

MONTE COOK'S ARCANA EVOLVED:
PLAGUE OF DREAMS



AN ADVENTURE FOR 1ST-LEVEL CHARACTERS

Monte Cook, James Bell & Todd Secord



Fiery Dragon

MONTE COOK'S

ARCANA UNEARTHED

Plague of Dreams

“This task must be undertaken with the gravest care and secrecy”

A Fantasy Roleplaying Adventure for *Monte Cook's Arcana Evolved*

Requires the use of *Monte Cook's Arcana Evolved*, published by Malhavoc Press, and the use of the *Dungeons & Dragons® Third Edition Core Books*, published by Wizards of the Coast, Inc.®

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Introduction

“So deep and varied is the history of these lands that its true memory can only be found in dreams.”

– Nirnura, Akashic Master

The *Malus Morphaera*, known by some as the Sphere of Nightmares, is an unusual and rarely discussed artifact of great destructive potential. Several different forces are searching for this elusive treasure.

Some seek to exploit its untapped knowledge, some to unleash its cataclysmic properties, and at least one hopes to use its abilities to gain wealth and prestige.

A simple caravan robbery has set off a chain of events that will pit several factions against one another, all fighting to secure this single prize. Will the heroes act as unwitting pawns in this contest of wills, or will they succeed despite the odds and prevent the plague of dreams?

Plague of Dreams is a fantasy roleplaying adventure for use with the d20 System and requires *Monte Cook's Arcana Evolved*, published by Malhavoc Press. This introductory adventure is designed for a party of four 1st-level player characters (PCs), but it can easily be modified to present a challenge to larger groups or more powerful characters. On average, four 1st-level PCs that complete this adventure will gain enough experience to reach 3rd-level.

While *Plague of Dreams* is an introductory adventure, it should not be mistaken for a simple adventure or an adventure only for novice players. *Plague of Dreams* serves as an introduction to the rules of *Monte Cook's Arcana Evolved*, as well as to the expanded setting of *The Diamond Throne*, and contains various roleplaying opportunities and challenging combat situations. We should also note that *The Diamond Throne* setting book is not needed to run this adventure successfully. Furthermore, the players need not use *Arcana Evolved* to create their characters; any d20-based fantasy roleplaying game can be used in conjunction with this adventure. The Game Master (GM) should, however, be familiar with *Arcana Evolved* in order to use the NPCs to their fullest.

For those who are experiencing *Arcana Evolved* or *The Diamond Throne* setting for the first time, or for those who simply want a developed starting point for adventure, *Plague of Dreams* is tailored to meet such needs. In addition to the adventure, *Plague of Dreams* presents the multi-racial town of Gahanis, a mining community with a diverse population representing all of the major *Arcana Evolved* races. Notes are included that suggest methods of revealing the nuances of the different races and class abilities.

If you intend to play a character in this adventure, STOP READING NOW! The following information is for the GM only; reading ahead may spoil the secrets and fun found in *Plague of Dreams*.

Preparation

Before running this adventure, the GM should read it through carefully to gain a familiarity with its layout and various features. The adventure is divided into chapters to make the information easier to digest. After the Introduction, the first chapter covers the town of Gahanis, which contains several charts and lists to aid improvisational roleplaying and allows the PCs to explore the town in a free-form fashion. The following chapters detail the adventure itself. The final section is Appendix I: Monsters and NPCs, which contains the stat blocks and write-ups for the various creatures and NPCs encountered in the adventure. Photocopying Appendix I for easy reference during play may be wise, and keeping copies of the maps on hand is also advisable.

In addition, the GM should be familiar with the new races, classes, spells, and abilities presented in *Monte Cook's Arcana Evolved*. If you are using a tabletop map and counters, such as those found in Fiery Dragon's *Counter Collection IV: World of the Diamond Throne*, you should prepare the counters you will need for this adventure ahead of time. Suggestions for creating new characters and developing backgrounds are included in Setting the Stage, below.

Adventure Background

Though the history of the *Malus Morphaera* itself is long and violent, the particular events currently unfolding in Gahanis are the result of more recent activity. The Jaren, a secretive and mysterious trade guild, have long sought the *Malus Morphaera*, the Sphere of Nightmares. After the artifact was revealed to them in a dream-vision, the Jaren first enlisted the aid of a verrik akashic named Nefenr, who had become indebted to them in order to fund his artistic works. When Nefenr could not find the information they sought, the Jaren began quietly using their network of trade alliances and clients to locate information and resources that might shed light on the mysterious artifact. One distant ally, Xibalba from Zalavat, found a centuries-old mojh-written tome, the *Inmagus Libellum*, which was thought to contain a brief mention of the orb. The Jaren hoped that this text would represent the first step in the artifact's discovery and arranged to have the tome delivered to them with their next trade shipment.

Just days before the book was to arrive, however, the caravan was attacked by bandits, and the *Inmagus Libellum*, along with other valuable treasure, was taken. Even as the Jaren felt the loss, a surviving caravan guard claimed to recognize two of the bandit attackers. Merrill Yannis and Den Rudiger, residents of Gahanis, were implicated in the robbery and a bounty was offered for their capture. While the Jaren are very public in their support to capture the bandits, since the safety of the trade routes are key to their economic longevity, they are quietly seeking mercenaries and bounty hunters to pursue their more covert goal of recovering the *Inmagus Libellum* and, hopefully, the ancient orb.

Behind the Scenes: The Jaren

The Jaren are outcasts who have banded together to impose their will upon the world. Guided by dreams and visions, their methods are chaotic and random at best, sometimes benefiting and sometimes damaging others, yet they focus intently on each new scheme and bring their considerable skills and talents to bear. They took but seven short years to dominate trade in the region. Now, they seek the *Malus Morphaera* — revealed to them in a dream-vision — and its untold power. They do not know exactly what the orb is, but they do know that it bears the potential to annihilate every living thing in the area.

Behind the Scenes: The Blue Knight

Early on, when the Jaren were still consolidating their trade power and subtly destroying their competition, they were granted a powerful and compelling dream. In their shared vision, the spectre of death became an ally, serving as their direct agent against opponents not swayed by guile and blackmail. Two nights later, a wounded sibeccai found herself at the door to the Jaren Guild Hall. They saved her life that night, and in return she offered up herself for service. The Jaren, driven by their vision, performed the ceremony that transformed the sibeccai into the Blue Knight, a champion of death.

Over the past years, while prowling the lands following the darkness that is her guide, the Blue Knight has also undertaken assignments for the Jaren. Destroying rival guilds' entire caravans, slaying untouchable figures who refuse to submit, penetrating unassailable security, the Blue Knight has helped the Jaren establish a position of prominence and power in the region — at the same time becoming a terrible and mysterious creature of death and darkness. The quiet roads are not lightly traveled when signs of the Blue Knight are evident.

Now, the goals of the Jaren have aligned with the cause of destruction itself, and the Blue Knight finds herself outside Gahanis, searching for a mysterious orb that contains a deadly knowledge. The Jaren want to unravel the orb's secret and gain its power. The dark spectre that drives the Blue Knight wants to unleash a terrifying plague that will drive the living past the brink of sanity and down the path of death. Once she finds the orb, the Blue Knight will determine which course of action to follow.



Behind the Scenes: Nefenr

Nefenr, the akashic whom the Jaren first questioned about the orb, knows more than he admits. An artist driven to success, Nefenr first fell in with the Jaren hoping that they would serve as altruistic patrons, financing his artistic projects. In truth, Jaren support comes at a high price, and Nefenr soon found himself little more than a pawn in their bid to control the trade guilds. After several months of using his talents and contacts as a Jaren spy, Nefenr had reached his breaking point. Secretly hoping to buy his freedom, Nefenr used his akashic abilities to track down the caravan bandit groups that had occasionally tormented the routes surrounding Gahanis. With his charisma and powers, as well the knowledge of trade schedules and shipments that he gained while serving the Jaren, Nefenr slowly assumed leadership over the various bandit groups, uniting them into a more efficient and deadly organization. With his growing illegal finances, Nefenr possessed the ability to end his contract with the Jaren, but he refrained since their dealings with him have granted him the knowledge required to plan and enact the bandit raids. So, Nefenr uses the Jaren as they once used him: as an information gathering tool in his bid for success and power.

In addition, living a dual life between the bandits and the Jaren has granted Nefenr something more significant. Several months ago, after some minor investigation by trade authorities, Nefenr moved the main bandit camp to an abandoned structure near the haunted Lake of Lost Voices, two days south of Gahanis. Hidden in a lost shrine, Nefenr found a mystical sphere, the ancient *Malus Morphaera* in fact, though its name and nature were unknown to him. Meditating with the orb did, however, grant Nefenr increased power and additional abilities. At first content to use the orb to develop his artistic creations further, Nefenr soon wanted to learn more about the mysterious artifact. The Jaren sought his help in learning of the orb at this time. Nefenr revealed nothing, but quickly organized his bandit gang when he learned of the *Inmagus Libellum* and its possible revelations about the orb.

Nefenr maintains a double-life, traveling between Gahanis and the Lake of Lost Voices, acting out the roles of a gifted and flamboyant artist by day, a loyal and sharp Jaren spy by night, and a cunning and greedy bandit strategist when the need arises. A new role is beginning to consume him, though: that of devoted servant. Thoughts of the orb grip him daily, and he finds himself quietly visiting it more and more often as ever so slowly he is yielding to its power and becoming an extension of its destructive will.

Adventure Synopsis

The adventure starts in the town of Gahanis. The heroes will be contacted by the Jaren, a mysterious trade organization, who hope to employ the PCs' aid in recovering an important tome taken in a recent caravan robbery. Two of the bandits have been identified, and the Jaren notify the heroes of their location — the long-abandoned Battlehome keep that lies several miles southwest of the town.

Entering the dilapidated Battlehome, the heroes will discover the entrance to the old slave tunnels, used to hide from the dramojh when they ruled the world. Exploring the tunnels will lead to encounters with a local goblin tribe, as well as some new and unusual creatures. Eventually, the bandits' hideout will be discovered, and the heroes will have an opportunity to confront and possibly capture them.

Gleaning information from the two bandits will uncover the existence of a larger bandit network and the location of its lair far to the northwest at the Lake of Lost Voices. The heroes will then be asked to take a 2-day overland journey to investigate and defeat the bandits in their lair. Along the way, the heroes will face several challenges and develop new allies and foes.

Finding the bandits' lair hidden in a fallen temple near the Lake of Lost Voices, the PCs will unravel the true prize sought by the Jaren: the Sphere of Nightmares, a powerful and potentially deadly artifact. The heroes will then be confronted not only by the bandit leader and his men, but by the mysterious Blue Knight, a champion of death.

Success will ensure the safety of Gahanis and the security of local trade routes, while failure could lead to further looting, bandit retaliation, and, possibly, the plague of dreams.

Adapting *Plague of Dreams* to Your Own Campaign

Plague of Dreams is not a generic adventure that can easily be dropped into any d20 fantasy campaign world. It is designed specifically as an introduction to *Arcana Evolved* and takes place in the world of *The Diamond Throne*. *Plague of Dreams* does, however, contain many components that can be useful outside of its primary purpose.

The overall story and plot can easily be modified for any campaign world. The Battlehome, the ancient caves, the Lake of Lost Voices, and the bandits' lair can all become encounters in another adventure not specifically tied to *Plague of Dreams*. New monsters, magic items, and NPCs can be used as drop-ins when a quick write-up is needed. So, while the overall adventure is not easily adapted to other settings, the various parts can be employed in other venues.

Setting the Stage

Creating Characters and Developing Backgrounds

Plague of Dreams is designed for newly created 1st-level characters, though it is easily scalable by increasing the power or number of opponents. When creating new characters for this adventure, a few considerations should be made. The adventure will provide extra intrigue for those playing akashics or verrik characters, both in relation to the orb and the main antagonists. We recommend that a champion of death not be included in the PCs' party for this adventure, since such a character's motives may coincide with the Blue Knight's and could lead to intra-party conflict that may overshadow the adventure. A greenbond or one of the various witch types could find moments to shine in the Battlehome's catacombs or when approaching the Lake of Lost Voices. Runethanes or totem warriors may be intrigued when confronted by the bandit spies, with whom they share abilities. Warmains, oathsworn, and unfettered will provide much needed offensive capabilities to the party, which may prove necessary to complete the adventure. Similarly, the mage blade or magister can add important magical ability and help overcome the various challenges contained in this adventure.

Once characters are created, establishing a reason for their current situation to have them located in the mining town of Gahanis is advisable. Feel free to suggest that the players develop any history they wish, as long as it ends with, "My character is currently in Gahanis because" Since this is an adventure designed to introduce the various races and concepts of *Arcana Evolved* to a new group, having all of the characters be newly arrived to the town may prove beneficial, as the opportunity to explore and learn will mirror the play of the adventure itself. Having one or more of the PCs be natives of Gahanis already is also possible, though steps must be taken to provide the players with any knowledge that would be appropriate for current residents. The drawback to this situation is that it will likely mean more work for the GM and in some respects hinder the mysterious atmosphere presented in the region.

Some possible reasons for new characters to travel to Gahanis include:

- The character is part of a caravan guard or escort that recently arrived with a trade delivery.
- The character has traveled to participate in or witness an upcoming ceremony. Faen characters have come to see Sauz Trusong, the town's finest herbalist, transform into a spryte. Giant characters have come to talk with Ra-Berken, a young giant who will begin his first ritual of the Shu-Rin. Litorians have come in from the plains to attend a large tribal feast.
- The character has come to find his fortune, hoping to strike it rich in one of the three precious metal mines near the city.
- The character is a bounty hunter, drawn in by the reward offered for the two bandit spies.

Story Hooks

The main challenge of developing new characters and uniting them in play to form an adventuring party is finding a common theme or motivation. The GM and individual players can develop character-related motivations, possibly including these driving forces directly in a character's background.

Following the adventure as written, the PCs will be quietly approached by the Jaren and hired to track the two bandit spies and recover the stolen tome. Alternate hooks include:

Caravan Survivor: The character is one of the few caravan guards or passengers who survived the bandit attack. Arriving in town, the character learns of the identity of two of the attackers and seeks revenge.

The entire party of PCs may be survivors of this attack, not knowing each other beforehand, but banding together for survival and retribution. Perhaps playing out a brief skirmish with a few bandits before beginning in Gahanis could familiarize the players with their characters and draw them into the story.

Revenge: Rather than surviving the bandit raid, the PCs are actually related to someone slain in the attack. Learning the identity and possible location of two of the bandits, the PCs have found their chance for revenge.

Bounty Hunters: Gold talks, and the reward for the two bandit spies has been heard loud and clear. The PCs have come to Gahanis to capture the bandits and collect the prize. They could be thrown together by town officials, suggesting they pool their resources to overcome a formidable foe.

Civic Duty: The characters are members of the Gahanis town guard, and this assignment has come up during their shift. This strategy affords an easy way to unite a varied party: the PCs' superiors — who are consumed with preparing for an upcoming ceremony and with patrolling the trade routes — have ordered them to work together and investigate the possibility that the two known bandits are hiding in the Battlehome.

Sibeccai youth all volunteer for a season of guard duty as a rite of passage that honors both their community and Mynorath the Peacekeeper, the guard captain. Young giants sometimes join the town guard as an extension of the Si-Karan, their protective nature driving them to help. Some humans join out of civic duty; others hope to find an opportunity to wield authority over others.

Chapter One

Gahanis

Gahanis is a human name that in older times meant “shelter.” During the rule of the dramojh, it served as a refuge for escaped slaves and rebels. When the giants came, Kether, the leader of Gahanis, attempted to aid them against the dramojh. The giants at the time gave Gahanis the name of Battlehome, for they used it as a base of operations and supply for many years.

Today, Gahanis thrives as a trade center. The mines of the Derenblack Hills, operated largely by sibeccai, produce vast amounts of iron and other metals. Although Gahanis has its own bale furnace and foundry, most ore is shipped in caravans either northward or toward the sea.

The Steward of Gahanis is Ne-Chardath. He works closely with a human Speaker, Neril Sann. The town boasts a population of about 3,500 individuals, with about half those being human, a quarter being sibeccai and faen, and the last quarter made up of giants, verrik, litorians, and mojh — in that order. Not far into the hills dwell two tribes of litorians, which keep in

fairly close contact with Gahanis. They have only a passing interest in the ores that move through the town, but do trade for other supplies. And of course the plains to the north teem with litorians as well.

The fortress of Gahanis still stands, mostly vacant, only occasionally used as a storehouse. The fortress is connected to the vast natural cave system used by escaped slaves in early times to hide from the dramojh. Common wisdom says that some of the bandits who raid caravans leaving Gahanis have spies that hide in the caves and monitor who comes and goes from the town.

Life in Gahanis

The geographic situation in Gahanis has made it ideal for some activities such as iron mining, the main economic drive in the area, and less than ideal for other matters such as crop growing. The soil in Gahanis is rocky and rough, and, while the ranchers who dwell to the east and southeast of the city do not have trouble providing grazing pastures for their herds, the area has never been able to support the wide-spread cultivation of grain or other necessary crops. Fortunately, the iron and ore mines have given Gahanis more than enough material to trade for the items they lack. The trade route, which once passed several days to the east of Gahanis, now diverts into this ore-rich town.

The secondary, and no less famous, exported product from Gahanis is beef. While the soil may not support grain or related food crops, it does produce enough pasture to maintain more than 1,000 dairy and meat animals, primarily cows and pigs. When not

Gahanis (Large Town): Conventional; 3,000 gp limit; Assets 525,000 gp; Population 3,500; 50% Human, 13% Sibeccai, 12% Faen, 10% Giants, 9% Verrik, 5% Litorians, 1% Mojh.

Authority Figures: Ne-Chardath, male giant Steward (Gnt2/Grn1/Ari3); Neril Sann, male human Speaker (Ari2); Mynorath the Peacekeeper, male sibeccai Guard Captain (Sbc2/Wrm2); Elantor, male litorian healer (Chm2 [Life]).

Important Characters: Nefenr, male verrik artist (Aks2/Mgr4); Jaren Guild Master (Wtc5 [Mind]).

Others: Ari1 (x10); Com8 (x1), Com4 (x2), Com2 (x4), Com1 (x2,501); Exp6 (x1), Exp3 (x2), Exp2 (x4), Exp1 (x818); War4 (x1), War2 (x2), War1 (x98); Aks4 (x1), Aks2 (x1), Aks1 (x4); Chm2 (x1); Grn1 (x2); Mbl2 (x1), Mbl1 (x2); Mgr1 (x2); Osn2 (x1), Osn1 (x2); Rth4 (x1), Rth2 (x2), Rth1 (x4); Twr1 (x2); Unf2 (x1), Unf1 (x2); Wrm2 (x2), Wrm1 (x4); Wtc1 (x2).

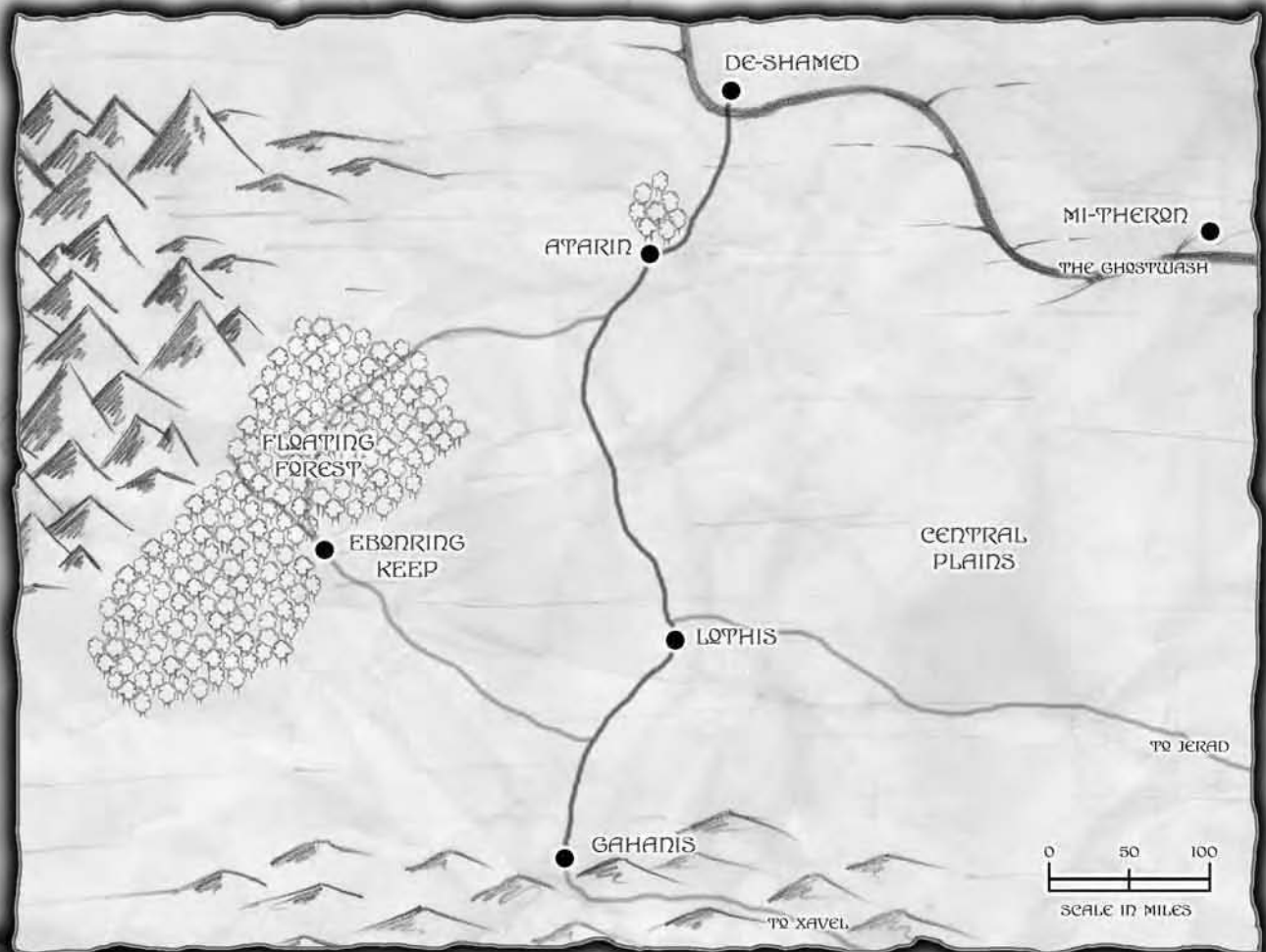
herding them north or south, travelers often enjoy a traditional "Gahanis Steak," seasoned with special mountain flowers and spices. Meat and dairy are the main staples of dining in the town, augmented by hardy local-grown vegetables and various fruits. Exotic produce and grain-based foods, such as breads and pastas, are rare but still enjoyed by the hard-working populace.

Gahanis is a town full of hustle-and-bustle, with a seemingly endless array of traffic both local and visiting. Due to the frequent trade caravans, the population of Gahanis can often double in a single week during the busy summer months. Fine inns often serve as a second home to wealthy merchants and visiting Guild Masters, while the lesser inns, taverns, barracks, and hostels hold the caravan guards and hirelings who stay within city limits. Beyond the city, along the trade routes heading north and south, are frequently used campgrounds and small way stations where less urban (or less wealthy) travelers stay.

Surrounding the town, past the campsites, are the local ranchers who call Gahanis home. Some have small fields of vegetables, though these fields are usually nothing more than glorified gardens, but as noted above, the land is mostly used as grazing pastures for livestock. There are twelve main cattle ranches outside of Gahanis, each with

its own brand and reputation. Beef is still the product of choice, but more cost-conscious farmers have recently taken up pig farming, as it involves a lower cost for a greater yield. There are also goat and sheep farms, and travelers often get news before entering town from the young shepherds who wander the hillsides. Beyond the trade routes, two tribes of litorians hunt and travel the great central plains, south of the Ghostwash.

While Gahanis has developed a resource-based economy and is sometimes viewed by merchants and Guild Masters as nothing more than a necessary stop between Jerad and Xavel, Ne-Chardath, the town's Steward, is hoping to cultivate an appreciation for the artistic side of the citizens. Recently, the town governors, under Ne-Chardath's direction, have begun using the council's coffers to fund artistic and cultural growth within Gahanis. The town's foremost artist, Nefenr, has been placed in charge of one such project celebrating the history and landscape of the community. There has been some related talk about refurbishing the Battlehome keep, restoring its former character without having it perform its original duties. Street performers and musical troupes are quick to display their talents when new caravans or travelers arrive.



Although the peoples of Gahanis celebrate the normal festivals that are respected by the various races, they have also developed a few local customs. One such day is the Bounty Day, possibly an outgrowth of the giants' Landwarding festival and a general thanksgiving ceremony. Bounty Day has been set by tradition and finds all of the inhabitants of Gahanis — even the verrik — co-operating to celebrate and ensure their continued prosperity. During the festival, various tools of the local industries are blessed and empowered in song and ceremony. It is said that animals branded with irons blessed during Bounty Day are immune to disease, while shovels and pick axes so honored are guaranteed to strike iron, gold, or other precious metals. In a diverse community such as Gahanis, Bounty Day is one day for all to put aside their differences and enjoy the spirit of a vibrant town.

Keeping order during the rest of the year is Mynorath the Peacekeeper, the sibeccai sheriff and Captain of the town guard. There are 50 full-time guards in Gahanis, double the usual number for a similar sized town, but understandable in a town where frequent caravans bring strangers in on a regular basis. In addition, there are 100 semi-trained citizens who can quickly form into a stand-by militia. The town guard patrols in pairs, each pair patrolling a regular location during the day and night. Location patrols are redistributed every week, as directed by Ne-Chardath, both to promote racial awareness and harmony and to dissuade bias and corruption. Sibeccai youth often spend some time as town guards, viewing the service as a sign of respect for the community and to Mynorath in particular. While they still may share the normal racial and cultural biases of their people, the sibeccai respect the Steward and their Captain and have a strong commitment to order and law.

The town council, governed by Neril Sann, the human Speaker, has a fairly relaxed but codified attitude to law and order within the town. Rules and regulations exist and are expected to be followed. Truthfully, most residents are fairly well behaved and live in an orderly fashion, though there is some racial tension below the calm surface. Common infractions are usually punished with fines or time spent in the town's jail, while greater incidents are dealt with very thoroughly by the Captain and his guards. Mynorath's tolerance and patience are as respected as his wrath is feared. One encounter with the Guard Captain's anger is often enough to put an end to further activity.

Either Ne-Chardath or Neril Sann sits once a month as an arbitrator or judge for any civil or town matters that arise. Ne-Chardath is well known for his fairness and faith, and he believes in giving everyone a second chance to prove themselves. He is also wise and pragmatic and does not suffer fools gladly. Whenever he gives someone a chance at redemption, he is quick to add, "Take this second chance and treat it well. There will not be another." Neril Sann is slightly less optimistic about his fellow townspeople, though he does try to put forth the Steward's ideals. He is interested more in solving problems and restoring order than he is in helping others better themselves.

Organizations in Gahanis

Town Council

The town council is made up of 21 members, including its overseer, Neril Sann. Ne-Chardath does not actually sit on the council, but as Steward he retains final approval over all decisions and actions the council undertakes. The other members of the council are elected semi-regularly and are representative of the population at large. There are 10 humans (including the Speaker), 3 sibeccai, 3 faen, 2 verrik, 2 giants, and 1 litorian. While a handful of mojh live in the town, none have taken part in the council.

Mining Guild

Controlled by the sibeccai, the Mining Guild is one of the main power centers in Gahanis. All workers (packers, miners, and other related occupations) involved in activity at either of main iron mines or at any of the precious metal mines must report in to the Mining Guild. The Guild controls all wages and work conditions and therefore is involved in the lives of nearly a third of the town's residents. Taking its fair share of the income generated, the Mining Guild has become very wealthy and diversified, owning stakes in several caravan operations, merchant houses, as well as having an interest in the foundry itself. Though it professes to remain impartial, the Mining Guild has occasionally aligned with one of the Trade Guilds, if only to gain a temporary concession.

Heath's Goods and Trade

Guild Master Heath runs the smallest trade organization in Gahanis. He is human and prefers to deal with his own people, though his first priority is to the financial health of his organization. His brother is his second-in-command and shares Master Heath's world views. Master Heath has made contacts with merchants in Mi-Theron and has worked hard to gain their business. He exports finished iron and steel goods made by local artisans and craftsmen (mostly human) and imports grain and other food crops from the farms surrounding the northern city.

Master Heath is secretive and cautious, and for good reason. He has dealt with rival cutthroats twice, though he has yet to learn their true mission. Also, he once discovered that one of his warehouse loaders was a spy employed by Sandjas, one of his verrik competitors. Unbeknownst to Sandjas, Heath has doubled the worker's pay and is now feeding him false information.

The Responsible and Beneficial Trade Organization

Run by a verrik named Sandjas, R&B, as it has become known, is a model of order and purpose. Sandjas is fond of schedules and detail and has perhaps the most efficient operation running in Gahanis. His warehouse workers have been trained to load and unload goods simultaneously, and Sandjas can often have a caravan train reloaded and prepared for return travel within a few hours of its arrival. Of course, this efficiency has also earned him some enmity from the tired and beleaguered caravan workers hoping for a few nights respite. Sandjas believes that rest is for the weak, and, while he cannot be described as a taskmaster, he has no understanding of those who are not completely devoted to their work during every waking moment.

It goes without saying that Sandjas has very little understanding of the other trade guilds. He has examined and re-examined his schedules and delivery ability and cannot grasp how others remain to compete. For him, his business is so clearly superior that any alternative is sheer madness. Of course, it is his ego and rigidity that turn business away, as there are many merchants and craftsmen who value trusting and friendly relationships above an extra copper piece or two earned (or saved). Recently, Sandjas has tried to correct this view with his own brand of "marketing" — indeed, the current name of the company is his best attempt at advertisement. He has also dabbled in more nefarious activities, such as hiring a spy to work in his rival's warehouse. This action has yet to prove fruitful, however, and Sandjas plans to end the ruse shortly.

Sandjas has many contacts and customers in Xavel, beyond into the Southern Wastes, and even as far as Zalavat. Sandjas deals in fine metals, raw ore, fabrics, crystal, and worked goods. Though he is often difficult to deal with, his reputation for speed and reliability is well-earned and, grudgingly, respected.

The Trade Council

One of the larger trade organizations, the Trade Council (or Trade Guild as it is sometimes known) resulted from the merger of four small rivals some time ago. Hoping eventually to match the Jaren and other large guilds in stature and knowing that their ongoing rivalry was a limitation, the four groups put aside their differences and formed an organization with a singular purpose: to make money. The Trade Council has guild-halls in various cities and towns throughout the area, and while the company as a whole is united in pur-

pose, the various Masters of each branch are very competitive with one another. The Trade Guild Master in Gahanis is Ibrian Mossel, and he works night and day to post greater earnings than his rival in nearby Lothis, Follaren Mithellin. Ibrian does well, though he constantly complains of his rival's "unfair advantage" of not having to worry about the law. Lothis has no Steward, and the Trade Council there is able to perform dealings that are sometimes a little shady in nature.

Ibrian's operation is not all above board, however, as he does keep his fingers involved in Gahanis's underground economy. He is careful, though, to maintain the appearance of innocence in these dealings and will never compromise the safety, security, and reputation of his guild. He presents himself as extremely honest and forthright, to avoid any suspicion of his less reputable activities, as well as to provide cover for less-watched Trade Council operations in other towns and cities.

The Jaren

Across the lands of the Diamond Throne, the Jaren have become firmly established as the most successful mercantile organization, as well as the most mysterious. The Jaren seemed to arrive shortly after the disappearance of the dramojh, their true identities hidden under long purple robes and burnished bronze masks. No one has ever seen their faces or bodies — and those who have were later slain in bandit raids or grievously harmed in accidents or have simply vanished.

The Jaren Guild of Gahanis is most unusual, an anomaly within a riddle. For years, the Jaren were content to remain based in the larger cities, avoiding the smaller trade towns such as Gahanis and Lothis. Slightly more than seven years have passed since the Jaren came to Gahanis — or rather, since Gahanis came to them.

