

Special: You may use this feat to qualify for feats and prestige classes as if it were Ride-By Attack.

Shining Strike

Your weapon flashes with searing light.

Prerequisite: Base attack bonus +6, Shining Warrior, ability to cast *daylight* as an arcane spell.

Benefit: You can activate your Shining Warrior feat as a swift action instead of a standard action. While using the ability of the Shining Warrior feat to have your weapon glow as bright as *daylight*, that weapon deals an extra 1d6 points of light damage with each hit, or an extra 2d6 damage against creatures particularly vulnerable to light.

APPENDIX THREE: NEW MAGIC

Overmaster

Abjuration

Level: Clr 5, Sor/Wiz 5

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Target: One spellcaster

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

This spell functions like *dispel magic*, except that it can only counter spells as they are being cast. Make a dispel check, 1d20 + caster level (maximum of +20) against DC 11 + caster level of the spell you're trying to counter. If you succeed, the spell is countered, and you can choose to cast the spell yourself as a free action. The spell functions as if cast by its original caster, except that it originates from you, you control it, and you make all choices regarding its effects and targeting.

Since this spell takes a standard action to cast, you must either ready an action to cast it in response to a spell, or must be able to counter spells reactively.

For example, Katrina (sorcerer 9) casts a *fireball*, but the inquisitor Kreven (cleric 17) uses *overmaster* to counter it. He may then immediately cast *fireball*, though its caster level will only be 9.

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War of the Burning Sky

Tears of the Burning Sky

by Ken Marable and Ryan Nock

In search of the Torch of the Burning Sky, the heroes set out for Sindaire and Castle Korstull, the canyon fortress where Emperor Drakus Coaltongue was slain.

Their destination lies within an endless firestorm, the result of a peculiar rupture in the fabric of the planes. While the castle surely holds clues to the fate of the emperor and his Torch, the heroes will have to contend with fiends, rival treasure hunters, and the survivors of Coaltongue's army to learn them.

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