



MARK OF HEROES

MOTE IN THE EYE OF CHAOS

A One-Round Dungeons & Dragons® MARK OF HEROES™ Adventure for 8th-Level Characters

Design: Stephen Radney-MacFarland

Sources: *Book of Vile Darkness* [Monte Cook], *Complete Psionic* [Bruce R. Cordell, Christopher Lindsay], *Dungeon Master's Guide II* [Jesse Decker, David Noonan, Chris Thomasson, James Jacobs, Robin D. Laws], *Player's Handbook II* [David Noonan], *Eberron Campaign Setting* [Keith Baker, Bill Slavisek, James Wyatt], *Fiend Folio* [Eric Cagle, Jesse Decker, James Jacobs, Erik Mona, Matt Sernett, Chris Thomasson, James Wyatt], *Five Nations* [Bill Slavisek, David Noonan, Christopher Perkins], *Frostburn* [Wolfgang Baur, James Jacobs, George Strayton], *Magic of Eberron* [Bruce R. Cordell, Stephen Schubert, Chris Thomason], *Monster Manual II* [Ed Bonny, Jeff Grubb, Rich Redman, Skip Williams, Steve Winter], "Lesser Golems" from *Dragon* issue 341 [Campbell Pentney], *EMH-1 Reflections of the Multiverse* [Stephen Radney-MacFarland], *EMH-3 No Ticket* [Stephen Radney-MacFarland].

Based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® rules created by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson and the new DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game designed by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Richard Baker, and Peter Adkison.

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INTRODUCTION

Mote in the Eye of Chaos is optimized for 8th-level characters. This means that it's designed and balanced for a group of four to five 8th-level characters (PCs). If your group deviates from this size and strength, each encounter features a section titled "Scaling the Encounter" so that you, the Dungeon Master (DM), can create a more enjoyable and better balanced adventure. If there are only four of five PCs of the same level in your group, it's easy to use this section: just use the level entry that corresponds with the PCs' level (the optimized entry is given in the main adventure text). For groups of mixed levels and groups with six PCs, determine the average level of the PCs, and increase that average by one for groups of six PCs. Treat that level as the groups level. That said, as DM you have discretion when it comes to fitting the challenges of the adventure to your group. If your group finds the challenges too easy or too difficult, feel free to increase or decrease the level of challenge appropriately. The goal is to challenge the PCs and entertain the players, not to overwhelm or even underwhelm them. The most enjoyable D&D games are ones where failure and character death are possible, but success and reward are attainable through daring and smart play.

Mote in the Eye of Chaos has been designed to be part of the RPGA DUNGEON & DRAGONS CAMPAIGNS: MARK OF HEROES program. Like all DUNGEONS & DRAGONS CAMPAIGNS adventures, it's recommended that PCs undertaking its challenges have at least one arcane spellcaster, a divine spellcaster (preferably a cleric), a strong warrior, and a rogue. Parties missing these valuable adventuring components may find *Mote in the Eye of Chaos* very challenging, and the chances of character death higher. Please warn the players of this before play starts. DUNGEONS & DRAGONS CAMPAIGNS allow players to "take one for the team"; that is to play a fastplay wizard, fighter, rogue, or cleric in place of one of their characters, and gain experience point for their character. If the group lacks one of these vital four classes, suggest to your players to take advantage of this option.

RPGA-SANCTIONED PLAY

Most likely you ordered this adventure as part of an RPGA even from the RPGA website, or as part of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS CAMPAIGNS retail program. To play *Mote in the Eye of Chaos* as part of the MARK OF HEROES campaign—a worldwide, ongoing D&D campaign set in Eberron—you must sanction it as part of an RPGA event. This event could be as elaborate as a big convention, or as simple as a group of friends meeting at the DM's house.

To sanction an RPGA event, you must be at least a HERALD-LEVEL gamemaster. The person who sanctions the event is called the senior gamemaster, and is in charge of making sure the event is sanctioned before play, runs smoothly on the date sanctioned, and then reported back to the RPGA in a timely manner. The person who runs the game is called the table DM (or usually just DM). Sometimes (and almost all the time in the cases of home events) the senior gamemaster is also the table DM. You don't have to be a HERALD-LEVEL GM to run this adventure if you are not the senior GM.

By sanctioning and reporting this adventure you accomplish a few things. First, it allows the PCs

participating in play to accumulate experience points (XP) and gold pieces (gp) to advance their MARK OF HEROES characters. Second, it allows the RPGA to track and record what character did during the adventure, and future adventures a written with what the majority of player did in mind—in this way characters' action shape the future of the campaign. Lastly, player and DMs gain rewards for sanctioned RPGA play if they are members of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS REWARDS program. Playing this adventure is worth four (4) points.

This adventure retires from RPGA sanctioned play on August 6, 2006.

To learn more about the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS CAMPAIGNS: MARK OF HEROES character creation and development, RPGA event sanctioning, and DUNGEONS & DRAGONS REWARDS, visit the RPGA website at www.rpga.com.

PLAYERS READ NO FARTHER

If you are planning on playing this adventure, stop reading now. The rest of the information in this adventure is for the DM only. If you read farther than this section, you'll know too much about its challenges, which kills the fun. Also, if you're playing this adventure as part of an RPGA-sanctioned event, reading beyond this point makes you ineligible to do so.

PREPARING FOR PLAY

To get the most out of this adventure, you need copies of the following D&D books: *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, *Monster Manual*, and the *Eberron Campaign Setting*. It is also a good idea to have a copy of the *Expanded Psionics Handbook*, as it is possible that some character playing in this adventure will be kalashtar utilizing the psionics rules.

Throughout this adventure, blocks of *italicized* text provide player information for you to paraphrase or read aloud when appropriate. Sidebars contain important information for you, including special instruction on running or expanding the adventure. Information on nonplayer characters (NPCs) and monsters appear in abbreviated form in the adventure text. Full information on NPCs and monsters are given in a section directly after each encounter in a section titled "Combat Statistics" or can be found in the *Monster Manual*.

This adventure may use material from various other D&D sourcebooks and other official sources. While many times the adventure text notes where this information came from, the adventure is designed so that you don't need to have those sources during play.

Either attached to the adventure, you'll find a special *RPGA Session Tracking Sheet* tailored for this adventure. If you're playing this adventure as part of an RPGA-sanctioned event, complete and turn in this sheet to your senior GM directly after play.

BACKGROUND

Earlier in 998 YK, almost by mere chance, the Diggers' Union discovered that a group of extraplanar shapeshifters called the nerra had infiltrated Eberron. While member of the Diggers' Union thwarted and opening between Eberron and a strange planar place called Specurium, that the mad gnome Belental Heirm theorized was some new

plane of existence, some nerra were able to escape, and may still be free pursuing their secret goals in Breland or elsewhere in Khorvair.

Worse still, not long after the incident at the Crook Observatory in Breland (as detailed in *EMH-1 Reflections of the Multiverse*) agents of the Diggers' Union discovered that a nerra had replaced a Karrn noble named Heriir Vessen, and that the nerra had an enclave in Northern Karrnath (as detailed in *EMH-3 No Ticket*). They also discovered, thanks to an annotated version of Heirm's *Deviant Celestia*, that Specurium was not its own plan, but part of Kythri, the Churning Chaos.

To be more precise, Specurium is a mote in the eye of the Churning Chaos—a planar divide created by the nerra, to escape enslavement.

Centuries ago, long after the githzerai of the powerful Vendulzat Monastery escaped the mind flayers of Xoriat, they discovered a race called the nerra drifting as nomadic refugees across and obscure region of Kythri. The exact reasons why they succumbed to the sins of their own race's creation, and enslaved the nerra is lost to time. But since their first meeting, the githzerai of Vendulzat Monastery have been using mirrorfolk slaves as soldiers, spies and servants.

This status quo has recently changed. Secretly for decades, the nerra have been plotting to throw off the yoke of their githzerai oppressors, and have used a strange planar convergence to create a powerful mote in Kythri that is connected to some locations in Eberron in a manner similar, but even more direct than a manifest zone. They call this mote Specurium.

While Diggers in Wroat foiled their plans to create such a rift in that city, the nerra were more successful in the village of Icenport in northern Karrnath, and have been using that enclave to create a large foothold in Eberron.

While the nerra have been successful, Vendulzat Monastery has not let their thralls sneak away quietly. On the boarder of the Sepcurium-Kythri connection a powerful battle has raged for months, as the githzerai fight to expand the rift between the planar places, and the nerra fight to close it. Day by day the nerra succeed in closing the connection a little more, and when it is completely closed, Specurium will become fully a part of Eberron, and the nerra will win their freedom.

In a last ditch effort to stop this, the githzerai has gated a small force to Icenport. This group, called a zenkkma—which roughly translates into “hunt for nerra”—has taken a sacred oath to thwart the nerra and shut down the mote on the Eberron side, and have and will use any means necessary to meet their goal, including the imprisonment and enslavement of the local population to help complete their goals.

Days before the PCs arrival, the zenkkma stormed the village of Icenport in search for the nerra. What they found was a local population with no realization that their local lord and his household had been replace with mirrorfolk from another plane.

The nerra, in an effort to keep up their ruse and stop the zenkkma sent out a force to confront the githzerai and slaad on field at the foot of Vessen Keep. Confident that they would disable if not destroy the small Kythri host, the nerra rode forth as the Frost Brigade, the local Karrn soldiery, supported by the local militia of townsfolk still ignorant of their heroes replacement by extraplanar shapeshifters. What the nerra didn't count on was that the zenkkma carried a pair of secret weapons: magic items called *shatterstones*, that once activated, emitted a powerful supersonic explosion that damaged only creatures with sonic vulnerability.

During the battle, the githzerai unleashed the power of one of these *shatterstones*, decimating the nerra's charge, and breaking the final resistance of the village folk.

The nerra responded by strengthening the defenses of Vessen Keep and waiting for the zenkkma's assault from within. This tactic might be their undoing, as *shatterstones* have a second, ultimately more debilitating use. If its explosion is let loose at the Specurium-Eberron border, it will shake that connection use, causing the nerra's mote to fall back into Kythri, and doom the mirrorfolk to fall back under the yoke of the Vendulzat Monastery.

SUMMARY

Mote in the Eye of Chaos is an open-ended adventure, that allows the PCs to discover a site and uncover a mystery at their own pace.

At its start, the PCs approach the extreme northern Karrnath settlement of Icenport. A usually sleepy fishing and trapping village, the PCs find the village dead quiet. Through investigation of the town's main sites, the PCs soon discover that they are not the only ones interested in the nerra. Not so long ago, a group of githzerai and slaad from the Churning Chaos of Kythri *gated* to Icenport and assaulted the town in the desire to strike the nerra from the other side of their mote.

Unfortunately, circumstance, Karrn stubbornness on the part of their slaves, and the zenkkma's chaotic nature has given the Kythri invaders great difficulty.

By visiting the main sites in town, the PCs can piece together the goals of the zenkkma in Icenport, free the local population from the yoke of the zenkkma, and discover that the nerra have been posing as the local lord and his household for months.

By the end of the adventure the PCs should be able to secret themselves into Vessen Keep, enter Specurium, and dislodge that planar mote from Eberron for good, or even make a deal with the nerra to aid in their final release from their former githzerai masters.

TROUBLESHOOTING

GITHZERAI OF VENDULZAT MONASTERY

The githzerai in this adventure incorporate the changes made to that race in the *Expanded Psionics Handbook*. If you don't have access to that rulebook, the following is a summary of those changes.

Also, the githzerai of the Vendulzat Monastery have a special unique power that allows them to see the nerra, this ability is also described below.

Vendulzat Monastery Githzerai Changes

A psionic githzerai does not possess the spell-like abilities, inertial armor ability, or spell resistance of standard githzerai. Instead, it has psi-like abilities (including *inertial armor*) and power resistance.

Psi-Like Abilities: 3/day—*catfall*, *concussion blast*, *psionic daze* (DC 10), *inertial armor*. Manifest level 1st. The save DC is charisma base.

Power Resistance (Ex): A githzerai has power resistance equal to its Hit Dice +5. In the MARK OF HEROES campaign, power resistance works exactly like spell resistance due to the psionic-magic transparency rules.

See Nerra (Su): all the githzerai of the Vendulzat Monastery are graced with a very selective version of true seeing. They all can see nerra as they truly are, and are immune to the nerra's *disguise self* and *mirror image* spell-like abilities.

GITHZERAI POWERS

The following powers are all from the Expanded Psionics Handbook, they are also presented in the OGL SRD.

CATFALL

Psychportation

Level: Psion/wilder 1, psychic warrior 1

Display: Auditory

Manifesting Time: 1 immediate action

Range: Personal

Target: You

Duration: Until landing or 1 round/ level

Power Points: 1

You recover instantly from a fall and can absorb some damage from falling. You land on your feet no matter how far you fall, and you take damage as if the fall were 10 feet shorter than it actually is. This power affects you and anything you carry or hold (up to your maximum load). You can manifest this power with an instant thought, quickly enough to gain the benefit of the power while you fall. Manifesting the power is an immediate action, like manifesting a quickened power, and it counts toward the normal limit of one quickened power per round. You can manifest this power even when it isn't your turn.

Augment: For every additional power point you spend, this power reduces your damage as if the fall were an additional 10 feet shorter.

CONCUSSION BLAST

Psychokinesis [Force]

Level: Psion/wilder 2

Display: Auditory

Manifesting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./ level)

Target: One creature or object

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: None

Power Resistance: Yes

Power Points: 3

A subject you select is pummeled with telekinetic force for 1d6 points of force damage. You can choose to have the power deal an equal amount of nonlethal damage instead. *Concussion blast* always affects a subject within range that you can see, even if the subject is in melee or has cover or concealment (you cannot use this power against creatures with total cover or total concealment).

Nonmagical, unattended objects (including doors, walls, locks, and so on) may also be damaged by this power.

Augment: You can augment this power in one or both of the following ways.

1. For every 2 additional power points you spend, this power's damage increases by 1d6 points.
2. For every 2 additional power points you spend, this power can affect an additional target. Any additional target cannot be more than 15 feet from another target of the power.

DAZE, PSIONIC

Telepathy (Compulsion) [Mind-Affecting]

Level: Psion/wilder 1

Display: Material and mental

Manifesting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: One humanoid creature that has 4 HD or less

Duration: 1 round

Saving Throw: Will negates

Power Resistance: Yes

Power Points: 1

As the *daze* spell, except as noted here.

Augment: For every additional power point you spend, this power can affect a target that has Hit Dice equal to 4 + the additional points.

INERTIAL ARMOR

Psychokinesis

Level: Psion/wilder 1, psychic warrior 1

Display: Visual; see text

Manifesting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Personal

Target: You

Duration: 1 hour/level (D)

Power Points: 1; see text

Your mind generates a tangible field of force that provides a +4 armor bonus to Armor Class. Unlike mundane armor, *inertial armor* entails no armor check penalty or speed reduction. Because *inertial armor* is composed of psychokinetic force, incorporeal creatures can't bypass it the way they do normal armor.

