

COR3-02

RETURN TO THE ISLES

A One-Round D&D LIVING GREYHAWK®

Core Adventure

Version 1.0

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The eerie words of a decrepit seer lead you back to the mysterious Isles of Woe, now an ominous landmark of the mighty Nyr Dyv. Somewhere deep within this ancient dark tomb lies vital information concerning the destruction of Tenh and possibly the key to sparing other countries from a similar fate. An adventure for foolish mortal characters of APL 2-12. Part three of the Ether Threat story arc.

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This is an RPGA® Network scenario for the Dungeons & Dragons® game. A four-hour time block has been allocated for each round of this scenario, but the actual playing time will be closer to three hours. The rest of the time is spent in preparation before game play, and scoring after the game. The following guidelines are here to help you with both the preparation and voting segment of the game. Read this page carefully so that you know and can communicate to your players the special aspects of playing an RPGA scenario.

Preparation

First you should print this scenario. This scenario was created to support double-sided printing, but printing it single sided will work as well. There is enough room along the inside margin to bind the adventure, if you desire.

Read this entire adventure at least once before you run your game. Be sure to familiarize yourself with any special rules, spells, or equipment presented in the adventure. It may help to highlight particularly important passages.

When you run an RPGA D&D adventure we assume that you have access to the following books: the *Player's Handbook*, the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and the *Monster Manual*. We also assume that you have a set of dice (at least one d4, d6, d8, d10, d12, and d20), some scrap paper, a pencil, an RPGA scoring packet, and your sense of fun. It is also a good idea to have a way to track movement during combat. This can be as simple as a pad of graph paper and a pencil, as handy as a vinyl grid map and chits, or as elaborate as resin dungeon walls and miniatures.

Instruct the players either to prepare their characters now, or wait until you read the introduction, depending on the requirements of the scenario as described in the introduction.

Keep in mind that you must have at least four players (not counting the DM), for the game session to be a sanctioned RPGA event. As well, you cannot have more than seven players participating in the game.

Once you are ready to play, it is handy to instruct each player to place a nametag in front of him or her. The tag should have the player's name at the bottom, and the character's name, race, and gender at the top. This makes it easier for the players (and the DM) to keep track of who is playing which character.

The players are free to use the game rules to learn about equipment and weapons their characters are carrying. That said, you as the DM can bar the use of even core rule books during certain times of play. For example, the players are not free to consult the *Dungeon Master's Guide* when confronted with a trap or hazard,

or the *Monster Manual* when confronted with a monster.

Some of the text in this scenario is written so that you may present it as written to the players, while other text is for your eyes only. Text for the players will be in gray boxes. It's strongly recommended that you paraphrase the player text instead of reading it aloud. Some of this text is general and must be adapted to the specific situation or to actions of the player characters.

Scoring

After the players have completed the scenario or the time allotted to run the scenario has run out, the players and DM score the game. The RPGA has three ways to score its games. Consult your convention coordinator to determine which method to use for this scenario:

1. No-vote scoring: The players write their names and RPGA numbers on the scoring packet grid. You fill in the top of the grid. That is all. No one is rated. This method is used for people who are just playing for fun.
2. Partial scoring: The players rate the game master and the scenario on their player voting sheet, and provide personal information, but don't vote for other players. The game master rates the scenario and completes personal and event information, but does not rate the players as a team or vote for players. This method is used when there is no competition, but the event coordinator wants information on how the game masters are performing, or the game master wants feedback on his or her own performance.
3. Voting: Players and game masters complete the entire packet, including voting for best player. If this method is used, be sure to allow about 15-20 minutes for the players to briefly describe their characters to the other players, and about 5-10 minutes for voting. This method is used when the players want to know who played the "best" amongst the group, or when the adventure is run in tournament format with winners and prizes.

When using voting, rank the players in order of your voting choice while they are completing their forms, so that you are not influenced by their comments on your abilities. It's a good idea to have the players vote while you determine treasure and experience awards for the scenario.

After voting, give the Scoring Packet to your event coordinator.

This is a LIVING GREYHAWK Adventure. As a LIVING adventure it is expected that players bring their own characters with them. If players do not have a LIVING GREYHAWK character generated, get a copy of the current LIVING GREYHAWK character generation guidelines, and a character sheet from your convention coordinator or the RPGA Web site, and then have any players without a character create one. Once all players have a LIVING GREYHAWK character, play can begin.

Along with the other materials that you are assumed to have in order to run a D&D game, it is also recommended that you have a copy of the LIVING GREYHAWK *Gazetteer*.

Living Greyhawk Levels of Play

Because players bring their own characters to LIVING GREYHAWK games, this adventure's challenges are proportioned to the average character level of the PCs participating in the adventure. To determine the Average Party Level (APL):

1. Determine the character level for each of the PCs participating in the adventure.
2. If PCs bring animals that have been trained for combat (most likely being war horses, dogs trained for war), other than those brought by virtue of a class ability (i.e. animal companions, familiars, paladin's mounts, etc) use the following chart to determine the number of levels you add to the sum above. Add each character's animals separately. A single PC may only bring four or fewer animals of this type, and animals with different CRs are added separately.

| CR | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|-----------|---|---|---|---|
| 1/4 & 1/6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 1/3 & 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 2 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 4 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

3. Sum the results of 1 and 2, and divide by the number of characters playing in the adventure. Round to the nearest whole number.
4. If you are running a table of six PCs, add one to that average.

By following these four steps, you will have determined the APL. Throughout this adventure, APLs categorize the level of challenge the PCs will face. APLs are given in even-numbered increments. If the APL of your group falls on an odd number, ask them before the adventure begins whether they would like to play a harder or easier adventure. Based on their choice, use either the higher or the lower adjacent APL.

APL also affects the amount of experience you may gain at the end of the adventure. If your character is three character levels or more either higher or lower than the APL this adventure is being played at, that character will receive only half of the experience points awarded for the adventure. This simulates the fact that either your character was not as challenged as normal, or relied on help by higher-level characters to reach the objectives.

Note: LIVING GREYHAWK adventures are designed for APL 2 and higher. Three or four, or sometimes even five 1st-level characters may find difficulty with the challenges in a LIVING GREYHAWK adventure. If your group is APL 1 there are three things that you can do to help even the score.

1. Attempt to create a table of six 1st-level characters, or try to enlist higher-level characters to play at that table.
2. Advise characters to buy riding dogs to help protect them, and fight for them. All riding dogs are considered trained to attack. PCs who want their dogs to attack must succeed at a Handle Animal or Charisma check (DC 10). Failure indicates that the animal will not attack that round. This is a free action (spoken command) that may be attempted each round. If an animal loses half or more hp in a single round it flees, unless another check is successful.

Time Units and Upkeep

This is a standard one-round Core adventure, set in the Nyr Dyv. As such, all characters must pay two Time Units per round. Adventurer's Standard Upkeep costs 12gp per Time Unit. Rich Upkeep costs 50gp per Time Unit. Luxury Upkeep costs 100gp per Time Unit.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

This scenario continues from the events depicted in *COR2-13 Into the Dying Lands*. In summary, the heroes returned to Tenh to help a slave free his family and friends that were trapped in lands destroyed by the ether creatures. Upon arriving at the safe haven used by the slaves (which was once some sort of shrine, built by ancient mages and priests), Wartoan, the half-crazed nominal leader of the slaves, spoke of visions, a "Dark One" that "must be found", and of the importance of the Dark One's hands. Wartoan described another island in the Isles of Woe, one that did not disappear, but instead sunk into the depths of the Nyr Dyv. This island rose recently along with the reappearance of the other Isles about six months ago. The slave leader also mentioned that a sword upon this island would lead the heroes to the Dark One.

After returning back to Greyhawk City, the heroes chartered another vessel to return to the lone isle that remained when the others disappeared. There, they hope to find answers to the origins of the ether threat, and what role this "Dark One" plays in it all.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The heroes begin the adventure sailing to the Isles of Woe, to investigate the Isle of the Deep, the one island in the cluster that did not disappear when the others were sent to the Ethereal Plane. On the way there, they have a run-in with a creature known as Meddigallan, a dragon turtle that lives near the Isles. He talks to the adventurers, telling them what he knows about the Isles, in payment for a kindness once delivered onto him.

Reaching the Isle of the Deep, the heroes find it covered in corals, seaweed, and ocean debris. There, they find the ruins of a few buildings, built with the same green stone found on the other Isles. A battle ensues with other creatures that have come to explore and investigate this island.

Searching through the ruins, the characters find strange carvings that depict the events after the Isles were banished. In addition, they locate a magical sword that was foretold to be found on this island.

All this time, the last denizen of this island, the half-stone golem druid groundskeeper known as Aganus, has been observing the heroes. After they retrieve the sword, he decides to strike, as only the mage-priests are allowed to tread on the island. It is possible that the heroes could subdue him, and confirm some of the information they have found in the ruins.

Once Aganus has been dealt with, and the Isle of the Deep has been explored, the heroes may leave. As they depart, the hero with the magical sword feels a strong desire to head northward, almost as if being compelled...

INTRODUCTION

The flag of the Domain of Greyhawk snaps in the strong north wind that blows across the deck of the Brightspray. Its destination is the Isles of Woe - for some of you, this is your second such foray here; for others, anticipation gnaws in your stomach as you wonder what secrets will be unveiled on your first journey to the mysterious islands.

Captain Jerandon, who once served the merchants of Greyhawk shipping goods around the Lake of Unknown Depths, has made this journey with his stalwart crew many times in the past half year. With the gold and reputation he has earned from braving the Nyr Dyv to take adventurers such as you to the Isles, he and his crew have lived well through the fall and early winter, not needing employment. Eventually though, the coin began to grow light enough in his purse that he decided to hire himself out again to those who are brave or foolish enough to risk exploring the recently reappearing Isles.

You and several other adventurers decided to take that risk, and have chartered the Brightspray and its crew to take you to an as-yet unexplored island in the cluster. Apparently different from the other islands, the sailors' rumors say that it is covered in the trappings of the lake, and nothing else besides sea birds dwell upon its surface. Some also say that this particular island has also resurfaced from the Nyr Dyv, pushed upward by either sea giants or a stone colossus. Whatever the case, your adventurer's spirit will not be denied, as you check your equipment over again on this, the last day of the journey.

The sun hangs high in the early afternoon sky when the lookout shouts, "Land ho! Isles are dead ahead!" After squinting over the fore of the Brightspray, the smallest dark speck appears on the horizon. The captain approaches you, a none-too-toothy grin on his face. "Should take us the rest of the day to get close. When we get there, we'll set anchor just off the coast. You can stay with us tonight, or row over. You get three days from when you leave the ship, just like in the deal."

Allow the players a chance to introduce their PCs to one another, as they have been on the Nyr Dyv for almost one week together. As before (in *CORS2-01 Isles of Woe*), the captain does not tolerate (nor have room for) any animals (or other non-humanoid creatures) medium-sized or larger. This includes horses, ponies, mules, and riding dogs. Familiars and small (or smaller size) animals may be present, but only one per PC. A special exception exists for those with porpoise animal companions; they may swim alongside the ship (as the crew considers them a good omen), and do not count towards the one/PC animal limit.

Those heroes participating in the events depicted in *COR2-13 Into the Dying Lands* have experienced a recurring dream. It is very clear, and remains with each hero long after they have woken. Ask the players at the table if their characters have played that event; for those PCs, read the following:

Ever since visiting the land that was once called Tenh, and gazing upon its lifeless husk, you have had a rather frequent dream; or more appropriately, a vivid memory. You see yourself talking to Wartoan, the decrepit old leader of the small enclave of slaves trapped in Tenh, and you ask him what the walls speak when they talk to him. He replies, "You want to know what the walls say? I will try but only for you." Wartoan stares at the wall for a second, his eyes roll back a bit and start fluttering, and a voice low and with no emotion rolls from his throat, "...and the two strong slaves lifted it from the back of the Beast. Thereupon I commanded the Brazen Portals to be brought low, and they were wrenched from their hinges and rang upon the stone. The Efrete howled in fear and fled when I caused the page to be read and the Beast passed into the City of Brass. Now was I, Tzunk, Master of the Plane of Molten Skies. With sure hand I closed Yagrax's Tome, dreading to..." With unexpected suddenness his eyes pop back into focus and his voice returns to normal, "you believe me now yes? The Dark One Yagrax must be found. His hands, his hands."

You ask Wartoan about the meaning of the hands he spoke of. "I am not sure where Yagrax's hands are but in a dream I saw a lone island in a sea of blue. It had buildings made of the same green stone as these walls but there was no life on it. It sits alone for ages in the dark and the cold. Half in and half out of the dark waters that surrounded it, weighing down on it like death. It did not go with the others when they left. No it stayed, stayed and guarded its burden. On it is a sword. A dark and terrible thing. It will lead you to him. Lead you to

the Dark One. I hope that means something to you." Wartoan disappears, and your memory of anything else in the dream fades with him.

