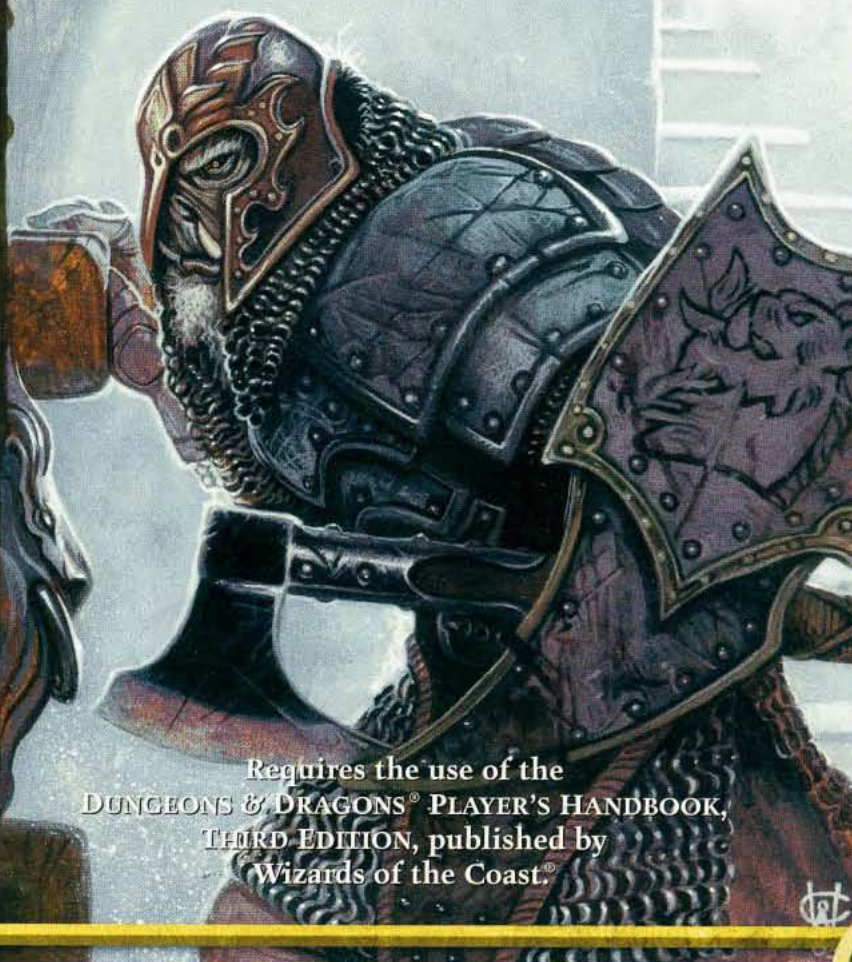


ADVENTURE II™



Requires the use of the
DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® PLAYER'S HANDBOOK,
THIRD EDITION, published by
Wizards of the Coast®

ADVENTURE II



**The only true test of a hero is
whether or not he believes in himself.**

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More thanks to Nate Barnes and Justin Lawler who put up with all my #%\$!. You guys should be dipped in that Han Solo stuff for preservation.

DEDICATION

Everyone else.



ETHAN+MIKE 2001

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Adventure II, a collection of d20 Fantasy scenarios from Alderac Entertainment Group. These modules were first released at the dawn of the d20 movement under the "Adventure Keep" title, providing Dungeon Masters with ready-to-play adventures: one-shot stories or links to home grown campaigns. For this collection, we retooled all of the game rules to comply with the new 3.5 Edition of the d20 System. In addition, we added dozens of options for running the adventures, expanded advice for the DM, created random encounter charts, helped with PC knowledge and information regarding the adventure, made bardic knowledge more useful, and added (new) improved encounters that are sure to make the adventures stellar. In some cases, the plots themselves are reworked to get the most drama out of your game and to keep internal logic consistent.

ADVENTURE CONDITIONS

Naming conventions are universal. If the adventures are worked into an ongoing campaign, replace any NPC or settlement name with one suitable to your campaign environment. Replacing an important NPC in the adventure with one the PCs have a relation with adds verisimilitude to the adventure and raises the interest level quite a bit.

Throughout these adventures, some items are standard. All doors, for example, unless specifically noted in the text have the following statistics:

■ **Basic Wooden Door:** hardness 5; hit points 10; break DC 13; locked DC 15.

Not all doors may be locked. Make individual determinations depending on the circumstances or simply roll 1d20 (1–10 it's locked, 11–20 it's open).

For lighting conditions, if there is constant activity with creatures capable of producing their own light (either with torches or lanterns), consider the lighting normal. Some kind of light is still required for creatures with low-light vision. On less-traveled pathways or personal rooms, the PCs should produce their own light-sources.

BARDIC KNOWLEDGE

A majority of the adventures have sidebars included specifically for the Bardic Knowledge special ability. This presents DCs for bards using their special class ability to gain information or obscure knowledge relating to the adventure at hand, giving PCs helpful information once they have a basic idea of what is involved. These also double as Information Gathering skill checks, or other "in the know" skill DCs at the DM's discretion (Knowledge (local) for rural town information, Knowledge (nobility

and royalty) when dealing with kings, lords, and nobles, and Knowledge (arcana) when magical lore would be in question.)

These were specifically written in order to detail what lore would be readily available, what would be told to other passing bards, or what could be known within reason. Just because a bard can take 20 on his Bardic Knowledge check doesn't mean he gains access to knowledge that simply has never been relayed. Telling him "the secret of the adventure" takes a lot of the mystery away from game play, which would effectively make this book useless, the monster stats aside.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

Nearly every adventure has a random encounter table. These encounters are to extend the adventure by providing encounters the PCs would have en route to the adventure. Very rarely are these to be used while actually partaking in the adventure itself. They can represent hunting creatures, NPCs with information, or encounters with creatures with clues as to what the adventure has in store. Unless otherwise instructed, don't use them once the actual adventure plot is underway; use them for the journey there.

City and town adventures are a different matter, however. Frequently the adventure begins with the PCs already in the adventure setting, and there is no set path of action as there is in a dungeon setting. In this case the random encounters are more like incidental mishaps the PCs will naturally run into throughout the adventure, as the city won't sleep or cooperate with the PCs for convenience's sake!

SCALING THE ADVENTURES

Every adventure is intended for a level range of PC participating, and gives basic advice on the types of skills or classes that will be useful. In each case there is a 3-level spread of suggested PC levels. This is intentional. Take this example from the adventure *Covenant Hill*:

"This adventure is designed for four to six PCs of levels 5 to 7. Wilderness skills are invaluable in this adventure."

If you have four or five PCs, the optimal level of the PCs participating is 6th. If you have fewer than four PCs, the ideal level for the party is 7th. If they have more than five PCs, the ideal level should be 5th. A cleric or any PC with skills and powers to combat the undead will be a worthy addition to any party tackling this adventure.

Noting a cleric or any PC with skills and powers to combat the undead should clue you in that rangers, druids, clerics and paladins would be a benefit to a party undertaking the adventure. These aren't strict requirements, and not having a cleric or paladin for this adventure does not make it impossible for a party not so

equipped to complete it, although many times undead are a special situation. A party tackling an adventure featuring a majority of undead without any special way of combating them will have a tougher time in general, and you may need to make minor adjustments in the encounters.

If your PCs are of a level simply unsuitable for the level range suggested, there are still ways to retool the adventures.

- **Mostly Roleplaying:** In this instance the adventure features a healthy mix of roleplaying and investigative skills. There is usually one specific threat monster and it's not encountered often. In this case it would be wise to simply replace the major creature with another monster of the appropriate challenge rating to your group. For example, the medusa in the adventure *Dawn of the Serpent* is a CR 7 creature. If you have a group of 3rd to 4th level PCs, replace the medusa with another stone-making creature, a basilisk, which is CR 5. If you have a group of 10th level PCs you could instead use a greater abyssal basilisk, which is CR 12.
- **Combat Variety:** These types of adventures feature an array of encounters with classic D&D monsters of all types. Without rewriting the adventure or spending hours reworking stats, there are some easy fixes you can implement. If your group is having an easy time of the adventure, add an additional creature or two to the encounter. Don't do this abstractly, simply consult the DMG for the consequences of adding creatures with differing CRs to an encounter and the overall effect it has on the challenge to a group of PCs. At its most basic, taking 1 or 2 creatures away makes a combat easier, while adding 1 or 2 could make it nearly impossible.
- **Mostly Roleplaying:** In this instance the adventure features a healthy mix of roleplaying and investigative skills. There is usually one specific threat monster and it is not encountered often. In this case it would be wise to simply replace the major creature with another monster of the appropriate challenge rating to your group. For example, the necromancer in the adventure *Covenant Hill* is a CR 8 creature. If you have a group of 3rd to 4th level PCs, take three levels off the necromancer and even consider doing away with his familiar. If you have a group of 10th level PCs you could instead add 3 levels of necromancer or consider if he qualifies for a prestige class to really give the PCs a run for their money.
- **Combat variety:** These types of adventures feature an array of encounters with classic D&D monsters of all types. Without rewriting the adventure or spending hours reworking stats, there is some easy fixes you can implement. If your group is having an easy time of the adventure, add an additional creature or two to the

encounter. Don't do this abstractly, simply consult the DMG for the consequences of adding creatures with differing CRs to an encounter and the overall effect it has on the challenge to a group of PCs. At its most basic, taking 1 or 2 creatures away makes a combat easier, while adding 1 or 2 could make it more difficult indeed.

In either case, simply adjusting the stats on the fly can make all the difference in combat. Each creature or NPC with weapons, armor or tools has them listed in their stat blocks. Replacing a guard's chain mail with leather armor and retrofitting him with a short sword instead of a battleaxe can make a difference. A creature could be wounded, having just fought a battle with another monster not in the adventure. In this case, it confronts the PCs with less hit points, perhaps one-third or even more off its total. And for spellcasting encounters, not every monster with spell-like abilities or NPC sorcerer will have saved all its powers especially for the PCs...

For monsters, there is excellent, easy advice in Chapter 4 of the *Monster Manual* detailing how to "level up" monsters to make them more challenging.

Do not try to equip NPCs with magic items outside of their range just to get an edge on the PCs. Every magic item you introduce for your foes is generally going to find its way into your PCs' hands, eventually. Don't equip an NPC with anything you don't want your players to take advantage of.

NEW MAGIC ITEMS AND MONSTERS

Each of the adventures features a new magic item or spell and a new monster. These have been collected for handy reference in the appendices (magic in appendix A and new monsters in appendix B). An abbreviated stat block of the monster's abilities are in the adventure where it appears, but for a full description, refer to the appendix.

DIVINATION AND MAGICAL ANSWERS

For adventures of 5th level on, take the time to be aware of the possibilities (and limitations) of various divination spells in your game. In particular, the spells *arcane sight* and *greater arcane sight*, *augury*, *commune*, *contact other plane*, *detect chaos/evil/good/law*, *detect thoughts*, *discern lies*, *discern location*, *legend lore*, *scrying* and *greater scrying*, *true seeing*, *vision*, and *zone of truth* can wreak havoc with mystery and suspense if your PC spellcasters are of high enough level to cast them. Taking a little time to brush up on exactly how they work can save lots of headaches when running the game.

At the same time, these powers are a part of the game. Just finding the spell or ability that foils the spell and equipping an NPC thus makes the PC spellcaster feel useless (especially if divination is a specialty). Find mundane reasons to avoid relying on the spells. How a specific NPC is portrayed goes a long way towards who PCs to target with divination spells.

CAMPAIGN OPTION AND FURTHER ADVENTURES

The adventures in this book can be run as separate one-shots or a DM can carefully craft an ongoing campaign with them, taking PCs from 1st all the way to 12th level. We have made this especially easy. In Adventure II we have taken special consideration as to the themes of the adventures and how they are grouped.

Cities

The Caravan City of Azul, the Dark Elf City of Hosuth, the Ogre City of Drahk-Suhl, and the Prison City of Hell's Reach have adventure hooks true, but they really shine as places the PCs can return to and filled with NPCs the party can interact with over the course of the campaign.

Thar be Dragons: Bitter Waters, In Cold Blood, Legacy of Madness, The Harbringer all feature dragon prominently as the major story point and adversary (and ally on occasion) for PCs wishing to be dragon friends or dragon slayers.

The Evil Campaign

If you want the challenge of running evil PCs through a few adventures for an alternative, here's a perfect model in The Gauntlet, Folnar's Dagger, Fall From Grace, and No Mercy.

Oriental Adventures

If you are using the Oriental Adventures rules or even the Rokugan campaign setting, with just a little attention the adventures The Daisho and the Ninja, Treachery's Reward, Blood on white pedals, and Unspoken Shame are perfect.

Tombs/Classic Dungeoneering

For a classic crawl with plot twists to keep every 10x10-foot room interesting, try on Tomb of the Overseers, Temple of the Eternal Flame, Heart of Amun Khonshu and Temple of the Iron Codex for size.

Undead

Frighten your PCs with Covenant Hill, The Flesh is Weak, Gottheit, and That Which Does Not Die featuring all manner of undead.

MONSTER AND NPC COMBAT TACTICS

Many of the NPCs and monsters in this collection are built with special abilities that can be subtle. Even feats can sometimes be overlooked in play when your attention is on a creature's attacks and armor class numbers. Pay special attention to the abilities an NPC would use to boost his own powers providing he is prepared for the PCs (spells like *mage armor* or *fox's cunning* for example). Feats like Power Attack and Dodge can be used every round; be aware of them!

Last but not least, overlook the more interesting d20 System combat options available to everyone. Disarm maneuvers, bull rush attempts, and weapon sundering

and grappling attacks all have specific rules making some creatures naturally excel at them. Take advantage of these to make combats more exciting and to keep the PCs on their toes.

DM TIPS AND TRICKS

If in any instance your players go off the beaten path, remember to keep naming conventions fluid while maintaining logic. What this means is, if they hear of a specific adventure (villagers swamped by monsters) in a particular town and decide to pass on the chance to go elsewhere, the name and location of the town simply changes to the next settlement they come across (also plagued by similar monsters). Instead of being "hired" to tackle the threat, they walk right into it and have little option but to react.

If a vital NPC is killed, make sure whatever information or item important to that NPC makes its way to another NPC still living so the story can go on.

Finally, there are a number of adventures herein that treat the adventuring population as little more than mercenaries. If your group won't easily fall for helping any sod with a sack of coins and require other hooks to land them, try on some of these optional triggers as opposed to "the hooded guy in the tavern".

FINAL THOUGHTS

The adventures here feature battles with undead and demons. There are murder mysteries and deceptions crafted to confound the PCs. There are mad wizards, mindless minions, scheming devils and NPCs just trying to get along. There are adventures in deep glades, high mountains, vast deserts and the open seas. Take advantage of the themes introduced to extrapolate additional dangers for your PCs. In particular, the Dungeon Master's Guide has excellent rules and advice for running PCs through all sorts of terrain hazards. Crossing a mountain range or swamp is only as easy as you'll let it be!

Last but not least, be kind but be tough. If you are sure the party will have their hands full with the major encounter or foe, don't beat them up senselessly with random encounters to wear them down, especially without magic healing available. But don't pull the punches if the PCs fail to prepare or equip themselves against their foe. The best game war stories are about the games where the PCs triumphed over a greater evil or won by the skin of their teeth, not about the time they trounced the devil with a shot or two then waltzed to the local tavern for some R&R.

In each of these adventure is a war story for your campaign. Time to play!

Chapter 1:

The Caravan City of Azul

Levels 1 to 20
by Douglas Sun

Spread out for hundreds of yards on either side of the main road lies a sprawling campsite bustling with folk. It appears to be a village, except maps do not mention any settlement for miles around, and besides, villagers don't live in weather-beaten tents made of stitched hide. You hear a lute being strummed, a high, sweet voice singing, and an unusually clear ring of hammer against anvil — all of this cutting through the braying of animals being herded toward the long grass outside the camp. The rich scent of food cooking, unlike anything you have smelled before, wafts toward you carried on the breeze. Then, suddenly and without due cause, a burst of bright color lights up the sky, accompanied by a piercing, gleeful cackle.

What is this place and who are these people?

As you reach the outskirts of the camp, a burly guard with a sharp longsword dangling at his side steps in front of you. He holds up his hand and looks you up and down. Then he smiles, but there is a flinty look in his eye. "Welcome to Azul," he says. "We have two rules here: stay out of trouble, and don't close your purse strings too tightly. Follow them, and you'll have a fine time."

DM BACKGROUND

This section isn't an adventure, but a civilized base of operations. Instead of a single plot, the PCs can use this place to make acquaintances and contacts, purchase items and equip themselves for other adventures, and rest, relax and study. Toward the end of this section, there are a number of exciting adventure hooks that can befall the PCs while they interact with the town suitable for all levels of play. This is designed to be a location the PCs can visit over and over again, becoming an integral part of the campaign.

Because of their motley appearance and nomadic lifestyle, the Azulites are sometimes derided as gypsies or vagabonds, but they insist on calling themselves a traveling village. Everyone in the caravan over the age of twenty originally lived in the village of Azul, once located on the contested borderlands between Lothir and Viridia.

Forty years ago, King Lor of Harek willed on his deathbed that his lands be divided between his two children, Prince Johnas and Princess Naresa. But, the two siblings hated each other and from the moment of their father's death, they fought over the lands that lay between their respective capitals. Even today, as both King Johnas

BARDIC LORE

A bard can make a Bardic Knowledge check to discover what he may have heard. A bard learns all the information of the DC his check succeeded by and all that below it (a Bard who rolled a 17 would learn the information under DC 15 and DC 10). Alternately this information can be gained by a Gather Information skill check +5 higher than the DC of a Bardic Lore check to see if the PC has heard any rumors.

- DC 10** King Johnas of Lothir and Queen Naresa of Viridia hate each other and from the moment of their father's death, they fought over the lands that lay between their respective capitals
- DC 15** The village of Azul lay astride the main invasion route favored by both sides.
- DC 17** acquired a reputation for selling exotic and rare goods at high prices, sometimes bartering for staple foods and raw materials,
- DC 20** Olimere is a strong leader who guides and manages Azul.

of Lothir and Queen Naresa of Viridia begin wither with age, their feud continues unabated, and the two kingdoms skirmish and invade each other's territories.

The village of Azul lay astride the main invasion route favored by both sides. Over the next twenty years, the depredations of war battered them unceasingly. A conquering army might take their food, their possessions, their women, their men, and burn their houses just for the pleasure of it. A retreating army might do the same to deny the resources to the enemy. And on top of it all, the town suffered crippling taxes—from both sides. In a given year, Lothir might tax Azul as its subject, and then Viridian soldiers occupying the lands would levy a new set of taxes upon subjects of Queen Naresa, before Lothir again conquered the land and lay new taxes yet again to pay for their glorious liberation.

Olimere, a successful farmer and the village's largest landowner, despaired of Azul's predicament. Weary of marauding soldiers, excessive taxes and the ever-escalating danger of swearing allegiance to both sides, he proposed the town literally remove itself from the map. The people would bundle all of their belongings into wagons and carts, and live on the road. If they kept no fixed abode, he reasoned, tax collectors and rampaging armies could not find them. After a moment of stunned silence, the residents of Azul agreed. Whether or not it was a good idea, it was certainly better than staying where they were.

For an entire generation, they traveled between the towns and cities of the lands contested by Lothir and Viridia, stopping here and there to trade and pick up supplies. They acquired a reputation for selling exotic

and rare goods at high prices, sometimes bartering for staple foods and raw materials, depending on their needs. Their experiences made them ferociously independent and self-reliant, and deeply loyal to one another. They treat outsiders with courtesy (especially if they appear wealthy), but never drop their guard. They recognize no higher authority than Olimere, who presides over Azul as First Citizen and they spit on the names of Lothir and Viridia.

If any of the Azulites are asked about their history, only those over the age of thirty know it in full. Those younger have heard it from their elders, but their recollections are limited. Teenagers and children have no memory of settled life; for them, the time before Azul is a fairy tale.

AZUL

Population: About 300

Government: Tribal, all recognize First Citizen Olimere as their leader, but there is no other political structure.

Religion: None officially, although Azul's only resident cleric serves Gabriel, God of travel & song.

Imports: Azul often needs to acquire grain, raw materials and other basic supplies from outside sources. Smuggling.

Exports: High quality finished goods (e.g., metalwork, prepared food) and services (e.g., entertainment).

Important NPCs: Thax the Armorer, Valedem the Illusionist, Maldemerion, Calan the Rogue.

Azul essentially is a huge, self-supporting caravan composed of the one-time residents of a village (and their descendants) who fled the hardships imposed by constant warfare between two neighboring kingdoms. How the PCs come to visit such a place is ultimately up to the DM, but this city provides many evenings of adventure for those willing to engage with the colorful members of this most unusual group of people.

THE ADVENTURE

The PCs come upon the Azulites while they are camped out, letting their animals graze and water and in general, taking a break from the rigors of traveling. They plan on moving on in a day or two, unless some unforeseen emergency comes up.

When they make camp, the Azulites fan out on either side of the road, forming a circle. The commercial establishments pitch their tents closest to the center, with the laborers, teamsters and guards located out toward the periphery. The occupants of each tent generally leave their carts and wagons just outside and send their draft, pack and herd animals to the perimeter, where they may graze under the watchful eyes of the herders and caravan guards.

THE CARAVAN CITY OF AZUL

Outsiders who wish to shelter with the caravan for the night may sleep outside Olimere's tent (location #2) under the watchful eyes of two caravan guards. Olimere charges them 1 gp per person per night. This is a rather hefty price for the privilege, but while Olimere does not like to turn away paying customers, neither does he want to get into the hotel business. Anyone who can gain a personal invitation from one of the city's inhabitants may stay with them for free, of course.

1. Caravan Guards

Azul maintains a force of 24 guards. They are all tough, well-equipped fighters, receiving wages proportionate to their level of loyalty and devotion. Each guard wears chain mail and carries a longsword, shield and a sap; their mail and swords are of masterwork quality made by Ruhgar; if fearing an attack they also arm themselves with light crossbows. Each guard also carries a pouch containing 2–5 gp.

Only 8 guards are on duty at any given time (for an 8-hour stretch), but the rest respond quickly if an alarm is given. When the caravan pitches camp, a pair of guards is stationed at each side where the main road enters the camp. Another pair stands guard at the entrance to Olimere's tent/store. The remaining two station themselves around the periphery of the camp, making short patrols through the camp.

The guards take their orders from Olimere. If anyone else — even senior members of the Azul community — orders them to do something, they hesitate. Olimere is not a sound tactician, however. The guards fight in a loosely organized fashion, trying to overcome opponents with their force of might, not their strategic prowess.

▲ Guardsman, Human Ftr 3: CR 3; Medium humanoid; HD 3d10+3; hp 24; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +3; Grp +5; Atk +7 melee (1d8+2/19–20, longsword) or +5 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); Full Atk +6 melee (1d8+2/19–20, longsword) or +5 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); SA —; SQ —; AL LN; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Climb +5, Intimidate +5, Jump +5, Ride +6; Dodge, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Focus (light crossbow)

Possessions: Masterwork chain mail, light steel shield, masterwork longsword, sap, light crossbow, 20 bolts.

2. Olimere's Tent/General Store

Olimere's tent is the largest in Azul, and it is also the only one meriting its own guard force. This reflects Olimere's status as the caravan's leading citizen, as well as the fact he runs the local general store, selling everyday goods to both outsiders and Azulites alike (although he sells to Azulites at a 30% discount). PCs may purchase mundane items here at the prices listed in Chapter 7 of the Player's Handbook. Olimere may also buy or barter for things he can resell, but

since he is as keen on making a profit as any businessman, he pays no more than one-third of the item's real value.

An old trunk containing the caravan's community treasury sits at the back of his tent, hidden by sacks of dry goods. It has a masterwork lock (DC 40) and the chest is sturdy. It contains 9,000 gp, 10,000 sp and 15,000 cp. Olimere pays the guards (as well as any necessary bribes) out of this fund. He carries the only key to the lock on a chain around his neck, and he is always careful to keep it under his tunic, hidden from view.

▲ Olimere, Human Exp 6: CR 5; Medium humanoid; HD 6d6+6; hp 30; Init +; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +4; Grp +6; Atk +7 melee (1d8+4, morningstar) or +4 ranged (1d10/19–20, heavy crossbow); Full Atk +7 melee (1d8+4, morningstar) or +4 ranged (1d10/19–20, heavy crossbow); SA —; SQ —; AL LG; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +7; Str 15, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Diplomacy +10, Gather Information +10, Handle Animal +8, Heal +12, Knowledge (local) +9, Listen +8, Ride +6, Sense Motive +11, Survival +10, Swim +8; Leadership, Mounted Combat, Negotiator, Self-Sufficient.

Possessions: Studded leather armor, +1 ring of protection, +1 morningstar (named "Sun's Fury"), heavy crossbow, 20 bolts, and treasure noted above.

Note: He uses his morningstar two-handed.

Olimere's family was the village's largest landowner, and therefore the closest thing to a gentry Azul had. He considers his responsibility to his people more important than running his store, and as such most Azulites respect him highly. In particular, the ever-shrinking numbers of Azulites who can remember the time before they took to the road feel a special sense of fellowship with him.

Olimere has no respect for the social order of lords and ladies of either Lothir or Viridia. He no longer cares a whit for either of them, and is interested only in what protects the welfare of Azul.

Olimere's immediate family also resides here, and most of them are present at any given moment. Olimere's nephew, the rogue Calan, keeps his tent nearby.

▲ Calan, Human Rog 5: CR 5; Medium humanoid; HD 5d6; hp 21; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +3; Grp +3; Atk +7 melee (1d6/19–20, shortsword) or +6 ranged (1d4/19–20, dagger); Full Atk +7 melee (1d6/19–20, shortsword) or +6 ranged (1d4/19–20, dagger); SA Sneak attack +3d6; SQ Evasion, trapfinding, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge; AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref +7, Will +1; Str 11, Dex 16, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +10, Climb +8, Disable Device +11, Hide +11, Knowledge (local) +9, Listen +8, Move Silently +11, Open Lock +11, Sleight of Hand +11, Tumble +11; Dodge, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse

Evasion (Ex): If Calan makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save he instead takes no damage.

Sneak Attack: Calan's attack deals extra damage any time his target would be denied a Dexterity bonus to AC (whether the target actually has a Dexterity bonus or not), or when the rogue flanks her target. This extra damage is +3d6. Should Calan score a critical hit with a sneak attack, this extra damage is not multiplied.

Trapfinding: Calan can use the Search skill to locate traps when the task has a Difficulty Class higher than 20. Finding a nonmagical trap has a DC of at least 20, or higher if it is well hidden. Finding a magic trap has a DC of 25 + the level of the spell used to create it. Calan can also use the Disable Device skill to disarm magic traps. A magic trap generally has a DC of 25 + the level of the spell used to create it.

A rogue who beats a trap's DC by 10 or more with a Disable Device check can study a trap, figure out how it works, and bypass it (with her party) without disarming it.

Trap Sense (Ex): Calan has an intuitive sense that alerts him to danger from traps, giving him a +1 bonus on Reflex saves made to avoid traps and a +1 dodge bonus to AC against attacks made by traps.

Uncanny Dodge (Ex): Calan retains his Dexterity bonus to AC (if any) even if he is caught flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker.

Possessions: +1 leather armor, ring of protection +1, masterwork shortsword, dagger, *potion of invisibility*, *potion of cat's grace*, belt pouch, 13 gp.

Calan is Olimere's nephew, and the black sheep of the clan. A young man in his early twenties, Calan still displays the fearlessness and penchant for mischief that marked him in his childhood. Unfortunately, it gets him into even more trouble now than it did then. Olimere despairs of him, but protects him as best he can.

Calan carries a masterwork shortsword he pilfered from Ruhgar's shop.

3. Valedem and His Troupe

After ten years as a traveling entertainer, Valedem the Illusionist has honed both his marketing and his showmanship to a fine point. Whenever Azul pulls into a town, he sends his crier out to announce his arrival. His associates, the brothers Tuck, Tris, and Thane then waylay anyone who wanders into the encampment with a brief display of juggling and acrobatics. Valedem emerges from his tent and declares in his sonorous voice 'an even greater show is theirs, if they return just after sunset.'

For his main show, Valedem charges 5 sp per head and spends two hours dazzling the crowd with displays of light, color and sound, both in between and in conjunction with the antics of Tuck, Tris and Thane. He occasionally employs Senek the Bard to perform interludes, or highlights Senek's songs with visual effects of his own. These shows are invariably spectacles, and they have helped make a return visit by Azul one of the most anticipated occurrences in the ravaged borderlands between Lothir and Viridia.

Valedem's tent is modest in size, for he requires only living space for himself, the acrobatic brothers and a few stagehands. Instead of self-indulgence, he clears away a large area in front of his tent for his performances. Valedem does, however, sell any potion, arcane scroll or wand a 9th level Illusionist could make. In addition, any arcane spellcaster who manages to befriend Valedem earns the opportunity to buy a scroll inscribed with a spell of his own invention, called Valedem's *dazzling sky*.

Concealed among the personal items in Valedem's tent is a chest containing 2,000 gp and a diamond worth 500 gp.

▲ Valedem, Human Wiz (Ill) 9: CR 9; Medium humanoid; HD 9d4+9; hp 30; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +4; Grp +4; Atk +5 melee (1d6+1, quarterstaff); Full Atk +5 melee (1d6+1, quarterstaff); SA Spells; SQ Summon familiar; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +8; Str 11, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 19, Wis 15, Cha 17.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +15, Concentration +13, Craft (Alchemy) +16, Knowledge (aracana) +16, Perform +11, Spellcraft +16; Alertness (from familiar), Combat Casting, Craft WandB, Craft Wondrous Item, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Scribe ScrollB, Spell Focus (Illusion).
Summon Familiar: Sarbital, his raven familiar.

☛ Sarbital, Raven: CR 1/6; Tiny Animal; HD 1/4 d8; hp 1; Init +2; Spd 10ft., fly 40 ft. (average); AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +0; Grp -13; Atk +4 melee (1d2-5, claws); Full Atk +4 melee (1d2-5, claws); SA —; SQ Deliver touch spells, empathic link, improved evasion, low-light vision, share spells, speak with master, speak with animals of its kind, spell resistance 17; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 1, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 14, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Listen +3, Spot +5; Weapon Finesse.

Wizard Spells Prepared: (4/5/5/4/3/1; save DC 14 + spell level (save DC 15 + spell level for illusions)): 0—*detect magic*, *ghost sound*, *read magic*, *resistance*; 1st—*color spray*, *disguise self*, *mage armor*, *silent image*, *ventriloquism*; 2nd—*hypnotic pattern*, *invisibility*, *minor image*, *mirror image*, *misdirection*; 3rd—*displacement*, *invisibility sphere*, *major image*, *Valedem's dazzling sky* (see Appendix A); 4th—*hallucinatory terrain*, *rainbow pattern*, *shadow conjuration*; 5th—*persistent image*.

Forbidden Schools: Conjuraction, Necromancy.

Spellbook: 0—*detect magic*, *ghost sound*, *read magic*, *resistance*; 1st—*color spray*, *comprehend languages*, *disguise self*, *magic aura*, *magic missile*, *mage armor*, *silent image*, *ventriloquism*; 2nd—*hypnotic pattern*, *invisibility*, *magic mouth*, *minor image*, *mirror image*, *misdirection*, *trap*; 3rd—*displacement*, *illusory script*, *invisibility sphere*, *major image*, *Valedem's dazzling sky* (see Appendix A); 4th—*hallucinatory terrain*, *illusory wall*, *rainbow pattern*, *shadow conjuration*; 5th—*mirage arcana*, *persistent image*.

Possessions: bracers of armor +2, cloak of protection +1, +1 quarterstaff (named "Mister Ection"), treasure as noted above.

Valedem came to Azul as a war refugee, taking shelter with Olimere after the illusionist's own home was burned to the ground by Viridian soldiers, and never left. Even now, no one can quite understand why so skilled an illusionist chooses to stay among small farmers, herders and tradesmen, and Valedem himself is not quite sure. They are glad he stayed, though, for this taciturn, enigmatic man puts on crowd-dazzling shows are perhaps the caravan's greatest attractions.

Valedem is unwaveringly loyal to Olimere and counts him as his closest friend. In turn, the three herders' sons whose performing talents he nurtured, Tuck, Tris, and Thane, look up to him as a father figure.

Valedem usually has a quarterstaff handy. Also, he tends to prepare Illusionist spells involving bright lights, vivid colors and sound effects.

4. Ruhgar the Armorer

Ruhgar is a brawny dwarf who has been Azul's blacksmith and armorer since the town was still a settled village. His tent serves as workplace, shop and living quarters all in one, and because of this, it is larger than any of the other residents except for Olimere. Although Ruhgar only works with two apprentices, he needs plenty of space for his portable forge, which is located at the back of the tent and features an ingenious collapsible chimney made of metal rings held together by mithril chains. It is both a masterwork armory and weaponsmithy.

Indeed, Ruhgar is an exceptional craftsman, even by dwarven standards. He sells a wide variety of arms and armor, some of which he makes himself, some of which he accepted as trade-ins. Any item of his own manufacture is of masterwork quality, and sells for a correspondingly higher price than ordinary arms and armor. A few items in his stock are magical in nature, the most powerful being the *greataxe of dwarven might*.

If PCs negotiate with Ruhgar, he accepts trade-ins at one-third of an item's value, but he does not pay cash for anything. He cares little for gems, having long ago left trade to Albon the jeweler. The only exception to this rule is anything made out of mithril.

Under Ruhgar's cot is a locked iron chest (DC 35). It holds 5,000 gp in gems and an ingot of mithril worth 500 gp.

▲ Ruhgar, Dwarf Ftr 3/Exp3: CR 5; Medium humanoid; HD 3d10+3d6+24; hp 55; Init +7; Spd 20 ft.; AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +5; Grp +9; Atk +10 melee (1d6+4/×3, handaxe) or +8 ranged (1d6+4/×3, handaxe); Full Atk +10 melee (1d6+4/×3, handaxe) or +8 ranged (1d6+4/×3, handaxe); SA—; SQ —; AL LN; SV Fort +8, Ref +5, Will +7; Str 18, Dex 16, Con 19, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +9, Climb +7, Craft (armorer) +15, Craft (weaponsmithing) +15, Handle Animal +7, Intimidate +10, Jump +7, Sense Motive +7; Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Iron Will, Skill Focus (Craft (armorer)), Skill Focus (Craft (weaponsmithing)).

Possessions: Leather armor, masterwork handaxe.

Ruhgar has been Azul's village blacksmith for over 60 years, and he is a familiar and comforting presence in the caravan despite his taciturnity and aggressiveness when drunk. He counts Olimere as a close friend and, being even older than the First Citizen, provides him with sage advice. He is an exceptionally skilled armorsmith, and he can also handle any weapon in his shop with at least a modicum of skill. He usually keeps a masterwork handaxe strapped to his belt.

5. Elana the Foodseller

If Olimere is Azul's leading citizen, then Elana is arguably its most famous. From the moment the caravan pulls into a town and makes camp, her tent floods with paying customers, and the cooking fires burn from dawn until dusk. There are those who argue she is the best cook in the two kingdoms combined.



Her ordinary tavern-style meals are tasty enough, but for those who can afford it, nothing less than her specialties will do. Her special recipes are elven in origin, and their secret ingredient is ambic, a rare and richly aromatic herb of which only the elves have any real knowledge. Ambic also has therapeutic properties when cooked into food, and this, too, accounts for the popularity of Elana's cuisine; no one understands precisely why, but everyone feels better after eating her cooking.

Anyone who eats three full meals of ambic-flavored food in one day may restore 1 point of temporary ability damage and heal 1d8+1 hit points of damage. Eating one full meal of ambic-flavored food in a day heals 1d3 hit points of damage. Eating a snack of ambic-flavored food (say, a chunk of bread) heals 1 hit point of damage. But this therapeutic gourmet experience does not come cheaply. For her non-ambic food, Elana charges as per the chart for food, drink and lodging in the Player's Handbook. Ambic-flavored food costs ten times as much, however.

Elana enjoys cooking as an art form and takes pride in having built a business keeping her and her six assistants in almost constant motion. There is something a little sad and wistful about her, however; the ravages of war have nearly driven elvenkind out of this corner of the world altogether, and she sees herself as one of the last custodians of a tradition that is fading away. If she encounters an elven or half-elven PC, she makes a gift of three days' worth of her ambic-flavored traveler's rations.

Hidden under a pile of empty sacks at the back of the tent is a locked chest containing 100 pp and 2,000 gp.

▲ Elana, Elf Exp 4: CR 3; Medium humanoid; HD 4d6; hp 18; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +3; Grp +3; Atk +4 melee (1d6, quarterstaff) or +5 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); Full Atk +4 melee (1d6, quarterstaff) or +5 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); SA —; SQ —; AL NG; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +6; Str 11, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Craft (alchemy) +9, Gather Information +6, Heal +9, Knowledge (local) +6, Knowledge (nature) +9, Listen +10, Profession (cook) +11, Sense Motive +7, Spot +7, Survival +8; Alertness, Skill focus (Profession (cook)).

Possessions: Leather armor, masterwork quarterstaff, short bow, 20 arrows.

6. Jarmak the Younger, Cleric

Jarmak the Younger is Azul's only cleric, a position he inherited from his late father. As such, he is one of the caravan's most important figures. He serves the god of travels and song, Gabriel. He is happy to use his powers to aid outsiders in exchange for a reasonable monetary offering to his deity, but his fellow Azulites always come first. He reserves his powers if he believes they need them before he rests.

He also sells potions and divine scrolls at the standard prices for those he feels respects his deity's interests.

▲ Jarmak the Younger, Human Clr 6: CR 6; Medium humanoid; HD 6d8+12; hp 36; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +4; Grp +5; Atk +6 melee (1d8+2/x3, longspear) or +5 ranged (1d8/x3, longbow); Full Atk +4; Grp +5; Atk +6 melee (1d8+2/x3, longspear) or +5 ranged (1d8/x3, longbow); SA —; SQ Turn undead; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +7; Str 13, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 15, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +7, Diplomacy +7, Heal +7, Knowledge (religion) +6, Survival +5; Endurance, Extra Turning, Brew Potion, Scribe Scroll.

Turn Undead (Su): This cleric may attempt to turn undead 9 times per day. Because he has 5 or more ranks in Knowledge (religion), he gets a +2 bonus on turning checks against undead.

Cleric Spells Prepared (5/4+1/4+1/2+1; save DC 13 + spell level): 0—*cure minor wounds*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *light*, *resistance*; 1st—*command*, *comprehend languages*, *cure light wounds*, *longstrider**, *obscuring mist*; 2nd—*augury*, *cure moderate wounds*, *enthrall*, *shield other**, *zone of truth*; 3rd—*cure serious wounds*, *fly**, *locate object*.

* Domain spell. **Domains:** Protection (generate a *protective ward* as a supernatural ability), Travel (for 6 rounds per day, can act normally regardless of magical effects that impede movement as if affected by the spell *freedom of movement*).

Possessions: Masterwork chain shirt, +1 *cloak of protection*, +1 *longspear* (named "freestrider"), potion of cure light wounds, wooden holy symbol, herbal and alchemical components, vellum parchments, vial of ink, pen, 55 gp.

7. Senek the Bard

Senek the Bard entertains crowds and draws customers to the caravan. Whenever the caravan pulls into town, Senek works the throng tirelessly, playing his lute, singing and telling stories in exchange for 'donations.' Sometimes he participates in Valedem's shows, in exchange for a small cut of the proceeds. It is a marginal living, but as far as he is concerned, it beats honest work.

When there are no crowds around, Senek spends much of his time in his tent honing his musical skills and working on new material. He is always eager to meet other bards so he can broaden his repertoire and swap tales of the trade. Any bard PC who spends an entire day in Senek's company earns 250 XP from their exchange of knowledge.

Senek carries on his belt a pouch containing 50 gp and a gem worth 50 gp. Except for his lute and a blunted rapier (–2 damage) he carries for enacting sword fights, he has no other possessions of note.

▲ Senek, Human Brd 5: CR 5; Medium humanoid; HD 5d6+5; hp 25; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 10, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +3; Grp +3; Atk +5 melee (1d6–2/18–20, rapier); Full Atk +5 melee (1d6–2/18–20, rapier); SA Spells; SQ Bardic music, bardic knowledge, countersong, fascinate, inspire courage +1, inspire competence; AL CG; SV Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +5; Str 11, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Balance +10, Climb +8, Disguise +11, Escape Artist +6, Gather Information +7, Knowledge (local) +9, Perform +13, Sleight of Hand +10, Tumble +10; Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (perform), Weapon Finesse.

Bardic Knowledge: Senek may make a special bardic knowledge check (1d20+6) to see whether he knows some relevant information about local notable people, legendary items, or noteworthy places.

Bardic Music: 5 times per day Senek can use his song or poetics to produce magical effects on those around him (including himself, if desired).

Countersong (Su): Senek can use his music or poetics to counter magical effects that depend on sound (but not spells that simply have verbal components). Each round of the countersong, he makes a Perform check. Any creature within 30 ft. of Senek (including the bard himself) that is affected by a sonic or language-dependent magical attack may use Senek's Perform check result in place of its saving throw if, after the saving throw is rolled, the Perform check result proves to be higher.

Fascinate (Sp): Senek can use his music or poetics to cause one or more creatures to become fascinated with him. To use the ability, a bard makes a Perform check. His check result is the DC for each affected creature's Will save against the effect. If a creature's saving throw succeeds, the bard cannot attempt to fascinate that creature again for 24 hours. If its saving throw fails, the creature sits quietly and listens to the song, taking no other actions, for as long as the bard continues to play and concentrate (up to a maximum of 1 round per bard level). While fascinated, a target takes a –4 penalty on skill checks made as reactions, such as Listen and Spot checks. Any potential threat requires the bard to make another Perform check and allows the creature a new saving throw against a DC equal to the new Perform check result.

Inspire Courage (Su): Senek can use song or poetics to inspire courage in his allies (including himself), bolstering them against fear and improving their combat abilities. To be affected, an ally must be able to hear the bard sing. The effect lasts for as long as the ally hears the bard sing and

for 5 rounds thereafter. An affected ally receives a +1 morale bonus on saving throws against charm and fear effects and a +1 morale bonus on attack and weapon damage rolls.

Inspire Competence (Su): Senek can use his music or poetics to help an ally succeed at a task. The ally must be within 30 ft. and able to see and hear the bard. Senek must also be able to see the ally.

The ally gets a +2 competence bonus on skill checks with a particular skill as long as he or she continues to hear the bard's music. Certain uses of this ability are not feasible. The effect lasts as long as the bard concentrates, up to a maximum of 2 minutes.

Bard Spells Known: (6/5/4; save DC 13 + spell level): 0—detect magic, flare, lullaby, mage hand, mending, read magic; 1st—charm person, cure light wounds, hideous laughter, silent image, unseen servant; 2nd—enthrall, detect thoughts, heroism, pyrotechnics.

Possessions: Blunted show rapier, lute, belt pouch, 50 gp, entertainer's outfit.

8. Albon the Jeweler

Albon is a crafty fellow who makes his living by selling jewelry of his own manufacture. Nearly any gem or jewelry is available, but Albon is a skilled jeweler and charges 20–50% above the value of the components for his goods, depending on how effectively the buyer bargains. He also seeks to acquire gems, and offers 50% of their value for them, although haggling sometimes drives him to 60%.

Albon cannot detect magic, so he is unaware one of the items in his stock is actually an *amulet of natural armor* +1. He bought it off of some equally clueless adventurers a while ago, and he would sell it for 500 gp based on his estimate of the value of its component gold and gems.

Albon shares the tent with two assistants. They occasionally do chores for him, and when customers enter the tent, they do their best to look busy, but their real purpose is to guard Albon and his merchandise. Albon himself has no combat skills. If someone tries to rob him, his assistants draw their weapons concealed under their tunics and hold off the attackers while Albon summons the guards.

▲ Albon, Human Exp 4: CR 3; Medium humanoid; HD 4d6; hp 16; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +3; Grp +4; Atk +4 melee (1d6+1, club); Full Atk +4 melee (1d6+1, club); SA —; SQ —; AL NG; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +9, Bluff +6, Craft (gemcutting) +9, Diplomacy +6, Knowledge (local) +8, Listen +8, Profession (jewelrymaker) +12, Search +6, Sense Motive +6, Spot +4; Alertness, Skill focus (Craft (gemcutting)), Skill focus (Profession (jewelrymaker)).

Possessions: Artisan's outfit, club, strongbox, 10 pp, 500 gp, 20 gems of various worth.

Albon carries a bag containing 20 gems of various types and sizes on his person; there is also a locked strongbox containing 100 pp and 500 gp underneath a pile of empty boxes at the back of his tent.

9. Orezia the Curio Dealer

Orezia, the dealer in curiosities and antiques, hangs her shingle outside her tent on a five ft.-tall, gaudily painted statue of something resembling the foreparts of a griffon grafted onto the bottom half of a kuo-toa. Orezia claims it represents a god worshipped by a long-lost civilization once inhabiting these lands, but no one really knows what it is. Whatever this totem might represent, it does draw customers to a shop selling things some might want, but no one really needs.

Orezia's merchandise consists of statuettes, carvings, and all manner of odd decorative trinkets serving no purpose and having little worth apart from their curiosity value. She sells many of these under the pretense they are antiques. Some of her goods have inherent value because they are carved out of semi-precious stones like quartz or lapis lazuli, and a few have inlaid gems of minor value. Most of her wares, however, are just plain odd.

Whenever potential customers enter her tent, Orezia drops whatever she is doing and attends them. She is used to having to persuade her customers to part with their money, and out of habit she leads them through her goods like an enthusiastic tour guide leading visitors through a museum, telling a little something about each item. Orezia has knowledge of magic and the arcane to help the selling points of some of her more interesting items. But Orezia is not a cheat; she sincerely believes everything she sells is special and unique — or it might be, at any rate. Most everyone in Azul regards her as an eccentric and likeable old soul, mostly because they know better than to take her too seriously.

There is one supernatural item in her shop. It is the *statuette of succubus summoning*, and Orezia has absolutely no idea of its power. She might sell it for 750 gp, the value of its component materials.

Orezia keeps a small chest with 250 gp hidden beneath a pile of rags.

▲ Orezia, Human Exp 6: CR 5; Medium humanoid; HD 6d6; hp 22; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +4; Grp +3; Atk +3 melee (1d6–1, club); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6–1, club); SA —; SQ —; AL CG; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +6; Str 9, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +10, Craft (alchemy) +10, Craft (curious) +10, Handle Animal +10, Listen +10, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Profession (merchant) +12, Ride +9, Spellcraft +10, Spot +9; Alertness, Dodge, Skill Focus (Profession (merchant)).

Possessions: Club, peasant's outfit, small chest, 250 gp.

10. Barella the Seer

Barella the Seer sets up shop in this small but highly visible tent with gaudy decorations out toward the periphery of the caravan. From her location, many believe she lacks the respect of the other tradespeople of the village; in fact, she and Maldemerion constitute Azul's disreputable quarter. It is no surprise, therefore, the two of them tend to stick together, and rumors have the two romantically linked.

Barella makes her living by telling her customers' fortunes. She has a variety of means at her command, her favorites are reading palms, casting bones and dealing from a deck of cards, a deck of her own design she claims has magical properties. She claims to commune with Gabriel while running through her act. In fact, Barella relies more on costume, setting, and her natural theatrical shrewdness than on any divine skill. She possesses the bardic abilities, but has no special talent for seeing into the future. All of her means of telling fortunes are pure bluff. She charges anywhere from 5–50 gp for her services, depending on the length and depth of the consultation.

Barella carries a dagger under her skirt. Hidden under a pile of clothes at the back of the tent is a locked chest containing 5,000 sp.

▲ Barella, Human Brd 3: CR 3; Medium humanoid; HD 3d6; hp 12; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +2 Grp +3; Atk +3 melee (1d4+1/19–20, dagger) or +3 ranged (1d4+1/19–20, dagger); Full Atk +3 melee (1d4+1/19–20, dagger) or +3 ranged (1d4+1/19–20, dagger); SA Spells; SQ Bardic music, bardic knowledge, countersong, fascinate, inspire courage +1, inspire competence; AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +5; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +7, Bluff +8, Concentration +6, Diplomacy +8, Disguise +7, Gather Information +8, Perform +8, Sense Motive +6; Dodge, Mobility, Spring Attack.

Bardic Knowledge: Barella may make a special bardic knowledge check (1d20+6) to see whether she knows some relevant information about local notable people, legendary items, or noteworthy places.

Bardic Music: 5 times per day Barella can use her song or poetics to produce magical effects on those around her (usually including herself, if desired).

Countersong (Su): Barella can use her music or poetics to counter magical effects that depend on sound (but not spells that simply have verbal components). Each round of the countersong, she makes a Perform check. Any creature

within 30 ft. of Barella (including the bard herself) that is affected by a sonic or language-dependent magical attack may use Barella's Perform check result in place of its saving throw if, after the saving throw is rolled, the Perform check result proves to be higher.

Fascinate (Sp): Barella can use her music or poetics to cause one or more creatures to become fascinated with her.

To use the ability, a bard makes a Perform check. Her check result is the DC for each affected creature's Will save against the effect.

If a creature's saving throw succeeds, the bard cannot attempt to fascinate that creature again for 24 hours.

If its saving throw fails, the creature sits quietly and listens to the song, taking no other actions, for as long as the bard continues to play and concentrate (up to a maximum of 1 round per bard level). While fascinated, a target takes a –4 penalty on skill checks made as reactions, such as Listen and Spot checks. Any potential threat requires the bard to make another Perform check and allows the creature a new saving throw against a DC equal to the new Perform check result.

Inspire Courage (Su): Barella can use song or poetics to inspire courage in his allies (including herself), bolstering them against fear and improving their combat abilities. To be affected, an ally must be able to hear the bard sing. The effect lasts for as long as the ally hears the bard sing and for 5 rounds thereafter. An affected ally receives a +1 morale bonus on saving throws against charm and fear effects and a +1 morale bonus on attack and weapon damage rolls.

Inspire Competence (Su): Barella can use her music or poetics to help an ally succeed at a task. The ally must be within 30 ft. and able to see and hear the bard. Barella must also be able to see the ally.

The ally gets a +2 competence bonus on skill checks with a particular skill as long as he or she continues to hear the bard's music. Certain uses of this ability are not feasible. The effect lasts as long as the bard concentrates, up to a maximum of 2 minutes.

Possessions: Dagger, performer's outfit, chest, 50 gp.



11. Maldemerion's House of Chance

Most of Azul's leading citizens look down their noses at Maldemerion's gambling house, but they all admit wherever they go, there is always quite a demand for his particular brand of entertainment. In fact, there is nothing terribly glamorous about Maldemerion's operation; all he offers inside his shabby tent is one game — dice — played on a worn table with inscribed numbers from 2–12.

There are no guards here. Olimere refuses to provide any, and Maldemerion is a tough enough customer to handle most anything coming his way. He keeps a bastard sword handy just in case. He does not try to hide his strongbox containing 2,500 gp, 7,000 sp and 3,000 cp, but he keeps a sharp eye on it.

▲ Maldemerion, Human Rog 2/Ftr 2: CR 4; Medium humanoid; HD 2d6+2d10+8; hp 30; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +3; Grp +6; Atk +6 melee (1d6+1/19–20, short sword) or +4 ranged (1d4+1/19–20, dagger); Full Atk +6 melee (1d6+1/19–20, short sword) or +4 ranged (1d4+1/19–20, dagger); SA sneak attack +1d6; SQ evasion, trapfinding; AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +0; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +7, Climb +9, Hide +7, Jump +8, Listen +7, Move Silently +7, Open Lock +7, Sleight of Hand +7, Spot +6; Combat Expertise, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (shortsword).

Evasion (Ex): If this rogue makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, he instead takes no damage.

Sneak Attack: These rogues' attacks deal an extra 1d6 damage any time a target would be denied a Dexterity bonus to AC (whether the target actually has a Dexterity bonus or not), or when the rogue flanks a target. Should the rogue score a critical hit with a sneak attack, this extra damage is not multiplied. Ranged attacks can count as sneak attacks only if the target is within 30 ft.

Trapfinding: These rogues can use the Search skill to locate traps when the task has a Difficulty Class higher than 20.

Possessions: Studded leather armor, masterwork bastard sword, short sword, commoner's outfit, strongbox, 2,500 gp, 7,000 sp and 3,000 cp.

A tough, ferret-faced man in his late 20s, Maldemerion lacks the feeling of generational solidarity with Olimere that Valedem and Ruhgar share. Only a child when the Azulites pulled up stakes, his memory of his village as a cozy community of honest farmers and tradespeople is dimmer than most. He cares much less about Azul's respectability; in his view, survival is its own justification and he can rationalize anything as an act of self-preservation. Maldemerion knows Olimere disapproves of his gambling business, and resents it.

He is quick to point out it is really not easy making your living off of the greed of others, and he has a few scars from dissatisfied customers to prove it. Maldemerion has learned how to handle himself in a fight, however. In addition to the bastard sword he keeps close by, he carries a shortsword with a poison tip concealed under his tunic.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

ALL FOR LOVE

Inkermer, son of the illusionist Valedem, has eloped with the daughter of the mayor of the last town visited by the Azulites. They wish to find a cleric of the god of justice to marry them, in the hope her family is more likely to reconcile itself to their union if it at least receives the blessing of their patron deity. They have not encountered a priest of justice since then, however, and they dare not leave the safety of the caravan to find one. Inkermer is desperate enough he gives the PCs a ring of protection +1 if they go to the nearest town and bring a priest back. As Inkermer suspects, however, his fiancée's father has sent out a band of armed henchmen to find his daughter. If the PCs encounter them, the henchmen bully them into cooperating, or bribe them by offering to split the reward money for the girl's return.

COME OVER HERE AND SAY THAT!

Ruhgar the armorer is a violent drunk. In the evening, if he has had too much ale, he singles out the PC with the lowest Charisma and badgers him into a wrestling match, offering 50 gp if the PC can beat him. He does not take no for an answer, and he does not accept any substitute opponents. Both combatants must strip off their armor, and the first one to lose consciousness from subdual damage loses. If Ruhgar loses, his apprentices haul him off to his tent and make good on his wager. If he wins, he starts to pick on the PC with the next-lowest Charisma before the other Azulites intervene and haul him off.

DON'T MESS WITH DRAGONS

The rogue Calan, Olimere's black sheep nephew, pilfered a cache of valuable gemstones from a dragon. The dragon, as clever as it is angry, has tracked him back to Azulite using its polymorph ability to disguise itself as a human traveler, and it does what it must to reclaim its property. If Calan knows the dragon is onto him, he may approach the PCs and ask them to protect him (he does not dare admit to his uncle or any of the caravan guards what he's done). Alternately, the dragon may approach the PCs, asking for their help in finding Calan amidst the bustle of the caravan. The PCs may also suddenly witness the dragon catching Calan or harassing Albion the jeweler, who is, much to his misfortune, an obvious starting point for the dragon's search.

If Calan remains blissfully unaware the dragon is after him, he might try to cut the purse of one of the PCs. If the PCs catch him, rough him up and leave him to bleed, Olimere acknowledges their right to do so, but treats them coolly thereafter. If they kill Calan, Olimere orders them to leave Azul and never return. If they catch Calan and bring him to Olimere, the First Citizen apologizes profusely and offers them 100 gp worth of merchandise from his stock.

A GHOST STORY

Senek the bard claims an incorporeal being has visited his tent at night. So far, it has not harmed him, but he worries it may — and besides, it's hard to sleep with the undead wandering around at the foot of your cot. However, Jarmak the cleric does not believe him and refuses to help (Jarmak really does think the bard is just trying out new material on him). Senek offers the PCs 500 gp if they sit up with him and dispel whatever this thing is once and for all.

GRAVE ROBBING IS A TIME HONORED PROFESSION

Orezia, the curiosities dealer has heard tales of an ancient tomb nestled in the hills to the south. No one quite knows who is supposed to be buried there, but all accounts agree it contains many valuable artifacts. If the PCs seem interested by her tale, she gives them a crude map showing the supposed location of the tomb. She also promises to buy from them any suitable item they bring back (at half its value, plus a 10% finder's fee). Of course, she pitches any estimates of an item's resale value as low as she credibly can — she may be old and eccentric, but she is savvy. And if the PCs try to take advantage of her by bringing back obvious junk, she becomes infuriated and has the caravan guards kick them out of the village.

MOST FOUL REBELLION

Here is a hook especially suited for evil PCs: Olimere is furious at Maldemerion for using loaded dice in his games — the odds are set against the players in the first place, so why get greedy? If anyone discovered his dishonesty, it could brand the entire village. Maldemerion, for his part, is furious Olimere refused to send the guards after the cheats who victimized him. Sick of being Azul's bad guy, Maldemerion tries to hire the PCs to assassinate Olimere so he can proclaim himself First Citizen. He offers them 100 gp each from his personal hoard, and promises to split Azul's treasury (the money stored in Olimere's tent) with them if they succeed.

Maldemerion has not counted on two things, however. First, as soon as Olimere raises any alarm, all guards, including those not on duty, converge on his tent, effectively surrounding anyone in it. Also, few people in the village like Maldemerion at all, much less prefer him to Olimere. In the event of a coup d'etat, the vast majority of the village rallies to oppose Maldemerion, whether or not Olimere is still alive.

NEVER GIVE A SUCKER AN EVEN BREAK

Maldemerion, the gambling parlor operator, recently discovered some customers had cheated him out of 800 gp by swapping his loaded dice for their loaded dice. By the time he realized what had happened, however, they were gone and Olimere refused to spare guards to chase after them. Maldemerion can provide exact descriptions of their appearance. He promises to split the ill-gotten money with the PCs if they track down the cheats and retrieve it for him. He does not tell the PCs the real amount of his loss is 400 gp, and he loses absolutely nothing by splitting the money with them.

ONE OF OUR BULLOCKS IS MISSING

For several days now, the Azulites have awakened to find one of their animals missing, and a blood trail tapers off until it can no longer be followed. Someone — or something — appears to be following the caravan.

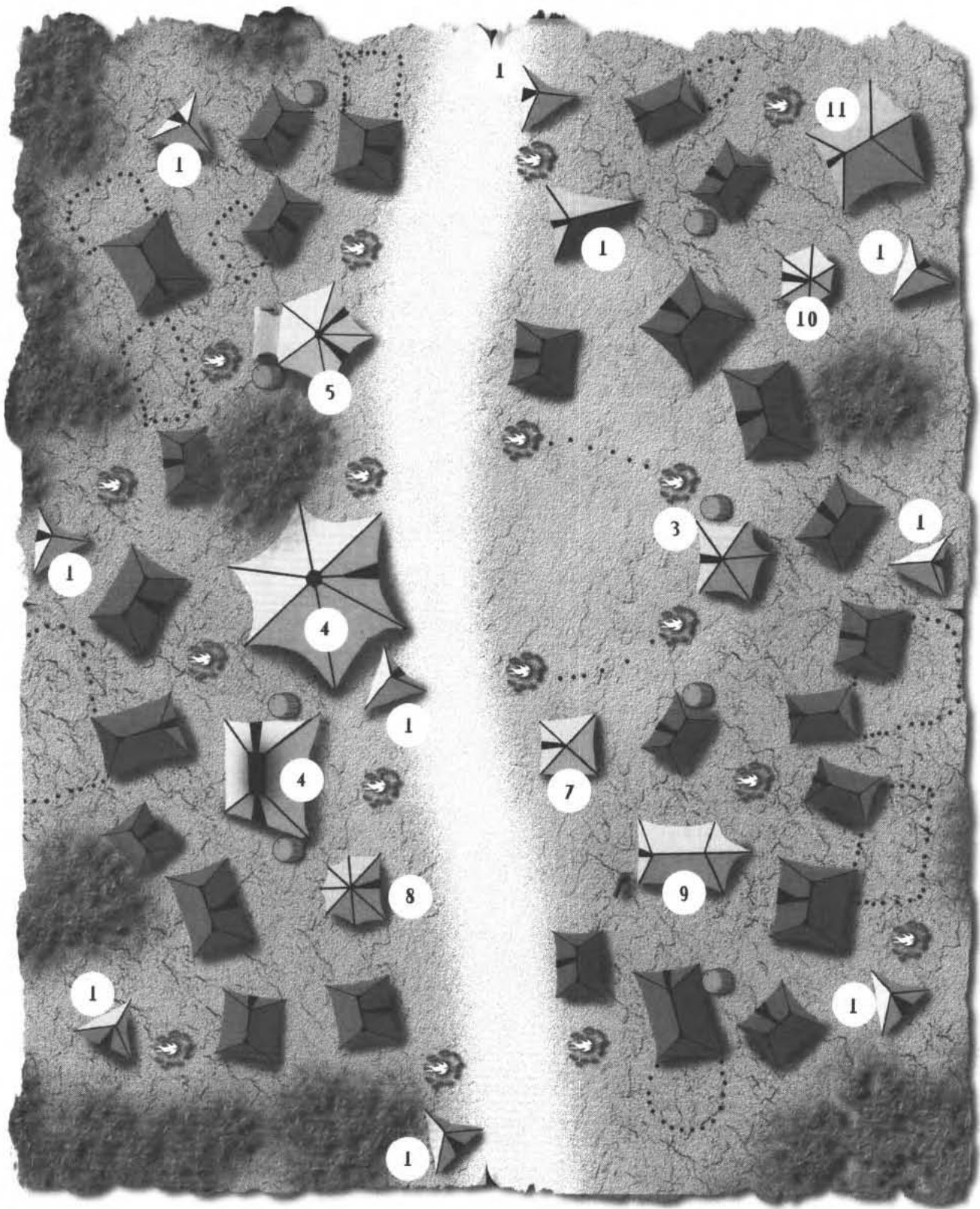
TASTES GOOD ENOUGH TO DIE FOR

Elana the foodseller has nearly run out of ambic, the secret ingredient in her dishes. Unfortunately, the only nearby source of the rare herb lies in territory occupied by a particularly ill-tempered band of hill giants (or bugbears, if the PCs are not strong enough to take on giants). If the PCs show any interest in helping her, she hands them a large sack and offers them 500 gp to fill it full of ambic leaves for her.

THE VILLAGE OF AZUL, I PRESUME?

Just because the Azulites do not want to be found by the taxmen does not mean luck always cooperates with them. Customs agents from either Lothir or Viridia may stumble upon them as they crisscross the ever-shifting border between the two kingdoms. The Azulites refuse to pay any import or export duties, despite the obvious threat of force. The government agents then try to bargain with Olimere: if they can borrow the caravan guards to raid a nearby enemy outpost, they let the Azulites go without paying anything. Olimere sees a way through this impasse, but does not wish to part with his guards, even as a loan. He calls the PCs over and offers them 1,000 gp in cash and another 1,000 gp in goods from any one in the caravan, payable upon their return, if they go in place of his guards.

THE CARAVAN CITY OF AZUL





THE WRONG PATH

Someone (a PC or an NPC of the DMs choosing) while perusing through Orezia Curios shop (room #9) accidentally rubs the head of the statuette of succubus summoning (see New Magic — Appendix A), releasing the creature to wreck havoc on the area.

♣ **Succubus:** CR 7; Medium outsider (chaotic, extraplanar, evil); HD 6d8+6; hp 33; Init +1; Spd 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (average); AC 20, touch 11, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +6; Grp +7; Atk +7 melee (1d6+1, claw); Full Atk +7 melee (1d6+1, 2 claws); SA Energy drain, spell-like abilities, summon demon; SQ Damage reduction 10/cold iron or good, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to electricity and poison, resistance to acid 10, cold 10, and fire 10, spell resistance 18, telepathy 100 ft., tongues; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +7; Str 13, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 26.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +19, Concentration +10, Diplomacy +12, Disguise +17* (+19 acting), Escape Artist +10, Hide +10, Intimidate +19, Knowledge (any one) +12, Listen +19, Move Silently +10, Search +12, Spot +19, Survival +2 (+4 following tracks), Use Rope +1 (+3 with bindings); Dodge, Mobility, Persuasive.

Energy Drain (Su): A succubus drains energy from a mortal it lures into some act of passion, or by simply planting a kiss on the victim. If the target is not willing to be kissed, the succubus must start a grapple, which provokes an attack of opportunity. The succubus's kiss or embrace bestows one negative level. The kiss also has the effect of a suggestion spell, asking the victim to accept another kiss from the succubus. The victim must succeed on a DC 21 Will save to negate the effect of the suggestion. The DC is 21 for the Fortitude save to remove a negative level. These save DCs are Charisma-based.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*charm monster* (DC 22), *detect good*, *detect thoughts* (DC 20), *ethereal jaunt* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only), *polymorph* (humanoid form only, no limit on duration), *suggestion* (DC 21), *greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only). Caster level 12th. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Summon Demon (Sp): Once per day a succubus can attempt to summon 1 vroock with a 30% chance of success. This ability is the equivalent of a 3rd-level spell.

Tongues (Su): A succubus has a permanent tongues ability (as the spell, caster level 12th). Succubi usually use verbal communication with mortals.

Skills: Succubi have a +8 racial bonus on Listen and Spot checks.

*While using her alter self ability, a succubus gains a +10 circumstance bonus on Disguise checks.

Chapter 2:

The Dark Elf City of Hosuth

Levels 1 to 20

by Ree Soesbee

The lizardfolk of Hssith were once a primitive people, foraging and hunting for their daily fare beneath the watchful eye of their patron — the Sun God. They lived in thatched villages huddled so closely together, other more civilized societies would call it a city.

But when the earth shook and the mountains slid into the river, their lives changed forever.

Deep beneath the mountains on the edge of Hssith swamp, thick, muddied water consumed a dark elf city. All the vaunted magic of the people was not enough to halt the cataclysm. The mountain fell and the city flooded.

Bearing little more than their precious libraries, the dark elves rose and swore to unearth their fallen city. Until then, however, the elves would have to make due.

Hssith, now called Hosuth, is a swamp city of lizardfolk enslaved by dark elves. The stagnant cityscape reflects a primitive civilization oppressed by higher intellect — a race of slaves laboring under the iron fist of tyrannical masters. The city is open to traders, merchants of all races, and adventurers who seek to steal the prizes buried in the lost city below the newly-made lake. But beware. You are not the only ones who seek to uncover what has been lost...

DM BACKGROUND

This section is not an adventure by itself, but a civilized base of operations. Instead of a single plot, the PCs can use this place to make acquaintances and contacts, purchase items and equip themselves for other adventures, and rest, relax and study. Toward the end of this section, there are a number of exciting adventure hooks that can befall the PCs while they interact with the town suitable for all levels of play. This is designed to be a location the PCs can visit over and over again, becoming an integral part of the campaign.

Hosuth is a campaign setting designed for characters of all races and classes, provided they are open-minded and at least outwardly tolerant of slavery. The city itself is comprised of several different features: a swamp, mountains, hills, rivers, and lakes, and wilderness.

Despite its primitive appearance, Hosuth's unique climate allows for either straightforward, combat heavy adventures, or it can be a backdrop for complex political games. The dark elf rulers of the city are tolerant toward humans and other humanoids. They must be, or their city would cease to exist from simple lack of trade. The changes the dark elf overlords forced upon the

THE DARK ELF CITY OF HOSUTH

BARDIC LORE

A bard can make a Bardic Knowledge check to discover what he may have heard. A bard learns all the information of the DC his check succeeded by and all that below it (a Bard who rolled a 17 would learn the information under DC 15 and DC 10). Alternately this information can be gained by a Gather Information skill check +5 higher than the DC of a Bardic Lore check to see if the PC has heard any rumors.

- DC 10** The city was once a lizardman settlement overtaken by the dark elves when an earthquake sundered the area.
- DC 15** The city is split into two areas: the decadent dark elf regions and the still primitive slave quarters of the lizardmen. Still, it is a city of opportunity, trade, and deals.
- DC 20** For three generations, the lizardfolk have suffered under oppression, while the long-lived dark elves hardly notice the passing of time.
- DC 25** There is a slow simmering rebellion brewing among the lizardfolk.

once-primitive city are drastic and require supplies of stone, lumber, grain, and other essentials. To this end, the city is open for trade.

The city is split into two areas: the dark elf regions and the as yet primitive slave quarters. When travelers first approach the city, the manicured parks covering the majority of the upper class areas of Hosuth is striking. Tremendous weeping willows, their limbs braided together with vine and covered in thick mosses, shield the stone or oak buildings below from any trace of sunlight. The river flowing through this area is girded with stone walls, constrained by aqueducts and strong dikes, and has bridges crossing the churning waters at every major intersection.

In the slave areas, however, the vegetation grows thick and lush, bursting up in disorganized, swampy groves.

The buildings are thatched huts, long mead-halls, and low walls to protect small gardens. They defy order, scattered on the hillocks rising above the soggy ground. Trodden dirt paths vanishing at the river's edge serve as roads, and the architecture is primitive and temporary.

Small creeks and river tributaries wind through the region. In the dark elf areas, hillocks are shored up; smaller waterways are channeled through open metal cylinders to pass as a crude sewage system. Buildings are connected by stone bridges whose pilings sink deep into the soggy earth. In the lower class areas, the river tributaries form a road-system for the amphibious lizardfolk slaves who swim through the watery thoroughfares with ease.

Dark elf guards patrol all portions of Hosuth, maintaining peace in the city. For three generations, the lizardfolk have suffered under oppression, while the long-lived dark elves hardly notice the passing of time. The slave population, far removed from the same event, is contained and relatively content, making the guards almost superfluous.

Inside this section are the details of the dark elf city of Hosuth. Although the city is primarily lizardfolk, the oppressive dark elves maintain superiority through magic and a tight lock-down of all weaponry. How the PCs come to visit such a place is ultimately up to the DM, but this book should provide many adventures for those willing to delve beneath the murky waters of Hosuth.

HOSUTH

Population: 18,000 (approximately 60% of the population is dark elves, 30% are lizardfolk, and 10% other)

Government: Tyrannical Dictatorship (Hegemony)

Imports: Stone, lumber, fine silks, spices, food

Exports: Grain, fish, perfume, silver ore deposits

Industry: Shipbuilding

Important NPCs: Dark Elves: Overseer Tamn'sharr Verekk (City Overlord), Arachne (Innkeeper, Sorceress and Purveyor of Pleasures), Captain Dechan Xul (Guard Captain), Dali'shar Vemon (High Priestess). Lizardfolk: Ysarr and Gress (Innkeepers), Tssicho (Shaman and Resistance leader)

As the PCs explore the city, note it is not your average run-of-the-mill community. While nothing like the underground cities of the dark elves, where outsiders would more than likely be attacked on sight, Hosuth is a city of opportunity. Mercenaries ply their trade; merchants both beneficial and treacherous haunt the streets and everywhere are dark elves and lizardfolk. Much of the architecture is a strange conglomeration of dark elf ingenuity and lizardfolk slave labor (filling in where instructions were vague with their own 'creativity'). Dark shadows are abundant, untrusting eyes watch from every alley, and it seems everyone has a hidden agenda.



THE DARK ELF CITY OF HOSUTH

If you wish to add a bit of chance to liven up a street walk, roll on the following table:

HOSUTH RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

1d20	Encounter
1	Alchemist with special deals
2	Armor merchant with special deals
3	Assassin looking for work
4	Blink dog pack (1d6)
5	Dark elf children bossing around lizardfolk slaves
6	Dark elf high cleric
7	Dark elf inquisitor asks the PCs 10 difficult background questions
8	Dark elf merchant with exotic goods from the underearth
9	Dark elf patrol
10	Dark elf watch captain
11	Elf ranger (disguised as dark elf) scouting for later attack
12	Leatherworker with special deals
13	Lizardfolk children playing
14	Lizardfolk drawing escape diagrams in mud with sticks
15	Lizardfolk slave working
16	Loremaster studying dark elf culture
17	Mercenary troops looking for work
18	Orc mercenary company looking for work
19	Smuggler selling poisons
20	Unemployed, drunk mercenary band

LOCATIONS

1. The Edge of the City

The swamp accounts for most of the natural habitat around the city of Hosuth. Travelers not taking the main roads into or out of the city find their travel times doubled, tripled during the monsoon season. Many wild creatures roam the swamp, and residents of the city consider it extremely dangerous. Some recount tales of black dragons, swamp serpents, and other terrible beasts.

Watchtowers dot the edge of the city, and the largest of them rise from high hillocks near the main roads leading both east and west out of Hosuth. Built by lizardfolk slaves some 50 years ago, these roads are stable means of travel into and out of the swamp. The earth here is hard-packed and bordered on either side by low stone walls keeping the road from flooding during high-water seasons.

Dark elves stand guard in the watchtowers. They are professional and mildly courteous. They allow travelers into and out of the city after brief questioning, and occasionally harass a high or grey elf traveler. Anyone stating business other than trade is usually taken special note of. Guards found outright arguing with guests who have come to deal in trade meet with severe punishment from the Captain of the Guard.

TROUBLESHOOTING

- Q.** Why didn't the dark elves retreat below the surface to rebuild their city in the underdark as they are accustomed?
- A.** The earthquake and natural disaster of the area long ago sealed off any routes into the underearth, and overland travel without knowing where another entrance was located wasn't their next best choice.
- Q.** What about paladins, freedom-loving rangers and elves? Surely these races and classes won't be tolerant of slavery nor want to trade anything with dark elves except sword blows.
- A.** And with that being the case you can use this setting in unique ways. Perhaps Tssicho, a rebel lizardfolk shaman slipped away from the city and approaches the PCs asking for help in freeing his oppressed people. Perhaps the PCs come across dark elves trade items among merchant goods, and upon hearing the tale of the dark elves decide to bring the fight to the dark elves. This could be an excellent high-level adventure. PCs cannot get help from any local military, as Hosuth is in a hidden valley difficult for troops to get by, and it is causing no trouble to neighboring kingdoms.

The dark elves impose a 10 gp per wagon tariff on goods entering or leaving the city, and the weight limit (500 pounds) on city roads is strictly enforced. Weapons in the city must be peace-bound at all times.

There are six manned watchtowers around Hosuth with no other obstacle to offer defense for the populace. These watchtowers have signal fires to warn of enemy approach. Ten dark elf guards make up the contingent for each watchtower. The seventh tower stands at the approximate center of the city, rising from one of the largest hillocks. It is the Captain's Tower (area #17). From its upper balconies the captain maintains a view of all the other towers and from the lower balconies he can see beneath the thick canopy of the dark elf quarter.

▲ Dark Elf Guard, Ftr 3: CR 3; HD Medium humanoid (elf); HD 3d10; hp 24; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +3; Grp +4; Atk +6 melee (1d6+1/18–20, rapier) or +4 ranged (1d4/19–20, hand crossbow); Full Atk +6 melee (1d6+1/18–20, rapier) or +4 ranged (1d4/19–20, hand crossbow); SA Poison, spell-like abilities; SQ Dark elf traits, darkvision 120 ft., light blindness, spell resistance 14; AL NE; Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +0*; Str 13, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 9, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Hide +3, Jump +7, Listen +5, Search +3, Spot +5; Alertness, Dodge, Point-Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (rapier).

* Dark Elves gain a +2 racial bonus on Will saves against spells and spell-like abilities.

Poison (Ex): An opponent hit by a dark elf's poisoned weapon must succeed on a DC 13 Fortitude save or fall unconscious. After 1 minute, the subject must succeed on another DC 13 Fortitude save or remain unconscious for 2d4

THE DARK ELF CITY OF HOSUTH

hours. Dark elves typically coat arrows and crossbow bolts with this poison, but it can also be applied to a melee weapon. Note that dark elves have no special ability to apply poison without risking being poisoned themselves. Since this poison is not a magical effect, dark elves and other elves are susceptible to it.

Spell-Like Abilities: Dark Elves can use the following spell-like abilities once per day: *dancing lights*, *darkness*, *faerie fire*. Caster level equals the dark elf's class levels.

Light Blindness: Abrupt exposure to bright light (such as sunlight or a daylight spell) blinds dark elves for 1 round. On subsequent rounds, they are dazzled as long as they remain in the affected area.

Possessions: Chain shirt, light shield, masterwork rapier, hand crossbow, 20 bolts, 2 vials of knockout poison, 2d6 gp.

▲ Dark Elf Guard-Sorcerer, Sor 3: CR 1; HD Medium humanoid (elf); HD 3d4+3; hp 12; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +1; Grp +1; Atk +2 melee (1d6+1/18–20, rapier) or +3 ranged (1d4/19–20, hand crossbow); Full Atk +2 melee (1d6+1/18–20, rapier) or +3 ranged (1d4/19–20, hand crossbow); SA Poison, spells, spell-like abilities; SQ Dark Elf traits, darkvision 120 ft., light blindness, spell resistance 12; AL NE; Fort +2, Ref +1, Will –1*; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 9, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +7, Hide +1, Knowledge (spellcraft) +6, Listen +2, Search +4, Spellcraft +7, Spot +3; Dodge, Dodge, Weapon Focus (rapier).

* Dark Elves gain a +2 racial bonus on Will saves against spells and spell-like abilities.

Poison (Ex): An opponent hit by a dark elf's poisoned weapon must succeed on a DC 13 Fortitude save or fall unconscious. After 1 minute, the subject must succeed on another DC 13 Fortitude save or remain unconscious for 2d4 hours. Dark elves typically coat arrows and crossbow bolts with this poison, but it can also be applied to a melee weapon. Note that dark elves have no special ability to apply poison without risking being poisoned themselves. Since this poison is not a magical effect, dark elves and other elves are susceptible to it.

Spell-Like Abilities: Dark Elves can use the following spell-like abilities once per day: *dancing lights*, *darkness*, *faerie fire*. Caster level equals the dark elf's class levels.

Light Blindness: Abrupt exposure to bright light (such as sunlight or a daylight spell) blinds dark elves for 1 round. On subsequent rounds, they are dazzled as long as they remain in the affected area.

Sorcerer Spells Known (5/3; save DC 12 + spell level): 0—*feather fall*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *shocking grasp*, *sleep*; 1st—*mage armor*, *magic missile*, *shocking grasp*.

Possessions: Rapier, hand crossbow, 20 bolts, 3 vials of knockout poison, *potion of invisibility*, *potion of eagle's splendor*, 2d6 gp.

▲ Dark Elf Guard-Wizard, Wiz 3: CR 3; HD Medium humanoid (elf); HD 3d4; hp 9; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 11, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp +1; Atk +2 melee (1d6/18–20, rapier) or +2 ranged (1d4/19–20, hand crossbow); Full Atk +2 melee (1d6/18–20, rapier) or +2 ranged (1d4/19–20, hand crossbow); SA Poison, spells, spell-like abilities; SQ Drow traits, darkvision 120 ft., light blindness, spell resistance 14; AL NE; Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +3*; Str 11, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 9, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +6, Craft (alchemy) +5, Hide +4, Knowledge (arcana) +9, Listen +4, Search +6, Spellcraft +9, Spot +5; Brew Potion, Scribe Scroll[B], Weapon Focus (rapier).

* Dark elves gain a +2 racial bonus on Will saves against spells and spell-like abilities.

Poison (Ex): An opponent hit by a dark elf's poisoned weapon must succeed on a DC 13 Fortitude save or fall unconscious. After 1 minute, the subject must succeed

on another DC 13 Fortitude save or remain unconscious for 2d4 hours. A typical drow carries 1d4–1 doses of dark elf knockout poison. Dark elves typically coat arrows and crossbow bolts with this poison, but it can also be applied to a melee weapon. Note that drow have no special ability to apply poison without risking being poisoned themselves. Since this poison is not a magical effect, dark elves and other elves are susceptible to it.

Spell-Like Abilities: Dark Elves can use the following spell-like abilities once per day: *dancing lights*, *darkness*, *faerie fire*. Caster level equals the drow's class levels.

Light Blindness: Abrupt exposure to bright light (such as sunlight or a daylight spell) blinds dark elves for 1 round. On subsequent rounds, they are dazzled as long as they remain in the affected area.

Wizard Spells Prepared (4/3/2; save DC 12 + spell level): 0—*acid splash*, *detect magic*, *mage hand*, *ray of frost*; 1st—*mage armor*, *magic missile*, *shocking grasp*; 2nd—*acid arrow*, *spider climb*.

Spellbook: 0—*acid splash*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound*, *mage hand*, *message*, *ray of frost*; 1st—*feather fall*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *shocking grasp*, *sleep*; 2nd—*acid arrow*, *spider climb*, *web*.

Possessions: Ring of protection +1, rapier, hand crossbow, 20 bolts, *potion of cat's grace*, 3 vials of knockout poison, 3d4 gp.

2. Northern Lake

The northern lake is a source of fresh water and fish for the residents of Hosuth. The water also provides an ideal climate for the gestation of lizardfolk eggs, and several hatcheries cluster on the western edge of the lake. Both dark elven troops and lizardfolk watch over them. Under no circumstances is anyone other than dark elves or lizardfolk allowed to come near this area.

▲ Dark Elf Guard, Ftr 1: CR 1; HD Medium humanoid (elf); HD 1d10; hp 11; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk +3 melee (1d6+1/18–20, rapier) or +2 ranged (1d4/19–20, hand crossbow); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6+1/18–20, rapier) or +2 ranged (1d4/19–20, hand crossbow); SA Poison, spell-like abilities; SQ Dark elf traits, darkvision 120 ft., light blindness, spell resistance 12; AL NE; Fort +2, Ref +1, Will –1*; Str 13, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 9, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Hide +0, Listen +2, Search +4, Spot +3; Toughness, Weapon Focus (rapier).

* Dark Elves gain a +2 racial bonus on Will saves against spells and spell-like abilities.

Poison (Ex): An opponent hit by a dark elf's poisoned weapon must succeed on a DC 13 Fortitude save or fall unconscious. After 1 minute, the subject must succeed on another DC 13 Fortitude save or remain unconscious for 2d4 hours. Dark elves typically coat arrows and crossbow bolts with this poison, but it can also be applied to a melee weapon. Note that dark elves have no special ability to apply poison without risking being poisoned themselves. Since this poison is not a magical effect, dark elves and other elves are susceptible to it.

Spell-Like Abilities: Dark elves can use the following spell-like abilities once per day: *dancing lights*, *darkness*, *faerie fire*. Caster level equals the dark elf's class levels.

Light Blindness: Abrupt exposure to bright light (such as sunlight or a daylight spell) blinds dark elves for 1 round. On subsequent rounds, they are dazzled as long as they remain in the affected area.

Possessions: Chain shirt, light shield, masterwork rapier, hand crossbow, 20 bolts, 2 vials of knockout poison, 2d6 gp.

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▲ Lizardfolk Troops: CR 1; Medium humanoid (reptilian); HD 2d8+2, hp 11; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 or 17, touch 10, flat-footed 15 or 17; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d4+1, claw) or +2 melee (1d8+1/x3, battleaxe) or +1 ranged (1d6+1, javelin); Full Atk +2 melee (1d4+1, 2 claws) and +0 melee (1d4, bite), or +2 melee (1d8+1/x3, battleaxe) and +0 melee (1d4, bite), or +1 ranged (1d6+1, javelin); SA —; SQ Hold breath; AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skill and Feats: Balance +4, Jump +5, Swim +2; Multiattack.

Hold Breath: A lizardfolk can hold its breath for a number of rounds equal to four times its Constitution score before it risks drowning.

Skill: Because of their tails, lizardfolk have a +4 racial bonus on Jump, Swim, and Balance checks. The skill modifiers given in the statistics block include a –2 armor check penalty (–4 on Swim checks) for carrying a heavy shield.

Possessions: Heavy shield, battleaxe, 3 javelins.

3. The Hatcheries

Lizardfolk are amphibious egg layers. As part of their mating ceremonies, the male builds a spire of driftwood, stone, or other solid material. The male then places this spire in the shallow areas of a natural water source.

After mating, the female and male place their eggs (as many as five in a single laying) in specially carved hollows within the spire, open to fresh sunlight but protected by the twisting sculpture. At the time of birth, a young lizard fights its way out of the egg, down the spire to the water, and lives the first few months beneath the waves of their birthplace. Lizardfolk hatcheries are recessed areas of the lake or river where tall spinnerets of stone or wood jut out above the waterline. Hatcheries have several spires in use, guarded constantly by attentive parents or tribe members. Occasionally, the dark elves harvest a few eggs, taking them to their libraries for their own use.

The dark elves know of all the hatcheries in Hosuth, except one (area #16). Protected by part of the landslide that drowned the old dark elf city, the hatchery hides within small caves opening up along the edge of the Southern Lake. The slave resistance jealously guards this hatchery, and the lizardfolk there fight, kill, and die to protect the secret of its existence.

4. Lizardfolk Commons

The lizardfolk populate the lower class areas of Hosuth, as well as émigrés from other cities, did not have the resources to invest in better housing. In general, most of the lower class areas are lizardfolk; the rest falls equally between humans, halflings, and other demi-human races.

The vegetation in this region of the city grows sporadically, untamed and wild. Trees rise randomly on the riverbanks, and small groves of marshy grasses hide many houses and small gathering places. Numerous huts spread along the top of the hillocks, and the roads in the area are simple dirt paths leading from a hut to the nearest river or main tributary. The huts are primitive, built of thatched grasses and packed mud. The more civilized buildings

may be wood or hewn lumber, but even these buildings rarely have window shutters. All are open to the air, built to incorporate breezes blowing through the huts during the cooler summer seasons. This means they are never locked; most of them have no doors. Anyone can easily slip into or out of a hut in the Lizardfolk Commons beneath the notice of a passing guard.

▲ Lizardfolk: CR 1; Medium humanoid (reptilian); HD 2d8+2; hp 11; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 or 17, touch 10, flat-footed 15 or 17; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d4+1, claw) or +2 melee (1d6+1, club); Full Atk +2 melee (1d4+1, 2 claws) and +0 melee (1d4, bite), or +2 melee (1d6+1, club) and +0 melee (1d4, bite); SA —; SQ Hold breath; AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skill and Feats: Balance +4, Jump +5, Swim +2; Multiattack. **Hold Breath:** A lizardfolk can hold its breath for a number of rounds equal to four times its Constitution score before it risks drowning.

Skill: Because of their tails, lizardfolk have a +4 racial bonus on Jump, Swim, and Balance checks. The skill modifiers given in the statistics block include a –2 armor check penalty (–4 on Swim checks) for carrying a heavy shield.

Possessions: Heavy shield, club.

5. Lizardfolk Gathering Halls

Three large halls remain from the days when the lizardfolk controlled Hosuth (Hssith). These buildings are popular sites for trade and at night become taverns for drinking, feasting, and brawling. The dark elves allow the lizardfolk freedom of movement through their portions of the city, although guards quickly break up any serious fighting. Lizardfolk cannot carry weapons, and must fight in hand-to-hand contests rather than their traditional alarmed tests.

In current times, these brawls have become more of a sport, and the dark elves allow them to occur. Often, the lizardfolk announce brawls ahead of time, creating an informal gladiatorial competition. Anyone within the city may join the fights (though the dark elves rarely do), and bets are made as much as a week in advance of the actual fights. To encourage certain fights, lizardfolk may place a prize on the head of more advanced or renowned victors. A percentage of the prize money goes to the victor, with the remainder going to the house and dark elves.

6. The Resistance

Unknown to the dark elves, several small resistance cells of lizardfolk hide in the two lakes around Hosuth. The largest of these cells holds 40–50 lizardfolk young born in the secret hatchery in the Southern Lake or otherwise smuggled out of the city. The lizardfolk train these children to fight, to survive in the wilderness, and in the ways of their old religion. An old shaman named Tssicho teaches the children, and if they have exceptional skill, also in potion making, spellcasting, and other outlawed practices.

The future of the resistance lies in these children.

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▲ Tssicho the Shaman, Lizardfolk Adp 6: CR 6; Medium humanoid (reptilian); HD 2d8+6d6+11; hp 38 hp; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 or 17, touch 10, flat-footed 15 or 17; Base Atk +4; Grp +5; Atk +5 melee (1d4+1, claw) or +5 melee (1d6+1, club) or +4 ranged (1d6+1, javelin); Full Atk +5 melee (1d4+1, 2 claws) and +3 melee (1d4, bite), or +5 melee (1d6+1, club) and +3 melee (1d4, bite), or +3 ranged (1d6+1, javelin); SA —; SQ Hold breath, summon familiar; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +5; Str 13, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 14, Cha 11.

Skill and Feats: Craft (alchemy) +5, Balance +4, Heal +4, Jump +5, Knowledge (arcana) +5, Spellcraft +4, Swim +2; Multiattack.

Hold Breath: A lizardfolk can hold its breath for a number of rounds equal to four times its Constitution score before it risks drowning.

Skill: Because of their tails, lizardfolk have a +4 racial bonus on Jump, Swim, and Balance checks. The skill modifiers given in the statistics block include a –2 armor check penalty (–4 on Swim checks) for carrying a heavy shield.

Summon Familiar (Su): Tssicho has a toad familiar named Grommet.

▲ Grommet, Toad Familiar: CR 1/10; Diminutive Animal; HD 1/4 d8; hp 1 Init +1 Spd 5 ft.; AC 17 touch 15, flat-footed 16, Base Atk +0; Grp –17; Atk —; Full Atk —; SA —; SQ Alertness, amphibious, deliver touch spells, empathic link, improved evasion, low-light vision, share spells; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 1, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 1, Wis 14, Cha 4.

Skills and Feats: Hide +21, Listen +4, Spot +4; Alertness Alertness (Ex): While a familiar is within arm's reach, the master gains the Alertness feat.

Improved Evasion (Ex): When subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, a familiar takes no damage if it makes a successful saving throw and half damage even if the saving throw fails.

Share Spells: At the master's option, he may have any spell (but not any spell-like ability) he casts on himself also affect his familiar. The familiar must be within 5 ft. at the time of casting to receive the benefit. If the spell or effect has a duration other than instantaneous, it stops affecting the familiar if it moves farther than 5 ft. away and will not affect the familiar again even if it returns to the master before the duration expires. Additionally, the master may cast a spell with a target of "You" on his familiar (as a touch range spell) instead of on himself. A master and his familiar can share spells even if the spells normally do not affect creatures of the familiar's type (magical beast).

Empathic Link (Su): The master has an empathic link with his familiar out to a distance of up to 1 mile. The master cannot see through the familiar's eyes, but they can communicate empathically. Because of the limited nature of the link, only general emotional content can be communicated. Because of this empathic link, the master has the same connection to an item or place that his familiar does.

Deliver Touch Spells (Su): A familiar can deliver touch spells for the master. If the master and the familiar are in contact at the time the master casts a touch spell, he can designate his familiar as the "toucher." The familiar can then deliver the touch spell just as the master could. As usual, if the master casts another spell before the touch is delivered, the touch spell dissipates.

Skills: A toad's coloration gives it a +4 racial bonus on Hide checks.

Adept Spells Prepared (3/3/2; save DC 12 + spell level): 0—cure minor wounds, detect magic, guidance; 1st—command, cure light wounds, sleep; 2nd—strength, invisibility.

Possessions: Heavy shield, masterwork club, 3 javelins.

7. Merchants Area

Hosuth welcomes all merchants and traders to the city. The dark elf overlords believe steady supplies of trade make Hosuth profitable and healthy.

To this end, the dark elves do everything they can to keep the Merchants' Bazaars active, safe, and fully stocked with locally produced goods and services, plus any number of exotic items you, as DM, wish to introduce to your campaign.

8. Merchants' Plaza

At the edge of the northern lake, the largest portion of merchants and traders congregate on a large plateau formed of three massive hillocks. Seven tremendous stone bridges connect and support the shops standing on either side. Criers walk the area with local news and regional warnings. As such, adventurers find work here easily, most often guarding caravans or eliminating some local threat within the surrounding marshland. Anyone caught stealing had best learn a trade without a right hand. Public execution follows if there is a second offense.

9. The Coiled Serpent

A particularly notable lower class inn stands to the west of the Plaza, overlooking the river hatchery. The Coiled Serpent was once a lizardfolk gathering hall, but has been transformed. The windows are large, and the doors are never closed (someone is awake within the tavern at all times). It makes for a cool resting place even in the heat of the harsh summer.

However, the very openness encouraging an easy resting-place makes the Coiled Serpent open to thievery. Burglars slip in and out of the inn's wide windows, lifting treasures from the patrons as they sleep. Adventurers taking rooms within the Coiled Serpent had best be wary. The inn takes no responsibility for lost items. The only comfort patrons have rests in the city's heavy-handed treatment of thieves and few dare to risk the wrath of the dark elf overlords for a few coppers or a jeweled bauble.

The owner of the Coiled Serpent, Ysarr, is free, having purchased his freedom by betraying revolutionaries and shamans of his own kind to the dark elf overlords. He and his mate Gress live in the Coiled Serpent. The lizardfolk consider Ysarr a traitor, and he rarely visits the Lizardfolk Commons. The dark elves, on the other hand, hold Ysarr and Gress in the highest esteem. The guards keep close watch on the inn because of their obvious loyalty.

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10. Dark Quarter

The commonly termed Dark Quarter of Hosuth is home to the largest population of dark elves. Although a few dark elves reside over their shops in the Merchants Area of the city, most have built homes here. The architecture is vastly different from the rest of the city, owing to ninety years of elven occupation. The vegetation grows close together, forming a huge canopy of plant-life over streets and houses. In a few places sunlight still breeches the vegetative ceiling, but the area is constantly dark and oppressively hot.

11-13. Capitol Buildings

The largest buildings in the quarter are those housing the dark elf libraries and laboratories. The Library (area #11) was once the largest temple of the lizardfolk's sun god, but the dark elves executed all the shamans and rebuilt to suit their needs. It was the only stone building in the city, making it, by dark elven standards, the most stable and least primitive. The building has since expanded to more than three times its initial size. It covers four hillocks and curves in magnificent arches over the rushing river tributaries. This building is constantly supervised, and manned every minute of the day and night by a vigilant staff of librarians.

The second of the large buildings in the Dark Quarter is the Grand Capitol (area #12). This building serves many of the city's functions: it is a meeting hall for the dark elf overlords, a laboratory for alchemical and arcane experiments, and a dungeon to keep subjects for these experiments. This building also serves as living quarters for a number of government scribes and the city reeve, and houses the treasury of Hosuth.

The last of the large buildings in the quarter is known as the Temple of Ichor (area #13). None may enter unless they are a dark elf. Rumors run through the city the dark elf god is a deity of secrets, a champion of chaos and venom, a large spider-woman, or a demon actually living within the temple in the form of a priest. Younger, uninitiated dark elves do not know the true nature of their deity, and those who have been inducted into its mysteries do not speak of it for fear of losing their tongues in the night. Some evenings, ghastly screams and dark chants can be heard coming from the purple-lit windows of this dreadful place. These are nights when lizardfolk huddle fearfully in their homes.

The dark elf belief in the spider goddess has waned since the destruction of their home. While it's not close to being shattered, the overall outlook on the religion of the dark elves has changed drastically from their elder days. Dali'shar spends most of her time pouring over old religious tomes for the most horrific, interesting, and debauched practices of her church which in the past have captured her people's attention and interest. It is this new, stronger religion that befalls Hosuth in this age.

▲ **Dali'shar Vernon, Dark Elf High Priestess, Clr 8:** CR 9; HD Medium humanoid (elf); HD 9d8+9; hp 58 hp; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +6; Grp +7; Atk +9 melee (1d6+1+1d6 electricity†/18–20, rapier) or +7 ranged (1d4/19–20, hand crossbow); Full Atk +9/+4 melee (1d6+1+1d6 electricity†/18–20, rapier) or +7/+2 ranged (1d4/19–20, hand crossbow); SA Poison, spell-like abilities; SQ Dark elf traits, darkvision 120 ft., light blindness, spell rebuke undead, spell resistance 20. AL NE; Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +9*; Str 13, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 17, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Hide +3, Knowledge (religion) +11, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Listen +2, Search +4, Spot +3 Spellcraft +11; Weapon Focus (rapier).

* Dark elves gain a +2 racial bonus on Will saves against spells and spell-like abilities.

Poison (Ex): An opponent hit by a dark elf's poisoned weapon must succeed on a DC 13 Fortitude save or fall unconscious. After 1 minute, the subject must succeed on another DC 13 Fortitude save or remain unconscious for 2d4 hours. Dark elves typically coat arrows and crossbow bolts with this poison, but it can also be applied to a melee weapon. Note that dark elves have no special ability to apply poison without risking being poisoned themselves. Since this poison is not a magical effect, dark elves and other elves are susceptible to it.

Spell-Like Abilities: Dark elves can use the following spell-like abilities once per day: dancing lights, darkness, faerie fire. Caster level equals the dark elf's class levels.

Light Blindness: Abrupt exposure to bright light (such as sunlight or a daylight spell) blinds dark elves for 1 round. On subsequent rounds, they are dazzled as long as they remain in the affected area.

Turn or Rebuke Undead (Su): An evil cleric rebukes or commands undead creatures. A cleric may attempt to turn undead 5 times per day. This cleric gets a +2 bonus on turning checks against undead because she has 5 or more ranks in Knowledge (religion).

Cleric Spells Prepared (6/5+1/4+1/4+1/2+1; save DC 13 + spell level): 0—create water, detect magic, detect poison, purify food and drink, read magic, virtue; 1st—cause fear, command, cure light wounds, cause light wounds, doom, protection from good*; 2nd—death knell, desecrate*, hold person, resist energy, sound burst; 3rd—animate dead*, bestow curse, contagion, deeper darkness, searing light; 4th—death ward*, divine power, poison.

*Domain spell. *Domains:* Death (may use a death touch once per day), Evil (cast evil spells at +1 caster level).

†On a successful critical hit the weapon causes an additional 1d10 points of electrical damage.

Possessions: Masterwork chain shirt, +2 ring of protection, +1 shocking burst rapier (named "arachnus"), masterwork hand crossbow, 3 vials of knockout poison, potion of eagle's splendor, potion of owl's wisdom, potion of cure serious wounds.

MUTATION CHAMBERS

Several of the chambers within the Grand Capitol are best left untouched; these belong to the dark elf sorcerers. The wizards who designed and equipped the laboratories specialize in mutative and transformation spellcraft.

They push to discover a means to mutate lizardfolk eggs into more useful and civilized creatures. Primarily, their goal is to create a controllable and sturdy creature to explore the ruined areas beneath the Southern Lake and retrieve the items, magical creations, and spells left below when the cataclysm destroyed the original dark elf city.

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This project requires hundreds of lizardfolk eggs, brought here from the hatcheries for examination and mutation. Some of the progeny lived, and have returned to the slave society within the city. Others proved too unstable, and were put down. The elves keep the marginally useful creatures in locked cells beneath the Grand Capitol for further research, breeding, and eventual destruction.

Of course, word of the experiments has leaked to the lizardfolk populace of the city. Thus, the resistance has created a secret spire in the Southern Lake (area #16, in hatcheries).

▲ Sleestik, Lizardfolk Bbn 3: CR 6; Medium humanoid (reptilian); HD 2d8+3d12 +5; hp 30; Init +0; Spd 40 ft.; AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +4; Grp +5; Atk +5 melee (1d10+1/x2, great club) or; Full Atk +5 melee (1d10+1/x2, great club); SA Rage; SQ Fast movement, illiteracy, trap sense; AL CN; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Balance +6, Climb +6, Jump +7, Listen +6, Swim +5; Cleave, Multiattack, Power Attack. Fast Movement (Ex): A barbarian's land speed is faster than the norm for his race by +10 feet.

Illiteracy: Barbarians are the only characters who do not automatically know how to read and write.

Rage (Ex): A barbarian can fly into a rage a certain number of times per day. In a rage, a barbarian temporarily gains a +4 bonus to Strength, a +4 bonus to Constitution, and a +2 morale bonus on Will saves, but he takes a -2 penalty to Armor Class. The increase in Constitution increases the barbarian's hit points by 2 points per level, but these hit points go away at the end of the rage when his Constitution score drops back to normal.

Trap Sense (Ex): Starting at 3rd level, a barbarian gains a +1 bonus on Reflex saves made to avoid traps and a +1 dodge bonus to AC against attacks made by traps.

Possessions: Greatclub.

Roll on the chart below to determine the random mutation inspired by the mutate egg spell (see Appendix A).

WATERWAYS

Stonework cordons separate the river tributaries and marshy lowlands of the original city of Hssith from the Dark Quarter. Unlike the Lower Common areas (a haphazard collection of huts on hillocks), the Dark Quarter boasts stone waterways, sewer systems, dikes to hold back floodwaters, and high arched bridges facilitate travel. Two major ways exist to traverse the Dark Quarter. The first method is to take a river raft through the thicker tributaries. The second method is on foot, though the twisting roads and irregularly placed bridges turn a short walk into a long hike over bridges and down cobblestone paths. Experimental high roads, somewhat like the tree bridges of the wood elves (though the dark elves scowl at such comparisons) is under development. Being incomplete, it is not a recommended method for travelers.

The dark elves maintain a series of lightly armed checkpoints along the river canals and on various bridges in the Dark Quarter. These checkpoints are primarily formalities, but they ensure no weapons enter the Dark Quarter unbound.

▲ Dark Elf Soldier, Ftr 1: CR 1; HD Medium humanoid (elf); HD 1d10; hp 11 hp; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk +3 melee (1d6+1/18-20, rapier) or +2 ranged (1d4/19-20, hand crossbow); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6+1/18-20, rapier) or +2 ranged (1d4/19-20, hand crossbow); SA Poison, spell-like abilities; SQ Dark Elf traits, darkvision 120 ft., light blindness, spell resistance 12; AL NE; Fort +2, Ref +1, Will -1*; Str 13, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 9, Cha 10.

1d20 Roll Random Mutation

- 1 Blood is acidic critical hit scored means attacker takes 1d6 points of damage (DC 12 Reflex save for half)
- 2 Bone structure decrease, subtract -4 to Constitution and recalculate hit points
- 3 Bone structure increase, add +4 to Constitution and recalculate hit points
- 4 Cast bull's strength once per day as a 3rd level sorcerer
- 5 Cast daze once per day as a 3rd level sorcerer
- 6 Cast mage hand once per day as a 3rd level sorcerer
- 7 Cast true strike once per day as a 3rd level sorcerer
- 8 Extra tail, +2 to Dexterity and Balance checks
- 9 Fins on back and legs, +4 to Swim checks
- 10 Gains Spell Resistance 12
- 11 Gills, creature can hold breath for 10 times longer than normal
- 12 Intelligence is decreased by 4 (with skill adjustments)
- 13 Intelligence is increased by 4 (with skill adjustments)
- 14 Internal organs shifted, chance to score a critical threat against creature decreased by 1
- 15 Poisonous Bite, +0, Initial and secondary damage 1d3 dex, save DC 12
- 16 Size alteration, decrease size to small
- 17 Size alteration, increase size to large
- 18 Two extra arms, second greatclub attack at +1
- 19 Two extra legs, movement increased by +10 feet
- 20 Wings, gains fly movement of 40 feet

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Skills and Feats: Hide +0, Listen +2, Search +4, Spot +3; Toughness, Weapon Focus (rapier).

* Dark Elves gain a +2 racial bonus on Will saves against spells and spell-like abilities.

Poison (Ex): An opponent hit by a dark elf's poisoned weapon must succeed on a DC 13 Fortitude save or fall unconscious. After 1 minute, the subject must succeed on another DC 13 Fortitude save or remain unconscious for 2d4 hours. Dark Elves typically coat arrows and crossbow bolts with this poison, but it can also be applied to a melee weapon. Note that dark elves have no special ability to apply poison without risking being poisoned themselves. Since this poison is not a magical effect, dark elves and other elves are susceptible to it.

Spell-Like Abilities: Dark elves can use the following spell-like abilities once per day: dancing lights, darkness, faerie fire. Caster level equals the dark elf's class levels.

Light Blindness: Abrupt exposure to bright light (such as sunlight or a daylight spell) blinds dark elves for 1 round. On subsequent rounds, they are dazzled as long as they remain in the affected area.

Possessions: Chain shirt, light shield, masterwork rapier, hand crossbow, 20 bolts, 2 vials of knockout poison, 2d6 gp.

14. Southern Lake

The southern lake near the city is relatively new, created during the earthquake ninety years ago. At that time, a tremendous landslide shattered the mountainsides near the river, allowing the water to pour down into the open catacombs beneath the mountain. The damage from flooding waters destroyed the dark elf city beneath the surface. The survivors of the cataclysm rose to the surface and captured Hssith, enslaving its people and creating a new civilization — Hosuth.

The lake is extraordinarily deep. Below the surface lies a series of catacombs and the dark elf ruins. They are extraordinarily dangerous; the rock and mud floors are unstable and could easily collapse. Many treasures are trapped in the depths of the southern lake, defying even the powerful dark elf mages. Occasionally adventurers have tried but few, if any, return.

ARACHNE'S CAVERN

Arachne's Cavern is an upper class inn catering to unusual desires, exotic tastes, and jaded pleasures. It provides expensive and secure chambers for travelers to the city, where they may indulge their fancies. The inn has several rooms, as well as sixteen complete suites. The inn's kitchens are known for their extraordinary dark elf cuisine. The Cavern also houses a stable of slaves chosen for their beauty or artistic abilities. In order to keep the slaves peaceful and pliable, the proprietress drugs them with her special fungus potions. The potions remove any desire to escape or resist a client's requests.

Arachne is the name given by the proprietress of the inn, though it is clearly a pseudonym. She is a dark elf sorceress who retired to the sunken dark elf city below the Southern Lake. When the elves seized the city of Hosuth, she loaned a great deal of her knowledge to the initial takeover, and her inn was one of the first all-stone buildings built within the Dark Quarter.

▲ **Arachne, Dark Elf Sor 7:** CR 7; Medium humanoid; HD 7d4+14; hp 36; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 20, touch 13, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +3; Grp +5; Atk +6 melee (1d6+2, quarterstaff); Full Atk +6 melee (1d6+2, quarterstaff); SA —; SQ —; AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +8; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 17.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +7, Diplomacy +7, Gather Information +5, Knowledge (Arcana) +10, Knowledge (Local) +9, Listen +3, Profession (Innkeeper) +6, Sense Motive +3, Spellcraft +11; Combat Casting, Dodge, Iron Will.

Sorcerer Spells Known: (7/6/4/3; save DC 13 + spell level): 0—detect magic, mage hand, mending, message, open/close, ray of frost, read magic; 1st—expeditious retreat, jump, magic missile, magic weapon, reduce person, true strike; 2nd—alter self, bull's strength, fox's cunning, levitate; 3rd—blink, haste, slow.

Possessions: Robe of protection +2, amulet of natural armor +5, wand of magic missiles (5th level caster, 19 charges), masterwork quarterstaff, sorcerer's robes, 77 gp.



15. Hidden Temple

In the wettest, nastiest area of the marsh north of the city, the lizardfolk have erected a new temple to their sun god. This temple contains many ostracized shamans; if they are discovered, they and their allies face execution. Dark elf law prohibits the worship of the lizardfolk sun god.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

ARTIFACTS AND RELICS

Someone must retrieve a powerful magic item in the southern lake. Either its emanations cause the ground to loosen, increasing the possibility of another earthquake, or the power contained in the item stops another earthquake from happening. The dark elves provide underwater transportation (one of the mutated amphibians they have created) and several potions of water breathing if necessary.

BURN!

Someone lit fires in the city. It is weeks before the monsoon season and during this dry time of year the city is especially susceptible, particularly in the Dark Quarter where vegetation is everywhere. Are these fires arson? Poor construction? Or magic gone awry?

CAPTIVE BEAUTY

The PCs witness a beautiful high elf girl led to Arachne's Cavern for use as a slave. Drugged and unable to resist, she also carries the mark of a prominent high elven house.

If the high elves discover she is here, they declare war on the city. On the other hand, they might reward a group of adventurers returning their cherished daughter. Either way, if the new slave leaves Arachne's Cavern, the proprietress is going to be very angry.

DISTRUST

This adventure hook takes advantage of the population's innate distrust and hostility toward each other. With tempers running high, what happens when an outside force threatens the city? Can the PCs unite the people of Hosuth or drive a wedge into its fractured schism?

FLOODED!

A dike breaks in the upper river and the resultant tide floods both the Lower Commons and Dark Quarter. This happens during the monsoon season, when the city is particularly vulnerable. What happens if the party discovers signs of sabotage? Is the resistance responsible? And if not the resistance, then who?

FORBIDDEN EXPERIMENTS

An experiment conducted on the lizardfolk eggs goes horribly awry. The creature is powerful and emerges in a bloodthirsty frenzy. The mutated egg beast escapes, terrorizing the city. It hides in the deepest portions of the waterways during the day and rises at night to feed. It never strikes the same place twice. Both elves and lizardfolk ask the PCs stop it, but how?

FROM BELOW

Some dark magic creature, long forgotten and thought destroyed, rises from the southern lake. This creature may be a survivor of a rival dark elf house, or a powerful lich. It is intelligent and determined to destroy the dark elves living in the city of Hosuth. While this may seem like a good thing to the lizardfolk, the city relies on the dark elf leadership. Without government, the entire city crumbles.

NORTHERN LAKE

Someone has poisoned the southern lake, contaminating the city's entire water supply. This is a contact drug, so merely swimming in the waterways affects the lizardfolk with plague-like symptoms. This plague does not affect many of the dark elves (who use gondolas to pass through the waterways), but the lizardfolk of the Lower Commons are in sad shape. The dark elves care little for the plight of their slaves, but the city depends on the labor of the lizardfolk. Without the lower classes to perform menial labor, how do the dark elves function? What happens if the lizardfolk suspect the dark elves of drugging the water or it's another experiment, this time on the populace as a whole?

POLITICS

The overseer is dying, so the elves must choose an heir. Political turmoil results from a replacement whose support is not unanimous. Will the new overseer of the city treat the lizardfolk well and give them their freedom? Will she be harsher and subject the lizardfolk to further executions and public torture? Who are the candidates, and what secrets are they are trying to protect? Do the lizardfolk support one over another and do they have the currency to hire adventurers who can ensure her victory? Does a powerful guild support one over another, spending money to secure her favor?

THE DARK ELF CITY OF HOSUTH

PREDATORS

Monsters native to the marshes attack the city. Although powerful in their own right, the monsters fled the swamp in fear of larger, more dangerous monsters. The city falls into a state of martial law and the elves conscript everyone into the defending militia. Now armed with spears, the lizardfolk present a viable, internal threat. All the while the attacks continue. Hired as mercenaries and advisors, the PCs must choose between constantly watching the city or defeating the greater horror living in the swamp.

SHAMAN'S FLIGHT

Discovered as a shaman (an illegal practice) by the city guard, a lizardfolk named Fthss flees through the city. He takes temporary refuge in the PCs' quarters, implicating them in his escape. Whether the PCs meant to help him or not, they are now involved, and face danger from the enthusiastic City Guard. Fthss pleads to be taken out of the city, promising them magic or favors. He knows where the hidden temple is and only asks them to get him to the swamp.

VISITING DIGNITARIES

Ambassadors from elsewhere, a foreign city, perhaps human or a tolerant nation of Elves, arrive to negotiate permanent trade relations with the overlords of Hosuth. If successful, it could mark the next era of improvements to the primitive city around the Dark Quarter. The lizardfolk who understand the delicacy of the trade negotiations might try to sabotage them. The dignitaries might express a willingness to deal, but not with a city using slave labor.

NPCS

YSARR AND GRESS (LIZARDFOLK)

Ysarr and his wife Gress are the owners and proprietors of the Coiled Serpent, in the Merchants Quarter of the city. Three years ago, they turned in a cabal of lizardfolk shamans meeting in the waterways below the Coiled Serpent. This act of loyalty won Ysarr and Gress their freedom and the Dark Elves executed six illegal practitioners.

It was a huge blow to the lizardfolk population of Hosuth. The others shun Ysarr and Gress. They are outcasts who consort with dark elves, maintaining their inn based on the good will of their former masters. The Coiled Serpent is now the most profitable middle-class inn within the city, but their business comes from tourists and travelers, not the patronage of the local population. Ysarr is stubborn, unwilling to admit this mistake.

He won his freedom, and it does not matter to him he earned it with the blood of his kin. His wife's eggs are safe from mutation, and his wife and children live without fear.

He ignores the sins of his past; making do as best he can without his people. White scars cover his scaled back — punishments from the lash of a whip when he was a child. He never wants his own children to know such humiliation. Ysarr is a fair merchant, gathering appropriate sums for the use of his inn, and paying his taxes diligently.

He does not like the laughing, fawning dark elves who remind him of his "loyal" act, but he smiles and grits his fanged teeth. With their money, he educates his children and plans, one day, to send them far away from here.

Gress, on the other hand, laments her part in the executions. She and her husband were told the shaman faced exile rather than death. She believes the dark elves lied to her, and regrets turning in the shaman for their "justice." Gress uses her freedom to help the resistance movement, unbeknownst to her husband. She hides badly treated slaves in unused rooms of the inn, and finds travelers willing to smuggle them out of the city.

She divides small portions of the inn's supplies and smuggles them to the hidden temple. If the dark elves find out, it means her death. But Gress cannot stand the guilt of her past actions, and she is willing to take the risk... so long as Ysarr never finds out.

Ysarr and Gress have four children and a newly laid clutch of three eggs at the hatchery in the river near their inn. Their oldest son, Tsirr, shows signs of becoming a shaman — signs Ysarr beats out of the child, or tries to ignore. Gress helps Tsirr understand the powerful forces shaping his destiny, and helps him hide his growing talent from his father. Still, she knows she must soon take Tsirr to the hidden temple. His talent neither disappears nor remains quiet, and she must save him from Ysarr before he destroys his son's greatest gift.

▲ Ysarr and Gress, Lizardfolk Exp 10: CR 10; Medium humanoid (reptilian); HD 2d8+10d6+12 (52 hp each); Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17 or 19, touch 10, flat-footed 17 or 19; Base Atk +7; Grp +9; Atk +9 melee (1d4+1, claw) or +10 melee (1d6+1, club) or +7 ranged (1d6+1, javelin); Full Atk +10/+5 melee (1d4+1, 2 claws) and +0 melee (1d4, bite), or +10/+5 melee (1d6+1, club) and +0 melee (1d4, bite), or +7/+2 ranged (1d6+1, javelin); SA —; SQ Hold breath; AL Ysarr NE, Gress N; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +6; Str 14, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 9, Cha 12.

Skill and Feats: Appraise +9, Balance +5, Bluff +10, Craft (brewing) +9, Diplomacy +10, Gather Information +10, Jump +11, Profession (barkeep) +9, Sense Motive +8, Swim +11; Multiattack Weapon

Hold Breath: A lizardfolk can hold its breath for a number of rounds equal to four times its Constitution score before it risks drowning.

Skill: Because of their tails, lizardfolk have a +4 racial bonus on Jump, Swim, and Balance checks. The skill modifiers given in the statistics block include a –2 armor check penalty (–4 on Swim checks) for carrying a heavy shield.

Possessions: Heavy shield, +2 dark elf robe of protection, masterwork heavy morningstar, 10 javelins, 2 potions of eagle's splendor.

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▲ **Ysarr and Gress' Children Lizardfolk:** CR 1; Medium humanoid (reptilian); HD 2d8+2; hp11; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 or 17, touch 10, flat-footed 15 or 17; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d4+1, claw) or +2 melee (1d8+1/×3, battleaxe) or +1 ranged (1d6+1, shortspear); Full Atk +2 melee (1d4+1, 2 claws) and +0 melee (1d4, bite), or +2 melee (1d8+1/×3, battleaxe) and +0 melee (1d4, bite), or +1 ranged (1d6+1, shortspear); SA —; SQ Hold breath; AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skill and Feats: Balance +4, Jump +5, Swim +2; Multiattack.

Hold Breath: A lizardfolk can hold its breath for a number of rounds equal to four times its Constitution score before it risks drowning.

Skill: Because of their tails, lizardfolk have a +4 racial bonus on Jump, Swim, and Balance checks. The skill modifiers given in the statistics block include a –2 armor check penalty (–4 on Swim checks) for carrying a heavy shield.

Possessions: Heavy shield, battleaxe, 3 spears.

OVERSEER TAMN'SHARR VEREKK

Tamn'sharr is one of the most powerful magic users in the city, and the only Master Mage who survived the cataclysm that destroyed the original dark elf homeland deep beneath Hosuth's mountain range. He remembers the cool stone arches, the vast caverns and subtle enchantments, which had lasted since the time of his ancient ancestors. He remembers the beauty in the depths of the earth, and he longs for her bounty. But now, like the others who survived, he was trapped here, in Hell.

Well, if this Hell was going to be his home, then he would conquer it with an iron lash, and never forgive it for not being the homeland he was born to rule.

His hatred of the surface world twists Tamn'sharr's entire outlook. He hates the heat, the sun and light, and he hates the native inhabitants — especially the unfortunate lizardfolk who live in Hosuth. He has no pity for their pain and suffering under dark elf rule, only contempt for their primitive society.

The wizard Tamn'sharr is responsible for the organization of the city of Hosuth. Immediately upon capturing and enslaving the native people, he instituted the government of seven overseer lords still ruling the city today. He stands as the most powerful of the overseers, both in political pull and in magical prowess, and has no intention of giving up the post for any reason. Other overseers are the voices of reason, guiding the city toward exterior trade and opening Hosuth's gates to foreign merchants. Tamn'sharr is an isolationist, a spiteful wizard with no respect for any life other than his own. If he genuinely believed Hosuth could exist without foreign aid and incoming trade, he would have cut off any and all contact with the outside world. Others have convinced him otherwise, and so, he allows the contact grudgingly.

He works early into the morning, and rarely rises until well past the heat of noon. His personal chambers are made cool with magical spells to better resemble his old towers within the fallen dark elf city. He spends his days between the council chambers of government and the lower laboratories. Working unceasingly to create a creature which is both pliable and sturdy, Tamn'sharr wants to create a breed of lizardfolk to go down to the catacombs beneath the southern lake. There, they begin long-term work to clear the city and reroute the river, to reclaim the dark elf homeland. He covets anything that can aid him in this goal.

Tamn'sharr has often hired mercenaries of all races to go down into the sunken city and map the extent of the damage. This provides him with current accounts of the area (to augment his own scrying), and also eliminates a good deal of the mercenaries festering within the city of Hosuth — and without Tamn'sharr paying them anything at all. He simply provides information about the city (not about the truly rich parts, or anywhere magic items might actually be located), and tempts the adventurers with tales of gold and lost magic. Then he watches them go, scribes on them for the next few days to update his map and learn of their discoveries. When they die, he moves on and continues his own explorations.

Tamn'sharr is never without at least four guards nearby, he knows he is despised by many in the city — both elves and lizardmen alike — and he takes no chances.

▲ **Tamn'sharr, Dark Elf Wiz 8:** CR 8; HD Medium humanoid (elf); HD 9d4; hp 26; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +4; Grp +5; Atk +7 melee (1d6+1/18–20, rapier) or +7 ranged (1d4/19–20, hand crossbow); Full Atk +7 melee (1d6+1/18–20, rapier) or +7 ranged (1d4/19–20, hand crossbow); SA Poison, spell-like abilities; SQ Dark Elf traits, darkvision 120 ft., light blindness, spell resistance 19, summon familiar. AL NE; Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +7*; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 18, Wis 12, Cha 12.

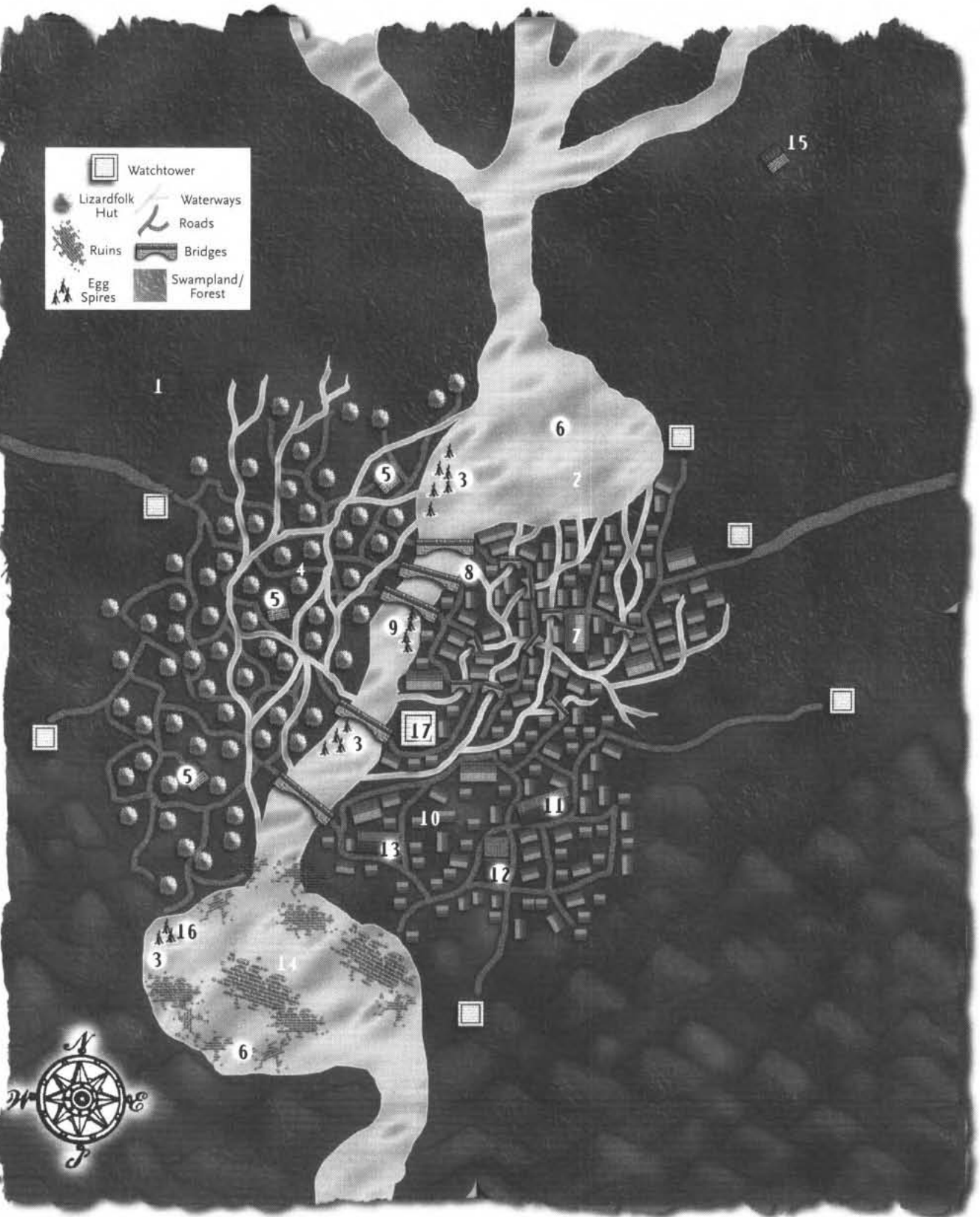
Skills and Feats: Concentration +11, Craft +11, Decipher Script +10, Hide +8, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Listen +2, Profession +10, Search +4, Spellcraft +11, Spot +3; Brew Potion[®], Combat Casting, Dodge, Lightning Reflexes, Scribe Scroll[®], Weapon Focus (rapier).