Five outcasts — socially awkward and misunderstood among their own kind — found each other and immediately formed a strong bond. Victims of a rare genetic quirk, they are all "albino" verrik. Rather than having the wine-colored skin and light hair of their folk, they have pinkish skin and dark hair, like some humans. While they may appear human, they are truly verrik in spirit and mind, odd and consumed and finding themselves apart from society. Not accepted in their distant homes due to their "freakish" appearance, they each left their families and communities and settled in Gahanis. Taking human names and lives, they gained some minor acceptance from the citizens, though they were not very social and never truly fit in with any group. Until one night, when they each shared a vision

The five outcast verrik, each unknowingly living parallel lives as humans, found each other in the first

of their shared dream visions. Finally finding commonality with others, the five immediately bonded, sharing their secret verrik heritage with each other, but retaining their human masquerade with the outside world.

The initial dream vision was but the first. Unknown forces have gifted the five with some form of communal prescience. Experiencing identical dreams, the five have followed these revelations and charted a course of success. Each excelling in separate endeavors, they were eventually led to a new reality. A dream, seven years ago, showed them contacting the Jaren, *becoming* the Jaren. Traveling to Mi-Theron, they contacted the mysterious guild and petitioned to form a Jaren branch in Gahanis. For some reason, the Jaren council approved, and the five found themselves directing the Gahanis post of the powerful guild.

Now they each live three lives, appearing as aloof humans during most days, sharing their verrik heritage and secret thoughts together at night, and occasionally wearing the bronze masks and purple robes when directing the Jaren affairs of Gahanis. Even though they are the Jaren's agents in the busy mining town, the five have never again interacted directly with another Jaren. This situation is not wholly unusual, however, for one may never meet an actual Jaren when working for them or with them. They have a vast network of employees and contractors from every major race. As to what grants the dream visions or why the Jaren would allow outsiders into their operation, the true answer is unknown. Perhaps a greater power exists that is using the five outcast verrik for its own purpose. Perhaps the Jaren themselves — whatever their true nature may be — are responsible for the visions and are using the five to further their own unfathomable plans. Whatever the reason, the five have reveled in their power and mystery.

Regardless of the source, the five Jaren have followed the course laid out by their shared dreams, not understanding the sometimes conflicting actions, but always obeying. The mysterious visions have led to expanded trade, helping unlucky merchants, providing resources to the town library and council, and creating funds to help widows and orphans. The visions have also led to murder, blackmail, sabotage, and the creation of the Blue Knight. The five Jaren have no preference when their dreams come; they are cold and remorseless when performing vile acts and kind and tender when performing generous acts. In truth, the five outcasts suffered psychologically during their formative years, and each has become removed from emotion and regret.

Roleplaying in Gahanis

When describing Gahanis to your players, here are some elements to remember when roleplaying in the bustling town. With regular trade caravans, a diverse and varied population, dynamic artists and performers, and a thriving mercantile culture, Gahanis is always alive with more activity than one would expect from a town of its size. There are *always* pedestrians walking the streets, travelling to a specific destination or simply browsing the storefronts.

In addition to the 3,500 residents noted in the town stat block, there are more than 800 children and adolescents who reside with their families in town. Kicking leather balls, staging mock sword fights, or simply practicing their skill with the sling, the young people of Gahanis play joyfully in all areas of town.

Remember that the town exists outside of the PCs' experience and that the citizens of Gahanis do not sit at fixed locations, waiting for the characters to arrive. Be sure to make them evolve and grow; create relationships and continuity. Feel free to use clichés at first when introducing the various races of the Diamond Throne, developing individuals further as the PCs become more accustomed to the town and its residents. For example, giants are fond of ritual and ceremony and live a rigid and regimented life. Faen are free spirited and joyous, with toadstool chairs and butterfly pets. Verrik are awkward and unsubtle, failing to understand humor and missing sarcasm. Litorians like milk and sleeping in late. Sibeccai wake early, preparing for possible giant guests that never arrive. The mojh are rarely seen — and rarely discussed.

The people of Gahanis are used to strangers and know that the economic health of the town is based on trade, so they take pride in their wares and workers. They are generally friendly and helpful, as long as they are approached in a respectful and polite manner. While some of the races do display the occasional bias, Ne-Chardath and the town council have worked very hard to instill a community spirit.

On the surface, Gahanis may seem like an ideal small town, and for the most part it is. Lurking just below the surface, though, there are some darker aspects. An underground economy, nurtured by Ibrian Mossel of the Trade Council and others, operates in the shadows. Occasional reports of robberies and thievery do reach the ears of Mynorath, and his men are not always able to find the culprits. Some individuals in the town also harbor darker secrets or selfish desires, often hidden behind a façade of congeniality.

Gahanis is an ideal "home base" for low-level characters, as the regular traffic and local geography introduce many options for adventure, while the small town politics remain interesting but not overwhelming. There are no retired 15th-level magisters or warmains with exploits and abilities that would overshadow the characters'. Truly, Gahanis is a place for a low-level party to grow and shine,

Gahanis Weather

	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
Heat wave	—	1–2	—	—
Hot	1–2	4–5	1	—
Sunny	4–5	6–7	2	1
Bright	6–7	8–9	3–4	2
Breezy	8	10–11	5–6	3
Dull	9–10	12	7–8	4–5
Mist	11–12	13	9–11	6
Windy	13	14–15	12–13	7–9
Overcast	14–15	16–17	14–15	10
Light Rain	16–17	18	16	11–12
Heavy Rain	18	19	17	13
Fog	19	20	18–19	15–16
Sleet	20	—	20	17
Snow	—	—	—	18–20

while developing the political skill and savvy that will certainly be necessary in mid- and high-level adventures. Basically, Gahanis is a great testing ground, a semi-controlled environment representative of many features in the land of the Diamond Throne at large.

One tool to make Gahanis seem alive is weather. It is not always sunny and dry, for the weather has a mind of its own. According to the season, roll 1d20 and consult the chart above to determine the daily weather.

Random Encounters in Gahanis

As mentioned, the citizens of Gahanis do not stand in place waiting for the characters to approach. Instead, everyone in Gahanis who is not encountered in their residence or place of employment is traveling from one location to another. For these chance encounters, first determine where the NPC is traveling from and where he is traveling to by rolling 1d12. There are 12 main areas in Gahanis, and the number generated corresponds to the general area that is either the origin or the destination of the NPC's journey. If a more specific location is needed, each area has been divided into a number of specific locations that can be represented by further die rolls.

For example, rolling a 10 means that the NPC set out from the Trade Center area, which contains 6 specific locations that can be determined by rolling 1d6. Area 2, the Market Square, is divided into 10 locations that can be generated by rolling 1d10.

Once the origin and destination are determined, the race of the NPC can be established with a simple 1d20 roll:

1d20

1
2–8
9–10
11–12
13
14
15–16
17–18
19
20

NPC Race

Special*
Human
Sibeccai
Faen, Quickling
Faen, Loesong
Faen, Spryte**
Giant
Verrick
Litorian
Mojh***

* Special indicates that one of the notable personalities listed below is encountered, likely Nefenr.

** Sprytes will only be traveling to or from Area 4, the Faen Park.

*** Mojh will only be encountered traveling to or from Areas 1 or 10.

Notable Personalities

Ne-Chardath

Giant Steward of Gahanis (Giant 2/Greenbond 1/Aristocrat 3)

The Steward sees himself as the shepherd of the community, fostering economic growth through trade negotiations and incentives, but also nurturing the spirit of the citizens with a love of art, music, ritual, and history. He is aware that nearby Lothis is siphoning off some of the area's trade, but feels that the culture of

Gahanis will eventually be as big a draw to the city as the ore mines and cattle ranches and that the local businesses will benefit in the long term.

Neril Sann

Human Speaker of Gahanis (Aristocrat 2)

The Speaker of Gahanis serves as the ombudsman for those who feel disenfranchised from the rule of the Diamond Throne. He is a practical man and always tries to find the fair solution. He is more interested in order and peace than artistic pursuits, but he supports the Steward's wishes, especially in public. He sees himself as a public servant rather than a politician.

Mynorath the Peacekeeper

Sibeccai Guard Captain (Sibeccai 2/Warmain 2)

Mynorath understands the city very well. While he generally respects the Steward and the Speaker, he believes that Ne-Chardath is an unrepentant optimist and that Neril Sann avoids confrontation. The Captain knows that the town has an underbelly, where those who do not respect law or who resent the giant's rule scheme and plot and act out of selfish desires. The sibeccai is respected — or feared — for his tenacity and unswerving dedication to the law of the land. He believes in swift and powerful justice and would rather overestimate a threat than be caught unprepared.

Elantor

Litorian Healer (Champion of Life 2)

Elantor is a compassionate and caring individual and sees himself as the caretaker of Gahanis's health. He has a small supply of healing capsules and potions available for those in need, as well as his own class-derived abilities.

Nefenr

Popular Verrick Artisan (Akashic 2/Magister 4)

Nefenr is the puppet master behind the scenes in Gahanis. While he has both akashic and spell-casting ability, his true power is in information. He is an agent of the Jaren, the leader of the bandits, and a trusted advisor to the Steward and Speaker of Gahanis. In truth, Nefenr works for himself, providing a lavish lifestyle and valuable position within the community. Nefenr will seek out the PCs, hoping to gain information about any and all activities in which they may be involved. He will use this information to his greatest advantage and will be most curious if these activities should overlap his own, such as the PCs being hired to investigate the bandits or other orb-related activity sponsored by the Jaren guild.

Nefenr's stats can be found in Appendix I.

Locations in Gahanis

Area 1: Civic Center

The political center of town, this area is made up of many recently built structures and showcases the themes and concepts that Ne-Chardath would like to spread to the rest of the community. This area is heavily traveled, with town guards, newly-arrived nobles, powerful merchants, and artists frequently encountered. It is clear that many of these buildings are of giant design — the large pillars, ornate scrollwork, and other decorative touches show the attention to detail and architecture for which giants are known.



Location 1A: Town Hall — This large building is the main political arena in town. Carved and ornate, frescos on the sides of the building depict the ruling giants in both Chi-Julud mode against the dramojh foe, as well as Si-Karan mode, shepherds of the citizens of the Diamond Throne. The massive doors are built from an old and weathered black wood, taken from the original ships that brought the giants to Khorl.

Elantor, the resident healer, also operates out of the Town Hall.

Location 1B: Courthouse — This building is the scene of the monthly trials held by the Speaker or the Steward.

Location 1C: Jail — With 12 secure cells, this building is constantly watched by 4 town guards. At any given time, there are 1–4 caravan guards or mercenaries within, sleeping off a night of drunken revelry or disorderly conduct. There are no permanent inhabitants, as Mynorath prefers corporal punishment for greater crimes.

Location 1D: Guard Hall — This building is the barracks for all active town guards in Gahanis. Full guard stat blocks can be found in Appendix I. The town guard is made up of all races, except the mojhs.

Location 1E: Library — Run by four mojhs scholars, this building is full of dusty tomes and old land surveys. Two mojhs work



during the day, while two work through the night. They are assisted by a human and a verrik who aid citizens when researching in the library. Merchants from distant cities often stop buy to sell unusual and rare books to the library, while the mojh complain that they are under-funded and do not get the respect they deserve.

Location 1F: Nefen's Observatory — This building serves as both Nefen's residence and his studio. A large central room features a domed ceiling, which the artist uses to create the illusion of moving stars and heavenly bodies. This building is a prime destination for the elite citizens and visiting nobles or wealthy merchants, and Nefen's sculptures and artistic creations, as well as his flamboyant (for a verrik) personality, are greatly desired commodities among the rich. At any time of the day, there are 1–8 apprentice artisans or local artists here discussing projects and creating works. Nefen can often be found here, telling stories and gathering information. Currently, Nefen is involved in Ne-Chardath's plan to revitalize the Battlehome fortress and celebrate the history of Gahanis.

Area 2: Market Square

This is the permanent market area in Gahanis. While various tables and wares are displayed further south near the caravan roads, this area contains the established and noteworthy shops of the town. This area is busy at all times and is the most diverse location in town, with all of the various races purchasing items from the shops.

Most of the merchants with shops here have residences within the building, either in an attached addition or in a second story. Most doorways are 8 to 10 feet high, accommodating the various residents of the town (though some giants must duck to enter).

Location 2A: Mountain Meadow — An apothecary and herbalist shop, run by Sauz Truesong (loresong wood witch 3) and her five daughters. This shop has various spices and herbs for sale, gathered from the nearby mountains and wild areas. The famous Gahanis "Steak Spice" is created and sold here, along with various magical herbs and potions that can recreate common 0-level spells (at 25 gp each).

The first time the characters visit here or encounter Sauz, she is instructing her daughters on the proper way to run the store (though they already know!). Sauz Truesong is presently preparing to transform into a spryte, and her daughters will be minding the business while she is away.

Location 2B: Brown's Bakery — Bread and pastries are enjoyed greatly in Gahanis, likely due to their slightly rare nature (loaves of bread often sell for 3 cp or more). Flour and grain is imported by

Heath's Goods and Trade and purchased in large quantities by Redjak Brown, the human baker who runs this shop. Redjak is assisted by his wife and daughter, a young wind witch named Kirsten who runs her own delivery business during the morning hours.

Location 2C: Sron & Marl — This unfortunately named enterprise is the local occult shop and fortuneteller. Sron, a 1st-level verrik mind witch, and Marl, a 4th-level verrik akashic, sell various potions, supposedly magical items, and entertain customers with awkwardly delivered prognostications.

Location 2D: Hod's General Store — This store, owned and operated by Hod Dandenning (male human Exp3) and family, carries all regular items needed for day-to-day life in Gahanis. Occasionally, Hod will pick up a minor curiosity to sell to his customers, but he prefers to maintain a standard catalogue and not "get all fancy" like his competitor, Mithellin & Mithellin's Mercantile ("Those fellas from Lothis," as Hod is wont to remind customers.)

Location 2E: Glass & Pottery Shop — Lile and Yrene Morris (both human Exp3) once ran competing craft-based businesses, but decided to merge into a stronger and more varied shop. Shortly thereafter, they were married.

In a book of notes passed down from his grandfather, Lile has some strange drawings and symbols that are unknown and undecipherable. If the proper circumstances presented themselves, they would be revealed as an ancient map of dimensional portals used by the dramojh to collect slaves from other worlds.

Location 2F: Dairy Shop — The litorian Grafton runs this shop, with the aid of his family and 2 young apprentices. This building is kept cool with the aid of magic and has a large cold cellar under the main store filled with iced creams and other treats enjoyed by the residents of Gahanis as well as the travelling caravan members. Grafton also purchases milk (both cow and goat) from local farmers and sells it or processes it into cheese or cream. Litorians love milk.

In the cellar, under a thick layer of dust and discarded blankets, is a sealed barrel containing the remains of Tralion the Investigator, a former sibeccai town guard who went missing 2 years ago. Grafton stored the barrel for a friend and has since forgotten about it.

Location 2G: Wee Carpenter & Tinker — This small shop features a troupe of quickling craftsmen who have joined together to offer their services to the greater community. While they do quite well charging for their exceptional skills, they make considerably more money behind-the-scenes as enforcers and extortionists.

Location 2H: The Wedding Present Inn — A gift from his in-laws, Gedge Frumleeds has run this prosperous inn and tavern since the day of his wedding ceremony. To honor his wife's parents, Gedge changed the name of the inn and promised to provide a life of fortune for his wife and family.

The Wedding Present is the destination of choice for wealthier merchants and travelers who can afford to pay good coin for exceptional service and comfort. The inn is large, with a well-lit and comfortable common room and guest suites for everyone from sprytes to full-grown giants. Charging 2 gp per night for a room and 3 sp for a meal, Gedge can afford to serve the best. The Wedding Present offers the famous Gahanis spiced steak and always has bread and desserts for its guests.

Location 2I: Artist Guild — This shop is run by passionate art lover Donathan. The single-named human sells both his own work and that of Gahanis's larger artist community. Prominently featured are works by Nefenr. Artists are usually gathered in the street in front of this building, debating the merits of various techniques and often arguing.

Location 2J: The Braised Bull Tavern — This tavern and restaurant serves the visiting merchants and wealthy residents of Gahanis. It is also the premier "special meal" destination, and citizens often save their wages to impress a lover or relative. Special dinners run from 3 sp to 10 sp (per person) for a banquet-style feast.

Area 3: Uptown Residences

This area is primarily filled with human and giant residents. The smaller human-sized houses are one-story dwellings, usually occupied by a family of 4–6. The larger human houses are two- and sometimes three-story buildings, housing up to 12 people (which could include a wealthy family and its servants).

Giant homes are notable by their red terra cotta shingled roofs and, of course, large size. All giant homes have an inscription over the main doorway, written in an ancient and nearly unreadable runic code. These inscriptions are blessings put on the house and residents before a giant family moves in.

Both the human and giant community tend to keep similar life cycles. Breakfast is a meal eaten before the day's work begins, lunch is a large repast that breaks up the work day, and dinner is a final feast celebrating the conclusion of a successful day. Humans seem to be slightly more flexible in their schedules, while giants, as an extension of their love of ritual, are very punctual and regimented, eating at precisely the same time every day. Giants are also strict about greeting and parting rituals, so acquaintances and friends are often avoided completely when a non-giant is in a hurry.

In their secret human identity, three of the five Jaren Guild Masters live in this community.

Location 3A: An Evening's Rest — This large building is an inn designed and built for the comfort of giants. The slogan over the door reads in giant, "All worthwhile activities must be followed by rest and contemplation." Ae-Radona is the owner and hostess of An Evening's Rest and greets all guests personally when they enter. (If a large group is entering at one time, completing the elaborate host greeting for each individual can take quite a while).

The common room is small yet accommodating, and Ae-Radona pays local performers to entertain guests nightly.

Location 3B: Well House — A large gazebo-like structure shelters the local well during poor weather. The well is 30-feet deep and provides fresh water for many residents of Gahanis. One wall is used as a community message board, with notes and announcements tacked up.

Location 3C: The Ale House — A master of marketing, Rachael Downing named her tavern clearly and appropriately. The Ale House is the destination of choice for those who have spent time on dusty roads or have put in a hard day's work in the blazing sun. Rachael's income is further augmented due to tragedy. Her brother Halreck once owned Eagle's Rest, an inn in nearby Lothis. The current owner, Ea-Nilarnis, sends half of the inn's profits to Rachael monthly out of respect for her late brother. Rachael uses this money to provide a diverse collection of ales and spirits, as well as nightly entertainment. She also employs a few giant bouncers to keep the peace.

The most notorious drink at the Ale House is called a "Flaming Lip." A rare oil coats the rim of the mug and is lit before consumption. Any character who imbibes this drink **suffers 1 point of temporary Dexterity and Wisdom damage**; however, any spellcaster who does so is able to apply the fire template to a single spell cast within the next 3 hours without using a material component (the necessary feat is still required, though).

Location 3D: Bathhouse — Two large pools fill this building, with sun-warmed water refilling a smaller area every few hours. A fee of 2 cp buys a few hours enjoyment of the pools and steam rooms. A luxurious retreat, the bathhouse is often used as a meeting spot for organized criminals and participants in the underground economy. Spending 2 gp here **reduces a Gather Information DC by 2**.

Area 4: Faen Park

The majority of faen in Gahanis do not live in houses or similar confining structures. Instead, they inhabit large tree-filled parks and green spaces. Densely grown trees form something of a protective barrier, turning these areas into secluded retreats for the free-spirited faen. The canopy above is riddled with rope ladders and swing bridges, wooden platforms and canvas shelters. The faen in Gahanis have a liberal concept of property ownership and often retreat to a residence that is convenient or familiar than one that has been specifically assigned. Fairy lights and toadstool seats, pan flutes and enchanting laughter: these are the qualities that make a faen home desirable.

Quicklings are barely visible, running from tree to tree, often swinging on ropes or simply jumping from branch to branch. Loresongs gather in knowledge circles, sharing stories and songs. Sprytes flit on gossamer wings among the greenery that blocks out the non-faen world.



Location 4A: Central Meeting Area — A large open space in the center of the community provides a place for rituals and sports. Quicklings can often be found engaged in running races or team competitions. Small woodland animals run freely with the residents, showing no fear of the larger creatures and enjoying complete comfort in their presence. Groups of faen gather here as the twilight overtakes day, singing and dancing and celebrating life, often with wild abandon.

Location 4B: Faen Cook House — From mid-afternoon until well into the night, this location is often the center of faen activity. More of a cooking area than an actual building, quickling and loresong chefs and staff work in shifts, creating meals for the members of the faen community. Visiting guests are often invited to join in a feast of mushrooms, berries, spiced apples, and similar light fare. Every 3 to 4 days, as their stomachs dictate, the faen serve roast pig or goat, turned all day over an open spit.

Location 4C: Faen Shops & Services — Quickling craft stores and loresong spell shops are sprinkled throughout the faen parks. Characters can purchase faen-sized equipment and gear at standard prices and can have 4th-level loresong witches cast spells (up to 2nd level) at the appropriate price.

Location 4D: Kraen's Tavern — Kraen Fullstring owns this small tavern. With drunken quicklings, wise-cracking loresongs, and fluttering sphytes, this pub comes alive as the sun descends each day. Should the characters visit this tavern, they will notice a grim quickling named Daen Longfellow sitting quietly in the back corner. Daen is a 3rd-level oathsworn, dedicated to finding a mysterious fey being known as "The Grim" who stole away his wife and child several months ago. Daen has traveled far and wide since leaving his home in the Harrowdeep. He has stopped at Kraen's, seeking information and possible allies. As with most oathsworn, he will not rest until he has completed his quest.

Area 5: Verrick Row Houses

Always organized and practical, the verrik community is comprised of linked row houses: structures that share common walls, reducing the need for materials and adding insulation value. These long buildings are divided into smaller housing units, with up to 4 verrik inhabiting a single living space. A terrace in each unit is used for hanging clothes out to dry or for enjoying evening meals in the warmer seasons. Verrick runes over each entryway act as an address system.

Location 5A: Book Shop — A source for old tomes and ancient information, at a cost. Dajson and Yendac are verrik magisters who have established this successful business serving like-minded verrik, inquisitive loresongs, and questing adventurers. They occasionally will sell tomes to the civic library at a minor discount, but only if they are slow sellers or specially ordered items that were never picked up. Recently, they helped a human client source a mojh-penned book in Zalavat. Little did they realize that this human client was, in fact, an albino verrik and one of the Jaren.

Location 5B: Cartography & Copies — Master cartographer Dowmas (verrik Exp5) uses his exceptional skill to create maps and to copy text, for 1 gp per page. In a practice book kept in a locked chest, Dowmas has recorded the truename of the dragon known as Shivawrang, who is rumored to haunt the Devanian Coast.

Dowmas once had a human apprentice, Den Rudiger, but ended the relationship when it was revealed that Den had been using his skills to forge royal treasury notes and civil documents.

Location 5C: End Unit Inn — The final two units in this row house have been converted into a modest verrik-run inn. A small common room serves simple meals in the afternoon and evening, and the inn has 6 rooms available



for 3 sp per night. A loose floorboard in one of the upper rooms can be spotted with a Search check (DC 25) and pried up with a Strength check (DC 15), revealing a +1 rapier, stored here months ago by a verrik unfettered.

Location 5D: Accountant & Money Changer — Lomar is a verrik money handler who has established an in-house business as an accountant and money changer. For a 1% fee, he will convert gold, gems, and jewelry into more common silver or copper pieces. Lomar employs 2 litorian warmain bodyguards to protect his premises. He also informs the quickling gang from the Wee Carpenter & Tinker (see Location 2G) of any wealthy targets that seem ripe for robbery.

open, large leather sheets drape down from supporting rods in the doorway, keeping out most of the elements and maintaining privacy.

The upper floor in a sibeccai house is actually a loft, open to the main living room below. Sleeping quarters are set in the loft, with leather curtains separating them for privacy. Up to 12 sibeccai can dwell in a single unit, though the average is 6.

Location 6A: Kangis the Fletcher — The preferred place to purchase bows, crossbows, quarrels, and arrows, Kangis's modest shop is the home of a true master craftsman. All weapons and ammunition created by Kangis are of masterwork quality and cost an additional 300 gp beyond the standard price. While Kangis's skill is impressive, it becomes even more so when you notice that the sibeccai is completely blind.

Location 6B: Raetran's Hostel — A cheap and convenient shelter used by travelers and tired caravan workers, Raetran's is the affordable alternative to The Wedding Present or An Evening's Rest. As the sign outside notes ("A deuce a night"), a single silver piece will buy a night's rest on a mattress in the common room. The peace is maintained by Raetran the Keeper himself, though his guests are often looking for nothing more than a quick sleep and some shelter from the elements. On rare occasions, Raetran will let a poor guest stay for free.

Location 6C: Jundath the Weaver — Shabby tapestries and worn blankets hang on display outside this converted home, testaments to Jundath's poor skill at his craft. That doesn't bother the shopkeeper, however, as the store is a front for criminal activity in the town. The front room of this building displays a few additional low-quality blankets, and the door to the back room is guarded by Throm Kalsen, a 3rd-level human unfettered. Throm's former partner, Merrill Yannis, left recently when he was identified as one of the caravan bandits operating near Gahanis.

Jundath can secure any item for purchase, for a simple 10% on the item's normal cost. The time needed to provide the item is equal to the item's normal gp value divided by 100. So, for example, Jundath could provide a rare water clock in 10 days, for a price of 1,100 gp. Jundath's services are usually used to secure weapons and armor, which are considerably cheaper and easier to come by, with most items available in a single day.

Since the discovery of Merrill's outlaw activity, Jundath is very careful to keep any mysterious or suspect item in a secret location, far away from this shop, which is now used strictly as a meeting place.

Location 6D: Ceremony Grounds — This large, open green space is used by the town for mass rituals and special ceremonies. When not being groomed for an upcoming ceremony, it plays host to lovers' picnics, children's sports, martial practice, and general leisure activities.



Area 6: Sibeccai Houses

Sibeccai live in tall houses with 15-foot tall entryways. The reason for the extra tall doorway is simple: sibeccai feel that they must always be ready for giant guests. Their fondness for the giants is evident in the oversized tables and couches placed in their homes. The front doorway is designed so that any potential giant guests need not stoop to enter. Due to the difficulty in opening and closing the large and solid wooden door, the sibeccai open their doors just before sunrise in the morning and close them before dusk at night. While the doors are

Area 7: Old Foundry and Shops

The old foundry has not been used since the first iron mine was turned into a lake, but the area has long been a part of the town's commercial history. These buildings show the signs of their age, but also the signs of great care, as sections have been carefully rebuilt and replaced when needed. Shops and businesses in this area persist due to their quality and craftsmanship, leaving those that are in vogue or trend-followers to the marketplace in the uptown area.

Location 7A: Old Foundry — This large building was once the center of the community. As Gahanis grew and new mines opened, the foundry became something of a landmark, reminding the community of its proud history and roots. The first project of the Society of the Home (the organization that is now working on restoring the Battlehome fortress), a portion of the Old Foundry is now a museum showcasing arms and equipment used in the long-ago battle against the dramojh, as well as an exhibit to celebrate noted residents of the past. Statues, many by local artist Nefenr, stand where iron was once forged, testaments to luminaries such as Cutter Rundlestone and Roark Westcoat.

The largest part of the Old Foundry is now a circular theater, with seasonal performances put on by several local companies of talented actors. Ne-Chardath has quietly submitted a play for the next season, entitled "The Making of the Rose." It is a romantic comedy and will surprise some with its wit but not its pro-community message.

Location 7B: Blacksmith — Hu-Baran, the giant blacksmith, runs the shop here. Most of the wares made here are set for export through one of the trade guilds. Hu-Baran is a self-proclaimed "artist of steel," making everything from common items to armor worn by the Knights of the Diamond. He would trade his entire enterprise, however, for a chance at adventure on a mystical quest.

Location 7C: Cooper & Wheelwright — With all of the caravan travel that comes to town, Ralston Jonnas has made a decent living repairing and replacing items damaged on the trails. Ralston employs 20 hands and is honest and forthright in business dealings.

Location 7D: The Ol' Barn — A place to rent, buy, or board horses, this stable and livery is run by Rakthar the Tender, a sibeccai with exceptional skill in the art of animal husbandry. Horses are not commonly ridden through town, so most visiting dignitaries pay 5 sp per day to keep their mounts here, where they will be well-groomed and well-treated. Horses can also be purchased here, and Rakthar currently has 4 mares for sale.

Location 7E: Mason — Most of the stonework in town is overseen by Mo-Telor, a large being even by giantish standards. Mo-Telor understands the art of stone and has been consulted by Nefenr on behalf of the Society of the Home about the Battlehome restoration project.

Location 7F: Two Weeks Wages — Dancing Bones, Spit and Bobber, and Three's Your Uncle are all played at this gambling house, with small fortunes gained and lost on a monthly basis. With a constant influx of caravans entering town, there are always newcomers ready to part with their hard-earned pay. Two pairs of town guards visit the premises every half-hour or so, keeping the ruckus to a minimum.

Most of the residents of Gahanis avoid the games here, and quiet talk says that the house has rigged most of the contests in its favor. Jundath the Weaver is secretly behind the gaming house, and does indeed rob those foolish enough to wager their coppers at his establishment.

Location 7G: Tegman's Brewery — Ale and beer created by litorian brewmaster Tegman is consumed locally, available at all inns and taverns, or exported through the Trade Council.

Location 7H: Shearing and Wool — Jak "Jakie" Howe shored 321 sheep in 7 hours and won the right to establish his shearing and wool shop on this site two generations ago. His grandson Kent Howe now runs the shop, shearing the local sheep and splitting the proceeds with the shepherds and farmers. It should be noted that none of the wool produced is ever used by Jundath the Weaver, something that Kent finds suspicious but has not investigated further. It should also be noted that Jakie Howe's shearing record still stands.

Area 8: Litorian Grounds & Old Mine

A shallow stream separates the bulk of Gahanis from the litorian grounds, which are situated on the east side of town. Two plains-dwelling tribes of litorians maintain strong relationships with the citizens of Gahanis, and the litorian population here rises and falls as new litorians casually join and others casually leave. Of the litorian residents, only 100 or so seem to have settled permanently, though that number can grow by as much as three dozen at times. While the litorians are considered — and do consider themselves — residents of Gahanis, they do enjoy the illusion of freedom and separateness that the stream provides. The stream flows into a central lake, which was created by diverting a larger river into the old iron mine, abandoned a generation ago.

Litorians live in large tents and mobile shelters, a tribute to their wandering nature. These huts are large and cover a wide area, with 6–10 litorians sharing a single shelter. Litorian youth sleep in hammocks while adults sleep on mattresses or pillows on the ground.



Litorians generally begin their day in the late morning, with their first meal coinciding with the humans' and giants' lunch break. Litorians prefer to work during the dusk and into the night and are known to keep local taverns open well past midnight.

Location 8A: Hostel — These empty tents were set up to accommodate the tribal litorians who often dropped in to visit for a day or two. Unlike the other hostels and inns in Gahanis, the litorians do not charge fees or require payment from those who need lodging.

Location 8B: Cook House — Similar to the faen, the litorians enjoy community meals, prepared at one of the large cookhouses. Unlike the faen, meat is always on the menu, with visiting litorians often bringing wild game from the nearby grasslands.

Location 8C: Abattoir — The slaughter house used by the town is kept on the litorian side of the lake and away from the more “civilized” sections of society. Farmers and ranchers sell their animals to the litorians, who in turn sell the prepared meat to the inns and taverns. Smaller orders are handled through the butcher shop.

Location 8D: Butcher Shop — Meat from the abattoir is cut and prepared here and sold to the citizens of Gahanis for their mid-day and evening meals. Charnor is the lead butcher and has mastered his craft. Before settling in Gahanis, he used his 5th-level unfettered skills as a bounty hunter, but a near-fatal encounter with some chorrim cost him two fingers and led to his retirement. He keeps his past to himself, and most assume that he lost his fingers plying his trade.

Area 9: New Foundry

When the old mine was closed and the new mines opened, a larger foundry was built to process the harvested ore. Both processed iron and steel, as well as raw ore, are important exports for Gahanis, with much of the town's wealth relying on this resource.