For those heroes, this dream has been their primary motivation to return to the Isles of Woe; Captain Jerandon's expedition has been the first opportunity to head back to the dark islands.

Once the heroes have introduced each other, and are ready, proceed to Encounter 1.

ENCOUNTER 1: FROM THE DEPTHS

As the *Brightspray* approaches the Isle of the Deep, read the following to the players:

With every passing hour, the dark spot at the edge of your vision grows larger and larger. The chill wind continues to blow strong, and white-capped waves smack against the sides of the Brightspray. Late in the afternoon now, the sun will set soon. As the sky begins to take on a softer glow, you catch a glimmer in the waves; at first you dismiss it as the light's reflection on the water, but then it seems to move closer and closer to the vessel. You inform the crew of what you've seen, and only moments later, the lookout shouts in panic, "Sea monster off the port bow! Sea monster off the port..." With an explosion of spray, a gigantic form rises up from the depths. Upon its back is a large deep green shell, which reflects the sunshine in beautiful shifting color whorls. Glittering in the golden light, its huge beaklike jaw opens, releasing a small hiss of steam. An emerald-yellow crest unfolds from the back of the creature's head, and its golden eyes sweep back and forth, looking over the crew, yourself, and your companions. The sailors on the Brightspray are panicked to the point of inaction, as all stand agape on the deck of the ship, the creature towering over them, its beak as high as the mainsail.

This is Meddigallan, an old dragon turtle that lairs near the Isles of Woe. Fortunately for the ship and the PCs, he is rather friendly for a creature of his type. A long time ago, a powerful human wizard from Greyhawk City saved his life, and ever since, he has vowed to be reasonable in his dealings with those that fly the flag of the Domain of Greyhawk. Since so few vessels have come this way of late, Meddigallan's curiosity has been piqued. Thus, he has come to chat with those on the

ship. If the heroes give him an opportunity to speak, he says the following:

The glittering deep green form opens its jaw again, and you can hear the rushing of air as it breathes inward. Then, in a voice that sounds like the crashing of a waterfall, it speaks to you in the Common tongue. "I am known as Meddigallan, Lord of the Bright Water, Master of the Rushing Waves, Friend to Dolphins and Wizards, and Render of Longships. You have entered my domain, and I demand a sacrifice! Who shall provide it among you? Hmmm? Perhaps one of the adventurers? A nice tasty hero snack, laden down with treasure! I would be willing to let the rest go for that pleasure!"

Meddigallan is just teasing. He lets up after a moment or two, and comes clean with the adventurers. He's really interested in talking with the people on the ship, especially the heroes. Portray him as sarcastic, kind, knowledgeable, and (most especially) curious.

He is willing to discuss many matters, and has the following to convey:

- He has felt the reemergence of the Isles of Woe; they created some sort of energy wave when they reappeared earlier last year. Many of the lesser creatures of the Nyr Dyv fled, but he knew better. However, he is not foolish enough to come very close to the reappearing Isles; he has heard that they returned from a rift in the planes.
- The island nearby is part of the Isles of Woe, and has recently risen from the depths of the Nyr Dyv. Meddigallan calls it the Isle of the Deep, and he's certain that it was magic that brought it back. That particular island has been submerged for centuries, and did not leave with rest. He is not sure as to why.
- No sailing ships have come to the Isle of the Deep as of yet. Meddigallan knows that the kuo-toa, an evil race of amphibian creatures, are planning to mount an expedition there soon, but he doesn't know whether or not they've carried out their plan as of yet.
- Meddigallan wants to know more about the goings on in the City of Greyhawk, as he has some friends there. He is willing to talk with the heroes extensively, and enjoys telling them small frivolous stories (like how much he enjoys playing hiding games in the weeds with the dolphins, or how bits of red sponge often get caught in his teeth when he eats near the coral reefs).

MEDDIGALLAN'S DEAL

If the heroes are respectful and conversational with Meddigallan, he offers them an opportunity.

After spending a while talking with the massive dragon turtle, Meddigallan makes an interesting offer. "Perhaps when you return from your exploration, you might be willing to trade from your treasure to have some items of magic from mine? I have no use for many of those things, and you seem like good folk. Besides, a human wizard named Otto once saved my life, and I made a promise to him. While I never may return the kindness he offered me, perhaps I can allow you to receive it in his stead. When you return, we shall see what I have of interest to you in my hoard. I will meet you here. Safe journey to all." Slowly, the great beast turns and slips back into the depths of the Nyr Dyv.

At the end of the scenario, the PCs have the opportunity to purchase certain magic items from Meddigallan's hoard. Since the items are not actually treasure accumulated by the heroes, they do not figure into their take of gold for the scenario. They are merely offered the chance to purchase some items from the *Dungeon Master's Guide* at the conclusion of the event.

SO, YOU WANT TO FIGHT, EH?

If the heroes go and attack Meddigallan right off (upon his emergence from the water), he attempts to bat the attackers from the ship (using his snatch ability, and attacking for subdual). If they persist, then he gives them his full attention, attacking with his breath weapon and natural attacks. His attacks include attempting to capsize the vessel (which is 50 feet long for purposes of the dragon turtle's ability). The heroes get no XP for defeating him, in any case.

➤ **Meddigallan, advanced male dragon turtle:** hp 300; see Appendix A.

ENCOUNTER 2: ISLE OF THE DEEP

After the encounter with the dragon turtle, the rest of the journey takes place without incident. The captain orders the ship to be anchored about 300 yards from the island. The heroes may wish to spend a last night with the captain and his crew, which is fine. Whenever

the heroes are ready to depart for the isle, read the following.

The captain sets anchor a few hundred yards from the shore of the Isle of the Deep. From this distance, you can see that the small island looks as though it was picked up by some immense hand, turned upside down, dunked into the Nyr Dyv, scraped against the bottom, and then turned right side up again. The entire surface of the drowned mass is covered in green and brown seaweed and lake plants. Light-colored coral pockmarks permeate the gently sloping hills. No trees are present, and the only signs of life you see are the gulls that mill about all around, nesting in the remains of the Nyr Dyv. At the top of one of the hills, you think you can make out a few ruined structures of some sort, although it could be just oddly shaped rock outcroppings.

The captain meets you as you prepare to disembark the ship. "Thought you might be wanting these; I always keep a few spare ones in my sea chest." He holds up two vials, each containing a swirling blue liquid.

If a hero at the table participated in the home play edition of *CORS2-01 Isles of Woe*, he loans the adventurers two *potions of swimming* as thanks for helping find his missing crewmen; he makes them promise to give them back if they don't use them, though (after all, they're not cheap). If no one in the party was present for that event, he offers to sell them for 150 gp each.

You get into the longboat that has been provided for you. The captain wishes you luck and as you paddle towards shore he shouts, "Return three days hence! Don't dawdle! Who knows how long she'll stay up?"

As the heroes are paddling toward the island, have each of them make a Spot check (DC 15). If they succeed, they notice a cavern to the west, just above water level. This is described under Area E and Encounter 4, below. Consult Map 1 for a layout of the island and its areas.

BACKGROUND ON THE ISLE OF THE DEEP

This particular island is part of the cluster of islands known as the Isles of Woe. Long ago, those islands were the center of a powerful empire of mage-priests. The mage-priests experimented with extraplanar magic, in particular summoning spells. A catastrophic

accident led to the arrival of the ether creatures, who promptly began to destroy several of the Isles of Woe. The mage-priests fled to one island, this island, and enacted a ritual that banished the other Isles to the Ethereal Plane. After a time, this island sunk into the depths of Nyr Dyv, where it remained for centuries. Recently, it has arisen to the surface, at approximately the same time as the other islands' return from the Ethereal Plane. More information on the events surrounding the Isles of Woe can be found in Area D, below.

GUARDIAN OF THE ISLE OF THE DEEP

When the mage-priests ruled this island, they took a druid named Aganus and subjected him to a ritual that turned the human into a half-stone golem. He vowed to care for the island, and was placed under spells to prevent him from aging. When the mage-priests left, and the island was sunk, Aganus remained. For centuries, he has been under the waves, waiting for the mage-priests to return. With the rising of the island, he believes that the time will soon come to welcome his masters home. To this end, he defends the island from trespassers, either killing them or driving them off.

As the heroes investigate the island, Aganus' animal companions and summoned creatures harry them when the opportunity arises. The DM should feel free to insert them anywhere appropriate for a challenge. Since the creatures and spells are part of his druidic class abilities, they are considered part of his challenge rating, and not separate onto themselves. Once the heroes obtain the sword, Aganus himself assaults them. See Encounter 5 for more information on Aganus and his animal companions.

AREA A: THE SHORE AND SURROUNDING AREA

Reaching the shore, you pull the boat up along the rocky beach. Many stones scattered along the coast appear an eerie shade of green; after further inspection, it is obvious that they are the remains of buildings long since destroyed. The smell of rotted vegetation hangs thick in the air; many of the sea plants are dead, but the isle seems to have a wet sheen that apparently still keeps much of the lakes' greenery in a relatively healthy condition. Another strange feeling overcomes you - the Isle of the Deep is warm, like an early summer's day. The wind only flutters leaves and dances with stray hairs here; only yards beyond the beach, you can see the Brightspray's sails flapping in the winter chill.

The island itself is relatively small - only about half mile wide, and almost as long. The warm climate on the Isle is due to an ancient magical weather working, still in place. Heroes searching around the beach find the following:

- A Search check (DC 20) unearths a strange-looking spear snapped in two under the sands. It belongs to a group of kuo-toa scouts that were sent here several days ago.
- Those looking for tracks find them with a successful Wilderness Lore check (DC 16). They appear to be webbed feet that walk generally upright. Rangers and foe hunters with favored enemy (kuo-toa) immediately recognize them as kuo-toa tracks, as do any aquatic-oriented characters (such as marinelords and kings/queens of the sea) with a successful Knowledge (nature) check, DC 10.
- The tracks lead to a crumbling green stone staircase that is still slick from rain and covered in old seaweed. The stairs go continue on for about 200 feet towards the ruins on the hill above. Characters ascending the staircase need to make a Balance check (DC 15) every 50 feet of movement up the stairs (some of the stairs are slick, and some are not); failure means they go nowhere, and failure by 5 or more means they fall down the stairs, taking 1d6 points of damage for every 20 feet they fall (at APL 2, this damage is subdual). If other heroes are on stairs below the falling PC, they must each make a Reflex saving throw (DC 12), or they are hit by the falling hero (both characters suffering 1d4 subdual damage), and begin falling as well. For each falling PC tumbling down the stairs, increase the saving throw for characters further below by 3. As a reminder, a PC can take 10 on the Balance check if he/she so wishes.
- Once one hero is on top, he/she may lower down a rope to assist the others; then, no one else is in danger of falling. PCs that wish to go up the hill without using the stairs find it to be a mass of ruins and sea vegetation, virtually impassable unless using spells or coming up with an ingenious plan.
- The cave in the side of the island is inaccessible from the beach. The heroes must get in the longboat and paddle over, swim, or rappel down from the top of the hill (see Area C for more information).

AREA B: THE RUINS OF AN EMPIRE IN EXILE

After your brief ascent, you reach the top of the hill. There, you see all that remains of the civilization that once was here - crumbling foundations of green stone, dark with algae and rotted plants, scattered stonework hidden in the grasses, and the shells of several buildings, crushed into broken bits by both time and tide. Many are little more than windbreaks, and homes to dozens of gulls. The largest building was most likely quite impressive in its day, standing three stories high. Now however, it is little more than rubble, and it is clear that the roof has collapsed, most likely destroying anything of value left within. A large pool of water lies in the center of the ruins; within, a soupy concoction of kelp and weeds hides anything that might be found below the surface.

The heroes may feel free to search the area unless they go into the buildings (see Areas C and D for details). The bodies of four kuo-toa can be found covered in foliage near the pool of water (Search check DC 13, or Spot check DC 22 to notice an amphibian leg in the grass). Their spears have been snapped in two. It is clear to anyone carefully observing them that they have been gnawed upon. A Heal skill check (DC 14) reveals that they have been dead for several days; making a more difficult check (DC 18) tells the hero that they died not from bite wounds, but strangulation. Characters with special analysis skills (such as watch detectives) that make the appropriate rolls know that it was some sort of plant tentacle from a larger-than-human creature that killed them, in addition to knowing all of the above information. Really, the kuo-toa were an advance scout party that was killed by Aganus' summoned creatures; in this case, a pair of assassin vines. The bites come from the druid's animal companions.

Several other items of interest present themselves as the heroes are searching about. Every hour that the PCs search around the area, roll once for each searching character on the chart below. With one exception, once a result has been obtained, it can no longer be used - reroll the result.

