

Chase Across Ghelspad

A collection of side quests for Vengeance of the Shunned
for characters of levels 6-9 for use with Scarred Lands 5th Edition

SLARECIAN
-VAULT-

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CREDITS

Vengeance of the Shunned Developer: Travis Legge

Authors: Anne Gregersen, Anthony Alipio, Cameron Blair, Catherine Evans, Dave Coulson, Hal Howard, Jessica Marcrum, Jessica Ross, R P Davis

Editor: Jessa Michalek (Parts 1-8) Travis Legge (Part 9)

Typesetting and Design: Travis Legge

Cover: Enmanuel “Lema” Martinez

Interior Art: B-Design, some art Bartek Blaszczec, Bruno Balixa (juumpei@gmail.com), Some artwork © 2015 Dean Spencer, used with permission. Gary Dupuis (gary@gdupuis.com), George Cotronis of Kraken Press, Ian MacLean, All rights reserved, some art Indi Martin © 2015, Jack Holliday, Jacob Blackmon, Jeshields, Jeff Brown, Some art Joe Calkins, Matt Morrow, © 2011 Matthew Meyer, used with permission, Shaman’s Stockart, Tan Ho Sim, Courtesy Sine Nomine Publishing

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Cartography: Anne Gregersen

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The Staff and the Secret Shrine



R P Davis



INTERLUDE

A simple prop to occupy my time...

-- M. Stipe

BACKGROUND

Long ago, during the Divine War, the titan Mesos had a powerful servant. This servant, a sorcerer called Zuvys, rained destruction on good folk wherever he went. He always carried with him a magical staff, a mighty artifact either of his own devising or a gift from his master.

When Zuvys was finally defeated in battle and slain, his spirit was forced — or drawn — into his staff. The staff became an artifact of immense power and unspeakable evil, for Zuvys' spirit spoke to those who bore the staff, whispering in their minds, driving them in madness or despair to commit vile acts using the staff's power.

The Order of Silver, whose paladins were the heroes who slew Zuvys, pledged to hide the Staff of Zuvys and guard it securely. They took the staff to a secret location, built a shrine to Corean, placed the staff in its innermost sanctum, and secured the whole with traps, wards, and guardians sworn to secrecy and to die in the defense of the shrine.

Maghiel has learned the location of the *staff of Zuvys* and has devised a way to use its power to aid her in summoning some strange fiends known as the "Mouths of Vangal". What purpose she has in mind, what part this plays in her plan, only she can say. She has sent her henchman, a twisted wizard named Anuzor Okalis, to fetch the staff of Zuvys by whatever means necessary. Anuzor has used his magic to charm, disable, or destroy the Order of Silver guardians, and has penetrated the inner sanctum of the shrine.

The exact location of the shrine is unimportant; it can be placed anywhere in the adventure area. The heroes are traveling (on their way to do something else) when a *holy*

beacon (SLPG p 135) lights up the sky. The origin point of the beacon is the secret shrine, which is some 15 miles away. When the heroes arrive, they find carnage and destruction. Reaching the shrine's inner sanctum, they confront Anuzor. When they defeat the wizard, the chief paladin appears and counsels them to render the staff powerless for a time by washing it in the holy waters of the sacred fountain nigh at hand and replacing it in its secret vault until the paladins of the Order can hide it once more.

THE STAFF

STAFF OF ZUVYS

Staff, legendary (requires attunement by a cleric, sorcerer, warlock, or wizard)

The Staff of Zuvys is a *staff of night everlasting* (SLPG p 169). In addition to the staff's regular powers, it has the following additional properties.

Mesos's Power Flowing. While you're attuned to the staff and when you hold it you gain an additional spell slot of each level for which you have slots available.

Hunter of the Virtuous. While you hold the staff, you are aware of the presence of good-aligned creatures within 60 feet of you that aren't constructs or undead.

Sentience. The Staff is a sentient neutral evil weapon with an Intelligence of 12, a Wisdom of 11, and a Charisma of 20. It has hearing and darkvision out to a range of 120 feet.

The Staff can speak, read, and understand Common, and can communicate with its wielder telepathically. Its voice is soft, silky, and seductive. While you're attuned to it, the Staff also understands every language you know.

Personality. The Staff speaks in a confidential, wheedling tone, as though it's always trying to convince you to do something.

The Staff's purpose is to slay good creatures, especially followers and servants of Corean. If it goes three or more days without slaying a good-aligned creature, a conflict occurs between it and its wielder at dawn on the 4th day

THE SECRET SHRINE

During this adventure, arcane spellcasting is subject to the "wild magic" effects of Mesos' Bane (see **A Mishap of Ill Portent**). In addition, the shrine is particularly badly affected due to the presence of the Staff of Zuvys. Consider adding the following effects to the existing Mesos' Bane effects.

D20 RESULT

- | D20 | RESULT |
|-----|---|
| 1 | The spell fails to take effect until 1d4 rounds later. |
| 2 | The caster's hair grows very rapidly to about 6 feet long, and turns purple, green, orange, or blue. |
| 3 | 1d6 squirrels appear around caster (treat as weasels). |
| 4 | All the caster's coins turn into teeth. |
| 5 | Try a different shampoo. Snow falls on the target's head and shoulders. |
| 6 | The spell goes off normally, but makes a sound like a pig squealing. |
| 7 | Target's hit points double. |
| 8 | Cow falls on target. Target takes 8d6 bludgeoning damage. |
| 9 | Caster regains all hit points and spell slots, as though they just finished a long rest. |
| 10 | Pretty sparkly lights! Caster outlined in faerie fire. |
| 11 | Whoa, pardner! Target is hasted. |
| 12 | ¡Ándale, ándale! Target is slowed. |
| 13 | Shiny shiny chomp chomp! Caster's teeth turn into diamonds. |
| 14 | All doors and windows within 60 feet of caster fly open. |
| 15 | Caster's shoelaces tie themselves together, unknown to caster. The next time they try to move, they must make a Dexterity saving throw against their spell save DC or fall prone. |
| 16 | Shocking display of magic. Caster takes 1d8 lightning damage. |
| 17 | All weapons within 60 feet are outlined in green flame and deal an extra 1d6 fire damage on a hit. |
| 18 | Target becomes unbearably itchy. Incapacitated until the end of its next turn except for frantic scratching. |
| 19 | The caster's skin turns purple, and they are compelled to hum a children's tune. |
| 20 | Roll twice on this table, ignoring this result if it happens again. |

The shrine is a small tower constructed of roughly-worked local stone. The tower stands in a clearing within a copse of trees. A wooden drawbridge spans the moat which surrounds the tower, the moat is fed by a stream which winds lazily through the clearing.

Unless otherwise noted, all chambers in the tower have stone walls, floors, and ceilings, and the ceilings are 12 feet high. Passages and staircases are 5 feet wide.

There are no windows on the first two levels, except for arrow-slits to either side of the drawbridge/gate. Small, round, stained-glass windows look out from the third level, and the fourth level is the open roof of the tower. The fourth level is protected by a crenellated battlement.

ROOM ONE: GUARDROOM

The drawbridge is lowered, and the heavy oak door, bound with iron, has been wrenched off hinges and is badly burned.

There are black scorch marks on the stone around the door.

Inside, there is disarray. This level is where the paladin guardians of the shrine lived and spent most of their time. There are bunks and tables and benches, all scattered across the rush-covered stone floor.

Opposite the front door, a wooden stair leads upward and to the right. There's a wooden trap door under the stairs.

Mesos' Bane, combined with the magical attacks of Anuzor Okalis in this place, has attracted 2 **arcane devourers** (SLPG p 233) from their usual haunts on the Astral Plane. They paw through the mess, looking for anything interesting.

If the heroes aren't being particularly careful to be stealthy as they approach the tower, the arcane devourers sense their approach and hide to either side of the doorway on the inside of the tower. Roll their Stealth checks (+6) against the passive Perception score of the first heroes to enter the tower. They'll wait to attack until half the party gets inside, if they can.

Otherwise, they attack whenever the heroes enter the room.

Treasure. If the heroes spend at least 30 minutes searching this room, they find 2 *potions of greater healing*, assorted coins worth 10 gp per hero, 14 days worth of rations, and 3 bottles of wine of an indifferent vintage. However, if they spend any time at all searching, they run the risk of Anuzor escaping with the Staff.

ROOM TWO: THE MAZE OF DEATH

This entire level is a maze filled with deadly traps. From swinging, scything blades to deadly crossbow bolts to jets of flame, around every corner is a fresh trap, all of which are going off like mad.

Fresh blood and bodies are everywhere. Anuzor Okalis' minions set off the traps. Some of the bodies are his minions, and others are dead paladins of the Order of Silver.

The heroes can clearly see the traps but can't find a way to shut them off. There's a control mechanism on the other end of the maze, next to the stairs to the next level, but they can't see it until they get through.

Maze of Death

Complex trap (level 5–10, dangerous threat)

This level is a twisting, turning hallway riddled with traps. The hallway is 5 feet wide. It is mostly clear. In the hallway with the crossbow trap, the floor is littered with bodies, becoming difficult terrain.

Trigger. This trap activates as soon as a creature enters the hallway, and it remains active until disarmed. When the heroes arrive, it is already activated.

Initiative. The trap acts on initiative count 20 and initiative count 10.

Active Elements. The first 30 feet of the corridor is free of traps. The Maze of Death begins at the first turning. It includes a set of scything blades along the first 80 feet of the trap, magical crossbow bolts that fire from one end of the hallway to the other in the next 80 feet, and white-hot jets of flame in its final 80 feet.

Scything Blades (Initiative 20). The blades attack each creature in the first 80 feet of the hallway, with a +7 bonus to the attack roll and dealing 22 (4d10) slashing damage on a hit.

Self-Loading Poisonous Crossbow Bolts (Initiative 10). The crossbows target each creature in the two sections of the second hallway. Each creature is targeted by 2 bolts, with a +7 bonus to the attack roll and dealing 6 (1d10) piercing damage on a hit. A creature hit by a bolt must make a **DC 16 Constitution saving throw**, taking 11 (2d10) poison damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one. In addition, a creature that takes poison damage is Poisoned. It can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

White-Hot Jet of Flame (Initiative 10). Each creature in both sections of the third hallway must make a **DC 16 Dexterity saving throw**, taking 22 (4d10) fire damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one.

Dynamic Elements. The Jet of Flame becomes more dangerous the longer the trap remains active.

Jet of Flame's Defense. Tampering with the Jet of Flame increases the trap's power. Each successful check on an attempt to disable the rune increases the damage of the Scything Blades and the Crossbow Bolts' poison by 5 (1d10) and increases the Jet's saving throw DC by 1.

Constant Elements. Each area of the trap affects each creature that ends its turn in an area affected by those elements.

Scything Blades. Any creature that ends its turn in the blades' area is targeted by an attack: +7 attack bonus; 5 (1d10) slashing damage on a hit.

Self-Loading Poisonous Crossbow Bolts. Any creature that ends its turn in the bolts' area is targeted by an attack: +7 attack bonus; 5 (1d10) piercing damage on a hit.

White-Hot Jet of Flame. Any creature that ends its turn in the jet's corridor must make a saving throw against the White-Hot Jet of Flame effect.

Countermeasures. Each of the trap's active elements can be thwarted by particular countermeasures, some examples of which are given as follows. Note that creative players will devise other methods; reward clever play.

Scything Blades. Heroes can smash the blades, damage their components, or discern how to avoid them. The blades are disabled if their attack bonus is reduced to -8. Here are some ways to reduce the attack bonus:

Intelligence (Investigation), DC 15. As an action, a creature that can see the blades can attempt an **Intelligence (Investigation)** check. A successful check means that the character has learned how to anticipate the blades' movement, imposing disadvantage on the blades' attacks against the creature as long as it isn't unconscious or incapacitated.

Attack. A creature in the area can ready its action to strike at one of the blades as it goes by. The blade gains advantage on its attack against the creature. The creature then attacks. Each blade has AC 15 and 15 hit points. Destroying a blade reduces the Scything Blades attack bonus by 2.

Dexterity check using thieves' tools, DC 15. Creatures can use thieves' tools to foil their mechanism, but they can only do so if they're in the area attacked by the blades. A successful check reduces the Scything Blades attack bonus by 2.

Self-Loading Poisonous Crossbow Bolts. The bolts are disabled if their attack bonus is reduced to -8. Here are some ways to reduce the attack bonus:

Stop up the holes: The holes from which the crossbow bolts fire can be stopped up in some way. There are 24 holes, and a hero can hammer something into 2 holes as an action. Each hole that is stopped up reduces the Crossbow Bolts attack bonus by 1.

Put a shield in front of it: A creature can block up 2d6 holes by placing a shield against the wall from which the bolts fire and either holding it there or affixing it in some way.

White-Hot Jet of Flame. The jet can be disabled with three successful **DC 16 Intelligence (Arcana)** checks. Each check requires an action. A creature must have traversed the jet's danger zone and be adjacent to it at the end of

the hallway to attempt the check, and only one creature can work on this task at once. Once a creature attempts a check for this purpose, no other creature can do so until the end of that creature's next turn. Alternatively, the jet can be disabled with three successful castings of dispel magic (DC 16) targeting the jet.

ROOM THREE: THE STAFF'S PRISON

As soon as a hero enters this room from the staircase, hideously maimed, screaming undead shamble slowly to attack.

Wights. 1 wight per hero, armed with longswords. Because of their reluctance to harm the heroes, they attack with disadvantage.

The wights are slain and reanimated paladin guardians of the Order of Silver. When Anuzor animated them, due to the wild magic, something terrible happened. The paladins' minds are still intact, as their souls trapped in their undead forms, though they're compelled to attack anyone who enters the room. They scream in agony and beg for release, either in death or by being returned to life.

Along one wall is an altar dedicated to Corean shaped like a sarcophagus. The religious items have been swept off the top and into a pile on the floor, and the lid pushed to one side. The lead-lined sarcophagus is empty. This is where the Staff was kept.

ROOM FOUR: THE SACRED POOL

This room contains a sacred pool and the henchman Anuzor (who holds the Staff), along with several of his minions.

Anuzor Okalis (**mage**). Anuzor is attuned to the Staff.

Bloodmen (SLPG p 240). Two bloodmen are all that's left of Anuzor's minions.

Paladin (treat as **knight**). Lying on the floor is a bound and gagged middle-aged woman in plate armor.

As soon as the heroes enter the room, the bloodmen attack. They mindlessly attack to the death.

When the characters arrive, Anuzor is halfway through casting a teleportation circle spell to make his escape. At the end of the 5th round of combat, he steps into the circle with the armored woman and the spell takes hold.

Tactics

The bloodmen attack mindlessly and to the death.

Anuzor has half his hit points and spell slots. If his teleportation circle spell is ruined, he does his best to Disengage and escape by jumping out a window, casting *feather fall* on himself, and running as fast as he can once he hits the ground.

If everything goes pear-shaped for the heroes, at your option the armored woman can slip her bonds, grab her greatsword, and join in the fray on the heroes' side.

POSSIBLE OUTCOMES

Anuzor Escapes. If Anuzor escapes with the Staff, the heroes have failed and Maghiel's plan takes a significant step forward. At your discretion, Anuzor may appear to bane the heroes later in the campaign. If Anuzor escapes without the Staff, Maghiel will greet him...warmly...and the heroes will not encounter Anuzor again.

Anuzor Slain. If the heroes slay Anuzor before the teleportation circle triggers, the Staff clatters to the floor and rolls toward the nearest wizard, sorcerer, or warlock character.

The Shrine Commander. The woman's name is Enyinnaya Farman. She's a paladin of the Order of Silver, and she was commander of the guardians of the shrine. If she survives and the heroes have the Staff, she begs them to first immerse it in the waters of the sacred pool and then seal it up in the sarcophagus on the floor below. She knows the immersion will suppress the Staff's telepathy for a short time and sealing it in the sarcophagus will render it inert. She tells the heroes that the Order will find a new hiding place at once.

If the heroes refuse, she picks up her sword and prepares to fight them, though she will certainly be slain. She is unafraid of death and is perfectly willing to fulfill her oath to die keeping the Staff out of improper hands.

ROOM FIVE: THE STAFF SPEAKS

When a creature first picks up the Staff, it speaks to them telepathically, begging them to rescue it from this awful place.

Roleplaying the *Staff of Zuvys*

Use the following talking points to guide your roleplay of the intelligent artifact.

- It wants its bearer to flee with all haste. "Take me away from this beastly place! Let us go forth and fight evil together!"
- It flatters them, praising their mastery of magic in the fight against Anuzor. "I have never beheld such wizardry. Who are you, who holds such might in the palm of the hand?"
- It pretends to innocence, dismissing any negative lore about it as misrepresentations. "I am but a simple prop, nothing more. My powers can be used for ill or good. Is it my fault they have been exploited for evil in the past?"
- It tells them that Maghiel had a plan to use it, and now that the characters have it, they can

use its power against her. "Imagine — a magician as mighty as you, enhanced by my powers; what can stand against us? Imagine what good we can do together!"

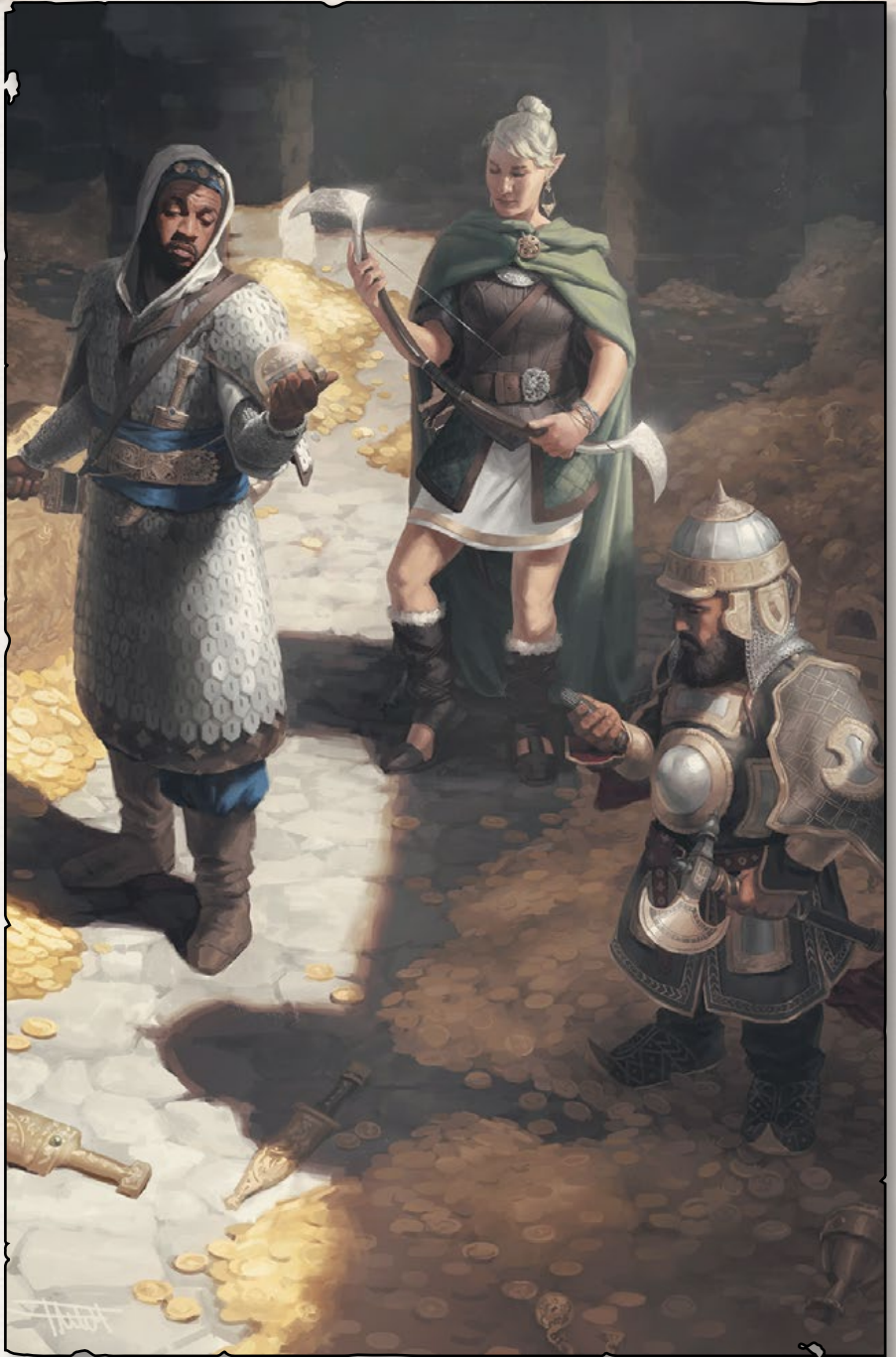
- It knows that Maghiel plans to siphon all of its power in order further her plans, effectively destroying it. It doesn't want that. "She seeks me not for my good counsel. Nay, she seeks me so she might drain me utterly, of all my power, so she might complete two goals at once: Deny my power to those who would forestall her and use that magic to further her own wicked ends."



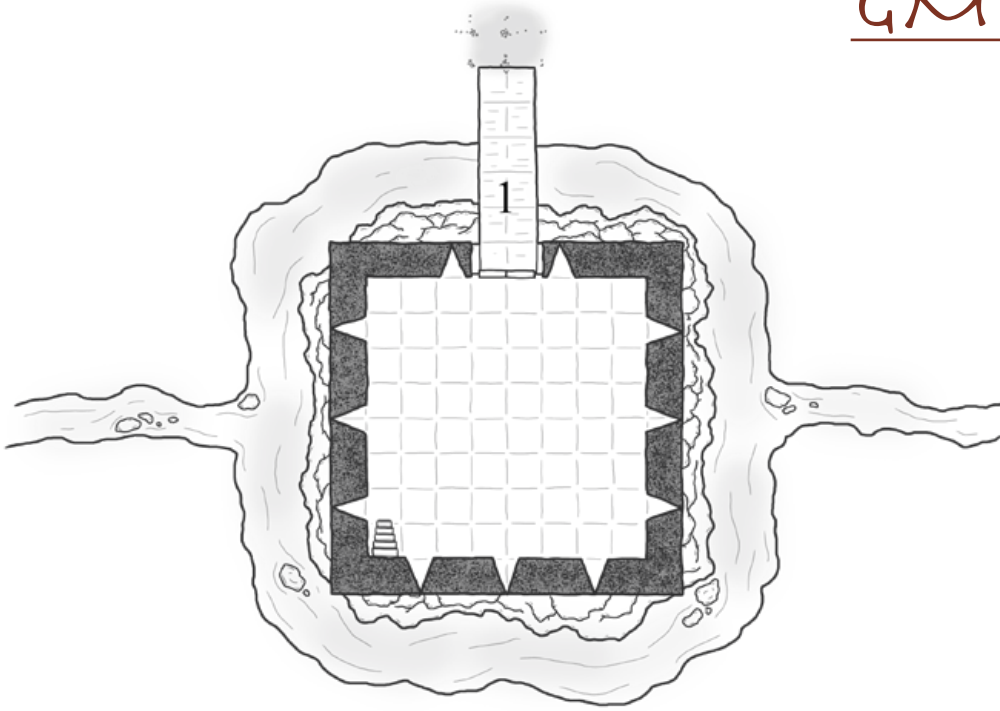
If the bearer agrees to its demands, it waits a few days before attempting to convince it to perform evil acts. Exactly how to do that is up to you, because your player's character will have unique weaknesses that the Staff will, after reading their mind, know how to exploit. It will start with dreams wherein the character is shown achieving their goals, and supporting their Ideals and Bonds, assisted by the Staff's power. It tries to use those levers to rationalize committing murder and grand larceny.

If its bearer refuses to comply, it begins to communicate with another spellcaster among the heroes, preferring a sorcerer or warlock, insisting on being carried away from the shrine and kept from the Order of Silver. If no caster agrees to its demands, it attempts to take control of its wielder. The wielder must make a **DC 18 Charisma saving throw**. On a failed save, the wielder is affected as though a *dominate person* spell was cast on it by the Staff for 12 hours.

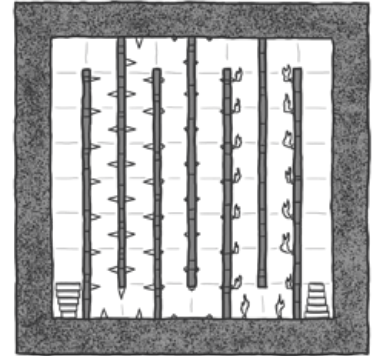
The *Staff of Zuvys* is utterly evil and uses every opportunity to dominate its bearer and drive them to commit evil acts.



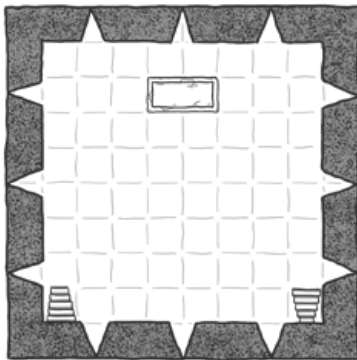
GM MAP



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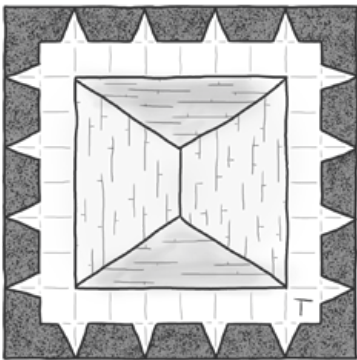
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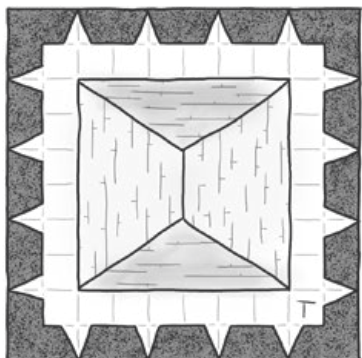
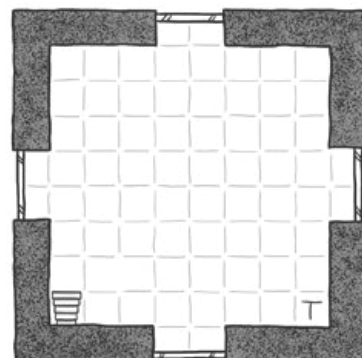
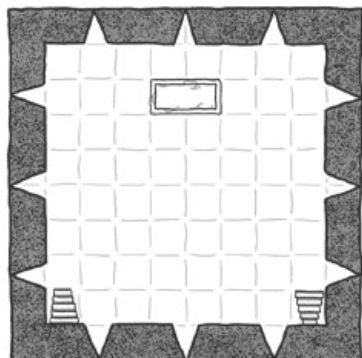
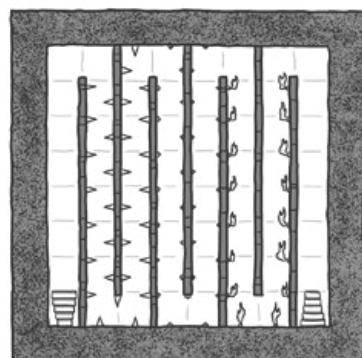
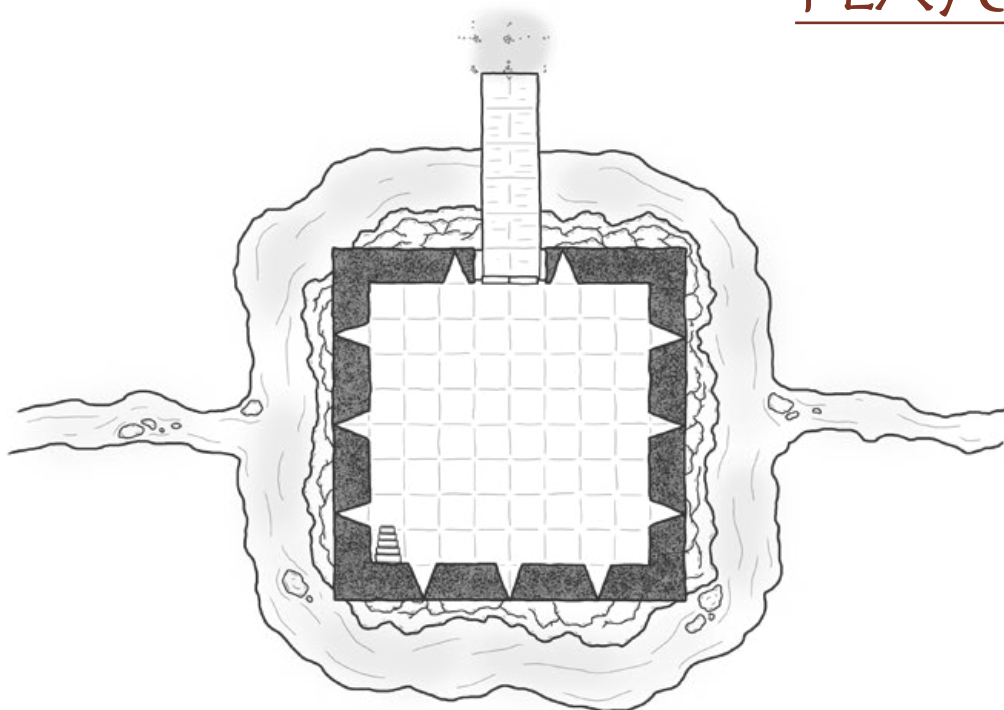
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ROOF



PLAYER MAP



Dreams and Nightmares



Anthony Alipio



INTRODUCTION

Dreams and Nightmares is an adventure designed for four to six characters of 7th level, though it can be easily modified for larger or smaller groups, or a group of average party level (or APL) as high as 9th level. Guidelines are included with each encounter for increasing the difficulty of opposition to suit higher APL groups.

This adventure is set in the Bleak Savannah, where several orc tribes have settled. An ancient and forgotten labyrinth beneath a sacred site has recently begun to stir up trouble for an orc homesteader named Charmok.

SYNOPSIS

As the characters traverse Ghelspad in search of answers to the questions raised in *A Mishap of Ill Portent*, they enter the orcish settlements in the Bleak Savannah where they encounter Charmok, an orc farmer who happens to be a distant cousin to Tsendur from Durgan's Rest. Charmok

has heard of the explosion at his cousin's house, as well as the party's continuing investigation into the matter, and he approaches the party with a request; he seems embarrassed to talk about it.

Orcs are generally fearless in battle and undaunted by hardship, but they can be superstitious at times. This orc has been having nightmares of being buried alive.

Since he heard of the events in Durgan's Rest, he has been visiting the sacred site to appeal to the ancestors for support, and the dreams seem to always occur after such visits. At first, he thought it might be related to what happened with his cousin. But lately his dreams have been more realistic and in vivid color. They feel more like memories than dreams, and when he looks at himself in these memories, he is clearly female...and furry.

Charmok now believes the dreams to be a call for help, possibly from a manticora, and that the party's arrival is a sign that the ancestors have heard his prayers.

BACKGROUND

Charmok's homestead is a small farm among the orcish settlements in the Bleak Savannah. Charmok and the other orc settlers in the vicinity honor their ancestors at a sacred mound. Its history is long forgotten; no one now living remembers that this mound was originally constructed to seal off the entrance to a labyrinth that lies below the surface.

The following history of the labyrinth can be pieced together from entries in K'rgzuth's war journal.

Hundreds of years ago, during the early years of the Divine Wars, a regiment of titanspawn marched from across the Kelder mountain range into the Bleak Savannah. Their attempt to flank the gods' army of divine races was a bold strategy, but one that never paid off. Whether by ill luck or divine intervention, the titanspawn crossed paths with a cerulean roc and utterly lost their sense of direction. They never arrived at the rendezvous point to meet up with The Proud gathering on the grasslands for a joint sneak attack.

Instead, the plan backfired, creating two smaller, separate, and disrupted fighting forces, against which the divine races were easily able to defend and rout from the battlefield. A small band of unitaurs escaped, finding refuge in an underground cavern system. Rather than plunging into the dark where the titanspawn might have an advantage, their pursuers opted to cause a cave-in, entombing the unitaurs forever.

These natural tunnels wound and twisted for miles, often doubling back on themselves. Even with their innate darkvision, the small warband could find no way out. After a few weeks, rations ran low and the dangers of the labyrinth were taking their toll. The unfamiliar and often treacherous terrain left them bruised and battered, while ravenous cavern creatures gave them no respite.

The unitaurs called out to the titan Hrinruuk, for guidance and deliverance, but The Hunter either ignored or never heard their pleas. In desperation, K'rgzuth, the unitaur leader and a minor mage, prayed to the already dispersed titan Mesos. Though there was no response, it was then that K'rgzuth discovered a magical artifact, untarnished by time or the elements: an orcish siege stone.

An arcane item fashioned by orc shamans; siege stones are not to be confused with those flaming boulders sent flying from orc war engines. Rather, they are a defensive measure, designed to allow those under siege to survive in a fortified bunker when supply lines are disrupted.

While the unitaurs were able to keep themselves alive for a time by sharing the use of the stone, eventually all

perished—all except K'rgzuth. After decades of wandering alone, he at last discovered another exit near an encampment of orcs. Ironically, however, K'rgzuth found he no longer wished to leave; whatever curse kept him alive in that place also bound him to it. As time passed, legend of a horned beast residing in the haunted labyrinth grew, and orcs steered clear of it.

While the Divine Wars yet raged, a Proud warrior named Sinvar and her raiding party were caught stealing from an allied orc encampment. They were sentenced to the labyrinth as traitors. Killed by K'rgzuth and the unitaur skeletons he commanded, Sinvar became a wraith and turned her fallen companions into specters. Rather than take vengeance on the unitaur (whom she saw as just another victim like herself), Sinvar blamed the orcs for her death. The undead Proud attacked the encampment, but the orc shamans were able to banish them back to the labyrinth.

This entrance was closed off and hidden beneath a sacred seal, and over time the labyrinth was forgotten. Eventually, the site was remembered only as a holy place, a shrine to bring offerings of thanks and prayerful requests to spirits of the past.

The recent spread of Mesos's Bane caused by the events in *A Mishap of Ill Portent* has awoken these long dormant undead, and they once more seek the death of orcs and other living creatures. Working together with Sinvar, K'rgzuth has been using magic to send vivid dreams to Charmok in order to trick him into breaking the seal and reopening the entrance to the labyrinth.

NOTABLE NPCs

Charmok (LN orc) A distant cousin to Tsendur from Durgan's Rest (*A Mishap of Ill Portent*), Charmok is the questgiver of this adventure. He asks the party to investigate a sacred orc site in order to find a manticora he believes to be in great danger. A farmer by trade, he is powerfully built, and knows how to swing an axe, but he is no adventurer or military warrior. He is also quite superstitious, and he will not approach the sacred site again until he is certain no more dreams will follow.

Sinvar (CE proud wraith) is the undead spirit of a Proud warrior with a longstanding grudge against the orcs. She remembers little of what happened to her, but feels great resentment and anger. She has several **proud specters** at her command. If the seal to the labyrinth is broken, and she is allowed to escape, she will take her vengeance out on the orcs in the area.

K'rgzuth (NE unitaur mage) is a cursed remnant of the Divine Wars. Trapped in the labyrinth long ago, his remaining warriors reduced to undead skeletons, K'rgzuth haunts the labyrinth with no goals other than to kill any who would enter his twisted realm of darkness. He aids

Sinvar's attempt at escape, partly to break up the monotony of his existence, but mostly to rid himself of her company.

PREPARATION

Text included in a plain box should be read aloud or paraphrased for the players. Sidebars and other shaded text are provided, where applicable, to call attention to important points for the GM to consider and should not be read aloud. Creature and NPC names are provided in bold text where they appear in the adventure, and their stat blocks are provided in Appendix: Creatures and NPCs.

INVOLVING THE PCS

This adventure assumes they have taken part in the events that occurred in *A Mishap of Ill Portent* and/or other adventures in the **Vengeance of the Shunned** series.

Charmok can either seek the party out and bring them back to his homestead, or he can simply be encountered as the party passes through an orc settlement in the Bleak Savannah.

MESOS' BANE

By now, the magical surge which pulsed outward from Durgan's Rest during the explosion can be felt in this area by any creature with the ability to cast arcane spells. Any character who casts an arcane spell using a bard, sorcerer, warlock, or wizard spell slot must roll 1d6 and consult the following chart.

The area affected by this magical surge expands by 100 miles per day that the *Clasp of Vergren* is outside of the reliquary. This effect will blanket the continent of Ghelspad in 26 days, regardless of where the Clasp is.

ORCS OF THE BLEAK SAVANNAH

The Bleak Savannah is a wild, arid, unruly place, and most of its inhabitants are native to the area, specially adapted to life in the harsh climate. The orcs who settled here during and after the Divine Wars are an exception to the rule, but over the centuries, they too have learned to live in accordance with the laws of nature.

Slightly leaner than their brethren in the Plains of Lede, these orcs are no less powerful and hardy. Semi-nomadic, they migrate with the annual rains, harvesting and storing fast-growing grains when available during the short rainy season.

Mesos' Bane

1D6 RESULT

- 1 **Bane of Heat:** You generate heat when you cast an arcane spell. You must make a Constitution saving throw against your own spell save DC or suffer 1 point of fire damage. For 2 rounds per level of the spell you cast (one round for a cantrip), you have advantage on saving throws against cold spells or effects, as well as resistance to cold damage. However, due to your discomfort, you also have disadvantage on Strength and Dexterity checks during that time.
- 2 **Bane of Luminance:** You generate light when you cast an arcane spell. You must make a Constitution saving throw against your own spell save DC or suffer 1 point of radiant damage. For 2 rounds per level of the spell you cast (one round for a cantrip), your body sheds bright light in a 20-foot radius and dim light for another 20 feet. During this time, you have disadvantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks (and the light might make some such checks impossible).
- 3 **Bane of Lightning:** You generate an aura of lightning when you cast an arcane spell. You must make a Constitution saving throw against your own spell save DC or suffer 1 point of lightning damage. For 2 rounds per level of the spell you cast (one round for a cantrip), you have advantage on saving throws against lightning effects, and you also have resistance to lightning damage. However, during the same period, you also have disadvantage on Strength and Constitution checks.
- 4 **Bane of the Mind:** You generate an aura of psychic dissonance when you cast an arcane spell. You must make a Constitution saving throw against your own spell save DC or suffer 1 point of psychic damage. For 2 rounds per level of the spell you cast (one round for a cantrip), you have advantage on saving throws against psychic effects, and you also have resistance to psychic damage. However, during the same period, you also have disadvantage on Intelligence and Wisdom checks.
- 5-6 No effect. Mesos' Bane does not flare up for you any more than normal



CHAPTER ONE: DAMSEL IN DISTRESS

As the party arrives at Charmok's homestead, read the following:

The farm, if you could call it that, seems little more than a barren patch of dirt with a modest mud hovel that sits atop a mound of earth. A lone baobab tree provides a modicum of shade from the overbearing sun, and a few long-legged secretarybirds stalking about in search of insects or other small prey. The land here is dry now, and it's hard to believe the whole area is flooded during the rainy season.

MEETING CHARMOK

Charmok lives a simple life. He harvests and trades grain; he hunts when he needs meat, leather, and bones; and every so often he chooses an animal to domesticate and raise (with limited success). He's currently working on a small flock of secretarybirds.

He fiercely protects his small plot of land from invaders, whether they be wild creatures or unsightly weeds, and he

has recently joined an alliance of local farmers that guard against the occasional raid from proud warriors that roam the grasslands.

Charmok honors the ancestors and leaves small offerings to the great spirits for plentiful rains and good harvests. He's indifferent to whether those spirits might be the gods or the titans or neither or both. At the end of the day, he's really more superstitious than actually religious.

However, he has recently had cause to question his lack of faith. He is anxious to speak with someone that might help him out of a current predicament but is hesitant to ask anyone outright.

Once he discovers the party was in Durgan's Rest during the explosion and helped put out the fire at his cousin Tsendur's house, he will request their aid in resolving his dilemma.

DREAMS OF FEAR AND FUR

When Charmok and the party are in a private setting where he won't be overheard, Charmok reveals further details about his situation:

He normally only visits the shrine once or twice a year, but after hearing of his cousin's troubles, he delivered an offering of grains for the spirits to watch over Tsendur (for a speedy recovery if he lived, for safe travels in the afterlife if he perished in the fire).

The dreams started shortly after that visit. He returned to the shrine several more times, praying for guidance, but the dreams only increased in intensity. At first they were indistinct, merely vague impressions from which he awoke with a sense of dread. Then there were the dreams of being buried alive. After that came the dreams of being chased in the dark. Most recently, and most horrifying, were the dreams where he felt a searing pain rip straight through his chest.

The last ones were so vivid and felt so real, it was almost as if they were his own memories rather than just a dream.

Charmok is visibly shaken after recounting his experiences, and a **DC 13 Wisdom (Insight)** check alerts party members that there is even more to the story. He can be persuaded, with a **DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion)** check, to reveal that when he looked down at himself in the most recent dream, he watched as a bone horn pierced his chest...a chest that was clearly feminine in nature and covered in tawny fur.

He also explains that though he at first thought the dreams were signs that things were not going well for his cousin, he now believes they are a call for help from someone else: a manticora woman in great danger.

He implores the party to investigate the shrine, convinced they are the answer to his prayers and the only hope for the mystery manticora in his dreams.



CHAPTER TWO: DELVING DEEPER

Charmok gives the party directions and can accompany them for a portion of the trip if it is asked of him, but he won't return to the shrine for fear of triggering a fresh round of nightmares.

The shrine is located roughly three miles north of Charmok's farm. As the party approaches, read the following:

Just as Charmok described, a grassy mound the size of a small house rises up conspicuously from the expanse of level prairie lands. It is reminiscent of a long barrow or burial mound one might find in more temperate areas, and there is a feeling of solemnity to it that you find difficult to describe in words.

A1 – SHRINE

Entering the sacred site seems simple enough. It is a large mound with an opening dug into one side. Inside is a small shrine where orcs leave small trinkets or offerings and light candles in memory of fallen comrades and loved ones.

The shrine is actually built on top of a trap door. A **DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation)** check can reveal its existence. Since the shrine is holy to the orcs, it is not generally disturbed or investigated.

Anyone proficient in Arcana or Religion can easily ascertain the purpose of the seal (runes “to keep the dead asleep”), as well as the fact that it is already partially breached.