Location 9A: Foundry — Still called the new foundry, though it is more than a generation old, this building is the largest in Gahanis. A massive giant-built bale furnace produces enough heat to keep the entire building free of snow in the winter. The foundry is active from dawn until dusk, and materials move in and out of this building by the wagonload. Anyone who enters this building **suffers a -2 penalty to Listen checks** for the next hour, a result of the constant hammering and overwhelming noise generated. The penalty is permanent for those who work here on a daily basis.

The fire in the bale furnace is magically enhanced by two small stones that must be replaced every other month. Rogan Tomes, the foundry captain, purchases these stones from the Jaren and believes them to be made from dragon's teeth. With them in the furnace, the fire can climb to an unbearable temperature, able to purify the recently mined ore or to create strong alloys such as steel or bronze.

Location 9B: Iron Monger — Iron items are cheaper at the source, and any common non-weapon can be purchased here for a few coppers below the standard price.

Location 9C: Swordsmith — Blan Cruthers is a master swordsmith, creating masterwork blades in his shop. Each sword costs 350 gp more beyond the standard value, and each blade is given a specific name before being purchased. Over drinks one night, Blan learned the true name of Throm Kalsen, Jundath the Weaver's bodyguard. Throm has no recollection of his drunken revelry, but Blan has memorized the valuable information to aid him should the need arise.

Location 9D: Distillery — Many of the fine alcoholic beverages served in Gahanis are born in this distillery. While resources must be imported into the city, the skilled workers in the distillery can create potent products that are sought across the region.

Area 10: Trade Center & Warehousing

The four major trade guilds have their offices here, at the main entry into town. Inbound caravans report to the designated guild and unload their wares into the appropriate warehouse. Outbound caravans negotiate cargoes with the same guilds, loading local wares and product from other warehouses.

The guilds make their fortunes by buying imports and selling to the local citizens at a slight profit, while buying local goods and resources and selling for export also at a slight profit. The profit per unit is usually relatively low; only by dealing in large volumes can the guilds generate their riches.

Location 10A: Heath's Guild Hall — The main office for Heath's Goods & Trade. Staffed by 30 to 40 accountants, foremen, buyers, and negotiators, Heath's employees are all human. The neighboring warehouse is fully staffed and organized, with goods rarely sitting for more than 30 days.

Location 10B: R&B Guild Hall — The verrik entry into the trade market, the Responsible and Beneficial Trade Organization employs some 20 workers, including at the warehouse. In a move later copied by the Trade Council and the Jaren, R&B have hired a mojh overseer to organize the schedules throughout the night. Gazlar, the R&B mojh employee, enjoys having access to the multitude of items that come through the warehouse and prefers to work at night, keeping a low profile in the often-biased town.

Location 10C: Trade Council Hall — This is where Ibrian Mossel curses the activities of his rival in Lothis. Like R&B, Ibrian has employed a mojh overseer to work nights on schedules and bookkeeping. Ibrian does not trust his employee, however, and ends up going through every schedule and record twice, hoping to maintain his legal and respectful appearance. The Trade Council flag, a field of white with a single red drop of blood, hangs above the doorway to this building.

Location 10D: Jaren Guild Hall — The office of the mysterious Jaren. Sixty people work in the guild hall and warehouses, but only three have ever seen their employers. The Jaren deal with their senior staff in a special room while wearing their full costumes. The managers have been unable to deduce any true information about their masters, but they are well compensated for their skill and discretion and so remain faithful.

Location 10E: The Lame Pony — This large inn is frequented by the captains and drivers of the trade caravans that pass through Gahanis. The quickling owner, Gez Swervedriver, understands his guests' need for rest and revelry in equal measure. Comfortable rooms are affordable and well-tended, and the common room features nightly entertainment and strong ale.

Gez spent years as a driver of some skill and established this inn when his lead pony broke her hind leg and had to be put down. Taking that as a sign, Gez promptly quit and invested his large savings in his next project.

A quickling of few words but good spirits, Gez may be the only being alive who has seen the Blue Knight and lived. While he never mentions this fact, his regular patrons quietly spread the word to new guests, establishing Gez's reputation and enjoying a fine tale at the same time.

Location 10F: Warehouses — These massive buildings are the economic heart of the town. Needed goods are pumped into the markets as imports, and local crafts and resources are pumped out as exports. Each trade guild has one massive warehouse (the Jaren actually have two) and have armed guards patrolling the building at all times. Warehouse workers are inspected at the end of each shift to keep theft to a minimum. The warehouses are stocked with every item imaginable, from rare books and magic stones to full suits of armor and cut lumber.

Area 11: Miners & Packers Camp

Most of the commoners of Gahanis are employed as miners and packers in one of the town's two iron mines run by the sibeccai. The miners work in two shifts that begin early in the morning or end well after dusk. Most of the miners and packers are modest wage earners, saving enough to move to a more prosperous neighborhood or leaving Gahanis entirely. Due to the nature of the work, there is a large turnover in employees as caravan guards and drivers grow weary of the road and settle down, while the miners dream of an exciting and exotic life on the road.

Location 11A: Barracks — Up to 12 miners can share a single unit, usually sleeping in hammocks. The haphazard construction and organization of the miner barracks is evident in the leaking roofs and exposed dirt floors. The rent for sleeping quarters is deducted automatically by the Mining Guild.

Location 11B: Greasy Gullet — A rough and tumble tavern, this is the site of more fighting and confrontations than anywhere else in Gahanis. Town guards patrol this area regularly and do not mind abusing the drunks and revelers who spill out of the Greasy Gullet on a nightly basis. The bartender has a strict policy and extends credit to no one.

Location 11C: Gambling Hall — Another gaming house, this pastime is second only to drinking in the lives of the miners. The gamblers enjoy everything from simple games such as dice and stones to more complex challenges such as dagger throwing and Two Man Punch. Rumors have it that Master Heath organizes a bare-fisted fighting tournament here once a month, but Mynorath the Peacekeeper has been unable to prove this.

Location 11D: Mithellin & Mithellin's Mercantile — An expansion store run by merchants in Lothis, Mith & Mith is the source for most citizens' common needs. Any common item can be found here for purchase, and anything exotic can be ordered and delivered promptly ("Order on Dawnday, deliver on Waterday," is the motto). Employees of the Trade Council are unofficially forbidden from purchasing goods here, as Ibrian's jealousy of his rival in Lothis creates odd regulations and petty rules.

Area 12: The New Mines

The noted resource of Gahanis, two massive iron mines produce vast amounts of ore, which is either refined or shipped raw to the various corners of the realm. Unlike typical metal mines, the Gahanis mines are open strip-mines, worked in descending layers. The mines are controlled by the Mining Guild, run by the sibeccai Guild Masters.

Location 12A: Iron Mine I — Known as the West Mine, this large open pit has been producing ore for a generation. The sibeccai have two shifts of miners who work newly exposed layers from dawn until dusk. Ore is then sent to the foundry for processing or directly to a warehouse for export in raw form.

Location 12B: Iron Mine II — The East Mine is larger but also shallower than its partner. Occasionally, gold, silver, or other precious metals turn up in this mine, but only in small quantities and not enough to pursue further. Working the mines is difficult, involving pick axes, hammers, buckets, and wagons, with workers constantly in motion. Sibeccai foremen ensure that work schedules are adhered to and that the workers are treated fairly.

Location 12C: Miner Guild Hall — Run by sibeccai Guild Masters, the true power in Gahanis may reside here. Every ounce of ore taken from the mines

and shipped from Gahanis is accounted for here, and the Guild Masters are sure to make this fact known to those who would challenge them. Two Guild Masters sit on the town council, while a third travels monthly to Jerad to negotiate larger trade rights and tariffs.

Six 6th-level unfettered sibeccai guards are always on duty in the hall, and justifiably so, as the guild's treasures include a cache of truenames, gems, jewelry, and magical items.

Location 12D: Fortune Mine — The last desperate hope of the poor, Gahanis has three small mines that intrude into the hillside. Discoveries of gold, silver, copper, and precious gems have led to the creation of these dark and unregulated mines. Exploration of the mines is allowed, provided that a 15 sp fee is first paid to the local Mining Guild and that any discoveries are reported.

Traveling into the mines can be a life-or-death affair, however, as cave-ins and strange attacks are a regular occurrence. In addition, a massive explosion, possibly magical in nature, wracked the area just 8 months ago, killing several prospectors and causing untold havoc to the nearby landscape. The only clue as to the cause of this catastrophe was a single sapphire-tipped dagger left at the scene. Many say that this is the calling card of the Blue Knight.



Chapter Two

The Jaren

Synopsis

While in Gahanis, the characters will be approached by the Jaren. The secretive guild desires the capture of the two bandit spies and the return of a special item, the *Inmagus Libellum*, a rare tome from far-away Xavel. The characters will then have some time to gather resources and information before setting out for the supposed location of the bandits, the abandoned Battlehome fortress.

Starting the Adventure

Whether the characters have joined into a group or are still acting as individuals, they have come to the attention of the Jaren Masters in Gahanis. This section assumes that the GM is using the Jaren as the impetus for the adventure and not one of the alternate story hooks suggested in the Introduction. Regardless, this section contains relevant information for any group about to investigate the Battlehome.

There are three encounters that will occur before the characters set off for the Battlehome: a summons from the Jaren, a casual encounter with Nefenr, and the actual meeting with the Jaren. After these encounter descriptions are notes on information that may result from PCs' investigation into related topics.

The Attention of the Jaren

The Jaren want an outside source to capture the bandits and hopefully return their stolen treasure. While they have publicly supported the reward offered, the secret organization does not want Ne-Chardath, Mynorath, or their competitors to gain any knowledge of their true goal: the *Inmagus Libellum*.

The PCs will receive a message from the Jaren in one of the following ways (each character may be approached via a different method, or all at once, if they have already formed into a party by other means).

Dreamspeach

In ritual, the Jaren are able to expand and guide their dream-vision ability. When the character (or characters) is asleep, he or she will have a vivid dream. Read or paraphrase the following:

You stand in the middle of a darkened space. Starlight begins slowly to illuminate the area, and you realize that standing before you is a tall and commanding presence. A being, dressed in purple robes and a burnished bronze mask begins to speak, its words echoing in the darkness: "Adventurer and hero, I am the Jaren Trade Master of Gahanis. As you may know, a bandit plague has descended upon this region. In the most recent attack, something of great value to my organization was stolen, something we desire greatly and wish to have returned. Our enemies are numerous and deadly, and news tells that the bandits involved may very well have been citizens of Gahanis itself. Therefore, the Jaren council desires utmost discretion and commitment. The Jaren request your aid in this matter. Will you perform a valuable service to the community by capturing these vile bandit spies and return that which was stolen from us? We offer compensation and instruction for this endeavor. Should this assignment intrigue you, then please come to the Jaren Guild Hall one hour past tomorrow's twilight. We hope that you are honorable and heroic and can aid us."

When the character (or characters) wakes, he or she will have a complete and vivid memory of this dream. Any resident of Gahanis will be able to provide directions to the Jaren Guild Hall.

Messenger Witch

While supernatural means are at their disposal, the Jaren will also use more common tactics. Kirsten Brown, the young daughter of the town's popular baker, runs a small delivery service during the morning hours. The character (or characters) will be approached by the youth while in town. Read or paraphrase the following:

A gentle breeze awakens nearby wind chimes and stirs the dust, but it's the whispering that draws your attention. The wind seems to be whispering your name as it blows. Looking to its possible source, you see a young human girl, wearing a simple black dress accented with a large red bow in her hair. She smiles and hurriedly approaches. "Oh, I found you!" she exclaims. "I've been looking for nearly an hour. I have a message for you!" She hands you a folded piece of parchment, then reaches into her pocket to produce a small book and writing stick. "Can you sign this delivery receipt, please?"

If asked, Kirsten reveals that the parchment was dropped off earlier in the morning by one of the warehouse workers employed by the Jaren Guild. She does not remember anything specific about him — he was pretty nondescript — except for his serious manner and insistence that the message is delivered promptly. (In fact, he was one of the Jaren, posing in his human identity). Once she has the receipt book signed, she will happily skip down the street back to her home.

The note is written in a formal hand, and reads: "Dear Heroic Adventurer, The powerful and honorable Jaren Trade Guild has need of your services. Recent bandit activity has affected the trade routes surrounding Gahanis and therefore affected the livelihood of the town's residents and local businesses. While two of the bandits' identities have been discovered, there are other related matters of more importance that require the dedication and skill of individuals such as yourself. If you are able and willing to undertake a bold and rewarding quest, please come to the Jaren Guild Hall one-hour past tomorrow's twilight. All questions will be answered at that time. Until then, please keep the contents of this message and our needs in utmost secrecy."

There is no signature, but the seal of the Jaren is present. Any resident of Gahanis will be able to provide directions to the Jaren Guild Hall.

Encounter with Nefenr

Thanks to his resources, Nefenr will know the characters are in town and wonder at their purpose. He will arrange to "bump" into one of the PCs or the entire party, if they're traveling together. Two things will be obvious to the characters immediately: the first is that Nefenr is very charismatic and flamboyant for a verrik; the second is that there is nothing else obvious about the man at all! Nefenr displays akashic memory abilities, yet he casts spells. He seems to have the training of a magister, yet he rarely carries a staff. Nefenr uses his psionic ability to mask his training and hide his true nature. The only thing he will willingly reveal is the fact that he is an artist of great merit.

Currently, Nefenr is sought for his "memory sculptures." Using his empowered akashic stone (see Appendix I), Nefenr is able to cast laden versions of his spells, applying the psionic template. Once his clients have paid, he begins asking about people in their past while he discretely casts *read mind*. Gaining a verbal description, he also takes mental cues from a client's own mind. Asking his customer to think about the subject for 5 minutes (the spell's duration), Nefenr will attempt to glean all necessary information about the subject (and anything else interesting that comes up in "casual" conversation). Then, using a psionic *illusory creature* spell, he can create an animate replica of the subject discussed. The illusion will interact with the client for a limited time, acting exactly as the client expects (thanks to the *read mind* spell).

When Nefenr runs into the characters, he will attempt to sell them on a memory sculpture. "For the low price of 3 gp — a special rate for you alone — you can participate in one of the most extraordinary sights in all of Gahanis!" Whether the characters agree or not, Nefenr will continue the conversation, casting his psionic-laden *read mind* spell in hopes of learning the PCs' motives and plans while in Gahanis. Nefenr will seek to target an obvious totem warrior or unfettered, or failing that, a mage blade or warmain. He will only work on another class if the target is litorian or if none of the other options are present. A **Will save (DC 15)** is required to negate Nefenr's spell.

At this point, Nefenr intends no harm toward the characters; he is merely curious. Should he learn of their invitation by the Jaren, he will keep a close eye on them and have his many agents (artists throughout the town) keep him informed.

Meeting at the Jaren Guild Hall

While the town is boisterous on most nights and drunken voices can be heard arguing and singing in the distance, the area around the Jaren Guild Hall is usually empty and quiet. The mystery and rumors that surround the guild are enough to keep most away, while two imposing litorian guards (both 3rd-level unfet-

tered) deter those with more curiosity than brains. They have been told that the PCs will be attending a meeting at exactly one hour after twilight. Approaching the guards or Guild Hall anytime before then will result in a polite but firm invitation to come back at the appropriate time.

At the designated time, and not a moment beforehand, the guards will lead the PCs — each of whom they will recognize due to very specific descriptions — into the main foyer in the Guild Hall. No lights permeate this building, and the guards will close the doors behind the characters, leaving them in total darkness. Moments later, an interior door will open, leading to a dimly lit room with comfortable chairs to accommodate all of the PCs. Also in the room is a single Jaren Master, dressed in the ceremonial purple robes and burnished bronze mask. In the darkness, he appears to float, though this is just a side-effect of sitting on an all-black chair in the dim light. A voice will beckon them to enter, at which point the following text should be read aloud or paraphrased:

“Brave adventurers, you have been chosen from the ranks of Gahanis for your prowess and discretion. As you may know, the Jaren are a powerful and respected trade organization across the realm. Bandits, those of weak character who prey on the success and fortunes of others, have repeatedly haunted these lands, attacking our trade caravans and disappearing into the wilderness with their ill-gotten gains. The most recent attack occurred less than a fortnight ago, and it seems that fortune has finally favored the righteous. Two of the bandits have been identified as citizens of this town and are believed to be hiding in the abandoned Battlehome fortress to the south.

“Rewards have been offered for the capture of these miscreants, but there are matters of more interest to the Jaren. Our organization wishes to employ you in an effort to bring justice to these bandit spies as well as to attend to a matter of utmost importance: the retrieval of Jaren property stolen during the last raid. We offer a bounty of 400 gold coins for the capture of the two bandit spies and an additional 300 gold coins for the retrieval of a single lost item. There is one concern, however: the Jaren have long been a secretive and secure organization. Our business dictates that we must maintain neutrality and remain above the petty concerns and machinations of our competitors. So, this task must be undertaken with the gravest care and secrecy, so as not to betray the trust that so many merchants and craftsmen have given us or to our competition an undue edge. Will you abide by this concern and take up this quest?”

The Jaren speaking to the party (the remaining 4 are observing from the next room) is completely sincere and will seem so as a result of any Sense Motive check. If asked about their secretive nature, the Jaren will explain to the party that, due to the often antagonistic relationship between the various races of the realm, they must maintain their anonymity and impartiality; revealing themselves would expose them to the corruption that haunts the other trade guilds and merchant organizations.

If the assignment is accepted, the Jaren will reveal further details. Merril Yannis (a snake totem warrior) and Den Rudiger (believed to be a scribe of some kind; his runethane abilities are not widely known) are two citizens who were identified in the recent bandit raid. The single guard who survived had been to Gahanis on numerous occasions and recognized the two by sight. It is believed that the two were spies who informed a larger bandit community about trade routes and caravan schedules. The two spies are believed to be hiding in the abandoned Battlehome fortress.

The Steward and the town council have also offered a reward — 200 gp for the capture of each bandit (100 gp for their dead bodies) — but the Jaren have no knowledge of any other bounty hunters or adventurers currently pursuing this task. Mynorath and the town guard have discussed inspecting Battlehome and hunting the bandits, but have spread themselves thin patrolling the nearby routes and preparing for the upcoming Bounty Day festival, which is set to occur in just over two weeks' time. If a break in the trade schedule can be found after the festival, there may be activity against the bandits undertaken by the town; until that time, adventurers, mercenaries, and bounty hunters seem to have the job to themselves.

The item sought by the Jaren is a simple looking book, bound in red leather. The title, *Inmagus Libellum*, should be written in a dark script across the face of the book. It is but a simple history text, though it does hopefully contain some rare and valuable information related to some recent Jaren pursuits. The Jaren Master will remind the party that recovery of this tome is the main goal on this quest and should be the highest priority.

The Jaren will be willing to pay a portion of the reward upfront, to provide equipment if necessary. They will also agree to any additional terms, within reason, that the PCs may present during negotiations. After all, money is easy to come by for the Jaren, and the PCs can be easily killed after completing the assignment.

After the party concludes its meeting with the Jaren, it will once again be escorted out into the night by the two litorian bodyguards. None of the Jaren will be seen leaving the guild hall.

Gathering Information

The characters may talk to citizens and visitors alike to discover the following information, listed by topic. Each topic investigated will require a few hours' socializing and a few gold pieces spent, as well as a Gather Information (DC 10) check, with greater success revealing further information as noted. Characters who are native to Gahanis or who have established historic ties to specific residents may take 10 on this check.

Bandits

DC 10: Rewards have been offered in the past, but none of the bandits' identities or their location was previously known. It is only recently that any leads have been available, but the town guard and Steward have been unable to act on them, as a busy trade season and upcoming festival consume their time.

DC 10: Some believe that the bandits are being paid by the jealous merchants of Lothis!

DC 12: The bandits have been attacking the trade routes for some time, but it is only within the last year or so that the attacks seem to have become more organized and deadly. It is assumed that the two identified bandits, Merrill Yannis and Den Rudiger, acted as spies within the community.

DC 14: Some say that the bandits are led by the Blue Knight, a mysterious and deadly figure who haunts the countryside. The Blue Knight's hallmark is a sapphire-tipped dagger left at the scene of brutal carnage and slaughter.

DC 16: Merrill Yannis was a somewhat accomplished snake totem warrior and formerly served as an escort at the local weaver's shop (though no one seemed to purchase much weaving while he worked there). Den Rudiger was an apprentice to a verrik cartographer and copier, but was fired when he began forging official documents. It's said that he was well versed in rune lore.

Jaren

DC 10: The Jaren are the largest mercantile organization, but also the most mysterious. They have maintained guild halls across the realm since the disappearance of the dramojh, but have only come to Gahanis within the last 8 years. No one, not even their most trusted employees, has ever seen their true identity.

DC 12: The Jaren, while skilled negotiators and dedicated businessmen, also seem to have a genuine public concern. Funds have been established to aid orphans and widows and to provide the poor with occasional relief.

DC 14: The Jaren do not always pay the highest price for goods or sell at the best cost, yet they are still very

successful. Some believe that their secrecy has become celebrity and merchants deal with them for the gossip generated rather than the monetary benefits.

DC 20: Some who have refused Jaren propositions have encountered unfortunate luck, often destroying their finances. Jaren caravans have been attacked by bandits in the past, but it seems to be far more likely that a non-Jaren caravan will be attacked.

Battlehome

DC 10: The Battlehome fortress was built during the war against the dramojh by incredibly skilled giant architects. The vast tunnel network under the complex served as a hideout for escaped slaves and eventually became an important giant outpost in the war.

DC 12: The fortress has long been abandoned, but periodic visits from concerned guards and officials help keep it from becoming too dilapidated. Still, the main doors are chained and locked, and it is against the town charter to trespass. It has often been assumed, though, that the fortress is used as a hideout for the criminal element.

DC 12: Nefen is currently consulting with the Society of the Home with regards to refurbishing Battlehome or at least documenting its importance to the town of Gahanis.

DC 14: The Battlehome fortress once held the famed Ebonring, an evil artifact that was said to have tainted the very stone of the building itself.

DC 18: Maps of the fortress do exist, but maps of the tunnels and caverns under the fortress, let alone a living guide, are impossible to attain. The tunnels are so complex that they are nearly impossible to navigate without aid, and some are said to lead to the Dark Depths.

Knowledge (history), Knowledge (humans), or Knowledge (giants) might also reveal information about the Battlehome corresponding to the results of the DC 10 and DC 14 Gather Information check about the Battlehome. However, the DCs to get the info are slightly higher: DC 10 Gather Information becomes DC 15 Knowledge, and DC 14 Gather Information becomes DC 25 Knowledge.

Chapter Three

The Battlehome Fortress

Synopsis

The PCs, having either been assigned a task by the Jaren or simply pursuing the matter on their own, enter the long-abandoned Battlehome fortress. Once inside, they discover that the keep is being used as a home for various creatures, including some transformed goblins, as well as a hide-out by the two bandit spies. Capturing or eliminating the bandits, the PCs will discover that the item desired by the Jaren is being kept at a different location — the bandits' main lair two days' travel to the south. At this point, the characters may have enough experience to gain a level.

Starting the Adventure

The Battlehome fortress lies a few hours' journey to the southeast of Gahanis. If the PCs investigate the existence of maps of the fortress, they will discover that copies are available in the town's library (Location 1E). The maps can be copied for free, as long as they are not taken out of the premises and a **successful Craft (scribe) check (DC 10)** is made. Copying the maps requires 4 hours of work. Alternatively, purchasing the maps costs 2 gp, but will draw questions from the curious mojh librarian. A **Diplomacy check (DC 15)** or **Bluff check (DC 15)** will be needed to assuage the librarian. Failure indicates that the PCs will be reported to the town's speaker or steward.

According to town charter, entering the Battlehome fortress without a permit is a crime. Such permits can be acquired at the town hall (Location 1A) or courthouse (Location 1B), as long as the characters sign a sworn statement that their intentions are honorable and that they are entering the fortress as a part of the restoration team or to "cleanse the area of foul creatures." Either way, a 10 gp deposit, per person, must be left with the magistrate on duty, half of which will be returned to the adventurers upon their return. Furthermore, the PCs must agree to forfeit to the town 5% of any non-historic treasure found, and anything that the town deems as having historical significance (such

as a giant's ritual mask) will be considered property of Gahanis. An iron key is supplied with the permit and must be returned promptly.

Of course, these negotiations will violate the Jaren's requirement of absolute secrecy, so should be avoided! Any breach of security will be recorded by Jaren spies and will result in a substantially lowered fee (or death, once the characters retrieve the missing tome.)

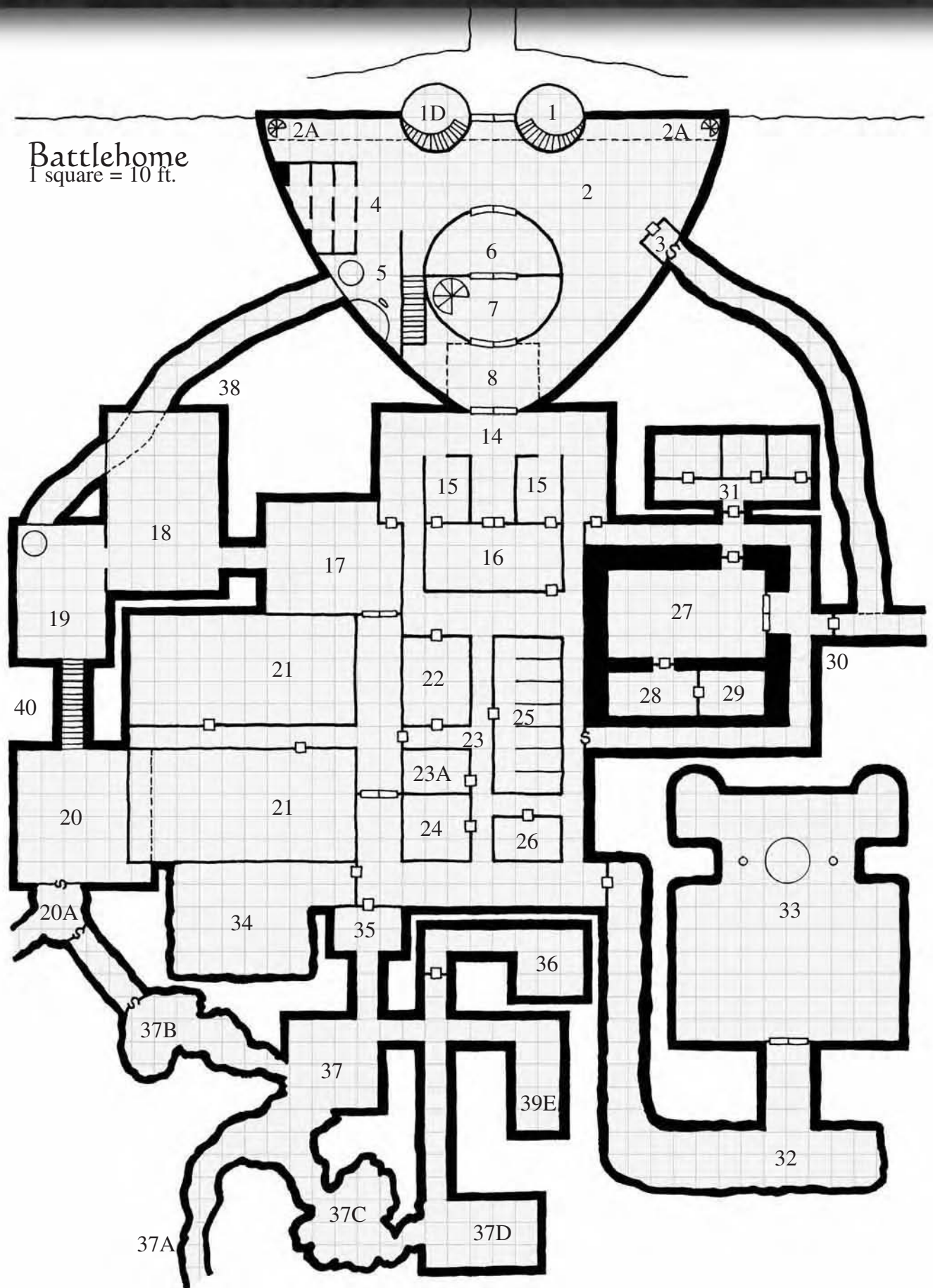
Approaching the Battlehome

The journey to the fortress will take only a few hours once the characters set out from Gahanis. The road through the Derenblack Hills is unused and rough, but will not present an obstacle. As the PCs near the location of the Battlehome, they may encounter Howorand Sala, an artist working with Nefen on the Battlehome preservation project. A **Spot check (DC 10)** will alert the PCs to his presence from a distance; otherwise, they will suddenly encounter him as they clear the final rise before viewing the Battlehome.

Howorand sits cross-legged on a rock formation, a blue crystal in one hand and an expression of concentration on his brow. If the PCs spot him at a distance, they may simply avoid him in his thought-consumed state. If, however, they stumble upon him or purposely interrupt him, he will begin the encounter as **Indifferent**. A **Diplomacy or Charisma check (DC 15)** can shift this attitude to **Friendly**.

Battlehome

1 square = 10 ft.



If Indifferent, Howorand would prefer that the PCs simply continue on their way and leave him to his work, to the point of simply walking away to a higher vantage point and ignoring further conversation. If Friendly, then Howorand will reveal the following:

“Hello, gentle travelers. My name is Howorand Sala, artist of Gahanis. You have found me deep in concentration, studying the quiet majesty of the Battlehome fortress. I have recently been commissioned by the Society of the Home to create a series of paintings of this respected and historic site, a great honor to be sure. However, I must admit a certain reluctance in spending time alone near a location with such a reputation. Luckily, my patron Nefenr has fashioned several “memory stones,” allowing me to absorb the details at a safe distance and explore them more fully at my leisure — and safety — back in my studio. Where are you bound on such a fine day as this?”

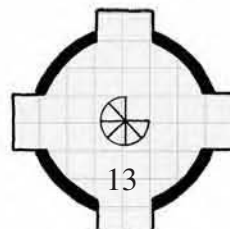
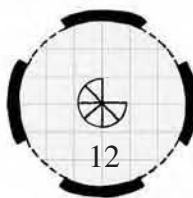
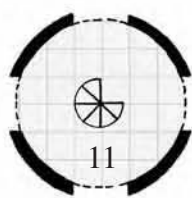
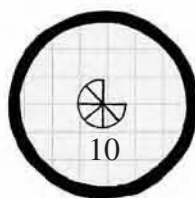
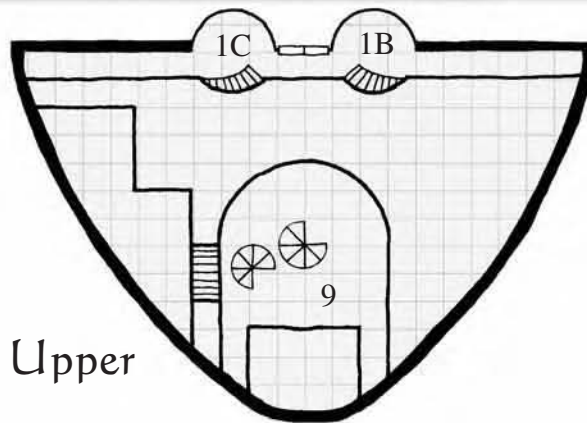
Howorand will not be concerned with the party’s destination in any legal regard; the idea that the PCs may be illegal trespassers does not even cross his mind. If they chose to reveal that they are traveling into the Battlehome, Howorand will offer up the following suggestion:

“You’re going in to the Battlehome? How fortuitous that I’ve encountered you! I’d love to create some works based on the interior majesty of the fortress, but — again — my disdain for physical danger cautions me against pursuing this course. Would it be possible for you to take this memory stone of Nefenr’s in with you, to record some of your observations and capture details of the interior?”

If the PCs agree, Howorand will gladly hand over the memory stone, asking them to return it to Nefenr’s observatory when they have completed their quest. Though they may not realize it, the characters may be exposing themselves to danger by accepting the memory stone. Should the stone be returned to Nefenr’s hands, he will be able to glean basic information from it as to the party’s capabilities and tactics. The stone “records” impressions for a 24-hour period, beginning when Howorand hands it over. With the stone, Nefenr will have knowledge of the party’s activities during this period — including any encounters with the bandit spies hiding in the fortress.