Items of Note in the Ruins (Roll 1d20)

- 1-10:** Nothing of interest.
- 11:** A group of yellow coral that appear to be arranged in a very orderly fashion. They still appear healthy, and are slick with water.
- 12:** A dead giant clam; its innards have been picked out by the gulls.

- 13:** A strange-looking shield, made of some sort of flexible bone, and covered with awful-smelling sticky oil. It is broken and useless. (This is one of the kuo-toa's shields.)
- 14:** Three reptile eggs, about the size of a human's fist. They feel leathery, and are torn open (Knowledge [nature] check, DC 10, identifies them as crocodile eggs).
- 15:** A brass and colored crystal wind chime. The crystals are cracked, but it still tinkles in the wind.
- 16:** A small piece of green stone in the visage of a scowling devil-creature.
- 17:** 20 feet of vine-like sea plants that have been tied together into a crude rope.
- 18:** A seashell necklace. Upon the largest of the shells is a single word in Elven - "friend".
- 19:** A gull chick. It is a little older, and can fly for brief "hops". In a few months, it will be mature enough (statistics as a raven if a PC druid or ranger wants to keep it as an animal companion).
- 20:** While walking near a small mound of rubble, the hero feels the hairs stand up on the back of his/her neck, and a cold shiver passes down his/her back. The *scrying* attempt listed under "I Spy" happens at this time; if it has already taken place, it happens again.

Earthquake

At some point during their search, an earthquake rocks the island. Read the following to the heroes:

As you look about the ruins on the Isle of the Deep, a sense of dread begins to well up within you; hundreds of gulls take flight, and the earth begins to rumble and shake. Ancient green stone crumbles in small showers from the remaining buildings, and you need to lie down to keep yourself from falling over. A terrible cracking noise, as if a god was splitting a mountain with a giant hammer, roars beneath you. After a few long moments that seem like hours, the rumbling passes into a low growl, and the earth begins to stabilize.

Once the ordeal is done, you take stock of the damage around you. The buildings look a little worse for wear, but they haven't yet collapsed. As your gaze settles on the pool, you realize with a start that all of the water is gone; all that's left is a gaping hole in the earth. Carefully approaching the area, you note that the earth beneath the pool has crumbled away, and a crude shaft extends down into darkness.

The shaft extends downward approximately 200 feet, ending in a pool of water (Area C). If the characters have enough rope to lower themselves down into the water may do so. A successful Climb check (DC 15) is required to make a half-move down a rope; if the rope is knotted, the DC drops to 5. A character that falls into the water takes no damage from the first 20 feet of the fall; the second 20 feet do 1d3 subdual damage for each 10-foot increment, and the rest does normal falling (1d6 per 10-foot increment) damage. See the Climb skill on pages 64-65 of the *Player's Handbook* and the text on falling on pages 112-113 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for more information.

I Spy

During their time on the Isle, the characters are subjected to two *scrying* spells - one while they are searching around (either before or after the earthquake, whenever the DM deems it appropriate), and the other when they retrieve the sword.

Secretly roll Scry checks (DC 20) for all characters that can attempt such rolls (PCs with ranks in Scry or an Intelligence of 12 or higher). It is recommended that these rolls be made at some earlier point in the scenario, so that the players aren't tipped off to the possibility of a *scry* attempt. Any characters that succeed in their roll feel a bit uneasy, as if they are being watched. The individual conducting the *scrying* is unknown to the heroes, and beyond the scope of this adventure.

AREA C: AGANUS' HOME

The smaller structure, ruined almost down to the foundation, used to be the slaves' quarters. It now houses Aganus, the centuries-old groundskeeper. When the heroes enter the building, read the following:

The green stone from this building has become so deteriorated that you hesitate to even enter through one of the many gaping holes covered with sea plants. Pulling away the slimy mess, you walk inside. The ground seems to be cleared away of much of the debris, and to your amazement, you see a crude bed woven from the taller grasses and sturdier lake plants that are found on the Isle. The choking smell of rotten vegetation is eclipsed here by the sharp scent of fresh animal dung, which you spot shortly after the smell hits you. Someone or something has made this forlorn place their home, and from the looks of things, for quite some time now.

The druid leaves no trace of his presence (trackless step ability), but there are numerous animal prints that can be identified with a Knowledge (nature) check, DC 10 (or Wilderness Lore check, DC 15). A character can also identify the spoor of the animal with a successful Wilderness Lore check (DC 20) or Knowledge (nature) check (DC 25). Consult Encounter 5 for a listing of Aganus' animals by APL. Nothing else of interest can be found here, as he does not return while the adventurers are in his resting area.

AREA D: THE HALL OF HISTORY

The larger building, only marginally more intact than the smaller structure nearby, looks as though it was once a grandiose hall of some sort. Entering through a whole big enough to accommodate your entire band, you immediately realize that the entire ceiling has collapsed inward; piles of green-hued rubble lie all over the floor. The walls and floor are covered in rotting seaweed and brittle coral. However, you take note that many of the intact walls have some sort of intricate carvings upon them depicting people and events. You find what appears to be the start point just to the right of the area where the door used to be; to your dismay, the first few panels are too broken and worn to understand. Plant debris hangs in front of the wall art like some sort of decaying drapery.

The heroes have entered a building that used to be one of the libraries on the island, and the carvings on the walls tell the story of the final days of the mage-priests. The destroyed carvings depict the summoning of the ethers, and the destruction of the other Isles of Woe. Once the adventurers clear away the seaweed, read the text below to them, one carving at a time.

The first decipherable carving in the green stone has images of humanlike men and women getting into boats, and flying overhead. Several people have their arms outstretched, bolts of energy flying through the air at the horde that approaches. The target of the wizards seems to be a never-ending mass of chitinous creatures, which you recognize as the ether creatures that have recently been plaguing the Flanaess. The island from which they are leaving looks barren and lifeless.

This carving shows the mage-priests and their retinue fleeing the other Isles. Some are casting spells to slow the horde down, so others can depart safely.

The next image shows a group of men and women in ceremonial robes and strange body wrappings forming a ring. In the center is a very gaunt man with some sort of large amulet around his neck. A massive book is suspended in the air above him. The Isles are seen off in the distance, but the carving is done without great detail and lightly scratched on the green stone.

Here, Yagrax (the center figure) leads many of the mage-priests in a ritual to banish the rest of the Isles of Woe (leaving this island to live on). The islands are fading away to the Ethereal Plane.

The following carving shows the gaunt man standing over another man, who is kneeling before him. The kneeling man is wearing the same wrappings, but has on a half cloak. His face is locked in pain, the source of which seems to be the energy bolt issuing forth from the gaunt man's hand.

Heroes that took part in *CORS2-I Isles of Woe* may roll an Intelligence check (DC 15) to remember the kneeling figure. The man is Alcanix, a powerful mage-priest who was responsible for unleashing the ether threat to the ancient Isles of Woe. Yagrax is killing him as punishment for his failure to control his experiment.

The next panel of green stone depicts the gaunt man staring out upon a throne, a small grin playing across his lips. The massive book, nearly as tall as he sits, is to the left of his enormous throne chair. On the ground before him are writhing bodies, their visages contorted in horrific ways. While the bodies look like these people, several of them have claws or sharp teeth.

The images in green stone end here.

Yagrax has gone insane, and has become the tyrant of a dying empire. The creatures lying in front of him are those who he considered dissenters; he killed them and turned them into undead as punishment for perceived acts of treachery.

The remainder of the story can be found in Encounter 4. A Search check (DC 13 + APL) reveals one item of interest - a green stone rod with three small equidistant spindles projecting outward from its center. This is the key to opening the door in Area E.

AREA E: THE CAVE, THE TUNNEL, AND THE DOOR

This area was viewable as the heroes brought their boat into shore. The cave has a natural tunnel filled with water that runs through the center of the island, ending at the doors to the only intact room left, which is described in Encounter 4. The heroes can reach the cave by rowing over to it, swimming to it (DC 15 Swim check in these waters), or rappelling down the side of the island from the ruins above (of course, magic provides other alternatives). Rappelling characters follow all of the normal Climbing rules, except that they are allowed a normal move before making a Climb check. The cave is about 150 feet below the ruins.

The Cave

While the opening outside is small (only about 7 feet high by 10 feet across), the cave itself is huge and roughly circular in shape, with a diameter of about 300 feet. Both above and below the surface, the cave is covered in coral and plant life. Crumbling rocks provide a dangerous-looking ceiling about 15 from the surface of the water. The water itself is about 30 feet deep here, and quite warm. There is enough debris and rubble along the sides of the cave to rest against (or back up to in a fight), if need be. It should be noted that the walls here and in the tunnel are not only natural earth, but are also composed of the green stone (the shattered remnants of other structures underground).

Swimming in the sheltered waters of the cave is a DC 10 Swim check (see the *Player's Handbook*, pages 74-75, for information on Swim checks; see the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 85, for information on drowning). Characters that perform an underwater search near the eastern end of the cave find a tunnel that appears to be about 8 feet in diameter. It is completely submerged, and of course, dark as a starless night.

The Tunnel

The submerged tunnel narrows quite a bit, with razor-sharp coral beds along the distance. Characters that wish to swim through the tunnel must make a Swim check (DC 10) to begin their underwater trek. Each round they spend underwater, they need to perform another Swim check, with a -1 penalty applied to the roll. A character can swim half his/her movement in one round. The tunnel continues on for a total of 50 feet underwater, before the PC notices light coming from above. The coral scrapes against a swimming PC each round, delivering 1d3 points of damage unless a

successful Reflex saving throw (DC 12) is made to entirely avoid it for that round.

The light (either sunlight or moonlight, depending on the time of day) comes from the shaft created on the surface of the island by the recent earthquake. The open area created by the quake is about 15 feet in diameter. Here, characters can catch a breath of air before continuing onward. The tunnel continues on for another 30 feet before ending in a great green stone door.

The Door

The following text assumes the heroes have some sort of light source by which to view the immediate area:

A massive green stone door, its true breadth obscured by the crumbling remains of the tunnel walls. Moving away some of the plants that obscure the door's face, you realize it has some sort of writing in a language long since lost to time.

If a character is able to cast *comprehend languages* or another similar spell on the door, or can roll a successful Decipher Script check (DC 30), the inscription states the following:

*The key or Lord Magic's touch
Allows one to pass, opens the way
To that which is Yagrax's bane
Malthindor, Oblivion's Blade*

The keyhole can be found with a successful Search check (DC 12 + APL). "Lord Magic's touch" refers to a cleric of Boccob channeling their holy energy. If one exists in the group, the door may also be opened by the cleric expending a turn/rebuke attempt and successfully turning/rebuking an APL + 2 Hit Dice undead creature. Also a character with the Open Lock skill can open it with a check at a DC of 30 (also, there is a -2 circumstance penalty for working underwater). Of course, characters could simply bash the door down; fortunately for them, the magics that protected the door have worn away with exposure. The stone door has the following statistics:

◆ **Etherstone door:** 4 in. thick; Hardness 8; 60 hp; break DC 28.

Once the door is opened, the water floods inward, sucking characters in the area into the next room unless they succeed in a Swim check (DC 20). Characters that get washed along with the water take 1d4 points of damage from the coral and colliding with

the bottom of the stairway. When the door is opened, go to Encounter 4.

ENCOUNTER 3: VISITORS TO THE ISLE

This encounter can occur at any time during the PCs exploration of the module. There are two possibilities for this encounter. Before play begins, ask the players whether or not any of their characters possess the strange Blackstone Heart Certificates. If so, ask them how many they possess and of what type (minor and major). Make sure to note this number as it is important as to determine how many of them “hatch”. If the PCs do not possess any of these stones, instead run them through the Visitors encounter below. If they do, run them through the Hatching encounter.

Visitors

The heroes are not the only ones who have decided to explore the Isle of the Deep. At some point during their exploration, an encounter takes place with a group of hostile creatures. The DM should place this encounter in either Area A or B, at any time deemed appropriate. The monsters withdraw if hurt very badly.

APL 2 (EL 4)

☛ **Kuo-toas (2):** hp 10, 12; see the *Monster Manual*.

APL 4 (EL 6)

☛ **Kuo-toas (4):** hp 10, 12, 14, 16; see the *Monster Manual*.

APL 6 (EL 7)

☛ **Chuul:** hp 93; see the *Monster Manual*.

APL 8 (EL 9)

☛ **Chuuls (2):** hp 93, 98; see the *Monster Manual*.

APL 10 (EL 11)

☛ **Chuuls (4):** hp 93, 95, 98, 101; see the *Monster Manual*.

APL 12 (EL 13)

☛ **Gelugon:** hp 114; see the *Monster Manual*.

Hatching

Many heroes have collected these odd Blackstone hearts, often found at the sight where many of the ether creatures have been seen. While they give the PCs a small advantage in dealing with the creatures, this is only a side affect of their true purpose. These stones are actually eggs of a sort, used by the ether creatures as a form of reproduction. Dormant up to this point, they are about to hatch.