* Dark elves gain a +2 racial bonus on Will saves against spells and spell-like abilities.

Poison (Ex): An opponent hit by a dark elf's poisoned weapon must succeed on a DC 13 Fortitude save or fall unconscious. After 1 minute, the subject must succeed on another DC 13 Fortitude save or remain unconscious for 2d4 hours. Dark elves typically coat arrows and crossbow bolts with this poison, but it can also be applied to a melee weapon. Note that dark elves have no special ability to apply poison without risking being poisoned themselves. Since this poison is not a magical effect, Dark elves and other elves are susceptible to it.

Spell-Like Abilities: Dark elves can use the following spell-like abilities once per day: dancing lights, darkness, faerie fire. Caster level equals the dark elf's class levels.

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Light Blindness: Abrupt exposure to bright light (such as sunlight or a daylight spell) blinds Dark Elves for 1 round. On subsequent rounds, they are dazzled as long as they remain in the affected area.

Summon Familiar: Tamn'sharr has never summoned a familiar.

Weapon Proficiency: A Dark Elf is automatically proficient with the hand crossbow, the rapier, and the short sword.

Wizard Spells Prepared (4/5/5/4/3/1; save DC 14 + spell level): 0—acid splash, arcane mark, flare, mage hand; 1st—color spray, expeditious retreat, hypnotism, mage armor, magic missile; 2nd—blur, false life, ghoul touch, levitate; 2nd—deep slumber, haste, hold person, protection from energy, see invisibility, 4th—black tentacles, fire shield, phantasmal killer, 5th—feeblemind.

Spellbook: 0—acid splash, arcane mark, flare, mage hand, open/close, read magic, resistance; 1st—color spray, expeditious retreat, hypnotism, identify, jump, mage armor, magic missile, ray of enfeeblement; 2nd—blur, false life, flaming sphere, ghoul touch, invisibility, levitate, see invisibility; 3rd—deep slumber, haste, hold person, lightning bolt, protection from energy, suggestion, 4th—black tentacles, fire shield, phantasmal killer, scrying, shout, 5th—feeblemind, summon monster V.

Possessions: Bracers of armor +2, ring of protection +2, wand of magic missile (23 charges, CL 5th), masterwork rapier, masterwork hand crossbow, 20 bolts, 3 vials of Dark Elf knockout poison, 90gp.

SLESTIK

A slestik is the name given to a dangerous variant of lizardfolk created by dark elf wizards. Not all slestik are exactly the same but they all have certain abilities in common. DMs should feel free to modify the template slestik for any individual encounter. Slestik are extremely dangerous opponents — only the finest, heartiest beasts manage the escape through the city, and out into the wild.

Because the dark elves have occasionally failed to properly tend to these beasts, several slestik managed to escape. A small community of the creatures now resides in the slime and muck at the far edge of the northern lake. These creatures are breeding on their own, and their genetic mutations have proven largely stable. Still, an occasional new mutation springs up, which may or may not continue in the next generation.

Slestik stand just under 8 ft. tall, but always walk hunched over in a nearly fetal position. They are covered in greenish scales like a dragon, but their heads and jaws are more serpentine. They have long claws extending from webbed fingers and toes, and a finned tail suited for extremely fast swimming.

Chapter 3:

The Ogre City of Drahk'Suhl

Level 1 to 20

by Travis Heermann

In my experience, ogres are stupid, lazy creatures possessing little more than basic intelligence. They are but brutal killers, scavengers, and raiders, with a dim-witted hatred of anything resembling civilization. However, I once overheard two of them speaking among themselves of a legendary city, a place where ogres and their kin could meet and trade without fear of harassment from civilized races. They named this place Drahk'Suhl — a city hidden beneath the ancient shoulders of a dormant volcano, at a gateway to the Lower Earth. At that moment I vowed I would find the legendary Drahk'Suhl, or die trying.

I found Drahk'Suhl infamous among giant races, a place where traders swap weapons and booty, where food and drink are plenty, where underlings do one's every bidding, and where gladiator pits slake the most bloodthirsty appetite.

One might say the opportunity for adventure in such a place is great. But this is true only for those with a brave heart, a keen wit, and cunning wiles... a person such as myself.

DM BACKGROUND

This section is not an adventure by itself, but a civilized base of operations. Instead of a single plot, the PCs can use this place to make acquaintances and contacts, purchase items and equip themselves for other adventures, and rest, relax and study. Toward the end of this section, there are a number of exciting adventure hooks that can befall the PCs while they interact with the town suitable for all levels of play. This is designed to be a location the PCs can visit repeatedly, becoming an integral part of the campaign.

The city of Drahk'Suhl is a mini-campaign or city setting designed for characters of all races, levels, and classes. Secreted within the bowels of a dormant volcano, Drahk'Suhl's roads are honeycombed with miles of lava tunnels, many of which connect to the deeper, darker underworld beneath the surface. These endless tunnels connect with underground lairs and forgotten dungeons. Drahk'Suhl works as a starting point for many adventures, and a resupply point for forays into the Lower Earth.

The italicized text above and throughout the adventure is taken from the travelogue of Jofram the Wanderer and DMs may read it aloud to the PCs or weave into the game narrative, as desired.

THE OGRE CITY OF DRAHK'SUHL

BARDIC LORE

A bard can make a Bardic Knowledge check to discover what he may have heard. A bard learns all the information of the DC his check succeeded by and all that below it (a Bard who rolled a 17 would learn the information under DC 15 and DC 10). Alternately this information can be gained by a Gather Information skill check +5 higher than the DC of a Bardic Lore check to see if the PC has heard any rumors.

- DC 10** No other ogre settlement has grown so large or so successful as Drahk'Suhl
- DC 15** Jin'Zil, an ambitious ogre mage, is the overseer of the city.
- DC 20** Order is maintained by the Black Nails — elite ogre fighters, who enforce the order and laws.
- DC 25** The sole underlying purpose of Drahk'Suhl is the accumulation of wealth in Jin'Zil's coffers.

The city of Drahk'Suhl remains unique among the ogre race. No other ogre settlement has grown so large or so successful, thanks almost completely to the leadership and foresight of Jin'Zil, an old and cunning Ogre Mage. It boasts a thriving economy based on the trade of goods (legitimate and otherwise) between the surface world and the races of the underground.

The city is divided into three areas: the worker class inhabits the lower levels; the middle levels contain all commerce and nearly all the non-worker denizens and guests; the upper level is where Jin'Zil and his cohorts live, enjoying the luxury purchased with the labor of those below.

Nearly every major race calls Drahk'Suhl home, but the majority dwelling underground are kobolds, orcs, hobgoblins, and the like. They come to trade with the surface world and each other. As a result, the traders here are generally rougher than your run-of-the-mill city-bred merchants. The middle level swarms with those seeking wealth, the bodyguards they bring with them, and the promise of adventure.

The sole underlying purpose of Drahk'Suhl is the accumulation of wealth in Jin'Zil's coffers. He created the city for this purpose alone. Even normal ogres act in a spirit of cooperation here. Those individuals who do not or cannot work together find themselves exiled.

Oddly, the locals expect order. Some attribute this to the presence of the Black Nails — elite ogre fighters, who enforce the order and laws of the Mahk-Turan. The Nails imposing presence deters those with outright criminal intent. Any violent disputes are resolved in the arena; fighting openly elsewhere garners the Black Nails' involvement.

DRAHK'SUHL

Population: 1,000 workers of many different races, 150 ogres, 100 misc. other individuals

Government: Despotic Mageocracy

Imports: Food, spirits, trade goods, black market goods

Exports: Precious metals and ores, exotic items

Important NPCs: Jin'Zil, Ogre Maguhl, and Chaal' Mahk, Captain of the Black Nails

ECONOMY

The denizens of Drahk'Suhl use small rectangular bars as currency instead of coins. Silver, gold, and copper bars are exchanged. Many bars are quite worn after years of use, but the merchants and the Mahk-Turan still accept them at face value. Anyone caught with forgeries or shaving a bar, faces severe reprimand and punishment from the Black Nails.

For ease of nomenclature, gp, sp, and cp are used universally in this adventure.

LAWS

The Mahk-Turan are a body of ogre magi who govern Drahk'Suhl. The Mahk-Turan pass all laws and the Black Nails, their enforcers, exact penalties and punishments according to the council's will. Though the list of crimes and offenses catches many unaware, those with power and influence find loopholes or use bribes to circumvent the rules. No amount of money can save a spellcaster, however. Only the priests of Zohl'nahk and the ogre magi council itself may cast spells. Feel free to elaborate for your campaign the small details or crimes and punishments, but for serious crimes the penalty is the Pit (area #3), an ancient lava tube two miles deep, into which all city refuse, living and otherwise, is thrown.

Similarly, the Mahk-Turan forbids the killing or maiming of a worker. Anyone who does so must immediately buy the worker's contract (200 gp). If they cannot pay, the Black Nails confiscate their belongings before throwing the killer into the Pit. Maimed workers encounter a similar fate.

THE OGRE CITY OF DRAHK'SUHL

HISTORY

A hundred years ago, the only things who called the caverns of Drahk'Suhl home were ogres living in squalor. When Jin'Zil, a powerful ogre mage, discovered it, he recognized its potential — highly defensible and at the midpoint between the surface world and the Lower Earth. Jin'Zil seized control of the ogres and used them to send slaving forays into the territory of the Svirkneblin. The ogres captured many of the deep gnomes and forced them to enlarge the existing cavern. The others grew enraged by the raids and launched a failed attack on the ogre settlement. For over a decade, the deep gnomes fought a bloody war against the ogres, but neither side gained the upper hand. Jin'Zil, realizing the war was bad for business, offered the deep gnomes a truce. He would release the slaves if the deep gnomes' attacks ceased. Thanks largely to the magical charm of the ogre mages, the gnomes agreed, and the truce has lasted to the present day.

Ogres are ultimately lazy creatures; so another source of menial labor was necessary. Jin'Zil offered gold to any who brought him criminals or prisoners of other races. However, to avoid angering the tribes or clans of the prisoners he purchased, he did not keep them as slaves. He kept them only for a short period of indentured servitude. The prisoners were free to own property, and live, as they wished. However, they had to obey the ogres and could not leave until they had paid the price of their contract. So now a large underclass of indentured workers, consisting of many races both good and evil, performs the day-to-day functions of Drahk'Suhl.

SOCIETY

The city's day-to-day functions, such as distribution of water, mining, refuse removal, etc., fall to the workers who number about one thousand. Races of all alignments living in uneasy proximity to each other have created a society as unique as Drahk'Suhl itself. The ratio of good to evil workers is about half-and-half, varying in either direction with startling regularity.

Since the city of Drahk'Suhl is underground, its denizens do not recognize nighttime or daytime. The city as a whole never sleeps. The servants work in twelve-hour shifts, with half of the workers either working or sleeping.

The workers live on the lower level of the great cavern in a warren of hollowed-out caves and crude shantytowns. Leaders and sub-leaders take charge among each group, individuals of particularly stalwart or brutal character who have earned or taken their comrades' respect, who resolve disputes within their groups, and who lead the occasional reprisals against the workers of opposite alignment when necessary.

To mark the workers' social status, smiths fit each with a steel collar. Each worker receives approximately one silver piece per day (but this amount can fluctuate).

They may pay off their contract at any time, so they scrimp and hoard their precious coin, eating the poorest of food, dreaming of the day they finally accumulate the 200 gp required to buy their contract and leave Drahk'Suhl. This equates to over five years at one silver piece per day — without food or clothes. Every mouthful of food they buy pushes back the day of their release. The larger, stronger, and meaner workers often prey upon their neighbors, seeking to steal whatever meager savings they can find. This is all according to Jin'Zil's design. As long as the worker class preoccupies their time with infighting, they cannot focus their attention on the ogre overlords.

The city has no internal food supply. If the imported food ran out, the denizens of the city would quickly resort to eating meat on the foot and the softer races like humans and gnomes would be the first to go.

The middle level of the city is where nearly all commerce takes place. Everyone who is not a worker lives on this level, except for the highest-ranking leaders of the city, who live on the upper level.

SHOW ME THE WAY

"Finding the city was difficult. Most merchants who supply the city with food like their special deal kept secret from competitors. Many ogres do not know its location, believing it only to be a legend. Those who do know are unwilling to speak to outsiders. I happened to cross paths with a half-orc merchant who had been there, and for a hefty sum he provided me with a map. I searched for weeks around the skirts of a sleeping volcano, among dozens of ancient tunnels, to find one the map described. I recognized the entrance by the pile of boulders, carefully arranged to conceal the opening which for all intents and purposes looks like natural landslide. Heartened after weeks of disappointment, I ventured into the darkness below."

The difficulty of actually finding Drahk'Suhl is left to the DM's discretion, with any number of encounters devised in the search for the entrance to the caverns or once the lava tunnels are found.

"The maze of lava tunnels would have been a nightmare to any not reared in the depths. But, after hours of searching, I spotted an inscription chiseled into the wall near an intersection, written in giant tongue, pointing to Drahk'Suhl. Several more hours and inscriptions later, I met a human trader with a train of pack mules, laden with goods, making his way to the surface. His bodyguards regarded my small size with amusement as I passed."

"When I grew weary and sat down to rest, I heard the distant echoes of a familiar din, a murmuring chorus of voices."

THE OGRE CITY OF DRAHK'SUHL

"With fresh strength, I hurried toward the sounds, and as they grew louder, a light drove back the darkness. I rounded a corner and froze in my tracks. A burst of light and noise struck me mute.

"The first thing I saw was the mammoth cavern, with three tiers reaching into the magic-lit vaults above, each teeming with activity. The second thing I saw was the guardpost, with the two largest, nastiest looking ogres I had ever seen. They were nearly three times my height and encased in armor and leaning on tremendous greataxes. Before I realized it, my habits of self-preservation had pressed me against the rough wall of the tunnel when I saw the trio of hard-bitten orcs passing between the guards. They passed another human trader and his bodyguards with little more than glances of contempt. At that moment, I knew Drahk'Suhl was different."

The main entrance to the city is on the west end of the first level. The PC's can find any entrance the DM wishes, but two Black Nails and two gougers (see Appendix B) guard each one.

GUARDPOSTS

Every Guardpost maintains two Black Nails and two gougers. The Black Nails respond immediately to any disturbance or infraction of the laws. The gougers' training forces them to remain at their posts. They instantly attack anyone wearing a Worker's Collar (see below). Each gouger wears a thick iron band around its neck, which allows Jin'Zil to Dominate them completely (see Appendix A). Because of the power of the rod of control, Jin'Zil is always in telepathic contact with every collared gouger in Drahk'Suhl. He occasionally speaks through the gougers, leading many to believe the creatures are more intelligent than they really are.

"I noticed another large inscription carved into the wall behind one of the guards. Written in Common, Draconian, Dwarven, Giant, Orcish, and Goblin was this warning:

'Death in the Pit to any who break the laws of Drahk'Suhl.'

'There shall be no fighting. Disputes are resolved in the arena.'

'There shall be no unapproved use of magic.'

'Workers shall not be harmed.'

'All business must be carried out in bars.'

"The gigantic guards hardly gave a second glance as I passed. Then a boulder beside the path growled and shifted with the sound like grinding stone. I jumped back, and the guards loosed a loud guffaw. I watched in terrified fascination as the large boulder rose up on four legs, revealing its huge claws and hindquarters bristling with coarse black hair. What I thought had been the rather pointed end of the boulder opened up into a ghastly yawn, revealing rows of dagger-like teeth. Its stone-gray tongue lolled out, and fresh spittle began to drip from its jaws.

"I knew it saw me as clearly as I saw it, because its blank, rocky face followed my movements with perfect precision, but I could discern no eyes. As I backed slowly away, I heard movement behind me, and spun to face another of these terrible creatures easing from its hollow in the naked stone. It took a step toward me, and I spun and dashed away, prompting a fresh roar of laughter from the two guards."

CITY LOCATIONS

I. Main Cavern

"The immense cavern glowed from magical light, up to about a hundred feet above, where I could see catwalks for the uppermost level. The ceiling of the great cavern disappeared in the darkness; how high I could not say. At the entrance, two stone ramps led up to the second level, tiered about forty feet above the floor of the cavern. I searched the cavern for any obvious means of reaching the uppermost level, but found none. Clusters of crudely built shanties spotted the sprawling floor of the cavern, with a distinct divide separating each half of the cavern, like a wide thoroughfare. Hundreds, perhaps thousands of individuals of every race bustled about, all hard at work. The air was dense with the scent of smoke, refuse, and close-packed bodies. At the far end of the cavern, nearly three hundred yards away, I could see a shimmering silvery ribbon falling from the blackness above. A waterfall! Falling into a large, crystal-clear pool, where it appeared the city drew its water."

The workers on the lower level are too concerned with their own business to bother themselves with outsiders. Most all of the workers have a lean and hungry look, with hints of desperation in their eyes. They are free to roam the lower and middle levels at will, but the gougers at each guardpost immediately attack anyone wearing a steel collar coming too near.

The workers of good alignment have gathered in the caves and shanties on the north side of the main cavern. Their leader is a grisly old dwarf named Tharus. The workers come to him to help them resolve disputes among themselves. These workers try to have as little as possible to do with the ogres or the evil workers. While they hate and distrust the workers "across the road" there is no outright conflict, because the penalty for hurting another worker, any worker, is harsh indeed. Most of the workers of good alignment are vigilant in protection of one another's savings. Any attempt at thievery earns at the very least a severe beating.

The workers of evil alignment live on the south side of the cavern. Their current leader is a battle-hardened bugbear named Bokk. Only the injunction against harming other workers has kept him from wiping out the "weak ones", stealing their silver, and buying his freedom.

THE OGRE CITY OF DRAHK'SUHL

The large pool at the eastern end of the cavern is crystal clear, about twenty ft. deep, and fed by a waterfall from darkness above, itself fed by some underground river. Since this is the city's only water source, bathing and washing in the pool are forbidden and signs are posted to this effect. Excess water runs away to unknown depths under the rock face on the eastern edge of the pool. Rumor has it the Ogre Magi brought the river here through months of intense magic, but this is unconfirmed.

2. Workers' Bazaar

The tents and stands line this area, where vendors and merchants who deal with the workers ply their trades. Weapons and magic are not available here, only food and goods. Everything here is of poor quality. There is a 25% chance any mundane piece of equipment or food the PCs search for can be found here. The prices are standard, but as mentioned are of sub-standard quality. Food is generally stale or foul, and goods are unreliable.

3. The Pit

The air in this chamber is oppressively hot because of the natural lava tube fifty ft. across. Two miles below is the hot molten glow of a subterranean magma lake, into which the city's refuse and criminals are thrown. Anyone looking down can see a pinprick orange glow at the bottom of the tube. The tube reaches straight upward all the way to the surface, a mile or more, but sunlight does not pass due to the slight curvature of the passage. Anyone standing too close to the lava flow for too long passes out from the gas and heat. This pass is a useful tool for further adventures in any fantasy campaign.

4. The Giant's Head Inn and the Arena

"Quite possibly the roughest inn I have ever encountered, the Giant's Head was nevertheless the place where I spent most of my time. Outside the entrance is a large placard, covered with scrawled challenges. Some cruel joker had covered a separate board with the scrawled names of those branded as cowards, those who had fled the city after legitimately challenged. Easily the most popular place in the city, especially among the ogres, the arena housed fighters of every school and race during my stay, and many of them died at the hands of their enemies during ritual combat.

"The ogre-sized tables and benches dominate the southern half of the tavern, and worn benches surround the twenty-foot-deep pit of the arena. During the fights, spectators of a dozen races drink and bet with reckless abandon.

"Sheets of canvas divide the northern portion of the chamber into dozens of small rooms, where most visitors to the city stay. Because of the ease with which a determined and skilled thief could operate here, I kept a close eye on my belongings during my stay, but I saw no evidence of any such occurrences."

An one-eyed ogre named Thok'Russ (Rog1/Ftr 1) runs this establishment with a small group of employees who he cows into perfect obedience with a subtle mix of making them feel pity for him and random acts of extreme violence.

The arena has nightly contests of strength and brutality. The contests are well matched to ensure long-lasting battles and great bloodshed...except those involving local disputes or criminal punishment naturally. Frequently, however, if seriously outmatched, a local fighting in the pit with a rival at the Black Nail's request still can petition for a champion to fight for them.

Gambling on the outcome of the fights is a given. Different bet masters hold different scales for those with more or less coin. The odds vary greatly between the well-matched bouts and those where one side is heavily favored.

5. Ogre Dens

These caverns house the majority of the city's ogre population, nearly one hundred individuals of every age and gender. These dens are filthy, smelly, and totally inhospitable to any but another ogre. Why the PCs would want to wander through such a wretched hive is unknown, but if you want to spice it up roll on the following chart.

ENCOUNTER TABLE

1d20	Encounter
1-10	Ogre who wishes to be left alone.
11	Black Nail guardsmen drunk and passed out.
12	Dark elf scout from a nearby cavern...
13	Dwarf worker from escape tunnel looking for tools.
14	Ogre bard trying a new tune.
15	Ogre child who is lost.
16	Ogre female giving birth.
17	Ogre mage trading gold for material components.
18	Ogre smuggler moving forbidden objects.
19	Ogres gambling looking for others to join.
20	Ogres with daggers wanting target practice.

6. Temple of Zohl'Nahk

Carved into the rock wall above the entrance to this chamber is the symbol of a gigantic clawed fist, the symbol of Zohl'Nahk, a lawful evil deity worshipped by some of the giant races. Many ogres and other adventurers come here for healing or spiritual guidance, such as it may be. Clerics who follow Zohl'Nahk wear black and grey as their colors with prominent, spiked shoulder plates. They generally have access to the Evil, Law, Luck and Strength domains.

7. Moneychanger

The dark elf moneychanger, named Balezith (Rog 5/ Sor 3), changes any money to gold and silver Bars, each approximately equal in value to standard gold and silver pieces, but shaped like rectangular bars and stamped with the name "Drahk'Suhl" written in Giant. Balezith charges a 15% fee to convert currency, half of which he gives as a kickback directly to Jin'Zil. If dealing with someone he immediately dislikes (like elves perhaps), he increases the fee to 25%. Belezith has two dark elf guards for his personal safety and an ogre bruiser to escort unruly customers out.

8. Black Nail Barracks

Here the Black Nails live and train, with 2–12 of them here at any time. A large open training area stands out, circled by racks of huge weapons. Dhoffu forges and maintains the Black Nails' weapons. His forge and sleeping skins are in the southwest corner of the chamber, but he keeps the area ventilated so as not to disturb his bunkmates.

Nearly any type of simple or martial melee weapon can be found here in large size. This is not a trading post, however and so they are not for sale. None of the items are of masterwork quality.

9. Meeting Hall

City gatherings of all types take place here. Along the east wall, a spiral staircase leads to the ogre-sized pulpit twenty ft. above the floor, and then up into the domed ceiling. This is the only way to the Upper Level.

The Middle Level has a total of four ramps leading to the Lower Level, two near the main entrance, and two in the middle, used mostly by workers. The inhabitants of the Middle Level do not venture down unless absolutely necessary, sending their worker servants instead. Three rope catwalks cross the vast open space of the cavern, and each is ten ft. wide. Only the Black Nails use these bridges for standing watch and overseeing the workers below.

10. New Construction

Workers are still hollowing out these caverns. Gnomes and Dwarves are the predominant race of workers, with Svirfneblin and Deep Dwarf overseers here as well. Depending on the quality of the rock, the workers either carry it off for use in new buildings, or throw it into the Pit.

11. Hidden Tunnel

This area is identical to New Construction (area #10), except some desperate dwarves are digging an escape tunnel. The entrance to the tunnel is well hidden behind a pile of rubble. A Spot check (DC 25) reveals its presence.

12. Armor and Weapons Bazaar

Dozens of smiths and merchants have tents and stands here. The majority of weapons are crude, ogre-sized weapons, but adept shoppers can find weapons and armor for medium-sized and small creatures. Many items are strange and exotic. The maximum value is 1,500 gp. With some luck (10% chance) one may even find a masterwork quality design here.

This is an excellent place for DMs to introduce new materials, weapons or armor from other d20 sources like AEG's *Mercenaries* book into the campaign. Prices are standard in all cases.

13. Food Market

The air here is humid and heavy with smells of cooking and livestock. Most non-workers come here to buy food (which is of much better quality than the worker's market). At the south end of the chamber are the livestock pens, where sheep, swine, and other, less palatable species are kept. Vendors of all races sell grain, bread, fruit, vegetables, cavern fungus, soups and stews, cheeses, and meat both raw and cooked.

14. Trade Goods and Exotic Items

Dozens of merchants from every race hock their goods here, selling practically anything that is not food or a weapon. Clothing, trade goods, equipment, and a few exotic magic items (maximum value 800 gp) are available. Masterwork items are available in moderation.

15. Jin'Zil's Den

Jin'zil ordered this large cavern specially hollowed out. The entrance is a double iron door over twelve feet tall.

The interior is richly decorated, and Jin'Zil is extravagant and has accumulated much wealth. As richly furnished as the abode of the most successful upper-world merchant, Jin'Zil's den is practically overflowing with expensive rugs and finely crafted furniture, bolts of exquisite silks, beautifully dyed linens and cleverly crafted curios, exotic items from all over the world, both above and below. Due to the success of his efforts in Drahk'Suhl, his personal treasure is ten times the standard treasure for an ogre mage. If his life is seriously threatened, he grabs a sack-full of his most valuable gems, and flees through the secret escape tunnel in the northwest corner.

16. Chaa!Mahk's Den

The Captain of the Black Nails has amassed a significant fortune of his own. His personal treasure is five times the standard treasure for an ogre. His cavern is very much like Jin'Zil's den, but it is decorated in more typical ogre fashion — furs, skins, weapons, and refuse. Chaa!Mahk keeps ten ogre females as concubines.

17. Ogre Mage's Den

These areas are similar to Jin'Zil's den, but nowhere nearly as lavish. Within them are all manner of crude magical talismans and tomes written in all languages, many of which teach nothing to the reader.

18. Observation Catwalk

Two catwalks reach out to a large wooden circular platform suspended a hundred feet above the cavern floor, supported by the catwalks and ropes embedded in the rock faces. There is a 50% chance Jin'Zil, Chaal'Mahk or one of the other ogre magi is here, surveying the domain.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Keep in mind the strict prohibition against open fighting and the unsanctioned use of magic, under penalty of death. Magic users must be careful not to be caught. The law against fighting within the city proper also makes many of these combat-driven adventure hooks trickier. The arena is the only place in the city where fighting is allowed. The Black Nails are vigilant, but on the other hand, they cannot be everywhere.

BANDIT ATTACK

Bandits of an unknown race set ambushes on the way to the city. One of Drahk'Suhl's wealthiest merchants recently lost a significant shipment of food and trade goods on its way in, and offers a substantial reward for anyone who can return his trade goods. The bandits are troglodytes taking advantage of the vulnerability of goods traveling to the city. If this interception of the food supply continues, bigger problems can arise.

BLOOD FEUD

A feud is building between the good workers and evil workers, one which even the Black Nails are hard-pressed to stop once bloodshed begins. The continued disappearances of so many good-aligned workers have angered them to the point of action. Tharus, their dwarven leader, believes the evil workers are responsible for the disappearances, but he does not know the reason and hesitates to speculate.

CHALLENGED!

A drunken ogre believes one of the PCs to have wronged him in the past, and loudly accuses the PC of a heinous but imaginary act. This could be either a case of mistaken identity or an ogre who bears a grudge against the PCs.

In any case, this ogre challenges one of the PCs to a fight in the arena. This idea could be tailored to the PCs in whatever devious manner the DM desires.

THE GREAT ESCAPE

A group of dwarven miners, desperate for their freedom, have secretly dug an escape tunnel in the Hidden Tunnel (area #11). However, work has halted recently, as something in the burrow attacked a group of miners, leaving no survivors. The escape tunnel is dwarf-sized, and winds into the solid rock for about 120-ft. before ending abruptly. There is a six-inch fissure in the rock wall that is home to an ochre jelly. Before the dwarves' tunneling can continue, someone must remove it.

MARAUDERS' HIDEAWAY

A group of marauding ogres uses the city as a base of operations for attacks in the surface world. Here they rest and sell their stolen goods at leisure. Perhaps the ogres ambushed the PCs or someone they know. The leader might have a bounty on his head in the surface world.

SOLD INTO SERVITUDE

Someone the PCs know fell to slavers bound for Drahk'Suhl: a friend, an important NPC, or even one of the PCs if he has been captured. This adventure combines easily with Marauders' Hideaway below. The PCs must travel to Drahk'Suhl and help the prisoner escape or buy his contract. Perhaps an ogre magi recognizes the magical abilities of one of the PCs, and demands a powerful magic item before the new worker's release.

A TEARFUL PLEA

The PCs meet a dwarven girl named Durassa, who has recently arrived in the city in search of her father. Her father was captured months before, and she believes he may be here, sold into servitude. She is a 1st-level dwarf commoner. The fact she made it this far is a bit of a miracle. She is alone, exhausted from her journey, terrified of everything around her, with very little money, in a city where dwarves are regarded as property. If the PCs do not help her, she disappears before long, never to be seen again.

THIEVES UNITE

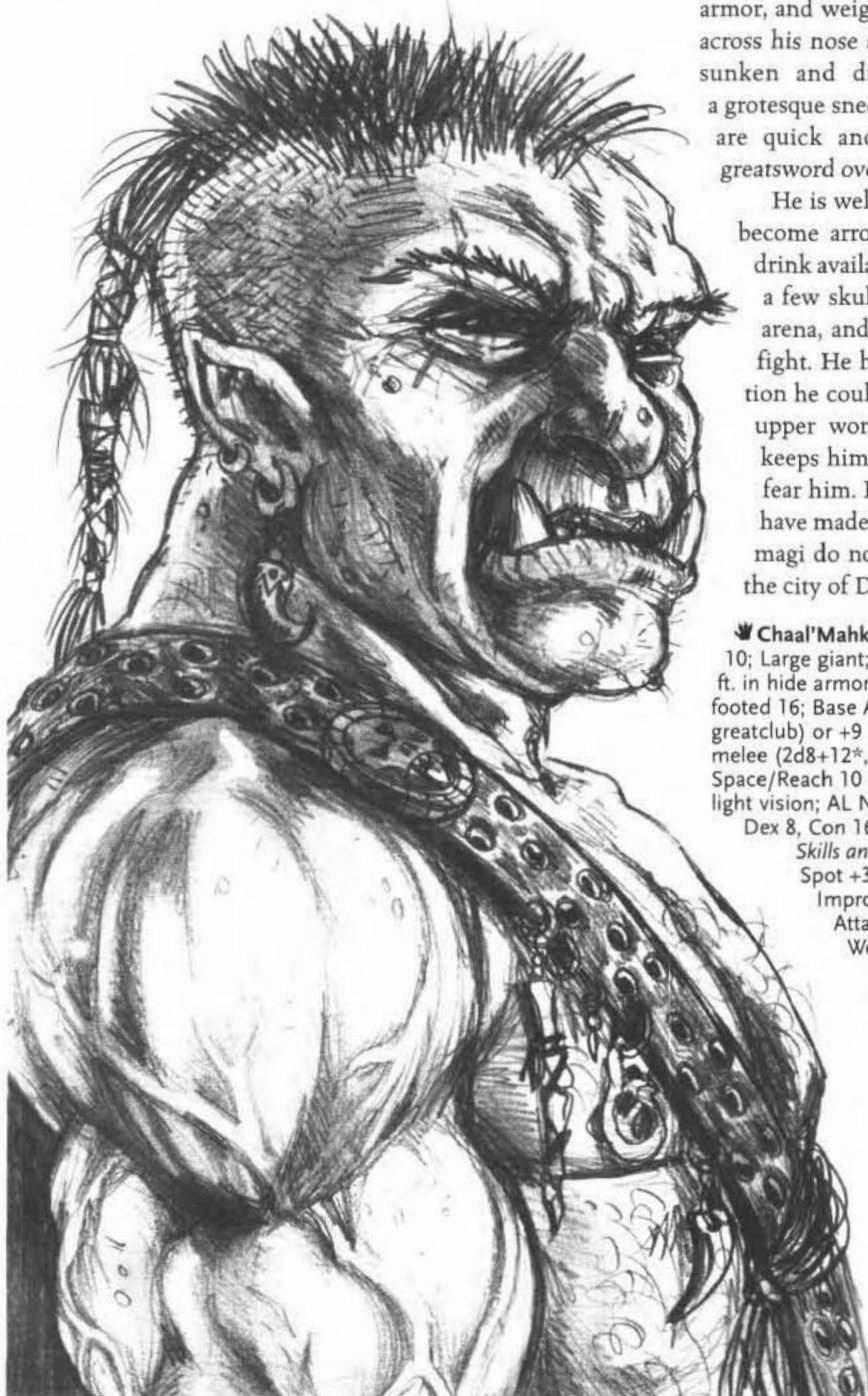
The city of Drahk'Suhl has no Thieves Guild. Very little "footpaddin'" takes place here because of the brutality to which ogres are prone. Nevertheless, there are a very brave few attempting to form a Thieves Guild here. Jin'Zil and the other ogre magi would never approve of such an organization, so the three fledgling members operate in complete secrecy. Their leader considers any petition for membership, even from non-rogue characters. Most of the good-aligned workers know how to get a message to him.

The guild has only two rules: first, steal only from the ogres and those who pander to them; second, 50% of all stolen property is given to the guild, all of which is distributed among the workers, so they can buy their contracts. His ultimate goal is to steal the treasure of the ogre magi and buy all the contracts.

NPCS

CHAAL'MAHK AND THE BLACK NAILS

In the early days, Jin'Zil knew he needed a strong arm to enforce his will. He sought out the nastiest ogre he could find, one who was smart enough to think for himself, but greedy enough to recognize the benefits Jin'Zil offered.



CHAAL'MAHK, CAPTAIN OF THE BLACK NAILS

Chaal'Mahk is a tremendous specimen of the ogre race. Bigger, smarter, and meaner than most others, he handpicked an elite group of fighters to be the strong arm who enforces the will of the ogre magi.

He stands almost twelve ft. tall, encased in battered armor, and weighs over 600 pounds. He has a nasty scar across his nose and one of his cheeks that make it look sunken and draws the corner of his mouth into a grotesque sneer, baring his huge yellow teeth. His eyes are quick and canny, and he wears an eight-foot greatsword over his shoulder within easy reach.

He is well accustomed to getting his way, and has become arrogant. He enjoys the plentiful food and drink available to him, and the opportunity to smash a few skulls in occasionally. He also frequents the arena, and on rare occasion accepts a challenge to fight. He has never lost. He dreams of the destruction he could wreak upon the soft, weak races of the upper world. Only the superior power of Jin'Zil keeps him in check; he knows the other ogre magi fear him. But he also recognizes it is Jin'Zil's brains have made Drahk'Suhl a success. As long as the ogre magi do not mistreat him, he serves. He is loyal of the city of Drahk'Suhl, and defends it to the death.

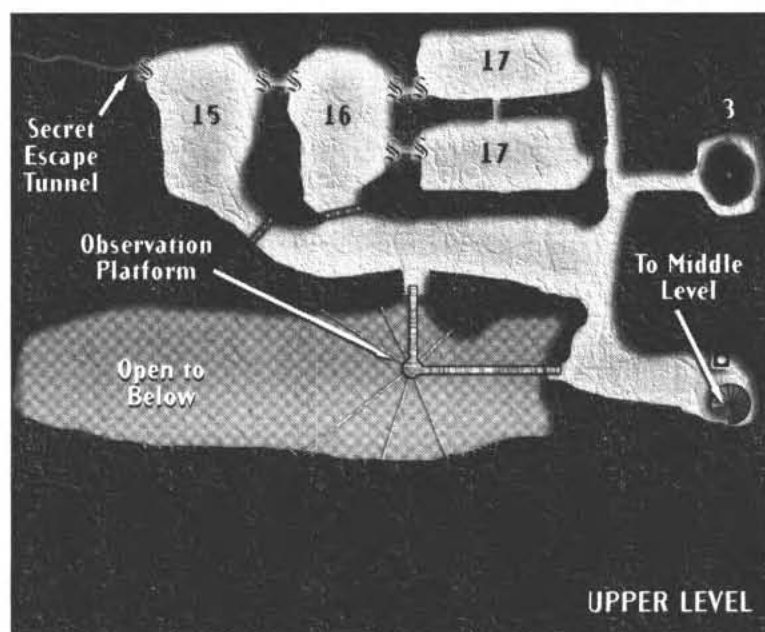
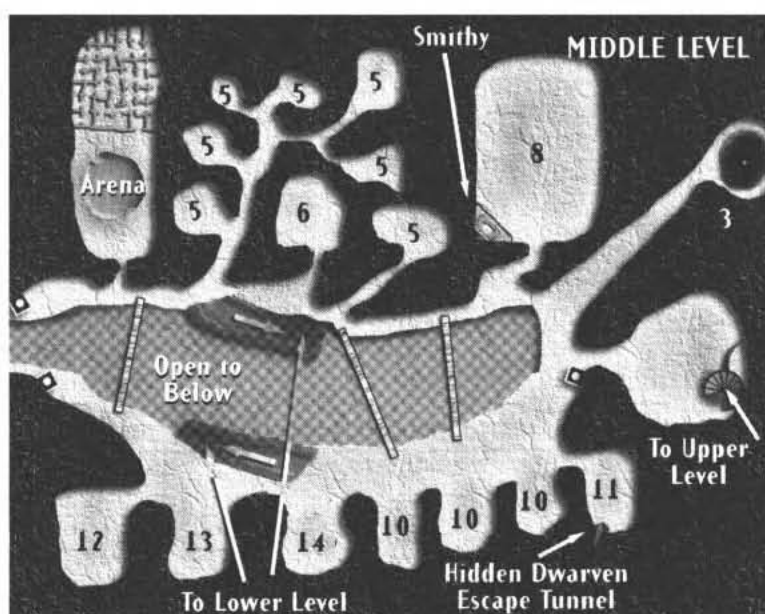
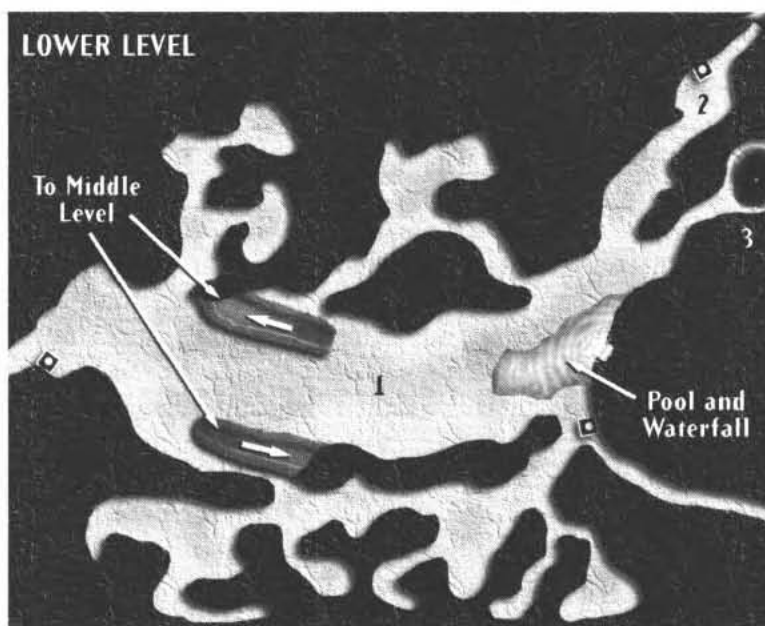
♣ **Chaal'Mahk, Captain of the Black Nails, Ogre Ftr 7:** CR 10; Large giant; HD 4d8+7d10+35 (96 hp); Init -1; Spd 30 ft. in hide armor, base speed 40 ft.; AC 16, touch 8, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +10; Grp +20; Atk +17 melee (2d8+12*, greatclub) or +9 ranged (1d8+6, javelin); Full Atk +17/+12 melee (2d8+12*, greatclub) or +9 ranged (1d8+6, javelin); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA —; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; AL NE; SV Fort +11, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 22, Dex 8, Con 16, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Climb +11, Intimidate +11, Listen +3, Spot +3; Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved overrun, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (greatclub), Weapon Specialization (greatclub).

* Subjects dealt a critical hit by a thundering weapon take an extra 1d8 points of sonic damage and must make a DC 14 Fortitude save or be deafened permanently.

Possessions: Hide Armor, +1 thundering greatclub (named "heathen"), ring of the ram (19 charges), heavy leather boots, 77 gp.

THE OGRE CITY OF DRAHK'SUAL



THE BLACKS NAILS

The Black Nails are bigger, stronger, smarter, and better equipped than their brethren are and they strike fear into the hearts of all but the most hardened adventurers.

Dangerous in and of themselves, they have trained to fight together. They both fear and revere Chaa'lMahk. They are suspicious of the ogre magi, but as long as they have plenty to eat, females to breed with, and the occasional melee, they are quite content.

When facing a serious threat, they form a massive wall of flesh, standing side by side, and attack first with a volley of javelins, then charging with their huge greataxes. If they are somehow losing the upper hand, they attempt a defensive withdrawal until they can regroup with their comrades. Their massive breastplates are gouged and worn from battle, but surprisingly nicely maintained for ogres. Each of their breastplates bears their symbol, a crude painting of a nail through a skull.

✦ **Black Nail, Ogre Ftr4:** CR 7; Large giant; HD 4d8+4d10 +19 (59 hp); Init -1; Spd 30 ft. in hide armor, base speed 40 ft.; AC 16, touch 8, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +7; Grp +15; Atk +12 melee (1d12+9, greataxe) or +6 ranged (1d8+5, javelin); Full Atk +12/+5 melee (1d12+9, greataxe) or +6 ranged (1d8+5, javelin); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA —; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; AL NE; SV Fort +10, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 21, Dex 8, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 7.

Skills and Feats: Climb +5, Intimidate +5 Listen +5, Spot +5; Alertness, Cleave, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (greataxe), Weapon Specialization (greataxe).

Possessions: Hide armor, greataxe,

JIN'ZIL, THE OGRE MAGI

Jin'Zil is unique among his race; he recognizes the value of cooperation. In an even more unusual occurrence among ogres, two other ogre magi have joined him in his quest for fantastic wealth. All three ogre magi are in a fierce competition among themselves to accumulate the most wealth, with Jin'Zil far in the lead. Jin'Zil knows Chaa'lMahk is his loyal ally, and does not hesitate to use him and the rest of the Black Nails against his rivals if they grow overly ambitious.

He is quite proud of his accomplishments and of what Drahk'Suhl has become. If he perceives a threat, he stops at nothing, destroying anything, to see its success continues.

✦ **Jin'Zil, Ogre Magi, Sor 5:** CR 8; Large giant; HD 5d8+5d4+30 (55 hp); Init +4; Spd 40 ft., fly 40 ft. (good); AC 20, touch 9, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +5; Grp +11; Atk +9 melee (3d6+7/19–20, greatsword) or +5 ranged (2d6/×3, longbow); Full Atk +9 melee (3d6+7/19–20, greatsword) or +5 ranged (2d6/×3, longbow); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA Spell-like abilities; SQ Darkvision 90 ft., low-light vision, regeneration 5, SR 19; AL NE; SV Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +7; Str 21, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 18.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +12, Concentration +11, Craft (alchemy) +10, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Listen +12, Spellcraft +10, Spot +12; Combat Casting, Combat Expertise, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes.

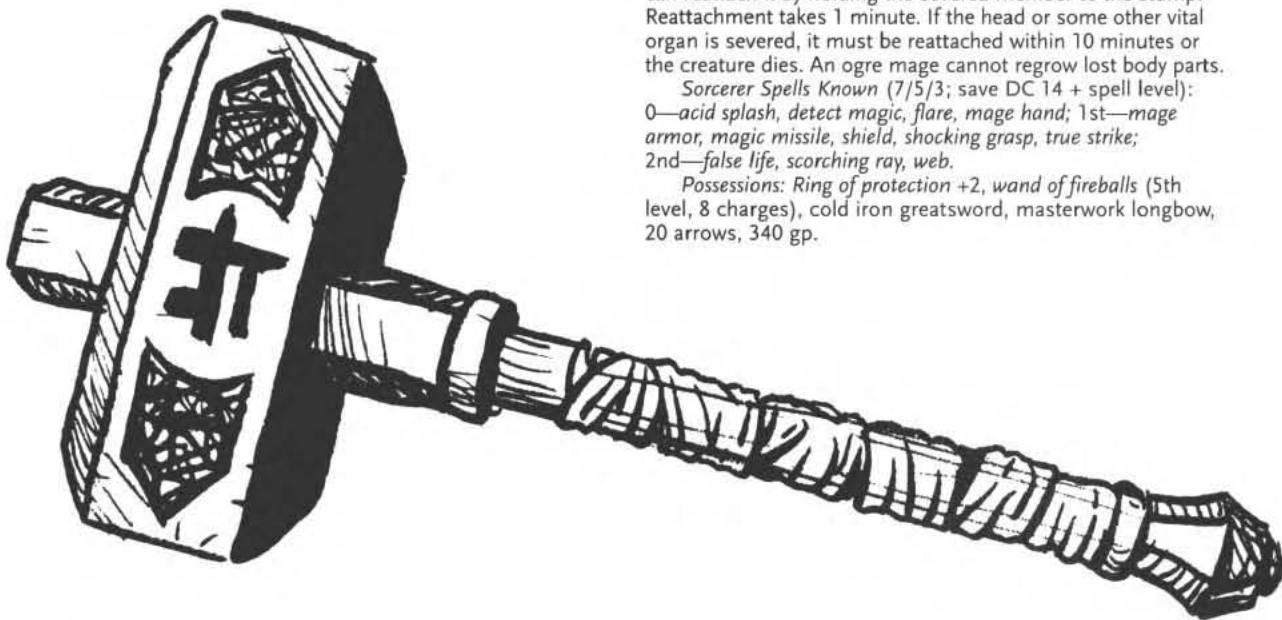
Spell-Like Abilities: At will—darkness, invisibility; 1/day—charm person (DC 15), cone of cold (DC 19), gaseous form, polymorph, sleep (DC 15). Caster level 9th. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Flight (Su): An ogre mage can cease or resume flight as a free action. While using gaseous form it can fly at its normal speed and has perfect maneuverability.

Regeneration (Ex): Fire and acid deal normal damage to an ogre mage. An ogre mage that loses a limb or body part can reattach it by holding the severed member to the stump. Reattachment takes 1 minute. If the head or some other vital organ is severed, it must be reattached within 10 minutes or the creature dies. An ogre mage cannot regrow lost body parts.

Sorcerer Spells Known (7/5/3; save DC 14 + spell level): 0—acid splash, detect magic, flare, mage hand; 1st—mage armor, magic missile, shield, shocking grasp, true strike; 2nd—false life, scorching ray, web.

Possessions: Ring of protection +2, wand of fireballs (5th level, 8 charges), cold iron greatsword, masterwork longbow, 20 arrows, 340 gp.



Chapter 4:

The Prison City of Hell's Reach

Levels 1 to 20
by Mike Mearls

According to myths, Hell spewed forth a foul seed of its damned terrain that took root in the world and yielded the ruined city known as Hell's Reach. Once a prosperous trading port for harboring pirates, outlaws, and worse within its walls, the gods themselves punished the city for turning its back on its one-time patron deity and embracing decadence, greed, and violence instead. A tremendous earthquake sundered the peninsula connecting the city to the mainland, leaving it a half-flooded island populated by small bands of desperate survivors. Hell's Reach is now a dumping ground for criminals deemed too dangerous to ever allow back into society and too likely to break free from prison.

Though warships constantly patrol the waters of Hell's Reach, travel to and from the city is not impossible. Smugglers and other criminals use magical means to ferry weapons, armor, and other goods to the ruins, trading such mundane items for poisons and worse. As a one-time prosperous port, many fabulous treasures lie hidden within the city's crumbling walls, and more than a few daring bands have ventured into the city. Those who make it out speak of desperate bands of cannibals, highly organized criminal gangs, and much worse now stalk the streets. Yet these same survivors often return laden with gold, jewels, and magic.

DM BACKGROUND

This section is not an adventure by itself, but a civilized base of operations. Instead of a single plot, the PCs can use this place to make acquaintances and contacts, purchase items and equip themselves for other adventures, and rest, relax and study. Toward the end of this section, there are a number of exciting adventure hooks that can befall the PCs while they interact with the town suitable for all levels of play. This is designed to be a location the PCs can visit over and over again, becoming an integral part of the campaign. While Hell's Reach can be used by lower level groups, it is an extremely dangerous and lawless place and better suited to characters of mid or higher level.

Hell's Reach nominally serves as a large-scale prison — in practice. However, magical means of movement and simple stealth are too effective to completely seal off contact between an entire city and the outside world. Hell's Reach serves more as a containment vessel for various scum and villains than as a real prison. The way the authorities see it, keeping the worst criminals in the same place with little direct supervision encourages them to kill each other off and helps make the crime quota at least somewhat manageable. The nobility is happy simply to get the worst criminals out of their hair and isolated from the rest of society.

THE PRISON CITY OF HELL'S REACH

BARDIC LORE

A bard can make a Bardic Knowledge check to discover what he may have heard. A bard learns all the information of the DC his check succeeded by and all that below it (a Bard who rolled a 17 would learn the information under DC 15 and DC 10). Alternately this information can be gained by a Gather Information skill check +5 higher than the DC of a Bardic Lore check to see if the PC has heard any rumors.

DC 10 Hell's Reach is a prison-city, cut off from the mainland on an island. A dumping ground for criminals and dissidents.

DC 15 Vicious gangs roam the lawless streets and vie for control.

DC 20 Hell's Island was not always an island; a terrible magical catastrophe long ago left it so.

DC 25 There is a powerful sea captain — a woman! and a mysterious mage who actually call Hell's Reach home.

Integrating Hell's Reach into an existing campaign is difficult if you have already run a few adventures. The PCs' home kingdom may simply not be involved in the administration or use of Hell's Reach, making it more of a curiosity and distant rumor for the populace than a potential destination for criminals. In addition, you could simply place Hell's Reach far enough from the characters' regular stomping grounds so not hearing of it is not jarring. Moving Hell's Reach from a maritime location to a landlocked one requires modifications. The sunken portions of the city could be part of a lake, while foot patrols and a large wall could replace the squadrons of warships keeping watch over the city. Perhaps the cataclysm which destroyed the city took the form of a massive flood, partially submerged the city's remains. The deities central to Hell's Reach's background, Phardon, Velena, and Yollgotha, are described at the end of this gazetteer and easily replaced with similar deities from your own pantheons.

HISTORY

One hundred years ago, the blasted city now known as Hell's Reach was the prosperous port town of Alleton, an important stopover point on the trade routes to the distant east. Silks, spices, weapons, and bizarre magic flowed through the town, bringing all sorts of travelers and wanderers with them. The goods entering Alleton were not strictly material in nature. The influx of travelers brought with it all manner of faiths, beliefs, and prophets. Amongst these was the worship of a deity known as Phardon of the Lash, patron of tyranny. Phardon's cult began as an underground organization, but with careful planning (and a few bribes) it took hold amongst the highly competitive and aggressive merchant princes who governed the city. Soon, the worship of Velena, the previous patron goddess of Alleton, gave way to that of Phardon. The city fell under the rule of a council of five despots. These five forced the poor, homeless, and other undesirables into workhouses or to crew merchant ships based out of the city. Alleton became a merchant's paradise due to its low tariffs and attitude: any privilege, no matter how debased, had a price. The city ran by and for commerce, with no thought to any other purpose.

Within two decades, Alleton was a debased city of thieves, murderers, and decadence. The ruling council's laissez-faire attitude allowed cutthroats and pirates to openly meet and plan their crimes so long as they did not target those merchants who dropped anchor in Alleton's harbor and paid tariffs into Alleton's coffers. Neighboring kingdoms moved to blockade Alleton and refuse shipments from merchants who did business with the city, but too many trading houses and shipping concerns moved their products through Alleton for such a plan to work.

As far as the merchants were concerned, forking over tribute and bribes to Alleton's government bought them security from pirate attacks. Looking over their ledgers, paying out tribute was, in the long run, more cost effective than recouping the loss of ships, goods, and men destroyed in pirate raids. The governments of the region resigned themselves to a system of semi-legitimate piracy on the open seas.

While Alleton's enemies in the material world were left impotent, other forces conspired against the city. The few remaining patriarchs of Velena, whose church had long ago fled the city after many of its followers perished at the hands of Phardon's minions, plotted the downfall of Alleton. Calling upon the power of their goddess, they struck the city with a terrible curse. Fire fell from the sky, igniting the ships at anchor and sinking them beneath the waves. The ground rocked with a tremendous earthquake, sundering the peninsula on which Alleton stood and turning it into an island. Finally, a monstrous tidal wave descended upon the port town, smashing its buildings to the ground and sweeping away the populace.

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A fleet of ships representing a coalition of nobles and governments from the region surrounded the city, leaping on the chance to pounce on the few pirates and other criminals who survived the disaster. To this day the island city of Alleton, now dubbed Hell's Reach, serves as a prison and sanctuary for the damned. Outsiders ferry pirates, murderers, and other criminals to the ruins, and leaving them to prey upon one another as a flotilla patrols the sea surrounding the city.

GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL ORDER

Hell's Reach falls under the control of a group of gangs, which range in size from a dozen to nearly a hundred members. Few of the city's approximately one thousand inhabitants claim no allegiance to a criminal group, as only a few extremely powerful individuals can survive on their own within the ruins. The remaining priests and followers of Phardon transitioned from running the city of Alleton to dominating the ruins of Hell's Reach with relative ease. Though many survivors blamed Phardon and his clerics for the city's downfall, no other clergies had survived to operate in Hell's Reach, making the surviving Phardonite clerics the only source of such divine magic as create food and water. In the lean times after the disaster this advantage proved critical.

Most gangs form around a single, charismatic leader. Gangs run a single section of the city, turning the ruins into a series of armed camps. The Sea Furys, a group composed mainly of ex-pirates, thieves, and murderers banished to Hell's Reach, is the second largest group in the ruins. They survive primarily through smuggling weapons, armor, and food on to the island, running the blockade by night in small outrigger canoes. The Sea Furys are organized along naval lines, with a captain leading each crew, and the captains in turn reporting to the leader of the entire organization — a woman dubbed the Admiral. Few gangs are as well-organized as the Sea Furys, but most of the ones who have managed to claim a portion of the city as their own run a similar, though smaller, operation.

Smugglers represent the sole link between the gangs and the outside world. While some of them operate as independents and do business with any willing gangs, most form long-term business relationships with a particular gang or criminal warlord. Most smugglers use magic to evade patrols, and a few enterprising wizards utilize teleport and similar magic to travel to and from the ruins.

At the bottom of the totem pole are the bands of outlaws and newly arrived criminals yet to earn membership in a gang, or those either too unstable or lacking any skills to gain gang membership. Teetering on the edge of starvation and madness, these poor souls live a short, desperate existence amongst the ruins. While rarely dangerous in small

groups, they sometimes gather together in large packs that can pose a deadly threat even to heavily armed and armored gangs. Many of these lost souls, as the others call them, have turned to cannibalism, demon-worship, and anything else that might assuage their pitiable condition.

In addition to the gangs and wandering packs of desperate men, a few solitary figures maintain abodes in the city. Primary among these is Malachai the Disfigured, an archmage of considerable power who chose to seize a tower in Hell's Reach and make it his lair. Malachai's primary area of expertise lies in summoning and binding demons.

He correctly reasoned his work would attract undue attention in civilized lands, but none would care what research he pursued in Hell's Reach. Furthermore, he often culls the surrounding ruins for sacrifices to his otherworldly allies.

The final power group in the city is small bands of sahuagin who hunt the criminals through the ruins for sport. The sea devil tribes consider a pilgrimage to Hell's Reach for a hunt, followed by a feast of human flesh, an excellent holiday from the typical raids on shipping and battles with sea elves. A few degenerate bands of lost souls actively work with the sahuagin, guarding their temporary lairs and helping to keep them abreast of which gangs represent the best hunting prospects.

ECONOMICS

Obviously, no legitimate trade flows into Hell's Reach, and the ruins produce few exports. Still, Hell's Reach is an important gateway for illicit drugs, illegal magical artifacts, and other banned or heavily restricted goods. Since the authorities venture into the ruins only in the direst circumstances, illegal trade and the production of dangerous goods can take place in the open without fear of a crackdown. Most of the gangs grow or produce illegal substances and trade them to smugglers for weapons, armor, and — most important — food. Getting people off the island is a little more difficult than merely hiding a sack of flour on the way in, but it is known to happen.

A limited amount of trade occurs between gangs, primarily as an offshoot of non-aggression and co-defense pacts.

Torred's petal is the most commonly grown narcotic. A hallucinogen purported to have magical properties; would-be druggists have difficulty growing this black flower in secret, as it requires direct sunlight and copious watering. In the lawless ruins, however, patches of the flower grow wild. Poison ranks right behind narcotics as the most common export, as such herbs grow and reproduce in the open. Many gangs either maintain an alchemist's lab or arrange for part of their payment to be made in manufactured poisons and drugs.

LOCATIONS AND IMPORTANT INDIVIDUALS

Keep in mind the city isn't necessarily a place of relaxation! At all times the city should seem busy, you never know what's around the next corner, and letting your guard down isn't something the "lifers" here do except when unconscious. The city never sleeps. Just as one plot is being wrapped up another score is in the making. To ensure there's always something to occupy the PCs, consider rolling on the following table.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

1d20	Encounter
1	Assassin scooping out target
2	Clerics of Valena on patrol
3	Dregs gang
4	Drunk citizens looking for a brawl
5	Drunk old-timer with loose lips
6	Fences looking to offload minor magic items
7	Ghost haunting a street
8	Ghouls out for a meal
9	Harbor workers off duty
10	Imp at play
11	Iron Guard Patrol
12	Large monstrous spider
13	Lost one gang
14	Malachi's undead servitors shopping for him
15	Merchant aggressively hocking wares
16	Press gang from visiting ship
17	Sahuagin group come to collect slaves
18	Sea Fury Pirates on leave
19	Street crier advertising Bellecroft's
20	Succubus (disguised as frightened 'inmate')

I. The Iron Keep

Built in the heyday of Alleton's power, this small castle served as the primary temple to Phardon for the entire region. Now it is a fortified camp from which the Phardonites rule over the northern half of the ruins.

Canon Peltrach ur'Raskor is an ironfisted commander who tolerates no disobedience. Patrols regularly sweep through the areas claimed by the Phardonites, killing or capturing all they encounter. This area is perhaps the safest section of Hell's Reach, yet the stifling tyranny and steep penalties for unauthorized criminal activity drive most to settle in other areas. Each inhabitant of this area must wear a metal collar fitted with a holy symbol of Phardon marks one's status and position in the Phardonite hierarchy. Laborers and other commoners wear steel ones; clerics, wizards, and mid-ranking commanders wear silver, and the uppermost leaders gold. This entire section of the city runs like a military encampment. Walled off and heavily patrolled, this area reacts poorly to strangers, attacking them on sight and either killing or jailing them

in the cells beneath the keep. Everyone has a place in the hierarchy of the church, from the lowliest sailor, to each warrior or cleric, up to Canon Peltrach himself.

The Phardonite Iron Guard maintains order and serves as the primary defense force. Composed mostly of clerics of Phardon, it wields absolute authority over any who wear the steel holy symbol. While the clerics' word is law, they obey the edicts handed down by the ruling council. Still, the vast majority of those who inhabit this area are at the mercy of Iron Guard patrols. A standard patrol is comprised of four members of the Iron Guard, but enhanced patrols of five members commanded by an officer are common if the Phardonites expect trouble.

The Phardonites engage primarily in the narcotics trade. While they count few wizards amongst their allies, they have extensive ties to the church hierarchy throughout the world. Most of the smugglers and traders they work with are ardent Phardonites. The church in this region uses the Iron Keep as its headquarters, plotting the overthrow of neighboring kingdoms from within its walls.

Many clerics make forays into the surrounding ruins to prove their mettle and reclaim lost artifacts of Phardon. The cataclysm that destroyed Alleton caused the loss of many holy relics, and though the church has made a concerted effort to reclaim each lost item, many still lie within and beneath the ruined city. In addition, a secretive splinter sect of Phardon occasionally sends expeditions into the deeps, the caverns and old sewers beneath the city. Unknown to Peltrach, these clerics have subverted some of the Iron Guard to the worship of Yollgotha. The demon lord's sleeping form has sent these heretics visions in their dreams, bidding them to come free it from its slumber in the earth. More information on Yollgotha is provided under the descriptions of areas #2 and #7.

Peltrach is a quiet, grim man. While he wields considerable influence as the head cleric of one of the most important bastions of Phardon's worship, he holds little power outside of the temple walls. While other clerics of Phardon plot to usurp governments and institute their own dictatorships, Peltrach works as little more than an administrator, helping coordinate but not command Phardonite efforts across the region. He longs to make a name for himself, and secretly hopes for a promotion to a more exciting post. Unfortunately for Peltrach, his increasing boredom with his current assignment has allowed others to seduce some of his clerics to the worship of Yollgotha.

Peltrach carries a +3 heavy mace he calls "Phardon's Blessing." To help ease his boredom, he often takes an active role in repelling attackers and patrolling the area just outside the Iron Keep. Were it not for direct orders from his superiors, Peltrach long ago would have enacted

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a campaign to conquer and subjugate the pirates of Admiral G'ort. He sees their existence as an insult to Phardon and in his free time, plots theoretical campaigns against them. In preparation for his ever-denied campaign, Peltarch has assembled a force of 40 human skeletons armed with spears and small wooded shields; he activates and sends them into combat against any serious threat to the Iron Keep.

▲ Iron Guard, Human Clr 2: CR 2; Medium humanoid; HD 2d8+2; hp 15; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +1; Grp +3; Atk +4 melee (1d8+2, heavy mace); Full Atk +4 melee (1d8+2, heavy mace); SA Spells, rebuke undead; SQ —; AL LE; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +5; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 15, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +6, Diplomacy +6, Knowledge (Religion) +6; Combat Casting, Weapon Focus (heavy mace).

Rebuke Undead (Su): Evil clerics rebuke or command undead creatures. These clerics may attempt to turn undead 5 times per day.

Cleric Spells Prepared: (4/3+1; save DC 12 + spell level): 0—cure minor wounds, detect magic, light, read magic; 1st—command, detect undead, divine favor, enlarge person*.

* Domain spell. *Domains:* Law (cast law spells at +1 caster level), Strength (activate a +1 enhancement bonus to Strength as a free action, the power lasts 1 round, and it is usable once per day).

Possessions: Chain shirt, heavy wooden shield, heavy mace, signal whistle, wooden unholy symbol, scroll of hold person.

▲ Peltrach, Human Clr 10: CR 10; Medium humanoid; HD 10d8; hp 55; Init +5; Spd 20 ft.; AC 20, touch 11, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +7; Grp +10; Atk +14 melee (1d8+6, heavy mace) or +8 ranged (1d10/19–20, heavy crossbow); Full Atk +14/+9 melee (1d8+6, heavy mace) or +8/+3 ranged (1d10/19–20, heavy crossbow); SA Spells, rebuke undead; SQ —; AL LE; SV Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +11; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 18, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +10, Diplomacy +12, Knowledge (arcane) +11, Knowledge (religion) +13, Spellcraft +11; Combat Casting, Extra Rebuking, Improved Initiative, Scribe Scroll, Weapon Focus (heavy mace).

Rebuke Undead (Su): Evil clerics rebuke or command undead creatures. Peltrach may attempt to turn undead 9 times per day.

Cleric Spells Prepared: (6/5+1/5+1/4+1/4+1/2+1; save DC 14 + spell level): 0—cure minor wounds, detect magic, detect poison, read magic, resistance, virtue; 1st—cause fear, command, doom, divine favor, enlarge person*, shield of faith; 2nd—bull's strength*, death knell, enthrall, hold person, resist energy, spiritual weapon; 3rd—contagion, dispel magic, inflict serious wounds, magic vestment*, searing light; 4th—divine

power, inflict critical wounds, poison, restoration, spell immunity*; 5th—greater command, flame strike, righteous might*, slay living.

* Domain spell. *Domains:* Law (cast law spells at +1 caster level), Strength (activate a +1 enhancement bonus to Strength as a free action, the power lasts 1 round, and it is usable once per day).

Possessions: +1 breastplate, heavy steel shield, +3 heavy mace (named "Phardon's Blessing"), heavy crossbow, 20 bolts, silver unholy symbol, 2 potions of cure moderate wounds, potion of owl's wisdom.

2. Black Spike

Malachai the Disfigured calls this bleak, stone tower home. Within its walls he summons and binds his demonic allies, often turning a demon loose on the city below in order to observe its capabilities in battle.

For this reason, the locals have deserted the surrounding area. Trespassers in the surrounding area risk reanimation as skinless zombies to patrol the area. Malachai's tower has neither doors nor windows, though a trap door rests atop the roof. Filling the six-story tower are labs, workshops, and other chambers staffed by quasits and undead servitors. In addition, a tunnel connects Malachai's basement to the deeps, giving the archmage access to the creatures that dwell there and their accompanying treasures.

Malachai has had his skin flayed. He acquired this distinctive trait as a punishment after losing control of a demon prince he attempted to summon years ago. Malachai's wounds bleed steadily and he often wears white robes stained with his own blood. The archmage rarely speaks, but when he does his voice is a quiet, harsh rasp. Rumor has it Malachai avoided death at the demon's hand only by offering it his soul. Supposedly, the archmage works tirelessly to fulfill some strange mission the demon charged him to complete. Once his task is done, Malachai's soul returns and his skin restores itself.

These rumors are at least partially true. Malachai is driven to discover a method by which the demon to which he is dedicated — Yollgotha of the Skinless Hordes — can once again walk the earth. According to Malachai's research, Yollgotha's physical form is buried deep beneath the ruins of Hell's Reach. The archmage willingly had his skin torn from his body as a sign of devotion to his dread lord.



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Currently, Malachai searches for any signs of Yollgotha's presence. He spends much of his time in the deeps amongst the degenerates who embrace Yollgotha as a god. As yet, Malachai is no closer to freeing the demon. His greatest concern is that the Phardonites and Sea Furies may form an alliance, which could bring an unacceptable level of order and safety to Hell's Reach. Malachai knows any would-be warlord of Hell's Reach would have to confront him at some point. He often sends his demonic servants on missions to ambush and slaughter Phardonite and Sea Fury patrols in the hopes of ratcheting up tension between the two groups. This plan has not yet yielded open conflict between the two parties, but Malachai's spies assure him it is only a matter of time before one side or the other declares open war.

▲ Malachai the Disfigured, Human Wiz 18: CR 18; Medium humanoid; HD 18d4-18; hp 40; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 24, touch 13, flat-footed 21; Base Atk +9; Grp +10; Atk +12 melee (1d4+3*/19-20, dagger); Full Atk +12/+7 melee (1d4+3*/19-20, dagger); SA Spells; SQ Summon familiar; AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +9, Will +14; Str 12, Dex 17, Con 8, Int 22, Wis 16, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +20, Craft (alchemy) +27, Decipher Script +27, Knowledge (arcana) +27, Knowledge (history) +27, Knowledge (local) +27, Knowledge (the planes) +27, Listen +11, Search +8, Spellcraft +27; Alertness, Brew PotionB, Combat Casting, Craft Wondrous ItemB, Dodge, Forge RingB, Improved Initiative, Maximize Spell, Scribe ScrollB, Spell Focus (necromancy), Spell Focus (invocation), Spell Penetration.

Summon Familiar: Malachi has no time for, or interest in, a familiar.

Wizard Spells Prepared: (4/6/6/5/5/5/3/3/2; save DC 16 spell level (save DC 17 + spell level against necromancy and evocation spells)): 0—*detect magic, detect poison, light, magic hand*; 1st—*burning hands, chill touch, floating disk, magic missile, ray of enfeeblement, shocking grasp*; 2nd—*command undead, continual flame, false life, flaming sphere, scorching ray, spectral hand*; 3rd—*fireball, lightning bolt, ray of exhaustion, vampiric touch, wind wall*; 4th—*animate dead, enervation, fire shield, shout, wall of fire*; 5th—*blight, cone of cold, magic jar, wall of force, waves of fatigue*; 6th—*chain lightning, circle of death, contingency, eyebite, symbol of fear*; 7th—*control undead, greater teleport, mage's sword*; 8th—*clone, greater shout, iron body*; 9th—*meteor swarm, wail of the banshee*.

Spellbook: 0—*detect magic, detect poison, ghost sound, light, magic hand, mending, open/close*; 1st—*burning hands, chill touch, erase, expeditious retreat, floating disk, identify, magic missile, ray of enfeeblement, shocking grasp*; 2nd—*command undead, continual flame, false life, flaming sphere, knock, misdirection, obscure object, scorching ray, spectral hand*; 3rd—*explosive runes, fireball, illusory script, lightning bolt, ray of exhaustion, secret page, vampiric touch, wind wall*; 4th—*animate dead, dimensional anchor, enervation, fire shield, scrying, shout, wall of fire*; 5th—*blight, cone of cold, magic jar, secret chest, sending, wall of force, waves of fatigue*; 6th—*chain lightning, circle of death, contingency, eyebite, guards and wards, symbol of fear*; 7th—*control undead, greater teleport, mage's sword, sequester*; 8th—*clone, greater shout, iron body, screen*; 9th—*foresight, meteor swarm, wail of the banshee*.

* It deals an extra 2d6 points of damage against all of lawful alignment. It bestows one negative level on any lawful creature attempting to wield it.

Possessions: Ring of protection +3, bracers of armor +8, +2 anarchic dagger, ring of sustenance, staff of fire (48 charges).

Assume Malachai has access to any scrolls and potions he may need. Take special note of the many spells in Malachi's spell book. Within are many backup, non-competitive spells you can take advantage of in foiling the PCs if they take action against him.

3. The Deep

The sewers, caves, and caverns beneath Hell's Reach flooded out in the wake of the disaster that destroyed the city, but isolated pockets remain accessible from the surface. Many strange creatures, the product of the divine energy that destroyed the city, lurk below. The more aggressive monsters move about the city ruins by night, hunting down lone travelers or small groups. A small colony of sahuagin lairs within the sewers and often plays host to warriors from allied tribes who have come to prove their skill in bravery by hunting within the ruins. These creatures are the bane both of those who live within Hell's Reach and the smugglers who attempt to run the blockade. The sahuagin prize the poisons and narcotics the smugglers carry, making them extremely attractive targets for raids.

A variety of horrors stalk and swim through the subterranean passages. Otyughs, giant lizards, and spiders are common in the deeps. In addition, the undead spirits of those who perished in the collapse of Alleton linger on here. Packs of ghouls and ghosts occasionally spill forth from the depths to wreak havoc on the surface and slaughter all whom they encounter. The clerics of Phardon have supposedly struck an alliance with some of the more powerful undead creatures, and on several occasions gangs who have struggled against the Phardonites have found themselves assaulted by undead.

In addition to the bizarre creatures living here, the deeps are home to the more degenerate and desperate ranks of the lost souls. Many of these poor men have succumbed to madness as a consequence their lives in Hell's Reach.

Most practice cannibalism, surging out of their tunnels to grab victims from the city above to devour in their feasts. Many lost souls worship the dormant form of Yollgotha, carrying out debased rites in his name. Rumors abound of passages deep beneath the city lined with human skulls and caked with ice no matter what the season.

Lost souls are normal humans, elves, dwarves, and other humanoids driven to madness and cannibalism by their imprisonment or by exposure to Yollgotha's twisted rituals and corrupting influence. Most revere the sleeping demon as a god, though few are coherent enough to name him or study his secrets. Lost souls refer to their lord as "He Who Sleeps," or "the Quiet Chaos." Malachai the Disfigured regularly walks amongst the lost souls in an effort to learn more about his master's resting-place. Thus far, he has learned nothing. Malachi does see the lost ones

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as a potential resource and expends a small amount of effort to protect them if they are being prayed upon, mostly in the form of guardian undead.

Generate lost ones as you would a normal NPC, though they are armed only with crude clubs, padded armor, and the occasional shield. Lost one spellcasters are all either adepts of Yollgotha or sorcerers. A few of the lost ones are fanatical enough to whip themselves into a blood frenzy, these lost ones may have a few levels of barbarian.

▲ Sample Lost One, Human Com 1: CR ½; Medium humanoid; HD 1d4; hp 6; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11, touch 10, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +0/+1; Full Atk +1 melee (1d6+1, club); AL CN; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 9, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Climb +4, Ride +3, Swim +2; Great Fortitude, Toughness.

Possessions: Padded armor, crude club.

4. Admiral G'ort

Located at the southern end of Hell's Reach, the fortified docks of Admiral G'ort are the richest and most luxurious section of Hell's Reach. A visitor to this enclave would be hard-pressed to imagine the squalor and desperation existing just outside its walls. Inhabited by a strongly unified and well-directed band of ex-pirates, thieves, and bandits, Admiral G'ort functions as an important way station for smugglers and other criminals. The leader of Admiral G'ort, the pirate captain known as the Admiral, has invested quite a fortune into bribing a few of the naval captains patrolling the waters around Hell's Reach. Whether directing them to destroy rival smugglers or escort her own crews to safety, the Admiral considers herself to be not only the head of her own smuggler's port, but also the de facto commanding officer of the fleets surrounding Hell's Reach.

Admiral G'ort resembles a rowdy seaside town rather than a blasted city of the damned. Shops and taverns line the streets, and though no large ships drop anchor at port, a few catamarans and other smuggling boats are always tied up at the docks. The area is home to patrols of Sea Furys pirates charged with keeping the peace. All violations of the Admiral's rules have the same punishment: banishment to Hell's Reach. The Sea Furys wear the blood red bandanas as identification. Higher-ranking Sea Furys are often rogues, wizards, or fighters.

The one commodity the Admiral does not offer is freedom. Per her agreement with the sea captains who accept her bribes, her smugglers deal solely in goods and passage for non-prisoners. The Admiral and her allies are too worried about some criminal's capture and admission of how he escaped from Hell's Reach to risk their very profitable arrangement.

The Admiral is above all a businesswoman. In fact, she was never sentenced to Hell's Reach, instead leveraging her bribes with the navy to access to the city and, later,

into her own smuggling empire. Many thieves' guilds use Admiral G'ort as a safehouse and storage area for recently stolen goods; confident the authorities would never dare investigate Hell's Reach. The Admiral's living quarters easily equals that of any mainland noble's, and her personal fortune swells by the day. The people of Admiral G'ort are firmly loyal to the Admiral. Before her arrival, Admiral G'ort was only a marginally better place to live than the rest of Hell's Reach. After defeating the former leader of the Sea Furys in personal combat, the Admiral set about building the newly dubbed Admiral G'ort into the world's preeminent destination for high price stolen artifacts and smuggled goods. The influx of money and goods has led to a dramatic upturn in Admiral G'ort's fortunes, and many of the Sea Furys and others who call this area home credit the Admiral with personally ushering in the current era of prosperity.

Relations with the Phardonites are the sole remaining problem for the Admiral. As the self-styled lords of Hell's Reach, they see her as an impudent upstart. Thus far, competition has remained solely with smuggling and trade operations, but a few isolated melees between the Iron Guard and Sea Fury patrols have erupted in recent months. Over the last few months, the disappearance of a few patrols near Phardonite territory has spurred a core of pro-war captains to make bolder and louder calls for actions.

▲ Sea Fury Pirates, Human Ftr 2: CR 2; Medium humanoid; HD 2d10; hp 15 each; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +2/+3; Atk +5 melee (1d6+1/18–20, rapier) or +4 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); Full Atk +5 melee (1d6+1/18–20, rapier) or +4 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Jump +2, Listen +1, Profession (sailor) +4, Swim +5; Dodge, Weapon focus (rapier).

Possessions: Studded leather armor, rapier.

▲ Admiral, Human Ftr 6/Rog 3: CR 9; Medium humanoid; HD 6d10+3d6+9; hp 50; Init +5; Spd 20 ft.; AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +8; Grp +10; Atk +12 melee (1d8+5/19–20, longsword); Full Atk +12/+7 melee (1d8+5/19–20, longsword); SA Sneak attack +2d6; SQ Evasion, trapfinding, trap sense +1; AL LN; SV Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +3; Str 16, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +10, Bluff +11, Climb +12, Jump +11, Intimidate +12, Profession (sailor) +12, Swim +10, Tumble +12; Cleave, Dodge, Improved initiative, Power attack, Skill Focus (Profession (sailor)), Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword).

Evasion (Ex): If she makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, she instead takes no damage.

Sneak Attack: Her attack deals an extra +2d6 damage time her target would be denied a Dexterity bonus to AC (whether the target actually has a Dexterity bonus or not), or when she flanks her target. Should the rogue score a critical hit with a sneak attack, this extra damage is not multiplied. Ranged attacks can count as sneak attacks only if the target is within 30 ft.

Trapfinding: She can use the Search skill to locate traps when the task has a Difficulty Class higher than 20. Finding a nonmagical trap has a DC of at least 20, or higher if it is well hidden. Finding a magic trap has a DC of 25 + the level

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of the spell used to create it. She can use the Disable Device skill to disarm magic traps. A magic trap generally has a DC of 25 + the level of the spell used to create it.

Trap Sense (Ex): She has an intuitive sense that alerts her to danger from traps, giving her a +1 bonus on Reflex saves made to avoid traps and a +1 dodge bonus to AC against attacks made by traps.

Possessions: Masterwork banded mail, *ring of protection* +2, +1 *longsword* (named "leviathan"), *rope of climbing*, masterwork spyglass.

5. The Dregs

Located at the western end of Hell Reach, the dregs are so named because the weakest and least influential gangs call this area home. The alleyways and streets of the dregs all flooded with seawater, making it difficult to grow most narcotics and poisons. The gangs here live primarily by raiding each other, the more prosperous gangs, and fishing. Most gangs claim the upper floors of a building as a lair and travel via pole-driven skiffs. Such buildings collapse soon after their load-bearing members soak up too much water. Gangs in this area usually have about a dozen members, none of whom are above second or third level. Most skilled warriors or thieves chose to live in the more secure and profitable boulevards, but occasionally a powerful figure may choose to become a big fish in the Dregs.

Most newly arrived convicts spend at least a few months in the Dregs proving themselves as capable warriors or thieves. The more powerful gangs often come here on raids, not only to deal with raiders but also to scout for potential recruits. Of all the sections of Hell's Reach, the Dregs are probably the safest for a group seeking to infiltrate the city. There are enough active gangs here that powerful monsters aren't too common, and no warlord can marshal a powerful force to deal with intruders in the area.

▲ Dregs Gang Member, Human Rog 1: CR 1; Medium humanoid; HD 1d6; hp 6, 5, 5, 4, 4, 3; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp +1; Atk +1 melee (1d6+1/19–20, short sword) or +1 ranged (1d4+1/19–20, dagger); Full Atk +1 melee (1d6+1/19–20, short sword) or +1 ranged (1d4+1/19–20, dagger); SA Sneak attack +1d6; SQ Trapfinding; AL NE; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +3, Climb +5, Hide +5, Listen +4, Move Silently +5, Open Lock +5, Sleight of Hand +5, Spot +4; Dodge, Improved Initiative.

Sneak Attack: These rogues' attacks deal an extra 1d6 damage any time a target would be denied a Dexterity bonus to AC (whether the target actually has a Dexterity bonus or not), or when the rogue flanks a target. Should the rogue score a critical hit with a sneak attack, this extra damage is not multiplied. Ranged attacks can count as sneak attacks only if the target is within 30 ft.

Trapfinding: These rogues can use the Search skill to locate traps when the task has a Difficulty Class higher than 20.

Possessions: Studded leather armor, short sword, dagger, belt pouch, 8 cp.

6. The Boulevards

A battleground for gangs ranking above those who inhabit the Dregs and below the Sea Furys or the Phardonites, the Boulevards are those portions of Hell's Reach still standing above sea level. The gangs here deal primarily in smuggling, tending small plots of narcotics or poisonous plants and either trading them with the Phardonites, Sea Furys, or the occasional independent smuggler. The majority of Hell's Reachers call the Boulevards home. While pitched battles are less common here than in the Dregs, violence is still commonplace.

The gangs here are prosperous enough they can take care of most of their basic needs, but a single raid or poor growing season can doom a gang. Most gangs have between ten and 30 members (with the largest having almost 50), and all claim a single building or block as home. The gangs typically fortify their territories, with many blocks turned into miniature castles by carefully scrounging materials from buildings at the center of the block to build walls along the edges.

▲ Boulevard Gang Member, Human Rog 2: CR 2; Medium humanoid; HD 2d6; hp 10; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d6+1/19–20, short sword) or +2 ranged (1d4+1/19–20, dagger); Full Atk +2 melee (1d6+1/19–20, short sword) or +2 ranged (1d4+1/19–20, dagger); SA sneak attack +1d6; SQ evasion, trapfinding; AL NE; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +3, Climb +5, Hide +5, Listen +4, Move Silently +5, Open Lock +5, Sleight of Hand +5, Spot +4; Dodge, Improved Initiative.

Evasion (Ex): If this rogue makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, he instead takes no damage.

Sneak Attack: These rogues' attacks deal an extra 1d6 damage any time a target would be denied a Dexterity bonus to AC (whether the target actually has a Dexterity bonus or not), or when the rogue flanks a target. Should the rogue score a critical hit with a sneak attack, this extra damage is not multiplied. Ranged attacks can count as sneak attacks only if the target is within 30 ft.

Trapfinding: These rogues can use the Search skill to locate traps when the task has a Difficulty Class higher than 20.

Possessions: Studded leather armor, short sword, dagger.

7. Velena's Hope

This small fortress of Velena worshippers hides among the ruins of the Boulevards. While most sages assume Alleton met its fate for turning its back on the worship of Velena, the truth is far more sinister. In ages past, the warrior queen Velena defeated the demon Yollgotha and imprisoned him beneath the earth directly below the city. Over time, the demon's influence helped lead to the influx of Phardonites into the city. On the day of Alleton's demise, a small band of necromancers and Phardonite clerics gathered to commit the final ritual, freeing Yollgotha and allowing him to once again walk the earth.

THE PRISON CITY OF HELL'S REACH

Velena's clerics, out of favor with the government and lacking the resources to directly challenge the cabal, called upon their patron and destroyed the city in order to contain Yollgotha. Since then, a small, highly dedicated sect of Velenans has secretly taken root in the city. Led by Alenton the Just these warriors carefully watch for signs of Yollgotha's presence. The archmage Malachai concerns them greatly, as they know they lack the resources to confront him. The sect hopes to tip off the Phardonites and their rivals in Admiral G'ort to the danger posed by Yollgotha and bait them into attacking Malachai. However, the archmage has seen to it to help exacerbate tensions between those two camps, unwittingly foiling Alenton's plans.

Velena's Hope appears as just another minor fortification amongst the Boulevards. In addition to Alenton, Anamira the Crusader, Dougal the Just, several lower level clerics, and a small group of paladins and fighters staff it. The followers of Velena help the more pitiable cases of Hell's Reach when possible, but dare not reveal themselves unless the situation is utterly dire. Thus far, this chapel remains a secret. Should Malachai learn of its existence, he likely wipes the sect out within a week.

Alenton understands tactics. He retains the memories of a seasoned veteran who commanded over one hundred successful battles. He remembers how to defend the pass and stops at nothing to do so.

▲ Alenton the Just, Human Pal 10: CR 10; Medium humanoid; HD 10d10+30; hp 89; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 19, touch 11, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +10; Grp +13; Atk +15 melee (1d12+5/×3, greataxe) or +12 ranged (1d8+3/×3, mighty composite longbow); Full Atk +15/+10 melee (1d12+5/×3, greataxe) or +12/+7 ranged (1d8+3/×3, mighty composite longbow); SA Smite evil 3/day; SQ Aura of courage, aura of good, detect evil, divine grace, divine health, lay on hands, remove disease, special mount, turn undead; AL LG; SV Fort +12, Ref +6, Will +9; Str 16, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 11, Wis 15, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Diplomacy +12, Handle Animal +11, Knowledge (religion) +10, Ride +11; Cleave, Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greataxe).

Aura of Good (Ex): The power Alenton's aura of good (see the detect good spell) is 5th level.

Aura of Courage (Su): Alenton is immune to fear (magical or otherwise). Each ally within 10 ft. of him gains a +4 morale bonus on saving throws against fear effects. This ability functions while Alenton is conscious, but not if he is unconscious or dead.

Detect Evil (Sp): At will, Alenton can use *detect evil*, as the spell.

Divine Grace (Su): Alenton gains a bonus of +2 on all saving throws.

Divine Health (Ex): Alenton gains immunity to all diseases, including supernatural and magical diseases.

Lay on Hands (Su): Alenton can heal wounds (his own or those of others) by touch. Each day he can heal 10 hit points of damage. Alenton may choose to divide his healing among multiple recipients, and he doesn't have to use it all at once. Using lay on hands is a standard action. Alternatively, Alenton can use any or all of this healing power to deal damage to undead creatures. Using lay on hands in this way requires a successful melee touch attack and doesn't provoke an attack of opportunity. Alenton decides how many of his daily allotment of points to use as damage after successfully touching an undead creature.

Remove Disease (Sp): Alenton can produce a *remove disease* effect, as the spell, twice per week.

Smite Evil (Su): Three times per day, Alenton may attempt to smite evil with one normal melee attack. He adds +2 to his attack roll and deals 5 extra points of damage. If Alenton accidentally smites a creature that is not evil, the smite has no effect, but the ability is still used up for that day.

Special Mount (Sp): Alenton's special mount is a heavy warhorse named Platinum. Once per day, as a full-round action, Alenton may magically call Platinum from the celestial realms in which it resides. The mount immediately appears adjacent to him and remains for 20 hours; it may be dismissed at any time as a free action.

▲ Platinum: Large Magical Beast; HD 6d8+12; hp 39; Init +1; Spd 50 ft.; AC 18, touch 10, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +3; Grp +11; Atk +6 melee (1d6+4, hoof); Full Atk +6/+6 melee (1d6+4, 2 hooves); SA —; SQ Improved evasion; SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 19, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 6, Wis 13, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Listen +5, Spot +5; Endurance, Run Improved Evasion (Ex): When subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, Nemesis takes no damage if she makes a successful saving throw and only half damage if the saving throw fails.

Low-light Vision (Ex): Can see twice as far as a human in dim light.

Scent (Ex): Can detect approaching enemies, sniff out hidden foes, and track by sense of smell.

Turn Undead (Su): Alenton gains the supernatural ability to *turn undead*. He may use this ability 5 times per day. He turns undead as a cleric of three levels lower would.

Paladin Spells Prepared: (2/2; save DC 12 + spell level): 1st—*cure light wounds, divine favor*; 2nd—*bull's strength, shield other*.

Possessions: Masterwork full plate, +2 greataxe (named "Velena's Might"), +1 masterwork mighty (+3) composite longbow, 20 masterwork arrows, holy symbol.

8. Bellecroft's

One of the few inns in town, Bellecroft's is neutral ground by all the major and minor gangs of Hell's Reach. The place serves as a meeting ground for mercenaries, smugglers, and delegations from gangs. Bellecroft takes a personal hand in keeping the peace. She and her staff of dwarves and humans sailed to Hell's reach after banishment for piracy. Bellecroft always wanted to run a tavern and saw a gaping hole in the Hell's Reach market. Using her unique combination of martial, brewing, and cooking skills, Bellecroft's quickly became the only place in the Boulevards where gang members could meet and discuss business in peace.

Bellecroft values her neutral status and takes great pains to treat all guests equally. The tavern lacks a common room primarily to keep tensions and the chances for a bar brawl to a minimum. Instead, patrons rent curtained, private booths for their use, or bedrooms upstairs for extended stays. Most customers pay in goods ranging from weapons and armor to imported food. Bellecroft's husband, a dour dwarf named Servik, brews the thick, black ale this place is known for. Bellecroft's fame has even managed to extend beyond the city. On the mainland, "Stopping for a brew at Bellecroft's" is a common euphemism for making a smuggling run to Hell's Reach.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

▲ Bellecroft, Dwarf Ftr 8: CR 8; Medium humanoid; HD 8d10+24; hp 63; Init +; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 10, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +8; Grp +10; Atk +11 melee (1d8+5/x3, warhammer); Full Atk +11/+6 melee (1d8+5/x3, warhammer); SA —; SQ —; AL NG; SV Fort +9, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 14, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 15.
Skills and Feats: Craft (brewing) +12, Intimidate +13, Jump +13; Cleave, Combat Expertise, Improved Disarm, Improved Trip, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (warhammer), Weapon Specialization (warhammer)
Possessions: +1 breastplate, light steel shield, +1 warhammer (named "Hammerholme"), 514 gp.

CURRENT SITUATION AND DEVELOPMENTS

Hell's Reach is a perpetual battleground. Gangs continually battle for turf. A few extra square feet on which to grow Torred's petal spells the difference between starvation and prosperity. The Phardonites and Sea Furys are the only gangs who have managed to carve out strong, enduring power bases, the Phardonites relying on their divine magic and the Sea Furys getting by with their strong ties to the outside world and military discipline. Sometimes a charismatic individual pulls together a coalition of gangs, but these groups often collapse with the death of their leaders. Drawing too much attention from the Phardonites or Furys is the best way for a would-be warlord to meet his end on an assassin's blade. The Furys and Phardonites accept each other as competitors, and often work more to keep other gangs down than to undermine each other's position. Both sides know fighting is bad for business, and neither currently believes the risks of open conflict outweigh any benefits. Still, a faction of fanatical Phardonites clamors for an unholy crusade to drive all non-Phardonites from the ruins. Some Sea Furys feel conflict with the Phardonites is inevitable and whichever side strikes first has the advantage in the conflict. The two sides are one major incident away from igniting a firestorm of violence throughout the ruins. With Malachai working to insure such an incident comes to pass, it is only a matter of time before Hell's Reach explodes.

Ironically, the one thing all gangs agree on is both the lost souls and the intruding sahuagin must die. Both groups pose an equal threat to all gangs and therefore pose the best tool a would-be warlord could use to cement a large-scale alliance amongst the criminals.

THE RACE

The characters uncover evidence that a cabal of necromancers plans to journey to Hell's Reach in order to claim a powerful, evil artifact long thought lost in the disaster that created Hell's Reach. The characters must journey to the ruins and either defeat the necromancers before they can claim their prize, or beat them to the goal and either destroy it or escape the island with it. While the necromancers may have the advantage in this situation, the characters could easily bribe or ally with a gang and work with them to defeat the necromancers.

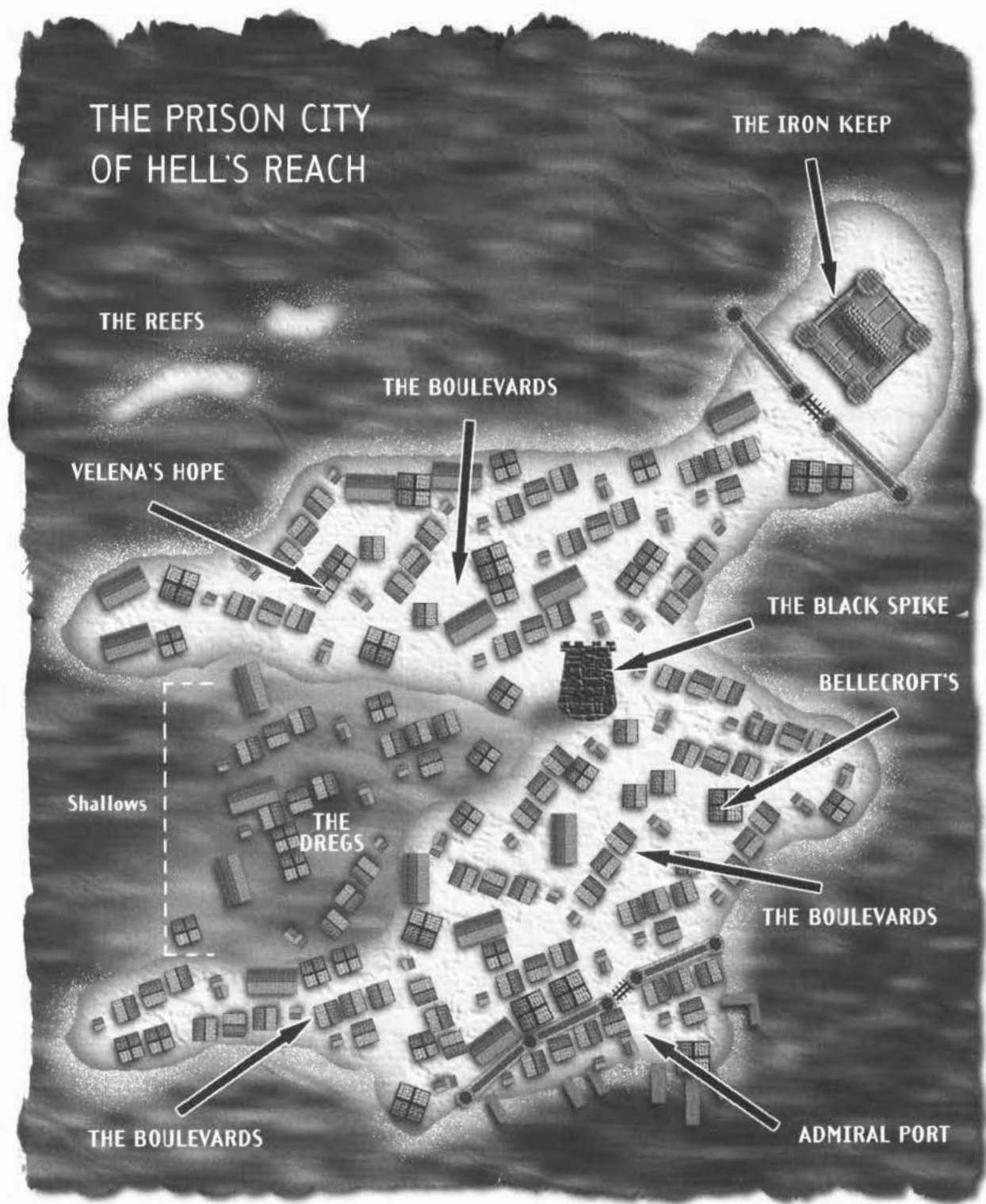
SETTLERS

If you are just starting a campaign and do not mind running games revolving around non-heroic characters, the PCs could be inmates freshly deposited on Hell's Reach. The characters must deal with hungry lost souls and rampaging gang members before either establishing their own gang or joining up with an established one. Over time, the PCs can struggle to make the best of their situation, either striving to escape to the outside world to working to carve out a safe niche within Hell's Reach. Not only must the characters deal with direct physical threats but politics in the form of forging truces with gangs and gaining new allies and resource management. Building a viable base of operations and contacts in various illicit trades are critical components to success in this sort of campaign.

YOLLGOTHA AWAKENED

The PCs stumble across evidence pointing to the demon Yollgotha is on the verge of awakening. They must journey to Hell's Reach, work with the groups who live there to topple the archmage Malachy, and journey deep within the bowels of the city to find Yollgotha's resting place and seal it off forever. This story could easily adapt to any of the other ideas listed above, and could form the backbone of an entire campaign.

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NEW DEITIES

PHARDON

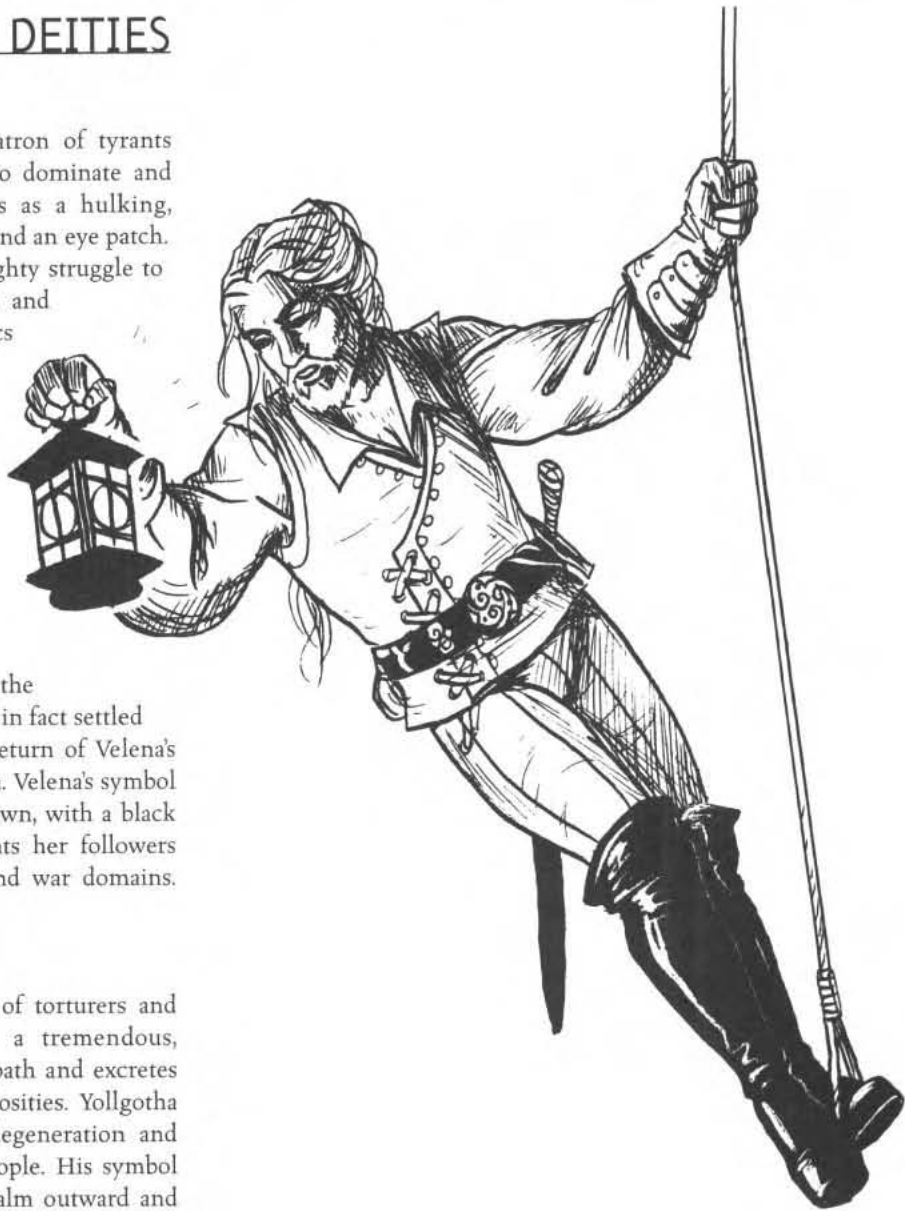
This grim deity is the lawful evil patron of tyrants and anyone who uses their strength to dominate and subjugate the weak. Phardon appears as a hulking, bearded brute wearing full plate armor and an eye patch. His face bears many scars from his mighty struggle to defeat and claim lordship over devils and other powerful creatures. Phardon's clerics often scar themselves in tribute to their lord. Phardon grants his clerics access to the law, evil, strength, and war domains. His favored weapon is the heavy mace.

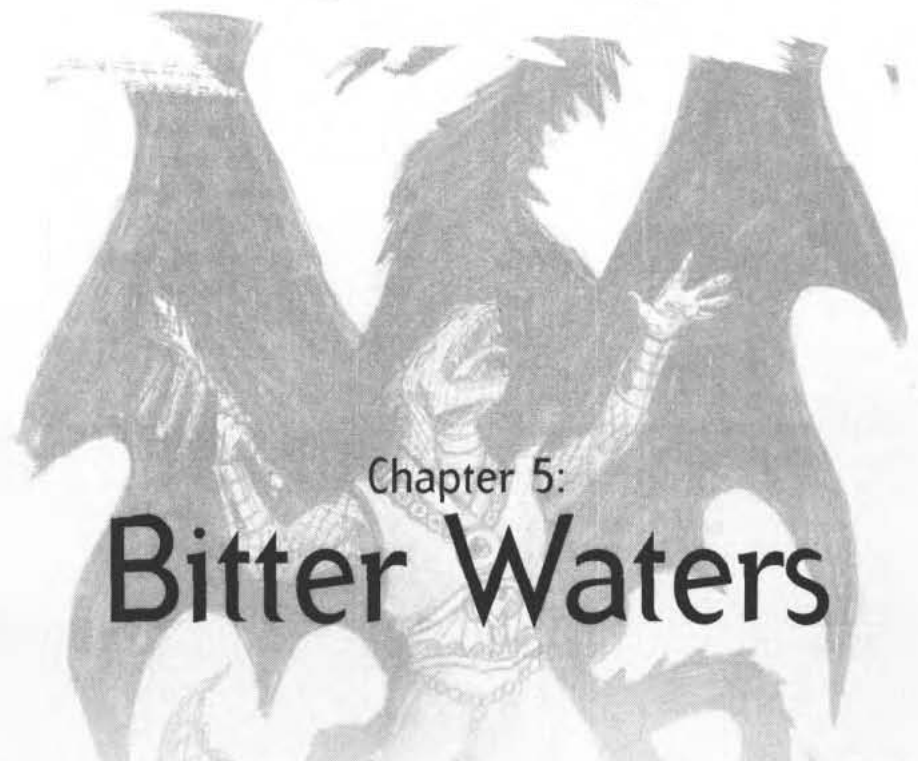
VELENA

A lawful good demi-goddess and patron of paladins, Velenia appears as a raven-haired, pale-skinned woman of slender build. Long thought to be the civic deity of Alleton, Velenia's followers in fact settled in the city to watch for signs of the return of Velenia's sworn enemy, the demon lord Yollgotha. Velenia's symbol is a golden triangle painted flat side down, with a black "V" painted in its center. Velenia grants her followers access to the law, good, protection, and war domains. Her weapon of choice is the greataxe.

YOLLGOTHA

The demon lord of pain, and patron of torturers and cannibals, Yollgotha is depicted as a tremendous, pale white worm devouring all in its path and excretes them out as tortured, skinless monstrosities. Yollgotha is chaotic evil and delights in the degeneration and destruction of formerly respectable people. His symbol is a skinless, bloody hand displayed palm outward and fingers spread. His favored weapon is the whip, and he grants his clerics access to the evil, chaos, destruction, and death domains.





Chapter 5: Bitter Waters

Levels 1 to 3

by Andrew Getting

Through acrid mists and bitter waters they march. They are quiet, silent as they exit the marshlands. Spears held high, the warriors scan the fog for signs of the attacker.

Every step takes them further from their old lands.

Every step brings them closer to the lands of their 'allies,' who had abandoned them when the marsh turned foul.

Every step brings one of them down to the befouled earth beneath the water, there to rest forever.

Every step churns up more of the poisoned water as it seeps between their scales and below the skin.

So many had died on this march, and after the attack, they had so few left...

The mists part in the night. The village's light bathes them in a false welcome.

The human guards are unsteady, either from poison or from drink. The town celebrates the end of the trade season, but not a man raises a toast to the creatures who died for it.

So many had died from the first attack of the beast and from the aftermath, but the humans would suffer for such treachery...

DM BACKGROUND

This adventure is designed for four to six PCs of levels 1 to 3. Diplomacy, wilderness and healing skills all serve the characters well in this scenario. The DM should allow one or more of the characters speak to draconic as it will allow them to communicate easily with the lizardmen.

Bitter Waters is a self-contained adventure (with possible ramifications in the future), which adapts readily to fit into any campaign. Because of the complexity of this adventure, it is recommended it be read carefully, making notes where appropriate.

Like many borderland communities, the village of Osell maintains a precarious existence — though taxes are low and few ask questions of the hardworking locals, life is difficult and survival depends on nature's bounty. This is especially difficult in a marsh.

The people of Osell therefore contacted a nearby tribe of lizardfolk, with whom they swore to peace and trade. Osell's profits rose with the lizardfolk exotic goods, and the town's growth stymied (per their treaty). Though hardly a paradise, Osell and the lizardfolk community each grew strong and content.

The lizardfolk, however, was not entirely candid with the human settlement. 20 years ago, before the humans came, the lizardfolk champion did combat with a great black dragon, claiming the marsh and its inhabitants as his. The great warrior died in combat, but not before maiming the retreating dragon. The dragon's lair was

BARDIC LORE

A bard can make a Bardic Knowledge check to discover what he may have heard. A bard learns all the information of the DC his check succeeded by and all that below it (a Bard who rolled a 17 would learn the information under DC 15 and DC 10). Alternately this information can be gained by a Gather Information skill check +5 higher than the DC of a Bardic Lore check to see if the PC has heard any rumors.

DC 10 The village of Osell maintains a precarious existence — though taxes are low and few ask questions of the hardworking locals, life is difficult and survival depends on nature's bounty.

DC 15 The people of Osell contacted a nearby tribe of lizardfolk, with whom they swore peace and trade.

DC 17 Osell's healthy trade wasn't just due to their own goods, but exotic offerings from the lizardfolk they trade with.

DC 20 It is said a great black dragon once dwelled within the swamp where the village of Osell lies.

DC 25 It is said the black dragon lost the use of his wings in a fight.

never found and fear gripped the lizardfolk that someday he would return. Once the humans arrived, the lizardfolk struck a pact, certain the humans would aid them if the dragon returned to claim his land.

On all accounts, they were wrong.

The black dragon, Afael, remained crippled, unable to fly. Without this advantage, Afael could not reap vengeance without exposing himself to greater harm. So, he waited. He drew upon his magic and created a new beast, from his dragonblood. The Drackinn was born.

Though clumsier and less intelligent than a true dragon, the Drackinn's attack was formidable and devastating.

This new dragon belched acid — not enough to kill outright, but in time, any who fell victim to it eventually died. Worse still, the creature secreted the acid through its body, tainting the marsh with its presence.

Desperate for aid, the lizardfolk called upon the people of Osell. Lizardfolk ambassadors met with the leader of the Osell council, deep in celebration. The men recently returned from selling their wares in town and a healthy supply of ale and cider was available for all.

Few townspeople were sober and the headman refused the lizardfolk request.

The following night, a lizardfolk war party descended upon the village. The only survivor was a drunken tradesman who watched the whole assault. Terrified, he fled to the Banik, where he recounted his tale.

The town of Banik was shocked with the news — less than a day before, Osell's merchants had been alive and rich. Now, all were dead without explanation. Banik's mayor offered a reward for anyone who found the cause for the slaughter and brought those responsible to justice.

THE FALL OF OSELL

Though only one man witnesses the lizardfolk sacking of Osell, the news floods to nearby cities. When the PCs enter Banik (or any nearby city or town), read the following aloud:

There is a fear in this town. The guardsmen, normally relaxed and genial or busy with pickpockets and drunkards, grip their weapons tightly and continually pace their stations. Several shops are closed, while others (even the grocers' and taverns) offer weapons in addition to their normal wares. A child cries out as the men flinch, looking toward the happily playing boy.

Depending on the prevailing alignment, the prices on martial goods such as weapons and armor could be as little as half (in a good community) or as much as three times (in an evil community).

Asking anyone what is going on provokes the same reaction:

Jenkins was returning to Osell from selling his wares, and he saw it all. First, half the bloody town exploded, and then fell over into the swamp. Next thing he knows, the whole place is a mess people screaming and running around, fights on the battlements, and then he sees what caused it all.

Slinking out of the marsh come these things with spears held high: lizardfolk. Osell's old allies turned on the town, ransacking it... making it their own. Jenkins ran back here, and he nearly climbed over the city walls just to talk to our mayor. Jenkins packed up and left soon after, saying those lizards 'ill be the death of us all. No telling what they'll do next...

If the PCs take the hint, move on to Speaking with Mayor Gevell. If not, within a day the townsmen have posted signs asking for a scout team to Osell, offering 100 gp per person who signs up. If the PCs take this route, move directly to "Briefing" below.

SPEAKING WITH MAYOR GEVELL

If the PCs express a desire to meet with Mayor Gevell, the city guards happily escort them.

If the PCs take the work, move to Briefing below.

A wave of relief passes over the guards' faces, and they eagerly take you to the mayor. Gevell — an adventurer before he was crippled — meets with you in his private offices. He stands with the aid of a crutch.

The mayor smiles upon your arrival. "Welcome, good friends. I understand you are here to aid us.

I've discussed the matter with Jenkins, and now keep him as a guest in my home until his nerves settle. Despite what you may have guessed, I am not interested in retaliation; the lizardfolk traded with Osell for nearly twenty years. They attacked for a reason.

Before I commit troops against them, I should like to know the reason. This is, of course, where you come in.

I shall pay you men (and ladies) 2,000 gold pieces to investigate this matter, and an additional 500 if you discover the cause of the lizardfolk ire and root it out. The people want justice and those responsible are held accountable. Osell wasn't the most important trade center in the region, but its people deserve an explanation.

Return tomorrow, and my man-at-arms will brief you.

"Near as we can tell, Osell's now got two ways in — the front gate, and the great bloody hole the lizards tore in the side of the place. If you people fancy yourselves lucky, you may want to consider the front entrance. I wouldn't. Bloody lizards'll probably jump you the moment they spot ya. The hole's more dangerous, probably unstable and still sinking into the swamp, but the guard's probably lighter, too. You're not going there for heroics, after all just to sniff the place out, and figure out what the lizards are up to."

He spits again and then wipes his mouth. "Got it? Good. Now get going."

The man-at-arms is willing to pay the PCs 50 gp in advance, but does not advertise the fact. If they ask for it, he gives it, but he does not trust the PCs or their skill.

But he is more concerned that if the PCs fail, the lizardfolk will attack Baint next.

OSELL

Take as much time as necessary to get the PCs to Osell (it should be just a day to the east on foot, with a few small encounters along the way). When the PCs arrive, they find Osell quiet, but with definite signs of invasion — the southwest wall, overlooking the marsh, has fallen, and lizardfolk warriors scout the perimeter. Unless the PCs attempt to enter by the southwest wall, the lizardfolk wait for the PCs to come to them. The lizardfolk are fully aware of how the outside world views their actions, and welcome any overture of peace. The lizardfolk assume the PCs to be the precursor to an invasion force should they enter through the wall.

BRIEFING

The PCs arrive at the gates to the mayor's home the following day. Read or paraphrase the following aloud:

Though you are certain you have arrived at the appointed hour, the manor yard is empty of any save you. No other adventurers or crusaders have arrived, and you quietly wonder whether it is because you are the only ones foolhardy...

Halting you in mid-thought, a man steps out of the mayor's home. Clad in blackened chain mail, and sporting a terrible scar from the cleft of his chin to his left eyebrow, he looks over you each with his one good eye.

"Finally," he spits. "You lot are the best Gevell could do, eh? Fair enough. His honor's money's as good as anybody's, I suppose, so listen up."

1. The West Gate

The gate, curiously, lies open. Beyond it, two towers are manned with unblinking lizardfolk. Though their eyes never leave you, they make no move to approach. Behind the towers, a rough assemblage of tents and banners stand before a large hut.

2. Western Guard Towers

Both towers have five lizardfolk apiece in them, the bulk of the tribe's remaining force. Ssa'all'iss has told both units to watch for outsiders, but not to make a move unless the newcomers threaten either them or their charges at location #6. If approached, they respond in Draconic the chieftain, Ssa'all'iss (room #11), wishes to speak to them. Only one speaks common and he only speaks if none of the PCs understand Draconic. Unless a lizardfolk dies, these warriors use their lassos to subdue opponents, rather than slay anyone outright.

♣ **Lizardfolk:** CR 1; Medium humanoid (reptilian); HD 2d8+2 hp 11; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 or 17, touch 10, flat-footed 15 or 17; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d4+1, claw) or +2 melee (1d6+1, club) or +1 ranged (1d6+1, javelin); Full Atk +2 melee (1d4+1, 2 claws) and +0 melee (1d4, bite), or +2 melee (1d6+1, club) and +0 melee (1d4, bite), or +1 ranged (1d6+1, javelin); SA —; SQ Hold breath; AL N: SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skill and Feats: Balance +4, Jump +5, Swim +2; Multiattack.

Hold Breath: A lizardfolk can hold its breath for a number of rounds equal to four times its Constitution score before it risks drowning.

Skill: Because of their tails, lizardfolk have a +4 racial bonus on Jump, Swim, and Balance checks. The skill modifiers given in the statistics block include a –2 armor check penalty (–4 on Swim checks) for carrying a heavy shield.

3. Guest House

The guesthouse is empty, save for the remains of a foreign merchant. Traveling papers identify the corpse as Jesmund Jenkins; his brother was the sole survivor.

4. Storehouse

This long, thin building was a storehouse until it caught fire. Now its southwest corner is blackened and few fish remain of what is likely the work of hungry lizardfolk.

Anyone studying the burns may make a Craft (alchemy) skill check (DC 15) to notice this is a chemical burn — a sign of explosives, in this case, fireworks.

5. The Southwest Entrance

Here the town's remains tilt absurdly into the marsh. Burnt logs float in the muck and within the town itself the swamp slowly reclaims the town. Just north of the charred, broken wall are two buildings in similar conditions. One is long and thin, and the other is all but destroyed. Behind this latter building is a large bonfire.

Hiding in the ruins of location #13 and amid the muck and water are five lizardfolk. Unlike the ones at location #2, these warriors are rather bloodthirsty — they blame the humans for the destruction of the tribe. If the PCs make any loud noise, five lizardfolk from location #12 investigate and attempt to lasso both groups. This second group arrives in two rounds.

If any great weight is placed solidly upon the ground here, such as a body falling sharply from combat, a hidden sinkhole triggers. All involved PCs must Swim (DC 19) to safety or risk sinking in five rounds, at which time they begin drowning. Worse still, bombardier beetles live beneath the soil and disturbing it awakens two other sleeping beetles. These beetles attack anything other than each other. They are immune to the poison of the Drackinn. Fortunately, however, the bog still mires them, and they take two full rounds to fight free of its embrace.

If the PCs help the lizardfolk fight off the bombardiers, they aid the PCs out of the sinkhole.

♣ **Giant Bombardier Beetle:** CR 2; Medium vermin; HD 2d8+4; hp 13 each; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d4+1, bite); Full Atk +2 melee (1d4+1, bite); SA Acid spray; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., vermin traits; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 10, Con 14, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: —

Acid Spray (Ex): When attacked or disturbed, the creature can release a 10-ft. cone of acidic vapor once per round. Those within the cone must succeed on a DC 13 Fortitude save or take 1d4+2 points of acid damage. The save DC is Constitution-based.

If the PCs have access to the appropriate magic or skills, allow PCs to tame or control the beetles. The lizardfolk, even the bloodthirsty ones, respect such an act and the beetles themselves make decent transport for a single rider.

Anyone who sets foot in the marsh, or who falls into its sinkhole, must make a Fort save (DC 15) or fall prey to the poison of the Drackinn, losing one temporary point each in Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution. Repeated exposures have cumulative effects.

6. Lizardfolk Camp

Here the lizardfolk have built their camp. In jarring contrast to the words of the townspeople, these creatures are lethargic, and many cough sickly or already dead. The vermin of the swamp swarm their bodies before some of the stronger ones drag the corpses behind the hut to the east. The medics' eyes offer neither conversation nor hope.

These lizardfolk are the sickest of the lot; two-dozen barely hang on to life. Ssa'all'iss (the chieftain) was the apprentice to the previous druid, who died in the Drackinn's assault. He lacks the power to heal more than one or two of his people a day and so the death toll rises.

None of these lizardfolk speak Common. But, even if spoken to in Draconic, they are weak and can only answer in a feebly nod or shake of the head.

♣ **Lizardfolk:** CR 1; Medium humanoid (reptilian); HD 2d8+2 hp 11; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 or 17, touch 10, flat-footed 15 or 17; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d4+1, claw) or +2 melee (1d6+1, club) or +1 ranged (1d6+1, javelin); Full Atk +2 melee (1d4+1, 2 claws) and +0 melee (1d4, bite), or +2 melee (1d6+1, club) and +0 melee (1d4, bite), or +1 ranged (1d6+1, javelin); SA —; SQ Hold breath; AL N: SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skill and Feats: Balance +4, Jump +5, Swim +2; Multiattack.

Hold Breath: A lizardfolk can hold its breath for a number of rounds equal to four times its Constitution score before it risks drowning.

Skill: Because of their tails, lizardfolk have a +4 racial bonus on Jump, Swim, and Balance checks. The skill modifiers given in the statistics block include a –2 armor check penalty (–4 on Swim checks) for carrying a heavy shield.

7. Fishermens' Huts

In contrast to the rest of the village, the huts remain sturdy, even inhabitable. Why didn't the lizardfolk attack here?

💣 **Fireworks Trap:** CR 3; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; fireworks, 1d4 damage per round for 1d10 rounds (DC 17 Reflex save half damage). Search (DC 15); Disable Device (DC 10)

One trip causes all of the traps in this area to go off, leveling the buildings. The lizardfolk discovered the traps and hence do not enter here.

These huts are home to the single surviving villager, Jenis. Jenis is only thirteen, and quite cautious about displaying her skills (her father beat her the last time she plied her thieving trade), but is also fully aware she is outnumbered and has little chance of surviving on her own. While she knows the location of each and every firework trap, she has no qualms about dying here. She has silently witnessed the lizardfolk invasion, and is looking for her chance for revenge. She instantly trusts any PCs, however.

Jenis intends to kill Ssa'all'iss as soon as she can. Though not truly evil, Jenis never forgives the lizardfolk for what they have done here. If necessary she befriends the right people to get to Ssa'all'iss. Jenis has not yet contracted the poison.

Read or paraphrase the following aloud if the PCs successfully disarm or navigate around three traps:

As you carefully step through the huts, you notice a flash of clothing. From around a corner, a girl's face peers at you. After a moment, she almost sobs with relief. "Thank the tide. You're not one of them."

Jenis refuses to answer any questions about her past (she is ashamed of her thievery), nor does she engage in idle chatter:

"Look, I'm grateful you're here and all, but those snakes killed everyone! Either get me out, help me destroy them, or bugger off!"

If asked about either the town or the lizardfolk, she responds:

She blinks away tears, but responds with a cold, clear voice: "The snakes killed 'em all. The fishers and guards first, but they didn't stop there. They came after all of us... I set off some of the fireworks as a warning and then strung up these huts. They don't dare come near me now."

Jenis disarms each of the traps, readying the fireworks for use as more controlled weapons. Depending on the circumstance, she either uses them to destroy the rest of the camp (Jenis is unaware the lizardfolk are dying, or she would have already done this), or turn them upon the Drackinn. PCs may make a Disable Device check (DC 20) to create such weapons once Jenis has showed them.

These are grenade-like weapons with a throwing range of 20 ft. and a burst radius of 5 ft. They do 1d4 damage a round, for 1d10 rounds, to all targets in the radius. If the fireworks come into contact with water, even if bursting, the fireworks are ruined.

▲ **Jenis, Human Rog 1:** CR 1; Medium humanoid; HD 1d6; hp 6; Init +1; Spd 30ft.; AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +0; Grp +0; Atk +0 melee (1d6, spear) or +1 ranged (1d4/19–20, dagger); Full Atk +0 melee (1d6, dagger) or +1 ranged (1d4/19–20, dagger); SA Sneak attack +1d6; SQ Trapfinding; AL CG; SV Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 11, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Balance +4, Bluff +4, Climb +3, Disable Device +4, Escape Artist +2, Hide +2, Listen +3, Move Silently +2, Open Lock +2, Search +4, Spot +2, Swim +4; Alertness, Run.

Trapfinding: Jenis can use the Search skill to locate traps when the task has a Difficulty Class higher than 20. Finding a magic trap has a DC of 25 + the level of the spell used to create it. Jenis can use the Disable Device skill to disarm magic traps. A magic trap generally has a DC of 25 + the level of the spell used to create it. A rogue who beats a trap's DC by 10 or more with a Disable Device check can study a trap, figure out how it works, and bypass it (with her party) without disarming it.

Possessions: Padded armor vest, dagger, shortspear.

8. Village Headsman's House

North of the bonfire, this house is a true house, rather than the simple huts of the villagers. Like the bonfire, however, the house emits a terrible stench. Peering within the windows, you can see why — the bodies of most of the villagers are within.

If the PCs search only the building (not the bodies), have them make Search checks (DC 20). Success means a note is found in the headsman's desk. It reads:

Today, the lizards came early. The old druid's apprentice led them, and spoke of a dragon in these waters. Though I would never admit it to such as they, I never trusted the lizardfolk. Still, if it proves a problem I can always send for help from home.

"Bah. What would a dragon possibly want with this place?"

If the PCs search the bodies (Will save, DC 18 to choke down the nausea), they find 300 gp in random coins and minor jewelry.

9. Shop

The smaller building next to the house and closer to the foul bonfire is, as its sign proclaims in both Common and Draconic, a general store. The door lays on the ground broken, ripped from the frame.

The shop's contents remain intact, though only a dozen shortswords and halfspears are directly useful to adventurers. Other contents include fishing nets and several long poles. The coinbox remains untouched (15 sp).

10. Dueling Grounds

Ssithiss and his remaining warriors seal this gate from within. It is used as the last stand against the outsiders if necessary. If the PCs agreed to Ssa'all'iss' request, or if the lizardfolk captured them, this serves as an arena to test the PCs in combat.

The remaining warriors crowd you, poking and prodding as they lead you within the inner walls of the village. Then, suddenly, the walls of fighters part, and standing before you is a hulking white brute of a lizardfolk — as wide as he is tall, and covered in scars.

The lizardman touches his breast. "Ssithiss the Grey. One you fight now."

The lizardfolk do not allow the PCs to leave until after a fight is over. When the fight begins, they shout and throw pebbles at the PC — this is their traditional ritual combat, and the PCs are welcome to treat Ssithiss likewise. No true warrior should fall to such a simple distraction. Ssithiss strikes to subdue (inflicting non-lethal damage) unless his opponent seems to be trying to call him. Ssithiss accepts surrender, just as he surrenders he is reduced to below half his hit points.

Debris thrown at either combatant risks distracting the warrior. If peppered by debris, the combatant must make a Concentration check (DC 10) or suffer a –3 penalty to hit until the end of the round (Ssithiss receives a +2 circumstance bonus to this check from his long experience with this ritual). In addition, the PCs may freely use any abilities they have which does not directly damage either participant.

If the PCs inquire about the fight, Ssa'all'iss responds:

This is not simple sport for us. The founder of Osell had to endure such a match, too. He later said our ways were... foreign? He did not understand though both our peoples could have a champion, the others still mattered. Strange customs, humans.

Jenis is still with the PCs and attempts to kill Ssa'all'iss while the fight is going on. The PCs may notice her movements by using the appropriate skill (Spot or Listen) against her Hide or Move Silently checks. Simply making eye contact may get her to back down (Intimidation check), as she does not wish to incur the PCs' wrath.