If the characters refuse this task, Howorand will simply shrug and carry on his studies, returning to an Indifferent attitude. He will relay information about this simple encounter to Nefenr, however, which will again pique his curiosity. Should the PCs choose to subdue Howorand — or worse — they will find him an easy target, incapable of defending himself or of escaping. A single successful hit against **AC 10** will reduce him to **0 hit points**, leaving him *unconscious*. Howorand wears no armor and carries only simple artist’s supplies (and the memory stone) on his person.

Battlehome – Upper
1 square = 10 ft.



The Battlehome Fortress

Carved from the side of Veil Mountain, the Battlehome fortress is a masterpiece of ancient magic and skilled architecture. Designed for a single purpose — war against the dramojh — the catacombs under the hill (which stretch out across the entire region) served as shelter for escaped slaves while the giant-built fortress acted as a defensive outpost and supply depot. After the dragon-scions were defeated, the Battlehome no longer had purpose, and those who were once slaves hiding in a dark shelter emerged and founded the community that would one day become Gahanis, which means “shelter” in the ancient human tongue.

Cut directly into the rock face, the immensity of the structure is breathtaking. A 200-foot wide wall reaches nearly 160 feet in height, with the top third of the wall featuring lattice-like weaving, designed for maximum effectiveness against an airborne foe. Birds dart through portions of this upper lattice, and the concave mountain-side visible beyond the wall suggests that the enclosed area is a giant hollow, scooped from the mountain like pulp carved from a hollow pumpkin shell.

A winding trail leads down from Howorand’s vantage point, dipping into a gully before ending at the fortress gate. Two massive iron doors secure the 20-foot by 20-foot entryway, flanked on either side by 30-foot wide towers. While the general opinion may be that the fortress is long-abandoned and therefore decrepit, closer inspection of the massive wall and towers proves otherwise. While the fortress is roughly 400 years old, it shows no signs of obvious weakness. A **Decipher Script check (DC 15)** will reveal that a few sets of strange runes carved into the wall are actually coded messages (“Meet on third full moon”; “Town guard changes at midnight”; “Uatu loves Jef,” and so forth) left by unsavory characters, further bolstering the Battlehome’s reputation of being a hideout for criminals at large.

Entering the Battlehome

There are four known caves that lead to the tunnels under the fortress, but they have all been sealed over to prevent creatures from the Dark Depths wandering up into the Gahanis area. Characters hoping to scale the mountain and rappel down into the fortress will find the steep mountain more daunting than the giant wall itself. A seemingly unending series of **Climb checks (DC 25)** will be needed to conquer the nearly 300-foot peak. The central iron doors of the main gate are impregnable and, outside of a dusting of oxidation, as strong as they ever were. They are barred internally by a complex locking system that is controlled in Area 9. The doors are further protected by a heightened *greater sealed door* spell inscribed upon them. The password for the doors is kept secret within an ancient tome (simple entitled *The Battlehome*) currently in Ne-Chardath’s possession.



There are two alternate means of entry: undertaking a difficult climb over the wall or passing through the makeshift opening in the eastern tower (Area 1). Climbing the fortress’ walls requires a series of **Climb checks (DC 25)**, allowing a character to travel one-half of her movement rate for each successful Climb check. Since the wall is 100 feet in height (before opening into the lattice structure), most characters will need between 7 and 10 successful checks. Once the characters have penetrated the lattice, they can either repeat the process, climbing down the inside (though they risk interference from the dark scamps — see Area 13), or they can affix a very long rope, **reducing the Climb check DC to 5**.

The tower on the east side of the gates may present the most attractive opportunity. A makeshift opening, roughly 10 feet by 12 feet is barred by a mounted iron gate. This gate was installed long after the fortress was officially decommissioned, allowing “easy” access for official business. It is bound with heavy iron chains and a padlock. Scribed on padlock is the symbol for the town of Gahanis, a stylized “G.” A plaque mounted beside the makeshift gate reads:

“With regard to any intent of entrance: The Battlehome and its outlying caves fall under the jurisdiction of the Gahanis township. Any entry without the required permit will be considered trespassing. Any violation of this order will lead to punishment under the specified laws of Gahanis. This order is for your protection, as well as the free peoples of Gahanis. Permits for lawful entry can be obtained at the Gahanis Town Hall.”

If the PCs received an official permit to explore the fortress, they will have a key for this padlock. Otherwise, they must use an alternative means to pass the gate.

Padlocked Chain: Hardness 10; hp 5; Break DC 26; Open Lock DC 20.

Exploring the Battlehome

The open nature of the fortress will yield sufficient light to navigate the first 14 areas of the fortress. Penetrating deeper into the structure will require the characters to supply their own light source or else suffer all **darkness related penalties (i.e., half-movement rate, 50% miss chance due to concealment, penalties to Spot and Search skill checks, and so forth)**.

Any keyed encounters will list the creature's name and hit points; complete stat blocks can be found in Appendix I. Several encounters within the dungeon, though taking place in specific areas, are fluid in nature. Creatures may attack and retreat, only to appear in another part of the complex; some may be forewarned of the party's presence and make an aggressive attack; others may stick to their main lairs, oblivious of the world around them. Read through the possible encounters carefully and make notes when creatures relocate or retreat. Use the map as an aid, noting locations for traps and ambushes. While the adventure as written is set up to do most of the simple work, bringing the complex to life is the purview of the Game Master, and the more believable the inhabitants of the Battlehome are, the greater the chance for an enjoyable adventure.

Area 1: The Gate Towers

Each tower has a 10-foot wide spiral stone staircase that winds its way up through an opening in the ceiling. The eastern staircase leads up to Area 1B and is connected to Area 1C by the keep's rampart. The staircase in the west tower descends from Area 1C to 1D below, which is the base of the western tower.

The only method of entering the fortress through the towers is to climb the staircase to the rampart level and then descend one of the rampart staircases at Area 2A.

Areas 1B and 1C

From this level above the iron gates, the giants would be able to pour hot oil upon and cast spells through "murder holes" in the tower at those near the entrance. These holes were bricked up many years ago. Archways 15 feet tall lead from these rooms to ramparts on the main wall. Traveling along the ramparts may attract the ire of the dark scamps located in Area 13.

Area 1D

Traveling down the stair case into the enclosed base of the tower, the party will come across a ghastly smell and an even grislier sight.

At the base of the stairs awaits a dreadful scene. A man in heavy brigandine armor lays sprawled out from an apparent fall, his head twisted completely around due to a crushed neck.

A **Heal check (DC 10)** will reveal that the decomposition of the body suggests it is at least 2 weeks old, while a **Survival check (DC 10)** will further suggest that the body has been consumed by something more than time (the handy work of the dark scamps).

The body is that of Stariff Blackweather, a relatively inexperienced warmain who decided to track down the bounty on the bandit spies in order to bolster his reputation. Unfortunately for him, the dark scamps from Area 13 swarmed him, forcing his fall down the tower stairs. His body has been picked clean by the dark scamps, and his possessions have been stolen by the goblin tribe, including his permit and entry key, which are now in the hands of the bandit spies.

Area 2: The Inner Courtyard Dome

Impressive to say the least, the expansive inner vault of the Battlehome rises 160 feet from floor to ceiling. Arrayed in a concave manner like an amphitheater, the cavern is dominated by a 60-foot diameter central pillar, supporting the roof and providing a key command area. Like the lattice wall, sections of stone appear to have been removed from parts of the tower, creating defensive openings to ward off attacking aerial creatures.

Though gloomy and thick with dust, light penetrating the lattice-wall makes the upper portion of the vault visible. Hundreds upon hundreds of long metal rods, anchored into the stone ceiling above, thrust down like a sea of stalactites. They once supported a multi-tiered catwalk structure, which has since been dismantled. Even if the enemy were capable of penetrating the outer defensive wall, it would most certainly have faced a fierce barrage of arrows, bolts, and spell fire from this inner defense. Taken in its entirety — the domed ceiling, the many ramparts anchored into the main wall, the extensive catwalk system — the cunning tactics of the giants become apparent: the fortress was not necessarily meant to prevent invasion, but rather to absorb it, corral it, and even trap it.

Examining the ancient structure, a **Craft (stonework) check (DC 10)** or **Knowledge (architecture or engineering) check (DC 10)** will reveal that the construction of the fortress must have involved powerful magical means. Lines and edges are crisp and plumb, yet the stone is seamless and without the suggestion of assembly. As noted, it seems the rock itself was simply scooped out, leaving the towers, walls, and buildings in this vast hollowed out space.

Area 2A

Four ramparts stretch across the interior of the main wall. All of them are accessed by the iron spiral staircases at the east and west ends and are 10 feet wide. There was once evidence that an iron guardrail had been mounted to prevent soldiers from slipping and falling. The lowest rampart stands 45 feet above the floor and connects with Areas 1B and 1C (which puts it 25 feet above the main gate). The next rampart is 55 feet above the first, where the lattice structure begins. From that point, there are two more ramparts, one 20 feet up and the last one another 20 feet above that.

Venturing out on to the higher ramparts, the wonder of the Battlehome will become more apparent. The top three ramparts coincide with each level of the inner tower (Areas 9B, 9C, and 9D). Openings in the tower align with the ramparts in such a way as to suggest that at one time a soldier could walk from rampart to tower by means of the suspended catwalk. Of course, these catwalks no longer exist, but there is evidence to imply their positioning. A **Knowledge (architecture or engineering) check (DC 10)** will immediately point out the exact positioning of where the catwalks might have led. From the upper three levels of the central towers, they fanned out into a complicated network that allowed access to the entire upper portion of the cavern. Defenders were most likely positioned along the ramparts/catwalks with bows and long javelins to form a devastating formation against the flying *dramojh*.

Any characters who have surmised this scenario or acquired this information through successful Knowledge checks, may make an **Knowledge (Engineering) check (DC 10)** to gain a further insight: the catwalks were likely made of metal, as wood would be too flammable and stone too heavy and dangerous to those below. Steel or iron would have been only slightly less deadly if toppled, but would present the best compromise to the giant designers.

Area 3: Small Guard House

Resting directly against the cavern wall is this 10-foot wide and 15-foot tall stone structure. A 12-foot tall iron door is in the precise center in the facing wall. It appears that the township has considered this door off limits, seeing as a swing latch is fixed to the door with a padlock.

Padlocked Latch: Hardness 10; hp 5; Break DC 26; Open Lock DC 20.

The padlock is scribed with the familiar “G” for Gahanis. Getting past the padlock will reveal an empty room. Before entering, a **Spot check (DC 10)** will discover a large carved rune on the dusty floor. The effect of the rune will be displayed on the first character who enters the room: a *teleport* spell. The affected character will be transported about 600 feet north of the fortress should he fail a **Will save (DC 15)**. The entire floor is the trigger for this magical effect. A

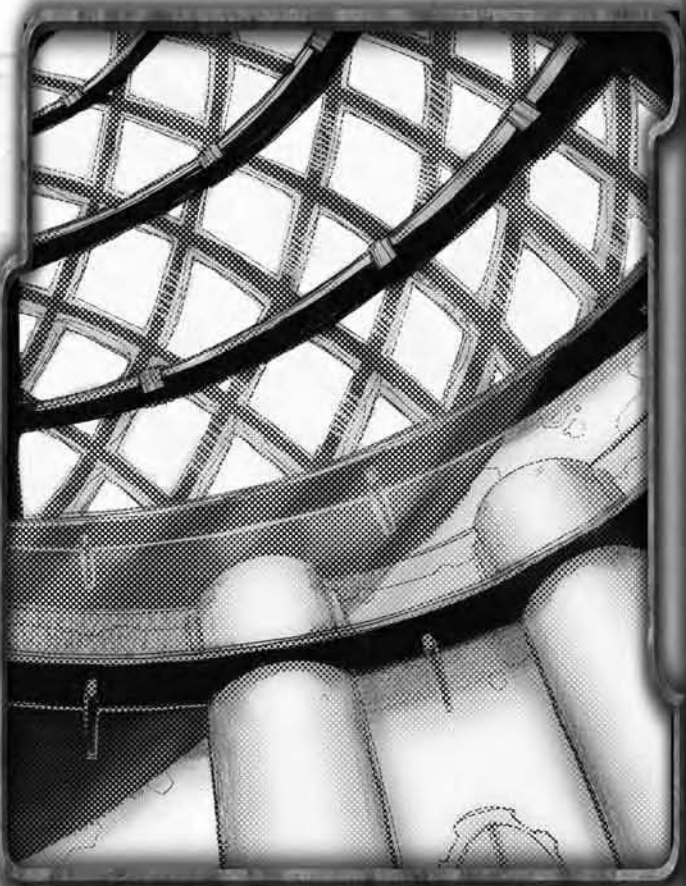
Knowledge (runes) check (DC

15) will suggest that the rune is indeed the cause of this effect. If this check was completed by a runethane, the character will further surmise that the rune appears to be a modified *rune of transport*. The magical effects of this unorthodox defense have diminished greatly over the years. Giant warriors and their allies wore a special *applied rune* on the soles of their footwear that would counteract this teleport effect.

A **Search check (DC 20)** will lead to the discovery of a secret door against the cavern wall (depressing a section of rock beside the door will unlock it with a noticeable “click” noise; pushing the one side will swing it open). Behind the secret door is a natural underground passage that leads to Area 30. This passage was used as a quick access to the natural caverns, an option for escape, or a means for a surprise counter attack.

Area 4: The Stables

Large stone partitions set in rows immediately suggest that at one time this building served as the stables for the massive radonts, the enormous horses used by the giants as mounts. The wooden doors that once housed the beasts have rotted away, leaving rusted hinges that have worn paper thin.



Area 5: The Smithy

This large area has a 25-foot ceiling and an arched 20-foot entryway. A large hearth set in the southwest corner of the room establishes this building as the fortress' smithy. The hearth is now inactive, but still very impressive in its construction. Resting before it is a large stone, whittled down by time, which was once the pedestal that supported the mighty anvil of the Battlehome. To the west is a 10-foot circular well. Beside it is another large stone container, decayed but still recognizable as the basin in which the smithy would temper his creations.

The building is empty, but a **Spot check (DC 15)** by a character who possesses the **Track** feat will expose tracks on the dusty floor. They appear to be recent, numerous, and made by small creatures. A second tracking-based **Survival check (DC 17)** will reveal Medium-sized humanoids among them. These tracks are the signs of the goblins and bandit spies who use the well as a means to traverse from their hideout to the inner courtyard. A **Search check (DC 10)** will reveal 120 feet of knotted rope fixed to a large grappling hook, located in the hearth and hidden from the casual viewer. This rope is used by the bandits and goblins to descend into the well when returning to the hideout.

The well taps 80 feet down into an ancient underground river (Area 38). The river is no longer active (see Area 38 and 39A for further details) and has been used by the bandits and goblins as an alternative route to exiting through the fortress complex — which they consider dangerous. A **Wilderness Survival check (DC 10)** or the simple opinion of a greenbond will immediately assess the well as being dry before any investigating into the matter is done.

Area 6: The Central Tower

These massive, 15-foot tall iron doors stand unguarded and unlocked. Until recently, these doors were kept barred and locked by the town, but the goblins have acquired a key and have left the doors unlocked so they can enter and exit the inner keep at will. A 15-foot iron slat leans against the wall, no longer securing the doors.

Area 7: Inner Gate Room

Like the main tower doors, the massive iron doors leading into this room are unlocked. A spiral stone staircase in the northwest corner leads to the upper levels of the tower (Area 9).

Area 8: Inner Courtyard

The central tower to the north, the cavern wall to the south, and two 50-foot high stone walls to the east and west square off this enclosed courtyard. The walls are in place to offer some kind of protection to the main entrance into the fortress' underground complex. A rampart 40 feet above connects to the tower from Area 9. The southern door leading to Area 14 is the same kind that is mounted in Area 6. It, like the other doors in the series, is also unlocked.

Note that this is a likely area for the dark scamps of Area 13 to swoop down and attack.

Areas 9–13: The Main Tower Rampart Levels

Climbing the 40-foot spiral staircase from Area 8 will lead up to the first rampart level within the central tower. A central staircase carries up through the rest of the tower, granting access to Areas 10–13. Each of these levels matches up with one of the ramparts on the main wall; the old catwalk system once connected Areas 11–13 to the ramparts accessible through Area 2A. This tower was the defensive control center of the Battlehome, with each level serving a specific purpose.

Area 9: Main Gate Control

This massive room features 20-foot wide by 12-foot high doorways that once led out to the lowest catwalk level; now, they only lead to open air. The ceiling is 35 feet above, and a 6-foot square observation window is set 10 feet above the floor on the north wall. Evenly spaced every 6 feet around the room are giant-sized arrow slits. Directly east of the observation window is a 5-foot tall stone pedestal, with a lever mounted to its top.

The observation window has a clear view of the main gates. Should the lever be pulled, the main gates will suddenly rumble and shudder, and then slowly open outwards. Furthermore, when the lever is pulled, the effects of the heightened *greater sealed door* spell are negated. Returning the lever to its previous position closes the doors and re-activates the spell. The gates have not been opened in generations, and doing so will send vibrating tremors throughout the complex, alerting the goblins and bandits.

Area 10: Safe Fall Rune Level

Spread around the outer rim of this room are eight pedestals, similar to that found in Area 9. Rather than a lever, however, each pedestal bears an engraved rune. This 25-foot tall room is without windows of any kind and also lacks exits to the former catwalk. The only means of exiting this room is the spiral staircase in the center.

As noted, the Battlehome was built to combat the aerial *dramojh*, with the upper lattice structure and ancient catwalks designed to provide attack and defense vantages against a flying foe. The fortress' defenses did not end there, however. The safety of the defenders was also considered, and a battle ceremony conducted in this room would activate the eight runes, which would blanket the Battlehome fortress with a *safe fall* spell effect. Any defenders wearing special footwear — marked with a special *applied rune* on the soles — would gain the protective effects of this spell should they be knocked off the catwalk or rampart during combat.

Area 11: Lower Catwalk Level

This 20-foot high room features 20-foot wide by 10-foot tall openings at the cardinal compass points, once granting access to the lowest level of catwalks. Peering through the openings, characters gain a better understanding of the former layout, as an array of iron poles of various thickness descend from the Battlehome's stone ceiling. Poles that descend down to this lower level are the thickest, able to accommodate the stress of supporting weight over such a long extension. From this vantage, some rails linking the poles are visible, though most have fallen away due to rust and exposure. Apparently, the main portion of the catwalk — the metal plates that would form the actual flooring of the suspended walkways — has been entirely removed for safety reasons. Jumping from pole to pole would appear to be extremely difficult, requiring a **Jump check (DC 30)** followed immediately by a **Balance check (DC 20)** to keep from falling. Making these checks would allow a character to travel from pole-to-pole, 10 feet at a time.

Area 12: Central Catwalk Level

This room is exactly like Area 11; however, catwalk access openings are located diagonally, meaning that they are at the northeast, northwest, southeast, and southwest portions of the space. The difference in this arrangement allowed for total coverage of the upper portion of the cavern's dome. It should be noted that the northeast and northwest configuration would have linked up with the lattice structure's rampart (120 feet from the cavern floor), roughly 55 feet directly ahead.

One can see human and animal bones scattered about the room. Beyond this room are five 5-foot by 10-foot metal plates that were once used in the formation of the walkway for the suspended ramparts. Curiously, a large rune is stamped in the middle of each of the plates. This is the same *applied rune* that the giants would have on the soles of their footwear that allowed them to bypass the magical trap in Area 3 and take advantage of the magic *safe fall* field generated within the dome. Needless to say, each of the metal plates was stamped with this rune so that should a portion of the catwalk be destroyed during an attack, the *safe fall* effect would apply to them as well. By this token, if any of the plates are placed on the floor of Area 3, then the effects of the *teleport* trap would be blocked, allowing easy access to the secret door.

Area 13: Lair of the Dark Scamps

The top level of the central tower is where 4 dark scamps have made their lair. As noted earlier, it is the GM's discretion when these creatures are actually encountered, given their vantage and ability to fly. Most certainly, they would likely detect intruders within the cavern itself (Area 2), along the ramparts (Area 2A), the inner courtyard (Area 8), or in any of the upper tower levels with an **opposed Spot/Listen check**. Should the party make loud noises on purpose (or by mistake), then the echo will be enough to immediately alert the dark scamps of their existence. The dark scamps have lived in the cavern for some time now and have no problem filling their voracious appetites; they simply fly abroad for small animals when bigger prey such as adventurers is sparse. They have an uneasy truce with the goblins, trading food, information, and treasure as the need arises. The goblins have not made a concentrated effort to remove the dark scamps knowing they make good "watchdogs."

The dark scamps will try to concentrate on one individual at a time if possible, hoping an early kill will drive the rest of the intruders away (and leave plenty of meat for their stomachs). If encountered in their lair, they will try to corral attackers to one of the openings and attempt to push them over the edge.

Dark Scamps (4): hp 4, 4, 4, 4.

The room is filthy, full of debris and garbage and the remains of past kills. After a **Search check (DC 10)**, a character will find the following: 32 gp, 150 sp, a half-used candle, a small steel mirror, and Stariff Blackweather's *+1 round shield*. Otherwise, this room has the same characteristics as Area 11.

Area 14: Main Hall

Aside from the rusty hinges, the great iron doors that divide the main hall and the inner courtyard (Area 8) swing open easily. To the south is a 20-foot wide hallway lined with pillars. The pillars are ornately carved into the forms of giant warriors stretching to the ceiling. At the end of this hallway are double iron doors with a very striking relief emblazoned across its surface: that of a champion giant warrior besting a *dramojh*.

To the southeast and southwest are two iron doors. Each door has two metal latches, each with a small "G" scribed on it, relaying that the town of Gahanis has officially attached them in order to control entry into these areas. Each of the four latches should be fitted with a padlock — the same as that found in Area 1, though only the top latch of the southeastern door is actually present. The other padlocks have been removed by the goblins with the key acquired from Stariff Blackweather in Area 1D.

Padlocked Latch: Hardness 10; hp 5; Break DC 26; Open Lock DC 20.

The Curse of the Vultrek

A loathsome creature that feeds off the carrion of demons, a vultrek has made its lair in Area 36. Feeding on the dead flesh of outsiders imbues it with magical side-effects, which manifest within a 200-foot radius of its location. In most cases, these effects are harmless, but they might manage to keep a low-level party on its toes. In lieu of wandering monsters (which *can* occur in the complex, but are rare), the party will most likely encounter these manifestations. Every 10 minutes, roll a 1d6. A result of 1 will require a second roll on the table at right.

Of course, the details of these effects and their place in the dungeon are wholly up to the GM. One need not make them random, but plan for them to be encountered in a specific order or area. Keep in mind, some of these effects could come into play during melee, thereby complicating the situation for the characters. In the end, these manifestations are best used to add flavor, lead the adventurers, and establish that the dungeon is, indeed, active.

The Curse of the Vultrek Encounter Table (roll 1D8)

- 1 The party will hear chanting from another room or from down a darkened hallway, suggesting that a ceremony is in progress. The effect lasts as long as the GM's target point has been reached — i.e., a particular room, the corner of a hallway, and so on. (As per the vultrek's *ghost sound* ability; no **saving throw**.)
- 2 A *gusting wind*, as per the spell, will blow through the party for **1 round**. (As per the vultrek's *gusting wind* ability, **Fortitude save [DC 12]**.)
- 3 The party wanders through a 10-ft. x 10-ft. field of *touch of nausea*. The effect lasts as long as a character remains in the field, and 1 round thereafter. The field will remain in place for 2 hours. (As per the Vultrek's *touch of nausea* ability, **Fortitude save [DC 10]**.)
- 4 An ancient weapon, discarded and forgotten, rises and attacks as per an *animate weapon* spell. Assume a longsword (**AC 11; Hardness 10; hp 5**) that will stay animated for **4 rounds**. It has a **speed of 30 ft.** and a **+2 attack bonus**.
- 5 A ghost-like figure can be seen 40 feet away and then disappears from sight. (As per the Vultrek's *lesser illusory creature* ability.)
- 6 The party will hear moans of pain from another room or from down a darkened hallway. The effect lasts as long as the GM's target point has been reached — i.e., a particular room, the corner of a hallway, and so on. (As per the Vultrek's *ghost sound* ability; no saving throw.)
- 7 A party member, randomly determined, feels the effects of *distraction*, as per the spell. The type of distraction is up to the GM, but one suggestion might be the horrific visage of the vultrek itself. The effect lasts for **2 rounds**. (As per the Vultrek's *distraction* ability, **Will save [DC 11]**.)
- 8 The party will hear loud, blasphemous voices growling from another room or from down a darkened hallway. The effect lasts as long as the GM's target point has been reached — i.e., a particular room, the corner of a hallway, and so on. (As per the Vultrek's *ghost sound* ability; no saving throw.)

The opposite doors are not necessarily passable, however, which will be evident should the PCs attempt the southwestern door. The goblins have barred it from the inside (see Area 17 for further details). They do not have the resources to control the fortress complex properly, but they have taken the necessary precautions to fortify the areas that lead to their lair.

Good Wooden Door: 1 1/2 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 15; Break DC 18.

Area 15: The Guard Rooms

Once used to by giant warriors on active duty as a meeting area, these rooms are now empty and full of debris. Dust, decaying lumber, and cobwebs fill the floor space.

Area 16: Throne Room

Perhaps in its original state, this room reflected the might of the giant commander who once oversaw the Battlehome, but this audience chamber is now dank and rank. A modest stone throne resting on a low dais in the southwest corner awaits visitors. In the floor, a stress fracture can be seen that cuts across the room lengthwise; a moldy smell seems to emanate from it. Refuse and garbage are piled up along the edges of the chamber and stacked up heavily behind the throne. The door in the southeast corner is slightly ajar.

Laying in wait beneath the garbage are 3 dire rats hungry for flesh. They will wait for the party to enter and settle before they attack.

Dire Rats (3): hp 5, 5, 5.

A Search check (DC 10)

will yield the following treasure: a single spryte-sized crystal slipper worth 34 gp and coins totaling 13 sp and 12 gp. The fissure is the result of hundreds of years of micro-shifts in the bedrock. It once connected to the underground river that is now dry, but the mold and decay remain. Beneath the grime and dirt of the walls and ceilings, observant characters will see painted frescos. They are so badly decayed, however, that fully assessing what their images depicted would be impossible, but they clearly filled the entire space, most likely lending to a very powerful effect.

Area 17: Common Room

This area was once the common room of the fortress, a place where off-duty giants could sit, relax, converse, and play games. Seeing as the space is a direct entry way into the goblins' lair, they have seen fit to bar both doors leading into the room. They have managed to fix 2 crude but effective iron latches of their own to the northeastern door (leading to Area 14), making use of 2 stolen padlocks (which have the official "G" inscribed on them). The double doors to the south of the room are chained through their handles, with the remaining padlock securing the chain.

Padlocked Latch: Hardness 8; hp 5; Break DC 24; Open Lock DC 20.

Standing guard, but bored to tears, are 2 goblins. They are aware of the fact that the fortress complex has been experiencing frequent hauntings of late (due to the vultrek) and will not react immediately to noises or the rattling of the doors (should the party try to open them). Should it appear that something is definitely trying to bash down the door, however, they will react accordingly, retreating back to Area 18 to join with more sizable numbers and make a stand. Once gathered in Area 18, the goblins will send one of their own to warn the rest of their numbers in the caves. Should they be caught off-guard by a magical means of bypassing the door (such as an *open lock* spell), the goblins may attempt to flee or stand and fight, as the situation warrants.

Goblins (2): hp 4, 4.

Area 18: Dining Hall

This room is absolutely devoid of any debris or garbage. Two very ancient iron chandeliers covered in cobwebs hang at either end of the room. Though this was once the main dining hall of the fortress, nothing suggests the space's former use other than the chandeliers. Areas 17, 18, 19, and 20 were once used by the goblins as their living space, but since the recent advent of the complex haunting (brought on by the presence of the vultrek in Area 36), they have pulled back into the caves to rest and sleep.

Three goblins, preferring the "comfort" of the complex rather than the bizarre transformation that is overtaking their gang (see Area 29 for more details), are helping stand

watch. Should the adventurers attempt to force their way into Area 17, the goblins from Area 17 will retreat back to this location to protect their lair as a group.

Goblins (3): hp 4, 4, 4.

Scattered nearby are several pairs of dice, suggesting the goblins like to gamble while at watch. The party might want to look at several scratches on the floor, requiring a **Search check (DC 10)**. The scratches on the floor seem to be a tally of who has won and lost in the goblins' games of chance. Each column of scratches looks to represent a separate goblin, signifying their numbers. There are 13 columns in all.

Area 19: The Kitchen

To the northwest, a large well occupies the corner of the room. South of it, a large rectangular block of stone rests on low columns, once used as a table. To the southeast is a 5-foot deep, 10-foot square pit, blackened by fire. A shaft of light, concentrated through a chimney over the pit, illuminates the room.

The well is exactly like the one found in Area 5. It has a 100-foot knotted rope with a grappling hook fixed at the edge to allow access down into the dry river tunnel (Area 38). The table is giant sized, standing 6 feet above the ground. To the south is an open doorway that leads to stairs going 40 feet down into Area 20. The chimney is 4 feet in diameter and leads directly straight up, almost 225 feet in length. It is through this long opening that the bandits release their homing pigeons (see Area 42B for further details). A **Search check (DC 10)** will turn up pigeon feathers and droppings, possibly hinting at the chimney's current use. A **Survival check (DC 10)** will indicate that the fire pit has been used often and recently. Needless to say, the bandits and goblins have used the kitchen to cook their meals, just as the giants did many years ago.

Area 20: Storeroom

Two dire rats will begin to snarl as intruders enter the room. Unlike the dire rats of Area 16, these creatures were raised by the goblins and behave like guard dogs. Goblins fleeing from Area 17 will dash through the southern door and leave the rats to deal with pursuers. Around their necks, the rats wear iron collars used when they are chained up in the goblins' caves. A secret door in the south wall (**Search check DC 20**) will spring open once a brick near the door is pressed.

Dire Rats (2): hp 4, 4.

Area 20A

This cave is the starting point for the tunnel that leads directly to the goblins' lair. It extends roughly 100 feet until it reaches an intersection (Area 40A). About 20 feet down the cave, on the eastern wall, a

Spot check (DC 10) will reveal ancient writing carved in Common: "Beware all who travel forth, for beyond this point there is no point." It is signed with skull and crossbones. Indeed, past the intersection, the full complexity of the caves of Veil Mountain stretch out in a maze for miles upon miles

A **Search check (DC 15)** will yield a crude secret door to the southeast. It swivels on a central post.

Area 21: Barracks

This enormous chamber at first glance appears to be empty save for the thick layer of rubbish that covers the floor. At one time, these barracks housed the company of giants that manned the fortress, hence their enormous size. The wooden bunks that the giants used have now fallen into decay, along with any other furniture and personal effects that used to be present. Given the fact that treasure seekers and lore finders alike have ventured through the complex, anything of any real interest has long since being hauled away.

Area 22: The Armory

Lining the walls of this moderately sized room are rusted iron racks, once used to store weapons. The room is empty aside from the remnants of rusted weapons and broken arrows. It was a staging area for small arms that augmented the main armory at Area 34.

Area 23: The Body

Entering this juncture in the hallway, the party will discover a grisly sight. Lying face down is the body of a verrik female eviscerated by what appears to be an animal. Uncharacteristically, there are no signs of armor or weapons among her shredded robes — odd for one in such a dangerous place. The large pool of dried blood that encircles the remains trails off, leading down the hallway to the south, signifying that this brave soul was already dying before she reached this point.

Examining the body will reveal the once proud face of Shema N'ralep, a verrik oathsworn bound to the protection of a noble son from the far-off city of Mi-Theron. This young noble, Jedrith Heros, was an unfettered with a sense of adventure. Disobeying the orders of his rich and powerful father, Jedrith set out to explore the world. His travels brought him to the Battlehome, an excellent starting point to build one's reputation as an adventurer. He did not heed the warnings, however, and delved deeper into the progressively dangerous caverns of Veil Mountain. For this he paid a terrible price. His loyal and loving companion Shema took a killing blow, saving him from certain death during battle with a creature of the Dark Depths. He escaped with his love in his arms, but they were not to make it free. They were

ambushed by the vultrek as they attempted to enter the Battlehome by the southern entrance. They escaped him temporarily, but he followed and in the end devoured their souls. Jedrith's remains can be found in Area 23A. A **Spot check (DC 10)** will show drops of blood leading from Shema's body to Area 23A. This incident can be dated back to roughly 5 days ago by means of a **Survival check (DC 10)**.