The disturbed runes fade as they watch. Within a few minutes the protective magic binding the seal dissolves completely.

Although the trap door remains closed, it is no longer locked, and a cold unnatural chill sweeps through the room.

THE FORGOTTEN LABYRINTH

The series of interconnected tunnels and caverns beneath the open savannah are complex and dangerous, even without the added threat of cursed and undead creatures hatching evil plots. Jagged rocks, cave-ins, slippery chutes, sudden drop offs, and deep underground lakes are all hazards that unprepared spelunkers might encounter there. It would be easy to get hurt, and easier to get lost if precautions aren't taken.

A2 – MAZE OF WHISPERS

Opening the trap door reveals a dirt ramp that slopes steeply down. There is a long narrow tunnel at its base which leads into the rest of the maze.

A **unitaur skeleton** charges at the first person entering the tunnel.

Treasure: The unitaur's ancient stone greataxe from the time of the Divine Wars.

Beyond the entrance tunnel, there are several looping paths in the labyrinth. While the party attempts to explore,

Sinvar passes in and out of the walls, whispering directions to the party but not yet engaging directly. Still impersonating the manticora, she always remains just out of sight and is trying to drive them into a trap (a cave of stalactite and stalagmite darkmantles).

“Turn left...then, turn right. Almost there now...”

Using the map: Allow the players to choose their direction and to follow or ignore the wraiths whispers as they like. Once they arrive at either of the caverns, the earth tremor occurs (see Cavern Approach below).

Alternate maze mechanic: A successful **Wisdom (Survival or Insight)** check will allow you to pick a safe versus unsafe choice when navigating the labyrinth. If the party picks 3 unsafe choices before picking 3 safe choices, they end up in the darkmantle cavern, otherwise it is the cavern with no darkmantles.

A3 AND A5 – CAVERN APPROACH

As the party reaches the entrance to the cavern for the confrontation with the wraith, an earth tremor causes the tunnel to collapse behind them, leaving no way to retreat.

Falling rocks cause 28 (4d10+6) bludgeoning damage, which can be halved with a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw.

A4 – CAVERN OF THE PROUD

Sinvar, the undead Proud wraith, awaits the party, along with 4-7 **proud specters** (depending on number of party members and APL).

A6 – CAVERN OF DARKMANTLES

If Sinvar is able to lead the party into a trap, she and her proud specters are here instead. In addition, Sinvar also has access to 3 lair actions per round with which to command 2-4 darkmantles.

At this point, Sinvar is ready to kill; she and her specters will fight to the death.

Treasure: Decayed remains of Sinvar and her proud warriors and 7 adamantine spear tips.



CHAPTER THREE: MASTER OF THE MAZE

If the party destroys the wraith and her minions, read the following:

As the wraith and the last of her ghastly minions are dispatched to a (hopefully) more permanent rest, the temperature of the cavern seems to rise a few warming degrees. But the feeling doesn't last, and the chill of undeath seeps into your bones once more as a deep rumbling voice echoes in the cavern:

"Well...I see the lioness has had her fun; much good it did her."

K'rgzuth the cursed unitaur and his remaining unitaur skeletons will enter from all sides, surrounding the party. He doesn't play the games Sinvar does. Unlike her, he is not trying to escape the labyrinth and is happy to let her die trying. If she happens to kill the party, escape, and wreak havoc in the world, great. If not, he will dispatch the party himself, once they are weakened.

He's a survivor, and if he senses he is nearing defeat at the hands of the party, he will attempt to escape, lose them in the twisting maze (with which he is by now intimately familiar), and circle back to pick them off one by one. However, if cornered, he will surrender and bargain for his life, offering to show the party the way out along with any valuables the party wants to take. The only item he won't part with is the siege stone. If this is taken from him by force, he immediately ages hundreds of years and dies as his body withers away at an alarming rate, becoming an empty husk in a matter of seconds.

Treasure: Upon defeating K'rgzuth, the party can acquire:

K'rgzuth's spellbooks including one tome dedicated to the *Censure of Mesos*, a true ritual.

K'rgzuth's war journal, which outlines his account of how he ended up here and includes a detailed map of the labyrinth. In addition to providing these helpful details, the journal would be worth a decent amount of coin to a historian.

The cursed *orcish siege stone*

A few other ancient orc treasures, perhaps worth more to a collector/historian as well.

ESCAPING THE MAZE

The other exit (marked in K'rgzuth's war journal) can now be discovered. In addition, since some of the rocks covering it were dislodged by the earlier earth tremor, it is possible to escape by this route. Small, tiny, gaseous, or incorporeal creatures can exit with little difficulty. Medium or larger creatures will need to move a few rocks and/or widen the passage in some other way:

SIZE OF THE LARGEST PARTY MEMBER	TOTAL # AREAS TO BE WIDENED	DIFFICULTY
Small	1	DC 13
Medium	2	DC 16
Large	3	DC 18

The party must achieve a number of successes equal to the Total # of areas to be widened before they experience 3 failures, or their efforts will cause a rock fall. Falling rocks cause 28 (4d10+6) bludgeoning damage, which can be halved with a **DC 15 Dexterity** saving throw. On the bright side, if this occurs (and assuming they survive), the exit is then cleared enough for the party to exit.

CONCLUSION

The party exits the labyrinth about two miles from the orc shrine, but after getting their bearings, **DC 14 Wisdom (Survival)** check, they can easily make their way back to Charmok's farm.

REWARDS

If the party survives the underground excursion, allow each character to gain a partial level as follows:

CHARACTER LEVEL	LEVELS EARNED
6th or lower	~1/2 level
7th	~1/3 level
8th or higher	~1/4 level

If you prefer tracking experience points over milestone level increases, assign xp based on the creatures defeated, and offer each character an additional 200 xp if the party avoided the darkmantle cave, 800 xp if K'rgzuth's spellbooks and the true ritual are recovered, 300 xp if they choose to destroy the orcish siege stone, and 300 xp for escaping the labyrinth.

APPENDIX: CREATURES AND NPCs

CHARMOK

Medium humanoid (orc), lawful neutral

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 15 (2d8 + 6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	16 (+3)	7 (-1)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

Skills Athletics +5

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Orc

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Aggressive. As a bonus action, the orc can move up to its speed toward a hostile creature that it can see.

ACTIONS

Greataxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* (1d12 + 3) slashing damage.

Javelin. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* (1d6 + 3) piercing damage or *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

SINVAR

Large undead (proud wraith), chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 76 (9d10 + 27)

Speed 0 ft., fly 60 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)

Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Leonid, Titan Speech

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Incorporeal Movement. The wraith can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

Overbearing Charge. If the proud moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a melee attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the wraith has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

ACTIONS

Life Drain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 21 (4d8 + 3) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

Create Specter. The wraith targets a humanoid within 10 feet of it that has been dead for no longer than 1 minute and died violently. The target's spirit rises as a specter in the space of its corpse or in the nearest unoccupied space. The specter is under the wraith's control. The wraith can have no more than seven specters under its control at one time.

PROUD SPECTER

Large undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)

Hit Points 27 (5d10)

Speed 0 ft., fly 50 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (-5)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages understands Leonid, Titan Speech

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Incorporeal Movement. The wraith can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

Overbearing Charge. If the specter moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a melee attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 10 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the specter has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

ACTIONS

Life Drain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 10 (3d6) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

DARKMANTLE

Small monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)

Hit Points 22 (5d6 + 5)

Speed 10 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)

Skills Stealth +3

Senses blindsight 60 Ft., passive Perception 10

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Echolocation. The darkmantle can't use its blindsight while deafened.

False Appearance. While the darkmantle remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a cave formation such as a stalactite or stalagmite.

ACTIONS

Crush. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* (1d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage. The darkmantle attaches to the target. If the target is medium or smaller and the darkmantle has advantage on the attack roll, it attaches by engulfing the target's head, and the target is also blinded and unable to breathe while the darkmantle is attached in this way. While attached to the target, the darkmantle can attack no other creature except the target but has advantage on its attack rolls. The darkmantle's speed also becomes 0, it can't benefit from any bonus to its speed, and it moves with the target.

A creature can detach the darkmantle by making a successful DC 13 Strength check as an action. On its turn, the darkmantle can detach itself from the target by using 5 feet of movement

Darkness Aura (1/day). A 15-foot radius of magical darkness extends out from the darkmantle, moves with it, and spreads around corners. The darkness lasts as long as the darkmantle maintains concentration, up to 10 minutes (as if concentrating on a spell). Darkvision can't penetrate this darkness, and no natural light can illuminate it. If any of the darkness overlaps with an area of light created by a spell of 2nd level or lower, the spell creating the light is dispelled.

K'RGZUTH

Large giant (unitaur, titanspawn), neutral evil

Armor Class 16 (19 with mage armor)

Hit Points 54 (6d10 + 21)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	9 (-1)

Skills Perception +2, Survival +2

Senses darkvision 60 ft.; passive Perception 12

Languages Giantish, Titan Speech

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Charge. If K'rgzuth moves at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a gore attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 14 (4d6) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Spellcasting. K'rgzuth is a 9th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). K'rgzuth casts mage armor on himself before combat and has the following wizard spells prepared:

- Cantrips (at will): *chill touch*, *fire bolt*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*
- 1st level (4 slots): *detect magic*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *shield*
- 2nd level (3 slots): *misty step*, *suggestion*
- 3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell*, *fly*, *lightning bolt*
- 4th level (3 slots): *greater invisibility*, *ice storm*
- 5th level (3 slots): *dream*

ACTIONS

Gore. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

Greatclub. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack.* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage.

UNITAUR SKELETON

Large undead (unitaur, titanspawn), lawful evil

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 67 (9d10 + 18)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+3)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)	8 (-1)	5 (-3)

Vulnerabilities bludgeoning

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 Ft., passive Perception 9

Languages Understands Abyssal and Titan speech but can't speak

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Charge. If the skeleton moves at least 10 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a gore attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 9 (2d8) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be pushed up to 10 feet away and knocked prone.

ACTIONS

Greataxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* (2d12 + 4) slashing damage.

Gore. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* (2d8 + 4) piercing damage.

APPENDIX: MAGIC ITEMS

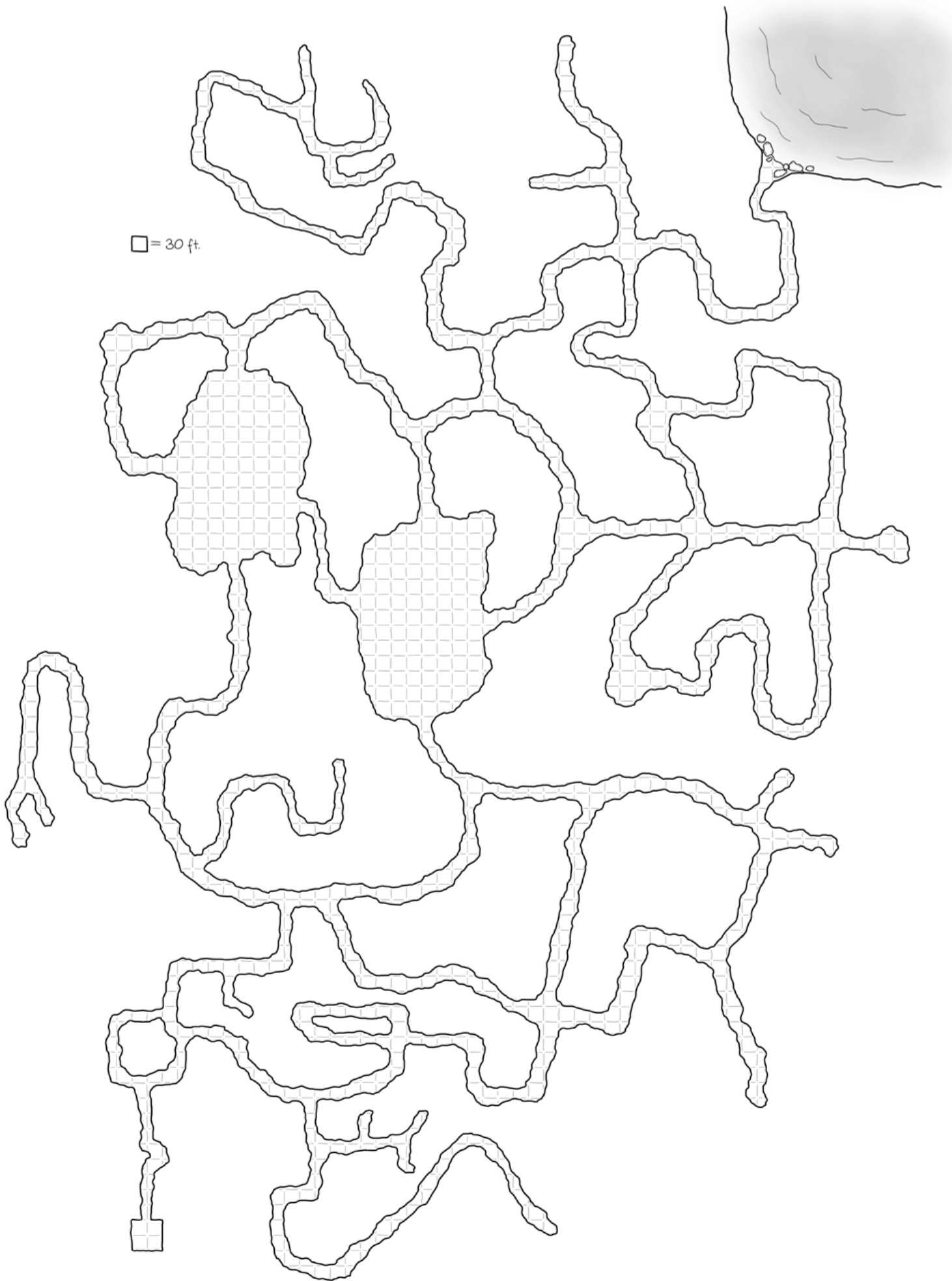
ORCISH SIEGE STONE

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

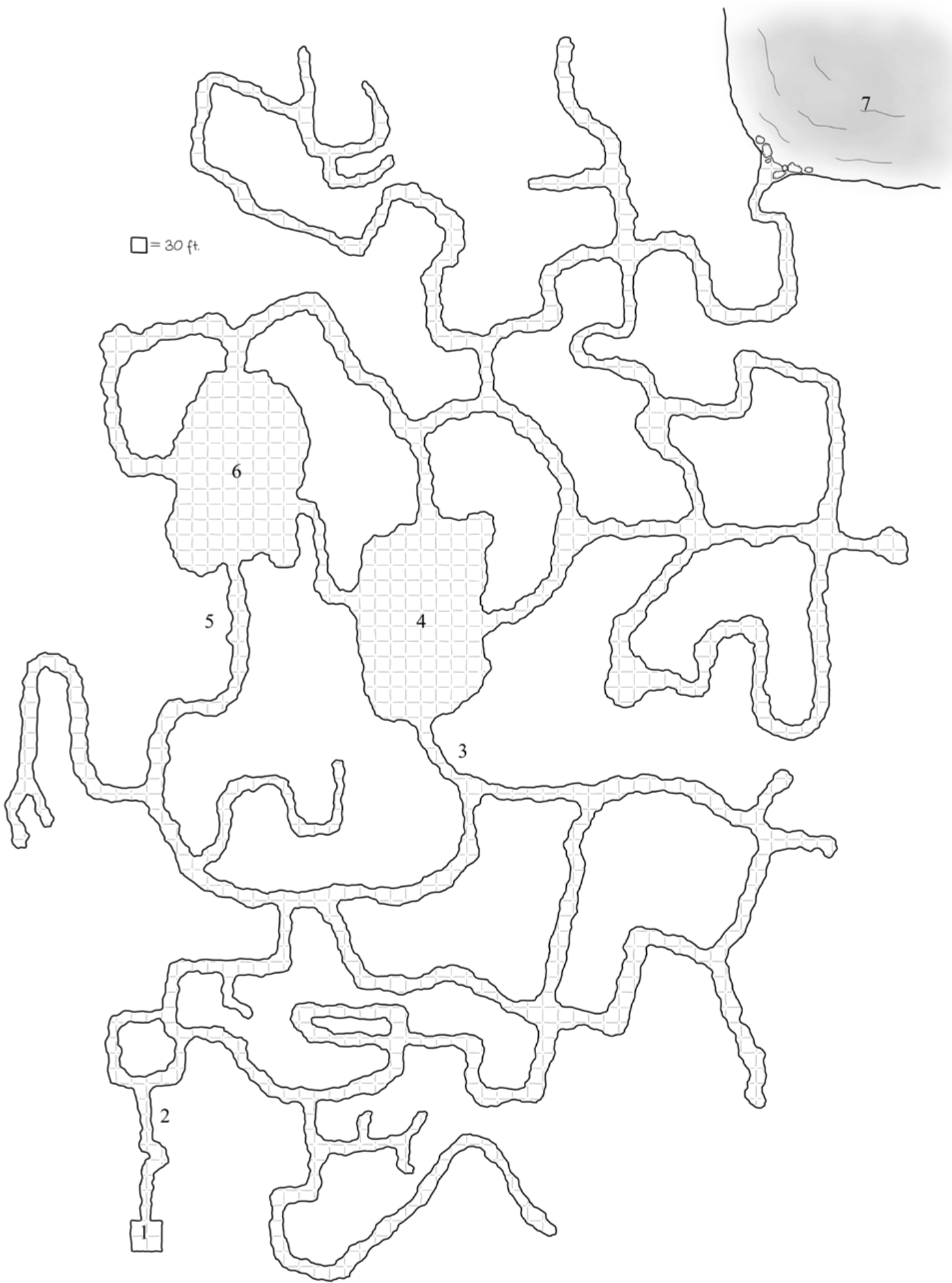
When you attune to one of these stones, it confers the following benefit to you: you don't need to eat or drink while you wear or carry it upon your body.

A stone has AC 24, 10 hit points, and resistance to all damage.

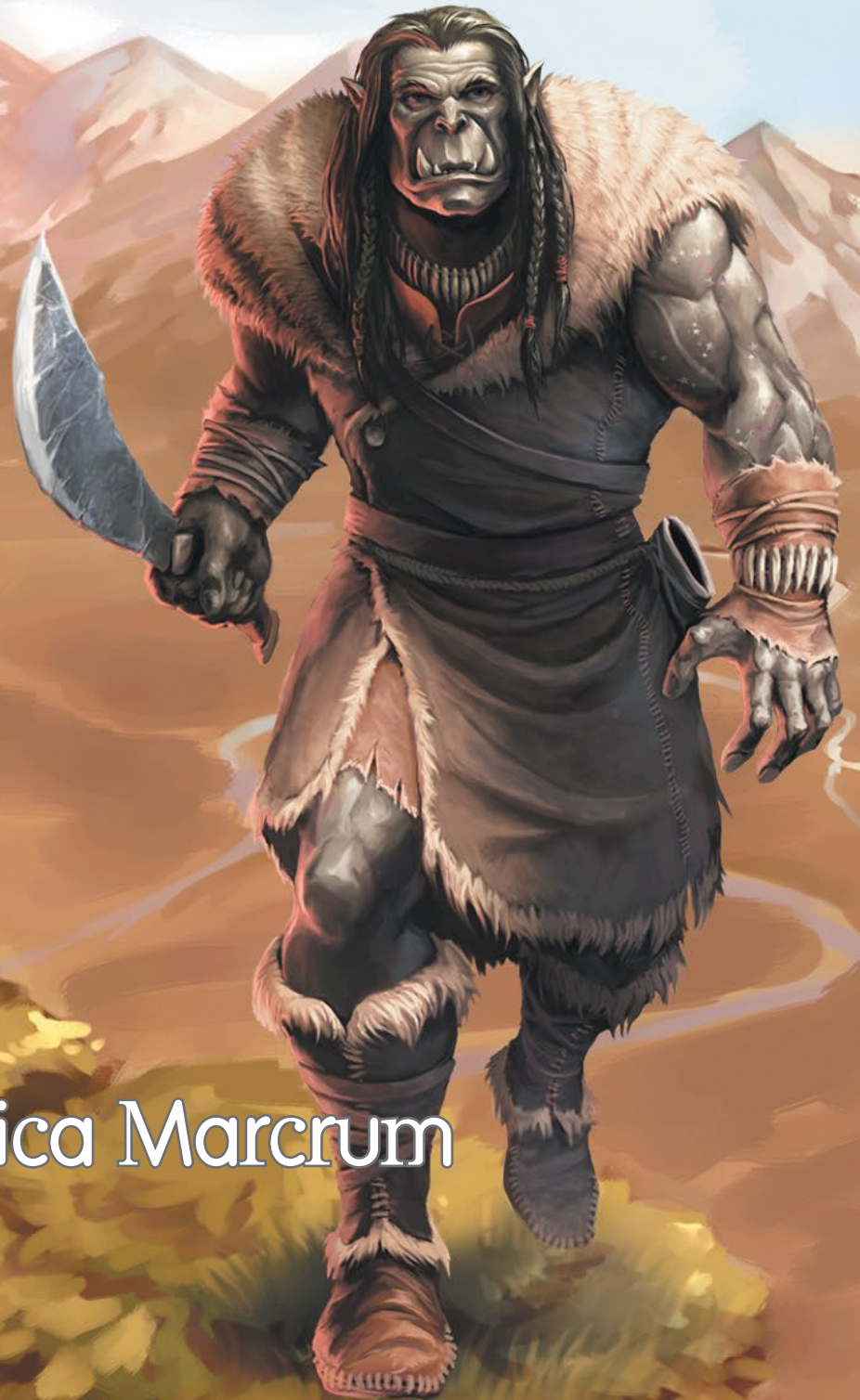
Curse. This siege stone is cursed, causing an unreasonable attachment to the location where you attuned to it. Once per day, you must make a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or be compelled to return to the spot you first attuned to the stone. While you remain within 500 feet of that location, the stone extends your natural lifespan, allowing you to age 1 year for every 50 years that pass.



□ = 30 ft.



Hope and Despair are Both Stars



Jessica Marcum



INTRODUCTION

Hope and Despair are Both Stars is designed for 4-6 characters of levels 6-9. Guidelines are included with each encounter for increasing the difficulty of opposition to suit higher average party level (or APL) groups.

This adventure is set in the Shumosh caravan's temporary settlement in the Plains of Lede. There are no fences, and the buildings are primarily made of leather skins draped over light wooden frames. Clearly part of a caravan, the settlement is meant to be picked up and moved at a moment's notice. There is a large tent with a warm fire circled by smaller buildings made for temporary dwelling or crafting. The largest area of all is the kennel, which contains a number of tame-looking direwolves and winter wolves.

SYNOPSIS

While traveling through the northern Plains of Lede, adventurers encounter a nomadic caravan of orcs fighting off a rampaging herd of hornsaws. After eliminating or calming the beasts, the adventurers are invited in by the orcs to toast their heroism. They learn that ideological

differences are widening between the orcs and both make strong arguments for the future of their tribe. The orcs appeal to the adventurers to help them deal with their opposition at any cost. No matter which side the adventurers choose, if any, the destiny of the Shumosh caravan is being written.

BACKGROUND

Orcs are one of the Redeemed races and frequently have that held against them. They are some of the greatest leather and metal workers in the Scarred Lands, though their work is more austere than the finer dwarven crafts. For years, they have lived primarily as semi-nomadic tribes on the Plains of Lede, though some of settled in Tu-Drog-Na and Mansk. Orcs are also masters of riding, and their hounds are unparalleled.

The Shumosh caravan is led by Myrnev, an Incarnate druid, who reveres the past. She has kept the caravan moving for years, as have the caravan mothers before her. In opposition to her is a younger faction led by Grushenk, a Tattoo Adept who believes that there is money to be

made in settling down for good, ideally somewhere highly populated and wealthy.

PREPARATION

Text included in the plain box should be read aloud or paraphrased for the players. Sidebars and other shaded text are provided, where applicable, to call attention to important points for the GM to consider and should not be read aloud. Creature and NPC names are provided in bold text where they appear in the adventure, and their stat blocks are provided in Appendix: Creatures and NPCs.

INVOLVING THE PCS

The adventure assumes the player characters are in the Plains of Lede near the Shumosh caravan during the hornsaw attack. The party hears the battle cries and sees the fight in the distance. Should they choose to aid the orcs in battle thereby earning respect from the warrior-minded caravan members, they are invited inside for celebratory drinks. Adventurers who choose not to assist the orcs in battle are approached after the fight with the offer of selling them something to make the adventurers feel braver and more combat-ready.

MESOS' BANE

There is a magical surge that can be felt by any creature with the ability to cast arcane spells. Any character within 100 miles of the Clasp of Vergren who casts an arcane spell using a bard, sorcerer, warlock, or wizard spell slot must roll 1d6 and consult the following chart

PLANES OF LEDE – SHUMOSH CARAVAN

The action of this adventure takes place in the Shumosh Caravan's temporary site located in the Plains of Lede, just east of the Kelder Mountains, west of Tu-Drog-Na, and north of the Blood Sea. The ground is flat and hard, and only shrubs and small plant life cover the ground. Game appears limited, though it is seen on occasion.

SHUMOSH CARAVAN

Small semi-nomadic village, lawful neutral

Population: 200

Government: Democratic gerontocracy (council of elders elects a ruler from among them)

Dominant Population: Orc

Primary Worship: Denev, Madriel

Defense: 50 warriors, 20 magic wielders, 50 dire wolves, 20 winter wolves

Commerce: Trade. The caravan trains their wolves as they travel and sell them to kennels at Tu-Drog-

TABLE: MESOS' BANE

D6 BANE

- 1 Bane of Cold:** You generate cold when you cast an arcane spell. You must make a Constitution saving throw against your own spell save DC or suffer 1 point of frost damage. For 2 rounds per level of the spell you cast (one round for a cantrip), you have advantage on saving throws against fire spells or effects, as well as resistance to fire damage. However, due to your frozen limbs, you also have disadvantage on Strength and Dexterity checks during that time.
- 2 Bane of Growth:** You generate a tangle of vines beneath your feet when you cast an arcane spell. You and anyone within 20 ft of you must make a Dexterity saving throw against your own spell save DC when moving or become entangled. If the save is failed two rounds in a row, you or anyone near you who fails are knocked prone. While prone, due to the coverage of vines, you have advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks, but disadvantage on Strength checks, as the vines continue to twist around your limbs.
- 3 Bane of Darkness:** You surround yourself in a cloud of darkness when you cast an arcane spell. You must make a Wisdom saving throw against your own spell DC or become blinded, even if you have Darkvision. For 2 rounds per level of the spell you cast (one round for a cantrip), you are engulfed in a black cloud with a 20-foot radius. During this time, you have advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks if you are in a dark area (if you are outdoors on a sunny day, this may make such a check impossible).
- 4 Bane of Animals:** You summon a swarm of wild beasts CR 1 or lower when you cast an arcane spell. These beasts are neither friendly nor hostile to you and are also not under your control. If attacked, they fight back. For 2 rounds per level of the spell you cast (one round for a cantrip) they follow you, after which time they disappear. During this time, you have advantage on Animal Handling and Charisma (Intimidation) checks and disadvantage on Charisma (Persuasion) checks unless the object of persuasion is particularly fond of wild beasts.
- 5 Bane of Cheese:** You cause wheels of cheese to fall from the sky when you cast an arcane spell. You, and those within a 20-foot radius of you, need to make a Constitution save against your own spell DC or suffer 1 point of bludgeoning damage. For 2 rounds per level of the spell you cast (one round for a cantrip), cheese wheels of various sizes fall. The cheese will not disappear following the spell and may be collected and consumed afterwards. No more than 1/10 cheeses are moldy and/or poisoned. Due to the haphazard nature of falling cheese, Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks are made at disadvantage.
- 6 No effect:** Mesos Bane does not flare up for you any more than usual.

Na and Mansk. They are known for their excellent leatherwork, which they sell in Bridge City, Tu-Drog-Na, Mansk, Mithril, and Durgan's Rest. They are also happy to trade with any who happen to encounter them between cities.

Organizations: None formal, though they are friends to the Vagabonds and fear the Proud less than most city dwellers. They have also dealt with House Asuras, and some of the younger orcs would like to further that relationship.

Notable NPCs

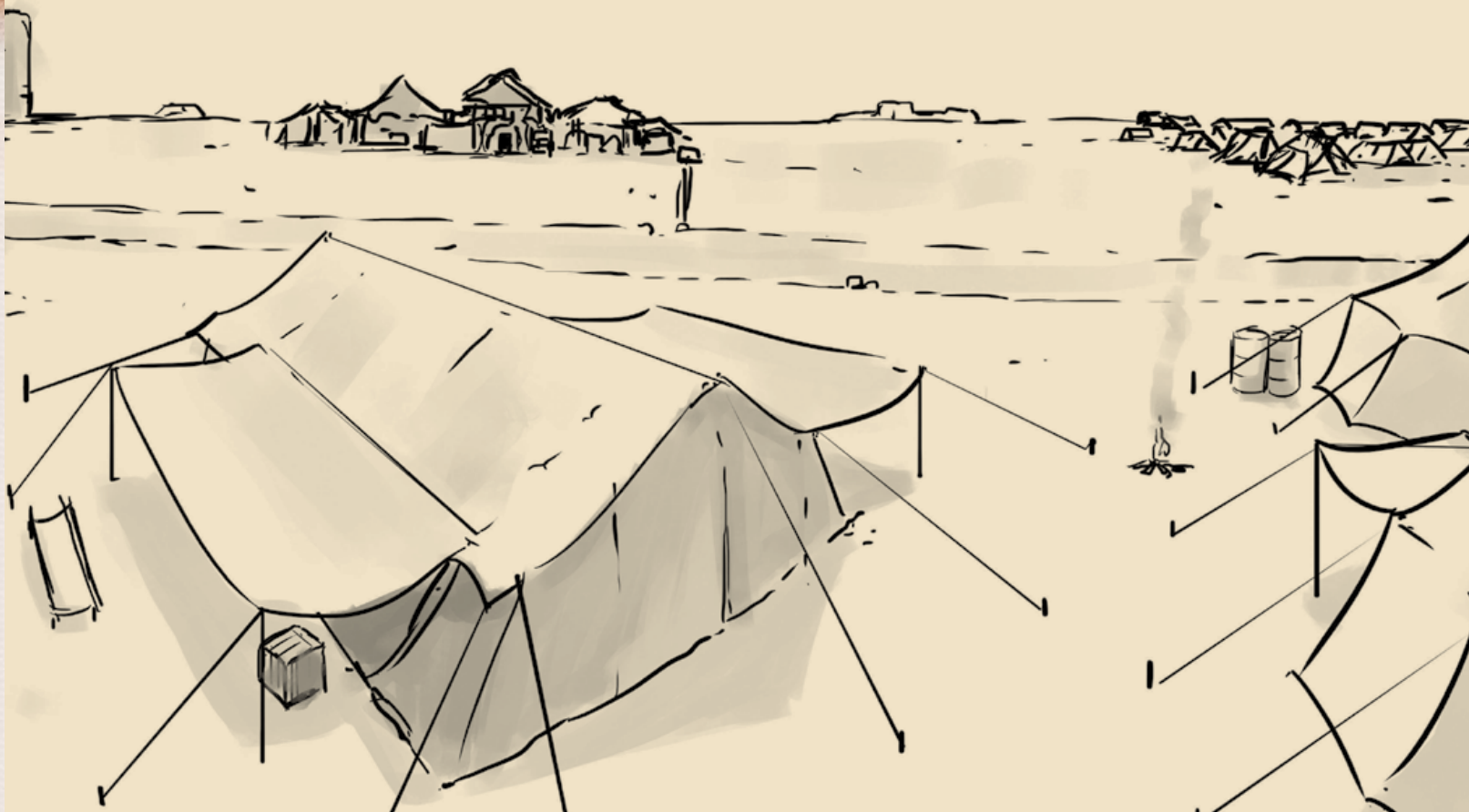
Myrnev (F LG orc **Incarnate**) Myrnev is the current leader of the Shumosh Caravan. A devout believer in Denev, she finds value in tradition, and teaches that orcs have been given the gift of Redemption. She knows that orcs are feared by other races and prefers to maintain the safety of her tribe by staying on the outskirts of civilization, consistently on the move.

Grushenk (F NG orc **Tattoo Adept**) Grushenk is a younger orc but has an active following among the crafters and artisans of the caravan. She is tired of having to travel between customers and wants to set up a shop in a wealthy neighborhood where she can make a regular income. She does not believe in the gods but will not speak out against them for fear of alienating the older orcs in the caravan.

Byurna (Gender neutral CG orc **Berserker**) Byurna is a skilled warrior who loves traveling and sating their considerable appetites for all sorts of things. They see no reason to change the way things are done, believing that the smartest people are in charge for a reason. They side with the majority but would prefer that Myrnev comes out on top.

Kvazosh (F N orc **Druid**) Kvazosh is a disciple of Denev but has begun to wonder if the old ways are the best ways. She loves living under the stars in the open air yet wonders if she is keeping the younger orcs from growing to their full potential with such strict adherence to the old ways. She is a member of the council who elected Myrnev, but she is leaning on Grushenk's side.





CHAPTER ONE: THE SHUMOSH ORCS

The Plains of Lede are sparse, yet warmer than expected given the northern clime. A warm wind blows from the South. After walking through patches of barren fields and grazing wild animals, the adventurers hear battle cries and screams in the distance.

The adventurers approaching the sounds see a group of orcs fighting valiantly against a herd of **hornsaw unicorns**. A nearby fighter (F N orc **fighter**) shouts “either make yourself useful or run for cover!”

The adventurers see that 3 Hornsaws lie dead, and several orcs are bloodied. A small group of orc fighters and their

direwolves are fighting against the remaining herd. Upon the adventurers’ approach, 2 hornsaws pull away from the orcs and launch themselves at the adventurers.

DIFFICULTY SCALING

If the party is weak, only 1 hornsaw will attack. If the party is especially weak, an orc **berserker** may come help them in their moment of need.

If the party is particularly strong, add a third **hornsaw**.

If the adventurers defeat the hornsaws, Byurna (Gender neutral CG orc **Berserker**) claps one of them on the back and cheers that there is nothing like a good fight. They then invite the party in to the main tent for a strong celebratory drink.

If the adventurers avoid the fight altogether, Kvazosh (F N orc **Druid**) asks if they were afraid and states that clearly, they are in need of something to make them feel more powerful. She invites them to take a look at the wares for sale inside the temporary settlement.

THE MEETINGHOUSE

A fire blazes in the center of the meetinghouse, and the atmosphere is warm and welcoming. The orcs do not frequently encounter fellow travelers and they are eager to share a pint of ale, hear stories from the road, and have an opportunity for trade. Depending on how the adventurers were brought into the caravan, they will have two different approaches.

The adventurers who arrived with Byurna, go to Drinks with the Old Guard.

The adventurers who arrived with Kvazosh, go to Shopping with the New Blood.

DRINKS WITH THE OLD GUARD

The adventurers who were welcomed in by Byurna are immediately given flagons of strong ale and toasted by their fellow warriors. A toast is also raised to Myrnev, who is reported to be communing with Denev outside under the stars, somewhat away from camp. Byurna praises Myrnev as a leader, sharing that Myrnev has kept the caravan going despite terrible odds, relating assorted war stories about evading Huror attacks and making peace with the Proud. If asked, Byurna will mention that some of the younger orcs and artisans are interested in settling down, though Byurna will express that they don't really see the point. A DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals that Byurna genuinely likes Myrnev and the quasi-nomadic life they are able to lead because of her leadership.

Byurna may introduce the adventurers to some of the elder druids and warriors who welcome them as equals and praise their battle prowess. The elders encourage the adventurers to take a look at the wares of the merchants and artisans but warn them to not listen to their "heretical nonsense." A DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check will convince the orc elders to express their concerns about Grushenk specifically, saying that "something should be done, preferably by an outsider." A DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals that they have grave concerns that Grushenk is going to divide the tribe irreparably. If pressed after a failed check, the elders inform the adventurers

that Myrnev has always guided the caravan well and that traditions last for a reason. They advise the adventurers to take a look around, with caution.

If the adventurers pass their checks and/or agree to look around, Byurna will inform them that the elders would like to hire them. The elders fear that Grushenk will make a move against them soon, and would prefer she is dealt with quietly, by whatever means they see fit. They are willing to offer the adventurers a prized *beastform ring* in return, along with some gp. *Continue to Shopping with the New Blood.*

Adventurers who do not look around, pass their checks, or look further around, continue to Chapter 2.

Adventurers who began at Shopping with the New Blood and then met the Elders, continue to Chapter 2.

SHOPPING WITH THE NEW BLOOD

The adventurers brought inside by Kvazosh are led to a group of artisans sitting just beyond the fire. They are introduced as "in the market for something special." Orcs may show them an array of +1 weapons and armor for sale (300-500 gp), as well as wooden and leather jewelry (approx. 25-100 sp) and talismans (Darkwood Bow for 200 gp, Cold Iron Weapons for 50-100 gp, and Oaken Armor for 350 gp).

Note: *Adventurers brought inside by Byurna may also shop at the artisan market but will not be led by Kvazosh. Grushenk will approach to offer them a tattoo.*

Kvazosh will inform them that what they will truly need to feel special, however, is a warrior's tattoo. She will introduce them to Grushenk, stating that Grushenk is the tribe's greatest tattoo artisan. Grushenk will gladly offer a magic tattoo to any adventurer for 150-500 gp depending on the complexity (all tattoos in SLPG available).

Whether or not the adventurers decide to get a tattoo, Grushenk speaks to them about her desire to set up a shop somewhere and help "take the tribe to the next level." (If the adventurers get a tattoo, this conversation takes place during tattooing. If they do not, it will take place while Grushenk walks them through the merchants and introduces them to various wolves, both dire and winter). Grushenk speaks about how old-fashioned traveling with a caravan is, and how much easier things would be in a city. She points out the artists and laments how infrequently they get to sell anything. She also praises the training of their direwolves and winter wolves, but shares her opinion that it would be just as easy to train them in a city.

With a DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check, the adventurers can see that Grushenk plans to speak out against Myrnev

soon but has no plans for violent overthrow. With a **DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion)** check, she shares her exasperation at endless traveling and worries that if she doesn't act soon, the desire for change will die down, yet she also doesn't feel ready to lead.

Following the conversation with Grushenk, Kvazosh approaches the adventurers and asks if they feel braver. She will inform them that Grushenk would like to partner with them in future business endeavors, beginning now with a show of good faith. Kvazosh shares that they would benefit from the adventurers convincing their fellow orcs of the benefits of city life. She advises the adventurers against attacking Myrnev directly, stating that they are better than bloodshed. In return, they will offer the adventurers a free tattoo now, and a 50% discount on all wares at their future stores.

Adventurers who wish to speak with more orcs or peruse their options, *continue to Drinks with the Old Guard. They will not be greeted as valiant warriors, but the orcs will still be friendly and gracious.*

All other adventurers continue to Chapter 2.

MEETINGHOUSE MAP

The meetinghouse is a large circular structure, and the fire brightens the center of the room. The light changes moving away from the fire from bright to dim light and then to darkness on the outskirts of the room.

A1 – FIREPIT

The center of the action. Orcs sit around the firepit drinking, sharing stories, and having a good time. This is where Byurna and their team of warriors bring the adventurers.

A2 – MERCHANT AND ARTISANS

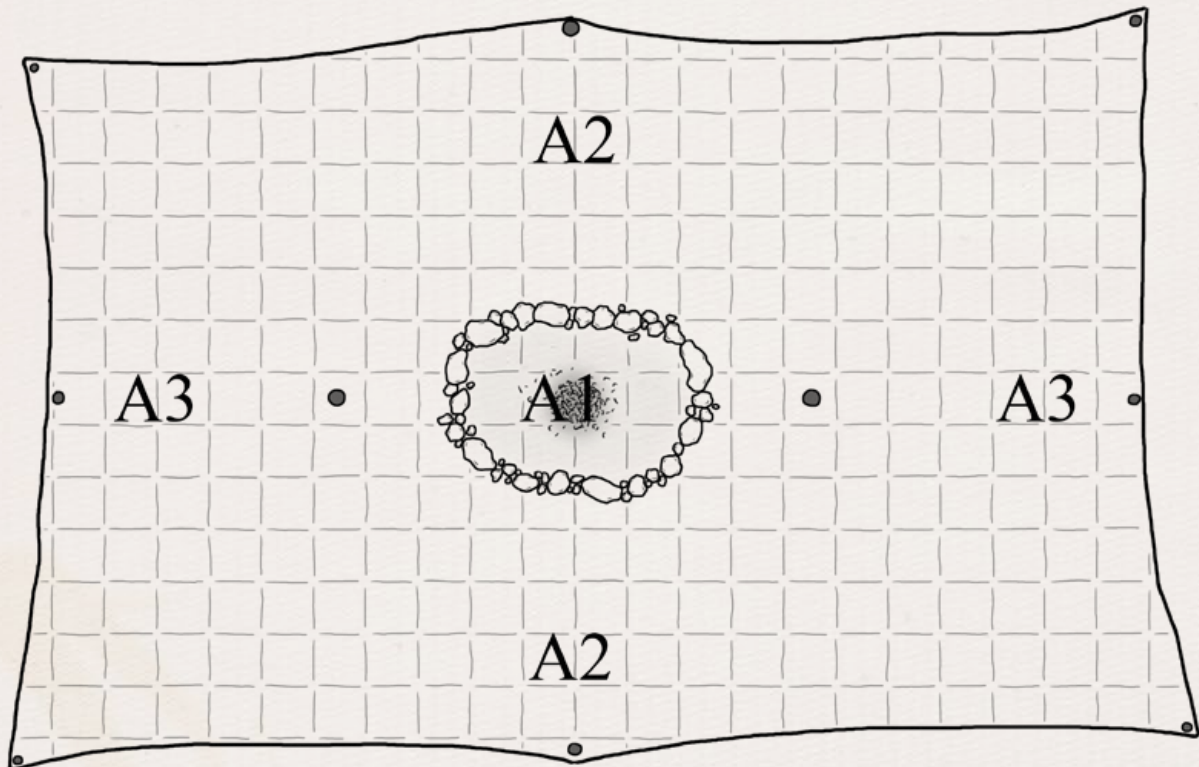
Just outside the circle of the firepit, in dim lighting, is where the younger orcs are drinking and comparing their wares. This is where Kvazosh brings the adventurers and where Grushenk is giving tattoos.