If they fail to stop Jenis, she runs a blade into Ssa'all'iss the first round, dealing maximum critical damage and sneak attack damage (14 points). Ssa'all'iss has only twelve and the PCs have two rounds to save his life, as Jenis runs for safety but is quickly cut down by a lizardfolk warrior. The PCs are in a tough bind now and the adventure opens to many possibilities if the PCs do not save the tribe chieftain.

▲ Ssithiss the Grey, Lizardfolk Brb 3: CR 3; Medium humanoid (reptilian); HD 3d12+3 (28 hp); Init +0; Spd 40 ft.; AC 15 or 17, touch 10, flat-footed 15 or 17; Base Atk +3; Grp +5; Atk +5 melee (1d4+2, claw) or +5 melee (1d6+2, club) or +3 ranged (1d6+2, javelin); Full Atk +5 melee (1d4+2, claw) or +5 melee (1d6+2, club) or +3 ranged (1d6+2, javelin); SA Rage 1/day; SQ Fast movement, hold breath, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 15, Dex 11, Con 13, Int 9, Wis 9, Cha 10.

Skill and Feats: Concentration +1, Balance +4, Jump +5, Swim +2; Multiattack.

Hold Breath: A lizardfolk can hold its breath for a number of rounds equal to four times its Constitution score before it risks drowning.

Rage (Ex): Ssithiss can fly into a rage once per day. In a rage, Ssithiss temporarily gains a +4 bonus to Strength, a +4 bonus to Constitution, and a +2 morale bonus on Will saves, but he takes a –2 penalty to Armor Class. The increase in Constitution increases Ssithiss's hit points by 6, but these hit points go away at the end of the rage when his Constitution score drops back to normal. (These extra hit points are not lost first the way temporary hit points are.) A fit of rage lasts for 6 rounds. Ssithiss may prematurely end his rage. At the end of the rage, Ssithiss loses the rage modifiers and restrictions and becomes fatigued (–2 penalty to Strength, –2 penalty to Dexterity, can't charge or run) for the duration of the current encounter.

Uncanny Dodge (Ex): Ssithiss retains his Dexterity bonus to AC (if any) even if he is caught flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker. However, he still loses his Dexterity bonus to AC if immobilized.

Trap Sense (Ex): Ssithiss gains a +1 bonus on Reflex saves made to avoid traps and a +1 dodge bonus to AC against attacks made by traps.

Skill: Because of their tails, lizardfolk have a +4 racial bonus on Jump, Swim, and Balance checks. The skill modifiers given in the statistics block include a –2 armor check penalty (–4 on Swim checks) for carrying a heavy shield.

Possessions: Heave Wooden Shield, club, four javelins.

Ssithiss does not use his Rage ability unless his opponent refuses his surrender, or unless he faces the Drackinn. He prefers subdual damage against the PCs.

Regardless of the battle's outcome, if the PCs merely accept Ssithiss' challenge, he joins them in the assault on the Drackinn. If the PCs attacked the lizardfolk, they are dragged into the fight with the Drackinn; the lizardfolk know attackers are on the way, and use every resource they can to bear against the dragon. Ssithiss explains the

Drackinn in the most rudimentary way. While he has so far escaped the poison choking his kind, his fights have left him barely aware of the outside world. All he knows is the Drackinn is an enemy sent by a black dragon.

11. Ssa'all'iss

As the PCs approach this tower, Ssa'all'iss greets them hurriedly.

Almost before the tower comes into view through the chanel smoke, a voice calls out. A single figure clambers down from the eastern tower, clad only in the vines of his native swamp.

The young lizardman approaches. "Friends!" he speaks in almost perfect common. "You've no idea how long I've awaited your arrival. Please, please, sit and listen."

"I am newly appointed the chief over my tribe. My father fell against an agent of our tribe's ancient enemy, Afael, a foul, black dragon whom we had banished decades ago. Though the dragon is too weak to face us directly yet, he has sent forward a spawn to attack us, a dire lizard twisted with potent sorcery and dragon blood. A week ago, this creature attacked us, and fouled the swamp with its presence. Many of our finest warriors died. My father died. Now I am chief, and the Drackinn's influence spreads. Soon, he shall have returned control of the marsh to his hidden master."

"Please, good friends, will you not help us and yourselves in ridding us of this plague?"

If the PCs agree, Ssa'all'iss sends them to recruit Ssithiss, who still views Ssa'all'iss as unworthy to lead. If the PC asks about the attack on Osell, Ssa'all'iss responds:

"We were allies with Osell for many years. When they refused to help us, they cast us out of the village. With the Drackinn at our back, we had no choice but to move forward into Osell. They rained fire upon us, and killed many more of my tribe. I regret their deaths were necessary."

A successful Sense Motive check (DC 20) reveals Ssa'all'iss is lying, but he does not acknowledge it — he was more than willing to turn on Osell after they rebuked his request. Ssa'all'iss does not recognize Jenis, but if she is present, she has her own take on the events:

Jenis shakes with fury at Ssa'all'iss' comments. "You lying snake! You attacked us in the night, and cut our people down without shame! We did nothing to you! Nothing!"

At this point, Jenis reaches for her dagger. If the PCs do not restrain her, she attacks Ssa'all'iss, catching him flat footed and dealing 1d4 + 1d6 damage. Despite this, Ssa'all'iss makes every attempt to let Jenis live. If the PCs make no attempt to restrain her, however, Ssithiss refuses to accompany the PCs against the Drackinn, and Ssa'all'iss closes off ties to the humans after the Drackinn dies.

Once subdued or restrained, Jenis calms down, and Ssa'all'iss responds to her accusation:

"We had a treaty, your kind and mine. We upheld our bargains to the last. When we needed your people's aid, they refused us. Your people broke the treaty, not mine. I regret they had to die, but for the survival of my people, yours still had to die. Be glad we still need you, girl, or else we would have killed you and your friends already."

Ssa'all'iss differentiates between Jenis and the PCs if they restrained her; otherwise, his future comments take on a cool, distant overtone.

▲ Ssa'all'iss, Lizardfolk Dru3: CR 3; Medium humanoid (reptilian); HD 3d8+3 (20hp); Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 or 17, touch 10, flat-footed 15 or 17; Base Atk +2; Grp +3; Atk +3 melee (1d4+1, claw) or +3 melee (1d6+1, club) or +2 ranged (1d6+1, javelin); Full Atk +3 melee (1d4+1, 2 claws) and +1 melee (1d4, bite), or +3 melee (1d6+1, club) and +0 melee (1d4, bite), or +2 ranged (1d6+1, javelin); SA Spells; SQ Animal companion, hold breath, nature sense, trackless step, wild empathy, woodland stride; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +5; Str 13, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 10.
Skill and Feats: Balance +4, Diplomacy +6, Handle Animal +6, Jump +5, Knowledge (nature), Survival +8, Swim +2; Dodge, Multiattack.

Animal Companion (Ex): Ssa'all'iss has a dire rat companion named Skrvus.

✦ Skrvus, Dire Rat: CR 2; Small animal; HD 3d8+3 (17 hp); Init +3; Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 16, touch 15, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +0; Grp -4; Atk +4 melee (1d4 plus disease, bite); Full Atk +4 melee (1d4 plus disease, bite); SA Disease; SQ Evasion, low-light vision, link, scent, share spells; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 11, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 4.

Skills and Feats: Climb +11, Hide +8, Listen +4, Move Silently +4, Spot +4, Swim +11; Alertness, Weapon FinesseB

Evasion (Ex): If Skrvus is subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, he takes no damage if it makes a successful saving throw.

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

Link (Ex): The druid can handle Skrvus as a free action, or push it as a move action. *Share Spells (Ex):* At the druid's option, he may have any spell (but not any spell-like ability) he casts upon himself also affect Skrvus.

Skrvus must be within 5 ft. of him at the time of casting to receive the benefit. If the spell or effect has a duration other than instantaneous, it stops affecting Skrvus if he moves farther than 5 ft. away and will not affect the animal again, even if it returns to the druid before the duration expires.

Additionally, the druid may cast a spell with a target of "You" on Skrvus (as a touch range spell) instead of on himself. The druid and Skrvus can share spells even if the spells normally do not affect creatures of the companion's type (animal).

Skills and Feats: Dire rats have a +8 racial bonus on Swim checks. Dire rats have a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks and can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened.

Dire rats use their Dexterity modifier for Climb and Swim checks.

Hold Breath: A lizardfolk can hold its breath for a number of rounds equal to four times its Constitution score before it risks drowning.

Nature Sense (Ex): Ssa'all'iss gains a +2 bonus on Knowledge (nature) and Survival checks.

Wild Empathy (Ex): Ssa'all'iss can improve the attitude of an animal. This ability functions just like a Diplomacy check made to improve the attitude of a person. The druid rolls 1d20 +3 to determine the wild empathy check result.

Woodland Stride (Ex): Ssa'all'iss may move through any sort of undergrowth (such as natural thorns, briars, overgrown areas, and similar terrain) at his normal speed and without taking damage or suffering any other impairment. However, thorns, briars, and overgrown areas that have been magically manipulated to impede motion still affect him.

Trackless Step (Ex): Ssa'all'iss leaves no trail in natural surroundings and cannot be tracked. He may choose to leave a trail if so desired.

Skill: Because of their tails, lizardfolk have a +4 racial bonus on Jump, Swim, and Balance checks. The skill modifiers given in the statistics block include a -2 armor check penalty (-4 on Swim checks) for carrying a heavy shield.

Druid Spells Prepared (4/3/2; save DC 12 + spell level): 0—*flare, light, mending, resistance*; 1st—*entangle, longstrider, obscuring mist*; 2nd—*barkskin, flame blade*.

Possessions: Walking stick.

While Ssa'all'iss may join the PCs, he only engages in combat if cornered. He is the marsh's only hope for survival, and he knows it.

12. Southern Tower

This tower contains five more lizardfolk warriors. They join the PCs against the Drackinn, and defend the PCs from their fellows at location 5. Keep track of their hit points for the final battle.

13. Ruined Building

If the PCs entered from the western gate, the militant lizardfolk are waiting here. They do not attack, but glower at the PCs as they pass.

14. Bonfire

Read or paraphrase the following aloud as the bonfire enters view (after the PCs pass any of locations 8, 9, 10, or 13):

The source of the fire is now plain: the blaze is a pyre of the bodies of the lizardfolk's fallen, and stands three men high. The stench is overwhelming, stinging your eyes.

15. Docks

The docks, though ruined, still have several small boats afloat. The boats have no steering mechanism. Within the waters themselves, you can see several small fish floating while flies nibble at the carcasses. Though nothing compared to the ghastly odor of the bonfire, the marsh itself has an unclean quality. Even the waters have a rainbow sheen to them.

If the PCs use the poles from location #9 to steer the boats, they can avoid the poisons of the marsh up to the final battle.

16. The Marsh and the Drackinn

See location #5 for information on the dangers of traveling through the marsh. PC movement is limited to half base movement on foot, and PCs may not run or sprint in the marsh. Every hour spent trudging through the marsh, make another saving throw to resist the poisons. Characters with open wounds make the saves with a -5 circumstance penalty.

After four hours of game travel, read or paraphrase the following aloud:

Suddenly, a howl erupts from the surrounding dark lands. A gout of foul, black liquid strikes a tree and caustic smoke emits from the bark. A large lizard, with bony brow and mischievous glint, rises from the water and shakes the fluids from its impossibly large, black wings.

If Ssithiss is with the PCs, he immediately Rages. Combatants in boats must make a Reflex save (DC 16) each round in the boat or fall into the water, risking poison.

Two lizardfolk warriors guard Ssa'all'iss, while the rest attack in earnest. Characters near open flames risk igniting pockets of swamp gas. Roll 1d10 every round a there is an open flame. On a 1, the fire ignites the swamp gas dealing 1d6 points of damage in a 5 ft. radius. A successful Reflex save (DC 12) reduces the damage by half. Remember, only certain magical fires burn.

The Drackinn fights until slain.

BITTER WATERS
THE TOWN OF OSELL



EPILOGUE

☙ **Drackkin:** CR 3; Medium dragon (aquatic); HD 4d12 + 8; hp 34; Init +1; Spd 30ft., 20 ft. flying (clumsy), 50 ft. swimming; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +4; Grp +4; Atk Bite +4 melee (1d8, bite); Full Atk +4 melee (1d8, bite), +2 melee (1d6, 2 claws); SA Breath weapon; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., immunities, low-light vision; AL CE SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +4; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10 Skills: Hide +6, Move Silently +6; Dodge, Multiattack.

Breath Weapon (Su): Drackinns spit a stream of venom, 60 ft. in length. Those caught in this line (Ref save, DC 15 to avoid) must make a Fort save (DC 15) or lose one temporary point each from Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution. Multiple strikes are cumulative.

Immunities (Ex): Drackinns are immune to sleep and paralysis effects.



If Jenis survives, she leaves Osell to the lizardfolk for now. She visits neighboring communities, drumming up support for a battle against Ssa'all'iss.

The lizardfolk choose to remain in Osell until the marsh heals itself. If Ssa'all'iss dies, this marsh cannot heal and Ssithiss takes charge, although he is a poor leader.

The lizardfolk remain poisoned, and the tribe dies within the month without outside aid. If both Ssa'all'iss and Ssithiss die, the lizardfolk are at the mercy of the PCs, Jenis, and Afael — a poor state, indeed.

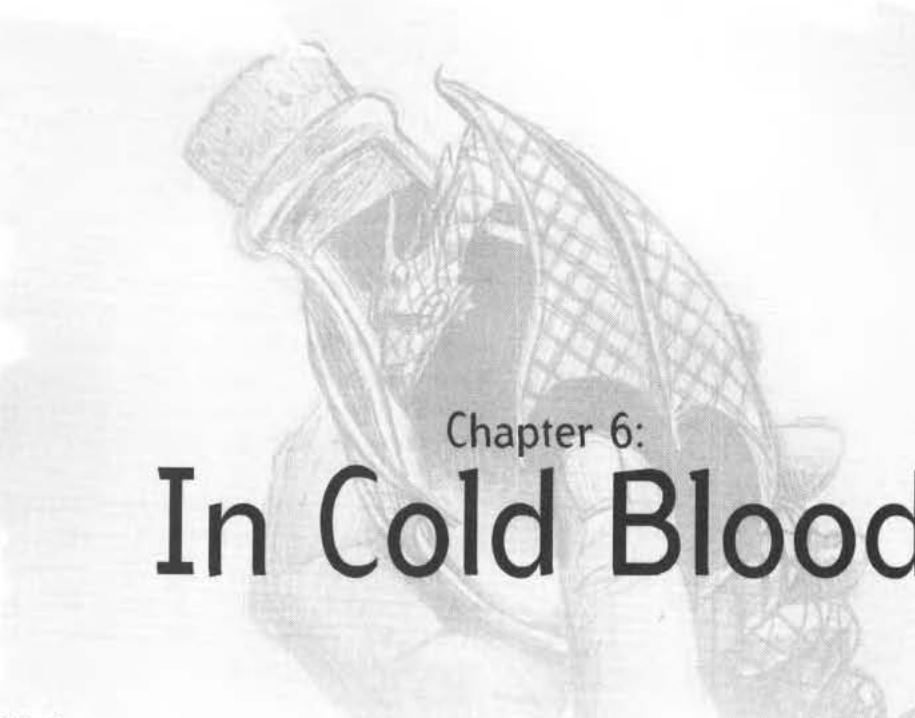
Afael, for his part, is at least briefly inconvenienced, regardless of the outcome.

He has watched the whole occurrence from afar, and may eventually offer aid to Jenis, Ssithiss, or any PC member who has shown an especially treacherous streak over the course of the adventure. He considers the entirety of the conflict to be in his best interests: driving a wedge between the lizardfolk and the nearby human communities, destroying the more powerful members of the tribe, and revealing the strategies of all who could conceivably oppose his return. Unless the whole of the adventure was a disaster, however (Ssa'all'iss and Ssithiss die, and the swamp remains poisoned), Afael does not return just yet. The dragon is perfectly willing to rule a poisoned stretch of swamp, but still wants subjects to bow to his despotic ways. He ultimately desires the conquest of this and the neighboring regions, and twists the ambitions of Jenis, Ssithiss, or the PCs toward this end.

He uses messengers (other lieutenants, the same fell creatures who guarded him in his sleep), or magic to contact these new servants, offering power and revenge in exchange for loyalty. If Ssithiss or Jenis fall prey to these tricks, they eventually become Chaotic Neutral and than Chaotic Evil.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

- Jenis wants to escape this provincial life and go to the big city. She asks the PCs to escort her there, where they have a chance to help her (and maybe even themselves) join a rogue and information guild (see the adventure "The Gauntlet").
- An agent of a blackguard named Intrepus comes to announce to the lizardfolk they will soon have a new master. Word is humanoids are being recruited into an army under this tyrant (see the adventure "Tomb of the Overseers").



Chapter 6: In Cold Blood

Levels 6 to 8

by Chris Hussey

The ravings of a mad prophet claim a great evil has returned to Ethinok and this time, there will be no salvation. Even those who vanquished evil in the past will be unable to stop it.

Terror grips the lower class as more of their number are reported disappeared in the night. The guards and merchants, largely unaffected, go about their days ignoring the "stories" of an unseen menace.

"There is nothing wrong here," come the stern replies of the city guard, if asked. All the while the Mayor and his people retort, "the Evil in Ethinok was banished long ago, this is nothing but vagrants and charlatans begging for attention."

The Church of Salvation is of another opinion, but their words are squelched in a city gripped with tension, apathy, and a demoralized poor class.

Why is there fear running in city's slums? What does it have anything to do with the missing vagrants who disappeared so many years ago? Is there really a great threat, or is there a simpler answer?

DM BACKGROUND

This adventure is designed for four to six PCs of levels 6 to 8. Investigative, social and stealth-related skills may all prove useful in this adventure.

The adventure easily fits into any existing campaign or even a current adventure the PCs are on. It also works as a stand-alone adventure. The nature of the adventure's end also provides the DM an opportunity to create plot threads for future adventures.

Several weeks ago, a blue dragon named Azuspear took up refuge in Ethinok, and with him traveled a small cadre of dragon thralls he created to serve his every whim. Azuspear hoped to use the thralls to build his power base in Ethinok. He could then move on, leaving his thralls behind to orchestrate his machinations. In order to feed his plans, beggars and lone-traveling poor folks from unsavory portions of the city were abducted to sate the dragon's appetite. Azuspear hopes to find candidates among these 'meals' whomever might be suitable to become his next thralls.

Azuspear wages a covert war of treasure gathering and power mongering against a green dragon named P'kinestra, his life-long rival. The two dragons sniped at one another for years, but Azuspear believes if he can gain a foothold in Ethinok, he can decisively end the conflict. While such actions may be beyond humanoid understandings, the power struggles adapted by dragonkind are part test, rivalry and superiority. After all to them it represents the ultimate opponent; for who could challenge a dragon in any of these areas save another dragon?

BARDIC LORE

A bard can make a Bardic Knowledge check to discover what he may have heard. A bard learns all the information of the DC his check succeeded by and all that below it (a Bard who rolled a 17 would learn the information under DC 15 and DC 10). Alternately this information can be gained by a Gather Information skill check +5 higher than the DC of a Bardic Lore check to see if the PC has heard any rumors.

Lore Regarding the Current Disappearances

DC 15 "Aye, I'd say near 20 people vanished off the streets in the past few weeks. No one's seen nor heard a peep from them since. 'Course, the damnable town guard won't lift a finger to help until someone better'n us gets taken, like last time."

DC 20 "There have been about 15 disappearances since people started taking notice. Who knows how many more?!? Odd thing is, there haven't been many witnesses, except for a crazy man calling himself a prophet. No one believes him, though, but I'm starting to think he knows something."

DC 25+ "No one noticed 'til about three people vanished in just one day. I think only eight people were taken altogether, near as I can tell. Mostly beggars and street thieves. Some say the Green Stag is responsible. It's the new tavern, which opened up on Highman Street. Built not long before the disappearances started."

Unbeknownst to Azuspear and his minions, P'kinestra the Green maintains a power base in the city as well, under the guise of a benevolent temple in one of the city's poorer districts (the "Church of Salvation"). P'kinestra's agents discovered the presence of the blue dragon Azuspear, and now looks for an opportunity to shut him down before he roots himself too deeply into the city's infrastructure.

P'kinestra's primary agent, Slofen, spotted the PCs, considering them the perfect talent to use in this ancient and private war. He intends to use the PCs against his rival rather than sacrifice his own resources, while avoiding detection of his own activities by the PCs.

The PCs must discover who is behind the people disappearing from the city streets and put an end to it. As they investigate, they may find out there is more than just a dark prophecy or a gang of vagrants. They might even come to the conclusion those they think are allies are really enemies.

ENDING THE ADVENTURE

This adventure is specifically designed to take multiple sessions of play to complete. As the adventure takes place in a city with nearly unlimited opportunity, the actions open to the PCs could lead to numerous dead ends or side-tracks. The plot involves some elements requiring further development for campaign play. Be aware there is no definitive ending to this adventure. The PCs may indeed end Azuspear's activities, at the same time letting P'kinestra's followers remain. If this is part of a greater campaign, the ramifications for the city and its outlook on the PCs are obvious. It is the duty of the DM to keep the PCs on their toes and make them question everything. When the adventure doesn't have the answer, it's the DMs job to throw the PCs a bone, make it up, and lead them astray.

An alternative involves eliminating both dragons (after all, they are both evil). In such an instance, the adventure becomes a protracted encounter with two very powerful foes. In this case the PCs are forced to work against two powerful foes, which could take 2 or 3 sessions (or more), depending on the complexity of their planning.

Ultimately, how the adventure ends is decided by the PCs' actions and observations. If the PCs get involved because of Farangen's missing daughter (see the Bardic Lore sidebar), make sure they know a little about the incident before they enter the city. This works especially well, if the PCs have been hearing rumors for months about the "cult." Also, allowing the PC to enter Ethinok, stay a night, and begin their usual routine without initial hints of evil sets them up perfectly. They are lulled into a false sense of security before the tension builds with rumors, gossip, and hushed stories of missing beggars. This with some of the unexplained sightings add an element of mystery.

GETTING STARTED

While the PCs are in the city, they eventually hear rumors and rumblings about second-class citizens disappearing from the city's poorest districts. While this sort of rumor is not unusual, the sheer numbers are disturbing. You can pique the curiosity of the PCs with a few tricks. Develop a few NPCs for the PCs to visit, or a business with the local clientele whispering discretely about it when they think no one is listening, or one day a town crier yells out: "a new record evening of disappearances." Unless the PCs are slow or pitiless, they should be nervous and suspicious all at once.

A PROPHET

Walking down a crowded, cobblestone street, the PCs hear the voice of a madman on the wind bringing grave news.

Shouts from a disheveled man across the market, distract your sojourn through the city streets. Long, matted hair and chipped teeth mar his appearance. He shouts into the crowd, but only a few people pay any attention; the rest avoid eye contact as they pass.

"Heed my words, citizens! He begins again. The evil that visited us once so long ago... has returned, I tell you all it is true! I have seen it myself! You think these disappearances are the result of mere chance? No! They come in the night to take the helpless for their sinister cause. The all-consuming hunger will not rest this time. When it came upon us before, the forces of Salvation saved us from the evil, but it did not stop the hunger... we will not be spared this time! Their evil shall consume us all!"

The prophet speaks in a crazed, elusive manner but he carries relevant information (having witnessed one of the kidnappings with his own eyes). He eagerly speaks with any PCs who engage him, describing the kidnappers as elves with blue skin and yellow eyes. He claims they are magical, with "fire dancing upon their hands." He knows no real facts of the city's previous bout with evil, except there were many disappearances several years ago. The Church of Salvation eventually stopped the evil and set up in town, to protect the innocent from further harm.

Draw out the encounter as long as you like, but when the PCs look like they've had enough (or if they ignore the prophet), a stranger steps in, a human with shoulder-length blonde hair and piercing eyes wearing the robes of a priest. This is Slofen, head priest from the Church of Salvation, and he informs the PCs the "mad prophet" is not far off:

"I cannot talk here. Perhaps you can come to my temple where we may speak in private...follow me."

BARDIC LORE CONTINUED

Lore Regarding the Past Disappearances

DC 15 "Yeah, nearly 20 people were missing before the cult was wiped out. That was about three years ago. Sad thing was the mercenaries who took care of the problem all died in the battle as well."

DC 20 "After a merchant lost his daughter, that's when the town guard got involved. They never found anything though. Ask any locals. They'll tell you about it. Can't say I remember his name though."

DC 25+ "The merchant Farnagen was broken up about his daughter. They're respected traders. Farnagen is still alive. I hear that he's hired men from out of town to find his daughter."

Investigation into the murders brings up very little information. Nobody has been accused of them, there are no apparent motives, and the victims are not well known (at least, not by anybody the PCs would ever associate with). The bodies are not available (having re-animated as wights).

Lore Regarding the Church

DC 15 "The Church of Salvation has been around for the past three years — made a name for themselves when they stamped out a lizard cult. Since then, they have been helping the poor."

DC 20+ "The Church does a lot of good. Some say they have ulterior motives, but I don't believe it. I think they feel guilty over the lizard cult debacle."

Lore Regarding the Lizard Cult

DC 15 "The lizard cult? They were some group supposedly worshipping a demon. Most folks don't believe they existed. After the Church came in, no one's heard a thing about them."

DC 20+ "They were a real cult all right, just not a large one. Most were wiped out by the Church a few years back, but some say they live, hiding out somewhere."

THE CHURCH OF SALVATION

The Church of Salvation is a small temple located in the poor district. To outsiders, the church offers hope to the downtrodden and destitute. Secretly the church is a perfect front for P'kinestra, with all its members being evil servants of the green dragon. A number of criminal activities take place behind the church walls, all of which generate enormous profits for P'kinestra and his minions.

Slofen is a thrall of P'kinestra, but hides his dragon aspects (scaled hands and torso) under his clothes. This allows him to carry on a presentable, public life without drawing suspicion. Slofen is interested in the PCs and would like it if they'd investigate this new round of disappearances.

"I truly hope you can be of help to us. There is truth to the madman's words you heard today. Though the city guard ignores these events, it is of the utmost importance to those of us who live our lives in the belly of the city.

"Many of the city's poor have gone missing... and this concerns us all. It may indeed be a rising evil, but we hope if we act soon enough, it can be stopped."

Whether or not the PCs are familiar with the Church depends on the depth of the campaign and their familiarity with the city. Slofen can answer trivial questions about the order, but does not hint at too much else. Still, the church of salvation isn't well known to many. Have PCs make a Knowledge (Religion) check (DC 20) to remember the church's aims.

To prevent unnecessary tipping off of this organization's true intent, treat Slofen as a concerned, average acolyte trying his best to help the poor. If asked which deity he follows, he mentions that he derives his powers from many good gods. He behaves as normal as possible, but does whatever he needs to shorten the PCs' visit — he has things to attend to, after all. If PCs suspect his intentions, they may employ magic to discern his alignment, bringing this thread to an end earlier than intended.

THE JOB

Slofen wants the PCs to investigate the disappearances and stamp out any evil. He also wants a report of any findings. If the investigation goes on too long, he wants regular reports. Slofen himself would have the church look into the matter, but claims he lacks the resources to effectively do so.

THE CHURCH OF SALVATION

The Church of Salvation is an institution set up in a few large cities' poorer districts. Unable to simply wait in lofty holy towers for the adoring masses, the clerics and followers of many different gods volunteer their time to directly assisting the poor and sickly of the city. Here they can prove their holy teachings to the people with direct intervention.

There is no prerequisite for joining the organization, except a claim to follow a good god and the willingness to volunteer time to the causes it champions.

Slofen happily answers the PCs' questions:

"What is the story behind the disappearances a few years ago?"

"About three years ago, we traced the disappearances to an evil cult who worshipped a reptile demon. A party of brave heroes stamped them out."

The Truth: P'kinestra took up residence in the city, with Slofen. The disappearances were actually food for the dragon, or P'kinestra's enthralled servants in certain cases, like the adventurers who helped "stamp out" the evil.

"What about the merchant's daughter?"

"Oulween was her name, I believe. It brought attention to the matter, but she was never found."

The Truth: Oulween is actually a thrall in service to P'kinestra, and works in the church. She brought in the last amount of cash to fund the temple and get the criminal operations off the ground.

"What's in it for us?"

"Besides the gratitude of the city's poor and downtrodden, the Church of Salvation will compensate you reasonably."

The Truth: Slofen can afford to pay very little actually — 500 gp in gems and jewels donated over the years. If pressed to reveal how much he can offer, he comes clean. "I wish there were more... but it is all we have."

MASTER FARNAGEN

It is not difficult to find the Farnagen merchant house, however Farnagen is not taking any visitors. He's distraught over his daughter, so his business suffers. The PCs may ask to see Master Farnagen by mentioning his daughter or hinting they are putting an end to the current disappearances. Most other requests are met with silence. Farnagen's assistant, Loliir, tells them to come back another time.

Upon gaining entrance, read or paraphrase the following:

The fine wood paneled chamber smells of tobacco and tea. Across the room hangs a portrait of a young, beautiful woman with dark hair. Sounds of a conversation tell you Farnagen is with a guest. A young man in a fine wool cloak leans over a desk, speaking to an old, well-groomed man.

"Father, I know I can do this. I am not a boy anymore. You have not trusted me... since Oulween disappeared, your faith is shaken and I am no —"

"Braf, I know you feel this is within your power, but please, I urge you not to go down this path. I do not wish to lose my son. But hush, we have company now."

The older man waves the younger aside, and urges you forward. "Come in please. You say you have word of my daughter?"

Master Farnagen answers any questions he can about his daughter's disappearance, but he knows little. Roleplay the situation and show the PCs how desperate and tired Farnagen is. Farnagen is easily willing to pay for his daughter's return: '1,000 gp to you if she is returned safely to me.'

"It was about three years ago when she disappeared, she went out to meet with friends and never returned. We knew something bad had happened when my personal guards found one half of her matched pendant in an alleyway in the city's slums. Even to this day, my heart remains unhealed. If you can do anything, I am forever in your debt."

MOUTH OF THE DRAGON

The Green Stag Tavern lies in the seediest section of the city slums, a multi-story building that has seen better days. It is a rowdy place, alive with music and boisterous voices. Several minor fights erupt while the PCs are there, not much to get involved in. Only one drink is available at the tavern: a house ale named Dragon's Blood. It has a strong kick, but tastes like a robust red ale. Most of the patrons enjoy it.

The tavern has a detailed menu, but most of the food is light and none of it goes well with the house ale.

Note: The ale has an *addiction* spell (see New Magic—Appendix A) cast upon it by Janjere, the wizard who lives here.

The tavern is a popular hang out for many different races here elves, dwarves, half-orcs, humans and even the occasional centaur from the surrounding plains is welcome. The servers are all elves, and the building does not match their usual presence. Observant PCs (Spot check, DC 20) note one of the elves serving ale has a slight bluish tinge to his skin. Any PC near the curtain separating the bar from the kitchen catches sight of the cook (Spot check, DC 25); he has fine blue scales on his cheeks, a tint not surprisingly similar to the other elf's.

Sitting around and talking with the patrons, the PCs learn little, folk enjoy the company best if they are left alone, and most of them are too drunk to carry on any sort of conversation. The servers and bartender avoid questions unrelated with drinking and eating. They blow off comments about their skin, should a PC bring it up. One might be so bold as to suggest, "it's the lighting in here, now, want another drink?"

BACK TO CHURCH

The PCs may at some point reach a dead-end or need to report to Slofen. If the PCs ask about the adventurers involved in the destruction of the lizard cult, Slofen expresses sadness over their deaths. He did not want it to happen, nor did he not want to mention it to the PCs for fear they would turn their backs on him. Slofen urges the party not to give up on their quest, despite not being able to find anything solid yet. He suggests the PCs hang out among the alleys and roads of the poor section of the city.

MISSING SON

About a day after the PCs meet with Farnagen, his son (Braf) disappears. News of Braf's disappearance spreads quickly after a vagrant finds his sword and cloak in an alley. Braf was no beggar and rumors soon turn to hysteria, and not just among the poor. If the PCs pay another visit to Farnagen, he pleads with them to find his son as well, doubling his offer.

STAKEOUT

If the PCs comb the streets or stake out various slums, criminal activity finds them quickly enough. In the middle of the night, not far from the Green Stag tavern, they hear a scream followed by the familiar sounds of combat.

Arriving on the scene, they see a dwarf struggling against three humanoid attackers. The attackers flee at the first sight of the PCs, disappearing into an alley way or into the shadows (and drinking a *potion of invisibility* the moment they are out of sight). The dwarf is intoxicated, nearing unconsciousness. With enough cajoling and a few slaps, he relates the following story.



"I was leaving the Green Stag. I'd had plenty to drink... thought it best to get home. I had not gotten far... far before those beasts [long pause] set upon me! I cut one of them... with my dagger.... They had scales... and claws. They kept saying, saying... it was my time."

The dwarf drifts off into a drunken slumber... PCs who search the area find blood and small blue scales (Search check, DC 15). If they follow the blood trail (DC 25), it leads back to the Green Stag.

✶ **Humanoid Attacker, Thrall, Elf Ftr 2:** CR 3; Medium humanoid (dragon); HD 2d10; hp 16; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19, touch 15, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +2; Grp +4; Atk +5 melee (1d8+2/19–20, longsword) or +4 ranged (1d6/×3, short bow); Full Atk +5 melee (1d8+2/19–20, longsword) or +4 ranged (1d6/×3, short bow); SA Shocking grasp; SQ Elf traits, immunity to electricity, low-light vision, darkvision 60 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Climb +5, Jump +5, Listen +4, Spot +4; Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (longsword).

Spell-like Ability (Su): This thrall can cast *shocking grasp* once per day as if by a 3rd level sorcerer.

Possessions: Studded leather armor, buckler, longsword, shortbow, 20 arrows, *potion of invisibility*.

Tactics: These elves are not bandits, they are out to secure an evening snack for their lord and master. They will do their best to escape confrontation, preferring to flee back to the tavern. If somehow discovered they will fight to the death. Note if they do make it back to their base, adjust the number of elves there, and remember these two will most likely still be invisible if the PCs head there right after them.

THE GREEN STAG: AFTER HOURS

By now, the PCs should have enough clues to investigate the Green Stag Tavern further. They can enter through either the front or back entrances, but each door is locked, requiring a *Open Locks* check (DC 20). A *Move Silently* check (DC 20) insures no one inside hears them.

1. Bar

This is the serving area, normally full of patrons with the fire burning strong. Now, after hours, it is empty except for table and chairs and the fire in the hearth is a mere ember. Behind the bar are three kegs of Dragon's Blood Ale.

2. Kitchen

There is an elf thrall here cleaning up after hours. He keeps a broom nearby in the corner, and his sword is stored under a counter behind the bar.

♣ **Thrall, Elf Ftr 2:** CR 3; Medium humanoid (dragon); HD 2d10; hp 16; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19, touch 15, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +2; Grp +4; Atk +5 melee (1d8+2/19–20, longsword) or +4 ranged (1d6/×3, short bow); Full Atk +5 melee (1d8+2/19–20, longsword) or +4 ranged (1d6/×3, short bow); SA Shocking grasp; SQ Elf traits, immunity to electricity, low-light vision, darkvision 60 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Climb +5, Jump +5, Listen +4, Spot +4; Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (longsword).

Spell-like Ability (Su): This thrall can cast *shocking grasp* once per day as if by a 3rd level sorcerer.

Possessions: Studded leather armor, buckler, longsword, shortbow, 20 arrows.

Tactics: This elf calls for help from below while fighting the PCs. He is concerned with sounding an alarm by any means necessary to alert others. He fights to the death. Note if the two elves the PCs caught accosting the dwarf outside made it back here, this elf will act surprised, but will actually be expecting trouble, his sword under his robes, and either of the surviving invisible elf fighters here with him, under tables.

3. Larder

Food is stored here in stacks. Crates, tubs, tureens, and casks fill the room in an ordered and organized fashion. 2 elven thralls are working here, cataloging and inventorying the items.

♣ **Thralls, Elf Ftr 2:** CR 3; Medium humanoid (dragon); HD 2d10; hp 16; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19, touch 15, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +2; Grp +4; Atk +5 melee (1d8+2/19–20, longsword) or +4 ranged (1d6/×3, short bow); Full Atk +5 melee (1d8+2/19–20, longsword) or +4 ranged (1d6/×3, short bow); SA Shocking grasp; SQ Elf traits, immunity to electricity, low-light vision, darkvision 60 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Climb +5, Jump +5, Listen +4, Spot +4; Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (longsword).

Spell-like Ability (Su): This thrall can cast *shocking grasp* once per day as if by a 3rd level sorcerer.

Possessions: Studded leather armor, buckler, longsword, shortbow, 20 arrows.

Tactics: One elf runs for help (to raise the alarm) through the door, while the other engages the PCs in combat, fighting to the death to delay the PCs.

4. Quarters

The remaining 4 elven thralls are here, including the one the dwarf previously wounded (12 hp).

♣ **Thrall, Elf Ftr 2:** CR 3; Medium humanoid (dragon); HD 2d10; hp 16 each; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19, touch 15, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +2; Grp +4; Atk +5 melee (1d8+2/19–20, longsword) or +4 ranged (1d6/×3, short bow); Full Atk +5 melee (1d8+2/19–20, longsword) or +4 ranged (1d6/×3, short bow); SA Shocking grasp; SQ Elf traits, immunity to electricity, low-light vision, darkvision 60 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Climb +5, Jump +5, Listen +4, Spot +4; Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (longsword).

Spell-like Ability (Su): This thrall can cast *shocking grasp* once per day as if by a 3rd level sorcerer.

Possessions: Studded leather armor, buckler, longsword, shortbow, 20 arrows.

Tactics: One of the elves heads through the trap door to alert his superiors. The rest engage the PCs.

Treasure: Each has a bed and small chest without a lock. Each chest contains some minor personal effects, 2d10 gp, and 3d10 sp.

5. Weaponsmith's Chamber

The elves keep their weapons maintained in this room with whetstones, oils, and care. The elven weapon master also lives here.

♣ **Vennzeer, Thrall, Elf Ftr 4:** CR 5; Medium humanoid (dragon); HD 4d10; hp 30; Init +6; Spd 20 ft.; AC 22, touch 15, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +4; Grp +6; Atk +8 melee (1d8+5/19–20, longsword) or +6 ranged (1d10/19–20, heavy crossbow); Full Atk +8 melee (1d8+5/19–20, longsword) or +6 ranged (1d10/19–20, heavy crossbow); SA Shocking grasp; SQ Elf traits, immunity to electricity, low-light vision, darkvision 60 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +4; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Climb +6, Intimidate +5, Jump +6, Listen +5, Spot +5; Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword).

Spell-like Ability (Su): This thrall can cast *shocking grasp* once per day as if by a 3rd level sorcerer.

Possessions: Chain mail armor, buckler, *ring of protection* +1, +1 longsword (named "Virilian"), heavy crossbow, 20 bolts, whetstone, a small key (to his locked chest, see below).

A rather gruff elf, Vennzeer keeps his weapons in top shape. He is a hardy fighter, giving as good as he gets.

Tactics: Vennzeer the weapon master knows all the elves in their group well, and shouts an alarm upon seeing strangers. If alone in combat, he fights his way to his comrades. If he hears the sounds of battle, he joins as quickly as possible, calling an alarm on the way.

Treasure: In a small locked chest (Open Lock check, DC 20) are 175 gp, 135 sp, and sapphire worth 200 gp.

6. Guard Captain's Room

The second in command of Azuspear's thralls, Fojen, lives in this makeshift room. Besides a bedroll, there is a small, wooden chest, a black journal and candle.

Tactics: Fojen is rarely in here. Place him wherever it keeps the action going. In combat, Fojen protects Azuspear, and gives his life for the dragon (if necessary). He is likely to snipe with his heavy crossbow and then fall back to defend his master.

▲ **Fojen, Thrall, Elf Ftr 8:** CR 9; Medium humanoid (dragon); HD 8d10; hp 55; Init +9; Spd 30 ft.; AC 28, touch 15, flat-footed 23; Base Atk +8; Grp +10; Atk +15 melee (1d6+5/15-20, rapier) or +13 ranged (1d10/19-20, heavy crossbow); Full Atk +15/+10 melee (1d6+5/15-20, rapier) or +13/+8 ranged (1d10/19-20, heavy crossbow); SA Shocking grasp; SQ Elf traits, immunity to electricity, low-light vision, darkvision 60 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +9, Ref +8, Will +5; Str 14, Dex 18 (20), Con 11, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Climb +8, Intimidate +7, Jump +8, Listen +7, Spot +5; Improved Critical (rapier), Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (rapier), Weapon Finesse, Weapon Specialization (rapier).

Spell-like Ability (Su): This thrall can cast shocking grasp once per day as if by a 3rd level sorcerer.

Possessions: +1 studded leather armor, +1 buckler, +1 rapier (named "hedrius"), *potion of bull's strength*, *gloves of dexterity* +2, a small key to his locked chest.

Treasure: The chest is both locked and trapped. Within are 3 potions of invisibility, 300 gp, 445 sp, a ruby-studded necklace worth 750 gp, and pair of matched ruby rings each worth 175 gp.

▲ **Ungol Dust Vapor Trap:** CR 5; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; gas; multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft.-by-10-ft. room); never miss; onset delay (2 rounds); poison (ungol dust, DC 15 Fortitude save resists, 1 Cha/1d6 Cha plus 1 Cha drain); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 16.

The black journal reveals the following information:

Search check, DC 15: From an entry six months ago:

We have had the most interesting past month. Janjere, my men, and I stumbled upon the dragon's lair, as the map had promised. We searched, and came upon the beast sure enough, but I lost three men in the process.

When the dragon discovered us, he made us an offer. He told us if we swore fealty to him, he could give us more wealth and power than we could imagine. We were reluctant at first, but accepted the offer. Part of the bargain required us to drink his blood. An odd sensation, but the dragon was true to his word.

Search check, DC 20: From an entry two months ago:

Our lord told us he wages a longstanding feud with a vile green dragon, P'kinestra. He plans to accompany us to a city soon to wage our war. He plans to have others drink his blood to spread his power even further.

From an entry two weeks ago: We took beggars and thieves from the streets to feed my lord, and search for worthy allies. The tavern is aiding us immensely in this effort, thanks to Janjere's magic. With the money from the tavern, we can fund a number of different operations.

When I informed our lord the disappearances such as ours happened in this city before, he became concerned, as if he suspected something. He told me Pinestra may already have operations in this city. I investigated this matter, but have found nothing yet.

7. Janjere's Room

This room is filled with jugs, jars and other containers. A small brazier emits heat and a haze of incense. A battered desk sits in one corner, a lamp resting on top, along with a large tome.

The leader of the elven band, Janjere lives here.

▲ **Janjere, Thrall, Elf Wiz 10:** CR 11; Medium humanoid (dragon); HD 10d4; hp 34; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 16, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +5; Grp +5; Atk +5 melee (1d6, quarterstaff); Full Atk +5 melee (1d6, quarterstaff); SA Shocking grasp, spells; SQ Elf traits, immunity to electricity, low-light vision, darkvision 60 ft., summon familiar; AL LE; SV Fort +6, Ref +9, Will +11; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 18, Wis 14, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +12, Decipher Script +16, Knowledge (arcana) +16, Listen +10, Spellcraft +16, Spot +10; Brew PotionB, Combat Casting, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Scribe ScrollB, Quicken SpellB.

Spell-like Ability (Su): This thrall can cast *shocking grasp* twice per day as if by a 3rd level sorcerer.

Summon familiar: Janjere's familiar left him upon his turning into a thrall. In place of this power he has learned to harness his new natural powers and can cast his shocking grasp spell-like ability twice per day instead of once.

Wizard Spells Prepared: (4/5/5/4/4/2; save DC 14 + spell level): 0—acid splash, dancing lights, mage hand, prestidigitation; 1st—burning hands, mage armor, magic missile, obscuring mist, shield; 2nd—acid arrow, cat's grace, scare, spider climb, web; 3rd—hold person, fireball, lightning bolt, slow; 4th—dimension door, enervation, shout, stonkskin; 5th—magic missile (quickened), baleful polymorph.

Spellbook: 0—acid splash, dancing lights, mage hand, prestidigitation, ray of frost, read magic; 1st—burning hands, erase, jump, mage armor, magic missile, obscuring mist, shield; 2nd—acid arrow, cat's grace, misdirection scare, shatter, spider climb, web; 3rd—arcane sight, haste, hold person, fireball, lightning bolt, slow; 4th—dimension door, enervation, polymorph, shadow conjuration, shout, stonkskin; 5th—baleful polymorph, nightmare.

IN COLD BLOOD

Possessions: Bracers of armor +2, quarterstaff, potion of cure moderate wounds, ring of feather falling, scroll of teleport, wand of magic missiles (9th level) with 23 charges, bag containing 250 gp worth of diamond dust (for stoneskin), key to his locked chest.

Tactics: Janjere tries to negotiate with the PCs at first, hoping to seduce them with the power Azuspear possesses. If this fails, he engages them in combat, gradually retreating to Azuspear's chamber. Janjere usually tries protecting himself first, casting mage armor and shield (in advance, he hears the PCs fighting), giving his men time to arrive before going on the offensive, if he has reason to believe that the characters are a serious threat he casts his stoneskin spell before moving to meet them. To contain the characters he casts his slow or grease spells first, and proceeds from there.

Treasure: In this room is a locked chest (Open Lock, DC 25). Inside are 1,750 gp, 473 sp, two diamonds worth 350 gp each, and a small, jade dragon statue worth 220 gp.

8. Azuspear's Chamber

Azuspear currently resides in this room.

In front of you is an amazing sight. Alert to your presence and scowling, a great blue dragon faces you, sitting on a raised sandy mound. An acrid scent fills the air, and blue lightning plays across the beast's teeth as he slowly grins. His piercing gaze is enough to make the most intrepid adventurer falter, and his muscles are like great, twisted oak trees.

The unconscious form of Braf Farnagen lies nearby. Azuspear is angry at the PC's interference. If the PCs seem capable he offers them one chance to leave, quietly (planning to have his servants ambush them later, to make them Thralls). Failing that, he attacks.

"It appears my menu options just increased for the evening. Your blades will make nice toothpicks once I am finished grinding your bones to meal between my jaws."

♣ **Azuspear, Young Adult Blue Dragon:** CR 11; Large dragon (earth); HD 18d12+72; hp 189; Init +4; Spd 40 ft., burrow 20 ft., fly 150 ft (poor); AC 26, touch 9, flat-footed 26; Base Atk +18; Grp +28; Atk +19 melee (2D6+4, bite); Full Atk +19 melee (2d6+4, bite) and +17 melee (1d8+2, 2 claws) and +17 melee (1d6+2, 2 wings) and +17 melee (1d8+6, tail slap); SA breath weapon; SQ Create/destroy water, DR 5/ magic, frightful presence, immune to electricity, sound imitation, SR 19; AL LE; SV Fort +15, Ref +11, Will +13; Str 23, Dex 10, Con 19, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +10, Diplomacy +14, Hide +17, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Listen +25, Search +23, Sense Motive +10, Spellcraft +25, Spot +25, Use Magical Device +23; Alertness, Eschew Materials, Flyby Attack, Hover, Improved Initiative, Magical Aptitude, Wingover.

Breath Weapon (Su): A line of lightning 80 ft. long by 5 ft. wide and 5 ft. high, 10d8 damage Reflex (DC 23) for half.

Create/Destruct Water (Sp): A blue dragon of any age can use this ability three times per day. It works like the create water spell, except that the dragon can decide to destroy water instead of creating it, which automatically spoils unattended liquids containing water. Magic items (such as potions) and items in a creature's possession must succeed on a Will save (DC 21) or be ruined. This ability is the equivalent of a 1st-level spell.



Frightful Presence (Ex): This dragon can unsettle foes with its mere presence. The ability takes effect automatically whenever the dragon attacks, charges, or flies overhead. Creatures within a radius of 150 ft. are subject to the effect if they have fewer HD than the dragon. A potentially affected creature that succeeds on a Will save (DC 21) remains immune to that dragon's frightful presence for 24 hours. On a failure, creatures with 4 or less HD become panicked for 4d6 rounds and those with 5 or more HD become shaken for 4d6 rounds. Dragons ignore the frightful presence of other dragons.

Sound Imitation (Ex): A juvenile or older blue dragon can mimic any voice or sound it has heard, anytime it likes. Listeners must succeed on a Will save (DC 21) to detect the ruse.

Spells: This dragon casts spells as a 3rd level sorcerer.
Sorcerer Spells Known (6/6; save DC 12 + spell level): 0—*detect magic, flare, light, mage hand, message, read magic*; 1st—*alarm, identify, magic aura*.

Tactics: Azuspear is deadly in combat, but does not enjoy a close quarters fight such as this. If the PCs do more than 100 points of damage to him, he breaks right through the ceiling and takes flight into the sky above the city. He does not return, but does not forget the PCs either. If the PCs are somehow able to pursue the dragon and press the fight, he offers all the information he has on the other dragon if the PCs spare his life. He vows never to return to the city.

Treasure: In the dragon's chamber are several chests. In all, they contain 2,020 gp and 13,206 sp — profits from the sale of the dragon's blood ale. In addition there are 12 gems worth 300 gp each, an *immovable rod*, *potions of tongues*, *fly*, *cure serious wounds*, *oil of bless* *weapon*, a *hand of the mage* and *dust of tracelessness*.

RESCUING BRAF

The merchant's son unwillingly consumed some of the dragon's blood. He is currently unconscious, destined to become a thrall, but can be saved from this fate by casting a *remove curse* spell within 2 hours (for more information see the Dragon Thrall template in Appendix B). Farnagen is overjoyed at the recovery of his son, and gladly pays the PCs for his return.

THE OTHER PIECE

If necessary, the PCs may wish to visit Slofen, especially if they are suspicious of his actions. If you want to make this section more enticing, have Braf inform the PCs that he discovered his sister was going to meet friends who were going to donate their time to the Church of Salvation before he was captured as a dragon meal.

9. Main Temple

Here, the organization conducts its daily business, offering medical aid, food and water to the city's poor. A single acolyte is present, who is cordial but a man of few words. If the PCs arrive at night, the acolyte informs the PCs Slofen is unavailable. Behind the curtained areas are small prayer chambers.

▲ Acolyte, Thrall, Human Clr 3: CR 4; Medium humanoid (dragon); HD 3d8; hp 24; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +2; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d8, heavy mace); Full Atk +2 melee (1d8, heavy mace); SA Rebuke undead, spells; SQ —; AL LE; SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +6; Str 11, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +7, Knowledge (religion) +6, Spellcraft +6; Combat Casting, Lightning Reflexes, Run.

Spell-like Ability (Su): This thrall can cast *shocking grasp* once per day as if by a 3rd level sorcerer.

Cleric Spells Prepared: (4/3+1/1+1; save DC 11 + spell level): 0—*detect magic, guidance, read magic, resistance*; 1st—*command, magic weapon, obscuring mist, protection from good**; 2nd—*calm emotions**, *cause moderate wounds*.

* Domain spell. **Domains:** Evil (cast evil spells at +1 caster level), Law (cast law spells at +1 caster level).

Possessions: Clerical vestments, heavy mace.

Tactics: Not expecting an attack, the acolyte flees through the secret door (room #2) at the first hint of violence on the PCs part. He carries 3d6 sp in a pouch at his side.

10. Back Room

This is a utility room used for preparing food and other household chores. While there are a variety of utensils, cookery and the like hanging on racks throughout the room, little of it is of real interest. In the center of the floor however is a secret door (Search check, DC 15) hidden under a well-worn carpet.

11. Larder

Instead of foodstuffs, the larder contains a number of weapons, and 2 undead dire wolves, created as guardians by Slofen's evil magic (to guard the temple after hours).

☠ Zombie Dire Wolf: CR 2; Large undead; HD 6d12+3; hp 42 each; Init +1; Spd 50 ft.; AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +3; Grp +11; Atk +11 melee (1d8+8, bite); Full Atk +11 melee (1d8+8, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA—; SQ Single actions only; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 27, Dex 13, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: Toughness.

Single Actions Only (Ex): Zombies have poor reflexes and can perform only a single move action or attack action each round. A zombie can move up to its speed and attack in the same round, but only if it attempts a charge.

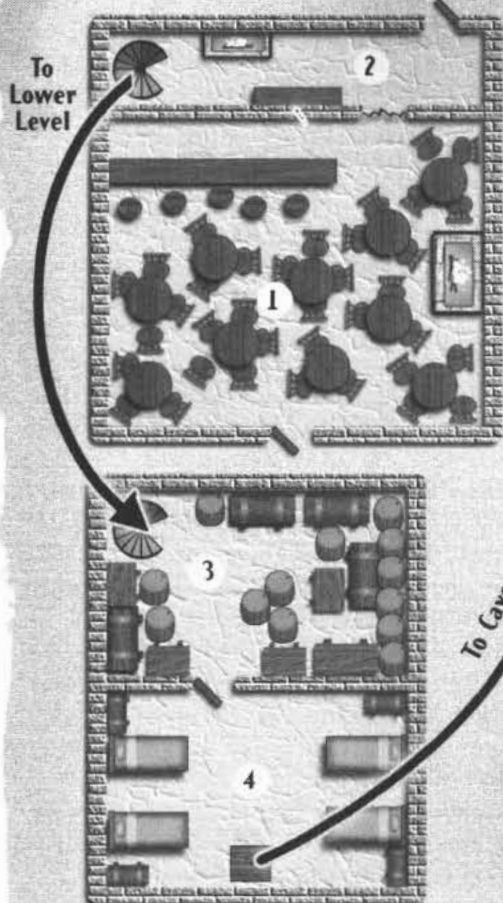
Tactics: The undead dire wolves attack strangers on site. Their barks are raspy howls, but can be heard by the acolytes in room #6, and likely Slofen in room #5, who all come to investigate.

12. Torture Room

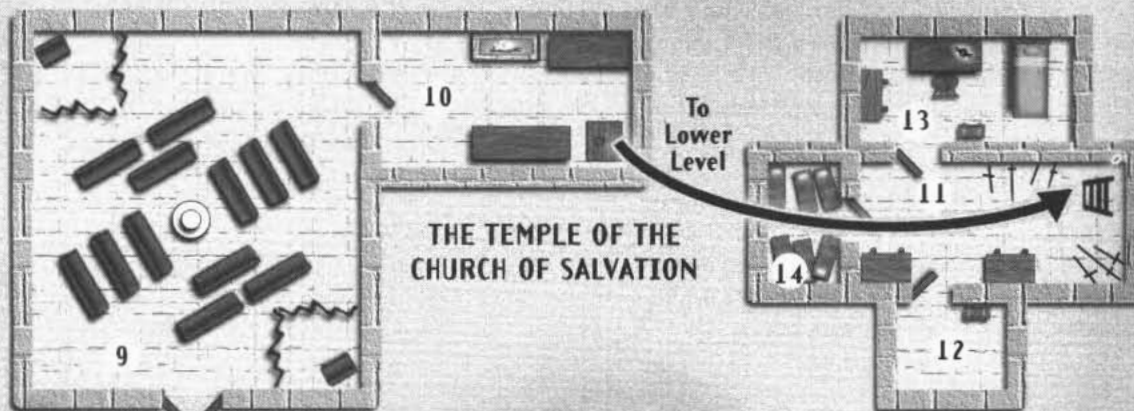
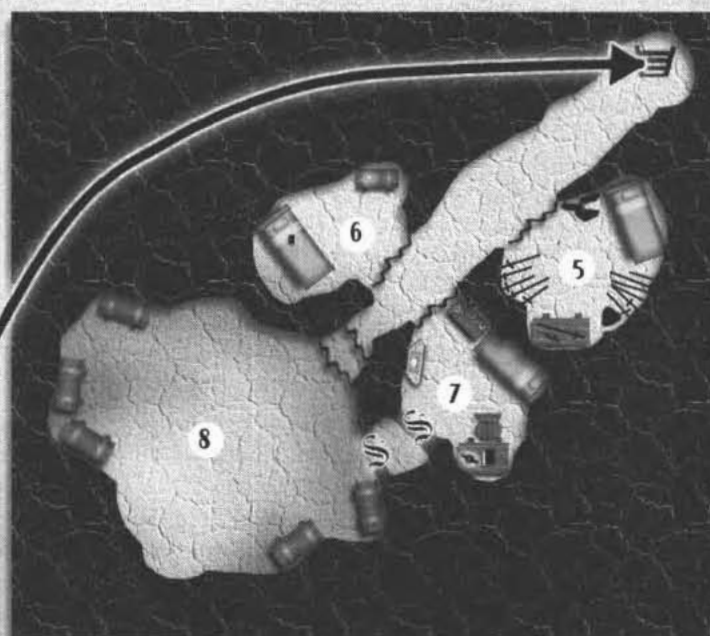
Several skeletal body parts adorn the walls, along with a healthy collection of some of the more insidious torture devices of the age. Dried blood colors the floor, and the room smells of sweat, rot and fear. Apart from this unsettling scene, there is nothing of much interest in here.

IN COLD BLOOD

THE GREEN STAG TAVERN



	Spiral Stairs		Bed		Tables
	Trap Door		Bedroll		Desk
	Secret Door		Chair		Chest
	Ladder		Stool		Barrel
	Fire Place		Pew		Curtain



13. Slofen's Room

Slofen lives in this simple, unadorned room. A bed, desk, vanity and a few other mundane trappings are here.

▲ Slofen, Thrall, Human Clr 11: CR 12; Medium humanoid (dragon); HD 11d8+22; hp 95; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +8; Grp +10; Atk +11 melee (1d6+3, sickle); Full Atk +11 melee (1d6+3, sickle); SA Rebuke undead; SQ —; AL LE; SV Fort +15, Ref +9, Will +16; Str 14, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 16, Wis 19, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +16, Diplomacy +17, Heal +18, Knowledge (arcana) +17, Knowledge (religion) +17, Spellcraft +17; Combat Casting, Dodge, Extra Turning, Improved Initiative, Scribe Scroll.

Cleric Spells Prepared: (6/6+1/5+1/4+1/2+1/1+1; save DC 14 + spell level): 0—*detect magic, guidance, inflict minor wounds, read magic, resistance, virtue*; 1st—*cause fear, command, divine favor, entropic shield inflict light wounds, protection from good*, shield of faith*; 2nd—*aid, darkness, desecrate*, enthrall, hold person, owl's wisdom*; 3rd—*contagion, inflict serious wounds, magic circle against good*, protection from energy, searing light, wind wall*; 4th—*divine power, inflict critical wounds, poison, spell immunity, unholy blight**; 5th—*dispel good*, slay living, wall of stone*; 6th—*harm, hold monster**.

* Domain spell. *Domains:* Evil (cast evil spells at +1 caster level), Law (cast law spells at +1 caster level).

Possessions: Bracers of armor +2, ring of protection +1, cloak of resistance +3, +1 sickle (named "harvester", eyes of doom (both lenses), and a *potion of invisibility*.

Tactics: Slofen does not negotiate with the PCs, he employs his best magic first as a show of force and to hopefully quell the situation quickly. Should he have any warning of the party's approach he will have cast his defensive spells on himself (in this order: aid, shield of faith, entropic shield, if he knows something of the party's spellcasters he may use protection from energy or spell immunity as well). If the fight gets heavy, he does his best to escape, possibly using wall of stone to seal the party away. Should he manage to escape he makes a beeline to the lair of his master P'Kinestra the green outside the city, so they can properly plot their revenge.

In Slofen's room are a few bits of paperwork dealing with legitimate temple business, but otherwise there is little indication of the illegal activities Slofen and his group are involved in. Provide a few clues if you intend to further the scope of the adventure, perhaps notes leading to a black-market fence in the city or a weapons supplier.

14. Acolytes Chamber

Slofen's other two acolytes live here. One of the acolytes is Oulween, Farnagen's daughter who disappeared years ago. Allow the PCs a Spot check (DC 20) to recognize her in the battle. She has become a thrall, and has no intention of returning to her old life with her family.

▲ Acolytes, Thrall, Human Clr 3: CR 4; Medium humanoid (dragon); HD 3d8+3; hp 20, 18; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +2; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d8, heavy mace); Full Atk +2 melee (1d8, heavy mace); SA Rebuke undead, spells; SQ —; AL LE; SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +6; Str 11, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +7, Knowledge (religion) +6, Spellcraft +6; Combat Casting, Lightning Reflexes, Run.

Spell-like Ability (Su): This thrall can cast *shocking grasp* once per day as if by a 3rd level sorcerer.

Cleric Spells Prepared: (4/3+1/1+1; save DC 11 + spell level): 0—*detect magic, guidance, read magic, resistance*; 1st—*command, magic weapon, obscuring mist, protection from good**; 2nd—*calm emotions*, cause moderate wounds*.

* Domain spell. *Domains:* Evil (cast evil spells at +1 caster level), Law (cast law spells at +1 caster level).

Possessions: Clerical vestments, heavy mace.

Tactics: The acolytes fight to the death against any intruders, and alert Slofen if he has not already arrived.

EPILOGUE

If the PCs never suspect Slofen, he has no problems using them in the future for other missions to further his fiendish goals. He may even eventually make them thralls. If Slofen becomes an enemy, the PCs are in trouble. P'Kinestra commands a solid power base in Ethinok, and Slofen and the acolytes at the Church are not the only thralls here (though Slofen is their leader).

Azuspear too, suffers defeat poorly if he truly manages to escape. Though it may take time, he eventually exacts his revenge, getting to the PCs... one by one.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

- Azuspear is the younger offspring of the great blue Synastarax. It was no coincidence Azuspear set up shop in this town, he was searching for something, something his mother discovered before him. She comes into the city with a vengeance, and a plot to use the PCs as her pawns to retrieve a great artifact (see the adventure "Legacy of Madness").
- The PC's heroics travel to the ears of Lord Kayne and Kylira Meridian, who have a deed of their own they wish to hire the PCs for (see the adventure "Temple of Eternal Flame").

Chapter 7:

Legacy of Madness

Levels 6 to 8

by Eric Steiger

In the late hours, PCs quaff a good drink, eat a hot meal, and recite great tales of bold deeds... this is the life the true adventurer cherishes.

But, when this precious time is cut short by the thunderous bellow of a dragon — one that is hungry for power and thirsty for unattainable treasure — the true adventurer does not argue. And when this treasure lies in the heart of a cave where an even more powerful force resides — one who guards the very power sought — the true adventurer does not flinch.

And when the treasure bears a power beyond thought, so great that a line of dragons have sworn to defend it — even to the death — the true adventurer asks, when do we leave?

The Legacy of Madness is more than just a myth. For some, it is a way of life.

DM BACKGROUND

Long ago, Ysar'n Drax the Mad Dragon's power permeated the Shroudlands. An immensely forceful silver dragon, Drax's instability and paranoia, greater even than most greens, earned him the nickname of The Mad. Heroes from all over the world came to challenge Drax; for the locals' sake, for the sake of their reputations, or for the vast treasure Drax had accumulated over his long centuries, the results never changed. Finally, 600 years ago, a hero whose name is lost to history challenged Drax. Nobody knows the outcome of the challenge, as neither was ever seen again.

The truth behind the conflict lies in the origins of Drax's madness. Long before he came to the Shroudlands, Drax had a talent for artifice. He spent years perfecting the art and science of forging magical items, preparing to create his masterpiece. His plan: to create a sentient artifact, not merely with a mind of its own, but with a portion of his own intellect. Able to learn and teach, Drax's artifact would be his gift to the world, enabling future generations to reach heights of learning undreamed of.

Instead of partaking of his mind, however, Drax's project stole his sanity. The *tome of artifice* warped into the *tome of logic*, the repository of perfectly clear thought. A sentient item, the Tome knows the most rational course of action in any situation, eliminating emotion or feeling from its processes. Though Drax, only a slightly eccentric silver dragon, soon sank deeper and deeper into madness. He grew paranoid and irrational, a shell of his former, magnificent self.

PLAYING A DRAGON

You have massive powers. You can fly. Nearly everyone else is puny compared to you. You have a hoard of treasure, enough to purchase a kingdom. You command magic, breath lightning, and you are old... old enough to have a vast repository of knowledge. You rule. Arrogance is not an ideal... it is a way of life.

That's exactly how Synastarax should come off. If your players begin scoffing at the idea "of you threatening their lives to go on an adventure"...blast them, just as the adventure suggests. Dragons do not have to prove themselves to anyone. Make sure to describe her scales, which could surely deflect a holy avenger, or the size of her claws, sharp enough to be vorpal weapons.

If you think this is a tad heavy-handed, welcome to the world of dragons! You could always have her blast the ground near the defiant PC, and issue a suitable warning. But any move that removes respect for the dragon should be carefully considered...

Drax's own offspring precipitated his downfall. Lethnearinos, one of Drax's children, investigated the rumors concerning his father's health. With his last bit of sanity (and against the Tome's advice), Drax took his own life rather than harm his child, and died explaining his plight. Lethnearinos, having fought his way through Drax's lair's considerable defenses, determined the cave would be adequate and appropriate to keep the book safe, augmenting traps and safeguards around it.

600 years later, after Ysar'n Drax faded into history, another ambitious dragon sought to follow in his footsteps. Synastarax, an enterprising young blue dragon, recently discovered a few pages from Drax's early notes on the tome of artifice. Now, she seeks the magical book. She believes if found, the tome can grant her powers beyond measure, and she'll be able to create anything she wants.

Synastarax knows of Drax's reputation for paranoia, and does not delve into the silver's lair herself. She plans on holding a village hostage to force a group of adventurers to do her dirty work, relying on the belief the party would prefer to save innocent lives rather than risk fighting in the village.

The *tome of logic* bears a subtle curse. It serves a very beneficial purpose — it always knows the most logical course of action to take at any given time. However, it seeks to become its owner's sole repository of sanity, making them more and more reliant upon it for wisdom. As it spends time with a person, it saps their wisdom, causing them to act less and less rationally on their own. It is not precisely evil, merely possessive. It has determined its thinking ability is perfect, and others' are flawed, therefore it is in the best interest of the user the tome take care of him.

THE ULTIMATUM

The adventure begins in any hamlet, village, or city. Synastarax takes the town hostage, cares little about the timing. If possible, start the adventure at the end of a previous one — the PCs are resting in a tavern, manor house, or other base of operations. Regardless, when the PCs are comfortable, read or paraphrase the following:

Things are quieting down around here. You yearn for relaxation, just a short respite before the next world-threatening emergency. Naturally, the gods couldn't let such an opportunity go by, and several thunderclaps suddenly break just outside. And then there is a voice. It reverberates all around and the building trembles from the shock. It threatens to collapse from the sheer power. It bellows: "I require a service, and until one among your number comply, you belong to me. The most capable should assemble in one hour to await... instructions. If I am not satisfied with their promptness... I shall destroy this town."

Craning your necks to the window, you see a massive blue dragon hovering above the village, lightning crackling from its maw.

Synastarax chooses a local landmark the PCs can find easily. She is serious in her threat, and if the PCs dawdle; she destroys a building or two (empty ones, she is intimidating the commoners, not provoking a dragon hunt), until they acquiesce. The party need not be the only candidates. Feel free to include challengers and NPCs with a modicum of skill.

What she wants is quite simple: she wishes the PCs to retrieve a book from the lair of a dead dragon, Ysar'n Drax — a task even the bravest PC should blanch at.

They have five days.

If a PC asks why she is unwilling to do it herself, she blasts him with her lightning breath weapon, then tells the survivors such a task is beneath her. A lowly human is up to the task. Synastarax is straightforward: if the PCs do not do as she wishes, she kills them first, and then razes the village, killing its inhabitants. She is impatient, pragmatic, and ruthless. She is willing to give the PCs any assistance that neither endangers nor inconveniences her (basically, nothing useful other than advice). She also warns the PCs if they attempt to double-cross her (i.e. agreeing and then fleeing) she will destroy the village, taking exactly as long to kill them as it took her to find them.

This is not a bluff.

☛ **Synastarax, Adult Blue Dragon:** CR 14; Huge dragon (earth); HD 21d12+105; hp 241; Init +4; Spd 40 ft., burrow 20 ft., fly 150 ft (poor); AC 28, touch 8, flat-footed 28; Base Atk +21; Grp +37; Atk +27 melee (2D8+8, bite); Full Atk +27 melee (2d8+8, bite) and +25 melee (2d6+4, 2 claws) and +25 melee (1d8+4, 2 wings) and +25 melee (2d6+12, tail slap); SA breath weapon, crush; SQ Create/destroy water, DR 5/magic, frightful presence, immune to electricity, sound imitation, SR 21; AL LE; SV Fort +17, Ref +14, Will +15; Str 27, Dex 10, Con 21, Int 16, Wis 17, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +27, Concentration +17, Diplomacy +17, Hide +16, Intimidate +27, Knowledge (history) +15, Listen +29, Search +27, Sense Motive +15, Spellcraft +15, Spot +29, Use Magical Device +15; Ability Focus (breath weapon), Alertness, Cleave, Flyby Attack, Hover, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Wingover.

Breath Weapon (Su): A line of lightning 100' long by 5' wide and 5' high, 12d8 damage Reflex (DC 27) for half.

Create/Destroy Water (Sp): A blue dragon of any age can use this ability three times per day. It works like the create water spell, except that the dragon can decide to destroy water instead of creating it, which automatically spoils unattended aqueous liquids. Magic items (such as potions) and items in a creature's possession must succeed on a Will save (DC 23) or be ruined. This ability is the equivalent of a 1st-level spell.

Crush (Ex): This special attack allows a flying or jumping dragon of at least Huge size to land on opponents as a standard action, using its whole body to crush them. For this dragon, crush attacks are effective only against small or smaller opponents (though it can attempt normal overrun or grapple attacks against larger opponents).

A crush attack affects as many creatures as can fit under the dragon's body. Creatures in the affected area must succeed on a Reflex save (DC 25) or be pinned, automatically taking bludgeoning damage during the next round unless the dragon moves off them. If the dragon chooses to maintain the pin, treat it as a normal grapple attack. Pinned opponents take damage from the crush each round if they don't escape. The crush attack inflicts 2d8+12 points of damage.

Frightful Presence (Ex): This dragon can unsettle foes with its mere presence. The ability takes effect automatically whenever the dragon attacks, charges, or flies overhead. Creatures within a radius of 180 ft. are subject to the effect if they have fewer HD than the dragon. A potentially affected creature that succeeds on a Will save (DC 23) remains immune to that dragon's frightful presence for 24 hours. On a failure, creatures with 4 or less HD become panicked for 4d6 rounds and those with 5 or more HD become shaken for 4d6 rounds. Dragons ignore the frightful presence of other dragons.

Sound Imitation (Ex): A juvenile or older blue dragon can mimic any voice or sound it has heard, anytime it likes. Listeners must succeed on a Will save (DC 23) to detect the ruse.

Spell-Like Abilities: 3/day—ventriloquism.

Spells: This dragon casts spells as a 5th level sorcerer.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/7/5; save DC 13 + spell level):

0—detect magic, flare, ghost sound, light, mage hand, message, read magic; 1st—alarm, identify, mage armor, protection from good; 2nd—cat's grace, glitterdust.

THE WAY TO THE LAIR

Synastarax pointedly refuses to give the PCs a ride to Drax's lair. She knows humans too well to allow a hero an opportunity to cut at her hide. She tells the PCs she will meet them in five days... right here.

The lair is wherever the DM likes. If this is an established campaign world, find a remote location with 30 miles of the village and bury the cavern there. The Shroudlands is the name given to the region near Ysar'n Drax's lair. A few locals considered themselves "under the dragon's shroud" while he was there, so the name remained. Wherever the cavern is, the Shroudlands are dangerous territory. While Drax lived, evil feared his wrath... until he went mad. At that point all beings feared him. But, after 600 years, empty land attracts immigrants and now the Shroudlands are home to most anything.

No road leads to Drax's lair. Few have traveled there in the last 600 years. Those who did never returned. The wilderness in the area is overgrown, swampy, and treacherous. The trek requires two days (roughly) of travel each way, leaving only a day to search for the tome. The PCs may have to spend some time finding maps, guides, or a local authority who knows a little bit about the terrain. Each day of travel, roll on the following chart 3 times (morning, noon, and night) for a possible encounter:

BARDIC LORE

A bard can make a Bardic Knowledge check to discover what he may have heard. A bard learns all the information of the DC his check succeeded by and all that below it (a Bard who rolled a 17 would learn the information under DC 15 and DC 10). Alternately this information can be gained by a Gather Information skill check +5 higher than the DC of a Bardic Lore check to see if the PC has heard any rumors.

DC 10 Ysar'n Drax lived in this region centuries ago. He was known as the Mad Dragon (if any PCs speak Draconic, they know Ysar'n Drax means "mad dragon").

DC 15 Drax was not always insane, but no mortal knows what made him this way.

DC 20 Ysar'n Drax was an ancient and powerful Silver Dragon.

DC 25 Before he went insane, Drax had a vast talent for and interest in artifice.

DC 30 Ysar'n Drax's original draconic name was Yafyhonaron.

TRAVELING ENCOUNTERS

1d20	Encounter
1–10	No encounter
11	Drider seeking recruits to form a bandit gang
12	Druid checking on the PCs passage
13	Ettin, charging travelers for passage through "his territory"
14	Green hag, mourning the death of her 2 sisters at the hands of adventurers
15	Huge monstrous scorpion, resting (PCs disturb it)
16	Shambling mound, shambling around
17	Treant watching the party's passing
18	Will-o-wisp
19	Wyvern seeking a nesting spot
20	Young ranger, tracking the party as initiation to woodsman's guild

TROLL AMBUSH

Once the PCs are far enough from civilized lands, read or paraphrase the following:

The area once known as the Shroudlands still befits its namesake. Where once the shroud was a metaphor, cast by the mad dragon, it is now literal. A pall overcomes the land — untamed and wild. There is evil here and little good to counterbalance it. Hacking through the swampy undergrowth, the sky grows darker and the heat beats down.

Encounter: This encounter is optional. 2 trolls have stalked the PCs since entering the swamp. Since they know the terrain and are not overcome by hunger, they wait until the best opportunity to strike, laying an ambush to surprise the PCs. Most likely they find two opposing trees which can hold their weight where the party is traveling, and jump down to attack from both sides.

♣ **Troll:** CR 5; Large giant; HD 6d8+36; hp 63 each; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +4; Grp +14; Atk +9 melee (1d6+6, claw); Full Atk +9 melee (1d6+6, 2 claws) and +4 melee (1d6+3, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA Rend 2d6+9; SQ Darkvision 90 ft., low-light vision, regeneration 5, scent; AL CE; SV Fort +11, Ref +4, Will +3; Str 23, Dex 14, Con 23, Int 6, Wis 9, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Listen +5, Spot +6; Alertness, Iron Will, Track.

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

Regeneration (Ex): Fire and acid deal normal damage to a troll. If a troll loses a limb or body part, the lost portion regrows in 3d6 minutes. The creature can reattach the severed member instantly by holding it to the stump.

UNICORN RESCUE

Encounter: By the end of a day's travel, the PCs have made it to higher ground, out of the swamp. Between here and Drax's lair, it is all deep woodland. While the going may be easier, it is no less dangerous. During the night,

a unicorn, named Kialee crashes through the PCs campsite, desperate to evade a pack of 6 worgs who have hunted her for days. She is tired, panicked, and bedraggled (and only 6 rounds ahead of the worgs). Blood from bites and scratches, make for an unsightly contrast on her white coat. If the PCs can calm her down somehow, they have a valuable ally for the path ahead. On the other hand, they also have to deal with the worgs, who are perfectly willing to give up Kialee in exchange for them.

Tactics: Worgs are intelligent. If the PCs gain the upper hand, they retreat into the woods, and follow from a safe distance, preparing to ambush when the PCs are at a disadvantage, possibly just after leaving Drax's lair.

If the PCs successfully rescue Kialee, she offers to escort them to Drax's lair (she knows where it is). Her thorough understanding of the area can shave half a day off the journey. Her life has been less than ideal, and she does not act as one would expect a unicorn to act. Under no circumstance whatsoever does she allow anyone to ride her, and she answers no personal questions, seeming jaded to inquisitive PCs.

If the worgs kill Kialee, the PCs still make it to Drax's lair, but lose the 12-hour window they would gain traveling with her. The death of a unicorn might be seen as an ill omen, as well, plaguing the minds of the PCs. Those attune with nature or with deep respect for life, suffer a –4 morale penalty to all saving throws for the rest of the day, and –2 for the rest of the journey (until they retrieve the book).

♣ **Unicorn:** CR 3; Large magical beast; HD 4d10+20; hp 42; Init +3; Spd 60 ft.; AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +4; Grp +13; Atk +11 melee (1d8+8, horn); Full Atk +11 melee (1d8+8, horn) and +3 melee (1d4+2, 2 hooves); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA —; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., magic circle against evil, spell-like abilities, immunity to poison, charm, and compulsion, low-light vision, scent, wild empathy; AL CG; SV Fort +9, Ref +7, Will +6; Str 20, Dex 17, Con 21, Int 10, Wis 21, Cha 24.

Skills and Feats: Jump +21, Listen +11, Move Silently +9, Spot +11, Survival +8*; Alertness, Skill Focus (survival).

Magic Circle against Evil (Su): This ability continuously duplicates the effect of the spell. A unicorn cannot suppress this ability.

Spell-Like Abilities: Unicorns can use detect evil at will as a free action.

Once per day a unicorn can use *greater teleport* to move anywhere within its home. It cannot teleport beyond the forest boundaries nor back from outside.

A unicorn can use *cure light wounds* three times per day and *cure moderate wounds* once per day (caster level 5th) by touching a wounded creature with its horn. Once per day it can use *neutralize poison* (DC 21, caster level 8th) with a touch of its horn. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Wild Empathy (Ex): This power works like the druid's wild empathy class feature, except that a unicorn has a +6 racial bonus on the check.

Skills: Unicorns have a +4 racial bonus on Move Silently checks. *Unicorns have a +3 competence bonus on Survival checks within the boundaries of their forest.

✎ **Worg:** CR 2; Medium magical beast; HD 4d10+8; hp 30 each; Init +2; Spd 50 ft.; AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +4; Grp +7; Atk +7 melee (1d6+4, bite); Full Atk +7 melee (1d6+4, bite); SA Trip; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; AL NE; SV Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +3; Str 17, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 14, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Hide +4, Listen +6, Move Silently +6, Spot +6, Survival +2*; Alertness, Track.

Trip (Ex): A worg that hits with a bite attack can attempt to trip the opponent (+3 check modifier) as a free action without making a touch attack or provoking an attack of opportunity. If the attempt fails, the opponent cannot react to trip the worg.

Skills: A worg has a +1 racial bonus on Listen, Move Silently, and Spot checks, and a +2 racial bonus on Hide checks. *A worg has a +4 racial bonus on Survival checks when tracking by scent.

YSAR'N DRAX'S LAIR

Drax's lair is embedded in a cliff overlooking the Shroudlands. While the cavern is quite large, it is also deceptively simple. By the time Drax took over the cave, he was powerful enough not to need a complex dwelling. When he went insane, he merely took the existing layout, and enhanced it to his liking. Regardless, the cavern system only has three visible rooms, which are natural caverns, separated by long, rough-hewn corridors. The entrance chamber connects to a receiving area, which is in turn connected to Drax's main chamber.

1. Entrance Chamber

Encounter: The entrance chamber is wide, over 130 ft. at the mouth. It narrows as it winds inward, but makes for a large cave. The cave was home to many residents over the years, but most knew better than to go deeper into the cave. Currently, a small tribe of 3 ogres has made their home here. Their leader is an ogre mage named Mak'ilur. As the PCs approach the cave, read or paraphrase the following:

The area around Drax's lair is quiet, almost as if in mourning for the fallen wyrm. The forest clears away before the cliff, offering an unobscured view of the cavern entrance. The mouth of the cavern yawns wide, large and eerily inviting. A sigil rests above the opening, ravaged by time. It must be Ysar'n Drax's.

Tactics: As soon as the ogres hear the PCs coming, the ogres take up strategic spots towards the back of the entrance, using their darkvision to their advantage. Darekh holds no loyalty to his followers, and if it looks like he is in danger of dying, he flees out the front of the cave (he and his followers never, ever, go further into the lair).

The entrance chamber narrows further in, but never less than 60 ft., make it large enough to accommodate a dragon's wingspan. The ceiling is about 40 ft. high.

Treasure: These ogres live in squalor and filth, but some gems and coins have been collected into small piles (apparently, they do not own any sacks). 214 sp, 59 gp, and 10 gems of various size and value make up the four piles. The gems are a rough bloodstone (10 gp), an off-color lapis-lazuli (35 gp), an eye agate (10 gp), a poorly cut opal worth (370 gp), a citrine (50 gp), a fine-colored jasper (nearly flawless, 250 gp), 2 azurites (10 gp, each), a banded agate (10 gp), and a large, dense moonstone (300 gp, possibly magical).

✎ **Ogre:** Large giant; HD 4d8+11 (hp 17, 25, 33); Init -1; Spd 30 ft. in hide armor, base speed 40 ft.; AC 16, touch 8, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +3; Grp +12; Atk +8 melee (2d8+7, greatclub) or +1 ranged (1d8+5, javelin); Full Atk +8 melee (2d8+7, greatclub) or +1 ranged (1d8+5, javelin);

Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA —; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +0, Will +1; Str 21, Dex 8, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 7.

Skills and Feats: Climb +5, Listen +2, Spot +2; Toughness, Weapon Focus (greatclub).

✎ **Mak'ilur Ogre Mage:** CR 8; Large giant; HD 5d8+15 (34 hp); Init +4; Spd 40 ft., fly 40 ft. (good); AC 18, touch 9, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +3; Grp +3/+12; Atk +7 melee (3d6+7/19–20, greatsword) or +2 ranged (2d6/x3, longbow); Full Atk +7 melee (3d6+7/19–20, greatsword) or +2 ranged (2d6/x3, longbow); **Space/Reach** 10 ft./10 ft.; SA Spell-like abilities; SQ Darkvision 90 ft., low-light vision, regeneration 5, SR 19; AL CE; SV Fort +7, Ref +1, Will +3; Str 21, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 17.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +11, Listen +10, Spellcraft +10, Spot +10.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—darkness, invisibility; 1/day—charm person (DC 14), cone of cold (DC 18), gaseous form, polymorph, sleep (DC 14). Caster level 9th. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Flight (Su): An ogre mage can cease or resume flight as a free action. While using gaseous form it can fly at its normal speed and has perfect maneuverability.

Regeneration (Ex): Fire and acid deal normal damage to an ogre mage.

An ogre mage that loses a limb or body part can reattach it by holding the severed member to the stump.

Reattachment takes 1 minute. If the head or some other vital organ is severed, it must be reattached within 10 minutes or the creature dies. An ogre mage cannot regrow lost body parts.

2. Welcome Cavern

Originally, a well-furnished area, it was specifically designed to make guests feel comfortable. When he went mad, Ysar'n Drax installed several traps in the room. When Drax died, Lethnearinos left the traps in place in order to discourage any curious guests from finding the *tome of logic*.

Read or paraphrase the following aloud when the PCs approach:

The corridor expands up ahead, to a room that might, long ago, have been pleasant and comfortable. It contains various tattered and decayed objects of art and furniture, none in any kind of functional condition. It appears to have been an antechamber of some kind, once upon a time. While not as expansive as the entrance chamber, it is still quite large.

There are three traps in this room. One is at the entrance, one is the room itself, and the other is at the exit. All of them are magical in nature.

Trap 1: A pressure plate at the room's entrance creates a globe of cold when pressed.

☛ **Glyph of Warding (Blast):** CR 4; spell; spell trigger; no reset; spell effect (glyph of warding [blast], 7th-level cleric, 3d8 cold, DC 14 Reflex save half damage); multiple targets (all targets within 5 ft.); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 28.

Trap 2: Most of the room is part of an elaborate reverse gravity trap. The ceiling (40ft. up) is covered in sharpened stalactites.

☛ **Reverse Gravity Trap:** CR 8; magic device; proximity trigger (alarm, 10-ft. area); automatic reset; spell effect (reverse gravity, 13th-level wizard, 6d6 fall [upon hitting the ceiling of the 60-ft.-high room], then 6d6 fall [upon falling 60 ft. to the floor when the spell ends], DC 20 Reflex save avoids damage); Search DC 32; Disable Device DC 32.

Trap 3: Finally, the exit to the room contains a tripwire linked to a wand in the opposite corner, which casts acid fog at the PCs. If removed without a Disable Device check (or on a failed one), the wand goes off. It currently has 23 charges left.

☛ **Acid Fog Trap:** CR 7; magic device; proximity trigger (alarm); automatic reset; spell effect (acid fog, 11th-level wizard, 2d6/round acid for 11 rounds); Search DC 31; Disable Device DC 31.

3. The Dragon's Den

This room is, naturally, the largest in the lair. It is over 200 ft. by 200 ft., easily large enough for its draconian occupant to rest comfortably. At the moment, it is filled with treasure and a single resident who remained unseen for over 600 years — the ghost of Ysar'n Drax. Read or paraphrase the following aloud:

Having navigated the traps lining the entrance to the Mad Dragon's lair, you see a truly awe-inspiring sight in the center. A gigantic room opens up out of the corridor, obviously the great beast's home. You can barely see the ceiling of the room, and the various passages the dragon used to reach the sky from here. Still brimming with treasure, the room boasts valuables of immense wealth.

☛ **Ghost of Ysar'n Drax/Yahfyonaron, Ghostly Ancient Wurm, Silver Dragon:** CR 24; Gargantuan dragon (cold); HD 37d12+333; hp 537; Init +4; Spd 40 ft., fly 200 ft (clumsy); AC 42, touch 6, flat-footed 42; Base Atk +37; Grp +63; Atk +47 melee (4D6+14/19-20, bite); Full Atk +47 melee (4d6+14/19-20, bite) and +46 melee (2d8+7, 2 claws) and +45 melee (2d6+7, 2 wings) and +45 melee (2d8+21, tail slap); SA breath weapon, crush, tail sweep; SQ Alternate form, DR 20/magic, immune to acid and cold, cloudwalking, vulnerability to fire, SR 30; AL LG; SV Fort +29, Ref +20, Will +29; Str 39, Dex 10, Con 29, Int 28, Wis 29, Cha 28.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +49, Concentration +49, Diplomacy +51, Disguise +49, Intimidate +49, Jump +39, Knowledge (arcana) +49, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +49, Knowledge (history) +49, Knowledge (religion) +29, Listen +51, Perform (sing) +29, Sense Motive +49, Search +49, Spot +51, Use Magical Device +49; Alertness, Combat Expertise, Craft Wondrous Item, Empower Spell, Enlarge Spell, Flyby Attack, Hover, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Snatch, Weapon Focus (claws), Wingover.

Breath Weapon (Su): A silver dragon has two types of breath weapon, a cone of cold and a cone of paralyzing gas, for this dragon the cone is 60 ft. The cone of cold inflicts 22d8 damage with a Reflex save (DC 37) for half damage. Creatures within a cone of paralyzing gas must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 37) or be paralyzed for 1d6 rounds plus 1 round per age category of the dragon (11 in this case).

Alternate Form (Su): A silver dragon can assume any animal or humanoid form of Medium size or smaller as a standard action three times per day. This ability functions as a *polymorph* spell cast on itself at its caster level, except that the dragon does not regain hit points for changing form and can only assume the form of an animal or humanoid. The dragon can remain in its animal or humanoid form until it chooses to assume a new one or return to its natural form.

Cloudwalking (Su): A silver dragon can tread on clouds or fog as though on solid ground. The ability functions continuously but can be negated or resumed at will.

Crush (Ex): This special attack allows a flying or jumping dragon of at least Huge size to land on opponents as a standard action, using its whole body to crush them. For this dragon crush attacks are effective only against medium or smaller opponents (though it can attempt normal overrun or grapple attacks against larger opponents).

A crush attack affects as many creatures as can fit under the dragon's body. Creatures in the affected area must succeed on a Reflex save (DC 37) or be pinned, automatically taking bludgeoning damage during the next round unless the dragon moves off them. If the dragon chooses to maintain the pin, treat it as a normal grapple attack. Pinned opponents take damage from the crush each round if they don't escape. The crush attack inflicts 4d6+21 points of damage.

Frightful Presence (Ex): This dragon can unsettle foes with its mere presence. The ability takes effect automatically whenever the dragon attacks, charges, or flies overhead. Creatures within a radius of 330 ft. are subject to the effect if they have fewer HD than the dragon. A potentially affected creature that succeeds on a Will save (DC 37) remains immune to that dragon's frightful presence for 24 hours. On a failure, creatures with 4 or less HD become panicked for 4d6 rounds and those with 5 or more HD become shaken for 4d6 rounds. Dragons ignore the frightful presence of other dragons.

Spell-Like Abilities: 3/day—fog cloud, control winds; 2/day—feather fall; 1/day—control weather.

Tail Sweep (Ex): This special attack allows a dragon of at least Gargantuan size to sweep with its tail as a standard action. The sweep affects a half-circle with a radius of 30 ft., extending from an intersection on the edge of the dragon's space in any direction. Creatures within the swept area

are affected if they are size small or smaller. A tail sweep automatically deals 2d6+21 damage. Affected creatures can attempt Reflex saves to take half damage (DC 37).

Spells: This dragon casts spells as a 17th level sorcerer.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/9/8/8/8/8/7/7/5; save DC 19 + spell level): 0—arcane mark, dancing lights, daze, detect magic, light, mage hand, mending, message, read magic; 1st—alarm, erase, identify, magic missile, true strike; 2nd—arcane lock, cat's grace, continual flame, locate object, resist energy; 3rd—dispel magic, fireball, lightning bolt, slow; 4th—arcane eye, detect scrying, scrying, searing light; 5th—dominate person, faithful hound, mind fog, teleport; 6th—blade barrier, globe of invulnerability, guards and wards; 7th—arcane sight—greater, dictum, hold person—mass; 8th—dimensional lock, sunburst.

If the *Dragons™* book by AEG is being used, the information on ghost dragons, page 89, can be substituted.

Tactics: The ghost does not attack the PCs, provided they do not attack him or try to steal his treasure. He greets them cordially, and asks of news of the outside realms. He tells them anything they wish to know, except about the tome. Yahfyonaron regained his sanity upon his death, and has spent the past 600 years dealing with the consequences of his actions. However, he is terribly afraid of the tome, doing his best to keep people from getting it, short of attacking them.

He offers false clues, dire warnings, and advice, but he neither stops nor helps the PCs achieve their goal. Once the PCs return to this room with the tome, he retreats into the Ethereal, offering no more trace of his presence unless his treasure is threatened.

Treasure: 17,000 gp, 122 gems (DM determined), a +4 speed longsword, potion of remove disease, rod of withering, 1 scroll (containing the spells *displacement*, *fly*, and *fear*), 1 scroll (containing the spells *transmute rock to mud*, *cone of cold*, and *interposing hand*), a staff of life, a wand of darkness (41 charges), and a pearl of power (5th level).

This is where the adventure becomes tricky. It is ultimately up to the DM how difficult it is to find the tome. The tome is not among the hoard, and Yahfyonaron tells the PCs this if they ask. There is, however, a hidden door on the southern end of the chamber which can be found with a Search check (DC 30).

Should they find the door, it is locked, requiring an Open Lock check (DC 30) to open. Once the PCs get past it, they enter a cramped passage. Here, they face the three doors.

RESTING PLACE

When Lethnearinos recovered the tome, he decided his father's lair was an ideal resting place. He wanted to ensure the book remained where it was, however, and rather than risk the consequences of destroying such a powerful artifact, he sealed it behind three doors, each of which bore a unique and cunning trap. They are each magically reinforced, and impervious to physical harm or abuse.

The only way past each door is to neutralize the trap guarding it or use a spell like *passwall*.

Bronze Door: this door is the first one along the secret passage, just twenty feet inside the hidden door. It carries a simple, deadly trap: contact poison on the entire door.

The poison is transparent, but has a slight sheen, allowing a Spot check (DC 25) to notice. If the poison touches bare skin, it deals 3d10 damage each round, for 5 rounds (Fort save DC 23 for 1d10 damage each round instead). It is corrosive, and if touched to clothing, eats through a layer of clothing every round. The only way past this trap is by neutralizing the poison; Alchemy check (DC 25).

Silver Door: This door is another 20 ft. further along, and is deathly cold. A PC touching it with bare skin suffers 4d6 cold damage on contact (Fortitude Save DC 20 for half), and without a successful Reflex save, sticks to it, taking 2d6 cold damage every round (Strength check DC 15 to pull free). The trap can be neutralized by doing a total of 30 points of heat/fire damage to the door.

Gold Door: This door does not have a trap so much as it is the trap. As soon as a PC gets within 5 ft. of the door, it takes its true form, of a clay golem (it turns inside out, so the gold exterior becomes the innards).

☛ **Clay Golem:** CR 10; Large construct; HD 11d10+30 (90 hp); Init -1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 22, touch 8, flat-footed 22; Base Atk +8; Grp +19; Atk +14 melee (2d10+7 plus cursed wound, slam); Full Atk +14 melee (2d10+7 plus cursed wound, 2 slams); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA Berserk, cursed wound; SQ Construct traits, damage reduction 10/adamantine and bludgeoning, darkvision 60 ft., haste, immunity to magic, low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 25, Dex 9, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: —

Berserk (Ex): When a clay golem enters combat, there is a cumulative 1% chance each round that its elemental spirit breaks free and the golem goes berserk. The uncontrolled golem goes on a rampage, attacking the nearest living creature or smashing some object smaller than itself if no creature is within reach, then moving on to spread more destruction. Once a clay golem goes berserk, no known method can reestablish control.

Cursed Wound (Ex): The damage a clay golem deals doesn't heal naturally and resists healing spells. A character attempting to cast a conjuration (healing) spell on a creature damaged by a clay golem must succeed on a DC 26 caster level check, or the spell has no effect on the injured character.

Immunity to Magic (Ex): A clay golem is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance. In addition, certain spells and effects function differently against the creature, as noted below.

A *move earth* spell drives the golem back 120 ft. and deals 3d12 points of damage to it.

A *disintegrate* spell slows the golem (as the slow spell) for 1d6 rounds and deals 1d12 points of damage.

An *earthquake* spell cast directly at a clay golem stops it from moving on its next turn and deals 5d10 points of damage. The golem gets no saving throw against any of these effects.

Any magical attack against a clay golem that deals acid damage heals 1 point of damage for every 3 points of damage it would otherwise deal. If the amount of healing would cause the golem to exceed its full normal hit points, it gains any excess as temporary hit points. For example, a clay golem hit by the breath weapon of a black dragon heals

7 points of damage if the attack would have dealt 22 points of damage. A clay golem gets no saving throw against magical attacks that deal acid damage.

Haste (Su): After it has engaged in at least 1 round of combat, a clay golem can haste itself once per day as a free action. The effect lasts 3 rounds and is otherwise the same as the spell.

The gold core of the clay golem makes it harder than others of its kind. The PCs may attempt to rip the gold core out from the golem, once slain, but its value is ultimately up to the DM.

Once the PCs fight their way past the golem, they enter a small room with a treasure chest. Lethnearinos did not trap the chest, but placed two spells upon it instead.

Treasure: The first one notifies his heir if the chest is ever opened (a permanent alarm), and the second spell hides the first spell from detection. Short of extraordinary measures, the PCs have no clue they triggered the spells. The return trip out of the lair is uneventful (unless the DM decides otherwise).

THE TOME

Once the PCs have the tome, it advises them with subtle emotional hints. Whoever holds the tome is more than willing to give it to the dragon. The tome is smart enough to know an adventurer would most likely keep a talking book, but subtle images and dreams about his family and friends ripped asunder given he keeps the book, should encourage him to give the book to Synastarax.

How he finds out is up to the DM, but the PC knows he cannot destroy the book (whether or not this is true).

NEGOTIATIONS WITH SYNASTARAX

Note: If the PCs somehow disabled the *alarm* spell on the chest, this encounter does not happen.

Read or paraphrase to the person holding the tome:

It is the evening of the fifth day. The tome is secure, and you await the dragon. Somehow, you know Synastarax is getting more than she bargained for, but your sense of self-preservation reminds you, this will be her problem soon. The draconian silhouette wings towards you from the setting sun. As the beast approaches, however, you see a glint of pink off of silver wings...

Encounter: The dragon currently approaching them is Ohandalyar, one of Lethnearinos's children. He is young, tired, and wounded, but knows the consequences if the tome falls into the wrong hands. He does not attack the PCs outright, but is cautious and edgy — after all, they are carrying the artifact his family has worked long to safeguard. He lands and answers any questions the PCs might have about the book, his sire or grandsire, or anything else the PCs wish to know. If they tell him about their deal with Synastarax, he offers to assist them in any way he can in order to prevent the book from falling into her claws. At the least convenient time, however, Synastarax shows up.

Tactics: Seeing the PCs talking to a silver dragon, Synastarax assumes they have betrayed her and broken the deal (and, depending on how things went with Ohandalyar, they might have). She immediately attacks, going after Ohandalyar first, then PCs once they pose a significant threat. Her first goal is the tome, however. If she can secure it and escape, she saves revenge for later.

This sort of combat (two dragons against one another, plus PCs) could be difficult for DMs to orchestrate. If necessary, have Ohandalyar die quickly so the PCs have a moment to shine. However, they have to be quick, as there are a few dragons (and others), which have had their eyes on the hoard for a long time.

☛ **Ohandalyar, Young Silver Dragon:** CR 7; Medium dragon (cold); HD 13d12+26; hp 110; Init +4; Spd 40 ft., fly 150 ft (poor); AC 22, touch 10, flat-footed 22; Base Atk +13; Grp +16; Atk +16 melee (1d8+3, bite); Full Atk +16 melee (1d8+3, bite) and +14 melee (1d6+1, 2 claws) and +14 melee (1d4+1, 2 wings); SA breath weapon; SQ Alternate form, immune to acid and cold, cloudwalking, vulnerability to fire; AL LG; SV Fort +10, Ref +8, Will +11; Str 17, Dex 10, Con 15, Int 16, Wis 17, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +19, Concentration +10, Diplomacy +21, Disguise +19, Intimidate +13, Jump +11, Knowledge (arcane) +11, Listen +21, Sense Motive +11, Search +19, Spot +21, Use Magical Device +11; Alertness, Combat Expertise, Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Multiattack.

Breath Weapon (Su): A silver dragon has two types of breath weapon, a cone of cold and a cone of paralyzing gas, for this dragon the cone is 30'. The cone of cold inflicts 6d8 damage with a Reflex save (DC 18) for half damage.

Creatures within a cone of paralyzing gas must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 18) or be paralyzed for 1d6 rounds plus 1 round per age category of the dragon (3 in this case).

Alternate Form (Su): A silver dragon can assume any animal or humanoid form of Medium size or smaller as a standard action three times per day. This ability functions as a *polymorph* spell cast on itself at its caster level, except that the dragon does not regain hit points for changing form and can only assume the form of an animal or humanoid. The dragon can remain in its animal or humanoid form until it chooses to assume a new one or return to its natural form.

Cloudwalking (Su): A silver dragon can tread on clouds or fog as though on solid ground. The ability functions continuously but can be negated or resumed at will.

Spells: This dragon casts spells as a 1st level sorcerer.

Sorcerer Spells Known (5/4; save DC 13 + spell level):

0—*detect magic, light, mage hand, message, read magic;*

1st—*alarm, unseen servant.*

LEGACY OF MADNESS

THE LAIR OF YSAR'N DRAX

3. THE DRAGON'S DEN

Tome Chamber

Secret Door

Bronze Door

Silver Door

Gold Door

Treasure

Tripwire

2. WELCOME CAVERN

Reverse Gravity Zone

Wand of Acid Fog

100 ft.

75 ft.

50 ft.

25 ft.

0 ft.

Ogre's Stash Piles

Pressure Plate

Ogre Den

1. ENTRANCE CHAMBER



EPILOGUE

If Synastarax survives the conflict, and acquires the book, the PCs have a new quest on their hands, as they race to recover the tome of logic from an increasingly insane blue dragon. If she did not get the book, then Ohandalyar wants it for safekeeping and (perhaps) eventual destruction. If Ohandalyar dies during the battle, his last words offer instructions on how to destroy the Tome for good, which should be extremely challenging. Only if one or more PCs are prepared to go insane, should they be allowed access to the book for a significant period of time.

If the book is destroyed, Ysar'n Drax (Yahfyanaron) rests peacefully. His ghost no longer haunts his lair, and the PCs may loot it at their leisure. However, they'll have to be quick, as there are quite a few dragons (and others), with their eyes on the hoard. But that's another story...

If Yahfyanaron has any grandchildren, or other relatives, some of them might take exception with PCs looting the tomb.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

- The PC's heroics travel to the ears of Lord Kayne and Kylira Meridian, who have a deed of their own they wish to hire the PCs for (see the adventure "Temple of Eternal Flame").
- An earthquake hits a nearby city revealing the Temple of the Iron Codex. The Iron Codex is another magical tome that the book in this adventure views as a threat and guides them toward the city in hopes of destroying it (see the adventure Temple of the Iron Codex").

Chapter 8:

The Harbinger

Levels 9 to 11
by Ree Soesbee

DM BACKGROUND

The most dangerous foe is the enemy you once called friend... The small peaceful town of Brookvale lies in the sheltered forest curve of a wide river, protected from weather by the sweeping arms of massive elm trees. The town boasts a library, a cultural museum filled with historical exhibits, and the temple of Ghesse, the River-goddess. Over the mossy gate hangs the sign of the Royal Testament — the King's own favor. It is a gentle place, where goodly folk spend time in craft-halls and educating themselves through study. Under the watchful eye of an old wizard named Calendrus, the town has prospered and grown. Until now...

A dragon appeared within the forest recently, ravaging outlying villages and destroying everything in its path.

It shows no mercy, nor any interest in peace — it exists merely to kill and maim. Yet the marauding dragon's hide shines silver in the sunlight — a color which should stand for goodness and justice. Something must be terribly wrong to drive a good dragon to slaughter innocent peasantry... and the dragon is headed directly for Brookvale!

The vengeful dragon descends on Brookvale without mercy. Silver wings shine in the sunlight, and acid drips from the dragon's mouth and claws as he breathes a stream of ice, destroying most of the town museum. The town guards launch volleys of arrows at him, but are quickly put down by another fearsome blast — this time, one of a snow and acid mixture. The guardsmen scream in agony as Calendrus swoops toward the temple.

This adventure is designed for four to six PCs of levels 9 to 11. A party undertaking this adventure should have access to both arcane and wilderness skills. High Willpower save bonuses are a requirement for surviving this adventure.

The town of Brookvale remained peaceful for many years. Carefully guided by the wizard Calendrus and his allies in the Temple of Ghesse, the town prospered into a cultural haven. Now, it is all threatened by a dragon on the rampage headed directly for the town.

- Silver dragons are peaceful, and love art and history. They would never ravage an innocent town, nor would they destroy a work of art or a museum — and there are both in Brookvale.
- Calendrus, the wizard, is not human. He is a silver dragon. In fact, Calendrus is the silver dragon who is about to attack the town of Brookvale. Due to a cunning plot by a black dragon, Calendrus' mind is not his own. As the pawn of an evil power, he is condemned to the role of puppet, forced to slaughter, maim, and destroy.
- Only the High Priestess of the Temple of Ghesse knows Calendrus is a dragon, and she swore to secrecy before her goddess. She cannot tell anyone the truth about his nature; even if she could, she does not know what drove Calendrus to attack the town.

BARDIC LORE

A bard can make a Bardic Knowledge check to discover what he may have heard. A bard learns all the information of the DC his check succeeded by and all that below it (a Bard who rolled a 17 would learn the information under DC 15 and DC 10). Alternately this information can be gained by a Gather Information skill check +5 higher than the DC of a Bardic Lore check to see if the PC has heard any rumors.

- DC 10** A High Priestess of the Temple of Ghesse serves the town's spiritual and guidance needs.
- DC 15** Some even whisper there is a silver dragon who watches over the town.
- DC 20** A black dragon is said to lair in the nearby swamp.
- DC 25** The black dragon has many strange allies including ogres and other, stranger things...

- Calendrus' was taken over by a Harbinger Worm, a malevolent creature which invaded his body and turned the powerful dragon into a puppet. The worm grows while feasting on the dragon's heart, becoming more powerful each day. (He is now a Greater Harbinger... see Appendix B).

Unless the worm is destroyed, the dragon razes Brookvale and its innocent residents in one week's time. If Calendrus is killed in the process, then the town of Brookvale loses his protection. If the Harbinger Worm escapes the death of its host, it seeks another body, insuring Brookvale is plagued by further evils. Hopefully, the PCs can piece together the clues about the worm, its nature, and how to defeat it without killing Calendrus. If they do, they have saved the town of Brookvale and earned the gratitude of a powerful silver dragon.

In the swamp down river from Brookvale, the black dragon Aaxhul plots to destroy all of the good dragons in the region. He sent Calendrus the 'gift' which infected the silver dragon's body with the Harbinger Worm, and he plans to do the same to all of the good dragons he finds. With Harbinger Worms controlling their actions, the good dragons can demolish cities, leading to dragon hunts by their frightened and confused allies.

Aaxhul is pleased with his plan, and is harvesting a crop of Harbinger Worms within his swamp. The Harbinger Worms do not hurt the black dragon as their semi-sentient minds understand he is a friend and ally.

BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

Players should be familiar with Brookvale, either from actually residing there, visiting, or from local gossip in neighboring towns. They know the town is peaceful, cultured, and filled with good-hearted citizens. As DM, you may substitute any such town in your own game world for Brookvale — assuming there is a swamp nearby. The NPCs established in this adventure can be integrated seamlessly into existing campaigns. Once the PCs establish a background with Brookvale, tell them about the rampaging dragon. An attack is in process and the peasantry, fleeing into the town of Brookvale to escape the dragon's wrath, begs the PCs for aid.

FOREST HUTS

Encounter: Outside the town of Brookvale are several small enclaves of huts where less-fortunate people live. Their homes are thatched, hidden among the sheltering oak trees of the forest — oaks which are now twisted with acid and covered with snow and ice. There are peasant women huddled in tree roots, clutching terrified children. Here and there on the ground lie bodies torn apart by the dragon's claws. Just above the trees you see a tremendous dragon, his scales shining in the sunlight. A cold spray radiates from the dragon's breath, and with the ice, black acid drips from his mouth and trickles down the scales of his neck. He holds two farmers in his claws.

Calendrus briefly engages the party. Manipulated by the Greater Harbinger, the dragon finished his devastation of the peasant huts, and retired deep into the forest to eat his prey. The PCs can try to rescue the peasants from the dragon, but he flees if in serious danger. Turn the PCs toward rescuing the peasantry from other dangers — dripping acid from tree limbs, collapsing trees or huts, and saving the lives of seriously injured woodsmen. As long as the PCs show a potent threat to the dragon, it is not stupid and leaves the area well before reaching single digit hit points.

After the dragon retreats, the peasants show their gratitude. They consider dragons — regardless of color — to be terrible monstrosities, and want to see them wiped out, this one in particular. The peasants suggest the PCs visit the nearby wizard's tower. The wizard, Calendrus, may know more about the dragon. They tell the PCs Calendrus may also be able to help them butcher the "evil creature".



☙ **Calendrus, Juvenile Silver Dragon:** CR 10; Large dragon (cold); HD 16d12+48; hp 152; Init +4; Spd 40 ft., fly 150 ft (poor); AC 24, touch 9, flat-footed 24; Base Atk +16; Grp +24; Atk +19 melee (2D6+4, bite); Full Atk +19 melee (2d6+4, bite) and +17 melee (1d8+2, 2 claws) and +17 melee (1d6+2, 2 wings) and +17 melee (1d8+6, tail slap); SA breath weapon; SQ Alternate form, immune to acid and cold, cloudwalking, vulnerability to fire; AL LG; SV Fort +13, Ref +10, Will +14; Str 19, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 18, Wis 19, Cha 18.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +23, Concentration +13, Diplomacy +25, Disguise +23, Intimidate +16, Jump +13, Knowledge (arcane) +13, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +12, Knowledge (history) +9, Listen +25, Sense Motive +14, Search +23, Spot +25, Use Magical Device +14; Alertness, Combat Expertise, Flyby Attack, Hover, Improved Initiative, Multiattack.

Breath Weapon (Su): A silver dragon has two types of breath weapon, a cone of cold and a cone of paralyzing gas, for this dragon the cone is 40 ft. The cone of cold inflicts 8d8 damage with a Reflex save (DC 21) for half damage.

Creatures within a cone of paralyzing gas must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 21) or be paralyzed for 1d6 rounds plus 1 round per age category of the dragon (4 in this case).

Alternate Form (Su): A silver dragon can assume any animal or humanoid form of Medium size or smaller as a standard action three times per day. This ability functions as a *polymorph* spell cast on itself at its caster level, except that the dragon does not regain hit points for changing form and can only assume the form of an animal or humanoid. The dragon can remain in its animal or humanoid form until it chooses to assume a new one or return to its natural form.

Cloudwalking (Su): A silver dragon can tread on clouds or fog as though on solid ground. The ability functions continuously but can be negated or resumed at will.

Spell-Like Abilities: 2/day—feather fall.

Spells: This dragon casts spells as a 3rd level sorcerer.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/6; save DC 14 + spell level):

0—detect magic, light, mage hand, mending, message, read magic; 1st—alarm, identify, true strike.

THE WHITE TOWER

Calendrus' tower was once a gracefully curving white spire located in the heart of a beautiful forest grove. However, something terrible stands now where the beautiful tower once was. The building lays shattered, with what used to be the top story crumbled around the spire's base. The tower itself is soiled, burned with acid and covered with ice.

If the PCs explore the tower, they find the dead bodies of Calendrus' servants. The tower's base still stands, and two stories of the building are relatively undisturbed. The upper level, where Calendrus kept his laboratory and his personal chambers, is in ruin. One wall is completely torn from the tower, leaving the upper story open to the sky. If the PCs search through the tower, they do not find Calendrus' body.

They do find several odd items for use in Calendrus' laboratory. By the wizard's bed in his private chambers, lays a small stone box lying open. The box is made of hematite, a blackish stone shining silver in the light. Inside the box is a small golden lizard. The lizard opens on an almost invisible hinge (Search check, DC 23 to notice), but is empty inside save for a thin smear of greasy residue.

Calendrus' journal is locked in the upper drawer of his desk, within the laboratory. If the PCs search the desk, make a Open Lock check (DC 22) or force the drawer (Strength check, DC 16). Calendrus' journal reveals several secrets about the wizard. Critical information reveals Calendrus is actually a silver dragon. Astute PCs should be

able to piece together the attack on the tower was actually the dragon breaking free from the inside. If not, offer them Search checks (DC 20) to realize this.

But why would the gentle and noble Calendrus go mad? Nothing in his journal indicates anger, he has no apparent enemies, and all of his journal writings hint that he cared deeply for Brookvale and its residents. Further research (Gather Information check, DC 20) reveals Imogen, the High Priestess of the Temple of Ghesse, knew Calendrus' secret.

TEMPLE OF GHESSE

Many of the refugees from the forest villages came to the Temple of Ghesse, seeking shelter. Through the pillared opening at the temple front, several of the River Goddess' acolytes tend to their peasants' wounds. The acolytes direct you to Imogen. She stands at the rear of the temple near the river dock, praying for the residents of Brookvale.

The priestess looks up from her prayers as the PCs approach. She welcomes them graciously, inviting them into her inner sanctum. She heard about the attack and is pleased they were able to drive off the dragon. If the PCs tell her they know who Calendrus really is, she quietly asks them to keep quiet. She smiles and admits she too knows the dragon's true identity. Imogen is worried for Calendrus, believing something horrible has happened. These actions are unexplainable.

Imogen was at Calendrus' tower yesterday eve, and knows he received a package from someone called his 'southern brother'. A package, she says with a scowl, delivered by a hooded creature, which could only have been an ogre. She did not see what was inside the package — he did not open it in her presence. But she describes it as a black stone box.

The Priestess of the River Goddess does her best to steer the characters from killing the dragon. She cares about Calendrus, and believes there must be a way to undo whatever curse has befallen him. She heals the PCs' wounds and offers them a safe haven for the night. Before she can finish, the alarm bells begin to ring at Brookvale's gate.

The dragon approaches...

IN THE HEART OF THE BEAST

Encounter: The attacking dragon descends on Brookvale without mercy. Silver wings shine in the sunlight, and acid drips from the dragon's mouth and claws as he breathes a stream of ice, destroying most of the town museum. The town guard launch volleys of arrows at him, but are quickly put down by another fearsome blast — this time, one of a snow and acid mixture. The guardsmen scream in agony as Calendrus swoops toward the temple.

Tactics: During this fight, the dragon takes out as many innocents as possible, forcing the PCs to both attack Calendrus and rescue the screaming townsfolk. If the PCs deal 85 points of damage to Calendrus, his wings are damaged and he falls to the earth. Once Calendrus is on the ground and near death (25 hp), the dragon's breast scales burst open and a writhing mass of thick tapeworms spill out.

The Greater Harbinger is massive — at least fifty ft. long, but intricately coiled upon itself in a spaghetti-like mass, and covered with numerous smaller, leech-like worms. When it falls, the large worm writhes frantically, and attacks anyone nearby, seeking another host. Once the worm is out of Calendrus' body he assumes his human guise curling up into a ball of pain and guilt (see New Monsters—Appendix B for full details of the Harbringer).

The Worm has learned a little from the previous fight and attacks the weakest member (if possible), trying to break through its skin. If reduced to 20 hp, it attempts to flee using its dark skin to hide in the foliage.

Once the Harbinger Worm is dead, and all those who have been spontaneously infected by it are restored, Imogen rushes to Calendrus and heals him (as best she can). Calendrus is extremely weak, both from the fight and from his ordeal. He is consumed by guilt for his actions while under the Worm's control.

When he can speak, he informs the PCs the worm — then small — hidden within the black box — found its way into Calendrus' system while he slept. When he awoke, he was paralyzed within his own body, unable to control his actions. He was a complete puppet to the worm, and the worm gave no thought other than to destruction and havoc.

Calendrus says the worm was a "gift" from a black dragon who lives in the swamps to the south of Brookvale. The black dragon's name is Aaxhul, and Calendrus fears he may send more 'gifts' to all of the dragons in the region. If these worms affect the other good dragons, many innocent people could be destroyed. Hunters or city guards defending their homeland likely destroys them, leaving Aaxhul and others to take over the area. He must be stopped!

But Calendrus is far too weak to fight Aaxhul... too weak to even get out of bed. He begs the PCs to travel into to Dark Fell and stop Aaxhul. Imogen provides what aid she can, but she also has to oversee rebuilding the city and helping its inhabitants. If you think the party needs the help, Imogen can provide two scrolls of *protection from energy* and one *potion of cure light wounds* for each member of the party.

THE DARK FELL

The Dark Fell is a thick, foul swamp located down river from Brookvale. The townspeople tell tales of ogres, hags, and all manner of terrible beasts inhabiting it. Few who travel into the Fell ever returned. Thick willow trees stand over stagnant pools of fetid water, as your small boat passes through viscous mudpools and half-solid mire. The lantern barely shines in the gloom of this oppressive place. Yet, something stirs in the water...

The PCs must enter the Dark Fell in a shallow boat — there are no other ways 'in', no matter what direction the PCs choose for their approach. The easiest way to enter the Fell is to go down-river from Brookvale, and simply let the river empty you out into the swamp. There are many creatures living in the swamp that can attack PCs as they travel into the deeper parts of the Dark Fell. Some of these are listed below, in case the DM wishes to have the party attacked — or in case the party gets out of the boat.

SWAMP ENCOUNTERS

1d20	Encounter
1	Ankheg (hunting)
2	Assassin vine
3	Basilisk (hunting)
4	Centaur ranger (on an adulthood initiation test)
5	Dire bear (hunting)
6	Dryad (who seeks a certain treant)
7	Giant crocodile (hunting)
8	Huge viper snake (hunting)
9	Nymph (looking for fun)
10	Orcs (1d10, scouting party)
11	Owlbear (looking for a new den)
12	Scrag troll (hunting)
13	Seven-headed hydra (staking out a territory)
14	Shambling mound (laying undisturbed until the PCs happen along)
15	Skum (2d4, raiding party)
16	Treant (who might discuss things with a PC druid or ranger)
17	Troglodytes (2d6, hunting party)
18	Water naga (protecting its home)
19	Wereboar (hunting, or if in human guise, lost and scared)
20	Yaun-ti sorcerer (looking for a rare material component)

ATTACKED BY OGRES!

Ahead, lies a small shantytown made of piled logs and stretched hides. Tremendously large individuals move around, apparently living in the "village". They are far larger than normal humanoids... as you get a bit closer you can place the creatures (and their stench). Ogres.

Encounter: There are 30 ogres in all at the camp (15 warrior men plus 10 women and 5 children). These ogres are minions of Aaxhul, viewing him as their chieftain and worshiping him as a near god. They know where his cave is, and how to approach it, but they are not willing to parlay or give away the information. If the party intends to cajole the information from the ogres, they have to trick or force it out of the leaders. Prying information from a lesser ogre is confusing and partially incorrect.

If the PCs skirt the ogre camp and search the swamp on their own for the dragon, there is an excellent chance they come across a wandering party of ogres (who attacks them immediately, consisting of a number equal to the party). During the attack, one of the ogres blows a horn to alert the village. If the ogres overcome the PCs, they take them into the ogre village to be used as sacrifices to Aaxhul, and later eaten. If the PCs defeat a significant amount (50%+), they surrender and an ogre leader points them in the right direction of Aaxhul.

Tactics: The ogres only fight if attacked, or they view the PCs as weak. The females attempt to cover their own, and the young ones escape into the deep swamp.

✶ **Ogre Warrior:** Large giant; HD 4d8+11 (29 hp each); Init -1; Spd 30 ft. in hide armor, base speed 40 ft.; AC 16, touch 8, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +3; Grp +12; Atk +8 melee (2d8+7, greatclub) or +1 ranged (1d8+5, javelin); Full Atk +8 melee (2d8+7, greatclub) or +1 ranged (1d8+5, javelin); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA —; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +0, Will +1; Str 21, Dex 8, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 7.

Skills and Feats: Climb +5, Listen +2, Spot +2; Toughness, Weapon Focus (greatclub).

THE PATH INTO DARKNESS

The trail leading to Aaxhul's caverns is not frequently traveled, and it appears as if the ogres have covered their tracks to keep the area hidden. Just in front of the dragon's cave, there is a large bronze statue half-submerged in the mire. The statue is a man holding aloft a shield with the sun blazoned on it, tarnished and covered in moss. The ground around the statue is thick with knee-deep muck, and the ogres refuse to go any closer to the cave than the edge of the clearing. Beyond the statue is a tremendous cave mouth, easily 50 ft. high and 50 ft. wide. The smell coming from below is a horrible blend of sulfur and chlorine, burning your nostrils as you approach the statue.

If the PCs take a careful look at the water, they notice it is covered with small insects and floating bugs. The bugs look quiet, but if disturbed, rise up and attack (see the spell *insect plague* for effect). The only physical way across is to leap to the statue and catch it, not breaking the water

line. Then, from the statue, the PCs can leap to the thin stone ledge at the front of the cave mouth. Any magic cast in the area arouses the bugs, and any wizard who starts a spell notes quickly the insects and crawlers in the muck begin to rise with the chanting.

These insects are semi-sentient, guarding their "Master's" cave. They cannot be killed by simple means, and therefore must be avoided unless an area of effect spell (such as stinking cloud) can be utilized against them without causing undue noise and thus ruining all chance of surprise. The area is gaseous, and torches and lanterns in the area sputter and flare up uncontrollably from time to time. Large amounts of fire kill the insects en masse, but the gas of the swamp ignites as well. Treating a large-scale fire spell or effect as if the metamagic feats *Widen Spell* and *Empower Spell* were applied can duplicate this. A *Spellcraft* check (DC 20) can warn over ambitious spellcasters of this danger and others may recognize the danger of fire spells with a *survival* check (DC 25), otherwise do not warn the PC. Any PCs inadvertently caught within the spell's area suffer for this lack of vision.



THE FIRST PASSAGE

The cave spirals up slightly into a natural hillock of stone and peat moss. The walls are thick, with spurs of black rock shoring up much of the area. The cavern mouth opens up into a passage, barely lit by small holes in the ceiling. The stench of chlorine and acid surrounds you, biting at your nose and making it difficult to breathe.

Stretching out before the PCs is a long corridor — 50 ft. long and just over 15 ft. wide — carved out of the dirt and stone of the swamp hillock. The hillock is quite large, and the dragon hewed his lair out of its internal structure, shoring the ceiling of the cavern with black stone from other parts of the swamp. Swamps are nasty, rainy places, and in order to ventilate the internal chambers and allow for a certain amount of water flow, the roof of this passage has small air-holes spaced about 15 ft. apart.

Several pressure plates cover the floor of the passage. Coated by algae and slime they are difficult to distinguish from the rest of the dirt floor. They are part of an elaborate trap the dragon has set in place here.

♦ **Falling Block Trap (with acid effect):** CR 6; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; Atk +15 melee (6d6); multiple targets (can strike all characters in two adjacent specified squares); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 25.

However, crushing the PCs with falling rocks is not the main focus of the dragon's trap. Obsidian is a light and relatively fragile stone, and once it has struck the ground, it shatters into a thousand pieces — and the acid gas within the stone escapes. This acid is part viscous and part gas, and extremely deadly. Part of the acid seeps into the water on the floor, swiftly spreading out from the point of release. If this acid touches organic material, it eats through anything lighter than waxed leather in one round. When the acid touches flesh, it deals 1d8 points of damage per round until washed away by clear water or alcohol.

The gaseous smoke released from the shattered obsidian boulder hisses out in a thick bank of fog spreading to an area of 10 ft. by 20 ft. (easily enough to fill the corridor from ceiling to floor for a 10 ft. portion of the passage). This cloud kills any creature with 1 HD or less (no save), and causes creatures with 2–4 HD to make *Fortitude* saving throws or be knocked unconscious; creatures remaining within the cloud continue to take 2d10 points of damage per round until they are dead. The cloud lasts for one hour.

There are six of these pressure plates scattered at intervals throughout the passage. Once one of the pressure plates is found, anyone looking for further pressure plates receives a +2 circumstance bonus to their search checks.

THE OOZE

Around a slight right-hand bend, you see a room approximately 30 ft. square. There is a metal portcullis on the far side, blocking off a massive opening. Odd groupings of algae in gray and sickly green create strange patterns on the floor of the room. The algae on the floor bubbles slightly, floating on a thin sheen of water.

This room is far more than it seems. Although there appears to be a floor, the actual ground is 5 ft. below the 'surface' the PCs see before them. A massive gelatinous cube, topped with various algae, slime, and stagnant water, appears to be the 'surface' of the floor, beneath the algae. If the PCs poke at the floor, they find it is squishy. Touching the floor with a pole or other long item only reveals the floor is solid beneath a few inches of water and slime. This solidity, however, is actually the topside of the gelatinous cube. The water fills all of the area of the room not occupied by the cube, and the oozes float lightly on top of the water, or crawls up the walls.