Searching the body (**Search DC 10**) will lead to a hip pouch containing love letters, written to Shema by Jedrith. A **Heal check (DC 10)** will confirm that the devouring of her body took place after death. A **Survival check (DC 10)** will suggest that the body was scavenged by an animal — the signs pointing toward a bird of some sort (vulture). A **Handle Animal check (DC 10)** will also verify this assumption. A **Knowledge (dangerous beasts) check (DC10)** cannot confirm the exact type of creature, but it can add that not only did the creature use a large beak to rend the flesh, it also had very sharp claws. The dire rats in Area 16 fear the remains, the stench of the vultrek keeping them at bay. There is nothing of value on the body.

Area 23A

Lying among the clutter and trash is the body of a young warrior, face up, his leather armor torn from his torso. Like the body of the young woman, he has been opened up in a savage and brutal way, stripped of his weapons, and the contents of his backpack spilled out. Needless to say, blood and dried viscera are sprayed about him. Closer inspection of the body (as per the criteria detailed in Area 23) will yield the same results. His empty scabbard was for a scimitar. A **Search check (DC 10)** of his backpack only shows standard equipment needed for underground exploration: 4 torches, 8 tindertwigs, 6 oil flasks, 2 days' rations (for one person), 25 feet of hemp rope, a small blanket, crowbar, thieves' tools, and so forth. Smearred with blood, however, is what looks to be an official town permit to explore the fortress, made out to a Master Jedrith Heros of Mi-Theron (see Area 36 for further details).

The room's purpose was that of sleeping chambers for giants who focused on the upkeep of the ceremonial chamber (Area 33) and leading the Chi-Julud rituals.

Area 24: The Ritualist's Quarters

The most striking thing about this otherwise empty room is a fresco on the east wall: a stylized depiction of a giant ceremony. The head ritualist used this chamber as his private quarters.

Area 25: Officer's Quarters

This large rectangular room has been divided into 7 "stalls," each 20 feet deep. An iron bar is mounted at the top of each opening, likely used to hang curtains. Each stall is full of debris and garbage. A low growling will be audible with a **Listen check (DC 10)**. Failure will mean a surprise round for the room's current resident.

A goblin that once belonged to the gang resides in the last northern stall. Given the unstable state of the goblins (see Area 39A for further details), it should be no surprise that one of their number has gone completely insane. Exiled from the caves, he now lurks in the complex, scavenging for food and water. He will wait for the adventurers to come to him, and then will pounce with his short sword, his eyes wild with fury and his mouth frothing.

Goblin (1): hp 4.

Area 26: The Commander's Quarters

A simple **Spot check (DC 10)** will show that the room has been recently occupied, given that much of the debris is piled to one side of the room and that evidence suggests a small cooking fire was once set up here. There is nothing more to this room other than confirming that the dungeon is used as a refuge to those wishing not to be found.

Area 27: Council Chamber

The large doors to this room carry a relief of a great rune. A **Knowledge (runes), (giants) or (history) check (DC 10)** identifies it as an ancient giant symbol of power. Unlike most of the ceilings throughout the complex, the ceiling here is arched. A long, rectangular stone block that once served as a table is situated in the middle of the room. On the back wall, chipped and worn, is a large fresco of giants at war with the dramo-jh — and winning. Outside of the giant stone table, the room is empty. Important council meetings and plans of war were conducted here.

Area 28: Judgment Room

Across from the doorway rests an oblong pedestal, slightly off center in the room. To the west, built into the wall, is a solid stone bench that spans the width of the chamber. Above it, high on the wall, is a stylized iron mask with ceramic tiles that radiate in a semi-circular pattern around it. The face is foreboding and full of strength.

If *detect magic* is cast on either the pedestal and/or the mask, they will radiate a faint glow for 1d6 minutes. Should a character touch the pedestal and then look up to the eyes of the mask, she must make a **Will save (DC 15)** or be transfixed, now under the influence of a *greater compelling question* spell. The character will not leave the gaze of the mask until she is pulled away by someone else; otherwise, she will stand there indefinitely, in a trance. In this time, she will answer whatever questions are asked of her as per the spell (receiving a **Will save [DC 15]** per question).

Prisoners, criminals, and spies were questioned here by the enchantment of the iron mask.

Area 29: Commander's Office

Unless the characters make a successful **Sneak check (DC 12)**, the creatures inhabiting this room will be preparing to attack as the party enters. When the PCs open the door, a choking green cloud will fill the immediate area. Living in this small room are 2 phungoid goblins (see Appendix I), who will exude their spore cloud attack (**Fortitude DC 12**) when the characters open the door. Should the adventurers enter and survive the initial spore attack, the first phungoid goblin will move to attack with his short sword, while the other attempts a second spore attack. Either way, they will kill or be killed.

Phungoid Goblins (2): hp 5, 5.

These two phungoid goblins were once members of the goblin gang, but were overcome by their ingestion of the sweet spore fungus that grows in the goblin caves (see Area 39A for further details). They no longer needed their comrades and decided to live out their new form cut off from the others. Most of all, their goblin brothers would not have them.

Area 30: Escape Tunnel

Entering the tunnel from Area 3, a party traveling south will eventually encounter an *greater eldritch wall* spell covering the tunnel's opening as it connects to a second tunnel leading east. The wall is part of a trap that was triggered a century ago. It is permanent in duration and has **725 hit points** remaining. The party will be able to see the door leading to the complex. From within the complex, the door once had a latch and padlock fixed by the town of Gahanis, but the latch has been destroyed long since. Should the characters find themselves on the other side of the *eldritch wall* and decide to head east into the dark unknown, they will encounter a large inscription on the northern wall, quite clearly, 40 feet up the tunnel: "Continue forth into the unending passages and ye shall likely find thyself between midnight and death."

Area 31: The Prison

Three imposing doors are spaced out along the northern wall. Positioned in the two doors closest to the eastside, 8 feet high, are small view windows with cover slats, which can be pulled back to see what is behind the doors. The door to the west is heavier in its construction, with runes carved across its surface. All the doors are fixed with heavy bolt locks, though the western door's bolt locks do not show the rust of time like the others.

These were the fortress' prison cells. The smaller prisons were meant for creatures of a non-magical nature; the larger cell was constructed for more powerful prisoners; each door is still functional. The two eastern cells are empty save for debris and the fallen skeleton of an unfortunate soul. The skeleton is human,

wearing a coat of rusted chain hauberk with a broken longsword by its side, suggesting that the being was an adventurer. In a pouch on its tattered belt is a peridot-topped ring worth 65 gp and an amber wedge worth 100 gp.

The doors are held in place with heavy springs, which make them difficult to open, requiring a **Strength check (DC 15)** to open from the outside and a more difficult **Strength check (DC 26)** to open from inside the cell. The reason for the difficulty is a heavy spring trap in each of the doors. If let go while open, they will slam shut, possibly sealing someone inside. They can be wedged open, provided that the method used involves something of 30 lbs. or more.

The larger cell's door has a heightened *greater sealed door* spell permanently cast upon it. Within its space are multiple heightened *null magic zone* fields to complete its impressive security (a combination of spells cover the entire cell). The door does not have a view window in order to maintain integrity. Needless to say, the characters would not want to be trapped in this room. Should they open the door to peer inside, they will encounter a black scathe (see Appendix I), which wandered up through the caves of Area 30 and mistakenly locked itself in this room (the acute aura of former dramojh prisoners was responsible for the attraction). It will erupt from the cell, fighting for freedom before it will truly attack the characters.

Black Scathe (1): hp 21.

Area 32: Ceremonial Procession Hall

This long and wide hallway, roughly hewn from the bedrock of the mountain, winds its way to the ceremonial chamber of Area 33. It is designed to allow the giants, during times of ritual, to file along its length. At its very end is a large bronze mask that fills the entire 20-foot by 20-foot space, spiraling flourishes enhancing its design. Should the mask be touched, the hallway will suddenly be illuminated by *lesser glowglobe* spells, situated every 20 feet along the hallway. Furthermore, magically generated ancient music will fill the air in a soft and rhythmic manner. As the music continues, the mask almost seems to start chanting, acting as a sonic guide to the ancient proceedings that took place here so very long ago.

The large iron doors that lead to Area 33 are molded into to large faces, emulating the face that forms the bronze mask. The doors will open easily.

Area 33: Ceremonial Chambers

As the characters examine this room, a feeling of good will settles upon them. An ironic feeling, to say the least, given the aggressive images painted on the walls: giant warriors, full of might and blood lust, rage across a battlefield against the shadow of their most hated enemies, the dramojh. The murals are intricate and detailed, a visual record of the giants' determination in dark times. Yet the topics vary beyond simply depicting heroic portraits; specific weapons of power and famous moments of giant history up until the point of the Battlehome's construction are also present. A large fountain, with a sculpted fist of iron erupting from its waters, sits near the north end of the room — and yes, its waters remain as fresh and blue as this day's sky. Flanking either side of it are 5-foot tall stone pedestals, covered in runes. Needless to say, as the rest of the fortress is old and decaying, this room seems to be resisting such forces.

If *detect magic* is cast on either the fountain and/or the pedestals, they will radiate a moderate glow for 1d6 x 10 minutes. The fountain acts as a *decanter of endless water*. If tried, the water is soothing, but should a PC succeed on a **Fortitude save (DC 10)**, it also unleashes one of the following special properties (roll 1d4):

1. The character is healed, as per a *battle healing* spell (**1d6 hit points of healing** only);
2. The character carries the effects of a *precise vision* spell (**duration of 40 minutes**);
3. The character carries the effects of a *magic armor* spell (that lasts up until its first successful use);
4. The character carries the effects of a *magic weapon* spell (that lasts up until its first successful attack).

The fountain will only grant a character these powers once per month. Giant characters need not roll the Fortitude save, as they gain the magical effect immediately. Beings who would be considered enemies of the giants (whether it be mojh, goblins, or otherwise at the GM's discretion) do not gain any positive effects at all. In fact, these recipients will experience a *touch of nausea*, as per the spell, for 1 hour.

A **Knowledge (history) or (giants) check (DC 10)** will identify specific events of the frescos including the landing of the giants at Khorl (Common Year 1228), the Battle of the Rosewood (Common Year 1230), and the great champion Ru-Annalor. Characters will be able to identify the runes on the pedestals with a **Knowledge (runes) check (DC 10)** as ancient runes of power and sustenance.

Area 34: Main Armory

Historians have noted that no libraries were located in the Battlehome — this is due to the fact that while in Chi-Julud mode, the giant's library was in effect their armory. This large chamber was dedicated to the massive build up of weapons that were stored and utilized at the fortress. Now, however, it is empty, with nothing to indicate the room's purpose.

Area 35: Locked Door

The door to this area is locked with a latch and padlock from the town of Gahanis (on the northern side) in an attempt to prevent anything from wandering into the fortress proper from Area 37A.

Area 36: Lair of the Vultrek

The door to this room is black and scorched, radiating an apparent and foreboding evil. It is unlocked, and when opened, it releases an ungodly stench of death. Characters will need to make a **Fortitude save (DC 12)** or feel the effects of a *touch of nausea spell* for **1 round**. Within this first round, the vultrek (hiding in Area 37D) will generate an *illusory creature* spell, having a shadowy version of itself peer quickly from around the northeastern corner and then retract back into the room. Should the party hesitate even further, the vultrek will cast *ghost sound* to convey the whimpering moan of a woman in pain. If any of the characters venture further into this hallway, the vultrek will send forth his pet, a seether (see Appendix I), from Area 37E. This beast will creep along the northern wall leading out of Area 37E in order to get a possible surprise attack. While the seether engages the characters, the vultrek will cast its *distraction* spell on one of the more powerful looking PCs. Should the seether be slain, the vultrek will attempt to flee, trying for an escape down Area 37A, unless the party appears noticeably weakened, in which case it may attack. The vultrek prefers prey that is freshly dead or on the verge of death. It will avoid fair fights if possible; however, the seether will fight to the death.

Vultrek (1): hp 18.

Seether (1): hp 15.

Area 36 was once the vault that kept the famous and evil *Ebonring*. During the ancient conflict between the dramojh and the giants, a key victory was scored with the capture of the *Ebonring*, a powerful artifact forged by the dragon-scions. The ring's nature was a mystery to the giants and left them with no alternative but to hide it from their draconian enemies. The great giant warrior Ji-Condur was put in charge of its safe keeping and elected to construct a keep in the Floating Forest for the specific purpose of protecting the ring. The artifact was kept at the Battlehome during construction, and in its time here, the fortress paid a haunting price. The *Ebonring's* influence began to permeate through the structure, causing acts of bad luck, strife, and unrest. When it came time for the ring to depart, all that were stationed at the fortress breathed a sigh of relief. The vault in which it was kept was forever tainted,

however, the aura of the ring still very much alive within the tiny chamber.

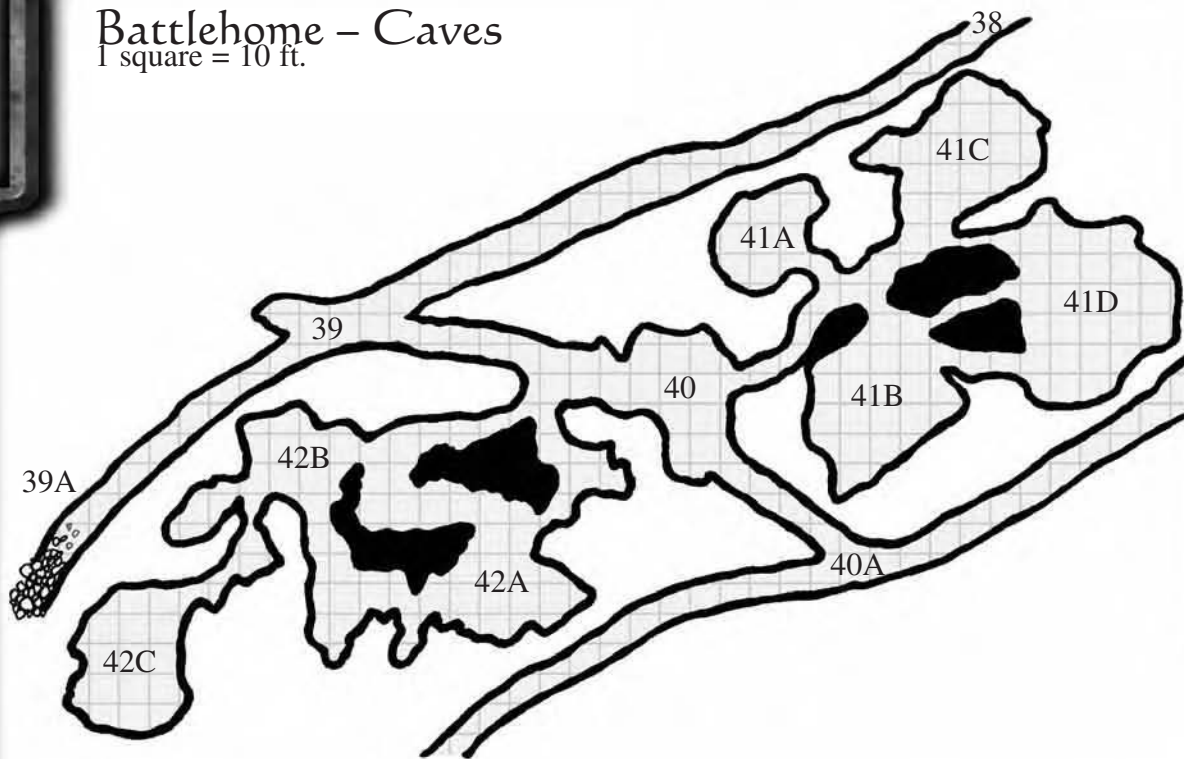
The vultrek entered the Battlehome from the Dark Depths, immediately attracted to the aura of evil. Due to the synergy of this location, the vultrek's powers manifested heavily, haunting the fortress as the ring did in its own time. The same can be said about the seether: it, too, wandered into the fortress feeling the ancient evil of the *Ebonring*. The pair formed an alliance of sorts, the seether feeding on the flesh of its victims and the vultrek on their souls.

Although the room's aura of evil is noticeable, once the characters get over the initial shock, they will not suffer any other ill effects. Within the chamber is the vultrek's treasure scattered about the floor (a *+1 scimitar* recovered from its most recent victim, a brilliant necklace made of 10 amethyst stones worth 800 gp, and a carved bone statue worth 45 gp). Also among the treasure is Jedrith's family seal, a pendant worth 25 gp. On the obverse is an inscription: "To my son Jedrith, heir to our future. Our hopes go with you." An **Appraise check (DC 10)** will confirm the pendant's importance, not only as a piece of jewelry, but as a powerful token that Jedrith's father, Able Heros, may wish returned. Given the town permit found in Area 23A and this pendant, it may occur to the players that a journey to Mi-Theron could be a possibility: the return of the family seal and the sad news that accompanies it may answer the lingering questions of the Heros clan and possibly add to the PCs' coin pouches.



Battlehome – Caves

1 square = 10 ft.



Area 37: Main Armory

The rooms of Area 36 and 37, carved out and constructed as needed, acted as a subsidiary to the main fortress.

Area 37

The central room, this space is now empty. Bones, rusted weapons, armor, and refuse litter the floor and adjacent corridors.

Area 37A

This passage is most likely thought of, by those who know the fortress, as the main entry to the uncharted tunnel complex that carries throughout the mountain and the surrounding region. Many expeditions have started here, never to return. Graffiti, carved on the tunnel's walls, provides the evidence: "The Company of the Righteous Sword — 1752" and "The Blazing Hands spit at luck" are but a few of the signatures. About 30 feet down the tunnel is the official warning, carved and filled in with white dye: "If thy wish is to live no longer, then by the Bitter Suns, please proceed."

Area 37B

A **Search check (DC 15)** will yield a crude secret door to the northwest. It swivels on a central post to a tunnel that links up to Area 20A. Otherwise, it is empty.

Area 37C

Another empty cave.

Area 37D

Normally, the vultrek lives in Area 36, but given the evil energies of the area and the vultrek's *deseccation* ability, the creature is able to sense when prey is close. Therefore, it prefers to position itself in this room as described above. It allows for long range attacks and an easy mode of escape. This chamber used to be a workshop, either to fashion clothing and small bits of jewelry or more intricate items such as glass and pottery. Two ovens are located in the wall to the east.

Area 37E

The seether lairs in this room. The floor is clawed and marked up from the creature's nervous scratching.

Area 38: The River Tunnel

Should the characters venture down the wells in Areas 5 or 19, they will find themselves in the river tunnel. It is empty but not completely dry, given the dankness in the air and on the walls. This dankness further perpetuates the smell of rot that fills the area. Should a greenbond be present, her assessment will be that the tunnel's water flow has likely been damned much further upstream, which can be the only explanation as to why the tunnel is empty yet still very humid. Every now and then, pools of water have collected along the tunnel floor. A greenbond would strongly recommend not drinking this water, as it is obviously contaminated.

Directly in between the connection of Area 5 and Area 19 is a *rune of warding* on the tunnel floor, placed there by Den Rudiger, the bandit runethane spy. The first PC attempting to cross over the rune (either coming from Area 5 or going to Area 5) must make a **Will save (DC 13)** or refuse to cross the area for 1 day. When the spies gained the permit key from the body of Stariff Blackweather they elected to "lock down" the tunnel, having changed the configuration of the town locks in Area 14 to the doors of Area 17. The tunnel continues down past the well opening of Area 19 to Area 39.

Area 39: Entrance to the Goblin Caves

Standing in an alcove is a lone goblin sentry. Adventurers using standard illumination to see their way through the darkness will be spotted immediately, in which case, the sentry will retreat up to Area 40 to warn the rest of the gang.

Goblin (1): hp 4.

Area 39A

Further down the tunnel, past the opening to the east passage, is an enormous fungus garden. It gives off a slight phosphorus glow, which can be seen 70 feet away. The fungus takes on the form of mushroom-like "stools," but moss and branches (some as thick as small trees) also fill the space. The collection of mold is so great and dense that it completely blocks the passage (and does so for another 200 feet). A greenbond will surmise that the "patch" is not the reason for the damming of the tunnel, but a by-product. Furthermore, the fungus is growing down the tunnel, continuing along the tunnel path. It can also be determined that this fungus is odd and likely dangerous to consume. This is where the sweet spore has been harvested by the goblins and bandits, who have become addicted to the dangerous substance (see Appendix I for further details).

Area 40: Central Cave

The main area for the goblins to gather, a large fire pit rests in the middle of the space. Rickety stools, bedrolls, flagons, and so forth encircle the fire, which is presently full of burning embers. A half-full bucket of sweet spore rests to one side as 3 goblins lay

sheepishly about the room. Should the goblin from Area 39 make it here to warn them, or should the characters fail an **opposed Sneak check**, the goblins will quickly gather themselves up and prepare for combat. They will suffer from a **-1 circumstances bonus to attack and damage rolls, saving throws, and skill and ability checks**, but benefit from a **+1 natural armor bonus to AC** due to the effects of the spore. Once his companions have been roused, the sentry goblin will continue on to Area 41 to alert the rest of his fellows (for a total of 6 goblins). They will then return to the caves in force looking for the intruders within 5 minutes.

Goblins (3): hp 4, 4, 4.

Area 40A

This is the junction with the tunnel of Area 20A. No sentry is posted here.

Area 41: Goblin Caves

This is the latest residence for the goblins, who moved here shortly after the vultrek began haunting the inner fortress. The goblins are relatively new to the fortress, having come from the cavern complex of Veil Mountain. They once had a chieftain, but he was slain by the bandit spies when they were looking for a hideout. The goblins took to their new masters, their loyalty sealed when they were offered gold for their services. Both bandits and the goblins, however, are now enthralled with the sweet spore drug, which has affected them greatly. The gang has splintered somewhat due to the spore's influence, but still they continue on a path of self-destruction.

Area 41A

This cave is sometimes used to hold the dire rats from Area 20. A large spike has been driven into the center of the room in order to chain them up (the chains lie to the side). Two more dire rats are presently chained up here (the chains are 10 feet in length), spoiling for a fight. Should the PCs blunder their assault upon the goblin caves, these rats could be freed in time to be of use against them in a concentrated counter-attack.

Dire Rats (2): hp 4, 4.

Area 41B

A sleeping chamber for a number of goblins, a **Search check (DC 10)** will yield 65 gp, some of the payment given to them by the bandits. Other goblin personal effects are in here as well, such as furs, odd shaped stones, goat's bladders full of goblin moonshine, and so on.

Area 41C

A fire pit set with a spit rests to the west of the cave, with a number of cooking utensils scattered about. Several sacks hold dried meats and fish. A keg of human beer (half full) sits on saw horses to the south.

Area 41D

The same as Area 41B, but two goblins lie here, passed out after having just taken a large dose of sweet spore. Should combat in Area 40 become excessively loud, they will wake, albeit in a very groggy state, and attempt to join the fight. They will suffer a **-2 circumstances bonus to attack and damage rolls, saving throws, and skill and ability checks**, but gain a **+2 natural armor bonus to AC** due to their sorry state. The goblins' appearance will be a shock as the effects of heavy sweet spore ingestion are starting to take hold. Much of their bodies are covered in mold, with toadstools sprouting from their flesh in many areas.

Should the cave be searched (**Search check DC 10**), the PCs will find the following treasure: an unused akashic memory stone (500 gp), a pair of dried spryte wings, a piece of chalk, 2 glass beads, and a tindertwig.

Goblins (2): hp 3, 3.

Area 42: The Bandit's Lair

Den Rudiger and Merrill Yannis reside within these caves, hiding out due to the bounty recently placed on their heads. Having been spotted and identified during a raid on a Jaren caravan that involved their bandit gang stealing the *Inmagus Libellum* (a tome seemingly regarded as priceless to the Jaren), they have since made their home with the goblins. Before this incident, the pair lived in Gahanis,



helping their bandit leader Nefenr spy on other merchant companies, rich travelers, and anyone else who drew attention to themselves. Now that they have been identified, however, Nefenr considers them a detriment to his operations and has made it clear to them to lay low in the Battlehome until all is fine. They only leave the fortress in order to get supplies or hunt for heartier food. To relieve the boredom of their present existence, they found solace in the sweet spore, its effects discovered by accident when Den decided to make a “mushroom soup.” While Merrill suffers from a “mild” addiction thus far, Den is completely overcome by the drug. Given this addiction, neither will venture too far from the fungus, no matter what, due to its powerful control.

Area 42A

This is Den Rudiger's cave; he lies passed out on its floor. Like the goblins in Area 41D, he is now in the second stage of the sweet spore's influence — his body being ravaged with the growth of mold and fungus, toadstools beginning to protrude through his tattoos and twisting their patterns. If combat breaks out in the caves, it is the GM's discretion on whether Den wakes from the sound, but Merrill will most likely wake him in any event. Should he be in a position to do battle, he will suffer a **-2 circumstances penalty to attack and damage rolls, saving throws, and skill and ability checks**, but gain a **+2 natural armor bonus to AC**. Knowing his skill in melee is basic at best, Den prefers to attack with *mudballs* before resorting to his nearby club.

The cave is furnished with a table, chair, and bed. On the table are a number of inks, quills, and stamps, as well as maps of Gahanis, the immediate region, and lands to the north and east — all of which detail known trade routes of various merchant companies. A **Search check (DC 10)**, however, will single out one map in particular that features the Lake of Lost Voices. This is peculiar due to the fact that the lake is 2 days' trek from Gahanis and has no direct trails to it. Furthermore, the map carries an odd symbol: that of a square with a black circle in the middle, the symbol of the bandit gang. There are also a number of notes and documents; some are shipping schedules, but most are falsified invoices, shipping licenses, and personal papers (an **Appraise check [DC 10]** will verify all this). A second **Search check (DC 10)** will also uncover Stariff Blackweather's official town permit to enter the fortress. Another **Search check (DC 10)** will yield a small chest kept underneath the bed. A small dart trap protects the contents of the chest, which includes 285 gp, a silver dice cup worth 30 gp, and a fine bottle of wine worth 10 gp (Den's personal trove, as well as a separate sack that holds Merrill's) and correspondence to the bandit camp's leader.

Dart Trap: CR 1; mechanical; touch trigger; manual reset; +10 ranged (1d6/x3 crit, dart); 10-ft. max range; Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 20.

One letter lists the haul from the most recent raid, broken into three columns. The first column, labeled "N," is followed by an assorted list of coins and gems. The second column, marked "Rudiger & Yannis," lists 350 gp. The third column, labeled "Back to Lair," lists a variety of unusual items, including a rare opal, silks, 2 barrels of grain, 12 kegs of ale, and an old tome from Xavel. Other personal effects, such as a change of clothes, wash basin and soap, and a bucket full of sweet spore round out the space.

Area 42B

The main cave is empty (this could change, however; see below), but in an alcove to the west are two bird coups up on saw horses. The coups hold four carrier pigeons each with a small brass ring around one of its legs. Upon closer examination, each ring is inscribed with the bandit's symbol (see above), a square with a circle in the middle. The spies use these pigeons to communicate with their comrades at the Lake of Lost Voices. A sack of bird feed and a toolbox sit beside the coups.

Area 42C

This is Merrill's cave. At the time the adventurers invade the caves, he will be lucid and aware, despite his addiction to the sweet spore, but he will be resting in his cave. Should noticeable sounds of battle echo into his area, Merrill will rise and prepare for combat. His first thought will be to wake Den in order to augment his attack, should he have time to do so. Otherwise, he will send his viper into Area 42B to act as a distraction to let him attempt an ambush from the southern tunnel. The snake will lie in wait, attempting a surprise strike on a passer-by.

Merril's main asset is his speed, and he will react quickly, attacking any obvious spellcasters in the party. He knows these caves fairly well now and will circle around, attacking from the rear and retreating if given the chance. He knows that he faces a very angry mob should he be taken back to town and figures that his life is already forfeit, so he will carry on until his last breath.

Neither Merrill nor Den will offer up Nefenr's name in any connection to the bandit raids. Despite their betrayal of the community, they still have family that they care for living there, and Nefenr has threatened revenge should his secret be revealed. The bandits have never actually themselves been to the lair at the lake (the map was to be their guide when the search for them died down), so they will deny any knowledge of the larger bandit group or a camp.

Within Merrill's cave is a small pool of water to the south, making the cave damp and humid – just right for the snake totem warrior. Resting on a small stool beside a bedroll is the permit key recovered from the body of Stariff Blackweather. With this key, the bandits are able to come and go as they please.



Chapter Four

Overland Journey

Synopsis

Information gained from the bandit spies will lead the PCs to the main bandit lair at the Lake of Lost Voices. Two days of overland travel are needed to reach the lake, and the PCs will encounter a few situations during their travels that may aid or hinder them. Upon arriving at the lake, the PCs must figure out how to gain access to the bandit lair, while the restless spirits of those trapped in the lake itself will try to lure the weak willed to their death.

Starting the Adventure

Once the PCs conclude their adventure within the Battlehome, they have several options. Examining the maps and documents, they may correctly conclude that the bandit lair — and the tome sought by the Jaren — is located at the Lake of Lost Voices. The PCs may then decide to travel there directly, hoping to retrieve the tome and complete their mission for the Jaren. Alternatively, they may not have discovered the location of the bandit lair, in which case they may need guidance or assistance from the Jaren or Nefenr to get them pointed in the right direction. Or, a third possibility may arise: the PCs decide that the life of an adventurer is too fraught with peril and choose to give up the excitement for a more sedate and safe life on a farm outside of Gahanis. Should that be the unfortunate case, then it will be time for the Jaren to hire new heroes to pursue their missing tome (and possibly eliminate those who failed!).

Pointing the Way

The primary consideration once the PCs have returned from the Battlehome is getting them properly motivated and directed toward the bandit lair at the Lake of Lost Voices. Likely, they will have determined their next course of action themselves. Should they require further prompting, however, the GM may wish to have key NPCs introduce appropriate motivation and knowledge to guide them on their course.

The Jaren

First off, the PCs will not be able simply to walk in and discuss their mission with the mysterious Jaren. They must book an appointment with the clerk on duty and return at the designated time. All meetings of such nature with the Jaren will always be conducted during the night, likely one hour after twilight. Should the PCs bring captured prisoners to the Jaren Guild Hall, guards will seize them, holding them within the hall as prisoners for the Jaren themselves to deal with. Again, the PCs will need to schedule an appointment for later that night. They will not see the bandit spies again.

Their eventual meeting with the Jaren will be held under similar circumstances to their first meeting: during the night, in a dimly lit room, a single Jaren seated on a black chair. From the start, the Jaren will remind the PCs that they have not completed their full assignment until the book is returned. If the PCs have captured the spies alive, Jaren questioning will reveal the location of the bandit lair as the Lake of Lost Voices, two days south of Gahanis. If the prisoners are not available to interrogate, the Jaren will ask to examine any evidence or clues that the spies may have held.

Evidence: Homing Pigeons

If the PCs deduced that the spies were using homing pigeons as messengers, the Jaren can arrange a *tracer* spell to be cast on one of the birds, which will be released and tracked. If the PCs did not bring a pigeon back from the Battlehome, the Jaren will request that they return quickly and fetch one, so as to properly complete their assignment. This will be an easy task and may take no more than two hours if the PCs remember their way around the fortress.

If the PCs have not guessed as to the nature or purpose of the pigeons, they may get some prompting from the Jaren. "Surely these lowly spies had no magical means to contact their superiors who must maintain a larger lair! What possible means of long-distance communication could they have used?" If the PCs are still clueless, the Jaren will have them recount their entire adventure within the fortress, possibly suggesting the pigeons if they are described.

Evidence: Den Rudiger's Papers

If the PCs deduce the existence and location of the bandits' main lair, then any citizen of Gahanis will be able to provide them with simple directions to the Lake of Lost Voices (as simple as, "Follow the southern stream for two days. It winds some, but it'll take you there.")