At some point in time while exploring the surface of the island, read or paraphrase the following to the players.

As you make your way around the island, you suddenly feel strange warmth coming from your belt pouch. Investigating, you find that the stones you have been carrying have suddenly grown quite warm, almost hot to the touch. Looking at the stone, you can make out an odd reflection, an image that is not there. It is the image of a mask, surrounded by flowing red tentacles. With a sudden burst, the stone turn to ash and a black vapor flows from them. This vapor coalesces into the form of an ether creature. These strange stones are not ordinary rocks at all; they are eggs.

The PCs have one round to prepare before the ether creatures full coalesce and immediately attack. During this period, the creatures are immune to attack. The number and type of ether creatures depends on the number and type of stones carried by the party as noted on the following chart. Minor Blackstone Heart eggs only produce Etherspitters and Etherhulks while a Major Blackstone Heart egg can produce a variety of creatures. It is also important to note on Blackstone Heart egg can “hatch” more than one creature.

| APL | Total number of stones possessed | | |
|-----|----------------------------------|--------------|------|
| | 1-3 | 4-6 | 7+ |
| 2 | 2 ES | 1 EH | 3 ES |
| 4 | 4 ES | 2 EH | 3 EH |
| 6 | 6 ES | 3 EH | 4 EH |
| 8 | 3 EH + 6ES | 6 EH | 1 EN |
| 10 | 2 EHa + 2 EH | 3 EHa | 2 EN |
| 12 | 3 EHa | 1 EN + 2 EHa | 3 EN |

Key:

| | |
|-----|---------------------|
| ES | Etherspitter |
| EH | Etherhulk |
| EHa | Etherhulk, Advanced |
| EN | Ethernought |

Note that Ethernights can only appear if the party possesses 1 major Blackstone Heart certificate for each one spawned. See the appendix (of this document) for statistics on each creature. If the party does not possess any major stones, then substitute advanced Etherhulks for Ethernights on a one for one basis.

After dealing with the creatures, they leave behind only an oily residue and nothing else (no more blackstone hearts as these "infants" have not had the time to generate any).

At this point, randomly determine half (round down) of the party's certificates for these stones to be destroyed with the following exceptions. You must destroy one major stone for each ethernaut the party fought. In addition to this guideline, do not destroy any more certificates than the party fought in number of creatures. For example, an APL 2 party with 6 stones would only lose one (not 3) as they only fought one creature. However, an APL 10 party with 9 stones would lose four with two of those being major assuming that they fought Ethernights.

ENCOUNTER 4: MALTHINDOR, OBLIVION'S BLADE

Your footsteps echo as you traverse the forgotten hall; your light plays shadow games on the eerie green walls and stairs. The air is dry and after a short while, you can taste the dust on your tongue. It is apparent that none have walked this path for so long that a dragon would be hard pressed to recall.

At the top of the long, straight climb is an archway with an open portal into the darkness beyond. The light reveals carvings in a strange language along the top of the archway.

Characters that make a successful Decipher Script check (DC 30), or that use magical means to read the writing can make out the following phrase:

Those who are heirs to his legacy walk without fear into the truth this chamber holds.

Once the heroes pass through the threshold into the room, read the following:

Your light reveals a small green stone room. In the center, a pedestal rises up from the floor. Resting on its smooth surface is a blade of unequalled

quality, a weapon so finely wrought that the greatest dwarven smiths would shake with jealous rage at the sight of such a thing of dark beauty. When the light plays off the surface of the sword's inscribed steel, it does not glimmer or shine, but is drawn inward and fades. Behind the pedestal, on the far wall, are two more panels of carvings, much like those you saw in the ruins far above, but in far better condition.

The room is a square 30 feet by 30 feet, with a 20-foot high ceiling. Characters must have their own light sources to see, since none are present here.

THE CARVINGS

Two carvings are found along the far wall. They tell the secret of Yagrax's fall.

The first carving shows a small group of robed mage-priests gathered around a forge. A smith stands in the center, his hammer held high. In his other hand you can see a blade lifted partway off of the anvil, the smith must be in the process of flipping it over. The mage-priests are staring towards the center, either at the forge or the smith. Crackling energy flies in the air above it all.

This scene depicts the remaining mage-priest dissenters working in secret on a weapon to destroy Yagrax - Oblivion's Blade.

In this scene, a powerfully built figure dressed in loose wrappings stands over the dismembered body of the tyrant-king, holding the sword present in the chamber. The body is severed into small pieces, and other mage-priests are shown walking away with parts of the corpse. The disembodied hands of the fallen ruler are wreathed in energy.

Here, one of the mage-priests has finally struck down Yagrax, cutting him into pieces with the one weapon that could truly kill him - the sword fashioned specifically for that purpose. The remaining mage-priests are gathering up his pieces, and taking them as far away from each other as possible. The strangeness surrounding the hands of Yagrax is a mystery, perhaps for another time.

THE SWORD AND THE TRAP

When the heroes approach the pedestal, read the following:

Up close, the sword's unearthly quality is obvious. The blade of the weapon is thin and long, almost as long as a bastard sword. Upon the surface, arcane sigils, their meanings long since lost to modern men, are carved just so they appear to flow into each other like swirls of water in a rushing stream. The light around the weapon grows dim as the blade swallows wisps of the brightest parts, ever hungry for more. The pommel, hilt and guard are made of a polished black stone, possibly obsidian. Black leather wraps around the hilt forming a handgrip, nearly undetectable against the stone. At the very end of the pommel, a smooth green stone, very much like those used to build the crumbling empire is set inside a thin ring of gold.

Once a character approaches to pick up the weapon, pull the player aside and read the following:

A deep male voice reverberates in your head, it every word filled with ancient power. You find that you understand it perfectly. "I, Malthindor, gave my very life to forge this weapon, to destroy the evil that was Yagrax. There was no other way; he could not be put to rest by any other means. Know now that to touch this weapon, to hold it in your hands, is to become heir to our legacy. And to become heir, you must be knowledgeable about what has befallen us, so that the grave mistakes of our time do not imperil the world again.

All of this began with one man - our downfall, our failure, our suffering. Name him and take up Oblivion's Blade to unmake that which he has wrought. Speak falsely or not at all, and the wails of those who suffered by Yagrax's hand shall overcome you." The voice echoes and fades from your mind; you know it has left you in silence to quickly think of your answer.

The voice is the spirit of Malthindor, speaking to the one PC that approached the sword first; no others hear him. The answer is "Alcanix", the mage-priest whose experiments horribly failed and brought the ether creatures to Oerth. If the hero successfully utters the name "Alcanix", then the trap described below does not trigger - award the heroes full XP. Otherwise, the trap goes off, and the heroes must deal with the consequences. If the hero being spoken to has participated in the events in *CORS2-01 Isles of Woe*, and has forgotten his name, they may make an Intelligence check (DC 15 + APL) to remember; a bard gets a second check using their bardic lore ability if they fail the first. The answer must be uttered within one minute (game time), or the trap goes off.

Trap: Emanating from just below the platform on the pedestal is a hidden magical sigil that contains a spell, triggered if the wrong answer is given as explained above. Note that the trap can be disarmed if a rogue works quickly while the voice is talking to another; they have a total of 10 rounds to find the trap and disarm it.

If it goes off, read the following to the PCs:

APL 2 (EL 4)

↪ **Bestow curse trap:** CR 4; magic device; special trigger (see above); automatic reset (trap resets itself after one minute); spell effect (*bestow curse* (-4 to rolls version), 5th-level cleric, Will save [DC 14] negates); Search (DC 28); Disable Device (DC 28).

APL 4 (EL 6)

↪ **Phantasmal killer trap:** CR 6; magic device; special trigger (see above); automatic reset (trap resets itself after one minute); spell effect (*phantasmal killer*, 12th-level wizard, Will save [DC 16] for disbelief and Fortitude save [DC 16] partial); Search (DC 29); Disable Device (DC 29).

APL 6 (EL 7)

↪ **Feeblemind trap:** CR 7; magic device; special trigger (see above); automatic reset (trap resets itself after one minute); spell effect (*feeblemind*, 12th-level wizard, Will save [DC 17] negates); Search (DC 30); Disable Device (DC 30).

APL 8 (EL 8)

↪ **Insanity trap:** CR 8; magic device; special trigger (see above); automatic reset (trap resets itself after one minute); spell effect (*insanity*, 13th-level wizard, Will save [DC 20] negates); Search (DC 32); Disable Device (DC 32).

APL 10 (EL 9)

↪ **Symbol of insanity trap:** CR 9; magic device; special trigger (see above); automatic reset (trap resets itself after one minute); spell effect (*symbol of insanity*, 15th-level wizard, Will save [DC 22] negates); multiple targets (up to 150 hit points worth of creatures); Search (DC 33); Disable Device (DC 33).

APL 12 (EL 10)

↪ **Wail of the banshee trap:** CR 10; magic device; special trigger (see above); automatic reset (trap resets itself after one minute); spell effect (*wail of the*

banshee, 17th-level wizard, Fortitude save [DC 23] negates); multiple targets (up to 17 creatures); Search (DC 34); Disable Device (DC 34).

Treasure: Once the heroes have cleared the trap, and picked up the sword, they may decide to search the area. If this event is being run at APL 10 or 12, the pedestal has a secret compartment in back, detectable with a successful Search skill check (DC 28). Inside, a small locked book rests with a key; on its cover is a symbol of an open book, with one eye staring out from each page. Clerics of Boccob, or characters succeeding in a Knowledge (religion) check (DC 25) know that this is an ancient symbol of Boccob.

❖ *Malthindor, Oblivion's Blade* (see Treasure Summary, worth 833 gp to each PC)

❖ *Boccob's blessed book* (APL 10-12 only, worth 708 gp to each PC)

I Spy Again

During their time on the Isle, the characters are subjected to two *scrying* spells - one while they are searching around (either before or after the earthquake, whenever the DM deems it appropriate), and the other when they retrieve the sword.

Secretly roll Scry checks (DC 20) for all characters that can attempt such rolls (PCs with ranks in Scry or an Intelligence of 12 or higher). It is recommended that these rolls be made at some earlier point in the scenario, so that the players aren't tipped off to the possibility of a *scry* attempt. Any characters that succeed in their roll feel a bit uneasy, as if they are being watched. The individual conducting the *scrying* is unknown to the heroes, and beyond the scope of this adventure.

ENCOUNTER 5: AGANUS' FURY

Throughout the heroes' time on the island, one single resident has been keeping an eye on them, watching and waiting for a time to strike at the trespassers. That person is Aganus, the half-stone golem druid left here over the centuries to protect the island and care for its state. The mage-priests made the simple druid Aganus into a half-stone golem, and granted him an eternity to perform his tasks. While the ancient empire was at its height, Aganus was little more than a groundskeeper for the island. All that changed when the ether creatures came, Yagrax went insane, and the last bastion of power, the Isle of the Deep, sank.

Aganus spent the centuries under the waves, surviving in air pockets, and learning to coexist with other creatures. All the time, he waited patiently for his masters' return, hoping they would come back from wherever they went so long ago. When this island rose up from the depths, Aganus believed that was a sign; a sign that the mage-priests of old were soon to return and claim their lost empire. As such, he is ensuring that none intrude upon the domain of his people. This includes the kuo-toa expedition, which he killed, and the heroes.

ANIMALS, ANIMALS, EVERYWHERE

To protect the Isle, Aganus lets loose his animal companions to deal with the PCs throughout their stay on the Isle of the Deep. Since the druid's animal companions are one of his class abilities, these creatures do not count as separate encounters for purposes of XP rewards. The DM should feel free to use these creatures at any conceivable point during the event. Good choices include: at the beach, in the ruins, and while exploring the cave (although keep them out of the tunnel). Many of the creatures are aquatic, and are best used when the heroes are traveling by boat, swimming, or on the shore. Here is a breakdown of the creatures present at each APL (note that since he is not an adventuring druid, Aganus does not face the usual adventurer's Hit Dice restriction on his animals - he gets 2 x his level):

APL 2

🐍 **Snake, medium-size viper:** hp 9; see the *Monster Manual*, pages 200, 202.

APL 4

🐍 **Snake, constrictor:** hp 16; see the *Monster Manual*, pages 200-202.

🐊 **Crocodile:** hp 22; see the *Monster Manual*, pages 195-196.

APL 6

🐙 **Octopus, giant:** hp 44; see the *Monster Manual*, page 199.

🐍 **Snake, huge viper:** hp 22; see the *Monster Manual*, pages 200-202.

APL 8

🐙 **Octopus, giant:** hp 44; see the *Monster Manual*, page 199.

🐊 **Crocodiles (2):** hp 22; see the *Monster Manual*, pages 195-196.

APL 10

👉 **Squid, giant:** hp 66; see the *Monster Manual*, pages 202-203.

👉 **Crocodiles (2):** hp 22, 22; see the *Monster Manual*, pages 195-196.