Encounter: One particularly tremendous gray ooze has crawled out of the water, and clings to the wall. It blends with the stonework nicely (there is little ambient light from this room, save for the small air holes in the ceiling far above), and is difficult to see or differentiate from the actual wall. The PCs must make a Spot check (DC 17) to notice this ooze and mark its location by looking carefully at the wall.

Tactics: PCs who attempt to walk across the room take three steps before sinking into the gelatinous cube upon which they tread. PCs leaping over the cube, and who do not land upon it, find themselves 5 ft. deep in stagnant water. The grey ooze clinging to the wall above the water attacks anyone climbing across the walls or ceiling. Lighting a torch in the room ignites the local gases and causes massive damage to all in the area (4d8 fire), a Survival (DC 25) or Profession (miner) (DC 20) check warns of this danger. However, only the ooze on the wall takes damage from this occurrence, as the cube on the floor is protected by the surrounding water.

The large portcullis on the far side of the room is locked and requires a key to open. The key is in one of the gelatinous cubes. The dragon trained his cube to create a pseudopod so when he calls to it, and the gelatinous cube reaches out to its master with the key when it hears the call.

The PCs must kill the cube, find the key, and use it to unlock the portcullis. Without it, they must find another means to open the gate. The portcullis' lock requires an Open Locks check (DC 30) to open, or a Strength check (DC 40). It is trapped.

◆ **Portcullis Lock Poison Dart Trap:** CR 4; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; Atk +15 ranged (1d4+4 plus poison, dart); multiple targets (1 dart per target in a 10-ft.-by-10-ft. area); poison (Small monstrous centipede poison, DC 10 Fortitude save resists, 1d2 Dex/1d2 Dex); Search DC 21; Disable Device DC 22.

◆ **Gelatinous Cube:** CR 3; Huge ooze; HD 4d10+32 (54 hp); Init -5; Spd 15 ft.; AC 3, touch 3, flat-footed 3; Base Atk +3; Grp +11; Atk +1 melee (1d6 plus 1d6 acid, slam); Full Atk +1 melee (1d6 plus 1d6 acid, slam); Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft.; SA Acid, engulf, paralysis; SQ Blindsight 60 ft., immunity to electricity, ooze traits, transparent; AL N; SV Fort +9, Ref -4, Will -4; Str 10, Dex 1, Con 26, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: —.

Acid (Ex): A gelatinous cube's acid does not harm metal or stone.

Engulf (Ex): Although it moves slowly, a gelatinous cube mows down Large or smaller creatures as a standard action. It cannot make a slam attack during a round in which it engulfs. The gelatinous cube merely has to move over the opponents, affecting as many as it can cover. Opponents can make opportunity attacks against the cube, but if they do so they are not entitled to a saving throw. Those who do not attempt attacks of opportunity must succeed on a DC 13 Reflex save or be engulfed; on a success, they are pushed back or aside (opponent's choice) as the cube moves forward. Engulfed creatures are subject to the cube's paralysis and acid, and are considered grappled and trapped within its body. The save DC is Strength-based and includes a +1 racial bonus.

Paralysis (Ex): A gelatinous cube secretes an anesthetizing slime. A target hit by a cube's melee or engulf attack must succeed on a DC 20 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 3d6 rounds. The cube can automatically engulf a paralyzed opponent. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Blindsight (Ex): An ooze's entire body is a primitive sensory organ that can ascertain prey by scent and vibration within 60 ft.

Transparent (Ex): Gelatinous cubes are hard to see, even under ideal conditions, and it takes a DC 15 Spot check to notice one. Creatures who fail to notice a cube and walk into it are automatically engulfed.

◆ **Gray Ooze:** CR 4; Medium ooze; HD 3d10+15 (31 hp); Init -5; Spd 10 ft.; AC 5, touch 5, flat-footed 5; Base Atk +2; Grp +3; Atk +3 melee (1d6+1 plus 1d6 acid, slam); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6+1 plus 1d6 acid, slam); SA Acid, constrict 1d6+1 plus 1d6 acid, improved grab; SQ Blindsight 60 ft., immunity to cold and fire, ooze traits, transparent; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref -4, Will -4; Str 12, Dex 1, Con 21, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: —.

Acid (Ex): A gray ooze secretes a digestive acid that quickly dissolves organic material and metal, but not stone. Any melee hit or constrict attack deals acid damage. Armor or clothing dissolves and becomes useless immediately unless it succeeds on a DC 16 Reflex save. A metal or wooden weapon that strikes a gray ooze also dissolves immediately unless it succeeds on a DC 16 Reflex save. The save DCs are Constitution-based.

The ooze's acidic touch deals 16 points of damage per round to wooden or metal objects, but the ooze must remain in contact with the object for 1 full round to deal this damage.

Constrict (Ex): A gray ooze deals automatic slam and acid damage with a successful grapple check. The opponent's clothing and armor take a -4 penalty on Reflex saves against the acid.

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

THE HARBINGER

Blindsight (Ex): An ooze's entire body is a primitive sensory organ that can ascertain prey by scent and vibration within 60 ft.

Transparent (Ex): A gray ooze is hard to identify, even under ideal conditions, and it takes a DC 15 Spot check to notice one. Creatures who fail to notice a gray ooze and walk into it are automatically hit with a melee attack for slam and acid damage.

THE DRAGON'S NEST

Around a slight right-hand bend, you see a room approximately 30 ft. square. There is a metal portcullis on the far side, blocking off a massive opening. Odd groupings of algae in yellow, sickly green and brown create patters on the floor of the room, which bubble slightly through a thin film of water.

Although the room does not contain Aaxhul, it is dangerous. Suspended on the ceiling are several Harbinger Worm sacs. Like silkworm cocoons, they are spun webbing, attached loosely to the ceiling. Sheltered by the darkness and the uneven texture of the ceiling, they cannot be seen from the door. Even from immediately below one of the sacs, they are hard to make out.

Allow Listen checks (DC 35), to see if the PCs hear a faint, skittering noise from above. If not, they are unaware of the sacs, but even if they hear the noise they may not be able to see them. Climbing up the sacs is not easy either, but provide the PCs an opportunity to investigate if they wish. If the PCs walk beneath the sacs, the Harbinger worms fall from their silk pouches, aiming for the intruders.

Tactics: If a worm makes contact with a PC's flesh, it exerts control over the PC by use of the dominate person spell. The PC is allowed a Will save (DC 17). If the subject fails, the Harbinger Worm forces the PC to attack his companions. The victim, overtaken by the Harbinger Worm, uses all physical or magical abilities or spells it has. The worm learns quickly, utilizing items the PC knows how to use. The Harbinger, realizing its Master's lair is threatened, uses every method at its (the PC's) disposal to defeat the PCs.

The goal of the worms is to wear down the PCs providing an edge for the actual dragon attack. The silk sacs are extremely vulnerable to fire, but so is the gas within the chamber (treat any fire spell effects as if they had the empower spell and enlarge spell metamagic feats applied at no additional level cost).

FACING THE BLACK DRAGON

At some point near the end of the battle above, when the PCs start to believe they have everything well in hand, Aaxhul returns to his cavern home. Read or paraphrase the following:

A terrible roar bellows from the opening behind you. A foreboding inky blackness moving and swirling like silt water suddenly fills the cavern mouth, and a dreadful, angry hissing echoes through the stone of the hillock. "So," the dragon snarls within his cloak of shadows, "You think to steal my gold? To destroy my pets? Now, you furl-less, crawling apes, for your impudence and arrogance... you shall die..."

Tactics: Aaxhul, the black dragon, cannot be subdued or easily defeated, and uses all of his abilities to fight the PCs. If he feels seriously outclassed, he seizes some of the Harbinger Worm sacs in his mouth, fleeing with them. However, so long as he thinks he can win, Aaxhul continues the attack.

👑 **Aaxhul, Young Adult Black Dragon:** CR 9; Large dragon (water); HD 16d12+48; hp 152; Init +0; Spd 60 ft., fly 150 ft (poor), swim 60; AC 24, touch 9, flat-footed 24; Base Atk +16; Grp +24; Atk +20 melee (2D6+4, bite); Full Atk +20 melee (2d6+4, bite) and +17 melee (1d8+2, 2 claws) and +17 melee (1d6+2, 2 wings) and +17 melee (1d8+6, tail slap); SA breath weapon; SQ DR 5/ magic, frightful presence, immune to acid, water breathing, SR 17; AL CE; SV Fort +13, Ref +10, Will +11; Str 19, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +5, Diplomacy +6, Hide +15, Intimidate +20, Knowledge (history) +3, Knowledge (nature) +3, Listen +22, Move Silently +19, Search +20, Sense Motive +4, Spot +22, Swim +9; Alertness, Blind-Fight, Cleave, Flyby Attack, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bite).

Breath Weapon (Su): A line of acid 80' long by 5' wide and 5' high, 10d4 damage Reflex (DC 21) for half.

Frightful Presence (Ex): This dragon can unsettle foes with its mere presence. The ability takes effect automatically whenever the dragon attacks, charges, or flies overhead. Creatures within a radius of 150 ft. are subject to the effect if they have fewer HD than the dragon. A potentially affected creature that succeeds on a Will save (DC 19) remains immune to that dragon's frightful presence for 24 hours. On a failure, creatures with 4 or less HD become panicked for 4d6 rounds and those with 5 or more HD become shaken for 4d6 rounds. Dragons ignore the frightful presence of other dragons.

Water Breathing (Ex): A black dragon can breathe underwater indefinitely and can freely use its breath weapon, spells, and other abilities while submerged.

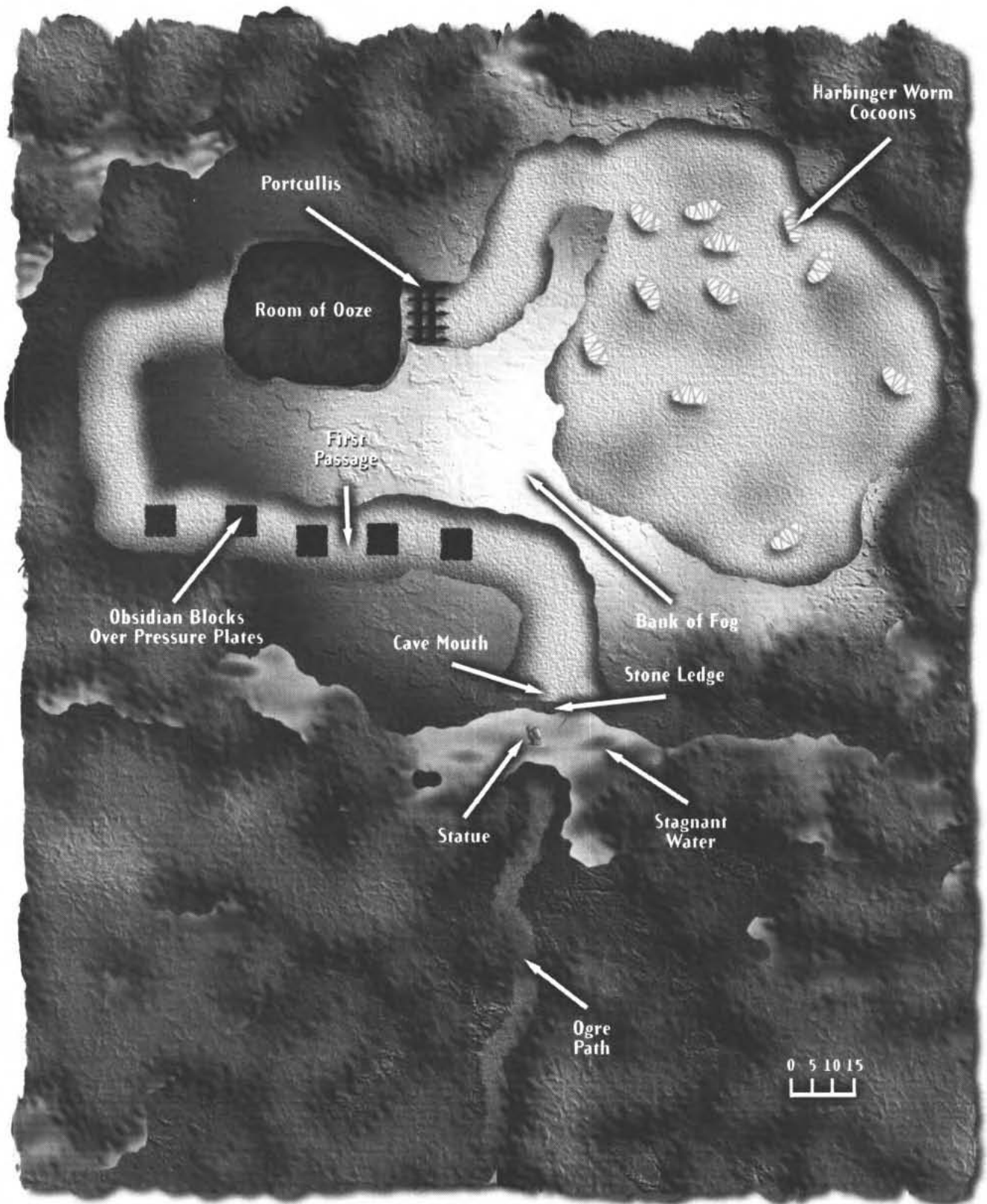
Spell-like Abilities: 3/day—darkness (radius 50 ft.).

Spells: This dragon casts spells as a 1st level sorcerer.

Sorcerer Spells Known (5/4; save DC 11 + spell level):

0—acid splash, detect magic, mage hand, message, read magic; 1st—alarm, magic aura.

THE HARBINGER



EPILOGUE

The black dragon's horde is scattered and takes hours to count and organize. There are 2,032 gp, 5,681 sp, and 7,328 cp. There are many statues, much jewelry and other pieces of art (too much to list here). If sold to a collector or jewelry expert, they could garner quite a bit. The dragon's acid breath and the acid dripping from his scales fused most of the coins together. Getting it out of the dragon's cavern and through the swamp should be a daunting task even for the most determined adventurer. Some of the smaller statues and jewelry items can be pried loose, but it takes effort.

There are a few magic items in the black dragon's horde, including one spellbook (all spells level 1–3, plus 4 randomly determined 4th level spells), a *ring of water breathing*, and a +2 *greatsword* (named "Onyxhammer"). A thorough search of the chamber reveals these items atop the slag heap, free from the melted pile (Aaxhul liked to take them out and peruse his horde's finer additions). A jeweled box at the top of a mountain of melted gold possesses the most unusual magic item in the horde. The box is locked (Open Locks, DC 30) and cannot be opened violently without destroying the magic item inside.

Within the box is a clockwork spider made of silver and onyx, with a dark garnet hourglass built into its abdomen. It is currently 'keyed' to the dragon, Aaxhul.

FURTHER ADVENTURE

- "Good people, I beseech you: Hear my story. My name is Allyn, and someone dear to me has suffered a tremendous attack upon his very soul. I beg you, please help me find the Heart of Anum Khonshu to save my friend. If you do, all of the treasure of the tomb, save the ruby, is yours – all of it! What say you?" (see the adventure "The Heart of Anum Khonshu").



Chapter 9:

The Gauntlet

Levels 2 to 4

by A. A. Acevedo and jim pinto

So you want to join the Minutemen?

You think you have what it takes?

We'll see tonight.

Six crimes in 12 hours, it shouldn't be too difficult, right?

It's not. Not until you see the "shopping" list.

Steal the journal from the Herbalist and Witch, Madame Byanca.

Find a precious and rare Black Diamond, hidden somewhere in the city.

Retrieve the Lord Rhelgin's sword.

Kidnap Father Milas Tomor, a Priest of Sun God.

Leave a bloody dagger in the room of Regent Petralis.

Last... we'll save that one for later. Worry about getting these five done first.

Impossible you say? Let's hope not. The penalty for failure is imprisonment. You see, the guild has a deal with the local constable. Anyone who fails to pass the guild's initiation is handed over to the constable and imprisoned for past crimes, real or otherwise. The guards enjoy a short period of glory for "solving the crimes" and the guild gets rid of a few worthless recruits.

Good luck!

DM BACKGROUND

This adventure is designed for four to six PCs of levels 2 to 4. At its core this is an adventure to allow a group of PCs to join a thief's guild. While rogues will be especially useful, remember that guilds take advantage of all sorts of talent to add to their ranks. Read the adventure carefully to become familiar with the various encounters before playing.

The PCs are committing a series of criminal activities over the span of a single evening in order to qualify for membership in the local thieves' guild. DMs who ran "Honor Among Thieves" (from the book in this series, Adventure I) may wish to make the group the Minutemen from the city of Desburg. DM may set the adventure there or make this a part of the organization's web of crime in another town. Membership is not limited to rogues; characters can be of any race or class, but should be of a neutral or evil alignment. Success earns the PCs the right to wear a 'MM' brand on their left arm.

If you wish to expand the possibilities of creating your own thief's guild for your campaign, the AEG book "Guilds" is indispensable, and this adventure easily acts as an introduction to any nefarious rogue's guild you may invent.

Obviously, rogues have the upper hand in some instances, but beating up a guard is best left to fighters and divining secrets is the work of bleary-eyed wizards and sages. A cleric following a god of rogues, mischief or trickery would also have a stake in completing the adventure. There are a variety of reasons the PCs could have for joining the guild, here are a couple of examples:

THE GAUNTLET

- The PCs attracted the guild's attention through their exploits. The guild doesn't like competition and offered two choices — join the guild or leave town.
- The PCs go to the guild for protection after a close call with local authorities.
- The PCs know someone who knows someone.

Once you've established the reason for the PCs' initiation, ask if they need to prepare before the ceremony begins. Acquiring supplies is easy. The PCs may want to pay for their equipment rather than spend the night in a cell.

Ashton's Bend (or any city you set the adventure in) is a small city, with a population just under ten thousand. The city rests on the shore of a well-traveled river, prosperously providing services to the river traffic. The city government is rife with corruption. Cargo inspectors are paid handsomely to allow smugglers access to the docks and warehouses. As a result, the city profits more from its underground trades than it does from legitimate business.

In a city with this level of corruption, the thieves' guild becomes an essential part of everyday life. The citizens treat high-ranking guild members like minor nobility and everyone — thieves, adventurers, and ruffians — wants to join the guild. The PCs have an opportunity to join the ranks of a prestigious organization, and should be at least respectful of this opportunity.

ADVENTURE PREPARATION

There are a few extra steps you can take to prepare for this adventure. We've randomized several of the key components so you can replay the Gauntlet with different tests, as many times as you like. If you'd like to use our prepared sites skip this section and start reading the section titled — "Beginning the Adventure". Otherwise, follow the directions below for building a unique gauntlet each time you play.

First, determine the target locations for the crimes (there are five included with this adventure, but feel free to come up with a few more). Roll 1d20 for each chart. Record your results on a piece of scratch paper or in your DM notebook, you'll need to refer to them later.

BUT MY PARTY ISN'T EVIL!

While especially made for unscrupulous PCs, the adventure is easily tailored to other alignments. Perhaps the Minutemen are actually an adventurers' or information guild. In this case, the targets are actually in league with the guild and are on alert for the PCs. Nonlethal combat is expected of all combatants, however the local militia won't be in on the game.

DISTRICT LOCATION TABLE

1d20	Location
1-4	Docks
5-8	Warehouse
9-14	Marketplace
15-17	Crafts
18-19	Lowtown
20	Hightown

Next, determine specific sites for these crimes. Feel free to adjust the details as you see fit.

DOCKS DISTRICT LOCATION CHART

1d20	Location	Locks/Doors
1-4	Brothel	Good wooden
5-7	Boarding House	Simple wooden
8-9	Shipwright	Good wooden
10-13	Fishmonger	Simple wooden
14-15	General Store	Strong wooden
16-18	Tavern	Good wooden
19-20	Boats	n/a

WAREHOUSE DISTRICT LOCATION CHART

1d20	Location	Locks/Doors
1-2	Brewery	Good wooden
3-4	Carpenter	Strong wooden
5-6	Cartwright	Strong wooden
7-10	General Store	Strong wooden
11-12	Livery	Simple wooden
13-14	Porters Guild	Simple wooden
15-20	Warehouse	Strong wooden

CRAFTS DISTRICT LOCATION CHART

1d20	Location	Locks/Doors
1-3	Clothier	Simple wooden
4-6	Weaponsmith Iron	
7-8	Armorer	Iron
9-10	Blacksmith	Stone
11-14	Jeweler	Strong wooden
15-16	Locksmith	Strong wooden
17-20	Merchant Tents	n/a

LOWTOWN DISTRICT LOCATION CHART

1d20	Location	Locks/Doors
1-4	Tavern	Simple wooden
5-6	Butcher	Simple wooden
7-8	Baker	Simple wooden
9-14	Inn	Strong wooden
15	Fortuneteller	Simple wooden
16	Apothecary	Simple wooden
17-20	Farmer's Market	n/a

HIGHTOWN DISTRICT LOCATION CHART

1d20	Location	Doors/Locks
1-2	Sage	Good wooden
3-4	Alchemist	Good wooden
5-7	Physician	Good wooden
8-10	Temple	Stone
11	Guard Station	Iron
12-18	Noble Manor	Stone
19-20	Architect	Good wooden

BUILDING CHARTS

1d20	Stories
1-10	1 story
11-18	2 stories
19-20	2 stories, 3 stories in Hightown

1d20	Basement
1-8	No
9-17	Yes
18-20	Yes (connected to sewer system)

1d20	Windows
1-8	Open*
9-14	Locked (DC 15) (1d8 windows)
15-17	Locked (DC 25) (1d6 windows)
18-19	Locked (DC 30) (1d4 windows)
20	None

* The number of windows is equal to the result rolled on a 1d20.

Simple wooden door: 1 inch, 5 hardness, 10 hp, lock (DC 15), Break DC 13.

Good wooden door: 1.5 inch, 5 hardness, 15 hp, lock (DC 18), Break DC 18.

Strong wooden door: 2 inch, 5 hardness, 20 hp, lock (DC 25), Break DC 23.

Iron door: 2 inch, 10 hardness, 60 hp, lock (DC 28), Break DC 28.

Stone door: inch, 8 hardness, 60 hp, lock (DC 28), Break DC 30.

During normal business hours, the owner is always there. Some live above or behind their business, while others have a separate residence.

There is a base 50% chance the owner is on the premises after 6 pm. Add a 10% chance for every hour after midnight with a maximum chance of 90%.

Typical Merchant:

▲ Merchant, Human Exp 2: CR 1; Medium humanoid; HD 2d6; hp 8; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +1; Grp +1; Atk +1 melee (1d6, club); Full Atk +1 melee (1d6, club); SA —; SQ —; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +4; Str 10, Dex 11, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +5, Bluff +7, Craft (any) +5, Diplomacy +7, Gather Information +5, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (local) +5, Listen +5, Profession (merchant) +5, Sense Motive +7; Negotiator, Persuasive.

Possessions: Artisan's outfit, merchant's scales, 2d12 gp.

Once the locations are determined, note guard activities. Roll for an encounter every hour, whenever the PCs are particularly noisy or whenever the game bogs down.

GUARD PATROL ROTATION

Time	Activity
6 am	First Watch — Shift Change, Open Town Gates
Noon	Second Watch — Shift Change
6 pm	First Watch — Shift Change, Close Town Gates
Noon	Second Watch — Shift Change

GUARD PATROL ENCOUNTER TABLE

1d20	Encounter
1-6	No Encounter
7-12	Standard Patrol
13-15	Elite Patrol
16-17	Royal Patrol
18-19	Knight Captain (Paladin) with Standard Patrol
20	Knight Captain (Paladin) with Elite Patrol

A patrol is comprised of 4–6 patrolmen (1d3+3).

During the day, there is a 25% chance a passing patrol stops the PCs as they are going about their business. After 6 pm this chance increases to 50% and after midnight increases again to 75%. If the PCs act furtive or suspicious, add 25% from the possible chance a patrol passes them by.

If the PCs are stopped, it is expected they provide proof of their legitimate business. They are asked questions like "Where are you coming from?" and "Who are you on your way to see?" — if they provide a reasonable explanation or documentation of their business in the area the guards allow them to pass without further incident.

If they act suspicious or fail to provide a decent excuse (i.e. fail an opposed Bluff check), the guards arrest the group and bring them to the guard station for questioning. If they fail to convince the Watch Commander of their innocence, they spend the night in jail.

The guard station is located in Hightown and there is a watch station in every district.

Guard Station

This location serves as the administrative offices, barracks, and prison. It is comprised of several large, stone buildings and a walled off courtyard.

Watch Station

These sites are small, single room offices housing a district administrator. The roving guard patrols check in with the administrator every hour on the hour.

Patrols

▲ Standard Patrolman, Human War 1: CR ½; Medium humanoid; HD 1d10+1; hp 7; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 10, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d10+1/x3, glaive) or +1 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); Full Atk +2 melee (1d10+1/x3, glaive) or +1 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); SA —; SQ —; AL LN; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Climb +2, Listen +4, Ride +2, Spot +4; Alertness, Improved Initiative.

Possessions: Studded leather armor, glaive, light crossbow, 10 bolts.

▲ **Elite Patrolman, Human War 2:** CR 1; Medium humanoid; HD 2d10+1; hp 12; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +2; Grp +3; Atk +3 melee (1d10+1/x3, glaive) or +2 ranged (1d10/19-20, heavy cross-bow); Full Atk +3 melee (1d10+1/x3, glaive) or +2 ranged (1d10/19-20, heavy crossbow); SA —; SQ —; AL LN; SV Fort +4, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Climb +3, Listen +4, Ride +2, Spot +5; Alertness, Improved Initiative.

Possessions: Chain shirt, glaive, heavy crossbow, 10 bolts.

▲ **Royal Patrolman, Human Ftr 2:** CR 2; Medium humanoid; HD 2d10+4; hp 15; Init +5; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +2; Grp +4; Atk +5 melee (1d8+2/19-20, longsword) or +3 ranged (1d10/19-20, heavy crossbow); Full Atk +5 melee (1d8+2/19-20, longsword) or +3 ranged (1d10/19-20, heavy crossbow); SA —; SQ —; AL LN; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +2, Intimidate +2, Jump +2, Listen +4, Spot +4, Ride +2; Alertness, Improved Initiative, Rapid Reload, Weapon Focus (longsword).

Possessions: Chainmail armor, small steel shield, longsword, heavy crossbow, 20 bolts.

▲ **Knight Captain — Anselyn of Fossmoor, Human Pal 5:** CR 5; Medium humanoid; HD 5d10+15; hp 53; Init +2; Spd 20 ft. (in breastplate); AC 19, touch 13, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +5; Grp +8; Atk +11 melee (2d6+4/19-20, greatsword) or +8 ranged (1d10+1/x3, heavy crossbow); Full Atk +11 melee (2d6+4/19-20, greatsword) or +8 ranged (1d10+1/x3, heavy crossbow); SA Smite evil 2/day, turn undead; SQ Aura of courage, aura of good, detect evil, divine health, divine grace, lay on hands, special mount; AL LG; SV Fort +9, Ref +5, Will +4; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 15, Wis 13, Cha 17.

Skills and Feats: Diplomacy +9, Handle Animal +7, Heal +6, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +7, Knowledge (religion) +7, Listen +6, Profession (soldier) +5, Ride +7, Sense Motive +6, Spot +6; Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Weapon focus (greatsword).

Aura of Courage (Su): Anselyn is immune to fear (magical or otherwise). Each ally within 10 ft. of Anselyn gains a +4 morale bonus on saving throws against fear effects. This ability functions while the Anselyn is conscious, but not if he is unconscious or dead.

Aura of Good (Ex): The power Anselyn's aura of good (see the *detect good* spell) is caster level 5th.

Detect Evil (Sp): At will, Anselyn can use *detect evil*, as the spell.

Divine Health (Ex): Anselyn is immune to all diseases, including supernatural and magical diseases.

Lay on Hands (Su): Anselyn can heal wounds (his own or those of others) by touch. Each day he can heal a total number of 15 hit points of damage. Anselyn may choose to divide her healing among multiple recipients, and doesn't have to use it all at once. Using lay on hands is a standard action.

Alternatively, he can use any or all of this healing power to deal damage to undead creatures. Using lay on hands in this way requires a successful melee touch attack and doesn't provoke an attack of opportunity. Anselyn decides how many of his daily allotment of points to use as damage after successfully touching an undead creature.

Smite Evil (Su): Twice per day, Anselyn may attempt to smite evil with one normal melee attack. He adds +3 to his attack roll and deals 5 extra points of damage. If Anselyn accidentally smites a creature that is not evil, the smite has no effect, but the ability is still used up for that day.

Special Mount (Sp): Anselyn has a special mount, a heavy warhorse named Crusader. At Anselyn's option, he may have any spell (but not any spell-like ability) he casts on himself also affect his mount.

▲ **Crusader, Heavy Warhorse:** CR 6; Large magical beast; HD 6d8+12; hp 39; Init +1; Spd 50 ft.; AC 18, touch 10, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +3; Grp +11; Atk +6 melee (1d6+4, hoof); Full Atk +6 melee (1d6+4, 2 hooves) and +1 melee (1d4+2, bite); SA —; SQ Empathic link, improved evasion, low-light vision, scent, share saving throws; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 19, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 6, Wis 13, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Listen +5, Spot +4; Endurance, Run, Empathic Link (Su): Anselyn has an empathic link with Crusader out to a distance of up to 1 mile. Anselyn cannot see through Crusader's eyes, but they can communicate empathically.

Improved Evasion (Ex): When subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, Crusader takes no damage if he makes a successful saving throw and half damage if the saving throw fails.

Share Saving Throws: For each of his saving throws, Crusader uses his own base save bonus or the Anselyn's, whichever is higher. Crusader applies his own ability modifiers to saves, and he doesn't share any other bonuses on saves that Anselyn might have.

Turn Undead (Su): Anselyn has the supernatural ability to turn undead. He may use this ability 6 times per day. He turns undead as a 2nd level cleric.

Paladin Spells Prepared (1; save DC 11 + spell level): 1st—*protection from evil*.

Possessions: Breastplate, large steel shield, +1 *greatsword* (named "Lazarus"), +1 *heavy crossbow*, 20 bolts, holy symbol, cape.

BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

As our story begins, the PCs arrive at the specified meeting place — an abandoned warehouse just as the sun is setting (6 pm). Their contact is a man named Devon. This is all they know. He is here to answer their question and give them their 'list'. The list includes six crimes to commit before dawn in order to become members of the local thieves' guild. To paraphrase, they are:

1. Steal Madame Byanca's personal journal.
2. Find a precious and rare Black Diamond, hidden somewhere in the city.
3. Retrieve Lord Rhelgin's sword. Lord Rhelgin is the statue in the center of the city.
4. Kidnap Father Milas Tomor, a Priest of Ijuran. Keep it quiet.
5. Leave a bloody dagger in the room of Regent Petralis without being seen.
6. Finally, there is the sixth task, which the PCs are not privy to initially. Once the first five tasks have been completed, Devon informs them what to do when the time comes.

Items 1 through 5 can be completed in any order.

When you are ready to begin the adventure read or paraphrase the following:

"Well here we are. The guild master asked me to look in on you and get your initiation started. You've got the list with you? Good, good. You have the rest of the night to complete the items on the list. I'll be here waiting for you and we have men stationed throughout the city keeping an eye on you. We don't care how you do it or in what order. All we care about is you get it done and have proof before 6 am. That's it. I'll see you back here at dawn."

0. The Warehouse

This large wooden building is strategically located at the junction between the warehouse district, docks, and Lowtown. At times it is used to hold stolen property or as a safe house for guild members. Tonight it is empty except for your contact, Devon.

1. Madame Byanca's House of Fortune

This crude dwelling is little more than a two-room shack with one door. Madame Byanca works in the front room reading palms and divining fortunes and sleeps in a small room in the back. The dwelling is crammed full of junk (bottles, boxes, books, casks) Byanca insists is imperative for her divinations.

▣ **Simple wooden door:** 1 inch, 5 hardness, 10 hp, lock (DC 15), Break DC 13.

Encounter: The PCs must steal Madame Byanca's journal — a small, leather-bound volume she keeps on a small table beside her straw cot. There is a 5% chance Byanca is out on any given evening — searching for herbs in the moonlight. If she's not out, she's here either sleeping (50% chance) or up ready to receive clients (45% chance).

Tactics: Once inside, the PCs must find Byanca's journal without disturbing Byanca or her familiar, Scour the raven. Byanca does not part with the volume under any circumstances, so the PCs must take it by force or stealth. If Bianca is sleeping, Skaur sleeps on his perch next to her bed in the rear room. If she is seeing clients, he helps keep an eye on visitors, from a perch in the front room.

Madame Byanca's raven sleeps lightly. If the PCs make noise, Scour hears them. Assume a Listen or Spot check of 16 for Skaur (as if he was taking 10) and a Listen or Spot

THE MAP?

The map section of this adventure details a number of locations throughout the city vital to running the adventure. There is no map of the city itself, because we expect the adventure to be placed in a pre-established campaign world. However, if this adventure is a one-shot deal, designing a good map may require some work (essential to making the adventure challenging... and organized for the players). Even if this adventure is set in a pre-designed city, the advice here should come in handy.

The city should be near a coast due to the aforementioned dock section (alternately this can be on a heavily traveled river).

The city should be divided into quarters, with a large divider down the center, like a river or an old wall. The quarters should be (roughly): Residential (mostly housing), Court (where official buildings are located), Mercantile (merchants, shops and markets), and Lowtown (the poor district), with the docks near Lowtown.

Madame Bianca's should be in the Residential Quarter. The Park with Lord Rhelgin's sword should be in the center of the city. Milas Tomorin's house is near his temple in the Court District along with Regent Petralis' quarters, and Aliz-Haraf's shop should be in the Mercantile district.

This helps ensure the PCs get a full tour of the city and don't complete all their goals within a few blocks of each other.

check of 5 for Byanca (she sleeps rather soundly). Move silently and Hide checks must exceed these numbers. Combating or killing Skaur wakes Byanca. A successful Search check (DC 25) finds the book is locked away in a small flat box (which is trapped).

♦ **Black Adder Vapor Trap (modified delivery):** CR 3; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; gas; multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft.-by-10-ft. room); never miss; onset delay (2 rounds); poison (black adder vapor, DC 11 Fortitude save resists, 1d6 Con/1d6 Con); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 16.

The box contains six guardian scarabs (see New Monsters—Appendix B) in addition to the book the PCs seek. These scarabs do not attack unless provoked, but removing the book or tipping the box angers them. If the PCs were not careful before opening it, the scarabs gain one surprise action during the first round, automatically surprising the PCs. Surprised PCs must make a Will save (DC 15) to avoid crying out, which in turn alerts Scour and Byanca. Dropping the box provides a Listen check (DC 12) for them both.

▲ **Madame Byanca, Human Adp 6:** CR 5; Medium humanoid; HD 6d6; hp 24; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +3; Grp +3; Atk +4 melee (1d6+1, club); Full Atk +4 melee (1d6+1, club); SA Spells; SQ Summon familiar; AL NG; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +6; Str 10 (12), Dex 10, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 13, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +8, Profession (fortune teller) +11, Knowledge (arcana) +9, Knowledge (nature) +9, Knowledge (history) +9, Knowledge (the planes) +9, Knowledge (religion) +10, Spellcraft +11; AlertnessB, Brew Potion, Craft Wondrous Item, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (Profession (fortune teller)).

Familiar Companion: Byanca has a raven familiar named Scour.

✦ **Scour, Raven:** CR ½; Small magical beast; HD 1; hp 12; Init +1; Spd 10 ft., fly 40 ft. (average); AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +3; Grp -4; Atk +5 melee (1d3-3, talons); Full Atk +5 melee (1d3-3, talons); SA —; SQ Empathic link, deliver touch spells, improved evasion, low-light vision, share spells, speak with master; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +6; Str 5, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 14, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Listen +6, Spot +6, Weapon Finesse (talons).

Improved Evasion (Ex): When subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, Scour takes no damage if he makes a successful saving throw and half damage even if the saving throw fails.

Share Spells: At Byanca's option, she may have any spell (but not any spell-like ability) she casts on herself also affect Scour. Scour must be within 5 ft. at the time of casting to receive the benefit.

Empathic Link (Su): Byanca has an empathic link with Scour out to a distance of up to 1 mile. Byanca cannot see through Scour's eyes, but they can communicate empathically.

Deliver Touch Spells (Su): Scour can deliver touch spells for Byanca. If Byanca and Scour are in contact at the time Byanca casts a touch spell, she can designate Scour as the "toucher". Scour can then deliver the touch spell just as Byanca could. As usual, if Byanca casts another spell before the touch is delivered, the touch spell dissipates. **Speak with Master (Ex):** Scour and Byanca can communicate verbally as if they were using a common language. Other creatures do not understand the communication without magical help.

Adept Spells Prepared* (3/3/1; save DC 11 + spell level): 0—*cure minor wounds, light, touch of fatigue*; 1st—*command, detect evil, protection from evil*; 2nd—*invisibility*.

Possessions: Divining robes, gauntlets of ogre power (counted in stats above), *potion of bull's strength*, *potion of cure light wounds*, *scroll of command*, *scroll of curse*, 57 gp.

*Assume 1d3 spells were cast during the day. Randomly determine which spells are exhausted.

▲ **Guardian Scarab:** CR 1/4; Diminutive vermin; HD 1/2 d8+2; hp 4; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16, touch 16, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +0/Grp -10; Atk +2 melee (1d2-4 plus poison, bite); Full Atk +2 melee (1d2-4 plus poison, bite); Space/Reach: 2-1/2 ft./0 ft.; SA Poison; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., poison immunity, tremorsense 60 ft., vermin traits; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 3, Dex 10, Con 14, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills: Climb +0, Hide +12, Spot +4; Weapon FinesseB **Poison (Ex):** Bite, Fortitude save (DC 11); Initial damage 1d2 temporary Strength, secondary damage 1d2 temporary Strength.

Treasure: The 'Journal' contains information on herbal remedies of all kinds. It has over 100 years of information spanning generations of herbalists. The secrets in Byanca's journal are worth thousands of gold to anyone who can exploit them. The book also contains a new spell called *Byanca's Heart* (see New Monster—Appendix A).

In addition to the book, PCs may find Byanca's magic items. Each is found on a successful Search check (DC 20) and each takes one minute of careful, quiet searching to find. Each round a PC looks through Byanca's room, have him make a Move Silently and Hide check against Scour's Spot total.

2. The Black Diamond

Somewhere, hidden in the city, is a rare Black Diamond cut from a stone, buried beneath the Mountains of Har'Illash. In order to find it, the PCs must ask around. There is an easy way and a hard way; it all depends on the DM.

Smart PCs might recall the guild specifically stated they just have to find the diamond, not retrieve it. If they gather enough information to be sure where it is and then report to the Guild they should be complemented on paying close attention to their orders.

The easy way is a Gather Information check (DC 25). This reveals Aliz-Haraf (a jeweler) is rumored to have a large portion of the uncut stone in his shop.

The hard way is to make them find it. Fully develop and role-play out the PCs hunting down the diamond. Send the PCs on a wild goose chase, if you like. Perhaps one thief directs them to a jeweler who directs them to a sage who directs them to an innkeeper who in turn sends them back to see another thief, etc. Whether or not they find the true Black Diamond or a fake is up to the DM. And of course, all of this at night when most shops are closed.

If the PCs wish to steal the diamond or verify its location, they must find a way into Aliz-Haraf's shop. The shop has four windows, all of which have iron bars over them. There is one strong door leading in the front and an iron door in the back.

■ **Good wooden door:** 1.5 inch, 5 hardness, 15 hp, lock (DC 18), Break DC 18.

■ **Iron door:** 2 inch, 10 hardness, 60 hp, lock (DC 28), Break DC 28.

Aliz-Haraf and his bodyguard, Turusk, are always here. Aliz-Haraf keeps a large room in the back and Turusk keeps smaller quarters in a room off Turusk's. Turusk is known to stay up late (until 3 am) and Aliz-Haraf keeps the shop open until 9 pm.

Breaking a Window: Strength check (DC 15) to bend the bars on the window.

Unlocking a Window: Pick Locks check (DC 25) and a contested Move Silently check against Turusk (if he is up).

If the PCs get inside, they must find the diamond, which Aliz-Haraf keeps in a strongbox (Open Lock, DC 35 to open) under his bed. Sneaking into his room is difficult and if Turusk is up he may be able to hear them. While the NPCs sleep consider their Listen checks an 8. If Turusk is up, allow him an opposed Listen check against the PCs Move Silently skill check.

Aliz-Haraf does not fight unless he has no choice, if he realizes there are intruders Aliz-Haraf alerts Turusk and then tries to slip away to fetch the guard. If captured he tries to buy his way out.

▲ Aliz-Haraf the Jeweler, Human Exp 2: CR 1; Medium humanoid; HD 2d6; hp 10; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +1; Grp +1; Atk +1 melee (1d3, unarmed); Full Atk +1 melee (1d3, unarmed); SA —; SQ —; AL NG; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +4; Str 10, Dex 11, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +5, Bluff +7, Craft (jewelry) +6, Diplomacy +8, Gather Information +6, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (local) +6, Listen +6, Profession (jeweler) +5, Sense Motive +7; Negotiator, Persuasive.

Possessions: Artisan's outfit, merchant's scales, 51 gp.

▲ Turusk the Guard, Half-Orc Ftr 3: CR 3; Medium humanoid; HD 3d10+9; hp 30; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +3; Grp +7; Atk +8 melee (1d8+4, longsword) or +4 ranged (1d4/19–20, dagger); Full Atk +7 melee (1d8+4, longsword) or +4 ranged (1d4/19–20, dagger); SA —; SQ darkvision 60 ft., orc blood; AL LE; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 19, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Intimidate +4, Listen +1, Profession (guard) +1, Spot +1; Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack, Toughness.

Possessions: Chain shirt, buckler, masterwork longsword, dagger (2), small sack, 12 gp.

Treasure: Aliz-Haraf keeps his jewelry in lock boxes through out the store. The cheaper stuff stays in the glass cases. It is ultimately up to the DM how much loot the PCs can walk away with. This building however, is in a well-patrolled section of town, and any loud noises generated by the PCs during this intrusion is sure to bring down the city guard on this location.

3. City Square

In the center of the city is a small park with stone walkways around a statue of Lord Rhelgin, the founder of the city. It is a sacred and historical landmark and few would dare to harm it. However, patrols are frequent here nonetheless. Add 3 to all rolls on the Guard Patrol Encounter Table.

Lord Rhelgin's statue is in a very regal pose. His sword is held high above his body. It is a finely crafted sword and if the PCs did not know it before, they can see now the sword is worth a great deal.

Removing the sword is difficult. First someone must climb up the 15-ft. high statue — Climb check (DC 10). Next the PC must find a way to remove the steel sword

from the stone hand. Pulling it out is possible, but with little leverage a Strength check (DC 25) is needed to hoist the sword from the cramped hand. If the PC is unable to pry it from the hand, then the fingers must be chiseled off. This is an easy task given the correct tools. A Strength check (DC 15) breaks the fingers from the statue (or 25 points of damage in a single swing — hardness 10, 15 hp). However, if the PCs opt for this method, they draw the attention of any patrols in the area. Randomly roll for the patrol arriving in 2d4 rounds. The PCs had best be light of foot if they intend to escape the city guard.

Lord Rhelgin's blade is well-known throughout the city and any citizen can identify it on sight. It is a cold iron masterwork weapon that radiates feint transmutation magic (never-rusting enhancements). Inquisitive PCs may question why the guild would want such a well-known blade.

4. Father Milas Tomor

Father Milas is a powerful priest in the city. PCs aware of the local climate — Gather Information check (DC 18) — know he is presently involved in a lengthy excommunication proceeding with an important regent in the city. Father Milas, a follower of Ijuran (or the God of Justice in your game world), is the most vocal and influential of the priests. If none of the PCs know this, it does not affect their ability to complete the adventure. It could add further complications to the plot, however, when the PCs later learn the impact of kidnapping an important priest. Developing a back-story to this plot hook is useful for running this adventure as part of an ongoing campaign.

The thieves' guild wants to see Father Milas for a quick chat.

If the PCs cannot secure him tonight, the guild can always find more competent men to do it for a few thousand gold. But why pay for work if you can get it for free? If the PCs are smart they save the kidnapping of Father Milas for last (so they don't have to lug him around everywhere).

Getting into Milas's home is no easy feat. He's a paranoid man and he keeps a guard dog in his home and lives in an entirely secure neighborhood. Father Milas lives in the Hightown district. The downstairs has only two windows and the front door (the only door) has a sturdy lock.

■ Strong wooden door: 2 inch, 5 hardness, 20 hp, lock (DC 25), Break DC 23.

If the PCs cannot get in the front door, they have to climb to the second story of the house or of a nearby building. There are four windows on the second floor, each one allowing access to a den or small room.

Once inside, they have the guard dog to contend with, and Milas, should he wake. He keeps his heavy mace under his bed and is prepared to use it if necessary. He has

not prayed for new spells yet and it is up to the DM if he has any remaining from the day before. If Anvil, the guard dog, begins barking, Milas wakes in 1 round.

Breaking or Forcing a Window: Strength check (DC 12). This automatically alerts Anvil.

Unlocking a Window: Pick Locks check (DC 15) and a contested Move Silently check against Anvil.

In essence, the only obstacles are Anvil and any patrols happening to be passing by. Anvil is always awake.

▲ Anvil, Guard Dog: CR 1; Medium animal; HD 2d8+4; hp 16; Init +2; Spd 40 ft.; AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp +3; Atk +3 melee (1d6+2, bite); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6+2, bite); SA —; SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Jump +8, Listen +5, Spot +5, Swim +3, Survival +1; Alertness, Track[®].

▲ Milas, Human Clr 7: CR 7; Medium humanoid; HD 7d8; hp 43; Init -1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11, touch 9, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +5; Grp +5; Atk +6 melee (1d8, heavy mace); Full Atk +6 melee (1d8, heavy mace); SA Turn undead, spells; SQ —; AL LG; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +7; Str 10, Dex 9, Con 11, Int 11, Wis 15, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Craft (carpentry) +4, Diplomacy +6, Heal +7, Knowledge (religion) +8, Listen +7, Spellcraft +2, Spot +7; Feats: Alertness, Eschew Materials, Extra Turning, Scribe Scroll.

Turn or Rebuke Undead (Su): Milas may attempt to turn undead 8 times per day. Milas has 8 ranks in Knowledge (religion) and therefore gets a +2 bonus on turning checks against undead.

Cleric Spells Prepared (6/5+1/4+1/2+1/1+1; save DC 12 + spell level): 0—*cure minor wounds, detect magic, guidance, light, mending, read magic*; 1st—*bleed, cure light wounds, detect evil, detect undead, obscuring mist, protection from evil**; 2nd—*augury, calm emotions**, *cure moderate wounds, gentle repose, zone of truth*; 3rd—*create food and water, cure serious wounds, magic circle against evil**; 4th—*divine power*†, *order's wrath**.

* Domain spell. Domains: Law (cast law spells at +1 caster level), Good (cast good spells at +1 caster level).

† Normally Milas does not prepare such "offensive" spells, but an *augury* cast the day before gave him the hint it might be needed today.

Possessions: Leather jerkin (acts as leather armor), masterwork heavy mace, clerical vestments, holy symbol.

Treasure: If the PCs take time to search the premises they may find a collection of Milas' holy goods (books, talismans, incense, candles, etc.)

5. Baron Regent Petralis

Baron Petralis is a noble from a nearby Barony who came to the city to establish his strength, and serve his own interests. It is not clear why the PCs must put a blade in his hand or who benefits from this, but the Baron has enough enemies to justify the act. The PCs may make a Gather Information check (DC 25) to determine how much they know about Baron Petralis.

The PCs are provided a dagger with the Baron's seal on the pommel. They must bloody it (with fresh blood) before putting it into his chamber, preferably near his hand. The PCs are being watched on this and there is an inside man, so as soon as the deed is done, calamity ensues.

Bloodying the dagger is the easy part. A chicken, lamb, or even a beggar, are all suitable recipients for the blade. In a last ditch effort; one of the PCs could cut himself with the dagger (inflicting 1 hp of damage). The important part is making sure the blood is fresh and to get in and out without being seen.

The Baron is staying in an expensive one-room bungalow in the Hightown district, a posh establishment known for its 60 gp a night price tag. It is known he is staying in cottage number 7. But getting past the Baron's personal guard is difficult. There is no room for foolhardy tactics here. If anyone is seen entering the Baron's room, the jig is up.

Bribe

A substantial bribe to the Baron's guard allows the PCs access. 1,000 gp is the minimum acceptable bribe. Make a Diplomacy or Bluff check (DC 20). Failure means the guard was insulted or upset with the PC and even with the gold they are not getting in. To make matters worse, a failed bribe attempt points an accusatory finger at the PCs when a bloody dagger is found in the room.

Sneak In Through the Window

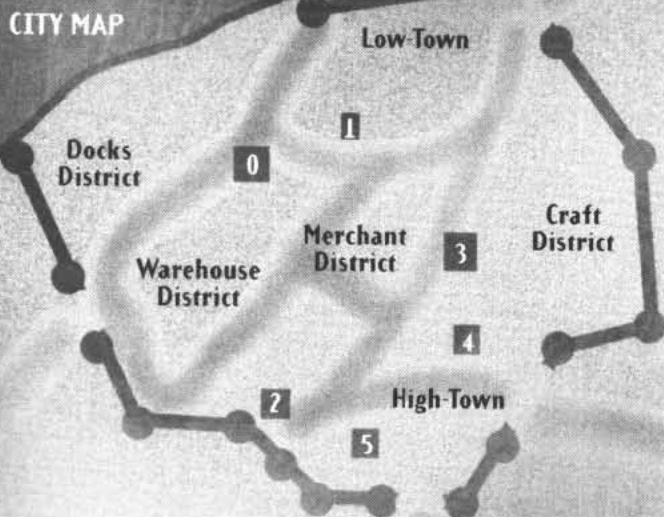
The PCs can easily sneak through a window to get in. There are two windows on each side of the building and each one is locked. A successful Open Locks check (DC 25) and a successful Move Silently check (DC 20) are required to get in and not alert the Baron inside nor his guard.

Wait for the Changing of the Guard

At midnight the guard's change, and again at 6 am. If the PCs are careful, one of them can sneak in while the guards walk the grounds around the cottage, leaving the door unguarded. During this quick patrol, the PC must sneak in between the guards, pick the lock and get inside, before anyone returns. The PC has 2d3 rounds to accomplish all of this. The PC must succeed at a Pick Locks check (DC 20) to open the door. It takes one round to move to the door, one round to get out the right lock picks for the job, and three rounds to pick the lock. It takes only two rounds if a roll of 25 or more is made and only one round if a roll of 30 or more is made.

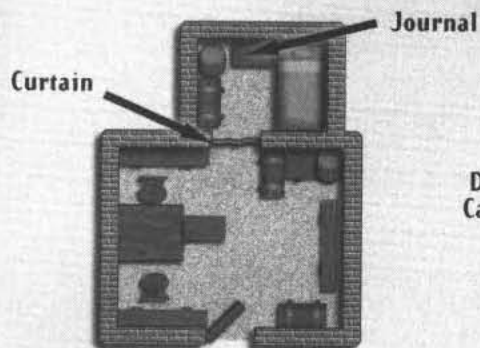
There is a lot of room for drama and tension here. Play it up.

CITY MAP



LOCATIONS OF THE GAUNTLET

① MADAME BYANCA'S HOUSE OF FORTUNE

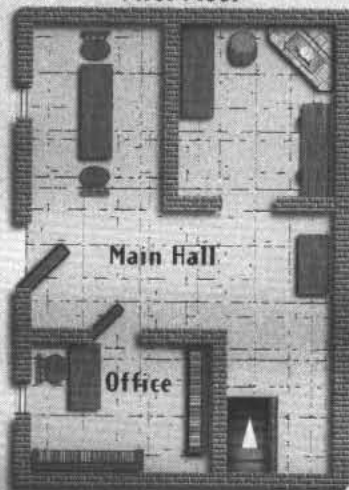


② ALIZ-HARAF'S FINE JEWELRY

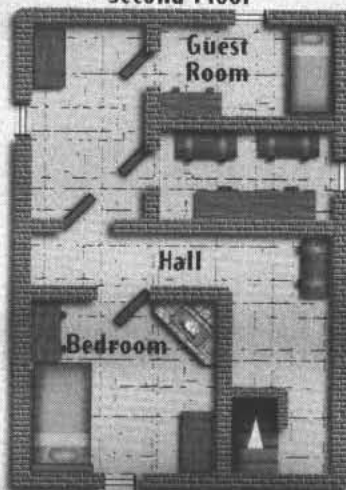


④ FATHER MILAS TOMOR

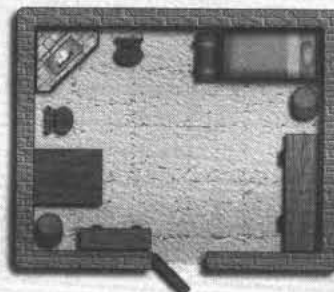
First Floor



Second Floor



⑤ REGENT'S COTTAGE



Once Inside

The immense suite before is lavished with decorations from around the globe. However, a smart thief knows not to take anything from this room, lest he rouse suspicion someone was here.

A Move Silently check (DC 15) is required to sneak to the Baron's bed without alerting the Baron or the guard outside (DC 18). Once next to the bed, the PC may place the dagger on floor near the Baron's hand.

Getting Out

The PC can easily leave through the window, requiring one last Move Silently check (DC 15).

▲ Baron Petralis, Human Ari 5: CR 4; Medium humanoid; HD 5d8; hp 27; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +3; Grp +3; Atk +5melee (1d6/18–20, rapier); Full Atk +5 melee (1d6/18–20, rapier); SA —; SQ —; AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +7; Str 11, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +7, Bluff +9, Diplomacy +7, Forgery +6, Gather Information +7, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (local) +6, Knowledge (royal and nobility) +9, Listen +6, Sense Motive +6, Spot +6, Swim +5; Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Finesse (rapier), Weapon Focus (rapier), *Possessions:* Masterwork rapier, royal outfit.

▲ Baron's Guards, Male Human War 2: CR 1; Medium humanoid; HD 2d10+5; hp 16; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +2; Grp +3; Atk +3 melee (1d8+1/19–20, longsword) or +2 ranged (1d10/19–20, heavy crossbow); Full Atk +3 melee (1d8+1/19–20, longsword) or +2 ranged (1d10/19–20, heavy crossbow); SA —; SQ —; AL LN; SV Fort +4, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Listen +4, Sense Motive +3, Spot +5; Alertness, Toughness.

Possessions: Chain shirt, small steel shield, longsword, heavy crossbow, 10 bolts.

FINAL TEST

Once the group has completed the five listed crimes they must report back to the warehouse. Devon collects whatever goods or people they've taken and tells them they have one final test to complete.

In actuality, this test is merely a test of loyalty. It is up to the DM what the PCs do (we have left room for customization). Anything from murdering a party member to turning one's own family over to the constables is a viable option. In actuality, the guildmaster does not expect anyone to complete the task. He or she must merely show considerable desire to commit the act to prove their worth. What thief can be trusted who places his friends or family above the guild?

EPILOGUE

If the PCs are successful (on all counts), they are granted full guild membership, which includes a brand or tattoo on their neck, forearm, or shoulder (depending on the campaign). The PCs are shown the safe houses and hang-outs, introduced to fences, "reliable" guards and all fellow guild members. They are also trained in guild procedure and protocol. The PCs have a long, profitable life of crime ahead of them and the guildmaster wants them trained properly.

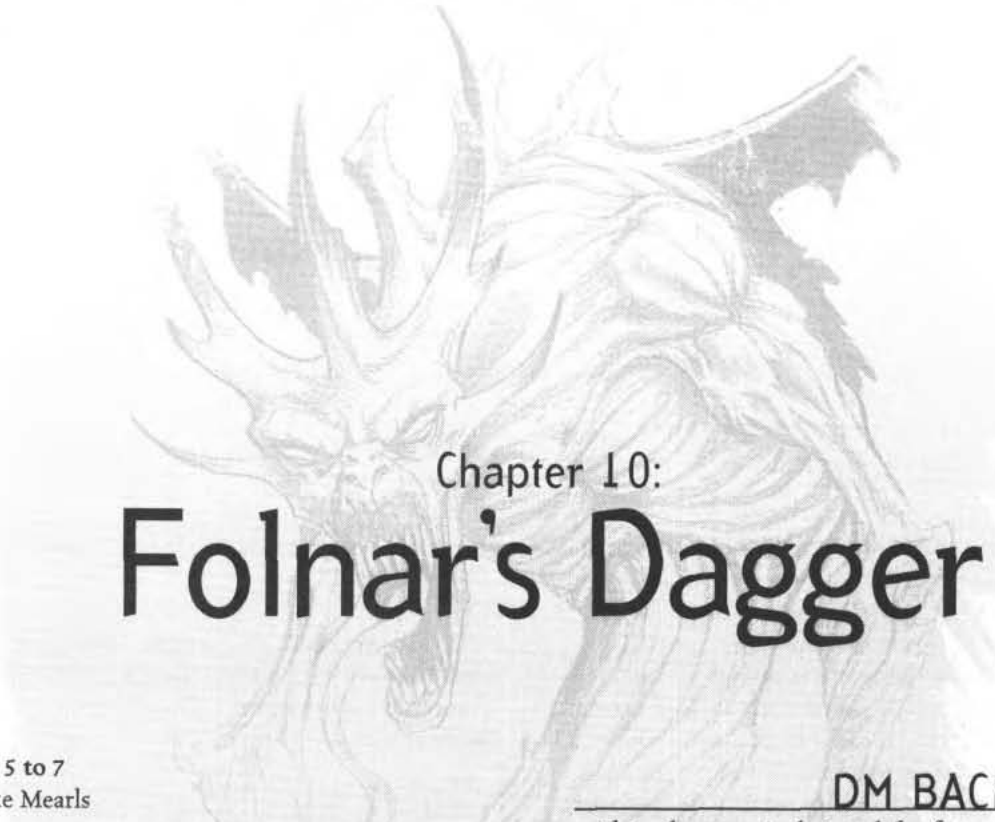
If the PCs fail, there is a price to pay — the guild turns them over to the local authorities. Fast talking PCs might be able to convince the guild to let them go, providing they leave the realm of the guild's influence and/or provide a handsome bribe. If not, it is off to jail. Let us hope they have a backup plan.

If the PCs are caught at any time during the evening, the guild disavows knowledge of the incident and even finds credible witnesses to speak against the PCs to insure a lengthy incarceration.

There's a load of uses for the guild once the PCs are "in". The guild is impressed with the PCs ability to work as a team. They might use the PCs as a special unit for complex confidence schemes or heists. The guild could use the PCs to scout out additional recruits, locally or within neighboring cities. The PCs might be asked to further harangue Baron Petralis, planting evidence that implicates him in scandals and paints him in an ignoble light.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

- Their first job is to bodyguard a merchant with ties to a guild that is on good terms with the minutemen (see the adventure "That Which Does Not Die").
- A chance to keep the land safe from an oppressive evil (who would surely disband the Minutemen) comes up. Plus there's a handsome reward involved... (see the adventure Tomb of the Overseers").



Chapter 10: Folnar's Dagger

Levels 5 to 7
by Mike Mearls

Whether by luck or by the hands of your dark lord, you have finally tracked down the location of the sacred dagger. With the blade, you can finally summon the demon R'Godae to this world and claim him as your vassal. If you believe the tales, and you see no reason to doubt them, R'Godae will be at your beck and call, forced into servitude in exchange for an end to the curse that banished him.

Of course, claiming the dagger won't be easy. According to your information, the weapon was once the possession of the wizard Folnar, a champion of justice and a bitter enemy of darkness. The dagger now rests within what was once his home, a place dedicated to training wizards and warriors who follow in Folnar's heroic steps. Striking there not only claims you the dagger, but also deals a grievous blow to the forces of good, ending the careers of some of its most promising young champions.

DM BACKGROUND

This adventure is designed for four to six PCs of levels 5 to 7. The adventure pits PCs against paladins and other lawful good foes, making this adventure most appropriate for evil characters or neutral ones with a strong mercenary streak. AEG's *Evil* sourcebook is highly recommended as a resource for this adventure, but is not required.

Decades ago, the great wizard Folnar crusaded against the church of the demon lord R'Godae. While R'Godae's earthly followers fell to Folnar's magic, time after time the church rose again with an ambitious new acolyte at its helm. Realizing directly confronting the church was a viable tactic only in the short term; Folnar formulated a plan to foil the church forever. While he could not directly confront the demon lord, Folnar worked a mighty ritual, trapping R'Godae within a magical prison and broke all contact between the demon and his mortal followers. Seemingly spurned by their lord, the church disintegrated and passed from the world, to the relief of many.

For his many great deeds against the forces of evil, Folnar emerged as a minor legend. After his death, his small personal fortress was transformed into a shrine dedicated to his memory. Folnar's personal effects and magical items were locked away in a vault, should they ever be needed again. In addition, Folnar's apprentices opened a school of magic in the fortress, teaching methods and tactics for battling evil to a new generation of crusading wizards. Paladins, clerics, and other warriors of good also spend time in the academy, learning practical

BUT, MY PARTY IS GOOD!

If you wish to adapt this adventure for good-aligned PCs, this is quite easy. Most of the story remains intact. The sad truth however is Folnar's dagger slowly corrupted the good folks who guarded it all these years, and they eventually formed a cult to the demon lord. After years of searching, they have finally found the secret to the ritual to free the demon, and the PCs are sent to stop them.

For most NPCs, simply alter their alignment to chaotic evil, no other adjustment is necessary.

For paladins, do the same, and do not use any of their paladin abilities (lost when they turned to evil) in the adventure or merely corrupt their powers to evil using any one of dozens of d20 "evil paladin" sources.

lessons on how to combine their skills with the apprentices' magical ones in order to form a potent fighting team. For years, the academy has continued the work of Folnar and served as the wizard's legacy to the world.

Many scheming wizards have attempted to free R'Godae, but none have succeeded. Only Folnar's dagger, when used as part of a ritual, can free the demon. The PCs must somehow come across this bit of information. You can easily insert it into a moldy old tome of forgotten lore the PCs happen across, or perhaps a divination spell; a hireling sage, or some other source of information divulging the dagger's secret to the PCs. Finding the dagger's location is not difficult. Any discreet queries to the local temples of good or a quick visit to a sage can uncover the dagger's resting place.

Alternately, this adventure could be the conclusion of months of research. A series of tomb excavations and NPC interrogations lead the PCs from city to city, library to library, cult to cult, looking for details on the final resting place of Folnar's dagger.

THE TARGET

Folnar's old base of operations is a fortified mansion located quite a distance from civilization. The mansion is a low slung, single story building tucked amongst the trees. A narrow but distinguishable trail winds two miles from the main road to the mansion. While the place is isolated, its inhabitants keep in close touch with the outside world, and travelers to and from the mansion are common.

In addition, a small, fortified guardhouse sits off the main road near the path leading to the mansion. This serves as the central headquarters for the local guards who patrol the roads against bandits, orcs, and other threats to travelers. The guardhouse and the mansion have a mutual defense pact in place, and if either is attacked the defend-

ers sound a great signal horn to draw their allies into the fight. A group of warriors, paladins, and wizards staff Folnar's mansion. 24 2nd-level warriors led by a 3rd-level paladin man the guardhouse. Use the temple guard stats for the warriors and Sir Beaugard's stats for the paladin commander.

ROSTER OF DEFENDERS

▲ Temple Guard, Human War 2: CR 1; Medium humanoid; HD 2d8; hp 10 each; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +2; Grp +3; Atk +3 melee (1d8+1/19-20, longsword) or +3 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow); Full Atk +3 melee (1d8+1/19-20, longsword) or +3 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow); AL LG; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Jump +3, Listen +4, Spot +4, Swim +5; Alertness, Dodge.

Possessions: Scale mail armor, heavy wooden shield, longsword, light crossbow, 20 bolts, tanglefoot bag, thunderstone.

The temple guards are eager recruits selected for their loyalty, bravery, and potential. They hold an ardent belief in living up to Folnar's legacy and fight to the death. They wear red tabards emblazoned with a blue star over their armor.

▲ Carrel and Simryl, Human Wiz 3: CR 3; Medium humanoid; HD 3d4+9; hp 18, 16; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +1; Grp -1; Atk -1 melee (1d4-1/19-20, dagger) or +3 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow); Full Atk -1 melee (1d4-1/19-20, dagger) or +3 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow); SA Spells; SQ Summon familiar; AL LG; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 8, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 11, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Craft (alchemy) +8, Concentration +7, Knowledge (arcana) +8, knowledge (religion) +8, Spellcraft +8; AlertnessB, Combat Casting, Dodge, Scribe ScrollB, Toughness.

Summon Familiar (Su): Each of these wizards has a toad familiar.

▲ Gribdt and Trub, Toad: CR 1/10; Diminutive Animal; HD 1/4d8; hp 1 Init +1 Spd 5 ft.; AC 17 touch 15, flat-footed 16, Base Atk +0; Grp -17; Atk —; Full Atk —; SA —; SQ Alertness, amphibious, deliver touch spells, empathic link, improved evasion, low-light vision, share spells; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 1, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 1, Wis 14, Cha 4.

Skills and Feats: Hide +21, Listen +4, Spot +4; Alertness **Alertness (Ex):** While a familiar is within arm's reach, the master gains the Alertness feat.

Improved Evasion (Ex): When subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, a familiar takes no damage if it makes a successful saving throw and half damage even if the saving throw fails.

Share Spells: At the master's option, he may have any spell (but not any spell-like ability) he casts on himself also affects his familiar. The familiar must be within 5 ft. at the time of casting to receive the benefit. If the spell or effect has a duration other than instantaneous, it stops affecting the familiar if it moves farther than 5 ft. away and will not affect the familiar again even if it returns to the master before the duration expires. Additionally, the master may cast a spell with a target of "You" on his familiar (as a touch range spell) instead of on himself.

A master and his familiar can share spells even if the spells normally do not affect creatures of the familiar's type (magical beast).

Empathic Link (Su): The master has an empathic link with his familiar out to a distance of up to 1 mile. The master cannot see through the familiar's eyes, but they can communicate empathically. Because of the limited nature of the link, only general emotional content can be communicated. Because of this empathic link, the master has the same connection to an item or place that his familiar does.

Deliver Touch Spells (Su): A familiar can deliver touch spells for the master. If the master and the familiar are in contact at the time the master casts a touch spell, he can designate his familiar as the "toucher". The familiar can then deliver the touch spell just as the master could. As usual, if the master casts another spell before the touch is delivered, the touch spell dissipates.

Skills: A toad's coloration gives it a +4 racial bonus on Hide checks.

Wizard Spells Prepared (4/3/3; save DC 12 + spell level): 0—arcane mark, daze, detect magic, message; 1st—mage armor, magic missile, ray of enfeeblement; 2nd—fox's cunning, mirror image, touch of idiocy.

Spellbook: 0—arcane mark, dancing lights, ghost sound, daze, detect magic, mending, message; 1st—alarm, charm person, mage armor, magic missile, ray of enfeeblement, sleep; 2nd—fox's cunning, mirror image, touch of idiocy, web, whispering wind.

Possessions: Wizard's robes, two daggers, light crossbow, 10 bolts each. Additionally Carrel carries a wand of magic missiles (caster level 5th, 25 charges) and Simryl carries a wand of burning hands (caster level 5th, DC 15, 27 charges).

Carrel is a tall, lanky mage with short blonde hair. He wears plain blue robes and prefers to avoid any direct combat, relying on warriors to screen him while he uses his magic to hinder the PCs. He turns and runs if attacked in melee. Simryl is the classic fire and thunder wizard, her red hair reflecting her fiery temperament. She pours her spells into the party with reckless abandon and then moves to the front to make use of her wand. She fights to the death.

▲ Sir Beaugard, Human Pal 3: CR 3; Medium humanoid; HD 3d10+9; hp 31; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +3; Grp +5; Atk +7 melee (2d6+3/19-20, greatsword) or +3 ranged (1d8/x3, longbow); Full Atk +7 melee (2d6+3/19-20, greatsword) or +3 ranged (1d8/x3, longbow); SA Smite evil 1/day; SQ Aura of courage, aura of good, detect evil, divine grace, divine health, lay on hands; AL LG; SV Fort +9, Ref +4, Will +6; Str 14, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 6, Wis 14, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Handle Animal +7, Ride +8; Cleave, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greatsword).

Aura of Courage (Su): Beaugard is immune to fear (magical or otherwise). Each ally within 10 ft. of him gains a +4 morale bonus on saving throws against fear effects. This ability functions while Beaugard is conscious, but not if he is unconscious or dead.

Aura of Good (Ex): The power of Beaugard's aura of good (see the *detect good* spell) is 3rd level.

Detect Evil (Sp): At will, Beaugard can use detect evil, as the spell.

Divine Grace (Su): Beaugard gains a bonus equal to his Charisma bonus on all saving throws.

Divine Health (Ex): Beaugard gains immunity to all diseases, including supernatural and magical diseases.

Lay on Hands (Su): Beaugard can heal wounds (his own or those of others) by touch. Each day he can heal 9 hit points of damage. A paladin may choose to divide his healing among multiple recipients, and he doesn't have to use it all at once. Using lay on hands is a standard action. Alternatively, Beaugard can use any or all of this healing power to deal damage to undead creatures. Using lay on hands in this way requires a successful melee touch attack and doesn't provoke an attack of opportunity. Beaugard decides how many of his daily allotment of points to use as damage after successfully touching an undead creature.

Smite Evil (Su): Once per day, Beaugard may attempt to smite evil with one normal melee attack. He adds +3 to his attack roll and deals 3 extra points of damage. If Beaugard accidentally smites a creature that is not evil, the smite has no effect, but the ability is still used up for that day.

Possessions: Banded mail armor, masterwork greatsword, longbow, 20 arrows, holy symbol.

Sir Beaugard is likable but dense and lazy. He looks the part of the hero, with chiseled features, blue eyes, and blonde hair. However, as soon as he gives an order, his inability to deal with tactics or anything else requiring mental acuity is readily apparent. He tends to get by on his charm and good looks, though he means well and is wise enough to follow orders to the letter. Fergus and the others like the lad too much to take him to task for his incompetence.

BARDIC LORE

A bard can make a Bardic Knowledge check to discover what he may have heard. A bard learns all the information of the DC his check succeeded by and all that below it (a Bard who rolled a 17 would learn the information under DC 15 and DC 10). Alternately this information can be gained by a Gather Information skill check +5 higher than the DC of a Bardic Lore check to see if the PC has heard any rumors.

DC 10 Decades ago, the great wizard Folnar crusaded against the cult of the demon lord R'Godae.

DC 15 While he could not directly confront the demon lord, Folnar worked a mighty ritual, trapping R'Godae within a magical prison and broke all contact between the demon and his mortal followers.

DC 20 After his death, Folnar's small personal fortress was transformed into a shrine dedicated to his memory.

DC 25 Folnar's personal effects and magical items were locked away in a vault, should they ever be needed again to battle evil.

▲ Sir Alec, Lady Dovetree, and Lady Tressa, Human Pal 1:

CR 1; Medium humanoid; HD 1d10+1; hp 11; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +1; Grp +3; Atk +5 melee (1d8+2/19–20, longsword) or +5 ranged (1d6/×3, shortbow); Full Atk +5 melee (1d8+2/19–20, longsword) or +5 ranged (1d6/×3, shortbow); SA Smite evil 1/day; SQ Aura of good, detect evil; AL LG; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +1; Str 14, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Diplomacy +5, Knowledge (religion) +4, Ride +4; Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Focus (longbow).

Aura of Good (Ex): The power of these paladin's aura of good (see the detect good spell) is 1st level.

Detect Evil (Sp): At will, these paladins can use detect evil, as the spell.

Possessions: Scale mail armor, masterwork longsword, heavy wooden shield, shortbow, 20 arrows, *potion of heroism*.

These three paladins see their duty in the mansion as a mere stepping stone to greatness. They fight to the death, and eagerly engage their enemies in battle.

▲ Arriana, Desmond, and MacGuire, Human Wiz 1: CR 1;

Medium humanoid; HD 1d4+3; hp 7 each; Init +1; Spd ft.; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +1; Grp +1; Atk +1 melee (1d6, quarterstaff) or +2 ranged (1d4/19–20, dagger); Full Atk +1 melee (1d6, quarterstaff) or +2 ranged (1d4/19–20, dagger); SA Spells; SQ Summon familiar; AL LG; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 14, Wis 11, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +4, Craft (alchemy) +6, Knowledge (arcana) +6, Knowledge (religion) +6, Spellcraft +6; Combat Casting, Toughness, Scribe ScrollB.

Wizard Spells Prepared: (3/2; save DC 12 + spell level): 0—*daze, flare, ray of frost*; 1st—*magic missile, mage armor*.

Spellbook: Wizard spellbooks and entries are listed here. 0—*daze, detect magic, flare, ray of frost, read magic*; 1st—*magic missile, mage armor, ray of enfeeblement, sleep*.

Possessions: Wizard's robes, quarterstaff, dagger.

Arriana most often works with Carrel, and her tactics and demeanor mirror the cautious outlook of her mentor. Desmond and Macguire both readily accepted their posting at the mansion as an opportunity to hone their battle skills. Both see the PCs as another test of their combat ability and fight to the death. Having spent so much time studying religion and combat tactics, they have not yet summoned their familiars.

▲ Sir Fergus, Human Pal 5: CR 5; Medium humanoid;

HD 5d10+10; hp 44; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 19, touch 11, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +5; Grp +8; Atk +10 melee (2d6+5/19–20, greatsword) or +7 ranged (1d8+3/×3, mighty composite longbow); Full Atk +10 melee (2d6+5/19–20, greatsword) or +7 ranged (1d8+3/×3, mighty composite longbow); SA Smite evil 2/day; SQ Aura of courage, aura of good, detect evil, divine grace, divine health, lay on hands, special mount, turn undead; AL LG; SV Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +5; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 11, Wis 15, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Diplomacy +10, Knowledge (religion) +8, Ride +9; Cleave, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greatsword).

Aura of Good (Ex): The power Fergus's aura of good (see the detect good spell) is 5th level.

Aura of Courage (Su): Fergus is immune to fear (magical or otherwise). Each ally within 10 ft. of him gains a +4 morale bonus on saving throws against fear effects. This ability functions while Fergus is conscious, but not if he is unconscious or dead.

Detect Evil (Sp): At will, Fergus can use detect evil, as the spell.

Divine Grace (Su): Fergus gains a bonus of +2 on all saving throws.

Divine Health (Ex): Fergus gains immunity to all diseases, including supernatural and magical diseases.

Lay on Hands (Su): Fergus can heal wounds (his own or those of others) by touch. Each day he can heal 10 hit points of damage. Fergus may choose to divide his healing among multiple recipients, and he doesn't have to use it all at once. Using lay on hands is a standard action.

Alternatively, Fergus can use any or all of this healing power to deal damage to undead creatures. Using lay on hands in this way requires a successful melee touch attack and doesn't provoke an attack of opportunity. Fergus decides how many of his daily allotment of points to use as damage after successfully touching an undead creature.

Smite Evil (Su): Twice per day, Fergus may attempt to smite evil with one normal melee attack. He adds +2 to his attack roll and deals 5 extra points of damage. If Fergus accidentally smites a creature that is not evil, the smite has no effect, but the ability is still used up for that day.

Special Mount (Sp): Fergus' special mount is a heavy warhorse named Nemesis.

▲ Nemesis; Large Magical Beast: HD 6d8+12; hp 39;

Init +1; Spd 50 ft.; AC 18, touch 10, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +3; Grp +11; Atk +6 melee (1d6+4, hoof); Full Atk +6/+6 melee (1d6+4, 2 hooves); SA —; SQ Improved evasion; SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 19, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 6, Wis 13, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Listen +5, Spot +5; Endurance, Run Improved Evasion (Ex): When subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, Nemesis takes no damage if she makes a successful saving throw and only half damage if the saving throw fails.

Low-light Vision (Ex): Can see twice as far as a human in dim light.

Scent (Ex): Can detect approaching enemies, sniff out hidden foes, and track by sense of smell.

Turn Undead (Su): Fergus gains the supernatural ability to turn undead. He may use this ability 5 times per day. He turns undead as a cleric of three levels lower would.

Paladin Spells Prepared: (1; save DC 12 + spell level): 1st—divine favor.

Possessions: Masterwork full plate, +1 greatsword (named "southstar"), masterwork mighty (+3) composite longbow, 20 arrows, holy symbol.

Sir Fergus is an old campaigner, his gray beard and salt and pepper hair a testament to his service in the forces of good. He is a capable if cautious commander who believes where and when you strike is just as important as how hard you hit.

▲ Sir Corrik, Human Pal 2/Wiz 5: CR 7; Medium humanoid;

HD 2d10+5d4+7; hp 31; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +4; Grp +6; Atk +8 melee (1d8+4/19–20, longsword) or +7 ranged (1d10/19–20, heavy crossbow); Full Atk +8 melee (1d8+4/19–20, longsword) or +7 ranged (1d10/19–20, heavy crossbow); SA Smite evil 1/day, spells; SQ Aura of good, detect evil, divine grace, lay on hands, summon familiar; AL LG; SV Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +9; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 16.

FOLNAR'S DAGGER

Skills and Feats: Craft (alchemy) +9, Craft (blacksmith) +9, Concentration +7, Diplomacy +8, Heal +6, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Knowledge (religion) +9, Ride +8, Spellcraft +11; AlertnessB, Combat Casting, Craft Magic Arms and ArmorB, Dodge, Point Blank Shot, Scribe ScrollB, Weapon Focus (longsword).

Aura of Courage (Su): Corrik is immune to fear (magical or otherwise). Each ally within 10 ft. of him gains a +4 morale bonus on saving throws against fear effects. This ability functions while Corrik is conscious, but not if he is unconscious or dead.

Aura of Good (Ex): The power of Corrik's aura of good (see the detect good spell) is 2nd level.

Detect Evil (Sp): At will, Corrik can use detect evil, as the spell.

Divine Grace (Su): Corrik gains a +3 bonus on all saving throws.

Smite Evil (Su): Once per day, Corrik may attempt to smite evil with one normal melee attack. He adds a +3 bonus to his attack roll and deals 2 extra points of damage. If Corrik accidentally smites a creature that is not evil, the smite has no effect, but the ability is still used up for that day.

Lay on Hands (Su): Corrik can heal wounds (his own or those of others) by touch. Each day he can heal 5 hit points of damage. Corrik may choose to divide his healing among multiple recipients, and he doesn't have to use it all at once. Using lay on hands is a standard action.

Alternatively, Corrik can use any or all of this healing power to deal damage to undead creatures. Using lay on hands in this way requires a successful melee touch attack and doesn't provoke an attack of opportunity. Corrik decides how many of his daily allotment of points to use as damage after successfully touching an undead creature.

Summon Familiar (Su): Corrik has summoned an Owl familiar named Gaskar.

▲ **Gaskar, Owl:** CR ¼; Tiny animal; HD 1d8; hp 4; Init +3; Spd 10 ft., fly 40 ft. (average); AC 17, touch 15, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +0; Grp -11; Atk +5 melee (1d4-3, talons); Full Atk +5 melee (1d4-3, talons); SA —; SQ Low-light vision; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 4, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 4.

Skills and Feats: Listen +14, Move Silently +17, Spot +6*; Weapon Finesse

Skills: Owls have a +8 racial bonus on Listen checks and a +14 racial bonus on Move Silently checks. *They have a +8 racial bonus on Spot checks in areas of shadowy illumination.

Alertness (Ex): While a familiar is within arm's reach, the master gains the Alertness feat.

Improved Evasion (Ex): When subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, a familiar takes no damage if it makes a successful saving throw and half damage even if the saving throw fails.

Share Spells: At the master's option, he may have any spell (but not any spell-like ability) he casts on himself also affects his familiar. The familiar must be within 5 ft. at the time of casting to receive the benefit. If the spell or effect has a duration other than instantaneous, it stops affecting the familiar if it moves farther than 5 ft. away and will not affect the familiar again even if it returns to the master before the duration expires. Additionally, the master may cast a spell with a target of "You" on his familiar (as a touch range spell) instead of on himself. A master and his familiar can share spells even if the spells normally do not affect creatures of the familiar's type (magical beast).

Empathic Link (Su): The master has an empathic link with his familiar out to a distance of up to 1 mile. The master cannot see through the familiar's eyes, but they can communicate empathically. Because of the limited nature of the link, only general emotional content can be

communicated. Because of this empathic link, the master has the same connection to an item or place that his familiar does.

Deliver Touch Spells (Su): A familiar can deliver touch spells for the master. If the master and the familiar are in contact at the time the master casts a touch spell, he can designate his familiar as the "toucher". The familiar can then deliver the touch spell just as the master could. As usual, if the master casts another spell before the touch is delivered, the touch spell dissipates.

Speak with Master (Ex): If the master is 5th level or higher, a familiar and the master can communicate verbally as if they were using a common language. Other creatures do not understand the communication without magical help.

Wizard Spells Prepared: (4/4/4/3; save DC 13 + spell level): 0—acid splash, flare, mage hand, ray of frost; 1st—burning hands, chill touch, magic missile, ray of enfeeblement; 2nd—acid arrow, bull's strength, mirror image, web, 3rd—fireball, lightning bolt, slow.

Spellbook: Wizard spellbooks and entries are listed here. 0—acid splash, disrupt undead, flare, mage hand, mending, message, ray of frost; 1st—burning hands, chill touch, hypnotism, jump, magic missile, ray of enfeeblement; 2nd—acid arrow, bull's strength, mirror image, scorching ray, web, whispering wind; 3rd—fireball, lightning bolt, secret page, slow, suggestion.

Possessions: bracers of armor +2, ring of protection +1, heavy wooden shield, +2 longsword (named "hell's doom"), heavy crossbow, 10 bolts, robes, wand of hold person (32 charges, DC 16, caster level 5th), holy symbol (mage armor at 1st level once a day, activated by touching the symbol and reciting a protective prayer).

Sir Corrik was once a paladin, but long ago gave up the path to study magic. While still a champion of good, his drive for justice and faith in the gods was eclipsed by his hunger for magical knowledge. Once a competent commander, he is now far too absorbed in his studies to properly maintain the garrison.

▲ **Guardian Hound:** CR 5; Medium outsider (extraplanar); HD 4d8+12; hp 30; Init +5; Spd 50 ft.; AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +4; Grp +7; Atk +7 melee (1d6+4, bite); Full Atk +7 melee (1d6+4, bite); SA Trip; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., scent, see invisibility, AL LG; SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +5; Str 17, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 4, Wis 12, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Hide +8, Listen +8, Move Silently +8, Spot +8, Survival +8*; Dodge, Improved Initiative, TrackB

See Invisibility (Su): Hounds are gifted with the ability to see invisible creatures at will. This ability functions as a see invisibility spell cast by a 4th-level sorcerer.

Trip (Ex): A guardian hound that hits with its bite attack can attempt to trip the opponent as a free action (+7 trip check) without making a touch attack or provoking an attack of opportunity. If the attempt fails, the opponent cannot react to trip the guardian hound.

Skills: *A guardian hound has a +4 racial bonus on Survival checks when tracking by scent.

Tactics: These creatures were dispatched to the mansion to help preserve Folnar's legacy and to defend his home from invaders. The hounds know the dagger could free R'Godae. At least two of them keep watch in room #3 at all hours.

The mansion's defenders maintain a total of 3,000 gp in coins, gems, and other trinkets stored in Treasure: their rooms. Each named defender (everyone but the warriors) also carries a *potion of cure light wounds*.

PHYSICAL STRUCTURE

The mansion is made of stone and bricks and is designed to withstand an open assault. While it lacks the complicated defensive structures of a castle, it is well built and can absorb a good deal of punishment.

- The foot-thick stone outer walls have a Hardness of 8 and 90 hit points. Punching a hole through walls in one action requires a Strength check (DC 30).
- The inner walls are also crafted of stone but are only 6 inches thick, giving them Hardness 8, 44 hit points, and a break DC of 25.
- The outer doors are ironbound wood, Hardness 5, 20 hit points, and a break DC of 23.
- The interior doors are not quite as tough as the outer doors, having a Hardness of 5, 15 hit points, and a break DC of 18.

DAILY ROUTINE AND PLANS

The defenders are divided into three shifts. During any given eight-hour period, one shift is on duty, another is relaxing, training, or taking care of chores around the mansion, and another one sleeps. Each shift consists of four guards, a first-level paladin, and a first-level wizard. Sir Alec and Arriana work with the first shift and are on guard from midnight to eight in the morning. Lady Dovetree and Desmond work with the second shift from eight in the morning to four in the afternoon. Lady Tressa and Macguire lead the final shift, guarding from four in the afternoon to midnight. The guardian hounds do as they please. Usually two sleep, relax, or play while the other two walk the perimeter of the mansion, keeping within fifty ft. of the mansion. The guards on duty have come to heavily rely on the hounds. Once, they actively patrolled with the hounds, but now two guards stand at each entry to the mansion, along with either the wizard or paladin on duty (determine randomly which door each chooses to guard any given day). If the weather is bad, the guards may choose to simply stay indoors, in rooms #2 and #6 as appropriate for the door they guard.

Sir Fergus and Sir Beaugard serve as lieutenants, each responsible for the overall defenses of the mansion for a 12-hour shift. Sir Fergus watches things from 8 AM to 8 PM, while Sir Beaugard takes the night shift. Sir Fergus takes a very active interest in his duties, moving between both guard positions and often accompanying the hounds on their patrol. He is always in full armor while on duty, and guards tend to be more active in pursuing any strange sights or sounds. At night, though, Sir Beaugard takes the reins and the guards are much more lax. While he is well liked by his companions, Beaugard is an incompetent commander who is far too easy on his men. Somewhat overconfident, he does not even wear his armor during his watch, opting to keep it in his room, and often allows his men to stay in rooms #2 and #6 rather than stand watch outside at night.

Sir Corrik is the overall commander of the mansion. However, he long ago abandoned his martial training to study magic. His primary motivation in accepting this posting was the opportunity it gave him to spend his days studying. He is usually in the laboratory with Carrel and Simryl. The three of them sleep until 8 AM, and otherwise spend most of their time in the lab. Typically, the off-duty level-one wizard is also in the lab.



TACTICS

It is highly recommended you utilize a dry erase map or somehow layout the table for miniatures. Keeping track of everyone's location and the location of rooms and door is essential here. There are a lot of NPCs to maintain, and it was found during playtesting an additional DM keeping track of the characters smoothes combat along. DMs interested in running a shorter version of this adventure can cut back on the number of NPCs and reducing the PCs level as well.

In the event of an attack, the defenders muster a response to the threat as quickly as possible. The soldiers and followers of Folnar's Manor train diligently for this sort of response and it is their duty to protect the dagger at all costs. If morale becomes an issue, roll a 1d20. On a 1, a soldier flees from battle. This is never true of paladins.

First, each sleeping and off-duty defender requires one minute to hastily don his armor, which imposes a -1 AC penalty. A defender who takes four minutes to suit up does not suffer this penalty. Heavier armor takes much longer than four minutes to don and it is unlikely any of the guards take this long, especially if the horn sounds. The wizards cast mage armor on themselves and are immediately ready to assume their posts.

Second, all defenders move to room #2, where Sir Corrik (or whoever is the highest level surviving officer) rallies them and dispatches orders. If they see an intruder before making it to room #2 they immediately move to attack. The wizards work hard to avoid melee, preferring to let the paladins and warriors absorb the brunt of any assault. The defenders take every opportunity to outflank attackers by dispatching troops to move down side corridors and take the enemy from the rear. For example, if the guards discover the PCs in room #7, they attempt to organize attacks against them from both the corridor to the north and room #3.

If Sir Beaugard assumes command, however, the defenders' tactics become much simpler. Beaugard relies on blind charges to carry the day, and may make such blunders as ordering soldiers guarding a wizard to abandon their post and investigate some odd noise. Normally, the commanders play it conservatively and prefer to wait for reinforcements rather than embark on any wild goose chase separating the garrison or draw them away from the mansion. Beaugard, on the other hand, is a fool who charges unthinking into battle without stopping to consider such possibilities as an ambush or other trickery.

The warriors first use their tanglefoot bags and thunderstones before engaging in melee, if it all possible. The use of thunderstones at the guardhouse has an opportunity to alert the guards at the main Manor of intruders. Each time a thunderstone is used, make a Listen check (DC 20) for each hound and guard on duty at the manor. It takes 15 minutes to get from the Manor to the Guardhouse.

All of the defenders are leery of harming their fellows and do not target any items or spells in such a way to harm their allies. The paladins equipped with *potions of heroism* drink them as soon as they move within sight of the PCs, while the wizards armed with wands use their prepared spells first, unless their wands provide a more useful spell.

The guards on duty at the time of an attack are responsible for sounding the horn (see area #2 described below) to summon help from the nearby guardhouse. Guards arrive fifteen minutes after hearing the horn. If the PCs overwhelm the guards on duty at the front door, the remaining defenders attempt to sound the horn. However, they do not avoid combat in favor of retrieving the horn unless the situation becomes desperate. The defenders fight to the death.

If the PCs attempt to flee, the paladins chase them but do not move more than 100 ft. from the mansion, for fear of leaving it undefended in case the first attack was merely a ruse.

If the PCs attack and are beaten back, the mansion puts out a call for reinforcements. The guardhouse dispatches a messenger escorted by six warriors to the nearest settlement, and within five days another 4d6 warriors accompanied by 2d4 3rd-level paladins arrive at the mansion. It is possible for the PCs to plan an ambush, in which case the mansion sends another messenger, this time escorted by paladins (dependent upon who survived). It is possible the villagers sense something is amiss and find some good adventurers to help against the PCs.

In addition, the guardhouse doubles its garrison. The mansion also doubles the watch and all guards who are not sleeping move about in full armor, whether they are on duty or not. This heightened state of security stays in effect (for all intents and purposes) indefinitely. Should the PCs choose to 'wait it out', the DM should have security return to normal in 1d4 weeks.

RECONNAISSANCE AND POTENTIAL PC PLANS

Cautious PCs will probably attempt to learn something about the mansion and its guardians before launching a direct assault. Here is a brief summary of what they can learn:

Through simply observation, they learn the guard shifts and who is in charge and when.

If the PCs make some discreet inquiries at the guardhouse, they learn of the garrison's plans to reinforce the mansion if needed. However, the mansion's defenders do not move to aid the guardhouse. If attacked by an overwhelming force, the guardhouse garrison attempts to flee to the mansion.

Beaugard is clearly incompetent. He stands in strong contrast to the more professional Sir Fergus. If the PCs are able to sneak into the mansion, they may overhear him bragging about the mansion's defenders or dismissing any potential threat from attackers.

Sneaking into the mansion is difficult with the hounds around but not impossible. The hounds sometimes wander away from the mansion, and if they are quietly disposed of, it is some time before anyone misses them.

If the PCs pose as travelers, they may have trouble dealing with the paladins' detect evil ability. The garrison does not attack anyone without provocation, but they do politely ask evil PCs to move along. Unless the character is obviously wounded or hungry, they are encouraged to seek shelter food, or other assistance at the guardhouse.

If Fergus is in command, he flatly refuses anyone who wants entrance to the mansion. A sob story or flattery, on the other hand, easily sways Beaugard.

Should the DM feel that the defenders of Folnar's mansion need more strength to challenge the party it is easy enough to work in. The mansion can be visited by travelling knights or paladins who would be willing to assist in its defense, a group of good adventurers could arrive looking for information from Sir Corrick, a party of pilgrims could arrive to visit the shrine, and so on.

MAP DESCRIPTION

1. Outside Area

No trees stand within fifty ft. of the mansion and no cover is available between the trees and the building. Besides the front and side doors, no other points of entry are visible. The mansion looks much like a bunker, lacking any windows or other weak points.

2. Entry Way

As they do in the rest of the mansion, continual flame torches light this hall. Designed to welcome guests, a rich red carpet adorns the floor, and a golden chandelier hangs from the ceiling. A large, bronze horn hangs from a chain set in the wall in the southeast corner of the room.

This is the signal horn used to warn the garrison at the guardhouse should the mansion come under attack.

3. Feast Hall

A rectangular wooden table surrounded by many chairs and stools fill this long room. Above the fireplace to the south hangs a portrait of Folnar, who appears as a grim faced human with thin, white hair and a salt and pepper goatee. Hanging below the portrait is a plaque dedicating the mansion to Folnar. On the mantle below the plaque rests Folnar's dagger.

The dagger on the mantle is *Folnar's dagger* (see New Magic—Appendix A).

The guardian hounds not currently on patrol often spend their time here.

In case of an attack, Sir Corrik attempts to grab and use the dagger, preferring to activate its dimension door ability to outflank attackers. If the PCs grab the dagger and attempt the ritual (either during the attack on the mansion or afterwards) see ritual, below.

4. Study

Two plush chairs and a low, round wooden table stand at the center of this room. Massive bookshelves holding a collection of tomes cover every wall.

5. Laboratory

Two workbenches covered with beakers, vials of noxious liquids, and various tools are set in the middle of this room.

The wizards spend much of their time here researching and practicing magic.

6. Storage

Barrels of food, casks of ale, weapons, armor, and other mundane supplies lie neatly stacked throughout this room. Three wooden stools and a brazier stand near the door for the guards' use while on duty.

7. Kitchen

A large cooking pot hangs over a small fire pit here. Shelves along the walls hold spices, herbs, and cooking utensils.

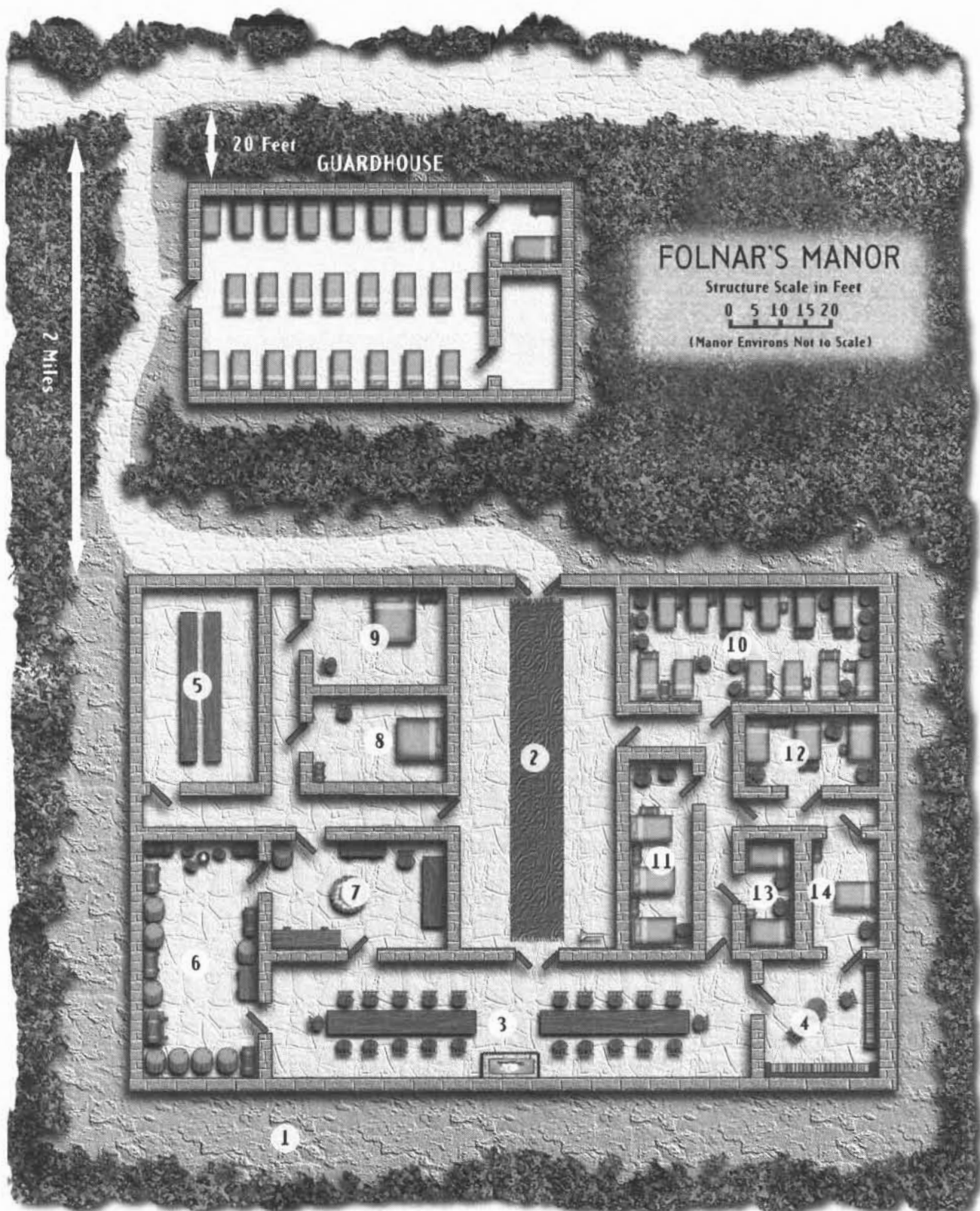
8-14. Bedrooms

Each of these bedrooms features a bed, footlocker, and chair for each occupant. The list below indicates sleeping assignments for each room:

#8	Sir Corrik
#9	Carrel
#10	12 Guards
#11	Beaugard and Fergus
#12	Alec, Desmond, and MacGuire
#13	Arriana, Dovetree, and Tressa
#14	Simryl

While the officers' bedrooms are far less cramped than their underlings', all of the rooms feature similar austere furnishings and decorations. If the PCs carefully search the bedrooms, they find trinkets, baubles, coins, and gems worth a total of 3,000 gp. If the PCs somehow manage to talk their way into the mansion, the on-duty officer allows them to sleep on the floor in room 10.

FOLNAR'S DAGGER



EPILOGUE

Once the PCs have the dagger, it's up to them to decide when and where (or if) to enact the ritual to summon R'Godae. If they were hired by someone or work for a greater power, there is the temptation to keep it for themselves rather than turn it over.

Performing the ritual is simple. DMs looking to enhance play may wish to use the demon summoning rules from the "Evil" book published by AEG. In such an instance, the dagger is the primary focus object for summoning and the PCs are merely there to facilitate the process. Have one of the PCs know the ritual or at least own a book detailing how it is performed. Draw out the summoning process as long as you like. Increase suspense by asking for Will and Fort saves. Once completed the ritual is completed, one of the following occurs:

- R'Godae is in fact a powerful demon. How powerful is up to the DM. Effectively, the adventure is over, but the PCs, if they've done their homework, will know how to exploit the situation. The PCs now have their very own demon, freed from a life of solitude and anguish. Whether or not R'Godae tries to escape is up to the DM.
- The stories were false. The dagger is only one piece of the puzzle. There are four more daggers, and each has its own powers over times, space, life and death. These daggers were hidden away by Folnar. No single person knows the location of all the daggers.
- Once the ritual is complete the smell of smoke and decay fills the room. Nothing appears to have happened, but everyone is filled with dread. Take each PC out of the room and describe to them a hellish vision. Elaborate and add details of what awaits on them on the side. When you take the PC holding the dagger of the room, tell him his body has been overtaken by R'Godae. The demon lives within him now and is not leaving without a fight. Let the PC know over time, he will corrupt, betray and ultimately destroy his fellow PCs, but not just yet.
- The story R'Godae would owe servitude to his rescuers is exactly that, a story. His followers spread this rumor far and wide after R'Godae was imprisoned, hoping to spur greedy and evil wizards far and wide to research methods to restore their dark lord. Indeed, R'Godae is far too much of a self-respecting demon lord to let some pitiable mortal command him. In fact, after his long imprisonment he is quite hungry. R'Godae takes a bite out of the nearest living creature.
- The PCs do not summon R'Godae. They are instead summoned to R'Godae.
- The dagger doesn't summon a demon, it IS a demon.
- The dagger does in fact summon R'Godae, but it holds open a gateway between our world and the next, where more demons and fiends can make their way here.
- The ancient word for demon has been mistranslated and a dragon, lich, powerful wizard or other beast that cannot be held by a magic circle is summoned.
- R'Godae cannot be held by any magic circle, but he in turn enjoys games. Whenever the PCs ask for something, he uses their wishes as an opportunity to summon more demonic energy into the world, shaping swords, coins, etc., from cursed, unholy souls.
- The dagger is a trap. The demon is summoned, but the PC's memories are wiped clean and they find themselves awake in a ritual chamber, blood everywhere and a dagger in one of their hands. Everything points to a demon summoning, but there is no sign of a demonic being. Perhaps the PCs even think the demon is one of them...
- The dagger does not summon R'Godae, but a different and more powerful demon or a righteous and stout guardian of the plane of law.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

- R'Godae comes forth during the ritual, but demands a deed before any boons are granted...depose the holy leader of the land! (see the adventure "Fall From Grace").
- R'Godae comes forth during the ritual and announces the PCs must now help him build his undead army. They are tasked to retrieve the Rod of Eternal Life from the town of Alstand.

Chapter 11:
Fall From Grace

Levels 6 to 8

by Andrew Getting

DM BACKGROUND

In the nation's darkest hour arises a new hope: a messiah-paladin, the prophesied God-King protecting the weak and low of station even as he defends the nation against invaders and corrupt statesmen alike, the God-King's ascension to the throne of Lutan promises to herald a new age of peace and prosperity for all his subjects, as foretold in the scriptures of Hairn, god of purity and salvation.

But peace and prosperity have never been profitable and many contest the rise of the God-King. Deposed royalty, foreign invaders, and corrupt merchants all find in him a mutual foe. Though the God-King's armies are mighty, many believe a few assassins can succeed where the legions of darkness have failed. All the while others conspire to make the God-King their own. Every brigand, cutthroat, and assassin in the realm turns an eye to Lutan and to a quick, bloody profit.

This adventure is designed for four to six PCs of levels 6 to 8. Having an evil cleric or someone with knowledge of religion as well as both social and stealth skills will be vital in this adventure. It can be inserted into any existing evil campaign. It takes place in the war-torn region of Lutan, the capitol province of an ancient state once ruled by paladin-princes. Though this all-but-forgotten nation has died, and its people conquered, very recently a prophesied God-King has arisen. This paladin, who hides his true name due to the danger of his position, has cast out or crushed all opposition, and now stands ready to lead his people to a new age of light.

That is where the PCs come in.

While it is rare when any rise to power is unopposed, the God-King has made serious enemies, both at home and abroad. The bounties soar, and soon every brigand, assassin, cultist, and conspirator has set their sights on the man.

The adventure begins with the PCs receiving word of the bounty through the underworld. The prospect of such a large sum of money for killing a lone man should entice most evil souls, and as the PCs depart, they find direct proof of this when a rival band attacks them, wanting the bounty for themselves.

To claim the bounty, the PCs may attempt anything from a simple assassination, to a smear campaign, to blackmail, to perhaps the greatest challenge of all — convincing a partially divine paladin to join their cause.



As the PCs close in on the God-King, they find an enchanted blade radiant with power. The sword is trapped, and beyond it lies the final challenge: the God-King himself.

It is highly recommended you read carefully through this adventure. Many details require close examination, and the PC's past certainly affects game play. Make notes where necessary and tailor this adventure to your campaign.

THE DIVINE TRAGEDY

As the ascension of the God-King comes about rather quickly, you may wish to have him take power during another adventure or in this one. In either case, read or paraphrase the following aloud:

Even as the town criers celebrate the beginning of a new age in Lutan, you duck for cover in the alley as the new town guard stomps past. It has been less than a week since the God-King won the throne, and though most of his subjects cheer this paladin-king, you are less fortunate.

The town criers' words reopen your wounds. The God-King appeared as peasant legend foretold, and overthrew the rightful government of Lutan even as he exiled its foreign invaders. Soon, he turned his accursed eyes to his native foes, and many of your friends are imprisoned, dead, exiled, or — like you — on the run from his newly reorganized guardsmen.

The guards pass without noticing you. You have escaped the paladin-king's wrath once more. You wait a moment, then open the hidden door in the abandoned building at the end of the alley. Though it is risky to have so many of the new king's enemies gathering in one place, few of you have the resources to leave the cities safely on your own. Inside sit an unkempt bunch of criminals, deposed royalty, and invaders, all trapped within Lutan's cities. Though only barely tolerant of each other's company, they remain quiet as you enter and take your spot on the crowded floor. The others, like you, are hot, sweaty, tired, and bristling with weapons.

After a few more enter the safehouse, a man in filthy silk finery stands up in the center of the room, rapping his walking staff into a support beam. Baron Richford was apparently one of the few foreign governors who escaped the God-King's slaughter.

"My friends," he says over the din. "My friends. We have been dealt a grave injustice. This upstart, this so-called God-King, this rabble, has uprooted us all. He has sealed the cities from our passing, and soon none of us will be left.

"It galls me, surely as it must gall all of you, to be undone by such a man. Without rank, station, or even a name, he has ruined us all, and so we have fled. We cannot afford to flee any longer. We must strike back at him now. Abbot Brewl will explain."

Richford gestures to a small, elderly man whose eyes have been stitched shut. After several creaks of his bones, the cultist Brewl stands. "Those of you of humble stock may already know this story. Let the others hear. We've no time for any nonsense."

"Back when Lutan was a free kingdom, one of the lesser powers of light took a particular shine to the place. Hairn was the patron of Lutan, and his servants guarded it from such as we."

"In the long run, it didn't matter. Money and power prevailed, and all of Hairn's men were done in by our ancestors. Before the head of Hairn's church fell, he spoke of Hairn's champion. Eventually, he said, some man would strike a bargain with Hairn the way some of us have struck bargains with other patrons. This man would take on part of Hairn's power, and free Lutan first of outside forces, and then of its own ills. Then this man would lead Lutan to a new glory, and the God-King's rule would last for centuries. My allies have confirmed this tale. The creature claiming to be the God-King may well be the man himself. Grinny?"

From the filth in a corner turns a small, misshapen thing — as if some small beast of a man finally shrugged off his pretension and admitted he was a rat. He smiles a wide, toothy grin. "Hyeh. We've seen him, yes. Some guards are loyal to us still. The God-King's temple is guarded by our friends, it is. 'I know where the God-King sleeps. His belly is open to us now. Strike it soon, and then we shall be free."

Richford touches Grinny the Rat on the shoulder, then looks at his hand and wipes it on his coat before speaking again. "We, your leaders, have come to a decision. Twenty thousand gold pieces to the men responsible for killing, unseating, or otherwise neutralizing the God-King. Those of you who wish to take us up on this offer, speak to Grinny. His men will tell you what we ourselves know, and will aid you in entering the God-King's temple when they feel you are ready. We caution you to remember though the God-King is but one man, his servants still wander the land where he is not, but if we allow him to remain, he will destroy us all."

With that, most of the room departs almost immediately. Unhappy as they are, most of your kindred spirits would apparently rather take their chances with the king's guard than with the man himself. A handful of others, some capable, most foolhardy, speak to Grinny briefly before one of his thieves escorts them into the alleys.

BARDIC LORE

A bard can make a Bardic Knowledge check to discover what he may have heard. A bard learns all the information of the DC his check succeeded by and all that below it (a Bard who rolled a 17 would learn the information under DC 15 and DC 10). Alternately this information can be gained by a Gather Information skill check +5 higher than the DC of a Bardic Lore check to see if the PC has heard any rumors.

DC 10 The God-Kings' personal guards, the White Fists, are mighty heroes not to be underestimated.

DC 15 Grinny the Rat can be trusted, but only when he is in sight.

DC 20 There are rumors even those close to the God-King have knowledge of a dark past.

DC 25 The God-King is under the protection of Hairn, the magic of evil mortals is said to be useless against him.

Depending on the nature of the PCs (whether they prefer personal power, spiritual/magical might, or worldly wealth), the Baron, the Abbot, or Grinny personally offers them additional incentive if asked. These are intangibles: favors, access to hidden lore, or the like (Grinny is especially generous, as he has no plans to keep his end of any bargain). They also subtly hint the PCs should not refuse, or the God-King's men are the least of their worries. Each of these men is desperate, and perfectly willing to sacrifice the PCs to the God-King in exchange for exile, even if they would rather stay. Parties who attempt to survive on their own must make a Disguise check (DC 20) to avoid harassment by either the guard or their former allies. If the PCs try to leave the city without travel papers (Forgery, DC 25), they may find themselves jailed.

WHAT IF THE PCS LIKE PALADINS?

Though intended for evil characters, you may modify this adventure for use for good parties with ease by inverting the nature of some events. In this case, the God-King rises to power by enslaving the people of Lutan, and the PCs must either expose his corruption, or destroy him. The few survivors of the God-King's machinations pool their resources to hire the PCs to free the land, and the rival gangs in the basic story are actually working for the God-King. The God-King's lair itself may even hold the clues to his ultimate redemption.ancient, evil ritual.

THE HUNT IS ON

At this point, the PCs are on their own. Fleeing the city, as illustrated above, is dangerous, and the PCs daily see signs of the God-King capturing or slaying their former comrades. Presumably, the PCs feel being poor and free is better than being rich and jailed.

The following are the basic methods the PCs may wish to employ:

Full-frontal assault. Though quite dangerous, any successful assault force is more than capable of continuing the momentum, and taking over Lutan themselves. Depending on how they do this, they are likely to make enemies of their would-be masters in the underworld — there is only so much power to go around. Grinny does not aid such a plan.

Assassination. Though easier than the frontal assault, the God-King was a formidable foe while he was mortal, and assassins must find both the means and the opportunity to strike him down. Further, assassinating him in public is likely to invoke a riot — the underworld aside; the God-King is enormously popular. Grinny points this out if he discovers the PCs wish to strike in such a manner. The increased security following a failed assassination makes his job more difficult.

Blackmail. Before he was king, before he was a demigod, before he was a paladin, the God-King was a man like any other. The Baron suggests this option if the PCs ask his advice, and further points out any dirty secrets would remain quite close to their master — leading the PCs to the temple (see rooms #7 and #14).

Framing. If news of the nefarious activities of the God-King reached his subjects, the wrath of the common people could depose even a demigod. Grinny especially likes proponents of such a plan, and offers up any fake evidence or false witnesses the PCs require. Of course, it is still up to the PCs to set the God-King up, and Grinny suggests planting evidence of his misdeeds within his own temple.

Corruption. Discussions with the Abbot revolve around his envy of the God-King's might, and his idle fantasies of swaying such power to more proper uses.

If the PCs are amenable to this suggestion, he reveals what little he knows of the God-King's character. The Abbot is dark and mysterious. He speaks in a broken, staccato manner. Play it up.

Read or paraphrase the following aloud to the PCs:

"The God-King's power relies on Hairn's blessing. Hairn is but a fledgling. His power in Lutan is great. Hairn bestowed his essence upon the God-King. Both Hairn and the paladin are at risk... if perhaps the man were... turned. Such a change may strip Hairn of his power. The God-King as a new deity... think about it. Break communication between master and servant. Force the knight to act against his lord. Yes, my... masters would reward you dearly for the God-King's conversion. Dearly."

Encounter: If the PCs wish to have a meeting with the God-King (nigh suicidal, but possible), the Baron may arrange it. Otherwise, the PCs rely on Grinny's good graces. In any case, once the PCs have a solid plan in place, a rival group attacks them, hoping for the gold and glory themselves. Have the PCs make a Spot or Listen check (whichever is higher for each character) against the attacker's various Hide or Move Silently checks. Success means the PCs spot an ambush and are not surprised; failure means a rival party catches the PCs flat-footed and attacks them, wishing to take the reward for themselves. There are as many rogues as there are PCs.

▲ Thieves' Guild Recruit, Human Rog 4: CR 4; Medium humanoid; HD 4d6+7; hp 23 each; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +3; Grp +4; Atk +5 melee (1d8+1/19–20, longsword) or +6 ranged (1d4+1/19–20, dagger); Full Atk +5 melee (1d8+1/19–20, longsword) or +6 ranged (1d4+1/19–20, dagger); SA Sneak attack +2d6; SQ Evasion, trapfinding, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +1; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Balance +10, Bluff +6, Disable Device +10, Disguise +6, Escape Artist +10, Hide +10, Listen +8, Move Silently +10, Open Lock +10, Tumble +10; Dodge, Improved Initiative, Toughness.

Evasion (Ex): If these rogues make a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, they instead take no damage.

Sneak Attack: These rogues' attacks deals +2d6 extra damage any time a target would be denied a Dexterity bonus to AC (whether the target actually has a Dexterity bonus or not), or when the rogue flanks the target. Ranged attacks can count as sneak attacks only if the target is within 30 ft.

Trapfinding: These rogues can use the Search skill to locate traps when the task has a Difficulty Class higher than 20.

Trap Sense (Ex): These rogues gain a +1 bonus on Reflex saves made to avoid traps and a +1 dodge bonus to AC against attacks made by traps.

Uncanny Dodge (Ex): These rogues retain their Dexterity bonus to AC (if any) even if they are caught flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker. However, they still lose their Dexterity bonus to AC if immobilized.

Possessions: Studded leather armor, buckler, masterwork longsword, two daggers, 1d10 gp each.

FALL FROM GRACE

Tactics: They flee if two of their number fall or if a PC casts a potent (3rd level +) offensive spell. A thorough Search check (DC 15) of the corpses (if there are any) reveals a brand on the back of their necks. A Gather Information check (DC 20) reveals this is a brand favored by Grinny the Rat, showing the recruits as his personal band of thugs.

Once the PCs have routed the recruits, they may continue on the path. Should the PCs wish to disguise themselves in the armament of the God-King's men, Grinny sells such outfits to them for either 200 gp for clever forgeries, or 100 gp for partially damaged (bloody or torn) genuine articles. Even when his neck is on the block, Grinny wants a profit. If the PCs wish to procure their own, have them make either a Profession (tailor) check (DC 20) and a Forgery check (DC 20), or an attack on a unit of the God-King's men.

▲ The White Fists, the God-King's Guard, Human Ftr 10:

CR 10; Medium humanoid; HD 10d10+33; hp 92 each; Init +2; Spd 20 ft.; AC 21, touch 11, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +10; Grp +12; Atk +14 melee (1d8+5/19–20, longsword) or +12 ranged (1d8+3/×3, longbow); Full Atk +14/+9 melee (1d8+5/19–20, longsword) or +12/+7 ranged (1d8+3/×3, longbow); SA —; SQ —; AL LG; SV Fort +10, Ref +5, Will +7; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Climb +12, Handle Animal +11, Intimidate +10, Jump +12, Listen +7, Ride +11, Spot +7; Alertness, Cleave, Combat Expertise, Dodge, Mobility, Power Attack, Improved Sunder, Iron Will, Toughness, Weapon focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword).

Possessions: Banded mail +1, heavy steel shield, +1 longsword, +1 mighty composite longbow [+2], cloak of protection +1, potion of heroism, 10d10 gp.

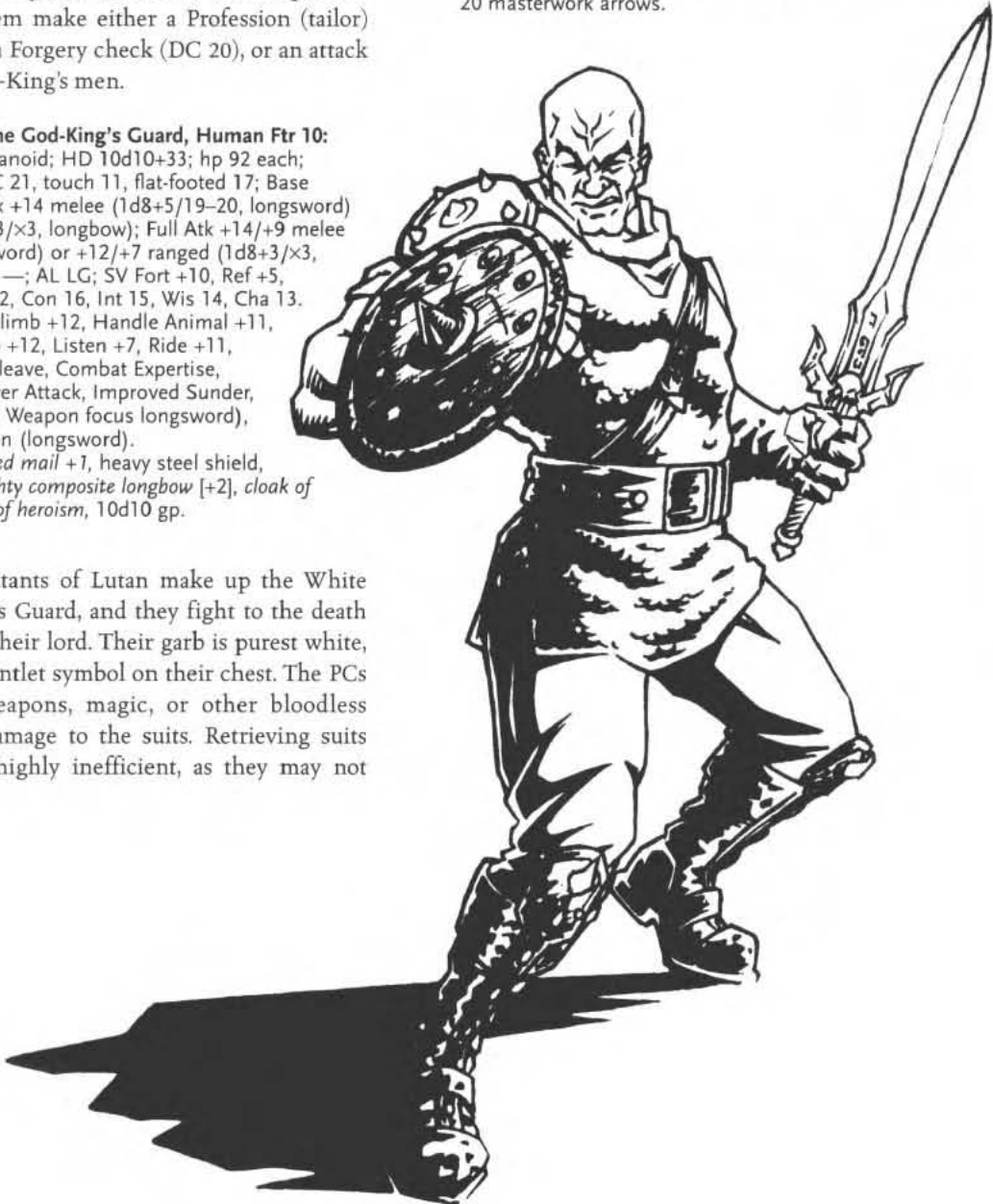
The finest combatants of Lutan make up the White Fists, the God-King's Guard, and they fight to the death against enemies of their lord. Their garb is purest white, with a clenched gauntlet symbol on their chest. The PCs must use blunt weapons, magic, or other bloodless method to avoid damage to the suits. Retrieving suits in this manner is highly inefficient, as they may not fit properly.

As stated, the White Fists, above, represent the pinnacle of the God-King's Guards. His other men at arms are impressive but nowhere near as skilled and powerful.

▲ **Man-at-Arms, Human Ftr 5:** CR 5; Medium humanoid; HD 5d10+5; hp 40; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 21, touch 11, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +5; Grp +8; Atk +10 melee (1d8+5/19–20, longsword) or +7 ranged (1d8+3/×3, longbow); Full Atk +10 melee (1d8+5/19–20, longsword) or +7 ranged (1d8+3/×3, longbow); SA —; SQ —; AL LN; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Climb +8, Handle Animal +6, Intimidate +8, Jump +8, Ride +8; Dodge, Cleave, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Focus (longbow), Weapon Specialization (longsword).

Possessions: Full plate, heavy steel shield, masterwork longsword, masterwork mighty composite longbow [+3], 20 masterwork arrows.



THE TEMPLE OF THE GOD-KING

All roads lead to the temple of the God-King. Once the PCs are ready to attack or infiltrate it, as opposed to openly meeting with the God-King, read or paraphrase the following aloud (otherwise, skip to #2):

Grinny nods, and traces a quick sign in the air. An assistant thief hands each of you a blindfold, and then someone shoves you forward. Out of the warehouse and into the rushing waters of the sewers, Grinny's man leads you in a complex series of lefts, rights, and reversals. After what seems like hours, a sharp pull tears the blindfolds from your faces. You are in a small storeroom.

The PCs are in room #12, behind a row of provisions.

Notes on the temple:

- It is not imperative the PCs visit every room, particularly if they simply wish to plant evidence against the God-King.
- For the purposes of casting spells, clerics with either Chaos or Evil domains function as clerics one level lower. Clerics with both domains function at two levels lower for casting spells. In addition, Hairn's influence stops all clerics from contacting their deity (other than Hairn) for any reason.
- Though Hairn's influence grows, casting the spell unhallow disrupts Hairn's will. In addition to its normal effects, casting unhallow at any point affects the God-King as though he were targeted by a blasphemy spell (see God-King's description). The effects of unhallow are much shorter, however, lasting only an hour before Hairn's might returns.
- It is wholly possible to draw the God-King's attention. Though he is dimly aware of intruders in the temple, he does not act unless the PCs damage the temple, interfere directly with Hairn's power, or touch the sword of intensity. If the PCs draw the God-King's attention, he arrives at the PC's location in 1d10 minutes.

1. Barracks

This room is lined with bunk after bunk of soldiers, sleeping, relaxing, or quietly studying their master's words.

Tactics: If the PCs have raised an alarm, the guards ready for battle, and notice the intruders. Ten of the men-at-arms are ready to fight the PCs, and another ten are ready within the round.

▲ Man-at-Arms, Human Ftr 5: CR 5; Medium humanoid; HD 5d10+5; hp 40; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 21, touch 11, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +5; Grp +8; Atk +10 melee (1d8+5/19–20, longsword) or +7 ranged (1d8+3/×3, longbow); Full Atk +10 melee (1d8+5/19–20, longsword) or +7 ranged (1d8+3/×3, longbow); SA —; SQ —; AL LN; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Climb +8, Handle Animal +6, Intimidate +8, Jump +8, Ride +8; Dodge, Cleave, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Focus (longbow), Weapon Specialization (longsword).

Possessions: Full plate, heavy steel shield, masterwork longsword, masterwork mighty composite longbow [+3], 20 masterwork arrows.

2. Antechamber

This is the room where the God-King receives visitors. It is directly across the hallway from the barracks, and should the PCs confront the God-King here, he has his full complement of guards nearby. If the PCs have not arranged an audience with the God-King, the antechamber is empty of occupants, but full of official documents (kept under lock and key, of course). It takes an Open Lock check (DC 18) to pick each of the locks on the desk, and inside are various official papers and the God-King's personal seal.

If someone steals the seal, the God-King notices it the following day, and takes steps to replace it, proving any upcoming papers are forgeries. If one of the papers marked with his seal is stolen, he does not notice it; it takes a Forgery skill check (DC 30 without a copy of the seal, 20 with) to properly forge an incriminating document.