If the PCs have not correctly interpreted the documents, examination by the Jaren will raise this point. Again, should the PCs have failed to gather the obvious clues, the Jaren will send them back into the Battlehome to collect the information and then provide the party with a clear course of action.

Regardless of the evidence used, the Jaren will advise the PCs that they have not yet completed their assignment and therefore are unable to be compensated as agreed. The Jaren will advise the PCs that their goal is likely held at the larger lair and will request that they set out for the Lake of Lost Voices at once. Should the PCs balk, the Jaren will agree to pay the fee for the capture/elimination of the spies (400 gp unless further negotiated) and will double the payment for the retrieval of the tome (to an additional 600 gp).

If the PCs pursued the bandit spies for alternate means, either to claim the town's reward or for personal reasons, then the town's steward and sheriff will play roles similar to the Jaren, outlined above. A reward (300 gp) will be offered for the capture or execution of the bandit leader, and the officials will similarly direct the PCs to the Lake of Lost Voices.

to Nefen's studio as requested before setting out for the Lake of Lost Voices. Should this happen, they will encounter Nefen as he is preparing to leave to go on a short overland journey. He will gladly accept the stone from them, curious as to what they have learned about his operation and his involvement.

He will then depart promptly, hoping to secure a few loose ends at the bandits' lair before any further investigation occurs. The PCs will next see him on the road as he returns from his mission.

If the PCs visit the Jaren first or suspect Nefen's involvement in the bandit organization, they will find he has already left, but his aide will accept the memory stone on his behalf.

Traveling to the Lake of Lost Voices

Before setting out, a **Gather Information check (DC 10)** will provide the characters with directions to the Lake of Lost Voices (confirmed by Den's map) and an oft-repeated rumor about he location: the Lake of Lost Voices is haunted. Possibly related to the feared Blue Knight, the lake is a place of doomed souls looking to add to their number. No one from Gahanis will travel there.

The trip to the lake is simple: an almost-dry stream flows south to the lake. Following it is an easy task, though the stream does wind back and forth throughout the hilly area. Due to the rough and rocky nature of the terrain, traveling

on horseback will be no quicker than traveling on foot.

The party will have three encounters before reaching the lake, where it will need to deal with the restless spirits that haunt the area. See the overland map for the locations of these encounters.



Meeting Nefen in Gahanis

If the PCs took the memory stone from Howrand, they may choose to return it



Encounter 1: Words of Warning

As the party follows the dried stream on its winding course, a **Listen check (DC 10)** will cause the PCs to hear a growling and thrashing noise, just around the next bend. A **Wilderness Survival check (DC 15)** or **Knowledge (dangerous beasts) check (DC 10)** will identify the growl as coming from a bear. Greenbonds or bear totem warriors gain a **+2 insight bonus** to these checks. If the PCs hear the bear and act accordingly, they will get a surprise round. The bear is too involved in its activities to stop to listen as the group approaches.

As the PCs round the corner, they will see a black bear standing over a fallen form. A **Knowledge (dangerous beasts) check (DC 10)** will remind the PCs that black bears are normally not aggressive, yet this bear appears to be feeding and agitated, so is unusually dangerous. Greenbonds or bear totem warriors will be aware of these facts immediately, without a check required. A **Spot check (DC 10)** will tell the PCs that the bear's current feast — the fallen form — is that of a humanoid, who appears to have the barest remnants of life left, much to the bear's dismay.

Black Bear (1): hp 19.

The fallen warrior is a male rhodin, a monstrous humanoid that plagues the realm. With ram-like horns protruding from their head and a thick, powerfully muscled body, the rhodin are normally fearsome warriors capable of great violence. This rhodin, however, is moments away from death.

Rhodin (1): hp -12 currently.

The black bear can be scared off with an **Intimidate check (DC 13)**. Furthermore, any attack that deals damage to the bear requires it to make a **Will save (DC 15)** or flee, leaving its helpless victim behind. The rhodin presents no threat to the party at this time and if left alone will certainly perish.

If the PCs are able to chase the bear away, the rhodin will let out a choking gasp and motion them to come closer. With its last breath, it will whisper (**Listen DC 10**) a final warning in broken common: “*Beware ... she wants the sphere ... to destroy us all. Do not ... let her ... have ... the orb.*”

Unless treated, the rhodin will reach **-13 hit points** and **death** the following round. Should the characters foolishly heal this creature, it will attack the characters quickly for 2 rounds before retreating into the forest.

Should the rhodin die, a **Wilderness Survival check (DC 10)** or a greenbond will reveal that the rhodin was not a victim of the black bear. Rather, the terrible gashes and cuts were delivered by a fierce weapon, wielded by expert hands. A character, with a successful **Intelligence check (DC 10)**, will be able to identify these wounds as the result of a dire weapon. Investigating the dead rhodin's body, a **Search check (DC 18)** will uncover a sapphire-studded masterwork dagger protruding from its back. The PCs may not realize it, but this dagger is the sign of the Blue Knight. The rhodin's armor has been destroyed by the killing blows, and any other items of value have been taken.

Encounter 2: The Witch in the Woods

As the PCs approach a massive earthen mound, they must make a **Spot check (DC 15)** or be startled by a wood witch, who will emerge from behind the obstruction, hoping to get a surprise attack with her *greenfire* ability (**Reflex DC 13 for half damage**). She will attack the closest character within range, following with her second burst of *greenfire* the following round before resorting to spells.

Witch (1): hp 6.

The witch is working for Nefenr, whom she knows only as “The Master,” and often acts as a go-between for Nefenr and the bandits when he cannot leave town. Nefenr discovered the woman, whom he simply calls “The Witch,” living near the Lake of Lost Voices when the bandits moved their lair. She had been tormented by the voices there for quite some time and has completely lost her mind. Now, she serves with single-minded devotion, grateful for the infrequent opportunities to leave the haunted lake, but always eager to return for more punishment. She is currently waiting for Nefenr to return from the lake and believes the PCs are assassins hired to eliminate him. She will therefore fight to the death to “save her master.”

Examining the earthen mound (**Search DC 15**) will reveal a stone surface with ancient writing carved into it. An old form of Common, it still has a basic familiarity and only requires a **Decipher Script check (DC 15)** to read.

It came from the sky, but not from our makers. We fashioned it into a magnificent orb, the symbol of our hopes and dreams. Instead it was full of nightmares. It has taken the lives of our city, but is now safely sealed away in the temple. Should this fall into the wrong hands, our nightmares will be shared in a plague of dreams. Heed this warning and avoid the temple and the orb at all costs.

Encounter 3: Nefenr on the Road Home

Nefenr is returning from his most recent visit to the orb, there once again to charge his memory stone. Nefenr will feign surprise, wondering what the party would be doing traveling down this inhospitable route to nowhere. He will then have a coughing fit (“due to the dry air,” he will say), allowing him to consume a *capsule of glamour* (see Nefenr’s stats in Appendix I).

If questioned as to his actions, Nefenr will first offer a feeble explanation, saying that he was working on some natural landscape features in a painting and in desperate need for reference material. This explanation will quite obviously be a false statement (**Sense Motive DC 5**), which he intends to have doubted. With only minor prompting, he will then seemingly break down and reveal the “true” story, hoping to misdirect any suspicion or theories the PCs may have as to his relationship with the bandits.

Nefenr’s story, told with a total **Bluff modifier of +11**, is that he is the unwitting victim of the bandits. He needed funds to begin his observatory and latest operation, but could not find sponsorship with any of his regular patrons. A rich man in Gahanis, introduced to him by Den Rudiger, promised to support him, but would require a favor in the future. Only after Den’s involvement with the bandits did Nefenr suspect that the rich patron was, in fact, in league with the bandits, but he has since learned that his repayment has come due. Now that the bandit spies have been roused, Nefenr has been ordered to provide the bandits with critical caravan schedules and guard schedules. Nefenr is frightened, especially since he is just now returning from receiving these orders at the bandits’ lair in a secret cave by the Lake of Lost Voices.

Of course, this story is a total fabrication. Nefenr is hoping to gain the PCs’ sympathy and plans to send them to their doom against the bandits. Still, he’s hedging his bets and will be leaving town immediately upon his return. His primary goal in this encounter is to deflect any suspicion and buy time to escape. If confronted further, Nefenr will use his spells to escape, knowing that physical combat is not his strong suit. He will cast *cloak of darkness* and *silent sheath* and slip away into the country, which he knows much better than the PCs. Once out of sight, he will travel to a nearby location, where bandit scouts have hidden a cache of homing pigeons, releasing one in time to warn the bandit lair of the party’s approach.

Nefenr (1): 24 hp.

Encounter 4: The Lake of Lost Voices

The bandit lair is located in a hidden cave near the haunted Lake of Lost Voices. Centuries ago, a small city once existed at the base of these mountains, dedicated to worshipping the astral bodies viewed in the night sky. Blessed by their gods, the city’s people received a great gift: a meteorite landed in the nearby area and was brought back to the city by the wise men and elders. The meteorite was worked and polished until it

resembled a great sphere, and it came to represent the hopes and dreams of the city’s inhabitants. Not everyone had the same motivations, however, and a dark ritual was performed, dooming the once hopeful sky watchers to live out their nightmares. A cleansing ceremony was attempted, but it was too late, and the starlight was replaced by torrential rain as the citizens drowned in their sleep. The Lake of Lost Voices is the haunted reminder, the watery grave that hides the remnants of the ancient city.

The bandits once used the area, long known to be haunted, as the perfect cover for their operation. Over time, they were able to resist the compelling effects of the lake and promoted the rumors and myths further to keep prying eyes away from their business. Eight months ago, however, a large underground explosion in the fortune mines of Gahanis set off an underground chain reaction, breaking off portions of the mountain and revealing an entrance to a long-lost temple built within the mountain. Crossing the lake in crude rafts, the bandits eventually took over the temple as their lair, creating a convenient yet secret exit in the far side of the mountain. Now, the bandits are protected from prying eyes in their hidden hide-out and further protected by the nature of the lake itself.

An eerie calm permeates the area of the lake, which seems undisturbed by the wind. With a mirror-like surface, the lake’s depth is unknown, showing only the reflection of a cloudy sky and the surrounding mountains. A few rocky boulders jut above the water’s surface. A closer inspection (**Search DC 15**) will reveal that these are not boulders, but the tops of ancient stone towers and buildings, signs of the ancient city buried beneath.

All PCs who approach within 25 feet of the lake must make a **Will save**. Whichever character achieves the lowest result will be the first affected by the lake’s dark power. Whispering voices begin to fill the character’s head, replicating the effects of a *suggestion* spell. The character must make a second **Will save (DC 10)**, or follow the commands of the whispering voices, which murmur, “*Join us below the surface. Join us in the sunken city. Join us in our grave.*” If the second Will save is successful, the character will be able to resist the urge to swim down to his death; however, the voices will continue in his heads for the next 6 hours, giving him a **–2 penalty to all Listen and Concentration checks**.

Should the character fail the save, he will be compelled to dive into the lake, thinking that the city beneath is made of his hopes and dreams.

Every time the PCs leave the area and return within 25 feet of the lake, they must repeat the process, with the lowest **Will save** result being the target every time.

A **Search check (DC 10)** will reveal a crude raft hidden behind some fallen trees and scrub. Examining the raft will show that it has seen recent use and seems water worthy. The entrance to the bandit lair (Area 1) can be found with a successful **Spot check (DC 25 from the shore, DC 10 from the lake)**.

Chapter Five

The Lost Temple

Synopsis

Having discovered the bandits' lair in an ancient temple, the PCs must penetrate the complex and deal with the various traps and creatures inside, not to mention the bandits themselves. Learning more of the origins of the *Malus Morphaera* and the history of the Lake of Lost Voices, the PCs may realize that the true danger inhabiting the temple is not the bandit gang, but the dangerous orb — should it fall into the wrong hands. The heroes will have a chance to confront the bandit leader and his lieutenant and decide the final fate of the orb. Just as the matter appears to be settled, however, the enigmatic and deadly Blue Knight will show up, seeking her deadly prize. The fate of the region may be decided in a final confrontation with the Champion of Death. Should the PCs survive this encounter, they may well reach 3rd level.

Starting the Adventure

The Temple of Vespers, the ancient structure now used by the bandits as a lair, has been sealed away inside a mountain since before the time of the dramojh. While it was once the religious pride of the city of Cylilithan, a dark destiny took hold and led to the city's destruction and the temple's burial. For ages, the temple remained the prison for the *Malus Morphaera*, an odd artifact fashioned from a fallen star by the sky worshipping people of Cylilithan. Realizing that an important ceremony had been corrupted, the priests of the temple tried to cleanse the orb, but their efforts were in vain. In a final act of desperation, they sealed the orb and filled the temple with discouraging traps, hoping that the dark powers of the orb would never be seen again. The orb has remained so sealed, until a day eight months ago when a devastating attack on a mining operation in the region triggered a series of earthquakes that shook the mountain and opened the temple.

The orb is a tool, and like any other, its function is dictated by its user. An amazing mixture of magic and mysticism, the orb can be used to fuel the spell-casting ability of those who have also mastered memory. Nefen is such a person and has used the orb's powers to augment his artistic ability and gain prestige and wealth.

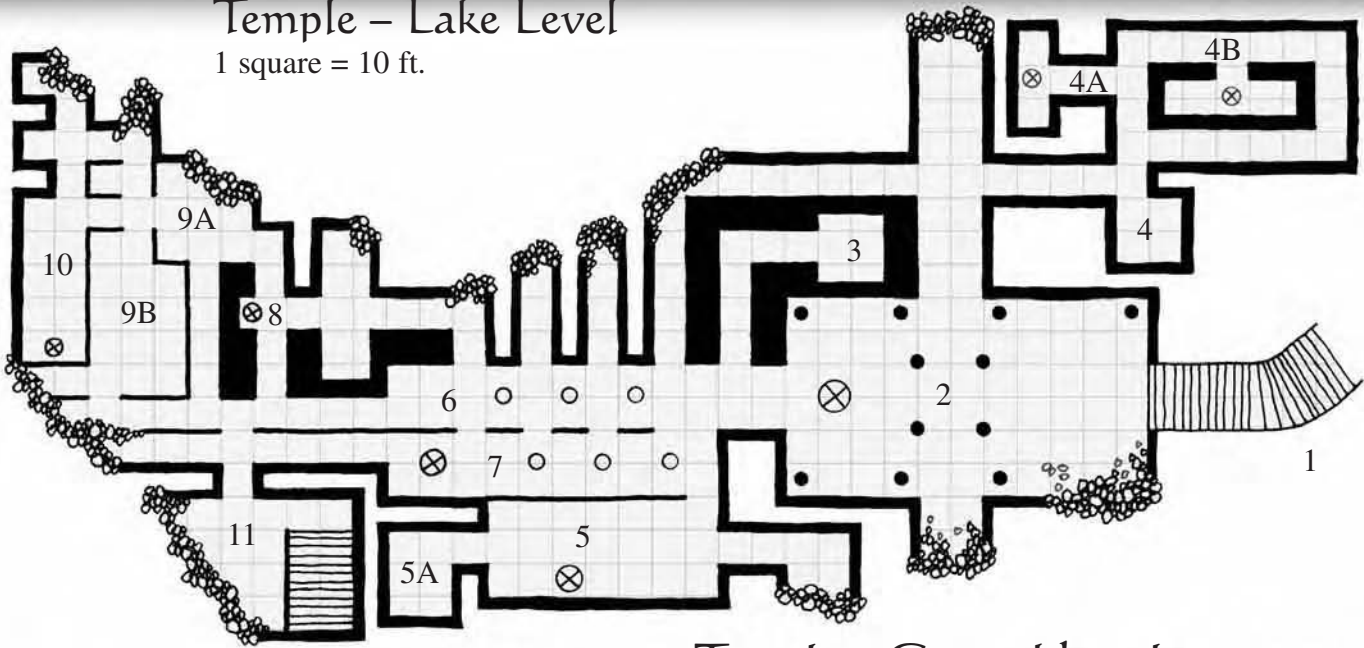
The orb was once used for another purpose, though. A dark contingent in the ancient priesthood used the artifact to steal the minds of the city's inhabitants through their dreams, forcing them to live in an unending world of nightmares, forever separated from their psyches. This psychic upheaval created ecological disaster, damning the city to its watery grave. Should the orb fall into the wrong hands, it can be used for similarly vile purposes again. Worse still, should it be shattered under the proper circumstances, it will unleash at once all the memories of the nightmares trapped inside, creating a plague of dreams that will devastate the region, drowning the residents in their own uncontrollable madness.

Attacking the Bandits

Once the PCs have found the bandit lair, they may begin to doubt their ability to challenge the bandit gang effectively in their own lair. If the party finds a secure vantage point, it may begin to observe some standard bandit activity. While the bandits' secret entrance (Area 12A) remains hidden, the PCs will see bandit activity in this general area. It will become obvious that the bandits have been divided into two shifts, with one shift guarding the temple while the other forages in and patrols the forest area. Unless the party attacks specifically at a shift change, it will only be facing half of the bandit gang at any one time (indeed, the adventure key is set up this way).

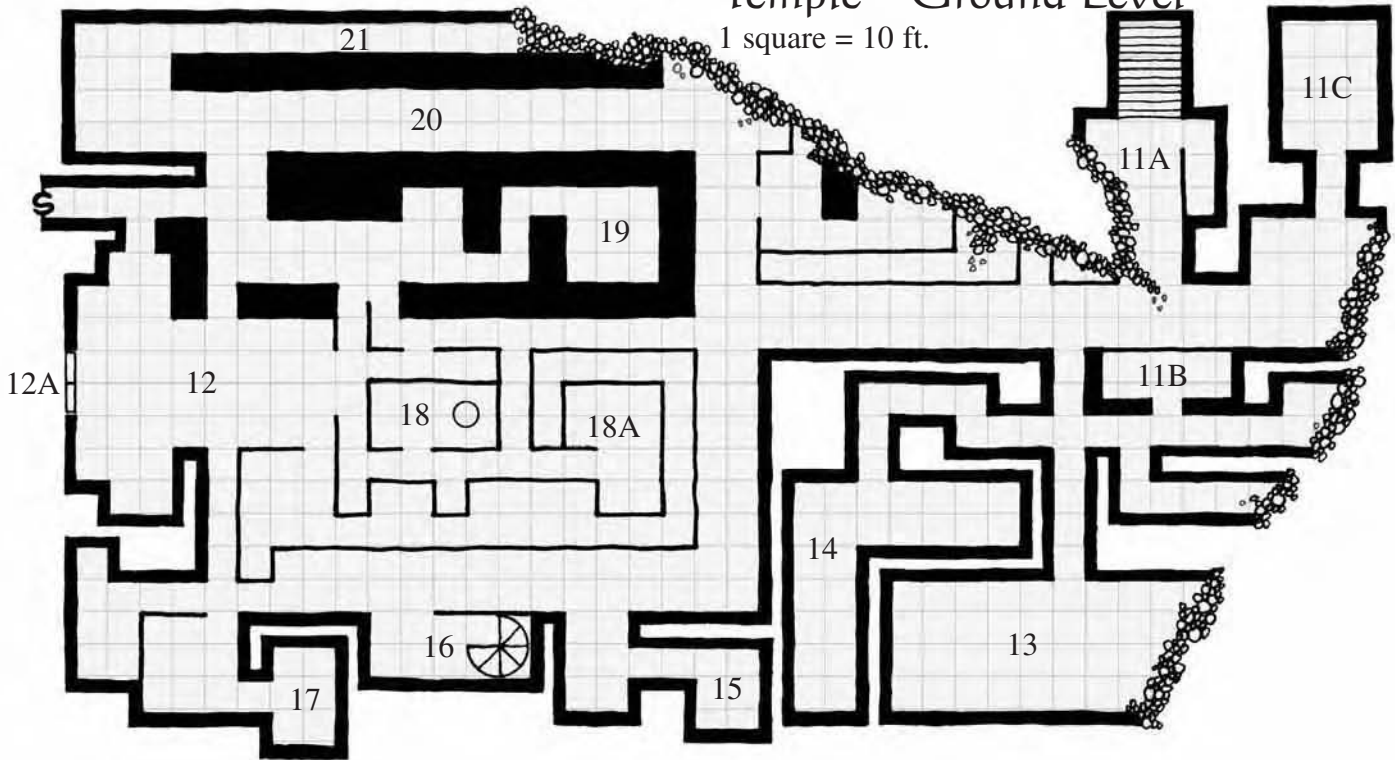
Temple – Lake Level

1 square = 10 ft.



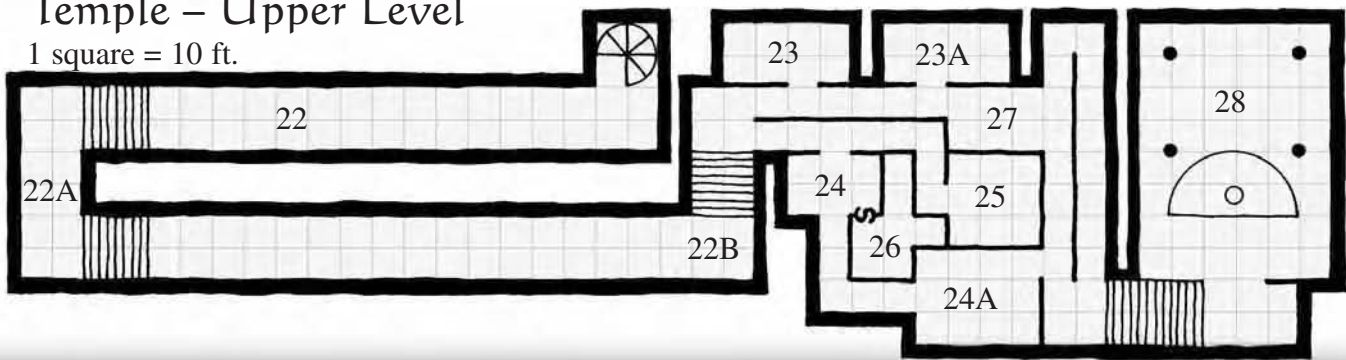
Temple – Ground Level

1 square = 10 ft.



Temple – Upper Level

1 square = 10 ft.



The party can certainly set up something of a nearby base camp, hoping that repeated raids and hit-and-run tactics, along with purely investigative forays, could provide an advantage. This is also a sound strategy, and the bandits would not expect invaders to remain close to their lair. Should the PCs make repeated attempts on the temple, however, eventually the lair's bandit leader will realize that they must be located nearby and a more determined search party will be sent.

There are two entries into the temple: the secret door on the far side of the mountain's ridge (Area 12A), which requires a **Search check (DC 30)** to locate from the exterior, and the lake-side entrance (Area 1), which has been noted in the previous chapter. If the heroes need a push to investigate this entry, perhaps a loose raft has slipped free of its mooring at Area 1 and drifted into visibility in the lake. Regardless, eventually the PCs must find their way in if they wish to complete their Jaren-appointed task or personal quest. Entering through Area 1 is the party's safest bet, as the lake level of the complex is rarely patrolled by the bandits, who prefer to use the mountain door to enter and exit.

Area 1: Temple Stairs

Entering a small chasm in the rock face, the PCs will see a 20-foot by 20-foot landing ahead. A **Knowledge (science) check (DC 10)** will reveal that this opening is the result of seismic activity, and large portions of the rock face must have fallen off within the past year. It appears that the bandits have tried to prevent any further degradation, as the party will notice braces and supports fitted into place.

A wide staircase leads up to the west, along an arched niche. Water laps against the stairs, which appear to continue down below its surface. Algae covers the lower stairs, and a **Balance check (DC 10)** must be made to disembark from a boat without slipping into the water.

Area 2: Grand Hall of the Sun God

Sunlight does not penetrate this area, so the party must provide illumination to continue. The 60-foot high ceiling of this chamber is supported by massive columns that stretch up into the darkness. What appears to be a thin layer of fabric or material stretched across the room is actually the intricate webbing of a Large monstrous spider. The spider will attempt to surprise the party, hungry for rare victims in its lair.

Monstrous Spider, Large (1): hp 22.

At the north end of the room, resting against a stone partition, is a massive 30-foot tall statue without

a head. If *detect magic* is cast on upon the statue, it will radiate a faint glow for 1d6 minutes. In its outstretched hands, it holds 2 spheres: a large one representing the sun and a smaller one representing the moon. Should a PC manage her way up to the statue's shoulders (**Climb DC 15**), she will discover a large round depression that looks as if it once contained ceremonial fires. Should some kind of fuel be placed within the depression and lit, the whole room will suddenly blaze with illumination. This effect will last for 1d4 rounds. While within the room and under the haze of the mystic fire, champions of light will gain a **+1 circumstances bonus to attack and damage rolls, saving throws, and skill and ability checks.**

Area 3: Vestry

This small room was once a vestry, but now its floor is unstable. PCs who enter the room will have found they just stepped in a **collapsing floor trap**. The space below is another room that is surrounded on all sides with stacked rubble. A **Search check (DC 10)** within the rubble, however, will lead to a pendant shaped like a griffon (81 gp value).

Collapsing Floor Trap: CR 1; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; Reflex save (DC 20) avoids; 10 ft. deep (1d6 fall); Search DC 24; Disable Device DC 20.

Area 4: Dire Rat Lair

This room is empty save a layer of dust. A **Spot check (DC 10)** will reveal a number of sizable holes in the walls along the floor. A **Knowledge (dangerous beasts) check (DC 10)** will identify them as dire rat holes. The dire rats will not rush to attack, however, having being well fed on a steady diet of fish. They will stay in their tunnels unless provoked; otherwise, they will lay in wait for an opportune time (see Area 4B).

Dire Rats (6): hp 5, 5, 5, 5, 5, 5.

Area 4A

One of many shrines devoted to the celestial gods of the temple's former worshipers, this rectangular room features a humanoid iron statue resting on a pedestal, devoid of arms or a head. Iron poles extend from the torso in place of these missing body parts, similar to a scarecrow. If *detect magic* is cast on upon the statue, it will radiate a faint glow for 1d6 minutes. Should the statue be touched in any way, then an electrical charge will erupt from the poles, striking the two closest PCs and unleashing a *lesser transfer wounds* spell as a 1st-level caster. This effect will not occur again until it is recharged through a heavy presence of ozone in the atmosphere (such as a major lightning storm).

Transfer Wounds Trap: CR 1; magic device; touch trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (transfer wounds [lesser], 1st-level magister, 1d10+1 hp healed, half dealt as subdual; Will save [DC 10] half); Search DC 26; Disable Device DC 26.

Area 4B

A second shrine devoted to the energies of the universe, the humanoid statue situated in this rectangular room can be found levitating above its pedestal. If *detect magic* is cast on upon the statue, it will radiate a faint glow for 1d6 minutes.

Entering the room will trigger the statue's magnetism power. The statue itself will become magnetic, affecting anything metallic within a 10-foot radius. PCs wearing metal armor must make a **Strength check (DC 15)** in order to resist the pull. Similarly, a **Reflex save (DC 15)** must be made to keep held weapons or other affected items from being snatched from a character's grasp. Every round that is spent within the statue's radius of effect requires another round of Strength checks or Reflex saves. Items or characters pinned to the statue may attempt to pull free with a **Strength check (DC 20)** or **Escape Artist check (DC 25)**. This effect will last for 12 hours and then dissipate, requiring an additional 12 hours to recharge.

One round after the statue ignites, the dire rats from Area 4 will arrive (the magnetizing hum of the statue attracts them). They will split into two groups of 3, approaching the room from both ends of the corridor that surrounds the statue room. They will fight to the death.

Magnetic Trap: CR 2; magic device; proximity trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (magnetism, 3rd-level magister, effects noted above); Search DC 27; Disable Device DC 27.

Area 5: Moon Shrine

A 20-foot tall statue stands against the south wall of this 40-foot high room. With a similar design to the previous statues, this one holds a large stone sphere. The chamber itself is otherwise empty, though the walls and ceiling are covered in reflective mirrored tiles. If *detect magic* is cast on upon the statue, it will radiate a faint glow for 1d6 minutes. Should a PC stare at the statue's reflection in the mirror for more than one minute, he will be affected with a *darkvision* spell for 4 hours. If this room is ventured into during the night, the statue will glow dimly. When its reflection is studied at this time, the *darkvision* effect will be upgraded to a heightened *darkvision* effect for the same duration.

Area 5A

The 20-foot by 25-foot area of this room is completely enveloped in a *veil of darkness* spell. Magical light does penetrate this version of the spell, but only in a 5-foot radius. Due to this magical compromise, *light* spells of any level or strength cannot cancel or dispel this manifestation. Should a PC have the *darkvision* ability and enter the room, after 3 rounds he will begin to see what appears to be a vision of the night sky. As the PC remains in the room, the vision becomes stronger, as if the PC were standing outdoors. If the PC stays in the room for 1 hour, he will be given the benefit of a diminished *foretell future*

spell (chance of a correct answer being 50%). At one time, the chamber's power was much stronger, but it has waned since its lack of use for thousands of years.

Area 6: Hall of Fallen Stars

Positioned on three 5-foot tall pedestals, each securely mounted to the marble, are small metal statues: a hawk, an owl, and an eagle. A 5-foot wide band of ancient and unknown runes circles each pedestal. At one time, each of these statues represented a single "gift from the gods" in the form of a recovered meteorite. Should a hawk totem warrior cross the runes surrounding the hawk statue, he will gain a **+1 competence bonus to attack rolls and skill checks** for the next hour.

Area 7: Hall of the Comet

Similar to Area 6, three 7-foot tall pedestals stand in a row, with a 10-foot tall statue aligned with them in the western end of the room. Unlike the humanoid designs of most of the statues, this statue is of a fiery avian form, similar to the bird statues found in Area 6. As the statue is approached, it will begin to glow and hum with mystic power. Should any PC come within 10 feet of the statue, it will release its energy in the form of a comet-like burst that will travel across the tops of the pedestals. Any PCs in the room at this time must save against a *shock* spell as well as a *dazzlesphere* spell.



Comet Trap: CR 2; magic device; proximity trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (*shock*, 1st-level magister, 1d4 + 1 Dex damage; Fort [DC 14] negates) and spell effect (*dazzlesphere*, 3rd-level magister, dazed for 1d4 rounds; Will [DC 15] negates); Search DC 27; Disable Device DC 27.

Once the “comet” hits the back wall, it will leave a magical fire blazing on the tops of each of the pedestals for 12 hours, after which the fire will wink out.

Area 8: Star Man

Once a majestic star map projector, a white marble statue now sits crumbled in dust, a victim of the recent seismic activity.

Area 9: Spider Lair

In Areas 9A, 9B, and 10, a Large monstrous spider waits in its webs (**Spot DC 20; Escape DC 26; Break DC 32; hp 14**). The creature generally positions itself in Area 9B, waiting for any activity from Area 8 or from the southern passageways.

Monstrous Spider, Large (1): hp 22.

Area 10: Shrine of the Celestial Winds

The northern end of the room is covered in spider webs, while in the southern end stands another humanoid statue made of iron. Unlike some earlier statues, its features are much more streamlined, only hinting at the human form. Should the statue be touched, it will activate a *wind churn* spell that swirls in the upper half of the room, harmlessly flinging around whatever loose debris and webbing occupy the chamber.

Area 11: Refuse Heap

Before the PCs enter this room, they will be able to smell the stench of refuse and offal. Inside, they will see that the room is half collapsed, but the bandits have installed several heavy lumber beams and struts to lend support to the ceiling. The main feature that dominates the room is a 20-foot wide staircase that extends 60 feet up to the next level. It is clear, however, that the bandits rarely come this way, for lying all about, down the steps and in heaps on the floor, are large piles of filth and garbage. Needless to say, this is the gang’s dumping ground (tossing the trash down the stairs and too lazy to manage it).

Hidden in the waste is a violet fungus, living off the sickly compost. A **Balance check (DC 10)** will be required in order for PCs to find proper footing as they ascend the slime-covered stairs. Should they slip down the stairs, no damage will be taken (due to the cushion of the garbage and slime), but it is possi-

ble that they may make enough racket to alert the bandit guard in Area 11B (possibly with a successful **Listen check [DC 20]**; this check may also apply should the party make an even bigger commotion in combat with the violet fungus).