Your *inertial armor* can be invisible or can appear as a colored glow, at your option.

The armor bonus provided by *inertial armor* does not stack with the armor bonus provided by regular armor.

Augment: For every 2 additional power points you spend, the armor bonus to Armor Class increases by 1.

THE DENIZENS OF KYTHRI AND MORAL

AMBIGUITY

In this adventure the PCs interact with two neutral societies in a struggle over the course of how their society progresses. The githzerai of the Vendulzat Monastery have benefited over the enslavement of the nerra for centuries, and believe the health of their society, and their ability to protect themselves from the daelkyr rests on that race's subjugation. The rules of the zenkkma allow the githzerai extreme moral lenience in achieving their goal.

On the other hand, the nerra are a people starving for self-reliance, and will pursue any means necessary to achieve that. Their centuries-old enslavement has stamped out any compassion for non-nerra. They see their plight as so desperate, that their freedom if not very existence allows them—no, necessitates them—to achieve their goal no matter the cost.

To this end both the githzerai and the nerra are neutral in the most selfish, desperate, and ambiguous sense, and at many times individuals tip the scale toward evil with more frequency than it tips toward the other side. While neither are true villains, both do villainous things. This form of neutrality can be, and should be very disturbing to the usual heroes and evil-hating neutrals that populate PC groups.

PROLOGUE: INTO THE FROZEN NORTH

Check to see who has the Story Objects "Knowledge of the Nerra" and "True Nature of the Deviant Celestial". Matron Martra would prefer choosing a group that had at least a majority of members with these bits of knowledge. In this case, her normally severe manner is dialed down a couple of notches.

If the PCs are suboptimal, here demeanor is less formal and friendly.

Either way, the jest of her the conversation prepares the PCs for a trip to the northern wilds of Karnnath, where the Union believes a large enclave of nerra might be hidden. The nerra have been impersonating Lord Heri

irVessen, a minor Karnn noble, so the search begins in his ancestral home of Icenport, a remote fishing and trapping village.

The day after the briefing the PCs are given airship tickets from Wroat to Korth, and the next day they are off on their trip to Karnnath.

From Korth, the PCs hitch a ride with a fast House Orien carriage to Bastion, and then hitch ride with a more plodding Orien caravan to Ice. From Ice they are shown a road—more like a glorified path—called the Icenport Road. This tract follows the Iceflow River for a while, and then snakes off west, going around the Karnnwood almost 100 miles to the isolated village of Icenport. The going is slow and very cold.

PART ONE: ICENPORT

As the PCs approach Icenport via the Icenport Road, read or paraphrase the following.

Rounding a craggy hill, the village of Icenport comes into view. The snow-covered settlement is flush against a partially frozen bay. Beyond its guardian inlet rages the cold and violent Karnn Bay.

Icenport is a mass of small and stout wooden buildings, many of them seem to be squat homes, partially buried to insulate them from the bitter cold. Aside from the numerous smaller structures, two large structures dominate the landscape.

The first sits in the middle of the village—a large Longhouse. You have seen similar structures in other northern Karnn communities. These Longhouses serve as town hall, tavern, and even markets. A plume of gray smoke wafts from the open top of the longhouse. Strangely, it is the only plume of smoke coming from any building in the village.

The second dominating structure is an open-flame lighthouse that sits on the rocky peninsula on the east flank of the harbor's inlet. Square and stout, and topped by a strange and seemingly unnatural flame, the structure looks different than the tall

graceful spires of Breland.

Taking in the sights, the most striking feature of Icenport may be how quiet it is. Except for the Longhouse no fires seem to burn throughout the entire village, and no living creature moves within the city.

The quietness of Icenport is due to the insurgence of the strange Kythri zenkkma that has taken over the village. Not only have the githzerai and slaad enslaved the population, their unnatural presence has scared away the local fauna. While the PCs walk through the town, a successful Knowledge (nature) check DC 20 confirms that it seems like the local animals are actively avoiding the general area, but it does not allow the PC to pinpoint a specific area of avoidance smaller than the settlement and its environs.

Let the PCs explore the town and its main buildings as they see fit. It will not be long before they find out what's going on in the poor town of Icenport.

LIGHTHOUSE

The northernmost of the town's three larger structures, the lighthouse is a mix of fortress and towering wick for a massive continual flame machine that warns ships and foes of the harbor's presence.

A square and squat tower, the lower levels of the lighthouse appear to be the remnants of some older fort that once guarded the harbor. Atop its battlements rises a narrow ivory tower, some 40 feet in height. A massive orange flame crowns the upper tower. Too bright to be normal fire, and seeming to neither emanate heat nor perform actual combustion, the flames are likely everburning in nature.

A Spellcraft check (DC 17) confirms the lighthouse illumination is everburning in nature and on a scale typically not seen outside of large cities. A Knowledge (arcane) or artificer knowledge success (DC 25) theorizes



that the mechanism that fuels such a large light evocation must be large, and fueled by a great ruby focus or many lesser ones kept in constant rotation.

Upon arriving in Icenport, the zenkkma stormed the lighthouse, mistaking its fantastic illumination as a show of power rather than a thing with a practical use. Believing they would cripple whatever warlord ruled this place, and maybe even find those aiding the nerra, they ripped into the structure, killing the Taggul brothers, the lighthouse guardians, in the process, and easily secured the lighthouse as their own.

The lighthouse is now the children's prison under the watch of Bogvut, a fat and melancholy red slaad. The rotund Bogvut feeds his depression with large amounts of comfort food...usually mud slaad tadpoles while on Kythri. He's gone hungry since arriving on Eberon, but is tempted by a new potential food—the children that J'ranz has ordered that he guard.

The path to the lighthouse is slippery (ground movement doubled, Balance and Tumble DC increased by 5), but the slick path serves as an annoyance rather than a hazard. His "moral" dilemma serving as a distraction in the noisy machine chamber, Bogvut only notices the PCs approach if they are extremely noisy (like busting down the front door) or they trounce around atop the lighthouse's lower observation area (area 6).

While the cold frozen ground is not a tracker's favorite palette, the pure amount of pedestrian activity lately has made it relatively easy for a skilled tracker to pick out clues. A DC 19 Track check can pick out at least a score pair of Small humanoid feet—maybe human children—beat a path to the lighthouse less than a week ago. They were joined by Medium humanoids and two Large creatures with clawed and webbed feet. A DC 25 Track check finds the distinct path of many of the Medium humanoids and the larger of the two webbed foot creatures leaving the place and heading back to town.

The entrance to the tower was damaged during the initial assault on the lighthouse, but it has been repaired somewhat, and barred from the inside. Without benefit of a *knock* spell, *chime of opening*, or magics that would otherwise bypass the portal, the PCs may have to bust it down (2 inch thick; hardness 5; hp 20; Break DC 23). That noise alerts Bogvut, who instantly suspects something amiss—he knows Y'errzalt or J'ranz would just bring Xiexox to *passwall* in.

LIGHTHOUSE CHARACTERISTICS

The lower level of the lighthouse is constructed of stonework that slants upward toward the battlements of the upper observation area. The outer walls are a sturdy 5-foot thick (hardness 8; hp 600 per five foot square), but fairly easy to climb (DC 20).

Walls are wood (6 inch thick; hardness 6; 60 hp per five foot facing) inside the lower works. The doors are simple (1 inch thick; hardness 5; hp 10), and many are damaged.

The lighthouses upper works are masonry (1 ft. thick; hardness 8; hp 90), made smooth by a layer of plaster (Climb 22).

1. DEMOLISHED LIVING AREA

Beyond the barred door is a ransacked mess of overturned tables, strewn chests and trunks, and violently scattered objects. While the quickest of inventories of the mess deduces this was once a living area, not a thing stirs here, and the fireplace on the far left wall is cold, and has been for days, at least.

The mess here is what's left of their initial assault. While there is nothing of real value among the wreckage, proper investigation yields clues. The tracks from outside

continue on into this place, and the placement of the debris and tracks allows an expert tracker (DC 25) to determine that an initial assault of the larger creatures and a number of the Medium creatures was followed by the trail of the smaller humanoids. An Investigate search (DC 15) finds the head of a rag doll. Analyzing the clue determines that the particular style of doll is a favorite of children in northern Karrnath, thus deducing that the Small humanoid tracks were likely made by children.

Development: The door leading to the Old Armory has been busted off its hinges, but the door itself has been propped up in the doorway.

2. OLD ARMORY (EL 4)

Like the entry chamber, this room has been ransacked. Many of the weapon racks that once lined the walls are little more than broken and splintered wood littering the stone floor. Weapons are strewn about the place; most damaged. Only one weapon still hangs on a fragment of a rack, seeming untouched by the destruction—a glowing longsword of a strange, almost alien design.

Among the weapons that litter the ground, a few are still usable. There is a masterwork guisarme, an alchemy blade (see sidebar), a repeating crossbow, and 10 bolts—three of them are *+1 flaming bolts* and the other seven are masterwork. The strange glowing sword still hanging on the rack is of githzerai make (Knowledge [planes] DC 30). A cunningly trapped weapon it's been glamered by a *Nystul's magic aura* to be a *+1 chaotic outsider bane longsword*. It is one of a trio of similar sword the maniacal Y'errzalt has placed throughout the village as a sick joke.

Trap: Though the sword looks of masterwork (and thanks to the glamer, of magical) construction, it's actually a trap that damages its wielder when used.

Eyeblast Poison Trapped Githzerai Longsword: CR 3; mechanical device; touch trigger*; repair reset; poison spikes (2d6 damage, Reflex DC 20 negates; if injured by spikes, Fort DC 22 or blindness for 24 hours); Search DC 25; Disable Device 20).

*The touch trigger activates the first time the weapon strikes and does damage to a creature or object.

Development: The northern door is damaged, but still stands. It's unlocked. The doorway on the western wall gapes open, its portal dashed and splintered on the floor beyond.

3. STORAGE CHAMBER (EL 5)

The door to this chamber is damage but still stands. When opened, the portal balances precariously on its lower hinge.

This large storeroom holds a number of barrels, crates, sacks and tins, but covering much of it is a strange pulsating growth. Covered in a tangle of yellow-green and orange pseudopod that move in waves and then stop to vibrate strangely, the growth appears to be a fungus, but is otherworldly, and smells of rank carrion.

The strange pulsating growth is a patch of Kythri insanity mold (see sidebar) left here by the zenkkma's blue slaad. Xiexox was so disturbed at the contents of one the many tins of salted fish that he fouled the place with mold. Once disturbed, it explodes, inundating the room with its spores (see sidebar).

Under the strange Kythri mold growth, this dry storage contains rations, drink, and general supplies. Along the bags of flour, the before mentioned tins of salted fish, crates of nails, and cords of wood are a pair of barrels of the heavy dark ale favored on the shores of the Karrn Bay, and small keg of the Brelish brandy enjoyed

on special occasions by the former Hanz Taggul. In the same general area stands a small crate similar to those used by the Aundarians to ship bottles of wine (Knowledge [local] DC 20 recognizes). Instead of wine, the straw-packed crate stores four flasks of alchemist's flame, and one of acidic flame.

4. DAMAGED SPIRAL STAIRS (EL 3)

The trail of devastation continues into this chamber. The door to this chamber was busted off its hinges, and lies shattered on the floor beyond. Mud and debris leads to the stairs, damaged by the passage of violence. Poking out under the stairs is a pair of legs in blood-soaked trousers. The right foot, devoid of shoe or stocking, is dead white.

Exploring the underside of the spiral stair further, the PCs find the legs splayed out from behind the stairs are no longer attached to a body. Xierxox chomped poor Hanz Taggul in half with a massive bite, and this is all that remains.

Poor Hanz was not the only casualty to Xierxox's devastating wake. While the wooden spiral stairs still climb up to the trapdoor on the ceiling, the stair's massive progress have noticeably damaged the stairs. Only with nimble care (Dexterity or Balance DC 15) can a creature reach the top without collapsing the stairs. Failure causes both the creature and the stairs to collapse. Those on or under the collapsed stairs must succeed a DC 14 Reflex save or take 2d6 points of damage from falling debris, and the noise alerts Bogvut of the PCs presence (see area 6).

Atop the stairs (and 10 feet above the ground) is a curious trap door that opens downward. Even from this side of the door, one can hear the whining of the *continual flame* machine beyond. The following words have been

"Heads low or heads ache"

The cryptic phrase serves as a reminder that the trap door opens into a space a scant two feet from the dangerous machine (see area 5).

5. MACHINE CHAMBER (EL 8)

Beyond the trapdoor is a whizzing confusion. A dangerous spinning device churns just over the entrance into the chamber. There is just enough room to crawl under the spinners to a safe area in the room beyond.

Alternatively, the PCs could enter this chamber via the trapdoor on the southeast corner of the ceiling that connects with the lower observation level (area 6).

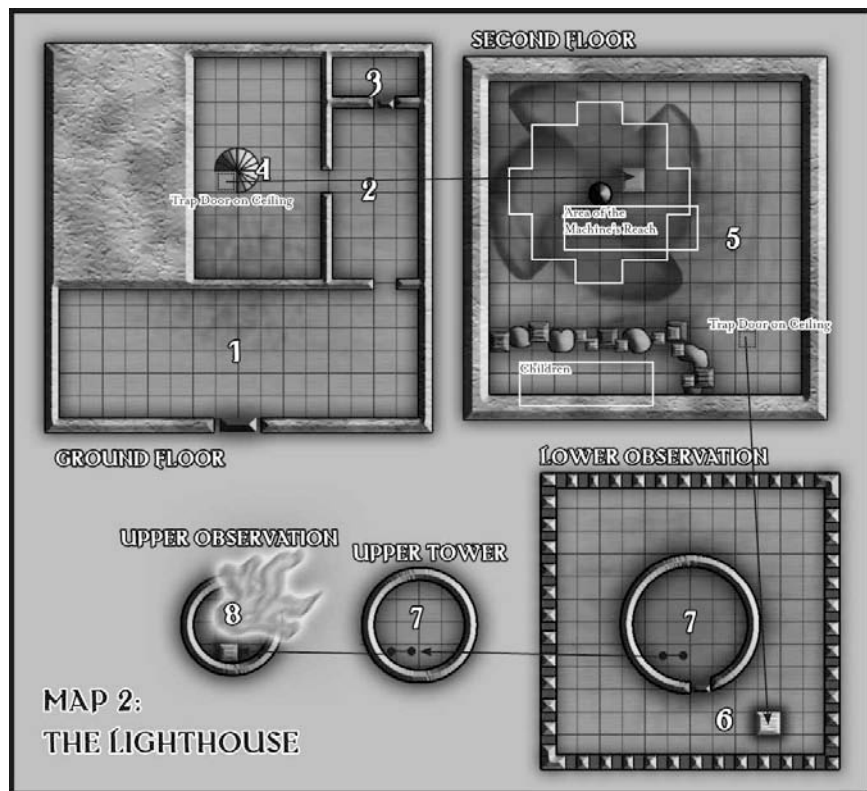
The massive *continual flame* machine spins dangerously in the northwestern corner of the room. This three-tiered contraption spins a trio of four-spoked spinners, each spoke ending in a ruby focus. The first tier spins only two feet above the trap door, which means Medium or Small creature in that square must crawl (see *Player's Handbook* page 142) or possible tumble (DC 12; failure takes damage) out of that square or take damage from the spinning machine (3d6 points).