APL 12

👉 **Octopus, giant:** hp 44; see the *Monster Manual*, page 199.

👉 **Crocodiles, giant (2):** hp 59, 59; see the *Monster Manual*, pages 195-196.

ENTER AGANUS

When the heroes have the sword, and are either preparing to leave or set on more exploration, Aganus reveals himself. Read the following to the players whenever it is appropriate, altering the text as necessary:

Out of the vegetation walks a strange, horrifying sight. A tall manlike thing, with elongated features strides forward, carrying a staff in one hand. He is dressed simply in a dirty loincloth; an intricately woven seashell necklace hangs on his bare chest. He walks barefoot and has pale, almost white skin - except for his right arm, shoulder, and part of his neck. There, the strange green stone grows upon him like some sort of fungus, completely obscuring any flesh that might be underneath. When he turns his bald head off to one side, you can see that the green stone actually runs up his neck - a stone tendril is curled around his ear, its terminus lying somewhere inside. His face burns with anger as he begins to speak, using the tongue of the elves.

Aganus has spent many years with aquatic elves under the water, and has learned their language. Elves automatically recognize the dialect as their underwater cousins'; other characters that speak Elven can make an Intelligence check (DC 20) to recognize the dialect. If for some reason, there are no PCs able to understand Elven, then he attempts to talk for a few moments, and begins to attack if the heroes don't do as he says (see below).

"You are trespassing on Imperial lands. I, Aganus, am caretaker of this island. I know you came to plunder this place, so drop what you have stolen, and leave now, before I kill you all!"

Aganus is not bluffing. If the heroes comply by leaving the sword (and at higher APLs, the *Boccob's blessed book*) and immediately returning to the ship, Aganus does not attack them. Otherwise, Aganus gives them only a few moments to explain themselves before he begins to assault the heroes.

With the exception of magical coercion, there is only one way to get Aganus to listen to the adventurers. If someone mentions that they are here to find the sword to use to stop a new ether threat, and they explain what has recently occurred, the druid agrees to talk on a successful Diplomacy check (DC 15 + APL). He knows the following information:

- The mage-priests lived here many long elf memories ago. These islands, known as the Eldritch Isles, were once the center of their great empire. The mage-priests conducted many magical experiments and harnessed the natural magical nexus that existed at the time.
- I was appointed to guardian of this island just before the coming of the ethereal plague, as it was known. Upon my appointment, the mage-priests melded my own form with that of the etherstone to give me strength and render spells powerless against me. They also managed to halt the ravages of time on my body. As payment for this honor, I agreed to remain loyal to my masters, and to protect this island with my life.
- Soon after this great blessing was bestowed upon me, the other islands were destroyed in the coming of the ether plague. I was told Alcanix released it upon us, and although we managed to fight them for quite some time, eventually the other islands were abandoned. Alcanix paid for his mistake with his life.
- When the small number of powerful arcanists were safely on this island, they enacted a ritual that banished the ether creatures and sent the other islands away from Oerth, to the Ethereal Plane. Only this island remained, where Yagrax hoped to rebuild the empire.
- After many more fullmoons, it was becoming apparent that this island was also slipping into the Lake of Dreams. Yagrax seized power from the other mage-priests and declared himself overlord. He claimed he did so because only he had the power to keep the island from sinking. For a time, his magic held, while his sanity slipped away, little by little.
- Eventually, Yagrax grew so paranoid and delusional that he began to round up anyone who he thought was defying him, had them executed, and animated their corpse to serve him. It was

then that a small group of mage-priests decided he needed to be deposed - by any method possible.

- Several attempts were made on Yagrax's life over the next longseason; however, neither spell nor sword could bring him low. The tyrant-king could not be killed. Many more died at his hands. Then, the few remaining powerful mage-priests figured out a way to kill him - by fashioning a weapon that drew on the power of oblivion itself.
- The weapon was forged, sacrifices were made, and the tyrant-king was killed. His remains were chopped up into small pieces and cast over the whole of the world. I have heard that his hands were especially troublesome, for they possessed some dark power. Soon after, the magic Yagrax had used to keep the island afloat unraveled, and this island sunk in a matter of a skycrossing; I was left behind when the few inhabitants fled by way of spell.
- I spent all the time from then until a longseason ago under the waves, learning from the denizens of the lake. The lake elves were especially friendly to me.
- Then, the island rose again from the water. I anticipate this as a message that the mage-priests are about to return, and wish their homeland back. So, I continue to serve them, waiting for the skycrossing when they would return.

If Aganus is told the truth about the return of the ether creatures, and the heroes convince him that they are there to stop this from happening again, the druid reluctantly agrees to let the heroes take the sword. In addition, he offers them his aquatic elven necklace to help guide their path (see Treasure, below). He does not leave the Isle under any circumstance.

Tactics: More than likely though, the heroes wind up fighting Aganus. He is more than willing to fight the heroes to the death, although he matches force with force (thus, if the heroes use subdual techniques, he attempts to as well). He does not hesitate to kill any heroes that use deadly force against him. Aganus has lost his *wild shape* ability due to his etherstone limb. At low APLs, it would be wise for the heroes to use *Malthindor, Oblivion's Blade* against the half-stone golem druid.

APL 2 (EL 4)

➤ **Aganus, male half-stone golem** Drd1: hp 12; see Appendix A.

APL 4 (EL 6)

➤ **Aganus, male half-stone golem** Drd3: hp 30; see Appendix A.

APL 6 (EL 8)

➤ **Aganus, male half-stone golem** Drd5: hp 48; see Appendix A.

APL 8 (EL 10)

➤ **Aganus, male half-stone golem** Drd7: hp 66; see Appendix A.

APL 10 (EL 12)

➤ **Aganus, male half-stone golem** Drd9: hp 84; see Appendix A.

APL 12 (EL 14)

➤ **Aganus, male half-stone golem** Drd11: hp 102; see Appendix A.

Treasure: Aganus has few things of value, as he lives simply off the land and the water. However, he does possess a few items of note.

◆ *Necklace of the hunt* (see Treasure Summary, worth 60 gp to each PC)

◆ *Ring of mind shielding* (APLs 8-12 only, worth 667 gp to each PC)

CONCLUSION

You set sail from the Isle of the Deep, your excursion complete. The captain has a fine dinner prepared that evening, and you sit below decks with him, recounting some of the events of your adventure. As you talk about this and that, your mind wanders back to the ancient carvings and their meanings. Why have the ether creatures returned? Does the resurfacing of the Isle of the Deep herald the return of the mage-priests? What of the sword, full of dark power? And what is the significance of Yagrax's hands?

You meet up with Maddigallan, the enigmatic dragon turtle, the next day. He talks your ear off about all manners of trifling things, but since he's a dragon turtle, and could steam bake you in no time flat, you listen with at least a modicum of interest. After a while, he presents you with magical treasure from his lair, and offers to trade with you. After all, the same treasure begins to look rather dull after a few hundred years.

You sail onward, back to the Domain of Greyhawk. Back to ale at the Black Dragon Inn, back to exploring the Cairn Hills, back to the familiar people and places and comforts you've come to expect. The tense feelings you had when arriving at that alien shore, the Isle of the Deep, are finally fading away, as you enjoy the more mundane concerns of the sea voyage home. But somewhere with your adventurer's heart, you know that more can be done, needs to be done, before the devastation of the ether creatures changes the face of Oerth forever.

The characters may purchase certain items from Maddigallan at the end of the adventure (items are listed in the Treasure Summary and the Adventure Record). Read the following text to the hero who holds the sword at the end of the event:

While sailing on chill winds across the Lake of Unknown Depths, you feel a tugging from within you. Heading up to the deck, you suddenly realize that Malthindor is in your hand, catching small motes of light, and snuffing out their essence. You can feel the pull; it is strong now, turning you, making you look in the one place you hoped against ... and then you cast your gaze north, towards the lands of the Old One.

The End

EXPERIENCE POINT SUMMARY

To award experience for this adventure, add up the values for the objectives accomplished. Then assign the experience award. Award the total value to each character.

Encounter 3: Vistors to the Isle

Defeat the creatures wandering the island or hatched creatures.

| | |
|--------|--------|
| APL 2 | 120 XP |
| APL 4 | 180 XP |
| APL 6 | 210 XP |
| APL 8 | 270 XP |
| APL 10 | 330 XP |
| APL 12 | 390 XP |

Encounter 4: Malthindor, Oblivion's Blade

Defeat the trap guarding the sword.

| | |
|-------|--------|
| APL 2 | 120 XP |
|-------|--------|

| | |
|--------|--------|
| APL 4 | 180 XP |
| APL 6 | 210 XP |
| APL 8 | 240 XP |
| APL 10 | 270 XP |
| APL 12 | 300 XP |

Taking the sword from the Isles of Woe.

| | |
|--------|--------|
| APL 2 | 45 XP |
| APL 4 | 60 XP |
| APL 6 | 75 XP |
| APL 8 | 90 XP |
| APL 10 | 105 XP |
| APL 12 | 120 XP |

Encounter 5: Aganus' Fury

Defeat Aganus.

| | |
|--------|--------|
| APL 2 | 120 XP |
| APL 4 | 180 XP |
| APL 6 | 240 XP |
| APL 8 | 300 XP |
| APL 10 | 360 XP |
| APL 12 | 420 XP |

NOTE: If the PCs defeat Aganus' animal companions but do not for some reason defeat Aganus, award them half of this XP.

Interrogating Aganus after his defeat, or gathering information after talking him down.

| | |
|--------|-------|
| APL 2 | 15 XP |
| APL 4 | 30 XP |
| APL 6 | 45 XP |
| APL 8 | 60 XP |
| APL 10 | 75 XP |
| APL 12 | 90 XP |

Roleplaying Award

Give out this award however you see fit - roleplaying, accomplishing goals, performing heroic actions, etc.

| | |
|--------|--------|
| APL 2 | 30 XP |
| APL 4 | 45 XP |
| APL 6 | 60 XP |
| APL 8 | 75 XP |
| APL 10 | 90 XP |
| APL 12 | 105 XP |

Total Possible Experience

| | |
|--------|---------|
| APL 2 | 450 XP |
| APL 4 | 675 XP |
| APL 6 | 840 XP |
| APL 8 | 1035 XP |
| APL 10 | 1230 XP |
| APL 12 | 1425 XP |

TREASURE SUMMARY

During an adventure, characters encounter treasure, usually finding it in the possession of their foes. Every encounter that features treasure has a “treasure” section within the encounter description, giving information about the loot, coins, and magic items that make up the encounter’s treasure.

The loot total is the number of gold pieces each character gains if the foes are plundered of all their earthly possessions. Looting the bodies takes at least 10 minutes per every 5 enemies, and if the characters cannot take the time to loot the bodies, they do not gain this gold. If you feel it is reasonable that characters can go back to loot the bodies, and those bodies are there (i.e., not carted off by dungeon scavengers, removed from the scene by the local watch, and so on), characters may return to retrieve loot. If the characters do not loot the body, the gold piece value for the loot is subtracted from the encounter totals given below.

The coin total is the number of gold pieces each character gains if they take the coin available. A normal adventuring party can usually gather this wealth in a round or so. If for some reason, they pass up this treasure, the coin total is subtracted from the encounter totals given below.

Next, the magic items are listed. Magic item treasure is the hardest to adjudicate, because they are varied and because characters may want to use them during the adventure. Many times characters must cast *identify*, *analyze dweomer* or similar spell to determine what the item does and how to activate it. Other times they may attempt to use the item blindly. If the magic item is consumable (a potion, scroll, magic bolts, etc.) and the item is used before the end of the adventure, its total is subtracted from the adventure totals below.

Once you have subtracted the value for unclaimed treasure from each encounter add it up and that is the number of gold pieces a characters total and coin value increase at the end of the adventure. Write the total in the GP Gained field of the adventure certificate. Because this is a Regional scenario, characters may spend additional Time Units to practice professions or create items immediately after the adventure so this total may be modified by other circumstances.