If the PCs have arranged a meeting with the God-King, read or paraphrase the following aloud:

Though his gaze tells you of his doubts concerning your sanity, the Baron nods. 'I will see to it,' he says, and the following day, the Baron sends a missive to you that the God-King will see you in the afternoon.

Unless the PCs openly bear symbols of evil, wear anything more than ceremonial arms and armor, or are infamous criminals whose faces are widely recognized, the guards escort them to this room.

Read the following aloud the first time the PCs enter this room, even if the PCs are not here on official business:

There is a full complement of bookcases concerning law, history, and religion, and a portrait of Hairn lifting a bloody gauntleted fist to the sky. Wooden chairs and a desk are the only other furnishings.

If the God-King awaits them, introduce him here. Unless the PCs give him reason to doubt their intentions (such as attempting to assassinate him), he assumes them simple diplomats or merchants. If the PCs have evidence against the God-King, such as the blackmail material found in rooms #7 and #14, role-play the interaction. Though more than mortal now, the God-King is fully aware that, should his past become common knowledge, all his efforts are wasted. He grudgingly accepts potent blackmail and tries to quietly do as the PCs demand rather than refuse and face execution by his own troops.

If the PCs do not attempt to blackmail the God-King, or to parlay with him under false pretenses of business or diplomacy, he becomes suspicious and has the PCs arrested. This is accomplished with an overwhelming show of force of the White Fists guardsmen. The PCs are incarcerated in a dank dungeon not far from the God-King's abode, but escaping should be an adventure in and of itself. Picking the locks or bending the bars would require a great deal of luck or talent. If the PCs still can't escape on their own, the God-King soon jails an infamous rogue named Wharton the Wiley. Wharton managed to sneak thief's tools in with him and escapes in the night, freeing other prisoners (including the PCs) and starting a revolt.

Depending on how difficult you want to make this on the PCs, the weapon locker could be between 1d4 jail guards or the entire regiment and the head jailer too.

■ **Iron doors:** 2 in. thick; hardness 10, hit points 60; stuck DC 28; open lock DC 28.

▲ **Kheherik the Head Jailer, Human Ftr 4:** CR 4; Medium humanoid; HD 4d10+8; hp 32; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +4; Grp +7; Atk +9 melee (1d8+5/19-20, longsword) or +6 ranged (1d10/19-20, heavy crossbow); Atk +9 melee (1d8+5/19-20, longsword) or +6 ranged (1d10/19-20, heavy crossbow); SA —; SQ —; AL LN; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Climb +8, Handle Animal +2, Intimidate +8, Jump +8, Ride +6; Dodge, Cleave, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Focus (heavy crossbow), Weapon Specialization (longsword).

Possessions: Splint mail, light steel shield, masterwork longsword, heavy crossbow, 20 bolts.

▲ **Jail Guard, Human War1 (10):** CR ½; Medium humanoid; HD 1d10; hp 10; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 10, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk +3 melee (1d8+1/x3, spear); Full Atk +3 melee (1d8+1/x3, spear) SA —; SQ —; AL LN; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Climb +4, Intimidate +4, Jump +4, Ride +3; Dodge, Weapon focus (spear).

Possessions: Leather armor, light wooden shield, spear.

▲ **Wharton the Wiley: Human Rog 6:** CR 6; Medium humanoid; HD 6d6+6; hp 30; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +4; Grp +5; Atk +7 melee (1d6+1/19-20, short sword); Full Atk +7 melee (1d6+1/19-20, short sword); SA sneak attack +3d6; SQ evasion, trapfinding, trap sense +2, uncanny dodge; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +8, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 15, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +8, Climb +10, Disable Device +12, Hide +10, Listen +11, Move Silently +12, Open Lock +12, Search +11, Spot +9, Tumble +12, Use Magic Device +8; Alertness, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (short sword).

Evasion (Ex): This rogue can avoid even magical and unusual attacks with great agility. If he makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, he instead take no damage.

Sneak Attack: This rogue's attacks deals an extra 3d6 damage any time a target would be denied a Dexterity bonus to AC (whether the target actually has a Dexterity bonus or not), or when the rogue flanks a target.

Trapfinding: This rogue can use the Search skill to locate traps when the task has a Difficulty Class higher than 20.

Trap Sense (Ex): This rogue gains an intuitive sense that alerts them to danger from traps, giving him a +2 bonus on Reflex saves made to avoid traps and a +2 dodge bonus to AC against attacks made by traps.

Uncanny Dodge (Ex): This rogue retains his Dexterity bonus to AC (if any) even if he is caught flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker.

Possessions: Masterwork studded leather armor, masterwork short sword, thief's tools (Wharton's key interest, once getting free, is to get these back from the weapon's locker. Until then he is unarmed).

▲ **Prisoner, Human Com1 (20):** CR ½; Medium humanoid; HD 1d4; hp 3; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +0/+1; Full Atk +1 melee (1d3+1, unarmed); AL Any neutral or evil; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 9, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Hide +5, Ride +3, Swim +2; Great Fortitude, Skill Focus (hide).

If the God-King is not here, the PCs may plant false evidence in the desk.

3. Hallways

Encounter: The hallways are regularly patrolled by a squad of six of the God-King's men (use the statistics above if necessary). During the day, the guards do not accost the PCs unless the PCs arouse suspicion in their dress, attitude, or if they attempt to break into rooms #6-11, 13, or 14. If the PCs are wearing the God-King's uniforms, the guards only stop the PCs if they misbehave. At night, the guard patrols are lessened (roll 1d20 every time the PCs leave a room, if the result is less than the number of rooms they have entered this night, they encounter a guard patrol).

Tactics: Though the hallways have nothing of apparent note, it is here Grinny's four assassins strike, here to the PCs. Every time the PCs leave a room, roll 1d12. If the result is lower than the number of rooms the PCs visited, then the assassins attack. The assassins automatically strike if the PCs raid the treasure room (room #13). Each player may roll a Spot or Listen check (DC 20), to avoid being caught flat-footed.

▲ **Assassin, Human Rog 5/Asn 2:** CR 7; Medium humanoid; HD 5d6+5; hp 28, 23, 19, 17; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +4; Grp +6; Atk +7 melee (1d6+2/18–20 plus poison, rapier) or +7 ranged (1d4+2/19–20, dagger); Full Atk +7 melee (1d6+2/18–20 plus poison, rapier) or +7 ranged (1d4+2/19–20, dagger); SA Death attack, sneak attack +4d6, spells; SQ Evasion, poison save +1, poison use, trapfinding, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +10, Will +2; Str 14, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 11, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Balance +9, Bluff +9, Disable Device +10, Disguise +6, Gather Information +6, Escape Artist +10, Hide +12, Listen +9, Move Silently +12, Open Lock +10, Tumble +11; Dodge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Weapon Finesse.

Poison on blades: Greenblood Oil, Fort DC 13, 1 Con/1d2 Con initial and secondary damage.

Death Attack: If an assassin studies his victim for 3 rounds and then makes a sneak attack with a melee weapon that successfully deals damage, the sneak attack has the additional effect of possibly either paralyzing or killing the target (assassin's choice). If the victim of such an attack fails a Fortitude save (DC 13) against the kill effect, she dies. If the saving throw fails against the paralysis effect, the victim is rendered helpless and unable to act for 1d6 rounds plus 1 round per level of the assassin. If the victim's saving throw succeeds, the attack is just a normal sneak attack. Once the assassin has completed the 3 rounds of study, he must make the death attack within the next 3 rounds.

Evasion (Ex): If these rogues make a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, they instead takes no damage.

Poison Use: Assassins are trained in the use of poison and never risk accidentally poisoning themselves when applying poison to a blade.

Save Bonus against Poison: The assassin gains a +1 natural saving throw bonus against all poisons.

Sneak Attack: These rogues' attacks deals +4d6 extra damage any time a target would be denied a Dexterity bonus to AC (whether the target actually has a Dexterity bonus or not), or when the rogue flanks the target. Ranged attacks can count as sneak attacks only if the target is within 30 ft.

Trapfinding: These rogues can use the Search skill to locate traps when the task has a Difficulty Class higher than 20.

Trap Sense (Ex): These rogues gain a +1 bonus on Reflex saves made to avoid traps and a +1 dodge bonus to AC against attacks made by traps.

Uncanny Dodge (Ex): These rogues retain their Dexterity bonus to AC (if any) even if they are caught flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker. However, they still lose their Dexterity bonus to AC if immobilized.

Assassin spells prepared (1; save DC 11 + spell level): 1—true strike.

Possessions: Masterwork studded leather armor, buckler, masterwork rapier, two daggers, *potion of cat's grace*, *potion of bull's strength*, vial of greenblood oil poison, 2d10 gp each.

The lead assassin has a *dagger of venom* (intended for the God-King). They also have a precise map of the land between the city and the temple, and forged papers. The leader has a brand on the back of his neck, beneath his hair. A successful Gather Information check (DC 20) marks him as one of Grinny's servants.

4. Meditation Chambers

These simple rooms contain prayer pillows and holy robes, but are otherwise unadorned. These rooms are the meditation chambers of both the God-King and his followers. While the guard may wonder at late-night visitors to these rooms, they are far less likely to attack someone for leaving one. The guards escort them from the temple if they catch the PCs in these rooms.

This room is bare stone walls and floor, with a portrait of Hairn lifting his bleeding, gauntleted fist in triumph over the forces of foreign invaders. There is a fist-sized hole in the wall, just below the painting.

If anyone places their hand in the hole, they find a small lever with a spike in the handle. If the PC does not have a gauntlet on, and pulls the lever, the PC takes a single point of damage. Once the PCs throw all four levers (one in each room), the doors to rooms #13 and #14 unlock.

If the PCs cast *blasphemy* or *unhallow* here, or subtly deface the painting and repeat the process for the other meditation chambers, the PCs weaken the God-King's ties to Hairn. See also room #14.

5. The Chapel

Read aloud the first time the PC's enters this room:

You see a row of pews before an altar to Hairn. Candelabra line the walls, as well as hanging banners of bloody gauntlets. A donation box is near the doorway, and near the altar is a podium with a book upon it.

The donation box is presently empty save an *alarm* spell (cast as an audible alarm).

The book is the Holy Writ of Hairn. This is the public copy of the writ, and the God-King reads aloud from it before his weekly mass, the next of which is in three days. If the PCs take the book and replace it in less than a day, its loss goes unnoticed. Placing unholy scriptures or the like within the book and claiming the God-King is an impostor provides enough proof for the populace to dethrone him.

Casting *blasphemy* or *unhallow* here, or subtly altering the altar towards another deity's favor angers Hairn, and he severs his ties to Lutan. It takes days of prayer on the God-King's part to discover what must be done to restore his position. Hairn sends him on a perilous quest alone to atone for the transgression, placing him in a position of extreme weakness and loosing the people's trust as he abandons them to follow this quest.

6-11. Private Quarters

These rooms belong to the clergy and workers of the temple. During the day, they are abandoned. At night, their inhabitants sleep here. In each communal cell lie four small cots, as well as a small collection of books and scrolls. Each cot also has a small lock box next to it. The books are almost all invariably holy works and derivative works on religion, history, nobility and royalty. These books are left out on shelves for anyone to peruse. Each room contains 2d10 such books. The cots are simple affairs with a single sheet and pillow each. Each also shows signs of personal hobbies, from heraldry to woodworking, songwriting and calligraphy.

The lock boxes are easy to pick or break (DC 12 in either case), and contain minor personal effects, roll on the following table for each box:

1d20	Private Quarters Box Objects
1-10	2d6 gp
11	A cold iron punching dagger
12	A gold wedding band (worth 100 gp)
13	Hawk trainer's arm guard
14	Iron robe clamp
15	Meditation candles
16	Pouch of incense
17	Small ivory holy symbol.
18	Small prayer book to the celestial gods
19	Sticks of colored chalk
20	Tiny, silver-plated bell (worth 5 gp)

Additionally, each room contains the following specific items:

Room 6: A small idol of Hairn, the god of purity and salvation, and a personalized scripture book of holy prayers.

Room 7: Clynth's diary (see below), an item that, with proper research, can be used to black mail the God-King.

Room 8: An additional 2d10 gp and a *dagger of venom* (this is the room of Grinny's hired guards).

Room 9: A series of notes about the deeds of the God-King. Most of the notes are written in verse and rhyme, suggesting this room belongs to a bard. If the PCs leave Clynth's diary in this lock box, the bard writes a tale, which denounces the God-King and his past actions.

Room 10: A rusted gauntlet, a whetstone, weapon and armor oil, and a dwarven tome on weapon and armor construction and care, with diagrams and ample notes in the common tongue.

Room 11: A prayer bead, pen and ink, a number of fine blank parchments, and four divine scrolls: *bless*, *detect evil*, *divine favor*, and *protection from evil* (each scribed at the 3rd level of ability).

If the PCs wish to study Clynth's diary (#7, above), they discover the following passage in 1d4 hours:

"...It is so frustrating. Hairn has chosen Kindel, but Kindel was mine first. It would be so easy to reclaim him, simply to tell people their beloved God-King once led the very army he now opposes. But no, it is better I make this sacrifice of my love than I let others fall for my selfishness..."

This book has enough information to blackmail the God-King.

12. Storeroom and Kitchen

A horrid smell of raw meat and spices assaults you as you enter the kitchen. Row upon row of sharp knives line the ceiling, and the racks contain iron rations.

Apart from the food and cooking utensils here, there is nothing else of interest.

13. The Treasury

These regal, iron doors are barred from within with holy power, and cannot be opened by physical means. An evil cleric expending a command undead attempt may channel unholy power to counteract the defense and breach the chamber requiring a turning/rebuke check of level + Charisma bonus (DC 23).

Otherwise the treasury doors only open if the PCs have closed all four gauntlets.

The doors swing open beneath your fingers, and you are bathed in a golden light. Hovering amidst gold treasures and fine gems is a beautiful long sword. Along its blade are intricately carved runes in an ancient language, and the halo the sword produces is almost too bright to bear.

This is not truly a valuable magic weapon, but rather a *sword of intensity*, a worthless trinket designed to trap would-be thieves. Touching it activates the alarm spell placed upon it, drawing the attention of the God-King.

Treasure: Among the other treasures in the room are 5,000 gp, another 3,000 gp worth of various gems, and a dark skull on an imp. With the exception of the sword, these are objects taken from the battles with the forces of evil.

14. The God-King's Chamber

A careful search reveals the presence of secret doors (Search check, DC 18). However, there is no visible means of opening them. Throwing all four switches in the meditation chambers (room #11) opens the doors, sliding them into the floor. They open automatically for the God-King, whose mere touch bypasses the locking mechanism.

If the PCs enter the room at night, the God-King *defends himself* from the intruders (see openly fighting the God-King below).

If the PCs enter the room during the day, read the following aloud.

Here, at last, is the God-King's chamber: a simple room with a small bed, yet another portrait of the accursed Hairn, and, some humanoid-shaped object off to the side covered by a tarp. Underneath is a full suit of plate armor — emblazoned with the heraldry of Alegnora, Lutan's sworn enemy. He keeps this as a reminder of his evil ways, and the strength he had to overcome it. No one has every asked him about it; indeed no one knows he even keeps this here. If someone were to inquire about it, he would easily explain it away as a trophy of war.

BLACKMAIL

If the PCs reveal the suit of armor and the knowledge the God-King is not from Lutan, this certainly causes great suspicion against the God-King from his subjects and followers, if they can escape with the evidence of course. If they threaten him with the evidence, he fights or works out a bargain. There is a lot of room for role-play here. Allow the PCs to talk their way into a sweet deal with the God-King of Lutan.

SUBDUAL

Casting blasphemy or *unhallow*, or subtly altering the painting disrupts the God-King's ties to Hairn. If the meditation chambers, the altar, and this room are all subject to such trickeries and it goes unnoticed, then the next time the God-King meditates, he finds himself attacked by the gods of those he fights. In the end, he is corrupted, trapping a portion of Hairn's influence within the newly formed blackguard.

OPENLY FIGHTING THE GOD-KING

As his name suggests, he is divine. The God-King is powerful; perhaps too powerful for the PCs. Should they choose to fight him openly, he is a worthy opponent. Make the PCs aware of his power should they choose to fight head-long against him.

▲ God-King, The: CR 17; Medium outsider (extraplanar); HD 16d10+64; hp 150; Init +2, (+6 within the temple); Spd 30 ft.; AC 23, touch 12, flat-footed 21; Base Atk +16/Grp +20; Atk Battleaxe melee +24 (1d8+9/x3); Full Atk Battleaxe melee +24/+19/+14/+9 (1d8+9/x3); SA Smite evil 4/day, turn undead; SQ Aura of courage, aura of good, detect evil, divine awareness, divine grace, Hairn's blessing, lay on hands, remove disease 4/week, unearthly health; AL LG (LE); SV Fort +18, Ref +16, Will +18; Str 18, Dex 14, Con 18, Int 18, Wis 18, Cha 19.

Skills and Feats: Climb +6, Concentration +10, Diplomacy +23, Handle Animal +9, Heal +6, Intimate +10, Knowledge (religion) +20, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +9, Listen +5, Perform (Oratory) +9, Ride +15, Spot +5; Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Great Cleave, Leadership[B], Power Attack, Sunder, Weapon Focus (Battle Axe).

Aura of Courage (Su): The God-King is immune to fear (magical or otherwise). Each ally within 10 ft. of him gains a +4 morale bonus on saving throws against fear effects. This ability functions while he is conscious, but not if he is unconscious or dead.

Aura of Good (Ex): The power of the God-King's aura of good (see the detect good spell) is 15th level.

Detect Evil (Sp): At will, the God-King can use detect evil, as the spell.

Divine Awareness (Su): Within the walls of the temple, the God-King is aware of everything that goes on around him. His Intelligence and Wisdom are also enhanced by four points each he gains the Improved Initiative feat.

Divine Grace (Su): The God-King adds his Charisma bonus to all saves.

Hairn's Blessing (Su): The God-King may not be targeted by Necromantic spells, or divine spells from the domains of chaos, death, or evil. The sole exception to this is blasphemy, which affects him as though he had half his hit dice. If corrupted, the god king retains Hairn's Blessing, but becomes immune to blasphemy.

Lay on Hands (Su): Each day the God-King can heal 64 hit points of damage. The God-King may choose to divide his healing among multiple recipients, and he does not have to use it all at once. Using lay on hands is a standard action.

Remove Disease (Sp): The God-King can produce a remove disease effect, as the spell, four times per week.

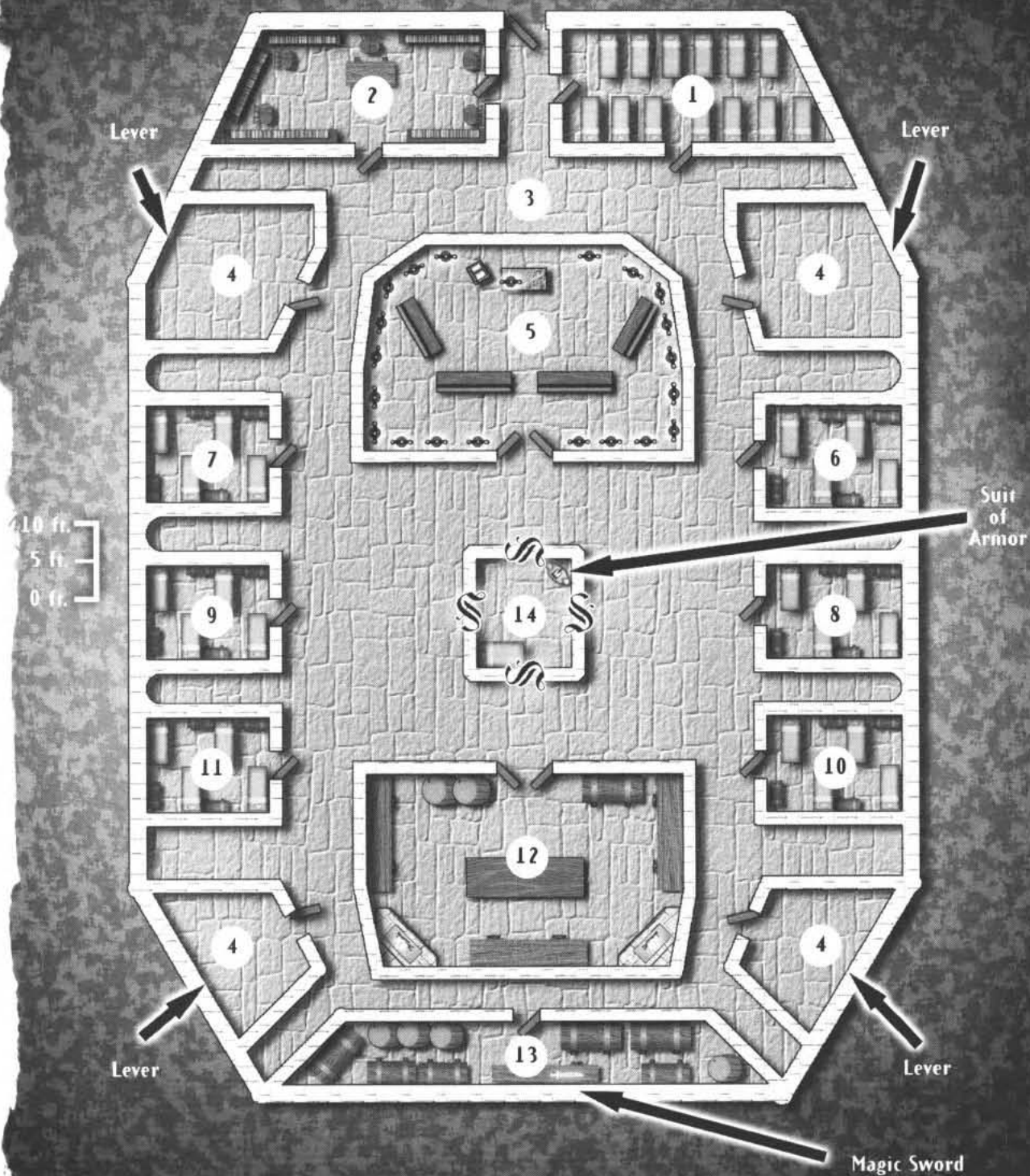
Smite Evil (Su): Four times per day, the God-King may attempt to smite evil with one normal melee attack. He adds +4 to his attack roll and deals 16 extra points of damage. If he accidentally smites a creature that is not evil, the smite has no effect, but the ability is still used up for that day.

Turn Undead (Su): The God-King has the supernatural ability to *turn undead*. He may use this ability 7 times per day. He turns undead as a 11th level cleric.

Unearthly Health (Su): The God-King is immune to any sickness, disease (including supernatural and magical ones), and can never be fatigued. He need never breathe, eat or sleep.

Spells: The God-King casts spells as a 16th level paladin (DC 14 + Spell Level), he usually has the following spells prepared: 1st—*bless, divine favor, lesser restoration*; 2nd—*bull's strength, resist energy, zone of truth*; 3rd—*daylight, dispel magic*; 4th—*holy sword, mark of justice*.

TEMPLE OF THE GOD-KING



EPILOGUE

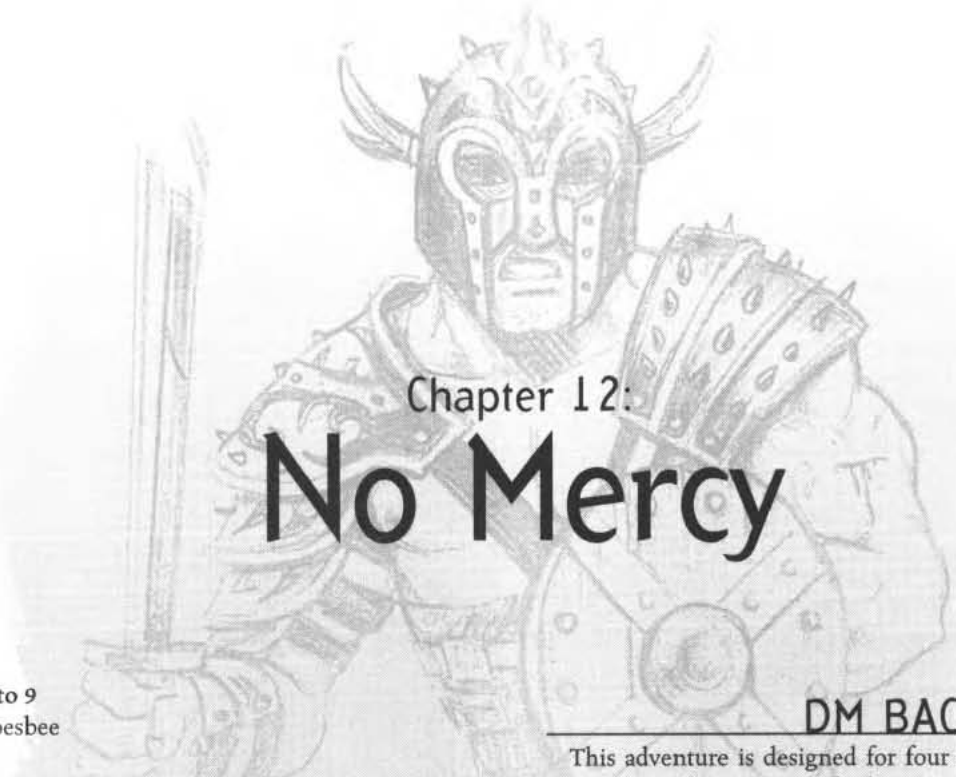
Much of this adventure is open to the interpretation of the DM. Because the PCs must plot and plan, this adventure cannot provide information for every contingency. Ultimately, the PCs will think of something we did not cover and it is up to the DM to use the information here as best as he can. This is a complex topic and it should not be that easy to corrupt a divine being.

Once the PCs have dethroned the God-King, they may retrieve their rewards (or attempt to, if they made a deal with Grinny). The PCs also have to deal with the political turmoil that follows in the wake of this adventure.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

- An evil blackguard, Prince Sukhir Blackhammer, quickly captures the city with the God-King dethroned. The PCs have drawn his attention as those who could best serve him and they are then integrated into his high command. Within a month however, the upheaval of the situation becomes too much, slaves revolt, and the city is thrown into chaos (see the adventure "No Mercy").
- The removal of the God-King causes a holy backlash on the city, and it is wracked with a terrible earthquake, leaving behind a telling artifact which may spell doom for all (see the adventure "Temple of the Iron Codex").





Chapter 12: No Mercy

Levels 7 to 9

By Ree Soesbee

DM BACKGROUND

The city of Rahbaud has been at peace for generations. It is a prosperous city, built on the backs of hard-work and guided by the hand of a powerful overlord. The nobility lives in splendor, trading locally to increase their own wealth while simultaneously capturing and breeding slaves for the benefit of all.

Now a slave rebellion in the gladiator pits threatens the prosperity and stability of this noble city. In the service of Prince Sukhir Blackhammer, known as the Iron Fist of Law, you have been enlisted to crush the rebellion. Your duty is to destroy the slaves who threaten Rahbaud's security, and bring the rebel leaders to the justice of the Iron Fist.

There shall be no mercy for those who dare to break with order, no refuge for the murderers of peaceful merchants and nobility, nor for slaves who aspire to buy their freedom with the blood of decent citizens.

An example must be set, to keep the peace and force the other slaves back into tranquility. If these treasonous serfs destroy generations of work with some false hope of 'freedom', then the Prince of Rahbaud shall give them their freedom...

In death.

This adventure is designed for four to six PCs of levels 7 to 9. Characters (and players) with a military and tactical bent are at an advantage in this adventure though stealth and magic will also prove useful.

Read the module at least once to familiarize yourself with the various encounters before proceeding to play. The player characters can be of nearly any race or class, but should all either be evil, or willing to work for evil ends.

The adventure begins in the opulent city of Rahbaud, a place known for its decadence and prosperity. Every noble bears unimagined wealth and the merchants enjoy the fruits of an extremely profitable slave trade with other cities in the southern nations. Rahbaud lies in the center of a peaceful province, a peace enforced through the firm rulership of Prince Sukhir Blackhammer, known by many as the Iron Fist of Law.

Then, just a few days ago, a slave rebellion began in the gladiatorial pits. Warriors trained to fight for the sport of their masters turned their blades upon the Overseers of the pits, bloodying their swords on the flesh of free men. Their revolt has caught the city on fire, and now slaves from every walk of life are rebelling against the rule of Prince Sukhir.

Worse, one of the Northern regions — a kingdom known as Adragiae — threatens war against Rahbaud. Adragiae is a kingdom of chaos, where arguing senators rule a fractious nation of starving peasants and mismanaged funds. Their army fallow, they took some imagined offense to Sukhir's rule, and using the excuse of 'freeing the slaves', they declared war upon the principality and

BUT MY PC'S ARE NOT EVIL!

With some modification this adventure can be run with good-aligned PCs. In this instance, the ruler Prince Sukhir Silverhammer, known as the Champion of Law has an annoying habit of allowing enemy soldiers to work their way toward freedom with gladiatorial combat. However, they finally imprisoned an enemy champion who has led a revolt of the other captives and they are the force the PCs are tasked with putting down.

PCS FROM "THE FLESH IS WEAK"

If the PCs are coming to the city on a diplomatic mission from the adventure "The Flesh is Weak", here's a chance to really twist this adventure around! In this instance, the PCs come to the city in the midst of the rebellion and must either give in and help the "lawful" city restore order or, even better, side with the rebellion against great odds. In this case, the adventure locations can become key points in which the PCs work with the defenders to win their freedom from Talmak's Guard and the overlords of the city. If this option is used, we've included four generic villains at the end of this adventure who are the city overseers, evil versions of the PCs who are Prince Sukhir's agents.

city of Rahbaud. With war declared, the slaves of Rahbaud became even more untenable, and their minor revolt has turned into widespread panic, and riots.

Calling upon the known PCs within his domain, the Prince of Rahbaud outlines his plan. Four companies of soldiers can fight the enemy, under Sukhir's command. A small company, Talmak's Guard, is placed under PC control and must put down the rebellion. The PCs must face riots, gladiatorial fights, a massive fire, and the raid of a secret holy site, to reclaim the city in the name of its Overlord.

Sukhir is in from the city during the adventure, staying to oversee troop movements, and prepare for a possible siege. He doesn't have time to squash the revolt, however, and needs the PCs to handle the internal problems while he takes care of the external threat.

BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

The city of Rahbaud can be any known city within your campaign world, or it can be a new location. The only catalyst needed is some excuse for Prince Sukhir to trust the PCs with the security of his city — some deed they have performed convinces him they are right for the job. Prince Sukhir commands their presence in his throne room at once.

Note: There is no "Bardic Lore" to be discovered at all about this adventure. However, you may set the adventure in the city of Desburg if you like.

1. Throne room of the Iron Fist

The city of Rahbaud is in flames, barely controlled by the city guards. There is rioting everywhere, and in the city square, the slaves are holding hostages. Martial law keeps the city under some control, but the PCs can tell things are about to break.

Through the riots in the city streets, a guards escort you to the palace of Prince Sukhir Blackhammer. Inside, you are greeted as honored guests, offered refreshment, and respectfully led to the throne room. Several aides debate over large maps, and the prince sits on his throne, chin resting upon a gauntleted fist. "Ah," he says as you approach. "Excellent."

Sukhir stands as you approach, and spreads his arms. He is dressed in ornate black chain mail, a thin crown of iron crossing his regal forehead. "Heroes of the Realm," he begins, as the aids fall silent. "This is our darkest hour. A few days ago, a slave rebellion began in the gladiatorial pits. Warriors trained to fight for the sport of their masters turned their blades upon the Overseers of the pits, blood-ying their swords on the flesh of free men. Now, the nation of Adragiae threatens war against us, taking advantage of our current rioting. Now, the slaves of Rahbaud have used this opportunity to turn their minor revolt into widespread panic and rioting. We must and will crush our enemies, but not while our city rots from within."

Sukhir steps down and walks among the tables, pointing out army encampments on the maps. "It is likely the slaves somehow knew of this imminent attack, or they have a leader. Perhaps someone from Adragiae is behind this. My best commanders, leaders of the city guard, were murdered in their beds by foul magic. Therefore, the slaves cannot to be trifled with, and must not be underestimated. Their leadership must be destroyed and the rebellion crushed, so Rahbaud remains safe from her enemies."

"Four divisions of soldiers march to the north, prepared to meet the armies of Adragiae. The small company remains here, to safeguard the city and put down the revolts. Your service to the principality has long been appreciated; you are feared among the populace as loyal, brutal, and effective. Talmak's Guard is under your command. Put down the rebellion, destroy the slaves who have murdered their masters, and bring their leaders in for punishment and execution. Do this, and you earn my appreciation, favor, and reward. It is up to you to reestablish order, and bring peace." Sukhir smiles. "I will establish control of the surrounding region and prepare my troops for battle against the invaders. My son Norod, is your liaison. You report only to him or to me. If there are no questions, I expect you to act as once."

A younger man with the steel eyes and black hair of his father nods from beside the throne. This must be the Crown Prince, Norod Blackhammer.

▲ Conscript (60), Human War 1: CR ½; Medium humanoid; HD 1d10; hp 10; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 10, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk +3 melee (1d8+1/×3, spear); Full Atk +3 melee (1d8+1/×3, spear) SA —; SQ —; AL LN; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Climb +4, Intimidate +4, Jump +4, Ride +3; Dodge, Weapon focus (spear)

Possessions: Leather armor, light wooden shield, spear.

▲ Talmak's Guard, (10), Human Ftr 1: CR 1; Medium humanoid; HD 1d10+1; hp 11; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk +3 melee (1d6+1/19–20, short sword) or +3 ranged (1d6/×3, short bow); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6+1/19–20, short sword) or +3 ranged (1d6/×3, short bow); SA —; SQ —; AL LN; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Climb +4, Intimidate +4, Jump +4, Ride +4; Dodge, Weapon Focus (shortsword), Weapon focus (shortbow).

Possessions: Studded leather armor, light wooden shield, shortsword, shortbow, 10 arrows.

▲ Legionarie (40), Human Ftr 2: CR 2; Medium humanoid; HD 2d10+2; hp 17; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +2; Grp +4; Atk +5 melee (1d8+2, morningstar) or +4 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); Full Atk +5 melee (1d8+2, morningstar) or +4 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); SA —; SQ —; AL LN; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Climb +5, Intimidate +5, Jump +5, Ride +4; Dodge, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (morningstar), Weapon Focus (light crossbow).

Possessions: Chain shirt, light steel shield, morningstar, light crossbow, 14 bolts.

▲ Sergeant (6), Human Ftr 4: CR 4; Medium humanoid; HD 4d10+8; hp 32; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +4; Grp +7; Atk +9 melee (1d8+5/19–20, longsword) or +6 ranged (1d10/19–20, heavy crossbow); Atk +9 melee (1d8+5/19–20, longsword) or +6 ranged (1d10/19–20, heavy crossbow); SA —; SQ —; AL LN; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Climb +8, Handle Animal +2, Intimidate +8, Jump +8, Ride +6; Dodge, Cleave, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Focus (heavy crossbow), Weapon Specialization (longsword).

Possessions: Splint mail, light steel shield, masterwork longsword, heavy crossbow, 20 bolts.

▲ Commander (3), Human Ftr 5: CR 5; Medium humanoid; HD 5d10+5; hp 40; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 21, touch 11, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +5; Grp +8; Atk +10 melee (1d8+5/19–20, longsword) or +7 ranged (1d8+3/×3, longbow); Full Atk +10 melee (1d8+5/19–20, longsword) or +7 ranged (1d8+3/×3, longbow); SA —; SQ —; AL LN; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Climb +8, Handle Animal +6, Intimidate +8, Jump +8, Ride +8; Dodge, Cleave, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Focus (longbow), Weapon Specialization (longsword).

Possessions: Full plate, heavy steel shield, masterwork longsword, masterwork mighty composite longbow [+3], 20 masterwork arrows.

▲ Monock the Warguard, Human Wiz 5: CR 5; Medium humanoid; HD 5d4+8; hp 22; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +2; Grp +2; Atk +3 melee (1d6, quarterstaff) or +5 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6, quarterstaff) or +5 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); SA Spells; SQ Summon familiar; AL LN; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +4; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +9, Decipher Script +11, Knowledge (spellcraft) +11, Knowledge (local) +11, Profession (tactician) +11, Spellcraft +11; Brew Potion, Empower SpellB, Improved Initiative, Run, Scribe Scroll[®].

Summon Familiar (Su): This wizard has a toad familiar named Stalg.

▲ Stalg, Toad Familiar: CR ½; Diminutive Animal; HD ¼d8; hp 1; Init +1; Spd 5 ft.; AC 17 touch 15, flat-footed 16, Base Atk +0; Grp –17; Atk —; Full Atk —; SA —; SQ Alertness, amphibious, deliver touch spells, empathic link, improved evasion, low-light vision, share spells; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 1, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 1, Wis 14, Cha 4.

Skills and Feats: Hide +21, Listen +4, Spot +4; Alertness

Alertness (Ex): While a familiar is within arm's reach, the master gains the Alertness feat.

Improved Evasion (Ex): When subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, a familiar takes no damage if it makes a successful saving throw and half damage even if the saving throw fails.

Share Spells: At the master's option, he may have any spell (but not any spell-like ability) he casts on himself also affects his familiar. The familiar must be within 5 ft. at the time of casting to receive the benefit. If the spell or effect has a duration other than instantaneous, it stops affecting the familiar if it moves farther than 5 ft. away and will not affect the familiar again even if it returns to the master before the duration expires. Additionally, the master may cast a spell with a target of "You" on his familiar (as a touch range spell) instead of on himself. A master and his familiar can share spells even if the spells normally do not affect creatures of the familiar's type (magical beast).

Empathic Link (Su): The master has an empathic link with his familiar out to a distance of up to 1 mile. The master cannot see through the familiar's eyes, but they can communicate empathically. Because of the limited nature of the link, only general emotional content can be communicated. Because of this empathic link, the master has the same connection to an item or place that his familiar does.

Deliver Touch Spells (Su): A familiar can deliver touch spells for the master. If the master and the familiar are in contact at the time the master casts a touch spell, he can designate his familiar as the "toucher". The familiar can then deliver the touch spell just as the master could. As usual, if the master casts another spell before the touch is delivered, the touch spell dissipates.

Skills: A toad's coloration gives it a +4 racial bonus on Hide checks.

Wizard Spells Prepared: (4/4/3/2; save DC 13 + spell level): 0—arcane mark, flare, mage hand, ray of frost; 1st—burning hands, mage armor, magic missile, ray of enfeeblement; 2nd—bull's strength, scorching ray, touch of idiocy; 3rd—fireball, lightning bolt.

Spellbook: 0—arcane mark, daze, flare, mage hand, ray of frost, read magic; 1st—burning hands, identify, grease, mage armor, magic missile, mount, ray of enfeeblement; 2nd—bull's strength, fox's cunning, invisibility, scorching ray, touch of idiocy; 3rd—deep slumber, fireball, lightning bolt.

Possessions: Cloak of protection +1, ring of protection +1, masterwork quarterstaff, heavy crossbow, 20 bolts, pouches with material components.



2. Rioting

The city streets near the gladiatorial pits and the wharf are filled with dead bodies, rioting, screams of the dying and blood-filled massacres. PCs are encouraged to march Talmak's Guard directly into this, the worst area of town, and begin the assault against the slave forces. Although the slaves are not as well trained as the Guard, they outnumber them nearly 5 to 1. Further, some of the slaves are armed, having taken weapons from dead guardsmen or from the stores at the gladiatorial pits. They offer some resistance. Do not run every round of combat, but rather, use some of the guard to add flavor to the encounter. The PCs are fighting 1st level commoners for the most part, and combat will involve one or two deaths a round.

By the time things settle down, the area fills with marching guards, and the occasional fight between slaves and a guardsmen. Invent different scenarios based on this assault. Some ideas include:

- A group of garrisoned slaves with a barricade in an alleyway attack a group of armed guards, lead by the PCs.
- The slaves break into a magic store or apothecary and use random magic items (potions, wands, etc.).
- Suicide-strike groups locate and follow the commanders (i.e., the PCs), and make armed attacks anytime the character is alone.
- One of the slaves is an experienced gladiator, taking on all comers. He holes up in a defensible position, and taunts the guard to fight him. He has already killed ten men, and is shouting for more to come through and duel him.

3. Burn Them Out!

As the rioting is slowly quelled, a legionnaire comes to the PCs. In the distance, the PCs see the orange glow of fire coming from the south of the city. The PCs know Rahbaud's docks are primarily made of wood and cannot withstand the fire for long.

"Sir!" The legionnaire salutes. "Fire, sir!" he shouts over the noise. "The wharfs, sir! To the north they're on fire. A group of newly outgoing slaves have escaped.. They fought with the guards and now the wharves are on fire. There are warehouses, shipping goods, and galleons from other kingdoms. If it burns, Rahbaud loses most of its trade!" The legionnaire looks frightened. "And more, sir, there's a group of gladiators from the pits swearing to burn the wharfs down to the very last dock. They've killed all the city guards in the area. The guards need us."

The fire on the wharves started in the large warehouse at location #2. A cluster of city guards were taking slaves off the slave ships and executing them when the guards were assaulted by ten men from the gladiatorial pits — also escaped slaves. Taken by surprise, the city guardsmen routed and were butchered. During the fight, the side of the warehouse caught fire by a lantern. The fire spreads wildly, through the warehouses and to the ships in the docks of the harbor.

The fire is pretty bad. The PCs have a choice: save the ships in the docks (many of which have slaves imprisoned in their lower levels), or put out the fires in the warehouses, and save the trade goods stored there.

3a. The Slave Ships

Inside the three burning slave ships, over four hundred slaves are about to roast. If the PCs can get the ships out of the harbor, they are spared the worst of the fight and are loosely 'allied' with the gladiators, who are also trying to free the slaves and rescue the ships. Any fighting occurring between the two is incidental. Once the gladiators realize the PCs are trying to keep the ships from burning, they stop attacking.

3b. The Warehouses

The warehouses are wooden for the most part, with stone foundations. Several of them are already on fire, the fine goods within slowly burn. The warehouses contain silks, spices, and more 'common' trade goods such as iron, copper, basic household goods, and food supplies. There are fifteen warehouses on fire, and ten more will soon be burning. This area should provide many battles, intermittent swordfights between the PCs and the gladiators, and plenty of trouble with the collapsing, burning walls and eaves of the warehouses are on fire.

A group of gladiators ensures the warehouses burn long enough for them to free the slaves aboard the threatened ships.

Tactics: While the PCs are using the legion to put out the wildfires, five of the gladiators light new ones. Their companions, another 5 gladiators, cut the traces on the ships and get them into the harbor, away from the fire. They fight against the legionaries only when necessary; their first priority is to keep the slaves aboard the ships from burning alive. As the ships begin to burn, the gladiators immediately race aboard them and open all of the slave pens. However, in their weakened condition, the slaves aboard the ship are no challenge to the legionaries or the PCs.

The gladiators are only interested in the slaves, and in slowing down the legion. They fight to the death only when defending an innocent. They flee to the Gladiatorial Pits as soon as the slaves aboard the ships are free, taking as many of the newly-freed slaves with them as they can.

▲ **Gladiators, Human Ftr 5:** CR 5; Medium humanoid; HD 5d10+10; hp 45; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +5; Grp +8; Atk +10 melee (2d5+5/18–20, falchion) or +6 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); Full Atk +10 melee (2d4+5/18–20, falchion) or +6 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); SA—; SQ —; AL CG; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +8, Handle Animal +6, Intimidate +8, Jump +8, Ride +8; Dodge, Cleave, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (falchion), Weapon Specialization (falchion).

Possessions: Studded leather armor, masterwork falchion, shortbow, 20 arrows.

You see the gladiators fleeing through the city streets, using the smoke and cover of the wharfs to hide them from you and your men. They are heading back into the city, carrying as many of their injured and the weakened slaves as possible. Because they are slowed, you can keep sight of them, although due to the rioting you cannot gain ground on the wily slaves.

Ahead of you, the smoke of the wharf clears and you catch a glimpse the evening sky. A tremendous, circular stone building looms in the streets ahead. It is the Gladiatorial Pits of Rahbaud. This is where the slaves armed themselves.

If it can be seized, the slaves lose their center of operations, their barricade against the legions of Rahbaud. The riots would begin to break up, with no leadership and no weapons. Also, you could likely capture someone who knows where the slaves are getting their good leadership... and then, destroy him.

One of the legionnaire commanders steps forward. "Sir, I know a way in. It is used when visiting dignitaries want to watch the fights, but don't want to fight the crowds in the streets. I doubt the gladiators know about it. But it is small — the whole legion can't get through it. I recommend the legion stay here and maintain a siege while I guide you and your compatriots inside, to slaughter their leaders and open the gates."

4. Gladiatorial Pits

The Gladiatorial Arena is similar to the Roman Coliseum, but more formidable. Iron portcullises cover each of the four entrances, and high stone walls blockade the inside, while providing amphitheater seating for the gathered crowds. The slaves inside have erected rudimentary blockades over the portcullises, piling chairs, banners, and anything movable against the heavy iron bars of the gates.

The passage the legionnaire commander speaks of begins in the wall of the lower district, and travels under the city until it comes up to a flight of stairs the legionnaire will tell the PCs is within the Gladiatorial Arena's walls. The stairs lead to the noble's section, and indeed, the secret panel opens within a box, which has a decent view of the sands at the center of the building. The PCs are free to decide how they assault the Arena, but any one, or all, of the following scenarios may occur.

4a. Spying on the Leaders

The leaders of the resistance in the gladiatorial pits are located in the guards chambers, sealed off behind portcullises. Getting in is difficult, as two guards have been stationed at each checkpoint throughout the arena. The gladiators know the grounds well. Should a PC be spotted, the gladiators shout for help and every 1d6 rounds 2 gladiators arrive to lend aid.

There are over 50 warriors in this building, with the majority of the slaves 1st level commoners (for the gladiators, use the statistics from the encounter at the docks). If the PCs break a guard point, slaves descend from every corner, attacking them in swarms. An additional 2d4 slaves arrive each round, until their reserves are depleted. If the PCs can get inside, the leaders of the rebellion are holding a meeting in a secret chamber, but attempt to disband if the defenses are breached. They leaders are Whitestag, Rafe, and Martin.

Whitestag is the leader of the mercenaries. A tremendous barbarian female, she stands over six ft. tall and wears plate armor. She has four bodyguards, each wearing chain, and is in full command of the gladiators here. She is downstairs in the slave chambers, preparing the rest of the gladiators for an assault on the legion outside. They all have bows, and are planning to begin shooting flaming arrows at the legion and several nearby shops, and then charging out the central gate to the gladiatorial pits in order to engage the legion while surrounded by fire and thick smoke. It is a reasonable plan; PC warrior classes should note it is quite possible this plan can succeed, given a bit of luck and a good quotient of fire.

In a fight, Whitestag leads from the front and enter into rage as soon as she has closed with her enemies. As long as she is alive and leading them, the slaves gain a +1 morale bonus to attack and damage. When Whitestag is killed, the gladiatorial slaves keep fighting out of desperation with a +2 morale bonus to damage but the commoner slaves break and run, trying to escape.

Rafe is slender and middle-aged, his features scarred and his hands callused. He is the obvious intelligence behind the slave revolt and carries a small pouch of material components and a wand — obviously a wizard (who was lucky enough to recover his traveling spellbook of evocation spells before the revolt). If a fight ensues, he hides behind Whitestag's guard and cast spells. Once the fight starts going badly, he backs into a corner, shouts the words of a spell, and vanishes, teleporting to the chapel beneath the Safe House (location #5A).

Martin is a rogue and seems to be from out of town. He talks about the impending invasion from Adragiae. He knows a great deal about the Adragiae forces, being their liaison to the slaves. In fact, if he is questioned, he provides information on Adragiae's troops, leadership, and battle-plans, including their arrangement with

Whitestag to free all of the slaves as soon as Adragiae takes the city. If the PCs sneak into the compound they may listen in on the meeting. If a fight begins, he joins in as long as the slaves have a chance of winning, but the moment things look bad, he will flee.

Martin (and a few of the other gladiators in case Martin is eliminated) know where the local safe house in the city is. This is where escaped slaves are smuggled out of Rahbaud, and where the Adragiae spies give aid to the revolutionaries. It is located in a nice house in the upper districts of the city (the NPCs tell them where). Further persuasion reveals the safehouse is protected by a powerful cleric named Santiago. Santiago is well known. If running in your own campaign, Santiago is someone the PCs have come to trust and respect.

▲ Whitestag, Human Bbn 8: CR 8; Medium humanoid; HD 8d12 +24; hp 81; Init +1; Spd 20 ft. (in armor, 40 ft. out of it); AC 19, touch 11, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +8; Grp +12; Atk +15 melee (1d10+8/19-20, bastard sword) or +10 ranged (1d6+4, thrown axe); Full Atk +15/+10 melee (1d10+8/19-20, bastard sword) or +10/+5 ranged (1d6+4, thrown axe); SA —; SQ Damage reduction 1/—, fast movement, improved uncanny dodge, rage 3/day, trap sense +2, uncanny dodge; AL N; SV Fort +9, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 19, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Climb +4, Intimidate +12, Jump +12, Listen +10 Ride +6, Survival +7, Swim +4, Tumble +3 (armor check penalties included); Blind-Fight, Cleave, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bastard sword).

Damage Reduction (Ex): Whitestag has Damage Reduction. Subtract 1 from the damage he takes each time he is dealt damage from a weapon or a natural attack. Damage reduction can reduce damage to 0 but not below 0.

Fast Movement (Ex): Whitestag's land speed is faster than the norm for his race by +10.

Improved Uncanny Dodge (Ex): Whitestag can no longer be flanked. This defense denies a rogue the ability to sneak attack the barbarian by flanking her, unless the attacker has at least four more rogue levels than the target has barbarian levels.

Rage (Ex): Whitestag can fly into a rage 3 times per day. In a rage, Whitestag temporarily gains a +4 bonus to Strength, a +4 bonus to Constitution, and a +2 morale bonus on Will saves, but he takes a –2 penalty to Armor Class. The increase in Constitution increases her hit points by 2 points per level, but these hit points go away at the end of the rage when her Constitution score drops back to normal. (These extra hit points are not lost first the way temporary hit points are.) A fit of rage lasts for 8 rounds. Whitestag may prematurely end her rage. At the end of the rage, she loses the rage modifiers and restrictions and becomes fatigued (–2 penalty to Strength, –2 penalty to Dexterity, can't charge or run) for the duration of the current encounter.

Trap Sense (Ex): Whitestag gains a +2 bonus on Reflex saves made to avoid traps and a +1 dodge bonus to AC against attacks made by traps.

Uncanny Dodge (Ex): Whitestag retains her Dexterity bonus to AC (if any) even if she is caught flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker. However, she still loses his Dexterity bonus to AC if immobilized.

Possessions: Masterwork full plate armor, +2 bastard sword (named "organgrinder"), two masterwork throwing axes, *potion of cure serious wounds*.

▲ Whitestag's Bodyguard, Human Ftr 2: CR 2; Medium humanoid; HD 2d10+2; hp 17 each; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +2; Grp +4; Atk +5 melee (1d8+1/x3, spear) or +3 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); Full Atk +5 melee (1d8+1/x3, spear) or +3 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); AL CN; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Climb +7, Jump +7, Listen +2, Spot +2, Swim +7; Alertness, Dodge, Run, Weapon Focus (spear).

Possessions: Chain shirt, buckler, spear, shortbow, 10 arrows.

▲ Rafe, Human Wiz 9 (evoker): CR 9; Medium humanoid; HD 9d4+9; hp 39; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (indicates mage armor already cast), touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +4; Grp +4; Atk +4 melee (1d8, heavy mace) or +5 ranged (1d8/10–20, heavy crossbow); Full Atk +4; Grp +4; Atk +4 melee (1d8, heavy mace) or +5 ranged (1d8/10–20, heavy crossbow); SA Spells; SQ Summon familiar; AL LG; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +6; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 18, Wis 11, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +16, Decipher Script +16, Knowledge (spellcraft) +16, Knowledge (the planes) +16, Listen +7, Spellcraft +16; Spot +7, Combat Casting, Craft Rod, Dodge, Enlarge Spell, Scribe ScrollB, Silent Spell, Spell Focus (evocation).

Summon familiar: Sadly, Rafe's familiar was killed when he was originally imprisoned.

Wizard Spells Prepared: (4/5/5/4/3/1 you need to add his bonus evocation spells in); save DC 14 + spell level): 0—dancing lights*, flare*, light*, ray of frost*; 1st—burning hands*, floating disk*, mage armor (already cast), magic missile*, shocking grasp*; 2nd—continual flame*, flaming sphere*, gust of wind*, scorching ray*, shatter*; 3rd—fireball* (x2), lightning bolt* (x2); 4th—fire shield*, ice storm*, wall of fire*; 5th—cone of cold*.

Traveling Spellbook: 0—dancing lights, flare, light, ray of frost; 1st—burning hands, floating disk, mage armor, magic missile, shocking grasp; 2nd—continual flame, flaming sphere, gust of wind, scorching ray, shatter; 3rd—fireball (x2), lightning bolt (x2); 4th—fire shield, ice storm, wall of fire; 5th—cone of cold.

* indicates an evocation spell, save DC 15 + spell level).

Possessions: Wand of magic missiles (5th level, 15 charges), heavy mace, light crossbow, 20 bolts.

▲ Martin, Human Rog 7: CR 7; Medium humanoid; HD 7d6+7; hp 34; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +5; Grp +6; Atk +8 melee (1d6+3/19–20, short sword) or +7 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); Full Atk +8 melee (1d6+3/19–20, short sword) or +7 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); SA Sneak attack +4d6; SQ Evasion, trapfinding, trap sense +2, uncanny dodge; AL CG; SV Fort +3, Ref +9, Will +4; Str 13 Dex 15, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +10, Climb +11, Disable Device +12, Escape Artist +12, Jump +11, Listen +12, Move Silently +12, Open Lock +12, Tumble +12, Use Magic Device +10; Dodge, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Weapon focus (short sword).

Evasion (Ex): If Martin makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, he instead takes no damage.

Sneak Attack: Martin's attack deals extra damage any time his target would be denied a Dexterity bonus to AC (whether the target actually has a Dexterity bonus or not), or when Martin flanks his target. This extra damage is 4d6. Should the rogue score a critical hit with a sneak attack, this extra damage is not multiplied. Ranged attacks can count as sneak attacks only if the target is within 30.

Trapfinding: Martin can use the Search skill to locate traps when the task has a Difficulty Class higher than 20.

Trap Sense (Ex): Martin gains a +2 bonus on Reflex saves made to avoid traps and a +2 dodge bonus to AC against attacks made by traps.

Uncanny Dodge (Ex): Martin retains his Dexterity bonus to AC (if any) even if he is caught flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker. However, he still loses his Dexterity bonus to AC if immobilized.

Possessions: Masterwork studded leather armor, +2 short sword (named "Starpoint"), shortbow, 20 arrows, *potion of invisibility*.

▲ Slave, Human Com 1: CR ½; Medium humanoid; HD 1d4+1; hp 3; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11, touch 10, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +0/+1; Full Atk +1 melee (1d6+1, club); AL NG; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 9, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Craft (any) +6, Ride +3, Swim +2; Great Fortitude, Skill Focus (craft).

Possessions: Improvised piecemeal armor, club.



4b. Caged Creatures

Various dangerous creatures are caged in the southern portion of the pits. These monsters are predatory and hungry. Their cages are open and they are wandering through the lower sections of the Gladiatorial Arena. If the PCs may encounter any of the following 'wandering monsters' while in the arena. It is suggested you do not beat them up with encounter after encounter down here. Three rolls on the chart below should be more than sufficient.

VILLAINS IN PLACE OF THE PCS

If the PCs are playing on the side of the slave's revolt, here are Nemesis NPCs to play the parts originally written for evil PCs:

▲ General Kayle, Blackguard, Human Ex-Pal 6/Blk 4: CR 10; Medium humanoid; HD 7d10+14; hp 60; Init +2; Spd 20 ft. (in full plate); AC 20, touch 11, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +9; Grp +10; Atk +10 melee (1d10+3/19–20, bastard sword); Full Atk +10/+5 melee (1d10+3/19–20, bastard sword); SA Poisoned blades, smite good, sneak attack +1d6; SQ aura of evil, detect good, poison use; AL LE; SV Fort +10, Ref +43, Will +4; Str 15, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +7, Diplomacy +6, Hide +6, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (religion) +5, Ride +6; Cleave, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Improved Sunder, Power Attack.

Aura of Despair (Su): Kayle radiates a malign aura that causes enemies within 10 ft. of him to take a –2 penalty on all saving throws.

Aura of Evil (Ex): The power of a blackguard's aura of evil (see the *detect evil* spell) is 4th level.

Command Undead (Su): Kayle has the supernatural ability to *command* and *rebuke undead*. He commands undead as would a cleric of two levels lower.

Detect Good (Sp): At will, Kayle can *detect good* as a spell-like ability, duplicating the effect of the *detect good* spell.

Poisoned Blades: Kayle coated his bastard sword with small centipede poison (DC 11, 1d2 Dex/1d2 Dex).

Poison Use: Kayle is skilled in the use of poison and never risks accidentally poisoning himself when applying poison to a blade.

Sneak Attack: Kayle's attack deals +1d6 damage any time his target would be denied a Dexterity bonus to AC (whether the target actually has a Dexterity bonus or not), or when Kayle flanks his target. Blackguard Spells Prepared (1/1;

save DC 11 + spell level): 1st—doom; 2nd—bull's strength

Possessions: Masterwork full plate, masterwork light steel shield, +1 *bastard sword* (named "skulgard").

▲ Icarus the Vile: Half-elf Sor 12: CR 12; Medium Humanoid; HD 12d4+12; hp 55; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 20, touch 14, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +5; Grp +4; Atk +5 melee (1d4–1/19–20, dagger) or +9 ranged (1d8/x3, light crossbow); Full Atk +5/+1 melee (1d4–1/19–20, dagger) or +10/+5 ranged (1d8/x3, light crossbow); SA summon familiar; SQ half-elf traits; AL LE; SV Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +9; Str 8, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 18 [20].

Skills and Feats: Concentration +11, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Spellcraft +10; Dodge, Improved Initiative, Leadership, Spell Penetration, Spell Focus (Necromancy).

Familiar: Icarus has never summoned a familiar.

Sorcerer Spells Known: (6/7/7/7/7/5/3; save DC 15 + spell level, save DC 16 + spell level for necromancy spells): 0—*disrupt undead*, *ray of fatigue*, *detect magic*, *read magic*, *resistance*, *light*, *acid splash*; 1st—*cause fear*, *chill touch*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *magic missile*, *burning hands*; 2nd—*blindness*, *false life*, *ghoul touch*, *scare*, *spectral hand*; 3rd—*gentle repose*, *halt undead*, *ray of exhaustion*, *vampiric touch*; 4th—*contagion*, *dimension door* [replaced fear on original list], *enervation*; 5th—*blight*, *waves of fatigue*; 6th—*circle of death*.

Possessions: Amulet of natural armor +2, bracers of defense +4, ring of protection +2, cloak of charisma +2, dagger, masterwork light crossbow.

Continued of following page...

GLADITORIAL COMBATANTS

1d20	Combatant
1	Black Bear (1)
2	Cheetah (1d6)
3	Chimera (1)
3	Dire Ape (1d4)
5	Dire Boar (1d3)
6	Dire Wolf (1d4)
7	Ettin (1)
8	Gnolls (2d6)
9	Goblins (2d8)
10	Hydra, Five-Headed (1)
11	Jaguars (2d4)
12	Kobolds (1d12)
13	Leopard (1d4)
14	Lions (1d6)
15	Manticore (1)
16	Monstrous Scorpion, large (1)
17	Orcs (2d8)
18	Owlbear (1)
19	Shocker Lizard (1)
20	Tiger (1d4)

4C. Opening the Gates

Once the gates to the building are opened, Talmak's Guard may stream in and destroy the remaining gladiators holding the building. There are a number of recently freed slaves here, many of them armed with a variety of weapons from the storehouses below the fighting arena. However, most of these fighters are 1st level commoners and warriors, untrained and incompetent.

These skirmishes should be brief and bloody, giving the impression of 'mopping up' since the PC leaders have removed the military leadership of the gladiators.

5. Safe House

The body of Talmak's Guard are unable to enter the Safe House, as they must put down many of the riots breaking out through the city. Have the PCs use the Guard to hunt down the rest of the gladiators, stop more riots in the bazaar, or escort prisoners to the prisons, south of the Upper districts. The PCs can take a small escort (though, hopefully, the Guard is worn down and wounded from the fighting), but marching the Guard across a rebelling city just to investigate an old man's house should register as excessive. After all, they can handle this. If they insist on taking the Guard with them, have another out break of fire or something similar draw most of them away (and should the PCs insist on keeping them with them, they draw the wrath of the Price for failing to save more of his city).

One of the legionaries guides the PCs to a small cottage within a garden, located at the bank of the river near the main wall separating the Upper district from the Lower district of Rahbaud. It is a well-cared for two story house, with a lovely garden and a small fountain in the front

yard. To the rear is a small stable, housing two horses. There is a small stone wall around the grounds (5 ft. high) with sturdy, but decorative iron gates in front and back.

The guide knows the house well, and gives the PCs the following information. The owner of the house is Santiago del Fuego, an elderly man with a wife and four grandchildren ranging in age from 5 to only 16. Santiago is beneath the house, in the chapel (location #5a), helping Rafe. His wife, Edrina, answers the door.

"I'm sorry, if you are looking for my husband, Santiago, he isn't home right now. He's gone into town to find the herbs I need to help my sick granddaughter. I'd be very willing to help you catch these escapees, but I'm afraid I don't know anything. My youngest girl, Marlana, has come down with a terrible ailment. You shouldn't come inside, as the disease is contagious, but if you'd like to search the grounds, you are very welcome to do so." Edrina is an elderly woman with a kind smile and blue eyes, and she leans on her cane with the infirmity of old age, though her hands are firm and do not shake.

If the PCs force their way inside the house, Edrina does not stop them. She protects the children, if possible, but otherwise she does not get in their way. The house is clean — no obvious signs of slaves, contraband or anything illegal. To all appearances, Edrina, has been spending her time in a downstairs bedroom with the other children, tending to a sick 5-year old who is resting in the bed. The little girl is partly asleep, feverish, and an untouched bowl of soup is on the bed stand beside her.

Any PC drinking the soup makes a Knowledge (nature) check at DC 20 or Heal (DC 25) to determine it contains a mild herbal toxin making one feel slightly ill, obviously resulting in the girl's condition. She is protecting someone.

A successful Search check (DC 20) reveals a secret aperture beneath the girl's bed, leading down to the banks of the river beneath the city. This is where Santiago and Rafe are currently located.

5a. Beneath the House

Stone stairs lead down a narrow aperture into the stone beneath the city, and the PCs can hear the rushing of water from the river as it passes beneath the house.

Conveniently have 6–10 Talmak Guard remaining to assist the PCs in this final encounter. The fear of seeing the Templar may cause them to run, but it is very important the PCs have a little bit of help in this final battle as Santiago and his allies are potent foes.

▲ Panrikon Kassiantr, Human Ftr 4/Rog 6: CR 12; Medium Humanoid; HD 4d10+6 plus 6d6+6; hp 55; Init +8; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +8; Grp +10; Atk +16 melee (1d6+7/15–20, rapier) or +13 ranged (1d4+2/19–20, dagger); Full Atk +16/+11 melee (1d6+7/15–20, rapier), +13 ranged (1d4+2/19–20, dagger); SA sneak attack 3d6; SQ evasion, trapfinding, trap sense +2, uncanny dodge; AL LE; SV Fort +8, Ref +13, Will +7; Str 15, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Balance +13, Bluff +12, Disable Device +13, Hide +13, Listen +7, Move Silently +13, Open Lock +13, Sense Motive +10, Spot +10, Tumble +19; Acrobatic, Improved Critical (rapier), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Finesse, Weapon focus (rapier), Weapon specialization (rapier).

Evasion (Ex): If this rogue makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, he instead takes no damage.

Sneak Attack: This rogue's attack deals an extra 3d6 damage any time his target would be denied a Dexterity bonus to AC (whether the target actually has a Dexterity bonus or not), or when the rogue flanks his target. Should the rogue score a critical hit with a sneak attack, this extra damage is not multiplied.

Trapfinding: This rogue can use the Search skill to locate traps when the task has a Difficulty Class higher than 20.

Trap Sense (Ex): This rogue gains an intuitive sense that alerts him to danger from traps, giving him a +2 bonus on Reflex saves made to avoid traps and a +2 dodge bonus to AC against attacks made by traps.

Uncanny Dodge (Ex): This rogue retains his Dexterity bonus to AC (if any) even if he is caught flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker.

Possessions: +2 shadow leather armor, +3 rapier (named "slaveslayer"), masterwork dagger (3), *potion of cure moderate wounds* (2).

▲ Ochruus, Ogre Mage: CR 8; Large giant; HD 5d8+15 (37 hp); Init +4; Spd 40 ft., fly 40 ft. (good); AC 18, touch 9, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +3; Grp +3/+12; Atk +7 melee (3d6+7/19–20, greatsword) or +2 ranged (2d6/×3, longbow); Full Atk +7 melee (3d6+7/19–20, greatsword) or +2 ranged (2d6/×3, longbow); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA Spell-like abilities; SQ Darkvision 90 ft., low-light vision, regeneration 5, SR 19; AL LE; SV Fort +7, Ref +1, Will +3; Str 21, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 17.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +11, Listen +10, Spellcraft +10, Spot +10

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—darkness, invisibility; 1/day—charm person (DC 14), cone of cold (DC 18), gaseous form, polymorph, sleep (DC 14). Caster level 9th. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Flight (Su): An ogre mage can cease or resume flight as a free action. While using gaseous form it can fly at its normal speed and has perfect maneuverability.

Regeneration (Ex): Fire and acid deal normal damage to an ogre mage.

An ogre mage that loses a limb or body part can reattach it by holding the severed member to the stump. Reattachment takes 1 minute. If the head or some other vital organ is severed, it must be reattached within 10 minutes or the creature dies. An ogre mage cannot regrow lost body parts.

By the time the PCs arrive, Santiago finished summoning the Celestial Templar. The creature bathes the small room with a holy light (see *New Magic*—Appendix A and *New Monsters*—Appendix B). Santiago looks more like a kindly grandfather than a dangerous enemy. He is in his mid-50s, his hair white with age, but he is still vital and his blue eyes are bright with his faith. He is dressed in a simple dove gray robe and holds a white staff and a light shield emblazoned with the symbol of his faith.

He looks tired but determined. "I am sorry it has come to this. But evil must be fought."

The ground here is permanently enchanted per the spell *hallow*. Evil PCs find that that Santiago and his allies are guarded by a *magic circle against evil* and are enchanted per the spell *bleed*.

The Celestial Templar moves to engage his foes directly, blazing with holy light. The templar attempts to engage the most powerful enemy in single combat but he will not allow himself to be flanked if at all possible using the *blade barrier* and the walls to guard its back.

Santiago uses his first action to cast *blade barrier* to protect himself and Rafe. Next he casts *summon monster V* (usually for a celestial brown bear, but choose as needed) to support the templar. He then casts *flame strike* or *sound burst* to target opposing groups especially those containing spell casters, using *hold person* or *searing light* on anyone who gets through the *blade barrier*.

Rafe, if he is here (and who has been healed back to full hit points if he is), casts his last bit of spells and utilizes his *wand of magic missiles* to keep the PCs at bay. Rafe focuses his attacks on people who get through the barrier followed by enemy spell casters.

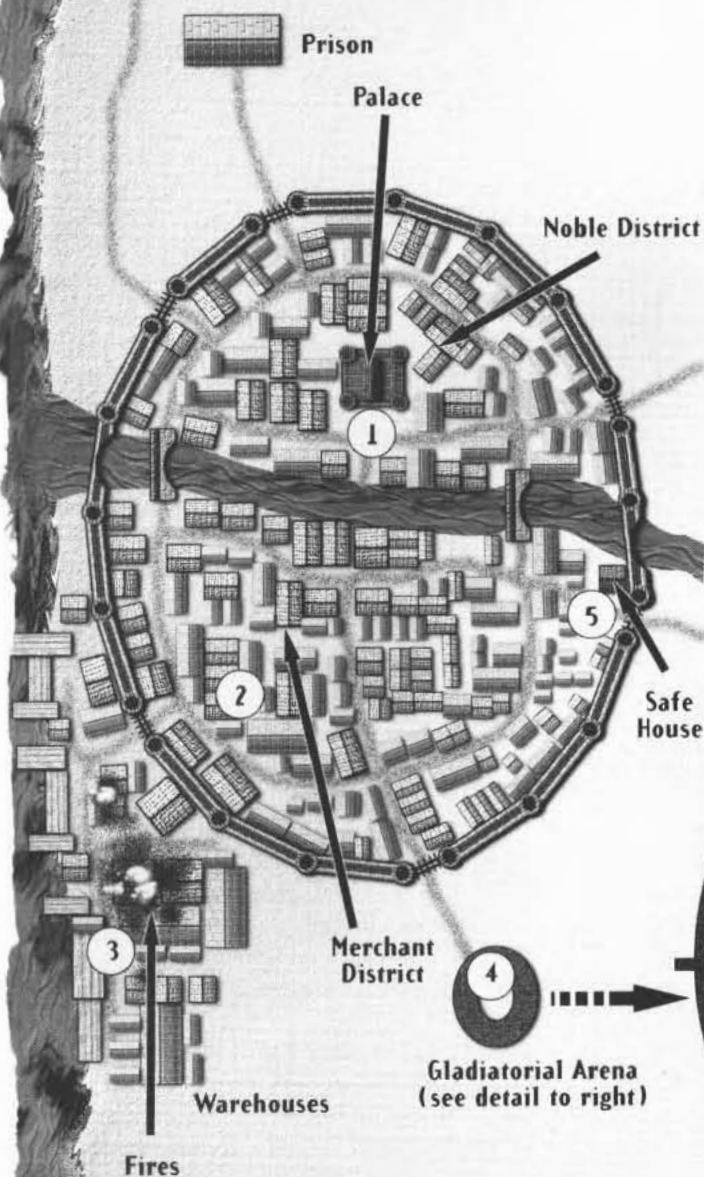
Santiago and Rafe are willing to fight to the death but prefer not to. If the Templar is slain, Santiago casts *dimension door* (with Rafe if he is still alive) to a nearby room where his wife and grandchildren should be waiting for him and then casts *greater teleport* to flee to safety (technically *greater teleport* does not carry Santiago and his family but his goddess will provide the extra boost of power to allow them to escape). Remind the PCs Prince Sukhir wants the leaders captured for a public execution.

Edrina and the children know Santiago is a priest of Kaleme. Edrina, if coerced, can provide a list of the worshippers who came to her husband's temple. The children know nothing — but are useful for leverage against Santiago or his wife. However, short of torture or mental control, Santiago does not comply. His faith is strong. He will not betray his goddess, his church, or the loyal followers of Kaleme. Not even for his grandchildren.

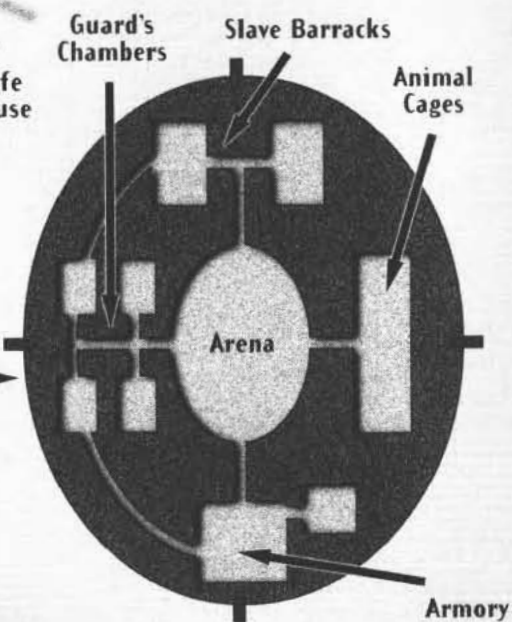
During the battle, Edrina and the children try to escape, using three potions of invisibility she hides in her dress and flees across the street to a room to wait for her husband, or, if he does not appear, to disguise themselves and try to slip out of the city.



NO MERCY THE CITY OF RAHBAUD



ARENA SUBLEVEL



▲ Celestial Templar: CR 9; Medium outsider (extraplanar); HD 10d8+30; hp 75; Init +6; Spd 40 ft.; AC 27, touch 12, flat-footed 22; Base Atk +10/Grp +15; Atk +2 *holy longsword* +19 melee (1d8+7 plus wrath of good); Full Atk +2 *holy longsword* +19/+14 melee (1d8+7 plus wrath of good); SA Dominate, spell-like abilities, spells, positive energy; SQ Damage reduction 5/evil, celestial qualities, low-light vision, darkvision 60 ft., SR 19; AL LG; SV Fort +10, Ref +9, Will +10; Str 20, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 17, Wis 16, Cha 17.

Skills and feats: Concentration +16, Hide +17, Knowledge (any five) or Craft (any five) +21, Listen +23, Move Silently +17, Sense Motive +23, Search +19, Spot +23; Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Blind-fight, Improved Initiative.

Aura of Menace (Su): A righteous aura surrounds the Celestial Templar, and any hostile creature within a 10-ft. radius must make a Will save (DC 18) to resist its effects. Those who fail suffer a –2 morale penalty to attacks, checks and saves for one day or until they successfully hit the Celestial Templar. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Tongues (Su): All celestial creatures can speak with any creature who has a language, as though using a tongues spell cast by a 14th level sorcerer.

Dominate (Su): Any creatures that make eye contact with the Celestial Templar must make a Will save (DC 18) or lose the ability to control their own actions. Once they have fallen under the command of the Celestial Templar, they must do exactly as the Templar wills, even to the point of committing suicidal or dangerous actions.

The Templar need expend no extra actions to control their new 'minion', but must simply will them to perform. A Dominated creature does not have the capacity to cast spells of any nature, and can only perform physical actions they would ordinarily be capable of achieving. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Immunities (Ex): All celestials are immune to electricity and petrification attacks.

Wrath of Good (Su): Any weapon used by a Celestial Templar (including unarmed attacks) is wrapped in good energy. This energy inflicts an additional 2d6 points of good damage to undead and evil outsiders, 1d6 points of good damage to neutral outsiders and evil beings and no damage to anyone else.

Resistance (Ex): All celestials receive a +4 racial bonus to Fort saves against poison.

▲ Santiago, Human Clr 13: CR 13; Medium humanoid; HD 13d8+13; hp 84; Init +1; Spd 40 ft. (with longstrider cast, 30 ft otherwise); AC 23, touch 12, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +9; Grp +9; Atk +10 melee (1d6+1, staff); Full Atk +10/+5 melee (1d6+1, staff); SA Turn/rebuke undead; SQ —; AL NG; SV Fort +11, Ref +7, Will +13; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 16, Wis 17, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +17, Craft (scribe) +11, Diplomacy +18, Heal +19, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Knowledge (history) +11, Knowledge (religion) +19, Knowledge (the planes) +8, Profession (priest) +11, and Spellcraft +11; Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Empower Spell, Extra Turning, Forge Ring, Scribe Scroll.

Cleric Spells Prepared: (6/6+1/6+1/5+1/4+1/3+1/2+1/1+1; save DC 13 + spell level): 0—*detect magic*, *guidance* (x2), *read magic*, *resistance*, *virtue*; 1st—*bane*, *command*, *divine favor*, *entropic shield*, *longstrider**, *shield of faith*; 2nd—*cure moderate wounds**, *enthral*, *hold person*, *owl's wisdom*, *protection from energy*, *sound burst* (x2); 3rd—*fly**, *invisibility purge*, *magic vestment* (x2), *searing light* (x2); 4th—*death ward*, *dimension door**, *divination*, *restoration*, *spell immunity*; 5th—*flame strike*, *summon celestial templar* (see Appendix A), *summon monster V*, *teleport**; 6th—*blade barrier*, *greater dispel magic*, *heal**; 7th—*empowered flame strike*, *greater teleport**.

By the beginning of combat, Santiago has already cast *magic vestment* on his chain shirt and his shield, giving each a +3 enhancement bonus, and the following spells on himself: *longstrider*, *resist energy* (fire unless he has reason to believe that his attackers use some other form of energy more often), and *spell immunity* (to magic missile and any two other spells of 4th level or lower). Santiago's *divination* spell has also been cast, if Rafe did not arrive to warn him, this is how he knows the characters are coming for him.

* Domain spell. **Domains:** Healing (cast healing spells at +1 caster level), Travel (9 times per day you can act normally regardless of magical effects that impede movement as if you were affected by the spell freedom of movement).

Possessions: Masterwork chain shirt, masterwork light steel shield, *ring of protection* +1, *ring of resistance* +2, +1 *staff* (named "wayfarer"), *pearl of power* (2nd level), three *potions of cure serious wounds*, holy symbol, 72 gp, 55 pp.

EPILOGUE

After the battle is finished, the PCs should take any survivors to the Prince's palace, where they are tortured, condemned, and publicly executed. Any and all slaves in Rahbaud accused of participation in the event are also destroyed. The good news of Rahbaud's victories over Adragiae spread through the city.

The PCs are the victors. They are rewarded with gold and prestige, and allowed to strike the death-blows against any the prisoners they returned to the Prince, should they so desire.

Bear in mind this adventure is about maintaining the status quo. PCs who kill for the sake of killing should not be given experience points. Rather, only those PCs acting in the best interest of Prince Sukhir are rewarded with gold, experience points and fame. Random murderers are not useful to the Prince.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

- If the PCs are evil, they are sent to repopulate the slave numbers by going and sacking the town of Gottheit (in which case the evil there is not going to ally with them in any event), if they are good, while escorting some slaves home to their village Gottheit, they discover not all is well there... (see the adventure "Gottheit").
- "Good people, I beseech you: Hear my story. My name is Allyn, and someone dear to me has suffered a tremendous attack upon his very soul. I beg you, please help me find the Heart of Amun Khonshu to save my friend. If you do, all of the treasure of the tomb, save the ruby, is yours — all of it! What say you?" (see the adventure "The Heart of Anum Khonshu").

Chapter 13:

The Daisho and the Ninja

Levels 1 to 3

by Travis Heermann

The ancestral swords of a powerful lord have been stolen! In the dark of night, on the eve of battle with the powerful Lion Clan, a shadowy figure crept into Shinjo Kunemura's chamber and made off with the most potent symbols of his power and lineage. Worse, Lord Kunemura has declared war on his old enemy, Akodo Shotokami. The imminent battle will be decisive, and the future of Lord Kunemura's lands and family hang in the balance.

The loss of the swords would be a terrible blow to morale if Lord Kunemura's troops hear of the theft. The lord's chamberlain, Ide Tsuyokaze, begs you to recover the swords at any price. According to Tsuyokaze, the chief suspect is the Kunemura's chief historian, Shinjo Hanashi, who was suspiciously absent on the morning after the theft.

Three servants were killed during the heist, and others whisper of seeing a ninja.

Find the thief and the stolen swords before it is too late!

DM BACKGROUND

This adventure is an Asian-style adventure designed for four to six PCs of levels 1 to 3. It fits in well with oriental style campaigns, but can be modified to suit any campaign. It has been written specifically for Rokugan, but the names and locations are merely signifiers, easily adapted to your campaign. If you do not possess the rulebook for *d20 Rokugan*, the stat blocks contain the OGL material necessary to "fake it."

The plot is simple. Lord Kunemura's daisho (katana and wakizashi) were stolen and all fingers point to Shinjo Hanashi. In fact, the swords were stolen by a ninja. But, Hanashi is missing. He witnessed the ninja's actions and the deaths of the servants and followed the thief into the forgotten catacombs beneath the castle.

However, the details are slightly complex. Ide Tsuyokaze and Shinjo Hanashi are mortal enemies. Tsuyokaze truly believes Hanashi to be the thief. He is so certain that he believes nothing else, perhaps even in the face of hard proof.

The truth of the ninja's identity may bring down Lord Kunemura's entire family. The ninja is Lord Kunemura's middle son, Akashi. Lord Kunemura is not known for his warmth. In this society, the first son is the heir, and any

THE DAISHO AND THE NINJA

BARDIC LORE

A bard can make a Bardic Knowledge check to discover what he may have heard. A bard learns all the information of the DC his check succeeded by and all that below it (a Bard who rolled a 17 would learn the information under DC 15 and DC 10). Alternately this information can be gained by a Gather Information skill check +5 higher than the DC of a Bardic Lore check to see if the PC has heard any rumors. PCs native to this region know three pieces of information without a roll.

- DC 10** Lord Kunemura's estate is located at the strategic intersection of two important roads. A large village is situated around the intersection, not far from the castle. The village is relatively prosperous.
- DC 12** The antagonism between Kunemura and Lord is common knowledge. Both daimyo are widely regarded as strong, stubborn, and doggedly persistent in pursuit of their goals. Many local inhabitants believe the conflict arose between two powerful personalities.
- DC 14** The relations between the two daimyo turned warlike in the last few days. The village and surrounding countryside have been mobilized for battle.
- DC 16** Lord Kunemura has nearly 2,000 troops at his disposal (500 samurai and 1,500 ashigaru).
- DC 18** Kunemura's castle is well fortified, with plenty of provisions and fresh water to withstand a siege.
- DC 20** Lord Kunemura's wife is named Midoke. The villagers adore her for her beauty, kindness, and culture, a necessary softening of Kunemura's rough edges.
- DC 24** Lord Kunemura has seven children: three sons and two daughters. The eldest son, Kunetachi is heir to the lord's estate and title. He is 21 years old and resides in the castle with his father as a gunso (commander). The middle son, Akashi, was sent away to be trained and educated. The youngest son, Tsumitoshi, is seven years old and still lives with his parents in the castle. The two daughters, Mariko and Hatsuko, are 5 and 8 years old.

subsequent sons serve as little more than backup in case harm befalls the eldest. As he matured, Akashi tried to please his cold, uninterested father, but was mostly dismissed. He would not act directly against his elder brother, because he truly loved him, but acting against his father was another matter. When Lord Shotokami promised lands and wealth to Akashi in return for betraying his father, the temptation was too great.

Lord Shotokami has been plotting to gain control of Lord Kunemura's lands for years and subverting one of Kunemura's family was a large part of the design.

He secretly trained Akashi specifically for this moment, the one when he would steal the swords from his father.

One of the reasons Lord Shotokami wants to take possession of Kunemura's castle is because of what lies below it — the lost Koda Ninjutsu School. It was abandoned during a great purge many generations ago and its location was forgotten. However, Lord Shotokami is aware of it because of his strong family ties to the ninja lineage. His aim is to take the castle at any cost and secretly reestablish the Koda Ninja School using the library of training techniques he believes are hidden there.

With his family's ancestral weapons, Akashi escaped into a secret tunnel in the foundation of the castle leading down into the deserted warren of the Koda school, with Shinjo Hanashi close after him.

The most desirable outcome for everyone involved is for no one to ever know the swords are missing. As yet, no one has been told. Only Tsuyokaze, Lord Kunemura, and his wife, Midoke are aware of the theft.

This adventure has many outcomes, depending on how the PCs handle the situation. The loss of the swords is as important as the very symbol of a family's honor. The ancestral swords, is an extremely delicate matter, one which must be handled discreetly to guard honor in general. Because of the delicate relationship between samurai and lord, Kunemura's chambers are off-limits to everyone.

GETTING THE PCS INVOLVED

- The PCs are Lord Kunemura's retainers, ordered by the chamberlain to find the swords and preserve the family's honor. Low-level retainers are better suited for this task because of the potential for dishonor. They are expendable. However, if successful, the rewards are measurable— higher status in Kunemura's household or special gifts.
- The PCs are guests passing through Lord Kunemura's domain. Itinerant strangers, or better yet, ronin. If successful, they might be offered fealty.

THE DAISHO AND THE NINJA

- They are independent magistrates or a magistrate's yoriki (deputies) specially called in to deal with the situation. Magistrates are expected to enforce the edicts of the emperor's law (or whatever type of government might be in place over Lord Kunemura) and maintain discretion above all else.

In any case, the chamberlain, Tsuyokaze, contacts them. He meets them in his chambers in the early morning hours and explains the situation.

Tsuyokaze is a round man, with voluminous robes layered in many bright hues, predominantly Lord Kunemura's family colors. His hair is perfectly arranged and glossy black, and his plump fingers absent-mindedly twist his long, feather-thin mustache.

His face is covered in a sheen of sweat, and his voice is high and nasal when he speaks.



"Many thanks for agreeing to meet with me. I apologize for the tenderness of the hour, but evil is afoot in Lord Kunemura's house and it must be dealt with most expeditiously, and most discreetly. I trust you are aware of the current military situation, with Lord Shotokami's army marching on our castle. Our scouts tell us he will arrive in two days." He pauses for a moment, letting this news sink in.

"I cannot stress enough the delicacy of what I am about to impart... Lord Kunemura's family daisho has been stolen from his very chambers. I'm sure you can understand the effect this would have on our loyal troops if this were revealed. Take this scroll. It gives you the authority to make whatever inquiries around the castle you require. If you are able to return the swords before the enemy arrives, you will have my, and Lord Kunemura's, utmost gratitude."

The scroll is written and signed by Tsuyokaze, stating the bearer may ask whatever questions deemed necessary in a matter "directly related to Lord Kunemura's well-being." The questions must be answered truthfully. Note this may become abusive and samurai not acting in an honorable manner raise suspicions.

Sense Motive checks (DC 22) reveals his anger with Hanashi goes deeper than this incident reveal.

If asked about the three dead servants, he says one was found dead in the stairway from the top floor, one in the kitchen, and one in a storage room. The bodies are currently in the servants' quarters, awaiting burial. Each servant was killed by a single precise slash across the throat.

▲ Ide Tsuyokaze, Human Unicorn Courtier 7: CR 7; Medium humanoid; HD 7d6; hp 29; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10 (10 touch, 10 flat-footed); Base Atk +3; Grp +3; Atk +4 melee, 1d6 damage (wakizashi); SA Whisper from the soul; SQ Class skill (diplomacy), the eyes see the heart, gossip, style and grace, talent, wealth; AL LN; Honor 2; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +8; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 16 (18); Maximum Void: 2.

Skills and Feats: Diplomacy +18, Games (go) +9, Gather Information +17, Knowledge (etiquette) +12, Knowledge (law) +8, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +12, Listen +11, Perform +17, Ride +10, Search +12, Sense Motive +17, Spot +11; Ichi Miru, Iron Will, Skill Focus (sense motive), Versatile (knowledge: law), Versatile (ride), Void Use.

Whisper from the Soul (Ex): Once per day, the courtier may target anyone he can communicate with. The subject suffers from an emotion spell, as if cast by a 7th level sorcerer. The effect lasts for 7 rounds.

The Eyes See the Heart (Ex): Anyone attempting to lie in front of the courtier must succeed at a Will save (DC 13/14). If he fails, the courtier knows he is lying.

Gossip: The courtier is allowed to make a Gather Information check to see if he has heard any useful rumors. The rumor is 53% (54%) likely to be accurate.

Style and Grace: A courtier gains a +4 competence bonus on all Charisma-based skill checks involving social interaction.

Possessions: Courtier's obi, fine kimono, wakizashi, *haori of charisma* +2.

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"I can even give you the name of the culprit. Shinjo Hanashi, my lord's historian, is missing this morning. One can only surmise he is somehow responsible, and has fled to preserve his miserable life. I am sure you will agree with my conclusion when you see his room. He must have killed those three servants during his escape."

THE INVESTIGATION

There are several relevant clues throughout the castle.

LORD KUNEMURA

If the PCs wish to speak to Lord Kunemura, he grants them a brief audience.

Yojimbo guard the audience hall and open the rice-paper doors. The room is dark. The great lord sits in silence on his dais, with grim, armor plated yojimbo sitting on either side of him. Many eyes scrutinize you as you cross the room and seat yourselves on the tatami mats at a respectful distance. Their faces are grim.

Lord Kunemura is a large man, known for his fighting prowess and credited with his family's surge of power during his rule. He is gruff with those he considers friends and openly hostile towards his enemies. As soon as you are situated, he orders his yojimbo to leave the room. When you are alone with him, he speaks with a voice like dry gravel.

"When I awoke this morning, the stand holding my ancestral swords was empty. My chambers are constructed with nightingale floors; no one may enter without the floorboards alerting me to their presence. It is a terrible thing Hanashi-san has done. I had always thought him a loyal servant. Strange how men can hide their hearts with silence. If you can recover the swords, and bring me the head of the man who stole them, you have my undying gratitude. But be warned, if you reveal to anyone what has happened, I will have your heads."

A Sense Motive check (DC 15) reveals he is shaken by the theft of his swords. By allowing them to be stolen, he has dishonored his family and all his ancestors. He wants to minimize the damage this might do to his troops morale if news gets out. Many believe seppuku is the only acceptable atonement for the loss of the swords.

He allows the PCs to see his chamber if they wish. The nightingale floors "sing" when someone walks on them. The sword stand rests on a special altar in an alcove on one side of the room. A Search check (DC 25) reveals one ceiling tile is slightly out of place. The space above the ceiling tiles is open to the rafters and across a few

separate rooms on the top floor of the castle, including Ide Tsuyokaze's room, Shinjo Hanashi's room, and Kunetachi's room.

▲ Lord Shinjo Kunemura, Human Unicorn Samurai 10/

Courtier 2: CR 12; Medium humanoid; HD 10d10+20 plus 2d6+4; hp 110; Init +6; Spd 20 ft.; AC 21 (12 touch, 19 flat-footed); Base Atk +11; Grp +15; Atk +18 melee, 1d10+9 damage (+3 *keen katana*); Full Atk +18/+13/+8 melee, 1d10+9 damage (+3 *keen katana*); SQ Ancestral daisho, class skill (survival), style and grace, talent, wealth; AL LN; Honor 2; Fort +12, Ref +8, Will +14; Str 15 (17), Dex 15, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 16; Maximum Void: 2.

Skills and Feats: Diplomacy +26, Gather Information +13, Handle Animal +23, Iaijutsu Focus +20, Jump +19, Knowledge (etiquette) +8, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +8, Ride +19, Sense Motive +22, Survival +19; Armor Focus (great armor), Daisho Specialization (katana), Power Attack, Ride-By Attack, Shinjo's Technique, Spirited Charge, Trample, Void Use, Way of the Unicorn, Weapon Focus (katana).

Style and Grace: A courtier gains a +4 competence bonus on all Charisma-based skill checks involving social interaction.

Possessions: +3 *keen katana* (ancestral daisho), +2 great armor, +3 *haori* of resistance, *obi* of giant strength.

HANASHI'S ROOM

This modest room is in shocking disarray. The tatami, nightclothes, and blankets are strewn across the floor. The small writing table is knocked askew, with ink spilling across the polished surface. The daisho stand is empty.

Search checks (DC 15) reveal the following information:

- The floors in this room are not nightingale floors.
- One of the ceiling tiles has been disturbed.
- The scrolls on the writing table are mundane descriptions of current events in the castle, supply inventories, troop counts, and the like.
- A scroll hidden in the wardrobe appears to be Shinjo Hanashi's personal journal. PCs who read it find nothing to incriminate him. On the contrary, many passages express his loyalty and devotion to Kunemura. Moreover, the animosity between Hanashi and Tsuyokaze is evident. Hanashi believes Tsuyokaze is jealous of his position. A Sense Motive check (DC 20) reveals Hanashi is intelligent and compassionate. He has little patience for the back-stabbing trivialities that are an integral to court life.

Shinjo Hanashi is mute though this fact is rarely discussed. He is universally liked and respected and people do not mention it. The inability to speak may be an impediment to some, but he used it to become an excellent listener, with a nearly eidetic memory.

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The ninja used Hanashi's room to gain access to the space above the ceiling. Hanashi awoke just after the thief made his exit. When he spotted the dead servant in the stairway, he hurriedly gathered his things to investigate, knowing he would be unable to make anyone understand quickly enough to prevent the intruder's escape.

KUNETACHI, ELDEST SON AND HEIR

Kunetachi is the spitting image of his father twenty years earlier; strong, stubborn, proud, and ambitious. He is currently a 5th Level Samurai and a worthy successor.

A DC 15 Sense Motive check reveals he is angry and worried. His father, mother, and Tsuyokaze refuse to tell him anything and he resents underlings or outsiders who know the truth, when he does not.

Kunetachi was asleep in his room when the theft occurred. He has heard servants whispering about a ninja in the castle, but he believes this to be utter nonsense. No ninja could possibly get past his guards.

MIDOKO, LADY OF THE CASTLE

Lady Midoko oversees the daily operation of her husband's house and takes care of the children. She may have been beautiful and lively once, but years of child rearing have torn that from her. She is a devoted mother and a timid wife, often trampled by Kunemura's hard-charging demeanor, but she never complains.

She has no idea who may have committed this horrible deed. She knows Ide Tsuyokaze believes the culprit is Hanashi, but she believes Hanashi is too kind and loyal to do such a thing. A Sense Motive check (DC 20) reveals she is very worried for her husband's future and her own. If he commits seppuku over the loss the swords, she will be expected to follow him in death by cutting her own throat, leaving no one to care for her young children.

OTHER INQUIRIES

Interviewing the castle servants and guards allows the PCs up to three Gather Information checks (DC 15) each. Successful checks reveal the following information:

- Shinjo Hanashi has been mute since birth. He is widely regarded as a compassionate, thoughtful man, and he is Lord Kunemura's most favored confidant and counselor.
- The castle servants and guards view Tsuyokaze mainly as a blustering fool, quick to anger and cruel to those below his station.

- Ide Tsuyokaze and Shinjo Hanashi despise each other.
- Lord Kunemura is universally respected and feared, but not regarded as particularly kind or compassionate.
- Many of the servants are frightened to enter the deepest parts of the castle foundations, because of tales of unexplained disappearances. (This is the clan of bakemono no tanuki luring unsuspecting humans away to be eaten. See New Monster section.) The servants have reported the disappearances, but no one believes them. Tsuyokaze knows of this, but does not mention it. He believes the servants ran away.
- Two servants sneaking some late-night bottles of sake claim to have seen a ninja.
- These two servants are cooks, and both vehemently claim to have been sober at the time, because they had not started drinking yet. One of the servants killed was their third drinking partner. They were in one of the many storage rooms in the foundation of the castle, awaiting their companion, when they heard a short gurgling scream and peeked out of their secret meeting place. They saw the ninja moving away and their friend dead on the floor. They offer to show anyone who asks the location of the attack.

CASTLE FOUNDATIONS

Eventually the characters' inquiries should lead them to the dark recesses of the castle foundations, where storage rooms are filled with provisions and the forgotten entrance of the Koda Ninjutsu School await those persistent and perceptive enough to find it.

The two cooks who saw the ninja easily find the spot, because it is their customary meeting location: in a small room where much of the sake is kept. They also know which direction the ninja went. A Search check (DC 20) reveals a bloodstain. Another Search check (DC 18) reveals another bloodstain five feet away in the shape of a footprint. It leads in the direction toward a little-used portion of the storage areas.

One of the storage rooms contains the secret entrance to the tunnels below. Another Search check (DC 20) reveals the footprints in the dust leading up to a stack of shelves, and scrape marks indicate the shelves swing aside.

The secret door can be opened with a Strength check (DC 15) and behind the cleverly hidden construction yawns a hole, with steps leading into unknown darkness.

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THE KODA NINJUTSU SCHOOL

1. Trapped Corridor

The stairs are cramped and narrow, leading down into the darkness. The dust on the stone steps is clearly disturbed by three sets of footprints, one set leads up, and two sets lead down. The corners of the ceiling are choked with dusty cobwebs, and the stairway is narrow and treacherous. Stagnant air wafts up out of the cool, moist depths, bearing the smell of earth and... something else.

This switchback corridor has several traps meant to dispatch any unwanted intruders. All the traps in this corridor can be disabled by pressing a small, camouflaged stone on the east wall at the foot of the stairs (Search, DC 25). There is a pressure plate in the floor near this switch that resets all the traps if they were disabled by the button in Area 2 or were set off. Alternatively, each trap can be discovered and disabled individually. All four traps are triggered by pressure plates in the floor, and automatically reset themselves after one hour.

A. Spiked Pit Trap: The first trap is a spiked pit 5 ft. wide, 10 ft. across, and 20 ft. deep.

♣ **Spiked Pit Trap:** CR 2; 2d6 falling damage; +10 melee 1d4 spikes for 1d4+2 damage per hit; Reflex save (DC 20) avoids; Search (DC 10); Disable Device (DC 20).

The sliding footprints abruptly disappear in the dust on the floor making this trap easier to notice. Inside the pit lies the unfortunate Hanashi, his leg impaled on one of the bamboo spikes. He is still alive but barely conscious. He currently has 0 hp. Hanashi is desperate to get out of the pit and catch the thief. If healed, he helps the PCs however he can. Communicating with him may not be easy however and eager PCs may bring him back to Kunemura without asking him what's going on.

▲ **Shinjo Hanashi, Human Unicorn Expert 3:** CR 3; Medium humanoid; HD 3d6; hp 10; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10 (10 touch, 10 flat-footed); Base Atk +2; Grp +2; Atk +3 melee, 1d4 damage (masterwork tanto); AL LG; Honor 3; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +6; Str 11, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 16; Maximum Void 2.

Skills and Feats: Diplomacy +9, Gather Information +9, Knowledge (etiquette) +9, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +9, Listen +9, Ride +6, Search +9, Sense Motive +9, Spot +9, Survival +9; Endurance, Skill Focus (listen), Void Use.

Possessions: Fine kimono, masterwork tanto.

B. Scything Blade Trap: A spring-loaded blade slashes from a camouflaged groove in the wall at about 3 ft. above the floor. It effects individuals standing within square B.

♣ **Scything Blade Trap:** CR 1; +8 melee 1d8 damage/×3 crit; Search (DC 21); Disable Device (DC 20).

C. Hail of Needles: A hail of tiny metal splinters shoots out of tiny holes in the south wall of the corridor. Anyone standing in squares B and C has a chance to be hit.

♣ **Hail of Needles:** CR 1; +20 ranged 2d4; Search (DC 22); Disable Device (DC 22).

D. Hail of Needles: This second hail of needles is activated by a pressure plate in the floor, and fires from numerous tiny holes in the west wall of the corridor. Anyone in squares C and D has a chance to be hit.

♣ **Hail of Needles:** CR 1; +20 ranged 2d4; Search (DC 22); Disable Device (DC 22).

2. Trap Reset

If the traps in Area 1 were disabled by the hidden switch in Area #1 or were set off, stepping on a pressure plate at this point resets them. There is also another camouflaged panel that disables the traps in this hallway identical to the one in Area #1.

3. Kitchen

A Search check (DC 20) reveals a chimney above the fireplace. This chimney secretly opens into the chimney of the main kitchen in the castle above.

4. Dining Room

Five small tables, practically rotted to sawdust, are scattered about the floor. In the corner is a pale, huddled shape. The young maiden gasps as she sees you, and cringes away, covering her eyes. "Don't hurt me again!" she weeps. Her dark eyes are wide and fearful. She is dressed in coarse peasant linen, but her features incredibly beautiful. "Oh, I'm sorry, I thought you were the bad men! I beg of you, help me get out of here before they come back!"

The young girl is really a bakemono no tanuki (6 hp) (see New Monster below). She intends to lure the PCs into the lair, where the rest of her clan can feast upon them. But first she wants to enjoy some sport at the PCs expense. At the first opening, she attempts a charm person on the PC most pleasantly disposed to her false appearance.

Her name is Ame. If asked about "the bad men," she says this place is filled with evil men, dressed in black, sneaking about like ghosts. This is untrue, since the Koda School has been abandoned for generations. If time permits, she attempts to charm person up to three of the

THE DAISHO AND THE NINJA

PCs. She particularly enjoys making romantic advances toward those charmed and setting them against one another.

She attempts to lure the PCs to Room #15, where the rest of her clan awaits. She tells them she knows the way out of here. But she is very patient. If they want to do some exploring first, she is perfectly happy to bide her time and wait. She is not pushy or disrespectful. But, if the PCs have no interest in listening or the one-hour time limit of her current form approaches, she takes the first opportunity to shapeshift. When no one is looking, she changes into a small creature such as a rat or a snake, and slips away. She does not take her natural form unless forced to do so, because she does not wish the PCs to see what she really is.

5. Bath

Two empty bathtubs lie cracked and rotting in two corners. A wooden bucket is rotted to rusted metal bands.

6. Latrine

There are two holes in the floor, each about 2 ft. across, covered by rotting wooden doors which have smaller holes, about 1 ft. in diameter, cut into them.

Below the wooden doors is the 10 ft. deep cesspit. The waste has long since decayed into soil and dust.

7. Dojo

The walls of his room are lined with disintegrating weapon racks, with a few rusted kama, ninja-to, and yari. In one corner is a low circular well.

These weapons are so rusted they are useless and break if wielded in combat. The well is filled with fresh water 50 ft. below. The tanuki regularly use this well. A Spot check (DC 15) reveals a bucket beside the well in good repair. It is tied to an iron ring in the wall with a good rope.

8. Cells

The door is fashioned of once-stout wood, now softened by rot, bound by bands of rusted iron, latched by a simple bolt on the outside. The interior is filled with dust and cobwebs. Rings of rusted iron are embedded on each wall.

9. Torture Chamber

One side of this room is partitioned by iron bars embedded in the ceiling and floor, creating a small holding cell with a short sliding door in the middle. Two wooden pillars stand side by side, with chains hanging from rings. A stone brazier stands in the center of the room, its cavity overflowing with cold, dark ash. A wooden table has collapsed in one corner, spilling its implements of torture across the floor. Rusted blades, tongs, pincers, and hammers speak volumes about the pain once inflicted here.

10. Smith's Workshop

In the center of his room is a large anvil beside an ancient forge, with its great bellows hanging in rotting strips from the side. A large hammered-tin tub lies empty along one wall, and the remnants of a few half-finished blades litter the floor.

Search checks (DC 20) reveal a chimney in the ceiling, similar to the one in room #3.

11. Living Quarters

The floor of these rooms is covered in shredded, rotting cloth, little more than bedding for rats. The air smells sourly of rat droppings and decay.

The detritus on the floor is the remnants of the sleeping mats that once lay on the floors of these rooms. The trainees and their teachers slept in these rooms.

12. Sensei's Quarters

A large wooden table sits in the center of the room, its age held at bay by some remarkably sturdy design efforts. Resting on the table are several items, all covered with dust, a fine porcelain sake jar and two beautiful cups, an ink pot with a brush sticking out of it, a burned out candle, a stick of red wax, and several neatly stacked shuriken. Lying near the far wall is a headless skeleton, its flesh and clothing long turned to dust.

The sake set is exquisite with a market value of 100 gp. The brush is stuck to the ink vial by the dried ink. The ten shuriken gleam as if freshly polished. These are +1 shuriken. The skeleton's skull is missing, and the bones are lying as if the body was cut into several pieces before it fell, with arm bones and ribs neatly sliced. Hidden in the floor below the table is a secret storage compartment (Search check, DC 20) with a Poison Gas Trap.

◆ **Poison Gas Trap:** CR 3, Fort save DC 18, 1d6 Con initial damage, 2d6 Con secondary damage; Search (DC 21); Disable Device (DC 21).

The trap affects everyone within 5 ft. of the table. The gas dissipates after 1d3 rounds. Inside the compartment is a black lacquered box containing a dozen scroll tubes sealed with wax. These scrolls contain all the secret ninjutsu techniques of the Koda Ninjutsu School, the collected knowledge of hundreds of long-dead spies and assassins. They are written in a secret language which could be deciphered over time with a Decipher Script check (DC 30).

13. Refuse Pit

A yawning pit fills the room, 20 ft. across and 10 ft. deep. The bottom of the pit is littered with the detritus of torture and death, hundreds of bones and skulls, broken,

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splintered, gnawed, or crumbling to dust. The pit stops at the foot of the doorway, so anyone carelessly entering the room must make a Reflex save (DC 18) or fall into the pit.

14. Training Tunnels

These tunnels are natural fissures. The walls are rough, but worn, as if by the passage of many feet and hands. The loose rock and gravel spilling over the paving stones cover the floor in the corridor. These tunnels were once used by the school to train ninja students in techniques of stealth and silent movement. The gravel and loose rock was placed here to teach the students how to move silently over noisy ground, therefore any Move Silently check in this area suffer a -10 circumstance penalty. A Survival check (DC 20) reveals the area is well-traveled. Another check (DC 25) shows the tracks are wildly various types, human footprints, snake trails, and animals of many sizes.

15. Play Room

In this room, Akashi waits for Lord Shotokami. Two tanuki, posing as messengers, have convinced Akashi that Lord Shotokami is coming in person to collect the stolen swords and reward Akashi for his deed. If the PCs talk to him, a Sense Motive check (DC 15) reveals he feels guilty about the harm he caused his family, but this is overshadowed by hatred for his father. Under no circumstances does he give the swords back or give himself up. He has burned his bridges behind him; his only path now is forward. Characters who know Lord Kunemura's family, including Hanashi, instantly recognize him.

▲ Shinjo Akashi, Human Unicorn Rogue 4 / Ninja 4:

CR 8; Medium; HD 5d8+24; hp 53; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18 (touch 13, flat-footed 18); Base Atk +7; Grp +9; Atk +11 melee, 1d4+3 damage plus night milk poison (+1 *tanto*); Full Atk +9/+4 melee, 1d4+3 damage plus night milk poison (+1 *tanto*), +9 melee 1d4+1 damage plus night milk poison (+1 *tanto*, off hand); SA Sneak Attack +4d6; SQ Class skill (ride), evasion, ninja dodge +1, poison use, speed of darkness, trap sense +1, trapfinding, uncanny dodge; AL NE; Honor 0; Fort +5, Ref +11, Will +2; Str 16 Dex 16, Con 16, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 16; Maximum Void 2.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +14, Climb +10, Disable Device +13, Disguise +10, Hide +14, Listen +7, Move Silently +14, Open Locks +14, Sense Motive +14, Spot +7, Tumble +14; Improved Initiative, Two-Weapon Fighting, Void Use, Weapon Focus (*tanto*).

Sneak Attack: If a ninja attacks an opponent who is unable to defend himself effectively, the ninja can strike a vital spot for extra damage. Any time the ninja's target would be denied his Dexterity bonus to AC (whether he actually has a Dex bonus or not), or when the ninja flanks the target, the ninja's attack deals extra damage. The extra damage is +1d6 at 1st level and an additional 1d6 every two levels thereafter. Should the ninja score a critical hit with a sneak attack, this extra damage is not multiplied.

Ranged attacks can only count as sneak attacks if the target is within 30 ft. The ninja can't strike with deadly accuracy from beyond that range.

With a sap (blackjack) or an unarmed strike, the ninja can make a sneak attack that deals subdual damage instead

of normal damage. He cannot use a weapon that deals normal damage to deal subdual damage in a sneak attack, not even with the usual -4 penalty, because he must make optimal use of his weapon in order to execute a sneak attack.

A ninja can only sneak attack a living creature with a discernible anatomy — undead, constructs, oozes, plants, and incorporeal creatures lack vital areas to attack. Any creature that is immune to critical hits is also not vulnerable to sneak attacks. The ninja must be able to see the target well enough to pick out a vital spot and must be able to reach a vital spot. The ninja cannot sneak attack while striking a creature with concealment (see Table 8-10: Concealment, page 133 of the *Player's Handbook*™) or striking the limbs of a creature whose vitals are beyond reach.

Ninja Dodge: The ninja gains this special variation of the Dodge feat for free at first level. Effectively, this ability has the same effect as Dodge, except that the ninja gains the ability multiple times. At fifth, tenth, fifteenth, and twentieth level, the bonus granted by Ninja Dodge is raised by one. At fifth level, the ninja may also choose to dodge multiple opponents in a round, declaring his dodge feat during his action. The ninja may choose to use some or all of this bonus to dodge each attacker; a ninja with +3 dodge may choose to use Ninja Dodge to gain +2 AC against one attacker, then +1 against another in the same round, +3 against a single attacker, or gain +1 AC against three attackers in the single round. Unlike the normal Dodge feat, this ability may not be used when wearing armor with a check penalty greater than 0. This ability stacks with the bonus provided by the actual Dodge feat. A ninja may take feats with Dodge as a prerequisite if he has Ninja Dodge, but may not use these feats when wearing armor with a check penalty greater than 0.

Poison Use: Ninja are trained in the use of poison and, beginning at 2nd level, never risk accidentally poisoning themselves when applying poison to a blade.

Trapfinding: This rogue can use the Search skill to locate traps when the task has a DC higher than 20.

Trap Sense (Ex): This rogue gains an intuitive sense that alerts him to danger from traps, giving him a +2 bonus on Reflex saves made to avoid traps and a +2 dodge bonus to AC against attacks made by traps.

Uncanny Dodge: At third level, the ninja gains the ability to react to danger before his senses would normally allow him to do so. He retains his Dexterity bonus to AC (if any) despite being caught flat-footed or being struck by an invisible attacker. He still loses his Dexterity bonus if immobilized.

Speed of Darkness: The strength of a ninja's attack lies in his ability to strike quickly at exposed areas and fade away. At fourth level and beyond, the ninja adds his Intelligence modifier to his initiative roll.

Possessions: +2 *ashigaru armor*, paired +1 *tantos*, six doses of night milk poison (injected DC 18, initial and secondary, 1d2 Con).

16. Small Tunnel

Only small creatures can fit into this tunnel. The tanuki use this to retreat if they feel they must flee. It leads outside, but branches wherever the GM wishes.

17. Spiked Pit Trap

This pit 5 ft wide, 5 ft. across, and 20 ft. deep.

◆ **Spiked Pit Trap:** CR 2; 2d6 falling damage; +10 melee 1d4 spikes for 1d4+2 damage per hit; Reflex save (DC 20) avoids; Search (DC 10); Disable Device (DC 20).

This tunnel leads to a secret exit about a quarter mile from castle.

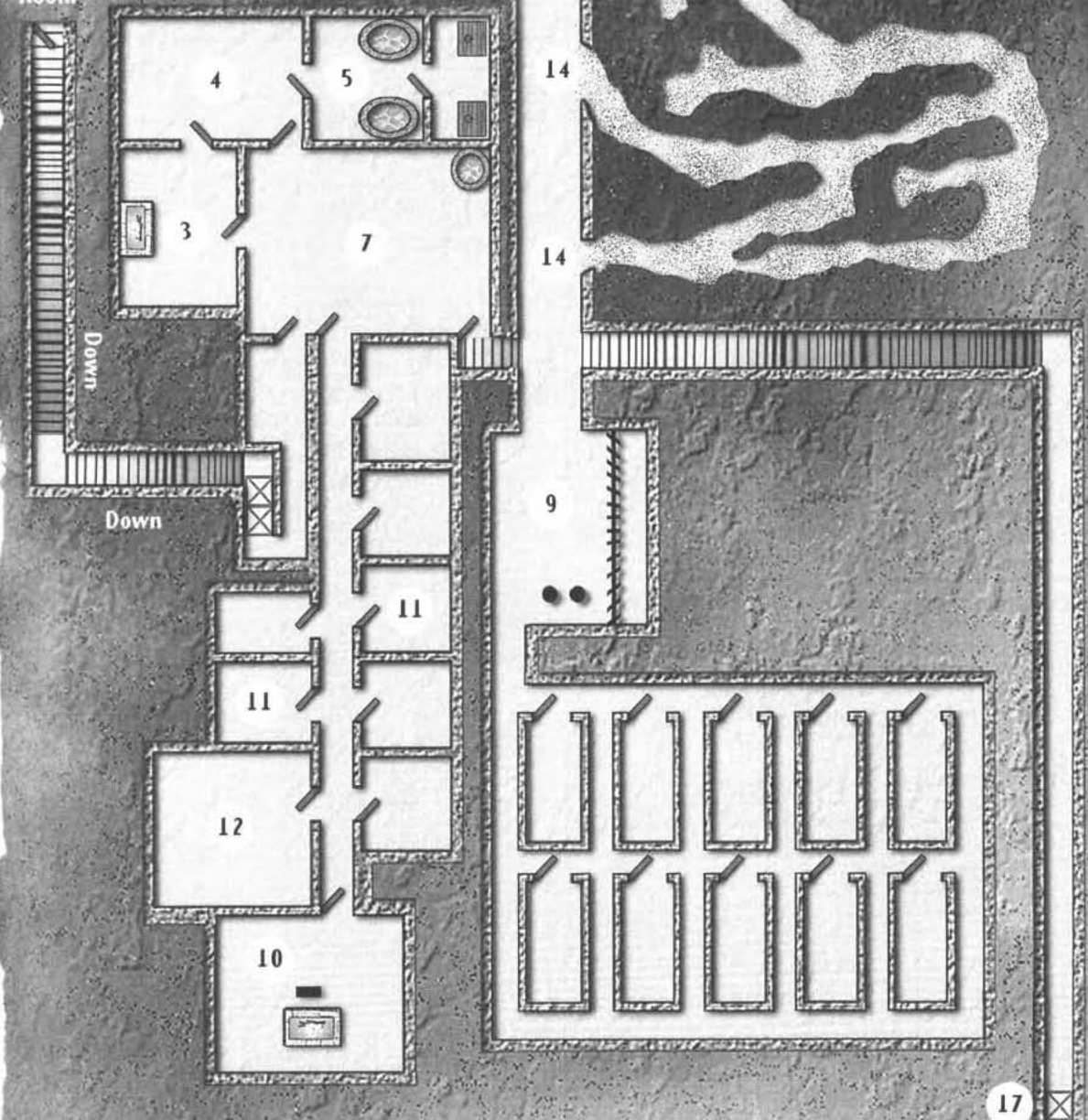
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KODA NINJA SCHOOL

To
Storage
Room

30 ft.
20 ft.
10 ft.
0 ft.



THE BAKEMONO NO TANUKI

These creatures are delighted over the abundance of humans for them to play with. Use them in any way possible to confound and disconcert the PCs. The tanuki may pose as ninja or other samurai, even impersonating a PC. Or, they might change into a nonhuman creature and frighten the PCs. When the PCs track down Akashi, they might not believe him to be real.

The tanuki are not evil. They are hungry and they particularly enjoy human flesh. Their caution and their love for a good game temper their hunger. They are intelligent and do not throw themselves mindlessly into a fight, unless they feel their home is threatened. Because they have lived here for many generations, they regard the abandoned ninjutsu school as their ancestral home and defend it by whatever means they can. They fight fiercely when provoked. There are 26 tanuki living here. If more than 15 are killed, they retreat from the area and find a new home elsewhere.

▲ Bakemono no Tanuki: CR 2; Medium magical beast (shapeshifter); HD 3d10+3; hp 20; Init +5; Spd 30 ft., burrow 5 ft. AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +3; Grp +3; Atk +3 melee (1d4, claw); Full Atk +3 melee (1d4, 2 claws), bite –2 melee (1d6); SA Charm person; SQ Alter self, darkvision 60 ft., rage; AL CN; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +3; SV Str 10, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 11, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +10*, Disguise +10*, Hide +5, Listen +5, Spot +10; Alertness, Improved Initiative.

Alter Self (Su): Bakemono no tanuki have the ability to assume the shape of any small or medium-sized animal or humanoid. It can change of form is a standard action and acts as the spell alter self as if cast by a 6th level sorcerer. They can change form three times per day, but may only maintain a shape for one hour before reverting back. If killed, it reverts to its natural form.

Charm Person (Su): The bakemono no tanuki can charm person three times per day, as if the spell were cast by a 6th level sorcerer. There however is no verbal or somatic component to this spell use and thus takes a fragment of a second to activate. A target can resist with a successful Will save (DC 13).

Rage (Ex): After a tanuki first takes damage in combat, it flies into a berserk rage on its next turn. It gains +4 Strength, +4 Constitution, +2 morale bonus to Will saves and –2 Armor Class. The rage lasts for 3 round + the tanuki's newly improved Con bonus and it cannot end its rage voluntarily.

Skills: Bakemono no tanuki receive a +5 racial bonus to Bluff and Disguise checks.

EPILOGUE

If the PCs retrieve the swords with no one else knowing about the theft, Lord Kunemura rewards them handsomely with expensive gifts or magic items, at the GM's discretion.

If news of the theft gets out and the swords are not retrieved, Lord Kunemura and his wife commit seppuku. If the PCs retainers, he orders them to commit seppuku to atone for their failure or casts them out, making them ronin. To the most honorable samurai, seppuku would be preferable.

If Hanashi is exonerated, Tsuyokaze is forced to commit seppuku for slandering his name. Tsuyokaze knows this and does everything in his power to prevent it, even if proof of Hanashi's innocence is produced.

If the identity of the ninja is revealed, Lord Kunemura immediately realizes Lord Shotokami orchestrated the plot. He flies into a rage and vows to wage war against Lord Shotokami until his last breath.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

- Lord Kunemura commands the PCs to send word to his longtime ally in the north along the coast about the coming war with his foe, and to request the aid of troops. As the PCs come close to that lord's town of Tara Mura, several figures in black masks appear from behind the rocks, wielding rough-hewn spears. They outnumber the PCs two to one (see the adventure "Treachery's Reward").
- News of the war must be brought to Lord Kunemura's ally to the south, in the province of Tesheda so they can prepare if his defences do not hold. But when they arrive a young boy with a scroll intercepts them. In sloped kanji, tilted and barely legible, the message reads "We have killed the Village Magistrate, so sorry. Town of Caotang no longer can work. Awaiting sentence of death" (see the adventure "Blood on White Petals").

Chapter 14:

Treachery's Reward

Levels 1 to 3

by Rich Wulf

Tara Mura is an indistinct village near the coast of Rokugan, in the lands of the Phoenix Clan.

The peasants who live here work hard and do their best not to attract attention from outsiders and few even realize the tiny village exists. The road bends near Tara Mura as the sun slowly sets. Despite its boring appearance, it may have a passable inn.

A chill breeze blows through the pass, a strange, restless howl upon the wind. The moon hovers fat and full in a sky too bright for a night such as this. Perhaps it would be best to find a safe place to spend the evening.

The dry snap of a twig echoes in the high rocks to one side of the road. Several figures in black masks appear from behind the rocks, wielding rough-hewn spears. They outnumber the PCs two to one.

Perhaps this won't be such a boring trip after all.

DM BACKGROUND

This adventure is an Asian-style adventure designed for four to six PCs of levels 1 to 3. It fits in well with oriental style campaigns, but can be modified to suit any campaign. It has been written specifically for Rokugan, but the names and locations are merely signifiers, easily adapted to your campaign. If you do not possess the rulebook for *d20 Rokugan*, the stat blocks contain the OGL material necessary to "fake it."

Many strange spirits dwell in this world. Some of the strangest have humble origins. One legend tells of a cat that survives its own curiosity long enough to become a powerful spirit. Sometimes called an elder cat, it grows a long, split tail and ghostly fur. These vain creatures draw upon the Shadowlands for their power, but even their fellow demons do not trust them. These cats have a strange power over the living and the dead, and penchant for mischief. They call themselves *nekomata*.

Shiba Ienobu, the governor of Tara Mura (Codfish Village), was a corrupt and evil man. The peasants knew no samurai would hear a peasant's testimony against Ienobu. Exposing his crimes would risk bringing even greater cruelty upon the village. Six months ago, the peasants of the village disguised themselves as bandits and murdered Ienobu on the roads outside Tara Mura.

Unnoticed, the ghostly Ritsuko watched from the bushes. The powerful *nekomata* immediately concocted a sinister plan. Animating the dead samurai's body, she sent his zombified corpse to the village. Claiming to be a demon of vengeance, the new Ienobu demanded the

peasants pay for their crime. Ritsuko commanded them to abandon their lives as fishermen and become true bandits. Convinced the karma of their terrible crime caused Ienobu to return and punish them, the peasants reluctantly obeyed.

Ritsuko cares nothing for karma or justice. She cares only for her slaves' glorious tribute. She remains in the village for as long as they accept the farce, completely enjoying their terror. She has made contact with a number of evil spirits from the forest, inviting them to live in Ienobu's home and share the bounty of Tara Mura.

BANDITS

On a lonely road through rough terrain the PCs are suddenly surrounded by a large group of masked bandits (peasants). There are twice as many bandits as PCs.

▲ Peasant 'Bandit', Human Commoner 1: CR ¼; Medium humanoid; HD 1d4 +1; hp 3; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (12 touch, 10 flat-footed); Base Atk +0; Grp +0; Atk +1 melee, (1d6+1, yari); Full Atk +1 melee (1d6+1, yari); AL N; Honor 1; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 7.

Skills and Feats: Profession (fisherman) +6, Spot +4; Alertness.

Possessions: Yari, peasant clothing.

The bandits wear peasant outfits and woolen masks dyed deep red with fish blood. They attempt to intimidate the PCs, attacking only if their demands are ignored. They demand coins and gems only; the bandits know better than to take a samurai's weapons. The bandits cover their trail, but a character with the Track feat can make a Wilderness Lore check (DC 17) to follow their circuitous route back to the village. If the PCs surrender their wealth, the bandits retreat without any further conflict of note.

Captured bandits confess to being from Tara Mura, and proceed to beg for forgiveness, claiming they were forced to steal to provide tribute for "the demon lord of Tara Mura." They also reveal Lord Ienobu is the ranking samurai in Tara Mura. He was "killed by bandits" six months ago, then returned from the dead shortly thereafter. Some of the peasant bandits are from the same group who killed Ienobu, but the captives avoid revealing this to the PCs. A Sense Motive check opposed by a peasant's Bluff check reveals they are hiding something. Captured peasants do not willingly return to Tara Mura, terrified of Ienobu's punishment for violating his command to repel outsiders.

TARA MURA

CODFISH VILLAGE

Tara Mura (hamlet): Leadership: Monstrous; AL CE (leaders) LN (population); 100 gp limit; Assets 475 gp; Population 200; Population: Human. Authority Figures: Ienobu, Medium-size zombie; Ritsuko, nekomata (see New Monster section). Others: Ashihei, male human Com1, village blacksmith; Mayoka, female human Mnk1, priestess.

Tara Mura is a coastal village, named for the fish so abundant in the area. The peasants are extremely poor and after years of extortion by Ienobu, most are suffering from malnutrition. All have a haunted look in their eyes; they believe they are ruled by a demon, a karmic punishment for the murder of their lord. The small boats at the docks are in disrepair, unused for months.

The villagers are wary of strangers. If the PCs do not make an effort to conceal themselves, the peasants swiftly report the PC's arrival to Ienobu. A Spot check (DC 15) reveals a peasant hurrying toward the castle in the hills. Assume any bandits who escaped the earlier battle alerted the creatures in the castle to the PC's existence.

There is no inn in the village. If the PCs wish to spend the night, their three most obvious options are in a peasant's home, the local temple, or Ienobu's castle.