There are no mechanisms to control the machine in this chamber, they are all located in the tower of the lighthouse, but strong, cunning, or foolish may attempt to hamper the machine's movements.

Disabling the Machine: To disable the machine, a PCs has to crawl to them machine's central pillar, open the hatch and basically short out the complicated Khyber and Eberron shard core of the machine. Doing so requires a DC 20 Disable Device check, and takes 2d4 rounds. In order for a PC to aid the disabling PC, he or she must also be adjacent to the machine's central pillar.

Sabotage: There more than one way to disable a machine, and sabotage, while crude and destructive, can be quicker than an artificer's careful prodding. There are two basic ways to sabotage the machine—gum up its works, or damage it.

Gumming up the works may take some fast thinking on your part, and players tend to be rather resourceful and inventive, but it will almost always involve using some object or force to stop the machine's movement. The rotation of the machine has a Strength of 18, and does 1d6 points of damage each round to objects impeding it (only metal and stone retain their hardness). Strong characters can attempt to grab (AC 20; creature takes 2d6 damage if it misses) and hold the machine (opposed Strength checks each round; lose grip and take 2d6 damage if the creature loses the check). The problem with impeding the machine's rotation is that it causes an arcane build up, and eventually it explodes. Every round there is a cumulative 5% chance the machine explodes. When it explodes dealing 5d6 points of damage to creatures in the chamber not protected by the



painted on the door in blocky script Common.

makeshift pen. That pen provides just enough cover to save the children within.

Attacking the machine is more difficult than it seems. The fast moving arms do an extraordinary job of protecting it from projectiles and melee attacks, and its magic enhances its natural protection with a healthy deflection bonus (AC 20, touch 20). The machine has a hardness of 10, and 80 hit points.

Turning it Off: The controls that turn the machine off and on are in the tower (area 7), at the bottom of the ladder leading up to the upper observation platform.

Creature: The machine is not room's only danger. Standing guard over a makeshift pen holding Icenport's children is Bogvult, the red slaad. If alerted to the PCs presence, he waits here ready to pounce at first opportunity. If not alerted the PCs catch him in a disturbing, and somewhat compromising position.

A fat and red toadlike humanoid stands over a makeshift pen. His right arm—blue, bloated, and misshapen—dangles forth a young boy of maybe nine or ten summers. The creature is about to drop the boy into his massive snaggletoothed maw.

If this is the case, give the PCs a surprise round. Bogvult responds by flinging his victim back into the pen, and moving forward to face the new challenge.

Bogvult (Red Slaad with single blue claw slaad graft): hp 48; *Melee* bite +11 (2d8+5) and claw +9 (1d4+2 plus implant) and blue claw graft +9 (2d6+2); *MM* 228-229.

Tactics: Bogvult, no brilliant tactician, relies on brute strength first. Typically starting with a pounce attack, he'll target known spellcasters first, using Mobility to plow past defenders. A coward at heart, the slaad saves his stunning croak as a means to secure escape when the battle goes against him. In the most dire straits, an against his intensely solitary nature, he'll attempt to summon another red slaad

Bogvult does not use his implant ability in this combat.

Development: If captured, Bogvult is an uncooperative prisoner. He is stubbornly evasive during questioning, afraid of what J'ranz and the leaders of the Vendulzat Monastery will do with him if he cracks. His fear is so strong it's virtually impossible (+20 to DCs) to intimidate him or engage in diplomacy. Once cracked, though, he is a valuable source of information about the strengths, locations, and number of the zenkkma.

The cramped makeshift pen holds 33 children, the youngest less than a year old, the oldest almost 13. While they faced the slaad with brave resolve, they break down once rescued. Even the whine of the continual fame machine can't drown out the cries and demands of the children. It takes magic (numerous *sleep* or *hypnotism* spells, a few *hypnotic patterns* or *deeper slumbers*, or a *calm emotions* casting generally does the trick), much coaxing (Diplomacy DC 30) or a stern hand (Intimidate DC 20) to get the children quiet and under control

Questioning the children finds that they have been locked in this place for almost three days. They were taken from their families after the "toad demons and flat-faced green men" defeated Warlord Gergus and the Frost Brigade and turned them to skinny men. They think the invaders want to enter Vessen Keep, but don't know why. They are all quiet convinced that only Lord Vessen and his men can enter the keep. If the PCs ask why, the children treat them as if they're daft. Growing up in Icenport, the magically impenetrable nature of Vessen Keep is one of life's axioms that need no explanation to children.

More pressing to some PC's peace of mind, the children confirm the slaad had not eaten any children—the heroes burst in at just the nick of time.

Treasure: The rubies at the end of the 12 spokes of the *continual flame* machine are worth 100 gp each, but taking them would deprive Icenport of their ability to repair the lighthouse.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

9th-level Characters: At this level, Bogvult isn't quite so solitary, and attempts to summon a second red slaad before the PCs enter the Machine Chamber (hp 52; *MM* 228-229).

10th and 11th-level Characters: At this level, Bogvult isn't quiet so solitary, and summons a second red slaad with automatic success before the PCs enter the Machine Chamber (hp 52; *MM* 228-229).

6. LOWER OBSERVATION PLATFORM

Climbing or flying up to this large platform finds old and worn battlements surrounding an old but sturdy wooden platform that serves as roof for the machine chamber (area 5) and floor for the platform. While sturdy and stable, the platform floor creaks loudly with each footfall, and only the lightest of steps (Move Silently DC 15) succeeds in concealing platform movement from Bogvult.

The trapdoor in the southeast corner of the platform opens into the machine chamber. There was once a ladder attached to the trapdoor, but Bogvult destroyed it to better secure the children's prison. The floor is 10 feet up, which means that the red slaad needs only to reach its edges, and a move action to squeeze his way through (a move action where Bogvult is considered squeezed; this action provokes attacks of opportunity).

The View: While the lower observation platform does provide a fairly good view of the town and the harbor, and eagle-eye PCs (Spot DC 25) can reconnoiter the smoke of small campfires coming from deep within the Vessen Wood, this vantage point offers very little evidence to the fate of the townspeople. The upper observation platform offers them a better point of view.

7. UPPER TOWER

The upper tower is a 10-foot radius masonry work that features little more than the continual flame machine controls, and a narrow spiral staircase winding up to the upper observation platform. Large iron pipes push the eldritch energy from the machine up to the flame atop the lighthouse.

Turning off the machine is a matter of just figuring out how the controls work (Knowledge [arcane], artificer knowledge, or Intelligence DC 12), and activating the right series of levers (move action).

8. UPPER OBSERVATION PLATFORM

A simple unlocked trapdoor opens up onto this uppermost spot on the lighthouse. The pipes continue up about 8 feet above the observations deck, its contents fuel the continual flame with cold and harmless-to-the-touch arcane energy. The illumination should be almost blinding here, but a crafty ward against the evocation allows those standing on the observation desk a normal—if not breathtaking—view of the Karrn Bay, harbor, and countryside around Icenport.

Those taking advantage of the vantage, see that nothing moves in the village. Scanning to the south and west does give them a limited view of the mining camp in the Vessen Wood.

A Spot check DC 15 clearly sees the fires of the far camp and movement by over a dozen humanoids, while a DC

25 picks out the blue slaad—though just as a hulking azure creature shambling about the place. The longer the PCs watch, the more they can discover about the camp and its relationship with the ghost town. Observing from this vantage for more than an hour spies a group moving from the camp to the longhouse. The group consists of a half-dozen githzerai warriors (lead by O’lani), Xierxox, and a group of 8-14 townsfolk. If the PCs have already wreaked havoc in the longhouse, the group’s arrival is followed by a rather frantic commotion before the group decides to investigate the lighthouse. If the PCs have yet to visit the longhouse, the group deposits the townsfolk, grabs the next shift, and returns to the mining camp.

NEW RULES

The alchemy blade is a new exotic weapon from *Magic of Eberron* (page 137). The Kythri insanity mold is an entirely new hazard.

ALCHEMY BLADE (EXOTIC WEAPON)

An alchemy blade appears much like a normal short sword. Two slender channels form a groove on each side of the blade, and the pommel is built to accept a flask of either alchemist’s fire or alchemist’s frost. (It could also accept a flask of acidic fire or alchemist’s spark, but a single use of either of these would render the weapon useless.)

When a flask of alchemist’s fire or alchemist’s frost is plugged into the pommel, the weapon is primed. When you strike a target with a primed blade and deal damage, an internal alchemical pump instantly expels the fire or frost through hollows in the hilt and out along the channels in the blade. In addition to taking any damage dealt by the blade, the target also takes damage as if it had been struck by the flask attached to the weapon. Adjacent creatures, including the wielder, are not subject to splash damage. If the blade deals critical damage, the frost or fire damage is not multiplied.

Priming an alchemy blade is a standard action that provokes attacks of opportunity. When not primed, the alchemy blade deals damage as a short sword.

KYTHRI INSANITY MOLD (CR 5)

If disturbed (attack, affected by a spell, or even touched), a 5-foot square patch of this mold explodes in a cloud of hypnotic and hallucinogenic spores. The cloud spreads out instantaneously like a burst from the original 5-foot square into the adjacent squares in all direction. Creatures within the cloud must succeed a DC 15 Will save or suffer effects similar to that of a *confusion* spell cast by a 10th-level wizard (lasts 10 rounds), but with the following changes to the behavior chart.

d%	Behavior
01-10	The creature acts normally, but the virulent and unpredictable spores infect the creature, growing at a supernatural pace. The creature becomes host to a patch of mold, similar in all ways to the 5-foot square patch described above. This infected creature’s own movement may disturb its spores. Whenever the creature moves faster than half its speed or when it attacks, it must succeed a Tumble (for movement only) or Dexterity check DC 13. Failure cause the spores explode at the end of its movement or attack. An infected creature can always opt to fail the check. You can also rule that other violent or compelled movement by the creature either triggers a check or automatically causes the spore’s explosion. When a spore explodes it does 1d6 points of damage to the creature it infects, along with its normal effect.
11-20	Act normally.

21-50	Do nothing but babble incoherently.
51-70	Flee away from the mold’s original location at top possible speed. If a creature was infected by a mold, and that mold cause the confusion effect, the creature flees in a random direction.
71-100	Attack nearest creature.

Kythari insanity mold does not cause confusion in or infect creatures immune to poison or confusion effects. Infected creatures only remain so for the confusion duration (10 rounds), so *delay poison* effectively neutralizes both the confusion and the infestation. Creatures infected by spores cannot be infected again by spores for another 24 hours, though it can suffer the *confusion* effects from other molds.

SLAAD GRAFT: BLUE CLAW

Some particularly canny slaadi have discovered the secret of nurturing a red slaad’s egg pellet into a graft with the form and power of blue slaad’s claw. Once grown, a graft of this type can only be applied to its red slaad “parent”, granting it a more powerful claw attack:

Location: Red Slaad arm.

Description: This graft takes the place of the red slaad’s lower arm. The lower arm takes the form of a blue slaad’s massive appendage, while corded tendrils of blue flesh-wrapped muscle wrap around the upper arm, and piercing the slaad’s body at the shoulder and flanks of the chest, digging in through flesh purple welts.

Activation: Blue claw is always active. It requires no action on the slaad’s part.

Effect: This graft increases the damage of one red slaad claw attack to 2d6+2 (half strength bonus). It is possible for a red slaad to have two of these grafts, and thus enhancing the damage for both claw attacks, but few do so, as the graft claw does not retain the ability to implant eggs.

Construction: Requires Slaad Fleshgrafter, *lesser restoration* spell, 3,000 gp, 240 XP, 6 days

Graft Donor: Arm of a blue slaad.

Graft Sacrifice: 4 hp

Price: 6,000 gp

LONGHOUSE

Sitting in the middle of town, this large arched-roofed building serves as tavern and town center. All of the major celebrations and events of Icenport take place within the insulated and elemental-warmed hall of the longhouse.

The cornerstone of the foundation bears glowing runes that state, “Firepit constructed and ensured by the Liugwen Binders Guild.”

A Knowledge (local) check (DC 15) recognizes the Liugwen Builders Guild as a company of Zilargo gnomes who create and sell custom elemental bindings. Zilargo gnomes gain a +2 bonus on this check.

The great double doors of the longhouse, while difficult to open, are merely stiff, and don’t require a Strength check.

LONGHOUSE CHARACTERISTICS

While it has a stone foundation, the majority of the longhouse walls and feature are wood (6 inch thick; hardness 6; 60 hp per five foot facing). The doors inside are simple (1 inch thick; hardness 5; hp 10), but the front door is much stronger (6 inches thick; hardness 6; 120 hp).

1. COMMON CHAMBER (EL 10)

The large open space within is rather dark; illuminated by the large fire pit at its center, the gaping smoke release cutting the ceiling over it, and a small smattering of dim everbright lanterns scattered throughout the cavernous chamber.

An obvious place of respite from the cruel northern clime, its large open area could house the entire town in times of need. A scaffolding system along with a hook and pulley rig dangling over the fire pit could allow one to lower entire oxen—or even larger beasts—onto the smoldering breach.

Even though the massive hole over the fireplace allows the snow to drift in, turned to sizzling rain by the time it reaches the fire pit, the longhouse interior is warm—even cozy.

Such comfort seems lost on the general ambiance of the Longhouse and the demeanor of its currents inhabitants. Hard stares come from folk perched atop harder furniture. Grimy-faced Karrn peasants look you up and down as if Keeper himself sent you to their little corner of Khorvaire.

There is almost a score townsfolk in the longhouse, but not a one is under 14 years of age. The people here are closed-mouthed and nervous if not downright scared and rude. PCs can get the hunch (Sense Motive DC 20) their arrival in town is not real source of anxiety; there is something else amiss. Those who succeed the check by 5 or more noticed a mix of veiled hope and frustration in the eyes of most of the townsfolk. There is one exception to the strange malaise gripping the people of the longhouse.

Only one person in the longhouse seems to be at ease in the place. On the south wall, just under the cook's hanging platform, sits a fat and grizzled looking human, who looks as if he has some orc somewhere in his family tree. His feet propped on the table, he takes deep swig from his flagon. After he slams down his drink, and lets out a deep and rumbling belch, his eyes widen with surprise at the long and loud burp. Once the rumbling is complete, he begins to laugh...or rather giggles.