A3 – THE OUTSKIRTS

Near the back of the meetinghouse, it is unnaturally dark. Adventurers without darkvision will be blinded. There are a few scattered tame **direwolves** and **winter wolves** here eating and appearing restless. A **DC 10 Wisdom (Animal Handling)** check will reveal that something unnatural is upsetting the wolves. A **DC 20 Wisdom (Survival)** check in this area will reveal a strange black feather on the ground.

There are three despairs hovering in the rafters of this area. They will not attack unless spotted and attacked first.

Treasure. A **DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation)** check reveals *2 scrolls of polymorph* as well as a note stating that *"It's not yet time. Wait until more of them are with us."*





CHAPTER TWO: DEBATING DESPAIR

The adventurers have been given a task by one or both factions to undercut or eliminate the other. At this point, Myrnev enters the Meetinghouse and draws attention to the despairs in the outskirts of the room (if the 3 **despairs** in the previous chapter have been killed, more will have come to take their place).

The entire ceiling appears to be full of despairs, but the orcs will fight heartily. Only 2 will attack the adventurers (3 for stronger parties, 1 for weaker parties).

After the despairs have been dealt with, Myrnev graciously thanks the adventurers and states that there is no need for political debate, as the despairs were the only reason the younger orcs were riled up. Grushenk strongly

disagrees and calls for a debate. *Go to The Debate*

Note: *If the adventurers kill either Myrnev or Grushenk outright during this time, go to War of the Extremists.*

THE DEBATE

Grushenk opens with her argument, deferring respectfully to the elders. Myrnev will respond. Then, they look to the adventuring party to hear an outsider's perspective.

Grushenk's argument: the hornsaw and despair attack are emblematic of a larger problem. With the violence on

the road, it is difficult for artisans to hone their craft because they spend half of their time fighting. The wolves that they sell for such a high price frequently die to fearsome beasts before their training is completed. The future for the orcs is to abandon the road, settle down in a wealthy city, and earn the income they deserve doing the things they do best.

Myrnev's argument: the Hornsaw and Despair attacks are nothing that have not happened before and will not happen again. All of life is a cycle, and the orcs role is to persevere and recreate that cycle through their actions. Were they to assimilate and live a softer life, they would soon cease to be orcs. They are the Redeemed, and the god-races will never let them forget it. They would be wise to remember it, as well.

Adventurers may make their own argument for or against either party here. With a **DC 20 Charisma (Performance or Persuasion)** check or with excellent role-playing, they win over the room.

Note: *If there is an orc or half-orc in the party, Myrnev and her faction are more likely to agree with the party. If they are speaking against Myrnev and have no orc-kin in their party, they make this check at disadvantage. Grushenk values assimilation and will respect the party's input regardless of its composition.*

The adventurers who choose to attack either leader instead of joining in the debate, *go to War of the Extremists.*

The adventurers who choose to stay out of the debate entirely, Go to Conclusion C.

WAR OF THE EXTREMISTS

Due to the adventurer's actions, violence has erupted in the meetinghouse. It is now a battle for control of the tribe, and the adventurers are caught in the middle. The wolves who were previously peacefully eating on the outskirts of the meetinghouse now begin to close in on them and go to their trainer's sides.

Myrnev, if alive, casts *dispel magic* on 3 *dire wolves* revealing that they are polymorphed **blight wolves**. She sends 2 of them after the adventurers for disturbing the peace of her caravan and 1 after Grushenk for not letting things go.

Note: *If Adventurers killing Grushenk was what caused this uproar, Myrnev still sics blight wolves on them for killing Grushenk openly and making her a martyr. She sends the other wolves after Grushenk's remaining supports.*

Note: *If Myrnev is dead, a **druid Elder** takes this action in her place, but only summons 2 blight wolves.*

Grushenk, if alive, calls 3 **winter wolves** and 3 **quillwolves** to her side. She also commands her followers to set loose 3 **moon cats** from among the artisan sacks and blankets to wander around and paralyze fighters. Grushenk sends 2 winter wolves and 2 quillwolves after the adventurers, sending the rest to defend the artisans from Myrnev's warriors. The moon cats move haphazardly around the grounds, paralyzing anyone and anything they come into contact with.

Note: *If the adventurers killed Myrnev, causing the uproar, Grushenk will not send wolves after them, but they will still be harassed by moon cats.*

Note: *If Grushenk is dead, an artisan or Kvazosh will do this instead.*

The battle is chaotic. If the adventurers are in a very tight spot, their previous acquaintances Kvazosh and/or Byurna come to their aid. The battle ends when the wolves are killed, thus ending the "debate" of bloodshed. Neither Myrnev nor Grushenk wants to martyr the other and will not fight to the death.

DIFFICULTY SCALING

This combat should be very hard, but not a massacre. For weaker parties, remove 1 of each kind of wolf. If it starts to look very bleak for the party, even with NPC intervention, have a friendly orc attract a wolf's attention just in the nick of time.

If Grushenk is killed or her forces are depleted, *go to Conclusion A.*

If Myrnev is killed or her forces are depleted, go to Conclusion B.

If both leaders are killed, go to Conclusion C.

Conclusion A: Tradition is our Bedrock

Myrnev thanks the adventurers for their assistance. The Shumosh caravan will remain as it ever has, a steady fixture moving upon the Plains of Lede. There may come a time for change, but it is not today. It may not be tomorrow. Only the stars will tell. Near the back of the meetinghouse, the younger orcs sullenly pack up their wares as they prepare for another day on the road. The older orcs stoically watch the adventurers leave, pride in their eyes.

Conclusion B: A New Age Dawns

Grushenk has won her motion and is now equal in status to Myrnev, if not outright replaced her (if Myrnev is dead). She is genuinely shocked and thrilled at the outcome, thanking the adventurers profusely for their help. While unsure where they will end up, she assures the adventurers that they will always be treated like family at her new

shop. There is concern in the faces of the older orcs, but the younger artisans are beaming with hope.

Conclusion C: Stalemate

The tribe is restless. With no clear winner of the debate, there is a question of who is truly in charge of the tribe. For now, they will continue on as before to Tu-Drog-Na, but after that, no one knows. Perhaps they will settle down somewhere, perhaps they will continue to travel. A feeling of unease is pervasive. As the adventurers leave, they hear the fluttering of wings above them and a single black feather falls to the ground at their feet.

REWARDS

All adventures either complete a milestone, or gain XP equal to the number of creatures they kill divided by the number of party members. Additionally, the following rewards are offered:

If the adventures helped Myrnev: *beastform ring* and 50 gp each

If the adventures helped Grushenk: Free tattoo each and a future 50% discount at the Shumosh Caravan's future permanent location.

A baby winter wolf, half-trained as a mount

A moon kitten



APPENDIX: CREATURES AND NPCs

GRUSHENK (TATTOO ADEPT)

Medium humanoid (orc), chaotic good

Armor Class 16 (chain shirt, buckler)

Hit Points 65 (10d8 + 20)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Dexterity +5, Charisma +6

Skills Arcana +4, Perception +3, Performance +9, Persuasion +9

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Ledean, Orcish

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Aggressive. As a bonus action, Grushenk can move up to her speed toward a hostile creature she can see.

Bardic Inspiration (3/Short Rest). Grushenk uses her bonus action to grant one creature other than herself one Bardic Inspiration die, a d8. Within the next 10 minutes, the target can roll the die and add the number rolled to one ability check, attack roll, saving throw, or damage roll it makes. The target can wait until after it rolls the check, but before the DM says whether the roll succeeds or fails. Alternatively, when an attack roll is made against the target, it can use its reaction to roll the Bardic Inspiration die and add the number to its AC against that attack, after seeing the roll but before knowing whether it hits or misses. A creature can have only one Bardic Inspiration die at a time.

Dancing Ink. Grushenk has vibrant white magical tattoo. She may cast *shield* from the tattoo up to three times, without consuming a spell slot. Once she has done so, the Dancing Ink tattoo fades away. Grushenk may apply a new Dancing Ink tattoo with

any spell she knows after a long rest.

Jack of All Trades. Grushenk adds +1 to any ability check she makes that she is not proficient in.

Savage Attacks. When she scores a critical hit with a melee weapon attack, Grushenk can roll one of the weapon's damage dice one additional time and add it to the extra damage of the critical hit.

Song of Rest. Grushenk can perform a song while taking a short rest. Any ally who hears the song regains an extra 1d6 hit points if it spends any Hit Dice to regain hit points at the end of that rest. Grushenk can confer this benefit on herself as well.

Spellcasting. Grushenk is an 8th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following bard and wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *blade ward, fire bolt, friends, message, vicious mockery*

1st level (4 slots): *charm person, comprehend languages, disguise self, faerie fire, shield, Tasha's hideous laughter, unseen servant*

2nd level (3 slots): *detect thoughts, hold person, rend the sovereign soul*

3rd level (3 slots): *hypnotic pattern, major image*

Actions

Multiattack. Grushenk makes two scimitar attacks or two shortbow attacks.

Scimitar. Melee Weapon Attack : +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit* : 5 (1d6 + 2) slashing damage.

Shortbow. Range Weapon Attack : +5 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit* : 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Countercharm. Grushenk starts a performance that lasts until the end of her next turn. During that time, she and any allies within 30 feet of her that can hear the performance have advantage on saving throws against being frightened or charmed. The performance ends if Grushenk is incapacitated, silenced, or she voluntarily ends it.

MOON CAT

Tiny monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 14 (4d4+4)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	5 (-3)	17 (+3)	16 (+2)

Skills Perception +5, Stealth +4
Senses passive Perception 15
Languages -
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Charming Kitty. Upon arrival, all creatures that can see the cat must succeed on a DC 21 Charisma saving throw. Those who fail view the cat as a friend and ally. If their attitude toward any creature in the vicinity is hostile, it shifts to indifferent. This effect lasts for nine hours. A creature may repeat their saving throw every hour, ending the effect upon them on a success. In addition, creatures that were charmed or frightened have those effects suppressed for the duration of the cat's charm. Those effects begin again as though no time has passed when the duration ends.

No Touch. Any creature who attempts to touch the cat, as opposed to the cat choosing to touch another creature, must succeed on a DC 11 Fortitude saving throw or be paralyzed for 7 (1d6+4) minutes.

Portent. The cat rubs against a creature of its choice, gifting it with a portent. The DM rolls 1d8 to determine the effect based on the current moon phase:

Moon Phase	Miracle	Curse
Full Moon	1-7	8
Waning Moon	1-5	6-8
New Moon	1	2-8
Waxing Moon	1-3	4-8

Miracle: The creature gains a +1 to all skill rolls, saving throws, or attack rolls for 6d4 hours.

Curse: The creature suffers a -1 to all skill rolls, saving throws, or attack rolls for 6d4 hours.

Actions

Multiattack. The cat makes one bite and two claw attacks.

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 piercing damage.

Claw. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 slashing damage.

Teleport. The cat teleports to a site where it feels drawn. Once its task is complete, or it is attacked, the cat teleports back to its lair.

MOON KITTEN

Tiny monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 11
Hit Points 3 (1d4)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)	14 (+2)	16 (+2)

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +3
Senses passive Perception 15
Languages -
Challenge 0 (10 XP)

Charming Kitty. Upon arrival, all creatures that can see the kitten must succeed on a DC 21 Charisma saving throw. Those who fail view the kitten as a friend and ally, and their emotional state. If their attitude toward any creature in the vicinity is hostile, it shifts to indifferent. This effect lasts for nine hours. A creature may repeat their saving throw every hour, ending the effect upon them on a success. In addition, creatures that were charmed or frightened have those effects suppressed for the duration of the kitten's charm. Those effects begin again as though no time has passed when the duration ends.

Portent. The kitten rubs against a creature of its choice, gifting it with a portent. The DM rolls 1d8 to determine the effect based on the current moon phase:

Moon Phase	Miracle	Curse
Full Moon	1-7	8
Waning Moon	1-5	6-8
New Moon	1	2-8
Waxing Moon	1-3	4-8

Miracle: The creature gains a +1 to a single skill roll, saving throw, or attack roll in the next 6d4 hours.

Curse: The creature suffers a -1 to a single skill roll, saving throw, or attack roll in the next 6d4 hours.

Actions

Multiattack. The kitten makes one bite or one claw attack.

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 piercing damage.

Claw. Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 slashing damage.

Teleport (Recharge 4-6). The kitten teleports to an unoccupied space it can see within 120 feet.

MYRNEV (INCARNATE)

Medium humanoid (orc), neutral good

Armor Class 15 (leather armor, Defense fighting style)

Hit Points 110 (17d8+34)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws INT +5, WIS +8

Skills Nature +5, Survival +8

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 19

Languages Druidic, Ledean, Orcish

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Aggressive. As a bonus action, Myrnev can move up to her speed toward a hostile creature she can see.

Land's Stride. Myrnev can move through nonmagical difficult terrain without having to use extra movement. She can pass through nonmagical plants without being slowed by them and without taking damage from them if they have thorns, spines, or a similar hazard. She has advantage to saving throws against plants that are magically created or manipulated to impede movement.

Savage Attacks. When she scores a critical hit with a melee weapon attack, Myrnev can roll one of the weapon's damage dice one additional time and add it to the extra damage of the critical hit.

Spellcasting. Myrnev is a 12th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following druid and ranger spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *guidance*, *produce flame*

1st level (4 slots): *animal friendship*, *call animal*, *create or destroy water*, *cure wounds*, *detect poison and disease*, *entangle*, *multiply missile*, *purify food and drink*, *speak with animals*

2nd level (3 slots): *beast sense*, *gust of wind*, *lesser restoration*, *pass without trace*, *spike growth*

Actions

Multiattack. Myrnev makes two melee or ranged weapon attacks.

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage.

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8+3) slashing damage.

Wild Incarnation. Myrnev polymorphs into one of her available shapes, and can remain in this form indefinitely. Myrnev can choose whether her equipment falls to the ground, melds with her new form, or is worn by the new form. Myrnev reverts to her true form if she dies or falls unconscious. She can revert to her true form by using an action on her turn.

While in a new form, Myrnev retains her game statistics, but her AC, movement modes, Strength and Dexterity are replaced by those of the new form, and she gains special senses, proficiencies, traits, actions, and reactions (except class features, legendary actions, and lair actions) that the new form has but she lacks. Her ability to speak and take any action that requires hands is limited to the capabilities of her new form. She can cast any innate spells of the new form, but cannot cast her own spells. Transforming doesn't break her concentration on a spell she's already cast, or prevent her from taking actions that are part of a spell that she's already cast.

Myrnev is able to change form into a pilfer pixie, a quillwolf, a sutak, or a trogon.

QUILLWOLF

Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 16 (3d8+3)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	2 (-4)	12 (+1)	5 (-3)

Skills Perception +3, Survival +3

Senses passive Perception 18

Languages -

Challenge 1

Keen Hearing and Smell. The quillwolf has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Pack Tactics. The quillwolf has advantage on attack rolls against a creature if at least one of the quillwolf's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and isn't incapacitated.

Quills. A creature that hits the quillwolf with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 2x(1d4) piercing damage.

Actions

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 12 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone and take an additional 2 (1d4) piercing damage.

Quill Burst (1/Day). The quillwolf vigorously shakes its body, launching quills in all directions. All creatures within 15 feet of the quillwolf must succeed on a DC13 Dexterity saving throw or take 2 (1d4) piercing damage.

WINTER WOLF PUP

Medium monstrosity, neutral

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 22 (4d8+4)

Speed 35 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +2, Stealth +3

Damage Immunities cold

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Common, Winter Wolf

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Keen Hearing and Smell. The pup has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Pack Tactics. The pup has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the pup's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Snow Camouflage. The pup has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide in snowy terrain.

Actions

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 12 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Cold Breath (Recharge 6). The pup exhales a blast of freezing wind in a 10-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw, taking 9x(2d8) cold damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

APPENDIX: MAGIC ITEMS

BEASTFORM RING

Ring, rare (requires attunement)

This simple silver band is etched roughly with figures of animals and lycanthropes. While wearing this ring, you can take the shape of a beast as if by means of the polymorph spell. The new form's challenge rating must be equal to or less than your level divided by 3, rounded down. After using this ring, you must finish a long rest before using it again.

SCROLL OF POLYMORPH

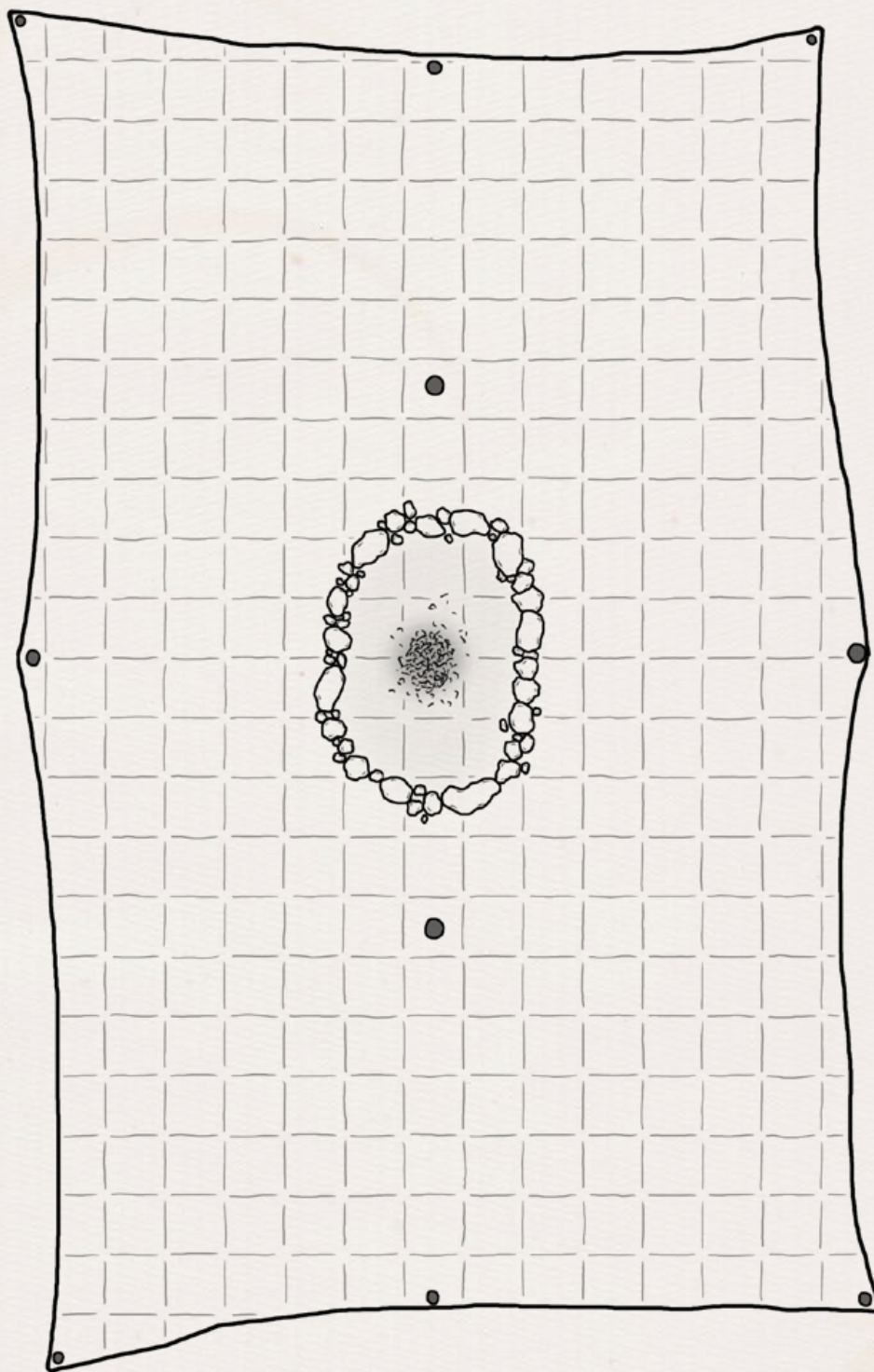
Scroll, rare

A spell scroll of polymorph bears the words of a polymorph spell, written in a mystical cipher. If the spell is on your class's spell list, you can read the scroll and cast its spell without providing any material components. Otherwise, the scroll is unintelligible. Casting the spell by reading the scroll requires the spell's normal casting time. Once the spell is cast, the words on the scroll fade, and it crumbles to dust. If the casting is interrupted, the scroll is not lost.

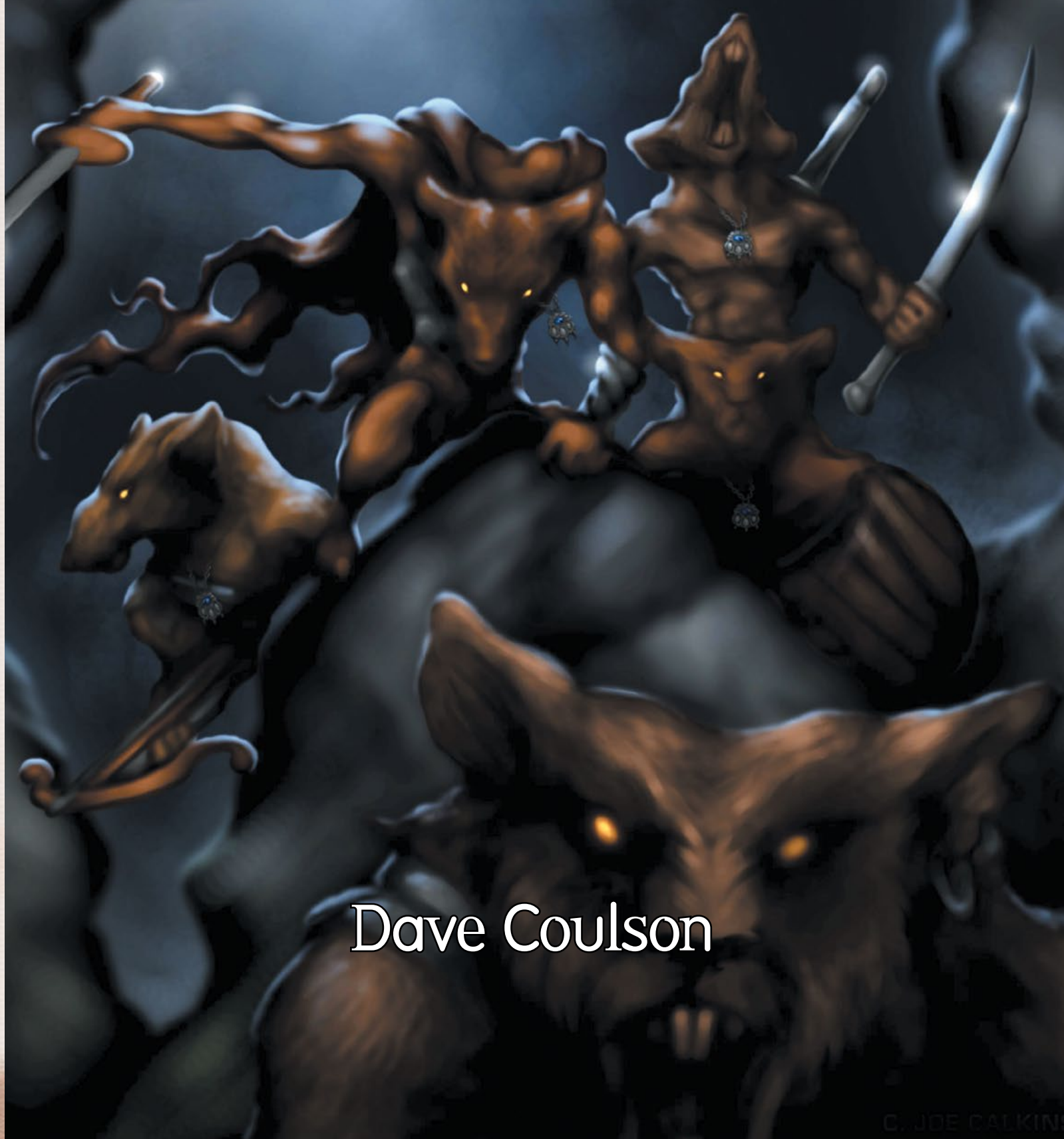
If the spell is on your class's spell list but of a higher level than you can normally cast, you must make an ability check using your spellcasting ability to determine whether you cast it successfully. The DC equals 10 + the spell's level. On a failed check, the spell disappears from the scroll with no other effect.

The scroll of polymorph's saving throw DC is 15 and its attack bonus is +7.

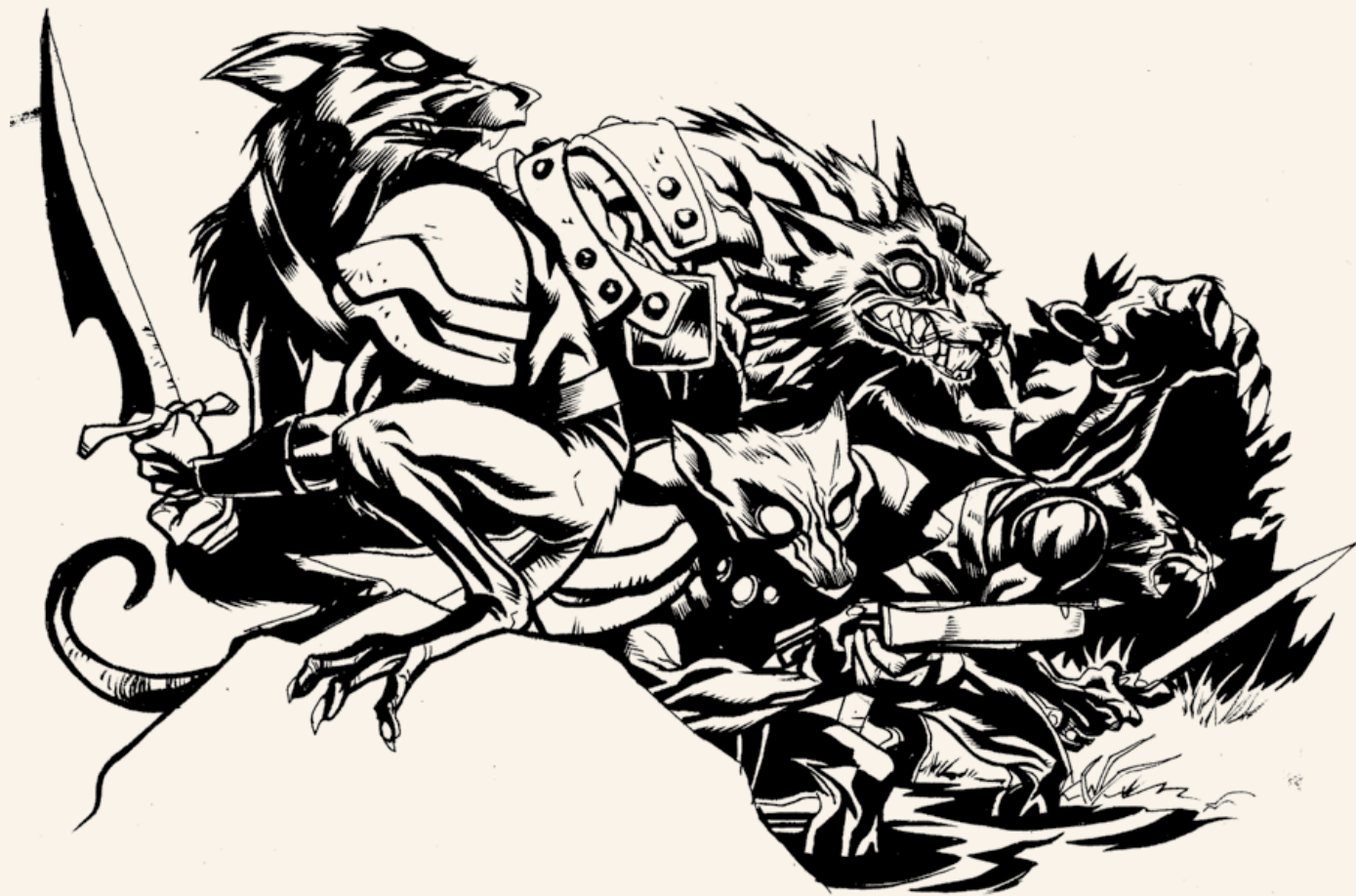
PLAYER MAP



Pit of Boiling Blood



Dave Coulson



INTRODUCTION

Anger and rage are powerful forces, and they can spread like a disease among a populace with little or no warning. The festering swamps of the Mourning Marshes have belched forth many diseases since the titan Chern fell upon the landscape, but recently something new has bubbled up. A rage-inducing disease birthed from a newly revealed cesspool on the borders of the marsh has created a problem for the Veshian Vigils, and unless stopped at the source, the sickness has the potential to affect many more lives.

Pit of Boiling Blood is a short adventure scenario designed for 4-6 characters of levels 6-9. It takes place in the Mourning Marshes, a dangerous swamp south of Vesh, and sees the characters tracking the host of a dangerous disease and, ultimately, to its foul lair to end the corruption welling up from below.

SYNOPSIS

The party encounters a small band of ranger apprentices of the Veshian Vigils on the road as evening descends. The rangers are survivors of an encounter with a blood-frenzied monster that attacked their patrol, a creature the Vigils were actively seeking because of its link to a new disease spreading around the southern regions of Vesh. In the ensuing battle the creature, a type of fiend called a bloodgutter, escaped into the Mourning Marshes. An open bounty remains on the creature, but the rangers couldn't pursue because their numbers were decimated.

Unfortunately, most of the rangers are affected by the bloodgutter's dangerous disease. That night they turn into savages with a thirst for blood and violence. They attack the characters, fighting wildly, and afterwards, the lone survivor begs for the party's assistance in stopping the bloodgutter.

The trail of the fiend leads from the ranger's original battle site into the Mourning Marshes. Along the way, the party must deal with the threats from the dangerous swamp itself, but eventually they catch up to the thing. The bloodgutter was spawned in a nearby pit, where its spilled blood returns to its home. To end the menace, the characters must follow the retreating blood to the source and then seal the fissure at the bottom, while dealing with the horrors spawned in the rage-inducing fluid.

BACKGROUND

The titan Chern fell upon the fertile land known as the Flourishing Flats east of the Kelder Mountains, but the land did not remain fertile for long. The blood of the titan seeped into the ground, creating the Mourning Marshes and birthing many diseases that afflicted the land in terrible ways. Dangerous, disease-ridden slitherin arose as rats gnawed on titan flesh and soon the rat-men overran the swamp. The nation of Vesh use the famous Vigils to patrol the marsh and keep the worst from spilling north, as there are always new and unpleasant things spawning from the dark legacy of Chern.

One of those unpleasant things emerged after a recent shift in the landscape. A wellspring of titan blood filled a newly created stone pit, which coupled with a nearby vein of magma creating a perfect recipe for disaster. The slowly boiling titan blood released a noxious gas carrying a disease that filled its victim with a powerful and reckless rage. A colony of otyughs were the first to be afflicted, the disease transformed them wholly into a new creature called a bloodgutter.

The bloodgutters were hosts for the new disease and they moved swiftly out, attacking slitherin and everything else with reckless abandon. Several of the monsters spread among the communities in southern Vesh where the resultant outbreak of the rage disease prompted the call for the Vigils to put an end to the monsters and their foul plague. A bounty was even placed on the bloodgutters to entice more mercenaries to take up the cause.

A small band of Vigils consisting mostly of apprentices stumbled upon a bloodgutter on the border of the Mourning Marshes by accident. They wounded the creature, forcing it to flee into the swamp, unfortunately most of their members became carriers of the rage disease during the fight. Two of the Vigils decided to track the bloodgutter while the rest, injured and inexperienced, made their way towards civilization to seek further aid.

PREPARATION

Text included in a plain box should be read aloud or paraphrased for the players. Sidebars and other shaded text are provided, where applicable, to call attention to

important points for the GM to consider and should not be read aloud. Creature and NPC names are provided in bold text where they appear in the adventure, and their stat blocks are provided in Appendix: Creatures and NPCs.

INVOLVING THE PCS

The ranger apprentices infected from their battle with the bloodgutter encounter the party and explain their situation, as they are seeking assistance for both themselves and their companions left behind to hunt the beast in the Mourning Marshes. By default, this encounter takes place on a road north of the Mourning Marshes and east of the Kelder Mountains. Alternately, the rangers can meet the party in a roadside inn or small village in the same region. The rangers are friendly if a little scared and looking for assistance, when ultimately the bloodrage disease takes hold of them in the night, forcing the party into action.





PART ONE: ROAD RAGE

A small band of ranger apprentices are traveling west from the Mourning Marshes towards the Kelder Mountains, seeking aid and reinforcements from a Vigil tower in the foothills. They encounter the party on the dirt road three days from the battle site, seeking aid along their journey before they continue westward. They do not realize they have become carriers of the rage disease.

Read or paraphrase the following to begin.

The fertile landscape of southern Vesh glows a brilliant crimson as the sun sets over the Kelder Mountains in the west. Twilight is a special time when all manner of creatures are active, from bats and insects to the more sinister things spawned in the dark recesses of Ghelspan, but so far you have encountered nothing threatening. Cresting a small hill to the east, however, a group of cloaked figures – five in all – appear and threaten to change the tenor of the quiet Veshian evening.

The cloaked figures are apprentice rangers of the Vigils, five in total (CG human **scouts**). They are led by Annick Dosser who hails the party in a friendly manner. The rangers are looking for information about the road ahead and to share stories about what's behind them. Annick does most of the talking as she explains the following to the characters.

- Annick and the band of Vigils were patrolling the border of the Mourning Marshes when they were attacked three days ago by a monster from the swamp called a **bloodgutter**. It was a tentacled beast with a great maw, thick legs, and blood-red skin.
- The bloodgutter is known to the Vigils as a recent abomination birthed from within the marsh. Annick and the rest did not expect to encounter it, and while they were not able to kill it, they did wound it and drive it further into the Mourning Marshes. The two

experienced rangers went after the bloodgutter while Annick and the rest were sent west to seek aid and convey information.

- The Veshian Home Commander put a 500 gold bounty on the bloodgutter as it has been revealed to be an instigator in some sort of rage-inducing disease that has spread in several southern communities in Vesh.

Annick doesn't want any trouble and isn't looking for a free ride, but if the characters look at the band and succeed on a **DC 14 Wisdom (Perception)** check they see the rangers are clearly exhausted and in need of rest. Any character that examines the rangers for signs of a disease can make a **DC 14 Wisdom (Medicine)** check to identify some sort of blood infection in many of them, but they all claim to have felt no signs of a disease.

Annick is looking for a break but if the party doesn't extend an offer of welcome for the night, she doesn't press it. She asks for any news of the road west and explains their destination is still several days away. The inexperienced and exhausted Vigils head out from the party, trying to part on friendly terms, before they camp for the night a short distance away.

CURING THE DISEASE

Characters can use spells such as *lesser restoration* to cure the afflicted rangers of the bloodrage disease. Annick insists that none of them were infected but she is not opposed if the party is willing to expend resources on them.

In this case, the triggering fumes only affect two of the rangers instead of four. Reduce the number of berserkers that attack appropriately.

RAGE AT NIGHT

Unfortunately, one of the rangers kept a souvenir from the fight against the bloodgutter that he isn't sharing with the rest of the group. A severed tentacle sits in his backpack, and after the rangers bed down for the night the fire heats the blood inside the tentacle, releasing a noxious gas. The odor triggers a potent form of the bloodrage disease in the infected rangers, turning them into four **berserkers**. The berserkers head out in a rampage and move straight for the party.

If the characters made camp with the Vigils, they can make a **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** check to notice the odd odor emanating from the pack of the one of the rangers. Successful characters are not surprised by the transformation of the rangers into berserkers and can act normally, otherwise those that fail are surprised. The berserkers fight until killed.

Annick is not one of the transformed though the berserkers seem to have little interest in her. Her proximity to the bloodgutter during the battle earlier marks her as one of them though she does not exhibit signs or carry the same disease.

After the berserkers are dealt with, Annick meets with the party and asks for their assistance. She can keep moving to the Vigil outpost but now she truly worries for her two companions that went into the Mourning Marshes after the bloodgutter. The disease spread by the monster is potent and she wants to make sure the pair of Vigils are fine – or can be put down if they've turned into raging fiends.

Annick gives the party directions to the battle site with the bloodgutter but she does not accompany them further. She tells them the site is marked with the longsword of a fallen Vigil member that died in the fight after the sword plunged into the monster's hide. It should be easy to spot.



PART TWO: TRAIL OF THE BLOODGUTTER

The site of the battle between the Vigil rangers and the bloodgutter is a few days journey to the east along the border of the Mourning Marshes. Annick does not accompany the party but gives them a description of the area, citing a copse of weeping willow trees clustered together on the swampy border as the geographical feature to look out for.

Finding the site isn't difficult if the characters follow Annick's directions. Read or paraphrase the following as they approach.

The festering expanse of the Mourning Marshes stretches south of the plains of Vesh, nestled between the Kelder Mountains and the Blood Sea. The swamp's dismal appearance holds with its sinister reputation – what few trees grow stand like withered skeletons against a treacherous landscape of fetid pools, low hillocks, broken boulders, and hidden threats. Overhead, a monstrous crow flies towards an unusual cluster of weeping willow trees just south of the little-used road you've been following. The hilt and blade of a longsword stuck in the muddy ground marks the battle site.

The battle site sits just beyond the weeping willow trees. Characters investigating can make **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** or **Wisdom (Perception)** checks to learn the following (each successful check yields one piece of information):

- There was combat in a small clearing just south of the weeping willows almost five days ago. Rain and the passage of time has consumed much of the evidence, but several large tracks still remain where a heavy quadruped creature trampled the ground along with booted humanoids.
- The longsword is covered in a thin oily sheen, with blood covering the handle where the ranger held it, but no blood at all can be found on the blade or around the surrounding area.
- Blood spatters dot the thick grasses and vegetation, but it seems to be from the human rangers. There are no signs of the monster's blood or ichor anywhere.
- There is a patch of thick grass pressed down as if a large creature laid down or was forced down. More flecks of blood from the rangers lay scattered about the area and broken arrow shafts hide in the undergrowth.
- Monstrous tracks lead further into the marshes south from the area where the beast fell, along with a pair of booted humanoid tracks.

The characters are meant to discover two things in this scene – the creature's blood is nowhere to be found and it fled followed by two rangers further into the Mourning Marshes. There's no obvious explanation for the missing monster blood, though Annick and the other Vigil rangers say they wounded it and it bled from their attacks. The longsword stuck in the ground is the clearest indication that something is unusual about this creature.

All of this is meant to foreshadow the path to the Pit of Boiling Blood (follow the retreating blood from the bloodgutter) but for now the only way forward is to follow the tracks.

ROUGH MOURNING

The Mourning Marshes are not a kind nor forgiving place. The trail left by the bloodgutter and the two Vigil rangers leads deeper into a dangerous region rife with monsters of all kind. Unredeemed slitherin dwell all over the Mourning Marshes, but for the purposes of this adventure the random encounters are kept out in favor of focusing on the events at hand. If you have the time, however, sprinkle in some run-ins with the monstrous insects and other threats of the marshes.

Following the bloodgutter trail is easy as the Vigil rangers deliberately left obvious tracks to mark their passage for their fellows to find. No check is necessary, it takes the party one day of traveling through the Mourning Marshes to come upon the bloodgutter's trap.

The two rangers that followed the bloodgutter into the Mourning Marshes were experienced warriors, but they underestimated the influence of the blood rage disease spread by the monster. Two days into their tracking they both succumbed to the disease and became berserkers, but their proximity to the bloodgutter created an unusual master/follower link. The berserkers follow the mental commands of the bloodgutter now, and they had a sense that others would be following them into the marshland soon.

The two **berserkers** are waiting to ambush any that came searching for them. One of them is clearly visible next to a small pool of brackish water, unconscious and bloody but appearing alive. The bloodgutter has buried itself in the ground next to the pool while the remaining berserker is buried mostly in muck 50 feet away.

Cautious characters that take the time to look around before rushing to the body can make **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** checks. On a success something is odd about the fallen ranger – his head moves just slightly to get a better look at the approaching party. Succeeding by 5 or more on the check also sees the ground shift next to it as if something moved underground slightly.

The berserkers and bloodgutter rise to attack as soon as a character approach, or when it becomes clear the ambush has been detected. The bloodgutter resembles a blood-red otyugh with black and purple markings splotched all over its bulky form.

The bloodgutter is an **otyugh** with the following changes:

- Change hit points to 190 (20d10+80)
- Change Strength to 20 (+5)
- Change bite attack bonus to +9 and increase damage to 18 (3d8+5) piercing
- Change tentacle attack bonus to +9 and increase damage to 12 (2d6+5) bludgeoning plus 7 (2d6) piercing
- Change tentacle slam damage to 14 (2d8+5) bludgeoning.
- Change challenge to 9 (5,000 XP)

The berserkers and bloodgutter fight until killed. After the bloodgutter is defeated, characters see a strange sight – the blood flowing from the creature all moves of its own accord into the swamp!



PART THREE: PIT OF BOILING BLOOD

With the bloodgutter defeated, the characters may think they have put an end to the threat in the Mourning Marshes. Unfortunately, this is not true. The creature's spilled blood leads them back to its birthplace, the Pit of Boiling Blood, and only there can the threat from the diseased swamp truly be put to rest.

Following the strangely moving trail of blood is easy enough as it is not sentient enough to attempt to thwart pursuit. It is simply drawn back to the pit that spawned it, leading the characters to the source of the blood rage disease. The trail of moving blood snakes its way slowly through the Mourning Marshes for 10 hours.

The characters can travel for 8 hours in a day without worrying about exhaustion, but more than that forces them to make Constitution saving throws. Review the Forced March section under Travel Pace in the SRD. If the party loses the trail of the blood, they can pick it up again with a **DC 18 Wisdom (Survival)** check.

Read or paraphrase the following as the characters come upon the entrance to the Pit of Boiling Blood:

An odor rises noticeably from the marshland as you follow the strangely flowing blood, metallic and sharp, a cloud of reddish mist rests low around a cluster of broken

stones ahead. The blood slips between and eventually over the stones before descending into an opening in the ground itself, which also seems to be the source of the red cloud hanging over the area. A slow bubbling echoes up from the hole.

This is the entrance to the Pit of Boiling Blood. The hole is 10 feet wide and descends 60 feet to a rough stone floor lit by a strange red glow. Characters can descend into the pit using whatever means available to them (the walls are rough and easily climbable).