Encounter 4: Malthindor, Oblivion's Blade
 APLs 2-8 833 gp
 APLs 10-12 1541 gp

Encounter 5: Aganus' Fury
 APLs 2-6 60 gp
 APLs 8-12 727 gp

Adventure Maximums

| | |
|--------|---------|
| APL 2 | 400 gp |
| APL 4 | 600 gp |
| APL 6 | 800 gp |
| APL 8 | 1250 gp |
| APL 10 | 2100 gp |
| APL 12 | 2268 gp |

ITEMS FOUND DURING THE ADVENTURE

APL 2

- ❖ *Javelin of lightning* (Adventure, DMG)
- ❖ *Malthindor, Oblivion's Blade* (Adventure*, see above)
- ❖ *Necklace of the hunt* (Any, see above)
- ❖ *Potion of water breathing* (Adventure, DMG)

APL 4 (All of APL 2 plus the following)

- ❖ *Dust of dryness* (Adventure, DMG)
- ❖ *Ring of swimming* (Adventure, DMG)

APL 6 (All of APLs 2-4 plus the following)

- ❖ *Trident of fish command* (Adventure, DMG)
- ❖ *Universal solvent* (Adventure, DMG)

APL 8 (All of APLs 2-6 plus the following)

- ❖ *Gloves of swimming and climbing* (Adventure, DMG)
- ❖ *Periapt of Wisdom +2* (Adventure, DMG)
- ❖ *Ring of mind shielding* (Any, DMG)

APL 10 (All of APLs 2-8 plus the following)

- ❖ *Boccob's blessed book* (Any, DMG)
- ❖ *Decanter of endless water* (Adventure, DMG)
- ❖ *Trident of warning* (Adventure, DMG)

APL 12 (All of APLs 2-10 plus the following)

- ❖ *Belt of giant strength +4* (Adventure, DMG)
- ❖ *Pearl of the sirens* (Adventure, DMG)

SPECIAL (NEW ITEMS TO BE LISTED ON THE ADVENTURE RECORD)

❖ ***Necklace of the Hunt***: This seashell necklace has been painstakingly woven from thin strands of a gold-green plantlike material. The necklace is magical, and was crafted by aquatic elves to use under the surface of the Nyr Dyv. The necklace provides a +3 competence bonus to both Intuit Direction and Wilderness Lore while worn.

Prerequisites: Craft Wondrous Item, creator must have 5 ranks in both Intuit Direction and Wilderness Lore; *Market Price:* 720 gp; *Weight:* 1/2 lb.

☛ **Malthindor, Oblivion's Blade:** Forged in the time of the mage-priests to kill the mad wizard Yagrax, Malthindor is a longsword of dark beauty. The blade of the weapon is thin and long, almost as long as a bastard sword. Upon the surface, arcane sigils, their meanings long since lost to modern men, are carved just so they appear to flow into each other like swirls of water in a rushing stream. When light is near the weapon, the source slightly dims as the blade swallows wisps of the brightest parts, ever hungry for more. The pommel, hilt and guard are made of obsidian, with black leather wrapped around the hilt to form a handgrip. At the very end of the pommel, a smooth green etherstone is set inside a thin ring of gold.

The sword feeds off the wielder's magical energies, growing in power as the wielder advances in magical ability. In game terms, the sword's magical abilities function only for an arcane spellcaster; the level of arcane spells the wielder is able to cast determine the number of powers the blade possesses. The only exception to this is that clerics of Boccob are treated exactly like arcane spellcasters for accessing powers; no other divine spellcasters derive any magical benefit from the sword. In the hands of all but arcane spellcasters, the longsword is considered to be a masterwork weapon. It takes one day for a new wielder to attune to Malthindor, and access the powers. This blade radiates faint evil is detected for.

Able to cast arcane spells: *Touch of the Mage-Priests* - the weapon is a +1 longsword.

1st-level arcane spells: *Wave of Despair* - as a standard action, when the blade is drawn, the wielder may cast *bane* as a 2nd-level caster once per day.

3rd-level arcane spells: *Thrice-Magicked Form* - as a standard action, the wielder can add the *ghost touch*, *keen*, or *frost* quality to the blade. This power lasts a number of rounds equal to the caster's arcane spellcaster level, and is usable once per day. Once chosen, the quality cannot be changed for that day.

5th-level arcane spells: *Hand of the Mage-Priests* - the weapon is a +2 longsword.

7th-level arcane spells: *Tapping the Well of Power* - as a standard action, when the blade is drawn, the wielder may cast *greater magic weapon* upon it as a 15th-level caster, with one exception: the power lasts a number of rounds equal to the caster's arcane spellcaster level. It is usable once per day.

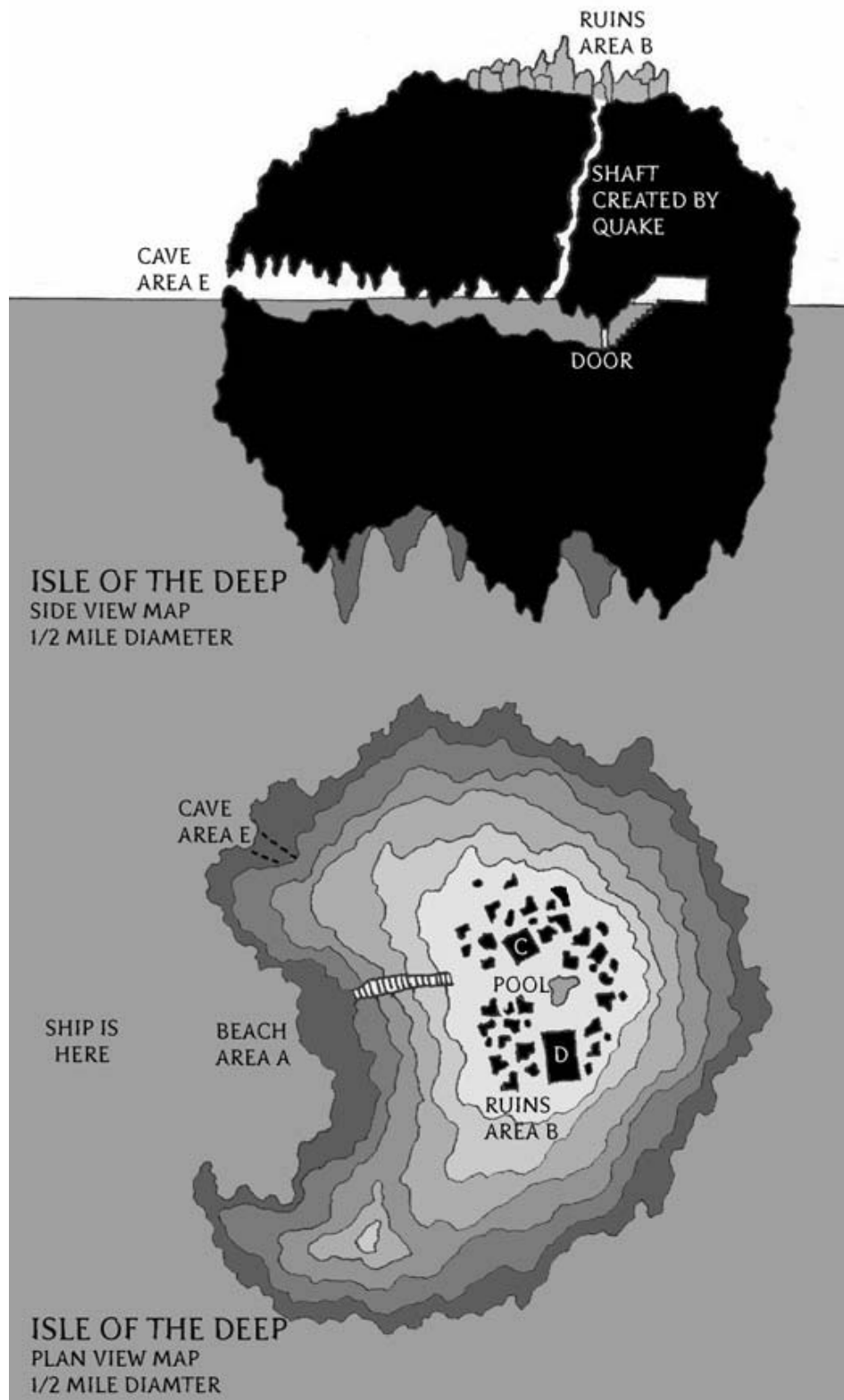
9th-level arcane spells: *Oblivion Triumphant* - whenever this weapon kills a creature, it cannot be brought back from the dead without a *true*

resurrection spell cast upon the body. If the blade cuts up the pieces of the body, the majority of them must be found in order for the *true resurrection* to be successful.

Prerequisites: N/A; *Market Price:* 10,000 gp; *Weight:* 4 lb.

* This item is only available for purchase after Core scenarios in the Ether Threat series.

MAP of the ISLE OF THE DEEP



APPENDIX A: NPCS AND MONSTERS

ENCOUNTER 1 (ALL APLS)

Meddigallan, advanced male dragon turtle: CR 11; Huge Dragon (Aquatic); HD 24d12+120; hp 300; Init +0; Spd 20, swim 30; AC 20 (-2 size, +12 natural); Atk +30/+25/+25 melee (4d6+8 [crit 19-20], bite; 2d8+4, 2 claws); SA Breath weapon, snatch, capsize; SQ Scent, immunities (fire, sleep and paralysis), keen senses; AL NG; SV Fort +19, Ref +14, Will +17; Str 27, Dex 10, Con 21, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Hide +7*, Intimidate +28, Intuit Direction +22, Knowledge (local, his territory in the Nyr Dyv) +7, Listen +30, Search +28, Spot 30; Alertness, Blind-Fight, Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Critical (bite), Iron Will, Power Attack.

*Dragon turtles receive a +8 racial bonus to Hide checks when submerged.

SA: Breath Weapon (Su): Cloud of superheated steam 20 feet high, 25 feet wide, and 50 feet long, every 1d4 rounds; damage 20d6, Reflex half DC 27; effective both on the surface and underwater.

SA: Snatch (Ex): A dragon turtle that hits with a bite attack attempts to start a grapple as a free action without provoking attacks of opportunity. If it gets a hold on a creature three or more sizes smaller, it seizes the creature with its mouth and automatically deals bite damage each round. If it does not move and takes no other action in combat, it deals double bite damage to the snatched creature. A snatched creature gets no saving throw against the dragon turtle's breath weapon.

The dragon turtle can drop a creature it has snatched as a free action or use a standard action to fling it aside. A flung creature travels 60 feet and takes 6d6 points of damage.

SA: Capsize (Ex): A submerged dragon turtle that surfaces under a boat or ship less than 20 feet long capsizes the vessel 95% of the time. It has a 50% chance to capsize a vessel from 20 to 60 feet long and a 20% chance to capsize one over 60 feet long.

ENCOUNTER 3

ALL APLs

☛ **Etherspitter:** CR 2; Small Aberration; HD 3d8; hp varies; Init +8; Spd 40 ft.; AC 19 (touch 15, flat-footed 15) [+4 Dex, +1 size, +4 natural]; Atk +5 melee (1d6+3, bite); SA Ethereal Spit, Steal Dead; SQ Stick, Minor Fading, Fast Healing 1, Chitter; AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 14, Dex 18, Con 11, Int 1, Wis 10, Cha 10. Length 3 ft.

Skills and Feats: Listen +3, Spot +3; Improved Initiative.

Ethereal Spit (Su): Opposed to a bite attack, the Etherspitter can issue forth a gob of highly magical spit. Treat this attack as a +7 ranged touch attack with a range of 10 feet. Anything hit by this spit receives 1d8 points of damage as a portion of the target is forcefully shifted to the Ethereal plane. This spit can be used on objects as well as living beings and ignores any hardness the object might possess. This spit causes has no effect within the area of a dimensional anchor spell or similar effect that prevents planar travel. This ability can be used every round.

Steal Dead (Su): As a full round action, the Etherspitter can shift the entire body of a dead creature to the Ethereal plane. This ability may only be used on dead creatures of size large or smaller. If damaged during this action, the shift is disrupted. This ability may only be used if three or more Etherspitters participate in the action. This ability cannot be used with the area of a dimensional anchor spell or other similar effect that prevents planar travel.

Stick (Ex): The many legs of an Etherspitter allow it to move at full speed along any surface. This effect is similar to that of spider climb but without the speed restriction.

Minor Fading (Su): With this ability, the Etherspitter can shift between the Ethereal and Material plane. This feat takes 1d6 rounds to complete during which time, the Etherspitter is considered incorporeal to creatures on both planes in that it requires +1 weapons to hit, and has a 50% chance to ignore the damage from any corporeal source. The Etherspitter can take only move actions during this period. Activating this ability is a move equivalent action. The use of this ability is not possible with the area of a dimensional anchor or other magics that prevent planar travel.

Fast Healing 1 (Ex): With this ability the Etherspitter recovers 1 hit point per round spent on the Ethereal plane. An Etherspitter reduced to -10 hit points still dies however. This ability has no effect on the material plane.

Chitter (Ex): The Etherspitter emits a constant clicking noise. This noise ruins any attempt at surprise that the creature might attempt to gain and results in a -8 circumstance penalty to any Move Silently skill check.

☛ **Etherhulk:** CR 4; Large Aberration; HD 6d8+24; hp varies; Init +1; Spd 30; AC 19 (touch 10, flat-footed 18); Atk +9/+9 (1d6+6, claw); Face/Reach 5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.; SA Rend, Dazing Gaze; SQ Fast Healing, Minor Fading;

AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +5; Str 23, Dex 13, Con 19, Int 6, Wis 11, Chr 10.