The strange creature is no human, or even half-orc, but rather is a disguised mud slaad named Hortolz, a minion of J'ranz and Y'erzalt. Taking his current form thanks to a *hat of disguise* loaned to him by the latter githzerai, he's been tasked with keeping order in the makeshift prison.

A creature of chaos, none too bright, and a tad intoxicated, Hortolz mistakes the PCs for Icengard townsfolk, and calls out.

Find a seat and shut it. You'll be working soon.

If there are warforged or other obvious outsiders among the PCs, the mud slaad quickly realizes his mistake and calls for Y'erzalt and the other githzerai for aid (see below). If not, quiet and seemingly complacent PCs could spend some time among the townsfolk gaining information (see Development).

Confronting Hortolz, giving the cretin a reason to suspect the PCs don't belong in Icenport, heading toward the upper levels of the longhouse, or trying to leave the place, moves the slaad to action. First he calls for the aid of Y'erzalt and the other githzerai who are meditating in the upper level (area 3).

Creatures: Once called by the mud slaad, the githzerai warriors jump down from the longhouse's upper level using their *catfall* psi-like ability. Each activates *inertial armor* ability before reaching the fray.

Y'erzalt: female githzerai enchanter 6; hp 17; Combat Statistics.

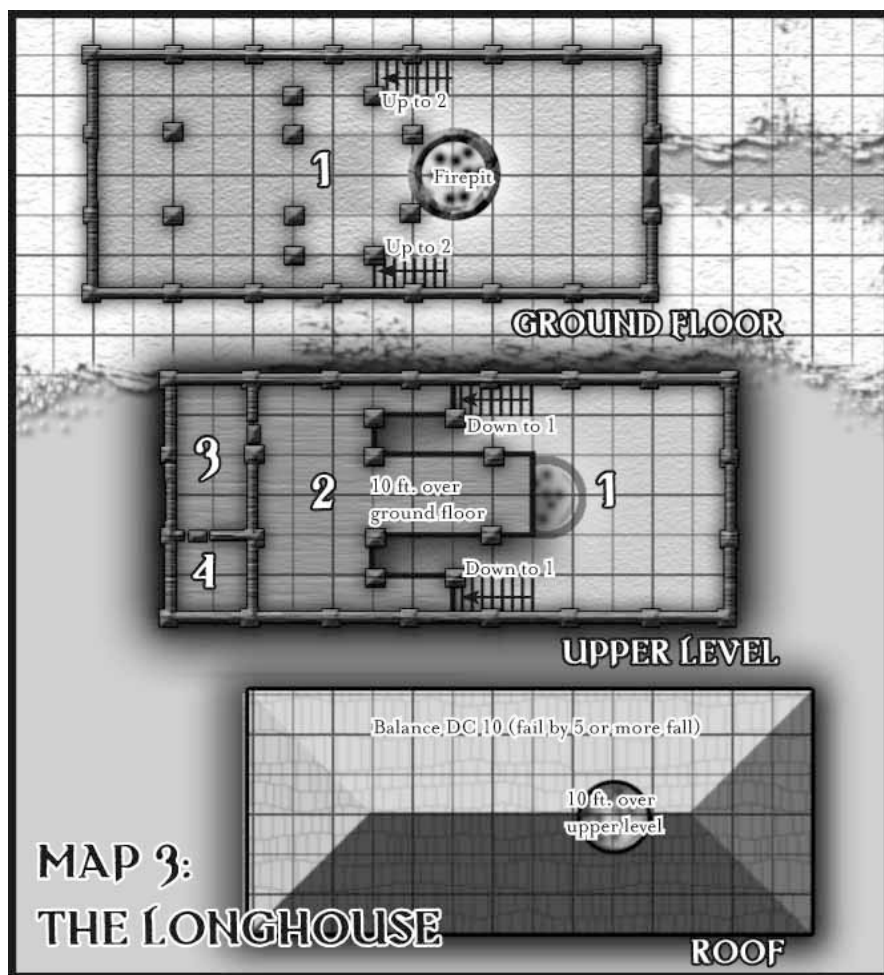
Hortolz: mud slaad; hp 30; see "Combat Statistics", below.

Githzerai Warriors (6): 9, 8, 6, 5, 5, 4; *Monster Manual* 129, modified by Troubleshooting.

Icengard Townsfolk (16): mix male and female human commoner 1: hp 5 each; Combat Statistics.

Tactics: After calling for help from his terrestrial allies, the craven mud slaad attempts to *summon* a red slaad (20% chance of success; *Monster Manual* pages 126-129) to protect him. Whether the red slaad appears or not, Hortolz follows the *summons* with a croak, even if it means engulfing his githzerai allies. An opportunistic creature, Hortolz attacks when the advantage is his, and cringes when it's not. He feigns death.

The githzerai warriors bravely move forward and engage foes, but Y'erzalt hangs back, casts *shield*, and fires *magic missiles* or *lightning bolts* down on opponent. When in range, she targets spellcasters with *deeper slumber*, *mindburn* (either by here spell or by scroll), or *Tasha's hideous laughter* (started with the extended spell first). If the battle goes against the zenkkma forces, Y'erzalt uses her



dimensional leap and *invisibility* to evade capture and warn O'lani and Xiexox of the danger that just stumbled into town.

Development: Defeating the zenkkma forces here turns the PCs into the town savior. The townsfolk shower the PCs with adoration, ply them with information about the current events in Icenport, and pepper them with demands. First and foremost, if they have not done so already, the townsfolk implore the PCs to save the town's children in the lighthouse. "There is a fat toad demon there, with a hungry look in his eyes," one grizzled old Karrn veteran missing an arm and a host of teeth tells the PCs. "I've seen that hunger before in Talenta, and its sating ain't pretty." He refuses to elaborate on his Last War experiences.

If Y'ertzalt was able to escape and warn O'lani and Xiexox, she returns with her companions and a host of eight githzerai warriors about 20 minutes later.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

9th-level Characters: Hortolz chance to summon a red slaad is increased to 60%.

10th-level Characters: Hortolz automatically succeeds in summoning the red slaad.

11th-level Characters: Hortolz automatically succeeds in summoning the red slaad and there is a second mud slaad in the preparation room (hp 45).

2. UPPER SCAFFOLDING

The floor of this ironbound, wood scaffolding stands eight feet above the ground. It features a walkway that wraps around the western side of the longhouse, and one that juts out toward the fire pit. That section of the walkway features the hook and pulleys that lower meat down the fire pit.

3. PREPARATION CHAMBER (EL 4)

This barren chamber features a non-magical pulley lift to the back of the bar area on the lower level to move food and material.

Y'ertzalt and the githzerai warriors have been using this chamber to meditate, though there is little sign of their use here. The exception to this is a sword that hangs on the western wall. One of three trapped weapons placed here by Y'ertzalt, this seemingly githzerai made longsword can be hazardous to anyone wielding it.

Trap: Though the sword looks of masterwork (and thanks to the glamor, of magical) construction, it's actually a trap that damages its wielder when used.

Eyeblast Poison Trapped Githzerai Longsword: CR 3; mechanical device; touch trigger*; repair reset; poison spikes (2d6 damage, Reflex DC 20 negates; if injured by spikes, Fort DC 22 or blindness for 24 hours); Search DC 25; Disable Device 20).

*The touch trigger activates the first time the weapon strikes and does damage to a creature or object.

4. STORAGE

The storage chamber contains extra stools, crockery, and utensils for larger events, along with a good deal of just general junk. A thorough search (DC 20) of the jumble finds a strongbox guarded by an average lock (DC 25). Inside are 3 *potions of cure light wounds* (CL 1) and 5 of *endure elements* (cold) (CL 1).

COMBAT STATISTICS

HORTOLZ CR 6

CN Mud Slaad
Medium outsider (chaotic, extraplanar)
Fiend Folio page 157

Init +6; **Senses** Darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +7, Spot +7

Languages Common, Kythric, Slaadi

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Dodge

hp 39 (6 HD); fast healing 3

Immune sonic

Resist acid, cold, electricity, and fire 5

Fort +7, **Ref** +7, **Will** +3;

Spd 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee bite +9 (2d6+3) and 2 claws +7 (1d4+1)

Base Atk +6; **Grp** +9

Special Attacks cringe, disease, sonic screech, *summon slaad*.

Abilities Str 17, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 6, Cha 8

SQ fast healing 3, feign death, outsider traits, resistances, sonic immunity

Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative, Multiattack

Skills Climb +12, Jump +12, Hide +10, Listen +7, Move Silently +11, Spot +7

Possessions *hat of disguise*

Cringe (Su): As a standard action, a mud slaad can cower in fear. This is a mind-affecting effect. Any opponent attempting to strike or otherwise directly attack the cringing creature, even with a targeted spell, must attempt a Will save (DC 12). If the save succeeds the opponent can attack normally and is immune to the effect of that mud slaad's cringing for 24 hours. If the save fails, the opponent can't follow through with the attack, that part of the attacker's action is lost, and the attacker can't directly attack the mud slaad for as long as it continues to cringe. If the mud slaad stops cringing and then cringes again, the opponent may attempt a new Will save to attack it.

Disease (Ex): Any creature hit by a mud slaad's bite attack must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 15) or be infected with a disease that transforms the victim over the next week into a mud slaad. The infected creature can attempt a new save each day (DC 15) to throw off the infection.

Sonic Screech (Su): Once per day, a mud slaad can emit a tremendous screech. Every creature within 30 feet must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 15) or take 5d6 points of sonic damage.

Summon Slaad (Sp): Once per day a mud slaad can attempt to summon 1 mud slaad with a 40% chance of success or 1 red slaad with a 20% chance of success.

Feign Death (Ex): If an opponent strikes a mud slaad and reduce it to 10 or few hit points, it can immediately attempt to feign death as an immediate action. Any creature that witnesses a mud slaad that is feigning death, including those creatures that watch it fall, can make a Sense Motive check (DC 22) to determine if the slaad's death is genuine. A Spot check will not reveal that the slaad's death is feigned, and even a Heal or Search check isn't guaranteed to discover the deception, so adroit is the mud slaad as stilling its breathing and reducing its heart rate. A successful check using either skill (DC 22) is required to reveal that the mud slaad still lives.

Y'ERZALT

CR 7

CN female githzerai enchanter 6
Medium humanoid (extraplanar, psionic)

Init +5; **Senses** Darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +1, Spot +1

Languages Common, Gith; Draconic, Kythric, Slaadi, Undercommon

AC 20, touch 20, flat-footed 15

hp 30 (6 HD)

PR 11

Fort +4, **Ref** +8, **Will** +7

Spd 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee dagger +2 (1d4-1)

Ranged masterwork light crossbow +9 (1d8/19-20)

Combat Gear arcane scroll of *mindburn* (CL 3th; DC 13), arcane scroll of *glitterdust* (CL 3th; DC 13), *wand of lightning bolt* (CL 5th; DC 14; 5 charges).

Base Atk +3; **Grp** +2

Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 6th, 1d20+6 to overcome SR; necromancy and transmutation are restricted schools):

3rd—*dispel magic*, *Extended Tasha's hideous laughter* (DC 17; 12 rounds), *deep slumber* (DC 18), *rage* (2 creatures).

2nd—*dimensional leap* (2), *invisibility*, *mindburn* (DC 17), *Tasha's hideous laughter* (DC 17)

1st—*charm person* (DC 14), *hypnotism* (DC 16), *magic missile* (3), *shield*

0—*acid splash* (range touch +7) (2), *daze* (DC 15) (2), *resistance*

Psi-Like Abilities (ML 2nd):

3/day—*catfall*, *concussion blast*, *psionic daze* (DC 13), *inertial armor*.

Abilities Str 8, Dex 20, Con 13, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 12

SQ psionics, *inertial armor*

Feats Extend Spell, Greater Spell Focus (enchantment), Improved Toughness^{CW}, Scribe Scroll^B, Spell Focus (enchantment).

Skills Climb +12, Jump +12, Hide +11, Listen +7, Move Silently +11, Spot +7

Possessions masterwork light crossbow, 20 bolts, dagger, *cloak of resistance* +1, *ring of protection* +1, *headband of intellect* +2, arcane scroll of *mindburn* (CL 3; DC 13), arcane scroll of *glitterdust* (CL 3; DC 13), *wand of lighting bolt* (CL 5th; DC 14; 5 charges); spell component pouch, traveler's outfit.

ICENGARD TOWNSFOLK CR 1/2

NG, CG, N mix male and female commoner 1

Medium humanoid (human)

Init +0; **Senses** Listen +2, Spot +2

Languages Common

AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Dodge

hp variable, see adventure text (1 HD)

Fort +1, **Ref** +0, **Will** +0

Spd 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee club +0 (1d6)

Base Atk +0; **Grp** +0

Abilities Str 10, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10

Feats Dodge, Toughness

Skills Climb +4, Jump +4, Listen +2, Spot +2

Possessions club, commoners outfit.

FIELDS OF THE DEAD

When the zenkkma pushed forward from the town toward Vessen Keep, a group of nerra rode out to stop them.

Taking the shape of Warlord Gergus and the Frost Brigade, they rode out atop Vessen warhorses and met their Kythri enemies on this field. And thanks to one of the zenkkma's *shatterstones*, they were torn apart.

The bodies of 20 varoot nerra, their mounts, and the few townspeople that joined the charge litter the blood-soaked snow in this field, virtually untouched—he presence of the unnatural zenkkma has even kept the ravens away.

There is no immediate danger here, but it's possible for the PCs to encounter O'lani, Xierxox, and a band of githzerai warriors here if Y'ertzalt was able to escape the longhouse and warn the rest of the zenkkma. The field of bodies does at least let the PCs know they are on the right track, and could even give them more clues.

Investigating the Scene: Using the Investigate feat (Search DC 10, whether or not the PC has the investigate feat or not) finds that the dead humans were killed with either weapons, or massive claw or bite attacks, while the nerra seem to have all been killed suddenly and with something else. Their skin is spider-webbed with tiny fractures, as if they were shattered. What's left of their mirror shard weaponry is littered in scattered piles of fragile remains, wholly unlike the powerful weapons they once were. Analyzing these clues (Search DC 25)

determines that the nerra were on the horses and were blow back by some force powerful enough to kill and shatter their alien skin. The strange part is that the blast had little to no effect on the horses and townspeople among the dead.

A Knowledge (nature) check DC 12 finds that the horses were magebred (thick-skinned bred).

Digging Deeper: Further searching the dead (Search DC 20; takes between 10 to 20 minutes) the PCs find a few items of interest. First, Y'ertzalt has left her third trapped sword here, clutched by the corpse of one of the townsfolk. A simple Investigate check (DC 15) recognizes that not only does the sword seem out of place, but the townsfolk was not holding the weapon when he died—it was forced into his hand after. Second, the PCs find large iron keys on two of the bodies. Carried by the nerras impersonating Warlord Gergus and his second, the keys open various locks into and within Vessen Keep.