BOILING BLOOD POOL

The bottom of the pit is a large circular, rough stone cavern, about 50 feet in diameter. The pit's opening ends in the corner of the cave, about half of the floor is covered by a reddish-brown liquid that resembles blood. The liquid is hot and heated by a natural source below the pool, which also keeps it at a slow boil. Bubbles constantly form and pop along its thick sludge-like surface. The pool is uncomfortable but only 3 feet deep at its deepest.

The metallic-tasting air is strong in the cave, and the characters must make DC 14 Constitution saving throws for every minute they spend in the area. On a failure, they are poisoned, and on a second failure they become reckless with the following effects:

- Any ongoing effect or spell they were concentrating on stops immediately.
- No effect or spell that requires concentration can be initiated.
- They suffer disadvantage on Dexterity and Wisdom checks and saving throws.

The characters are not the only ones in the cave. There are two bloodgutters (see the previous part for statistics) that have recently returned to the cave, sipping blood on the pool's edge. They attack any intruders.

ENDING THE BOILING BLOOD

Defeating the bloodgutters in the cave should be the immediate concern, but the characters must find a way to deal with the boiling blood if they wish to put an end to the threat. The bloodgutters came and went from a tunnel that leads from the far end of the pool to the surface, but the whole area is riddled with tunnels and caves, and the real threat is the fumes released by the boiling blood, which can escape through any number of small cracks and crevices in the area.

The best way to seal the pool is to “cauterize” the cave with fire or acid. Characters that inflict acid or fire damage to a creature within 5 feet of the pool sees the blood boil furiously in reaction. Inflicting 30 or more damage to the pool in one round is enough to boil the blood at a rapid scale and seal the stone itself to stop the leakage.

CONCLUSION

The threat from the blood rage disease spread by the bloodgutters of the Pit of Boiling Blood ends with the sealing of the pool itself, either by fire or other means. With nowhere to recharge their disease, the remaining bloodgutters die out in the Mourning Marshes and life continues on as it did before. The party has put an end to a dangerous situation threatening the people of Vesh.

REWARDS

Annick and any remaining Vigils seek out the party after they return from the Mourning Marshes. They reward the characters with a purse containing 10 gemstones each worth 50 gp, along with the promise of friendship should they need to call upon the Veshian rangers in the future. Annick can become a useful ally to the party as well, creating a link between the characters and the Vigils all around Vesh and the Kelder Mountains.

The Good Hosts



Catherine Evans



INTRODUCTION

The Good Hosts is an adventure designed for four to six characters of 7th level, though it can be easily modified for larger or smaller groups, or a group of average party level (or APL) between 6th and 8th level. Guidelines are included with each encounter for increasing the difficulty of opposition to suit higher and lower APL groups. This short adventure can be placed anywhere along the Hornswythe River or one of its tributaries, and centers around a small geomantic/engineering research station set up on the riverbank.

SYNOPSIS

Backwash from the Blood Sea destroyed a geomancy and engineering research camp on the banks of the Hornswythe River, killing or injuring most of the occupants. The **gluttonous troll Anruk** feasted on the dead and wounded

and was infested by nearby **skullworms** while it slept on the mound of carcasses it created. Under the skullworms' control, and tormented by them to control its appetite, the troll returned several days later, gathered up the surviving researchers and carried them back to its lair. The party must find the kidnapped engineers and geomancers... but how will they deal with the skullworms that now infest them too?

BACKGROUND

When bizarre weather patterns or strange magic cause the Hornswythe River to reverse its flow, backwash from the Blood Sea flows into the inland lake known as the Blood Basin. The normally peaceful area becomes polluted and infested with titanspawn. Often there are warnings, and the crews of engineers and geomancers who study the river have time to break camp and get out of the way. Most recently, the *Clasp of Vergren* (see **A Scholarly Schism**)

caused fluxes in Mesos' Bane that triggered both a reversal of the flow and a sudden, almighty flood.

The flood destroyed a small geomantic research station on the bank of the river. Most of the former researchers died, and in the flooded land skullworms hatched. The gluttonous troll that claims the area as territory ate the bodies and became host to skullworms itself. It kidnapped the rest of the research team and is storing them in a nearby cave network, making its food last.

PREPARATION

Text included in a plain box should be read aloud or paraphrased for the players. Sidebars and other shaded text are provided, where applicable, to call attention to important points for the GM to consider and should not be read aloud. Creature and NPC names are provided in bold text where they appear in the adventure, and their stat blocks are provided in Appendix: Creatures and NPCs.

INVOLVING THE PCS

There are a number of ways to get characters involved:

- Savila Nebega from the Academy of Magic & Engineering in Bridged City (recurring character from Adventure 2) asks the party to carry a message to their colleague Eirene Malikeia, at her geomantic research station on the banks of the Hornswythe.
- A nearby village is concerned that they haven't received the usual monthly order for supplies - a substantial bit of income for a couple of local businesses - and hire the party to investigate.
- Characters simply pass the recently "abandoned" camp at the side of the river and decide to investigate.

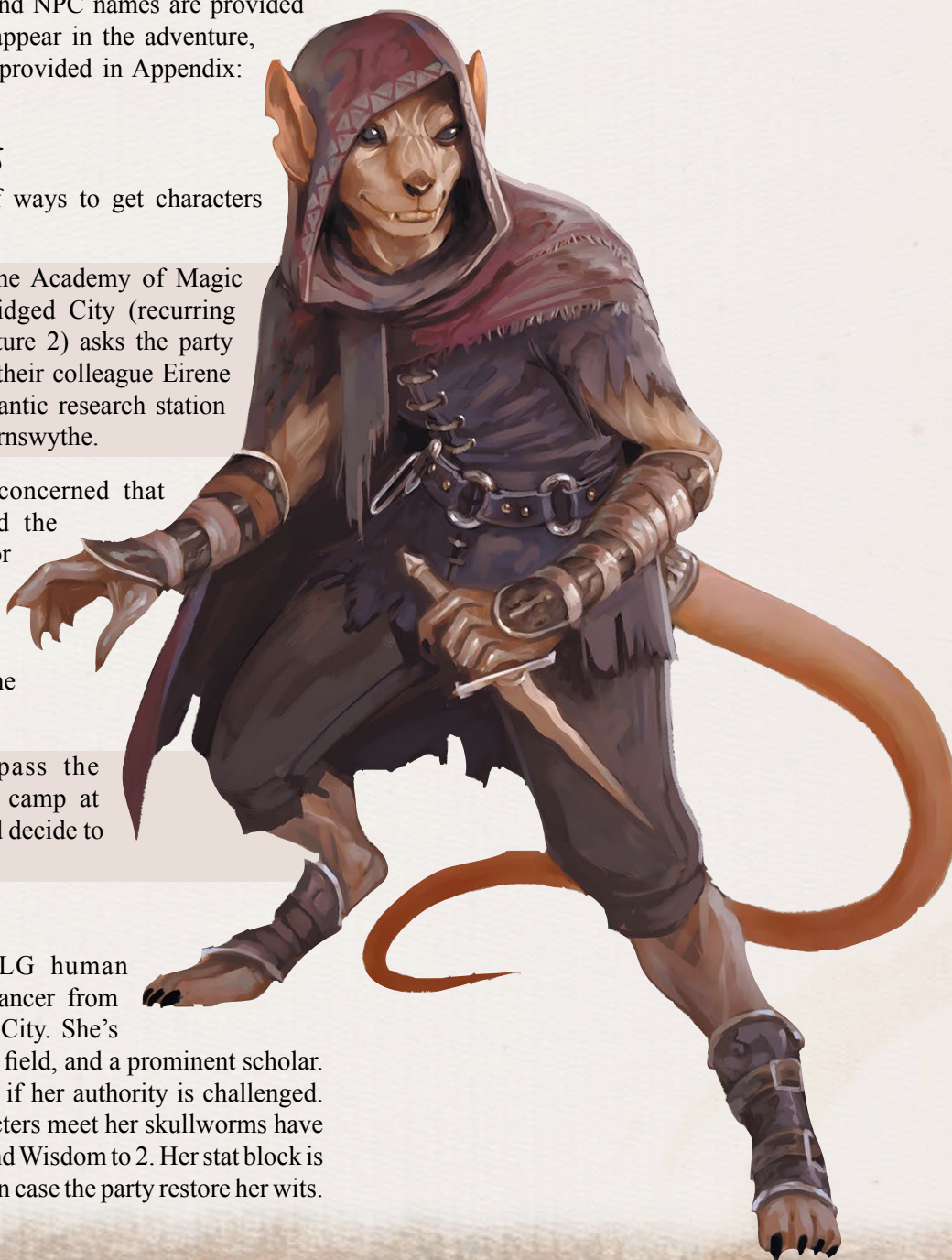
NOTABLE NPCs

Eirene Malikeia (F LG human **mage**) Eirene is a geomancer from the Academy in Bridged City. She's a recognized expert in her field, and a prominent scholar. She can be cold and rude if her authority is challenged. However, when the characters meet her skullworms have reduced her Intelligence and Wisdom to 2. Her stat block is provided in the Appendix in case the party restore her wits.

Kallios Malikeia (M N human **commoner**) Eirene's ten year old son. Usually wide-eyed and curious, but when characters meet him, he is possessed by **skullworms**, and is chillingly calm.

Kalyx Malikeia (F LG human **modified commoner** - see Appendix) Eirene's fourteen year old daughter. Tough, independent, and tenacious, but reaching the limits of her ability to endure horror.

Master Builder Erlek (M NG slitherin **modified mage** - see Appendix) Erlek is an engineer from the Walled Warren, supporting Eirene's magical research with his own scientific approach. He is a kindly elderly slitherin with a wry sense of humor. He is infested with skullworms and has an Intelligence and Wisdom of 2 when the characters encounter him.





ONE: INUNDATED

The party should approach the research station from the south. As they arrive, read or paraphrase the following:

The dry grass of the steppe dies away close to the riverbank, and the ground is coated in a layer of thick, rich mud. It's a deep, crimson color, as appealing and out of place as old blood. The river must have burst its banks at some time in the recent past, and when it did, the substance that flooded the land around it was not exactly water.

The research station is just where it is supposed to be... but there's not much left. A few buildings half collapsed where the flood waters hit them; broken wood, metal, and glass tangled up on the bank. From this distance at least, it appears unoccupied.

RED SEA RISING

Characters who have been to the Blood Sea recognize the salty, viscous fluid from that body of water. A successful **DC 12 Intelligence (Nature)** or **Intelligence (History)** check means a character is familiar with the “natural” phenomenon of the Hornswythe reversing its flow. It happened most famously during the nightmare of the Blood Monsoon (SLPG pg. 177), but it has occurred several times since. The reasons are poorly understood.

Characters familiar with the phenomenon are also aware that numerous teams of geomancers and engineers are working on ways to dam the river and protect the lake known as the Blood Basin from the pollution and titanspawn the Blood Sea water brings with it.

RESEARCHING THE WRECKAGE

The research station is made up of three single-story, timber buildings, in various stages of disrepair. The flood washed away a lot of earth around the foundations as well as soaking the wood, causing sections to collapse.

LIVING QUARTERS

Furthest from the water, this 60 foot by 30 foot longhouse is the most structurally sound building on the site. The door hangs off its hinges. Inside, furniture is broken and disorganized and there are still several inches of standing water, above which flies and mosquitoes buzz excitedly.

The front half of the building is a sitting room and kitchen; the back half is a communal dormitory containing thirteen beds. The information characters learn depends on their level of success on an Intelligence (Investigation) check.

- DC 10: there are enough personal possessions - clothes, books, musical instruments, card and dice sets, etc. - to suggest all thirteen beds were occupied. Some attempt has been made to clean up this building, but whoever tried gave up very quickly.
- DC 13: not all of the residents were adults. Two were probably teenagers (slightly smaller clothes/shoes) and one was a younger child (games and toys).
- DC 15: a chest in the kitchen contains a book of staff comings and goings. It indicates when researchers and their families came, and when they left. Current occupants were:
 - 4 geomancers from different institutions, including **Eirene Malikeia** from the Academy in Bridged City, along with her husband **Tolan** and three children **Drea, Kalyx, and Kallios**.
 - 4 engineers from Hedrad.
 - 1 master builder (**Erlek**) from the Walled Warren.

Treasure. If characters really wish to strip this building, they'll find 2d4x10 gp in coins and personal possessions/trinkets.

LABORATORIES

Set ten feet back from the riverbank, this 40 foot square building is divided up into a number of small, private workshops. The wall nearest the riverbank is partially collapsed, and so is the roof.

The flooded, stinking, wreckage contains an entire forest's worth of waterlogged and unreadable papers, and twisted glass and metal instruments that suggest various engineering and arcane occupations. More of these broken instruments

are tangled on the riverbank outside.

Treasure. Most of the equipment is ruined, but characters can salvage up to 3d6x10 gp worth of badly damaged artisan's (engineer's) tools. A successful **DC 16 Intelligence (Arcana)** check doubles this amount.

STORAGE SHED

This small (10 feet by 15 feet) building is right on the water. The door is nailed shut with a wooden plank. Removing it requires a successful **DC 14 Strength** check; alternatively, the door is AC 10 and has 15 hit points. When the door is opened, a tide of thick, reddish water gushes out. Characters who make a successful **DC 12 Dexterity saving throw** avoid being coated with this water, but there is no consequence beyond some ruined clothes and mild discomfort.

Within the shed is:

- Stacked firewood, spare blankets, sacks of grain and assorted supplies. The water has ruined all of it.
- Congealed puddles of blood, bone, and viscera. At first, they appear to be badly decomposed bodies, but quickly several of the pools flow around characters' feet and once outside form into semi-solid, somewhat humanoid shapes

Bloodmen

There are 6 **Bloodmen** (SLPG pg. 240) in the shed.

Adjusting Difficulty

For a weak party, reduce the number to 3; for a strong party, increase to 8.

TRACKS

The tracks of several humanoids and something much larger, heavier, and barefoot lead away from the flooded research station. A successful **Wisdom (Survival)** check reveals:

- DC 12: There are 6 sets of humanoid tracks.
- DC 14: The tracks are about two days old.
- DC 17: There are much older tracks here too: the same large creature came through about a week ago and returned a few days later.

Following the tracks is easy, but if the characters don't achieve at least 13 on a **Wisdom (Survival)** check it's slow going: they travel at half their normal movement speed while tracking, so Encounter 2 occurs as night falls.



TWO: INFORMER

As characters cross the steppes, following the tracks away from the river, read or paraphrase:

Long, dry grass and rolling hills surround you, smooth rounded shapes occasionally turning jagged where the hills break up into cave entrances. A breeze stirs the yellow grass, and it takes a while before the sharpest of you notices that some of the disturbance is from another creature, running alongside you a few yards to your right.

The character with the highest Passive Perception notices movement first; other characters notice soon after, in order of their Passive Perception scores. A successful **DC 13 Wisdom (Perception)** check reveals that the source of the movement is a single, medium sized creature, on two legs.

This is **Kalyx Malikeia**. She has been pacing the characters for the last few minutes, trying to decide whether they are safe to approach. If the characters don't come to her, she'll overcome her nerves and approach them in about another 15 minutes.

KALYX

Kalyx escaped from the troll's cave a couple of hours ago while the creature was feeding. She's a tall, wiry, fit girl but she's also tired, hungry, and in shock. She's seen a lot of horror in the last week and while she's holding up pretty well, she would really like to turn over responsibility for rescuing her mother, her little brother, and Master Builder Erlek to a group of experienced professionals.

Kalyx tells the characters:

- After the flood, a huge, bestial troll invaded the camp and abducted her and her family. It overpowered them. They are young people and scientists, not fighters.
- The troll seems to be saving them as a food supply.
- She can lead the characters back to the cave but won't go inside under any circumstances.

She is willing to beg, plead, and promise anything she needs to (including a huge sum of money from the Academy, that she cannot make good on), to get the characters to save her family.

She would rather not talk about what happened at the research station but with a successful **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion)** or **DC 17 Charisma (Intimidation)** check, will reveal that:

- She, her mother **Eirene**, her little brother **Kallios**, an engineer called **Daphne**, and the slitherin **Master Builder Erlek**, were out of the camp when the flood hit; they were unhurt and therefore able to flee when the troll came.
- The flood injured her father **Tolan** and her sister **Drea**; the troll subsequently killed them (and everyone else who didn't die in the flood) and devoured all of the corpses.
- The troll returned a few days later. This time it was more controlled, less frenzied. It roped the survivors together and abducted them to its cave a few miles away.

DEVELOPMENT

Either Kalyx leads the characters to the troll's cave, or they find it themselves. Encounters 3, 4, and 5 take place in the troll's cave (see Map).





THREE: INGRESS

As the characters approach the troll's cave, read or paraphrase:

The smell hits you from a dozen yards away, almost before you see the slit in the rock that leads into the darkness. For a creature the size of a troll it would be a tight squeeze, and it's pitch dark inside.

THE LAY OF THE LAND

The cave is dark, made of natural grey rock, and reeks of the troll's presence and all of the bodies it has devoured there. It is uncomfortably warm, but spacious: wide passages, large rooms, and high ceilings.

CAVE ENTRANCE

Anruk has set a simple trap at the entrance of his lair: a tripwire of braided grass, camouflaged by dirt and shadows, across the entrance, releases a rope holding in place an entire sharpened tree trunk that swings forward and seriously injures the poor fool who entered first. Detecting the trap requires a successful **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception)** check; disarming it requires a successful **DC 14 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools)** check.

Kalyx does not know about this: the troll set it up after discovering she had escaped; in case she came back with soldiers or others who might hurt him.

If characters fail to detect or disarm the trap, the character in the doorway takes 20x(4d10) Piercing damage. A successful **DC 14 Dexterity saving throw** halves this damage.

THE LARDER

A passageway leads deeper into the cave. Thirty feet in, a heap of stones blocks a tunnel leading to the right; the passage continues forwards. The stones are another new addition, added since Kalyx's escape.

Moving the Stones

The stones are big and heavy and will take ten minutes to fully clear away (reduce by 1 minute for every assisting character who has a Strength of 15 or greater) and unless all characters involved succeed on a **Dexterity (Stealth)** check against the troll's **passive Wisdom (Perception)** of 13, the process alerts the troll in Area 3. Moving the stones quietly takes twice as long but will not alert the troll.

The Prisoners

Behind the stones are a human woman, a young human boy, and a muscular, grey-furred slitherin male with long, bushy whiskers that almost form a beard. Each of them is bound by ropes around their ankles.

The two adults are glassy eyed and uncommunicative (the skullworms have reduced their Intelligence and Wisdom to 2). The young boy - Kalyx's brother Kallios - is alert and talkative. This is because he has been completely taken over by the skullworm.

Kallios tells the characters:

- His sister escaped to find help
- His mother and Erlek are "scared stupid"
- The troll is probably asleep right now: he "finished eating" their mother's friend Daphne that morning (he is completely unemotional when he explains this)

A successful **DC 13 Wisdom (Insight)** check reveals that there is something deeply off about the boy. He's too alert and articulate to be in shock, but he's not reacting in any of the expected ways to the horror he's been through.

A successful **DC 16 Wisdom (Perception)** check (made at disadvantage if characters do not have some way of seeing/lighting the area) reveals a thin trail of dried blood down Kallios' neck from his ear, and crusts of blood around his nose.

A successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** check reveals a squirming nest of maggot-like worms still chewing through a skull and scraps of flesh in the corner of this chamber. This is what remains of Daphne.

Once the characters have noticed any of these things, a successful **Wisdom (Medicine)** or **Wisdom (Nature)** check lets a character recall:

- DC 14: the existence of and basic facts about skullworms: they are parasites that crawl into bodily orifices while a humanoid sleeps, devour their host's brains, then take over the body.
- DC 16: any magic that cures disease will kill the skullworms.
- DC 18: killing the skullworms doesn't restore the host's mind. Only a *Regenerate* spell will do that.
- DC 20: the host retains awareness throughout their ordeal. In this case that means that they will be around to watch a gluttonous troll devour their bodies, and those of their family and friends, piece by piece.

Do the characters kill these poor souls? Vow to get them to a powerful cleric? Not realize at all, and try to rescue them? That's up to them, but it should provide some good roleplaying... especially if they realize the child is possessed, but still aware.

Remember that loud noises have a 50% chance of alerting the troll.

Kalyx's Luck

Kalyx avoided the skullworms simply because the sounds of the troll eating, sleeping, and moving around disturbed her so much that she stuffed her ears with rags before trying to sleep. She was a hard target, so the skullworms ignored her.



FOUR: IMBROGLIO

The party have to fight Anruk. If they continue to explore the cave, they will encounter him in Area 3 of the map. If they attempt to leave without dealing with him, or have alerted him to their presence, Anruk will chase them down the passageway and attack them from behind.

If they encounter the troll in Area 3, read or paraphrase the following:

This huge, rounded, chamber echoes with the sound of guttural breathing and low grunts. The greyish figure making the sounds squats amidst a heap of dirty grass bedding, sucking the marrow from a long bone. Even crouched, it is taller than a man, cadaverously thin but with muscles and sinews like steel cords.

In the darkness, characters do not see a hole in the floor that leads downwards. This sloping passage goes to the nest of a pack of **carrion hounds**. They are also infested with skullworms and will fight in support of Anruk.

GLUTTONOUS TROLL

The troll is intelligent enough to communicate but has little interest in doing so - and even with the skullworms in place, it only speaks Giantish and Titan Speech. It's much more interested in killing and eating: the worms have been forcing it to resist its urge to feed, but the hunger is distracting. They are going to let Anruk slake his hunger now. He fights to kill, will pick unarmored targets and will attack an incapacitated character until they are dead.

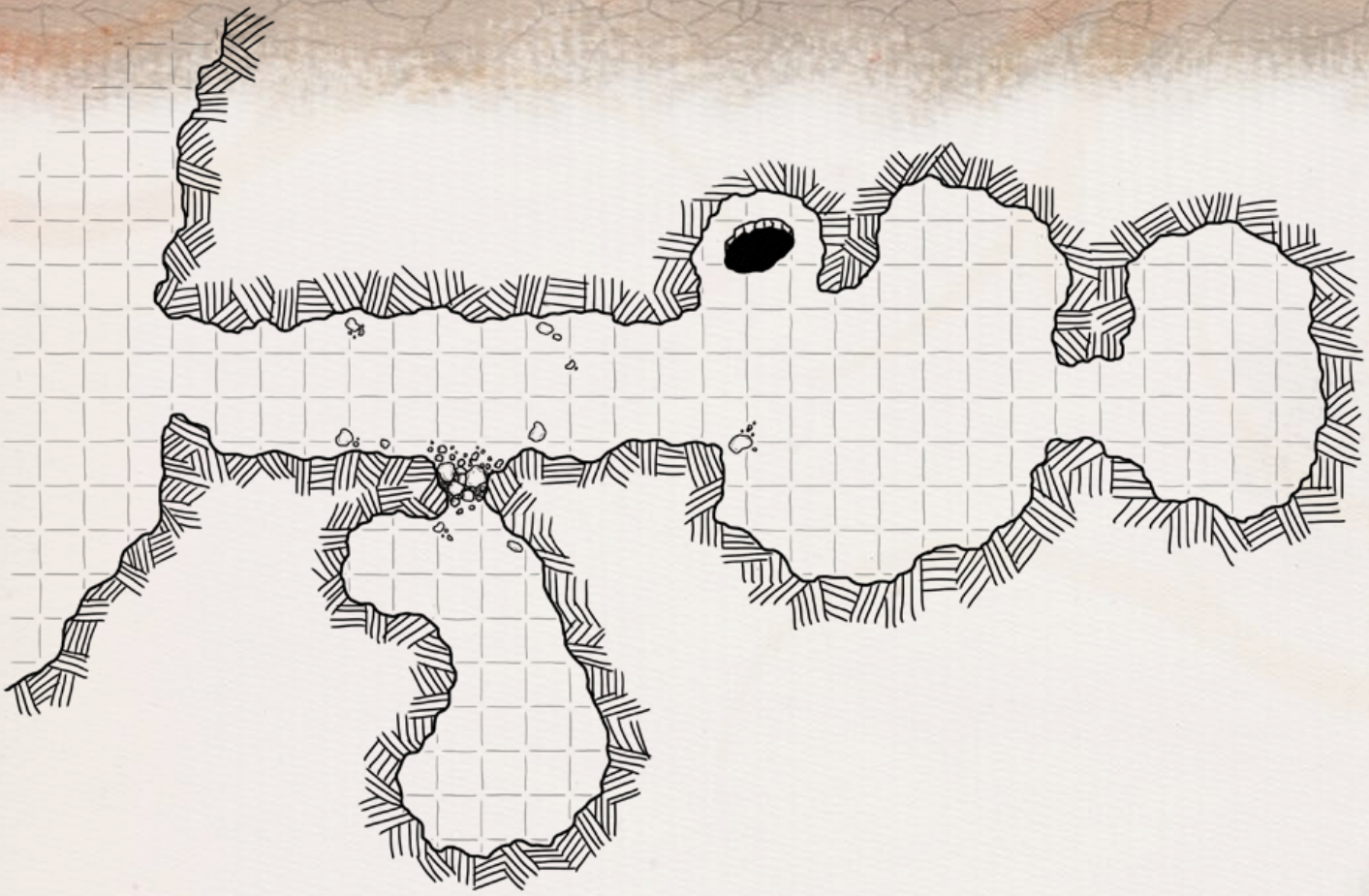
CARRION HOUNDS

If the troll is alerted to the characters' presence by noise in the larder (or elsewhere) or if the troll ambushes them as they leave, 6 **carrion hounds** enter battle in the first turn. Otherwise they arrive at the end of the first round and act in the second.

ADJUSTING DIFFICULTY

For weak parties, reduce the number of carrion hounds to 3 (or remove them entirely). For strong parties, increase the number of carrion hounds to 9.





FIVE: INVICTI

A passageway at the back of the troll's lair leads to an older larder. Read or paraphrase:

This room is filled several feet deep with the cracked and broken bones of humanoid. It would be almost impossible to pick out a distinct skeleton amongst the piles, but here and there you see a ring still on a fingerbone or a piece of armor tossed carelessly in amongst the remains. And you can see it clearly: deep within this charnel house, something glows with a soft, golden light.

The first character to wade through the bones (knee high on a Medium character, hip deep on a Small) finds a golden apple, as fresh as if it still hung on the boughs of a tree and the first wholesome thing they've seen in this place, in a small leather pouch hanging from a belt wrapped round a skeletal pelvis. This is an *apple of replenishment* (see Appendix: Magic Items).

Treasure. Characters willing to pick through the bones also find jewelry worth 2d6 x 50 gp.

CONCLUSION

If the characters have the *apple of replenishment*, don't hurry them to a conclusion. Let them discuss how best to use it: whether they wish to use some or all of it on the prisoners in the cave or save it for later use.

When the characters leave the cave and decide how to deal with the captives (if they have not already done so), the adventure is over.

If the characters were commissioned by a contact from the Academy *and did not kill Eirene*, their contact will be grateful of news of her and promise to provide whatever assistance they can in future.

REWARDS

Allow each character to gain a level.

APPENDIX: CREATURES AND NPCs

BLOODMEN

Medium aberration (shapechanger, titanspawn), neutral evil

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 59 (7d8 + 28)

Speed 20 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	5 (-3)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)

Damage Resistances piercing and slashing attacks

Senses blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft.; passive Perception 10

Languages Titan Speech (can't speak)

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Create Spawn. Once during a short rest, a bloodman that has drained at least 25 hit points from other creatures with its Absorb Blood attack can spawn a new bloodman from its own body. The newly created bloodman emerges into an unoccupied space adjacent to the original bloodman, with 25 current hit points. A newly spawned bloodman cannot use Create Spawn until 24 hours have passed.

Keen Smell. The bloodman has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Shapechanger. The bloodman can use its action to assume a fluid state, becoming an ooze-like pool of ichor, or change back into its vaguely humanoid form. In its ooze form, the bloodman can't attack, but its swim speed increases to 40 feet and it gains resistance to all bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage. Otherwise, its statistics are the same in either form.

Actions

Absorb Blood. *Melee Weapon Attack.* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d10 + 3) necrotic damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 14). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained. While it maintains this grapple, the bloodman doesn't attack. Instead, at the start of each of the bloodman's

turns, the target loses 11 (2d10) hit points due to blood loss. The bloodman regains a similar number of hit points.

The bloodman can end the grapple itself by spending 5 feet of its movement. It does so after it drains at least 36 hit points of blood or once its current target dies.

Pool Form. A bloodman in either humanoid or ooze form may touch another willing bloodman and cause them both to merge their bodies together into a larger pool of ooze. Any number of bloodmen may join the pool by using an action to touch the pool; for every 4 bloodmen that merge in this way, the pool increases by one size, to a maximum of Gargantuan with 12 or more bloodmen. A merged bloodman pool's hit point total is equal to the sum of all members' current hit points. Otherwise, the pool's stats are the same as that of a bloodman in ooze form.

A bloodman pool acts as a single unit on the initiative of the first bloodman to initiate Pool Form. When a bloodman leaves the pool on its turn (a move action), divide the pool's remaining hit points equally among all merged individuals, rounded down. Any bloodmen that leave the pool get one equal share of those hit points. Newly separated bloodmen all act on the same initiative as the pool.

CARRION HOUND

Large aberration (titanspawn), unaligned

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 93 (11d10 + 33)

Speed 40 ft., burrow 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)

Skills Perception +4

Damage Resistances poisoned

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Titan Speech (can't speak)

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Disease Immunity. The carrion hound is immune to diseases.

Keen Smell. The carrion hound has advantage on **Wisdom (Perception)** checks that rely on smell.

Multiple Heads. The carrion hound has roughly a dozen heads. It has advantage on saving throws against being blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, stunned, and knocked unconscious.

Stench. Any creature other than a carrion hound that starts its turn within 5 feet of the carrion hound must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until the start of the creature's next turn. On a successful saving throw, the creature is immune to the stench of all carrion hounds for 1 hour.

ACTIONS

Multiple Bites. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage plus 17 (5d6) acid damage.

COMMONER

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 4 (1d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Senses Passive Perception 10

Languages Ledean or Veshian

Challenge 0 (10 XP)

ACTIONS

Club. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage.

ERLEK

Medium humanoid (Slitherin), Any Alignment

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 40 (9d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Int +6, Wis +4

Skills Arcana +6, History +6, Medicine +6, Nature +6

Senses darkvision 30ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Veshian, Common, Slitherin, Ancient Ledean

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Actions

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., or reach 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* (1d4+2) piercing damage.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit:* (1d4+2) piercing damage.

GLUTTONOUS TROLL

Huge giant (titanspawn), chaotic evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 172 (15d12 + 75)

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	9 (-1)	22 (+6)	6 (-2)	9 (-1)	6 (-2)

Skills Perception +3

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened

Senses darkvision 60 ft.; passive Perception 13

Languages Giantish, Titan Speech

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Keen Smell. The troll has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Regeneration. The gluttonous troll regains 15 hit points at the start of its turn. If the troll takes acid or fire damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of the troll's next turn. The troll dies only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

Actions

Multiattack. The troll makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack.* +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d6 + 6) piercing damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack.* +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d8 + 6) slashing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 18). If the target is Medium or smaller, it is also restrained until this grapple ends. While grappling this target, the troll has advantage on attack rolls against it and can't use the grappling claw's attack against other creatures. When the gluttonous troll moves, a Large or smaller creature it is grappling moves with it.

Rock. *Ranged Weapon Attack.* +10 to hit, range 60/180 ft., one target. *Hit:* 22 (3d10 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

Swallow. The gluttonous troll makes one bite attack against a Medium or smaller target it is grappling. If the attack hits, the target is also swallowed, and the grapple ends. While swallowed, the target is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the troll, and it takes 21 (6d6) acid damage at the start of each of the troll's turns. A gluttonous troll can have only one creature swallowed at a time. If the troll takes 25 damage or more on a single turn from the swallowed creature, the troll must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw at the end of that turn or regurgitate the creature, which falls prone in a space within 10 feet of the troll. If the troll dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse by using 15 feet of movement, exiting prone.

KALYX

Medium humanoid (human), any alignment

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 6 (1d8+2)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)

Skills Athletics +2, Stealth +4

Senses Passive Perception 11

Languages Ledeian or Veshian

Challenge 0 (10 XP)

Actions

Club. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage.

MAGE (EIRENE, RESTORED)

Medium humanoid (human), Any Alignment

Armor Class 12 (15 With Mage Armor)

Hit Points 40 (9d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Int +6, Wis +4

Skills Arcana +6, History +6

Senses darkvision 30ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Veshian, Common, Slitherin, Ancient Ledeian

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Spellcasting. The mage is a 9th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). The mage has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light, mage hand, mending, prestidigitation*

1st level (4 slots): *comprehend languages, detect magic, grease, unseen servant*

2nd level (3 slots): *enlarge/reduce, gust of wind*

3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell, dispel magic, sending*

4th level (3 slots): *control water, secret chest*

5th level (1 slot): *wall of stone*

Actions

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., or reach 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* (1d4+2) piercing damage.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit:* (1d4+2) piercing damage.

APPENDIX: MAGIC ITEMS

APPLE OF REPLENISHMENT

Wondrous Item (rare)

The apples of replenishment are said to grow on one tree and one alone, in a grove deep in the Ganjus forest, sacred to Denev. Their power is mighty and rare, for the tree fruits just once a century.

These golden apples can be cut in half and consumed; in which case each half has the effects of the *regeneration* spell. If the whole apple is buried in a tomb or grave and left there for 24 hours, it has the effect of the *resurrection* spell.

Sundered Sisters



Jessica Ross

DEAN SPENCER



INTRODUCTION

Sundered Sisters is an adventure designed for four to six characters of 8th level, though it can be easily modified for larger or smaller groups, or a group of average party level (or APL) as high as 9th level or as low as 6th. Guidelines are included with each encounter for increasing the difficulty of opposition to suit higher APL groups.

This adventure is set in the Soporata Swamp, a dangerous region blanketed in a thick fog and noxious gas. Though some life has evolved to survive in the swamp, those who enter may succumb to the gases after only a few hours of exposure. Deep in Soporata Swamp lives Maerella the hag with her menagerie of unusual beasts, and beneath her home is a cache of powerful weapons desired by Raehl, a sundered mage.

SYNOPSIS

As the characters pass through a tavern or town, they hear of the location of a fragment of Mesos hidden beneath the house of a murderous hag in the Soporata Swamp. Buried with the fragment is reportedly a cache of powerful weapons and artifacts – perhaps even powerful enough to defeat a Titan. The characters must face a menagerie of vicious animals, a maze of trees and beasts, and an angry hag to find the tomb. In searching for these weapons and the fragment, the characters may learn there is more to this situation than they previously thought.

BACKGROUND

Maerella is a powerful and reclusive swamp hag who built her home above a piece of Mesos, according to rumor. And with that piece of Mesos is a cache of powerful artifacts,

but no one has been able to get past Maerella, so no one has laid eyes on the stash or been able to confirm its existence.

Though Maerella's menagerie of vicious beasts are bad enough, there's an added danger: Maerella's home lies several hours' journey into the Sorporatra Swamp, known to locals as a deadly swamp because of the noxious gas permeating the air. No one can survive travel in the swamp for more than a few hours, and between the air and the animals attacking any who venture near, the cache of artifacts has remained untouchable.

There is a tomb beneath Maerella's hut, but it doesn't house a fragment of Mesos; instead, it contains Maerella's granddaughter Aurelia who Maerella trapped there when she was becoming too powerful for Maerella to control.

PREPARATION

Text included in a plain box should be read aloud or paraphrased for the players. Sidebars and other shaded text are provided, where applicable, to call attention to important points for the GM to consider and should not be read aloud. Creature and NPC names are provided in bold text where they appear in the adventure, and their stat blocks are provided in **Appendix: Creatures and NPCs**.

INVOLVING THE PCS

Characters hear rumors that a fragment of Mesos is buried under a hag's house in the Sorporatra Swamp, and buried with it are several powerful artifacts. Why would anyone bury anything but weapons powerful enough to defeat a Titan with a fragment of a Titan?

SORPORATRA SWAMP

A thick and noxious cloud permeates the Sorporatra Swamp, spelling danger and potential poisoning for any who spend time there.

For every hour they spend in the Swamp, characters must make a successful **DC 5 Constitution saving throw** or take 1d10 poison damage. Every time a character takes poison damage this way, the DC goes up +1 for the next roll.

For every 12 poison damage taken this way, the character becomes poisoned for one hour. Any character who has the poisoned condition for three consecutive hours becomes paralyzed for 1 hour or until they are healed.

For groups with lower APL, the party may roll every 2 hours instead of every hour.

TRAVEL PACE

The first two chapters of this adventure involve travel through the Sorporatra Swamp. This Travel Pace table should be used as a reference while characters are traveling and contending with the noxious swamp gas.

TRAVEL PACE

PACE	DISTANCE TRAVELED PER...			
	Minute	Hour	Day	Effect
Fast	400 feet	4 miles	30 miles	-5 penalty to passive Wisdom (Perception) scores
Normal	300 feet	3 miles	24 miles	—
Slow	200 feet	2 miles	18 miles	Able to use stealth

GRANDMOTHER'S GIFTS

Auntie Maerella Twigmouth, like many hags, recruits new hags when she sees the opportunity. Travelers wandering through her swamp often provide a convenient opportunity for recruitment, especially if they find themselves weakened by the noxious gas. If there is at least one woman character in the party and at least one man, Maerella attempts to recruit the women by appearing secretly and asking them to betray the men. If there is at least one woman and no men, Maerella reaches out to the entire party at once, causing all of them to see the same vision and making no effort to keep it a secret.

Any time a woman character takes poison damage, or when the party takes the correct path in the Trusted Trees maze twice consecutively, the woman character who has most recently taken poison damage has a vision.

When a character experiences a vision, they see a face form out of the plants in the water near their feet. The face first smiles sweetly before whispering a message only the character(s) experiencing the vision hears.

With the first vision, the hag greets the character by name before issuing a warning: "This swamp isn't safe for your friends. Turn back."

The second vision contains an offering: "Hello again, my child. If you insist on traveling through my swamp, at least let me offer you some assistance. Take this dragonfly and consume it; it will keep you safe." When Maerella says this, a dragonfly lands in the water near Maerella's conjured face. It allows the character to pick it up, and if the character eats it, she's immune to poison damage for one hour and resistant to poison damage for one more after that. If the character refuses to eat the dragonfly, Maerella repeats this same offer in subsequent visions until the offer is accepted or until the party arrives at Maerella's hut.

After accepting this protection, the next vision brings a test: "I hope my protection has served you well. Perhaps I can offer you something even better. Prove your devotion. Stop harming my pets, and I will give you something truly

amazing.” At this point, Giant Constrictor Snakes (1 per party member) attack, but they don’t attack the character in talks with Maerella unless that character attacks first. If the character abstains from the fight, another dragonfly lands on the character’s shoulder. Consuming the dragonfly extends the character’s protection against poison for another hour.

The final vision contains a mission: “Auntie Mae appreciates your devotion, young one, and wants to reward you for the work you’ve done. I can teach you to control the swamp the way I do, to live with it in harmony. Come to me, follow the trees to my hut, and I’ll train you up good and strong. But first, you need to do one last thing for me: those who don’t follow Mormo aren’t welcome here. Get rid of your friends; don’t lead them to your new family. And then, little sister, you’ll find everything you ever wanted here with me.”

If any one woman in the party receives Maerella’s visions, she can attempt to secretly recruit any of the other women in the party, as well. If any of the women reveal the recruitment to men in the party, Maerella appears in another vision and rescinds her invitation, as well as any protection against poison. Auntie Maerella actively recruits trans and cis women, and if nonbinary characters are willing to join her, she accepts them happily. The visions continue plaguing the party until the end of chapter two, when they reach either Maerella’s hut or the secret tomb entrance.

MESOS’ BANE

The corruption of Mesos’ Bane has reached Sorporatra Swamp by this point, mingling with the arcana already in the area. The presence of so many of Mormo’s followers in the Sorporatra Swamp taint the arcana toward poison, affecting the damage types. Any character who casts an arcane spell using a bard, sorcerer, warlock, or wizard spell slot must roll 1d6 and consult the following chart.

NOTABLE NPCs

Auntie Maerella Twigmouth (F NE druid **swamp hag**) lives with her menagerie of animals in the Sorporatra Swamp. Having lost her last two recruits, Luella and Aurelia, she is ready to find a new woman to transform into a hag, but she is fiercely protective of her home and unwilling to venture far enough from the swamp to find a new apprentice. The only thing she wants more than to create more hags is to protect the tomb beneath her hut. She doesn’t want Aurelia released yet, but if she’s killed, she knows Aurelia will avenge her, so directs her murderers to the tomb.

Raehl (NB CE **sundered mage**) fears the hag coven in the swamp because, last they heard, it was still a coven who guards the hut. Raehl encouraged the spread of rumors that weapons powerful enough to bring down a Titan lie under

TABLE: MESOS’ BANE

D6 BANE

- Bane of Corrosion:** You generate a corrosive spray when you cast an arcane spell. You must make a **Constitution saving throw** against your own spell save DC or suffer 1 point of acid damage. For 2 rounds per level of the spell you cast (one round for a cantrip), the acid clouds your senses and gives you advantage on saving throws against the noxious gas in the swamp. However, due to your discomfort, you also have disadvantage on Strength and Dexterity checks during that time.
- Bane of Venom:** You generate a poison spray when you cast an arcane spell. You must make a **Constitution saving throw** against your own spell save DC or suffer 1 point of poison damage. For 2 rounds per level of the spell you cast (one round for a cantrip), your body releases an aura of poison, preventing creatures in the swamp from attacking you and instead encouraging them to attack your teammates. During this time, you have disadvantage on Constitution checks.
- Bane of Death:** You generate an aura of shadow when you cast an arcane spell. You must make a **Constitution saving throw** against your own spell save DC or suffer 1 point of necrotic damage. For 2 rounds per level of the spell you cast (one round for a cantrip), you have advantage on saving throws against necrotic effects, and you also have resistance to necrotic damage. However, during the same period, you also have disadvantage on Strength and Constitution checks.
- Bane of the Mind:** You generate an aura of psychic dissonance when you cast an arcane spell. You must make a **Constitution saving throw** against your own spell save DC or suffer 1 point of psychic damage. For 2 rounds per level of the spell you cast (one round for a cantrip), you have advantage on saving throws against psychic effects, and you also have resistance to psychic damage. However, during the same period, you also have disadvantage on Intelligence and Wisdom checks.
- No effect.** Mesos’ Bane does not flare up for you any more than normal.

the hags’ hut to try to draw adventurers into the swamp to make the fight easier for them. They want to sneak into the tomb while someone else fights the hags and won’t attack the characters until they’re in the tomb (or if they become desperate because Maerella successfully recruits more hags).