STAYING IN THE VILLAGE

Characters staying in the village are referred to Ashihei, the blacksmith, who offers a room for three coppers. Ashihei is a stocky older man with steel gray eyes. Though he seldom smiles and speaks mostly in monosyllabic grunts, he is a pious and thoughtful person. Ashihei's wife and three sons died of the plague years ago, so he has plenty of room for visitors (he explains this quite bluntly). Ashihei did not participate in Ienobu's murder, and is ashamed of what has become of Tara Mura. Though he knows Ienobu is evil, he refuses to leave the village. He believes he deserves punishment for failing to stop the others from slaying Ienobu. He tells the PCs everything he knows, but only if they ask. He thereafter encourages them to leave as quickly as possible before they become entangled in the dark fate of Tara Mura.

STAYING AT THE TEMPLE

The PCs may seek accommodations in the local temple to the Fortunes. Mayoka, the temple's only priest, is a pretty young girl with a muscular build, shaven head, and nervous grin. She offers the meager accommodations if they seem honorable. If they seem untrustworthy, she insists the temple has no room.

Mayoka's former master, an elder monk named Daisetsu, was slain by Ienobu after the evil samurai returned from the grave (Ritsuko saw the elder monk as a threat). Mayoka was meditating in the hills at the time, and thus survived. Mayoka does not believe Ienobu was sent by the gods; she believes he is merely an evil spirit to be exorcised. She has sketched a crude map of Ienobu's castle, but knows she cannot defeat the undead samurai alone and practically begs the PCs to aid her.

▲ Mayoka, Human Monk 2: CR 2; Medium humanoid; HD 2d8+2; hp 16; Init +5; Spd 30ft.; AC 13, touch 10, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp +3; Atk +1/+1 melee (1d6+2/x2, flurry of blows), or +5 melee (1d6+2, 1d6+1/x2, quarterstaff), or +3 ranged (1d6/x3 short bow); Atk +1/+1 melee (1d6+2/x2, flurry of blows), or +5 melee (1d6+2, 1d6+1/x2, quarterstaff) or +3 ranged (1d6/x3 short bow); SA Flurry of blows; SQ Evasion, unarmed strike; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +4 Will +5; Str 14, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Balance +4, Climb +4, Escape Artist +4, Hide +4, Jump +4, Listen +4, Move Silently +3, Tumble +5; Deflect Arrows, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (quarterstaff).

Flurry of Blows (Ex): When unarmed, this monk may strike with a flurry of blows at the expense of accuracy. When doing so, he may make one extra attack in a round at his highest base attack bonus, but this attack suffers a -2 penalty, as does each other attack made that round.

Unarmed Strike: This monk gains Improved Unarmed Strike as a bonus feat. His attacks may be with either fist interchangeably or even from elbows, knees, and feet. This means that he may even make unarmed strikes with his hands full. There is no such thing as an off-hand attack for this monk striking unarmed. This monk may thus apply his full Strength bonus on damage rolls for all unarmed strikes.

Evasion (Ex): If this monk makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, he instead takes no damage. Evasion can be used only if he is wearing light armor or no armor. A helpless monk does not gain the benefit of evasion.

Possessions: Masterwork quarterstaff, shortbow, 18 arrows.

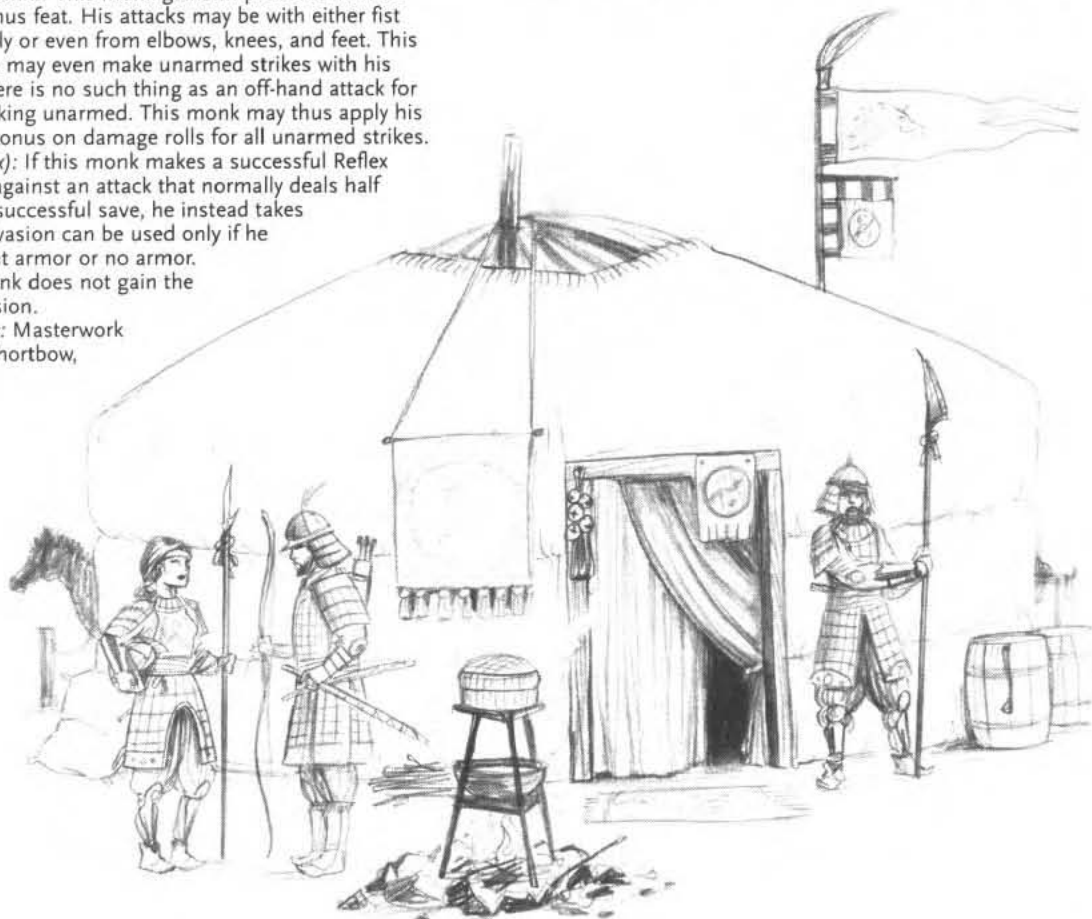
STAYING AT IENOBU'S CASTLE

If the PCs demand free shelter, the peasants respectfully suggest perhaps their lord, Ienobu, would be better equipped to accommodate them. Skip on to the description of the castle itself. Consider Ritsuko aware of the PC's approach.

ANGRY MOB

If the PCs stay in the village, Ritsuko (as Lord Ienobu) commands a mob of torch-wielding peasants to kill the PCs. In the middle of the night, these villagers surround the PC's refuge, screaming for blood. There are at least sixty commoners wielding clubs, knives, and sharp stones.

A Listen check (DC 10) by any PCs still awake detects the mob 3d4 rounds before it arrives. (DC 15 for sleeping PCs, up to 1d4 rounds before it arrives.) If the PCs are staying with Ashihei, he wakes them and delays the mob for five rounds, giving the PCs a chance to escape. If the PCs are in the temple, Mayoka has an escape tunnel prepared, leading to the woods 100 ft. away. The tunnel is narrow, so any PCs using it must make a successful Escape Artist check (DC 15) every twenty ft. One character may enter



the tunnel per round, and may only progress further down the tunnel if the character in front of them makes their check successfully. Obese or claustrophobic PCs are unable to use the tunnel, and PCs wearing heavy armor has to drag it behind them or find another means of escape.

A successful Diplomacy check (DC 25)(the mob is Hostile) could convince the mob to back down. Shifting the mob's mood to Indifferent convinces them to escort the PCs out of town instead of attacking. Shifting the mob's mood to Friendly or Helpful convinces them to disperse, so long as the PCs promise to destroy the evil Ienobu.

Alternately, the PCs may choose to openly confront the mob. An powerful display of weaponry or magic can cow the mob with a successful Intimidation check (DC 20). Characters can aid one another, as per the normal rules. Killing peasants has an equal chance of frightening the rest away or instantly inciting them to attack.

KYUDEN TARA MURA

Upon their first approach to the castle, read the following.

A small castle is nestled in the hills, straddling a river. The castle has been cunningly built to blend in with nature rather than obstruct it. It has no outer wall or other defenses, as there would be little reason for enemies to attack a village as insignificant as Tara Mura. Thick vines cover much of the castle. The wood has turned a dark, slimy black. A strange distant howl, not the howl of guard dogs but of some other stranger beast rises on the wind. Something foul has overcome the castle of Lord Ienobu.

The castle is foreboding, but does not radiate evil to magical detection. The reason for the castle's hideous state is more mundane. Since Lord Ienobu's return, many of his servants have fled in terror from the strange spirits haunting the castle.

If it is night time, lights glimmer within the house, both in the main building and on the second floor. Some of the lights seem to flicker a pale green.

1. The Bridge

A successful Listen check (DC 20) traces the howling sounds to this wooden bridge. The nekomata despises dogs, and thus replaced the castle's guardians with a pack of fierce baboons tamed by its hypnotic powers. There baboons (hp 8) are feasting on the body of a sea tortoise stuffed beneath the bridge. As soon as they detect the PCs, they rush to the attack. If the PCs are prepared, this may give them a round or two of ranged attacks before the primates can close. The baboons fight to the death.

▼ **Baboon:** CR ½; Medium animal; HD 1d8+1; hp 5; Init +2; Spd 40 ft., climb 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 12, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +0; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d6+3, bite); Full Atk +2 melee (1d6+3, bite); SA —; SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 4.

Skills and Feats: Climb +10, Listen +5, Spot +5; Alertness

Skills: Baboons have a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks and can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened.

2. Entrance hall

When the PCs enter, read the following:

This room appears to once have been used to entertain visitors, but has been thoroughly vandalized. Small stools are broken and scattered about. The kakemono paintings have been slashed apart, and chewed up. A samisen lays broken in the corner. Only a small black dragon statue to the right of the door seems unharmed.

A young boy in the silken robes of a servant kneels in the middle of the floor, his face blue as he clutches at a black and red scrap of silk tied tightly about his throat. He claws the air and gasps, reaching toward you for help.

This is Hiro, the last sane human servant in the castle. Earlier today, he decided to make his escape. A haunted kimono — one of two fiendish animated objects serving the nekomata — captured the boy. The other object is the wooden dragon statue, which ambushes the PCs if they help him. (The PCs must make a Spot check vs. DC 20 to avoid being surprised by the statue unless they specifically state suspicion toward it.) Unless the PCs assist Hiro, the boy passes out from lack of oxygen in two more rounds. The kimono then snaps his neck. If Hiro dies, the kimono helps the dragon attack the PCs. If one of the animated objects is destroyed, the other flees to join the nekomata on the second floor.

◆ Fiendish Animated Object, Small (statue and kimono):

CR 1; Small construct; HD 1d10+10; hp 16, 14; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; 14, touch 12, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +0; Grp -4; Atk +1 melee (1d4, slam) Full Atk +1 melee (1d4, slam); SA Constrict; SQ Construct traits, constrict (kimono only), darkvision 60 ft., hardness, low-light vision, resistance to cold and fire 5, *smite good*, spell resistance 6; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will -5; Str 10, Dex 12, Con —, Int 3, Wis 1, Cha 1. Skills and Feats: —.

Constrict (Ex): A flexible animated deals damage equal to its slam damage value plus 1½ times its Strength bonus with a successful grapple check against a creature up to one size larger than itself.

Hardness (Ex): An animated object has the same hardness it had before it was animated. A statue has a hardness of 10. A kimono has a hardness of 0.

Smite Good (Su): Once per day, a fiendish animated object can make a normal melee attack to deal an extra point of damage against a good foe.

If Ritsuko was aware of the PC's approach, Hiro warns the PCs that peasants from the village have come to defend the castle. Otherwise, he has no information other than that something truly terrible inhabits the eastern wing of the castle. A few of the servants went there and did not return, so he advises the PCs to avoid it unless they prepare themselves effectively for battle. After delivering this warning, Hiro thanks the PCs and flees into the hills if he is capable.

3. Long Hallway

This hallway has many open windows to admit fresh air. This hallway is never illuminated, though paper lanterns hang from the ceiling. The floorboards creek eerily, but there are no real dangers in this hall.

4. Kitchen

This unused kitchen stinks of filth and excrement. The gnawed bones of animals lay scattered on the floor. A figure dressed in rags lurches to its feet wielding a rough club and staring with wild eyes. It screams inarticulately and swings at the air, as if trying to drive you away. Its skin is filthy, its hair tangled, but its eyes seem disturbingly human.

Kikujiro was once Lord Ienobu's doshin, a peasant who kept order in the village. The nekomata takes personal pleasure in hypnotizing this man regularly, implanting bizarre suggestions and gradually driving him insane. He strikes out against anyone who enters his "den".

▲ Kikujiro, Human Ftr 1: CR 1; Medium humanoid; HD 1d10+2; hp 12; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, 11 touch, 13 flat-footed; Base Atk: +1; Grp: +4; Atk: +4 melee (1d6+3, club); Full Atk: +4 melee (1d6+3, club); AL CN; Honor 1; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will -4; Str 16, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 3,* Cha 7.

Skills and Feats: Climb +7, Jump +7, Ride +5; Cleave, Improved Initiative, Power Attack.

Possessions: Ashigaru armor, club.

* Kikujiro's Wisdom is indicative of his current mental state. He effectively has 10 points of temporary Wisdom damage, which must be cured to restore his sanity. If the PCs cure Kikujiro (with the potion of lesser restoration hidden in the east wing or by separating him from the nekomata's influence for ten days), he agrees to assist the PCs. Kikujiro is perhaps the only person who knows of Ritsuko's true nature, and it is the cat spirit which is the true danger here.

5. Storage

This room contains food and supplies. Most of it is rotted or has been consumed by Kikujiro. Ritsuko subsists entirely off of food delivered by the villagers.

6. Servant Quarters

These cramped quarters are empty. One looks to have been occupied recently but the others have been long vacant. There is nothing of interest in these rooms.

7. Open Hallways

The walls of these hallways are open to the air. Paper lanterns hang, burning with strange green light even during the day. These lanterns can be doused normally, but if the PCs leave this area and return, they find the lanterns burning green again. A Knowledge: Arcana check (DC 15) reveals the light is due to a corruption in the elements. This is tied to a fiendish fire elemental who flits from lantern to lantern. (If the PCs are stealthy, they may notice the wisp-like creature.) If the elemental detects the PCs approaching, it hides in a random lantern and attacks them from behind.

◆ Fiendish Fire Elemental, Small: CR 1; Small elemental (fire, extraplanar); HD 2d8; hp 9; Init +5; Spd 50 ft.; AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp -3; Atk +3 melee (1d4 plus 1d4 fire, slam); Full Atk +3 melee (1d4 plus 1d4 fire, slam); SA Burn; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., elemental traits, immunity to fire, resistance to cold and fire 5, *smite good*, spell resistance 7, vulnerability to cold; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref +4, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 4, Wis 11, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Listen +2, Spot +3; Dodge, Improved InitiativeB, Weapon FinesseB

Burn (Ex): A fire elemental's slam attack deals bludgeoning damage plus fire damage from the elemental's flaming body. Those hit by a fire elemental's slam attack also must succeed on a Reflex save or catch on fire. The flame burns for 1d4 rounds. Save DC 11. A burning creature can take a move action to put out the flame. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Creatures hitting a fire elemental with natural weapons or unarmed attacks take fire damage as though hit by the elemental's attack, and also catch on fire unless they succeed on a Reflex save.

Smite Good (Su): Once per day, a fiendish fire elemental can make a normal melee attack to deal two extra points of damage against a good foe.

8. Front Stairs

If Ritsuko is aware of the PCs' approach, it stations two peasants here. Each carries a shortbow and ten arrows. They crouch in the shadows (Hide skill 2 ranks) and wait for a clear shot. If attacked in return, they run into the hills (they know better than to enter through the front door). The doors behind them are barred from the inside (break DC 25; busting down the door likely sets off the trap in the next room).

9. Archer Trap

This is the main receiving room. Archer statues stand at each corner of the darkened room, facing the center. If any creature weighing more than fifty pounds steps through the door, a pressure plate causes the statues to aim in the direction and fire (once each). If the trap is detected, this can be avoided in a variety of ways. Characters can enter behind the cover of shields, they can disarm the traps (must be done at each statue, Balance check (DC 15) to cross the floor without activating the pressure plate), or the PCs could simply drop and crawl (causing the traps to fire harmlessly over their heads).

♣ **Arrow Traps (4):** CR 1; +10 ranged (1d6/×3 crit); Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 20). Note: 200-ft. max range, target determined randomly from those in its path.

10. Gallery

A maze of shoji screens criss-cross the room. A number of kakemono (silk paintings) hang from them. All of these paintings are new, and all feature paintings of cats. (Ienobu, under Ritsuko's control painted these.) A Listen Check (DC 10) detects a subtle mewling. There are over a dozen cats prowling about this chamber, keeping an eye on the PCs. They are ordinary cats, who have come to honor the elder cat spirit. They do not attack, but merely watch and report what they see to Ritsuko. The paintings (24 total) are worth up to 20 gp each to an interested buyer.

11. Tiny Bones

Five feline skeletons protect this room. They hide in the rafters and attack the PCs as they enter. This battle serves little purpose other than to make noise and alert Ritsuko above.

♣ **Skeleton, Cat:** CR 1/6; Tiny undead; HD 1/4d12; hp 3; Init +8; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 15, flat-footed 12; Base Atk: +0; Grp -1; Atk +2 melee (1d2-2, claw); Full Atk +0 melee (1d2-2, 2 claws); Space/Reach 2½ ft./0 ft.; SA —; SQ Damage reduction 5/bludgeoning, dark vision 60 ft., immunity to cold, undead traits; AL NE; Honor: 0; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 6, Dex 17, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1; Taint +6.

Skills and Feats: Improved Initiative.

The west wall is a clever secret door. It seems to be an ordinary wall, with a window. This is actually a fantastic painting. A skylight in the ceiling above the painting allows sunlight to enter, causing the painting to subtly change color with the time of day. Any close study of the painting (Search check, DC 15) reveals the lack of dimension and perspective. Reaching through the window finds the latch to open the door, just beneath the sill.

12. Arsenal

Once the arsenal of Lord Ienobu, this room contains three shortbows, seventy arrows, twelve spears, and a full daisho (katana and wakizashi, effectively a masterwork bastard sword and a masterwork short sword). A trap door in the floor (Search check DC 20) reveals a small box containing a potion of hiding, a scroll of mage armor, and a Quaal's feather token (tree).

13. East Wing

A rogue giant wasp, arguably more deadly than even the nekomata, gutted the east wing. During the day, the wasp is 30% likely to be hunting in the hills.0

A gaping, eight ft. wide hole has been smashed in the ceiling in this section of the castle. The walls are covered with a sticky brown substance. A few desiccated lumps stick here and there in the fluid, screams of silent agony frozen upon the faces of these unfortunate souls

If the wasp is present, the PCs hear a buzzing as it prepares to attack. If they flee immediately, it attacks one character and returns to its nest. If they remain here, it fights to the death.

♣ **Giant Wasp:** CR 3; Large vermin; HD 5d8+10; hp 32; Init +1; Spd 20 ft., fly 60 ft. (good); AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +3; Grp +11; Atk +6 melee (1d3+6 plus poison, sting); Full Atk +6 melee (1d3+6 plus poison, sting); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Poison; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., vermin traits; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 18, Dex 12, Con 14, Int —, Wis 13, Cha 11, Taint +5.

Skills and Feats: Spot +9, Survival +1*.

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 14, initial and secondary damage 1d6 Dex. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Skills: Giant wasps have a +8 racial bonus on Spot checks.

* They also have a +4 racial bonus on Survival checks to orient themselves.

Treasure: The wasp has accumulated a fair amount of incidental treasure, scattered about the wax-covered corpses of its victims. After twenty minutes of searching, the PCs find 305 gp, a masterwork quarterstaff, a *potion of lesser restoration*, two *potions of cure light wounds*, a +1 *wakizashi* (short sword), and a noble outfit that would be quite presentable after a thorough cleaning.

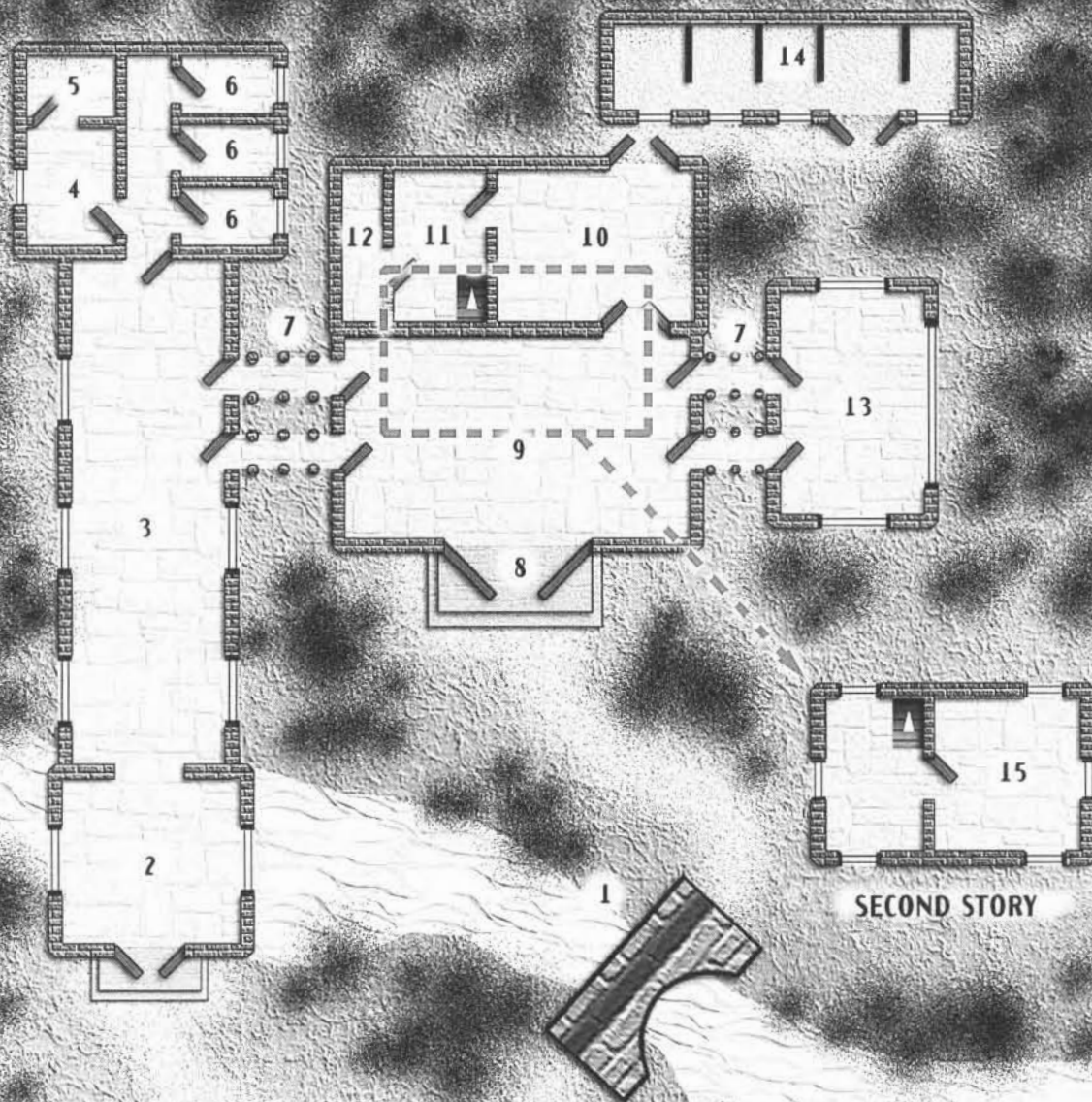
14. Stables

There are no horses remaining, and the building has fallen into disrepair.

15. Lord Ienobu's chambers

Nightingale floors, wooden floors designed to creak noisily when trod upon, cover the western half of this floor. The floors grant a +10 circumstance bonus to all Listen checks against those attempting to Move Silently upon them. Lord Ienobu, a zombie dressed in great armor, waits behind the door along with any other denizens of the castle who escaped (except the wasp and other peasants). If Ritsuko was warned of the PC's arrival, she has three peasants armed with spears waiting. Though the peasants have orders to attack the PCs, the nekomata doesn't seriously expect them to make a difference. She hopes at least one of them dies so she can have a new body to animate in case the PCs destroy Ienobu.

TREACHERY'S REWARD

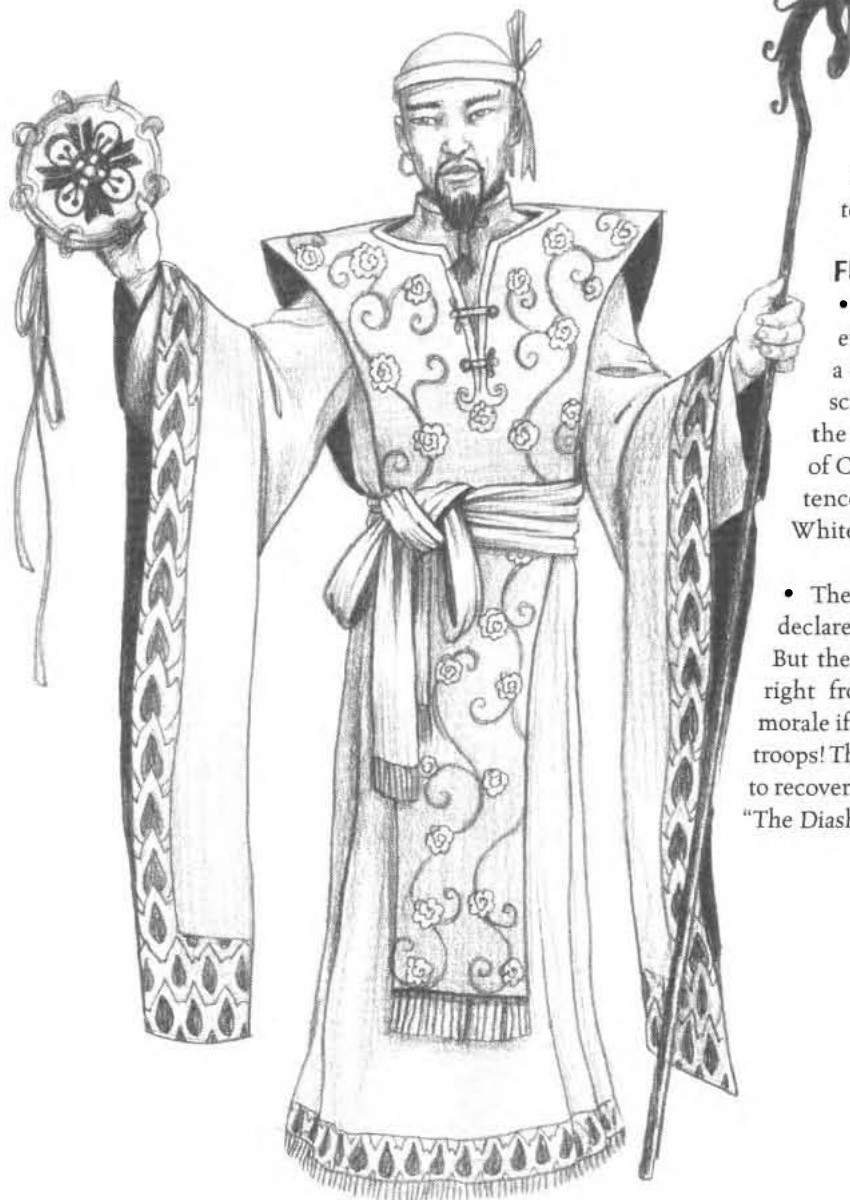


TREACHERY'S REWARD
KYUDEN TAARA MURA

Ienobu batters his opponents with his fists while threatening to rain the holy wrath of the gods of death upon the PCs for daring to attack him in his home (through Ritsuko's ventriloquism). Ritsuko, the nekoma-ta, hides in the rafters, holding her action to animate another corpse once Ienobu falls (choosing heavily armored PCs first). If things go badly, Ritsuko flees.

☛ **Lord Ienobu:** CR ½; Medium undead; HD 2d12+3; hp 16; Init -1; Spd 30 ft. (can't run); AC 11, touch 9, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +1; Grp +1/+2; Atk Slam+2 melee (1d6+1) or club +2 melee (1d6+1); Full Atk Slam+2 melee, (1d6+1) or club +2 melee (1d6+1); SA—; SQ Single actions only, damage reduction 5/slashing, darkvision 60 ft., undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref -1, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 8, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: Toughness.



Treasure: Ritsuko's treasures lie about Ienobu's bed chamber. The PCs find three bolts of fine silk (worth 300 gp each), a ruby ring worth 75 gp, 1,200 gp, 300 sp, a ring of sustenance, and a bag containing three kharmic coins (see New Magic — Appendix A).

EPILOGUE

When all is said and done, the PCs may feel it is their responsibility to decide the fate of Tara Mura. Do they report the murder of Lord Ienobu? Do they take pity on the poor peasants and conceal the crime? What of

Ritsuko? If the cat spirit survived, it is extremely likely she'll wish to wreak vengeance upon the PCs as well as recover those impressive items in Ritsuko's hoard that were stolen by the villagers.

The results of this adventure could have interesting implications for a long-term campaign.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

- While relaxing after the current series of events, a young boy comes to the PCs from a nearby village holding a scroll. Inside is a scrawled letter which reads: 'We have killed the Village Magistrate, so sorry. Town of Caotang no longer can work. Awaiting sentence of death' (see the adventure "Blood on White Petals").

- The lord of the land Lord Kunemura, has declared war on his old enemy, Lord Shotokami. But then the Lord's ancient weapons go missing right from his very home, a terrible blow for morale if word of this treachery every got out to his troops! The lord's chamberlain, Tsuyokaze, begs you to recover the swords at any price (see the adventure "The Diasho and the Ninja").

Chapter 15:

Blood on White Petals

Levels 2 to 4
by Ree Soesbee

There is a secret to every message, and a hidden truth in every riddle... Traveling along the roads outside the peaceful province of Teshida. A humble ashigaru youth runs toward you, kneeling in the muck and mud at your feet.

"Please," he says, weeping. "Please."

He holds up a scroll, sealed with the chop of the village of Kinuji Mura. On the outside, written in poor calligraphy, is the word 'samurai'. Within, there is a message. In sloped kanji, tilted and barely legible, the message reads 'We have killed the Village Magistrate, so sorry. Town of Kinuji Mura no longer can work. Awaiting sentence of death.'

Kinuji Mura is a wealthy village. Its production of silk worms is renowned throughout all of Kikumura Province, and without the yearly tithe from the town, many master silk-makers will have no goods for sale when the winter comes. The entire province will starve.

"I will take you to Kinuji Mura," the ashigaru youth says brokenly. "And there, you must administer the Emperor's justice... and destroy us all."

DM BACKGROUND

This adventure is an Asian-style adventure designed for four to six PCs of levels 1 to 3. It fits in well with oriental style campaigns, but can be modified to suit any campaign. It has been written specifically for Rokugan, but the names and locations are merely signifiers, easily adapted to your campaign. If you do not possess the rulebook for d20 Rokugan, the stat blocks contain the OGL material necessary to "fake it."

The village of Kinuji Mura is wealthy, filled with peasants who care for the famous silkworms and provide silk for the entire province. Without the silk production of this village, the province's main resource, it has no goods to trade for winter food. Kinuji Mura has no record of being disobedient; no subversive elements are housed within the borders, and its peasants are cared for and quite comfortable given their station. The village Magistrate, an aged samurai named Shinjo Husuto, cares for Kinuji Mura and its inhabitants. He is known for his fairness and generosity.

But, unknown to the PCs, the peaceful and prosperous village they remember was overturned two years ago with the death of Husuto. The samurai's son, Shinjo Eojin, was named Magistrate following his father's death, and he was a different man than the aged Husuto. The son's rule has been significantly less fair... and far more tyrannical.

Eojin forced the peasants to work harder. He raised their taxes. He overthrew their town council and imposed a system of absolute dictatorship. Fancying himself a warrior, Eojin levied a military tax and hired mercenaries to form a militia for the peaceful village. Although they did not need the militia, the village of Kinuji Mura endured the indignity of house-to-house searches for 'stolen' goods. During these searches, guards stole many precious family heirlooms, and some of the villagers were injured or killed.

Moto Shen, Lord of the neighboring Futai province, always envied Kinuji Mura's wealth. Only a small river tributary separated Futai from the silkworm farms of Kinuji Mura. While Husuto was Magistrate, Moto Shen knew he could not possibly conquer Kinuji Mura. The peasants would revolt, the quick-witted old magistrate would call in the soldiers of nearby provinces, and it would come to nothing. But with Eojin, the son, in power — times had changed. Pandering to the young man's pride, Moto Shen sent several of his own soldiers into the area, and arranged for them to be hired into Eojin's 'ashigaru militia'. By using Eojin's pride and power-lust, Moto Shen's guards manipulated him into abusing his people. Their eventual intent was to have Futai soldiers march into Kinuji Mura, destroy Eojin, and 'liberate' the village — thus ensuring the loyalty of the village and its workers.

What Moto Shen did not count on, however, was the depth of Eojin's ambition. Unknown to Moto Shen or to the soldiers he had sent to spy upon Kinuji Mura, Eojin practiced black sorcery. He summoned a ravenous Marauder, feeding it the children of the town one by one in order to ensure its loyalty and command its power. Eojin locked the children of the village within the shrine on the hillside above Kinuji Mura, planning to use them to fuel his black magic; in the meantime, they were useful tools for blackmailing their parents into servitude. Meanwhile, the beast was teaching Eojin greater and more powerful arts... and one day, Eojin would have destroyed Kinuji Mura and marched upon Kikumura in order to seize it for his own.

But even plans within plans go awry. One of the parents snuck into the shrine late at night, planning to free his daughter and leave Kinuji Mura. He found a black ritual going on there, and heard the beast bargaining with Eojin for the lives of the village children. The peasants went mad, attacked and killed Eojin and fled back to the village.

The next morning, the entire village revolted. They killed most of the militia, destroyed Eojin's shrine, and hung the magistrate on a torii arch with his belly slit open for the crows. The peasants believed this would end the Goikengu demon's attack — but they were wrong. Eojin's death did not destroy the demon, but rather freed

it to operate independently — unshackled by Eojin's black magic. The Goikengu and its minions now ravage the countryside, feasting on the flesh of the unwary.

They must have children, however, in order to keep their form upon this world and prevent vanishing back into Jigoku. The village has hidden them as best they can, but they cannot keep them safe forever.

THE ADVENTURE

1. The Village of Kinuji Mura

As you approach the village of Kinuji Mura, the rolling hills and manicured stands of juniper trees are comforting. The area is beautiful, an elegant locale for such a wealthy town. Still... these fields and forests should be worked, and not a single silk farmer strolls among the pods which hang from the treetops. The area is quiet, empty.

The undeniable stench of rotting flesh hangs in the air. A villager ahead in the road runs back toward the town, screaming to the others about a group of samurai approaching. At the front gates of this quaint little town, all of the village's peasants are lying on the ground, their faces flat against the ground both in homage and in fear.

Only one kneels, his face lowered but not pressed to the ground. In his hands, he holds a set of swords indicating the office of the magistrate — likely, the swords of the samurai governor of this town. He holds them out in respect, his eyes lowered. "Honorable samurai," the old man begins. "We, the village of Kinuji Mura, have murdered our magistrate. We have taken up arms against a samurai. We know there can be no forgiveness. We offer you our lives, noble warriors, in penance for our crime."

Though it appears to be the entire population of the village, no children are present. None peer around the corners or out the windows of the vacant huts. In fact, there seem to be no children at all in the entire village.

If the samurai ask which of the peasants killed the magistrate, the old man continues speaking for the village. He insists all of them have done this deed, and they wish to be punished as one for their misdeed. PCs may make a Spot check (DC 12) to notice many of the women are weeping, and three of the peasant men are mildly injured (cuts, a bandaged arm, etc).

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Why did you Kill the Magistrate?

At this question, the peasants look terribly frightened, and many of the women weep aloud. They look at the PCs in terror, and cannot answer. The samurai PCs are no doubt angry at their refusal to reply, but these peasants are obviously in mortal fear. They simply plead for the PCs to kill them and not force them to answer. The peasants hint at some great evil plaguing their village, but they believe if they name it, it will strike them down.

The PCs may continue to press, intimidate the peasants into answering, or gently ease the information from one of the villagers. If they do, the peasants finally crack. Read the following text:

Where is the Magistrate's Body?

"Very well!" the ashigaru sobs, their resolve broken at last. "I will tell you. Eojin took our children! He took them away, to feed them to the great Goikengu demon! We killed Eojin to save our children!" Suddenly, a shadow not cast by the sun falls over the peasants and the remaining crowd screams and scatters. Before the speaking peasant can react, another man leaps upon him, pulling a small kitchen knife from his clothing. In a frenzy, the second peasant stabs the first, blood spraying everywhere. After he has butchered the first man, and the second peasant looks up at the PCs and smiles – and his eyes are black from corner to corner. "Come to me, samurai," he hisses – the voice seems ten times louder than this man could have spoken – "come to me, and I will show you death... and pain..." He laughs. The knife-wielding peasant's head spins suddenly, snapping in a single convulsion and he falls to his face in the dust – dead. The black slowly fades from his eyes.

At the torii arch near the southern edge of the village. This is also the source of the rotting flesh, and a thin column of smoke rises from the area of the village. The peasants take the samurai to the arch if they request to see the body. A crude instrument has decapitated Eojin (a pile of small harvesting knives lie beside the corpse), and his body has several knife-wounds and punctures. There is a monk beside the corpse, chanting to the local spirits and burning the Magistrate's personal effects. A small journal is among these items, but if the PCs don't pay attention to the monk, it is burned before they notice its existence.

PCs who check the body carefully (DC 14 if not touching it, 10 if they touch the body) notice black stains on its fingers. Also, there is a lock of hair hanging from the dead man's belt that appears to have been sawed crudely from its owner's scalp. The hair is that of a child.

Where are the Children?

At this, there is a great thunder of weeping, and even some of the men tear their hair and cry out in anguish. Many of them point at the east road, but they cannot answer any questions directly.

What lies down the Eastern Road?

The Monastery of White Petals lies a quarter mile down the eastern road. So long as the samurai do not ask the peasants what significance the Monastery holds, the peasants answer this simple question.

What's in the Journal?

Eojin's journal is the best source of information available to the PCs. Even if they are slow to find it, allow them to salvage a few of the pages from the fire in order to get partial clues. The journal reveals Eojin was a demon-summoner, a practitioner of blood sacrifices and black magic. It describes how he murdered his father to gain control of the magisterial position, and then administered excessive taxation so he would have the money to hire a militia and purchase the items he needed for his sacrifices. He discovered the name of a powerful demon who would bargain for the souls of children. Expecting to gain great power, Eojin took all nineteen of the village's children to the local monastery and kept them there – supposedly to force the villagers to pay taxes. In actuality, he intended to have a ritual, sacrifice the children, and gain phenomenal power.

The last entry mentions that tonight at sunset, he will send all of the monks away from the monastery, and use the ritual chamber in order to summon the demon. The journal describes how the demon has the power to possess and animate bodies, as well as its own powerful magic. Once all of the children are sacrificed, the demon can take a physical form, and be freed to wreak havoc.

No other description of the demon is given.

2. The Monastery of White Petals

Following the eastern road out of Kinuji Mura, you are afforded another spectacular view of the countryside. The road twists up a small hill, overlooking the village, a nearby river, and the wide silk forests surrounding Kinuji Mura.

At the top of the rise, a building with a wooden wall surrounding it comes into view. The wooden wall is very tall, but the sounds of a songbird within are audible. The main opening to the temple lies directly ahead – a set of huge, carved oak doors currently closed. To the north of the door is a ritual circle for offerings. Seven cherry trees are planted in a circle around a large, smooth altar-stone, and white blossoms cover the ground.

With a Spot check (DC 10), the PCs notice the trees nearest the wooden wall are blackened and wilting, their blossoms disfigured. The stone upon which incense and other offerings have been left is strangely scarred with knife blows, and blood stains the ground at the base of the stone. This is the site where Eojin was murdered, performing the ritual to summon the Goikengu demon (Eojin no Oni).

Eojin successfully summoned the demon, but lost control of it when the peasants attacked him.

Eojin no Oni was freed, and immediately changed the child into a koi fish to preserve its life force. At the base of the altar stone, the PCs may find (Spot check DC 18) three large, beautiful koi scales, and the footprints of a young child. The child walks from the temple to the stone, but never returns back into the temple. The trail ends here.

The demon is not able to complete the ritual without a willing 'priest.' Without someone to finish the ritual, it lives for a number of weeks equal to the number of children in its control — destroying a child per week. The Goikengu currently has twelve children in the temple, (he has already killed seven) all of whom are magically transformed into koi fish so they can be easily imprisoned.

The main doors to the temple are slightly ajar, and two burned-out torches lie on the stairs of the main entrance. There are no noises within the temple.

3. Main Ritual Hall

The main ritual hall is large and airy; vast windows at the top of the two-story room allowing light and wind to sweep through the chamber. Eight large pillars, carved with twisting dragons, hold the ceiling aloft in two rows down the middle of the room, and a tremendous altar rests in the center of the chamber.

Eight priests kneel in a circle around the altar, remaining absolutely silent and motionless. A set of double sliding-screens covers the center of the eastern wall, marking the door into the main body of the temple.

The monks surrounding the altar are dead. However, they are the perfect conduits for the Goikengu demon's possession power, and rise to attack the PCs once the party is within the main chamber — preferably, when one or more of the PCs are in easy grasp. Until the demon animates the bodies, they radiate as lifeless corpses and nothing more. When the PCs are in range, the corpses suddenly come to life, eyes turning jet-black. The animated monks attack the PCs until they are completely destroyed.

After the battle, the PCs hear the faint screams of children echoing throughout the monastery, as the Goikengu demon draws power from his captives to fuel his abilities.

Behind the sliding doors at the east of the ritual chamber is a hallway. The hallway has a sliding screen to either side, leading to two rooms (Room #4 and #5), and extends 15 ft. before reaching the main hallway (Room #6).

☛ **Goikengu-Animated Monk:** CR 2; Medium humanoid; HD 2d8+2; hp 16; Init +5; Spd 30ft.; AC 13, touch 10, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp +3; Atk +1/+1 melee (1d6+2/x2, flurry of blows), or +5 melee (1d6+2, 1d6+1/x2, quarterstaff), or +3 ranged (1d6/x3 short bow); Atk +1/+1 melee (1d6+2/x2, flurry of blows), or +5 melee (1d6+2, 1d6+1/x2, quarterstaff) or +3 ranged (1d6/x3 short bow); SA Flurry of blows; SQ Evasion, unarmed strike; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +4 Will +5; Str 14, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Balance +4, Climb +4, Escape Artist +4, Hide +4, Jump +4, Listen +4, Move Silently +3, Tumble +5; Deflect Arrows, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (quarterstaff).

Flurry of Blows (Ex): When unarmed, this monk may strike with a flurry of blows at the expense of accuracy. When doing so, he may make one extra attack in a round at his highest base attack bonus, but this attack suffers a -2 penalty, as does each other attack made that round.

Unarmed Strike: This monk gains Improved Unarmed Strike as a bonus feat. His attacks may be with either fist interchangeably or even from elbows, knees, and feet. This means that he may even make unarmed strikes with his hands full. There is no such thing as an off-hand attack for this monk striking unarmed. This monk may thus apply his full Strength bonus on damage rolls for all unarmed strikes.

Evasion (Ex): If this monk makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, he instead takes no damage. Evasion can be used only if he is wearing light armor or no armor. A helpless monk does not gain the benefit of evasion.

Possessions: Masterwork quarterstaff, shortbow, 18 arrows.

4. Dojo

This room was a dojo, designed to keep the monks fit physically, and trained in simple martial styles. Although the room is empty, the mats still litter the floor, and a rack of wooden bokken (practice swords) hangs neatly on the wall in the far corner. It is obvious many battles occurred here — though probably between the monks, and during regular practice times.

One of the bokken rises from its place on the wall, pointing menacingly. Then another, then a third... until the all five have risen and hangs in the air. A child's laughter whispers through the room, and the swords move — blindingly fast to — attack.

The bokken are animated by the power of the Goikengu and fight until destroyed.

☛ **Fiendish Animated Object, Small (bokken):** CR 1; Small construct (outsider); HD 1d10+10; hp 16, 14; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; 14, touch 12, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +0; Grp -4; Atk +1 melee (1d4, slam) Full Atk +1 melee (1d4, slam); SA Constrict; SQ Construct traits, darkvision 60 ft., hardness, low-light vision, resistance to cold and fire 5, *smite good*, spell resistance 6; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will -5; Str 10, Dex 12, Con —, Int 3, Wis 1, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: —

Hardness (Ex): An animated object has the same hardness it had before it was animated. A bokken has a hardness of 5.

Smite Good (Su): Once per day, a fiendish animated object can make a normal melee attack to deal an extra point of damage against a good foe.

5. Bathing Chamber

The room to the north of the small hallway is a bathing chamber, complete with a large tub located against the north wall. There is room enough for four men in the tub at any time, and plenty of firewood for heating the water in the bath. A well in the corner draws water up to the surface, from which it would be carried to fill the tub.

Several light robes lid, folded, by the door. There are a selection of soaps and scrubbing sponges, all arranged in a basket. The room seems otherwise empty.

With a successful Listen check (DC 12), the PCs hear faint, fearful whispers coming from the well. The well is too small to crawl down, and raising the bucket on the string only brings up clear water. However, if they stop

and listen to the voices for a while, the PCs hear the whisperings of several children, all very frightened and begging for help. Some weep, some call out to their parents, others whisper encouragement to one another in an attempt to keep hope alive. The voices are echoing strangely through the water, and the sound is disturbing.

The children can faintly hear the PCs if the PCs try to contact them. They know very little about their state, except they are in a dark place, and it is very cold. They whisper for help, afraid to speak louder lest they attract the demon's attention. The PCs cannot climb down the well to rescue them, and must continue on, though certain the children are still alive. Any use of life-detecting powers into the well only reveal the faint presence of fish and other common aquatic life.

6. Main Hallway

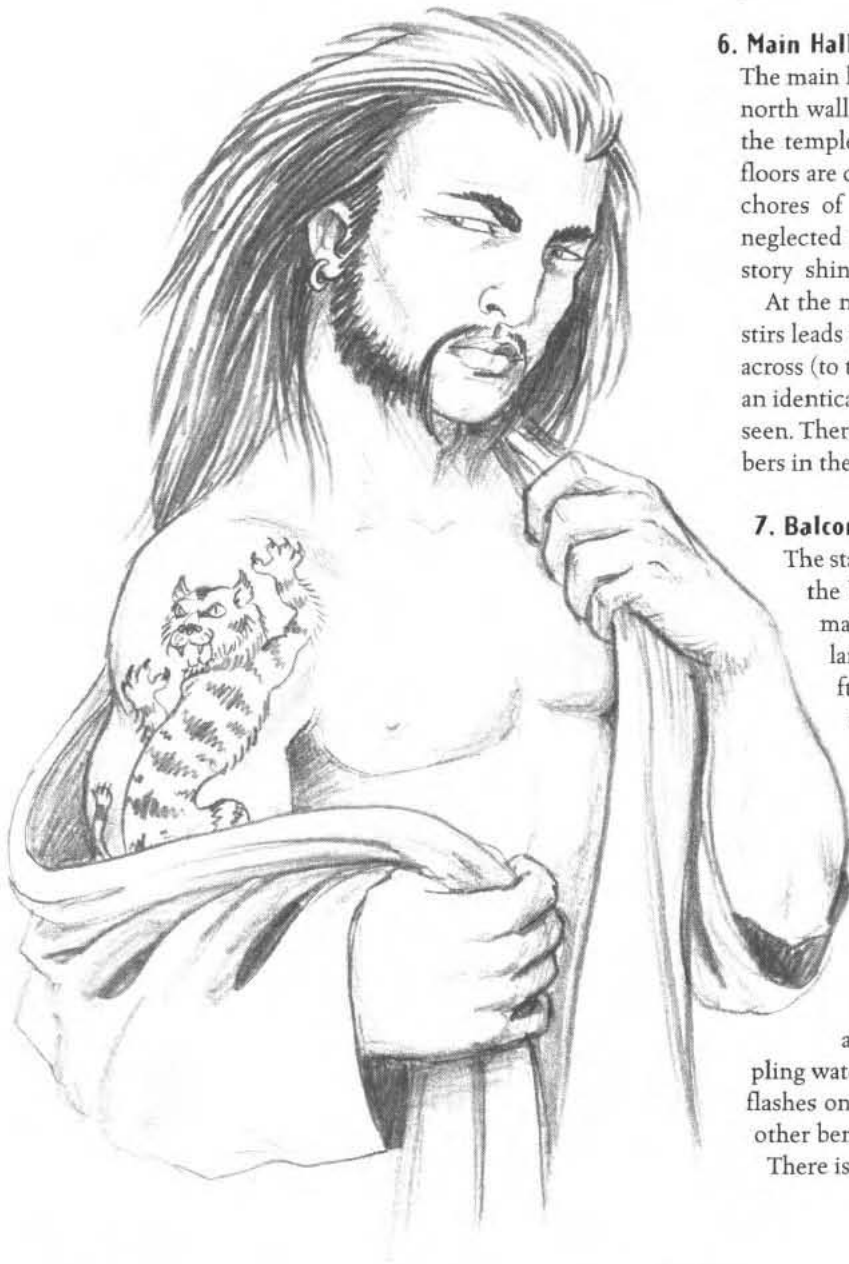
The main hallway of the temple stretches from the upper north wall to the south chambers, and out to the front of the temple at a smaller aperture to the southwest. The floors are clean, swept free of dust and debris by the daily chores of the monks though those chores have been neglected in the last few days. Windows in the second story shine light down through wide archways.

At the northern end of the hallway, a flight of narrow stairs leads up through an archway to the outside. Directly across (to the east) the doorway into the main ritual hall, an identical small hallway with three sliding doors can be seen. There are two other sliding doors leading to chambers in the southern end of the temple.

7. Balcony

The stairs to the north lead up to an outer arch exiting the building. Outside, there is a long, flat balcony made of red-lacquered wood, which overlooks the large garden below. The balcony is nearly thirty ft. above the garden, and leaping would certainly result in broken limbs. The garden, pride of the monastery, was once tended to every day as part of the monks' meditational cycle. Although the monastery is shrouded in blood and the monks twisted by evil powers, the garden is still a haven. The garden is filled with spreading cherry trees, wide cobblestone paths, and two elegant sand gardens. The main feature of the garden is a large koi pond with two islands, and gently arched bridges offering passage over the rippling water. The pond extends beneath the balcony, light flashes on the scales of large koi fish as they chase each other beneath the waves.

There is nothing else of interest on the balcony.





8. Brothers' Barracks

This room has a separate flight of stairs leading up to a second story. Both the lower and upper parts of this chamber are filled with futons for sleeping. This set of rooms was the barracks, which housed the main body of the monks of the temple. Fortunately, the monks are still here. Unfortunately, they're all dead.

The room is covered in blood. It spatters the walls, drips from the windowsills of the high second-story windows, and bodies litter the floor all over the chamber. Bodies begin to move as you draw near...their eyes turn black as ethereal, impish giggling echoes nearby.

Two of the 'monks' in this chamber are actually the masters of the monastery's dojo, and are far more competent fighters than the others. All of the animated inhabitants of this room fight until destroyed.

🏯 **Goikengu-Animated Master, Human Mnk 4:** CR 4; Medium Humanoid; HD 4d8+11; hp 27; Init +5; Spd 40 ft.; AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +4; Grp +7; Atk +7 melee (1d6+3, unarmed attack); Full Atk +5/+5 melee (1d6+3, 1d6+3/x2, flurry of blows); SA Flurry of blows; SQ Evasion, ki strike, slow fall 20 ft., still mind, unarmed strike; AL N; SV Fort 6+, Ref +5, Will +10; Str 16, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 18, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Balance +4, Climb +5, Escape Artist +6, Jump +5, Knowledge (religion) +3, Move Silently +6, Sense Motive +7, Spot +3, Tumble +8; Deflect Arrows, Iron Will, Improved Initiative, Stunning Fist, Toughness.

Evasion (Ex): If a monk makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, he instead takes no damage.

Fast Movement (Ex): A monk gains a +10 enhancement bonus to his speed.

Flurry of Blows (Ex): When unarmed, a monk may strike with a flurry of blows at the expense of accuracy. When doing so, he may make one extra attack in a round at her highest base attack bonus, but this attack takes a '2 penalty, as does each other attack made that round.

Ki Strike (Su): A monk's unarmed attacks are empowered with ki. Her unarmed attacks are treated as magic weapons for the purpose of dealing damage to creatures with damage reduction. Ki strike improves with the character's monk level.

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Slow Fall (Ex): A monk within arm's reach of a wall can use it to slow his descent. When first using this ability, he takes damage as if the fall were 20 feet shorter than it actually is.

Still Mind (Ex): A monk gains a +2 bonus on saving throws against spells and effects from the school of enchantment.

Unarmed Strike: A monk gains Improved Unarmed Strike as a bonus feat. A monk's attacks may be with either fist interchangeably or even from elbows, knees, and feet. This means that a monk may even make unarmed strikes with her hands full. There is no such thing as an off-hand attack for a monk striking unarmed.

Possessions: None

❖ **Goikengu-Animated Monk:** CR 2; Medium humanoid; HD 2d8+2; hp 16; Init +5; Spd 30ft.; AC 13, touch 10, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp +3; Atk +1/+1 melee (1d6+2/x2, flurry of blows), or +5 melee (1d6+2, 1d6+1/x2, quarterstaff), or +3 ranged (1d6/x3 short bow); Atk +1/+1 melee (1d6+2/x2, flurry of blows), or +5 melee (1d6+2, 1d6+1/x2, quarterstaff) or +3 ranged (1d6/x3 short bow); SA Flurry of blows; SQ Evasion, unarmed strike; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +4 Will +5; Str 14, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Balance +4, Climb +4, Escape Artist +4, Hide +4, Jump +4, Listen +4, Move Silently +3, Tumble +5; Deflect Arrows, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (quarterstaff).

Flurry of Blows (Ex): When unarmored, this monk may strike with a flurry of blows at the expense of accuracy. When doing so, he may make one extra attack in a round at his highest base attack bonus, but this attack suffers a –2 penalty, as does each other attack made that round.

Unarmed Strike: This monk gains Improved Unarmed Strike as a bonus feat. His attacks may be with either fist interchangeably or even from elbows, knees, and feet. This means that he may even make unarmed strikes with his hands full. There is no such thing as an off-hand attack for this monk striking unarmed. This monk may thus apply his full Strength bonus on damage rolls for all unarmed strikes.

Evasion (Ex): If this monk makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, he instead takes no damage. Evasion can be used only if he is wearing light armor or no armor. A helpless monk does not gain the benefit of evasion.

Possessions: Masterwork quarterstaff, shortbow, 18 arrows.

9. Priests' Barracks

This chamber is elegantly furnished in comparison to the meager rooms surrounding it. Painted shoji screens section off four individual sleeping areas and a round table lies in the center of the room, capable of seating eight men. Small bowls of rotten rice rest on the table; the chopsticks scattered across the floor. Across the floor, in patterns created by the spilled soy and teriyaki sauces, are the tracks of something snakelike — and very large. The marks head into the corridor, but end at the door.

This room is otherwise empty of everything but the head priests' personal belongings — robes, prayer beads, and their futons. One of the futons has a spilled calligraphy set on it and a piece of rice paper with a half-finished poem:

*"In the depths, their souls
Rise like rainbows to the sun..."*

There is no final line to the haiku.

10. Kitchens

This is a fairly small room, with a large chopping block in the center, and an area for a cooking-fire. Two zombie-like cooks turn from their chopping and snarl, raising their butcher knives high above their heads as they attack. Other knives fly from their places on the wall!

❖ **Goikengu-Animated Cook:** CR 2; Medium humanoid; HD 2d8+2; hp 16; Init +5; Spd 30ft.; AC 13, touch 10, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp +3; Atk +1/+1 melee (1d6+2/x2, flurry of blows), or +5 melee (1d6+2, 1d6+1/x2, quarterstaff), or +3 ranged (1d6/x3 short bow); Atk +1/+1 melee (1d6+2/x2, flurry of blows), or +5 melee (1d6+2, 1d6+1/x2, quarterstaff) or +3 ranged (1d6/x3 short bow); SA Flurry of blows; SQ Evasion, unarmed strike; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +4 Will +5; Str 14, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Balance +3, Climb +3, Craft (cook) +5, Escape Artist +3, Hide +3, Jump +4, Listen +3, Move Silently +3, Tumble +5; Deflect Arrows, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (quarterstaff).

Flurry of Blows (Ex): When unarmored, this monk may strike with a flurry of blows at the expense of accuracy. When doing so, he may make one extra attack in a round at his highest base attack bonus, but this attack suffers a –2 penalty, as does each other attack made that round.

Unarmed Strike: This monk gains Improved Unarmed Strike as a bonus feat. His attacks may be with either fist interchangeably or even from elbows, knees, and feet. This means that he may even make unarmed strikes with his hands full. There is no such thing as an off-hand attack for this monk striking unarmed. This monk may thus apply his full Strength bonus on damage rolls for all unarmed strikes.

Evasion (Ex): If this monk makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, he instead takes no damage. Evasion can be used only if he is wearing light armor or no armor. A helpless monk does not gain the benefit of evasion.

Possessions: Masterwork quarterstaff, shortbow, 18 arrows.

❖ **Fiendish Animated Object, Small (knife):** CR 1; Small construct (outsider); HD 1d10+10; hp 16, 14; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; 14, touch 12, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +0; Grp –4; Atk +1 melee (1d4, slam) Full Atk +1 melee (1d4, slam); SA Constrict; SQ Construct traits, darkvision 60 ft., hardness, low-light vision, resistance to cold and fire 5, smite good, spell resistance 6; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will –5; Str 10, Dex 12, Con —, Int 3, Wis 1, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: —

Hardness (Ex): An animated object has the same hardness it had before it was animated. A knife has a hardness of 6.

Smite Good (Su): Once per day, a fiendish animated object can make a normal melee attack to deal an extra point of damage against a good foe.

11. Storage Room

This small storage room holds many gardening tools, extra robes, and boxes of tallow waiting to be poured into ritual candle molds. It is fully stocked, save for the food barrels, all of which have gone rancid despite being packed with wax and salt. Smelling the casks of sake here reveals they, too, are foul, and all the water in this room is greenish and sickly.

There is nothing else unusual in this room. The demon Goikengu's presence fouls all food within the monastery, given a few days, and so all the stored rations have gone bad — touched by a very particular disease.

PCs with appropriate skills may make Knowledge skill checks (DC 15) to recognize these as the signs a Goikengu demon has moved into the area. If a PC does so, they may be allowed to know simple facts from the monster sheet at the end of this module, as the DM desires.

Anyone who eats or drinks significant amounts from the stores becomes diseased per the spell contagion.

12. Private Ritual Chamber (A, B)

12A: Sliding shoji screens make up the north and west walls, while the south and east walls are made of solid stone. The south wall appears to be the outer wall of the monastery, but the east wall is made of packed red clay bricks, fashioned in elaborate patterns of raised textures. The patterns symbolize characters — balance, peace, and harmony. Blood stains all three, turning them into mockeries of their once-stately visual meaning.

The floor here is stained with blood and darker syrups, smeared as if a snake-tail crossed the room many times, lashing from side to side. The smears travel east, and continue beneath a small oak door in the eastern wall.

This room was once a waiting and meditation chamber outside the private ritual room of the high priests of the temple. It has been blasphemed with blood and corruption. PCs who take the time to note the darker stains on the floor are teriyaki and soy, possibly from the ruined meal in chamber (#9).

12B: Through the door to the east, there is a larger chamber, obviously used for private rituals and ceremonies. Once, it was ivory-white, with colorful mosaics on the smooth floor, now trampled and stained. Five empty white and gold pedestals rise from the floor. The debris was once a statue, lies at the base of each. A hissing comes from the far corners, where two arches open into the gardens. Moving quickly, a snake-like being rises from the far floor of the room and rears its head.

The creature is hideous. The snake is a mass of flesh, composed of the writhing bodies of six men in tattered monk robes. The men are clearly still alive. The head of the snake is humanoid, but distorted and enlarged so it resembles the gaping mouth and sloping forehead of a viper. A bloody tongue lashes out with a horrible hiss.

This creature was created by the Goikengu to operate independently in case of trouble. The creature is like a golem, with only animal intelligence and faint flashes of insight from the minds of the monks who form its flesh. When the snake dies, the monks who merged into its form also died. There is no way to undo the Goikengu's transformation. The creature fights until it is near death (10 hp or less). It flees into the gardens beyond, sinking beneath the waves of the koi pond if possible, or digging its length beneath the sand in the rock gardens to hide from the PCs.

✦ **Construct Constrictor Snake:** CR 2; Medium animal; HD 3d10+23; hp 41; Init +3; Spd 20 ft., climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.; AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +2; Grp +5; Atk +5 melee (1d3+4, bite); Full Atk +5 melee (1d3+4, bite); SA Constrict 1d3+4, construct, darkvision 60 ft., improved grab, low-light vision, ; SQ Scent; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +2; Str 17, Dex 17, Con -, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Balance +11, Climb +14, Hide +10, Listen +7, Spot +7, Swim +11; Alertness, Toughness

Constrict (Ex): On a successful grapple check, a constrictor snake deals 1d3+4 points of damage.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a constrictor snake must hit with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can constrict.

13. Gardens

The gardens are wide and expansive, with cherry trees blowing softly in the wind. White petals cascade to the ground as the branches of the trees move and sway. In any other circumstance, this would be a beautiful scene. Now, it is ghastly and ironic, with blood spread wall to wall inside the temple.

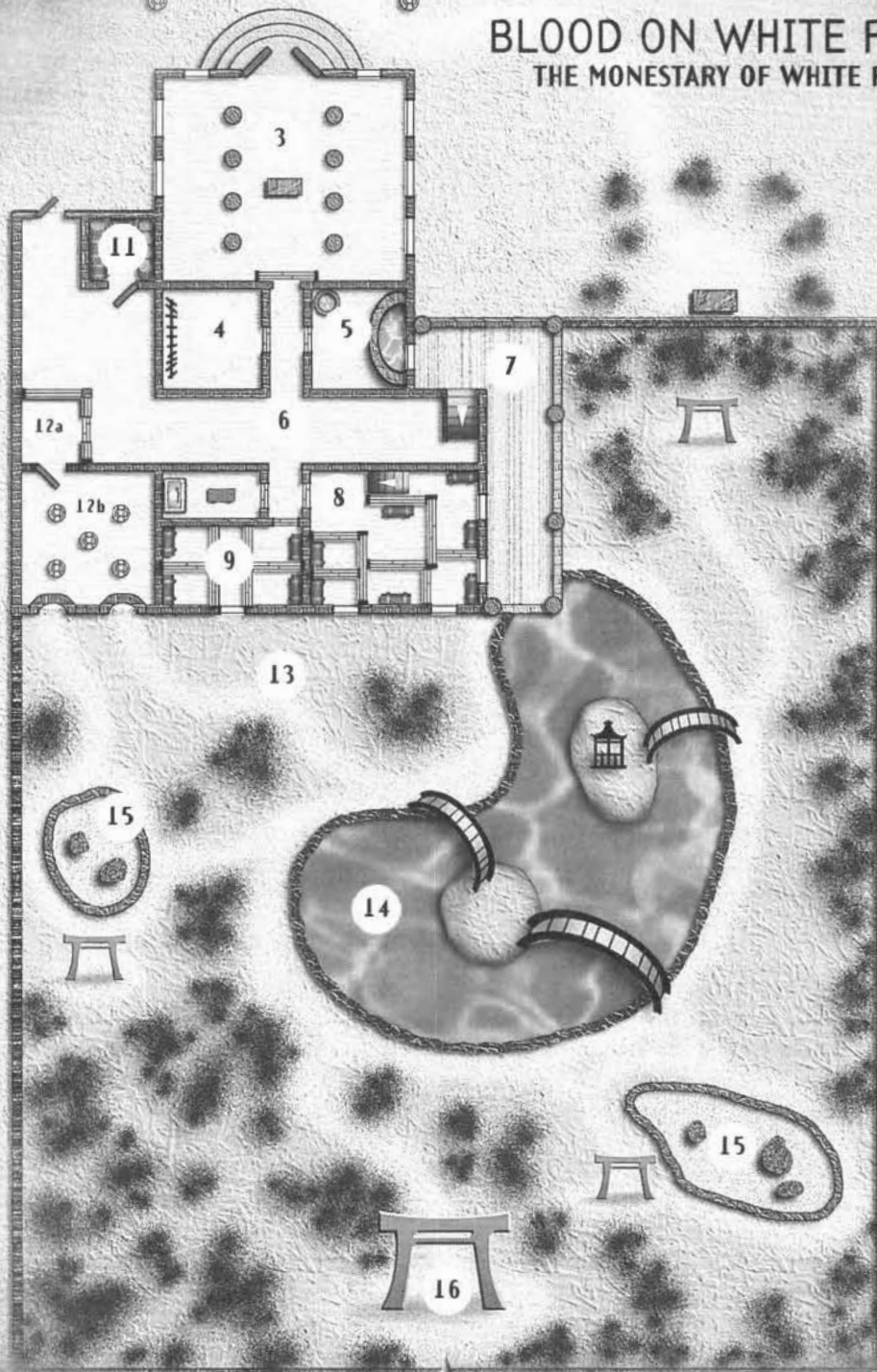
There are two large sand gardens in the area, one nearby and one through the trees. To the north are the broad koi pond and its two small islands. In the far rear of the garden, an ivory and gold torii arch rises above the white flowers of the cherry trees, framing what may be a ritual area — but the lower portions are blocked from view by the cherry forest.

14. Koi Pond

The koi pond is large, and has two small islands in the center, connected to either side by arched bridges painted with green and gold lacquer. Beneath the waves, koi swim back and forth in the sunlight. One of the two islands has a small gazebo upon it, obviously a place for meditation, looking out over the soft waves of the pond.

The koi pond is actually the secret to the Goikengu demon's plans. The fish within the pond are not carp at all, but the transformed bodies of the captive children, desperately seeking escape from their watery prison. If the PCs place their ears near the surface, they hear the faint whispers of children, begging for assistance. Although the children cannot carry on conversations

BLOOD ON WHITE PETALS
THE MONESTARY OF WHITE PETALS



with the PCs, the koi swim exceptionally close; they nibble gently on the fingers of the PCs if they dip them into the water — very odd behavior for the usually shy koi.

The whispers from the water speak in riddles, telling of darkness and pain. The children's voices are frightened, and some cry or scream. As a koi gets closer to a PC listening to the water, one single voice (the voice of a child) gets louder — and then fainter, as the koi moves away. The fish cannot communicate, or answer questions, but if the PCs listen long enough they should be able to understand the Eojin, the magistrate, gave these children as a gift the Goikengu. Eojin hoped the demon would reward him with immortality and power — but when the ritual was interrupted and the villagers killed Eojin, the Goikengu demon was stuck in a half-here, half-there state of existence between the physical and demonic realms.

The children are terrified, because once a week, precisely at sunset, the demon becomes tangible for ten minutes. During this time, he performs the ritual and slaughters another child. Seven children have been killed, twelve remain. When all the children die, the demon will be free and fully able to manifest in this world. Tonight, the demon comes for another victim — and the children are afraid. 'The belt,' they whisper as the sun begins to set, 'the belt...'

15. Sand Gardens

The sand gardens are quite ordinary, except for the prints described above.

The two sand gardens have been disrupted, their careful patterns disturbed by the tread of heavy, clawed feet. The prints of very small feet tread alongside the demon's prints — as if a child were being pulled from somewhere near the temple back toward the rear of the gardens.

16. Ivory Shrine

In the rear of the gardens is a large ivory arch, fashioned with two strong pillars of ivory and gold holding aloft the curved tusks of two ancient elephants. The arch is magnificent, large enough for five men to walk side by side beneath it, and taller than the height of three men.

AT SUNSET

At first, nothing is visible. Then, hanging in the air as sunset begins, a shimmering darkness erupts like black tar from the center of the topmost arch. It pours from the two crossed tusks at the top of the torii arch, dripping down like a gelatinous waterfall and congealing upon the ground. It drips in this fashion slowly, molding itself into the semblance of a horrific, horned demon with terrible claws. When the sun vanishes completely from the horizon, the Goikengu stands in the center of the dripping arch, claws bared. It wears no clothing, but has a shining

belt wrapped around its waist. The belt shines brightly against the creature's dripping, tar-like flesh, and appears to be made of large gold and silver scales.

The Goikengu already knows the PCs are there, and knows everything they have said or done within the temple grounds. He's been watching them the entire time, from the half-ream where he is stuck until the rituals to free him are complete. Therefore, he is already aware of the PC's capacities, strengths and weaknesses — and uses them to his advantage.

The belt the demon wears is magical, and contains the essences of the twelve children still trapped in the lake. If the belt is damaged, a great wailing rises from the koi pond as if the children are being physically harmed. If it is dispelled or destroyed, the children die.

EPILOGUE

Once the Goikengu is defeated, the PCs must take the belt from the tarry corpse and carry it to the pond. The koi circle joyfully, eager to be free. The scales are attached to the belt by small hooks to keep them in place, and may be freed from the leather strapping of the belt with a little effort. Each scale must be dipped into the water, one by one. For each, a single carp rushes forward and take the scale into its mouth — becoming instantly a human child. Silver scales are for the boys and gold for the girls.

When all the children have been transformed, they thank the PCs with cheers and shouts, many running ahead into Kinuji Mura to meet with their grieving parents. The PCs are then treated to the best meal Kinuji Mura can offer, and full suits of new silk clothing from their finest looms, as payment and tribute to the great deeds of the PCs.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

- A few of the children were visiting from the domain to the south, where Lord Jingoro rules, and has his own need of adventurers. Nightmares plague him of his ancestors meeting their ends, not as the histories say they did, but as cowards and men without honor. His own resolve founders and soon his enemies realize his weakness, and exploit it to their own ends (see the adventure "Unspoken Shame").
- A rightful master comes from the East to help the burden on this poor village, but he brings his own grave news. This overseer tells the legendary tale of Eriador. He charges the PCs with the task of venturing into the heart of the now monster-infested Mountain of Anduin to call back the people's great hero, Eriador the Paladin (see the adventure "Tomb of the Overseers").



Chapter 16: Unspoken Shame

Levels 3 to 5

by Andrew Getting

Lord Jingoro has already had many incarnations. While he was but a youth, the voices of his ancestors guided him. As a man, he fought with unparalleled skill and valor. As a general, he led armies to victory in the emperor's name. As a daimyo, he has faced treason, famine, plague, and war, battling each in turn.

Never before has Lord Jingoro truly known fear. His ancestors have always granted him their strength. Regardless, these great spirits have stood beside him.

Until now.

Nightmares plague Lord Jingoro — nightmares of his ancestors meeting their ends, not as the histories say they did, but as cowards and men without honor. As he watches each of his idols topple, his resolve founders. Soon his enemies recognize his weakness, and exploit it to their own ends.

As madness dogs his footsteps, the daimyo calls upon his most loyal servants to aid him in uncovering the mysteries of his ancestors... and undoing their most tragic mistake.

DM BACKGROUND

This adventure is an Asian-style adventure designed for four to six PCs of levels 3 to 5. It fits in well with oriental style campaigns, but can be modified to suit any campaign. It has been written specifically for Rokugan, but the names and locations are merely signifiers, easily adapted to your campaign. If you do not possess the rulebook for d20 Rokugan, the stat blocks contain the OGL material necessary to "fake it."

Lord Akodo Jingoro is the PCs' lord and one of the empire's most celebrated heroes in recent memory, exemplifying bushido in his every gesture, particularly with regards to piety. Unusually gifted with keen insight into his ancestors' spirits, Jingoro swore to stand beside them after he died. Now nearing retirement, the daimyo's enemies have conspired with an ancestor spirit who feels himself slighted by the daimyo's lack of affection.

This spirit, Akodo Shindoku, aspired to heroism in life, only to have his own kin slay him for his dishonor. Shindoku's survivors quickly forgot both his honor and his shame, relegating him to a small shrine in Jingoro's ancestral hall. His worship consists of little more than token sacrifice and prayer which grew ever more twisted in the spirit world.

He also grew more familiar with his fellows, and more hateful towards them. As an ancestor spirit, Shindoku found the tales of the others were scarcely more than half-truths themselves, with many of the more noble spirits, so favored by his descendents, being every bit as corrupt as he. His bitterness festered, but lay impotent without a focus.

Then came Matsu Izudenki.

In his youth, Akodo Jingoro earned his reputation by overthrowing a corrupt lord, Izudenki's master. Though Izudenki found himself disgusted with his master's practices, honor forced him to serve regardless, and with his lord's death, Matus Izudenki found himself a ronin. Izudenki swore to avenge his lord's death before committing seppuku, but instead fell into a deep depression.

Late one night, drunk on sake, Izudenki stole into the hall of ancestors, seeking the completion of a half-formed plan to find a dishonored ancestor there before passing out. Izudenki's sake-dimmed mind, combined with his hateful heart, allowed Shindoku to take hold.

With flesh a healthy share of hatred at his fingertips, Shindoku turned his power upon the daimyo, intent upon ruining him before the daimyo could become yet another honored ancestor, while Shindoku himself lay forgotten and neglected. He leaves Shindoku's body while the daimyo sleeps, and haunts his descendant's dreams by telling him the full truth of the other spirits.

It is this action that will lead to his undoing.

THE ADVENTURE

Because this adventure takes place within the home of the PCs' daimyo, the DM may wish to warn the PCs (or, at the very least, the PCs with honorable characters) they are charged with protecting the daimyo's estate as well as the daimyo's person. Characters who damage furniture or cast area-effect damage spells incur severe displeasure from their daimyo.

It is a beautiful morning. A gentle breeze, the mild temperature, and the slightest hint of freshly cut bamboo fill the air, assuredly portents of a gentle day.

Allow the PCs to go about their normal activities and allow them to relax somewhat, while reminding them of their duties to the daimyo. The more honorable characters should quickly round up the others, but allow the PCs the illusion of calm before breaking it.

When the players are ready to continue, read on:

Approaching Lord Jingoro's estate, the calm of the morning evaporates as quickly as dew. Though the servants go about their duties, they do so with quick, uneven steps, and a few even dare to make eye contact before collecting themselves and hurrying along. At the front entrance awaits Lord Jingoro's wife, Akodo Suko, her impeccable powder streaked with tears.

If the party stops a servant and asks about the morning's events, see room #11 for the response.

Suko eyes you, her lips pursed, almost white with the effort. She feigns a smile, and speaks quickly.

"Domo arigato. Please, come with me, quickly."

The daimyo's wife won't speak of her husband's ailment and quietly glares at anyone who refuses to comply with her. As wife to the daimyo, she still outranks the PCs.

Suko leads you into the estate, stepping quickly past the blooming garden and bustling servants. Several guards watch as you pass, but make no move to collect your weapons. Finally, at the rear of the grounds, Suko looks around outside a door, and stops.

"Whatever secrets you find today, guard with the utmost concern. My husband is unwell, and has complained of nightmares for several days. At first, he dismissed it as a simple weight upon his mind, a test of faith from his ancestors. Now... now, I must warn you Jingoro's many enemies would no doubt fall upon us all, should they discover his current state. Please, let this be second most in your mind, only preceded by restoring him to his proper health."

With that, she slides open the door.

The scent of the room is thick with the odors of stale sweat and melting wax. Within lies a bed ringed with candles. Lying upon the bed, shivering, is the sickly form of Lord Jingoro.

With a weary hand, [the daimyo] waves at you to stop speaking. He gulps twice; licking his dried lips, and then speaks in a low, cracked voice:

"For two weeks now, I have suffered. Outside," Jingoro says, pointing to the south, "is my family's hall of ancestors, where we place our shrines. I thought myself blessed. Blessed to be the heir to a prestigious line of heroes. Blessed to be their humble and dutiful servant. Blessed, too, to be their student, so near to them I could hear their voices even as a boy.

"How wrong I was. I refused to believe the dreams, fearing they were a portent of my own unworthiness to stand among those glorious spirits when I died. I ignored the visions which haunted me for three days, before I called for a history, to verify or deny them.

"How sad I was, when my nightmares proved true. I am no heir to heroism, but rather to thieves, brigands, and villains. The stories I heard from my family, and from the spirits themselves, were nothing more than lies."

Lord Jingoro leans forward, coughs, and smiles. "Lies. All of it. My whole life based upon lie after lie after lie, and I did nothing but praise the liars."

He raises a hand to his face, tearing the cheek with a fingernail, and Suko rushes to his side to sooth his pain. When his hacking subsides, he speaks again.

"I cannot allow this lie to continue. I have decided in the morning, I shall write what I have learned of my accursed line and I shall send the findings to the Emperor. Then I shall commit seppuku, to end my shame." Point to one of the PCs, "I would like you, to be my second."

"Hush, husband, you must rest. Decide upon such happenings in the morning, when you are better rested." Lord Jingoro nods and his wife escorts you from the room.

"You know my husband. You know he is a brave man. These dreams are not fancy. This much is clear. Voices from beyond speak to him in his trauma. You know what you must do."

Suko pauses. "He keeps the documents of his ancestors' misdeeds in his study, and you may wish to investigate his shrine as well."

Lady Suko does not allow the PCs entrance until they mention the possibility of an akumu to her, at which point progress to the Finale.

2. The Study

The study, normally barred, is open. To the north, Lord Jingoro's personal guard noisily trains and to the south is his trophy room, where he entertains special guests. Along the eastern wall is a case for holding scrolls, but several lie scattered about the floor before it.

A Search or Spot check (DC 20) reveals the slightest trace of blood about the room less than a day old.

PCs may jump to the reasonable conclusion someone has ransacked these quarters. This is not the case. Lord Jingoro, in a fit of depression, left his study before cleaning up after himself. Allow the PCs to pursue this course. Several of the newest servants are, in fact, spies, and the PCs may uncover their purpose before they do any lasting harm.

If the PCs investigate the scrolls, allow them to find each one, after 15 minutes of searching. These are the most prominently displayed ancestors at the shrine (room #4). Each of these scrolls contains enough information to disgrace the daimyo and the spies will seek out the documents if the PCs tell anyone other than the daimyo, Suko, or Izudenki of the scrolls' contents. The PCs may continue to search the scrolls, but below are the only ones not sealed.

Make a note of who keeps these documents — the spies attempt to pilfer the papers from their present keepers.

Scroll 1

This scroll describes the life of Akodo Yuuki, the founder of this particular branch of the Akodo family, and who once uncovered a conspiracy of monks who sought to overthrow the Emperor. This scroll, however, suggests that Yuuki was himself an agent of those monks, and betrayed them when he realized that they had no intention of allowing him to survive the plot.

Scroll 2

This scroll is ragged and charred. Evidently a fragment of a much larger document, it tells of a modest courtier, Kitsuo Yasashisa, and how she blackmailed one of the Emperor's finest magistrates into marrying her.

Scroll 3

This is a document almost torn in two and bearing the personal mon of Jingoro's great uncle, Akodo Jun. While Jun was personally responsible for the extermination of several bandit gangs, the note nevertheless demands that the recipient offer up payment, or his or her gang is next.

This specific document is a crass forgery — Jun was far too crafty to leave evidence of his wrongdoing, and anyone may roll Knowledge (history or nobility) at DC 18 to realize this. If they succeed by 5 or more, they also know that Jun retired to a monastic life early over a scandal. Izudenki (possessed by Shindoku) slipped this into the other scrolls to further torment the daimyo, but though the note itself is a lie, its suggestions as to Jun's character are not.

Scroll 4

This paper contains a hastily drawn script, with several sloppy kanji and spilled ink in one corner. It is a confession describing his ties to several others in the family, each a prominent member of a blood cult. The author then goes on to beg the Emperor's forgiveness, and for permission to commit seppuku. It is signed in similarly atrocious calligraphy as Matsu Goro, Lord Jingoro's great maternal grandfather.

Scroll 5

This note is dated nearly eighty years ago, apparently as part of a personal log. The author describes winning a great battle after receiving orders to surrender; the writer makes reference to burning the notice and slaying the messenger." A Knowledge (history) check (DC 22) reveals similar events transpiring in the life of Jingoro's father.

Scroll 6

This parchment bears a date just over two hundred years old, and recounts of the writer, Akodo Naitomen, witnessing his own brother hiring an assassin. Naitomen then describes the horror he felt as he drew his blade against Akodo Shindoku, and the shame that burned within him as he told their father what had happened.

A Knowledge (history) check (DC 15) reveals Naitomen was a minor functionary, but Shindoku was a noted diplomat between clans.

3. Guardposts

Guardposts are set aside for visiting family of Lord Jingoro's six guards now stand watch here. They bow.

If asked about the daimyo's condition, the guards respond.

Each night for over a week, he has awoken with screams. Each night, we rush to his side, fearful some treachery brought him low, but no. His only visitor is the weird, black incense which he burns in his candles.

If asked about suspicious persons in the area or about the blood in room #2, they respond:

The only suspicious thing going on is one of Lord Jingoro's new hires is missing. The rest of the servants have had to work all the harder for his absence.

The "servant" in question is Izudenki, who was placing the forged document among the others when the spies came upon him. He managed to wound three before they fled, but was hurt in the process. He quietly cleaned up his blood, and fled for the secret chamber (room #13) before collapsing. Shindoku is deathly afraid Izudenki will die before Jingoro does, which would slay Shindoku as well. This is why he left hints in room #12. He hopes someone will discover Izudenki, and tend to him.

If the PCs mention any of the documents from room #2, the guards strongly suggest the PCs remain quiet about the whole affair, lest unsavory ears get wind of the daimyo's impure lineage. Unfortunately, they say this within earshot of one of the spies. Every time the PCs enter or leave a room, roll 1d8 and subtract the number of spies caught. If the result is less than five, a "servant" attempts to pick one of the PC's pockets. See room #9 for details.

♣ **Guards, Human Lion Fighter 4:** CR 4; Medium humanoid; HD 4d10; hp 30; Init +4; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 10, flat-footed 17; Atks +6 melee (1d10, katana); Full Atk +6 melee (1d10, katana); SA —; SQ —; AL LN; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +2, Jump +2, Listen +3, Ride +2, Search +3, Spot +3, Swim +2; Alertness, Blind-Fight, Dodge, Improved Initiative.

Possessions: Great Armor, katana, wakizashi, masterwork tanto, masterwork tessen, yumi (short bow), 50 arrows.

4. Shrine

Outside is a large, freestanding building — [the daimyo's] hall of ancestors. Within lie the remains of his most prestigious forebears.

If the PCs have already looked over the documents from room #2, they quickly find the shrines to each ancestor here.

Of especial note is that, despite Naitomen's relatively low status within the family, his shrine is much larger and more tended than nearby Shindoku's. A Search check (DC 20) reveals someone has recently disturbed Shindoku's shrine, spilling some of its funerary ashes.

5. Trophy Room

This is the room where the daimyo entertained his closest friends — to the south is where he met others. Within lies his most cherished possessions — key items of many of his ancestors' lives, such as armor, daisho, mempo, writings, and such.

Shindoku has an artifact present — his masterwork yumi. While it, like all the other items here, is trapped (see below), it was a prized possession of Shindoku's while he was alive. Interfering with it, or destroying it, brings it forth to attack.

♣ **Alarm Trap:** CR 1; no attack roll necessary (sounds an alarm if the associated object moves); Search (DC 15); Disable Device (DC 10).

6. Meeting Chamber

This is where Lord Jingoro met most of his guests, particularly to negotiate treaties or similar types of agreements. A lowered table figures in the center of the room.

There is nothing of consequence here, but a Spot check (DC 25) or Knowledge (architecture) check (DC 10) reveals this room is significantly larger than room #12 (assuming the PCs have been there), despite the doors being directly across the garden from each other.

7. Kitchen

A blast of steam welcomes you to the kitchen, and the servants scurry about. Nearby are the servants' chambers.

If the PCs have already confronted the other spies in room #9, the remaining conspirator uses the confusion in the room to attack the PCs. All Hide and Move Silently checks in the kitchen get a +3 situational bonus, due to the persistent sounds of cooking and the associated steam.

If the PCs question the servants, the peasants immediately drop to their knees and do not speak unless spoken to.

If the PCs ask about the daimyo's condition, the peasants respond:

Jingoro-sama has had nightmares, gracious lords, but we are certain this will not deter him from future glory. We offer him our own humble protections in prayers.

If the PCs ask about banishments, or the cause of the nightmares, the servants respond:

Oni cause nightmares among the righteous, in retaliation for their good deeds. Every morning, we have chased away a demon of black smoke from Jingoro-sama's room.

If the PCs ask the servants about the documents, the servants beg forgiveness and promise not to tell anyone of the daimyo's ancestors.

If the PCs ask about the missing servant (Izudenki), the servants respond:

He was the only one of the new servants to have shirked his duties. [The daimyo]-sama is fair, but also expects much of us. Perhaps this wastrel decided to abandon his duties rather than strive to achieve them.

If the PCs ask about suspicious persons, the spy attacks (see room #9). This solitary spy attacks until he has slain all the PCs, or until he takes damage, after which he flees.

8. Garden

Lord Jingoro's garden was once his quietest accomplishment, a flowing source of greenery, which he personally maintained. Already, however, its natural tendencies have rebelled against his ministrations, overcoming the pruning he has since neglected.

A Search check (DC 15) reveals a trail of blood along the garden floor, leading from room #2 to room #12.

Any fight occurring here quickly draws the attention of the nearby guard.

9. Servants' Quarters

If the PCs have already uncovered the spy in room #7, the spies here have heard the screams of the other servants, and await here in ambush. Unless the PCs approach this room carefully, the spies catch the PCs flat-footed.

Otherwise, they react as do the servants in room #7; they, too, are investigating the daimyo's madness, but for their own master's purposes.

▲ Spy, Human Rogue 7: CR 7; Medium humanoid; HD 7d6; hp 24 (10, 11, 12); Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 17; Atks +8 melee (1d6+1, +1 *ninja-to*); Full Atk +8 melee (1d6+1, +1 *ninja-to*); AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 11, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +4, Disable Device +4, Disguise +6, Escape Artist +4, Forgery +2, Gather Information +6, Hide +6, Innuendo +3, Listen +5, Move Silently +7, Open Lock +4, Pick Pocket +8, Read Lips +7, Search +5, Sense Motive +2, Spot +5, Swim +2; Alertness, Blind-Fight, Dodge, Weapon Finesse (*ninja-to*).

Possessions: +2 *ashigaru armor*, +1 *ninja-to*, 10 shuriken, 2 vials of night milk poison.

Three of the spies in this room are already wounded, having only 10 to 12 hp each. Their bandages are plainly visible, and if asked about them, they attack. Unless the PCs make a great deal of noise, the guards do not hear the fight over the racket in the kitchen.

The spies in this room fight until at least two of them have died. The others surrender, and offer up that another servant, Izudenki, was prowling in the study. After their arrest, they escape and flee with any proof of the daimyo's madness or dishonorable ancestry.

10. Storeroom

This room contains the provisions needed for the kitchens to the north — large crates of spices, rice, and vegetables.

If the spies have stolen any of the documents from #2, they have hidden the papers here. A Search check (DC 20) reveals them tucked away inside an empty crate.

11. Servants' Quarters

Here are several servants, mostly errand boys, relaxing in their quarters. Upon noting your arrival, they fall to their knees before you.

The servants here act like those in #7 and #9, but there are no spies here. In addition, if asked about the demon haunting the daimyo, they acknowledge they chased it to the spare room to the south, but fled when it turned back upon them.

12. Spare Room

This is another guest room, reserved for those less favored than the ones adjacent to [the daimyo's] chambers. As such, it is rarely used... but someone has clearly gone

to much trouble within. A trail of blood leads to the southern wall, just below a portrait of [the daimyo's father] in a dueling stance.

A Spot check (DC 25) reveals the portrait's stance is not entirely accurate; the swordsman is gripping the wrong way with his left hand. If the PCs push on the left side of the portrait, the door opens.

13. Secret Room

The door slides open, revealing the bloodied form of a man dressed in simple peasant clothes. A wakizashi dangles from his left hand, but his wounds are not self-inflicted. He looks up at you, smiles, and speaks. "At last."

Izudenki has been quietly awaiting his death here. He doesn't know (nor does he care) that Shindoku is an akumu. He only seeks to rid the world of his foul enemy. If left alone for another hour after the PCs find him, he bleeds to death. He is presently too weak to stand on his own. If the PCs stabilize him, he is still weak (he still suffers from the damage Shindoku has inflicted upon him, even if his physical wounds are gone).

He tells the PCs what he knows as soon as he realizes they are not spies, but servants of the daimyo.

"I must apologize for what I... we have done to your master... I am Izudenki... a ronin... Long ago, bushido compelled me to serve a dishonorable lord... [The daimyo] did what I could not and slew my master... Now a ronin, I swore revenge but could find no honorable way to avenge my lord... Many days ago... I drank too much sake, and found myself at your master's shrine. Drunk, I stumbled and tipped over an urn. At first I thought the smoke was nothing but ashes... but the cloud remained in the air before descending upon me... The demon Shindoku... compelled me to serve it. I disguised myself as a servant... and came here, while it attacked Lord Jingoro nightly. One night, it forced me to place... a forgery among many histories and some other servants... attacked me. I drove them off, covered my tracks, and crawled here to die."

"The akumu... will come again tonight... we must face it and best it... or your lord will never be the same."

The PCs may summon the akumu either by meddling with Shindoku's bow (room #5) or by awaiting it within the daimyo's chambers (room #1). In either case, progress to the Finale once the PCs are set in their position.

14. Western Gallery

At the entrance to Lord Jingoro's home is an expansive series of murals decorating the walls. This mural depicts several of his ancestors. Here, too, are several decorative bonsai, and unrolled scrolls of haiku.

If the PCs look closely, they find Shindoku — he is the only ancestor with a bow. The other ancestors include those mentioned in room #2, and several less notable others.

15. Eastern Gallery

This mural displays Lord Jingoro's most courageous act, the overthrow of a corrupt daimyo, portrayed here as cowering behind more noble protectors. Jingoro cuts down all his foes with ease, but his eyes lock onto his true enemy.

The other daimyo in this picture is Izudenki's dead master.

FINALE

If the PCs await the akumu in room #1, read the following aloud:

After initial protests, Suko assents. Izudenki quietly begs Jingoro's forgiveness, but your lord is in a feverish state, and either does not hear or does not respond. Soon, however, the darkness sets in, and the candles smoke...

If, however, the PCs summon the akumu by using the bow in room #5, read the following:

As soon as you move the bow, a wild howl shrieks from outside, and a black smoke oozes into the room from the southeastern corner.

Arrows fired from this bow may strike the akumu as though they were magical.

In either case, continue:

The spirit coalesces into the form of a great, black cat with the face of a man — Shindoku. The spirit hisses, and leaps into your midst.

Whether the PCs damage Shindoku directly or not, a successful hit causes it great pain. If the PCs are in room #1, Shindoku hurriedly attempts to weave past them, and slay the daimyo. If the daimyo dies, the akumu shrieks in triumph and quickly departs.

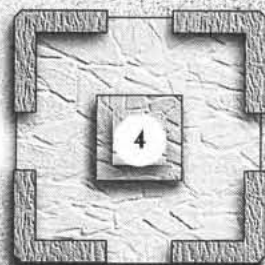
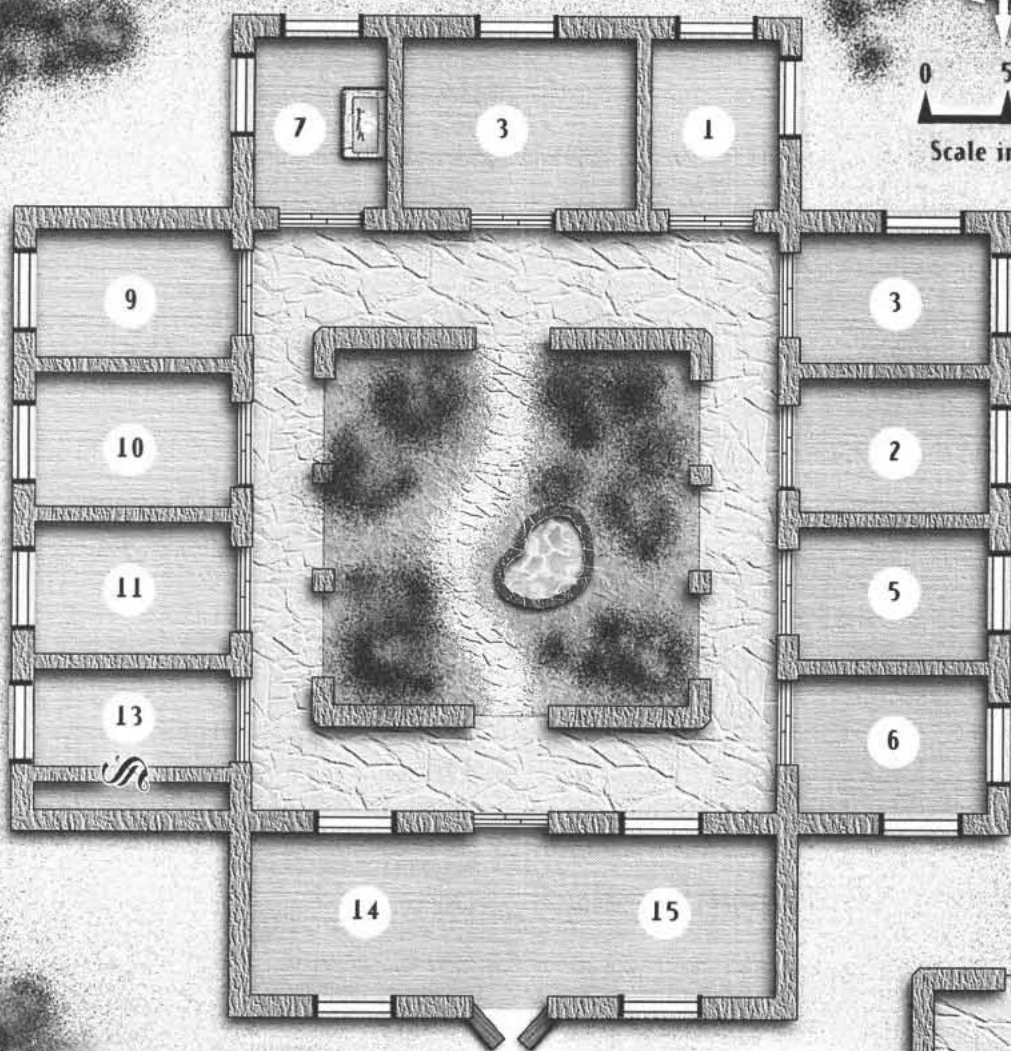
Over the next few days, weeks and months, it attacks the daimyo's wife, any children they might have, and finally any remaining family.

UNSPOKEN SHAME

THE DALIYO'S ESTATE



Scale in Feet



Once the akumu is present, Izudenki attempts to commit seppuku. Shindoku may possess Izudenki as a free action, unless disrupted as above. It takes Izudenki five rounds to complete the three cuts, and he refuses any second for the ritual. If he succeeds before the daimyo dies, the daimyo's madness immediately fades, and Shindoku is irrevocably destroyed.

EPILOGUE

If the daimyo survives, and Izudenki committed seppuku, read the following aloud:

Lord Jingoro awakens the next morning, refreshed. His nightmares have passed, and as you tell him of Izudenki's death, he sighs sadly. "He was a good man felled by misplaced loyalties, but he was still a good man. He died in my service, seeking only my salvation where my ancestor sought my doom. I shall call a shugenja to bless Shindoku's shrine, then rededicate it to Izudenki-san. Though he intended to slay me, and though he and I never met before last night, he is as my son to me."

If the daimyo dies, read the following aloud:

With a roar of triumph, Shindoku leaps through the wall, dissipating into smoke. A low rattle escapes the lord's throat. The next morning, you quietly gather your possessions, and, with Izudenki, set off in search of the spirit which stole your master's soul. Ensuing encounters find Shindoku aided by another akumu, this one with the face of the daimyo. If Izudenki dies after the daimyo does, he too rises again as an akumu.

If the daimyo lives, but Izudenki dies before committing seppuku, read the following aloud:

Izudenki's death destroyed Shindoku, but brought no mercies upon Lord Jingoro. He wakes in the morning, gibbering and incoherent. He refuses to look upon either you or his wife, and soon Suko takes over his affairs, announcing her husband has retired to a monastery."

Depending on the PCs' performance, the daimyo's wife may choose not to keep them on as retainers.

LOOSE ENDS

Izudenki was most assuredly not the fallen daimyo's only retainer, and others will most certainly follow, especially if they hear word of Izudenki's actions.

If any of the spies escape (quite possible, given at least one is not in room #9), they report to their unknown master all they have seen or heard. Unless the spies succeeded in their theft of the daimyo's documents, they have no proof which could directly undo Jingoro's position, but the mere knowledge of the akumu should prove interesting. If the spies escape with at least one of the documents, it takes 1d6 weeks minus the number of stolen documents for the spies' master to mount a case against Jingoro, half if he is dead or insane.

If the akumu escapes, it likely has new akumu in service to it. Shindoku dispatches these to other family before itself fleeing to stalk other kin. The destruction of the akumu, especially as Shindoku personally acquires more power, could provide even the newly-ronin PCs with a quest.

If Jingoro survives with both body and mind intact, the problem of his unwholesome lineage remains. While disposing of the evidence against him is a simple enough matter, the daimyo is an honorable man, and asks the players to uncover the victims of his ancestors' crimes, he might make good upon their mistakes.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

- The PCs learn of an evil tyrant about to wage war upon their territory, and only the ancestor spirit of a great warrior destined by fate to spare the innocent can stop him. (see the adventure "Tomb of the Overseers").
- Lord Jingoro tasks the PCs to deliver a message to a village up the coast where he has a good friend who is worried about Jingoro and wishes news of his health. As the PCs finally reach the town, the dry snap of a twig echoes in the high rocks to one side of the road. Several figures in black masks appear from behind the rocks, wielding rough-hewn spears. They outnumber the PCs two to one (see the adventure "Treachery's Reward").

NEW FEAT

Soul of Purity (Ancestor)

Following Izudenki's death by seppuku, Jingoro decrees for Izudenki join his family's shrine, thereby honoring the ronin's sacrifice. The PC who behaved most honorably over the course of this adventure is approached by Izudenki in thanks, offering his services as an ancestor. Note that, as a spirit, Izudenki no longer falls prey to mortal trickery, and won't aid a PC who has merely pretended to be honorable.

After Izudenki offers his patronage to a PC, the PC may take this feat at his or her next available opportunity to gain a feat, ignoring normal rules for ancestor feats.

Benefit: When making a Sense Motive check, you may always take 10, even when normally not allowed to.

Chapter 17:

Tomb of the Overseers

Levels 3 to 5

by Ken Villars & John Zinser

Nearly 100 years ago, Lord Eriador wrested the lands from the hands of evil and initiated a reign of unsurpassed courage, wisdom, and might enduring over three centuries. One day this great man of valor was called onward to continue his battle for freedom and goodness on a higher plane of existence. Leaving the responsibilities of rulership to his faithful overseer, he donned his magical shield, helm, and sword and traveled to the Holy Mountain of Anduin to meet his destiny.

Eriador left the overseer with this solemn promise: if there ever arose a time of great need, he would answer a summons from the Mountain of Anduin to come back to vanquish any evil who dared oppress his people.

It is now the reign of the third overseer. For years, a blackguard named Intrepus plagues the land by sending forth hordes of evil humanoid minion from his keep of Vilegaard to oppress the people. The overseer is forced to pay tribute to the mage to protect his people. Life is now nearly unbearable for his subjects.

It has been over five years since the mage desecrated the holy mountain by placing foul creatures in its depths to guard against the possibility of the people seeking help from their nearly forgotten champion.

A fortnight ago, your party was gathered in a secret council chamber to meet with the overseer himself. You felt a spark of hope for the people of this land as the overseer told the legendary tale of Eriador. He gave you the equipment you would need and charged your party with the task of venturing into the heart of the now monster-infested Mountain of Anduin to call back the people's great hero, Eriador the Paladin. Although the three parties sent before you have not returned, ridding the land of the mage seemed worth any risk, and you eagerly set out on your quest. Now, standing before the defiled mountain, you wonder if perhaps you acted too hastily.

DM BACKGROUND

This adventure is designed for four to six PCs of levels 3 to 5. Although the final battle with the shadow demon may seem quite difficult for a party of this level, several powerful magic items have been placed in the temple to help them accomplish the task.

It is important to note all items from the temple — the sword, shield, helm, keys, scroll, and so on — phase out and return to their original location within the mountain if the PCs attempt to leave with any of them before summoning Eriador. This is why the monsters have not been able to remove or destroy these items.

TOMB OF THE OVERSEERS

BARDIC LORE

A bard can make a Bardic Knowledge check to discover what he may have heard. A bard learns all the information of the DC his check succeeded by and all that below it (a Bard who rolled a 17 would learn the information under DC 15 and DC 10). Alternately this information can be gained by a Gather Information skill check +5 higher than the DC of a Bardic Lore check to see if the PC has heard any rumors.

DC 10 The blackguard Intrepus has wizards at his command to create all manner of strange horrors.

DC 15 Intrepus has infested Mount Anduin with a variety of terrible creatures.

DC 20 There are magic items within that will aid in the fight against the invaders.

DC 25 These items are also vital in releasing the great paladin Lord Eriador.

The adventure starts with the PCs just outside the entrance to the Holy Mountain of Anduin, burial place of the previous two overseers. You may choose to make the journey to the mountain as eventful as you like, but the PCs should be close to full strength before venturing into the mountain.

ENCOUNTER TABLE

1d20	Encounter
1	Abandoned farmstead (with signs of orc ravagers)
2	Adult arrowhawk out hunting
3	Aranea out hunting
4	Eagle scouting territory
5	Gnoll ranger scouting
6	Gravestone marker of overseer soldier
7	Halfling fighter on riding dog
8	Hobgoblin patrol (2d4) training with leader (3rd level fighter)
9	Human pilgrims on the road to the mountain
10	Large monstrous spider in trees
11	Lion out hunting
12	Locust swarm from nearby field
13	Mad blind druid prophesizing doom
14	Nixie band (2d3) out seeking their pseudodragon companion
15	Orc patrol (2d6) seeking to stop trespassers
16	Owlbear skeleton
17	Pseudodragon out playing
18	River bridge where toll was once collected (abandoned)
19	Satyrs (1d3) drinking wine
20	Skirmish of the dead (bodies of orcs and overseer humans)

THE ENTRANCE

The entrance to the tomb is carved into the mountain itself. A simple arched stone passageway leads to the altar chamber (area #1). Two gigantic stone warriors over 20 ft. tall stand vigil over it. As the PCs enter each location described below, read or paraphrase the following text.

1. The Altar Chamber

You push through the cobwebs covering the entrance to the tomb and find yourselves in a large room mostly filled by three rows of broken pews. One row lines the left side of the chamber, with another to the right, and a third running straight down the middle. Directly in front of the middle row, at the far side of the room, stands a stone altar. A mass of webs covers the left, rear corner of the room, and there is an archway on the right wall.

The altar is made of solid stone. If examined by a PC with Search skill (DC 10), a small button is found on the underside of the altar's top slab. A good-aligned PC pushing the button causes a strong voice to resonate throughout the chamber: "It helps us, it warms us, it gives us sight. It is a symbol of good, but sometimes it bites."

If the party answers out loud: "Sun," a scroll with the divine spells *bleed*, *cure light wounds*, and *protection from evil* appears on the altar. If the button is pushed again, whether or not the riddle is answered, a gold key appears atop the altar. This key can open any door in the mountain temple, as well as the chest of displacement at #13.

The webs in corner are the home of five monstrous spiders. This secret door can easily be found if Searched for (DC 15). It is locked, but an Open Lock check (DC 30) can defeat it.

☛ **Monstrous Spider, Large:** CR 2; Large vermin; HD 4d8+4 (22 hp); Init +3; Spd 30 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +3; Grp +9; Atk +4 melee (1d8+3 plus poison, bite); Full Atk +4 melee (1d8+3 plus poison, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Poison, web; SQ Dark-vision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft., vermin traits; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 17, Con 12, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Climb +11, Hide +3*, Jump +2*, Spot +4*
Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 13, initial damage 1d6 Str; secondary damage 1d6 Str. The save DC is constitution-based.

Web (Ex): A monstrous spider can throw a web eight times per day. This is similar to an attack with a net but has a maximum range of 50 ft., with a range increment of 10 ft., and is effective against targets up to one size category larger than the spider. An entangled creature can escape with a successful Escape Artist check (DC 13) or burst it with a Strength check (DC 17). Both are standard actions. The check DCs are Constitution-based, and the Strength check DC includes a +4 racial bonus.

Web-spinners often create sheets of sticky webbing from 5 to 60 ft. square, depending on the size of the spider. They usually position these sheets to snare flying creatures but can also try to trap prey on the ground. Approaching creatures must succeed on a DC 20 Spot check to notice a web; otherwise they stumble into it and become trapped as

TOMB OF THE OVERSEERS

though by a successful web attack. Attempts to escape or burst the webbing gain a +5 bonus if the trapped creature has something to walk on or grab while pulling free. Each 5-ft. section has the hit points given on the table, and sheet webs have damage reduction 5/—.

A monstrous spider can move across its own web at its climb speed and can pinpoint the location of any creature touching its web.

Tremorsense (Ex): A monstrous spider can detect and pinpoint any creature or object within 60 ft. in contact with the ground, or within any range in contact with the spider's webs.

Skills: Monstrous spiders have a +4 racial bonus on Hide and Spot checks and a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks. A monstrous spider can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened.

* Web-spinning spiders have a +8 racial bonus on Hide and Move Silently checks when using their webs.

2. Font Room

In the center of this otherwise empty room is a small marble font filled with crystal clear water. There are no identifying marks on the font.

The font is magical and contains holy water. There are six flasks worth of water in the font. Regular water placed here automatically becomes holy water in 24 hours. The font emanates good and cannot be removed from the room (although holy water, once created, can be taken from the room as usual). The monsters infesting the temple avoid this room, as attempts to destroy the font have failed.

3. Skeletons

This room has three helmets in glass boxes on the back wall. They are golden in color and rest on red velvet pillows. This is all the information you can take in before three skeletal guardians rush you with raised longswords!

Three skeletons immediately attack the PCs when they open this door. The skeletons fight until one side or the other is destroyed or the PCs are run off. Because the helmets created them, the skeletons cannot flee if turned. The helmets have had the *necromantic armor* spell placed on them (see Appendix A).

The skeletons immediately attack anyone within 30 ft. of the helmets. Anyone outside this range posing no threat is not followed. Those outside the range using ranged attacks are perused relentlessly.

☛ **Human Warrior Skeleton:** CR 1/3; Medium Undead; HD 1d12 (10, 8, 6 hp); Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +0; Grp +1; Atk +1 melee, (1d8/19-20, longsword) or +1 melee (1d4+1, claw); SA —; SQ Damage reduction 5/bludgeoning, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to cold, undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 13, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: Improved Initiative.

4. Wood Golem

This small room is empty save for a crude, human-shaped wooden statue in the corner. There are two glass vials to one side of its feet.

This is no statue. In fact, it's a special genre of golem made from wood. As golems go, it is not as potent in combat as many of its legendary namesakes, although it still significant a threat. It animates and attacks as soon as anyone enters the room. The golem cannot leave the room.

Each of the vials contains a magical potion. The first is a potion of *cure moderate wounds*. The second is a *potion of heroism*.

☛ **Wood Golem:** CR 5; Medium construct; HD 7d10+20; hp 58; Init -2; Spd 15 ft.; AC 18, touch 8, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +5; Grp +9; Atk +9 melee (2d6+4, slam and thorns); Full Atk +9 melee (2d6+4, two slams and thorns); SA Thorns; SQ Construct traits, immunity to magic, darkvision 60 ft., damage reduction 10/metal, damage reduction 10/slashing, regeneration 1; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +2; Str 18, Dex 6, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: —.

Thorns (Ex): At will as a free action, the wood golem may sprout thorns from its body. These thorns deal an additional 1d4 points of piercing damage with every successful slam attack. A creature that attempts to grapple the golem takes automatic thorn damage each round the grapple is maintained.

Immunity to Magic (Ex): A wood golem is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance, except as follows:

A *warp wood* spell or any fire-based magic attack slows the golem (as the *slow* spell) for 2d6 rounds, no saving throw.

An *antiplant shell* spell holds the golem at bay as a *protection from evil* keeps outsiders at bay.

Regeneration (Su): The wood golem may regenerate 1 hit point per minute as long as it is in direct contact with a living tree. The golem cannot be healed any other way including use of the *Craft Construct* feat.

(Wood Golem from *Creature Collection* Revised © 2003 White Wolf Publishing, Inc.)

5. Memorial to the Overseers

The wall to this circular, domed room is ornately carved and painted with murals. Several *continual flame* spells have been cast around the dome's rim, brilliantly lighting the room. Two statues flank the doorway through which you entered the room, arms outstretched towards two other, much larger, statues directly opposite you on the other side of the room. The larger statues are dressed in the official robes of the overseer.

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The shadows cast by the two larger statues are quite sharp and black. If PCs are looking for trouble they may notice this with a Spot check (DC 20). There are three shadows in this room. They wait until the PCs are close enough to make a surprise attack.

Between the two statues of the overseers is a concealed door which can be found with a Search check (DC 15) which leads to the tomb of the overseers (area #6).

☛ **Shadow:** CR 3; Medium undead (incorporeal); HD 3d12 (22, 18, 17 hp); Init +2; Spd Fly 40 ft. (good); AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +1; Grp —; Atk +3 melee (1d6 Str, incorporeal touch); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6 Str, incorporeal touch); SA Create spawn, strength damage; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., incorporeal traits, +2 turn resistance, undead traits; AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +4; Str —, Dex 14, Con —, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Hide +8*, Listen +7, Search +4, Spot +7; Alertness, Dodge.

Strength Damage (Su): The touch of a shadow deals 1d6 points of Strength damage to a living foe. A creature reduced to Strength 0 by a shadow dies. This is a negative energy effect.

Create Spawn (Su): Any humanoid reduced to Strength 0 by a shadow becomes a shadow under the control of its killer within 1d4 rounds.

Skills: Shadows have a +2 racial bonus on Listen and Spot checks and a +4 racial bonus on Search checks. *A shadow gains a +4 racial bonus on Hide checks in areas of shadowy illumination. In brightly lit areas, it takes a -4 penalty on Hide checks.

6. Tomb of the Overseers

Within this room, there are two identical mausoleums. There are pillars supporting the ceiling, and carvings, paintings, and mosaic murals of the overseers' deeds line the walls. These images are heroic, valiant and humbling at the same time.

Both sets of doors are locked (Open Lock, DC 25), and the ornate tombs are each protected by a *glyph of warding* trap.)

☛ **Strong wooden door:** 2 inch, 5 hardness, 20 hp, lock (DC 25), Break DC 23.

☛ **Glyph of Warding (Blast):** CR 4; spell; spell trigger; no reset; spell effect (glyph of warding [blast], 10th-level cleric, 4d8 fire, DC 14 Reflex save half damage); multiple targets (all targets within 5 ft.); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 28.

There is a guardian naga here who greets or attacks the PCs, depending on which door they enter through.

If the PCs enter through the concealed door using the gold key from the altar room, the naga greets them in a friendly manner, believing them to be emissaries from the overseer. If the PCs enter through the concealed door but do not have the key, the naga issues the warning below without first using its spit attack. If the PCs enter through the blocked corridor, the naga uses its spit attack first and then issues the challenge:

"Who dares enter the sacred tomb of the overseers? Identify yourselves, or be prepared to face the wrath of their guardian!"

If the PCs enter this room in any way other than through the concealed door with the gold key, it takes careful negotiation to gain the naga's good faith. Once the PCs have the naga's good will and take the time to explain their quest, the guardian allows them to pass through freely. He also offers any help he can provide. He is unfortunately bound to stay in this room, but he is willing to use his spells to aid the party in any way possible.

If the PCs attack the guardian of this good temple, they should get what they deserve.

☛ **Guardian Naga:** CR 10; Large aberration; HD 11d8+44 (93 hp); Init +2; Spd 40 ft.; AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +8; Grp +17; Atk +12 melee (2d6+7 plus poison, bite) or +9 ranged touch (poison spit); Full Atk +12 melee (2d6+7 plus poison, bite) or +9 ranged touch (poison, spit); SA Poison, spit, spells; SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL LG; SV Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +11; Str 21, Dex 14, Con 19, Int 16, Wis 19, Cha 18.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +18, Concentration +19, Listen +13, Diplomacy +8, Disguise +4 (+6 acting), Intimidate +6, Sense Motive +18, Spellcraft +17, Spot +13; Alertness, Combat Casting, Dodge, Eschew Materials, Lightning Reflexes.

Poison (Ex): Injury or contact, Fortitude DC 19, initial and secondary damage 1d10 Con. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Spit (Ex): A guardian naga can spit its venom up to 30 ft. as a standard action. This is a ranged touch attack with no range increment. Opponents hit by this attack must make successful saves (see above) to avoid the effect.

Spells: Guardian nagas cast spells as 9th-level sorcerers, and can also cast spells from the cleric list and from the Good and Law domains. The cleric spells and domain spells are considered arcane spells for a guardian naga, meaning that the creature does not need a divine focus to cast them.

Typical Spells Known (6/7/7/7/5; save DC 14 + spell level): 0—*cure minor wounds, daze, detect magic, light, mage hand, open/close, ray of frost, read magic*; 1st—*cure light wounds, divine favor, expeditious retreat, mage armor, magic missile*; 2nd—*detect thoughts, lesser restoration, see invisibility, scorching ray*; 3rd—*cure serious wounds, dispel magic, lightning bolt*; 4th—*divine power, greater invisibility*.

7. Brown Mold

At the end of this corridor, a natural cavern begins. The air grows colder as you move deeper into the tomb.

In this area, brown mold covers the walls, floor, and roof. As the PCs approach, they should notice the temperature decreasing well before they get too close to the mold. PCs coming within 5 ft. of the mold suffer 3d6 nonlethal cold damage. Fire brought within 5 ft. of the mold causes it to immediately double in size, extinguishing the fire in the process. Cold damage destroys the mold instantly.

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The PCs must find a way past the brown mold or return to the altar chamber (area #1) and find the secret door there.

If the PCs spend more than 20 minutes trying to figure out a way past the brown mold, the yellow musk zombie (area #8) walks past the mold (he is unaffected by the cold) and attacks the PCs as stated in "The Zombie's Post" (area #8). This time, however, his attack may be even more deadly, since he carries any victim back through the area affected by the brown mold.

8. The Zombie's Post

The cavern ahead is empty except for a humanoid male with pale-yellow skin and blank, glazed eyes. He wears tattered chainmail.

When the yellow musk zombie comes within 20 ft. of the PCs, they notice it appears to have vegetable matter (vines, leaves, and buds) tangled in its hair. It slowly approaches the party, and when it gets within 15 ft., it rushes forward and attacks the smallest PC. If both of the zombie's attacks hit the same PC, it has grabbed its victim by the throat. In this case, the victim suffocates.

The zombie then tries to carry the victim to the creeper's home (area #9). This slows him to half his movement rate. The zombie ignores all attacks upon himself once it has grabbed someone. It takes him 2-4 rounds to reach the creeper. If the zombie reaches the yellow musk creeper with a victim, he hurls the PC into the plant.

The zombie is a hapless member of one of the parties sent into the tomb never to return. Note this "zombie" is not an undead, but a living victim of the creeper. If the blue creeper controlling him is killed, he can be restored to health by a *neutralize poison* spell, followed by *heal* and four weeks of bedrest.

Yellow Musk Zombie: CR 1; Medium plant; HD 2d10+4; hp 20; Init -1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16, touch 9, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +1; Grp +4; Atk +4 melee (1d8+3/19-20, longsword) or +4 melee (1d6+3, slam); Full Atk +4 melee (1d8+3/19-20, longsword) or +4 melee (1d6+3, slam); SA—; SQ Plant traits, link to creator, sprout new creeper; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref -1, Will -3; Str 16, Dex 8, Con 14, Int 4, Wis 4, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: —.

Link to Creator (Ex): A yellow musk zombie is linked to the yellow musk creeper that created it and can never move more than 200 ft. from it.

Sprout new Creeper (Ex): After about 2 months of service to a yellow musk creeper, the yellow musk zombie wanders up to 1 mile away from its creator and dies. Where it falls, new yellow musk seedlings sprout from its head and the corpse, take root, and within one hour, a new fully grown yellow musk creeper blossoms.

(Yellow Musk Zombie from the Tome of Horrors, Copyright 2002, Necromancer Games, Inc.; Author Scott Greene, based on original material by Albie Fiore.)

9. The Creeper's Home

A large, bush takes up the back half of this cavern. The plant has three beautiful, large flowers resting on a bed of vines and leaves.

When the PCs enter this room, a yellow musk zombie moves to attack them. He is identical to the zombie at #8.

If both of its attacks hit the same PC, the zombie throws his victim into the yellow musk creeper its next action.

A yellow musk creeper controls the two zombies and is looking to create more.

If the PCs attempt to pass through or around the plant by using torches or fire to keep the roots at bay, the roots try to attack one in four PCs anyway.

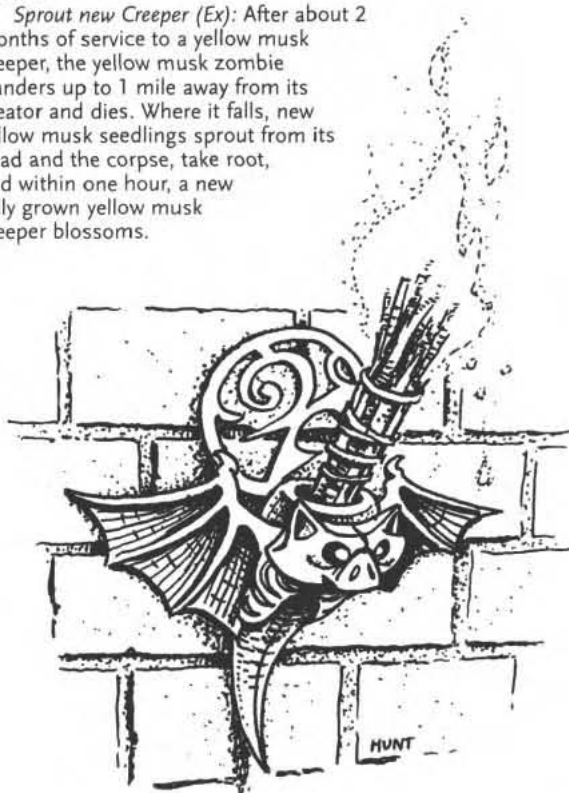
After killing the yellow musk creeper, if the PCs Search it (DC 10), they find a +1 dagger named "Trollnail".

Yellow Musk Zombie: CR 1; Medium plant; HD 2d10+4; hp 20; Init -1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16, touch 9, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +1; Grp +4; Atk +4 melee (1d8+3/19-20, longsword) or +4 melee (1d6+3, slam); Full Atk +4 melee (1d8+3/19-20, longsword) or +4 melee (1d6+3, slam); SA—; SQ Plant traits, link to creator, sprout new creeper; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref -1, Will -3; Str 16, Dex 8, Con 14, Int 4, Wis 4, Cha 1.

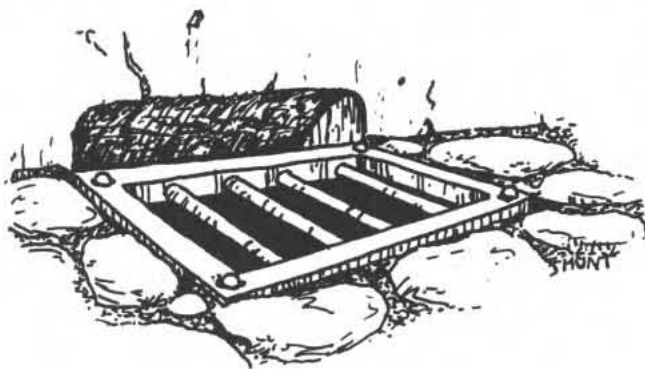
Skills and Feats: —.

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Sprout new Creeper (Ex): After about 2 months of service to a yellow musk creeper, the yellow musk zombie wanders up to 1 mile away from its creator and dies. Where it falls, new yellow musk seedlings sprout from its head and the corpse, take root, and within one hour, a new fully grown yellow musk creeper blossoms.



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☛ **Yellow Musk Creeper:** CR 2; Large plant; HD 3d8+9; hp 22; Init +0; Spd 0 ft.; AC 13, touch 9, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +1; Grp +17; Atk +6 melee (grapple, slam) or +2 ranged (pollen spray); Full Atk +6 melee (grapple, slam) and +2 ranged (pollen spray); SA Pollen spray, improved grab, intelligence drain, create yellow musk zombie; SQ Blindsight, plant traits, main root; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +0, Will +1; Str 20, Dex —, Con 17, Int 3, Wis 11, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: —.

Blindsight (Ex): The yellow musk creeper has no optical organs but can ascertain all foes within 30 ft. using sound, scent, and vibration.

Pollen Spray (Ex): An opponent hit by the spray must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 14) or act as if affected by charm monster. Charmed creatures move at their normal speed into the awaiting vines of the yellow musk creeper.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, the yellow musk creeper must hit a Huge or smaller creature with its slam attack. If it gets a hold, it attaches its roots to the opponent's head. The yellow musk creeper has a grapple bonus of +11. After a successful grab, the yellow musk creeper can attempt to attach its remaining roots with a single grapple check. A single attack against a root causes it to release, but after 1 full round there will be so many tiny roots attached to the target, that the Intelligence drain cannot be prevented in this manner.

Intelligence Drain (Ex): A creature held by a root takes 1d4 points of temporary Intelligence damage each round the hold is maintained.

Main Root (Ex): The actual roots of the yellow musk creeper lie under the surface of the soil and dirt where it grows. Through the flowers, bulbs, and attaching roots can be destroyed, so long as the main root exists, the yellow musk creeper eventually heals all damage dealt to it. The hit points in the statistic block represent the main root. Only by destroying the main root can a yellow musk creeper truly be slain.

Create Yellow Musk Zombie (Su): A victim reduced to Intelligence 0 dies instantly; a victim reduced to Intelligence 1 or 2 becomes a yellow musk zombie in 1d2 hours under the creeper's control. If the yellow musk creeper is slain before the yellow musk zombie rises, the transformation can be prevented by the casting of neutralize poison followed by heal or restoration.