Violet Fungus (1): hp 15.

Area 11A

Once the PCs reach the top of the steps, they will discover that the bandits have placed a number of stone partitions (sections that have fallen from the temple’s structure) as a “gate” of sorts. They have left a 5-foot space clear to negotiate. This is a minor defensive measure assisting the bandit guard in Area 11B.

Through this space, as the PCs climb the stairs, they will see the light of a hooded lantern, fixed to the eastern wall, illuminating the stone partitions. The lantern oil will last for 6 hours before it must be attended by the bandit guard. Furthermore, if they peer down the chamber from behind the partition, the PCs will have a chance to view (**Spot DC 20**) the light of an arrow slit fashioned in the northern wall of Area 11B. **Opposed Sneak/Spot checks** will give the bandit a **+4 bonus** should he be on alert, or a **-1 modifier** if not.

If they are successful in clearing the staircase, the PCs will then have the option to hide behind a large pile of fallen rock and rubble to the southwest that provides **1/4 cover** or in an alcove to the east. From there, the guard receives a **+6 bonus** if he is on alert and a **+1 bonus** if not.

If the bandit gang has been warned of the party by Nefenr or if there is some other reason for the bandit guard to be cautious, consider him on alert status — meaning that he will be peering through his arrow slit watching and listening for any signs of activity during his shift. Otherwise, he will sit by his post, paying modest attention while he smokes his pipe. Should the PCs decide to wait for the lantern light to fade, this will signify the end of the shift for the present guard (roll 1d6 to determine randomly how many hours of fuel are left). He will signal for the next bandit in line, and while his partner takes up a position in Area 11B, he will refuel the lantern, holding a small candle to see his way.

Should the guard spot any invaders, he will signal a “silent” alarm to rouse his comrades to arms in Area 13. They will arrive in 4 rounds. While he waits for their support, the guard will start firing with his short bow through the arrow slit.

It should be noted that the bandits are aware that this method of guarding the back door is awkward, but Nefenr has commanded that they leave nothing to chance. They have rejected the idea of setting up a trap, fearing it would place undo stress on the fragile structure but also to maintain a clear alternate escape route.

Area 11B

The guard post features a 2-foot long arrow slit carved through the wall to spy and fire upon possible intruders, providing **9/10 cover (+10 AC bonus; +4 Reflex save bonus)** for the bandit guard. Should the need arise, he will trigger the “silent” alarm: a system of twine and pulleys that are threaded through the various hallways (along the ceiling) leading to Areas 13 and 14 which will ring a small bell in each room. A single pull signals a shift change, a vigorous ringing signifies the alarm. Although a war horn would be a more efficient means of alerting the temple complex, it has not been employed for fear of causing stress to the structure.

Bandit (1): hp 6.

The bandits from Area 13 will arrive in 4 rounds from the time of the alarm (see Area 13 for more details). Once they have assessed the situation, they will immediately send one of their number to warn the other group of bandits in Area 12. If this action is possible, then that bandit and Therder from Area 17 will be on the move, arriving in 12 rounds (see Area 12 for more details).

Also located in the room are several stools, 10 boxes of candles, a small pitcher, and 3 barrels each holding 20 pints of lantern oil.

Area 11C

This space is unoccupied, but does contain several stacks of timber used in the shoring up of the temple's construction.

Area 12: Main Entrance

This large spacious chamber is considered the main entryway by the bandits. Through a passage to the north of the room lies the secret door that leads to the outside. A **Search check (DC 15)** will reveal it for what it is; by pressing a stone pressure plate to the side, a section of the wall slides down, and pressing the stone plate again raises the wall.

On the west side of Area 12, 5 bandits are present, sitting around a table playing cards. They are more preoccupied with their card game than anything else. The room is lit with 3 lanterns. Should the bandits be on alert status, then these 3 will be sober. If there is no reason for them to be concerned, however, they will have already consumed a few tankards of ale (**-1 circumstances penalty to attack rolls, saving throws, skill and ability checks** due to their level of intoxication).

If the alarm has been sounded, and a bandit has managed to make it to this room to warn them of intruders, the 3 here will immediately inform Therder, the bandit lieutenant in Area 17. First, he will send 1 bandit up to Area 22A to warn the upper level. He will then assign 4 to the secret door (fearing a diversionary tactic). After this, he will take the remaining bandit with him to investigate the situation in the east end.

If the PCs decide upon a frontal

assault and enter through the secret door, the guards will not be so quick to rise, thinking that their comrades have returned from their latest mission. Depending on the PCs' tactics, they may be able to gain surprise or manage to slip by before the bandits notice. If combat does break out, Therder in Area 17 will most certainly come to investigate, while one of the bandits will attempt to break free to warn the others in Areas 11B and 13. There is a chance in this scenario that the upper level is not made aware of the intruders in time.

Bandits (5): hp 6, 6, 6, 6, 6.

On the table, the PCs will be able to recover 128 gp and a single black leather boot from the card game.

Area 12A

The area outside, should the party reconnoiter the ridge that surrounds the Lake of Lost Voices. Sixty feet from the secret door, the PCs will find a small decayed stone arch standing on the rocky slope. Upon closer inspection, they will see that underneath the arch there appears to be a hollow space. Within this space are a number of bird perches. A **Spot check (DC 10)** or the presence of a greenbond will note that on the ground surrounding the arch is bird seed. This is the collection point for the bandit's carrier pigeons. Every 4 hours, a bandit from Area 12 is sent to check on the hollow to see if any pigeons have returned.

The slope of the ridge rises abruptly to steep facing. A **Search check (DC 30)** will be required in order to discover the secret door leading to Area 12. The mechanism is the same as it is to open it from the inside.

Area 13: Sleeping Quarters

A large and expansive chamber (40-foot high ceiling), the entire east end is full of rock and debris. Much of this is offset by the bandits work of reinforcing the chamber with timber beams. This is the first of two sleeping quarters for the bandits, each barracks divided by shift; the present shift is sleeping in this room. At the time of the PCs' exploration, 4 bandits will be resting here. Should the alarm be sounded, they will react as quickly as they can, hastily donning their armor. Once ready, they will arrive at Area 11A in 4 rounds (see Area 11B for more details). Obviously, if they are caught napping, they will have no armor, but they do sleep with their weapons by their side.

The room is full of bedrolls and small lockers or sacks holding personal effects. A **Search check (DC 10)** and **15 rounds** to cover everything will yield the following treasure: 750 gp, a giantish ceremonial mask (1,250 gp), a deck of cards (2 gp), and 2 kegs of beer (3 gp each)

Area 14: Sleeping Quarters

The second of the two main sleeping quarters for the bandits, this room is presently empty except for bedrolls and small lockers or sacks holding personal effects. A Search check (DC 10) and 15 rounds to cover everything will yield the following treasure: 81 gp, 15 sp, and a silver comb (15 gp).

Area 15: Witch's Quarters

When the witch from the valley (see Chapter 5, Encounter 2) stays at the temple, this room serves as her sleeping quarters. It is empty now save for a bed a night stand with a table and a chair.

Area 16: Spiral Staircase

This stone spiral staircase climbs 60 feet to Area 22 of the upper level.

Area 17: Therder's Chamber

Lieutenant of the bandit gang, second in command to Odthow the litorian chief, Therder is taking a moment before retiring to read a book of short stories entitled *Blood Bane's Tales*. He sits at a table by his bed, reading by candle light. He is dressed in his armor, with his spear close to his side. Unless a commotion is raised in Area 12 or he is summoned by one of his underlings, Therder will be found in his room.

Therder, Bandit Lieutenant (1): hp 23.

In the corner of his room is a locked chest containing a list of 3 spies currently operating in Gahanis, a worked silver bookmark (12 gp), 250 gp, and a large diamond ring worth 1,500 gp.

Locked Chest: Hardness 5; hp 1; Break DC 17; Open Lock DC 20.

Area 18: The Temple Well

This room holds the well used by the bandits, drawing forth water from the Lake of Lost Voices.

Area 18A

A makeshift kitchen, this room is complete with a cooking pit, spit, tables, and shelving containing cooking utensils, dried foods, and spice jars. It is presently unoccupied.

Area 19: Storage Hall and Room

Stacked and organized throughout the antechamber to the west and the main room to the east are the supplies held by the bandits: crates of woodcraft tools, camping equipment, barrels of ale, rope, chains, shackles, fishing poles, stone picks, torches, 5 lanterns, 2 bullseye lanterns, and several barrels of oil, as wells as 12 shortbows, 20 short swords, hundreds of arrows, several quivers, and 5 leather jacks.

Area 20: Hallway of the Horse Stables

This long and wide hallway serves as the bandits' stables, holding a total of 16 horses at this point. Two long beams are fixed along the hallway on either side, to which the horses are tied. Stacked against the wall to the very west are bales of hay that should last the horses for a week.

Area 21: Caretaker's Hallway

Febb, the bandit caretaker of the horses, lives in this lonely hallway. He is responsible for the cleaning of the stables and the care of the horses (replace his **Intimidate +4** skill with **Handle Animal +4**). He is slightly askew in his perception of the world, constantly talking to himself and referring to the horses in his care as his "little dragons." He is a capable fighter, though, and will defend the horses if he feels they are threatened. He prefers to live filthily, and he smells, his living space at the end of the hallway containing nothing more than a bedroll and a sack of twigs (which he chews on). Saddles for the horses are hung along the walls of the hallway, with riding blankets and bits kept in foot lockers under each one.

Febb, Bandit (1): hp 6.

Area 22: The Hallway of Malus

This large ceremonial hallway seems to be lined with a substance that takes on the characteristics of obsidian. Yet it is reflective and carries light normally despite its jet black color.

Area 22A

Resting here (or waiting, if alerted) is a single bandit crossbowman. On the steps of Area 22A, he has placed a bullseye lantern, aimed down the hallway. If he is in a ready position, he will fire upon intruders immediately, yelling down the hallway to his comrades in Area 22B. If he feels he will be outmatched for melee, he will turn and run to Area 22B.

Area 22B

Two more crossbowmen wait here for a signal from their partner at Area 22A. They too have a bullseye lantern trained down the hallway. If alerted, they will shout out to warn the bandit chief, Odthow, in Area 25.

Bandit Crossbowmen (3): hp 8, 8, 8.

Area 23: Bandit Command Center

Once priests' quarters, the room now serves as the bandits' war room, from which they plan out and map their raids. In the middle of the chamber is a large table surrounded by several chairs. Large maps of the region are hanging on the walls, while even more detailed maps, ledgers, and diaries are found on the table. In the corner is a small stand that holds quills, ink, and many rolls of parchment. Searching through the ledgers and diaries, a PC can surmise that the information inside will prove to be

of great value to the authorities in Gahanis. It should be noted that the bulk of the information deals with specific departure/arrival times of various trade caravans and a listing of the loot captured. The diary holds accounts of the bandits' raids: number of killed and wounded (for both sides), whether the information they received on the caravan was correct, how big the caravan was, and so on. There is no direct mention or hint of Nefen's involvement in any of the books.

Area 23A

Three large pigeon coups are here, each holding a total of 15 pigeons with a small brass ring around one of their legs. Each ring is inscribed with the bandits' symbol: a square with a circle in the middle. Many sacks of bird feed sit beside a stool where a lit lantern rests.

Area 24: Antechamber

This small room leads to Nefen's quarters in Area 24A. A secret door to the southeast can be found (**Search DC 20**), however, leading to the bandits' stash of booty.

Area 24A

When Nefen stays at the temple (which is, at times, as regular as once every two weeks), he takes this room. An oak poster bed, very polished, occupies the southeast corner, a matching nightstand with candles right beside it. An ornate footlocker, full of ceremonial robes, sandals, and a traveler's outfit, sits at the foot of the bed. Another oak writing table with a chair is set against the north wall, with a number of books in its shelves: *Celestial Navigation of the Ancients*, *Runes of Power Dictionary*, and *Hulaleha's Guide to Magical Stones* are the most notable titles. The total collection is worth 700 gp. Blank parchment and notebooks sit to the side with a number of quills and bottles of ink. There is also an ink stamp with the bandits' seal (a square with a black circle within it) resting on top of it. Three paintings of the Gahanis landscape (by an unknown artist) hang on the room's walls.

Area 25: Odthow's Room

Although Nefen is the overseer and executive commander of the bandit gang, the litorian warrior Odthow is their chief. He handles the day to day operations, and coordinates the raids from Nefen's orders by way of the carrier pigeons. All notes from these carrier pigeons are destroyed once received. Odthow's furnishings are sparse, consisting of bear furs and cushions piled on the floor. A locked chest contains 360 gp, an ornate but empty picture frame (12 gp), a bone comb (1 gp), a silver tankard (3 gp), and a child's sized ring (1 gp).

Locked chest: Hardness 5; hp 1; Break DC 17; Open Lock DC 20.

Should Odthow be alerted of intruders, he will position himself in Area 28 to protect the *Malus Morphaera*. If not, he will like-

ly be meditating in his room (though ready for action), focusing his litorian nature.

Odthow, Bandit Leader (1): hp 26.

Area 26: Treasure Room

This chamber once held the *Malus Morphaera* until the earth tremor that shattered much of the temple cracked its "containment" unit. This container still exists in the middle of the room: a large cylinder, extending from floor to ceiling, consisting of the same strange material found in the lining of the hallway of Area 22. A noticeable fault line can be seen stretching the length of the cylinder, but worse than that is a small hole, chipped out by Nefen, to release the artifact. The surface of the cylinder is covered in a geometric rune code that can be confirmed by a **Knowledge (runes) or (magic) check (DC 20)** as being very ancient, yet sophisticated, in its application. Piled about the container, to every corner of the room, is the bandits' captured booty: numerous bobs of silk (120 gp total), 20 jars of rare spices (50 gp total), beautifully worked trinkets and jewelry (500 gp total), an unclaimed *+1 dagger*, 12 pairs of fine leather shoes (10 gp), and several sacks filled with coins (300 gp total).

Area 27: Wall Memorial

Situated in this 80-foot long hall is an ancient wall fresco depicting the story of the *Malus Morphaera* on both sides of the partition. An **Appraise check (DC 20) or Knowledge (history) or (humans) (DC 15) check**

will define the fresco as being a major archeological find prized by any scholarly historian. It is very realistic in its treatment, the artist or artists having possessed a tremendous amount of skill. The painting is divided up in very large and detailed sections that appear to be arranged in chronological order.

The first section shows a sophisticated ancient city resting in a ridge valley; an **Intelligence check (DC10)** will immediately identify it as being under the Lake of Lost Voices. The second section features a comet in the sky over the city at night. The third focuses on many priests and workers digging out of the earth what seems to be a small black orb. The fourth section depicts them as revering the orb as holy. The fifth section has the priests taking the orb back to a temple in the ridge overlooking the city. The sixth section shows the orb at rest in a ceremonial chamber, worshippers extending their arms to it. The seventh section pictures the orb hovering over the city, with what can be described as a calendar overlaid in the background. The eighth section shows the priests construction the orb's container (which must be described to the PCs if they have yet to see it). Finally, sections 9 and 10 are blank, ready for the depiction of the next stage.

Area 28: The Malus Morphaera

The artifact itself resides here. Floating above a solid stone pedestal is a large blackened sphere, which hums and throbs with mystic energy. Peering at the orb will reveal glimpses of faces tortured and screaming, the remains of the psyches stolen so long ago. The only other items in this room are a large cushion resting on the floor directly in front of the orb, a sheet of parchment covered in writing, and a single tome, the *Inmagus Libellum*.

The book is open to a specific page, which features a rendering of the black orb on the top corner. Directly under this image is a brief passage:

“The *Malus Morphaera*, called the Sphere of Nightmare. Created long ago as a tool to incarnate the dreams of a hope-filled people, the black orb served another purpose, that of destruction. Contained within the sphere itself are the tortured thoughts and nightmare dreams of the doomed worshippers from long ago. While it can be used as an enhancing tool, the Sphere’s true purpose is now that of a powerful weapon of annihilation. To release the fearful energy contained within, the sphere must be shattered on the third midnight of the full moon. Doing so will release the plague of dreams, a nightmare wave of madness that will kill all in its path.

My visions of this relic have been terrifying. The great memories do not reveal its location, but it must not be allowed to fall into the wrong hands.”

— From the akashic scholar Ven Brion

The parchment is covered in Nefenr’s notes. He’s arranged his thoughts into three sections.

The Orb — an item of power, surely. Concentration is the key. Must be a keen mind. A special link, psyche and spells, magic and mystic. Concentration is key to charge stones. Drain the memories, fuel the power. Key to success. Eliminate all who know and retrieve the orb.

Jaren — hunt the orb? Sent for the tome, *Inmagus Libellum*, without notifying me. Behind my back — don’t want my attention. What is their purpose for the orb? Surely chaos. Must liberate book to gain knowledge. Cannot let them know my involvement. They may be more dangerous than expected.

Hunter — a distant memory, pushing her to find the orb. The Jaren, or something else? Again, destruction down that path. Must maintain the secrecy of the lair to protect from her and Jaren. Just a myth, or truly death incarnate?

The orb itself has a physical presence in the room, as if a powerful giant magister were sitting on the pedestal. Faint whisperings can be heard, mixed with distant shrieking. Anyone who comes in physical contact with the orb must make a **Will save (DC 17)** or suffer a *distraction*, as per the spell cast by a 10th-level magister (lasting 10 rounds). The distracting image takes the form of the floating faces trapped within the sphere, calling to the PC.

Touching the orb for longer than a single round will result in another **Will save (DC 19)** to avoid a second effect. Should the PC fail this save, a heightened *learn truename* effect will be released, mentally forcing the PC to answer the simple question, “*What is your truename?*”

Each of these effects is repeated upon subsequent contact.

The *Malus Morphaera* (**Hardness 0; hp 10; Break DC 10**) is an ancient and mystical artifact that combines both the power of spellcraft and akashic memory mastery, the magical and the mystical. If a PC touches the orb and saves against its *distraction* and *compelling question (greater)* effects and meditates using the orb as a focus for 1 hour (requiring a successful **Concentration check [DC 20]**), then the orb will allow the user to siphon off the trapped minds, turning the living memories into spell slots. The orb will grant 2 extra spell slots of 1st, 2nd, and 3rd level, which can only be used to cast heightened or laden versions of spells already prepared by a spellcaster. These memory-slots must be stored in a physical device, such as an akashic memory stone. The orb will grant this empowerment once every two weeks.

Should the orb be shattered, the entire area within an 800-foot radius will become affected as by a *cursed locale* spell, forever more inflicting a **–2 morale penalty on all attack rolls, saving throws, and checks** made in that area.

Should the orb be shattered on the third midnight of the full moon, then the trapped psyches will rush out in a terrible plague of dreams. Replicating the effects of a *curse of the chaotic mind* spell, the terrible wave of despair and confusion will spread to an ever-widening area, at a rate of 3 1/2 feet per minute (1/3 of a foot per round). After 2 days, the radius will stop at 2 miles. Any living being within the radius during these 2 days will become afflicted with the *curse of the chaotic mind* effect should it fail a **Will save (DC 23)**. Certainly, this result would devastate a heavily populated area or even a small town, permanently reducing all but the most iron-willed to mentally-impaired shells. After a 2-day period, the area can be safely entered, but those affected can be saved only by a *remove curse* spell.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

Synopsis

Upon discovery of the *Malus Morphaera*, the *Inmagus Libellum*, and Nefenr's notes, the PCs very well may realize that they have been told only part of the greater picture. The orb is a dangerous tool, and the PCs might feel it necessary to keep it from falling into the wrong hands — but whom can they trust? Certainly, the writings in the temple put the motives of the Jaren in question, and the author of the note itself does not have the purest of interests in the artifact. Ne-Chardath and the town council of Gahanis may provide a safe haven, but are they fully aware of the machinations being plotted around them? Should the orb be destroyed or protected?

While the PCs dwell on these possibilities, the final piece of the puzzle appears: the Blue Knight. Striking quickly, she will attempt to liberate the orb for her own dark purposes.

The Blue Knight

This champion of death has been stalking the PCs since they set out for the Lake of Lost Voices. Letting them penetrate and weaken the bandit forces, the Blue Knight hopes to attack them at their weakest and liberate the orb.

Attacking in the Temple

This encounter is one of dramatic purpose, and its exact timing should be determined by the actions of the PCs themselves. If the PCs are planning simply to destroy the orb before leaving the temple, then the Blue Knight will strike while they are still on the premises. Once the PCs have taken a moment to reflect on their information and discuss their plans, they will need to make a **Listen check (DC 10)** to avoid a surprise ranged attack by the Blue Knight, who will attempt to neutralize one target with a deadly thrown dagger before wading in further with her fearsome dire longsword.

Attacking During the Overland Trek

If, however, the PCs plan to carry the orb back to Gahanis to seek further guidance, or perhaps a reward, then the Blue Knight will move against the party during the 2-day overland journey. Preferring to strike at night in order to gain the maximum advantage from her **Night Owl** feat, the Blue Knight will attack the party with savage ferocity and dark cunning, calling upon the power of death should the party present a significant challenge.



Blue Knight (1): 26 hp.

While the primary objective of the Blue Knight is the orb's retrieval, she will revel in the melee and attempt to slay every member of the party. Since the day when she first began haunting the Gahanis region, she has left only one victim alive. She plans to kill the entire party and leave one of her infamous sapphire daggers as a calling card.

Though she is ruthless and determined, she is not reckless and will not throw away her own life in vain. Should she suffer injury and admit defeat is possible, she will activate her *dimensional door stone*, transporting herself to a pre-determined safe location 600 yards away.

Concluding the Adventure

Success and Continuing Plot Hooks

Should the PCs survive and return to Gahanis, there will be several avenues to pursue. If the PCs have retrieved the *Inmagus Libellum*, they will be paid their full reward by the Jaren. The Jaren, however, will begin using information found within the book and seeking the orb in earnest. Should they determine that it is now in the possession of the PCs, or if the PCs were involved in its destruction, then the Jaren will become a dangerous threat indeed. The PCs will be safe in public, as the Jaren work hard to maintain their benevolent appearance, but the heroes will be the target of repeated assassination attempts and robbery. Should the Jaren be exposed, the Gahanis branch of the Jaren guild will be terminated by the Jaren organization at large, and the five outcasts may possibly find themselves without their vast network of resources, which may make them even more dangerous as the matter becomes personal.

Nefenr will have left for Lothis by the time the PCs return to Gahanis, though he will monitor stories and rumors that come from the town for some time. Should his name be discussed in relation to the bandits, the Jaren, or the orb itself, he will quickly move on to a large community, likely Ka-Rone or Khorl on the coast. There, he will live under an assumed name, trying to restore the opulent lifestyle that he had built in Gahanis and possibly planning revenge against those who thwarted his plans.

Ne-Chardath the steward would be the safest avenue for the PCs to pursue with regard to matters of the orb. His first suggestion would be to send the orb to the scholars in the capital city of De-Shamod for further examination and protection. Of course, the Jaren will volunteer their caravans for this task, should they remain in a position to do so.

Failure and Continuing Plot Hooks

If the Blue Knight absconds with the orb, then the PCs will have less than 3 weeks to track her down before she performs the devastating plague of dreams ritual during the third midnight of the full moon. Perhaps an unknown eclipse buys them more time or alters the result of the deadly ritual in some way, leading to further adventure.

If the party fails to survive, the Jaren may be forced to recruit a second party to track down the Blue Knight and retrieve certain items in her possession that they desire greatly. The bandits may have rebuilt and refortified their lair, claiming the area and further hampering the party's search. Perhaps the Blue Knight has recruited the remaining bandits, forming a death cult intending to unleash the plague against the people of Gahanis, and the second party is the only means of averting this disaster.

Or perhaps new adventurers are needed to travel to Gahanis to learn why all communication has ceased and trade caravans have not emerged for some weeks. The new characters will find the town plunged into madness, victims of the plague of dreams ritual held by the Blue Knight some time earlier. Can a cure be found, and if so, what adventure might lead to the reversal of this terrible curse?

Adventure Aftermath

Regardless of the final outcome, there will be plenty of loose ends and plot threads to follow. These five chaotic Jaren are directed by dream visions and may be only the smallest manifestation of a greater dark plan. The Blue Knight could haunt the PCs for some time, appearing at unexpected times and interfering in completely unrelated adventures. Nefenr could be disgraced, plotting revenge, or may have completely escaped detection and taken his activities to the next level. The PCs might need to bide their time, collecting experience and power, until they can finally confront those who they know have plotted against the town. Spending time in Gahanis while the Jaren, Nefenr, and the party all have their hidden agendas can lead to some tense and exciting roleplaying moments, as each group struggles to learn the others' secrets without revealing its own.

Appendix I

Monsters & NPCs

Bandit, male human War1

CR 1/2; Medium-sized Humanoid; HD 1d8+2; hp 6 (-3 dying/-14 dead); Init +1 (Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 13 (+1 Dex, +2 leather jack; touch 11, flat-footed 12); BAB +1; Grap +3; Single Atk +3 melee (1d6+2/19-20, short sword), or +2 ranged (1d6/x3, 60 ft., shortbow); SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills: Intimidate +4, Jump +6. **Feats:** Fleet of Foot, Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (short sword).

Possessions: 20 masterwork arrows, leather jack, shortbow, short sword, 1d8 gp.

Bandit Crossbowman, male human Unfl

CR 1; Medium-sized Humanoid; HD 1d8; hp 8 (-1 dying/-10 dead); Init +2 (Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 16 (+2 Dex, +1 dodge, +3 studded leather jack; touch 13, flat-footed 13); BAB +1; Grap +2; Single Atk +2 melee (1d6+1/18-20, rapier) or +4 ranged (1d8+1/19-20, 80 ft., light crossbow); SQ Parry; SV Fort +0, Ref +4, Will -1; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 14.

Skills: Climb +5, Gather Information +6, Jump +5, Open Lock +6, Sneak +6, Spot +3. **Feats:** Fleet of Foot, Natural Archer, Point-Blank Shot.

Possessions: 10 masterwork bolts, light crossbow, rapier, studded leather jack, 1d10 gp.

Black Bear

CR 2; Medium-sized Animal; HD 3d8+6; hp 19 (-3 dying/-15 dead); Init +1 (Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 13 (+1 Dex, +2 natural; touch 11, flat-footed 12); BAB +2; Grap +6; Single Atk +6 melee (1d4+4, claw); Full Atk +6/+6 melee (1d4+4, 2 claws) and +1 melee (1d6+2, bite); SQ Low-light vision, scent; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 19, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills: Climb +4, Listen +4, Spot +4, Swim +8. **Feats:** Endurance, Run.

Feat Notes: Endurance bestows a +4 bonus on checks or saves to resist nonlethal damage. Run allows the black bear to run at 5 times normal speed and gain a +4 bonus on jump checks made after a running start.

Black Scathe

CR 2; Large Aberration; HD 4d8+23; hp 41 (-3 dying/-15 dead); Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (-1 size, +5 natural; touch 9, flat-footed 14); BAB +5; Grap +11; Full Atk +7/+7 melee (1d6+5 plus 1d6 fire, 2 slams); Face/Reach 5 ft./10 ft.; SA Burn; SQ Blindsight 60 ft., ooze; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +3; Str 20, Dex 10, Con 15, Int 4, Wis 8, Cha 7.

Burn (Ex): Scathes produce great internal heat as a result of their unstable chemistry. A scathe that touches or strikes a living opponent or an organic substance deals 1d6 points of fire damage; constant contact deals 10 points of fire damage per round.

Blindsight (Ex): Scathes can “see” by way of sound, allowing them to locate objects and creatures within 60 feet. A *silent sheath* spell or any similar effect negates this ability and effectively blinds the scathe.

Ooze: Although scathes are technically aberrations, they retain many of the special qualities of oozes. They are immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and shape changing. They have no functional sensory or vital organs and are thus immune to critical hits or flanking. They are immune to all mind-affecting spells or effects. They are blind but have the blindsight special quality, and they gain bonus hit points by size as an ooze. Like oozes, however, they receive no feats or skills.

Blue Knight, female sibeccai Chm4 (Death)

CR 4; Medium-sized Humanoid; HD 4d10; hp 26 (-1 dying/-10 dead); Init +2 (Dex); Spd 20 ft.; AC 19 (+2 Dex, +6 breastplate, +1 feat; touch 13, flat-footed 17); BAB +4; Grap +7; Single Atk +8 melee (1d8+7/19-20, +1 *dire longsword*), or +8 melee (1d4+4/19-20, masterwork dagger), or +6 ranged (1d4+4, 10 ft., masterwork dagger); SA Death's Blessing (+1 to damage vs. living); SQ Call Shield (+3 AC for 4 minutes, 1/day), Call Upon Power (+2 Str and +2 Con for 4 rounds, 1/day), low-light vision; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +5; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 11.

Languages: Common, simple Giant.

Skills: Skills: Climb +6, Jump +6, Knowledge (Geography) +3, Spot +4, Sneak +4. **Feats:** Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Heavy), Iron Flesh, Night Owl.

Possessions: +1 breastplate, +1 *dire longsword*, 6 masterwork sapphire daggers, *dimensional door stone*, 32 gp.

Ability Notes: The **death's blessing** bonus has already been included in the weapon damage stats. Invoking the **call shield** ability summons a +1 *medium shield*, bestowing a +3 bonus to AC and last for 4 minutes. **Calling upon power** increases the Blue Knight's Strength and Constitution by +2 for 4 rounds, adding a +1 bonus to attack rolls, damage rolls, related skill checks, and Fortitude saves, and bestowing 4 temporary

New Magic Item: Dimensional Door Stone

This small, smooth rock is enchanted with the *dimensional door* spell. The stone is thrown down and releases the spell upon impact, targeting the thrower.

Caster Level: 7th; *Prerequisites:* Craft One-Use Item, *dimensional door*; *Market Price:* 1,400 gp; *Cost to Create:* 700 gp + 56 XP; *Weight:* 1 lb.

hit points. The Night Owl feat grants the Blue Knight a +1 competence bonus to attack rolls, saves, and skill checks during the night.

Dark Scamp

CR 1/3; Small Aberration; HD 1d8; hp 4 (-1 dying/-11 dead); Init +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 20 ft., climb 15 ft., fly 60 ft. (average); AC 14 (+1 size, +2 Dex, +1 natural; touch 13, flat-footed 12); BAB +1; Grap -3; Single Atk +3 melee (1d6, tail whip); Full Atk +3/+3 melee (1d3, 2 claws) or +3/-2/-2 melee (1d4 and 1d2, bite and 2 rakes); SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 5, Wis 12, Cha 5.

Skills: Climb +9, Jump +6, Listen +3, Sneak +5, Spot +3. *Feats:* Flyby Attack*, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse (tail whip)*. *Bonus feats.

Den Rudiger, male human Rth1

CR 1; Medium-sized Humanoid; HD 1d6+1; hp 7 (-2 dying/-13 dead); Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (+1 Dex; touch 11, flat-footed 10); BAB +0; Grap +2; Single Atk +2 melee (1d6+2, club); SA Erase rune, activate 2 lesser runes, runic template; SQ Fire resistance 5; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 15, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills: Appraise +6, Concentration +5, Forgery +10, Gather Information +4, Knowledge (runes) +7, Spot +5. *Feats:* Elemental Mage (Fire), Elemental Resistance (Fire), Skill Focus (Forgery).

Possessions: Traveler's outfit, stout club, 3 sp.

Lesser Runes Known (DC 13): Rune of Affliction, Rune of Warding

Spells Readied (3/1): 0—*bash*, *glowglobe*, *scent bane*; 1st—*mudball*, *transfer wounds* (lesser).

Dire Rat

CR 1/3; Small Animal; HD 1d8+1; hp 5 (-2 dying/-12 dead); Init +3 (Dex); Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 15 (+1 size, +3 Dex, +1 natural; touch 14, flat-footed 12); BAB +0; Grap -4; Single Atk +4 melee (1d4 plus disease, bite); SA Disease; SQ Low-light vision, scent; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 4.

Skills: Climb +11, Listen +6, Sneak +8, Spot +6, Swim +11. *Feats:* Skill Application (Listen and Spot); Weapon Finesse (bite).

Disease (Ex): Filth fever, bite, Fortitude DC 11, incubation period 1d3 days, damage 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Con. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Skills: Dire rats have a +8 racial bonus to Swim and Climb checks and may take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened. Dire rats use their Dexterity modifier for Climb and Swim checks.