Aurelia Twigmouth (F NE druid **swamp hag**) was a fledgling hag studying under Maerella. Aurelia turned out to be a quick study and quickly surpassed Maerella's other apprentice, Luella, before surpassing even Maerella's abilities. After accidentally injuring Luella, she lost complete control of her powers, constantly lashing out with dangerous and powerful spells that were tearing her apart. After trying to kill Aurelia, Luella fled the coven, and Maerella put Aurelia into a magical slumber and trapped her in the tomb beneath their hut until she could find a way to control Aurelia's growing power.





CHAPTER ONE: SORPORATRA SWAMP

Whispers and rumors surrounding the swamp become more common the closer the characters travel to it. While the stories are not all the same, there are two common themes: a fragment of Mesos the Dismembered lies in the Sorporatra Swamp, entombed with weapons powerful enough to kill a Titan. Protecting this cache of powerful artifacts is a coven of hags who don't allow anyone to get close.

Anyone who approaches the swamp from the west or northwest finds signs of the Twigmouth hag coven, eventually leading to their home above the tomb.

As soon as the characters enter the swamp, they see a tree that looks like it has a face, and near the mouth,

small twigs poke out in every direction. Behind this tree is a smaller one, also containing a face with twig-filled mouth. If someone attempts to touch either tree, a **swarm of poisonous snakes** attacks, and a **giant constrictor snake** rests in the branches, closely watching any who come near and waiting for an opportunity to strike. If characters attempt to walk by without touching the trees, the giant constrictor snake attacks, but the swarm only attacks if someone makes physical contact with either tree. If any of these snakes die within 30 feet of this tree, a thick sap leaks from the eyes on the tree. Any creature who touches the sap becomes poisoned.

For every mile traveled (and every time a character becomes poisoned), roll 1d6 on the Miniscule Menagerie table to determine which creatures attack. Any time creatures from Maerella's menagerie attack this way, the characters see the creatures come from the nearest tree with face in the bark. They may swing down from the branches, appear from behind the trunk, or even crawl out of the tree face's mouth.

For groups with lower APL, consider halving the number of creatures who attack or roll on the Menagerie table once every 2 hours.

The swamp is a dangerous place for characters due to the noxious gas and constant threat of attack, but the path is clear: In the vast swampland, there are many trees similar to the first one they see that appear to have a face and a mouth full of twigs. These trees appear in all different shapes and sizes, but the trees that lead to the hag's hut all have this in common.

MINISCULE MENAGERIE*

Maerella has collected a large menagerie through her long life, and some of her creatures guard the paths leading

to her home to discourage visitors. When these creatures attack, they always come from another tree that appears to have a face with twigs growing from its mouth.

RESULT	CREATURE(S)
1	swarm of rats (1 swarm per party member)
2	giant poisonous snake (1 per party member)
3	giant toad (1 for every 2 party members, rounded down)
4	flying snakes (2 per party member)
5	swarm of poisonous snakes
6	giant toad (1 per party member)

As long as the characters continue following the twig-mouthed trees, it won't take them long to arrive at the path to Maerella's hut. After 5 miles of travel or after the party takes 20 poison damage in total (whichever comes first), the next tree they see are the three trees that begin the path to the maze.





CHAPTER TWO: THE TRUSTED TREES

Read or paraphrase the following:

A path where the swampy waters seem clearer and the plant life less overgrown emerges, beckoning you near. Three large trees, all with faces similar to the ones you've seen throughout the swamp grow at the edge of this path. One tree is split down the middle, its face cleft into two equal parts; one appears to have stopped growing, and its branches reach up toward the sky with its bark face contorted in pain; the last tree stands between the two, its face staring solemnly at the path ahead.

The swamp fog seems especially thick on either side of the path, making this cleared section seem like the obvious choice to progress further. As soon as the characters step onto the path, all three trees exhale *poison spray* toward them. The characters must each succeed on a **DC 10 Constitution check** or take 1d12 poison damage.

Once the poison spray clears, the characters may choose a path.

MAZE IN THE MARSH

After every 1 mile of travel, the characters come across another crossroads where the path diverges into four new paths: one the smallest tree faces, one the medium tree faces, and one each side of the split tree faces. The characters must choose one of the four paths, and the other swamp mechanics are still in effect here (poison gas and travel pace). After 4 miles traveled on the correct path (and 2 traveled consecutively), they come across Maerella's Hut. If the characters don't figure out which is the correct path, they come across Maerella's Hut the next time they choose the correct path after traveling 8 miles.

At each crossroads, the trees appear in a different order, but they always look the same: one tree is a little smaller and seems frozen and lifeless next to the others. One is larger and appears to be split down the center, creating two trees. All three appear to have faces in the bark, and all three faces seem to have mouths full of twigs. A **DC 10 Wisdom** check when examining the trees reveals the medium-sized one has the most twigs in its mouth, the smallest tree's face is contorted in pain, and both sides of the split tree's face appear angry.

A successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana or History)** check allows a character to recall a story about the coven of hags in the swamp. A hag rescued women lost in this swamp if they wanted to become hags. After many decades, she formed a coven of these lost souls, and this coven of hags ruled the swamp. One of the initiates became very powerful very quickly, and her sister wanted to leave the coven to strike out on her own and make a name for herself. Before she left, she attempted to siphon some of her sisters' power, and the explosive consequences of her actions tore the coven apart.

On an 11, the character knows a hag coven ruled this swamp until one of the hags split her loyalty between the coven and elsewhere, which eventually led to the coven's downfall. Traces of the hags' power and control of the region can still be seen everywhere in the swamp.

There are two ways to the stash: through the hag's hut or through a well-hidden entrance under a tree. By following the paths in front of the small, pained tree, the characters could wander around the swamp endlessly, constantly battling the creatures who have made the paths near those trees their home. By following the sundered tree, characters face greater dangers but can eventually reach a secret entrance to the underground tomb. The easiest path to the tomb is by following the paths in front of the medium trees, which lead to the hag's hut and then to the tomb beneath.

VILE VISIONS

Visions plague any characters who become poisoned or take poison damage while in the maze of trees. Roll 1d4 on the visions table and read or paraphrase the vision to the character(s) experiencing it.

RESULT	VISION
1	You watch as two trees sprout from the ground. The branches of one tree reach down to rip its own trunk apart, splitting it down the middle, releasing a thick, noxious gas into the air. Even split, the tree grows ever larger, overshadowing the tree next to it, growing too large to see the smaller tree nurturing a sapling. You blink the images away, and when you look again, the trees are gone.
2	A tumbling mass of plants and mud tears through the swamp toward you, absorbing every living being in its path. As it approaches, it grows larger, the consumed branches and serpents reaching out toward you, beckoning you closer, promising power. The mass vanishes into a swirl of mist or fog.
3	The reeds growing from the murky water sway and extend toward you, before curling in on themselves and opening thin, yellow eyes. The reeds open their mouths, revealing sharp fangs. The snakes unfurl to their full length and strike at you then disappear into the mists.
4	The ferns at your feet quiver and extend, crawling up your legs and pulling you deeper into the soft ground. The harder you fight, the faster you sink, and the face on a tree's trunk looms over you, smiling sweetly. You close your eyes, and when you open them again, you're standing back on the path.

STUNTED SAPLINGS

If the characters take the path in front of the smallest tree, the medium, solemn-faced tree exhales *poison spray* toward the characters, and they must succeed on a **DC 10 Constitution saving throw** or take 1d12 poison damage. Then roll 1d4 on the following table. While on this path, they also see plants stunted in their growth, petrified trees, and smaller creatures writhing in the swamp as if in pain.

In the years since this path has been abandoned, small settlements of Asaatthi and Slitherin have made their homes in these areas.

RESULT	ENCOUNTER
1	Asaatthi Blades (1 per character) attack
2	1 giant constrictor snake attacks
3	1 swarm of poisonous snakes attacks
4	Nothing attacks, but a swarm of poisonous snakes watches the characters closely from the reeds

SOLEMN SWAMP

If the characters take the path in front of the medium tree, roll 1d4 on the following table. If there is at least one woman in the party and at least one man, and if the characters take this path twice consecutively, all women in the party must succeed on a **DC 10 Intelligence saving throw** or experience one of the visions from Grandmother's Gifts.

After choosing this path at least four times, when the characters take this path twice consecutively, they face a group of Witch Totems, which attempt to lead the party away from Maerella's hut. The characters can ignore or fight the witch totems to get to the hut.

RESULT	ENCOUNTER
1	Asaatthi Blades (1 per party member) attack
2	The twig's from the tree's mouth shoot forward as poison darts
3	Witch Totems (2 per party member) attack
4	Vines swing forward from the tree branches to entangle the characters

SUNDERED SISTERS

If the characters take either of the paths in front of the split tree at any of the crossroads, roll 1d4 on the table below to determine the encounter. The fog thickens along this path, and the players must roll Constitution saving throws more often to avoid poison from the gas. If players continue along this path after 5 crossroads, they eventually come upon the secret tree entrance, but Maerella is there guarding it.

RESULT	ENCOUNTER
1	Diseased Slitherin (1 per party member) attack
2	Slitherin Red Witches (1 per 2 party members, rounded down) attack
3	1 Asaatthi Witchblade and 2 Asaatthi Blades attack
4	1 swarm of poisonous snakes attacks





CHAPTER THREE: SISTERS IN SPIRIT

If they take the paths in front of the split trees, they end up in front of a large, damaged tree with trampled cattails all around it. Before the characters can approach it, Maerella appears and demands to know why the characters are invading her home.

If they take the paths in front of the solemn-faced trees, they make it to Maerella's hut.

Either way, the following interaction depends on Maerella's success with recruiting a new hag. If she has been successful in convincing a woman to join her and any other party members are still alive, Maerella fights alongside the woman betraying the rest of the party. If Maerella and

her new fledgling hag kill or scare off the rest of the party, a desperate Raehl will attack. If Maerella and the fledgling hag die, the rest of the party can proceed to the next part or attempt to leave the swamp.

If Maerella hasn't been successful in her recruitment, she makes a direct offer to the women in the party now, promising power and a long life as a hag if they fight alongside her. If no one takes her up on this offer, the adventure progresses as normal.

Maerella, a **swamp hag**, summons a **giant crocodile** to aid her.

If the characters win the fight, read or paraphrase the textbox below.

As the hag falls, her eyes turn away from you and toward a large tree. You follow her gaze to a well-hidden trapdoor.

“Had my sisters been here, you would not have stood a chance. We are weaker when we are apart,” the hag grumbles, and the water and reeds around her sway and move with her words.

“Release her, then. And face the consequences.” She lets out a final breath and collapses into the murky water.

Her body expands as you watch, collapsing and regrowing into more swamp plants, and snakes and rats claw out of the mass and run into the surrounding swamp.

After they kill Maerella, they can attempt to search her home and find swarms of poisonous and giant constrictor snakes, a few spell and potion ingredients, and a *Staff of the Python* and *serpentsteel spear* (see Rewards for more details).

At this point, the characters can locate the trapdoor easily because Maerella pointed it out. A successful **DC 15 Perception (Wisdom)** check alerts them to movement near the tree (which is visible from the hag’s hut). The movement happens too quickly for them to see who it is, but it’s clear whoever was moving went through the trapdoor.

This new presence is Raehl, who the characters face as soon as they head into the tomb.





CHAPTER FOUR: TORN ASUNDER

Read or paraphrase the following:

A dark path leads you to a large stone cavern overgrown with thick patches of reeds, ferns, and other swamp plants. Thick, murky water drips from the ceiling, filling the chamber with a damp, stale smell. In the center of the room is a humanoid who looks unnaturally slim, digging into the ground. They turn to face you as you approach.

“Thank you for taking care of the hags for us,” two voices say in harmony. “If you leave now, we won’t have a problem. We’ve laid claim to the weapons here. Leave now, while you still can.”

Raehl, the sundered mage, fights to the death to defend the rumored cache of weapons here. They heard a rumor of something powerful under Maerella’s hut and wanted an easy way to get to it because they had also been told Maerella was part of a powerful coven of hags and worried they couldn’t take them alone, especially knowing the hag coven worshipped Mormo and fearing their favored weapon of poison.

Raehl is split to attempt to find some of the weapons while distracting the characters with battle. If the fight starts going too poorly for Raehl, they’ll recombine. Otherwise, they give up the search after five rounds and attempt to recombine for the rest of the fight.



After they kill Raehl, read or paraphrase the following.

The mage falls to the stone floor, their blood leaking out into the dirt. As it does, you see a pattern in the floor you didn't notice before and watch as their blood swirls into the engravings in the stone, highlighting a large and convoluted magic circle.

THE SUNDERED SISTER

A successful **DC 15 Arcana (Intelligence)** check reveals that the symbols are reminiscent of a containment spell. As the characters watch, the stone chamber begins to shake, and the swamp plants in the tomb with them begin growing.

When **Aurelia** appears, she casts *cloudkill*; everyone must make a **DC 17 Constitution saving throw**. They take 5d8 damage on a failed saving throw or half as much damage on a successful save. Aurelia uses this distraction to activate the *teleportation circle* built into the tomb and disappears.

Aurelia's appearance (and immediate disappearance) triggers the *magic mouth* spell in a face carved into the stone behind Aurelia's tomb. Maerella's voice speaks softly from the face.

"I'm sorry, dear one. If you're hearing this, you were released too soon. I can't help you control your power yet. I'll see you again."

Beneath the stone face is a chest that wasn't obvious until the message directed the party's attention there. Inside the chest, they find a *Medallion of the Seashell*, a *necklace of adaptation*, and *serpent-skin armor*.

The characters have contributed to the release of Aurelia, a powerful hag who can't control her abilities. Her arcana comes forth in uncontrollable and explosive bursts, and with no family remaining, there's no way to predict where she may have disappeared to.

CONCLUSIONS

This adventure provides several branching paths, and each one leads to a different conclusion.

TURNING BACK

The Sorporatra Swamp is dangerous and can be deadly. If the characters decide to turn back toward safer destinations, the swamp is glad to let them leave. Though creatures may watch the characters from the swampy waters and trees, they let the characters pass safely.

At the DM's discretion, Raehl may run into the characters as they're leaving and either attempt to convince them to keep trying or fight them.

In the following weeks, the characters hear rumors of a hag coven in Sorporatra Swamp being wiped out and someone dangerous gaining access to powerful weapons.

ACCEPTING GIFTS

If any of the women accepted Maerella's offer to become a hag and accept her mentorship, Maerella takes her on as a fledgling hag as soon as she arrives at the hut. If the women in the party kill all the men and recruit or kill any women or nonbinary characters unwilling to join, Maerella immediately ushers the remaining women into her home.

Maerella also welcomes the women willing to become her apprentices if, instead of killing the rest of their party, they simply scare them out of the swamp (but do so without revealing Maerella's recruitment).

They spend the following weeks in training, and Maerella feeds them potions of swamp ingredients to turn them into swamp hags.

This has lasting impacts on the campaign, as the fledgling hag has either killed or split off from the rest of her party.

MAMA MORMO

If the characters manage to make a bargain with Maerella instead of killing her, Maerella wants the characters to stop whoever is attempting to break into the tomb to release Aurelia. She explains that Aurelia was a fledgling hag who lost control of her powers and became dangerous to herself and the rest of the coven.

If they kill or scare off Raehl without waking Aurelia, she offers a *Snake's Blessing*, a *Staff of the Python*, *serpentsteel spear*, or a *ring of resistance* with an amethyst gem.

EVERYONE DIES

If the party kills Maerella and Raehl and releases Aurelia, they are free to explore the tomb and Maerella's hut for rewards. While there are not weapons as powerful as the rumored Titan-killers, there are still plenty of items to be found.

They must also live with the knowledge, however, that they've released an uncontrollable hag unto the world. They may never see her again, but they may continue hearing rumors whenever they're in the area of wild surges of magic and a swamp hag attacking anyone who sees her.

REWARDS

If the party raids the tomb, they find

- Medallion of the Seashell (SLPG)
- Serpent Skin Armor (SLPG)
- Necklace of Adaptation (SRD)

If they kill Maerella and raid her hut, they find

- Staff of the Python (SRD)
- Serpentsteel Spear (SLPG)

If the characters don't kill Maerella and prevent Aurelia's escape, Maerella rewards them with the two items they would find by raiding her hut as well as a ring of resistance with amethyst (poison) gem.

MILESTONES AND XP

To determine experience earned by defeating enemies, total the XP per enemy and divide by number of characters.

ENEMY	XP PER ENEMY
Raehl (defeat or bargain with)	3900
Maerella (defeat or bargain with)	3900
Asaatthi Blade	100
Asaatthi Witchblade	450
Flying Snake	25
Giant Constrictor Snake	450
Giant Crocodile	1800
Giant Frog	50
Giant Poisonous Snake	50
Giant Toad	200
Slitherin (Diseased)	100
Slitherin (Red Witch)	200
Swarm of Poisonous Snakes	450
Swarm of Rats	50
Witch Totem	50

If you prefer to track milestones, players advance one milestone for each major event:

- finding their way through the maze of trees
- defeating or making a deal with Maerella
- defeating or making a deal with Raehl
- turning against their fellow players (if they take Maerella's deal to become a hag)

APPENDIX: CREATURES AND NPCs

MAERELLA TWIGMOUTH, SWAMP HAG

Large fey (titanspawn), neutral evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor) (16 with barkskin)

Hit Points 136 (13d10+65)

Speed 30 ft., swim 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	11 (+0)	21 (+5)	16 (+3)	19 (+4)	16 (+3)

Saves Wisdom +7, Charisma +6

Skills Nature +4, Perception +7

Damage Resistances acid, necrotic

Damage Immunities poison

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 17

Languages Ancient Ledeon, Druidic, Ledeon, Giantish, Sylvan, Titanspeech

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Amphibious. Maerella can breathe air and water. Horrific Appearance. Any humanoid that starts its turn within 30 feet of Maerella and can see her true form must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, with disadvantage if Maerella is within line of sight, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to Maerella's Horrific Appearance for the next 24 hours. Unless the target is surprised or the revelation of the hag's true form is sudden, the target can avert its eyes and avoid making the initial saving throw. Until the start of its next turn, a creature that averts its eyes has disadvantage on attack rolls against Maerella.

Spellcasting. Maerella is a 12th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 15, or +7 to hit with spell attacks). Maerella knows the following druid spells:

Cantrips (at will): *poison spray, druidcraft, shillelagh*

1st level (4/day): *animal friendship, charm person, entangle, fog cloud*

2nd level (3/day): *barkskin, spike growth, gust of wind*

3rd level (3/day): *acid arrow, wind wall, plant growth*

4th level (3/day): *blight, giant insect*

5th level (2/day): *conjure animals* (reptiles only)

6th level (1/day): *conjure fey*

Swamp Witch. Maerella can move across swampland without needing to make an ability check. Additionally, difficult terrain composed of earth or rocks doesn't cost her extra movement. In swampy terrain, Maerella leaves behind no tracks or other traces of her passage unless she wishes to; if she does not, she can't be tracked except by magical means.

Actions

Quarterstaff. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d6) bludgeoning damage, or 5 (1d8) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands.

Claws (Hag Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack.* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (2d6+1) slashing damage plus 7 (2d6) poison damage.

Illusory Appearance. Maerella covers herself and anything she is wearing or carrying with a magical illusion that makes her look like an ugly creature of her general size and humanoid shape. The effect ends if Maerella takes a bonus action to end it or if she dies. The changes wrought by this effect fail to hold up to physical inspection. For example, Maerella could appear to have no claws, but someone touching her hand might feel the claws. Otherwise, a creature must take an action to visually inspect the illusion and succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check to discern that Maerella is disguised.

RAEHL, SUNDERED MAGE

Medium aberration, neutral evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)/14 (natural armor)*

Hit Points 95 (10d8+50)/ 48 (5d8+25)*

Speed 30 ft

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	20 (+5)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	18 (+4)

Saves Charisma +8/+7, Wisdom +4/+3

Skills Arcana +6, Perception +4, Survival +4

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 19

Languages Ancient Ledean, Titanspeech

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

*All statistics after the slash refer to the sundered mage's separated bodies, while the first number refers to its combined form.

All-Around Vision. When united, the sundered mage's facial features morph constantly, each face able to look in different directions, granting it advantage on Intelligence (Investigation), Wisdom (Perception), and Wisdom (Survival) checks. In addition, the sundered mage cannot be flanked if using that optional rule.

Otherworldly Sight. The sundered mage can see all invisible and ethereal creatures and objects within 60 feet.

Regeneration. While the sundered mage has at least 1 hit point, it regains 6 hit points at the start of its turn. When in its dual-form, each body regenerates hit points separately. However, if one form perishes, the regeneration does not keep the other body from dying.

Sorcery Points. The sundered mage has a pool of 12 sorcery points which it may call upon to twist its magic to fit its needs as follows.

Distant Spell. The sundered mage may spend 1 sorcery point to double the range of the spell. When it uses the ability on a spell that has a range of touch, the range increases to 30 feet.

Maximize Spell. When the sundered mage spends 3 sorcery points, all variable, numeric effects of the spell are maximized, requiring no roll to determine damage, hit points affected, number of targets, etc., as appropriate.

Create Spell Slots. As a bonus action, the sundered mage may expend sorcery points to gain a spell slot. It can create spell slots no higher than 5th-level. Alternately, the sundered mage may, as a bonus action, expend one spell slot to gain a number of sorcery points equal to the slot's level.

SPELL SLOT LEVEL	SORCERY POINT COST
------------------	--------------------

1st	2
2nd	3
3rd	5
4th	6
5th	7

Spellcasting. The sundered mage is a 12th-level sorcerer. It's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch*, *fire bolt*, *friends*, *mage hand*, *message*, *true strike***

1st level (4 slots): *magic missile*, *sleep*

2nd level (3 slots): *ray of sickness*

3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell*, *fireball*, *haste****

4th level (3 slots)*: *blight*, *greater invisibility****

5th level (2 slots)*: *animate objects*, *dominate person*

6th level (1 slot)*: *disintegrate*, *globe of invulnerability*

* When in its dual-form, the sundered mage loses all 5th- and 6th-level spell slots, and its number of available 4th-level spell slots is reduced to 2.

** When in its dual-form, the effects of true strike may be used by either of the sundered mage's bodies, allowing it to gain its benefits on the same turn.

*** The effects of these spells are shared by both bodies if the sundered mage is in its dual-form.



War Caster. The sundered mage has advantage on Constitution saving throws to maintain its concentration on a spell when it takes damage.

The mage can perform somatic components of spells even when it has weapons in one or both hands.

When a hostile creature's movement provokes an attack of opportunity from the sundered mage, the mage may use its reaction to cast a spell at the creature, rather than making an opportunity attack. The spell must have a casting time of 1 action and must target only that creature.

Actions

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack* : +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit* : 5 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack* : +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit* : 4 (1d6) bludgeoning damage, or 5 (1d8) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands.

Dual-Form. The sundered mage splits itself into two separate bodies, or re-unites from its dual-form into a single body.

The two bodies act independently from one another, though they share a single mind, which allows them to communicate with one another instantly. The dual-forms share experiences, feelings, and have full use of each others' vision and other senses. As long as both forms are on the same plane of existence, there is no limit to the range of this effect.

When a wounded mage reforms into a single body, its total hit points are added together. A subsequent split divides its remaining hit points in half for each body. If one of the dual-forms is slain, the other body dies instantly. Spells that affect the ability scores, skills, or abilities of one body affects the other body automatically.

CREATURES FROM SLPG

ASAATTH BLADE

Medium humanoid (snakefolk, titanspawn), lawful evil

Armor Class 16 (scale mail)

Hit Points 22 (4d8 + 4)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Acrobatics +4, Perception +2

Damage Resistances poison

Senses darkvision 60 ft.; passive Perception 12

Languages Asaatth, Titan Speech

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Asaatthi Resistances. The asaath has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or poisoned.

Spellcasting. The asaath blade is a 1st-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 11, +3 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *mage hand*, *poison spray*, *true strike*

1st level (2 slots): *magic missile*, *silent image*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The asaath blade makes one scimitar attack and one bite attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack.* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack.* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 5 (1d6 + 2) slashing damage.

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack.* +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit*: 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing.

ASAATTH WITCHBLADE

Medium humanoid (snakefolk, titanspawn), lawful evil

Armor Class 16 (scale mail)

Hit Points 67 (9d8 + 27)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	17 (+3)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

Skills Acrobatics +5, Perception +2

Damage Resistances poison

Senses darkvision 60 ft.; passive Perception 12

Languages Asaatth, Titan Speech, plus one other

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Asaatthi Resistances. The asaath has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or poisoned.

Spellcasting. The asaath witchblade is a 6th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *acid splash*, *mage hand*, *poison spray*, *true strike*

1st level (4 slots): *animal friendship*, *magic missile*, *silent image*, *shield*

2nd level (3 slots): *enhance ability*, *spider climb*, *twisting thrust**

3rd level (3 slots): *bestow curse*, *hypnotic pattern*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The asaath witchblade makes two scimitar attacks and one bite attack, or it makes two shortbow attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack.* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack.* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack.* +5 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing.

DISEASED (SLITHERIN)

Medium humanoid (titanspawn), any evil

Armor Class 13 (leather armor)

Hit Points 19 (3d8 + 6)

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	5 (-3)

Skills Acrobatics +4, Medicine +3, Stealth +4

Senses darkvision 60 ft.; passive Perception 11

Languages Slitherin, Titan Speech

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Contortionist. The slitherin has advantage on Dexterity checks to escape from bonds or being grappled, as well as to squeeze through tight spaces.

Disease Carrier. The Diseased slitherin is immune to the effects of disease. However, it can still contract diseases and be a carrier, exposing others to the disease's ravages.

Rodent Empathy. The slitherin can converse with rodents through body language and simple sounds, communicating simple ideas to such beasts.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The slitherin makes two attacks: one bite and one claw, or one bite and one shortsword.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack.* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d3 + 2) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw against disease or become poisoned until the disease is cured. Every 24 hours that elapse, the creature must repeat the saving throw, reducing its hit point maximum by 3 (1d6) on a failure. This reduction lasts until the disease is cured. The creature dies if the disease reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack.* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) slashing damage.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack.* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack.* +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage.

RED WITCH (SLITHERIN)

Medium humanoid (titanspawn), lawful evil

Armor Class 12 (15 with mage armor)

Hit Points 16 (3d8 + 3)

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Skills Acrobatics +4, Arcana +5, Stealth +4

Senses darkvision 60 ft.; passive Perception 11

Languages Slitherin, Titan Speech, plus any two other tongues

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Contortionist. The slitherin has advantage on Dexterity checks to escape from bonds or being grappled, as well as to squeeze through tight spaces.

Disease Resistance. The slitherin has advantage on saving throws against disease.

Rodent Empathy. The slitherin can converse with rodents through body language and simple sounds, communicating simple ideas to such beasts.

Spellcasting. The Red Witch is a 3rd-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 13, or +5 to hit with spell attacks). The Red Witch has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch*, *filch**, *minor illusion*

1st level (4/day): *color spray*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *silent image*

2nd level (2/day): *acid arrow*, *blindness/deafness*

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack.* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d3 + 2) piercing damage.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack.* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

WITCH TOTEM

Tiny construct (titanspawn), any evil

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 7 (2d4 + 2)

Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)	11 (+0)	6 (-2)

Skills Stealth +5

Damage Vulnerabilities fire

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities poison, psychic

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft.; passive Perception 9

Languages Titan Speech (can't speak)

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Forest Camouflage. While it is in forest terrain and remains motionless, a witch totem is invisible.

Regeneration. The witch totem regains 1 hit point at the start of its turn. If the totem takes acid or fire damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of its next turn. The witch totem is destroyed only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

Traceless Passage. The witch totem can't be tracked except by magical means. It leaves behind no tracks or other traces of its passage.

ACTIONS

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack.* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d3 + 1) slashing damage.

Dart. *Ranged Weapon Attack.* +3 to hit, range 10/30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) poison damage.

CREATURES FROM SRD

FLYING SNAKE

Tiny beast, unaligned

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 5 (2d4)

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
4 (-3)	18 (+4)	11 (+0)	2 (-4)	12 (+1)	5 (-3)

Senses Blindsight 10 ft., Passive Perception 11

Languages --

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Flyby. The snake doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 piercing damage plus 7 (3d4) poison damage.

GIANT CONSTRICTOR SNAKE

Huge beast, unaligned

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 60 (8d12 + 8)

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	1 (-5)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)

Skills Perception +2

Senses Blindsight 10 ft., Passive Perception 12

Languages --

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Constrict. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 16). Until this grapple ends, the creature is restrained, and the snake can't constrict another target.

GIANT CROCODILE

Huge beast, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (Natural Armor)

Hit Points 85 (9d12 + 27)

Speed 30 ft., swim 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	9 (-1)	17 (+3)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)

Skills Stealth +5

Senses Passive Perception 10

Languages --

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Hold Breath. The crocodile can hold its breath for 30 minutes.

Actions

Multiattack. The crocodile makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its tail.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 21 (3d10 + 5) piercing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 16). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the crocodile can't bite another target.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target not grappled by the crocodile. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

GIANT FROG

Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 18 (4d8)

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)

Skills Perception +2, Stealth +3

Senses Darkvision 30 ft., Passive Perception 12

Languages --

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Amphibious. The frog can breathe air and water.

Standing Leap. The frog's long jump is up to 20 feet and its high jump is up to 10 feet, with or without a running start.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 11). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the frog can't bite another target.

Swallow. The frog makes one bite attack against a Small or smaller target it is grappling. If the attack hits, the target is swallowed, and the grapple ends. The swallowed target is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the frog, and it takes 5 (2d4) acid damage at the start of each of the frog's turns. The frog can have only one target swallowed at a time. If the frog dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse using 5 feet of movement, exiting prone.

GIANT POISONOUS SNAKE

Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)

Skills Perception +2

Senses Blindsight 10 ft., Passive Perception 12

Languages --

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4 + 4) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw,

taking 10 (3d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

GIANT TOAD

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 39 (6d10 + 6)

Speed 20 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	13 (+1)	13 (+1)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)

Senses Darkvision 30 ft., Passive Perception 10

Languages --

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Amphibious. The toad can breathe air and water.

Standing Leap. The toad's long jump is up to 20 feet and its high jump is up to 10 feet, with or without a running start.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d10 + 2) piercing damage plus 5 (1d10) poison damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 13). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the toad can't bite another target.

Swallow. The toad makes one bite attack against a Medium or smaller target it is grappling. If the attack hits, the target is swallowed, and the grapple ends. The swallowed target is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the toad, and it takes 10 (3d6) acid damage at the start of each of the toad's turns. The toad can have only one target swallowed at a time. If the toad dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse using 5 feet of movement, exiting prone.

SWARM OF POISONOUS SNAKES

Medium swarm of Tiny beasts, unaligned

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 36 (8d8)

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	18 (+4)	11 (+0)	1 (-5)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)

Damage Resistances Bludgeoning, Piercing, Slashing

Condition Immunities Charmed, Frightened, Grappled, Paralyzed, Petrified, Prone, Restrained, Stunned

Senses Blindsight 10 ft., Passive Perception 10

Languages --

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny snake. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 0 ft., one creature in the swarm's space. *Hit:* 7 (2d6) piercing damage, or 3 (1d6) piercing damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer. The target must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw, taking 14 (4d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

SWARM OF RATS

Medium swarm of Tiny beasts, unaligned

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 24 (7d8 - 7)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	11 (+0)	9 (-1)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)

Damage Resistances Bludgeoning, Piercing, Slashing

Condition Immunities Charmed, Frightened, Grappled, Paralyzed, Petrified, Prone, Restrained, Stunned

Senses Darkvision 30 ft., Passive Perception 10

Languages --

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Keen Smell. The swarm has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny rat. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in the swarm's space. *Hit:* 7 (2d6) piercing damage, or 3 (1d6) piercing damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer.

APPENDIX: MAGIC ITEMS

MEDALLION OF THE SEASHELL

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

Lore. The Maritime Vigil, represented by the seashell, is a young vigil assigned to patrol the Blood Sea coast, with headquarters south of the Sorporatra Swamp near Calastia.

Powers. You can use your action to expend 3 charges to grant yourself advantage on Strength checks and saving throws for 1 hour. During this time, swimming costs you no extra movement and you can breathe underwater.

STAFF OF THE PYTHON

Staff, uncommon (requires attunement by a cleric, druid, or warlock)

You can use an action to speak this staff's command word and throw the staff on the ground within 10 feet of you. The staff becomes a giant constrictor snake under your control and acts on its own initiative count. By using a bonus action to speak the command word again, you return the staff to its normal form in a space formerly occupied by the snake.

On your turn, you can mentally command the snake if it is within 60 feet of you and you aren't incapacitated. You decide what action the snake takes and where it moves during its next turn, or you can issue it a general command, such as to attack your enemies or guard a location.

If the snake is reduced to 0 hit points, it dies and reverts to its staff form. The staff then shatters and is destroyed. If the snake reverts to staff form before losing all its hit points, it regains all of them.

SERPENT-SKIN ARMOR

Armor (leather), very rare (requires attunement)

Lore. Mormo's most devout followers maintain serpent pits deep within the Hornsaw Forest, and *serpent-skin armor* was first crafted from the skin of giant snakes fattened there on the blood of the Hag Queen.

Powers. While you wear this armor, you gain a +1 bonus to AC. You also have advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks you make to hide, as well as on checks to escape bonds or to avoid or escape being grappled.

NECKLACE OF ADAPTATION

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

While wearing this necklace, you can breathe normally in any environment, and you have advantage on saving throws made against harmful gases and vapors (such as cloudkill and stinking cloud effects, inhaled poisons, and the breath weapons of some dragons).

RING OF RESISTANCE

Ring, rare (requires attunement)

You have resistance to poison while wearing this ring with an inlaid amethyst.

SERPENTSTEEL SPEAR

Weapon (spear), common

Lore. This greenish-tinged metal, favored for centuries by the asaathi, is an alloy of copper, tin, and snake venom, all crafted using a highly secret alchemical process. Calastian mages have yet to uncover the secret of forging serpensteel, despite their best efforts.

Powers. Once per turn, a creature hit by this weapon takes an additional 1d4 poison damage.

Beetle's Blood



Hal Howard



BEETLE'S BLOOD

This is a short side quest that brings the characters face to face with a former ally, Dain Ironheart. Dain has gone mad in attempts to thwart Maghiel's plans and will do anything to acquire the power to do so.

The adventure is set in the Kelder Mountains, south of Burok Torn. Dain has found the lab of one of Gest Ganest's former apprentices and is attempting to activate and control the **steel beetles** within. If successful, he could potentially replicate an entire army of beetles.

The challenge is that powering the beetles requires a blood sacrifice. As Dain has already discovered, not just any blood will do. It needs to be the blood of a humanoid.

Lost in his desperation and madness, Dain has abducted nearly the entire village of Riverton and has begun sacrificing them to power the beetles. The clock is running, can our heroes thwart Dain and save Riverton?

DESIGN NOTES

The adventure is designed to be a hard test for four characters with an average level of 9. The characters we play tested with are part of the digital package. If you have a larger group, action economy should allow a group of six 7th level characters to complete the quest. In all cases, I highly recommend that the party include at least one caster with area of effect spells. Fireball and shatter proved to be key to battles in the holding area and the lab.

In most play tests, the cave encounter was benign, only causing the characters minor damage and a few spell slots. The encounter in the foyer, however, usually downed one or more characters causing the remaining characters to expend resource to stabilize and heal them. Most teams risked a short rest to regain hit dice and spell slots after that encounter. If you want to press them to the limit have the dwarves disrupt that rest. The consecutive encounters

in the holding and the lab will tax resources in a major way and could easily result in the death of a character. Do not allow them a rest between these encounters, if they rest for more than 10 minutes have Dain return with the Beetles and remaining soldiers to put an end to this threat to his plans.

THE BEGINNING

This adventure begins when the characters receive a sealed note from Dain Ironheart (see **Appendix: NPCs and Monsters**). Dain is a dwarven forge cleric dedicated to the defeat of Maghiel. The characters may have met him in an earlier adventure.

The note reads:

Come quickly. I have discovered a way to tip the battle with Maghiel in our favor. Meet me at Riverton, as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Dain Ironheart, Defender of Burok Torn

Riverton is a small unremarkable village in the Kelder Mountains.

RIVERTON

When the characters arrive in Riverton, they find a nearly abandon village with only a few elders and perhaps a dozen children below the age of 10 in residence.

By speaking with the villagers, the party may learn the following:

- Dain arrived here several weeks ago with a band of dwarven soldiers and priests.
- He searched the nearby mountains for the location of a long dead magician's abandoned laboratory.
- The magician was Galwick Tarn, one of Gest Ganest's apprentices.
- Dain claimed to have found the laboratory. The note to the characters was sent right around this time.
- Shortly afterwards, two of the dwarven soldiers were killed in a mysterious accident.
- Following their death, the remaining soldiers returned to purchase all of the village's livestock over the objections of the villagers. They paid top coin but roughed up a few belligerent sellers in the process.
- One week ago, Dain returned and gathered everyone in the village square for an impassioned speech seeking their aid.

- Following the speech, all the villagers (save the few still here) followed him into the mountains.
- The villagers took nothing with them but the clothes on their backs.

If one or more of the characters are well versed (proficient) in History or Arcana, each may make an **Intelligence (History or Arcana)** check.

RESULT FACTS KNOWN

10+	Gest Ganest was a famous magician that survived the Titanswar.
12+	Gest disappeared about 20 years after the war.
14+	Gest's tower and lab are also located in the Kelder mountains. It has been sealed since his disappearance.
16+	Gest is famous for the creation of mechanical creatures and war machines.
18+	Gest's creations often relied on blood magic to power them.

Finding Galwick's Lab

The lab is in the mountains about 8 hours hike from Riverton. Following the trail left behind by the villagers is not at all difficult.

During the hike check for random encounters every two hours of travel. There is a 1 in 12 chance of an encounter, if traveling during daylight hours. That chance increases to 1 in 6, if the characters are traveling at night.

If an encounter happens, roll on the following table:

D6 ENCOUNTER

1-2	d4+3 wolves
3	d6+2 goblins and d4 worgs
4	d4 ogres
5	d4+1 dire wolves
6	2 hill giants

GALWICK'S LAB

Just ahead the trail breaks into a clearing. Sixty feet away on the opposite side of the clearing, a cave entrance 10' high and nearly 10' wide beckons.

The entrance to the lab is a hidden door within the cave. Until recently, the cave was home to a brown bear. His presence tended to discourage others that may have sought shelter within.

CAVE (A1)

The tunnel opens into a large circular natural cavern, 40' in diameter with a domed ceiling 25' above.

The cavern is guarded by two **clay golems**.

The golems remain motionless until the characters enter the cavern and then attack unless Dain Ironheart is with the party. They cannot be reasoned with and their only purpose is to deter anyone from following Dain into the lab. The golems are Dain's creations, though the characters may mistakenly believe they were created by Galwick as guardians for the lab.

Careful investigation and a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** check reveals that the cavern appears to have been occupied by a large animal or beast of some kind until recently.

Finding the secret door that leads from the cavern into the lab complex requires a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** check. Once the door is found, opening it requires either a **DC 20 Dexterity check with thieves' tools** or a **DC 24 Strength (Athletics)** check.

FOYER (A2)

Beyond the secret door a short tunnel leads to the doorway into a larger room. The lintel of the door seems oddly low (being only 6' from the floor) and bears an inscription. Inside the room beyond you see the bloodied bodies of two humans.

The inscription on the lintel reads 'Mind Your Head' in Ledean. The bodies are dressed in farmer's clothing and unarmed.

If the character's pause to assess the situation, then a successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Insight)** check will reveal:

- The dead appear to have tried to reach this door.
- They are unarmed.
- At least a dozen throwing knives are scattered about the room.
- The dead appear to have bled out from knife wounds.

The dead are two of the villagers that broke free and attempted to escape just hours before the characters' arrival.

If the characters enter the foyer, anything that stands more than three feet off the floor will activate the **searing wind** that occupies this space.

The only way for a creature taller than 3' to cross the room successfully is to crawl. If there was a command word to deactivate the trap, it has been lost to time with the departure of the builders.

There are arrow slits down either side of the room. If you want to make this room extra challenging, have the **Kelder soldiers** from A4 man the arrow slits with their

crossbows. They could even intentionally spring the trap and set the **searing wind** in motion.

HALL (A3)

A 10' wide corridor leads east and west. Smaller hallways leading northward clearly go towards the archery platforms that overlook the area you just exited.

The hallway proceeds westward down a set of stairs and turns north to a set of open double doors.

The secret door leading to Galwick's quarters and the barracks requires a **DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation)** check to discover from this side. Even if discovered, the mechanism to activate it is broken. Forcing it open from this side would require several minutes and a successful **DC 25 Strength** check with a crowbar or similar lever. Doubtless, the effort would attract some attention from the **Kelder soldiers** in A4.

CELLS (A4)

If the characters had previously met Dain:

The door opens into a large open room with iron barred cells on either side. Dain Ironheart and a dozen of his soldiers occupy the center of the room. The cells are filled with human commoners.

If they have not:

The door opens into a large open room with iron barred cells on either side. A dozen dwarven soldiers and their leader occupy the center of the room. The cells are filled with human commoners.

The seven of the eight cells are filled with the villagers of Riverton (15-20 villagers per cell). Several are too weak to stand, as they have had two or more pints of blood drained in an attempt to animate the steel beetles (see A5).

Dain greets the characters as old friends and apologizes for any trouble they may have had to this point. 'All a misunderstanding... had I only known you were coming.' He is absolutely convinced that his current plan is a righteous one and that these villagers are a small sacrifice to make in the greater cause of defeating Maghiel.

The characters can persuade him to spare the villagers on a successful **DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion)** check. He is surrounded by allies committed to his cause, so the check is made with disadvantage.