(Yellow Musk Creeper from the Tome of Horrors, Copyright 2002, Necromancer Games, Inc.; Author Scott Greene, based on original material by Albie Fiore.)

10. Empty Room

Along the walls of this large rectangular room are four tapestries of the great paladin Lord Eriador riding in a joust, receiving an award, battling a horde of demons, and another surrounded by a company of noble knights. There is a door on the far wall.

The secret door located here behind one of the tapestries can be discovered with a Search check (DC 20) and bypassed with an Open Lock check (DC 25).

11. Shield Room

Directly across from the entrance to this room is an alcove about 10 ft. deep. Hanging in this small niche, suspended 5 ft. off the ground by two thick wires is a shining, heavy silver shield with a large blue opal in its center.

A necrophidius, or "death worm," attacks the PCs as soon as they enter the room. It looks like a long, spiked spine topped by a fanged, human skull. It moves like a monstrous snake. Although comprised of bone, the necrophidius is actually a construct, not an undead, and so it cannot be turned.

If PCs Search closely (DC 20), they note the following. There are small pebbles and rocks on the floor below the shield. The alcove walls to the left and right of the shield have deep gouges in them, from about 2.5 ft. to 5.5 ft. off the floor.

If the pressure on the wires holding the shield decreases by more than a pound or increases by 5 pounds, the front portions of the walls of the alcove slam together with tremendous force, leaving just enough room for the shield to remain untouched. The walls then immediately spring back into position. The PCs have to find a way to cut the wires or lift the shield off of them without entering the alcove.

☛ **Crushing Wall:** CR 5; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; walls slam together (4d10, crush); multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft.-by-10-ft. room); DC 20 Reflex save avoids; onset delay instantaneous; Search DC 22; Disable Device DC 25.

☛ **Necrophidius:** CR 2; Large construct; HD 2d10; hp 16; Init +3; Spd 30 ft. (can't run); AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +2; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d8 plus paralysis, bite); Full Atk +2 melee (1d8 plus paralysis, bite); SA Dance of death, paralysis; SQ Construct traits, damage reduction 10/piercing, damage reduction 10/slashing; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 17, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: Move Silently +11

Dance of Death (Ex): On the first round of combat, a necrophidius entrances its opponents by swaying back and forth. Those within 30 ft. viewing the dancing snake must succeed at a Will save (DC 11) or be unable to take

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any action for 2d4 rounds. Victims are not helpless, and the charm is broken if they are attacked. Opponents gain a +4 bonus to their attack roll when attacking an entranced victim. Entranced victims also lose their Dexterity bonus to AC. The save is Charisma-based.

Paralysis (Su): Bite, Fortitude save (DC 11) or paralyzed for 1d6 minutes. The save DC is Charisma-based.

(Necrophidius from the Tome of Horrors, Copyright 2002, Necromancer Games, Inc.; Author Scott Greene, based on original material by Simon Tilbrook.)

12. Sword Room

A 2-ft. tall stone pedestal stands in the middle of this octagon-shaped room. Lying on the pedestal is a shining silver bastard sword with an intricately designed hilt of wrought gold and ivory. The pommel is inset with a shining blue gemstone almost 2 inches in diameter. On the left side of the room is a life-sized statue of a minotaur, crouching down on one knee, a greataxe clutched firmly in its hands. The statue is facing halfway between the door and the sword.

When the PCs enter the room, they may notice (Spot, DC 10) the minotaur statue's eyes follow them. If a PC touches or moves the sword, the statue instantly springs to life, transforming into a real minotaur. The beast attacks any PC holding the sword, or anyone protecting him.

If the sword is dropped, or the offending PC leaves the room without the blade, the minotaur picks up the sword and places it back on the pedestal. Then it returns to its place in the room and once again become a statue. Each time the minotaur animates, it reverts to full hit points.

If the PCs attempt to harm the statue in any way, the minotaur animates to protect itself. The PCs can stop the minotaur from animating by blindfolding it or blinding it in some way before they take the sword. If the PCs bind the statue before they take the sword the minotaur first attempts to break his bonds and then comes after the PCs once he is loose.

The sword is a replica of Eriador's Sword of Might. It is, in fact, a *sun blade* (see New Magic — Appendix A).

☛ **Minotaur:** CR 4; Large monstrous humanoid; HD 6d8+12 (39 hp); Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 9, flat-footed — (see text); Base Atk +6; Grp +14; Atk +9 melee (3d6+6/x3, greataxe) or +9 melee (1d8+4, gore); Full Atk +9/+4 melee (3d6+6/x3, greataxe) and +4 melee (1d8+2, gore); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA Powerful charge 4d6+6; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., natural cunning, scent; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +5; Str 19, Dex 10, Con 15, Int 7, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Intimidate +2, Listen +7, Search +2, Spot +7; Great Fortitude, Power Attack, Track

Powerful Charge (Ex): A minotaur typically begins a battle by charging at an opponent, lowering its head to bring its mighty horns into play. In addition to the normal benefits and hazards of a charge, this allows the beast to make a single gore attack with a +9 attack bonus that deals 4d6+6 points of damage.

Natural Cunning (Ex): Although minotaurs are not especially intelligent, they possess innate cunning and logical ability. This gives them immunity to maze spells, prevents them from ever becoming lost, and enables them to track enemies. Further, they are never caught flat-footed.

Skills: Minotaurs have a +4 racial bonus on Search, Spot, and Listen checks.

13. Helmet Room

This room has been ransacked. A 2-ft. cube metal chest with a glass window in its front sits on the floor, and a metal chime hangs by a rope from the ceiling.



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A skeletal creature with glowing red eye-sockets, wielding a huge, glowing dagger and wearing a battered helm dwells here. The monster holds aloft a magical rod as it confronts the PCs when they open the door. This is a ghastr. If the PCs pulled the rope (area #14), the ghastr is expecting them. He is hiding (Spot, DC 25) when the PCs arrive, and he ambushes them as they come in the door. Otherwise, the creature simply attacks.

If the PCs look through the glass front, they see a shining silver helm. On the helm, there's a shining blue gemstone approximately 2 inches in diameter. The box is unlocked, and when opened, is found to be empty. If the gold key from #1 is used on the unlocked, closed box, the helm reappears in the box and can be found there when the box is opened again.

The Helm of Wisdom: This magic item gives the wearer +3 deflection bonus to armor class and +2 enhancement bonus to Wisdom when worn. If a cleric or paladin dons the helm, he immediately gains the use of another first-level spell of his choice.

Strong abjuration; CL 9th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, shield of faith, owl's wisdom, prayer; Market Price: 25,000 gp; Cost 12,500 gp + 1,250 XP.

Ghastr: CR 3; Medium undead; HD 4d12+3; hp 45; Init +3; Spd 30ft; AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +2/+5; Full Atk +5 melee (1d8+3 + paralysis, bite), +3 melee (1d4+1 + paralysis, 2 claws); SA Ghoul fever, paralysis, stench; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., undead traits, +2 turn resistance; AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +6; Str 17, Dex 17, Con —, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Balance +7, Climb +9, Hide +8, Jump +9, Move Silently +8, Spot +8; Multiattack, Toughness.

Ghoul Fever (Ex): Disease — bite, Fortitude DC 15, incubation period 1 day, damage 1d3 Con and 1d3 Dex. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Ghoul Fever (Su): Disease — bite, Fortitude DC 15, incubation period 1 day, damage 1d3 Con and 1d3 Dex. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Paralysis (Ex): Those hit by a ghastr's bite or claw attack must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 1d4+1 rounds. Even elves can be affected by this paralysis. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Stench (Ex): The stink of death and corruption surrounding these creatures is overwhelming. Living creatures within 10 ft. must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or be sickened for 1d6+4 minutes. A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by the same ghastr's stench for 24 hours. A *delay poison* or *neutralize poison* spell removes the effect from a sickened creature. Creatures with immunity to poison are unaffected, and creatures resistant to poison receive their normal bonus on their saving throws. The save DC is Charisma-based.

14. The Bell Room

This room appears empty except for a rope leading up through a small hole in the ceiling.

Should the PCs pull the rope, they hear a distant bell chime softly, and the ghastr (area 13) is alerted to their presence.

15. Well of Humility

In the center of this diamond-shaped room squats an old stone well. Eleven human skulls are spaced regularly around the outside of the well's wall. The shaft of the well goes down 30 ft. before it reaches water. The water is about 10 ft. deep. At the bottom of the well, the glitter of gold and gems can be seen. A stone ladder carved out of the inside wall of the well goes down into the water. The water in the well looks brackish and smells foul.

If an offering of value such as gold or gems is thrown into the well, the skulls speak:

"Lowly is the true path, and he who wishes to walk it must first crawl."

At the top of the ladder in the well is a secret door (Search, DC 20), a 4-ft. by 4-ft. hatch over a tunnel of the same height and width. The tunnel leads into the pedestal room (Room #17), where it comes up through a concealed hatch (Search, DC 20) in the floor.

If the PCs manage to gather the valuable bits in the bottom of the well, they come up with a total of 48 gp and a handful of gems worth a total of 250 gp.

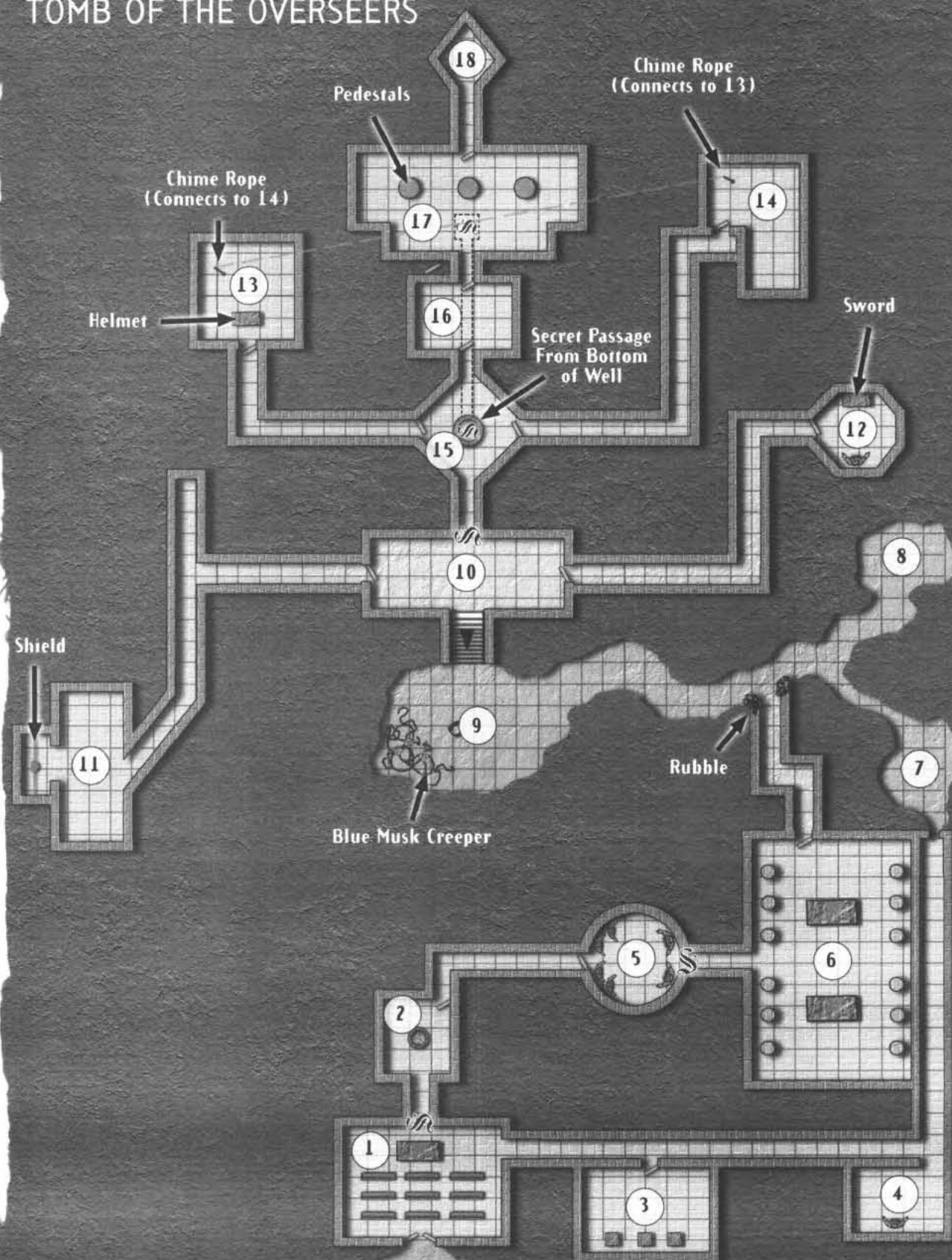
16. Shadow Demon

This room is cold, dark, and empty. An eerie silence pervades the chamber and there is a distinctively uneasy feeling about the room.

Wait for a player to begin speaking, and then interrupt them with a frightening howl! A shadow demon attacks the PCs at the entrance to the room. It first uses its *darkness* spell to gain an advantage over the PCs. If things start to go badly, it uses its *cause fear* spell in an attempt to scare the PCs off.

The demon is the final guardian placed here by the mage, and he knows if the PCs have survived this far they are not to be dealt with lightly. Unless the PCs have found and are using the replica magic items from the other areas of the temple, they will not stand much of a chance against the shadow demon.

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☛ **Shadow Demon:** CR 6; Medium outsider (Chaotic, Evil, Incorporeal; HD 7d8+21; hp 52; Init +6; Spd ft.; AC , touch , flat-footed ; Base Atk +7; Grp +7; Atk +9 melee (1d6, incorporeal touch) or +4 melee (1d8, incorporeal bite); Full Atk +9 melee (1d6, incorporeal touch) and +4 melee (1d8, incorporeal bite); SA Spell-like abilities, malevolence; SQ Shadow blend, incorporeal traits, darkvision 60 ft., demon traits, sunlight powerlessness; AL CE; SV Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +6; Str —, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Hide +12, Intimidate +10, Listen +9, Search +9, Sense Motive +8, Spot +9; Blind-Fight, Improved Initiative.

Malevolence (Su): Once per day, a shadow demon can merge its body with a creature on the Material Plane. This ability is similar to magic jar as cast by a 10th-level sorcerer, except that it does not require a receptacle. If the attack succeeds, the shadow demon's body banishes into the opponent's body. The target can resist the attack with a successful Will save (DC 16). A creature that successfully saves is immune to that shadow demon's malevolence for one day. The save DC is charisma-based.

Shadow Blend (Su): During any conditions other than full daylight, a shadow demon can disappear into the shadows, giving it 9/10 concealment. Artificial illumination, even a *light* or *continual flame* spell, does not negate this ability; a *daylight* spell, however, will.

Spell-Like Abilities: 1/day — *darkness* and *fear*. These abilities are as the spells cast by a 12th-level sorcerer (save DC 13 + spell level).

Sunlight Powerlessness (Su): Shadow demons are utterly powerless in natural sunlight (not merely a daylight spell) and flee from it. A shadow demon caught in sunlight cannot attack and can take only one standard action or one move action each round.

(Shadow Demon from the Tome of Horrors, Copyright 2002, Necromancer Games, Inc.; Author Scott Greene, based on original material by Neville White.)

17. Pedestal Room

Three identical, white marble pedestals stab out of the middle of the floor of this slightly T-shaped room. They are spaced 15 ft. apart and are each 3.5 ft. high. The tops of the pedestals are a ft. across and have a 2-inch wide, perfect half-spherical depression in the center.

The blue gemstones in the sword, shield, and helm activate the pedestals. As the items are placed on the pedestals the following happens:

First item: A translucent, two-dimensional image of a doorway appears on the wall leading to the holy room of visitation (area #18).

Second item: The image of the door is now more detailed and three dimensional, but not solid.

Third item: The door becomes real. It is not locked. The replica items disappear.

18. The Holy Room of Visitation

Across from the opening of this diamond-shaped room stands a life-sized statue of a large, handsome man clad in gleaming platemail. The statue is facing the door, but looking skyward with gauntleted right arm stretched toward the heavens and its left arm folded across its chest. The statue is carved of pure white marble.

Evil creatures entering this room take 1d10+10 points of damage per round until they either die or leave. The statue is of the paladin Eriador. If the replicas of the Shield of Courage, The Sword of Might and the Helm of Wisdom are placed on the statue in the correct locations read the following.

The ground begins to shake and tremor. A host of pure voices can be heard singing from somewhere, and a pure, baritone voice cries out: "Who summons Eriador, and what is your reason for doing so?"

If the PCs answer honestly, there is a brilliant flash of white light, and Eriador the Paladin, savior of the people, appears standing on the pedestal in place of the statue, holding and wearing the true versions of the replicas placed on the statue.

EPILOGUE

Eriador then accompanies the PCs back to the city where he resumes the throne. If you like, your PCs can become involved in his efforts to destroy the blackguard and his minions terrorizing the area. In any event, he rewards the party with 10,000 gp, a *longsword* +2 named "Truetaalon", a *staff of healing* with 17 charges, a *figurine of wondrous power* (*onyx dog*), and a scroll with five 3rd level arcane spells on it.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

- Once back in the city, Eriador requests the PCs visit the local church, now in need of stalwart adventurers to put down an ancient evil recently plaguing the city (see the adventure "Covenant Hill").
- Eriador's agents have intelligence concerning where to strike against Intrepus first. Word is he seeks a fabled dagger with the power to summon forth a demon to serve him in the war which currently looms on the horizon (see the adventure "Folnar's Dagger").

Chapter 18:

The Temple of Eternal Flame

Levels 6 to 8

By Scott Fitzsimmons and jim pinto

The night is cold and recent adventures have left you without companions. Here, at the inn of the Parched Throat, you seek further glory and adventure. Tonight, however, you find neither. Just a bard in an empty taproom composing a sad tune on his harp.

He pulls out a pipe and lights it, sending ribbons of smoke to the rafters of the inn. Pictures appear within the strands of smoke, weaving an intricate story of a lamp that flames eternal. As you sit enthralled, the Bard takes notice of your interest.

"Greetings mercenary, I am Torren Aboleam, messenger to Lord and Lady Myridian, and if you're looking for some work I have an excellent offer for you. If you care, I shall explain further, but I've the feeling this night you'll simply ask me to escort you into my Lord's Presence?"

He smiles acknowledging your grin.

"As you wish."

DM BACKGROUND

This adventure is designed for four to six PCs of levels 6 to 8. At least one cleric is recommended for this adventure. The characters should be well equipped with healing magic and at least one character should have a high strength as several doors need to be forced open.

This is a difficult dungeon adventure with a few tricks and twists. There are three obstacles. First, the PCs must locate the *decanter of endless water*. Next, find the *sapphire lamp*. Lastly, they must extinguish the flame of the lamp and return the wick to Lord Kayne as requested. In all, this is difficult and the encounters in this adventure are very hard. Only if the PCs reserve their strength can they hope to win.

Alternately, only run the adventure for 8th level PCs.

THE LORD'S WISH

Lord Kayne and Kylira Meridian have selected specific adventurers to retrieve the wick of the sapphire lamp.

Their intention for the wick is simply to exact revenge. Lord Kayne and the Mummy Naga battled before and Kayne lost his only daughter in the fight. Secretly, he wants the PCs to kill the Naga. The wick is a secondary

task given to the PCs to accomplish. A special gravestone was made to hold the wick, to be re-lit for the lost child. Redemption is near.

The PCs are assembled in Kayne's hall and tasked to retrieve the wick of the sapphire lamp. Kylira opens a portal to the pyramid where the lamp is held.

Stats for Kylira and Kayne are not provided, but both are powerful sorcerers. Kayne's men are well trained and up to 20 guards can be summoned in a few rounds. Their stats have been omitted to conserve space. If the PCs insist on fighting Kayne, the guards subdue them and Kylira incapacitates them with powerful spells.

THE GREAT PYRAMID

The pyramid has three levels and can be entered by opening the hidden door that is part of the ancient time dais. Once within the PCs need to overcome the many tricks, traps and monsters to find the objects they seek.

THE CLAWED NECKLACE

A necklace with a small withered hand can be found on several creatures within the pyramid. When worn this necklace prevents the mirror of opposition (room #10) from activating. To increase the difficulty of the adventure, remove necklaces from fallen foes. These necklaces detect as *faint abjuration* magic.

BARDIC LORE

A bard can make a Bardic Knowledge check to discover what he may have heard. A bard learns all the information of the DC his check succeeded by and all that below it (a Bard who rolled a 17 would learn the information under DC 15 and DC 10). Alternately this information can be gained by a Gather Information skill check +5 higher than the DC of a Bardic Lore check to see if the PC has heard any rumors.

DC 10 Kayne and Kylira are reputed to be powerful sorcerers

DC 15 Over the years their campaigns and personal missions have brought them good friends and bitter enemies.

DC 20 Kayne lost his daughter several years ago and has become a broken, yet powerful, man.

DC 25 Several skilled adventures were recently hired by Kayne but none have been seen since.

NO CHOICE BUT ONE

Surrounded by twenty or so guards, you are escorted to a large courtroom. A large man in black and green robes sits upon an elegant throne; a woman cloaked in red and black stands at his side. She looks you over skeptically. The large man stands and speaks, "I am Lord Kayne and this is Kylira. I care not how you have come to be in my service, but I have a need for your skills. I require the wick from the Ever-Burning Sapphire Lamp of Myul Tohlan. You need only to extinguish its flame and return it to me. If you do this, I shall reward your efforts...the quicker it's done, the bigger the reward."

The lady removes two rings from her left hand. With incomprehensible words, the rings grow to eight ft. in diameter. The circles begin to spin and wobble on the same axis. A bright flash comes from the center and reveals a large temple beyond. She smiles coyly when addressing you: "Step beyond and my magic will send you just outside your objective. I advise not straying far from where you appear."

Neither of them answers any more questions. If asked where they are to be taken the basic answer is "to the object of your quest". They consider the quest mercenary, and expect the PCs to do their job as asked, not ask annoying questions. PCs walking into the center of the spinning rings are teleported to the base of the temple.

1. The Door of Time

You now stand before a large pyramid covered in thriving vines and underbrush. At best guess the pyramid rises 300 ft. high. The whirling of the magical rings still spin behind you. Closer observation reveals a large number "6" near the top of the pyramid. Many steps lead to the top from all sides.

With little effort the PCs uncover a large round dais that is a part of the east wall of the temple. This dais has numbers around it like that of a clock, but is missing the numbers 1, 11, and 12. Where these numbers are missing is a cutout shape like "U". If the dais is turned so the number 12 is in the 6 o'clock position, the "view" creates an archway and reveals an opening into the pyramid. A successful Strength check (DC 25) is required to move the dais.

THE TEMPLE OF ETERNAL FLAME

2. Reflections

In the center of this large, octagonal room is a 5-ft. wide square pillar from floor to ceiling. Two large iron wheels are mounted 3 ft. from the floor on both the western and eastern sides of the central block. All of the angled walls are made of mirrors from floor to ceiling. The floor is covered in dust and riddled with various traps.

An inscription in the bottom of each mirror reads 'Vay Loos', meaning "unlock" in draconic. When this word is spoken aloud, in front of the mirror, it lights up and shows the outside of the pyramid. After three minutes the mirror fades back to normal. An iron valve wheel marked 'A' turns the timepiece on the outside of the pyramid. This closes the outer door. The valve marked 'B' opens a concealed, sliding door in the floor at the west end of the room. A successful Survival check (DC 18) identifies the tracks as human and lizard. The lizard type is unknown.

3. Hall

The descent reveals a room sharing the same center pillar as the octagonal room above. Four torch sconces with burning torches rests on each of the four sides. Three sandstone pedestals spaced evenly along the southern wall holding creatures that resemble small-winged devils. Their hair blazes, adding light to the room. On the north wall are three more pedestals with a devil on each. Additional torches behind each pedestal increase visibility and cast shadows everywhere. The creatures glare at you and quickly move to the attack.

Encounter: These creatures are fire mephitis — six in all. They attack the PCs as soon as they enter the room, taking one partial action while the PCs adjust to the light. Once the first mephitis begins combat, the remaining three in the northern end of the room join the fray. They flank the PCs whenever possible.

Tactics: On the first round of combat, the fire mephitis on the northern wall summon more mephitis with their special ability. Success or no, the mephitis act normally in the second round.

On the third round of combat any remaining mephitis on the southern edge use their summon mephitis ability as above. Wounded mephitis fly to the torch sconces where they heal 2 hp per round so long as they touch the flame.

They fight to death, but do not fight stupidly, healing when the PCs heal and talking advantage of PCs separated from the group.



THE TEMPLE OF ETERNAL FLAME

The salamanders from room #4 are allowed a Listen check, getting involved if they hear combat and only if they will make a difference in the fight. Otherwise, they stand guard in room #4 and wait there, calling for reinforcements to hamper the PCs.

☛ **Fire Mephit:** CR 3; Small outsider (extraplanar, fire); HD 3d8; hp 13; Init +5; Spd 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (average); AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +3; Grp -1; Atk +4 melee (1d3 and 1d4 fire, claw); Full Atk +4 melee (1d3 and 1d4 fire, 2 claws); SA Breath weapon, spell-like abilities, summon mephit; SQ Damage reduction 5/magic, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to fire, fast healing 2, vulnerability to cold; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +8, Escape Artist +7, Hide +11, Listen +6, Diplomacy +4, Disguise +2 (+4 acting), Move Silently +7, Spot +6, Use Rope +1 (+3 with bindings); Dodge, Improved Initiative.

Breath Weapon (Su): 15-ft. cone, damage 1d8 fire, Reflex half DC 12. The save DC is Constitution-based and includes a +1 racial adjustment.

Spell-Like Abilities: 1/hour—*scorching ray* (DC 14) as the spell cast by a 3rd-level sorcerer; 1/day—*heat metal* (DC 14). Caster level 6th. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Summon Mephit (Sp): Once per day, a mephit can attempt to summon another mephit of the same variety, much as though casting a *summon monster* spell, but with only a 25% chance of success. Roll d%: On a failure, no creature answers the summons that day. A mephit that has just been summoned cannot use its own summon ability for 1 hour. This ability is the equivalent of a 2nd-level spell.

Fast Healing (Ex): A fire mephit heals only if it is touching a flame at least as large as a torch.

4. Meeting Chamber

This meeting chamber lacks chairs now, dominated simply by a single stone table. Four molten colored creatures resembling large eels surround the table, in various stages of rest. They look at your group with crimson eyes ablaze; each wears chainmail, carries an oddly shaped mirror-shield, and is armed with a wicked longsword.

Encounter: These four salamander flamebrothers are tasked with guarding the temple from intruders. They are ready for combat and fight bravely, although not to the death.

Tactics: If too many fall, the rest flee down the hallway calling in assistance from rooms #6 and #7. Note that two of the flamebrother salamanders wear the clawed necklaces mentioned earlier.

☛ **Flamebrother Salamander:** CR 3; Small outsider (extraplanar, fire); HD 4d8+8; hp 26; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +4; Grp +1; Atk +6 melee (1d6+1/x3 plus 1d6 fire, spear); Full Atk +6 melee (1d6+1/x3 plus 1d6 fire, spear) and +4 melee (1d4 plus 1d6 fire, tail slap); SA Constrict 1d4 plus 1d6 fire, heat, improved grab; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., immunity to fire, vulnerability to cold; AL NE; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +6; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Craft (blacksmithing) +8, Hide +12, Listen +11, Move Silently +6, Spot +11; Alertness, Multiattack.

Constrict (Ex): A salamander deals automatic tail slap damage (including fire damage) with a successful grapple check. A noble salamander can constrict multiple creatures simultaneously, provided they are all at least two sizes smaller than it.

Heat (Ex): A salamander generates so much heat that its mere touch deals additional fire damage. Salamanders' metallic weapons also conduct this heat.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a salamander must hit a creature of up to one size larger than itself with its tail slap attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can constrict.

Skills: Salamanders have a +4 racial bonus on Craft (blacksmithing) checks.

Feats: Salamanders have the Multiattack feat even though they do not have the requisite three natural weapons.

5. The Laboratory

The door to this room is locked at all times. PCs can pick the lock with a successful Open Lock check (DC 25). The door has claw marks in its face.

☛ **Ironbound door:** 1 in. thick; hardness 6; hp 20; AC 5; break DC 25.

A chair has been wedged behind the door on the other side. If the lock is picked a Strength check (DC 20) is still required to force it open. Otherwise, a Strength check (DC 35) is needed to force the door with the lock still in place.

Within are two narrow tables, various glass bottles of all sizes, and strange instruments holding the bottles for their intended use. A slight sulfuric smell lingers in the air. Large mirrors hang from ceiling to floor on the north and south walls. Several open flames rest in bowls and torch sconces, both covered in arcane runes and obviously magical. A small white coat and a short staff rest in the corner, dust and charcoal stain the material.

Beneath each mirror is the word 'hoshur' (in draconic this means "show me"). This activates the mirrors and allows onlookers to view the outside of the temple, from the top down. The PCs can see the vegetation, stones, and floating rings.

The dust is the remains of an alchemist sent here by lord Kayne several months ago. The staff is a *staff of frost* (14 charges).

Treasure: A thorough search of the lab (Search check, DC 25) reveals two potions of cure light wounds, a potion of stinking cloud, a wand of lightning bolt (CL 3rd, 8 charges), a journal, and a spellbook. The journal and spellbook look nearly identical. They are both leather-bound, with brass corners and a crescent moon-shaped sigil is burned into the cover of each. However, inside they are remarkable different. Casting detect magic reveals the wand, spellbook and potions as magical, but not the journal.

The journal details the life of one Flechan Moondar, and is written in both common and elven. If the PCs can read elf, they may spend one hour reading the book.

They learn Flechan was hired by Lord Kayne, went through the rings, and asked to find a lamp inside the temple. He was attacked almost immediately and fled to this room where he locked himself inside. Over the next few weeks he slowly starved to death, being unable to leave or explore the temple with so many creatures about. He discovered some healing potions in the lab to keep himself alive, but nothing he did quelled his hunger nor found the solution for his impending demise. It is unclear how he eventually died or why his skeleton is now ash. In reality he used the staff of frost on himself.

If the PCs read on, the journal is a ravenous and maddening tale that lacks coherence; eventually end is scrawled in symbols that hardly look like letters in any language. This hints to clever PCs that it could be a code or riddle. It is in effect, nothing more than his tortured mind tricking him, but the PCs need not know this and the code should keep them occupied for some time. If this is being run as a tournament adventure or the PCs are under a time limit, allow them to squander as much time as they like with this journal.

The spellbook contains the following spells: *arcane mark, dancing lights, detect magic, disrupt undead, ghost sound, ray of frost, read magic, identify, obscuring mist, silent image, sleep, unseen servant, blur, continual flame, invisibility, locate object, and tongues*. The book is 18-pages long and the last page is blank.

6. The Barracks

This room is empty if the flamebrother salamanders responded to help in room #4.

A single fire at the center of the room provides light to see by. Several bedrolls and two cots rest near the southwestern walls. Four molten colored creatures resembling those in the room before are sharpening their blades and talking among themselves.

Tactics: The flamebrother salamanders fight immediately and call for help from those within room # 7. Note that two wear the clawed necklace.

THE MYSTERIOUS CODE

Despite the 'mysterious code' in the rear of the journal that is supposed to delay or confuse PCs, there are some real-world stumbling blocks to pulling it off. If no visual aid is provided, the PCs will assume they must succeed at a skill check. And a skill check takes mere seconds to roll, decipher, and move on.

There are two recommendations for handling this:

- Make up bogus designs on scrap paper as a handout and give it to the PCs. Let them examine them and guess at it all they want. Whatever they guess let them know it is incorrect. They will eventually get the hint. That, or take the most bizarre guess and "make" it (sound) correct!
- Have the PCs try their hand at figuring out the designs. Have them make Knowledge (arcana) checks, Decipher Script checks, and the like. Do not tell them the DC. No matter what they roll, they make no sense of it. They should eventually get the hint. But be prepared for annoyed players if they start rolling '20s'!

Flamebrother Salamander: CR 3; Small outsider (extraplanar, fire); HD 4d8+8; hp 26; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +4; Grp +1; Atk +6 melee (1d6+1/x3 plus 1d6 fire, spear); Full Atk +6 melee (1d6+1/x3 plus 1d6 fire, spear) and +4 melee (1d4 plus 1d6 fire, tail slap); SA Constrict 1d4 plus 1d6 fire, heat, improved grab; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., immunity to fire, vulnerability to cold; AL NE; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +6; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Craft (blacksmithing) +8, Hide +12, Listen +11, Move Silently +6, Spot +11; Alertness, Multiattack.

Constrict (Ex): A salamander deals automatic tail slap damage (including fire damage) with a successful grapple check. A noble salamander can constrict multiple creatures simultaneously, provided they are all at least two sizes smaller than it.

Heat (Ex): A salamander generates so much heat that its mere touch deals additional fire damage. Salamanders' metallic weapons also conduct this heat.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a salamander must hit a creature of up to one size larger than itself with its tail slap attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can constrict.

Skills: Salamanders have a +4 racial bonus on Craft (blacksmithing) checks.

Feats: Salamanders have the Multiattack feat even though they do not have the requisite three natural weapons.

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The room is rather cluttered, but there are two small leather bags within the bedrolls. The leather bags contain 10 gp, 6 sp, and a single green gem. The gem is like nothing seen before. An Appraise check (DC 20) reveals it is not a known gemstone.

7. Training Barracks

Three battered and burnt wooden dummies stand near the east wall. They seem to be training manikins. Three molten colored creatures stand with weapons drawn.

Tactics: The flamebrother salamanders fight to the death, calling for those within room #6 for help.

Treasure: There's a small bag partially hidden underneath a pile of torn and bloody garments on the western wall. Allow the PCs a Spot check (DC 25) or Search check (DC 20). The bag contains a simple looking masterwork dagger, 10 cp, 20 sp, and 5 gp. There are two plain silver rings (worth 30 gp) and a song written on a piece of paper as well. The song is simple, but those who can read sheet music notice a unique and beautiful melody behind the words. The song tells of a peasant boy wooing a noblewoman. The song is signed by Tor Valon Nightsinger, a bard who was previously recruited into finding the lamp for Lord Kayne. His remains are now where to be found.

8. The Fountain

An old decorative stone well with a mounted head of a lizard sprays water into a shell-like basin. The stone lizards' arms stretch forward, a finely crafted longsword in its right hand and a roughly cut mirror shield on its left arm. The water rolls down the tongue, cascading over shells before filling the basin. Standing in-between the well and your party is a large, muscular red and black scaled creature, wielding a large spear. The creature radiates heat and the spear is reddish and blackened.

Tactics: This salamander drinking from the fountain readies his weapon, attacking when the PCs enter. It engages the largest or strongest-looking fighter, constricting him if possible. If the PCs are small-sized it can constrict two of them at once, otherwise it holds the strongest fighter as long as possible. This average salamander fights to the death. It fights fiercely, calling his partner from room #9 within two to three rounds of fighting. There is also a 75% chance his partner is already in the hallway between room #8 and #9, and flanks the PCs.

✦ **Average Salamander:** CR 6; Medium outsider (extraplanar, fire); HD 9d8+18; hp 58; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +9; Grp +11; Atk +11 melee (1d8+3/x3 plus 1d6 fire, spear); Full Atk +11/+6 melee (1d8+3/x3 plus 1d6 fire, spear) and +9 melee (2d6+1 plus 1d6 fire, tail slap); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft. (10 ft. with tail); SA Constrict 2d6+1 plus 1d6 fire, heat, improved grab; SQ Damage reduction 10/magic, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to fire, vulnerability to cold; AL CE; SV Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +8; Str 14, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +11, Craft (blacksmithing) +19, Diplomacy +3, Disguise +1 (+3 acting), Hide +11, Intimidate +3, Listen +8, Move Silently +11, Search +12, Spot +8; Alertness, Multiattack, Power Attack.

Constrict (Ex): A salamander deals automatic tail slap damage (including fire damage) with a successful grapple check. A noble salamander can constrict multiple creatures simultaneously, provided they are all at least two sizes smaller than it.

Heat (Ex): A salamander generates so much heat that its mere touch deals additional fire damage. Salamanders' metallic weapons also conduct this heat.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a salamander must hit a creature of up to one size larger than itself with its tail slap attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can constrict.

Skills: Salamanders have a +4 racial bonus on Craft (blacksmithing) checks.

Feats: Salamanders have the Multiattack feat even though they do not have the requisite three natural weapons.

Treasure: The clean water of this fountain heals 2d8 hit points of damage (once only) when imbibed. Water taken from the well evaporates if bottled, and therefore must be consumed at its source. The sword the statue is holding is called *mistblade* (see New Magic—Appendix A). Removing the sword requires a tall PC (at least 6 ft. tall) and a successful Strength check (DC 18).

The shield radiates strong abjuration magic, but is cursed. Should a PC touch the shield's mirror face, he suffers 2d8 points of acid damage and 1d4 points of temporary Constitution damage. A Fortitude save (DC 20) results in half damage. If a PC touches the edge in an attempt to lift the mirror from its holding place, he must succeed at a Reflex save (DC 20) or lose 1d4 fingers from each hand touching the shield. Blood that drips from the shield into the water boils away into steam almost instantly. There appears to be no safe way to remove the shield from the statue.

A successful Search check (DC 25) reveals that there is something "trapped" or deadly about the shield. A DC 30 Search check reveals that its edge is dangerously sharp and a DC 35 Search check reveals that its surface is acidic. However, only a rogue would be able to notice anything and only when looking for it.

9. Guard Post

A humanoid creature made tracks throughout the room; two large hammocks hang from hooks in the stone. The room otherwise appears empty. Light from the western corridor shines into this room.

Encounter: This average salamander is larger than the one in room #8. If both salamanders fought the PCs in room #8, this room is empty. Otherwise the salamander stands at attention, as if guarding something. It wears a clawed necklace. It engages the strongest-looking fighter first and fights to the death.

✎ **Average Salamander:** CR 6; Medium outsider (extraplanar, fire); HD 9d8+18; hp 75; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +9; Grp +11; Atk +11 melee (1d8+3/x3 plus 1d6 fire, spear); Full Atk +11/+6 melee (1d8+3/x3 plus 1d6 fire, spear) and +9 melee (2d6+1 plus 1d6 fire, tail slap); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft. (10 ft. with tail); SA Constrict 2d6+1 plus 1d6 fire, heat, improved grab; SQ Damage reduction 10/magic, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to fire, vulnerability to cold; AL CE; SV Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +8; Str 14, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +11, Craft (blacksmithing) +19, Diplomacy +3, Disguise +1 (+3 acting), Hide +11, Intimidate +3, Listen +8, Move Silently +11, Search +12, Spot +8; Alertness, Multiattack, Power Attack.

Constrict (Ex): A salamander deals automatic tail slap damage (including fire damage) with a successful grapple check. A noble salamander can constrict multiple creatures simultaneously, provided they are all at least two sizes smaller than it.

Heat (Ex): A salamander generates so much heat that its mere touch deals additional fire damage. Salamanders' metallic weapons also conduct this heat.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a salamander must hit a creature of up to one size larger than itself with its tail slap attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can constrict.

Skills: Salamanders have a +4 racial bonus on Craft (blacksmithing) checks.

Feats: Salamanders have the Multiattack feat even though they do not have the requisite three natural weapons.

Treasure: A Search check (DC 25) or Spot check (DC 30) reveals a loose stone in the floor. Underneath the floor is a small copper decanter with a cracked cork lid. This is a *decanter of endless water*. The guards here have been unable to destroy the decanter (having damaged it several times in the attempt), so they hid it away under a stone and placed a guard here so no one could ever use it. The lid to the decanter is damaged and can only be opened twice. After the cork is removed a second time, it crumbles.

The decanter has one word etched on the inside bottom — 'Ekena'k'. The command word operates the decanter as a geyser, which produces a 20-ft. stream of water at 10 gallons per round. Unfortunately, the command word to make it stop had long since worn off (it is meant to be discovered during another adventure). If left open, the decanter eventually fills the temple with water, flooding the inhabitants out.

10. Hall of Mirrors

Bright reflections light up this 50-ft hallway. A total of eight mirrors line the walls in 5-ft. increments. Each mirror is unique in its own nature; some are serpent-like with a head and tail wrapped tightly around with claws holding the mirror. Others vary in form from wooden frames to stone but each is distinctive. A heavy sandy-red marble door marks the end of the hallway. An ornate lamp is etched into the door. Beneath it there appears to be writing of some kind.

Each of the eight mirrors is ornate but has no special abilities, however, the single mirror hiding in the shadows on the ceiling is a *mirror opposition* (see chapter 7 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). In every respect this item appears to be a normal mirror. The mirror does not work on anyone wearing a clawed necklace. The twist here is after three rounds of combat, the two randomly teleport within the 50-ft. hallway. Use a 1d8 to determine the placement of the PC. The opposition appears next to the PC.

The mirror works on only one PC at a time. Additionally, the reflection cannot be harmed by anyone but the reflected PC.

The red-marbled door has the inscription in common "let there be light." If spoken aloud the trap within room #11 activates and the door opens automatically. If not, the PCs need only to pull the door open with a Strength check (DC 20).

✎ **Marble Door:** 6 in. thick; hardness 8; hp 80; AC 5; break DC 45.

11. False Tomb

Note the stairs appearing on the map are actually hidden and cannot be found until the lever is located.

You feel the chill of the room as you enter. A single candle gives off only a very little bit of light. The candle sits in a small sapphire lamp on top of a horizontal sarcophagus. Six other sarcophagi stand vertically along the western and eastern walls. Elegantly carved humanoids are noticeable on each of the sarcophagi lids. Their arms are crossed on their chests, palms down, and fingers spread wide. Long fingernails protrude from their hands and the shadowed facial features are sharply toned.

Encounter: Everything occurring within this room is an illusion. This trap is only activated if one of the PCs uttered the command word in room #10. Only one PC needs to survive the encounter to end the illusion. Once the PCs enter the room, the marble door closes behind them.

Tactics: The main sarcophagus lid bursts open after 1 round, sending the candle flying. The violent opening of the sarcophagus snuffs out the small light. This should be a clue to the PCs something is amiss. The creature now facing the PCs is an illusion of an elven vampire. Unless some light is provided or unless the PCs have darkvision, they must fight at a significant disadvantage.

The vampire fights fiercely and without cause. If the PCs give it the room to do so, it summons forth 10d10 bats (also an illusion), which rip out, from the sarcophagus and hallway (if the door is open).

One round after the vampire is out of his tomb, the first three of the six sarcophagi open and skeletons (again, an illusion) emerge wearing full suits of plate armor and carrying longswords. One round later, the remaining sarcophagi open and three more illusionary skeletons join the combat.

When near destruction, the vampire activates an illusionary delayed blast fireball (as a 9th level sorcerer) from a small marble hidden in his cloak. The blast detonates within one round burning everything in the room, including the vampire. On a successful Spot check (DC 20) or a successful Search check (DC 15), those who remain see their fallen comrades are only sleeping. Be sure to add appropriate lighting modifiers! A gentle nudge wakes any fallen PC and they realize it was an illusion. Should everyone 'die' from the encounter, they merely sleep for 8 hours before waking fully refreshed, with the room exactly as they found it, the lamp still lit resting on the coffin.

Descending stairs lie under a sliding floor plate. The plate is activated by a concealed lever in the sarcophagi closest to the stairs on the westernmost wall. A successful Search check (DC 30) locates the lever. The lever is wood, reinforced with iron. It is old and brittle. It breaks after the PCs pull it down, leaving the stairway open indefinitely. Should the PCs presume this is the right lamp, they're surprised when Lord Kayne requests they return to the temple.

✦ **Illusionary Vampire, Elf Ftr 7:** CR 9; Medium undead; HD 7d12; hp 55; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 25, touch 15, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +7; Grp +9; Atk +14 melee (1d10+8/19-20, bastard sword) or +12 melee (1d6+5, slam); Full Atk +14/+9 melee (1d10+8/19-20, bastard sword) or +12 melee (1d6+5, slam); SA Blood drain, dominate, energy drain; SQ Alternate form, damage reduction, fast healing, gaseous form, resistances, spider climb, undead traits; AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +5; Str 20, Dex 21, Con æ, Int 13, Wis 13, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +12, Hide +19, Jump +9, Climb +9, Intimidate +7, Listen +10, Move Silently +14, Search +9, Sense Motive +10, Spot +11; Alertness, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bastard sword), Weapon Specialization (bastard sword).

Blood Drain (Ex): A vampire can suck blood from a living victim with its fangs by making a successful grapple check. If it pins the foe, it drains blood, dealing 1d4 points of Constitution drain each round the pin is maintained. On each such successful attack, the vampire gains 5 temporary hit points.

Dominare (Su): A vampire can crush an opponent's will just by looking into his or her eyes. This is similar to a gaze attack, except that the vampire must use a standard action, and those merely looking at it are not affected. Anyone the vampire targets must succeed on a Will save or fall instantly under the vampire's influence as though by a *dominate person* spell (caster level 12th). The ability has a range of 30 ft.

Energy Drain (Su): Living creatures hit by a vampire's slam attack (or any other natural weapon the vampire might possess) gain two negative levels. For each negative level bestowed, the vampire gains 5 temporary hit points. A vampire can use its energy drain ability once per round.

Special Qualities: A vampire retains all the special qualities of the base creature and gains those described below.

Alternate Form (Su): A vampire can assume the shape of a bat, dire bat, wolf, or dire wolf as a standard action. This ability is similar to a *polymorph* spell cast by a 12th-level character, except that the vampire does not regain hit points for changing form and must choose from among the forms mentioned here. While in its alternate form, the vampire loses its natural slam attack and dominate ability, but it gains the natural weapons and extraordinary special attacks of its new form. It can remain in that form until it assumes another or until the next sunrise. (If the base creature is not terrestrial, this power might allow other forms.)

Damage Reduction (Su): A vampire has damage reduction 10/silver and magic. A vampire's natural weapons are treated as magic weapons for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

Fast Healing (Ex): A vampire heals 5 points of damage each round so long as it has at least 1 hit point. If reduced to 0 hit points in combat, it automatically assumes gaseous form and attempts to escape. It must reach its coffin home within 2 hours or be utterly destroyed. (It can travel up to

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nine miles in 2 hours.) Any additional damage dealt to a vampire forced into gaseous form has no effect. Once at rest in its coffin, a vampire is helpless. It regains 1 hit point after 1 hour, then is no longer helpless and resumes healing at the rate of 5 hit points per round.

Gaseous Form (Su): As a standard action, a vampire can assume gaseous form at will as the spell (caster level 5th), but it can remain gaseous indefinitely and has a fly speed of 20 ft. with perfect maneuverability.

Resistances (Ex): A vampire has resistance to cold 10 and electricity 10.

Spider Climb (Ex): A vampire can climb sheer surfaces as though with a *spider climb* spell.

Turn Resistance (Ex): A vampire has +4 turn resistance.

Skills: Vampires have a +8 racial bonus on Bluff, Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Search, Sense Motive, and Spot checks.

Possessions: Chain shirt, masterwork bastard sword.

✦ **Illusionary Human Warrior Skeleton:** CR 1/3; Medium Undead; HD 1d12; hp 6; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +0; Grp +1; Atk +1 melee, (1d6+1, short sword) or +1 melee (1d4+1, claw); SA —; SQ Damage reduction 5/bludgeoning, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to cold, undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 13, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: Improved Initiative.

Possessions: Short sword.

12. Final Descent

These stairs descend, ending in a short hallway leading to a massive brass door. The door has an ornate lamp engraved on it with a large flame feathering itself upward. Written in common beneath the lamp are the words "let there be light." There are white powdered marks on the stone floor. A small pebble lies on the ground.

The door is locked, but a successful Open Lock check (DC 15) opens the large door without difficulty. The small pebble is actually a fragment of bone crushed from the door opening over it. The markings on the floor are the remnants of what is left of the broken bones.

Encounter: Coiled throughout the room, a noble salamander hides. It wears an activated ring of invisibility. It waits for one of the PCs to step into the center of the room and attacks, constricting with its enormous tail.

Tactics: It is not afraid to set off a fireball or two, as it is immune to fire damage. It only summons a fire elemental when the PCs reduce it to 25 hit points or less and it can get to a safe place to cast it. It attempts to retreat up the stairs into the room above if necessary. This is a very tough encounter and the DM should expect a death of two.

If it successfully kills a PC, it takes a defensive position for one round and taunts them.

Leave now and I shall forgive this transgression. Your lives mean nothing to me, tell Kayne that his war with us shall end soon and my lord and I shall consume his soul as we did his daughters.

If the PCs retreat, the salamander allows them to leave without incident. If they fight on, he does not offer them a second chance.

✦ **Noble Salamander:** CR 10; Large outsider (extraplanar, fire); HD 15d8+45; hp 120; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 18, touch 10, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +15; Grp +25; Atk +23 melee (1d8+9/x3 plus 1d8 fire, +3 longspear); Full Atk +23/+18/+13 melee (1d8+9/x3 plus 1d8 fire, +3 longspear) and +18 melee (2d8+3 plus 1d8 fire, tail slap); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft. (20 ft. with tail or longspear); SA Constrict 2d8+3 plus 1d8 fire, heat, improved grab, spell-like abilities; SQ Damage reduction 15/magic, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to fire, vulnerability to cold; AL LE; SV Fort +12, Ref +10, Will +11; Str 22, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 16, Wis 15, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +19, Craft (blacksmithing) +25, Diplomacy +4, Hide +15, Intimidate +4, Listen +13, Move Silently +17, Spot +13; Alertness, Cleave, Great Cleave, Multiattack, Power Attack, Skill Focus (craft [blacksmithing]).

Constrict (Ex): A salamander deals automatic tail slap damage (including fire damage) with a successful grapple check. A noble salamander can constrict multiple creatures simultaneously, provided they are all at least two sizes smaller than it.

Heat (Ex): A salamander generates so much heat that its mere touch deals additional fire damage. Salamanders' metallic weapons also conduct this heat.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a salamander must hit a creature of up to one size larger than itself with its tail slap attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can constrict.

Spell-Like Abilities: 3/day—burning hands (DC 13), fireball (DC 15), flaming sphere (DC 14), wall of fire (DC 16); 1/day—dispel magic, summon monster VII (Huge fire elemental). Caster level 15th. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Skills: Salamanders have a +4 racial bonus on Craft (blacksmithing) checks.

Feats: Salamanders have the Multiattack feat even though they do not have the requisite three natural weapons.

✦ **Fire Elemental, Huge:** CR 7; Huge elemental (fire, extraplanar); HD 16d8+64; hp 136; Init +11; Spd 60 ft.; AC 19, touch 15, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +12; Grp +24; Atk +17 melee (2d8+4 plus 2d8 fire, slam); Full Atk +17 melee (2d8+4 plus 2d8 fire, 2 slams); Space/Reach 15 ft./15 ft.; SA Burn; SQ Damage reduction 5/—, darkvision 60 ft., elemental traits, immunity to fire, vulnerability to cold; AL N; SV Fort +9, Ref +17, Will +7; Str 18, Dex 25, Con 18, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Listen +11, Spot +12; Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative B, Iron Will, Mobility, Spring Attack, Weapon Finesse.

Burn (Ex): A fire elemental's slam attack deals bludgeoning damage plus fire damage from the elemental's flaming body. Those hit by a fire elemental's slam attack also must succeed on a Reflex save or catch on fire. The flame burns for 1d4 rounds. The save DC is 22. A burning creature can take a move action to put out the flame. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Creatures hitting a fire elemental with natural weapons or unarmed attacks take fire damage as though hit by the elemental's attack, and also catch on fire unless they succeed on a Reflex save.

13. Tomb

This chamber is nearly 50 ft. across and a large pillar takes up most of the center. A strong flavor of animal waste fills the air and the floor is covered with a thin layer of dust. Unfamiliar markings can be made out in the dust. Throughout the room animal and human remains are scattered. There appears to be no other exits from the room except by a (3 ft. by 4 ft.) hole found in the eastern wall.

Encounter: The PCs do not have much time for searching this room. Ssylurin, the mummy naga (see New Monster — Appendix B) is already aware it has occupants and lurks within its hole, waiting to attack. The mummy naga attacks the PCs when they have made their way past the (5 ft. by 5 ft.) pillar. The naga is the guardian of the everburning sapphire lamp found in room #15; and so it fights to the death.

▲ **Ssylurin, Mummy Naga:** CR 7; Large undead; HD 8d12; hp 52; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +4; Grp +4; Atk +7 melee (2d6+3 plus poison, bite); Full Atk +7 melee (2d6+3 plus poison, bite), +7 melee (1d8+1, tail slap); SA Poison, spells; SQ Darkvision 60 ft. damage resistance 10/magic, immune to cold and electricity, undead traits; AL LN; SV Fort +4, Reflex +3, Will +7; Str 16, Dex 13, Con —, Int 14, Wis 13, Chr 15.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +12, Listen +10, Spellcraft +8, Spot +12; Alertness, Combat Casting, Eschew MaterialsB, Multiattack;

Poison (Ex): Injury. Fortitude DC 17; initial and secondary damage paralysis, 2d6 rounds. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Spells: Mummy Nagas cast spells at 7th level sorcerers. **Typical Sorcerer Spells Known** (6/7/7/4: Save DC 12 + Spell Level): 0—arcane mark, daze, flare, ghost sound, mage hand, ray of frost, read magic; 1st—cause fear, magic missile, ray of enfeeblement, sleep, spider climb; 2nd—darkness, ghoul touch, scare; 3rd—hold person, lightning bolt.

14. The Lair

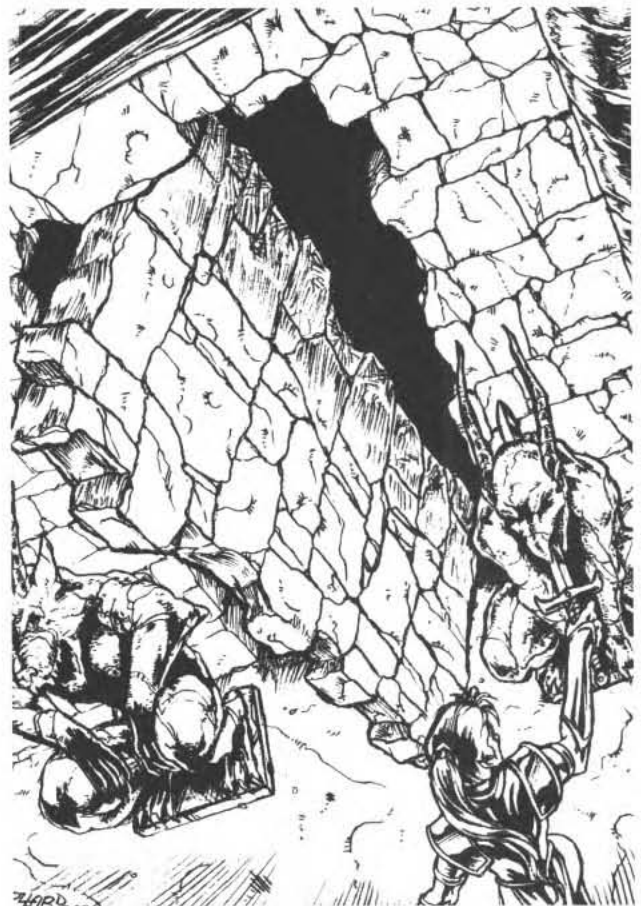
The small entrance looks tight. Skeletal remains litter the room. The room carries the stench of death; a large pile of torn clothing is laid in a twisted nest. Various broken weapons are scattered about. The nest appears to be empty.

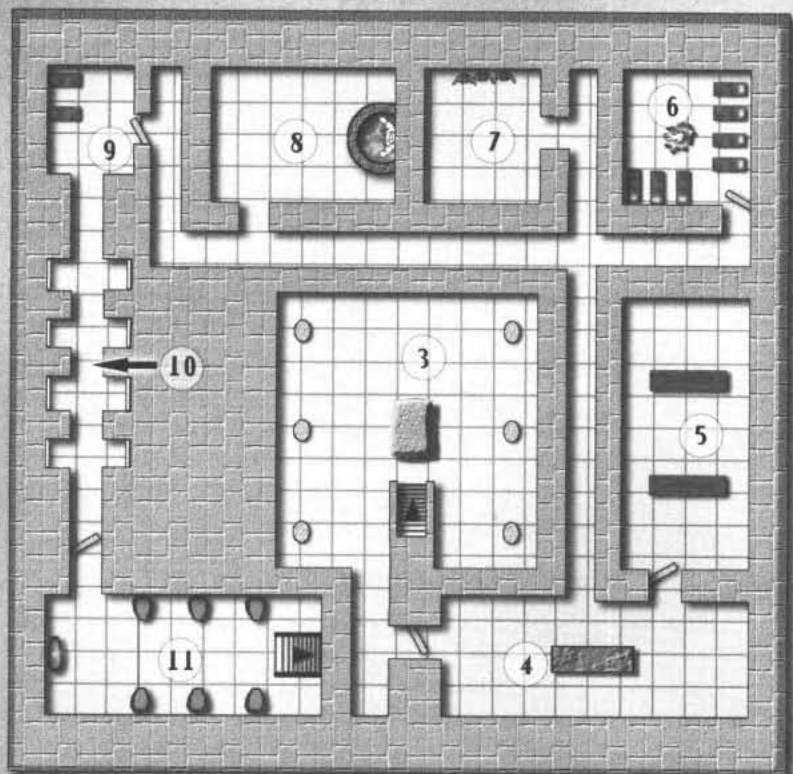
Treasure: 100 gp, 10 sp, and 2 red gems (value 20 gp each) are buried in the nest of clothing.

15. Lights out

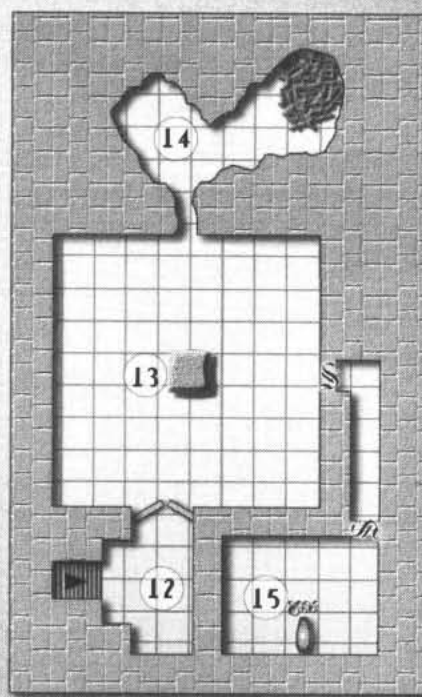
The two secret doors leading to this room are not easy to find. The stonework is seamless and a successful Search check (DC 30) for the first one and Search check (DC 25) for the second reveals the exact location of the door. Once located, they are simply opened by pushing against the wall, with a successful Strength check (DC 23). The doors swing inward and must be held open or they slide shut behind the PCs. Pulling open a secret door is much more difficult, requiring a crow bar or slim metal rod and a Strength check (DC 26) to pull it back open.

Stale air pushes past your face as the door opens inward. This room (20 ft. by 25 ft.) reveals an array of jars sitting on the floor in front of a sarcophagus. Ornate strips of cloth lined with gold and silver hang from the ceiling. A small sapphire lamp rests on the center of the coffin. It is in the shape of a dragon, its chest pushed out proudly, the head tilted back as if roaring. Flame burns from the gaping maw.

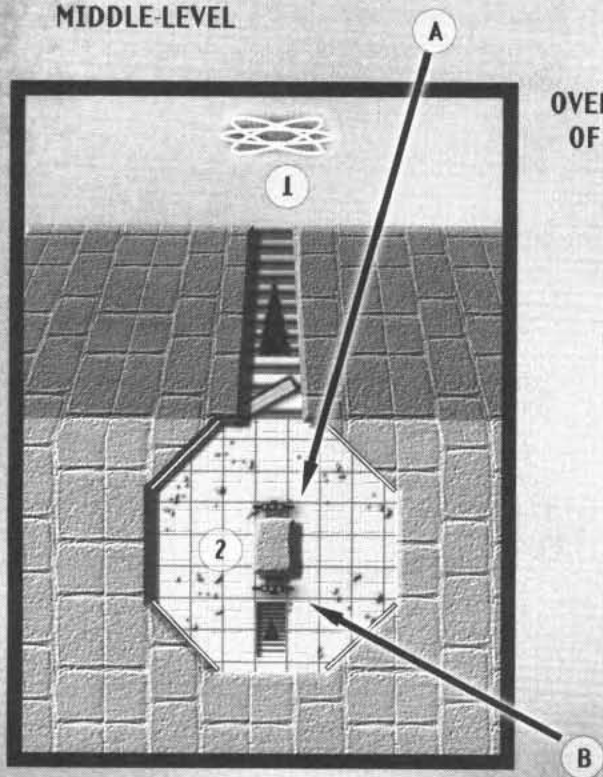




MIDDLE-LEVEL



LOWER-LEVEL



OVERHEAD VIEW
OF ENTRANCE

THE TEMPLE OF ETERNAL FLAME

This is the real ever-burning *sapphire lamp*. Nothing the PCs do beyond using the decanter of endless water extinguishes the flame. The jars in front of the sarcophagus are the remains of the body trapped within. DMs are encouraged to elaborate on the story of the war between the naga and Lord Kayne. What trapped its soul in the jar?

Once the decanter of endless water is opened and the activation word (overflow) is said aloud, water pours forth. Once the lamp is doused in the waters, a magical blast erupts from the lamp and forces the decanter of endless water from the holder's hands. The decanter shoots across the room and lodges in a small fissure in the north wall. The high-pressure water blasts anyone back that gets near it. The water fills the room quickly, increasing its depth one inch per round. The wick from the sapphire lamp can be removed after the water level rises high enough to extinguish the flame. The PCs must flee back to the top of the pyramid and exit.

15. Dry Ground

If the PCs 'died' in room #11, then Kylira and Kayne assume the PCs do not make it and deactivated the magic teleporting rings. When the PCs exit the pyramid, they find hard, blasted earth in every direction. They have no idea where they are, and they have no idea how long before Kylira is to open the magical gate again, if ever.

In actuality, the PCs are on a shattered portion of the elemental plane of fire. The war between Kayne and Ssylurin has gone on for many years, and the realities were torn apart by their magical powers. The mummy naga is a fraction of what he once was and Lord Kayne is a broken man desperate for revenge. Neither is good or evil in this melodrama and the PCs are no more than pawns in their little game. Feel free to elaborate on their history to meet the needs of your campaign, going so far as to use them as near god-like powers in a world of lost heroes. Or this is merely the conclusion of a hopeless quest, bending the PCs to seek revenge or take a stand where others have failed.

If the PCs did not 'die' read or paraphrase the following:

You travel back to the upper level and exit the flooding pyramid. The magical rings that allowed you to travel here still spin in place. Lord Kayne and his followers watch you from the other side. There is a glimmer of hope in the old Lord's eyes. Once on the other side he asks for the wick. As promised he gestures to a large wooden chest off to his side. He looks at you and then to the magic Kylirs at his side, then laughs.

"Thank you for your services, you may leave. This chest is yours!"

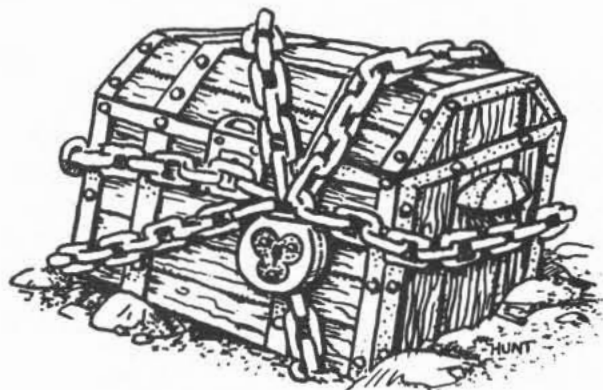
EPILOGUE

The chest has a total value of 3,000 gp in the form of various gems and pieces of jewelry. Lord Kayne notes the PCs worth and may call upon them again for future work. He is someone who can appreciate spending money for mercenaries when it is worth it, and the PCs have proved their worth to him. Their future relations with Lord Kayne could be very lucrative, if they respect his privacy and continue to perform good work. If they continued to ask questions when they returned, or demanded to know everything about the mission, he sends them on their way to never call on them again. Lady Kylira echoes her Lord's outlook on the PCs in either situation.

However, most PCs will resent being "forced" to do his bidding and may plot his demise.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

- Set up Lord Kayne and Lady Kylira as rulers of a city for this adventure. Their alignments and overall outlook on life might not be the most honorable, or perhaps they are indeed good rulers with strong hands. Either way, as soon as this adventure is complete, their city revolts, and the PCs are immediately promised knighthood if they help restore the city to order (see the adventure "No Mercy").
- Salamanders enacting revenge summon a fire elemental beneath Lord Kayne and Lady Kylira's town or city, wreaking havoc and sending a terrible earthquake through the region (see the adventure "Temple of the Iron Codex").



Chapter 19:
**Temple of
the Iron Codex**

Levels 8 to 10

By Ree Soesbee

The legend of the Iron Codex is told only when the winter is at its most impenetrable, and snow has covered all the roads of the land. A book of steel pages and wrought-iron bindings, the Iron Codex is said to destroy any who dare to read from its cursed pages. It is said to have the power to summon strange magic, and if disturbed from its sacred resting place, its power could destroy the world. Long ago, ancient heroes placed it upon an altar, guarded and ensorcelled to keep the Codex undisturbed. So long as it is not disturbed, the Iron Codex will sleep... forever. It is an artifact of immeasurable power and arcane dangers... but, after all, only a legend.

Then, within the city where you make your home, a tragic earthquake struck, and a deep crevice split the city in two. Shortly after the earthquake, a fine ash began to fall over the city. Day and night for three days, the ash pours slowly down upon the inhabitants. As it does, a strange sickness strikes the residents of your home. The innocent are dying. Clerics struggle to uncover the cause, sending you to the edge of the chasm to discover the source of this strange plague.

It is there you find the impossible. Deep beneath the city's southern gate, nearly a hundred feet into a crevice that did not exist, you find a pair of great iron doors, once sealed with molten silver, built into the side of the granite wall. The earth has shifted away, and the earthquake has unsealed the doors,

disturbing the sleep of those within. The thick rain of ash seeps out from the tomb, whispering and clawing at you as you peer into an unfathomable darkness.

And carved into the iron of the massive portal gates are the words:

"Behold the Temple of the Iron Codex."

DM BACKGROUND

This adventure is designed for four to six PCs of levels 8 to 10. As all "crypt" style adventures, problem solving, stealth, and quick swordplay are certain to save the day. By virtue of this adventure's design, the Codex can be replaced with nearly any magical "thing" from your campaign world — any sword, helmet, ring, scepter, lich hand, etc. will suffice. So long as the item is powerful and is kept from the hands of mortals, feel free to alter the plot to suit the campaign.

The adventure works especially well as the finale to a great quest. Perhaps the temple lies at the base of a great mountain that requires weeks or months of adventuring just to reach. The battle to reach the temple should certainly test the PCs before the journey into the unknown...

TEMPLE OF THE IRON CODEx

BARDIC LORE

A bard can make a Bardic Knowledge check to discover what he may have heard. A bard learns all the information of the DC his check succeeded by and all that below it (a Bard who rolled a 17 would learn the information under DC 15 and DC 10). Alternately this information can be gained by a Gather Information skill check +5 higher than the DC of a Bardic Lore check to see if the PC has heard any rumors.

- DC 10** It can summon beings from infernal planes, and acts as a beacon to evil creatures who reside on this one
- DC 15** A group of heroes created an altar of immense power to imprison the book.
- DC 20** If it is removed from its altar, the Codex's powers will return to it.
- DC 25** A wizard once attempted to conquer the book and use its power for evil purposes. While he controlled the Iron Codex, he devastated an entire kingdom, killing thousands of innocents and calling forth an army of infernal beasts. He was defeated only at great cost, and the book was taken by a band of heroes.

You may wish to use the band of heroes who first imprisoned the Iron Codex to use as a further source of adventures. The heroes appear, symbolically, in the Temple of the Iron Codex.

However, if that does not fit the current campaign model, set the temple under the city of Desburg and use our plot.

The Temple of the Iron Codex was buried thousands of years ago, keeping the power of the Codex safe from mortal eyes. So long as the Codex remained hidden, its power could not be released. Unable to destroy it, the tome was sealed within the walls of a great temple — its location unknown to the world. However, if the book were ever disturbed, the malevolent spirits of the Codex would fight for freedom, going as far as to plague the bearer or bring great evil upon those who come in contact with him. Relentless, the spirits would not stop until they were freed. Luckily for mankind, all traces of the book were destroyed, all maps were burned, and all legends of the Codex were lost... almost.

Centuries passed, and a city was built over the site of the temple, its inhabitants ignorant of what lay beneath their homes. When an earthquake fractured the foundation of the city, the Temple of the Iron Codex was unearthed — and the gates to the Temple shattered. Deep within the passages of the Temple, the earthquake has shaken the book from its protections, allowing the evil of the Codex to seep out past the iron gates that once kept such a catastrophic event from taking place.

The grand city of Desburg is the site of the current adventure. The PCs may have helped the Count of Desburg in "Honor Among Thieves" (from *Adventure I*) and explored the sewers in "Sundered Faith". If this is the case, the earthquake in that adventure was simply a preamble of the one in this adventure.

TROUBLESHOOTING

Some players are going to suggest responses such as, "Well, why not take the whole city guard down there?" or "I'll call in every cleric of my church, and we'll get the High Priest to come in and move the temple to another plane." If this happens, you should remind your players of two things. First, the city is currently trying to handle the devastation of the earthquake and treat the citizens who have come down with the strange plague following it. Second, the book's power is obviously going to be drawing the attention of evil beings... and every minute they waste is another chance for some powerful evil being to get into the Temple ahead of them. Finally, the count, knowing how trustworthy and talented the PCs are, requests their aid in helping a city that has become their second home.

INSIDE THE TEMPLE OF THE IRON CODEx

The massive iron doors of the temple were once sealed with silver, but the earthquake has broken the seal and jarred the doors from their resting place. You can see through the open portal, though smoke and ashes blow in your eyes, into a hallway leading into a large round room. On the doors is carved a giant spider, holding an enormous book.

When the party enters, they find themselves in a short hallway leading into room #1. The hallway is carved from stone, and decorated with carvings of spirals and knotwork. The large room at the end of the hallway has no door, and can be seen from the faint light of day behind the characters. They need a source of light to continue further.

TEMPLE OF THE IRON CODEx

1. The Entrance Hall (Deraloth)

You enter a large round room with walls covered completely in mosaics of gold and semi-precious stones. The artwork is beautiful, but portrays an attitude of seriousness and solemn guardianship. The figures depicted on the wall of this circular chamber seem almost lifelike, and vary widely in race, age and size. There is even a large red-scaled dragon, twining through all the other figures and dominating the scene. In the far arc of the circular room are three passages, each leading south.

The earthquake seems to have struck this room hard, breaking chunks of floor and shattering parts of the mosaic.

If the PCs choose to look at one of the figures depicted in the mosaics, they notice there are ten. The names of the individual figures are listed beside each one, written in a very old variant of the common tongue. A Bardic Knowledge check (DC 20) or Knowledge (history or myth and legends) check (DC25) reveals them as legendary heroes of good, perhaps the very heroes who sealed the Iron Codex away.

Mosaic 1 (Deraloth): This is not one of the figures on the wall, but rather an image of a spider covering the entire floor of this room — a feminine figure and perhaps protector of the tomb. You notice the figure's name is carved on the first stone inside the archway leading back toward the temple opening.

Mosaic 2 (Arril): This is the figure of a young elven maiden, with red hair and green eyes. She is holding a sprig of greenery in one hand and a bow in the other.

Mosaic 3 (Forgehammer): The third figure is a stocky dwarven male, forging a battle axe on a brightly glowing anvil.

Mosaic 4 (Broggnax): A burly troll roars beneath a titanic waterfall, his claws extended. His skin is greyish, and he wears armor, as if he were intelligent rather than primitive.

Mosaic 5 (Percival): This figure is hidden beneath the last few coils of the great dragon's tail. It is a young human boy — no older than 6 — smiling and winking.

Mosaic 6 (Leo): This figure is not a humanoid, but a great lion made of black stone. It is carved into a leaping pose.

Mosaic 7 (Greybeard): An ancient man, apparently half-elven, rests on a chair and reads a scroll. He seems wise, peaceful, and gentle, but troubled, as if he knew something bad were in the air.

Mosaic 8 (Themis): A woman with bluish skin and golden hair stands wearing seashell armor and lifting a sword glowing with purity and strength. Her pose is regal, like a paladin, and the moon shines down on her as if returning her salute.

Mosaic 9 (Mavek): A powerful human male wears studded leather armor and holds a gladius. He confidently marches across a barren wasteland, unafraid.

Mosaic 10 (Shad'rav): The largest of the murals, a Red Dragon twists all around the room, near each of the other figures. It seems to be bringing the others together.

2. The Western Chamber (Mavek)

On the bronze door is carved the word 'Mavek' in common.

When you open the door to this chamber, you see five stone gargoyles, squatting on the floor to the chamber. They do not move, and they do not respond to the door opening. The rest of the room is plain stonework. The ceiling is twenty ft. high, arched, with no beams or support, and has slight stress fractures from the recent earthquake. There is a bronze door in the southern wall.

Encounter: These five stone beasts are unique to the Temple. They are called lesser vesagos gargoyles (see New Monsters — Appendix B).

Tactics: While the gargoyles are stationary, they are immune to all attacks, including magical ones. If the gargoyles move, they are vulnerable, however. Once a gargoyle rests and takes no move actions for three turns, it freezes into stone once more and regains its invulnerability. Otherwise, these gargoyles are typical for their creature type.

As soon as the characters enter the room, or whenever the gargoyles feel they have a good opportunity, they attack. Note there are several large pits, covered by the illusion of a floor. The gargoyles are aware of the pits, but fly when they attack, so they are not concerned about falling in. Characters who fall into a 30-ft. pit take 3d6 falling damage. The gargoyles gain a +2 circumstance bonus to all bull rush attempts when pushing PCs through the illusory floor.

✶ **Lesser Vesagos Gargoyle:** CR 6; Medium construct; HD 6d10+20; 62 hp; Init +2; Spd 45 ft., fly 75 ft. (average); AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +4/Grp +6; Atk +8 melee (1d4, claw); Full Atk +8 melee (1d4, 2 claws), +6 melee (1d6, bite), +6 ranged (1d10 fire, breath weapon); SA —; SQ Damage reduction 15/+1, immunity to fire; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 14, Dex 14, Con —, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 7. Skills and Feats: Hide +9, Listen +4, Spot +4; Multiattack, Weapon Finesse (claw, bite).

Breath Weapon (Su): 30-ft. cone, once per round, damage 1d10 (3d10), Reflex DC is 18 (22) half. The save DC is Constitution-based.

TEMPLE OF THE IRON CODEX

3. The Central Chamber (Forgehammer)

On the steel door is carved the word 'Forgehammer' in common.

This room has an extremely low ceiling, no more than four ft. above the floor. Across the floor in strange criss-cross marks are notches in the ground, stretching from one side of the room to the other in no appreciable pattern. Stone pillars shedding darkness over the details of the room hold up the ceiling. The earthquake does not appear to have caused any damage to this room. Dimly, in the far wall, you think you see the outline of another door.

Each of the notches in the floor (detailed on the map) is part of an elaborate trap. Some of them shield blades, which cut upwards toward the ceiling, and others are the landing points for guillotine blades dropping down from above. Some blades roll down from the side, on pendulum-like pivots, while others drop straight down or shoot upwards from the floor.

The pillars shed magical shadows in a radius of 15 ft. (overlapping), confusing PCs and preventing them from knowing the locations of the blades. PCs carrying a magical light source may add a +2 circumstance bonus to their AC to avoid the swinging blades, as the magical light shrinks the magical shadows (a *daylight* effect almost dispels the shadows entirely, increasing the circumstance bonus to AC against the traps to +4). Normal light sources, such as torches or lanterns, do not decrease the shadows' effect.

Roll to determine the type of trap the area holds:

1d20	Trap
1–8	Floor Scythe Trap: CR 4; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; Atk +20 melee (2d4+8/×4, scythe); Search DC 21; Disable Device DC 18.
9–16	Ceiling Pendulum: CR 3; mechanical; timed trigger; automatic reset; Atk +15 melee (1d12+8/×3, greataxe); Search DC 15; Disable Device DC 27.
17–20	Blue Whinnis Floor Scythe: CR 6; mechanical; touch trigger; manual reset; Atk +16 melee (2d4+8/×4 plus poison, scythe); poison (blue whinnis, DC 14 Fortitude save resists, 1 Con/Unconsciousness); Search DC 22; Disable Device DC 17.

4. The Eastern Chamber (Broggnax)

On the stone door is carved the word 'Broggnax' in common.

The room is shaped like a massive rock garden, with trees carved in marble and moss growing across the ground at your feet. A waterfall of lava pours out of the ceiling over the east wall, splashing on the rocks below. The lava river crosses the room and exits in the center of the west wall. Two paths lead from the door to the river. On the far side of the river, the paths continue toward another stone door in the south wall. There is no apparent way to cross the river. Scattered throughout the room are approximately 20 statues of humanoids, of varying races and ages, all posed in athletic motion. The lava seems to have been scattered across the area in the west, creating pools of half-cooled stone. The earthquake hit this room hard and the river of lava coursing through the chamber is all the more dangerous for being unstable.

Encounter: Ten of the statues in the room (the shaded circles) are carefully shaped Vesagos Gargoyles.

Tactics: The Gargoyles wait until the party has approached the river, and use their attacks to push the characters into the molten lava. Only the Gargoyles on the side of the river with the characters attack. If the party is separated during their river crossing, the Gargoyles on the far side take full advantage of this. The gargoyles on the side with the PCs animate first, in an attempt to make the party believe not all of the statues are gargoyles. This tactic is designed to split up the party, or cause them to waste attacks on the real stone statues.

The statue marked with an "X" has a lever, which causes a stone panel to slide up from the floor and cover the river, forming a thin bridge just wide enough for one person to walk across. The lever is hidden on the statue, but can be located with a successful Spot check (DC 20) on the specific statue.

Lava or magma deals 2d6 points of damage per round of exposure, except in the case of total immersion (such as when a character falls in), which deals 20d6 points of damage per round. Damage from magma continues for 1d3 rounds after exposure ceases, but this additional damage is only half of that dealt during actual contact (that is, 1d6 or 10d6 points per round). An immunity or resistance to fire serves as an immunity to the lava.

TEMPLE OF THE IRON CODEX

✦ **Lesser Vesagos Gargoyle:** CR 6; Medium construct; HD 6d10+20; 62 hp; Init +2; Spd 45 ft., fly 75 ft. (average); AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +4/Grp +6; Atk +8 melee (1d4, claw); Full Atk +8 melee (1d4, 2 claws), +6 melee (1d6, bite), +6 ranged (1d10 fire, breath weapon); SA —; SQ Damage reduction 15/+1, immunity to fire; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 14, Dex 14, Con —, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 7. Skills and Feats: Hide +9, Listen +4, Spot +4; Multiattack, Weapon Finesse (claw, bite).

Breath Weapon (Su): 30-ft. cone, once per round, damage 1d10 (3d10), Reflex DC is 18 (22) half. The save DC is Constitution-based.

5. Chamber of Flame (Shad'ra)

Each of the three doors to this room looks the same. They are iron, with thick bands of red ore. A red dragon's head is carved on each door, and the doors feel warm to the touch.

As soon as you open the door to this room, you are assaulted by a wave of heat stinging your eyes and skin. This tremendous room is more than 120 ft. across, thirty ft. high, and at least sixty ft. deep from the ceiling down to the flaming lava below. From the doorway where you are standing, a thin path twists out over the lava, supported by tall pillars of stone rising from the fire below. The paths lead into the room above the flame. Looking to the side of the doorway in which you are standing, you see two more doors are entrances to this huge room. Each doorway leads to one of the twisting paths.

Looking out at the chamber, you see two of the stone bridges lead out to platforms, and one leads only a few short steps from the door where it enters the room. A central platform stands in the center of the room, a short distance from the shortest path. In the distance, far away on the southern wall, you notice a door.

All around on the high walls of this chamber is a mosaic of a tremendous red dragon, filling the ceiling and walls with massive scaled coils. The heat shimmers against the smooth stone so the dragon looks like he's alive.

As you step into the room, you feel slightly light-headed. Any magical light you were holding fades and any magic items you are wearing dull and seem temporarily unenchanted.

This entire room is ensorcelled and under the effects of an *antimagic* field cast at 20th level.

At each circular junction down the path, there is a small pillar about 4 ft. tall, topped by a strange glass case with a golden lever inside. Moving the lid of the glass case (it swings easily), characters find the levers untrapped and in working condition. Each lever corresponds to an opening in a path (A to a, B to b, and so on). When the lever is flipped, the corresponding bridge slides out from under the stone path, safely unifying one side of the gap with the other. These bridges are safe and sturdy to walk on, and can be triggered no other way.

Ropes suspended between the bridges burn through from the heat in 2d4 rounds, dropping anything hanging from them into the lava. Chains grow hot after 6 rounds, and sear anyone touching them for 1d6 points of fire damage each turn. Characters attempting to climb across hot chains must make a Fortitude save (DC 15 + amount of fire damage taken) or fall.

6. The Library (Greybeard)

The door to this chamber is made of quartz, shimmering from the heat of the previous chamber. On it is carved the word 'Greybeard' in common.

This small room is magically protected from the heat of the previous chamber, and is cool and comfortable. The walls of this chamber are covered in bookshelves, with numerous tomes carefully organized on each shelf. Looking at each shelf, you note all of the books are on the topic of the Iron Codex, whether they contain legends, myths, or claim to be 'factual' accounts of the book's power. The books are in remarkable shape, considering they must have been stored here for over a thousand years. A fountain of cool water runs in the corner of the room, and two reading tables occupy the center of the room. Some of the books appear to have fallen from their shelves in the earthquake, and at least one of the shelves in the western wall is cracked and tilted, the books toppled to the ground around it. There are two other doors in the room, in either corner of the south wall, one made of obsidian, and the other made of ivory.

The water in the fountain is tainted, but not poisoned. A *detect poison* spell does not detect anything but *detect magic* reveals an aura of moderate enchantment. If anyone drinks from the water, they must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 20) or fall into a deep sleep. Characters can only be awakened from this sleep with a *break enchantment*, *remove curse* or *restoration* spell.

If any book is removed from the room, its pages quickly fall to rot and ash, no longer protected by the preservative spells cast on the room. Each hour the characters spend reading the books, reveals one piece of information:

- The Iron Codex is the talisman of an ancient and powerful demon, and is partially alive. The tome is aware of its surroundings, and has the ability to call to the demon whose soul resides in it. It can summon beings from infernal planes, and acts as a beacon to evil creatures who reside on this one.
- The spells cast on the Temple serve to shield the Iron Codex's beacon from reaching any infernal powers, but only while the Codex is safely on its warded and

TEMPLE OF THE IRON CODEx

protected altar within the Temple. If it is removed from its altar, the Codex's powers return to it, and the book immediately calls to servants of its master.

- Anyone touching the Iron Codex may become possessed by the spirit within the book. If this occurs, the demon is released to this plane to possess the mortal body. If the book, or the mortal shell, is destroyed, the demon is completely freed, and may move between its plane of origin and the mortal world at will.
- The heroes depicted on the first room's mural devised this temple as a means to protect the Codex and prevent any evil forces from acquiring it. They created an altar of immense power to imprison the book. The magic of this altar would prevent the book from summoning its master's minions, and a temple was constructed around the altar so no mortal servants of the demon could retrieve the Iron Codex. The heroes then buried the temple beneath a fallen mountain, hoping it would remain buried and forgotten by humanity, and the Codex would be permanently lost.
- The Iron Codex has the ability to control storms and to cross planes, and can offer anyone who is strong enough to conquer the demon soul within its immense power. Anyone who could use the book could summon minions from other planes, and even take the form of a terrible demon, calling on infernal sources of strength and unknown magical spells. The wizard, Ardos once attempted to conquer the book and use its power for evil purposes. While he controlled the Iron Codex, he devastated an entire kingdom, killing thousands of innocents and calling forth an army of infernal beasts. He was defeated only at great cost, and the book was taken into the custody of a band of heroes.
- The Iron Codex was created by an ancient demon whose name has been lost to time. He placed part of his spirit within the book and sent it to the mortal plane, hoping someone would read it and thereby free him on this plane to cause chaos. His plan nearly worked. An evil wizard named Ardos found the book, and worked spells upon it, hoping to summon the demon and then control the infernal beast in order to conquer a neighboring kingdom. His plan was foiled by a band of heroes who then took the book far from the kingdom, promising to create a permanent prison for its evil.

7. The Obsidian Door (Leo)

The door to the South-west seems plain, and is made of obsidian. The head of a lion is carved into the black stone.

The black door opens, and you see a long, dark tunnel beyond. Your light flickers, and you have an extremely small range of visibility.

Beyond the black door is a circular room filled with shadows and echoes. You see a massive stone statue; five times the size of a man. It is shaped like a male lion made of obsidian, but its eyes glow with a red, feral light. On its breast is a ruby the size of your fist, also glowing red. You have barely enough time to note these things before the beast attacks.

If the PCs follow the tunnel, their light sources operate at half-capacity due to a weak darkness spell cast permanently on the corridor. At the end of the corridor is another door, identical to the first.

Encounter: The creature in this room is a Greater Vesagos Gargoyle. It continues to attack until it is dead. The Greater Vesagos Gargoyle can fit down the corridor (though barely), and continues to chase and attack the characters if they choose to retreat.

On the far wall of the room is a second ruby, identical to the one in the gargoyle's chest. The first one can only be removed from the gargoyle when it is dead. If the first ruby is placed against the second one in the far wall, the secret door in this room opens with a soft hissing of trapped air escaping.

✶ **Lesser Vesagos Gargoyle:** CR 6; Medium construct; HD 6d10+20; 62 hp; Init +2; Spd 45 ft., fly 75 ft. (average); AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +4/Grp +6; Atk +8 melee (1d4, claw); Full Atk +8 melee (1d4, 2 claws), +6 melee (1d6, bite), +6 ranged (1d10 fire, breath weapon); SA —; SQ Damage reduction 15/+1, immunity to fire; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 14, Dex 14, Con —, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 7.

Skills and Feats: Hide +9, Listen +4, Spot +4; Multiattack, Weapon Finesse (claw, bite).

Breath Weapon (Su): 30-ft. cone, once per round, damage 1d10 (3d10), Reflex DC is 18 (22) half. The save DC is Constitution-based.



TEMPLE OF THE IRON CODEX

8. The Ivory Door (Arril)

The door to the southeast is unadorned, and is made of ivory. On the stone door is written the word 'Arril'.

The ivory door is cold to the touch, and when you open it, you feel a chill bite your skin. Beyond is a wintry room filled with icicles, frosted stone, and ivory pillars. A sense of well-being pervades this room, and those who do not follow the path of good feel distinctly uncomfortable even when simply standing in the hallway. You see a beautiful blue gem set in the far wall of the room, covered in a thin layer of ice. There are no other apparent exits to the chamber, and no creatures can be seen easily.

This entire room is under the effect of a permanent *magic circle against evil spell*, cast at the 12th level of ability. If a creature enters the room, a delicate, feminine voice speaks from nowhere. It intones the following riddle:

Give me food, and I live.
Give me water, and I die.
What am I?

The correct answer to the riddle is fire. If the riddle is incorrectly answered, nothing occurs. The voice only asks the riddle again, or accepts an answer, if another good character enters the room. If one of the characters in the room responds with the correct answer, the snow in the chamber swirls, as in a child's snow globe. It spins into a figure of ice, in the form of a young woman. Although she does not seem to see the characters, she addresses them in a short speech and then fades away into snow, leaving a brilliant blue gem in her wake.

The maiden opens snowy eyes, and speaks in Elvish. "You who have come here, seeking the Iron Codex, know this. Its powers are uncontrollable, and it corrupts with a simple touch. If you stand before me, I know no evil rests in your hearts. Yet there is a greater danger: evil will tempt even the souls of good men, and lead them to their doom. I pray you, if you seek the Tome for your own purposes or for another, put aside this quest. Leave evil where it lies, and imperil not your soul with this stained tome."

The blue gem dropped by the illusory maiden is identical to the one in the far wall. If the gem placed against the one in the wall, the secret door in this room opens with a soft hissing of trapped air.



TEMPLE OF THE IRON CODEx

9. False Codex (Themis)

Both of the secret corridors from room #7 and room #8 lead to the same destination. The corridors are identical, and the doors at the end of each corridor are also identical. No matter which direction the PCs enter, read the following description. The door to this chamber is made of strange bluish steel. On the door is carved the word 'Themis'.

Though the corridor was dark, the room inside is filled with a brilliant light. You come into a large, rectangular room with three massive stone altars at its center covered in velvet cloth. On the east wall, there are four statues which you recognize from the mosaic in the first room of the temple: an elven maiden, a male human warrior, a large troll, and a serpentine dragon. By the west wall are four more: a human woman with spiders on her raiment, a burly dwarf, an elderly half-elven man, and a large stone lion. At the rear of the chamber, there is another statue on a dais high above the altars. The statue is lifelike, dressed in armor of seashells and holding a shining sword aloft—the source of the light in the room. The woman's face is peaceful, but sorrowful.

The three altars are placed in a 'U' formation before the statue of the paladin, each covered in a thick red velvet cloth. All three of the altars are covered in gold and silver runes, obscure magical symbols and arcane writing. On each of the three altars lies a thick book, the cover made of iron, and the pages peeping out from beneath the closed bindings are stained the color of blood. Even the unenlightened can intuit the powerful magic in this room, emanating from the three books, the altars, and the glowing sword.

The earthquake caused major damage to this room, shattering one of the statues (the human female), and tilting the three altars on a dangerous angle, the books having slid precariously to the edges of the three platforms. This chamber, and its possessions, has been badly disturbed by the quake. You see no other entrances or exits to the chamber.

Treasure: All three of the books on the altars are cursed, and radiate evil and powerful magic (necromatic, evocation, and conjuration) if detect magic is cast. None of these tomes is the actual Iron Codex; all three are identical copies of the legendary tome, possessing none of its true power. Anyone who touches one of the books suffers the following effects (depending on the book). The effects can only be removed by a *remove curse* spell:

Book 1—Trapped:

✦ **Glyph of Warding (Blast):** CR 5; spell; spell trigger; no reset; spell effect (*glyph of warding* [blast], 10th-level cleric, 5d8 electricity, DC 14 Reflex save half damage); multiple targets (all targets within 5 ft.); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 28. PC must also make a Will save (DC 17) or become cursed by the tome. The cursed possessor covets the tome, insisting it is the true Iron Codex. He hears it whispering to him, and becomes convinced it is a danger to the world. In order to 'save the world from the tome', the PC becomes obsessed with the security of the book. At the earliest opportunity, the PC abandons his companions and seeks out the nearest 'safe place', be it a marsh, forsaken mountain range, or other isolated locale. There, convinced the world must be protected from the Codex, the PC hides himself and the tome, slowly losing his sanity and becoming less and less human, until he is rescued, or starves to death.

Book 2—Trapped:

✦ **Glyph of Warding (Blast):** CR 5; spell; spell trigger; no reset; spell effect (*glyph of warding* [blast], 10th-level cleric, 5d8 electricity, DC 14 Reflex save half damage); multiple targets (all targets within 5 ft.); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 28. PC must also make a Will save (DC 17) or become cursed by the tome. If cursed, the possessor is convinced this is the real Iron Codex, and immediately feels the uncontrollable desire to kill anyone who tries to take it from the Temple. This irresistible urge even extends to friends, lovers, and even those closest to the PC. The PC is now willing to give his life in order to 'save the world from the evil of the Iron Codex'.

Book 3—Trapped:

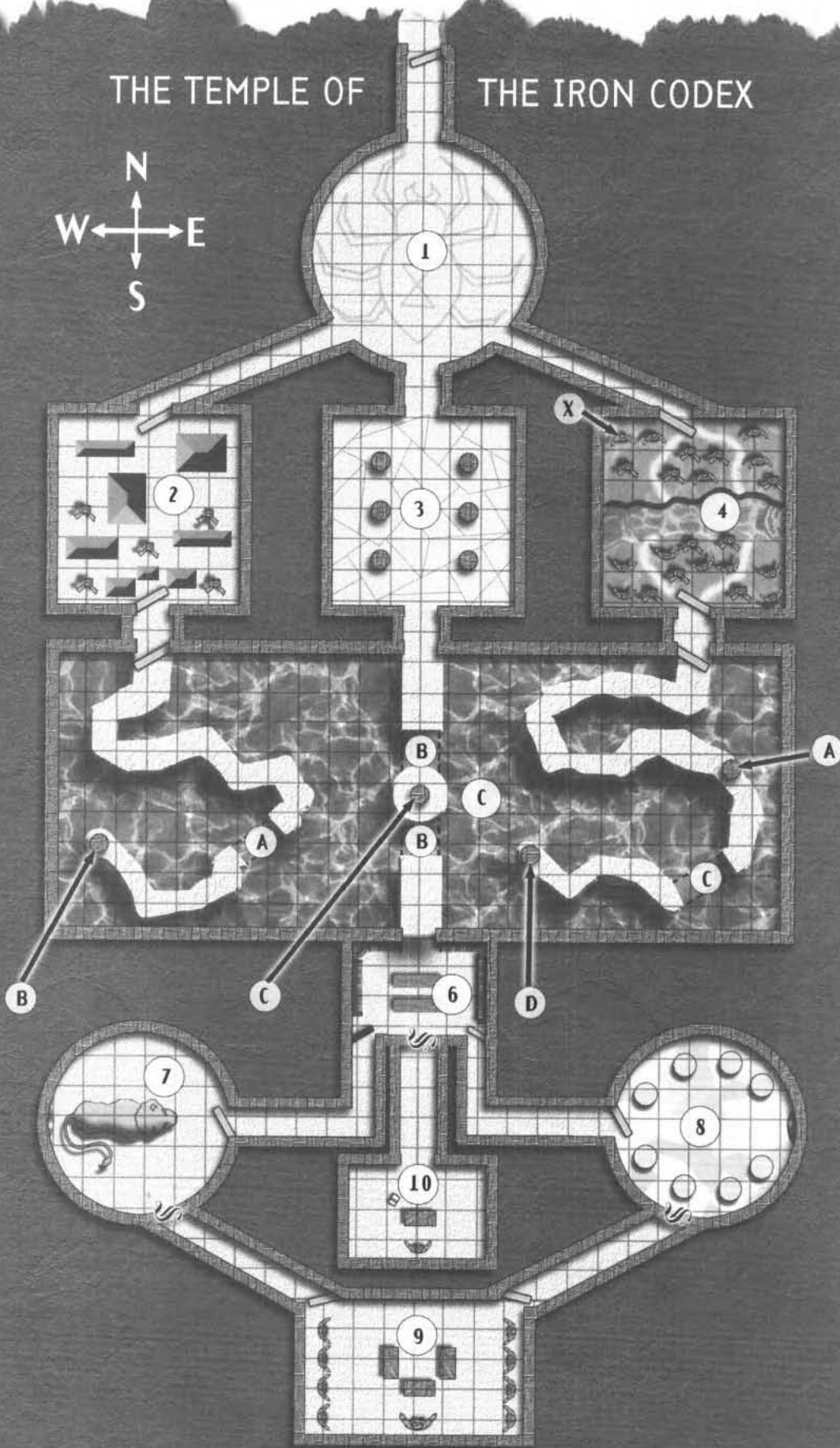
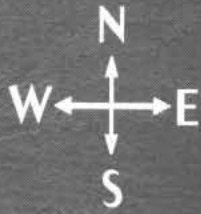
✦ **Glyph of Warding (Blast):** CR 5; spell; spell trigger; no reset; spell effect (*glyph of warding* [blast], 10th-level cleric, 5d8 electricity, DC 14 Reflex save half damage); multiple targets (all targets within 5 ft.); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 28. PC must also make a Will save (DC 17) or become cursed by the tome. The resulting curse convinces the individual this is the true Iron Codex, and immediately knows the book confers great power upon him, if he only were to remove it from the Temple. The urge to take the tome and run is nearly uncontrollable, and the PC may take such action, if his companions are not prepared to stop him.

The statues around the room, while remarkable in their perfect likenesses, are not magical, simply trapped with magic. Only the sword in the hand of the woman behind the three altars is a magic item. The longsword is a named weapon: the runes on its surface read 'Mordrungir'. It is a +3 longsword, with the ability to create *light* and *darkness* at a command. If wielded by a fighter of good alignment, the sword gains the ability to detect evil in a 30' radius.

If the characters take any of the three Tomes from their altars and carry them out, they are free to leave the Temple (re-negotiating the traps, of course). However, within a week, a demon arrives at the city and ransacks the temple, carrying away the true Iron Codex... beginning a new adventure for the PCs as they discover their error.

THE TEMPLE OF

THE IRON CODEX



TEMPLE OF THE IRON CODEx

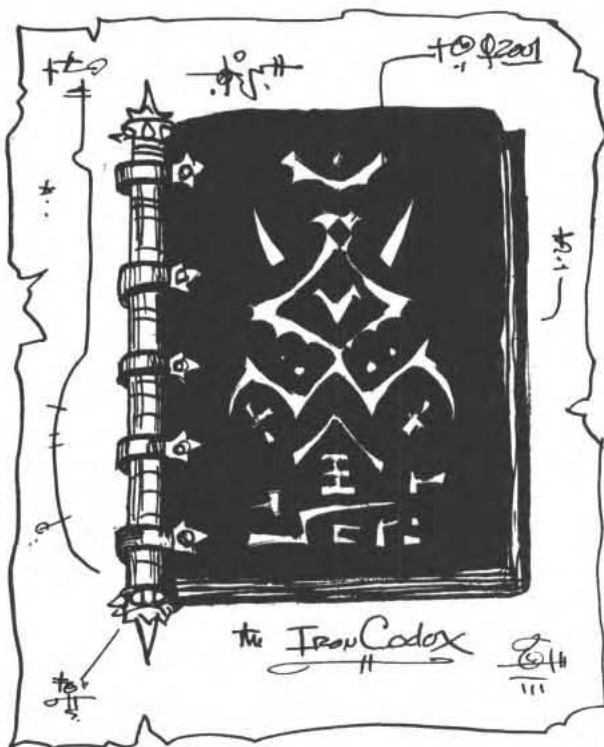
10. The True Codex (Percival)

If both of the gems from rooms #7 and #8 are placed upon their respective matches in the walls at the same time, a secret door opens in room #6. The door to the inner chamber is made of plain stone, and carved into it is the word 'Percival'.

This small room is plain and unadorned, the stonework exceptional but unassuming. The walls are granite, and the altar in the center of the room is made of forged steel. Behind the altar is an incredibly lifelike statue of a small human boy.

However, this room is in disarray. The recent earthquake shattered the doors of the Temple and caused damage everywhere, tilting the altar, causing the massive tome once resting upon it to slide to the floor below.

This room is the actual burial chamber of the Iron Codex. The book lying on the floor radiates evil, and the altar on which it once rested radiates a strong aura of protective magic. Anyone approaching the book feels heat coming from its wrought-iron covers, and can hear faint whispers as if voices spoke from between the blood-red pages of the tome. Anyone who touches the Iron Codex must make a Will save (DC 20) or be possessed by the demon within the tome. For more detailed information on the abilities of the Iron Codex, see the Item description at the end of this adventure.



At this point, most of the difficult part of the adventure is over. All the PCs must do is straighten the altar (which causes the large steel altar to glow again, its power restored), and place the Codex on top, within the protective aura of the spells cast on the large steel altar. However, they must be cautious not to actually touch the Iron Codex. Carrying it through simple means, such as cloth or leather, is not enough to protect them from the curse of the Codex. Only by touching it with steel gauntlets (reducing the Will save to 10) or by using spells or other distance-lifting means can they avoid the Iron Codex's attempts to possess their bodies.

Once the Iron Codex is safely on the altar once more, the statue in the back of the small room animates, and a small boy's voice whispers, "Thank you...". All characters are healed of 3d8+5 points of damage, and receive the benefits of a *bless* spell for 12 hours.

EPILOGUE

If the characters are successful, they have navigated the dangers of the Temple of the Iron Codex, restored the tome to its proper resting place, and saved the lives of their city. However, there are still several threads to be considered before the DM closes the book on this adventure.

Evil minions of the Codex know where the Temple lies, and they stop at nothing to retrieve the book and free their master. The PCs must find a way to re-bury the Temple, defeat the demon, or destroy the Iron Codex safely – no mean feat. These adventures do not have to immediately follow this module, but can be a series of long-term plots for the characters in future gaming sessions.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

- "Good people, I beseech you: Hear my story. My name is Allyn, and someone dear to me has suffered a tremendous attack upon his very soul. I beg you, please help me find the Heart of Amun Khonshu to save my friend. If you do, all of the treasure of the tomb, save the ruby, is yours — all of it! What say you?" (see the adventure "The Heart of Amun Khonshu").
- A vengeful dragon descends without mercy. Silver wings shine in the sunlight, and acid drips from the dragon's mouth and claws as he breathes a stream of ice, destroying most of nearby building. The guards launch volleys of arrows at him, but are quickly put down by another fearsome blast — this time, a mixture of snow and acid. The guardsmen scream in agony as the dragon swoops toward the PCs! (see the adventure "The Harbringer").

Chapter 20:

The Heart of Amun Khonshu

Levels 9 to 11

by Kat & Marcelo Figueroa

It all began simply enough, just like your last adventure, in a tavern where you're accosted by a stranger promises of great wealth complicated only by a significant risk factor.

"Good people, I beseech you: Hear my story. My name is Allyn, and someone dear to me has suffered a tremendous attack upon his soul. He now lies on the verge of death.

"As a child, I was fascinated by a story of an enchanted ruby with the power to bring a lost soul back from the dead. I have only recently discovered this story may be true and the ruby might exist.

"You see, many hundreds of years ago – in the region we now call the Great Desert of Ninva – there ruled a wicked man named Amun Khonshu. Some say he was a powerful sorcerer, others say he was a god. In searching for this fabled ruby, I have found this region did not become a desert until after this vile man died. Once his vast power was taken with him into the afterlife, its horrible absence left a terrible blight upon the land.

"Regardless of the effects of his disappearance, Amun Khonshu was a murderer and a tyrant who ruled over the people based on the premise of a fanatical death cult dedicated to his personal advancement. Fortunately, upon Amun Khonshu's death, his cult was driven underground and eventually destroyed by neighboring nations. But before the cult was vanquished, the servants of Amun Khonshu preserved their leader's body

and sealed it away in a secret tomb, along with his vast store of ill-gotten treasure. Legend has it they left the enchanted ruby there as well, to guide his soul back to his mortal frame.

"I believe I have found the location of this tomb, but my band of associates is not up to the task of surmounting the perils of the Ninva Desert. I beg you, please help me find the Heart of Amun Khonshu to save my friend. If you do, all of the treasure of the tomb, save the ruby, is yours – all of it!

"What say you?"

DM BACKGROUND

This adventure is designed for four to six PCs of levels 9 to 11.

The party can start off in just about any city on the edge of a large desert, or even smack dab in the middle of it at a caravanserai. If necessary, you can even have the PCs encounter Allyn far from the desert, just as he finishes up an adventure of his own (presumably one where he found the final piece to the puzzle of location of the tomb of Amun Khonshu).

Paraphrase or read aloud the encounter with Allyn as part of the introduction to this adventure. Assuming the PCs agree to accompany Allyn to the tomb, they need to

THE HEART OF AMUN KHONSHU

BARDIC LORE

A bard can make a Bardic Knowledge check to discover what he may have heard. A bard learns all the information of the DC his check succeeded by and all that below it (a Bard who rolled a 17 would learn the information under DC 15 and DC 10). Alternately this information can be gained by a Gather Information skill check +5 higher than the DC of a Bardic Lore check to see if the PC has heard any rumors.

DC 10 Amun Khonshu's mummified body is protected by many devious and deadly traps.

DC 15 Amun Khonshu once had a small harem to his name filled only with the most beautiful women.

DC 20 His followers were entombed with him to provide servants for him in the afterlife.

DC 25 The very elements themselves protect his tomb.

prepare equipment and supplies for a four-day trek through the desert. They should also bring tools they might need to excavate an underground tomb.

You should feel free to play out the journey through the desert. Make the experience as difficult as you see fit, but do not purposely sabotage the heroes' chances of finding the tomb... and don't be too harsh on them yet! They're going to need all their wits and strength to handle the perils of the tomb itself. If necessary, refer to Desert Terrain in Chapter 3 of the DMG).

Even though Allyn knows the exact route to Amun Khonshu's tomb, it is still a difficult four-day journey, and the party must brave the dangers of the Ninva Desert. There is a 25% chance per day the party stumbles across an oasis guarded by randomly determined inhabitant from the table below:

ENCOUNTER TABLE

1d20	Encounter
1-10	No encounter
11	Androsphinx
12	Barbed Devil
13	Basilisks (1d3)
14	Blue dragon (very young)
15	Gynosphinx
16	Huge monstrous scorpion
17	Jann (1d3)
18	Lamias (1d3)
19	Large Monstrous scorpions (1d4+2)
20	Ogre mage leading 1d4 human slaves

Having lived in the desert for some time, Allyn is an expert navigator of the wastes, and already knows the path

to the tomb. Unless Allyn somehow becomes unable to guide the PCs to the tomb, it is unlikely they could get lost along the way.

Strictly speaking, the PCs do not have to accompany Allyn to the tomb. If the beginning described here somehow does not suit your campaign, the PCs can discover the tomb's existence by some other means which better suits your plans. The entire basis of an adventure could be the party simply finding a map to the lost tomb.

ALLYN, THE ALLY

Allyn has only one objective: to recover the Heart of Amun Khonshu so he can save his life-long friend. He is honor-bound to keep his end of the bargain and let the party keep whatever else is found in the tomb. Should the PCs choose to renege on their part of the deal, Allyn is prepared to take whatever measures are necessary to secure the gem for himself and escape from the party, even if it means subduing or actually killing any or all of the heroes.

In any case, Allyn is not so foolhardy as to risk his life in vain for the gem. If faced with a situation in which it is clear he can do little else but lose, he is more than willing to let the party to face their own fate. If necessary, he retreats during a potentially fatal encounter and lingers around the entrance to the tomb, hiding in a nearby dune. When the situation seems safe again, he ventures back down into the tombs to learn of the PC's fate and see if there is still any chance he can procure the gem on his own or with the remainder of the party.

Note Allyn uses the desert ranger class (with appropriate 3.5 modifications) from the AEG book *Wilds*. Otherwise, he is a normal ranger favoring desert terrain.

♣ **Allyn, Human Desert Rgr 6:** CR 6; Medium humanoid; HD 6d10+12; hp 42; Init +1; Spd 40 ft.; AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +6/+1; Grp +7; Atk +9 melee (1d6+2/18-20, rapier) or +8 ranged (1d8/x3, longbow); Full Atk +9/+4 melee (1d6+2/18-20, rapier) or +8/+3 ranged (1d8/x3, longbow); SA —; SQ Desert lore +2, favored enemies, ranger options (+10 ft. move and +1 natural AC bonus); AL N; SV Fort +9, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Handle Animal +5, Heal +7 Knowledge (nature) +9, Listen +4, Ride +6, Search +5, Spot +6, Survival +11; Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, TrackB, Weapon focus (rapier).

Desert Lore: Allyn gains a +2 circumstance bonus to Balance, Hide, Move Silently, Search, Spot, and Survival checks made in the desert. Additionally, anyone trying to track Allyn or his companions through the desert adds +5 to the DC.

Favored Enemy (Ex): Allyn has selected first aberrations and second undead as his favored enemies. He gains a +2 bonus on Bluff, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot, and Survival checks when using these skills against creatures of this type. Likewise, he gets a +2 bonus on weapon damage rolls against such creatures.

Possessions: Studded leather armor +2, +1 rapier (named "dune"), longbow, 20 arrows, quiver, desert clothing, two waterskins.

THE HEART OF AMUN KHONSHU

THE TROUBLE WITH TOMBS

The PCs are bound to run into a few general problems in the tomb, which do not have anything to do with either monsters or traps...

THE WRITING ON THE WALLS

The hieroglyphics on the walls of the tomb can only be read with a successful Decipher Script or Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 30). The PCs must make this check every time they attempt to decipher any inscriptions. Make sure you take full advantage of the limitations of the skill's use, as described in Chapter 4 of the *Player's Handbook*.

IN THROUGH THE OUT DOOR

There are no doors throughout the interior of the tomb. Each entrance to another chamber was bricked over as part of sealing the tomb shut.

Finding any such entrances requires a Search check (DC 20). An elf's heightened senses allow them a Search check without looking, as with a regular concealed door. Each PC can make an attempt to discover where the wall meets a masonry-covered entrance. If the PCs fail to find

a particular door and have seemingly exhausted all options for moving forward, Allyn encourages them to search again. He is not going to be satisfied with the venture to the tomb until he lays his hands on the enchanted ruby, and leaves no stone unturned now he has others to help him.

Furthermore, once a wall section is discovered to actually be a bricked-over opening, the PCs are going to have to use mining or excavating tools to open it up. There are no hidden latches here. Each door section is considered masonry. (Thickness 1ft., Break DC 35, Hardness 8, Hit Points 90, Climb DC 20).

GIVE ME A LIGHT

The tomb is entirely underground, and there are no light sources. It's up to the PCs to provide their own light, whether by means magical or mundane.

THE TOMB OF AMUN KHONSHU

Once the PCs finally make it to the spot in the desert where the tomb is located, you are ready to proceed with the rest of the adventure. As the PCs enter each numbered area on the map, consult the entry listed here and read the boxed aloud. All undead within the Tomb are shielded by Amun Khonshu's will which imposes a -4 profane penalty to all Charisma checks for turning or rebuking undead within the Tomb.

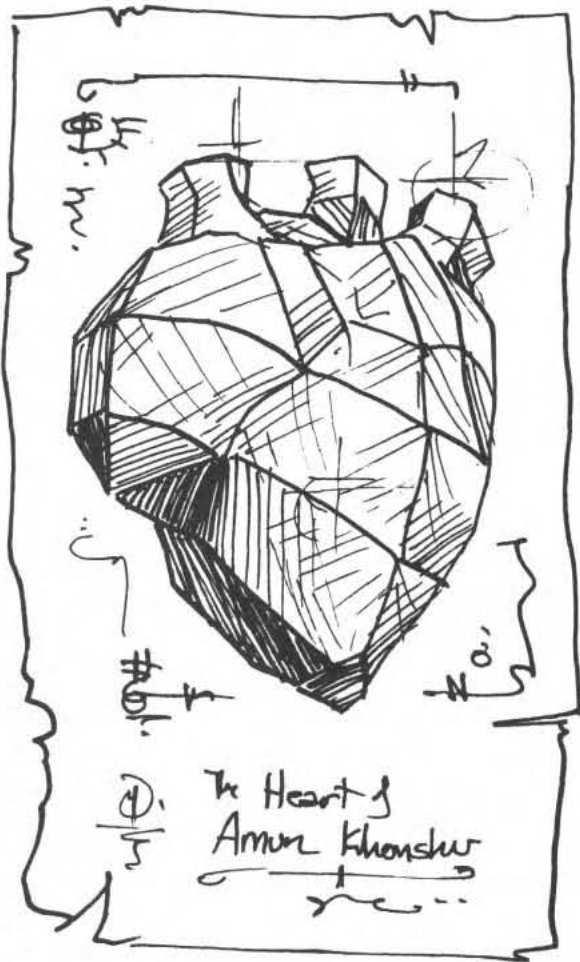
1. Guardian Chamber

As you approach the area where the entrance to the tomb is supposed to be, you are underwhelmed. You were fully expecting to see the face of a massive palace carved in the sand. Instead, the entrance is little more than a dark hole in the swiftly shifting dunes. It is miraculous Allyn could have found it at all.

Getting even closer to the entrance, you notice evidence you are not the first ones to have discovered it. The main entry has already been unearthed and opened.

Upon entering the tomb, you see vast ancient texts adorning the walls, inscribed in a pictographic language long since buried in the sands of time. On either side of the doorway, a few paces in, are two fairly large pedestals upon which stand as the tomb's guardian statues.

One of these statues has fallen completely to rubble, its pieces scattered across the floor. Opposite, the other stands at attention, looking as fresh as the day it was carved. You also detect the smell of five warriors' rotting corpses lying around the pedestal of the broken statue. The cadavers are still holding their weapons in hand, and they have been bludgeoned to death with a large club.



THE HEART OF AMUN KHONSHU

If asked, Allyn truthfully informs the party he has no knowledge of this unfortunate band of adventurers. If the PCs manage to successfully translate the hieroglyphs on the wall, they decipher a warning to anyone who would be so bold as to disturb the slumber of Amun Khonshu to think otherwise.

Encounter: Once the PCs are all within the chamber and are searching for the door to the Antechamber (room #2), the intact guardian statue, a clay golem, suddenly comes to life and attacks the party.

Tactics: After the golem has engaged in the first round of combat, it immediately enacts *haste* on itself and attempts to deliver as many crushing blows as it can. The golem fights furiously until it is completely destroyed.

☛ **Clay Golem:** CR 10; Large construct; HD 11d10+30 (90 hp); Init -1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 22, touch 8, flat-footed 22; Base Atk +8; Grp +19; Atk +14 melee (2d10+7 plus cursed wound, slam); Full Atk +14 melee (2d10+7 plus cursed wound, 2 slams); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA Berserk, cursed wound; SQ Construct traits, damage reduction 10/adamantine and bludgeoning, darkvision 60 ft., haste, immunity to magic, low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 25, Dex 9, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: —.

Berserk (Ex): When a clay golem enters combat, there is a cumulative 1% chance each round that its elemental spirit breaks free and the golem goes berserk. The uncontrolled golem goes on a rampage, attacking the nearest living creature or smashing some object smaller than itself if no creature is within reach, then moving on to spread more destruction. Once a clay golem goes berserk, no known method can reestablish control.

Cursed Wound (Ex): The damage a clay golem deals doesn't heal naturally and resists healing spells. A character attempting to cast a conjuration (healing) spell on a creature damaged by a clay golem must succeed on a DC 26 caster level check, or the spell has no effect on the injured character.

Immunity to Magic (Ex): A clay golem is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance. In addition, certain spells and effects function differently against the creature, as noted below.

A *move earth* spell drives the golem back 120 ft. and deals 3d12 points of damage to it.

A *disintegrate* spell slows the golem (as the slow spell) for 1d6 rounds and deals 1d12 points of damage.

An *earthquake* spell cast directly at a clay golem stops it from moving on its next turn and deals 5d10 points of damage. The golem gets no saving throw against any of these effects.

Any magical attack against a clay golem that deals acid damage heals 1 point of damage for every 3 points of damage it would otherwise deal. If the amount of healing would cause the golem to exceed its full normal hit points, it gains any excess as temporary hit points. For example, a clay golem hit by the breath weapon of a black dragon heals 7 points of damage if the attack would have dealt 22 points of damage. A clay golem gets no saving throw against magical attacks that deal acid damage.

Haste (Su): After it has engaged in at least 1 round of combat, a clay golem can *haste* itself once per day as a free action. The effect lasts 3 rounds and is otherwise the same as the spell.

2. Antechamber

Upon entering this room, you notice five stone pillars set in an "X" pattern across the room. Each of the pillars is adorned with hieroglyphs and contains a large precious stone on each of its compass facings.

The hieroglyphs in this room document the earliest beginnings of Amun Khonshu's rise to power as the pharaoh's vizier and a highly regarded member of the Magi of Ninva.

The pillar in the center is actually a gelatinous cube that has been covered in dust and sand to disguise itself. The cube patiently waits for a hapless PC to remove the gem from one of its sides before it strikes. A character with ranks in Knowledge (architecture and engineering) or Craft (stonemasonry) receives an automatic skill check (DC 15) to notice the pillar is not supporting any of the ceiling's weight.

☛ **Gelatinous Cube:** CR 3; Huge ooze; HD 4d10+32 (54 hp); Init -5; Spd 15 ft.; AC 3, touch 3, flat-footed 3; Base Atk +3; Grp +11; Atk +1 melee (1d6 plus 1d6 acid, slam); Full Atk +1 melee (1d6 plus 1d6 acid, slam); Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft.; SA Acid, engulf, paralysis; SQ Blindsight 60 ft., immunity to electricity, ooze traits, transparent; AL N; SV Fort +9, Ref -4, Will -4; Str 10, Dex 1, Con 26, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: —.

Acid (Ex): A gelatinous cube's acid does not harm metal or stone.

Engulf (Ex): Although it moves slowly, a gelatinous cube can simply mow down Large or smaller creatures as a standard action. It cannot make a slam attack during a round in which it engulfs. The gelatinous cube merely has to move over the opponents, affecting as many as it can cover. Opponents can make opportunity attacks against the cube, but if they do so they are not entitled to a saving throw. Those who do not attempt attacks of opportunity must succeed on a DC 13 Reflex save or be engulfed; on a success, they are pushed back or aside (opponent's choice) as the cube moves forward. Engulfed creatures are subject to the cube's paralysis and acid, and are considered to be grappled and trapped within its body. The save DC is Strength-based and includes a +1 racial bonus.

Paralysis (Ex): A gelatinous cube secretes an anesthetizing slime. A target hit by a cube's melee or engulf attack must succeed on a DC 20 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 3d6 rounds. The cube can automatically engulf a paralyzed opponent. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Blindsight (Ex): An ooze's entire body is a primitive sensory organ that can ascertain prey by scent and vibration within 60 ft.

Transparent (Ex): Gelatinous cubes are hard to see, even under ideal conditions, and it takes a DC 15 Spot check to notice one. Creatures who fail to notice a cube and walk into it are automatically engulfed.

Treasure: Each of the 20 gems is real, nonmagical, and of varying quality and type, even the ones attached to the gelatinous cube. The recovered gems are worth 200 gp each.

THE HEART OF AMUN KHONSHU

3. Earth Portal

The door to this chamber bears the universal symbol of earth, making it fairly easy to find in a Search check (DC 15).

You find the portal to this room easily. It features a large symbol you recognize as the element of earth. Once you knock the masonry out of the portal, a small, dark room beckons you.

Every PC who enters the chamber must make a Fortitude save (DC 15) or be permanently turned to stone. A PC who succeeds in his save is immune to the curse so long as he moves within the room. Leaving the chamber and then re-entering it again exposes the PC to the curse's effects.

Treasure: Along the back wall of this chamber are various vessels containing a total of 1,500 gp and one black opal (gem, nonmagical, 1,000 gp value).

This room contains no door to the sarcophagus room on the other side of its back wall.

4. Air Portal

The door to this chamber bears the universal symbol of air, making it a simple matter to Search for (DC 15).

You find the portal to this room without difficulty, since it bears on its front the symbol for the element of air. Once the masonry has been removed, you can peer into a pitch-black room.

This chamber contains dormant spores that carry the eggs of scarab beetles. Once the chamber is opened and exposed to the fresh air of the hallway, the spores are activated and become both deadly and invisible attackers. Every character to enter the chamber must make a Fortitude save (DC 20). Success means the spores only have an effect equal to breathing stale air in a dusty room, nothing more. Failure means the spores begin to gestate in the victim's lungs.

In 1d6 hours, the infected PC begins retching and coughing violently — causing a -4 circumstance penalty to all actions as the larvae hatch and writhe within the victim's lungs. A kind DM may allow a PC a Concentration check (DC 20) to take the intended action without the -4 penalty. Eventually, 1d4 hours after the eggs have hatched, the beetles molt to their full size and then begin crawling their way out of the victim's lungs through the lung wall.

At this point, the infected PC dies.

A Heal or Survival check (DC 20) allows a character to recognize the danger that they are in. Once a PC becomes infected, only a *cure disease* spell or purging the lungs with

wine or other alcohol (causing 1d4+1 points of Constitution and Strength damage) halts and destroys the growth of the beetles.

Treasure: Along the back wall of this chamber are various vessels containing a total of 1,200 gp, an onyx (gem, non-magical, 40 gp value), and a pearl (gem, non-magical, 14 gp value).

This room contains no door to the sarcophagus room on the other side of its back wall.

5. Water Portal

The door to this chamber bears the universal symbol of water, which can be spotted with relative ease with a Search check (DC 15). However, because of the pit, the PCs cannot stand in front of the door. They must break into the room from the side of the pit.

As you turn the corner, you discover a pit in the floor. There is no ledge by which to bypass it. The pit is 10 ft. long, 10 ft. wide, and 20 ft. deep. Even from where you stand, you can see the portal to the room easily, since it is marked with the symbol for the element of water. Unfortunately, it lies directly across from you over the pit.

Tactics: Once the PCs enter the room, they are attacked by four shadows which do their best to corral the PCs back out through the chamber door so they fall into the pit.

Treasure: Along the back wall of this chamber are an assortment of clay vessels containing a total of 1,700 gp, an ornate silver chalice (art, non-magical, 70 gp value), and a wand of magic missiles (1st level caster, 750 gp value).

The Water Portal room contains the only door to the Sarcophagus room on its back wall. If the PCs choose to investigate the pit, a Search check (DC 30) exposes a secret entrance to the Chamber of Worldly Possessions (room #8).

✦ **Shadow:** Medium undead (incorporeal); HD 3d12 (19 hp); Init +2; Spd Fly 40 ft. (good); AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +1; Grp —; Atk +3 melee (1d6 Str, incorporeal touch); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6 Str, incorporeal touch); SA Create spawn, strength damage; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., incorporeal traits, +2 turn resistance, undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +4; Str —, Dex 14, Con —, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Hide +8*, Listen +7, Search +4, Spot +7; Alertness, Dodge.

Strength Damage (Su): The touch of a shadow deals 1d6 points of Strength damage to a living foe. A creature reduced to Strength 0 by a shadow dies. This is a negative energy effect.

Create Spawn (Su): Any humanoid reduced to Strength 0 by a shadow becomes a shadow under the control of its killer within 1d4 rounds.

Skills: Shadows have a +2 racial bonus on Listen and Spot checks and a +4 racial bonus on Search checks. *A shadow gains a +4 racial bonus on Hide checks in areas of shadowy illumination. In brightly lit areas, it takes a -4 penalty on Hide checks.

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6. Fire Portal

The door to this chamber bears the universal symbol for fire, making it a little easier to Search for (DC 15).

You find the portal to this room easily, since it bears the symbol for fire. Once the masonry is removed, you peer into a dark room.

This room is filled with natural gas, which is odorless. PCs may make a Knowledge (dungeoneering) check (DC 20) or Survival (DC 25) to detect the presence of the gas. If the PCs use a flame light source and peer into the room, the gas ignites. Anyone peering directly into the hole is hit as if by a fiery burst which originates on the flammable light source for 15d6 damage from the blast, and everyone within 10 ft. of the blast takes 7d6 damage. In either case, the PCs are allowed a Reflex save (DC 30) for half damage. The PC peering into the hole is thrown back, incurring an additional 4d6 damage from slamming into the wall. The PC cannot make a Reflex save against this damage.