Talking to the Dead: All of the nerra are neutral in alignment, and can impart a decent amount of knowledge about the events that lead up to their death. Most importantly they know the location of Vessen Keep's hidden entrance, they can describe the *shatterstone*, and can even describe the true nature of their (and by extension, the Icenport's) plight.

The dead townsfolk can relay little real information. They can answer questions about the invaders, and they saw the destruction of Warlord Gergus and the Frost Brigade, but don't know what to think about their town's defender's transformation into mirror-skinned humanoids.

MINING CAMP (EL 11)

After the zenkkma took over the town, and battled the nerra on the Fields of the Dead, they determined that the nerra must be held up in the keep atop the crag.

Unfortunately, they soon found out that the keep had no discernable entrance, and if the townsfolk knew how to get in, they weren't telling...not even after the githzerai holed up the children in the lighthouse.

O'lani decide to mine into the crag, which should have been an easy task, thanks to his blue slaad ally. This became more complicated when he found that Xierxox's *passwall* ability was frustrated by the heavy iron ore make up of Vessen Crag.

Not one to quit, O'lani put the uncooperative townsfolk to work, and the group has been mining to gain access to Vessen Keep's dungeon ever since. The going is slow, the townsfolk are tired, and the member of the zenkkma are both bored and frustrated.

Sneaking Up on the Camp: The Vessen Wood is mostly medium forest, which is made up of trees and light undergrowth, with patches of heavy overgrowth, and a smattering of massive trees (*DMG* 87 for the game effects of these tree and undergrowth types).

The prevalence of cover and concealment of the forest makes it easy for stealthy PCs to sneak upon the camp. Unless they become aware of the PCs presence in the area, the zenkkma does not post guards in the forest; they're that confident of their control of the town.

Listen on all sides is harder here, due to the constant ringing of the mine works. Increase the DC of the check by 3 per 10 feet, not 1, but also note that Move Silently checks are more difficult in undergrowth.

As long as the PCs have 70 feet of forest between them and the clearing, no one in the clearing spots the PCs. Once they breach that vision barrier, use the highest Spot and Listen among the members of the zenkkma (probably Xierxox with a Listen and Spot of +9) each round to notice the PC's approach. Leaving the work for their Eberon thralls, the zenkkma is not considered

distracted, and Xierxox at the very least would relish an attack just to “do something fun”.

Once they spot the PCs, the member of the zenkkma leap into action, defending their mission.

Creatures: Frustrated by the drudgery of what has become an extended mining operation, the creatures of the zenkkma savor any assault as a delightful change of pace. Their natural chaos breeding a form of attention deficit, only O’lani realizes to late that the PCs might mean doom to their very important mission.

J’ranz: male githzerai lurk 5; hp 40; Combat Statistics

O’lani: male githzerai zerth (monk 3/ardent 3); hp 30; Combat Statistics

Githzerai Warriors (10): 9, 8, 8, 7, 7, 6, 6, 5, 4, 3; MM 129, modified by Troubleshooting.

Xierxox (Blue Slaad): hp 75; MM 229

Tactics: Xierxox starts off combat by letting loose his *chaos hammer* spell-like ability, and moving forward to confront his foes. A veteran of countless battles, Xierxox’s favorite tactic is to take warriors out of the battle and confronting softer targets, like wizards. The blue slaad uses his *telekinesis* and hold person to incapacitate warrior, with a favorite tactic involving using his telekinesis to throw a warrior into the air, and letting gravity do the rest.

J’ranz and O’lani work as a team, with O’lani using his Stunning Fist and *destiny dissonance* power to weaken targets, given J’ranz more opportunity to use his augmented psionic sneak attack.

The remaining githzerai warriors use swarm tactics in an attempt to overwhelm foes and control the battlefield.

Development: While the Kythri host savors the chance to fight, a hard fight puts them in the mood to negotiate—after all, fun should not get in the way of the scared oath of the zenkkma. Once negotiations begin, the Kythri invaders explain to PCs why they are here, and even suggest a truce in order to stop the nerra.

Still, the githzerai can be frustrating allies. Arrogant and unremorseful of their actions in Icenport, their focus on the goal of the zenkkma can seem despicable to more noble PCs. What’s even worse, is that the group sees, and attempts to use, the PCs as fodder, ordering them to scout ahead, and bear the brunt of any “nerra traps.” In almost all situations they could care if the PCs live or not, and

will even stab them in the back if it suits their ultimate purpose.

Whether or not the PCs ally with the zenkkma, if they are able to secure the release or promise of release (Diplomacy DC 25) of the townsfolk and their children, the group is thankful, and become more helpful than they ever were to the githzerai and their “toad demons.”

One of the townspeople d knows about the secret entrance into Vessen Keep. The town drunk, now crawling-up-the-walls sober thanks to days of hard labor, a man named Goetlib Branz, saw Lord Vessen exit from a secret entrance to the east one night during an ale binge. Grateful for his release, he’ll gladly show the PCs where he saw the secret entrance, all he needs is a sip or two of ale to stiffen his resolve....

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

9th-Level Characters: There is a red slaad supporting the group (hp 52; MM 128-129)

10th-Level Characters: Xierxox is joined by his brother Xoxreix (hp 68; MM 229)

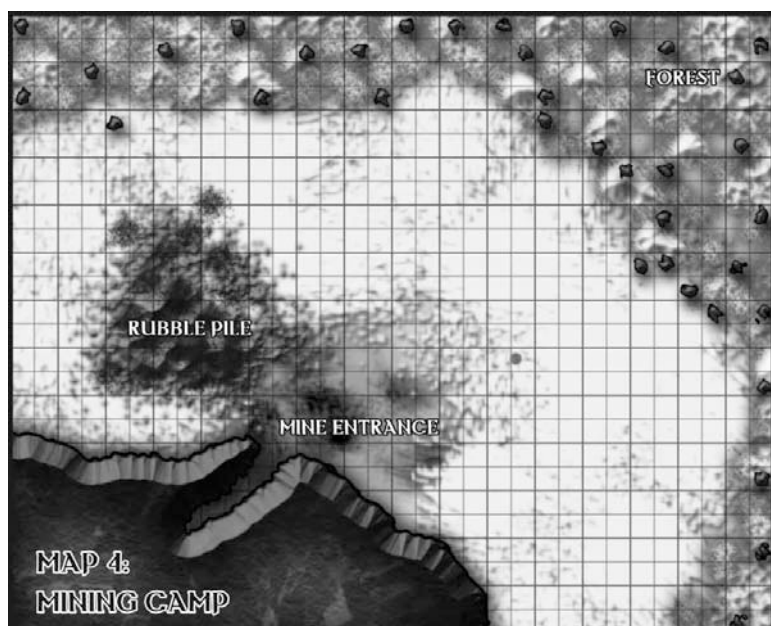
11th-Level Characters: Xierxox is joined by his brother Xoxreix (hp 68; MM 229), and all of the githzerai are under the effect of a *heroism* (PH 240) effect, a special blessing of the zenkkma.

THE SHATTERSTONE

The *shatterstone* is a magical bomb created by the githzerai of the Vendulzat Monastery to do massive damage to the nerra without harming most other creatures. Creating a supersonic explosion in a 60-foot radius spread, it does 8d6 points of damage to creatures with sonic vulnerability. The explosion is harmless to other creatures.

Detonated within the mote at the Eberron-Specurium border, it has the added effect of instantaneously severing the tie between the two planar places.

Activating the *shatterstone* is a standard action that provokes attacks of opportunity. Once activated, it takes five rounds to power up the magical device before it explodes. The only way to stop this process is to dispel the item (CL 15th), which makes the *shatterstone* permanently inert.



COMBAT STATISTICS

J' RANZ

CR 7

CN male githzerai lurk* 5

Medium humanoid (extraplanar, psionic)

Init +5; **Senses** Darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +5, Spot +5

Languages Common, Gith; Kythric, Slaadi, Undercommon

AC 21, touch 19, flat-footed 16

hp 40 (5 HD)

PR 10

Fort +2, **Ref** +9, **Will** +5

Spd 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee +1 *keen kukri* +9 (1d4+1/16-20)

Ranged mwk light crossbow +9 (1d8/19-20)

Atk Options psionic sneak attack +1d6

Special Actions lurk augments (additional sneak attack, unfocusing strike [DC 12], stunning attack [DC 12], solid strike, ignore concealment, mental assault)

Base Atk +3; **Grp** +4

Power Points/Day 12 □□□□□ □□□□□ □□;

Lurk Powers Known (ML 5th, 1d20+5 to overcome PR):

2nd—*evade attack***, *extend reach***

1st—*adrenaline boost***, *psionic grease* (DC 14),

*sensory gloom*** (DC 14)

Psi-Like Abilities (ML 2nd):

3/day—catfall, psionic daze (DC 13), psionic knock, inertial armor.

Abilities Str 13, Dex 20, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 8

Feats Githzerai Knock***, Weapon Finesse

Skills Climb +5, Concentration +9, Escape Artist +13, Hide +13, Listen +5, Move Silently +13, Spot +5, Tumble +13

Possessions +1 buckler, +1 keen kukri, masterwork light crossbow, 20 bolts, traveler's outfit.

Lurk Augment (Ex): 7/day—J'ranz can augment his melee attack by selecting an ability from his available lurk augments. In some cases, he can also use power points to increase the power of his lurk augment. The power of the augment lasts for 1 round or until J'ranz's next attack. If that attack misses, that use is wasted.

Using a lurk augment is a swift action. When powering an augment with power points, J'ranz cannot spend more than 5 power points on a single lurk augment.

Additional Sneak Attack: The lurk's next attack deals an extra 1d6 points of damage from a sneak attack. For every 2 power points spent, this damage increase by 1d6 points. The attack must be one to which sneak attack damage applies. Minimum 1st level.

Unfocusing Strike: A creature hit by the lurk's attack must make a Will saving throw DC 12 or lose its psionic focus in addition to taking damage from the attack. For every 2 power points spent, the DC increases by 1. Minimum level 1st.

Solid Strike: The lurk's attack deals an extra 2 points of damage. For every power point spent, the damage increase by 1. Minimum level 3rd.

Stunning Attack: A creature hit by the lurk's attack must make a Fortitude saving throw DC 12 or be stunned for 1 round in addition to taking the damage from the attack. For every 2 power points spent, the DC increase by 1. Minimum level 3rd.

Ignore Concealment: The lurk's next attack ignores the miss chance provided by concealment or total concealment. The lurk must still attack the correct square when attacking an invisible creature. Minimum level 5th.

Mental Assault: The lurk's next attack deals 2 points of either Intelligence or Wisdom damage in addition to its normal damage. The lurk chooses which type of ability damage to deal when activating the power. For every 2 power points spent, the ability damage increases by 1.

Psionic Sneak Attack (Ex): While psionically focused, J'ranz can strike a vital spot for extra damage if she attacks an opponent while he is unable to defend himself effectively. This is identical to the sneak attack ability of the rogue (*Player's Handbook* 50), except the damage only applies when the lurk maintains a psionic focus.

Sneak attack damage and psionic sneak attack damage stack, whenever both would apply to the same target.

*This is class from *Complete Psionic* all the rules you need to run a member of this class is contained within the statistic block

**New psionic power, see sidebar.

***This feat is from *Complete Psionic*, it swaps out the *concussion blast* psi-like ability with *psionic knock*

O'LANI

CR 7

LN male githzerai ardent* 3 / monk 3

Medium humanoid (extraplanar, psionic)

Init +5; **Senses** Darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +3, Spot +3

Languages Common, Gith, Kythric, Slaadi

AC 23, touch 19, flat-footed 19; Dodge, force mantle

hp 30 (6 HD)

PR 11

Fort +6, **Ref** +11, **Will** +10; evasion, still mind

Spd 40 ft. (8 squares)

Melee unarmed strike +8 (1d6+1) or unarmed strike flurry of blows +6/+6 (1d6+1)

Atk Options flurry of blows (see above), unarmed strike

Special Actions Stunning Fist (3/day—DC 15) chaos, death, and force mantles (see below)

Base Atk +4; **Grp** +4

Power Points/Day 15 □□□□□ □□□□□ □□□□□;

Ardent Powers (ML 3rd, 1d20+3 to overcome PR; chaos, death, and force mantles):

1st—*destiny dissonance*, *force screen*, *matter agitation*, *stygian discernment**

Mantles Chaos (Expend psionic focus to deal additional damage to nonchaotic creatures. Deal an additional 1d6 points of damage with a melee or ranged attack or a spell that deals damage) Force (gain a +1 deflection bonus to AC while psionically focused), and Death (Expend psionic focus to kill a dying creature, as the death knell spell [DC 15; see *PH* 217]).

Psi-Like Abilities (ML 2nd):

3/day—catfall, concussion blast, psionic daze (DC 13), inertial armor.

Abilities Str 13, Dex 20, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 17, Cha 8

SQ Fast movement, still mind

Feats Dodge, Improved Unarmed Strike, Stunning Fist, Weapon Finesse

Skills Concentration +3, Escape Artist +13, Jump +7, Sense Motive +9, Tumble +13.

Possessions cloak of resistance +2, brooch of shielding (20 points), potion of barkskin (CL 1st), monk's outfit.

*This is class from *Complete Psionic* all the rules you need to run a member of this class is contained within the statistic block

**New psionic power, see sidebar.

PART TWO: THE MOTE IN VESSEN KEEP

If successful by the end of Part One, the PCs should discover that their path leads to Vessen Keep—as seemingly impregnable castle on the rocky cliff overlooking Icenport. They should also have discovered the location of its secret entrance—either by Icenport's local drunk, Goetlib Branz, or by their own cunning. Hopefully they have also found one of the two keys on the bodies of the nerra in the Fields of the Dead.

The secret entrance at the cliff's base isn't the only ground entrance into Vessen keep, the irVessen family has other smaller and even more secret paths to their ancestral home, but many are spoiled by the nerra mote, and are beyond the scope of this adventure. This secret "front" entrance is the best path for the PCs to enter the nerra mote.

Some parties may attempt to fly up to the keep and enter the keep through a window or other opening, but those tactics ultimately fail. The nerras' mote has expanded on the Eberron side to the keep's boundaries. Because of this, any entrance into the keep is sealed with an adamantine-hard mirror-like boundary. Even breaking through the walls of the keep only uncovers a layer of this hard and shiny boundary further thwarting entrance.

Using the *shatterstone* on the boundary does nothing.

1. SECRET ENTRANCE

On the northern most cliff face of Vessen Crag, amid a confusing network of false trails and tracks is the keep's main secret entrance. Finding the location with Goetlib Branz's help is difficult, but not impossible. There are divination methods (such as *detect secret doors*, but the secret door is entirely mechanical, so a *detect magic* does not detect it), and even success at a rather difficult track check (DC 35) helps pinpoint the true path of the last charge of the Frost Brigade.