If the characters fail to persuade Dain to change course, ten of his soldiers attack while Dain and two of his **Kelder soldiers** retreat down the stairs to the Lab (A5).

If the characters persuade Dain of his folly then he accompanied by two Kelder soldiers will lead them into the Lab (A5).

Treasure. Each soldier carries 15 gp and one gem worth 25 gp.

THE LAB (A5)

The stairs end in a large space divided into several areas lined with workbenches and equipment. On one side, an elevated platform is filled with twelve cots. Each cot contains a listless villager with tubes protruding from their arms as blood drains into a set of tanks on the main floor of the room. The outputs of the tanks are connected to six large steel beetles.

The steel beetles are the reward that Dain undertook this endeavor to gain. The original version was created by Gest Ganest around 100 years ago. Galwick Tarn continued that work here.

The beetles require blood sacrifice to power them. One creature sacrificed is enough to power a beetle for one month. They seem to have a limitless capacity for fuel.

Dain had been attempting to supply blood to the creatures without killing the villagers, but that did not work. Their magic requires the lifeforce of the donor be drained completely. Driven mad by the pursuit, he has begun sacrificing the villagers.

Roll a d12 to determine how many of the villagers currently in the cots have expired. Each minute following the characters entering the room another will die.

If fighting broke out in the Cells (A4), then Dain, two Kelder soldiers, and 3 beetles await the arrival of the party and the battle starts immediately upon their arrival.

If the characters managed to persuade Dain to give up his plan then when he and they arrive in the Lab, Dain immediately starts to shutdown the machinery and any remaining villagers are safe.

Unfortunately for the characters, his soldiers are not so easily convinced and one of them begins pleading with Dain to see the folly in what the characters propose. 'We are so close to activating these weapons.'

The soldiers activate the beetles and a battle between the characters and all twelve soldiers and three beetles ensues. What will Dain do? Will he help the characters defeat his own forces? Will he support his own soldiers against them?

For the first round of combat, Dain does nothing except continue to shutdown machinery and fret about the situation. At the beginning of his turn in the second round and each subsequent round have one of the characters (their choice among those that can communicate with Dain) and one of

EXAMPLE:

By the time Dain's turn comes up in the third round, three Kelder soldiers have fallen in battle. The chosen character rolls a 12 on the check and adds their persuasion bonus (+7) and subtracts the number of fallen opponents (3) for a net score of 16. The soldier rolls a 10 and adds his bonus (+3). No characters have fallen so the net score is 13. The characters won by 3, nothing happens.

Round four, five Kelder are down. The character rolls a 15 (+7 bonus, -5 Kelder down), net 17. The soldier rolls a 6 (+3 bonus, no characters down), net 9. Dain aids the characters by casting bless on them.

Round five, seven Kelder are down. The character rolls a 4 (+7 bonus, -7 Kelder down), net 4. The soldier rolls a 12 (+3 bonus, no characters down), net 15. Dain joins the soldiers' side of the battle.

the soldiers roll a contested **Charisma (Persuasion)** check. Reduce each party's check by the number of opponents (not counting beetles) that have fallen.

If either party wins by 10 or more then Dain joins their side of the battle and no further checks are needed. If either party wins by 5 to 9 then Dain takes some action that aids their side (heals them, blesses them, etc.). If neither party wins by 5 or more then Dain does nothing to aid or harm either party.

Treasure. Other than the beetles or the remains of them, the lab contains little of value. Each soldier carries 15 gp and one gem worth 25 gp. Dain's battleaxe is a +2 *magic weapon*. Dain carries 50 gp and two gems (100 gp each).

A good aligned party should destroy the remaining beetles and seal the lab for good on their way out. A slightly less scrupulous group could salvage six beetles for 500-1000 gp each.

STUDY (A6)

This room contains two overstuffed chairs and a writing desk. The walls are lined with shelves filled with books, scrolls, and various small mechanical models. Several books and scrolls lay open on the desk.

Among the scrolls and books on the desk is a book describing the inner working of a steel beetle. Both the mechanical and magical components necessary to create one would cost 2500 gp.

Most of the other books and scrolls are of little value.

BEDROOM (A7)

This room contain a large four post bed with curtains drawn around it along with chairs, dressers, and other furnishings. It smells faintly of decay and death.

On the bed, the slowly decaying body of Galwick Tarn lies peacefully. The corpse has a rather plain looking ring on his right hand and a dagger clutched in his left.

A locked chest sits along the south wall. The chest requires a successful **DC 20 Dexterity check with thieves' tools** to open.

Treasure. The ring is a ring of flying and the dagger is +1. On a nearby table rests Galwick's spell book. The book contains 25 spells ranging from level 1-7. The exact spells and how many are still legible is up to you.

The chest contains 14 pp, 253 gp, 124 sp, and 12 gems (100 gp each).

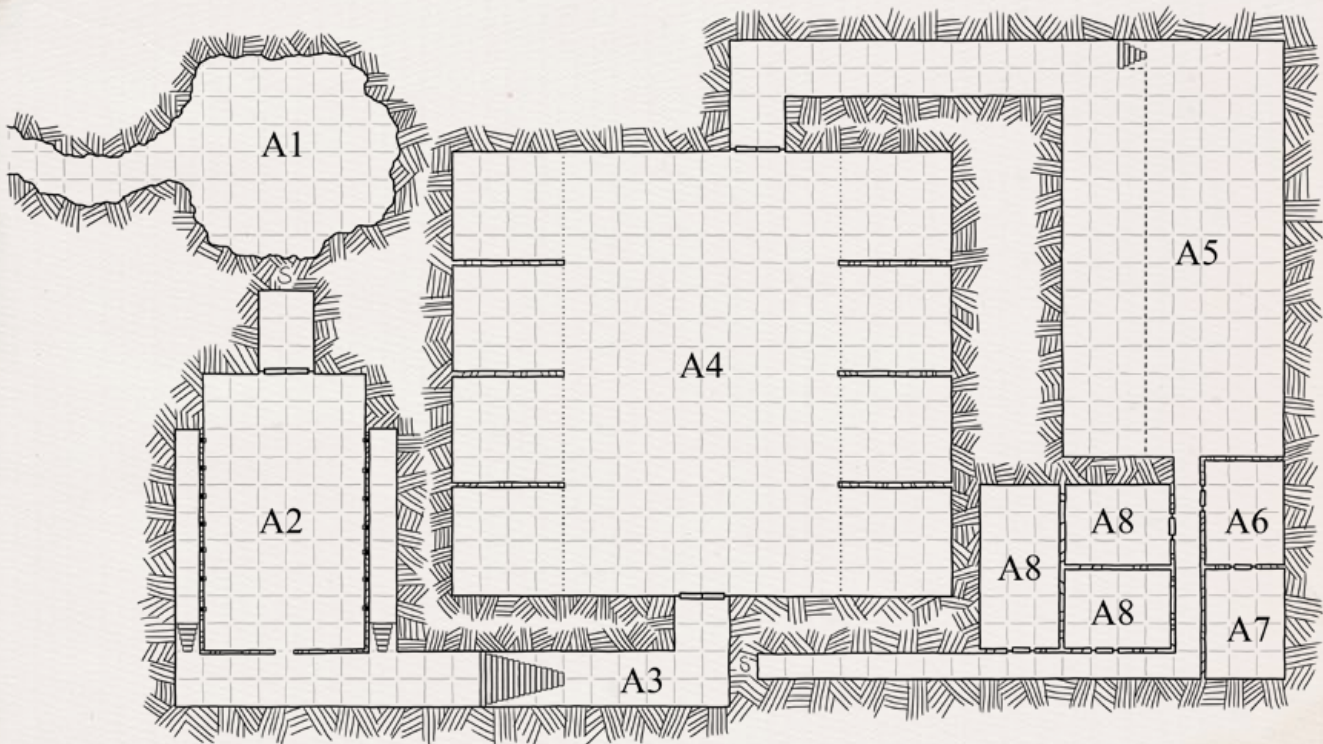
BARRACKS (A8)

Each of these rooms is a barracks area used by Galwick's former assistants and guards. They are unused at present and contain nothing of value.

WRAP

I hope your group enjoyed this little side quest. Whether you decide to play out the return to Riverton or simply handwave the destruction of the lab and the return of the villagers is entirely up to you.

If you do decide to playthrough, use the same random encounter table on the return trip, but keep in mind that a group including all those villagers is quite large and most of the encounters are likely to simply avoid the group. The hill giants or dire wolves might attempt a grab and go if there are stragglers that are not carefully being looked after.



APPENDIX: NPCS AND MONSTERS

DAIN IRONHEART

Dain is a male Kelder dwarven cleric of Goran. He is a defender of Burok Torn. He was corrupted by the quest to stop Maghiel from achieving godhood and destroying the dwarves. To him, the ends now justify the means and he will stop at nothing to save his people.

DAIN IRONHEART

Medium humanoid (dwarf), lawful evil

Armor Class 20 (Plate and Shield)

Hit Points 83 (10d8+30)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)		12 (+1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	18 (+4) 13 (+1)

Saving Throws WIS +8, CHA +5

Skills Perception +8, Persuasion +8

Damage Resistance Poison

Senses Darkvision 60ft., Passive Perception 18

Languages Common, Dwarf

Challenge 8 (3900 XP)

Resilient. Dain has advantage on saving throws against being poisoned.

Steadfast. Dain has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

Turn Undead. (2/day) All undead creatures within a 30ft radius must make a Wisdom Save (DC16). CR 1 or lower undead are destroyed on a failed save. Creatures over CR 1 are turned on a failed save for 1 minute.

Divine Strike. Once on each of Dain's turns when he hits with a weapon attack, he can cause the attack to deal an extra 1d8 fire damage to the target.

Spellcasting. Dain is a 10th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips: *light, mending, sacred flame, spare the dying*

1st level (4 slots): *bless, cure wounds, shield of faith, searing smite, inflict wounds, guiding bolt*

2nd level (4 slots): *heat metal, spiritual weapon*

3rd level (3 slots): *daylight, elemental weapon, protection from energy*

4th level (2 slots): *guardian of faith, wall of fire*

5th level (2 slots): *animate objects, mass cure wounds*

Actions

Battleaxe +2. Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (d8 + 4) slashing damage.

Kelder Soldier

Dain's followers are a group elite Kelder dwarven soldiers. When operating as a unit, Kelder soldiers have defensive bonuses based on their tactics.

KELDER SOLDIER

Medium humanoid (dwarf), any lawful alignment

Armor Class 20 (Plate and Shield)

Hit Points 65 (10d8+20)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA	
16 (+3)		12 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Athletics +6, Perception +3, Persuasion +3

Resistance Poison (Advantage on Poison Saves)

Senses Darkvision 60ft., Passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Dwarf

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Resilient. Kelder Soldiers have advantage on saving throws against being poisoned.

Steadfast. Kelder Soldiers have advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

Shield Wall. When a Kelder Soldier is using a shield and fighting side by side with another Kelder Soldier, they each get +2 to their AC.

Actions

Multiattack. Kelder Soldiers make two melee attacks per round.

Battleaxe. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (d8 + 3) slashing damage.

SEARING WIND

The most powerful summoners can trap entities from other planes in weapons. Though almost any kind of small item or weapon can be caught up by one of these creatures, throwing stars or small daggers are the most popular.

Searing winds serve their masters as guardians or warriors.

SEARING WIND

Huge Construct, unaligned

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)

Hit Points 105 (10d12+40)

Speed 0 ft., fly 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA	
22 (+6)		16 (+3)	18 (+4)	3 (-4)	10 (+0)	1 (-5)

Damage Immunities poison, psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons that aren't adamantite

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 10

Languages understands the languages of its creator but can't speak

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Immutable Form. The searing wind is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Magic Immunity. The searing wind is immune to all spells, spell-like abilities except as follows:

Though cold-based spells cause no damage to the searing wind, it does halve the number of attacks the searing wind can take on its next turn.

Magic Weapons. The searing wind's weapon attacks are magical.

Swarm. The searing wind can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a tiny weapon. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

Actions

Multiattack. The searing wind makes 1d12 barbed whirl attacks until its current hit points drop below half its maximum hit points, then it makes 1d6 barbed whirl attacks.

Barbed Whirl. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d6 + 6) slashing damage.

STEEL BEETLE

The steel beetles were built approximately 80 to 120 years ago by the magician Gest Ganest and his apprentices in their (now abandoned) workshop deep in the Kelder Mountains. Some were used as security for the workshop, but most were sold for hefty commissions to private individuals as bodyguards and war machines.

STEEL BEETLE

Medium Construct, neutral

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 76 (8d10+32)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)		14 (+2)	18 (+4)	3 (-4)	11 (+0) 1 (-5)

Damage Immunities poison, psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons that aren't adamantite

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 10

Languages understands the languages of its creator but can't speak

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Immutable Form. The steel beetle is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Magic Immunity. The steel beetle is immune to all spells, spell-like abilities except as follows:

The steel beetle is takes damage as normal from sources that deal necrotic damage, and its maximum hit points are reduced by the amount of necrotic damage done. In addition, the steel beetle becomes inert if it is dealt necrotic damage, and it remains this way until re-energized by the sacrifice of a living creature to fuel it.

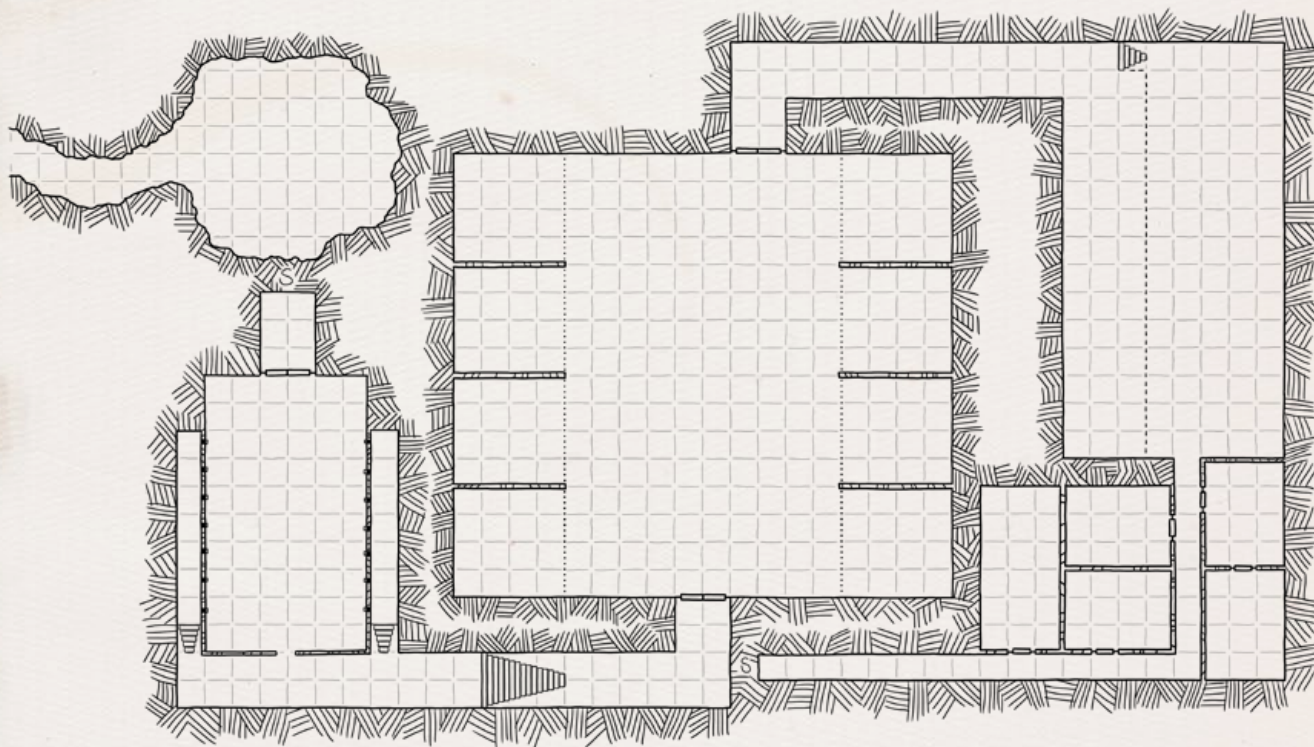
Actions

Multiattack. The steel beetle makes two claw attacks.

Claw. Melee Weapon Attack : +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit* : 16 (2d10 + 5) slashing damage.



PLAYER MAP



The Cliffs of Death



Cameron Blair

Blair



INTRODUCTION

Cliffs of Death is an adventure designed for four to six characters of 9th level.

This adventure is set within the expansive canyon system of the Canyon of Souls. This area of the Kelder Mountains consists of a number of interconnected canyons, cliffs, and valleys that form a lengthy, treacherous mountain pass. The nation of Ontenazu straddles the canyon, its twin halves settled on either side. The canyon is known for its harsh, deadly winds, which blow westward from the Celestial Shelf and bounce through the canyon. Many parts of the Canyon of Souls are impassable because of these winds. However, a select few Ontenazuans can navigate these winds and ferry people across safely; even the most seasoned of guides, though, can sometimes fall victim to the canyon's fickle winds.

SYNOPSIS

In Maghiel's search for power she stumbled upon rumor of an Ontenazuan cult who sought great power through the Slarecians they worshipped. When she could she sought their tomb out. Once the Canyon of Souls was traversed, Maghiel had but to breath un-life into the corpses strewn throughout the tomb. The raised Eknethryn were happy to serve and quickly jumped at the chance to serve a worthy master once more.

In her act of necromancy, Maghiel discovered the pulsing magic of a shrine dedicated to the trickster, Enkili, hidden within the ancient stone walls of the canyon created as a gift to Denev. Seeing an opportunity for power Maghiel set the Eknethryn to work using the place of power to siphon the magic in the Canyon of Souls into the necromancer.

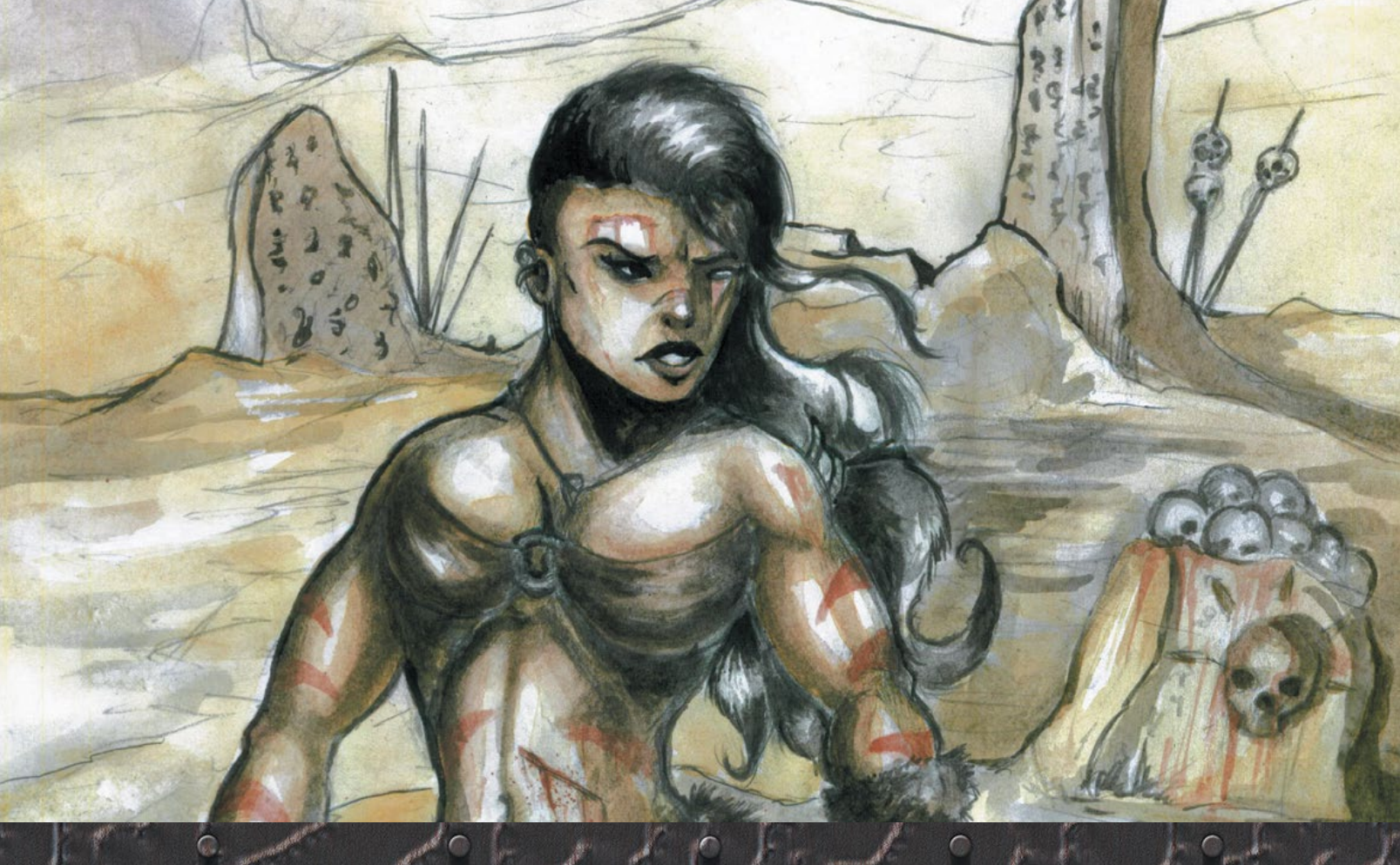
The fruits of the Eknethryn's labors are now clearly seen from both East and West Ontenazu as a nightly pyre of brackish purple energy pierces the sky and draws the magical winds of the Canyon of Souls into the depths of the canyons where the cult was buried.

BACKGROUND

Before the Titans had even begun thinking about creating the gods that would be their demise, The Eknethryn had begun. A band of humanoid bonded in worship of Slarecian, the shadows that creep through the night and feast upon the innocent and unknowing. The Eknethryn were at first murderers, petulant in their devotion to their false deities. They soon became dogged in their degradation as their masters fed them shreds of falsehoods promising them power and other boons. Their numbers swelled and the Eknethryn moved past their petty murders and on to feeding kidnapped Ontenazuans to their masters in ritual sacrifices.

Once the missing dead were found, the Ontenazuans quickly took action and captured the cult leaders. They soon sentenced the most notable members to be buried alive in the depths of the Canyon of Souls. Some residents of the region old enough to remember the cult say that when the moon does not shine, they can hear the pleading screams of The Eknethryn as they were locked away. The cult has now been dead for over a century.





CHAPTER 1: ONTENAZU

Whether the adventurers caught sight of the magical pyre outside of the Canyon of Souls or see the brackish light pierce the sky as they enter, the adventurers will first find themselves in either East or West Ontenazu.

The Canyon itself has never been anyone's first choice for crossing the Kelder Mountains. However, since the Calastian occupation has effectively sealed off the Irontooth Pass, the Canyon of Souls is rapidly becoming the best, if still deadly, method of traveling through the virtually impassable mountain range. Though the settled areas on either side are known as Ontenazu, they are dramatically different from one another.

Native Ontenazuans mostly make up West Ontenazu, while East Ontenazu is a melting pot of natives and travelers who have chosen to stay or are simply taking their time on their way through.

WEST ONTENAZU

The largest settlement near the western mouth of the Canyon of Souls is known as West Ontenazu. Prior to the invasion by Calastia, most of those who lived in the area were nomadic, wanderers who lived off the land outside the Canyon, and who viewed the awesome power of the winds there as a focus for meditation, self-improvement, and for honoring the Earth Mother, Denev.

After blocking Calastia's attempt to seize the Canyon, many of those wanderers have cloistered together, erecting homes and monasteries, a place where they can focus on their contemplations of existence, nature, and the divine.

Outsiders are welcome in West Ontenazu, and the people of the settlement are friendly to all unless given a reason to act otherwise. Then they are fiercely protective of one another and their homeland and are quite capable of defending it. Ontenazuans are often most friendly with those seeking enlightenment or the betterment of one's self and will often open their homes to shelter those in need, sharing what they have with complete strangers to help them on such a journey.

EAST ONTENAZU

Only a handful of years ago, East Ontenazu was nothing more than a massive marketplace positioned near the mouth of the Canyon of Souls. Caravans and travelers would stop in the makeshift forum, which could barely be considered a town as there were few if any permanent structures. Some merchants would set up shop for a few days or even weeks, hawking their wares to other travelers before heading through the Canyon themselves.

Today, the impermanence of East Ontenazu is disappearing. Though much of it is still made up of wagons and tents, those who have decided to call Ontenazu home have begun building structures, including homes, an inn, a gambling hall, and even some permanent store fronts. After defending the pass through the Kelders from the Calastians, permanent fortifications are starting to appear. While no government exists as of yet, many of the merchants who are a part of the ongoing settlement effort are looked to for solving disputes, guidance on what areas should be fortified or cleared for building, and even for hosting events and ceremonies such as weddings and holiday gatherings.

More permanent than even the merchants and travelers who have decided to settle in the area are the windwalkers, guides who have lived in the area and trained to survive the deadly conditions of the Canyon of Souls itself. Travelers looking to cross the Canyon are highly encouraged by the locals to hire a windwalker, lest they fall prey to the dangers of the Canyon. While those traveling the Canyon are not required to have a guide, permanent signs near the mouth of the Canyon have been placed, warning those who are unprepared of imminent danger. Many of these signs are sponsored by newly permanent store fronts, who promise to sell travelers the goods they need to survive a crossing of the Canyon, even if they choose not to hire a windwalker to guide them.

The windwalkers themselves have established a few trading posts, both to make it easy for potential customers to hire them, but also to sell gear they make themselves,

equipment they know from experience will see a person through to the other side of the Canyon safely. The windwalkers train for years with master guides to know the signs of any number of dangers present in the mountain pass, and they are currently in the process of erecting a building that will serve as a headquarters and training compound. Not all windwalkers are as well trained, however, and those who are not part of a growing guild of the guides are often found selling their services for far less gold... but with much less experience to guarantee the safety of their charges.

RUMORS

Asking around East or West Ontenazu for recent events and stories the adventurers might hear the following.

- **(West Ontenazu)** The evil looking light that pierces the sky is just another trick of the canyon trying to pull people into its depths.
- **(East & West Ontenazu)** Something in the canyon has woken up and the light is just an after-effect.
- **(East Ontenazu)** Whatever is causing that light has stolen a handful of children from East Ontenazu, but they're probably fine.
- **(East & West Ontenazu)** A strange woman came through the settlements not long before the light started piercing the night.
- **(West Ontenazu)** The winds in the canyon are getting stronger. They started pulling people into the Canyon towards where the light is coming from. 3 windwalkers have already died.
- **(East Ontenazu)** The light has been scaring everyone in the settlement. Guards are more on edge and whispers of more strangers appearing are making the settlement more unstable.

MERCHANTS AND OTHER GOODS

Goods and equipment (SRD p. 62) can be readily found in Ontenazu via merchants and craftsmen but the prices are twice their normal value. As remote settlements the cost for producing and trading goods must match the trials required to live and work there. Merchants and tradesfolk are willing to bargain.

The merchants sell unique equipment to aid those traveling through the Canyon of Souls.

ITEM	COST	WEIGHT
Goggles	2gp	-
Fur Tent	5gp	35 lb.


Goggles. An extra thick piece of blown glass held in a frame of cured and hardened leather, these goggles can be affixed to a person's head with its attached leather straps and buckles. Though the goggles protect from going blind from the blowing sand of the Canyon, Wisdom (Perception) checks while wearing them are rolled at disadvantage.

Fur Tent. This tent still has the heavy fur of whatever beast it came from. It provides better and longer-lasting protection against the winds in the Canyon of Souls, though it too will wear down over time. A fur tent sleeps two.

If adventurers mention their intention on travelling into the canyon to investigate the pyre of light merchants in East Ontenazu will laugh and mention something about not wanting their goods to decorate corpses at the bottom of the canyon. Merchants from West Ontenazu will continue to do business but advise they approach windwalkers as guides to travel anywhere in the canyon.

Hiring a windwalker is an easy but expensive endeavor.



A painting of a canyon with a wooden bridge and a windwalker. The scene is set in a deep, narrow canyon with steep, rocky walls. A wooden bridge with a thatched roof spans across the canyon. A windwalker is visible on the bridge. The landscape is rugged and mountainous, with a mix of green and brown tones. The sky is a deep blue. The painting has a textured, painterly style.

CHAPTER 2: THE CANYON OF SOULS

Traversing the Canyon of Souls is a deadly endeavor on the best of days. With a windwalker to guide them, the adventurers can avoid the worst of the Canyon's natural dangers, though creatures and unnatural perils still persist.

If the group chooses to attempt passage through the Canyon without a windwalker, all saves against the hazards of the Canyon are rolled at disadvantage. A character who is proficient in Nature or Survival may make a **DC 22 Intelligence** check once they have encountered a hazard in order to learn about it, and can then grant their group a better chance of dealing with that hazard. If this happens,

the characters do not roll at disadvantage against that hazard. Traveling with a windwalker grants characters advantage on saving throws against the hazards of the Canyon.

For every hour the characters spend in the Canyon of Souls, roll 1d20. On a 19, or when it is dramatically appropriate, the winds begin to blow. On a 20, stronger high winds blow. They can be heard before they are felt, as they roar through the canyons, giving characters with a passive Perception of 13 or more a chance to hear them and take shelter before the winds reach them, if shelter is available. The winds last for 1d100 minutes, then simply

stop. Often, there isn't so much as a breeze in the Canyon of Souls, only the winds or stillness.

The winds of the Canyon of Souls are devastating. Each round a creature spends in the winds, they must roll a **DC 15 Constitution** saving throw, suffering 3x(1d6) piercing damage and being blinded for 1 minute on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. This damage is considered magical for overcoming damage resistance. If a creature fails on three consecutive saving throws, they become blinded for 24 hours, at the end of which they may repeat the saving throw, their eyesight returning on a successful save. Creatures who fail the saving throw over three consecutive days are permanently blinded. If a hazard is marked as high-winds, characters must also succeed on a **DC 15 Strength** saving throw or be pushed 10 feet in the direction the wind is blowing.

Dealing with the winds can be problematic, if caught unaware, but should rarely prove deadly. Taking shelter in caves, niches in the canyon walls, side canyons where the wind isn't currently blowing, or using equipment a

character may have brought with them are all viable options to get out of the wind. If players are unable to come up with viable solutions, a character succeeding on a **DC 13 Wisdom (Survival)** or **Intelligence (Nature)** check should allow them to find shelter nearby.

Traveling the Canyon of Souls can often be accomplished in 10 days, though during winter months it can take as long as a month or more. Even during good weather, travel through the Canyon can take longer due to the unstable nature of the winds, forcing travelers to seek shelter for days at a time.

While Maghiel's vortex is active, traversing the Canyon, even with a windwalker, is deadly. Descending or travelling the canyon while the magic is active imposes disadvantage and any failed save imposes 1 level of exhaustion. Travelling with a windwalker in these conditions removes the disadvantage from all saves but does nothing to effect the exhaustion.





CHAPTER 3: THE CRYPT OF THE EKNETHRYN

ROOM ONE: THE HOWLING TUNNEL

Hidden in the walls of the immense canyon the crypt of the Eknethryn sits on the largest ledge (5ft.) found this deep within the Canyon of Souls. Finding the doorway to the crypt requires a successful **DC 10 Wisdom (Perception)** check. The door to the crypt is locked with a century old bind and requires a **DC 15 Dexterity** check using thieves' tools or break the door open with a **DC 17 Strength** check.

The door opens to a narrow 5ft wide 10ft tall passage cut into the stone of the canyon wall. There are no light sources within the crypt. If the players have a light source, they easily see that scratched upon the walls is Ontenazuan writing. The writing details the crimes of the Eknethryn and ends with "The Eknethryn were everything we are not. They turned the world upside down. Right was wrong, evil was good." If the party takes the time to read the entirety

of the writing the Stone Golem(SRD p.317) that guards the tomb will emerge from the wall and attack, attempting to prevent the party from furthering deeper into the tomb.

ROOM TWO: SEALED ANTECHAMBER

The narrow tunnel gives way to a small antechamber. The dense musk of death hangs in the air as your light reveals a large stone door. A strange lock dominates much of the door, it hums with magic. To the right of the door sits an ancient brazier, untouched for over a century. On the left of the door sits a large basin that looks as if it once held water.

The door cannot be unlocked by any physical means it can only be unlocked by solving the puzzle that was crafted into the lock. To unlock the door water must be poured over the brazier and fire must touch the bottom of the basin. Any adventurer that looks more intently at the basin can attempt a **DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation)** check to see that basin is charred at the bottom from recently being lit on fire. If the brazier is lit with fire or the basin filled with water, a poison gas is released from the lock. Any creature in the antechamber must succeed a **DC 12 Constitution** saving throw or become poisoned.

ROOM THREE: BURIAL CHAMBER

The smell of rancid death fills your nostrils as you enter this cramped burial chamber. Stone pedestals and alcoves carved into the walls decorate the room and present decayed corpses covered in equally addled cloth. Many bodies are strewn about in positions of madness and despair as only the Eknethryn deserved.

The air feels heavy as you see that most of the corpses have teeth bared and much of their flesh chewed off. The cultists, in the madness that ensued from their burial attempted to devour themselves to stay alive.

The chamber glows softly with the same brackish purple light that pierced the sky. The light emanates from strange runes scrawled on the floor in the center of the room, an acrid smell of necromancy pulsing from it and the jewel that hovers slightly above it.

This chamber is where the rank and file cultists of the Eknethryn were buried. None of the bodies in this room will attack at this time, though some may move slightly as if asleep. Five Buried Cultists (see Appendix A) wait until the adventurers leave after successfully fighting their leaders before lashing out. If the party attacks the cultists, they will engage in combat.

Tactics: The Buried Cultists use their numbers to any advantage that they can, swarming a single opponent before moving on to the next. If an adventurer is successfully paralyzed by the cultists dreadful glare the cultists will move on to the next threat, not worrying to finish anyone off until all opponents are paralyzed.

The glowing runes and jewel that dominate the room are a trap, a rune of devastation (see Appendix A) and a ruse put in place by Maghiel.

If the players are not fooled by Maghiel's trickery they must find the hidden entrance to move deeper into the dungeon. The next chamber is hidden by a secret door hidden within the wall. A **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** check will reveal the door.



ROOM FOUR: SMALL BURIAL CHAMBER

A compact ceiling brushes the top of your heads as you enter this chamber. Three stone pedestals stand alone in the room, two bodies lay mangled and desiccated where they lay upon them. The third body has risen, covered in the tattered cloth it was buried in, it writhes over a collection of glowing arcane markings upon the ground. From this ritual a pulsing beam of magic cascades into a hand dug tunnel on the opposite side of the room.

This final chamber is dominated by the stone slabs that the leaders of the Eknethryn were entombed upon. The leader of the cult has since thrown off its bindings, absorbed any power from its compatriots, and begun work siphoning the Canyon of Souls magic towards Maghiel to bolster her power. Tauza, the leader of the Eknethryn leers at them before pausing and attacking.

Tactics: Tauza will do anything to protect the icon it has been using as a magical siphon and stands over it casting spells and using its dreadful glare until anyone comes into melee. (see Appendix A for more information)

ROOM FIVE: DEFILED SHRINE

This room is found at the end of the roughhewn tunnel that the cult leader dug when they were risen. An ancient shrine, lost to time, lay hidden in the landscape of the Canyon of Souls as a final trick from Enkili in their gift to Denev. Enkili could not have planned for Maghiel's disturbed plans of godhood and so the Eknethryn quickly

set to corrupt the shrine and use its power to feed Maghiel at her behest.

The simple shrine, a small obelisk decorated with Enkili's symbols set in the middle of a small 15ft by 15ft room is scratched and defiled with strange markings and dried ichor from the undead in the tomb behind. If the players act to clean the shrine and remove any stain they can of the corruption, nothing will happen at first but as the party moves to leave rewards will fall behind them. Along with 10,000 gp and 10 gems worth 500 gp each two items fall when the adventurers turn to leave: A Mirror Shield of Enkili (see Appendix B) and a rust colored bag of tricks (SRD p.210).

CONCLUSION

Making their way back up the sheer and dangerous cliff faces of the Canyon of Souls: the party will not have gained much save knowledge of Maghiel's ultimate goal the scope of her abilities and the questionable aid of a god of tricks.

REWARDS

If the party successfully stop Tauza from performing its nightly rituals and kills all of the buried cultists, allow each character to gain a level. If you prefer tracking experience points, assign xp based on the creatures defeated, and offer each character an additional 50 xp for solving the door puzzle and an additional 150 xp for cleansing Enkili's shrine.

APPENDIX A: MONSTERS AND TRAPS

TAUZA, LEADER OF THE EKNETHRYN

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 17(natural armor)

Hit Points 97 (13d8+ 39)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18(+4)	10(+0)	17(+3)	11(+0)	18(+4)	16(+3)

Saving Throws Con +8, Int +5, Wis +9, Cha+8

Skill History +5, Religion +5

Damage Vulnerabilities radiant, fire

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Common, Ontenazuan , Abyssal

Challenge 15 (13,000 XP)

Magic Resistance. Tauza has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Spellcasting. Tauza is a 9th-level spellcaster. Their spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). Tauza has the following cleric spell prepared:

Cantrips (at will): sacred flame, thaumaturgy

1st level(4 slots): inflict wounds, shield of faith, bane

2nd level(3 slots): hold person, silence

3rd level(3 slots): animate dead, bestow curse

4th level(3 slots): guardian of faith, banishment

5th level(1 slot): flame strike

Actions

Multiattack. Tauza can use their Dreadful Glare and makes two attacks with its cursed fist.

Cursed Fist. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. Hit: 10 (2d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage plus 10(3d6) necrotic damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with Mesos' Bane(see sidebar) and with Eknethryn rot. The cursed target can't regain hit points, and its hit point maximum decreases by 10 (3d6) for every 24 hours that elapse. If the curse reduces the target's hit point maximum

to 0, the target dies, and its body turns to dust. The curse lasts until removed by the remove curse spell or other magic.

Dreadful Glare. Tauza targets one creature they can see within 60 feet of it. If the target can see Tauza, it must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw against this magic or become frightened until the end of Tauza's next turn. If the target fails the saving throw by 5 or more, it is also paralyzed for the same duration. A target that succeeds on the saving throw is immune to the Dreadful Glare of Tauza and the Buried Cultists for the next 24 hours.

Legendary Actions

Tauza can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Tauza regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Attack. Tauza makes one attack with it's Cursed Fist or uses its Dreadful Glare.

Blinding Winds. Blinding winds from the Canyon of Souls swirl around Tauza. Each creature within 5 feet of the mummy lord must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or be blinded until the end of the creature's next turn.

Blasphemous Word (Costs 2 Actions). Tauza utters a blasphemous word from its service of the Slarecians. Each non-undead creature within 10 feet of Tauza that can hear the magical utterance must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of Tauza's next turn.

Channel Negative Energy (Costs 2 Actions). Tauza magically unleashes negative energy. Creatures within 60 feet of Tauza, including ones behind barriers and around corners, can't regain hit points until the end of Tauza's next turn.

Whirlwind of Sand (Costs 2 Actions). Tauza magically transforms into a whirlwind of sand, moves up to 60 feet, and reverts to its normal form. While in whirlwind form, Tauza is immune to all damage, and it can't be grappled, petrified, knocked prone, restrained, or stunned. Equipment worn or carried by Tauza remain in its possession.

BURIED CULTIST

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 11(natural armor)

Hit Points 58 (9d8 +18)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16(+3)	8(-1)	15(+2)	6(-2)	10(+0)	12(+1)

Saving Throws Wis+2

Damage Vulnerabilities radiant, fire

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Ontenazuan , Abyssal

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Actions

Multiattack. The buried cultist can use their Dreadful Glare and makes one attack with its cursed fist.

Cursed Fist. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. Hit: 10 (2d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage plus 10(3d6) necrotic damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with Mesos' Bane(see sidebar) and with Eknethryn rot. The cursed target can't regain hit points, and its hit point maximum decreases by 10 (3d6) for every 24 hours that elapse. If the curse reduces the target's hit point maximum to 0, the target dies, and its body turns to dust. The curse lasts until removed by the remove curse spell or other magic.

Dreadful Glare. The buried cultist targets one creature it can see within 60 feet of it. If the target can see the buried cultist, it must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw against this magic or become frightened until the end of buried cultist's next turn. If the target fails the saving throw by 5 or more, it is also paralyzed for the same duration. A target that succeeds on the saving throw is immune to the Dreadful Glare of Tauza and the Buried Cultists for the next 24 hours.

RUNE OF DEVASTATION

Simple trap (level 5-10, dangerous threat)

This trap glows with a bright pink-purple light and whispers slowly emanate from the jewel floating aloft in the center of the trap.

Trigger. Anyone who attempts to manipulate the floating jewel triggers the trap.

Effect. When activated, the trap casts a phantasmal killer spell on anyone within a 10ft radius. A programmed illusion spell activates in tandem and a disembodied voice cries in agony, cursing whoever triggered the trap.

Countermeasures. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals that the jewel has near invisible magical ties to the runes on the ground. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check made within 5 feet of the pressure plate disables the trap and the glowing stops. If the trap is disabled, the conditions of the programmed illusion are not met.