Skills and Feats: Listen +9, Spot +6, Climb +8, Jump +9; Multiattack

Rend (Ex): If a Etherhulk hits with both claw attacks, it latches onto the opponent's body and tears the flesh. This attack automatically deals an additional 2d6+9 points of damage.

Minor Fading (Su): With this ability, the Etherhulk can shift between the Ethereal and Material plane. This feat takes 1d6 rounds to complete during which time, the Etherhulk is considered incorporeal to creatures on both planes in that it requires +1 weapons to hit, and has a 50% chance to ignore the damage from any corporeal source. The Etherhulk can take only move actions during this period. Activating this ability is a move equivalent action. The use of this ability is not possible with the area of a *dimensional anchor* or other magics that prevent planar travel.

Fast Healing 1 (Ex): With this ability the Etherhulk recovers 1 hit point per round spent on the Ethereal plane. An Etherhulk reduced to -10 hit points still dies however. This ability has no effect on the material plane.

Dazing Gaze (Su) – As the *daze* spell, 1 round effect with no HD restrictions, 30 ft. range, Will save (DC 13).

☛ **Etherhulk, Advanced:** CR 8; Huge Aberration; HD 12d8+72; hp varies; Init +0; Spd 30; AC 21 (touch 8, flat-footed 21); Atk +19/+19 (1d8+10, claw 19-20/x2); Face/Reach 10 ft. by 10 ft./15 ft.; SA Rend, Dazing Gaze; SQ Fast Healing, Minor Fading; AL N; SV Fort +10, Ref +4, Will +8; Str 31, Dex 11, Con 23, Int 6, Wis 11, Chr 10.

Skills and Feats: Listen +12, Spot +11, Climb +10, Jump +11; Multiattack, Improved Critical (Claw)

Rend (Ex): If a Etherhulk hits with both claw attacks, it latches onto the opponent's body and tears the flesh. This attack automatically deals an additional 2d8+15 points of damage.

Minor Fading (Su): With this ability, the Etherhulk can shift between the Ethereal and Material plane. This feat takes 1d6 rounds to complete during which time, the Etherhulk is considered incorporeal to creatures on both planes in that it requires +1 weapons to hit, and has a 50% chance to ignore the damage from any corporeal source. The Etherhulk can take only move actions during this period. Activating this ability is a move equivalent action. The use of this ability is not possible with the area of a *dimensional anchor* or other magics that prevent planar travel.

Fast Healing 1 (Ex): With this ability the Etherhulk recovers 1 hit point per round spent on the Ethereal plane. An Etherhulk reduced to -10 hit points still dies however. This ability has no effect on the material plane.

Dazing Gaze (Su) – As the *daze* spell, 1 round effect with no HD restrictions, 30 ft. range, Will save (DC 16).

☛ **EtherNaught:** CR 9; Large Aberration; HD 16d12+48; hp Varies; Init +4; Spd 40 ft, Climb 30'; AC 24 (touch 9, flat-footed 24); Atk +19 (2d6+4, Bite), and +14 (1d8+2, 2 Claws), and +14 (1d6+2, 2 Tentacles), and +12 (1d8+4, Tail Whip); Face/Reach 5 ft by 10ft / 10ft; SA Breath Weapon; SQ DR 15/+2, Tremorsense 120 ft., Immune to Sleep, Immune to Fear, Immune to Paralysis, Cold Immunity, Sonic Immunity, Acid Resist 20, SR 17, Fast Healing 3, Major Fading; AL N; SV Fort +13, Ref +10, Will +11; Str 19, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 12

Skills and Feats: Climb +23, Listen +21, Search +16, Spot +18; Multiattack, Improved Initiative, Toughness

Breath Weapon (Su): 40-ft cone of Ethereal Spit. 10d6 points of Ethereal Shift damage, Ref save DC 22 for half. Once used cannot use again for 1d4 rounds.

Major Fading (Su): With this ability, the EtherNaught can shift between the Ethereal and Material plane. This feat takes 1 round to complete during which time, the EtherNaught is considered incorporeal to creatures on both planes in that it requires +1 weapons to hit, and has a 50% chance to ignore the damage from any corporeal source. Activating this ability is a move equivalent action. The use of this ability is not possible within the area of a *dimensional anchor*.

Fast Healing 3 (Ex): With this ability the EtherNaught recovers 3 hit point per round spent on the Ethereal plane. An EtherNaught reduced to -10 hit points still dies however. This ability has no effect on the material plane.

ENCOUNTER 5

APL 2 (EL 4)

Aganus, male half-stone golem Drd1: CR 4; Medium-size Humanoid (Human); HD 1d8+4; hp 12; Init +0; Spd 30 (can't run); AC 19 (+9 natural armor); Atk +7 melee (1d6+7, quarterstaff); SA Slow, spells; SQ DR 15/+1, magic immunity (as stone golem), nature sense, spells; AL N; SV Fort +8, Ref +0, Will +7; Str 24, Dex 10, Con 18, Int 12, Wis 17, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Animal Empathy +5, Concentration +6, Handle Animal +5, Heal +5, Intuit Direction +7, Knowledge (nature) +2, Spellcraft +3, Swim +11, Wilderness Lore +10; Iron Will, Track.

Possessions: Quarterstaff, *necklace of the hunt*.*

*New item listed in Appendix B.

SA: Slow (Su): A stone golem can use *slow* as a free action once every 2 rounds. The effect has a range of 10 feet and a duration of 7 rounds, requiring a successful Will save (DC 13) to negate.

SQ: Magic Immunity (Ex): A stone golem is immune to all spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural effects, except as follows. A *transmute rock to mud* spell slows it (as the *slow* spell) for 2d6 rounds, with no saving throw, while *transmute mud to rock* heals all of its lost hit points. A *stone to flesh* spell does not actually change the golem's structure but makes it vulnerable to any normal attack for the following round (this does not include spells, except those that cause damage).

Spells (1st-level druid; 3/2; base DC = 13 + spell level): 0—*detect magic, light, resistance*; 1st—*entangle, obscuring mist*.

APL 4 (EL 6)

Aganus, male half-stone golem Drd3: CR 6; Medium-size Humanoid (Human); HD 3d8+12; hp 30; Init +0; Spd 30 (can't run); AC 19 (+9 natural armor); Atk +9 melee (1d6+7, quarterstaff); SA Slow, spells; SQ DR 15/+1, magic immunity (as stone golem), nature sense, spells, trackless step, woodland stride; AL N; SV Fort +9, Ref +1, Will +8; Str 24, Dex 10, Con 18, Int 12, Wis 17, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Animal Empathy +7, Concentration +6, Handle Animal +7, Heal +7, Intuit Direction +7, Knowledge (nature) +2, Spellcraft +4, Swim +13, Wilderness Lore +12; Iron Will, Power Attack, Track.

Possessions: Quarterstaff, *necklace of the hunt*.*

*New item listed in Appendix B.

SA: Slow (Su): A stone golem can use *slow* as a free action once every 2 rounds. The effect has a range of 10 feet and a duration of 7 rounds, requiring a successful Will save (DC 13) to negate.

SQ: Magic Immunity (Ex): A stone golem is immune to all spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural effects, except as follows. A *transmute rock to mud* spell slows it (as the *slow* spell) for 2d6 rounds, with no saving throw, while *transmute mud to rock* heals all of its lost hit points. A *stone to flesh* spell does not actually change the golem's structure but makes it vulnerable to any normal attack for the

following round (this does not include spells, except those that cause damage).

Spells (3rd-level druid; 4/3/2; base DC = 13 + spell level): 0—*detect magic, guidance, light, resistance*; 1st—*entangle, faerie fire, obscuring mist*; 2nd—*flame blade, summon swarm*.

APL 6 (EL 8)

Aganus, male half-stone golem Drd5: CR 8; Medium-size Humanoid (Human); HD 5d8+20; hp 48; Init +0; Spd 30 (can't run); AC 19 (+9 natural armor); Atk +10 melee (1d6+7, quarterstaff); SA Slow, spells; SQ DR 15/+1, magic immunity (as stone golem), nature sense, resist nature's lure, spells, trackless step, woodland stride; AL N; SV Fort +10, Ref +1, Will +10; Str 24, Dex 10, Con 18, Int 12, Wis 18, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Animal Empathy +9, Concentration +7, Handle Animal +9, Heal +10, Intuit Direction +8, Knowledge (nature) +2, Spellcraft +5, Swim +15, Wilderness Lore +15; Iron Will, Power Attack, Track.

Possessions: Quarterstaff, *necklace of the hunt*.*

*New item listed in Appendix B.

SA: Slow (Su): A stone golem can use *slow* as a free action once every 2 rounds. The effect has a range of 10 feet and a duration of 7 rounds, requiring a successful Will save (DC 13) to negate.

SQ: Magic Immunity (Ex): A stone golem is immune to all spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural effects, except as follows. A *transmute rock to mud* spell slows it (as the *slow* spell) for 2d6 rounds, with no saving throw, while *transmute mud to rock* heals all of its lost hit points. A *stone to flesh* spell does not actually change the golem's structure but makes it vulnerable to any normal attack for the following round (this does not include spells, except those that cause damage).

Spells (5th-level druid; 5/4/3/2; base DC = 14 + spell level): 0—*detect magic (x2), guidance, light, resistance*; 1st—*entangle, faerie fire, obscuring mist, shillelagh*; 2nd—*charm person or animal, flame blade, summon swarm*; 3rd—*poison, summon nature's ally III*.

APL 8 (EL 10)

Aganus, male half-stone golem Drd7: CR 10; Medium-size Humanoid (Human); HD 7d8+28; hp 66; Init +0; Spd 30 (can't run); AC 19 (+9 natural armor); Atk +12 melee (1d6+7, quarterstaff); SA Slow, spells; SQ DR 15/+1, magic immunity (as stone golem), nature sense, resist nature's lure, spells, trackless step,

woodland stride; AL N; SV Fort +11, Ref +2, Will +11; Str 24, Dex 10, Con 18, Int 12, Wis 18, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Animal Empathy +11, Concentration +8, Handle Animal +11, Heal +12, Intuit Direction +8, Knowledge (nature) +2, Spellcraft +6, Swim +17, Wilderness Lore +17; Cleave, Iron Will, Power Attack, Track.

Possessions: Quarterstaff, *necklace of the hunt**, *ring of mind shielding*.

*New item listed in Appendix B.

SA: Slow (Su): A stone golem can use *slow* as a free action once every 2 rounds. The effect has a range of 10 feet and a duration of 7 rounds, requiring a successful Will save (DC 13) to negate.

SQ: Magic Immunity (Ex): A stone golem is immune to all spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural effects, except as follows. A *transmute rock to mud* spell slows it (as the *slow* spell) for 2d6 rounds, with no saving throw, while *transmute mud to rock* heals all of its lost hit points. A *stone to flesh* spell does not actually change the golem's structure but makes it vulnerable to any normal attack for the following round (this does not include spells, except those that cause damage).

Spells (7th-level druid; 6/5/4/3/2; base DC = 14 + spell level): 0—*detect magic* (x2), *guidance*, *light*, *resistance* (x2); 1st—*entangle* (x2), *faerie fire*, *obscuring mist*, *shillelagh*; 2nd—*charm person or animal*, *chill metal*, *flame blade*, *summon swarm*; 3rd—*greater magic fang*, *poison*, *summon nature's ally III*; 4th—*flame strike*, *languor**.

*New spell listed in Appendix B.

APL 10 (EL 12)

Aganus, male half-stone golem Drd9: CR 12; Medium-size Humanoid (Human); HD 9d8+36; hp 84; Init +0; Spd 30 (can't run); AC 19 (+9 natural armor); Atk +13/+8 melee (1d6+7, quarterstaff); SA Slow, spells; SQ DR 15/+1, magic immunity (as stone golem), nature sense, resist nature's lure, spells, trackless step, venom immunity, woodland stride; AL N; SV Fort +12, Ref +3, Will +12; Str 24, Dex 10, Con 18, Int 12, Wis 19, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Animal Empathy +13, Concentration +9, Handle Animal +13, Heal +14, Intuit Direction +8, Knowledge (nature) +2, Spellcraft +7, Swim +19, Wilderness Lore +19; Cleave, Great Cleave, Iron Will, Power Attack, Track.

Possessions: Quarterstaff, *necklace of the hunt**, *ring of mind shielding*.

*New item listed in Appendix B.

SA: Slow (Su): A stone golem can use *slow* as a free action once every 2 rounds. The effect has a range

of 10 feet and a duration of 7 rounds, requiring a successful Will save (DC 13) to negate.

SQ: Magic Immunity (Ex): A stone golem is immune to all spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural effects, except as follows. A *transmute rock to mud* spell slows it (as the *slow* spell) for 2d6 rounds, with no saving throw, while *transmute mud to rock* heals all of its lost hit points. A *stone to flesh* spell does not actually change the golem's structure but makes it vulnerable to any normal attack for the following round (this does not include spells, except those that cause damage).