Gahanis Town Guard, War1

CR 1/2; Medium-sized Humanoid; HD 1d8+6; hp 10 (-3 dying/-14 dead); Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+1 Dex, +3 studded leather jack; touch 11, flat-footed 13); BAB +1; Grap +3; Single Atk +4 melee (1d8+3/x3, longspear) or +3 melee (1d6+2/19-20, short sword) or +2 ranged (1d8/19-20, 80 ft., light crossbow); SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills: Climb +8, Jump +8. *Feats:* Skill Application (Climb and Jump), Sturdy, Weapon Focus (longspear)

Possessions: 10 bolts, light crossbow, longspear, short sword, studded leather jack, 1d4 sp.

Goblin

CR 1/4; Small Humanoid (Goblinoid); HD 1d8; hp 4 (-1 dying/-11 dead); Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +3 studded leather; touch 12, flat-footed 14); BAB +0; Single Atk +1 melee (1d8-1, morningstar) or +3 ranged (1d6-1/x3, 30 ft., javelin); SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 8, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 8.

Languages: Goblin, Common.

Skills: Hide +6, Listen +3, Move Silently +5, Spot +3. *Feats:* Point Blank Shot, Skill Application (Listen and Spot).

Possessions: 2 javelins, morningstar, studded leather jack, 1d4 sp.

Goblin, Phungoid

CR 1/4; Small Humanoid (Phungoid); HD 1d8+1; hp 5 (-2 dying/-13 dead); Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +4 natural; touch 16, flat-footed 15); BAB +0; Grap -5; Single Atk +1 melee (1d8-1, morningstar) or +3 ranged (1d6-1/x3, 30 ft., javelin); SA Spore cloud; SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will -2; Str 8, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 6, Wis 7, Cha 4.

Languages: Goblin, Common.

Skills: Hide +6, Listen +1, Move Silently +5, Spot +1. *Feats:* Point Blank Shot, Skill Application (Listen and Spot).

Possessions: Morningstar.

Spore Cloud (Su): As a free action once per day, a phungoid goblin may expel a cloud of spores in a 10-foot radius from its body. Any living creature within the cloud must make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + 1/2 the phungoid's HD + the phungoid's Constitution modifier) or be *stunned* for 1 round; further, if it fails this save, the creature gains a level of sweet spore dependence 24 hours later. Multiple failed saves against phungoid spore clouds stack with one another (so a creature with Stage One dependence that fails a second time against a spore cloud gains Stage Two dependence 24 hours later), and they also stack with dependence brought on normally by sweet spore consumption.

Fey are immune to the effects of the spore cloud, as they are to sweet spore consumption.

Jaren Guild Master, male verrik unbound Wtc5 (Mind)

CR 5; Medium-sized Humanoid (Verrick); HD 5d6+5; hp 25 (-2 dying/-13 dead); Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+1 Dex, +3 robes of protection; touch 14, flat-footed 13); BAB +3; Grap +3; Single Atk +3 melee (1d6, club); SA Mindcloud (Will DC 15 or dazed for 1 round, 1/day), mindfire (4d6, half subdual, Will DC 15 negates, 3/day), spells; SQ Innate abilities (1/day, as 6th-level caster: *contact, sense thoughts, telekinesis [lesser]*); SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +7; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 15, Wis 17, Cha 6.

Skills: Bluff +6, Concentration +5, Disguise +9, Innuendo +11, Intimidate +6, Sense Motive +11, Use Magic Device +2. **Feats:** Improved Initiative, Sensitive, Skill Focus (Disguise).

Possessions: Robes of protection +2, mask of sorcerous guise (constant), gauntlet of sorcerous blast (12 charges), witchery bag, guild scepter (can be used as a club).

Spells Readied (4/3/2): 0—*bash, canny effort, detect magic, ghost sound, minor illusion*; 1st—*compelling command, distraction, glamour, veil of darkness*; 2nd—*ice bolt, read minds*.

Merril Yanniss, male human Twr3 (Snake)

CR 3; Medium-sized Humanoid; HD 3d8+3; hp 20 (-2 dying/-12 dead); Init +8 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative, +2 class ability); Spd 30 ft.; AC 18 (+2 Dex, +5 snakeskin armor, +1 class ability; touch 14, flat-footed 15); BAB +3; Grap +4; Single Atk +5 melee (1d8+2, spikestick) or +5 ranged (1d4+2, 20 ft., darts); SQ Animal companion; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 14, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills: Climb +7, Intuit Direction +6, Listen +6, Spot +6, Swim +7, Survival +6. **Feats:** Improved Initiative, Intuitive Sense, Resistance to Poison, Speed Burst, Weapon Focus.

Possessions: Spikestick, 8 darts, +1 snakeskin armor, *potion of beastskin, potion of darkvision, potion of see invisibility, potion of subtle step*, 12 gp.

Totem animal companion: Viper, CR 1/2; Small Animal; HD 1d8; hp 4 (-1 dying/-11 dead); Init +3 (Dex); Spd 20 ft., climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.; AC 17 (+1 size, +3 Dex, +3 Natural; touch 14, flat-footed 14); BAB +0; Grap -6; Single Atk +4 melee (1d2-2 and poison, bite); SA Poison; SQ Scent; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 6, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2.

Skills: Balance +11, Climb +11, Listen +7, Sneak +11, Spot +7, Swim +6. **Feats:** Weapon Finesse (bite).

Poison (Ex): Vipers use their poisonous bite to subdue and kill their prey. Injury, Fortitude DC 10, initial and secondary damage 1d6 Con. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Monstrous Spider

CR 2; Large Vermin; HD 4d8+4; hp 22 (-2 dying/-13 dead); Init +3 (Dex); Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 14 (-1 size, +3 Dex, +2 natural; touch 12, flat-footed 11); BAB +3; Grap +9; Single Atk +4 melee (1d8+3 and poison, bite); Face/Reach 10 ft. by 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Poison; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., immune to all mind-affecting effects; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 17, Con 12, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills: Climb +14, Jump +8, Sneak +6, Spot +15.

Poison (Ex): Monstrous spiders use their poisonous bite to subdue and kill their prey. Injury, Fortitude DC 17, initial and secondary damage 1d6 Str. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Nefenr, male verrik Aks2/Mgr4

CR 6; Medium-sized Humanoid (Verrick); HD 6d6; hp 24 (-1 dying/-10 dead); Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (+1 Dex, +2 ring of protection; touch 13, flat-footed 12); BAB +3; Grap +2; Single Atk +3 melee (1d4/19-20, +1 dagger), or +5 ranged (1d4/19-20, 10 ft., +1 dagger); SQ Innate abilities (1/day, as 6th-level caster: *contact, sense thoughts, telekinesis [lesser]*), perfect recall, sensory control, skill memory +2 (1/day), magister's staff; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +9; Str 8, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 15, Cha 12.

Languages: Common, Verrick.

Skills: Appraise +8, Bluff +6, Concentration +9, Craft (sculpture) +12, Diplomacy +6, Disguise +3, Forgery +8, Gather Information +9, Innuendo +11, Knowledge (cosmology) +8, Perform (storytelling) +6, Sense Motive +7, Sleight of Hand +3, Sneak +6, Spellcraft +5. **Feats:** Craft One-Use Item, Psion, Skill Focus (Gather Information), Spell Artist.

Possessions: Ring of protection +2, +1 dagger, 10 capsules of glamour, magister's staff, empowered akashic memory stone, masterwork artisan's tools, ink vial, ink pen, 3 sheets parchment, courtier's outfit, warm cape, 56 gp.

Spells Readied (5/4/3): 0—*detect creature, detect disease, detect poison, door warning, ghost sound, minor illusion, scent bane, sense thoughts*; 1st—*charm, compelling question, illusory creature, mind stab, transfer wounds (lesser)*; 2nd—*cloak of darkness, protective charm, read minds, silent sheath*.

Akashic Memory Stone Notes: Nefenr purchased this akashic memory stone, and has empowered it by using the *Malus Morphaera*. When empowered, the stone holds 2 extra spell slots of 1st, 2nd, and 3rd level, which can only be used to cast heightened or laden versions of spells already prepared by Nefenr.

Odthow, bandit leader, male litorian RWr2/Ltn1

CR 3; Medium-sized humanoid (litorian); HD 2d10+1d8 +6; hp 26 (-3 dying/-14 dead); Init +2; Spd 40 ft.; AC 17 (+4 armor, +1 dodge, +2 Dex, touch 13, flat-footed 14); BAB +2; Grap +5; Single Atk +6 melee (2d6+6/19-20, +1 greatsword), or +4 ranged (1d6+1*3, 70 ft., mighty [+1] composite shortbow); Full Atk +4 melee (2d6+6/19-20, +1 greatsword) and +3 melee (1d6+1, bite), or +4 ranged

New Magic Item: Capsule of Glamour

Ingesting this small tablet activates a single-use *glamour* spell.

Caster Level: 1st; **Prerequisites:** Craft One-Use Item, *glamour*; **Market Price:** 100 gp; **Cost to Create:** 25 gp + 2 XP; **Weight:** —.

Sweet Spore Dependence

<i>Failed Fortitude Saves</i>	<i>Dependence Level</i>	<i>Penalty</i>	<i>Bonus</i>
1	Stage One	-1	+1
2	Stage Two	-2	+2
3	Stage Three	-4/-2	+2/+1
4	Stage Four	-6/-4	+3/+2
5	Stage Five*	—	—

* At this point, the creature gains the “phungoid” template.

“*Penalty*” is the modifier applied to all attack and damage rolls, skill and ability checks, and all saving throws (including future saves against sweet spore’s effects) thereafter. Where two numbers appear separated by a slash, the second number indicates a penalty applied to the affected creature’s Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores. Ability scores reduced in this way can never be reduced to less than 1.

“*Bonus*” is the modifier applied to the creature’s natural armor (if it has no natural armor, it gains this number as a natural AC bonus). Where two numbers appear separated by a slash, the second number indicates a bonus applied to the affected creature’s Constitution score.

(1d6+1/*3*3, 70 ft., mighty [+1] composite short-bow); SA Combat Rites; SQ Low-light vision, +1 AC vs. swords; Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 16, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills: Climb +7, Handle Animal +1, Intimidate +4, Jump +7, Listen +2, Search +2, Sneak +2, Spot +2, Survival +2; **Feats:** Bite, Defensive Stance, Fleet of Foot, Natural Swordsman.

Possessions: 20 arrows, +1 greatsword, master-work chain shirt, mighty (+1) composite short-bow, potion of lesser battle healing (CL 5: 1d6+5), 60 gp.

Combat Rites (Su): Rank 1: 5, Rank 2: 1.

Rhodin

CR 1/2; Medium-sized Humanoid (Rhodin); HD 1d8+1; hp 5 (-2 dying/-12 dead); Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16 (+4 beastscale armor, +2 Large wooden shield; touch 10, flat-footed 16); BAB +0; Grap +2; Single Atk +2 melee (1d8+2/x3, battleaxe) or +0 ranged (1d6+2/x3, 20 ft., shortspear); Full Atk +2 melee (1d8+2/x3, battleaxe) and +0 melee (1d6+1, butt) or +0 ranged (1d8+2/x3, 20 ft., shortspear); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will -1; Str 14, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 8, Cha 9.

Languages: Rhodin, Common.

Skills: Listen +2, Spot +1. **Feats:** Multiattack, Night Owl.

Seether

CR 1; Small Aberration; HD 3d8+6; hp 19 (-3 dying/-14 dead); Init +2 (Dex); Spd 40 ft., burrow 10 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 16 (+1 size, +2 Dex, +3 natural; touch 13, flat-footed 14); BAB +3; Grap +1; Single Atk +5 melee (1d6+1, bite); Full Atk +5/+5/+0 (1d4+2 and 1d6+1, 2 claws and bite); SQ Blindsight 60 ft.; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 6,

Wis 12, Cha 7.

Skills: Climb +11, Escape Artist +8, Jump +8, Listen +12, Search +3, Sneak +7. **Feats:** Affinity with Skill (Listen).

Blindsight (Ex): Seethers can “see” by way of sound, allowing them to locate objects and creatures within 60 feet. A *silent sheath* spell or any similar effect negates this ability and effectively blinds the seether.

Skills: Seethers receive a +2 racial bonus to Escape Artist checks. Seethers also receive a +4 racial bonus to Listen and Search checks and may always make Listen checks in place of Spot checks. These bonuses and ability are lost if blindsight is negated.

Sweet Spore (CR 1)

This dungeon hazard poses no direct threat to creatures, but for those who might consider fungi to be part of a normal diet, eating the aromatic and delicious fungus can easily become a deadly habit. Any time an omnivore or herbivore passes within 10 feet of sweet spore, it must make a Will save (DC 10, +1 for every time that creature has eaten sweet spore in the past) or break off a piece of the fungus and devour it.

Every third day during which a creature eats sweet spore, it must make a Fortitude save (DC 13) or suffer from sweet spore dependence. The first time it fails such a save, it gains the effects of Stage One dependence. Each subsequent failure results in another level of dependence, until the creature reaches Stage Five and the effects become irreversible. The effects of dependence are shown on the chart above.

Levels of sweet spore dependence are easily visible to observers. A creature with Stage One dependence breaks out in small, hard fungal growths all over its body, especially growing out of and around its bodily orifices, while a creature with Stage Four dependence is covered entirely in brownish growths and is distorted almost beyond recognition.

Any penalties or bonuses accrued from sweet spore dependence last for one full year, minus a number of months equal to the creature's Constitution modifier. Thus, if a creature with an 11 Constitution reaches Stage Two dependence after 2 weeks of consuming sweet spore, but then does not consume any more of the fungus for a full year minus two weeks, it drops down to Stage One dependence; two weeks later, if it still consumes no more sweet spore in that time, its body finally purges the last of the sweet spore from its system. If the creature had a 19 Constitution, it would drop down to Stage One after only 8 months, and then two weeks later purge the remaining sweet spore.

Moreover, once a creature has developed any level of sweet spore dependence, it becomes addicted. Each day thereafter, it must make a Will save (DC 15) or seek out more sweet spore, returning if necessary to the location where it previously found the fungus or to some other location at which it might reasonably expect sweet spore to be found.

For some reason, fey can ingest sweet spore without any effect; in fact, many fey consider sweet spore to be a great delicacy.

Therder, bandit lieutenant, male human War3

CR 2; Medium-sized Humanoid; HD 3d8+10; hp 23 (-3 dying/-14 dead); Init +1 (Dex); Spd 20 ft.; AC 16 (+1 Dex, +5 breastplate; touch 11, flat-footed 15); BAB +3; Grap +5; Single Atk +7 melee (1d8+3/x3, masterwork long-spear) or +5 melee (1d6+2/19-20, short sword) or +4 ranged (1d8/19-20, 80 ft., light crossbow); SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 15, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills: Climb +10, Jump +10. **Feats:** Power Attack, Skill Application (Climb and Jump), Sturdy, Weapon Focus (longspear)

Possessions: 10 bolts, light crossbow, masterwork longspear, short sword, breastplate, 24 gp.

Violet Fungus

CR 3; Medium-sized Plant; HD 2d8+6; hp 15 (-4 dying/-16 dead); Init -1 (Dex); Spd 10 ft.; AC 13 (-1 Dex, +4 natural; touch 9, flat-footed 13); BAB +1; Grap +3; Single Atk +3 melee (1d6+2 and poison, tentacle); Full Atk +3/+3/+3/+3 (1d6+2 and poison, 4 tentacles); Face/Reach 5 ft./10 ft.; SA Poison; SQ Low-light vision, plant; SV Fort +6, Ref -1, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 8, Con 16, Int -, Wis 11, Cha 9.

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 14, initial and secondary damage 1d4 Str and 1d4 Con. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Vultrek

CR 3; Medium-sized Outsider (Chaotic, Evil); HD 3d8+3; hp 16 (-2 dying/-13 dead); Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (average); AC 16 (+1 Dex, +5 natural; touch 11, flat-footed 15); BAB +3; Grap +4; Single Atk +4 melee (1d6+1, claw); Full Atk +4/+4/-1 melee (1d6+1 and 1d4, 2 claws and bite); SA Desecration, spells; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., telepathy, fast healing 1, immunities, resistances, SR 14; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +4; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 13.

Skills: Concentration +6, Knowledge (ceremony) +5, Knowledge (magic) +5, Listen +4, Search +5, Sense Motive +5, Spellcraft +7, Spot +6, Wilderness Survival +2. **Feats:** Corrupt Mage, Multiattack, Sanctum*. *Bonus feat.

Spells Readied (5/3/2): 0—*bash, detect magic, disorient, ghost sound, minor illusion, read magic, touch of nausea*; 1st—*detect secret doors, distraction, illusory creature (lesser), touch of fear, veil of darkness*; 2nd—*animate weapon, bypass ward, gusting wind*.

Desecration (Su): The very presence of a vultrek imbues its sanctum with negative energy. Once the vultrek assigns a sanctum (per the Sanctum feat), it may cast any spell it knows at any point within the affected area, even if it cannot see the targeted area or if the area would normally be beyond its spell range. This ability is in addition to any other spell modifications made possible by the vultrek's Sanctum feat or any other feats.

Incidentally, undead creatures within such a desecrated area gain a +1 profane bonus to attack rolls, damage rolls, and saving throws. Undead created within a desecrated area gain +1 hit point per HD.

Spells: Vultreks cast spells as magisters, with a caster level equal to the vultrek's HD. They have no need of a staff for a focus, however, instead casting their spells through their own corrupt, otherworldly power.

Telepathy (Ex): A vultrek can communicate telepathically with any creature within its sanctum that has a language. It must know of the creature's presence, however, although it need not know the creature's precise location.

Immunities (Ex): Vultreks are immune to poisons and diseases.

Resistances (Ex): Vultreks have acid, cold, electricity, and fire resistance 10.

Skills: Vultreks receive a +2 racial bonus on Sense Motive and Spot checks.

Witch, female human Wtc1 (Wood)

CR 1; Medium-sized Humanoid; HD 1d6+1; hp 7 (-2 dying/-13 dead); Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+1 Dex, +1 padded armor; touch 11, flat-footed 11); BAB +0; Grap +0; Single Atk +0 melee (1d6, club); SA Greenfire (2d6, Ref DC 13 halves, 2/day), spells; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +6; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 14, Cha 8.

Skills: Bluff +3, Climb +4, Concentration +5, Heal +6, Wilderness Survival +6. **Feats:** Energy Resistance (Fire), Iron Will, Slippery Mind.

Possessions: Witchery bag, padded armor, club.

Spells Readied (3/1): 0—*bash, canny effort, ghost sound*; 1st—*mudball*.

For further information on the Dark Scamp, Phungoid, Scathe, Seether, Sweet Spore and Vultrek, see Counter Collection IV: World of the Diamond Throne from Fiery Dragon Productions.

For further information on rhodin, see The Diamond Throne from Malhavoc Press.



NEW MONSTERS

DARK SCAMP

Small Aberration

Hit Dice:	1d8 (4 hp)
Initiative:	+6
Speed:	20 ft., climb 15 ft., fly 60 ft. (average)
AC:	14 (+1 size, +2 Dex, +1 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 12
Attack:	Tail whip +3 melee; 2 claws +3 melee; or bite +3 melee and 2 rakes –2 melee
Damage:	Tail whip 1d6; claw 1d3; bite 1d4; rake 1d2
Face/Reach:	5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks:	—
Special Qualities:	Darkvision 90 ft.
Saves:	Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +3
Abilities:	Str 10, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 5, Wis 12, Cha 5
Skills:	Climb +9, Jump +6, Listen +3, Sneak +5, Spot +3
Feats:	Flyby Attack (B), Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse (B)
Environment:	Any warm land or underground
Organization:	Solitary, pair, flight (3–6), grist (7–12), or hive (13–30)
Challenge Rating:	1/3
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Always neutral evil
Advancement Range:	2–3 HD (Small)



Description

Dark scamps appear to be some horrific blend of twisted, malevolent monkey and great bat. Alone, they are not particularly dangerous to a competent swordsman, but they often appear in large numbers, making them rather more of a matter for concern.

Combat

When landing on or near a target (swarming is a common tactic), dark scamps typically attack with their two lower claws; only when grounded do they attack with their vicious bite and rake with the bony claws located at the tip of their wings. Dark scamps can use their tail attack at any time, although they tend to do so only while flying, in combination with their Flyby Attack feat.

SCATHE, BLACK

Large Aberration

Hit Dice:	4d8+23 (41 hp)
Initiative:	+0
Speed:	30 ft.
AC:	14 (–1 size, +5 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 14
Attack:	2 slams +7 melee
Damage:	Slam 1d6+5 plus 1d6 fire
Face/Reach:	5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.
Special Attacks:	Burn
Special Qualities:	Blindsight 60 ft., ooze
Saves:	Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +3
Abilities:	Str 20, Dex 10, Con 15, Int 4, Wis 8, Cha 7
Skills:	—
Feats:	—
Environment:	Any land and underground
Organization:	Solitary
Challenge Rating:	2
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Always neutral evil
Advancement Range:	5–12 HD (Large)





Description

There are rumored to be different kinds of scathes, but if this is true, “black scathes” are by far the most common of their kind. A scathe was at one time the “toxic waste” from dramojh bio-experiments, which has over time become sentient; however, scathes don’t break down matter well when they absorb prey, as do most oozes, so over time they tend to harden and take on an ambulatory form of their choosing, most often that of a large, black, oily-skinned humanoid.

Black scathes generally stand between 8 and 10 feet tall in humanoid form, and a glowing orange heat is visible where another creature’s eyes and mouth would be.

Combat

Black scathes are terrible foes, for they do not know fear and they do not tire. Their assaults are simple, straightforward, and savage.

Burn (Ex): Scathes produce great internal heat as a result of their unstable chemistry. A scathe that touches or strikes a living opponent or an organic substance deals 1d6 points of fire damage; constant contact deals 10 points of fire damage per round.

Blindsight (Ex): Scathes can “see” by way of sound, allowing them to locate objects and creatures within 60 feet. A *silent sheath* spell or any similar effect negates this ability and effectively blinds the scathe.

Ooze: Although scathes are technically aberrations, they retain many of the special qualities of oozes: They are immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and polymorphing. They have no functional sensory or vital organs, and are thus immune to critical hits or flanking. They are immune to all mind-affecting spells or effects. They are blind but have the blindsight special quality, and they gain bonus hit points by size as an ooze. However, like oozes, they receive no feats or skills.

SEETHER

Small Aberration

Hit Dice:	3d8+6 (19 hp)
Initiative:	+2
Speed:	40 ft., burrow 10 ft., climb 20 ft.
AC:	16 (+1 size, +2 Dex, +3 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 14
Attack:	2 claws +5 melee and bite +0 melee
Damage:	Claw 1d4+2; bite 1d6+1
Face/Reach:	5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks:	—
Special Qualities:	Blindsight 60 ft.
Saves:	Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +4
Abilities:	Str 15, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 7
Skills:	Climb +11, Escape Artist +8, Jump +8, Listen +12*, Search +3*, Sneak +7
Feats:	Affinity with Skill (Listen)
Environment:	Underground
Organization:	Swarm (4–7), throng (8–15), or mass (16–40)
Challenge Rating:	1
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Always neutral evil
Advancement Range:	4–6 HD (Small); 7–9 HD (Medium-size)



Description

Seethers were first bred long ago by the dramojh; these small, agile, yet strong creatures were designed to burrow into enemy strongholds and attack their draconic masters’ foes from sur-





prise. Since that time, seethers have become a fairly common problem throughout the lands ruled by the Diamond Throne.

Combat

Seethers use fairly simple tactics in combat, as befits their relatively weak intellects. They are fierce foes, though, and their attacks are always sudden and concerted.

Blindsight (Ex): Seethers can “see” by way of sound, allowing them to locate objects and creatures within 60 feet. A *silent sheath* spell or any similar effect negates this ability and effectively blinds the seether.

Skills: Seethers receive a +2 racial bonus to Escape Artist checks. *Seethers receive a +4 racial bonus to Listen and Search checks, and may always make Listen checks in place of Spot checks. These bonuses and ability are lost if blindsight is negated.

VULTREK

Medium-Size Outsider (Chaotic, Evil)

Hit Dice:	3d8+3 (16 hp)
Initiative:	+1
Speed:	30 ft., fly 50 ft. (average)
AC:	16 (+1 Dex, +5 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 15
Attack:	2 claws +4 melee, bite –1 melee
Damage:	Claw 1d6+1; bite 1d4
Face/Reach:	5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks:	Desecration, spells
Special Qualities:	Darkvision 60 ft., telepathy, fast healing 1, immunities, resistances, SR 14
Saves:	Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +4
Abilities:	Str 12, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 13
Skills:	Concentration +6, Knowledge (ceremony) +5, Knowledge (magic) +5, Listen +4, Search +5, Sense Motive +5, Spellcraft +7, Spot +6, Survival +2
Feats:	Corrupt Mage, Multiattack, Sanctum (B)
Environment:	Any
Organization:	Solitary
Challenge Rating:	3
Treasure:	None

Alignment: Always chaotic evil

Advancement Range: 4–7 HD (Medium-size); 8–9 HD (Large)



Description

Once simple vulture-like birds, these loathsome creatures fed off of the carrion of abyssal battle fields. With a steady diet of such arcane evil essence, the birds eventually mutated and grew into a new abyssal species. Individual vultreks’ powers vary widely, but all act as a sort of conduit for magical manifestation. They gravitate to areas of arcane evil, and need to devour souls in order to survive.

Vultreks resemble large, gaunt humanoids with heads very much like those of vultures. They retain their large, foully pinioned wings, and have developed a set of fully functional arms with wicked claws.

Combat

Vultreks are cunning and malevolent foes, reveling in terror and bloodshed. They are spellcasters first and warriors second, using their spells to weaken, harry, and dishearten their foes before rending them to pieces and feeding on both flesh and spirit.

Being descended from one of the most effective scavengers, vultreks are not averse to allowing other creatures to kill their prey and feed on the physical remains — it is the soul of the victim that truly nourishes them. For this reason, it is not uncommon for vultreks to form alliances with other fierce predators, assisting from a distance with magic while their allies tear into their victims.

Desecration (Su): The very presence of a vultrek imbues its sanctum with negative energy; once the vultrek assigns a sanctum (per the Sanctum feat), it may cast any spell it knows at any point within the affected area, even if it cannot see the targeted area or if the area would normally be beyond its spell range. This ability is in addition to any other spell modifications made possible by the vultrek’s Sanctum feat or any other feats.

Incidentally, undead creatures within such a desecrated area gain a +1 profane bonus to attack rolls, damage rolls, and sav-





ing throws. Undead created within a desecrated area gain +1 hit point per HD.

Spells: Vultreks cast spells as magisters, with a caster level equal to the vultrek's HD. However, they have no need of a staff for a focus, instead powering their spells through their own corrupt, otherworldly power.

Telepathy (Ex): A vultrek can communicate telepathically with any creature within its sanctum that has a language. It must know of the creature's presence, however, although it need not know the creature's precise location.

Immunities (Ex): Vultreks are immune to poisons and diseases.

Resistances (Ex): Vultreks have acid, cold, electricity, and fire resistance 10.

Skills: Vultreks receive a +2 racial bonus on Sense Motive and Spot checks.

NEW DUNGEON HAZARD

Sweet Spore (CR 1): This dungeon hazard poses no direct threat to creatures, but for those who might consider fungi to be part of a normal diet, eating the aromatic and delicious fungus can easily become a deadly habit. Any time an omnivore or herbivore passes within 10 feet of sweet spore, it must make a Will save (DC 10, +1 for every time that creature has eaten sweet spore in the past) or break off a piece of the fungus and devour it.

Every third day during which a creature eats sweet spore, it must make a Fortitude save (DC 13) or suffer from sweet spore dependence. The first time it fails such a save, it gains the effects of Stage One dependence. Each subsequent failure results in another level of dependence, until the creature reaches Stage Five, and the effects become irreversible (see below). The effects of dependence are shown on the chart below:

Failed Fortitude Saves	Dependence Level	Penalty	Bonus
1	Stage One	-1	+1
2	Stage Two	-2	+2
3	Stage Three	-4/-2	+2/+1
4	Stage Four	-6/-4	+3/+2
5	Stage Five*	N/A	N/A

**Penalty* is the modifier applied to all attack and damage rolls, skill or ability checks, and all saving throws (including

future saves against sweet spore's effects) thereafter. Where two numbers appear separated by a slash, the second number indicates a penalty applied to the affected creature's Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores. Ability score reduced in this way can never be reduced to less than 1.

"*Bonus*" is the modifier applied to the creature's natural armor (if it has no natural armor, it gains this number as a natural AC bonus). Where two numbers appear separated by a slash, the second number indicates a bonus applied to the affected creature's Constitution score.

Levels of sweet spore dependence are easily visible to observers: A creature with Stage One dependence breaks out in small, hard fungal growths all over its body, especially growing out of and around its bodily orifices, while a creature with Stage Four dependence is covered entirely in brownish growths and is distorted almost beyond recognition.

Any penalties or bonuses accrued from sweet spore dependence last for one full year, minus a number of months equal to the creature's Constitution modifier. Thus, if a creature with an 11 Constitution reaches Stage Two dependence after 2 weeks of consuming sweet spore, but then does not consume any more of the fungus for a full year minus two weeks, it drops down to Stage One dependence; two weeks later, if it still consumes no more sweet spore in that time, its body finally purges the last of the sweet spore from its system. If the creature had a 19 Constitution, it would drop down to Stage One after only 8 months, and then two weeks later purge the remaining sweet spore.

Moreover, once a creature has developed any level of sweet spore dependence, it becomes addicted: Each day thereafter, it must make a Will save (DC 15) or seek out more sweet spore, returning if necessary to the location where it previously found the fungus or to some other location at which it might reasonably expect sweet spore to be found.

For some reason, fey can ingest sweet spore without any effect; in fact, many fey consider sweet spore to be a great delicacy.

FUNGOID

Creatures that become addicted to sweet spore literally eat themselves into a fungal state. After ingesting too much of that substance, they lose their identity and become something that resembles a walking, hostile toadstool: a fungoid. Some portion of their intellect remains, though, for they hate what they have become, and they project this hatred onto those who resemble what they once were, exhibiting brutal violence toward sentient creatures that remind them of their former lives.

"Fungoid" is a template that can be added to any omnivorous or herbivorous creature, (hereafter referred to as the "base creature"), except for fey, which are for some reason immune to the effects of sweet spore. The base creature's type changes





to plant. A fungoid uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted below.

Hit Dice: Same as base creature.

Speed: Same as base creature.

AC: The fungoid gains a +1 bonus to natural armor. This stacks with the bonus gained from Stage Four sweet spore dependence.

Attacks: Same as base creature.

Special Attacks: A fungoid retains all the special attacks of the base creature and also gains the following.

Spore Cloud (Su): As a free action once per day, a fungoid may expel a cloud of spores in a 10-foot radius from its body. Any living creature within the cloud must make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + 1/2 the fungoid's HD + the fungoid's Constitution modifier) or be stunned for 1 round; further, if it fails this save, the creature gains a level of sweet spore dependence 24 hours later. Multiple failed saves against fungoid spore clouds stack with one another (so a creature with Stage One dependence that fails a second time against a spore cloud gains Stage Two dependence 24 hours later), and they also stack with dependence brought on normally by sweet spore consumption.

Fey are immune to the effect of the spore cloud, as they are to sweet spore consumption.

Special Qualities: Same as base creature.

Saves: Same as base creature.

Abilities: A fungoid's Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma each decrease by 2 points, and its Constitution increases by 2; these modifiers stack with those from Stage Four sweet spore consumption.

Skills: Same as base creature, but modified for any change in ability scores.

Feats: Same as base creature, although the benefits of some feats may be lost if the creature's ability score prerequisites drop too far.

Climate/Terrain: Any temperate or warm, but usually underground.

Organization: Solitary, but often encountered with other fungoids if a sweet spore patch has existed in the area for any length of time.

Challenge Rating: If the base creature's HD are 3 or less, then same as base creature; if the base creature's HD are 4 or more, then as base creature +1.

Advancement Range: Same as base creature.