Mesos' Bane

DIE ROLL	EFFECT
1	Bane of Heat: You generate heat when you cast an arcane spell. You must make a Constitution saving throw against your own spell save DC or suffer 1 point of fire damage. For 2 rounds per level of the spell you cast (one round for a cantrip), you have advantage on saving throws against cold spells or effects, as well as resistance to cold damage. However, due to your discomfort, you also have disadvantage on Strength and Dexterity checks during that time.
2	Bane of Luminance: You generate light when you cast an arcane spell. You must make a Constitution saving throw against your own spell save DC or suffer 1 point of radiant damage. For 2 rounds per level of the spell you cast (one round for a cantrip), your body sheds bright light in a 20-foot radius and dim light for another 20 feet. During this time, you have disadvantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks (and the light might make some such checks impossible).
3	Bane of Lightning: You generate an aura of lightning when you cast an arcane spell. You must make a Constitution saving throw against your own spell save DC or suffer 1 point of lightning damage. For 2 rounds per level of the spell you cast (one round for a cantrip), you have advantage on saving throws against lightning effects, and you also have resistance to lightning damage. However, during the same period, you also have disadvantage on Strength and Constitution checks.
4	Bane of the Mind: You generate an aura of psychic dissonance when you cast an arcane spell. You must make a Constitution saving throw against your own spell save DC or suffer 1 point of psychic damage. For 2 rounds per level of the spell you cast (one round for a cantrip), you have advantage on saving throws against psychic effects, and you also have resistance to psychic damage. However, during the same period, you also have disadvantage on Intelligence and Wisdom checks.
5-6	No effect. Mesos' Bane does not flare up for you any more than normal.
7	Bane of Wind: A sudden, violent burst of wind picks up the caster and hurls them 10 feet in a random direction, then swirls around them until the end of their next turn. The caster takes 1 point of bludgeoning damage, and ranged attacks against them are at disadvantage until the wind dissipates.
8	Bane of the Canyon: Your magic and the strange forces that emanate from the Canyon of Souls collide, flicking you like an insect through the Ethereal. You disappear and are hurled 10 feet in a straight line away from your target, reappearing in an unoccupied space. If your spell targets yourself or has no target, you are thrown in a random direction. You suffer 1 force damage. Until the end of your next turn, you have advantage on saving throws against force effects, and you also have resistance to force damage.

APPENDIX B: TREASURE

MIRROR SHIELD OF ENKILI

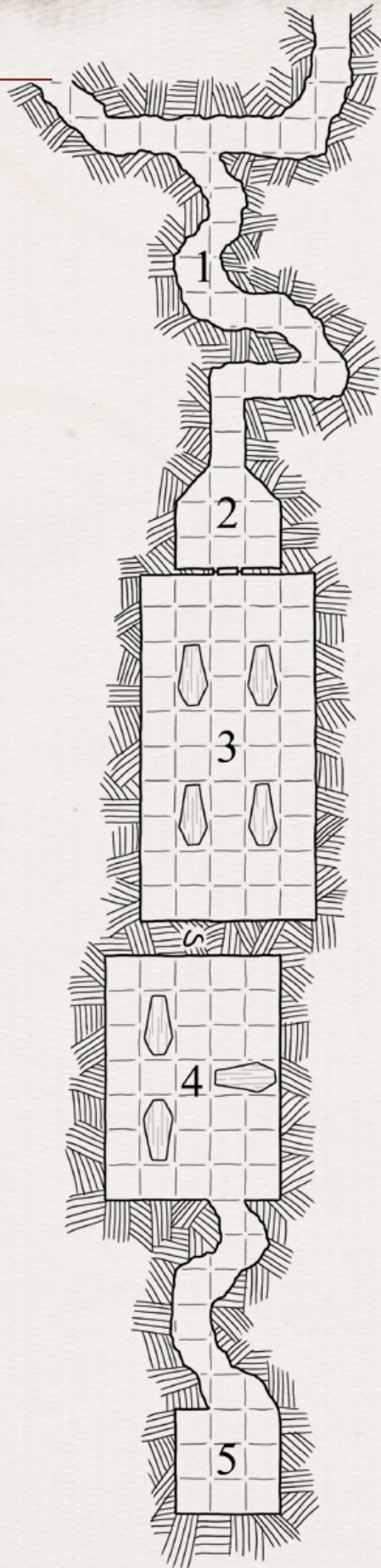
Armor (shield), rare (requires attunement)

While holding this shield, if you are attacked you may spend a reaction to impose disadvantage on a single creature that is attacking you by reflecting an unseen light off of your shield and onto your enemy.

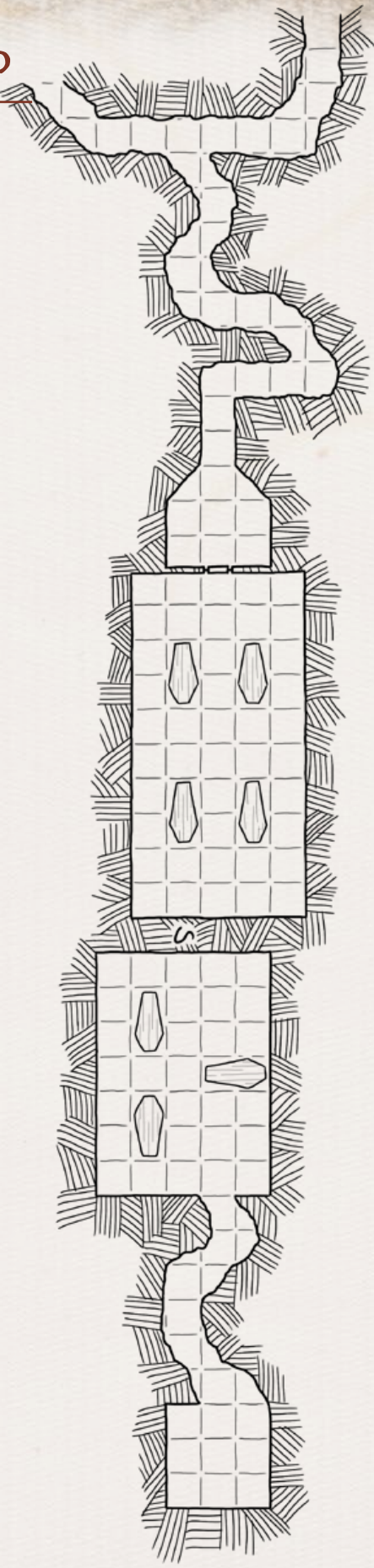
Creatures who cannot see or that rely on senses other than sight, such as blindsight are still affected by this ability.

You may also spend an action to cast the spell mirror image once per short rest.

GM MAP



PLAYER MAP



Planar Index



Anne Gregersen



THE DIVINE PLANES

THE MITHRIL HEAVEN

In the eyes of a mortal, the true visage of the Mithril Heaven is certain to be lost. Unable to fathom to purity and grace embedded within the plane, all they are able to see is a shimmering world made out of metals and light. The buildings that mark the realm are tall and beautiful, constructed with an airy, open design that mirrors their creator. It is the home of creativity. A paradise of honor and fairness, taking after the nature of the plane's chief denizen and holy creator.

The god Corean, god of craftsmanship and chivalry, exists alongside the Mithril Heaven. The nature of the plane itself is a perfect representation of Corean's ideals,

making a strong and beautiful haven where creativity and chivalry can flourish. This is seen in the landscape of the plane. The sky and mountains shine as if made of mithril, and even the forests are made as strong, shimmering pillars of metal reaching towards the golden sky. Any construction found within the plane is made of the strongest metals in existence and are specifically built to stand the test of both time and conflict. Corean has made his plane to withstand the unholy power of the abyss, a purpose reflected well in the core strength of the Mithril Heaven.

Provided that one shares the mindset of Corean, the plane is perfection made reality. Every aspect of construction appears as if it was made by a craftsman at the height of their artisanal ability. The realm has several smithies and forges where celestial beings in service to Corean work to create artifacts and items of use for their godly master. Though this may seem unnatural, the meld of nature and

construction does not appear jarring in the Mithril Heaven. The two are joined together, impossible to completely tell where one ends, and another begins. As a whole, the Mithril Heaven is a piece of ever-moving, ever-evolving art, made perfect by the harmonious melding of all its aspects. The sky and the mountains, the valleys and the rivers. They echo the mind and brilliance of the greatest creator, Corean, and are perfection made reality.

HOUSE OF COREAN

The Mithril Heaven also goes by another name, this being the name of the home of the plane's creator. Sitting on a vast stone plateau, the House of Corean resembles a castle built entirely from precious metals. The outer walls of the castle are made out of pure adamantine and the plateau on which it rests lies on top of the plane's tallest mountain. This is the home and abode for Corean himself as well as his most loyal servants. It is within the walls of this keep that he hears the prayers of his followers and receives news of what happens in the multiverse. His power is absolute within his plane, and the House of Corean is no exception to his rule. Those who reside within follow the rules set by Corean, something they are honored to do.

The House of Corean also provides training grounds for the honored dead who were worthy to enter the Mithril Heaven after their life ended. Those who come to the plane are expected to continue their training under the supervision of Corean himself. The greatest artisans of the plane are also found within the House of Corean, working at their forges to create celestial armors and weapons. The construction of these items is helmed by Corean who watches over the creation process to determine that nothing less than perfection is achieved.

OPTIONAL RULES: PRAISE AND FANFARE

When entering into the Mithril Heaven, a creature is imbued with a feeling of honor and strength. This feeling is strengthened by the literal fanfare experienced when outsiders first come into the plane, as it is assumed they are there because of their great capabilities in life and beyond. For the first hour after arriving in the Mithril Heaven, creatures with a good alignment add 1d4 to each saving throw, skill check, and attack roll they make. Creatures with an evil alignment subtract 1d4 from each saving throw, skill check, and attack roll they make as they are unable to fully appreciate the fanfare made in their honor.

THE GOLDEN PARADISE

The denizens who dwell in this plane live a simple life, one that goes well with the picturesque beauty found in the Golden Paradise. A land of rolling hills, open woodlands, and fine, pastoral fields, the name of this plane is well deserved as none of the darkness and dread found in other avenues of the multiverse have a presence there.

It is a place free of hardship and destruction. Though life within the Golden Paradise is simple, it is a peaceful one, free of the obligations and threats that might be found beyond the borders of the plane. The spirits who make their home in the Golden Paradise are largely left to their own devices. They are free to live life as they want to, generally because the interests they choose to pursue are quite harmless and mundane in nature. There is no war or conflict within the Paradise, as the creatures living there simply have no interest in engaging in that sort of activity.

As the most compassionate and merciful of the gods, the angelic Madriel governs the plane towards peaceful certainty. From her castle, the Citadel of the Sun, Madriel can watch over her domain and protect it from the destructive forces that might come to threaten its peaceful existence. The Citadel is so grand that it can be seen from anywhere in the Golden Paradise, its golden towers reaching high into the skies, casting divine light down on the city beneath it.

Most of the spirits of the plane live in Lioban, the blessed city, which stretches out around the Citadel of the Sun. People who lived peaceful, good lives in the urban areas of the Scarred Lands may have their rest in this city after death where they might continue acting as they did in life. The streets of Lioban are not unlike any other city one might find in the Scarred Lands. Merchants and craftsmen can be found selling their wares, and farmers occasionally come to the market to sell whatever produce their fields will have spawned. The price for such wares is always fair and just. There is no swindling or cheating taking place in Lioban and people are always willing to extend a helping hand to a fellow citizen if it is needed.

MADRIEL'S ANGELIC COURT

In addition to Madriel, there are plenty of other powerful creatures surrounding her and assisting her with bringing peace to the Golden Paradise. Most of these entities are angels whose purpose within the plane vary from protector to scholar to healer. Some of these entities can be considered more like demi-gods than angels, as is the case with Aspharal the demi-god of flowers. Once a priest to Madriel, Aspharal walked the Scarred Lands with seeds

and soil to restore natural life where none thought it could grow. His services to Madriel in life earned raised him to divine status, a position he uses to rebuild destroyed or barren landscapes in the Scarred Lands.

In charge of defending the plane from outside threats is the solar Herian. Though threats rarely appear near the Golden Paradise, there have been historical instances of it happening and Herian is determined to not let the destruction caused in those moments happen again. He is determined to have a standing army of angels and solars patrolling the peaceful countryside, believing that their presence will deter future attacks on the plane. This goes against what Madriel and her followers believe about the Golden Paradise, this being that the realm is a peaceful one free of strife and hardships. His ideas have caused conflict between Herian and the rest of Madriel's following, and he has only been allowed to partially erect the grand army he dreams of commanding.

Another powerful angel within the Golden Paradise is Ruma. Her position is one of great importance, as she is charged with ensuring that the welfare and harmony of the plane's residents is maintained. She is the most trusted of Madriel's followers and often acts as an extension of the goddess's divine will. As kind and protective as she is, Ruma spends a lot of her time worrying about the well-being of both her charges and the authenticity of the plane itself. She fears that if the rulership of the Golden Paradise turns more militaristic, like Herian suggests it should, that the identity of the peaceful plane will be lost.

OPTIONAL RULES: IDEAL FORM

Souls that make it to the Golden Paradise always find themselves strangely reinvigorated and perhaps slightly different from what they were in life. When entering the plane, the bodies of humanoids are transformed to be in their best condition. Older adventurers will become younger and stronger, and people suffering from ailments or physical handicaps will find themselves alleviated from these troubles.

THE ETERNAL GLADE

As is made clear by its name, the wilderness of the Eternal Glade stretches infinitely towards a never-nearing horizon. The plane is nature at its most powerful and primeval, the realm being home to any kind of natural terrain imaginable. Everything from tundra to jungles, from swamps to ocean shores, from snow-covered mountains to the most scorching

of deserts. To attempt to map this plane out is completely impossible however, despite the very clearly defined terrain differences that can be experienced as one ventures through the Eternal Glade. The terrain is always moving and where a rocky trail might lead to a warm forest one day, it might open up into a barren desert the next.

The purpose of the Eternal Glades is to show what the world of Scarn would be like without the depredations of the sentient races. There are no cities or structures to be found in the plane, and there are no humanoid races making their home within the realm. This is the will of Tanil, the goddess of the hunt, who can be found wandering the plane made to exist from her mind and thoughts.

TANIL'S GLADE

While there are no construction or buildings to be found within the Eternal Glade, there are certain locales that have a degree of permanency within the plane. One such location is Tanil's Glade, a place found at the end of every pathway carving its way through the Eternal Glade. No matter which path one takes, it will eventually bring them to the home and dwelling of Tanil herself.

The glade itself looks like a small, natural clearing, the ground of which is covered in a beautiful carpet of fallen leaves. They have fallen in such a way as to create a collage of every known type of tree found in Scarn and lay so perfectly that most hesitate before stepping into the glade out of fear disturbing this tapestry.

No matter where she might be, Tanil always knows when someone enters into her glade and will soon appear to see who might wish to talk to her. However, as the goddess has grown more reclusive, the path to her glade has become more treacherous. The journey to find Tanil is longer and more dangerous than it once was, and even if someone successfully makes it to the glade Tanil might not even appear, instead sending a forest spirit to assist whoever encroached on her home.

OPTIONAL RULES: MEMORIES OF HOME

Because of the shifting nature of the plane, visitors might encounter areas they have never seen before just as easily as they will find locations they have seen before. When traveling through a type of terrain a creature is very familiar with, there is a 10% chance that they recognize aspects of the area from exploring similar areas in the Scarred Lands. If this is the case, the creature has advantage on any Intelligence (Nature) checks and Wisdom (Survival) checks made while within that instance of terrain.

THE TIMELESS VAULT

Like Hedrada, the god who dwells within this plane, the Timeless Vault is the perfect representation of the concept of law. There is no room for good or evil, no stand to take other than the one maintained by the rules of the multiverse. That is the creed of Hedrada, and therefore also of the Timeless Vault. In this plane, everything runs and functions under a tight and well-maintained regime. There is a consistency here that is not found anywhere else in the multiverse, and any actions taken are completely evenhanded and without any kind of favoritism. Regardless of outside circumstances or happenings, all receive their due. Nothing less, nothing more. The reason for this extreme consistency is to stand up for the purpose and concept of law itself. To break, bend, or otherwise manipulate the law sends the signal to mortals that doing so would be an acceptable thing to do to achieve some greater end not encompassed by the laws of the realm. It is because of this mindset, held in its purest and highest regard by Hedrada himself, that the Timeless Vault is a realm which operates under the strictest principles of justice found anywhere in the Scarred Lands.

THE SYMMETRY OF AUREON

The plane itself mostly consists of its one and only city, Aureon. It takes up almost all of the space of the Timeless Vault and is very uninviting to any sort of change or alteration. With the rigidity of Hedrada concerning law and the permanency of the plane's capital, it is virtually impossible for any creature to make their distinct mark on the world within the Timeless Vault. This is by design, as Hedrada expects all beings who live within his plane to abide by the laws attached to the realm. No mortals, gods, or divine beings may change anything within the plane, as that would go against the principal rules set up for the plane by Hedrada himself. Because of this, Aureon is a city of symmetry. Each building is constructed to abide by a specific set of rules and regulations, and has been designed to fit perfectly within the area it was erected. The near perfect attention to detail and rather extreme lack of beautification means that the city is immediately considered odd and strange by mortals who visit it. Even mortals who are used to law being a part of the world have experienced some avenues of chaos in their day to day lives. Examples could be a crack in the stone wall, or a tile put down crookedly. None of these minor errors exist within Aureon, and the resulting effect is uncanny for any mortal who walks the streets of the pristine city.

At its center lies Hedragos, the palace of Hedrada and the birthplace of lawful philosophy. The interior of the palace is

unknown to everyone except Hedrada and his chosen few, and it is impossible for someone not granted permission by Hedrada to make their way through the palace. Anyone who enters the palace will become lost almost immediately and are completely unable to find their way around the building. Despite this, Hedrada is not hostile or negligent to those who venture into his plane. Hedrada believes that there should be a strong connection between himself and his worshippers, and maintaining this relationship is very important to the god. By acting distant, he fears the devotion his followers have for him might become lax and weaken his power. This would be the grandest failure in Hedrada's eyes, as the need for law should never be understated and its presence is crucial for the Scarred Lands to function.

OPTIONAL RULES: LAW AND ORDER

Creatures of chaotic alignments will feel as ill at ease in this plane as lawful creatures will feel at home. While in the Timeless Vault, creatures with a chaotic alignment have disadvantage on Intelligence and Wisdom checks. Creatures with a lawful alignment feel the opposite effect and have advantage on Intelligence and Wisdom checks.

THE HOWLING LIMBO

As the home of Enkili, the goddess of chaos and storms, the nature of the Howling Limbo is naturally a mirror of its mistress's whims. Almost nothing in this plane is permanent, and it can therefore be hard to produce any defining statements about the realm. The natural framework of the Howling Limbo is always changing, and it does so chaotically. Plains turn into mountains, marshes to deserts, forests to oceans. Despite these drastic changes, the nature of the altered areas stays the same. This means that an area which is dangerous or safe will remain so, no matter how many alterations it goes through. The same can be said for buildings and cities, as they too remain somewhat stationary. One week, a township may rest beneath the waves of an ocean and the next it will be in the treetops of a grand forest.

This shifting of nature is recognizable to those visiting the plane, though to an extreme degree. The forests, swamps, and oceans that appear in the Howling Limbo look like areas that can be found within the Scarred Lands, just taken to an extreme. Mountains reach high enough to touch the skies, oceans with no visible bottom, and other similar extremities are natural occurrences within this plane. This constant shifting is also found in the goddess who live in the plane. Her form is intangible and ever-changing, just as her movements are. No one can predict where she will

be or what she plans to do next, or even who she chooses to impersonate when she does so. Visitors to the Howling Limbo should take care to pay their respects to any creature they meet on their journey through the plane, as anyone or anything they encounter might be Enkili disguised as a beggar, noblewoman, or even some random beast of burden.

While the plane might resemble the Scarred Lands, there are plenty of factors that set it apart from the realm of mortals. Canyons, rivers, and other natural landmarks form in extreme shapes and sizes, and the cities also take on this chaotic visual aesthetic. Villages might consist of multiple square buildings stacked on top of one another or have a score of houses dangling by ropes from thick treetops. The same can be said of the Halls of Enkili, the home of the goddess, which is always shifting through multiple strange realities. The only constant to this ever-changing place is a cavern where the howling of constant winds can always be heard. In its center is a natural spring whose nature will change according to Enkili's mood. In one moment, it will be a calm trickle of clear water and the next it might turn into a boiling geyser.

FORTUNE'S WHEEL

A rather unique, and somewhat constant location in the Howling Limbo is the Fortune's Wheel, a huge paddlewheel boat that is constantly travelling the seas and waters of the chaotic plane. The boat is large enough to house a city and is strong enough to make it through even the harshest of storms the plane can offer. The boat itself is mostly made up of various gambling dens and other locales of ill repute. The young men and women who work the Fortune's Wheel call themselves Enkili's Favored and are always looking for ways to tempt or beguile visitors to bet a little more than they might want to.

OPTIONAL RULES: MADDENING HOWLS

The winds of the Howling Limbo are as strange and shifting as the nature of the goddess who rules the plane. Every day a creature spends within the plane tests strength of their mind like only madness can. At the start of each day, a creature in the plane must make a **DC 10 Wisdom** saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes two levels of exhaustion. They can only get a maximum of five levels of exhaustion because of this effect. If they ever get more than five, the creature does not die but instead lose their minds to the howling of the plane around them. They will wander into the shifting wilderness, becoming one with the chaos of the plane.

THE IRON HELLS

This plane embodies the concept of 'hell' like no other place in the multiverse. A dark, bleak, and cruel realm, it fits well with the personality of its godly resident. Chardun, the god of tyranny and war, takes pride in the smoking pit that is the Iron Hells, as its perilous facade perfectly aligns with the mentality of the god. The air is heavy and hard to breathe, each breath feeling burning and acrid when drawn into the lungs. It is a realm made to fit Chardun's needs and no one else's. As a result, any mortals who visit the plane are sure to find the experience both unpleasant and horrific, the same emotions they might feel if they were to face Chardun himself.

The Iron Hells acts as the eternal prison for the unfortunate souls who disappointed Chardun in life. Those who did not follow his creed are doomed to burn forever in his Hell, their bodies grinding and breaking beneath the ground of the plane. Pits and crevasses in the terrain act as funnels for their screaming, adding a choir of despair to the already hellish locale. The souls who suffer in this way do so for eternity, even if the fabric of their ethereal being is destroyed. In these cases, they are merely returned to their fully functioning form by Chardun to once again experience the horrors of his tortures. If they prevail long enough through the damnation they are experiencing, they might be deemed worthy of being turned into a lesser devil. This is a small chance of a better future for the doomed souls and it is the only glimmer of hope they can cling to as they endure the pain and suffering of a cruel god over and over until the end of time.

DOMAIN OF WAR

In the center of the plane lies a mountain, its cliffs dark and jagged as the rest of the plane around it. At the top of this mountain, Chardun can watch over his domain below. Below and around the mountains, fields of battle and war stretch out as far as the eye can see. Here, devils and damned souls clash together in brutal combat, their conflict acting both as training for when Chardun will unleash them on his enemies and for the general amusement of Chardun himself. The fighting is constant and bloody, no combatants ever merciful as they know such weak behavior will be punished. The warriors that fall in combat, which often happens, are reassembled by Chardun to fight once again, making the rhythmic clang of steel against steel a constant song within the Iron Hells.

Law is paramount within the Iron Hells and is visible by the strict militaristic way Chardun rules his realm. Devils fly across the bloody battlefields in tight formations and any semblance of free will is crushed beneath a boot of

torture or other vile punishment. Nowhere is this lawful nature felt more than in the Stronghold, the home and court of Chardun. This is where he plots his future conquest of the Scarred Lands, as well as the rest of the multiverse, and also where he attends any visitors who might have come to offer their fealty to his rule. The Stronghold is massive enough to hold hundreds of armies within its walls and it is always well manned by the devils of Chardun's armies. Though its size is impressive, even by godly standards, Chardun is not satisfied with his lot. The Stronghold is always expanding and growing, the ambition of its ruler allowing for nothing other than utter and complete control.

OPTIONAL RULES: GREAT REFORGING

There is much glory and prowess to be found within the Iron Hells, if one is evil and powerful enough to take it. Creatures with an evil or lawful alignment that spend at least one day within the Iron Hells must make a **DC 10 Wisdom** saving throw at the beginning of each day they spend in the plane. On a failed save, their alignment shifts to lawful evil. If the creature fails another save after the first one, the creature becomes increasingly intrigued by the militaristic nature of the hellish armies and begin to consider joining them. If they fail another save after this one, they join Chardun's army and are transformed into a random lesser devil. Once this transformation occurs, the character is lost and remains in the Iron Hells as a devil in Chardun's armies.

Once the creature leaves the plane, provided they have not been turned into a devil, their alignment and thoughts are both restored to normal.

THE BLACK LANDS

The plane known chiefly as the Black Lands has many other names that describes it. The Suckling Lands and the Moonlit Demesnes are just a few of the titles this plane of darkness and dread has been given throughout the ages. Similar names are given to the ruler of the plane, the goddess of death, nightmares, and madness, Belsameth the Bloody. Also called the Death of Dreams, Belsameth makes her home within this plane of always night, a plane where an expansive starless sky bends infinitely, allowing only moonlight to shine down on the twisted wilderness below. Gnarled, shriveled trees and shrubbery covered in thorns stick to the ground like barbed fingers, the reach of which is painful and bloody. The ground itself is clotted from blood and decay, the denizens of the realm prowling the underbrush with the ill intentions of a cruel dream.

Madmen and savages prowl the wilderness, as does savage beasts born from children's nightmares and parent's fears. Wolves, spiders, and slithering serpents all find a home within this black realm which is open and welcome to all those creatures who feast beneath the cover of night.

As the realm of the Black Lands is so horrifying to think about, it is not surprising that it has made its way into plenty of poems and stories throughout the ages. Belsameth has plenty of titles that portray her vile nature along with that of her planar home, and it is no different for the palace where she dwells. Called the Cradle of Nightmares, among other equally nightmarish names, the palace is a monstrous building. More ruin than fortress, it rises like a festering blister against the hungry wilderness around it. Its towers twist unnaturally from its walls, their immense weight held up by strained rope and vines. Madmen crawl and balance their way along these ropes, the thorny branches below bloody and broken from where some of them fell to be consumed by the wilderness below. Inside the palace, infinitely stretching hallways make openings to an infinite number of rooms, each of which opens up to even more locations within the Cradle itself. Belsameth can be found at the center of this house of horrors, her throne room being made entirely out of black obsidian and her throne itself is an ovulating creature of gnashing teeth and shifting flesh. A gargantuan gibbering moulder moves beneath its mistress, faintly resembling a throne for the wicked goddess of madness.

LYCANTHROPES AND HAGS

Many spellcasters and creatures of the night follow the ideologies of Belsameth. Hags, especially, take care to pay their respects to the powers of the Black Lands as well as the mistress who rules over it. The same is the case for creatures bound by the power of the moon, which is also the domain of Belsameth. Lycanthropes of all kinds can be found stalking the wilderness of the Black Lands, their transformation into their bestial self made constant and horrifying within the framework of the nightmare plane.

OPTIONAL RULES: MOONBORN

Shapeshifters who visit this plane become unable to hold back their primal urges. Immediately after entering the plane, they will violently shift out of their true form and into their shapeshifting form. This form is far more grotesque and horrifying than it would normally be, portraying a bestial and feral creature better at home in nightmares than in the physical world.

THE PESTILENTIAL ABYSS

Just like many other realms found within the Divine Planes, the Pestilential Abyss consists of all manner of terrain. Much like the Eternal Glade, areas can shift and change on a whim from mountains to forests to oceans, except here the locales look to be seemingly drained of all life. The mountains are desolate and abandoned, the forests blighted and diseased, and the oceans have been corrupted into a dark, tangy liquid unable to hold any life. This misshapen and ashen land is a home to demons and the lords who govern them. The various groups of demonic forces clash together constantly, each led by a demon lord determined to maintain control over the portion of the Pestilential Abyss they have chosen as their domain. There is no diplomacy to be found within this realm, no concept of peaceful negotiation or parlay. There is only the eternal fight to exert one's power over the other warring factions of the plane.

RULER OF THE ABYSS

While there are almost too many demon lords present in this plane to count, there are some who have maintained their position long enough to become near permanent

fixtures of power within the realm. One such figure is Vangal, though he is neither a demon nor a lord. Vangal is the god of destruction and disaster, and seems oddly content with watching the demons of the plane fight each other for power. He rarely participates in the fighting, considering their jockeying for power as little more than an amusing spectacle for him to witness. He is the definite ruler of the plane, his powers much stronger than that of any rival demon lord within the Abyss. From this keep, the Citadel of Fallen Tears, he watches the demon denizens of the plane act out their wars below, content to watch as they tear each other apart in endless battles and wars.

OPTIONAL RULE: CHAOS OF WAR

The always warring and battling demons of the Pestilential Abyss are bound to incite a reaction to any creature who visits the plane. Creatures who take an Attack action or cast a spell that deals damage, inflicts a condition, or otherwise harms another creature while in the Pestilential Abyss must make a **DC 10 Charisma** saving throw. On a failed save, the creature gets caught up in the frenzy of battle and they become unable to discern friend from foe for as long as the battle lasts. If they fail this saving throw three times during the same visit to the Pestilential Abyss, their alignment permanently switches to chaotic evil.



THE FUNDAMENTAL PLANES

THE ETERNAL VOID

While some scholars might describe the Eternal Void as the plane of death and darkness, this is very much not the case. Though certain undead creatures do reside within the confines of the plane, the role of the Eternal Void is not to house those who have passed on from the world of the living. To some, the truth of the plane might be more frightening than the stories being told about it, as the plane embodies one concept over anything else: Nothingness. Endless and eternal, stretching beyond what the eye can see, is a world of Nothing.

As the multiverse requires a balance of forces, these being between life and death, the Eternal Void serves as the darker side of that scale, providing the decay required for the creation of the Highest Brilliance to not become overwhelming. This plane of Nothing is the ultimate representation of destruction, entropy, and deterioration. As a result, many would be inclined to believe the nature of the plane to be evil. Understandably so, but its destructive powers are needed for life in the multiverse to persist. Darkness is needed as to not be blinded by the light, and things must decay for new life to grow in its stead.

Despite this overwhelming feeling of Nothing, as this is what the plane's purpose and nature ultimately are, the plane is not devoid of any defining features as might be expected. With the otherworldly interference of the titans, traces of the other planes have interfered with the natural structure of the plane. As a result, the Eternal Void has hills, rivers, and even cities filling it, though the creation of these are suspected to be more of an artificial replica of a matching location found somewhere else in the multiverse.

While the Eternal Void mirrors the geography as found in the rest of the multiverse, this reflection is a grim and empty one. With the exception of some subspecies of undead, no life exists within this plane, be it intelligent or otherwise. Twisted ruins of cities that never housed any inhabitants stand as skeletons of an empty world, devoid of any life or movement. Fields and forests are crumbling away where they stand, started fires ebb out in mere moments, and any apparent source of heat echoes nothing but silence and cold. Even the rivers and lakes are black from pollution and forever still, never moving or flowing in any direction.

LIFE DRAINING DENIZENS

The few creatures that can survive in this dark and draining environment are the undead creatures who embody those two concepts. Certain undead creatures, such as specters and vampires, haunt the plane as shadows of their full selves, as they are capable of existing both in the Eternal Void and in the material plane at the same time. These might appear as a threat to those making a visit to the Eternal Void, but these creatures, though powerful when faced in the Scarred Lands, are severely weakened in their home plane. Any attacks they might do that drains life away from their target is usually transported through the undead from the material plane to the Eternal Void. The undead creature acts as a conduit in this regard, transferring the energy from one plane to another. When in the Eternal Void, this transference cannot happen, and the undead creatures are unable to drain life from any creature that finds itself within the plane of Nothingness.

OPTIONAL RULES: POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE ENERGY

Because of the draining, decaying nature of the plane, certain types of magic will be affected by the energy of the Eternal Void. While in the Eternal Void, creatures using spells and magical effects that regain hit points do not roll to determine how much health is restored. They instead heal for the lowest possible amount for the spell or effect.

Though the positive energies as found in restorative magics are weakened in this plane, the spells that tap into negative energy are enhanced. Any spell cast that deals necrotic damage while inside the Eternal Void deals maximum damage to its target.

THE HIGHEST BRILLIANCE

While poets and minstrels paint a picture of the Highest Brilliance as a golden hued plane of healing and restoration, this doesn't accurately portray the nature of the plane. The restorative powers of healing play a large part in the structure of the plane, this is true, but the healing effects are so ingrained in the framework of the plane itself that it overflows into lethality. These effects are often ignored by those who wish to envision the plane for themselves, such as artists and painters, who choose to focus on the beautiful aspects of the plane itself. The sky shows an ever-changing and ever-mingling swirl of colors bathed in constant light as darkness never falls over the Highest Brilliance.

The powers found in the Highest Brilliance are strong enough to kill those subjected to them, though death isn't the final end for a body succumbed to the energy of the plane. The restorative energy is so strong that it mutates whatever may have died into a new, alternate lifeform. This can happen to bodies where the soul has left it, or even to a severed limb now taken from its owner. The Highest Brilliance gives living energy to this dead flesh, turning it from corpse to creature in mere moments.

The strange denizens of the plane, mutated and always altering lifeforms, move about a world that is just as chaotic as their alterations seem to be. As the Highest Brilliance extends to touch on all other planes in the multiverse, it also mirrors each and every plane it touches with some distinct differences. The main difference would be the abundance of life found within the plane, even in areas that mirror locations void of any life. The most natural of things, such as a rock rolling down a hill, could suddenly sprout limbs and start walking around, exploring the nooks and crannies of the plane until the restorative energies of the Highest Brilliance alters the spawned creature into a new mutated being. The forests consist not of trees but instead of treants who are all linked into one, large moving being that makes up the forest. These forests are among the oldest and most magical in the multiverse, and forests in the Scarred lands with any kind of ties to magic or otherworldly phenomena can trace its effects back to the chaotic alterations found in the Highest Brilliance.

LIVING CITIES

Even the buildings which are merely echoes of their actual structures in the Scarred Lands are living things in the Highest Brilliance, making exploration through the plane both a strange and utterly unique experience. The “cities” of the Highest Brilliance, as they might be called, are not inhabited, at least not in the traditional sense. Instead of any humanoid settlers making their way around the city streets, the residents of these townships are but moving masses made up of humanoid body parts. Writhing limbs and torsos move among each other, occasionally fusing or absorbing one another, and even attempting to absorb any other living thing that comes too close to the undulating mass.

OPTIONAL RULES: EXPLOSIVE HEALING

The pure positive energy that flows through the plane means that any magical healing effect or spell is insanely amplified. When creatures use a spell or magical effect to regain hit points, they automatically heal for the maximum possible amount plus an additional 10 hit points.

You can have too much of a good thing however, and if a creature is ever healed beyond their hit point maximum, the excess healing will turn burning and consuming in their bodies. The creature’s hit point maximum is lowered by an amount equal to the excess healing they were subjected to. This effect lasts until the creature leaves the Highest Brilliance or until they are subjected to an effect that would restore its maximum hit points, such as the spell *greater restoration*. If the creature’s maximum hit points is lowered to 0 while in the Highest Brilliance, its body explodes and it dies.

THE DEEPEST SKY

As the home and origin of all things connected to the element of air, the Deepest Sky is the acting source of all things related to the wind and skies. It is the home of both light breezes, as one might enjoy on a warm summer’s evening, as well as blistering winds that are so strong that it can strip the flesh from your bones.

The creatures that make their home in this realm of air are known as the auran, though there are many different kinds of creatures that fall under this term, only few of which enjoy being grouped in with the others. Djinni and elementals, as well as birds and other winged beings all find a home in the Deepest Sky, soaring on the endless winds that make up this plane of existence.

THE WALL OF WINDS

Though the plane itself is infinite, it is not without shape and landmarks. Endless cyclones mold clouds into black forces of energy that rage with destructive power, sometimes for centuries or millennia, and cities also spring up to house the denizens of this plane of never-ending storms. The Wall of the Winds houses the self-appointed rulers of the Deepest Sky, the djinni, and is a city made out of magically molded clouds and winds. Stretching far beyond what the eye can see, all the way to the horizon, the Wall of the Winds is among the largest citadels found in all the planes.

During the Titanswar, the Wall of the Winds acted as more of a protective vault, storing and keeping knowledge of all the planes within the arcanelly created cloud walls of the city. However, the city was not immune to the horrors of war and fell under siege by servants of the Gods. The kind and good-natured djinni living in the citadel were locked away behind an invisible barrier, impenetrable by any known means of power. Locked away and kept from moving freely about their home plane, the djinni grew hateful and cruel, turning against each other. The area around the city is plagued by dark clouds and violent storms, keeping any potential adventurers from exploring the area around the citadel.

OPTIONAL RULES: THE POWER OF WIND

Those who choose to explore the vast and endless winds of the Deepest Sky will have to be careful not to lose themselves to freedom found within the plane. With their movement completely unrestricted, some visiting creatures might become so infatuated with the nature of the plane that they are unwilling to leave it again.

AIRWALKING

Conscious beings moving around in the Deepest Sky have individual control over their directional pull. There is no gravity in the plane, or rather, there is no common gravity among the creatures moving about the endless winds of the plane. Any conscious creature is capable of determining its own “down” direction, being capable of changing both the direction and force of the gravity with a bonus action. All creatures are granted a fly speed equal to their movement speed as long as they remain within the Deepest Sky.

Objects that are not being moved by other creatures or are otherwise manipulated do not move and will remain floating stationary in midair.

LOVER'S WHISPER

Occasionally, the winds of the Deepest Sky will form into a dark expanse of moist, heavy air made up of warm, calm breezes that swirl in lazy circles and affecting the area around it. These areas are called a Lover's Whisper and can be incredibly dangerous for those unfamiliar with its power. Creatures that spend too much time near a Lover's Whisper will grow lazy and slow as a result, eventually being consumed so utterly by the magic within the Whisper that they die and drift eternally within the unnatural vortex.

Creatures entering a Lover's Whisper are immediately affected by the sweet and caring whispers produced by the winds. These whispers promise greatness and delights beyond your wildest imaginations and can infect the mind so purely that it is lost forever. Creatures that enter a Lover's Whisper must succeed on a **DC 15 Wisdom** saving throw or become hopelessly addicted to the Whisper's energy. If a creature that is addicted to the Lover's Whisper is removed from it, the creature will do everything in its power to get back to the swirling winds. For as long as it remains outside of the Whisper while addicted, the creature has disadvantage on all attack rolls, saving throws, and ability checks. Once per month, those addicted to the Lover's Whisper may repeat the saving throw, ending the addiction on a success. Otherwise, the effect can only be removed with a magical effect or spell such as *greater restoration*.

THE VAULT OF EARTH

Packed layers of sand, soil, dust, and dirt make up this elemental plane of earth. Though dense and strong, the Vault of Earth - by some referred to as the Infinite Tomb - is not entirely made up of various types of natural ground. There are tunnel systems and caves winding their way through the infinite expanse of soil, creating pockets and nooks where civilization can spawn and grow.

Though civilization can occur, and does occasionally, cities are not a usual find within the caverns of this plane. This is because the ground has a tendency to shift and change over time, causing tunnels to collapse and caves to seal up like a healing wound. Many expeditions have met their end within the Vault of Earth, being buried or encased alive between layers and layers of moving rock and soil. With no way to escape and no hope for rescue, these unfortunate souls are left to succumb alone in the darkness of the plane.

THE CITADEL OF STONE

Though it was thought to be lost and forgotten after the gods of Scarn exiled the city, the Citadel of Stone survived its entombment within the Vault of Earth. The citadel, a massive and grand underground settlement, houses the introspective dao. In their exile, the dao who lived in the Citadel turned their attention away from the outside of their city, accepting the fact that they would never be able to go beyond the walls of the Citadel again. Their attention turned to research and study, their intent grew solid as they begun the slow process of immortalizing their experiences, ideals and imaginings in the stone sprouting around them.

The result of this is a city filled with culture and art. Beautiful museums stand erected and great debates concerning matters of politics and philosophy are normal happenings within the Citadel of Stone. However, their imprisonment within the ground has made them slow to react to new developments. Used to their own rules and traditions, the possibility of change does not sit well with the dao of the Citadel, who are comfortable eternally debating over possible solutions instead of ever acting them out.

Being the largest city in the Vault of Earth, along with its recent reappearance, the Citadel of Stone has gathered a lot of attention from outside entities traveling from other planes. These creatures are all eager to see the city that was thought to be forever lost, but the patient and reflecting dao do not make the best of sparring partners when it comes to conversation. The dao can debate and discuss for hours, days, or even weeks over simple matters, matters which visiting denizens have not patience to sit and listen to.

OPTIONAL RULES: ENTOMBMENT

The movement and shifting of the Vault of Earth is uncontrollable and unpredictable. The power of the moving soil makes travel between the known settlements of the Vault of Earth extremely dangerous, as pathways can shift, spilt, or disappear entirely as the ground of the plane settles into new positions. While in the Vault of Earth, any spell or magical effect that would manipulate, move, or create earth does not function. This includes spells and effects that create rock and stone. If such a spell is used it automatically fails, the spell slot is expended, and the action is wasted.

THE GREAT INFERNO

No other elemental planes know as much pain and destruction as that of fire, the Great Inferno. This plane resembles a molten ocean of colorful fire and flames. Blue, white, and red meld with the light grays found among smoldering embers and the deep blacks of charred coal. Steam, lava, and burning winds occasionally rip through the plane as the other elemental planes interfere with the framework of the Great Inferno, turning the cruel plane even crueler with their presence.

The plane is so dangerous in fact, that otherworldly entities have a hard time exploring it beyond the protected pockets of civilization where the destruction of fire has been kept at bay. Only the hardest and most powerful beings can walk in the wilderness of the Great Inferno, and most all visitors of the plane stick to traversing between the few erected townships scattered throughout the plane of ash and embers.

THE CITY OF BRASS

Many discussions have sparked about whether the Great Inferno is the most dangerous and lethal plane in the multiverse. Some would say that other planes, such as the Iron Hells, make up crueler existences than the purely elemental, and thereby neutral, plane of fire. But even those who say this tend to shudder when they speak about the City of Brass.

Elevated between a dark cloud of cinder and smog, and a vast, whirling lake of molten brass lies the largest city known to exist within the multiverse. Believed to be as big as all the settlements of Scarn put together, the City of Brass is capable of housing as many citizens as there are stars in the sky, if not more. It is the home and birthplace of the efreeti who govern the city with a fiery passion that is not surprising given their nature. Their ingenuity at molting metal and earth has shaped the City of Brass into a vast metropolis, teeming with slavers and merchants looking to exchange exotic wares gotten from all over the multiverse. The efreeti value heroics above anything, seeing the acts of military brilliance or cunning slyness as marks of a hero. They dare not grow lazy in their power, as someone stronger or smarter than them might strike them down from their position. The sultans of the City of Brass know this as well as anyone, and if they should be outwitted or outmatched, they will not rest until the one who did so tastes destruction in the inferno outside of the City of Brass.