Spells (9th-level druid; 6/5/5/4/3/1; base DC = 14 + spell level): 0—*detect magic* (x2), *guidance*, *light*, *resistance* (x2); 1st—*entangle* (x2), *faerie fire*, *obscuring mist*, *shillelagh*; 2nd—*charm person or animal*, *chill metal* (x2), *flame blade*, *summon swarm*; 3rd—*greater magic fang*, *poison*, *spike growth*, *summon nature's ally III*; 4th—*flame strike*, *languor**, *summon nature's ally IV*; 5th—*ice storm*.

*New spell listed in Appendix B.

APL 12 (EL 14)

Aganus, male half-stone golem Drd11: CR 14; Medium-size Humanoid (Human); HD 11d8+44; hp 102; Init +0; Spd 30 (can't run); AC 19 (+9 natural armor); Atk +15/+10 melee (1d6+7, quarterstaff); SA Slow, spells; SQ DR 15/+1, magic immunity (as stone golem), nature sense, resist nature's lure, spells, trackless step, venom immunity, woodland stride; AL N; SV Fort +13, Ref +3, Will +13; Str 24, Dex 10, Con 18, Int 12, Wis 19, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Animal Empathy +15, Concentration +10, Handle Animal +15, Heal +16, Intuit Direction +8, Knowledge (nature) +2, Spellcraft +8, Swim +21, Wilderness Lore +21; Cleave, Great Cleave, Iron Will, Power Attack, Track.

Possessions: Quarterstaff, *necklace of the hunt**, *ring of mind shielding*.

*New item listed in Appendix B.

SA: Slow (Su): A stone golem can use *slow* as a free action once every 2 rounds. The effect has a range of 10 feet and a duration of 7 rounds, requiring a successful Will save (DC 13) to negate.

SQ: Magic Immunity (Ex): A stone golem is immune to all spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural effects, except as follows. A *transmute rock to mud* spell slows it (as the *slow* spell) for 2d6 rounds, with no saving throw, while *transmute mud to rock* heals all of its lost hit points. A *stone to flesh* spell does not actually change the golem's structure but makes it vulnerable to any normal attack for the

following round (this does not include spells, except those that cause damage).

Spells (11th-level druid; 6/6/5/5/4/2/1; base DC = 14 + spell level): 0—*detect magic* (x2), *guidance*, *light*, *resistance* (x2); 1st—*entangle* (x2), *faerie fire* (x2), *obscuring mist*, *shillelagh*; 2nd—*charm person or animal*, *chill metal* (x2), *flame blade*, *summon swarm*; 3rd—*greater magic fang* (x2), *poison*, *spike growth*, *summon nature's ally III*; 4th—*dispel magic*, *flame strike*, *languor**; *summon nature's ally IV*; 5th—*animal growth*, *ice storm*; 6th—*fire seeds*.

*New spell listed in Appendix B.

APPENDIX B: NEW RULES ITEMS

Languor

Transmutation

Level: Drd 4

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 action

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

Effect: Ray

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell causes creatures it hits to become weak and slow. A subject who fails a Will save is *slowed* as the spell and suffers a cumulative enhancement penalty to Strength equal to $1d6-1$ per two caster levels (minimum additional penalty of 0, maximum of -10) each round. If the subject's Strength drops below 1, it is helpless. This spell does not counter *haste* nor is countered by it, but a *hasted* creature can be brought to normal speed by *languor*, and a creature affected by *languor* can be brought to normal speed by *haste*. (*Masters of the Wild*, page 89.)

☛ **Necklace of the Hunt:** This seashell necklace has been painstakingly woven from thin strands of a gold-green plantlike material. The necklace is magical, and was crafted by aquatic elves to use under the surface of the Nyr Dyv. The necklace provides a +3 competence bonus to both Intuit Direction and Wilderness Lore while worn.

Prerequisites: Craft Wondrous Item, creator must have 5 ranks in both Intuit Direction and Wilderness Lore; *Market Price:* 720 gp; *Weight:* 1/2 lb.

☛ **Malthindor, Oblivion's Blade:** Forged in the time of the mage-priests to kill the mad wizard Yagrax, Malthindor is a longsword of dark beauty. The blade of the weapon is thin and long, almost as long as a bastard sword. Upon the surface, arcane sigils, their meanings long since lost to modern men, are carved just so they appear to flow into each other like swirls of water in a rushing stream. When light is near the weapon, the source slightly dims as the blade swallows wisps of the brightest parts, ever hungry for more. The pommel, hilt and guard are made of obsidian, with black leather wrapped around the hilt to form a handgrip. At the very end of the pommel, a smooth green etherstone is set inside a thin ring of gold.

The sword feeds off the wielder's magical energies, growing in power as the wielder advances in magical ability. In game terms, the sword's magical abilities

function only for an arcane spellcaster; the level of arcane spells the wielder is able to cast determine the number of powers the blade possesses. The only exception to this is that clerics of Boccob are treated exactly like arcane spellcasters for accessing powers; no other divine spellcasters derive any magical benefit from the sword. In the hands of all but arcane spellcasters, the longsword is considered to be a masterwork weapon. It takes one day for a new wielder to attune to Malthindor, and access the powers. This blade radiates faint evil is detected for.

Able to cast arcane spells: *Touch of the Mage-Priests* - the weapon is a +1 longsword.

1st-level arcane spells: *Wave of Despair* - as a standard action, when the blade is drawn, the wielder may cast *bane* as a 2nd-level caster once per day.

3rd-level arcane spells: *Thrice-Magicked Form* - as a standard action, the wielder can add the *ghost touch*, *keen*, or *frost* quality to the blade. This power lasts a number of rounds equal to the caster's arcane spellcaster level, and is usable once per day. Once chosen, the quality cannot be changed for that day.

5th-level arcane spells: *Hand of the Mage-Priests* - the weapon is a +2 longsword.

7th-level arcane spells: *Tapping the Well of Power* - as a standard action, when the blade is drawn, the wielder may cast *greater magic weapon* upon it as a 15th-level caster, with one exception: the power lasts a number of rounds equal to the caster's arcane spellcaster level. It is usable once per day.

9th-level arcane spells: *Oblivion Triumphant* - whenever this weapon kills a creature, it cannot be brought back from the dead without a *true resurrection* spell cast upon the body. If the blade cuts up the pieces of the body, the majority of them must be found in order for the *true resurrection* to be successful.

Prerequisites: N/A; *Market Price:* 10,000 gp; *Weight:* 4 lb.

* This item is only available for purchase after Core scenarios in the Ether Threat series.

APPENDIX C: HALF GOLEM TEMPLATE

Half-golems are the results of good-intentioned actions taken too far. While the application of a poultice infused with curative herbs or the casting of a spell can save the life of an injured or diseased person, only powerful magic can replace a missing limb. Such magic is often beyond the reach of the ordinary person working in a quarry or a mill, or scything a field of grain, who suffers the loss of one or more limbs.

Arcane artisans applied their knowledge of golem construction to come up with a way to restore such a person to wholeness. While the initial results were promising, there was a limit to the effectiveness of the technique – many people who received one or more new limbs through this process proved unable to withstand the trauma of the transformation and became permanently evil as a result. Individuals of evil intent now exploit this limitation, purposely creating ravaging, unholy crosses between living beings and golems.

Construction

There are two steps to making a half-golem. The first is constructing the limbs, and the second is attaching the limbs.

Molding a limb from clay, preparing one made of flesh, carving it from stone, or forging it from iron requires an appropriate skill (see the specific half-golem descriptions for details) and can be done by anyone. Infusing a formed limb with magic requires the Craft Wondrous Item and Craft Magic Arms and Armor feats. It takes one month to complete the magical rituals. The creator must labor for at least 8 hours each day in a specially prepared laboratory or workroom. The chamber is similar to an alchemist's laboratory and costs 500 gp to establish.

When not working on the rituals, the creator must rest and can perform no other activities, just as if he or she were creating a golem. As with a golem, if the creator is personally constructing the limbs, he or she can perform the building and the rituals together.

Once created, the limbs are treated as spell completion items. Any character capable of casting the appropriate level of spell (see specific descriptions) can attach the limb. All that's left to do is perform the final gestures and speak the words needed to imbue the limb with magic. All the limbs to be attached to a particular body must be of the same type – it's not possible, for instance, to attach a limb made of iron to a half-golem that already has a new limb made of stone.

Any such attempt automatically fails, leaving the second type of limb unattached.

The Danger

Each time a limb is attached to his or her body, the recipient makes a Will save. The DC of the save varies according to the number of new limbs the character has received

| | Save DC |
|-----------------|----------------|
| First new limb | 15 |
| Second new limb | 19 |
| Third new limb | 25 |
| Fourth new limb | 33 |
| Fifth new limb | 43 |
| Sixth new limb | 55 |

A character who succeeds at all the save he or she is required to make takes on the attributes of a half-golem as described below – except that the character retains his or her alignment, gains a +4 bonus to Constitution, and does not change type or gain construct traits. As soon as the character fails one of these required saves, he or she becomes a half-golem of neutral evil alignment. The character then has no Constitution score and the character's type changes to construct, granting him or her construct traits. A neutral evil half-golem retains the memories and knowledge of its former life, but its personality becomes murderous and cruel. It demonstrates the hatred of flesh creatures common to elementals, and it seeks methods appropriate to its class to slaughter as many flesh creatures as possible.

Creating a Half-Golem

"Half-golem" is a template that can be added to any animal, beast, giant, humanoid creature, magical beast, or monstrous humanoid (referred to hereafter as the character). There is no minimum level of Hit Dice requirement to become a half-golem. The character's type changes to construct once a Will save is failed. Each half-golem takes on the characteristics of a particular type of golem (flesh, clay, stone, or iron) as described later in this section.

A half-golem's abilities are primarily those of the character with the following exceptions.

Hit Dice: Same as the character

Intiative: Same as character –1 to account for the half-golem's reduced Dexterity (See Abilities, below)

Speed: Same as character, but a half-golem cannot run.

AC: A half-golem replaces any natural armor bonus it may have had with a new bonus according to its type (see the table below). The change to Dexterity (see Abilities, below) also effects the half-golem's Armor Class.

Attacks: Same as character.

Damage: Same as character.

Face/Reach: Same as character.

Special Attacks: Same as character (and see the table below).

Special Qualities: Same as character; plus construct traits (upon a failed Will save), damage resistance (see table below), and others by type (see table below).

Saves: A half-golem gains a +2 racial bonus on Fortitude saves; otherwise same as character.

Abilities: Half-golems have -2 Dex, +4 Con (or no Con upon a failed Will save), -6 Int, +0 Wis, and -6 Cha. Strength varies by type (see the table below). The number of limbs attached does not alter a half-golem's Strength score.

Skills: Same as character, modified by new ability modifiers. The drop in Intelligence does not retroactively remove skill points spent.

Feats: Same as character.

Climate/Terrain: Same as character.

Organization: Solitary, pair, or squad (5-20)

Challenge Rating: Same as character +3.

Treasure: Standard.

Alignment: Same as character (if all Will save succeed) or always neutral evil (if any Will save fails).

Advancement: By character class.

| Common Half Golems Traits | Stone |
|---------------------------|----------------|
| Natural Armor | +9 |
| Special Attacks | Slow |
| Damage Reduction | 15/+1 |
| Special Qualities | - |
| Strength | +10 |
| Magic Immunity | As stone golem |

Combat

A half-golem fights as the character from which it is created. Half-golems are usually straightforward, unobtrusive combatants that rely on their great strength to win the day. They rarely use teamwork or cooperation even when banded together.

Construct Traits: A half-golem is immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis,

stunning, disease, death effects, necromantic effects, and any effect that requires a Fortitude save unless it also works on objects. The creature is not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, ability drain, energy drain, or death from massive damage. It cannot heal itself but can be healed through repair. It cannot be raised or resurrected. A half-golem has darkvision (60-foot range).

Magic Immunity: Half-golems completely resist all magical and supernatural effects, except as noted in the appropriate golem descriptions (see *Monster Manual*).

Stone Half-golem

A stone half-golem drags thick limbs of roughly chiseled stone. Stylized to suit its creator. For example, one might appear armored, have a particular symbol carved on it, or have designs worked into it. The limbs may be different types of stone.

Slow (Su): A stone golem can use *slow* as a free action once every 2 rounds. The effect has a range of 10 feet and a duration of 7 rounds, requiring a successful Will save (DC 13) to negate. The ability is otherwise the same as the spell.

Construction

A stone limb must be chiseled from a single block of stone weighing at least 300 pounds. The carving requires a successful Craft (stonemasonry) check (DC 20). The rituals cost 16,000 gp and 320 XP and require *geas/quest* and *stone to flesh*. Attaching the limb requires the ability to cast 6th-level arcane spells.