Once the door's location is pinpointed, opening it requires that the PCs either located the hidden keyhole (Search DC 20) and use one of the keys found in the Fields of the Dead, or open this amazing and *arcane locked*

(CL 10th) door the hard way. A *knock* or *dispel magic* must suppress or dispel the *arcane lock* and then the physical lock must be opened (DC 40) or the door can be bashed down (4 inches thick; hardness 8; hp 120; Break DC 38 [28 after arcane lock is suppressed or dispelled]).

Once open, the entrance slopes upward toward the shrine of Dol Dorn and the stables. The *everburning*

are also guardians of the shrine, and this entrance to Vessen Keep. The nerra, who learned the guardians' secrets from Heri ir'Vessen, see their usefulness as the castle's first defense, have left them in peace, using their *disguise self* ability to bypass them with ease.

Creatures: The statues are actually wood golems, programmed to attack all but Lord Heri ir'Vessen,

Warlord Gergus, and the member of the Frost Brigade. They recognize their masters by sight alone—they are virtually deaf—so PCs passing the chamber via *invisibility* or by disguising as one of the lords or a member of the Frost Brigade (maybe using Hortolz's *hat of disguise*). They attack those who lack subterfuge with an undying tenacity and resolve.

Wood Golems (6): hp 60, 55, 53, 52, 43, 41; Combat Statistics

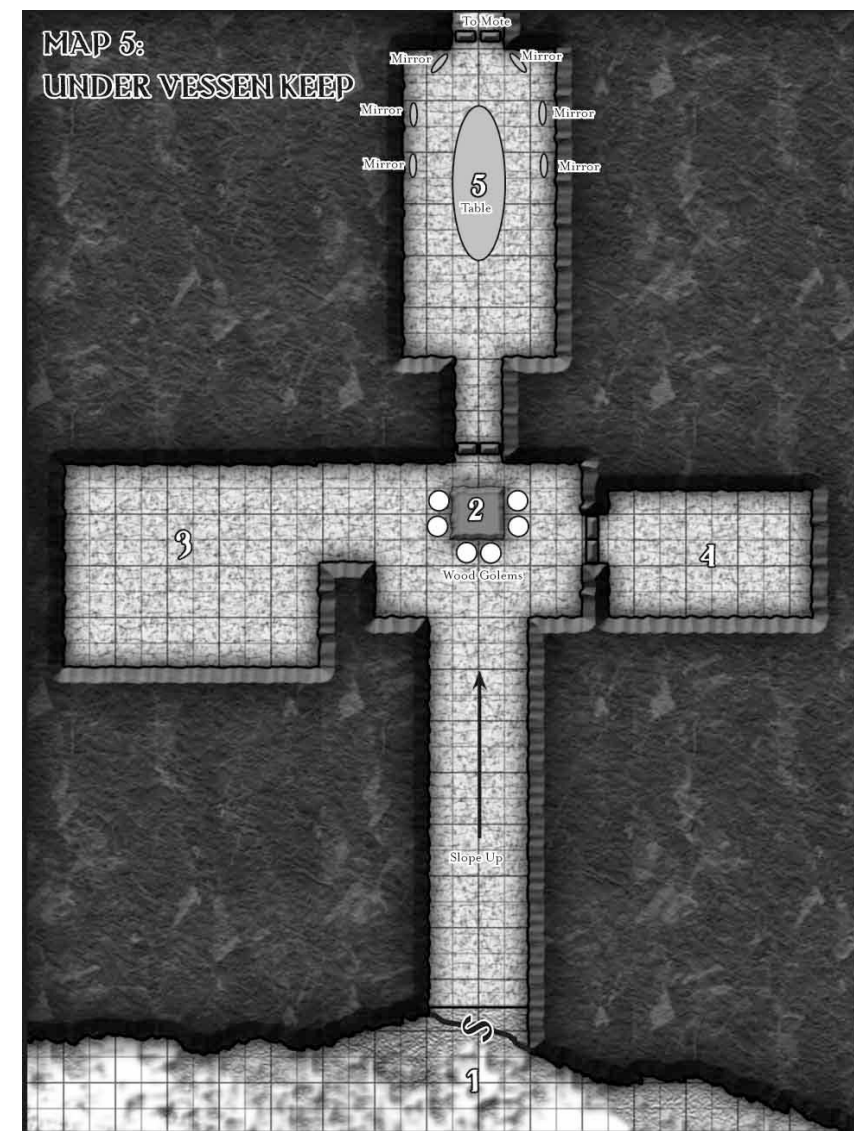
Tactics: Mindless automatons, the wood golems attack until the PCs are driven out of the castle and its dungeon, the intruders or dead, or they are destroyed. They have been programmed to know the importance of flanking and attacks of opportunity, but lack any further advanced tactics.

Development: The iron double door beyond the shrine is locked (good lock DC 30) but not trapped. The Vessen key unlocks the door. The area just in front of the door is warded with an *alarm* spell (8th-level caster) placed by a varoot nerra sorcerer. The spell triggers a silent alarm that warns sorcerer, who in turn reports the intrusion to Nur-Zumiil. The sillit nerra immediately moves to the Great Hall to confront the threat (see area 5).

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

9th-Level Characters: The wood golems are specially prepared with a magical resin that suppresses their fire vulnerability. They are immune to all fire effects that allow for spell resistance.

10th-Level Characters: Not only are the wood golems prepared with the magical resin described above, the statue of Dol Dorn is an ill-made Stone Golem (hp 107; *MM* 136, lacks the DR of normal stone golems).



torches of the shrine can be seen flickering in the distance from the secret opening.

2. WOODEN SOLDIERS (EL 8)

Atop a large marble slab adorned with numerous sconces and torches, stands a tall and triumphant statue of Dol Dorn in his human form. Surrounding the statue on all visible sides are life-sizes wooden statues of warriors. All wear the device of Vessen—the head of great black bear crushing a longsword in his jaws.

Everburning touches in the sconces illuminate this shrine to Dol Dorn. While the wooden statues are part of the shrine, each an effigy of an ancient Vessen warlord, they

COMBAT STATISTICS

WOOD GOLEM CR 3

"Lesser Golems" from *Dragon* issue 341

N Medium Construct

Init -1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision

AC 19, touch 9, flat-footed 17

hp variable, see encounter text (4 HD); **DR** 5/slashing

Vulnerable fire

Immunities ability damage, critical hits, death effects, disease, effects that require a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects or is harmless), energy drain, exhaustion, fatigue, magic (see below), massive damage, mind-affecting effects (charms,

compulsion, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects), necromancy effects, nonlethal damage, paralysis, poison, sleep effects, stunning
Fort +1, **Ref** +0, **Will** +1

Spd 20 ft. (4 squares)

Melee 2 slams +6 (1d10+3)

Base Atk +3; **Grp** +6

Abilities Str 16, Dex 8, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 1

SQ buoyant, construct traits, fast repair, fire vulnerability, low-light vision, magic immunity

Buoyant (Ex): Wood golems float in water and other liquids, and automatically succeed at any Swim checks to remain on the surface.

Fast Repair (Su): If a wood golem is damaged, its body begins to warp and knit itself together, repairing 2 hit points per round. This ability is identical to fast healing, except that it repairs damage rather than curing it. If the golem is reduced to 0 hit points or less, the wood ceases to renew and the golem is destroyed. Hit points lost as a result of fire damage cannot be repaired with this ability.

Fire Vulnerability: The body of a wood golem is, naturally, very susceptible to fire damage. Wood golems take half again as much (+50%) damage from fire. In addition, hit points lost of fire cannot be repaired by the golem's fast repair ability.

Magic Immunity (Ex): A wood golem is immune to any spell or spell-like ability (or power, psi-like ability, or infusion) that allows spell resistance (or power resistance). In addition certain spells and effects function differently against these creatures as noted below.

Any spell that deals fire damage affects the golem normally and deals extra damage, per the creature's fire vulnerability. *Antiplant shell* affects wood golems as if they were plants. *Plant growth* repairs all damage dealt to a wood golem, restoring it to full hit points.

3. STABLES

This large room contains numerous stalls for horses, and the supplies of a well-stocked stable.

There are three magebred horses (*ECS* 295; thick-skinned breed) still in the stable, each in their own stall. The rest of the horses died in the Frost Brigades last charge on the Fields of the Dead.

The horses stay fed, and the stalls stay clean thanks to an assortment of magical wards and devices all bearing the mark of House Vadalis.

4. ARMORY

The walls of this chamber are covered with various weapons and armor racks. Hundreds of weapons are stored here, all seem well made and clean, and many are adorned with the Vessen device.

In the center of the room, a preserved and stuffed ogre is posed with his massive greatclub ready to strike—obviously a trophy of some Vessen hunting expeditions.

A storehouse in times of siege, there are dozens of weapons and armor of almost every variety in this place. Most of the weapons and armor in this place are the normal variety found in the PH, but there are some exceptions. Five of the longswords and one of the greatswords are masterwork. The greatclub in the stuffed ogre's hand is a +1 *thundering greatclub*, and a chest hidden behind of the weapon cabinets (Search DC 15) contains four thunderstones.

5. GREAT HALL (EL 9)

This long hall is adorned with polished granite and brass. Paintings of military actions, Vessen general, and the trophies of war decorate the walls, and a truly massive table dominates its center. Flanking the table in a crescent shape on the far

end of the room are six standing mirrors, all pointing toward the head of the table.

This chamber once served as the lower most hall, and tactical planning area for the keep. Once the headquarters for Warlord Gergus, and meeting hall for the Frost Brigade, it is now the upper-most hall of Vessen Keep that has not been swallowed up by the mote.

If the PCs did not set off the alarm beyond the shrine to Dol Dorn (see area 2), this place is uninhabited, though the abundance of mirrors in this chamber will likely put the PCs on guard.

If the PCs find the place uninhabited, but break a mirror in this chamber three kalareem nerra (see area 6) come to investigate through another, with two staying to try to stop the PCs while the other mirror jumps back to the mote to warn the others of the approach.

If the PCs set off the alarm, the stage is set slightly differently. At the far end of the table sits Lord Heri ir'Vessen (PCs recognize his visage if they played *EMH-3 No Ticket*)

Creature: The real Lord ir'Vessen died on the assault that brought the mote to Vessen keep. Like the one met on the lightning rail in *EMH-3 No Ticket* this one is a disguised nerra; the second in command to the nerra force, a cunning sillit nerra named Nur-Zemiil.

Nur-Zemiil: female sillit nerra beguiler 4: hp 65; Combat Statistics.

Tactics: Nur-Zemiil's chief goal is to convince the PCs that she is Lord ir'Vessen, and that she has everything under control. Politely, she asks the PCs to travel back to Korth, and report the Kyrthri insurgency to agents of King Kaius.

She is convincing in this role (Bluff +14 [acting +16], Disguise +14), but lacks any detailed knowledge of the ir'Vessen holdings or Karnnath. Even without magic, the PCs could suss out her deception with cunning quizzes on ir'Vessen and Karnn trivia.

If her ruse is discovered, Nur-Zemiil doesn't panic or attack, she just changes her negotiation strategy.

She gives the PC a brief history lesson on the nerra, their enslavement, and their recent fight for freedom. If pressed, she admits that the nerra have done some terrible things to the people of Eberron to secure their, even now, tenuous hold on freedom, she insists that all were acts of desperation or ignorance on how the mote and the conterminous state with Kyrthri would affect the people and places of Eberron. The nerra just wish to be free, and would be happy to live peacefully with the people of Eberron to achieve it.

With this new tact, Nur-Zemiil is still deceiving the PCs. The nerra would much rather continue pursuing their infiltration of Eberron than join it through negotiation, as she doubts the powers of Eberron would truly accept her and her people. Such posturing is just a ploy to find out more about the PCs strength, connections, and personality (for future replication) than it is any real deal making; unless, of course, the PC hold the *shatterstone*.

That item is immediately recognizable by Nur-Zemiil and all the nerra in the mote as their potential doom, and the sillit nerra takes extreme steps to neutralize the threat...including true and real negotiations (see Conclusion).

Development: If negotiations go poorly, or end in combat, Nur-Zemiil makes her escape through one of the mirrors, mirror jumping to the mote, where the PCs likely encounter her anew.

COMBAT STATISTICS

NUR-ZEMIL

CR 9

Female sillit nerra beguiler* 4

N Medium outsider (extraplanar)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +14, Spot +14

Languages Common, Kythric

AC 29, touch 15, flat-footed 27

hp 65 (11 HD)

Resist Cold 15, electric 15, fire 15; **SR** *reflective spell resistance* 21

Fort +9, **Ref** +11, **Will** +12

Weakness sonic vulnerability

Spd 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee nerra shard longsword +14 (1d8+3/19-20 plus wounding)

Ranged +5 *shuriken* (star from *robe of stars*) +18 (1d2+6)

Base Atk +9; **Grp** +11

Attack Options 3/day—shard spay (30-ft. cone, DC 16 for half; 5d6 plus bleeding)

Beguiler Spells (CL 4th; d20+4 to overcome SR)

2nd—4/day—*blinding color surge** (DC 15), *blur*, *daze monster* (DC 16), *detect thoughts* (DC 15), *fog cloud*, *glitterdust* (DC 15), *hypnotic pattern* (DC 15), *invisibility*, *knock*, *minor image*, *mirror image* (DC 15), *misdirection* (DC 15), *see invisibility*, *silence* (DC 15), *spider climb*, *stay the hand** (DC 16), *Tasha's hideous laughter* (DC 16), *touch of idiocy*, *vertigo** (DC 15), *whelming burst** (DC 16).

1st—7/day—*charm person* (DC 15), *color spray* (DC 14), *comprehend languages*, *detect secret doors*, *disguise self*, *expeditious retreat*, *hypnotism* (DC 15), *mage armor*, *obscuring mist*, *rouse**, *silent image* (DC 14), *sleep* (DC 15), *undetectable alignment*, *whelm** (DC 15).

o—6/day—*dancing lights*, *daze* (DC 14), *detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 13), *message*, *open/close*, *read magic*.

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 16th; 1d20+16 to overcome SR)

At will—*change self*, *false vision*, *mirror image*; 3/day—*mislead*

Abilities Str 13, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 17, Wis 14, Cha 18

Feats Alertness, Exotic Weapon proficiency (nerra shard longsword), Improved Initiative, Spell Focus (enchantment), Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (nerra shard longsword)^B.

Skills Bluff +18, Concentration +14, Diplomacy +8, Disguise +14 (+16 acting), Gather Information +14, Hide +11, Intimidate +16, Jump +2, Knowledge (the planes) +13, Listen +14, Move Silently +11, Search +12, Sense Motive +14, Spot +14, Survival +2 (+4 following track on other planes), Tumble +14.

SQ Armored mage, trapfinding, cloaked casting (+1 DC), surprise casting, advanced learning

Possessions +1 *chain shirt*, nerra shard longsword, +2 *ring of protection*, *robe of stars* (3 stars).