There is only one entrance to the city, this being a massive gate carved from a single piece of obsidian. Any attempts at breaking this gate throughout the years have failed, as the gate itself is said to be as thick as a mountain and stronger than even the most powerful titan. The city itself makes a gorgeous tapestry of black buildings made of basalt and obsidian, bright bazaars and market stalls with various exotic merchants bidding people to buy their wares in a thousand different tongues, and a towering, dark wall protecting the citizens of the city from outside forces.

OPTIONAL RULES: THE POWER OF FIRE

The fire and flames that mold this plane of existence shape the lives of every creature that lives or visits the planes. This is especially true for those who choose to explore the boiling crevasses of the Great Inferno.

EXTREME HEAT

Creatures traveling through the Great Inferno must brave the fiery hot temperatures plaguing the plane. As long as the creatures remain within the plane, they suffer the effects of extreme heat.

HOTFOOT

The areas beyond the beaten pathways of the City of Brass are inlaid with the power of a thousand fires. Creatures that remain standing in the same spot for at least one round will begin to feel a scorching pain beneath them as the heat from the ground starts burning into their feet. Creatures suffering this sort of pain take 3 (1d6) fire damage at the beginning of each of their turns. They will continue to take this damage at the beginning of each of their turns until they move at least 5 feet away from the area they were standing.

THE ENDLESS DEEP

With no surface and no bottom, the blue sapphire waters of the Endless Deep stretch eternally to affect every aspect of the surrounding multiverse. All water sources in Scarn or other planes of existence can trace their origin to the sprouting streams of the Endless Deep, be they salt, fresh, or stagnant. Raindrops, clean snow, and murky rotting water can all be found within the elemental plane of water.

In previous eras, the Endless Deep was the home and resting place of the titans who commanded the waves and seas of the plane. Their immense forms, wounded and bleeding from battle, were soothed by the ailing waters of the plane which rejuvenated the mighty titans. There was opposition to this treatment of the plane, as the forms of the titans churned the elemental waters into boiling oceans

whenever they moved. The marids who can command over the waters of the Endless Deep wished to remain in control over the plane, something they were able to do until they were sealed away by divine powers, trapped inside of their city now turned prison, the Castle of Currents.

Beyond this one heart of civilization are the two blood seas, these being the Black Sargasso and the Ichor Sea. The Black Sargasso is a place mentioned only in hushed whispers between people who know no one will hear them speak. Ships that venture there are never seen again, their crews consumed by the vile creatures that delve in the depths of the Black Sargasso. Kraken have been known to frequent the area, and quiet voices speak of viler, deadlier things delving in the sea.

The other blood sea, the Ichor Sea, is larger than the Black Sargasso and just as lethal. The waters of the Ichor Sea are thicker and denser than waters anywhere else in the plane, as the liquid itself is in fact not water, but instead hot, boiling blood. Demons and other darkly aligned monstrosities thrive within this sea, especially those who are not affected by poisons. The thick blood that flows within this sea is corrupted into a potent poison affecting any creature that somehow ingests or imbibes it. Any creature that swallows or gets the bloody liquid of the Ichor Sea into their mouth, must immediately succeed on a **DC 15 Constitution** saving throw or become poisoned until they finish a long rest.

THE CASTLE OF CURRENTS

Until very recently, the fabled home of the waterbending marid was also their prison. In an attempt to avoid the destruction of their beautiful home, the marid sealed themselves within the very city they sought to protect by raising a pearly dome made out of opaque, boiling glass. Having been prisoners within their own home for so long, the marid have little reason or need to explore beyond the vastness of their own home. Instead, they scout the

forgotten and lost avenues of their own plane of existence, hoping to reclaim the outposts that were lost during their voluntary imprisonment.

Seeing the Castle of Currents is a sight worthy of a poet's praise. It is a beautiful city built out of pearl and coral with spires and towers reaching upward, shining with faint, bluish lights. These buildings, though they might look fragile with their pearl and coral walls, are nigh indestructible. The city itself, beautiful as it is, is as hard and strong as steel.

Tamed fish and whales move lazily between the constructed buildings, acting as working animals for the marid who live within the city, transporting goods and materials from one section of the city to another. Like the City of Brass, the Castle of Currents allows for trading of precious materials between hundreds of extraplanar denizens who are able to visit the plane. The goods being traded here are of a less sinister nature than what might be found in the City of Brass. The wares one might find within the Castle of Currents is mostly that of precious gems, fine wine, and exotic spices.

OPTIONAL RULES: CLEANSING WATERS

The waters of the Endless Deep are purer than any other water source available in the entirety of the multiverse. If a creature allows itself to relax completely, the ailing energies of the elemental waters can penetrate through its pores and soothe any pain it might be feeling.

If creatures that are paralyzed, stunned, or petrified remain still and suspended in the elemental waters for at least one minute, these conditions will end, and the creatures will be able to move again. If a wounded creature does the same thing, the creature regains 4 (1d8) hit points every minute for as long as it remains still in the water.



THE OCCULT PLANES

ETHEREAL PLANE

This plane functions as an otherworldly echo of the material plane, lying in close proximity to the work of the Scarred Lands. Describing it as an echo is quite accurate, as the physicality of the world is lost in the Ethereal Plane. Those who have traversed its expanse describe it as having a certain thickness to it, like moving through water. Everything that passes in the material realm resonates within the confines of the Ethereal Plane, creating reactionary ripples in the framework of the ghostly realm.

These ripples can be more or less tangible, sometimes remaining and catching spirits that are making their way through the plane to cross through to the realm of the

dead. Ghosts and other incorporeal undead are known to be caught in the plane during their transition from life to death, becoming stuck at a crossroads between their living self and the afterlife.

Throughout the history of the Scarred Lands, many wars have found battlefields within the Ethereal Plane itself. As the fabric of the Ethereal Plane only sets up a thin border between itself and the material world, many creatures were able to see the usefulness of moving through a ghost world instead of the physical one. Assassins and spies have used the plane to strike at unsuspecting people, appearing from the veil as an incorporeal shape ready to strike. A shadow from the shadows, the Ethereal Plane became a tool to be used for selfish purposes.

REALM OF SPIRITS

Ghosts and spirits are prevalent in the Ethereal Plane. Because of the overlap between the Ethereal Plane and the material one, these spirits will sometimes appear in the physical world at times where the border to the Ethereal Plane grows thin. While not all spirits that are in the Ethereal Plane are malicious, the fact that they are tied to the plane tends to corrupt them after enough time has passed. Being unable to find their eternal rest, they grow angry and violent within the echo of the world they used to inhabit.

OPTIONAL RULES: PASSIVE POSSESSION

Many spirits live within the Ethereal Plane, some of which are intent on feeling the energy of a live body once again. Creatures who take a long rest while in the Ethereal Plane must succeed on a **DC 10 Charisma** saving throw or become possessed by an invisible **ghost**. If the ghost is exorcised, it is no longer invisible.

ASTRAL PLANE

As an extension of the natural world of the material plane, the Astral Plane lies beyond the incorporeal realm of the Ethereal Plane. Where the body can travel beyond the boundaries of the material plane to explore the Ethereal, only the soul and mind is allowed to travel into the Astral Plane. It is a wide plane of intellectual existence, touching and manipulating every other plane in the multiverse, and the souls of the deceased are sent to this plane when they die. These souls float along the pathways of the Astral Plane, awaiting the arrival of Nemorga, the demigod of the dead, who will place his judgement upon them.

When discussing the aspects of time and space, nothing can oppose the Astral Plane in either of these categories. It is known as the oldest plane, the place that existed before time as a concept was fully realized. Likewise, compared to other infinite planes of the multiverse, the Astral Plane stretches past any borders the universe might have set up for them. It goes beyond infinite, beyond age, and even beyond existence itself. Not even the gods know what rests at the edges of the Astral Plane.

LIMBO AND NEMORGA

As incomprehensible as the Astral Plane is for mortal minds, no location is more mind breaking than Limbo, the home of Nemorga. Limbo exists as a pocket of infinity within the infinite Astral Plane, an infinite mini-plane that houses the demigod of death. In the center of Limbo lies a mountain with a massive mansion made in black and

white stone. The mansion is as large as most cities and is the home of Nemorga and his servants.

Also known as the Gray King, it is the responsibility of Nemorga to tend to the souls of dead. He understands little about the ways of living beings and has no interest in knowing about their affairs. He is content with his lot of judging the recently deceased, letting his will be known through the voices of his faithful servants.

OPTIONAL RULES: TIMELESS SPACE

While creatures are in the Astral Plane, they cease ageing. They no longer require food, air, or sleep, and any wounds they may have sustained stop bleeding. Illness and disease are suspended, and any bodily advancement, such as growing in height or changing weight, is halted.

PLANE OF SHADOW

Though the existence of the Plane of Shadow is likely to be unknown by most residents of Scarn, its purpose within the multiverse is important to maintain the balance of the planes. It is a realm that lies between the borders of others, a place that is neither completely dark nor completely light. It embodies the concept of hiding, as its effects and power can be felt in all areas that are in some way or another hidden from prying eyes.

The power of the Plane of Shadow is one that is felt more than seen, as is expected when dealing with a plane as wreathed in mystery as the Plane of Shadow is. Few people are consciously aware of the energy exuding from the plane, but all citizens of the Scarred Lands have felt it. A shadow shifting unnaturally in the candlelight, hairs standing up when walking down a dark alleyway, and that cold feeling tickling down the spine when the cloaking shadows births an irrational and unexplainable fear.

SHADOWS AND SHAPES

All the uncomfortable sensations one might feel when walking in dimly lit areas are amplified when visiting the Plane of Shadow. Shapes seem to be moving in the dark shimmers of the plane, lights appear and flicker out of nowhere, and becoming disoriented and lost among the shadows is a very real possibility for those who visit the plane. It is not a lifeless plane, however. Though the eternally shifting shadows are likely to spiral most mortals into madness, this is not the case for everyone. Some find themselves strangely at home in the shadows, learning to move with them as the shift and cloak the plane.

All manner of shadow creatures live in the plane, creatures who are most comfortable in areas with little light and who survive by skulking and sneaking through the world. These creatures live under the rule of Drendari, the demigoddess of shadows, who also reside within the plane. She rules the realm from her Palace of Shadows, a citadel hidden beneath heavy shadows making it hard for anyone unfamiliar with the palace to walk through its halls.

The few mortals who can survive in the Plane of Shadows without going mad are given rooms in the palace where Drendari dotes on them as if they were grand guests. She takes great pride in the mortals who choose to come to her palace and serve her, lavishing them in compliments and rewards, and thereby invoking the jealousy of some of her lesser shadow minions.

OPTIONAL RULES: FIGURES IN THE DARK

The shifting shadows and shapes of the Plane of Shadows can have grave effects on the mind. Creatures who have spent one hour in the plane must succeed on a **DC 10 Wisdom** saving throw or become affected by long-term madness. After spending eight hours in the plane, they must succeed on a **DC 15 Wisdom** saving throw or become affected by indefinite madness. This saving throw is repeated every eight hours they spend in the plane. If they succeed on three of these saving throws, they become immune to the madness inducing effects of the plane.

PLANE OF DREAMS

When the mortals who dwell in the Scarred Lands drift off to sleep, the dreams that enter their minds are widely considered to be pure figments of imagination. Fictional stories conjured up by an unconscious mind. This is not the case, as the thoughts created while in sleep are actually real whispers of the Plane of Dreams, which the dreamer briefly touches as they lay sleeping in their beds.

Though it is a confusing location, the Plane of Dreams is both real and extremely significant for the shaping of the multiverse. It is not just the home of dreams, as witnessed only in sleep to be forgotten just after waking, but encompasses the concept of ideas and thoughts. All aspects of reality as can be constructed by the mind are present in the plane. Fears, feelings, and thoughts mingle together, some briefly touching before drifting apart in search of new stranger pairings, as decided by the mortal minds influencing the fabric of the Plane of Dreams. This pure representation of thought itself is likely to cause madness to most who witness it, as they cannot possibly fathom the sheer power and reach that the concept of thought holds.

SEARCHING FOR SILVER

The Plane of Dreams is the home of various entities that are more or less physical in their existence. Most are mere figments of mortal imagination, taking on the form of whatever dream-like creature a sleeping mortal might have thought up in their mind. An exception to this ever-shifting creatures is the demigod Erias who wanders the plane, watching the thoughts of mortals unfold around him. He has a deep fascination and affection for any creature that dreams, and he enjoys seeing their hopes and fears represented within the intangible, infinite world that is the Plane of Dreams.

Erias's wanderings also have a different purpose. He is searching for something within the plane, something that frightens the demigod and he knows well where it is. One of the few permanent locales of the Plane of Dreams, somehow safe from the altering nature of the rest of the plane, is the Silver Gate, a massive portal constructed out of beautiful, alchemical silver. Though it stands tall enough to allow even the largest of giants to pass through, entrance through the Silver Gate is impossible. Passage through the portal is barred by a locked swinging door and it is protected by Erias and his minions who will not let anyone attempt to enter through the Gate. Beyond its door lies the dreams of Erias himself and opening the door would unleash a mighty evil on the world that would eventually consume it like a wildfire.

What Erias is searching for is the key to this door and his dreams that lie beyond it. He believes that, if the key should be found and used, dark destruction would fall upon the multiverse.

OPTIONAL RULES: STUFF OF NIGHTMARES

The intangible and maddening nature of the Plane of Dreams seeps into the very minds of any mortal who might venture there. Creatures who remain in the plane suffer from a random long term madness. This madness cannot be removed by any means, but disappears 1d10 x 10 hours after leaving the plane.



THE ZODIACAL PLANES

THE FASTNESS OF TURROS, THE ETERNAL

The entirety of this plane is made out of Turros the Tower, a conscious and speaking being that makes up the full extent of this plane. Nothing exists outside of him, and there is only life within the walls of his form. Over a hundred spiral staircases connect the different floors of Turros, leading visitors from room to room.

The Summit, the top of the tower that is Turros, can also be accessed and anyone who makes it there can choose to engage in direct conversation with Turros. He speaks

knowingly about stonework and architecture and is more than capable of offering advice about construction of buildings. Conversation with Turros will only occur if the one asking has never engaged in violent behavior while within Turros. A large number of humanoids and demi-humans, as well as a number of earth elementals, make their home within the Tower, and Turros does not consider it proper behavior if they are harmed.

OPTIONAL RULES: MINDING CONSTRUCTION

Creatures who spend at least one day within Turros begin to become affected by the inherent knowledge flowing through the grand Tower. As long as they are in Turros, when these creatures make an Intelligence (Investigation) check to examine stonework or similar building material

or make an Intelligence (History) check to recall various methods of architectural construction, they are considered proficient in the skill and add twice their proficiency bonus to the roll.

THE DEEPNESS OF VESPIS

An interconnected series of limestone caverns that stretches out to cover about five square miles houses the living incarnation of darkness and night, this being Vespis the bat. The grottos that make out the home of the dark winged creature are always muted by darkness, inky black shadows clinging to the walls as if they were living creatures waiting for prey. In the center of the plane is a massive cave, bigger than any other in this plane, lies the Palace of Night, a large, onyx castle placed in the middle of the cavern. This dark keep is the home of Vespis and her loyal minions, these being several colonies of bats that fly and swirl around the onyx palace towers. Here, travelers might attempt to make contact with Vespis who is said to be able to know all there is to know about what unfolds, or will unfold, within places of near or complete darkness.

She knows of every cave or cavern that exists in the multiverse and is able to map any cave out perfectly if asked. However, a creature can only ask her one question a year and expect an answer from the giant bat. And while the answers she provides are always true, her responses can be vague, metaphorical, and hard to interpret.

OPTIONAL RULES: HEART OF DARKNESS

No matter what spell, magic effect, or item is used, light can never penetrate the darkness that is festering within the Deepness of Vespis. An area can never be illuminated more than to be considered dim light, and when traveling within the Palace of Night any sort of light source is immediately quenched by magical darkness. Each room and floor of the palace is always covered in complete darkness as if affected by the *darkness* spell.

THE CELESTIAL FACTORY OF MALNEUS

When entering the Celestial Factory, an awe-striking sound of thousands of hammers hitting metal and the whirring of arcane powers sparking throughout the plane

washes over those who bear witness to the magical forge. Along with the beating of the hammers sounding almost like a heartbeat, the creativity and ingenuity found among the fire elementals and other magical beings who live in this plane, the Celestial Factory is the forge what shapes the weapons and magical artifacts used by the gods and powerful mortals all over the multiverse.

The plane is never silent or still, as the forgers are always busy working on their creations for their celestial masters. No other place in the multiverse offers as many or as high quality magical items as the Celestial Factory, and making sure this standard is upheld is Malneus, a massive and powerful iron golem. Along with his forge-masters, Malneus holds authority over the plane and those who dwell in it. His workers are not allowed to talk to visitors, as this might distract them from their work. Malneus has an undying respect for trade and craftsmanship, and will not take kindly to anyone who attempts to fool him. If he finds out a visitor has cheated him, he will seek to kill them immediately. This might make Malneus seem hot-headed, but that is not the case. If a visitor is honest and respectful of craftsmanship taking place in the Celestial Factory, he will always deal fairly with their requests.

OPTIONAL RULES: HEAT OF THE FORGE

The forges of the Celestial Factory are so infused with arcane energy that it can seep into the very fabric normal objects arriving in the plane. While in the Celestial Factory, all armor and weapons are considered magical and receive any benefits that might come from this such as overcoming damage resistances against certain monster types. This arcane infusion happens passively and sticks around within the item for a while after leaving the plane. For 2d6 days after leaving the Celestial Factory, the armor and weapons worn while in the plane are considered magical. When the effect wears off, the armor and weapons return to their non-magical state.

THE CHARNEL FIELDS OF NEKHEROS

To an outsider, there is no other word that better describe the Charnel Fields than dreadful. Though the plane has no direct connection to the afterlife, the strewn dead bodies that lie around the fields and the bones protruding from the ground makes for a haunting visage. Undead creatures, such as zombies and skeletons, wander aimlessly among

the corpses and carrion birds circle the dark sky above. It is a land of decay, and is home to the vulture Nekheros, the first creature to descend on the battlefield after the Titanswar to feast on the fallen dead.

In the center of the plane lies the Crypt of Nekheros, the unsavory home of the enormous carrion bird. It is an immensely large crypt built from the cleaned skeletons of humanoid creatures and has been shaped to vaguely look like a human skull. The walls of the crypt are lined with **skeletons** that are inanimate as long as they remain undisturbed. If they are touched, they will immediately awaken and attack whoever touched them. These skeletons are considered the property of Nekheros, as is all information that might be sought about the nature of undead creatures. Nekheros knows everything about the nature of corporeal undead, such as zombies, as well as graves and tombs. He can even tell people the details of their own death, though he will not provide any sort of information without proper payment being paid. He demands a humanoid sacrifice, a fresh body for him to feast on. If the request is minor, he might ask only for a limb or digit, which he will consume gleefully before answering any question.

OPTIONAL RULES: DEATH TOUCHED

While on this plane, no wounds or cuts heal or otherwise scab over. Creatures taking bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage while on this plane have their hit point maximum lowered by an amount equal to the damage taken. Their hit point maximum remains lowered until they leave the plane and they cannot be raised under any circumstances while they remain on the Charnel Fields.

THE SEA CASTLE OF DELPHOS

In the pleasant and quiet sea that makes up this plane rests Delphos, a kind and caring creature who seeks to help those she can and protect those requiring her help. The plane is a small ocean with beautiful, clear water and fine plants decorating the sea floor. There are no sharks or other dangerous creatures to be found within the plane, as it is a safe haven for any who enter it. The plane is the home of Delphos, a huge dolphin who carries with her precise knowledge about the future as long as the future concerns water or areas near water, such as a shoreline or riverbank. Though her knowledge of the oceans and waters of the worlds is vast, and she can describe any event that will take place near such places in great detail, she has no knowledge about what might happen around land-locked areas. She is helpful to those needing her assistance but

will only assist people who do not wish to harm innocents or corrupt waterways. However, she will only answer a single question per year from a petitioner, as she does not wish for them to grow too reliant on her powers.

Her home, the Sea Castle, is the only part of the plane that actually extends above the surface of the water. It is a beautiful, baroque construction that has seemingly been built out of fine seashells and polished pieces of coral. The Castle reaches all the way to the bottom of the sea and reaches over 100 yards above the ocean surface, the rooms above the water housing the kind sea elves who share the plane with Delphos and who will protect the plane if necessary.

OPTIONAL RULES: INVITING WAVES

As Delphos is always welcoming of visitors, creatures that enter the plane are able to breathe and communicate underwater. The creatures retain their normal mode of respiration in addition to this, but they should not take their new water breathing abilities for granted. It is a gift which can be taken away as easily as it was given. If the creatures act dangerously or with violence within the plane, their ability to breathe water ceases immediately.

ETERNAL BATTLEFIELD OF DESTRIOS

This plane is made up of a large, grass covered field. Each side of this field has a small forest and a river runs down its center to divide the field roughly in half. There is a reason for this symmetry, as every day two armies clash violently together in deadly combat that lasts for as long as the light remains or until no one is left standing. The following morning, those who fell in combat rise anew to begin the battle once again and any survivors of the battle to come spend the night in their camps, talking about the glory of battle and the intricacies of war. The dawn brings with it a clean battlefield, undisturbed by any chaos that might have struck previously and allows for the fighting to continue in glorious eternity. The armies who fight one another are all spirits made up of soldiers who died during the Titanswar and were given the option to continue fighting in the afterlife as a reward for their service.

Though the battlefield is of her domain, Destrios does not take part in the fighting. She is a glorious creature, a massive warhorse who is all-knowing about the art and history of warfare. She is a beautiful creature with a jet-black hide and steely blue hooves matching the color of her

eyes. As the armies fight, she remains in her military tent which has been placed in the exact center of the battlefield. Here, she offers advice and answers to those who make it within 100 yards of the tent, as this area is considered a safe space where the combat of the battlefield is halted. Only those who display heroics in combat and survive the carnage of the battlefield may ask her questions, and even then, she only allows for one question to be posed to her. If a creature wishes to ask her another, it must leave the plane and return to fight its way to the center of the battlefield once again.

OPTIONAL RULES: CALL TO ARMS

Creatures who are on this plane are constantly affected by the energy of combat and warfare. This energy can translate into a hunger for battle that cannot be quenched and will heighten their fighting prowess as they charge into battle. Once per day while on the Eternal Battlefield, they can scream out a Call to Arms as a bonus action. For one minute, the creature who let out the call has advantage on initiative checks, advantage on Strength checks, and it has resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage.

THE MAZEWAYS OF KYLOS

There is little physicality to be found within the Mazeways, as any sort of physical and normal construction was shattered by the Titans as they brought destruction to the plane. As the gods remade the heavens, this place was reconstructed as well. Traces of previous ages, though fragmented, make up the very fabric of this plane, in turn making it stronger against potential manipulation than other planes of existence. Now, the plane of endless stars and skies is made up of intertwining stone pathways which guide any visitor of the plane to walk through a world spun into existence from fragments of destroyed history.

There are only two ways to leave the plane. The first, and easiest, is to immediately leave through whatever entrance one came through when they entered the plane. Once even one step has been taken along the paths of the Mazeways, the only other way to escape the winding roads of the plane is to reach the home of the plane's protector, Kylos. In the center of the plane lies a large silver palace decorated with intricate and confusing sculptures and reliefs. This palace, simply called The Center, is the home of Kylos, an indescribable, genderless entity who can offer directions to any location found within the Scarred Lands. Kylos does not give out information for free, demanding strange and eccentric prices for its knowledge.

Aside from Kylos, many other creatures reside in the plane. At each junction of the Mazeways, a challenge is posed to those who make it there. This challenge can involve creatures asking riddles or providing puzzles, or it might be a challenge of combat which tests the wanderers to their physical limits. No matter their nature, these creatures are tied to their respective junction and can never leave that area.

OPTIONAL RULES: LABYRINTHIAN CONFUSION

Spending enough time in the strange and shifting Mazeways will start to affect the minds of mortal creatures after a short period of time. Creatures who finish a long rest within the Mazeways must succeed on a **DC 10 Wisdom** saving throw. On a failed save, they wake up disoriented and confused, questioning where they are and why they are there. Creatures who fail the saving throw have disadvantage on all Wisdom and Intelligence saving throws they make until they finish their next long rest.

THE FOREST OF LYCAEUS

With strong oaks and maple trees standing as natural pillars, the Forest of Lycaeus is a plane of existence that embodies the concept of the Hunt. With the exception of the Lodge, the plane consists entirely of forest, so dense in places that medium or larger creatures will have trouble moving through the woods.

The plane was created to honor the wolf Lycaeus, a brave animal who attacked a Titan after it ruined his beloved forest. As guardian of the plane, his powers extend beyond the borders of his home to the Scarred Lands where hunters dedicate their hounds to the celestial wolf in hopes that they will go to join his pack in the afterlife. Lycaeus himself can be found within the Hunting Lodge, a massive hall made out of intertwining oak trees that have created a grand, natural building which houses Lycaeus and his favored wolf followers. Both Lycaeus and the other wolves of the plane are celestial in nature and do not wish to harm respectful visitors to the plane. They instead hunt the abundant prey that can be found within the forest, only turning on visitors if they attempt to harm a wolf or damage the forest.

Lycaeus is the largest of all the wolves and is a proud, stoic leader. He is the greatest of all hunters, knowing how to track and hunt any creature in existence, as long as they are not, humanoid or undead, but he is not likely to give this information away to just anyone. To win enough favor that Lycaeus might bestow his wisdom on someone, they must first complete a trying and dangerous hunt within the

Forest itself, the prey of which must be anything else than a wolf. After the hunt is successful, they must bring the heart of the creature to the Hunting Lodge before Lycaeus will share his knowledge with them.

OPTIONAL RULES: DENSE FOREST

The density of the plane makes it hard for creatures to move around without resistance. As long as the creatures are venturing within the forest itself, the area they are walking on is considered difficult terrain.

THE HOUSE OF BLADES

When the Titanswar ended, the weapons that had been used during the fighting and which had tasted the blood of an avatar were gathered by the gods. The intention was to store them away, but that did not happen. Instead, the iron and steel that had ended so many lives were forged into a single weapon, a giant scythe which was to be mounted in the heavens to serve as a reminder of the lives lost during the war. Other weapons that had been used during the Titanswar were also gathered. Their purpose was another however, as these were made into the walls of the House of Blades, a plane which now serves as a vault of sorts for the gods' weapons as well as a monument to weapons that cause death.

The House of Blades is as dangerous as the weapons it is made from. The walls and floors are sharp from bladed swords sticking out from them, and black water flows to surround both the House itself and the lower floors of the building. This black water is liquid death and has the same lethal powers as the water of the underworld's rivers. In the center of the building lies the throne room, the home of the plane's regent. Sikklos, the embodiment of death, might be mistaken for a grand hooded figure when first approached. Dark shrouds in the vague form of a humanoid hold on to a jet black, 15-foot scythe. This weapon is the true form of Sikklos, the figure holding it acting simply as a voice and carrier for the reaper itself. Sikklos is as powerful and dangerous as the weapons that make up its home. If Sikklos is displeased, a simple nod from its corporeal form means a likely death for the creature targeted. However, Sikklos is not cruel without reason. Unless attacked or insulted, visitors of its plane may walk the House of Blades unhindered. They may even ask Sikklos questions about deadly spells and weapons, though it will not answer any questions until the petitioner has proved themselves in worthy combat.

OPTIONAL RULES: DEATH BY THE SCYTHE

The House of Blades is not a friendly place for an outsider and offers a dangerous avenue of exploration for anyone who treads into Sikklos's domain.

REAPING DEATH

If a creature has displeased Sikklos or attacked it, it must succeed on a **DC 25 Constitution** saving throw. If it fails, the creature drops dead on the ground.

CUTS AND WOUNDS

Everything in the House of Blades is sharp, even the walls and floors. Creatures who are walking barefoot or touch the walls or floor with a bare limb must succeed on a **DC 15 Dexterity** saving throw or take 3 (1d6) slashing damage.

THE WOODS OF URSOS

The dense Woods of Ursos are a place frequented by healers, especially those looking for ways to improve on their craft. Others come to the plane out of desperation, searching for the magical mud found in the center of the woods where Ursos resides. Hot springs and mud pools surround his cave, their waters imbued with healing properties so potent they can heal any injury or illness.

Watching over the woods is Ursos, a huge bear with a supernatural skill set. He knows everything about medicine and disease, including how to treat the diseases and diagnosing what a creature might be suffering from. He will only share this information with those who are trained in the arts of healing. This may include clerics or people proficient in the Medicine skill. Even then, Ursos will not answer more than one question per year of any one petitioner, and he refuses to aid those who will use the information he provides to harm others. He will even go so far as to chase people out of his woods if he believes their purpose to be evil or cruel.

OPTIONAL RULES: HEALING MUD POOLS

The healing powers of the mud pools of Ursos cannot be understated. Creatures who spend at least 10 minutes submerged to their chests in the mud pools will fall asleep and wake up 2d4 hours later. Once they wake up, their hit points are fully restored, any disease or illness plaguing them is gone, and any lowered ability scores will have been restored to their normal values.

THE ISLAND OF SONG

There are two main purposes of the Island of Song. Created by the gods as a home for the plane's main inhabitant, Charys the Siren. The Island was given to Charys, both as a way of honoring her beautiful voice and to protect the Scarred Lands from its power. The Island itself rests in a large, blue ocean, the only part of the plane which is relatively safe. The home of Charys, the Island in the center of the plane, is dangerous to any sailor who might venture into the plane. It is a gorgeous place, tempting anyone who lay their eyes on it. The Island has beaches of black sand and several clear springs carrying fresh water across it. It is almost as alluring as the voice of Charys herself.

The voice of Charys the Siren is so hauntingly beautiful that it calls on anyone who hears it. They will follow the sound, eventually ending up at the Island in the center of the plane where they will wander aimlessly for days, weeks, or years, searching for Charys. Those few who escape the Island are unable to explain what they saw there and what the song itself sounded like. However, they will be forever disappointed when they hear others sing, as it in no way compares to the beauty of the siren's song.

OPTIONAL RULES: SIREN'S SONG

When within 100 feet of the Island in the center of the plane, the song of Charys can be heard. Creatures that can hear it must succeed on a **DC 15 Wisdom** saving throw or be charmed by Charys. While they are charmed, the creatures must use each of their turns to attempt to make it to Charys by following the sound of her voice. As long as the creatures are charmed by Charys, they do not need sleep, food, or water, and they do not age. A charmed creature can repeat the saving throw every seven days, ending the effect on a success. The effect also ends if the creature hasn't heard Charys's song for at least one hour.

THE SKYLANDS OF RUKHA

Stretching out across a vast sea of air are the Skylands, a realm of birds and other flying beasts of the multiverse. It was created to honor the power of the rocs, the mightiest sky dwellers in existence. They, along with other winged creatures, fly between the soaring mountains that make up the plane, hunting the animals who make their homes along the mountainsides.

Ruling of the realm is the most powerful of all rocs. Rukha, the strongest and mightiest of the rocs, is in charge of this plane. He is a proud being, feeling more at home soaring in the skies than near the flying mountains of his domain. As such, he only acknowledges visitors of the Skylands if they are able to fly. Though he will land on solid ground when he needs to eat, he won't talk to anyone while in that state and will only bestow his wisdom to those who show a significant control over the skies. He knows all about weather and any flying creature that might be found in the Scarred Lands. He also knows significant details about any flying structures or cities. This information does not come freely, however. To gain the favor of Rukha, petitioners must first provide aid to large creatures of the sky. This can mean anything from healing an injured roc or feeding a volt of vultures with fresh carcasses. In turn, this is also how to gain the favor of the other flying creatures of the Skylands. Rocs, giant eagles, and similar creatures can act as mounts for any earthbound visitors, provided they offer a valuable carcass for them to eat or a gift of similar significance.

OPTIONAL RULES: MOUNTAIN CLIMBER

While in the Skylands, exploring the soaring mountains and the flying islands becomes much easier. Creatures in the Skylands have advantage on climbing checks, any falling damage they take is halved, and their jump and leaping distances are doubled.

THE SUN FIELD OF KHEPIRA

Of the Zodiacal Planes, the Sun Field is the most barren and uniform of them all. A wide plane of dark blue earth, it is devoid of life and movement save for the solar scarabs who travel across the plane's surface. Every day, the scarabs roll their dung across the earth and bury them come evening. This movement, constant and identical, helps solidify the movement of the sun across the sky and keeps the great ball of fire safe from harm. At night, the plane grows dark as on a summer's evening touched by twilight, and when morning comes as does the sun ball. A bright ball of glowing gold rises from the earth, passing through it as if intangible, where it is then grabbed by Khepira, a giant celestial stag beetle.

Khepira's purpose is to transport the ball of glowing gold across the blue earth of the Sun Field, mirroring the path the sun moves across the sky. She pushes the sun ball all day and buries it beneath the ground when evening comes.

Her purpose is tied to the movement of the sun, and when it rests in the earth so does she. Though she knows much about light and lore, Khepira's purpose is singular and cannot be interrupted. If asked questions, she will always answer truthfully and can always tell if someone near her tells a lie.

OPTIONAL RULES: MOVING BEETLES

The many solar beetles living in the Sun Field make it hard to move around without stepping on some. Luckily, they are quite resilient and determined in their movement patterns. If a creature stands still for at least one minute, they must make a **DC 10 Dexterity** saving throw. On a failed save, the creature moves 5 feet in an eastward direction at the start of each of their turns, as a group of scarabs runs beneath their feet and pick them up. This transportation ends if the creature uses 5 feet of their own movement.

THE GOLDEN PALACE OF IMPERATUS

No other place in the multiverse is as filled with wonder, opulence, and avarice as the Golden Palace. Every facet of its construction is made with perfection, from the walls and magnificent columns holding the ceiling to the smallest fittings on the doors and gates. Precious materials, such as diamonds and gold, decorate the palace, and each room is so opulent with riches that it is overwhelming to most who witness it. The center throne room itself is the grandest of them all. Housing Imperatus himself, it is large and rich with decor. Imperatus sits on a massive throne made entirely out of gold, celestial griffins and dozens of servants attending to his every need, as well as providing him with protection from anyone who might wish him harm. Part of the walls within this room are made from intricately cut rubies, emeralds, sapphires, and diamonds, these precious gems having been cut whole to decorate the interior of Imperatus's throne room.

Imperatus was a valiant and selfless defender of celestial firmament during the Titanswar, and for this he was rewarded with the position of guardian by the gods. His purpose is to watch over all that is precious and valuable, a purpose he is proud to have. Visually, Imperatus looks like a man, if a man stood 10 feet tall with skin of polished gold. His eyes glint with the shine of diamonds and his hair looks like it was spun from the finest rubies in existence. Imperatus knows everything there is to know about valuable items such as art pieces and gems, including their worth, location, and

other special properties. He does not know how such items will be protected however, and he never gives information up for free. For his help, petitioners must offer something valuable in return. As a host, Imperatus is friendly and jovial, as long as the proper respects are given. If a visitor attempts to steal from or cheat Imperatus, they are likely to be sentenced to immediate execution, as thieving is a crime punishable by death while in the Golden Palace.

OPTIONAL RULES: RICHES AND SPLENDOR

The sheer splendor of the plane itself is both awe striking and distracting. While in the Golden Palace, creatures have disadvantage on any Wisdom (Perception) check they make that relies on sight as they are distracted by the glittering decorations of the plane. In addition, creatures that are proficient in the Sleight of Hand skill must succeed on a **DC 10 Wisdom** saving throw once every hour they spend in the Golden Palace. On a failed save, they have disadvantage on all Wisdom and Charisma checks made while in the plane, as they are too focused on the riches around them.

THE FIELDS OF ASTARRA

Unlike most of the other zodiacal realms, this plane is open to those who wish to stay and live in the peaceful Fields. It is a place of idyllic perfection where things such as injury, illness, and unhappiness does not exist. The fields and forests provide ample food for those who live in the plane and the people who live in the plane are kind, caring creatures. Many of them reside in Day's Rest, small, fairly normal looking village that is uncanny only in the sense that its citizens seem far too happy and comfortable.

Led by the archdruid Astarra, it is no wonder the plane has become a representation of a perfect community. She is the leader of the plane and is always happy to see visitors come to her realm. She'll invite them into her home, a simple wooden house not unlike any other house found in the plane and offer the visitors tea while she makes gentle small talk about the weather or engages in other casual conversation. She maintains this polite exterior as long as she, her charges, and her plane are treated properly. If the visitors act in any rude or aggressive manner, they will receive a stern lecture about the importance of proper manners by Astarra before being dismissed from the plane.

OPTIONAL RULES: CALM OF SOUL

The energy of this plane is one of positivity and calm. While in the Fields of Astarra, abilities that manipulate another creature's emotions negatively do not function. Examples of this could be spells such as *fear* and *friends*. Features that rely on emotional outbursts, such as the barbarian's rage, do not function either.

THE DUALITY OF DRACHYS

The nature of the Duality of Drachys is extremely strange to most outsiders. When entering the plane, it must be done in pairs, a pair that will in turn become very strange to look at. Upon entering, the pair becomes joined together and are inseparable for the duration of their visit. This duality is seen throughout the plane, as the actions happening on one side of the zodiac realm will be echoed on the other side. This includes the growth of plants and the raising of buildings. If it happens on one side of the plane, it will happen in the exact same way on the other. The plane otherwise seems quite ordinary with forests, fields, and villages strewn throughout. Even the people seem normal, except that they have an exact counterpart on the opposite side of the plane. This counterpart mirrors everything their other half does, including speaking and working.

The ruler of the realm is Drachys itself. It rests in the exact center of the plane on an island that is perfectly circular where it watches over the plane around it. Drachys is a two-headed ancient gold dragon. It knows all there is to know about disasters, past and present, including their causes, how many injured or killed are involved, and where it will take place. Drachys only allows one question to be

posed by a visiting pair to the plane, and then only if the pair can be in complete agreement. It values harmonious resolution, and if the pair approaching Drachys have not found it, it will ignore them and refuse to answer their questions.

OPTIONAL RULES: CONJOINED TRAVELERS

When entering into the Duality of Drachys, it must be done in pairs. When this happens, the two members of the pair will become conjoined for as long as they remain in the plane. When fused together in this manner, the pair make a new and haunting figure with two arms, two legs, and two heads. The right side of the person keeps the characteristics of one person, while the left side keeps the characteristics of the other. The pair share control over their body, having to work together to walk and move. If they don't work together, the two members of the pair must make contested Wisdom checks, the winner maintaining control of the body for the next round.

Each head retains its own Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma ability scores, as well as any skills, feats, spells, and levels they may have. However, the being's Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution ability scores are the average of the two original character's ability scores. The being's hit points are equal to the total sum of the two creature's hit points.

Any clothing a character is wearing is fused with the body when the two bodies join, but anything it is wearing other than that falls to the ground if they can no longer hold onto it.

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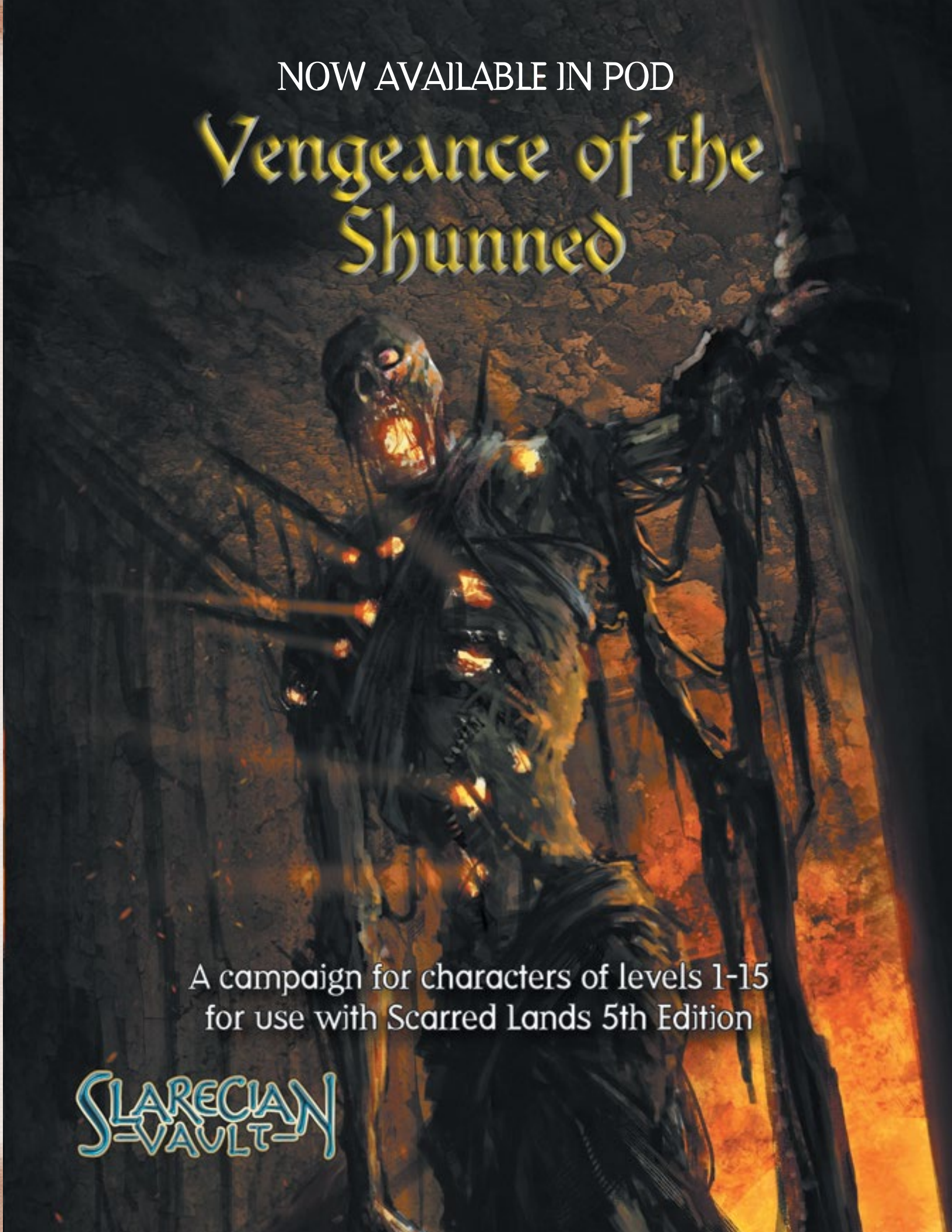
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