Armored Mage (Ex): Normally, armor of any type interferes with arcane spellcasting gestures, which can cause spells to fail if those spells have somatic components. A beguiler's limited focus and specialized training, however, allow you to avoid any chance of arcane spell failure as long as you restrict yourself to light armor. This training does not extend to any other form of armor, nor does this ability apply to spells gained from other spell-casting classes.

Cloaked Casting (Ex): Starting at 2nd level, a beguiler's spells become more affective when cast against an unwary foe. You gain a +1 bonus to the spell's save DC when you cast a spell that targets any foe who would be denied a Dexterity bonus to AC (whether the target actually has a Dexterity bonus or not).

Mirror Jump (Su): Nerras can move through mirrored and reflective surfaces at will. The effect is similar to shadow walk, but the nerra travels through their home plane.

Nerra Shard Weapon: Nerras swords and daggers are made out of the substance of their plane. Resembling the shards of a broken mirror that have been set into a shiny hilt, they look deceptively fragile. In the hands of someone with and Exotic Weapon Proficiency in the weapon they are a +2 *wounding* weapon. Those without the feat wield it awkwardly (-4 penalty to attack rolls) and don't benefit from the *wounding* effect.

Reflective Spell Resistance (Sp): a spell resisted bounces off and is reflected back to the caster. The caster becomes either

the spell's target or the point of origin for the spell's effect, as appropriate.

Shard Spray (Su): 3/day—Nur_Zemiil can release a 30-ft. cone of mirrorlike shards from her hands that do 5d6 points of damage to all within the cone area. All within the cone get a DC 16 Reflex save for half damage and to avoid further effect. Those who fail their save suffer another 2 points of damage each round, as the wounds persistently bleed. Multiple wounds from this type of attack are cumulative. The bleeding can be stopped with a successful Heal check (DC 10) or the casting of any *cure* spell on the wounded creature.

Sonic Vulnerability (Ex): All nerras take half again as much (+50%) damage as normal from an attack involving sonic energy, regardless of whether a saving throw is allowed, of the save is a success or failure.

Surprise Casting (Ex): Starting at 2nd level, when you successfully use the Bluff skill to feint in combat, your target is denied its Dexterity bonus (if it has one) to AC for the next melee attack you make against it or the next spell you cast. You must remain in melee with the target, and the attack must be made or the spell cast on or before your next turn. The target is not considered flat-footed and therefore can make attacks of opportunity against you if you do not cast defensively.

*From *Player's Handbook II*; information need to run class or spell is contained in statistic block, or presented in the new spells and powers sidebar.

NUR-ZEMIL

CR 10

Female sillit nerra beguiler* 5

N Medium outsider (extraplanar)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +14, Spot +14

Languages Common, Kythric

AC 30, touch 15, flat-footed 28

hp 71 (12 HD)

Resist Cold 15, electric 15, fire 15; **SR** *reflective spell resistance* 22

Fort +9, **Ref** +11, **Will** +12

Weakness sonic vulnerability

Spd 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee nerra shard longsword +14 (1d8+3/19-20 plus wounding)

Ranged +5 *shuriken* (star from *robe of stars*) +18 (1d2+6)

Base Atk +9; **Grp** +11

Attack Options 3/day—shard spay (30-ft. cone, DC 16 for half; 5d6 plus bleeding)

Beguiler Spells (CL 4th; d20+4 to overcome SR)

2nd—5/day—*blinding color surge** (DC 16), *blur*, *daze monster* (DC 16), *detect thoughts* (DC 16), *fog cloud*, *glitterdust* (DC 16), *hypnotic pattern* (DC 16), *invisibility*, *knock*, *minor image*, *mirror image* (DC 16), *misdirection* (DC 16), *see invisibility*, *silence* (DC 16), *spider climb*, *stay the hand** (DC 16), *Tasha's hideous laughter* (DC 16), *touch of idiocy*, *vertigo** (DC 16), *whelming burst** (DC 16).

1st—7/day—*charm person* (DC 15), *color spray* (DC 15), *comprehend languages*, *detect secret doors*, *disguise self*, *expeditious retreat*, *hypnotism* (DC 15), *mage armor*, *obscuring mist*, *rouse**, *silent image* (DC 15), *sleep* (DC 15), *undetectable alignment*, *whelm** (DC 15).

o—6/day—*dancing lights*, *daze* (DC 14), *detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 14), *message*, *open/close*, *read magic*.

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 16th; 1d20+16 to overcome SR)

At will—*change self*, *false vision*, *mirror image*; 3/day—*mislead*

Abilities Str 13, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 17, Wis 14, Cha 18

Feats Alertness, Exotic Weapon proficiency (nerra shard longsword), Improved Initiative, Silent Spell^B, Spell Focus (enchantment), Spell Focus (illusion), Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (nerra shard longsword)^B.

Skills Bluff +19, Concentration +15, Diplomacy +8, Disguise +16 (+18 acting), Gather Information +14, Hide +11, Intimidate +18, Jump +2, Knowledge (the planes) +13, Listen +14, Move Silently +11, Search +12, Sense Motive +14, Spot +14, Survival +2 (+4 following track on other planes), Tumble +15.

SQ Armored mage, trapfinding, cloaked casting (+1 DC), surprise casting, advanced learning

Possessions +2 chain shirt, nerra shard longsword, +2 ring of protection, robe of stars (3 stars).

Armored Mage (Ex): Normally, armor of any type interferes with arcane spellcasting gestures, which can cause spells to fail if those spells have somatic components. A beguiler's limited focus and specialized training, however, allow you to avoid any chance of arcane spell failure as long as you restrict yourself to light armor. This training does not extend to any other form of armor, nor does this ability apply to spells gained from other spell-casting classes.

Cloaked Casting (Ex): Starting at 2nd level, a beguiler's spells become more affective when cast against an unwary foe. You gain a +1 bonus to the spell's save DC when you cast a spell that targets any foe who would be denied a Dexterity bonus to AC (whether the target actually has a Dexterity bonus or not).

Mirror Jump (Su): Nerras can move through mirrored and reflective surfaces at will. The effect is similar to shadow walk, but the nerra travels through their home plane.

Nerra Shard Weapon: Nerras swords and daggers are made out of the substance of their plane. Resembling the shards of a broken mirror that have been set into a shiny hilt, they look deceptively fragile. In the hands of someone with an Exotic Weapon Proficiency in the weapon they are a +2 wounding weapon. Those without the feat wield it awkwardly (-4 penalty to attack rolls) and don't benefit from the wounding effect.

Reflective Spell Resistance (Sp): a spell resisted bounces off and is reflected back to the caster. The caster becomes either the spell's target or the point of origin for the spell's effect, as appropriate.

Shard Spray (Su): 3/day—Nur-Zemiil can release a 30-ft. cone of mirrorlike shards from her hands that do 5d6 points of damage to all within the cone area. All within the cone get a DC 16 Reflex save for half damage and to avoid further effect. Those who fail their save suffer another 2 points of damage each round, as the wounds persistently bleed. Multiple wounds from this type of attack are cumulative. The bleeding can be stopped with a successful Heal check (DC 10) or the casting of any cure spell on the wounded creature.

Sonic Vulnerability (Ex): All nerras take half again as much (+50%) damage as normal from an attack involving sonic energy, regardless of whether a saving throw is allowed, of the save is a success or failure.

Surprise Casting (Ex): Starting at 2nd level, when you successfully use the Bluff skill to feint in combat, your target is denied its Dexterity bonus (if it has one) to AC for the next melee attack you make against it or the next spell you cast. You must remain in melee with the target, and the attack must be made or the spell cast on or before your next turn. The target is not considered flat-footed and therefore can make attacks of opportunity against you if you do not cast defensively.

*From *Player's Handbook II*; information need to run class or spell is contained in statistic block, or presented in the new spells and powers sidebar.

6. MOTE IN THE EYE OF CHAOS (EL 12*)

Just past the Great Hall, and up the winding stairway, a passage leads to what was once the upper dungeon level of the keep. Now it opens up into the great mote in the plane of Kythri that the nerra call Specurium.

Dungeon corridor falls away into a dizzying display of open space. Before you is a sea of hot and airy void, seemingly miles if not scores or even hundreds of miles across. Within this

strange sea float thousands of floating rocky islands, all adorn with mirror-like shard growths.

Nerra of all types scramble on the all surfaces of the islands, each governed by its own strange gravity with down as each individual island's center. The nerra move from island to island by one of two ways. While some fly, others walk into the mirrorlike shards, finding egress through another shard on another island.

The majority of the activity of this strange place occurs in the far distance, at what appears to be a violent rift in the hazy boundaries of this pocket dimension. At that rift and intense battle is taken place, and even at the intense distance you can make out forces of nerra, githzerai, and slaad pitted in the fierce breach battle.

Closer to home, the nerra in the islands closer to you have noticed your entrance, and move toward their strange shard portals. Four similar portals grace the large overhang of Eberron reality where you are currently standing.

The physics of the mote is very similar to the Astral Plane (DMG 154) with directional gravity (centered on islands) and the enhanced magic that quickens magic (which has given the nerra an advantage in their fight against the githzerai). These physics extend to the boarder marked "save zone" on the map.

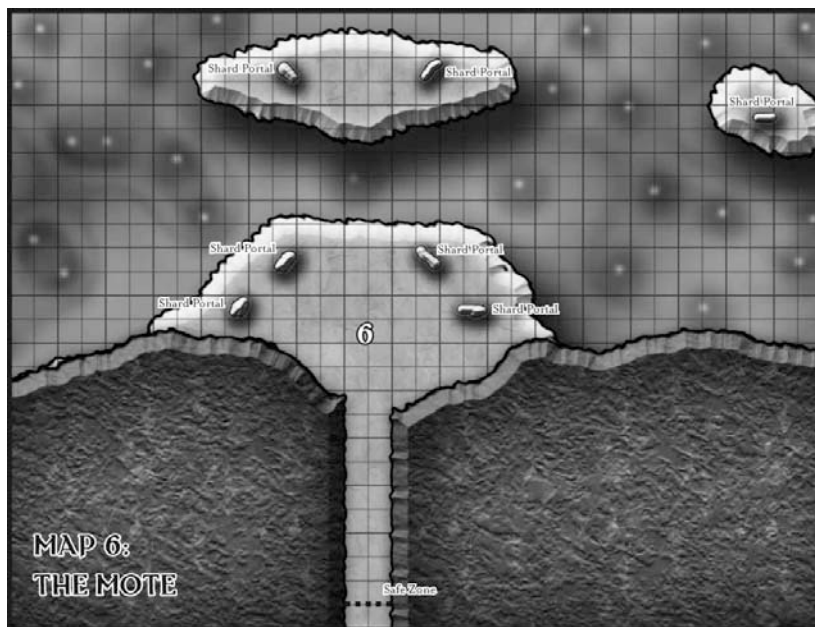
For PCs who fall off the ledge or one of the islands, and cannot be rescued, they are considered lost (character death), as no nerra will rescue them.

The mirrorlike shard portals that serve as the mirror jump points for the nerra have the following stats.

Mirrorlike Shard Portal: 5 inches thick; hardness 5; hp 60; vulnerable to sonic damage (no hardness, does 50% more damage).

Creatures: On the first round one kalareem nerra exits from each of the four mirrorlike shard portal on the overhang. Each round thereafter, 1d4, -1 for each mirrorlike shards the PCs have destroyed, kalareem nerra enter the combat through the shards.

Kalareem Nerra: hp 19 each; Combat Statistics. If the PCs met with Nur-Zemiil in the Great Hall, and she escaped to the mote, she directs the assault on the PCs from the closest island (the one shown on the map of the overhang). That island floats at the same level as the overhang (making it a straight 20-foot jump from the



PC's starting position).

Nur-Zemiil: female sillit nerra beguiler 4: hp 65;
Combat Statistics (above).

Tactics: The nerra assault keeps coming until the PCs flee, enter into some form of diplomacy with Nur-Zemiil (see below), destroy all of the mirrorlike shard portals (which prompts Nur-Zemiil to treat for peace) or the pry Specurium away from Eberron by using the *shatterstone*.

Development: What could be the quickest and most dramatic ending to this encounter is if the PCs use the *shatterstone* to sever the connection between the mote and Eberron. In the five rounds it takes for the *shatterstone* to power up and explode, Nur-Zemiil and here people fight frantically to stop that from happening. The best strategy the nerra can employ is to capture the *shatterstone*, and move it to the great hall via the mirrorlike portal and the mirrors in that chamber. If that is impossible, because the PCs shattered the portals or the mirrors, a brave kalareem nerra attempts to grab the *shatterstone* and run it to a safe part of the Vessen Keep dungeon beyond (see the map for the safe zone).

If the *shatterstone* is used as a threat, Nur-Zemiil is willing to enter into real diplomacy, agreeing to seek out help from the Diggers' Union for her peoples quest for freedom from there Kythri overlords (see Conclusion).

COMBAT STATISTICS

KALAREEM NERRA

CR 3

N Medium outsider (extraplanar)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +8, Spot +8

Languages Common, Kythric

AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15

hp 19 (3 HD)

Resist Cold 10, Electric 10, Fire 10; **SR** *reflective spell resistance* 15

Fort +5, **Ref** +6, **Will** +5

Weakness sonic vulnerability

Spd 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee 2 nerra shard longsword +9 (1d8+2/19-20 plus wounding)

Base Atk +3; **Grp** +4

Attack Options shard spray—3/day

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th; 1d20+12 to overcome SR)

1day—*mirror image*

Abilities Str 13, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 13

Feats Exotic Weapon Proficiency (shard longsword)^B, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (shard dagger)^B, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (shard longsword)^B

Skills Bluff +7, Diplomacy +6, Disguise +7 (+9 acting), Hide +9, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (arcane) +6, Knowledge (the planes) +6, Listen +8, Move Silently +9, Sense Motive +7, Spot +8

Possessions two nerra shard longswords.

Mirror Jump (Su): Nerras can move through mirrored and reflective surfaces at will. The effect is similar to shadow walk, but the nerra travels through their home plane.

Nerra Shard Weapon: Nerras swords and daggers are made out of the substance of their plane. Resembling the shards of a broken mirror that have been set into a shiny hilt, they look deceptively fragile. In the hands of someone with and Exotic Weapon Proficiency in the weapon they are a +2 *wounding* weapon. Those without the feat wield it awkwardly (-4 penalty to attack rolls) and don't benefit from the *wounding* effect.

Reflective Spell Resistance (Sp): a spell resisted bounces off and is reflected back to the caster. The caster becomes either the spell's target or the point of origin for the spell's effect, as appropriate.

Sonic Vulnerability (Ex): All nerras take half again as much (+50%) damage as normal from an attack involving sonic energy, regardless of whether a saving throw is allowed, of the save is a success or failure.

Shard Spray (Su): 3/day—a kalareem can release a 30-ft. cone of mirrorlike shards from it hands that do 3d4 points of

damage to all within the cone area. All within the cone get a DC 16 Reflex save for half damage and to avoid further effect. Those who fail their save suffer another 2 points of damage each round, as the wounds persistently bleed. Multiple wounds from this type of attack are cumulative. The bleeding can be stopped with a successful Heal check (DC 10) or the casting of any *cure* spell on the wounded creature.

NEW SPELLS AND POWERS

ADRENALINE BOOST

Complete Psionic 78

Pycho-metabolism

Level: Lurk 1, Physical Power 1, psychic warrior 1

Display: Olfactory

Manifest Time: 1 swift action

Range: Personal

Target: You

Duration: 1 round

Power Points: 1

You can increase your physical prowess and reaction speed until the beginning of your next round. You receive a +2 insight bonus to Strength and Dexterity.

Augment: For every 3 additional power points you spend, the bonus increases by 1.

BLINDING COLOR SURGE

Player's Handbook II 104

Illusion (Glamer)

Level: Beguiler 2, sorcerer/wizard 2

Components: V, S, F

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Targets: You and one creature

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

You strip the color from your body and gear, turning it into a lance of energy, and hurl it at a target. When you cast this spell, you target a creature with the colors stripped from your form. The target must make a Will save or be blinded for 1 round.

You also gain the benefit of *invisibility*, for the duration of this spell, even if the target creature succeeds on its save or if its spell resistance protects it.

Focus: A small prism.

DIMENSIONAL LEAP

Magic of Eberron 95

Level: Bard 2, sorcerer/wizard 2

Components: V

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: 10 ft./level

Target: you and touched objects

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

You instantly transfer yourself from you current location to another spot within range. The distance traveled must be an increment of 10 feet (10 feet, 20 feet, 30 feet, and so on). You always arrive at exactly the spot desired, whether by simply visualizing the area or by stating directions and distance. You can bring along any object you are touching as the spell is cast, so long as their weight doesn't exceed you maximum load. You cannot bring along other creatures.

If this spell would put you in a place that is already occupied by a solid body, the spell fails.

EVADE ATTACK

Complete Psionic 89

Psychoportation

Level: Lurk 2, nomad 2

Display: Visual

Manifester Time: 1 immediate action

Range: Personal

Target: You

Duration: instantaneous

Power Points: 3

You warp space, briefly creating a shimmering, translucent blue sphere around yourself that deflects on attack of opportunity you provoke with your move action.

Augment: If you spend 4 additional power points, you can attempt to avoid one successful regular attack made against you (instead of an attack of opportunity). To successfully evade a regular attack, you must make a manifest level check (1d20 + your manifest level, maximum +10) against a DC of 15. If you succeed the attack misses.

EXTEND REACH

Complete Psionic 89

Psychokinesis

Level: Lurk 2, psychic warrior 2

Display: Visual

Manifester Time: 1 swift action

Range: Touch

Target: One melee weapon

Duration: 1 round

Power Points: 3

You cause a telekinetic extension to form as you strike with your weapon, granting you greater reach in combat. When you manifest this power, your weapon becomes a reach weapon, extending its reach by 5 feet. If your weapon is already a reach weapon, this power extends its reach an additional 5 feet. The weapon no longer threatens all the squares that it previously threatened, but instead threatens those that are 5 feet farther ways. For example, if you manifest extend reach while using a bastard sword, you cannot attack an adjacent opponent, but you can attack one 10 feet away. If you are using a guisarme (a polearm with a 10-foot reach), you do not threaten an opponent 10 feet away, but threaten an opponent 15 feet away.

Augment: For every additional power point you spend, the duration increases by 1 round.

MINDBURN

Magic of Eberron 99

Enchantment (Compulsion) [Mind-Affecting]

Level: Sorcerer/wizard 2

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: One creature

Duration: 1 round/3 levels

Saving Throw: Will negates; see text

Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell attacks a creature's mind, causing the target to lose its highest-level remaining spell, spell slot, or infusion slot each round. The target gets a save to avoid this effect each round. On its first successful save, the spell ends.

ROUSE

Player's Handbook II 123

Enchantment (Compulsion) [Mind-Affecting]

Level: Beguiler 1, duskblade 1, sorcerer/wizard 1

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: 10-ft.-radius burst

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

With a loud snap of your fingers, you cause any sleeping creature in the spell's area to awaken.

This spell has no effect on creatures that are unconscious due to being reduced to negative hit points, or that have taken nonlethal damage in excess of their current hit points.

SENSORY GLOOM

Complete Psionic 98

Psychometabolism

Level: Lurk 1

Display: Material

Manifester Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: Once creature

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates

Power Resistance: Yes

Power Points: 3

You override your target's nervous system and partially shut down one of its senses. You can choose which sense to affect when manifesting this power. Each obscured sense has a different effect on the foe.

Sight: The target's vision is hampered. It sees its surroundings as if through a dense fog. Creatures that are adjacent to the target seem blurry, and any attacks made against an adjacent opponent are made as if that opponent had concealment. Creatures more than 5 feet away from the target have the benefit of total concealment.

Hearing: The target is temporarily deafened (*Player's Handbook* 307).

Scent/Taste: The target cannot smell or taste anything. Creatures that normally benefit from the scent ability (*Monster Manual* 314) no longer do so for the duration of the power. Characters who try to ascertain the properties of a potion by taste automatically fail in the attempt.

Touch: The target cannot feel the ground (as if its limbs had fallen asleep) or assess its position in relation to the ground accurately. The target must succeed on a DC 5 Balance check each round to keep from falling prone. If the target falls prone, it must succeed on a DC 10 Balance check to stand up. Creatures that normally benefit from the tremorsense ability no longer do so for the duration of the power.

Augment: You can augment this power in one or both of the following ways.

1. For every 2 additional power points you spend, you can affect one additional sense simultaneously. You can affect a total of four senses.
2. For every 2 additional power points you spend, the power's save DC increases by 1

STAY THE HAND

Player's Handbook II 126

Enchantment (Compulsion) [Mind-Affecting]
Level: Bard 1, beguiler 2, cleric 2, sorcerer/wizard 2
Components: V
Casting Time: 1 immediate action
Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)
Target: One humanoid
Duration: instantaneous
Saving Throw: Will negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

If the target creature fails its save against *stay the hand*, it refrains from attacking you or targeting you with spells for the remainder of the current round. You can cast this spell during an opponent's turn after the opponent announces its intention to attack you or target you with a spell. If the opponent becomes subject to this spell, it can choose a new target to attack, but it takes a -4 circumstance penalty on its attack roll due to the sudden change of intentions at the last second. Likewise, the subject of this spell can redirect a spell that has been target on you, but it must succeed on a Concentration check (DC 15 + the spell's level) or the spell is wasted.

STHYGIAN DISCERNMENT

Complete Psionic 100

Clairsentience

Level: Death 1, psion/wilder 1, psychic warrior 1
Display: Auditory and visual
Manifester Time: 1 standard action
Range: 60 ft.
Area: Cone-shaped emanation
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 min./level see text
Saving Throw: None
Power Resistance: No
Power Points: 1

You can detect the aura that surrounds undead creatures. Furthermore, you can detect the aura that emanates from negative energy effects, whether instantaneous or ongoing. The amount of information revealed depends on how long you study a particular area. If you fully study a location, you gain benefits against the threats your power might have revealed.

1st Round: Presence or absence of undead or negative energy auras.

2nd Round: Number of undead or negative energy auras in the area and the strength of the strongest such aura present. If you are good-aligned, the strongest undead or negative energy aura's strength is overwhelming (see below), and if the creature (or negative energy effect has Hit Dice (or is of a level) equal to at least twice your character level, you are stunned for 1 round and the power ends.

3rd Round: The strength and location of each undead or negative energy aura. If an aura is outside your line of sight, you discern its direction but not its exact location. Upon spending 3 rounds studying a particular area with stygian discernment, your enhanced knowledge provides you with a +2 insight bonus that you can apply toward your next attack roll, saving throw, or the save DC of the next power you manifest that affects the undead creature you have located using this spell.

Augment: The strength of an undead or negative energy aura is determined by the Hit Dice (or spell/power level) of the undead creature (or negative energy effect) as shown on the following table:

HD/Spell or Power Level	Strength
0-1	Faint
2-4	Moderate
5-10	Strong
11 or higher	Overwhelming

VERTIGO

Player's Handbook II 127

Illusion (Phantasm) [Fear, Mind-Affecting]
Level: Bard 2, beguiler 2, sorcerer/wizard 2
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Target: One living creature
Duration: 1 round/level (D)
Saving Throw: Will disbelief
Spell Resistance: No

The subject of this spell becomes dizzy as the ground seems to drop away beneath its feet. The subject must succeed on a DC 10 Balance check at the start of each turn to take a move action. If it fails, it cannot move. If it fails the check by 5 or more, it falls prone. While affected, the subject also takes a -2 penalty on attack rolls and saving throws. Airborne creatures receive a +4 bonus on saves against this spell and do not need to make the Balance check.

WHELM

Player's Handbook II 128

Enchantment (Compulsion) [Mind-Affecting]
Level: Beguiler 1, sorcerer/wizard 1
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Target: One living creature
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: Will negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

You launch a magical assault that wears at the target's mind, dealing 1d6 points of nonlethal damage if it fails its saving throw.

For every two caster levels beyond 1st, you deal an extra 1d6 points of nonlethal damage to the subject, to a maximum of 5d6 at 9th level.

WHELMING BURST

Player's Handbook II 128

Enchantment (Compulsion) [Mind-Affecting]
Level: Beguiler 2, sorcerer/wizard 2
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: 30 ft.
Area: Cone-shaped burst
Target: One creature
Duration: instantaneous
Saving Throw: Will negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

You assail the mental faculties of creature in the area, dealing 1d6 points of nonlethal damage per two caster levels (maximum 5d6 at 10th level) to each creature that fails its saves.

CONCLUSION

There are many ways this adventure can end successfully. The PCs can free the people of Icenport from the zenkma, and then use the githzerai *shatterstone* to sever the mote from Eberon. They could also negotiate some sort of truce with the nerra, be it real or a ruse by the mirrorfolk to stall the PCs meddling long enough for

them to finally divorce Specurium from Kythri. The following is an overview of each of these endings.

Leaving Icenport

Unless threatened with the shatterzone, Nur-Zumiil will treat with the PCs only to trick them into leaving Icenport. She will make all sorts of promises to get the meddler away from the mote in Vessen keep, but will follow through on none of them.

Destroying the Mote's Connection to Eberron

If the PCs successfully use the *shatterstone* to sever the mote's connection to Eberron, they are thrown by the explosion to the foot of Vessen crag. Shaken but unharmed, the explosion destroys Vessen Keep but it also ends the nerra's involvement with Eberron...at least for now.

True Negotiation

If forced into true negotiations with the PCs due to their threat to use the *shatterstone* to destroy Specurium's connection with Eberron, she agrees to come with the PCs to treat with the Diggers Union and the powers of Khorvaire to find a place for the nerra on the continent.

ADVENTURE QUESTIONS

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS CAMPAIGNS (of which MARK OF HEROES is part of) tracks character progress digitally. At the adventure's end, you report what the characters did, by answering a number of questions. The answers to those questions are tallied, and determine not only what happens in the campaign, but also the experience points (XP) and gold piece (gp) value increase each character gains.

At the end of this adventure, you'll find the RPGA Session Tracking form, tailored for this adventure. On the section titled "Adventure Questions" fill in the bubble that corresponds to the best answer for the questions below.

Many times the questions ask whether or not the PCs defeated an encounter. Defeating doesn't necessarily mean killing all enemies, but many times such an event suffices as defeating an encounter. Sometimes PCs merely bypass an encounter. Through luck or circumstance a group of PCs can avoid encounters unscathed. Does bypassing an encounter earn the XP that defeating it would? No. The reward for getting past an encounter without actually interacting with it is having extra resources to bear in the next encounter. Where is the line? You are going to have to make that decision, because you are the DM.

For traps, PCs get experience points just for encountering them, whether or not they have been disabled.

Sometimes the PCs' actions don't really fit the actions of a particular adventure question perfectly. This especially happens when you play the adventure using the "Scaling the Encounter" options. In these cases find the answer that best fits the spirit of their results.

1. Did the PCs save the children in the lighthouse?

- A. No. They never went to the lighthouse.
- B. No. They tried, but were defeated by the red slaad.
- C. Yes.

2. How did the PCs handle the situation in the Lighthouse?

- A. With guile and cunning. They found out information without having to fight the zenkkma forces there.

- B. They confronted the githzerai and their slaad, and defeated them in a fair fight. Unfortunately the githzerai sorcerer was able to warn her companions.
- C. They defeated the zenkkma forces, and were able to sneak up on the githzerai and slaad in the Mining Camp.
- D. The zenkkma forces defeated the PCs.
- E. They never faced this encounter.

3. Did the PCs find the key in the Fields of the Dead?

- A. No.
- B. Yes.

4. Did the PCs defeat the zenkkma forces in the Mining Camp?

- A. No. They encountered them, maybe even fought them, but parleyed for peace.
- B. No. They defeated the PCs.
- C. Yes.

5. How did the PCs find the secret door into Vessen Keep?

- A. With the help of the town drunk.
- B. By their own devices.
- C. They didn't.

6. Did the PCs defeat the wood golems?

- A. Yes. They destroyed them.
- B. Yes. They bypassed them.
- C. No.

7. How did the PCs handle the nerra in the mote?

- A. They used the shatterstone to sever the connection between the mote and Eberron.
- B. After a brief fight, they negotiated with the nerra.
- C. They never got this far.

8. Rate the Group's roleplaying.

- A. Fantastic! Everyone had interesting and engaging characters that interacted and challenged the adventure in very fun ways.
- B. Good. Most players had interesting and engaging characters.
- C. Okay. There was some roleplaying.
- D. None. There was no roleplaying. They treated the adventure as nothing more than a set of objectives to be accomplished.

DIGITAL STORY OBJECTS

Story objects are now digital. You'll notice on both your Session Tracking Sheet, and in the online reporting on the RPGA database, there's a section titled certification or cert. These sections allow you to enter up to two groups of five alphanumeric characters. At the end of each adventure, usually in a sidebar or in the Conclusion section, there is a list of story objects unique to the adventure. This list also features a description of the object, and the five alphanumeric character code you place on the Session Tracking Sheet and the online reporting to grant a character a particular story object. The story object then is reported with the adventure questions, and appears on the character's online character record after the session is reported.

Here are the story objects for this adventure, give out only one.

Enmity of the Nerra

Cert Code: MH1027

With a strange magic item called a *shatterstone*, you have stopped the main nerra insurgence into Eberron.

Ambassador for the Nerra
Cert Code: MH1028

You have agreed to help the nerra find a place in Eberron by at least presenting their cause to the Diggers' Union, and maybe the greater powers of Khorvaire.
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