If a larger hole is opened in the portal's masonry before any PCs step through into the room, any source of flame instantly causes the gas to ignite. This does 10d6 damage to all PCs in the room or within 20 ft. of the door and blows out or consumes all non-magical light sources. Again, the affected PCs can each make a Reflex save (DC 30) for half damage.

Once the gas is lit, the danger is not over. The gas still leaks into the room. Within 1 hour, the chamber is filled with gas again, and introducing a flame into the mix produces the same kinds of results as before. After 30 minutes, there is enough gas to produce half the effects, listed above.

This room does not contain a door to the sarcophagus room on the other side of its back wall.

7. False Sarcophagus Chamber

Upon entering this chamber, you are struck by the wondrous craftsmanship and grace of its décor, as if someone took painstaking care to ensure Amun Khonshu's passage into the afterlife would be a smooth one.

The golden sarcophagus is in the center of the room on a platform and does not in any way reflect the wickedness of its inhabitant. It is truly a thing of beauty and gleams softly in the light you've brought into the room, almost as if it hungers to escape the darkness.

The walls of this room stand in stark contrast to the beauty of the sarcophagus lying in the center of the room. Gruesome scenes of senseless slaughter at the hands of Amun Khonshu's cultists adorn the ceiling. Forbidden and sacrilegious rites of necromancy are carefully drawn upon the walls in devastating detail. Decorative vessels and jars line the floor along the walls.

This is not the real sarcophagus chamber of Amun Khonshu. The sarcophagus here isn't even covered with real gold. Instead, it has been covered with gilding taking great care to imitate Amun Khonshu's actual sarcophagus. The cultists built this chamber and filled it with Amun's treasure in an attempt to fool grave robbers into thinking they had stumbled upon the real crypt; so any tomb raiders would take their fill and depart, leaving the true sarcophagus chamber untouched.

When the PCs open the sarcophagus, they discover a mummified skeleton which proves to be truly and utterly dead. This poor soul was once the leader of Amun Khonshu's death cult, and he considered it an honor to take his own life so he might serve his dark lord in death as well as life. Along the walls of this chamber is a vast collection of vessels and jars. Sealed inside one of these vessels is an enraged bottle imp. Randomly determine which of the PCs opening vessels and jars unstops the container with the bottle imp inside. The imp attempts to bite the hand of the adventurer who sets him free during the surprise round, and then flies about the room to harass and annoy the rest of the party. His preferred tactic is to teleport to an open bottle just before he is attacked, and then reappears from a vessel behind a party member. If seriously wounded, the bottle imp assumes smoke form and retreats to the strongest looking bottle he can find.

Bottle Imp: CR 4; Tiny undead; HD 4d12; hp 26; Init +7; Spd fly 30 ft. (perfect); AC 22, touch 19, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +2; Grp -2; Atk +11 melee (1d3+4/19-20, tiny short sword); Full Atk +11 melee (1d3+4/10-20, tiny short sword) or +6 melee (1 plus sleep, bite); SA Sleep bite; SQ Damage reduction 5/good, smoke form, retreat, vanishing bottle, undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +1, Ref +8, Will +4; Str 18, Dex 25, Con —, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Escape Artist +14, Hide +22, Listen +3, Move Silently +14, Search +4, Sense Motive +5, Spot +3; Dodge, Weapon Finesse.

Sleep Bite (Su): Anyone bit by a bottle imp must make a successful DC 12 Fortitude save or fall into a deep slumber for 10d6 minutes.

Smoke Form (Ex): bottle imps can turn gaseous at will, as if by the *gaseous form* spell cast by a 4th level sorcerer.

Retreat (Su): When reduced to 0 hit points, it is not destroyed; instead, it automatically and instantaneously becomes gaseous, teleports to its bottle, and pulls in the stopper. After 24 hours, it returns to full strength and may once again exit its bottle.

Vanishing Bottle (Su): Three times per night, as a standard action, a bottle imp may teleport its bottle top any location up to 300 ft. away; this functions as the *vanish* spell, except the imp need not touch its bottle, there is no chance of the bottle being disintegrated, and the bottle cannot be sent to the ethereal plane. When the bottle teleports, the imp travels with it. Of course, if the imp perceives an attack directed at its bottle, it usually activates the bottle's vanishing power to escape. The imp has usually scouted out the surrounding area to find the most innocuous locations to hide its bottle in the event of an emergency.

Possessions: Tiny short sword.

Bottle Imp from Necromancer Games' Creature Collection Revised, © 2003 White Wolf Publishing, Inc.

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Collectively, the remaining vessels and jars contain a total of 11,000 sp, 1,600 gp, 170 pp, three hematite stones (gem, nonmagical, 12 gp value), one bloodstone (gem, nonmagical, 80 gp value), one black pearl (gem, nonmagical, 300 gp value), one jade stone (gem, nonmagical, 90 gp value), one wool tapestry (art, nonmagical, 100 gp value), one *potion of aid*, a *wand of invisibility* (36 charges), a +3 *shocking burst great axe* (named Storm of the Sands) and a set of *bracers of armor* +5.

8. Chamber of Worldly Possessions

Upon passing through the secret door, you find yourself standing upon a very small, sandy beach overlooking an ice-cold, underground pond. Three steps into the water and you realize it drops off very quickly. You're going to have to swim across the pond to get to the beach on the other side, where lies another bricked-up wall, shrouded in darkness.

The pond is about 10 ft. deep. PCs wearing heavy armor or weapons are going to have trouble crossing it, (although inventive PCs should be able to find a way to get both themselves and their gear across safely). The water is cold, but as long as the PCs do not soak in it for too long, they should not get much more than a chill from it.

Once the PCs reach the other side of the pond and break through the masonry wall to get into the next room, read the following to them aloud:

Upon breaking through the masonry to enter the chamber, you discover there are no hieroglyphs on the walls, no great treasure vessels, nothing of any value at all. Nothing of any interest here — except for the four skeletons scattered about the place, wearing little more than tattered dresses.

Having sacrificed his treasure as a precaution to keep grave robbers from uncovering his true resting place, Amun Khonshu had the last of his possessions dutifully prepared to accompany him in the afterlife: his four wives. Unfortunately for these ill-fated women, they were still alive when Amun Khonshu died.

Following the vile leader's last orders, his cultists gathered the women and hauled them off to their husband's tomb. Stripped of all adornments save their clothing, they were sealed in this small room next to Amun Khonshu's true burial chamber. These four wretched souls did not last long in the tomb, but their souls were not properly laid to rest. Thus, they haunt this chamber with a supernatural fury.

Encounter: As soon as the PCs step into this chamber, the ghosts of Amun Khonshu's wives attack. They harbor a tremendous hatred toward men, putting all men into the same category as their treacherous husband.

Tactics: With this in mind, these ghosts focus their unholy attentions first and foremost on any male members in the heroes' party, Allyn included. The ghosts have no reservations about attacking female members of the party, but they only bother doing so if the female PCs attack them directly or if the women grave robbers are the only targets left.

If the PCs flee, the ghosts cannot pursue the PCs beyond the boundaries of the room. Amun Khonshu's wives are bound to the place of their death. If Allyn is attacked, he immediately retreats, which might tip off the party to the fact the ghosts cannot follow them outside of their death chamber.

Remember each of these ghosts was an evil cleric in their past lives, and they still have their clerical powers at their disposal. If they can still see any retreated PCs from their vantage point in the death chamber, they eagerly use any of their ranged infernal powers to persecute the heroes. They choose their targets for these attacks just as you would expect — men first.

The door to the true sarcophagus chamber is a hidden part of the back wall of this chamber, Search (DC 25) to find.

✶ **Ghost, Human Clr 4:** CR 6; Medium Undead (incorporeal); HD 4d12; hp 31, 30, 27, 25; Init +7; Spd fly 30 ft. (perfect); AC 19, touch 13, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +3; Grp +4; Atk +4 melee (1d3+1, unarmed); Full Atk +4 melee (1d3+1, unarmed); SA Corrupting gaze, frightful moan, rebuke or command undead; SQ, Manifestation, incorporeal traits, rejuvenation, turn resistance +4, undead traits; AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +12; Str 13, Dex 16, Con —, Int 13, Wis 18, Cha 23.

Skills and Feats: Hide +11, Listen +12, Knowledge (arcana)+7, Knowledge (religion) +9, Search +9, Spot +12, Concentration +9, Spellcraft +7; Combat Casting, Iron Will, Improved Initiative.

Corrupting Gaze (Su): A ghost can blast living beings with a glance, at a range of up to 30 ft. Creatures that meet the ghost's gaze must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 18) or take 2d10 points of damage and 1d4 points of Charisma damage. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Frightful Moan (Su): A ghost can emit a frightful moan as a standard action. All living creatures within a 30-ft. spread must succeed on a Will save (DC 18) or become panicked for 2d4 rounds. This is a sonic necromantic mind-affecting fear effect. A creature that successfully saves against the moan cannot be affected by the same ghost's moan for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Horrific Appearance (Su): Any living creature within 60 ft. that views a ghost must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 18) or immediately take 1d4 points of Strength damage, 1d4 points of Dexterity damage, and 1d4 points of Constitution damage. A creature that successfully saves against this effect cannot be affected by the same ghost's horrific appearance for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Rejuvenation (Su): In most cases, it's difficult to destroy a ghost through simple combat: The "destroyed" spirit often restores itself in 2d4 days. Even the most powerful spells are only temporary solutions. A ghost that would otherwise be destroyed returns to its old haunts with a successful level

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check (1d20 + ghost's HD) against DC 16. As a rule, the only way to get rid of a ghost for certain is to determine the reason for its existence and set right whatever prevents it from resting in peace. The exact means varies with each spirit and may require a good deal of research.

Turn Resistance (Ex): A ghost has +4 turn resistance.

Turn or Rebuke Undead (Su): These clerics may attempt to command or rebuke undead 9 times per day. Since these clerics have 5 or more ranks in Knowledge (religion) they get a +2 bonus on checks against undead.

Skills: Ghosts have a +8 racial bonus on Hide, Listen, Search, and Spot checks.

Cleric Spells Prepared (5/4+1/3+1; save DC 14 + spell level): 0—*detect magic*, *inflict minor wounds*, *light*, *resistance*, *virtue*; 1st—*bless*, *doom*, *inflict light wounds*, *protection from good**, *shield of faith*; 2nd—*death knell**, *hold person*, *sound burst*, *spiritual weapon*.

* Domain spell. **Domains:** Evil (Cast evil spells at +1 caster level), Death (Death touch once per day. Death touch is a supernatural ability that produces a death effect. You must succeed on a melee touch attack against a living creature (using the rules for touch spells). When you touch, roll 4d6. If the total at least equals the creature's current hit points, it dies (no save).

9. Sarcophagus Chamber (Real)

Upon entering this room, the first thing you notice is there is no writing on the walls, no great treasure vessels, no decorations of any kind whatsoever. In the center of the room lies a simple, stone outer sarcophagus. In each corner of the room proudly stands a Mastiff-sized, mummified canine.

As soon as the first PCs enter the room, the four tomb hounds (see New Monsters — Appendix B) begin baying at the party. Anyone within 60ft. who hears this is treated as if a 10th-level sorcerer had cast a *ray of enfeeblement* upon him. As the PCs struggle to make their appropriate saving throws, the hungry death dogs move in together to attack.

Whether the dogs have been dispatched before the party opens the outer sarcophagus or not, as soon as the lid is moved, *protection from energy (fire)* is cast upon the creature inside the coffin. Treat this as if a 20th-level sorcerer cast it. Apparently, Amun Khonshu was fearful his corpse might be torched while he was away.

The inner sarcophagus is made of pure gold. This requires a Strength check (DC 30) to remove from the outer sarcophagus, and it is impossible to open the inner sarcophagus without doing so. The edges of the lid are simply too far around the thing for the PCs to otherwise be able to reach them.

As the leader of a death cult, Amun Khonshu always thought he would be able to cheat death — with the proper plan. For the most part, he is well on his way toward this goal. However, the procedure for this isn't quite complete.

The heart of Amun Khonshu (see New Magic — Appendix A) is still restoring the vile man's soul to his long-dead body. Enough of the evil leader's spirit has been transferred into the gem for him to be able to awaken and defend himself. As soon as the inner sarcophagus is removed from its setting, Amun Khonshu awakens to destroy the fools who have interrupted his recovery.

Amun Khonshu starts any battle by using defensive spells to protect his vulnerable body. These spells, kept in his ring of spell storing, are: *expeditious retreat*, *fog cloud*, *mage armor*, *protection from energy*, *shield*, and *stoneskin*.

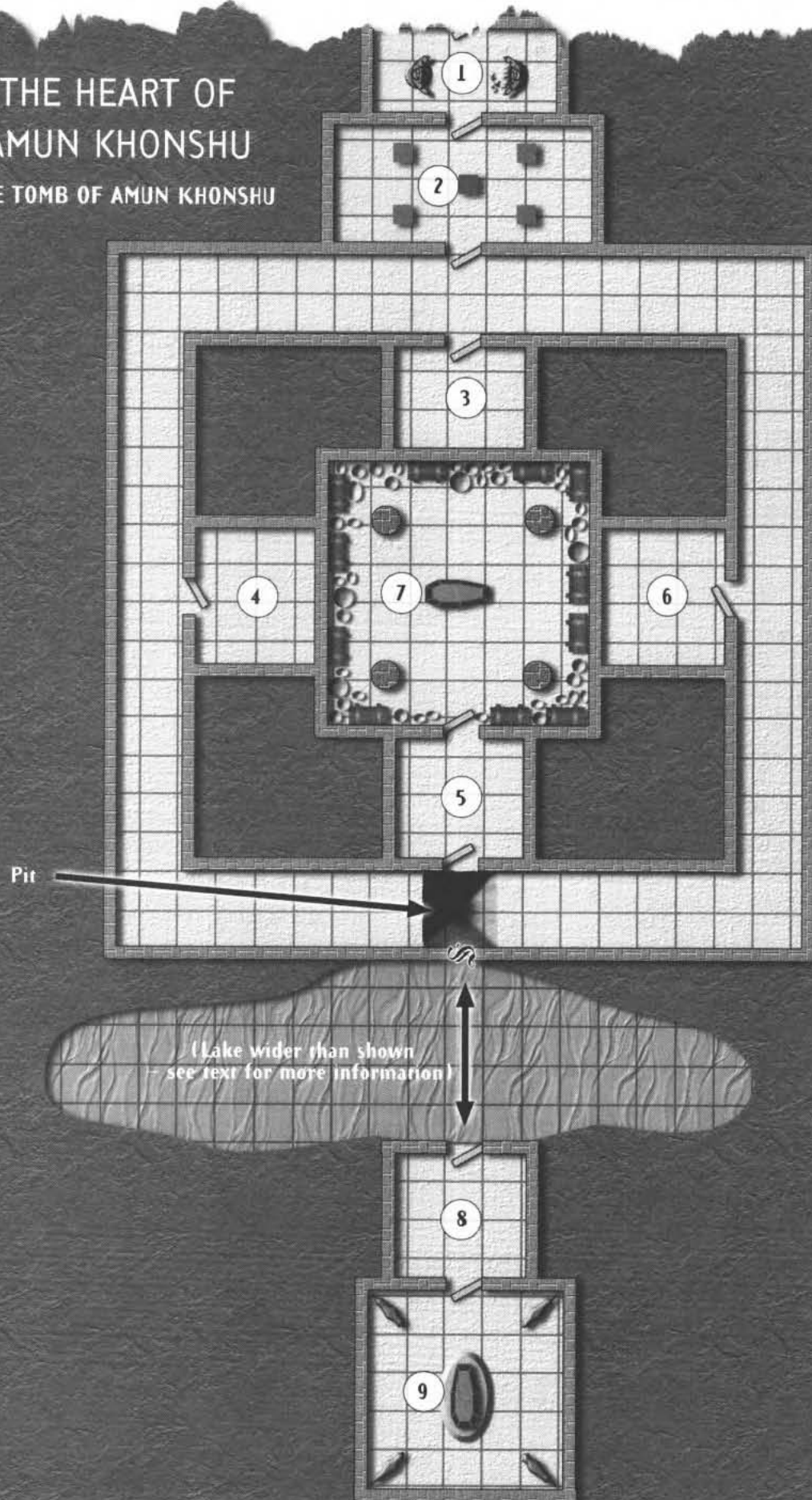
Amun Khonshu is a terrible sight to behold. His mighty headdress is composed of small bones; his rotting face is barely contained within the bandages, bloating out in between loose sections. His eyes are feral and wild, denoting a madness along with ferocity. The spells covering his

bandages are not immediately apparent, and they may betray (falsely) to PCs that he is somehow advanced or watched over by a god.



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If the party manages to destroy the mummy was once Amun Khonshu, a Search check (DC 20) reveals the Heart of Amun Khonshu among his remains. (Allyn searches the creature's corpse thoroughly, even if no one else is willing to touch it.) The Heart is actually placed within the mummy's chest cavity where Amun Khonshu's real heart once beat. The secrets of the Heart are inscribed on the interior of the inner lid of the sarcophagus's in the same hieroglyphics found throughout most of the tomb.

Amun Khonshu's spell book was transcribed onto the very bandages his body is wrapped in, so the original could be destroyed. If the bandages have not deteriorated in the course of battle, they can be recovered and deciphered. He has each of these spells inscribed on his bandages: *blindness/deafness*, *blur*, *cause fear*, *dancing lights*, *daze*, *dispel magic*, *enervation*, *expeditious retreat*, *feeblemind*, *fireball*, *flare*, *fog cloud*, *ghost sound*, *light*, *mage armor*, *mage hand*, *mirror image*, *protection from energy*, *ray of frost*, *resistance*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *read magic*, *shield*, *stoneskin*.

▲ Amun Khonshu, Mummy Ftr 7: CR 12; Medium undead; HD 15d12+3 (95 hp); Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 20, touch 10, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +11; Grp +18; Atk +19 melee (1d6+9 plus mummy rot, slam); Full Atk +19/+14 melee (1d6+9 plus mummy rot, two slams); SA Despair, mummy rot; SQ Damage reduction 5/—, darkvision 60 ft., immune to turning, undead traits, vulnerability to fire; AL LE; SV Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +10; Str 24, Dex 10, Con —, Int 6, Wis 14, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Hide +10, Intimidate +9, Jump +10, Listen +8, Move Silently +9, Spot +8; Alertness, Cleave, Great Cleave, Great Fortitude, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (slam), Weapon Specialization (slam)

Despair (Su): At the mere sight of a mummy, the viewer must succeed on a DC 16 Will save or be paralyzed with fear for 1d4 rounds. Whether or not the save is successful, that creature cannot be affected again by the same mummy's despair ability for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Immune to Turning (Su): Inside his own tomb, Amun Khonshu can not be turned or rebuked by any being of less than divine power.

Mummy Rot (Su): Supernatural disease, Fortitude DC 16, incubation period 1 minute; damage 1d6 Con and 1d6 Cha. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Unlike normal diseases, mummy rot continues until the victim reaches Constitution 0 (and dies) or is cured as described below.

Mummy rot is a powerful curse, not a natural disease. A character attempting to cast any conjuration (healing) spell on a creature afflicted with mummy rot must succeed on a DC 20 caster level check, or the spell has no effect on the afflicted character.

To eliminate mummy rot, the curse must first be broken with *break enchantment* or *remove curse* (requiring a DC 20 caster level check for either spell), after which a caster level check is no longer necessary to cast healing spells on the victim, and the mummy rot can be magically cured as any normal disease.

An afflicted creature who dies of mummy rot shrivels away into sand and dust that blow away into nothing with the first hint of a breeze.

☛ Tomb Hound: CR 5; Large undead; HD 7d12; hp 45; Init +2; Speed: 40 ft.; AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +3; Grp +14; Atk melee +11 (1d8+10 plus mummy rot, bite); Full Atk melee +11 (1d8+10 plus mummy rot, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Mournful baying, despair, mummy rot; SQ Damage resistance 5/—, vulnerability to fire, undead traits; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +7; Str 25, Dex 15, Con —, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Hide +5, Listen +8, Move Silently +5, Spot +8, Survival +10; Alertness, Iron Will, TrackB, Weapon Focus (bite).

Mournful Baying (Su): As an attack, the tomb hound can howl from the depths of despair. This emanates as a 60-ft. cone. Anyone caught in the area must succeed at a Will saving throw (DC 12) or take 1d6+1 temporary Strength damage. The DC is Wisdom-based.

Despair (Su): When first in contact with the tomb hound, the viewer must make a Will save (DC 10) or be paralyzed with fear for 1d4 rounds. This ability can only affect each person once per day.

Mummy Rot (Su): Supernatural disease — bite, Fortitude save (DC 20), incubation period 1 day. Afflicted characters lose 1d6 temporary Constitution every day until she is either healed by means of a remove disease spell or magical effect or her Constitution falls to 0 or less, in which case he dies.

A character slain in this manner this falls to dust and blows away unless both remove disease and raise dead spells are cast on the remains within six rounds.

EPILOGUE

The solid gold sarcophagus won't be easy to transport to civilized lands, but is a true treasure and archeological find. A collector or museum would easily pay up to 10,000 gp for it.

If Allyn survived the adventure, he keeps his word about the treasure: the PCs can have it all except the heart itself. He may ask them to escort him to the town on the edge of the desert where his friend lies ill. If he dies during the adventure, have the PCs find a map on his body noting the town where his friend is. Perhaps kind PCs may even quest there to restore his friend to health.

FURTHER ADVENTURE

- An angry dragon descends without mercy. Silver wings shine in the sunlight, and acid drips from the dragon's mouth and claws as he breathes a stream of ice, destroying most of nearby building. The guards launch volleys of arrows at him, but are quickly put down by another fearsome blast — this time, one of a snow and acid mixture. The guardsmen scream in agony as the dragon swoops toward the PCs! (see the adventure "The Harbringer").

Chapter 21:
**That Which
Does Not Die**

Levels 3 to 5
by Eric Steiger

It's a simple bodyguard job.

"The threat level is low, and the pay is good" is what the merchant said when he hired you. Then the bodies started showing up, and every indication is your employer is next, along with anybody associated with him — like you. Suddenly, the job seems a lot more complex.

Everybody makes mistakes. It's a part of life... and death. But when one of those mistakes ends in a murder, it's up to you to clean up the loose ends. Because the murder didn't quite take, and now you're stuck right between a single-minded undead revenge machine, and its prey. It doesn't eat, it doesn't sleep, it doesn't negotiate. It kills. And you're in line to be the next target. The term "underworld connections" just took on a whole new meaning.

DM BACKGROUND

This adventure is designed for four to six PCs of levels 3 to 5. It features the new monster template of the Revenant, a type of undead returned from the grave specifically to seek vengeance upon its killer. It's up to the PCs to stop it, but it's easier said than done... How do you kill That Which Does Not Die?

Nykal Lorensen is a cloth merchant in over his head. First, he needed a quick loan to pay for an exclusive line of clothing. He had borrowed money from some shady merchants with the understanding defaulting on the loan would have unpleasant consequences. The line never took off. Being a coward at heart, Lorensen fled rather than face his backers. When they finally caught up to him, they left him alive in exchange for control over his business. They made a profit, but forced Lorensen to engage in unscrupulous practices, threatening his life if he refused. He lied, he cheated, he bribed, but nobody ever got murdered — until recently.

Torthan Ulefar, a mercenary, retired not long ago and went into the textiles business. Using his contacts from his years of campaigning, he became very successful trading all over the land. Lorensen's associates decided he was a threat. He would not be bought out, did not take bribes, ignored blackmail, and killed the saboteurs they

sent. Finally, they grew desperate, and decided to have him assassinated. They sent their best, and their second-best man to do the job.

The second-best returned, with word it was done. The matter was considered settled. This was three months ago.

Nykal Lorensen's associates are several members of the criminal organization known as the Golden Skull. While they are a relatively new and small group, the Skull has risen to prominence through cunning and ruthlessness. They know when to kill, and when to threaten death. While the majority of their holds are financial, they are not adverse to theft, blackmail, and murder. One of their other major assets is secrecy. Very few of their underlings (including Lorensen) know of their full membership or the true extent of their holdings. The DM is encouraged to flesh out and use the Golden Skull organization for further adventures, but for now, it is enough to understand the hold they have on Lorensen.

Two weeks ago, the assassin who brought word to the Golden Skull of Ulefar's successful assassination turned up dead in his room at an inn. He died from a stab wound through his left eye. Six days ago, one of the founding members of the Golden Skull was found dead in his house, again stabbed through the left eye. Needless to say, the organization is worried. They have spent the past six days arranging a three-month dispersal, as the members of the Skull scatter to various hideouts, leaving their businesses in the care of their minions.

Lorensen, in his paranoid fashion, has decided the killings are a result of the murder he participated in (he was marginally involved, as it was his business the killing advanced), and desperately seeks protection. He believes Ulefar had friends or family who learned of the reasons for his untimely demise, and are seeking revenge for his death. Little does he know it is Torthan Ulefar himself who is killing his own killers! Due to the circumstances of Ulefar's murder, and his considerable conviction, Torthan has returned from the grave as a Revenant, his sole goal to exact revenge upon his killers. This situation, however, is unique in terms of the quantity of people involved. Because several members of the Golden Skull, and Lorensen, perpetrated Ulefar's murder, he is compelled to kill each of them.

Ulefar has begun to take down the members of the Skull responsible for his death. Lorensen, while not a member of the Skull, is partly responsible, and Ulefar needs him dead. It is up to the PCs to prevent this from happening. Lorensen really is not a bad person, he is just a coward who has made some bad decisions. In the end, he may have the chance to redeem himself.

THE ADVENTURE

The adventure can begin in any decent-sized city, preferably one large enough where murder is somewhat common.

Nykal Lorensen is looking for bodyguards, the kind of people who have experience with strange occurrences. He posts signs in blacksmiths' shops, taverns, supply stores, back alleys, anywhere he thinks adventurers might see them. Needless to say, contacting him should be the least of the PCs' worries. He arranges to meet them as soon as possible, wherever the PCs are most comfortable.

Lorensen believes the members of the Skull are being systematically hunted by one of Torthan's close friends or relatives. His goal is to get far away from anybody who knows him, change his name, and basically become someone else. His first order of business is escape. Lorensen wants to get as far away as he can, as quickly as he can. He is not picky, and if the PCs are reasonably competent (or at least, appear so), he hires them.

Lorensen is more worried about his life than his money at the moment. He pay any reasonable fee (200 gp for the group originally agreed, per day is suggested), but requests the PCs sign a simple contract, including a clause that should the PCs wish to end the contract, he needs a month's notice to find replacements. He also points out that a letter of recommendation from him is considered a high honor. Surely such a letter can aid the PCs in the future.

If asked, he explains that someone is trying to kill him because of a business deal gone sour. He does not offer any details about the deal, or about the person trying to kill him. If pressed, he snaps at inquiring PCs, reminding them he didn't hire them for an interrogation.

It doesn't take much to notice Lorensen is hiding something and is paranoid. A successful Sense Motive check (opposed by Lorensen's Bluff check) reveals Lorensen is unnaturally frightened — something from his past continues to haunt him, grating his nerves.

Once the PCs have determined a price, Lorensen wants at least one guard at all times. He plans on leaving town in one week, and needs time to finalize his preparations (selling his business, arranging to have his investments liquidated, etc). He allows all of the PCs (except the one guarding him) to do whatever they like during the week, provided they are in regular contact.

▲ Nykal Lorensen, Human Exp 4: CR 3; Medium humanoid; HD 4d6+4; hp 18; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +3; Grp +3; Atk +3 melee (1d6, shortspear); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6, shortspear); SA —; SQ —; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 11, Con 13, Int 16, Wis 9, Cha 17.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +10, Bluff +10, Craft (sewing) +10, Diplomacy +10, Gather Information +10, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (local) +10, Listen +6, Profession (merchant) +6, Sense Motive +6; Negotiator, Persuasive, Run.

Possessions: Shortspear, artisan's outfit, merchant's scales.

MESSAGE IN THE DARK

Due to the twisted emotional energy surrounding their deaths, each of the murderers Ulefar kills return to the world as wights. While he is not aware of this, it would hardly matter to him either way what evils he looses onto the world, being concerned only with revenge. However, it matters quite a bit to everyone else.

Ulefar has decided to toy with Lorensen, and left his third victim in a place where he would be sure to find it. He did not, however, count on the other two following him, in search of fresh prey. Read the following aloud to whichever PCs are guarding Lorensen on the third evening as they come across the body in a suitably spooky location of your choosing:

The man is frightened...this much is obvious. His face is sunken, and while he might once have been considered handsome, his paranoia has given him a gaunt, worried appearance. He is nicely dressed, and it is obvious he has a significant amount of money. He leans in closer and speaks:

"I need protection. I'm afraid for my life. I can pay you, more than you could ever want."

If the PC (or PCs) get close enough to examine the body, the wight strikes, aided by its companions (who are hiding in the shadows along the doorway). All three of them still show the evidence of their deaths, daggers embedded in their left eyes. Lorensen, if they get close enough for him to see, recognizes all three of them — two as members of the Golden Skull, and the other as one of the assassins.

✶ **Wight:** CR 3; Medium undead; HD 4d12; hp 26; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +2; Grp +3; Atk +3 melee (1d4+1 plus energy drain, slam); Full Atk +3 melee (1d4+1 plus energy drain, slam); SA Create spawn, energy drain; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., undead traits; AL LE; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 12, Dex 12, Con —, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Hide +8, Listen +7, Move Silently +16, Spot +7; Alertness, Blind-Fight.

Create Spawn (Su): Any humanoid slain by a wight becomes a wight in 1d4 rounds. Spawn are under the command of the wight that created them and remain enslaved until its death. They do not possess any of the abilities they had in life.

Energy Drain (Su): Living creatures hit by a wight's slam attack gain one negative level. The DC is 14 for the Fortitude save to remove a negative level. The save DC is Charisma-based. For each such negative level bestowed, the wight gains 5 temporary hit points.

Skills: Wights have a +8 racial bonus on Move Silently checks.

BARDIC LORE

A bard can make a Bardic Knowledge check to discover what he may have heard. A bard learns all the information of the DC his check succeeded by and all that below it (a Bard who rolled a 17 would learn the information under DC 15 and DC 10). Alternately this information can be gained by a Gather Information skill check +5 higher than the DC of a Bardic Lore check to see if the PC has heard any rumors.

DC 5 A man was murdered 6 days ago.

DC 10 He was a prominent merchant and businessman.

DC 15 Another, unidentified man, was found dead 2 weeks ago.

DC 20 Both were killed the same way — with a dagger through the eye (still in the body when it was found).

DC 25 Both bodies have since disappeared.

DC 30 The earlier man killed was a hired assassin.

Investigation into the murders brings up very little information. Nobody has been accused of them, there are no apparent motives, and the victims are not well known (at least, not by anybody the PCs would ever associate with). The bodies are not available (having re-animated as wights).

FIGHT AND FLIGHT

Immediately after the attacks from the wights, Lorensen decides it's time to leave. He orders the rest of the PCs rounded up, packs what he can into a wagon, and is ready to depart within an hour. He doesn't care it's late at night, and refuses to listen to any arguments from the PCs, reminding them they are being paid to follow orders, not give them. He buys the PCs horses (any available) if they don't have any, but he insists on leaving right now. If they refuse, he reminds them they signed a contract. Under no circumstances does he tell the PCs why he is being targeted, or who the wights were.

On the outskirts of town, Ulefar has prepared a trap for Lorensen and the PCs. He has cut a deal with an evil cleric, allowing the cleric to study him (the DM is encouraged to create reasons for, and consequences of, these studies) in exchange for undead labor. The first of these undead are preparing to ambush Lorensen and the PCs once they are out of sight of the town. When they are a good distance away, read the following to them:

After leaving the city with all possible haste, and it seems Lorensen is finally calming down. Perhaps now, he'll listen to reason and make camp for the night; it's about time. The surrounding area is slightly wooded and pastoral. The night is turning into morning quickly and some sleep would be quite welcome. But, Lorensen is frozen in fear, pointing at some silent movement directly in front of him. The silhouettes at which Lorensen is pointing gleam white in the moonlight... bone white!

The skeletons attack Lorensen before anybody else, and unless the PCs make it impossible, it ignores them.

☛ **Human Warrior Skeleton:** CR 1/3; Medium undead; HD 1d12; hp 6; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +0; Grp +1; Atk +1 melee, (1d6+1 club) or +1 melee (1d4+1, claw); SA —; SQ Damage reduction 5/bludgeoning, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to cold, undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 13, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: Improved Initiative

THE TRUTH OF THE MATTER

By this point, it should be pretty obvious to the PCs Lorensen is being targeted for a specific reason, and by someone with significant resources. He, in turn, is getting the idea this particular problem might not be outrun. It takes a Diplomacy or Intimidate check (DC 15) to make Lorensen talk, but once he does, he tells everything.

Lorensen explains to the PCs he made some bad business choices, which forced him under the influence of some powerful, and very evil, people. In order to further their ends, he was made to engage in ruthless business practices against his will, but he never committed murder. However, a competitor recently refused to sell his business to Lorensen, and the Golden Skull had him killed. Because it was his business which stood to gain, Lorensen found himself an unwilling participant in the murder of Torthan Ulefar.

Lorensen honestly does not know who is out to kill his associates and him, but believes it is one of Ulefar's friends or family. He also tells the PCs there were five members of the Skull involved in Ulefar's murder, not counting himself or the assassin. With two members and the assassin dead, this leaves three more, and himself. It should occur to the PCs to find the members of the Skull, and try to arrive before the killer does. Lorensen knows of one of them, whose home is half a day's ride away, but he cannot find the way in the dark. At this point, rest is the only option.

Note telling them what happened does not free the PCs from their contract, as Lorensen is quick to point out. In fact, he refuses to be separated from them, considering them his best hope for survival.

THE MADMAN'S DEATH

Kazyrian Tinrek was always considered the least stable of the members of the Golden Skull. While they prefer threats and financial motivation to outright violence, the Skull knows the necessity of driving a point home. When this point needed to be driven home with a battleaxe or hot poker, Kaz was the one who drove it. He handpicked the assassins who killed Ulefar, and supervised the entire operation. For this reason, Ulefar went to considerable effort to make Kaz's death as slow and painful as possible. So slow and painful, in fact, the only part really killed was the small remainder of his sanity. Kaz is now an allip, one of the terrible spirits of the insane.

By the time the PCs reach Kazyrian's manor, it is already a charred husk, with flames still licking at the remainder of the building. Ulefar came this morning, and is still here, watching the PCs. When they arrive, read the following aloud:

As soon as you reach the home of the man Lorensen identified, you know you're too late. Kazyrian Tinrek, chief enforcer for the Golden Skull, is either dead or homeless, as made evident by the burnt-out remains. This house may have once stood majestically, but it is now barely more than soot. From within the dying embers of the house, you hear a wailing. Is it possible someone survived?

The wailing is the allip, who immediately attacks anybody coming in range. From the clothes, and the dagger still in its left eye, Lorensen can identify it as Kaz, thus narrowing the list of targets down to three (himself, and the two remaining members).

☛ **Allip:** CR 3; Medium undead (incorporeal); HD 4d12; hp 26; Init +5; Spd Fly 30 ft. (perfect); AC 15, touch 15, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +2; Grp —; Atk +3 melee (1d4 Wisdom drain, incorporeal touch); Full Atk +3 melee (1d4 Wisdom drain, incorporeal touch); SA Babble, madness, Wisdom drain; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., incorporeal traits, +2 turn resistance, undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +4; Str —, Dex 12, Con —, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 18.

Skills and Feats: Hide +8, Intimidate +7, Listen +7, Search +4, Spot +7, Survival +0 (+2 following tracks); Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes

Babble (Su): An allip constantly mutters and whines to itself, creating a hypnotic effect. All sane creatures within 60 ft. of the allip must succeed on a DC 16 Will save or be affected as though by a hypnotism spell for 2d4 rounds. This is a sonic mind-affecting compulsion effect.

Creatures that successfully save cannot be affected by the same allip's babble for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Madness (Su): Anyone targeting an allip with a thought detection, mind control, or telepathic ability makes direct contact with its tortured mind and takes 1d4 points of Wisdom damage.

Wisdom Drain (Su): An allip causes 1d4 points of Wisdom drain each time it hits with its incorporeal touch attack. On each such successful attack, it gains 5 temporary hit points.

THAT WHICH DOES NOT DIE

The revenant, Ulefar, is watching the entire fight from hiding, and attacks as soon as the allip is dispatched. While he cannot be permanently killed, it is possible for him to take enough damage to be incapacitated for a time, indistinguishable from death.

▲ **Ulefar, Human Expert 5:** CR 7; Medium undead; HD 5d12; hp 30; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +3; Grp +8; Atk +8 melee (1d6+5/x2, slam); Full Atk +8 melee (1d6+5/x2, slam); SA Energy drain, hold person; SQ Damage reduction, fast healing overriding obsession, purpose, resistance, strength of will, turn resistance; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +10; Str 20, Dex 13, Con —, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +8, Bluff +8, Diplomacy +8, Hide +14, Intimidate +8, Listen +15, Move Silently +15, Profession (merchant) +8, Search +14, Spot +14; Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Persuasive.

Energy Drain (Su): If the revenant strikes his killer with a slam attack, he suffers 2 negative levels.

Hold Person (Su): As per the spell, hold person, the revenant gazes at his killer, causing him to freeze in panic. Unless the target makes a Will save, the victim takes no physical actions for one round/revenant level.

Damage Reduction (Su): Revenants benefit from damage reduction 10/+1.

Strength of Will (Su): Due to the overriding obsession for vengeance, a revenant gains an increase of hit points equal to 1/2 its current hit point total (rounded down) when in sight of one or more of its killers. These hit points are temporary and are lost if the killer dies or the revenant loses sight of them.

Purpose (Su): So long as even one of its killers lives, the revenant cannot die permanently, save through divine intervention (destruction by a cleric). However, once they avenge themselves, their thirst for vengeance is over. 1d4 rounds after its last murderer dies, the revenant fades from existence.

Overriding Obsession (Su): A revenant always knows the relative location of each of its killers. However, the revenant cannot voluntarily turn down a chance to attack its prey. It can choose which one to hunt, but it must always pursue one of them.

Turn Resistance (Ex): A revenant has +4 turn resistance. Resistance (Ex): Since they feel no pain, revenants have cold and electricity resistance 20.

Fast Healing (Ex): Powered by sheer strength of will, a revenant won't give up until the job is done. As long as their killer is still alive and they have at least 1 hp, a revenant heals 3 hp per round. Once they reach 0 hp, the revenant stops moving, and the healing rate is reduced to 3 hp/hour until they are above 0.

Possessions: Leather armor.

Within the wreckage of Kazyrian's house, few items of interest are still intact. Among these are 223 gp and a divine scroll containing the spells cure light wounds, cure moderate wounds, and aid (all written at the 5th level). Also, in the ruins of Kazyrian's study are enough fragments of documents to track down the two remaining targets. One of them is Anyra Lasenther, a seductive and charismatic sorceress. The other is Bailan Ranthar, who runs all of the business ventures for the Golden Skull.

Bailan and Anyra are romantically involved, and neither trusts the other an inch. As a result, when the five conspirators went into hiding, the two of them went back to Bailan's keep together. Each wants the other dead, and they both know it. They each believe the other is responsible for the murders, an attempt to consolidate power. Anyra thinks Bailan gave the order to disperse in order to prevent the group from discussing the murders too closely, implicating him.

Bailan's keep is only two days' ride from Kazyrian's, and is not difficult to find. If the PCs haven't been punished enough, feel free to add this encounter.

BREAKFAST

On one of the mornings on the way to Bailan's keep, the horses' panicked nickering awakens the PCs. There is a griffin nearby, and it is eyeing the horses hungrily. It attacks either early in the morning, before the PCs have mounted, or at some later point once they are dismounted. Only if he is in danger of losing them does the griffin attack while the PCs are riding. Remind the PCs, if they think about letting him have one of the horses, of the utmost necessity for speed. Also, if Lorensen bought the horses during the flight from town, he is not eager to see any of them eaten.

▲ **Griffon:** CR 4; Large magical beast; HD 7d10+21 (59 hp); Init +2; Spd 30 ft., fly 80 ft. (average); AC 17 (–1 size, +2 Dex, +6 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +7; Grp +15; Atk Bite +11 melee (2d6+4, bite); Full Atk +11 melee (2d6+4, bite) and +8 melee (1d4+2, 2 claws); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Pounce, rake 1d6+2; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +5; Str 18, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 5, Wis 13, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Jump +8, Listen +6, Spot +10; Iron Will, Multiattack, Weapon Focus (bite).

Pounce (Ex): If a griffin dives upon or charges a foe, it can make a full attack, including two rake attacks.

Rake (Ex): Attack bonus +8 melee, damage 1d6+2.

Skills: Griffons have a +4 racial bonus on Jump and Spot checks.

Bailan's Keep

Bailan's keep is two days ride away from Kazyrian's, but the PCs' horses are counterbalanced by Ulefar's steadfastness. While they can go faster, he needs no sleep, no food, and no rest. As it turns out, he arrives just before the PCs, with a wand of animation (a gift from his cleric ally). Because he expects company (the PCs), Ulefar animates each guard he kills as a zombie, with orders to attack anybody who comes into the keep.

☛ **Human Commoner Zombie:** CR ½; Medium undead; HD 2d12+3; hp 16; Init -1; Spd 30 ft. (can't run); AC 11, touch 9, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +1; Grp +1/+2; Atk Slam+2 melee (1d6+1) or club +2 melee (1d6+1); Full Atk Slam+2 melee, (1d6+1) or club +2 melee (1d6+1); SA—; SQ Single actions only, damage reduction 5/slashing, dark-vision 60 ft., undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref -1, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 8, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: Toughness.

Single Actions Only (Ex): Zombies have poor reflexes and can perform only a single move action or attack action each round. A zombie can move up to its speed and attack in the same round, but only if it attempts a charge.

Bailan's keep is small and organized. From the sound, it should not be difficult to tell where Ulefar and the others are. Once the PCs enter Bailan's living quarters, read the following aloud:

After finishing off the last of the zombies, you race upstairs, following the screams. As you enter Bailan's personal quarters, you realize immediately you are too late. Before your gaze reaches his corpse, you already know what you will see. Sure enough, the blood pools around his head, face-up, with a dagger through his left eye. Standing over him, threatening the beautiful woman in front of you, is the same undead man you left for destroyed at Kazyrian Tinrek's manor. Other than a little more decayed, he seems quite as healthy as the last time you fought him. His attention is entirely focused upon Anyra, who is desperately trying to stave him off.

Anyra cares more about getting away than anything else, and as soon as it becomes clear to her Ulefar is more than a match for her, she presses a hidden button on the bedposts, opening up a trap door. The trap door leads to Bailan's dungeon, a relatively small maze built under his keep for disposing of enemies too dangerous to handle any other way. Everybody in the room (except Anyra) may fall into the maze.

☛ **Pit Trap:** CR 3; mechanical, activated trigger; manual reset; DC 20 Reflex save avoids; 40 ft. deep (4d6, fall); Search DC 18; Disable Device DC 18.

BAILAN'S MAZE

Each encounter in the Maze is numbered. Because of his location when he fell through the trapdoor, Ulefar enters the maze at room #4. The PCs enter at location #1. Note the entire maze is open, and most of the occupants are quite interested in fresh prey. If the PCs dawdle too long in any one spot, they likely have several fights on their hands in rapid succession.

The maze is worked granite, with little decoration. While it is obviously man-made, not much effort went into its design and construction. There are no torch sconces, the floor is unworked stone, and the entire place smells. Make it clear to the PCs they do not want to be here. There is no treasure to be found, and no glory. Survival is the major goal here. Added to this impetus is the continued threat of the revenant, which should not be forgotten.



THAT WHICH DOES NOT DIE

1. Giant rats

As soon as they fall into the maze, the PCs are set upon by a pack of giant rats, which live by the entrance waiting for food.

As you tumble through the chute, you lose your sense of direction, knowing only you are falling. You do not have much time to wonder, however, as you soon spill out onto a stone floor, bereft of the furnishings of the house. Cold, dark, and foreboding, there is no question this is a dungeon, and from the chittering and scratching, it is equally obvious something else is down here.

☛ **Dire Rat:** CR 1/3; Small animal; HD 1d8+1; hp 7, 7, 6, 6, 5, 5, 4, 4; Init +3; Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 15, touch 14, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp -4; Atk +4 melee (1d4 plus disease, bite); Full Atk +4 melee (1d4 plus disease, bite); SA Disease; SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 4.

Skills and Feats: Climb +11, Hide +8, Listen +4, Move Silently +4, Spot +4, Swim +11; Alertness, Weapon Finesse.

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

Skills: Dire rats have a +8 racial bonus on Swim checks. Dire rats have a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks and can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened.

Dire rats use their Dexterity modifier for Climb and Swim checks.

2. Ethereal Marauder

Bailan had this creature captured by a wizard and placed in his dungeon, and he was quite proud of it. It usually feeds on the rats, but far prefers something more... lively.

Turning the corner, you see you have reached a dead end in the maze. 'Dead', however, seems to be a relative term, as made evident by the bones scattered throughout the room. You turn to leave, when before you stands a strange creature, seemingly all teeth and muscle, with a sinuous tail. The three red eyes spaced evenly about the triangular mouth all stare at you hungrily. Whatever creature this is, it was not there a moment ago, but you don't have much time to consider as it charges you, teeth first.

☛ **Ethereal Marauder:** CR 3; Medium magical beast (extraplanar); HD 2d10; hp 11; Init +5; Spd 40 ft.; AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +2; Grp +4; Atk +4 melee (1d6+3, bite); Full Atk +4 melee (1d6+3, bite); SA —; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., ethereal jaunt; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 7, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Listen +5, Move Silently +5, Spot +4; Improved Initiative

Ethereal Jaunt (Su): An ethereal marauder can shift from the Ethereal Plane to the Material Plane as a free action, and shift back again as a move action. The ability is otherwise identical with the ethereal jaunt spell (caster level 15th).

Skills: Ethereal marauders have a +2 racial bonus on Listen, Move Silently, and Spot checks.

3. Zombie Dire Rats

There were more dire rats here, but Ulefar came across them first. They are now freshly undead.

There are dire rat corpses on the floor here, an indication that something is quite out of place. So far, everything you have encountered in this dungeon would be loath to leave perfectly good food behind. As if to confirm your fears, the corpses slowly rise to their feet and approach. The rats' freshness does nothing to diminish their putrescence, and serve as a grim reminder of the creature with which you still must deal. Right now, however, your problems are much closer, with bloody matted hair and grimy teeth.

☛ **Dire Rat, Zombie:** CR 1/2; Small undead; HD 2d12+3; hp 16; Init +2; Spd 40 ft. (can't run), climb 20 ft.; AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp -3; Atk +2 melee (1d4+1 plus disease, bite) or +2 melee (1d4+1, slam); Full Atk +2 melee (1d4+1 plus disease, bite) or +2 melee (1d4+1, slam); SA Disease; SQ Single actions only, damage reduction 5/slashing, darkvision 60 ft., undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 15, Con —, Int 1, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: Toughness.

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

Single Actions Only (Ex): Zombies have poor reflexes and can perform only a single move action or attack action each round. A zombie can move up to its speed and attack in the same round, but only if it attempts a charge.

4. Empty Room

This is where Ulefar came in. If the DM would like, the PCs can encounter him again during the maze. It is suggested Ulefar reach the exit just after the PCs, using his ability to track Lorensen to stalk them.

5. Ooze

A Gray ooze lurks in the dungeon, mopping up whatever the rats and marauder don't get to first. It is here, in the PCs path

☛ **Gray Ooze:** CR 4; Medium ooze; HD 3d10+15; hp 31; Init -5; Spd 10 ft.; AC 5, touch 5, flat-footed 5; Base Atk +2; Grp +3; Atk +3 melee (1d6+1 plus 1d6 acid, slam); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6+1 plus 1d6 acid, slam); SA Acid, constrict 1d6+1 plus 1d6 acid, improved grab; SQ Blindsight 60 ft., immunity to cold and fire, ooze traits, transparent; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref -4, Will -4; Str 12, Dex 1, Con 21, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: —.

Acid (Ex): A gray ooze secretes a digestive acid that quickly dissolves organic material and metal, but not stone. Any melee hit or constrict attack deals acid damage. Armor or clothing dissolves and becomes useless immediately unless it succeeds on a DC 16 Reflex save. A metal or wooden weapon that strikes a gray ooze also dissolves immediately unless it succeeds on a DC 16 Reflex save. The save DCs are Constitution-based.

THAT WHICH DOES NOT DIE

The ooze's acidic touch deals 16 points of damage per round to wooden or metal objects, but the ooze must remain in contact with the object for 1 full round to deal this damage.

Constrict (Ex): A gray ooze deals automatic slam and acid damage with a successful grapple check. The opponent's clothing and armor take a -4 penalty on Reflex saves against the acid.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a gray ooze must hit with its slam attack. It can then start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can constrict.

Transparent (Ex): A gray ooze is hard to identify, even under ideal conditions, and it takes a DC 15 Spot check to notice one. Creatures who fail to notice a gray ooze and walk into it are automatically hit with a melee attack for slam and acid damage.

6. Vargouilles

More of Bailan's pets, a pair of vargouilles begins hunting the PCs as soon as they enter the maze. Much like the other residents of the dungeon, the vargouilles seek whatever prey they can get in the maze, often subsisting on rats.

☛ **Vargouille:** CR 2; Small outsider (evil, extraplanar); HD 1d8+1; hp 7, 5; Init +1; Spd Fly 30 ft. (good); AC 12, touch 11, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +1; Grp -3; Atk +3 melee (1d4 plus poison, bite); Full Atk +3 melee (1d4 plus poison, bite); SA Shriek, kiss, poison; SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 5, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Hide +9, Intimidate +3, Listen +5, Move Silently +5, Spot +5; Weapon Finesse.

Shriek (Su): Instead of biting, a vargouille can open its distended mouth and let out a terrible shriek. Those within 60 ft. (except other vargouilles) who hear the shriek and can clearly see the creature must succeed on a DC 12 Fortitude save or be paralyzed with fear for 2d4 rounds or until the monster attacks them, goes out of range, or leaves their sight. A paralyzed creature is susceptible to the vargouille's kiss (see below). A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by the same vargouille's shriek for 24 hours. The shriek is a mind-affecting fear effect. The save DC is Constitution-based and includes a +1 racial bonus.

Kiss (Su): A vargouille can kiss a paralyzed target with a successful melee touch attack. An affected opponent must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or begin a terrible transformation that turns the creature into a vargouille within 24 hours (and often much sooner; roll 1d6 separately for each phase of the transformation).

First, over a period of 1d6 hours, all the victim's hair falls out. Within another 1d6 hours thereafter, the ears grow into leathery wings, tentacles sprout on the chin and scalp, and the teeth become long, pointed fangs. During the next 1d6 hours, the victim takes Intelligence drain and Charisma drain equal to 1 point per hour (to a minimum of 3). The transformation is complete 1d6 hours later, when the head breaks free of the body (which promptly dies) and becomes a vargouille. This transformation is interrupted by sunlight, and even a daylight spell can delay death, but to reverse the transformation requires remove disease. The save DC is Constitution-based and includes a +4 racial bonus.

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 12 or be unable to heal the vargouille's bite damage naturally or magically. A neutralize poison or heal spell removes the effect, while delay poison allows magical healing. The save DC is Constitution-based and includes a +1 racial bonus.

7. Pit trap

Bailan has the intersection of these passages trapped with a spiked pit.

☛ **Spiked Pit Trap:** CR 3; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; DC 20 Reflex save avoids; 20 ft. deep (2d6, fall); multiple targets (first target in each of two adjacent 5-ft. squares); pit spikes (Atk +10 melee, 1d4 spikes per target for 1d4+2 each); Search DC 21; Disable Device DC 20.

8. Gargoyle

Bailan used part of his ill-earned fortune to buy the services of this gargoyle from its previous master, a wizard who is now dead. Read the following to the PCs as they reach this intersection.

A passage branches off to the left here, leading into the darkness. Several broken statues line the corridor, evidence of some nasty thing's battle for either food, or survival. One in particular stands out: a warrior in armor, battling against a vicious-looking gargoyle. The warrior's head lies next to him on the ground and the sword's blade is clutched in the gargoyle's hand. The gargoyle is in almost as bad shape as the warrior, with horns and fingers missing.

It takes a Spot check (DC 20) to see the gargoyle's eyes go red before it attacks. Those who fail are caught flat-footed as the creature leaps to the attack.

☛ **Gargoyle:** CR 4; Medium monstrous humanoid (earth); HD 4d8+19; hp 37; Init +; Spd 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (average); AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +4; Grp +6; Atk +6 melee (1d4+2, claw); Full Atk +6 melee (1d4+2, two claws) and +4 melee (1d6+1, bite) and +4 melee (1d6+1, gore); SA —; SQ Damage reduction 10/magic, darkvision 60 ft., freeze; AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +4; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 18, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 7.

Skills and Feats: Hide +7*, Listen +4, Spot +4; Multiattack, Toughness.

Freeze (Ex): A gargoyle can hold itself so still it appears to be a statue. An observer must succeed on a DC 20 Spot check to notice the gargoyle is really alive.

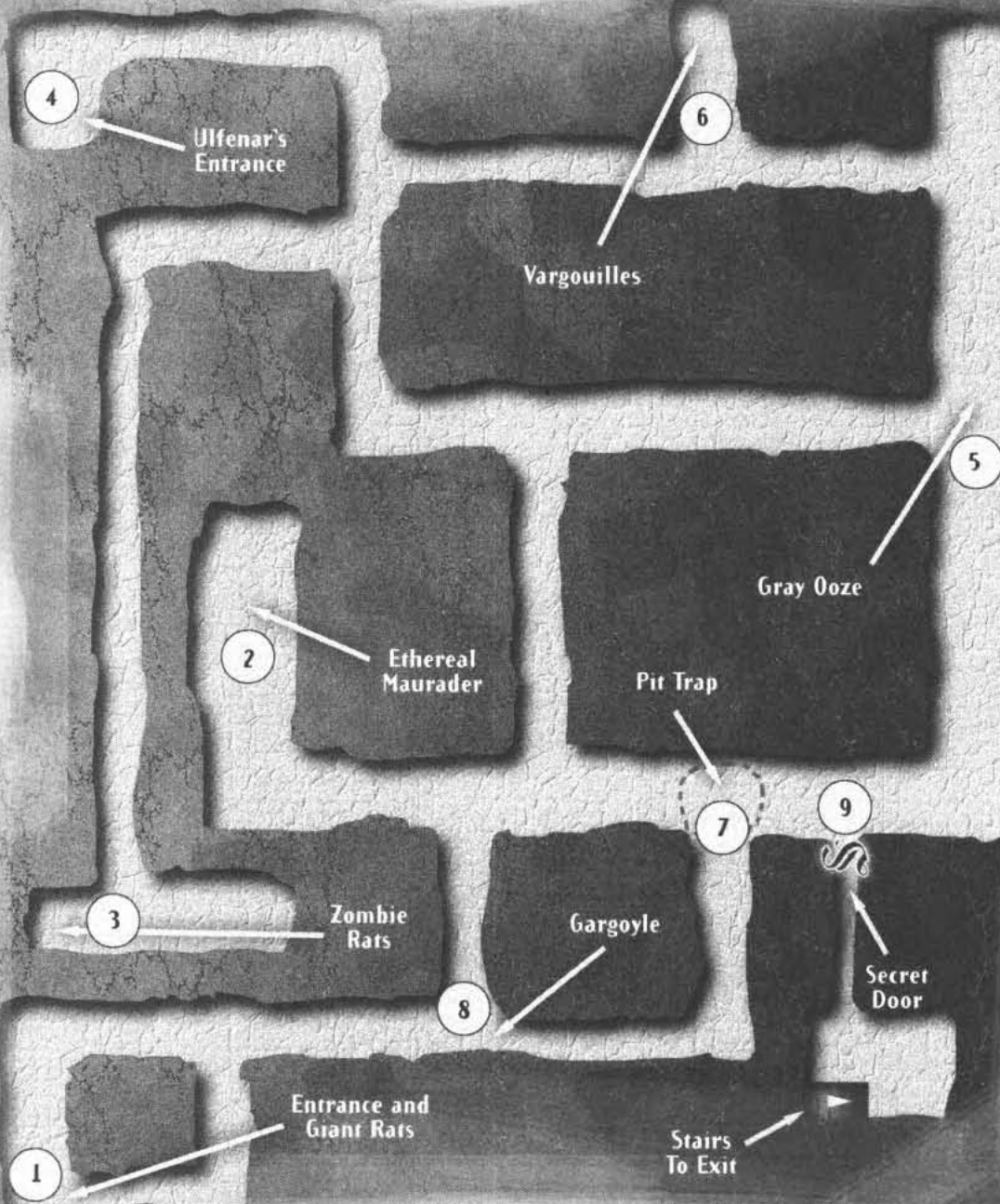
Skills: Gargoyles have a +2 racial bonus on Hide, Listen, and Spot checks. *The Hide bonus increases by +8 when a gargoyle is concealed against a background of stone.

9. Secret Exit

The only way out of this maze is through a secret door. The switch is a brick set into the wall, noticeable on a Search (DC 15) check. Once the brick is pressed, the door opens up. The floor is noticeably less dusty here, and some light does penetrate the secret door (it is only painted wood).

Anyra is waiting at the exit to the maze with her secret weapon prepared: a scroll of control undead. While she is not normally of sufficient level to cast the spell, she has studied it for years, and automatically passes the caster level

THAT WHICH DOES NOT DIE



THAT WHICH DOES NOT DIE

check to cast it. When she does, she sets Ulefar against the PCs, watching the battle from a safe distance. When the PCs get through the secret door, read the following to them:

After crawling out of the hidden passage, you see a set of stairs in this room, and you know you are almost free of this maze. However, standing on them is the same beautiful sorceress from before, her lovely features twisted in rage and fear. She points past you, and you turn to see your undead pursuer emerge into the room. She pulls a scroll from her belt, and speaks to you as she unrolls it. 'You brought it here to kill me, but I have something you didn't count on. Now, your mistake shall be your undoing!' The scroll fully opened, Anyra begins to read from it. As she does, the revenant stops, and his remaining is glowing. As the sorceress finishes the spell, the scroll begins to smolder, and the undead creature turns, not to Lorensen or Anyra, but to you!

What Anyra forgets about is Lorensen. He realizes he is doomed to die no matter what, but he is tired of being used by the Golden Skull, and has decided to act now, rather than die begging for his life from either Ulefar or the sorceress. He sneaks up behind Anyra and stabs her in the back.

▲ **Anyra, Human Sor 5:** CR 5; Medium humanoid; HD 5d4; hp 18; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +2; Grp +2; Atk +3 melee (1d6, shortspear) or +3 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6, shortspear) or +3 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); SA Spells; SQ Summon familiar; AL NE; SV Fort 1, Ref +2, Will +6; Str 11, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 17.

Skills and Feats: Combat Casting, Dodge, Lightning Reflexes.

Summon Familiar (Su): Anyra has summoned a cat familiar named Bishop.

✦ **Bishop, Cat Familiar:** CR ½; Tiny Animal; HD ½d8; hp 2; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp +12; Atk +4 melee (1d2–4, claws); Full Atk +4 melee (1d2–4, two claws) and –1 melee (1d3–4, bite); SA —; SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 3, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Balance +10, Climb +6, Hide +14*, Jump +10, Listen +3, Move Silently +6, Spot +3; Weapon Finesse.

Skills: Cats have a +4 racial bonus on Climb, Hide, and Move Silently checks and a +8 racial bonus on Jump checks. Cats have a +8 racial bonus on Balance checks. They use their Dexterity modifier instead of their Strength modifier for Climb and Jump checks. *In areas of tall grass or heavy undergrowth, the Hide bonus rises to +8.

Sorcerer Spells Known: (6/5/3; save DC 13 + spell level): 0—acid splash, daze, flare, mage hand, ray of frost, touch of fatigue; 1st—burning hands, color spray, mage armor, magic missile, ray of enfeeblement; 2nd—eagle's splendor, flaming sphere, touch of idiocy.

Possessions: Cloak of protection +2, masterwork shortspear, light crossbow, 10 bolts, sorcerer's robes.

If Lorensen is killed in the fight with Anyra, then Ulefar dies 1d4 rounds after them. If he is not, read the following aloud to the PCs:

With the sorceress dead, the revenant turns his attention to his last target: your employer, Nykal Lorensen. Despite his apparently newfound "heroism," he is obviously frightened, but stands his ground. As he bows his head to the man whose death he carries responsibility for, Lorensen prepares to face death, praying to his deity for the first time that you're aware of. The revenant's face, however, takes on an odd visage, and speaks.

"A life for a life. Your debt is repaid." With those words, the undead stalker collapses to the floor and decays before your eyes, as if the gods of death were making up for their stolen time.

There is a decent bit of treasure scattered throughout Bailin's house, and with him and the guards dead, the PCs can claim it.

Treasure: The house contains 564 gp kept in a locked safe (DC 15 to pick or force), a tapestry of a blue dragon on the wing worth 200 gp, Bailan's +2 longsword by his bed (named "Darksheen"), and a +1 ring of protection on Bailan's finger. Ulefar's wand of animation disintegrated with him.

EPILOGUE

What becomes of the Golden Skull? They have just lost five powerful members, and are going to be more than just a little interested in the circumstances surrounding their deaths. Since there is no evidence of the revenant ever existing, the PCs and Lorensen are prime suspects. Also, there is the matter of Ulefar's cleric ally, who is unlikely to be working alone. A death cult in the immediate vicinity is no laughing matter. Finally, Lorensen himself is going to need to get back on his feet. Either as a cloth merchant somewhere else, or with a new profession, he has use for competent adventurers such as the PCs. Especially once he (inevitably) gets in over his head.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

- The death cult arising from the ashes in this adventure could begin working to integrate the absolute rule of a blackguard warlord named Intrepus, and the PCs bring this warning to the rulers, who ask their assistance (see the adventure "Tomb of the Overseers").
- Returning to the town they were originally hired in, the PCs hear word that the dead are rising, and the local church is hiring mercenaries to thwart an ancient evil (see the adventure "Covenant Hill").



Chapter 22:

Covenant Hill

Levels 5 to 7
by Ree Soesbee

Everyone knows about the Lich on Covenant Hill. His tale is older than the town which grew up in its shadow, more ancient even than the forest surrounding them both. For hundreds of years he has walked the nearby beaches, searching for the bodies of shipwrecked sailors. Yet the Old One has never ventured toward the village, and nothing disturbs his silent hermitage. The land is at peace, though soft moans still whisper on the long shadows of night and the peasants of Heathwyck tell tales of ghosts and spirits walking the ancient garrison's barren grounds.

But on recent nights, the old tales have begun to come true. Once the tales of undead were no more than moans in the wind. Now, dead rise from the graves of Heathwyck, marching one by one into the night.

The people of Heathwyck are frightened, and it seems the Old One turned his eyes at last toward the town below. The peace which has existed for centuries has been broken, and peasants who stay too late in the fields are slaughtered by undead while the moon shines brightly above. More graves open, and the dead stumble toward the ancient garrison as if drawn by some unknown force — a command they cannot resist.

Something terrible whispers in the winds of Covenant Hill...

DM BACKGROUND

Covenant Hill is an adventure designed for characters of levels 5 to 7. A cleric or any PC with skills and powers to combat the undead will be a worthy addition to any party tackling this adventure.

PCs must enter a ruined garrison infested with undead, fight to discover the true source of the evil emanating from Covenant Hill — and destroy it. But at the end, the players must make a difficult decision between justice... and greed.

A Lich named Ulrún has lived in the forgotten garrison of Covenant Hill for hundreds of years. Once a powerful good necromancer, Ulrún has spent his immortality studying death in order to find a way to restore life. He lives in self-imposed solitude with his undead servitors and those few apprentices brave enough to seek him out. Ulrún is a good soul. He uses the bodies of animals and of shipwrecked humans in his experiments, and would never threaten the innocent people of Heathwyck. However, his apprentices do not all have the same morals. An ambitious man named Jethritch slipped into Ulrún's private chambers. While there, Jethritch stole Ulrún's phylactery — the gem giving him command over undead. With the phylactery, Jethritch raised a barrier around Covenant Hill, preventing Ulrún from returning. He has begun to summon undead, gathering an army. Jethritch plans to declare himself King by the power of dark necromancy.

The priests and paladins of Heathwyck's church, the Temple of Light, want to rid the town of the Lich. They are prevented in this undertaking however. The Temple of Light simply does not have the manpower or the popular support to attack Covenant Hill. Now the undead rise up from the graves around Heathwyck and the Temple of Light is drawing more support. Their own force cannot enter the place, but a militia of commoners could do so.

Both Ulrun and the Temple of Light approach the PCs, and ask them to retrieve the phylactery. If it is returned to Ulrun, he returns to his studies, sadder and wiser. The bodies of the Heathwyck dead are returned to their graves.

If the phylactery is returned to the Temple of Light, Ulrun is banned from the area forever, and the barrier around the garrison on Covenant Hill falls.

The Temple and Ulrun both offer to reward the PCs for their services. Those rewards, however, are vastly different in scope. The Temple offers the PCs 'the peace of mind, knowing an evil such as this is destroyed' and 'a blessing upon their souls.' They offer no monetary compensation, and no magical gifts other than simple healing when the PCs return from their quest. The Lich, on the other hand, offers both money and magic items. He has a store of items outside the garrison, and he allows the PCs the chance to take their choice from his treasure-vaults.

If they betray either one, the other almost definitely becomes a major thorn in the PCs side for a long time to come. No matter which side they aid, the other curses them for their decision. In the end, what happens to Ulrun and Heathwyck is entirely in the hands of the PCs.

PLAYER INTRODUCTION

Heathwyck is a bustling town near the sea, beneath the cliffside shadow of a mountain known as Covenant Hill. It has a busy port, and is renowned as a pleasant tourist attraction in the warm summer months. Legend has it a Lich lives in the abandoned garrison ruins at the top of Covenant Hill, but no one seems to care. It is a peaceful town, and filled with pleasant diversions.

You are asleep in your room at the inn in the city, when you hear a terrible scream outside your window. Leaping to look, you see three rambling figures, and a fourth tearing himself up from the graveyard across the street. A peasant woman drops her bags and flees from the zombies as they make their way up the road toward the cliff garrison.

A banging at your door captures your attention before you can do more than stare. In the hallway, a white-faced acolyte of Heathwyck's Temple of Light stands holding a lantern. His fingers shake with fear and his voice is strained. "Please," he begs, "Come quickly. The Temple has need of you."

The acolyte leads the PCs to the Temple of Light, in the center of Heathwyck.

The Temple of Light is a white stone building, lit on all sides by blazing torches which seem to cause the building itself to glow. In deference to the God of Light, the Temple is never dark – inside or out. Peasants huddle inside, kneeling in prayer on the stone pews or whispering in fear as the priests of Light try to calm them. The acolyte leads bows in reverence, and then turns to show the way to the Grand Master's chambers at the rear of the temple. He knocks once on the door, and then opens it.



Within rests a nearly ancient man. His graying beard lies heavy on a withered chest, and ancient fingers shrivel beneath the thick gold rings of his office. He lies on his bed while the Lord Templar of the church salutes you. The Templar says, "I am Johannis, and this is the Grand Master Laurent, of the Light. The Grand Master is ill, and this strain wearies him." The Templar looks worriedly at the old man.

"I... am... Laurent," whispers the old man. "I have been in the service of the god for fifty years. All this time, I have looked up at the black garrison and wondered when its evil would be released upon our peaceful city."

A racking cough shakes his body. "The evil has now... come. Undead rise from the graves of Heathwyck. An army is forming — one which could threaten the entire kingdom with its black necromancy. It must be stopped..."

Another spasm of coughs makes and the old man is silent as his Templar continues the tale. "There is a Lich dwelling in the garrison of Covenant Hill. He is raising an army, and stealing the bodies of our loved ones to fuel his war. This must be stopped. Many of the populace are convinced there must be some other evil behind these supernatural attacks so until now, we were forced to be content with a truce. But now the evil threatens us within an inch of our lives. Please help us. Go to the tower and steal the Lich's phylactery, the source of his power. With it, we can at last destroy the evil of Covenant Hill."

THE TEMPLE'S OFFER

They have no money or magic to offer the PCs, but they insist killing the undead will save the town from evil, and their god will look favorably on anyone who helps them destroy the undead of Covenant Hill. They also strongly hint at the discount the temple will allow them for future healing and restoration spells cast upon them, as well as the adulation of the people of the village.

Laurent is very old, and sick. After telling the PCs of the dangers, he asks them to leave him to rest. Johannis escorts the PCs out of the temple, and speaks of raising a militia of commoners to attack the temple once the PCs have stolen the phylactery. He tells them according to legend it is a large green amulet on a silver chain. Once they retrieve it, they should return immediately to holy ground. Although the PCs don't know it, the Lich's magic prevents the phylactery from being destroyed.

The Temple's promise that they have the means to destroy it is empty.

Several of the peasants in the church hear Johannis speaking to the PCs, and the word spreads quickly that the PCs are helping the Temple of Light. A few people even stop to thank the PCs on their way out, kissing their hands and telling tales of undead mothers, cousins, sisters and children walking the streets toward the ancient garrison.

The people of Heathwyck are terrified, and genuinely believe the evil of Covenant Hill is going to destroy them. The PCs are already heroes — and they have not even begun their quest.

THE LICH'S OFFER

After the PCs are away from the temple and on their way back to the Inn, read or paraphrase the following:

A cold wind blows through the deserted city streets of Heathwyck. A man in tattered robes is standing in the road ahead. He raises a hand in peace, and his voice is rough and strange as he says, "Peace, noble adventurers. I mean you no harm. My name is Ulrun, and I need your help. A traitorous apprentice desecrated my home on Covenant Hill, and he threatens these gentle folk. I am no threat to them, nor have I ever been. I seek only to do my research in the quiet peace of immortality. Yet my apprentice Jethritch has stolen my phylactery, used magic to ban me from my own garrison, and draws upon the strength of my labors to do evil. If he is not stopped, he will murder countless innocents in his mad quest for power. Please. Listen to me. Aid us all, and stop Ansgar. Win for me my phylactery, and I will send the dead of Heathwyck to sleep once more in their quiet graves. More, I will reward you with your choice of treasures from my collection — gold and jewels, or lost magics to aid you on future quests." The old man removes his hood. His features are shriveled and desiccated, withered skin pulled tight over his skull in death. "I can do no more without my phylactery. Return it to me at the beach where the bones of fallen ships lie, and help me restore peace." With that, the wind rises once more, bitter and cold. The Lich fades into the darkness and is gone.

Ulrun is staying in the shipwrecked husks on the cliff-shore, but if the PCs seek him there at this time, he cannot be found. Once they have the phylactery, they can go to the beach to return it to him, and he gladly comes out to meet them.

ON THE ROAD TO COVENANT HILL

The trip to Covenant hill is but an hour by foot under the worst possible conditions. From the road above the cliffs, the ruins of a garrison at the top of Covenant Hill emerge. It is large and gray against the stormy sky, but the tower's topmost light still shines, warning ships at sea off the rocky coast. The road twists and turns through thick scrub and tree-lined rocky areas. Around a corner, several large creatures leap through the brush!

The road to the Lich's stronghold is badly overgrown. The creature attacking the PCs is an owlbear, one of the beasts from Ulrun's laboratories. It was set free by Jethritch in order to protect the keep from any of the Temple's followers or Heathwyck's peasants tried to assault Covenant Hill. There are 3 owlbeats (hp 47) involved in this attack; 2 are waiting in the tree line for an opportunity to strike when the PCs least expect it.

❖ **Owlbear:** CR 4; Large magical beast; HD 5d10+25; hp 52 each; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +5; Grp +14; Atk +9 melee (1d6+5, claw); Full Atk +9 melee (1d6+5, 2 claws) and +4 melee (1d8+2, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Improved grab; SQ Scent; AL NE; SV Fort +9, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 21, Dex 12, Con 21, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Listen +8, Spot +8; Alertness, Track. Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, an owlbear must hit with a claw attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity.

THE OUTER TOWERS

The portcullis to the garrison at the top of the hill is lowered, and covered with rust. It will be difficult to raise with even the greatest strength. To either side, lonely towers rise above the ivy-covered walls of the garrison, and through the gate the noise of clattering shutters flip open and closed in the wind.

The shutter sound is not actually shutters, as any PC who Listens (DC 15) can tell. It is actually movement within the outer courtyard, as if something is marching in a repetitive fashion. The noise is actually the skeletal archers, marching in mindless formation inside the outer courtyard.

The undead are shielded from some aspects of positive energy by the magics worked upon Ulrun's phylactery by his treacherous apprentice. All Charisma checks to turn undead suffer a -2 profane penalty as long as Jethritch possesses the phylactery.

If the PCs approach the tower, a squad of 14 zombies inhabiting the two high stone structures makes their way out and attacks them. Within three rounds, a small squad of 8 skeletal archers appears beyond the portcullis, shooting arrows through the open grating of the iron gate (this

gives the skeletons cover, providing a +4 cover bonus to their AC). It should be noted the majority of these skeletons and zombies are the bodies stolen from Heathwyck's graveyards, as noted by the fresh earth on their bodies, and the symbols on their clothing. The portcullis requires Strength check (DC 20) to lift, and takes 3 rounds to push it high enough so a Medium creature can crawl underneath. There is a lever inside to lift the gate farther (if turned with a Strength check (DC 12). One of the skeletons has an iron key hanging from its rotten belt (this fits the double doors, detailed below).

❖ **Human Commoner Zombie:** CR 1/2; Medium undead; HD 2d12+3 (16 hp each); Init -1; Spd 30 ft. (can't run); AC 11, touch 9, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +1; Grp +1/+2; Atk Slam+2 melee (1d6+1) or club +2 melee (1d6+1); Full Atk Slam +2 melee, (1d6+1) or club +2 melee (1d6+1); SA—; SQ Single actions only, damage reduction 5/slashing, darkvision 60 ft., undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref -1, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 8, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: Toughness.

Single Actions Only (Ex): Zombies have poor reflexes and can perform only a single move action or attack action each round. A zombie can move up to its speed and attack in the same round, but only if it attempts a charge.

❖ **Human Archer Skeleton:** CR 1/2; Medium Undead; HD 1d12 (6 hp each); Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (19 with cover), touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +0; Grp +1; Atk +1 melee (1d4+1, claw) or +1 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); SA—; SQ Damage reduction 5/bludgeoning, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to cold, undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 13, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: Improved Initiative.

THE OUTER COURTYARD

Just inside the outer gates is a large courtyard which may have once been a training area for soldiers. There is a great deal of exercise equipment (now rotted), and a stable in the north-eastern corner. The stable hangs by a few bolts, and the hay and grain inside is long since rotted away. The courtyard is empty and eerily silent. To the west, you see a large set of iron double-doors leading into the garrison proper. Above you, the lonely light of the lighthouse tower shines bleakly out to sea.

The key from the skeleton's belt unlocks the double-doors, which open, squeaking loudly on its rusted hinges. The door is used occasionally (thus, it still moves, as does the portcullis), but it is rarely opened and is not silent when used. If the door is allowed to open normally, the noise will alert the monsters in the next four areas. To open the door quietly requires a Move Silently check (DC 25).



1. The Entrance Chamber

As you enter the main entrance hall of the garrison, you see a dimly lit chamber stretching 40 ft. long by 20 ft. wide. There are three doors, one north, one south, and one on the far west wall.

If the door from the Outer Courtyard made a significant amount of noise, read or paraphrase the following text:

The western door is swinging open as you enter, and you see three knights in ancient plate mail striding through, their zombie mastiffs at their side. One of them silently points his sword at you as a challenge, and the huge hounds leap forward to attack.

If the doors were silenced (Magically or with Move Silently) the fight with the Brothers of Steel (see Appendix B) and their hounds occur when the party enters the Feast Hall (room #2).

2. The Feast Hall

The door to the west opens slowly, but is silent. The room beyond was once a feast hall, but now the tapestries are dull and tattered, and the huge table is scarred and rotted. There are four doors out of this room, two on the north wall, and two on the south. The far southern door is barred shut with bands of iron.

If the Brothers of Steel did not attack the PCs in the Entrance Chamber (room #1), then read or paraphrase the following:

Three 'knights' in ancient plate mail rise, their zombie mastiffs at their side. One of them raises his sword to indicate he wishes to challenge you, and the huge hounds leap forward to attack.

☛ **Brothers of Steel:** CR 3; Medium undead; HD 4d12; hp 26; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +2; Grp +8; Atk +8 melee (1d10 +6, bastard sword); Full Atk +8 melee (1d10 +6, bastard sword) or +8 melee (1d6 +6, 2 claws); SA Siphon soul; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., undead traits; AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 22, Dex 14, Con 0, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 7.

Skills: Climb +7, Hide +3, Listen +5, Search +3, Spot +2

Feats: Blind-fighting, Cleave, Exotic weapon proficiency, Improved Initiative, Multiattack

Siphon Soul (Su): Because the Brothers of Steel were created to hold souls within their bodies, they may siphon the souls of others and use them as energy sources. They must succeed at a touch attack in order to siphon a soul, causing an additional 1d6 temporary Wisdom damage. The Brother of Steel then gains three times the amount of wisdom damage inflicted as bonus hit points (which can exceed the Brother of Steel, original hit points). Any creature drained to 0 Wisdom falls unconscious.

☛ **Zombie Hound:** CR 2; Large undead; HD 5d12+3; hp 32 each; Init +1; Spd 50 ft.; AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +3; Grp +9; Atk +9 melee (1d8+6, bite); Full Atk +9 melee (1d8+6, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA —; SQ Single actions only; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 23, Dex 13, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: Toughness.

Single Actions Only (Ex): Zombies have poor reflexes and can perform only a single move action or attack action each round. A zombie can move up to its speed and attack in the same round, but only if it attempts a charge.

3. Tactics Room

Once grand, this room holds tables filled with three-dimensional maps of the region obligatory for strategy sessions.

The maps on the tables are sadly out of date, showing only a tiny village where the bustling city of Heathwyck stands. The coast, mountains, and other natural features seem correct, with minor changes to mark the passage of time. The books on the shelves are rotting and foul, and their information is of little use (outdated military tactics, antiquated armor repair techniques, and the like from a bygone age). Troop movements, supply lines and the contents of the armory and grain reserves from year to year are also recorded and kept in a library here.



Treasure: This room saw little use while Ulrun was in charge, but has become recently disturbed again now Jethritch is in charge. To a collector, the old books many be of value, and could fetch a price of up to 250 gold for the collection here of 10 salvageable tomes (any PC with ranks in Appraise can tell this).

4. Study Hall

Long tables with thin benches pushed underneath them fill the room. On the west wall, there is a large slate board hanging from the ceiling, and on the ground around it is a great mound of chalk dust. Books lay scattered about the room, and several of the tables appear to have been hacked apart by sword or axe blows. This room may once have been some sort of a study hall, but it is now ruined and destroyed. Five zombies look up and, grin as they draw their blades.

☛ **Human Commoner Zombie:** CR ½; Medium undead; HD 2d12+3 (16 hp each); Init -1; Spd 30 ft. (can't run); AC 11, touch 9, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +1; Grp +1/+2; Atk Slam+2 melee (1d6+1) or club +2 melee (1d6+1); Full Atk Slam+2 melee, (1d6+1) or sword +2 melee (1d6+1); SA: SQ Single actions only, damage reduction 5/slashing, darkvision 60 ft., undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref -1, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 8, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: Toughness.

Single Actions Only (Ex): Zombies have poor reflexes and can perform only a single move action or attack action each round. A zombie can move up to its speed and attack in the same round, but only if it attempts a charge.

5. Officers' Rooms

These are in moderately good repair, despite their rotting furnishings. There are only two beds in each room, and the beds are still standing. The chests at their feet remain. Apparently, these were the quarters for the officers of the garrison, but now some are the resting places of the Brothers of Steel. Every time a PC inspects one of these rooms for the first time, roll on the following table for the contents:

OFFICER'S ROOM CONTENTS

1d20	Contents
1–5	Nothing of value, rotting furniture
6	Bottle of ancient, vintage wine (worth up to 75 gp)
7–8	Brother of steel*
9	Collection of love notes from a girl to an officer (worth up to 20 gp to a historian)
10	Heavy steel shield hanging on a wall
11	Hidden cache, with last will and testament to an officer for a small manor house down in town
12	Holy symbol (wooden) of the temple of light hidden in a mattress
13	Iron pot
14	Officer's cape (old and dusty under a bed, but regal and salvageable)
15	Old Officer's diary (worth up to 100 gp to a collector)
16	Old officer's portrait (ripped, but repairable and worth up to 50 gp to a historian)
17	Old-style masterwork halberd propped in a corner
18	Sealing wax and signet ring (in small tin box in mattress)
19	Signal whistle
20	Vial of holy water

Three of these rooms are occupied by a Brother of Steel. As soon as one of them is attacked, the other two come out of their chambers and engage the PCs in combat.

✦ **Brothers of Steel:** CR 3; Medium undead; HD 4d12; hp 26; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +2; Grp +8; Atk +8 melee (1d10 +6, bastard sword); Full Atk +8 melee (1d10 +6, bastard sword) or +8 melee (1d6 +6, 2 claws); SA Siphon soul; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., undead traits; AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 22, Dex 14, Con 0, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 7.

Skills: Climb +7, Hide +3, Listen +5, Search +3, Spot +2
Feats: Blind-fighting, Cleave, Exotic weapon proficiency, Improved Initiative, Multiattack.

Siphon Soul (Su): Because the Brothers of Steel were created to hold souls within their bodies, they may siphon the souls of others and use them as energy sources. They must succeed at a touch attack in order to siphon a soul, causing an additional 1d6 temporary Wisdom damage. The Brother of Steel then gains three times the amount of wisdom damage inflicted as bonus hit points (which can exceed the Brother of Steel, original hit points). Any creature drained to 0 Wisdom falls unconscious.

6. Common Barracks

These chambers were once part of the main barracks of the garrison. They are now empty of everything save their rotted furnishings. Every time a PC inspects one of these rooms for the first time, roll on the following table for the contents:

COMMON BARRACK ROOM CONTENTS

1d20	Contents
1–10	Nothing of value, rotten furniture
11	Brothers of Steel (1d3)
12	Dagger
13	Flint and steel
14	Hidden cache of 2d12 gp
15	Old (but still functional) candles
16	Old soldier's tabard (worth 2 gp to collector)
17	Parchment and dried ink
18	Skeletons (2d4)
19	Whetstone
20	Zombies (1d6)

7. Kitchen

This room is foul smelling and covered in gruesome slime and bloody paste. The remains of several half-eaten carcasses lie on the counters, chopped to pieces and gnawed on by the undead. The smell is almost overpowering. To the north, there is a half-open door leading into a dark chamber. There are a number of creatures on the ground, scrabbling at maggots and chunks of bodies and stuffing them into their mouths.

The creatures are ghouls. Disgustingly, three of the corpses (two animal, one human) in this chamber are animate, and attack the PCs in the kitchen. Treat these three undead as half-hp zombies, unarmed and without the Toughness feat. Alternately, simply roll randomly and have one PC entangled in flailing corpse limbs each round.

✦ **Ghoul:** CR 1; Medium undead; HD 2d12 (13 hp); Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d6+1 plus paralysis, bite); Full Atk +2 melee (1d6+1 plus paralysis, bite) and +0 melee (1d3 plus paralysis, 2 claws); SA Ghoul fever, paralysis; Q Darkvision 60 ft., undead traits, +2 turn resistance; AL CE; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 13, Dex 15, Con —, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Balance +6, Climb +5, Hide +6, Jump +5, Move Silently +6, Spot +7; Multiattack.

Ghoul Fever (Su): Disease—bite, Fortitude DC 12, incubation period 1 day, damage 1d3 Con and 1d3 Dex. The save DC is Charisma-based.

An afflicted humanoid who dies of ghoul fever rises as a ghoul at the next midnight. A humanoid who becomes a ghoul in this way retains none of the abilities it possessed in life. It is not under the control of any other ghouls, but it hungers for the flesh of the living and behaves like a normal ghoul in all respects. A humanoid of 4 Hit Dice or more rises as a ghast, not a ghoul.

Paralysis (Ex): Those hit by a ghoul's bite or claw attack must succeed on a DC 12 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 1d4+1 rounds. Elves have immunity to this paralysis. The save DC is Charisma-based.

8. Granary

The door is difficult to push open, and seems to be stuck in the sludge covering the ground. From the smell, you guess this room was a granary of some sort. Inside the granary, bodies lie stacked against the walls. Some are human, some are animal, and some... are indistinguishable parts. There is faint movement deep within the pile, as if some of the corpses are still alive...

One of the corpses is still alive — and it is one of Ulrun's apprentices. The young man is human, badly wounded. If the PCs dig him out of the pile, he thanks them gratefully. Unless the PCs have plenty of curative spells and cure disease, the apprentice dies of his wounds within a few days. The apprentice's name is Medoch, and he tells the PCs about the crypts beneath the garrison and the secret entry in the armory. Medoch explains the Ulrun is not evil, nor were his apprentices. Only one, Jethritch, ever showed any such leanings. Since he stole Ulrun's phylactery and used the magic to ban Ulrun from the fort, Jethritch has been making undead at a phenomenal rate. He uses any corpses he can find, and murdered the other apprentices in order to create undead from their bodies. Jethritch believes he can become a lich if he can only find Ulrun's notes on the subject. Once he has done that, Jethritch will take his growing army and ravage the land.

Medoch is very sick, and cannot go with the PCs. He asks to be left outside in the courtyard, even if they aid him in some way (via the Heal skill or spells for example). Medoch is still loyal to Ulrun, and does anything to help the PCs if he is convinced they genuinely serve his master.

▲ Medoch, human Wiz (necromancer) 1: CR 1; Medium humanoid; HD 1d4+2; hp 6 (currently 0); Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +0; Grp +0; Atk +0 melee (1d4/19–20, dagger); Full Atk +0 melee (1d4/19–20, dagger); SA Spells; SQ Summon familiar; AL NG; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 14 (currently 6), Int 15, Wis 11, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +4, Decipher Script +4, Knowledge (arcana) +4, Knowledge (anatomy) +4, Spellcraft +4; Greater Spell Focus (necromancy), Scribe ScrollB, Spell Focus (necromancy).

Summon familiar: Medoch's familiar, an owl named "Spindle" was killed in his recent battle in the fortress.

Wizard Spells Prepared (3/2; save DC 12 + spell level (save DC 14 + spell level for necromancy spells)): 0—*disrupt undead*, *touch of fatigue*, *read magic*; 1st—*chill touch*, *ray of enfeeblement*.

Spellbook: 0—*detect magic*, *disrupt undead*, *touch of fatigue*, *read magic*; 1st—*cause fear*, *chill touch*, *ray of enfeeblement*.

Possessions: Wizard robes, dagger.

9. Armory

The armory is located at the rear of the garrison, and it is sealed with large oak doors. These doors swing open slowly. Beyond is a large, dark room, twenty by thirty. Where the other hallways of the garrison have had torches or small lanterns, this room is pitch-black, with no windows to break the gloom. Weapons line the walls: rusted hammers, broken swords, rotting wooden bows and other useless arms. They hang silently as if waiting for the troops in the garrison to come and fight again. Once the PCs can see properly, read or paraphrase the following:

Full sets of armor stand in line crating a path through the armory. Figures of rotted leather, half-rusted chain hanging in pieces from wooden mannequins lend the entire chamber an eerie presence. The walls are filled with rusted weapons and armor on hooks. Through the doorway, a soft clanging sound comes from the far side of the room, where a pile of discarded shields and breastplates lie on the ground. It moves slightly, as if something has slipped out from under the pile of rusting metal, and then the room is silent again.

Inside the room are two Shadows. If the PCs do not bring light into the room, the Shadows do not attack them. If the PCs bring a light source, the Shadows attack the PC with the light source, intending to put it out and drive the infidel from their chamber.

One of the armored mannequins (bearing a rotted suit of partial plate) conceals a trap door on the floor beneath it. This trap door is locked (DC 10 to unlock) and trapped with a poison dart.

▲ Poison Dart Trap: CR 3; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; Atk +10 ranged (1d4 plus poison, dart); poison (wyvern poison, DC 17 Fortitude save resists, 2d6/2d6 Con plus 1d3 Wis); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 18.

▲ Shadow: CR 3; Medium undead (incorporeal); HD 3d12 (19 hp); Init +2; Spd Fly 40 ft. (good); AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +1; Grp —; Atk +3 melee (1d6 Str, incorporeal touch); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6 Str, incorporeal touch); SA Create spawn, strength damage; SQ Dark-vision 60 ft., incorporeal traits, +2 turn resistance, undead traits; AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +4; Str —, Dex 14, Con —, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Hide +8*, Listen +7, Search +4, Spot +7; Alertness, Dodge.

Strength Damage (Su): The touch of a shadow deals 1d6 points of Strength damage to a living foe. A creature reduced to Strength 0 by a shadow dies. This is a negative energy effect.

Create Spawn (Su): Any humanoid reduced to Strength 0 by a shadow becomes a shadow under the control of its killer within 1d4 rounds.

Skills: Shadows have a +2 racial bonus on Listen and Spot checks and a +4 racial bonus on Search checks. *A shadow gains a +4 racial bonus on Hide checks in areas of shadowy illumination. In brightly lit areas, it takes a –4 penalty on Hide checks.

Below the trap door is a ladder leading down into a cold darkness. There is one weapon of value in this room — a +1 longsword (named "boneseecker") is hidden beneath the pile of breastplates in the northern corner.

10. The Crypts

The rusted iron ladder leads down into the darkness for nearly a hundred. This chamber has been carved by the passing of water. The walls are irregular, but smooth, and four passages — like dry water canals — lead out of the chamber and into more darkness. Suddenly, echoing from the labyrinth is a whispered, spectral moan.

The chambers deep beneath the garrison were carved long ago by the action of the sea, during a time of high waters. They are now safe from flooding, and have not been invaded by water in a very long time. The ground is sand, and the walls are soft sandstone and lime. The garrison used this area as a burial ground, and several crypts have been dug into the walls of the numerous chambers swelling in the corridors of the labyrinth.

These crypts are flat areas carved deep into the stone, and dead bodies have been placed within the alcove. Some of these bodies are ancient, but others are very recent. These too are some of the bodies stolen from the city of Heathwyck recently, waiting to rise into the ranks of the undead.

One of the larger chambers contains several beds, and seems to have been used as a resting place for Ulrun's four apprentices. The area is now blackened and charred by magic, and blood stains the walls and the floor.

Further, there are four wraiths prowling the chambers below the Garrison, tending to the dead bodies and making eerie sounds echoing through the labyrinth. These wraiths were once guardians, and protectors of the crypts, but their purpose has been perverted by Ansgar's use of the phylactery. If the PCs approach and proclaim they have come in Ulrun's name, the wraiths back away and allow them to pass. However, if the PCs in any way violate the alcove crypts, the wraiths immediately attack.

The wraiths know where Jethritch is located, but cannot resist the will of the phylactery or aid the PCs to find him.

✦ **Wraith:** CR 5; Medium undead (incorporeal); HD 5d12 (32 hp); Init +7; Spd Fly 60 ft. (good); AC 15, touch 15, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +2; Grp —; Atk +5 melee (1d4 plus 1d6 Constitution drain, incorporeal touch); Full Atk +5 melee (1d4 plus 1d6 Constitution drain, incorporeal touch); SA Constitution drain, create spawn; SQ Dark-vision 60 ft., daylight powerlessness, incorporeal traits, +2 turn resistance, undead traits, unnatural aura; AL LE; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +6; Str —, Dex 16, Con —, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Diplomacy +6, Hide +11, Intimidate +10, Listen +12, Search +10, Sense Motive +8, Spot +12, Survival +2 (+4 following tracks); AlertnessB, Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Improved InitiativeB.

Unnatural Aura (Su): Animals, whether wild or domesticated, can sense the unnatural presence of a wraith at a distance of 30 . They do not willingly approach nearer than that and panic if forced to do so; they remain panicked as long as they are within that range.

Daylight Powerlessness (Ex): Wraiths are utterly powerless in natural sunlight (not merely a daylight spell) and flee from it.

Constitution Drain (Su): Living creatures hit by a wraith's incorporeal touch attack must succeed on a DC 14 Fortitude save or take 1d6 points of Constitution drain. The save DC is Charisma-based. On each such successful attack, the wraith gains 5 temporary hit points.

Create Spawn (Su): Any humanoid slain by a wraith becomes a wraith in 1d4 rounds. Its body remains intact and inanimate, but its spirit is torn free from its corpse and transformed. Spawn are under the command of the wraith that created them and remain enslaved until its death. They do not possess any of the abilities they had in life.

robes) are lying on tables around the room. A smaller chamber is connected to this, to the south-west. It has been converted into a library, and books line the room from floor to ceiling, protected by large glass cabinets.

Several of the caskets shudder and open, and the creatures inside open unliving eyes. They step out, prepared to defend their Master's Laboratory, and a disembodied voice whispers, "Attack, Brothers of Steel. Destroy those who threaten the mighty Ansgar, and I shall make servants of their bones!"

The dead bodies once belonged to Ulrun's other apprentices, but Jethritch tortured them all to death while trying to discover all of Ulrun's hidden secrets.

The creatures in the caskets are Brothers of Steel, powerful undead created by Ulrun but now controlled by Jethritch. Jethritch is currently in room #12 (The Vault) and has seen the PCs through a peephole. He allows the PCs to fight the Brothers of Steel, using his spells from a distance to help the undead. If the PCs win, Jethritch immediately commands the nearby wraiths to attack them, and the PCs become engaged in another battle.



11. Library and Laboratory

This large chamber within the maze of passages opens out before you into darkness. Torchlight gleams from glass panes and stone tables. Numerous bottles, books, mechanisms and other signs of an alchemical laboratory lie strewn about. This appears to have been where Ulrun did his research. Ten large wooden cabinets — caskets? — lean against the wall around the room. A man's body, wearing the robes of an apprentice, has been nailed to the wall in gruesome death, and other corpses (also wearing



While the PCs are engaged in fighting the wraiths, Jethritch escapes with the phylactery out the crypt tunnels toward the sea. (See room #12 for a full description of Jethritch.)

If the PCs take the time to study Ulrún's experiments and read through his texts and notes, they discover the true purpose of his work: to find a way to use science to restore the dead to life. He is not creating undead, but trying to find a way to restore them. The Brothers of Steel are one of his successful experiments — they have the capacities and function of a living man, but no emotion. Ansgar, who had no such moral qualms, stole the bodies of the Heathwyck residents. He intended to create an army and

raze the town, turning the rest of the peasantry into fighting undead and sweeping out from there. Ulrún suspected Jethritch of being evil, but hoped he could overcome the young mage's moral indiscretions.

Treasure: The jars, beakers, and expensive lab equipment in here could be collected and sold for up to 5,000 gp if the PCs invested great time to such a task.

✦ **Brothers of Steel:** CR 3; Medium undead; HD 4d12; hp 26; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +2; Grp +8; Atk +8 melee (1d10 +6, bastard sword); Full Atk +8 melee (1d10 +6, bastard sword) or +8 melee (1d6 +6, 2 claws); SA Siphon soul; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., undead traits; AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 22, Dex 14, Con 0, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 7.

Skills: Climb +7, Hide +3, Listen +5, Search +3, Spot +2
Feats: Blind-fighting, Cleave, Exotic weapon proficiency, Improved Initiative, Multiattack.

Siphon Soul (Su): Because the Brothers of Steel were created to hold souls within their bodies, they may siphon the souls of others and use them as energy sources. They must succeed at a touch attack in order to siphon a soul, causing an additional 1d6 temporary Wisdom damage. The Brother of Steel then gains three times the amount of wisdom damage inflicted as bonus hit points (which can exceed the Brother of Steel, original hit points). Any creature drained to 0 Wisdom falls unconscious.

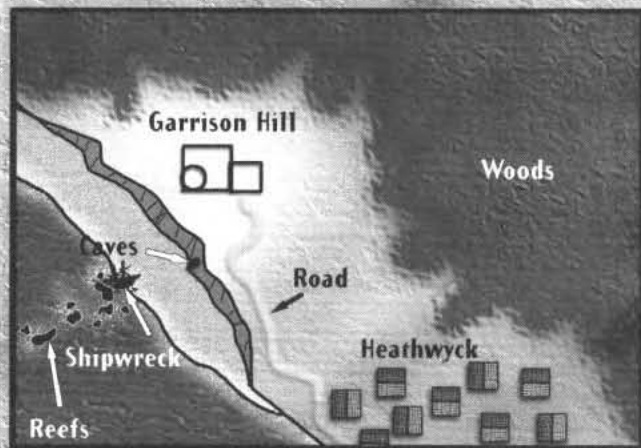
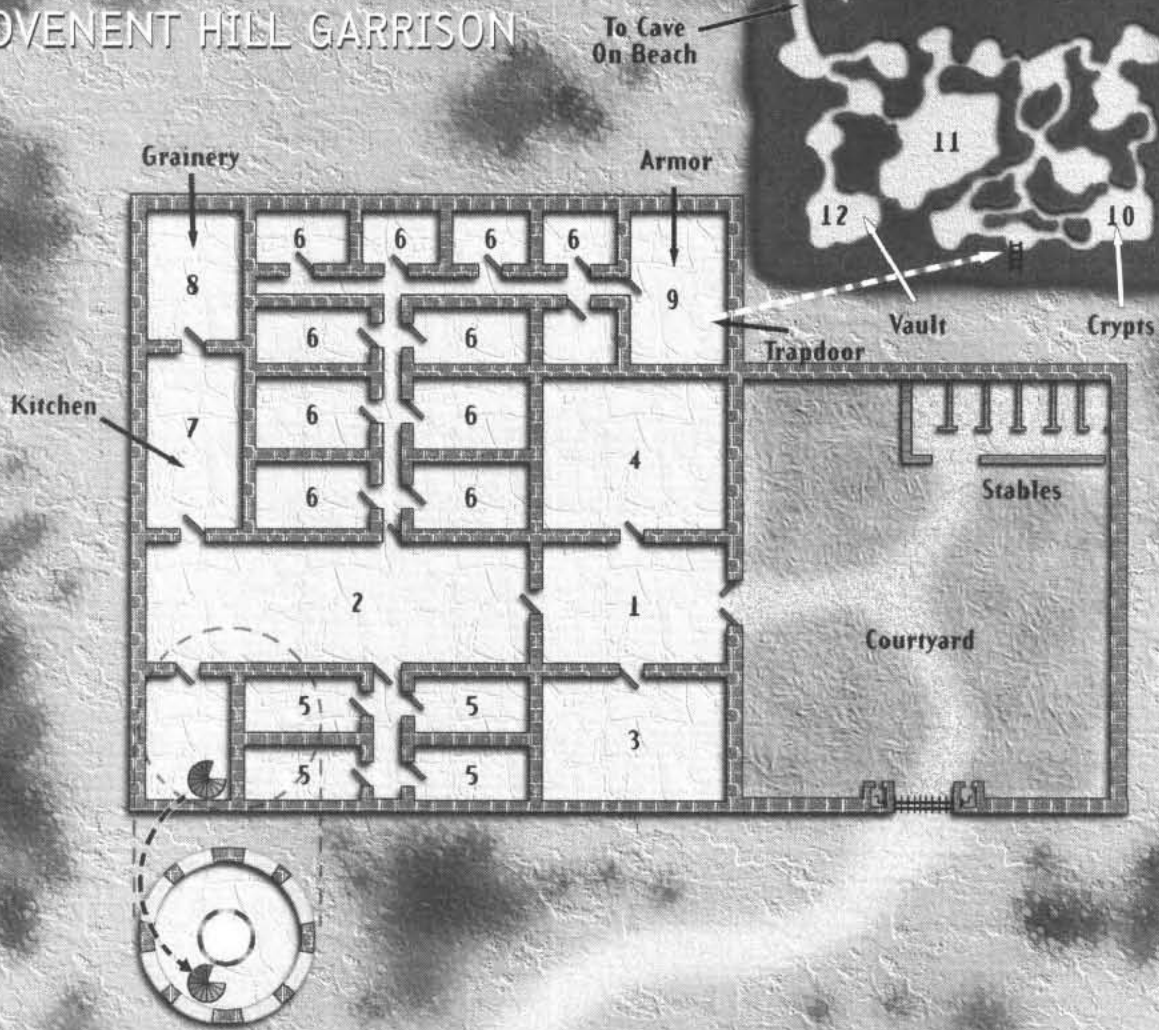
12. The Vault

The room at the end of the secret passage is a personal chamber, with a large bed, several reading tables, and research books neatly placed in shelves along the upper walls. It seems to be Ulrún's private rooms, though no trace of his undead nature can be gleaned simply by looking at the chambers.

These are Ulrún's chambers, but he is not here, more likely Jethritch is. Jethritch is thoroughly evil, and does anything he can to destroy the PCs. If he is here, Jethritch is hiding behind one of the large tapestries, and attacks the party if they continue into the room. He is hoping they do not see him, and then leave to search elsewhere — allowing him the opportunity to escape. A Spot check (DC 12) locates Jethritch. If found, Jethritch fights to the death. He is not afraid of death, and is more frightened of what will happen to him if he is given to Ulrún. He is decked out in black robes with golden runes of undeath sewed into the edges, an iron skull-crown is atop his head, in his own preparation for his coming (demented) coronation. His long, black hair is greasy and unkempt, a deceiving gentle calm lies within his black eyes. Jethritch has a zombie hound hiding under the large golden bed.

COVENENT HILL

COVENENT HILL GARRISON



▲Jethritch, Human Wiz (necromancer) 8: CR 8; Medium humanoid; HD 8d4+16; hp 36; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +4; Grp +4; Atk +6 melee (1d4+2/19–20, dagger); Full Atk +6 melee (1d4+2/19–20, dagger); SA Spells; SQ Summon Familiar; AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +7; Str 11, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 18, Wis 12, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +13, Craft (alchemy) +15, Decipher Script +15, Heal +6, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Knowledge (anatomy) +15, Listen +8 Spellcraft +15; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wondrous Item, Craft Construct, Greater Spell Focus (necromancy), Spell Focus (necromancy).

Summon Familiar: Jethritch has a bat familiar named "Dessloc".

🦇Dessloc, Bat familiar: CR 1/10; Diminutive Animal; HD 8d8; hp 18; Init +2; Spd 5 ft. (1 square), fly 40 ft. (good); AC 20, touch 16, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +6; Grp –17; Atk —; Full Atk —; SA —; SQ Alertness, blindsense 20 ft., deliver touch spells, empathic link, improved evasion, low-light vision, share spells, speak with master, speak with animals of its kind; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +7; Str 1, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 9, Wis 14, Cha 4.

Skills and Feats: Hide +14, Listen +8*, Move Silently +6, Spot +8*, Alertness.

Blindsense (Ex): A bat notices and locates creatures within 20 . Opponents still have 100% concealment against a creature with blindsense.

Skills: *A bat has a +4 racial bonus on Spot and Listen checks. These bonuses are lost if its blindsense is negated.

Wizard Spells Prepared (4/5/4/4/3; save DC 14 + spell level (DC 16 + spell level for necromancy spells)): 0—*detect magic, disrupt undead, touch of fatigue, ray of frost*; 1st—*burning hands, cause fear, mage armor, magic missile, ray of enfeeblement*; 2nd—*false life, ghoul touch, scare, spectral hand*; 3rd—*gentle repose, halt undead, ray of exhaustion, vampiric touch*; 4th—*contagion, enervation, fear*.

Spellbook: 0—*detect magic, detect poison, disrupt undead, touch of fatigue, ray of frost, read magic*; 1st—*burning hands, cause fear, chill touch, magic missile, ray of enfeeblement*; 2nd—*arcane lock, false life, ghoul touch, scare, see invisibility, spectral hand*; 3rd—*dispel magic, gentle repose, halt undead, nondetection, ray of exhaustion, vampiric touch*; 4th—*arcane eye, contagion, enervation, fear*.

Possessions: Bracers of armor +2, ring of protection +2, +2 dagger (named "femur").

🧟Zombie Hound: CR 2; Large undead; HD 5d12+3; hp 32 each; Init +1; Spd 50 ft.; AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +3; Grp +9; Atk +9 melee (1d8+6, bite); Full Atk +9 melee (1d8+6, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA—; SQ Single actions only; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 23, Dex 13, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: Toughness.

Single Actions Only (Ex): Zombies have poor reflexes and can perform only a single move action or attack action each round. A zombie can move up to its speed and attack in the same round, but only if it attempts a charge.

Note: As long as Jethritch has the phylactery, his personal hound cannot be turned.

Treasure: Jethritch does have Ulrun's phylactery (it appears as a large emerald on a silver chain, hanging around Jethritch's neck), but will not give it up. He must be killed in order for the PCs to retrieve it. (For more information on Ulrun's phylactery, see Appendix A). There are at least 2,000 gp worth of precious items scattered about in this room, mostly in the form of Ulrun's personal items and rare books on necromancy and potion making.

EPILOGUE

Once the PCs have Ulrun's phylactery, they must decide what to do with it. Outside the crypts is a passage leading down to the wrecked ship. Ulrun is waiting there, hoping the PCs bring him the phylactery. The Templar Johannis waits near Heathwyck, and can be seen in the distance standing in the radiance of a continual flame spell on the pier. The PCs are entirely on their own to decide what to do.

If they do decide to return it to Ulrun, he rewards the PCs with one minor magic item each from his storehouse deep in the ocean. As these items are those lost in shipwrecks or sunken ships, the items may not be exactly as the PC requests, but Ulrun tries to reward them well. He then returns all of the bodies stolen from Heathwyck.

If the PCs return the phylactery to Johannis and the Temple of Light, the city of Heathwyck rejoices and holds a festival in the honor of the PCs. Then, the next morning, the peasant militia storms Covenant Hill, burning and destroying it, and also attacking Ulrun. They drive the Lich into the ocean. The PCs become heroes (although many of the peasantry die in the attack), and Heathwyck reveres their names for generations.

In either case, the side the PCs did not choose swears eternal hatred toward the PCs. If the PCs keep the phylactery for themselves or do something unforeseen with it, both sides swear enmity toward the PCs.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

- The temple of light takes themselves very seriously because one of their higher defenders has ascended to rule the land, but this may be too much of a 'good' thing (see the adventure "Fall From Grace").
- The lich on the hill turns out to not be a threat to the city afterall, as the PCs uncover during the adventure. The real threat is the blue dragon who resides within the city itself under an ancient disguise, and this adventure draws his attention to the PCs (see the adventure "In Cold Blood").

Chapter 23:

The Flesh is Weak

Levels 6 to 8

by Travis Heermann

Not long ago, Alstand was a prosperous town, bustling with activity. Now, its streets are all but empty. Uneasy faces with hollow eyes peer through cracks in shuttered windows. Animals grow skittish in the narrow streets.

The few passersby warn the town's residents are disappearing, one by one. Friends and neighbors vanish from their homes. The terrified townspeople whisper of ghastly noises coming from Watchman's Hill. Something is moving among the grim, dark stones of the old cemetery, which has stood still for a century.

The adventurers' horses shy away from the small figure darting from the darkness of a half-open cottage door, an unkempt conglomeration of gaunt, dirty faced, rumpled, unwashed clothes, and staring, blood-shot eyes. "Please! Can you help me?" He is a ten-year old boy, and his terrified gaze flicks about in all directions, completely alarmed "Please! Something has taken my mother and father!"

DM BACKGROUND

This adventure is designed for four to six PCs of levels 6 to 8. One or more clerics and the ability to counteract level drains makes this adventure much more survivable for an adventuring party. The DM may wish to find some good dark music to play as background to this adventure to emphasize the 'horror movie' aspects of the scenario.

Three hundred years ago, a man named Lord Alstand founded a town with his namesake. He was an aged sorcerer, merely interested in a quiet life devoted to study. Lord Alstand was terrified of growing old and the older he grew, the stronger his obsession became: he sought the keys to eternal life. He managed to obtain a legendary artifact called the rod of eternal life (see Appendix A), intending to use it to remain young forever. However, the power of the rod came with a terrible price: the possessor was forced to kill another and trap their life force into the rod at least once every 50 years.

Another perilous side effect of the rod resulted in the victims becoming blood wraiths, dangerous undead creatures trapped between the incorporeal world of wraiths and the ever-hungry world of vampires. A blood wraith is not favorably disposed to the person who originally killed them, but whoever holds the rod in his hand can control them.

To Lord Alstand's detriment, his first victim was his butler, Gascar. Lord Alstand mistakenly killed his trusted assistant when first learning to use the rod. When the blood wraith, formerly Gascar, first appeared, Lord Alstand discarded the rod in shame and guilt, not knowing the rod could control the blood wraith. The aging

sorcerer knew the terrible fate of those killed by the undead and he cut his own throat before the wraith could kill him.

The blood wraith wreaked havoc on the town, until the local cleric found the rod and learned to control the blood wraith. The cleric held the blood wraith at bay for days while the townspeople hastily constructed a crypt to house the dead Lord Alstand and trap the wraith. When the crypt was completed, the cleric forced the blood wraith into the crypt, sealing it with holy wards, guards, symbols and glyphs, hoping none would ever be foolish enough to break the seals.

In time, the events of the town's early days were forgotten, lost to disinterested generations. However, there is one who remembers, an old elf woman called Shee'netha. She was but a young maiden in those days.

A few months ago, a stranger came to town looking for information about the rod of eternal life. He had heard tales of an item allowing one to live forever. No one knew what the stranger was talking about, since it had been locked within Lord Alstand's crypt, forgotten, for over three hundred years. But the stranger was determined.

The last time anyone saw the stranger, he was headed to Watchman's Hill with a shovel and a pickaxe. He unwittingly broke the seals on Lord Alstand's crypt and released the blood wraith. The blood wraith, ravenous after centuries of confinement, immediately slew the would-be grave robber. Free from his imprisonment, the blood wraith seeks vengeance against the town — to consume the blood and souls of the descendants of those who trapped him. Once sated, it leads a sizeable army of wights against the barony and perhaps the kingdom.

BARDIC LORE

A bard can make a Bardic Knowledge check to discover what he may have heard. A bard learns all the information of the DC his check succeeded by and all that below it (a Bard who rolled a 17 would learn the information under DC 15 and DC 10). Alternately this information can be gained by a Gather Information skill check +5 higher than the DC of a Bardic Lore check to see if the PC has heard any rumors.

- DC 10** The town of Alstand is named after its founder, Lord Alstand, a talented sorcerer.
- DC 15** Watchman's Hill is said to be haunted.
- DC 20** There is an elf woman in town who has been alive since the town was founded.
- DC 25** Lord Alstand sought the secret to eternal life and some say he found it but he died under tragic circumstances.

THE TOWN OF ALSTAND

Alstand is small town of about 500 people, mainly humans. Many of the town's details like wealth, government, racial distribution, and principal trade goods are left to the DM's discretion. The PCs might arrive here while on the way to somewhere else, unaware of the evil afoot until they blunder into it. Or perhaps they have heard tales from a passing traveler about a town in dire need of help. Or perhaps one of the townspeople has left his home in search of hardy adventurers to save the town from the evil festering on Watchman's Hill.

On the maps of Alstand and Watchman's Hill, each of the topographic lines encompassing Watchman's Hill represents a change in elevation of 10 ft. Therefore; the top of the hill rests at an elevation of 100 ft. above the town itself.

The mood of this adventure is one of a classic horror movie. The best time of year to stage this adventure in your campaign is mid-autumn and the descriptions are written with this in mind. Lavish your descriptions of the town and countryside with dark skies, moaning winds, and wispy, low-hanging fog in the early morning and late evening. The PCs should be pulling their cloaks around them a little bit tighter before they even reach the town. At various intervals, dark shadows and mysterious noises just out of sight should plague them during this adventure.

The landscape is characterized mostly by rolling grasslands, low hills and scattered groves of trees. The trees dropped their leaves, and now stand gnarled and naked against the chill of coming winter. A stiff wind drives tumbling waves of clouds across the sky and rustling swarms of desiccated leaves across the ground. The road meanders through shallow valleys and low hills. The scream of a hawk drifts down as it floats upon the invisible currents of air, hovering almost motionless. In the distance, just visible over the surrounding landscape is a tall, rounded hill. The crumbling remains of what was once a stone watchtower sits like a grim sentinel atop the rocky hill. Below, a small town huddles in the valley.

Regardless of the time of day, from a distance the PCs see no activity. The windows are dark. The streets and surrounding fields are empty. The road carries no traffic except the PCs. The descriptions and events below assume the PCs approach the town between dawn and dusk. Approaching at night is far more dangerous (see below, Alstand by Night).

When the PC's are within about a quarter mile of the hill, read the following:

The crumbling watchtower is not alone atop the hill. Numerous dark stone shapes jut from the rounded crest in haphazard order, encircled by a tall iron fence. Short, squat stones, tall, standing stones, low-built tombs blockish, gray mausoleums all populate the hill. A cemetery stands dark and morose on the rocky heath.

When the PC's reach the outskirts of town, read the following:

The road passes straight through the middle of Alstand, hemmed on both sides by two-story wood and stone shops, with the homes of the proprietors above. The only sounds are the mournful moans of the wind in the alleys and streets and the creaks of the shop signs at the wind's caress.

As the PC's move into town, successful Spot checks (DC 15) glimpse 1d6 individual townspeople hurrying through the streets. Any of the townspeople caught in the open speak quickly and rush to shelter. They heartily recommend the strangers do the same. Further Spot checks (DC 15) reveal the PC's are being watched, through cracks in tightly shuttered windows or doors.

Suddenly the door of a nearby cottage flies open and a small figure rushes out. His hair is unkempt and greasy. From behind a dirt smeared, his blood-shot eyes stare. "Please! Can you help me?" the ten-year old boy pleads. His terrified gaze flicks in all directions. "Please! My name is Johfig. Something took my mother and father last night! You must help me."

A Sense Motive check (DC 10) reveals he is terrified, tired, and hungry. He appears to have not slept at all, and if the PC's ask, he confirms this. If it appears they might help, he clings to them as his mortal saviors.

If the PC's ask Johfig what happened here, read the following:

"About 10 days ago, Father came home from the tavern. He told a scary story about Imish and his parents. They disappeared right out of their house! They were the first ones! People disappear every night! Last night... last night... something... came and took them away! I could hear them. Whatever it was, it smelled awful, and I heard ... I heard Mother scream. She dropped a plate, I think. Father yelled for help, but then he stopped. I... I was so ... I hid in my room. I couldn't do anything!" He sobs uncontrollably. "I couldn't stop them!"

Johfig does not know what took his parents away. He could not bring himself to look.

What is happening in Alstand?

Every night, the blood wraith and his growing army of wights descend from Watchman's Hill and break into homes and shops. The blood wraith feeds on the souls of the townspeople and the slain become wights under the

blood wraith's control. He savors the terror almost as much as he enjoys the blood. He also knows if he attacks in full force, he will likely frighten them all away, leaving him with no sustenance and no more potential followers. He attacks while his victims sleep, moving through walls and ceilings. The dead then rise as wights and follow him into the night.

As the townspeople from the edges disappeared first, the people living nearer the center of town grew ever more afraid. Many have left their homes to stay with relatives closer to the center of town. The town is collapsing on itself from fear. The people huddle closer and closer together as their numbers dwindle.

Soon after the disappearances began, several members of the town militia, accompanied by the local cleric, took their weapons and investigated the old cemetery. None of them returned. None have the courage to find out what happened.

After the PC's make inquiries, they may believe a vampire is involved. Allow them to think so. Encourage it.

I. Dekis' Place

Dekis' Place is one of two inns in town. Inside, the fires are burned out. Food is left half-prepared or half-eaten. There is no evidence of a struggle.

In four of the guestrooms, bedcovers are strewn across the floor. The innkeeper, Dekis, and his family disappeared last night, along with four guests. Scrounging PC's may discover something on the following table, at the DM's discretion.

Inn Looting Table

1d20	Loot
1	Backpack
2	Bedroll
3	Candle
4	Clay tankard
5	Commoner's outfit
6	Dagger
7	Eating utensils
8	Leather boots
9	Pair earrings (worth 4 gp)
10	Rope, 50 ft.
11	Signet ring
12	Small sack with 4gp
13	Small wooden hand mirror
14	Soap
15	Sword scabbard
16	Thief's tools
17	Vial of holy water
18	Walking stick
19	Waterskin
20	Winter cloak

2. The Old Flagon Inn

Many of the townspeople have gathered here for protection and support. Some of the younger men gather their courage, acting out their hostility through drinking or boasting, but the hopeless looks in their neighbor's eyes deflates them. The PCs may be able to recruit 2d10 1st level Commoners to help them here. All of the townspeople with any martial skills once part of the militia are all gone now.

A Spot check (DC 20) reveals one man looks as if he has been drinking since dawn. He is Molich, the town cobbler. He grows increasingly agitated if there is any talk about what happening in the town. At some point, Molich is unable to restrain himself and launches into a drunken tirade, his eyes wild and his voice slightly unhinged.

"You all ain't seen what I seen! You're all dead! But it ain't the end. No! I know! Because I seen Dekis last night! I heard something over at Dekis' last night. I... weren't sleeping. I peeked out the window, and I seen Dekis comin' out! Only it wasn't Dekis no more! He was... his skin was all white, and his eyes were red. And... and he looked right at me! There was no way he coulda seen me, but he did!" He shudders visibly and downs his drink, desperately gulping at every drop. "Then he smiled... walked down the street. He was headed straight up to Watchman's Hill! Only the dead have business up there!"

Molich drinks some more. If the PCs ask him to explain himself, he isn't much help. He merely repeats the same information in a different order.

▲ Peasant, Human Com 1: CR 1/2; Medium humanoid; HD 1d4; hp 3; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +0/+1; Full Atk +1 melee (1d3+1, unarmed); AL NG; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 9, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Craft (any) +6, Ride +3, Swim +2; Great Fortitude, Skill Focus (craft).

3. Shee'netha, Town Healer

The unofficial town matriarch is a venerable elf woman named Shee'netha. Her cottage lies somewhat off the center of town. Before long, she becomes a victim to the blood wraith's insatiable hunger.

She has been here as long as the town has existed, and she is the only person who knows the truth about what happened. When she was a delicate elf maiden at the tender age of 95, she fell in love with a dashing human ranger named Janis. He was a retainer of the human sorcerer known as Alstand. She left her own people to join Alstand's company and to be near Janis. In Alstand's company, her skills as a bard increased. When he retired from adventuring life, Alstand founded the town.

Shee'netha and Janis followed him here, married and started a family. Almost 300 years have passed. Janis died when Shee'netha was little more than a girl and as yet she still mourns him. Her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren are all dead. Five generations of her descendants have come and gone. It is well known over a hundred of the town's residents are her direct descendants.

Because of Shee'netha's great age, she seems a morose and distant figure to the short-lived humans. Their reverence for her borders on worship. Consequently, no one ever talks to her, so she welcomes any chance for normal conversation. She is partially unaware of the severity of the problem and is only beginning to suspect what is happening. If anyone bothers to tell her the whole story, the truth comes in a flash of insight.

She remembers well the events bringing the blood wraith into existence, and how it was imprisoned in Alstand's tomb. However, few have spoken to Shee'netha of the events, keeping her sequestered from the facts. Those horrible events are not something she wished to speak about before, but she understands the severity of the cause now. She has not left her house since the trouble began, believing herself too old and weak to be of much use against the blood wraith.

She is the only one in town who knows the secret of the rod of eternal life. She is terrified of its power. Her friend Amil, another of Lord Alstand's retainers, was the cleric who sacrificed himself to imprison the blood wraith so many years ago. He took the rod with him into the tomb, forcing the blood wraith to remain still until the tomb was sealed. She shudders to think of her old friend sealed in the dark, alone with the blood wraith, waiting for the end. She does not know how he died, but she thinks he inevitably passed out from exhaustion. And then the blood wraith took him.

Use Shee'netha in the story as you see fit — perhaps as a source of information or a gentle hand skilled at healing. She does not actively join the PCs, but she defends herself as best she can.

▲ Shee'netha, Elf Brd 6: CR 6; Medium humanoid; HD 6d6; hp 22; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +4; Grp +4; Atk +6 melee (1d4+2/19–20, dagger) or +7 ranged (1d4+2/19–20, dagger); Full Atk +6 melee (1d4+2/19–20, dagger) or +7 ranged (1d4+2/19–20, dagger); SA Spells; SQ Bardic music, bardic knowledge, countersong, fascinate, inspire competence, inspire courage +1, suggestion; AL LG; SV Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +8; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 17, Cha 19.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +8, Climb +5, Concentration +9, Craft (woodcarving) +10, Decipher Script +12, Diplomacy +9, Gather Information +9, Heal +10, Knowledge (local) +12, Listen +8, Move Silently +6, Perform +13, Sense Motive +9, Spellcraft +8; Leadership (Shee'netha has a 4th level cohort named Ruland and 5 first level villagers); Negotiator, Skill Focus (heal).

Bardic Knowledge: A bard may make a special bardic knowledge check with a bonus equal to his bard level + his Intelligence modifier to see whether he knows some relevant

information about local notable people, legendary items, or noteworthy places. (If the bard has 5 or more ranks in Knowledge (history), he gains a +2 bonus on this check.)

A successful bardic knowledge check will not reveal the powers of a magic item but may give a hint as to its general function. A bard may not take 10 or take 20 on this check; this sort of knowledge is essentially random.

Bardic Music: Six times per day, Shee'netha can use her song or poetics to produce magical effects on those around her (usually including herself, if desired).

Countersong (Su): Shee'netha can use her music or poetics to counter magical effects that depend on sound (but not spells that simply have verbal components). Each round of the countersong, she makes a Perform check. Any creature within 30 ft. of the bard (including the bard herself) that is affected by a sonic or language-dependent magical attack may use the bard's Perform check result in place of its saving throw if, after the saving throw is rolled, the Perform check result proves to be higher. If a creature within range of the countersong is already under the effect of a non instantaneous sonic or language-dependent magical attack, it gains another saving throw against the effect each round it hears the countersong, but it must use the bard's Perform check result for the save. Countersong has no effect against effects that don't allow saves. The bard may keep up the countersong for 10 rounds.

Fascinate (Sp): Shee'netha can use her music or poetics to cause one or more creatures to become fascinated with her. Each creature to be fascinated must be within 90 ft., able to see and hear her, and able to pay attention to her. Shee'netha must also be able to see the creature. The distraction of a nearby combat or other dangers prevents the ability from working. She can target up to two creature with a single use of this ability.

To use the ability, Shee'netha makes a Perform check. Her check result is the DC for each affected creature's Will save against the effect. If a creature's saving throw succeeds, Shee'netha cannot attempt to fascinate that creature again for 24 hours. If its saving throw fails, the creature sits quietly and listens to the song, taking no other actions, for as long as she continues to play and concentrate (up to 6 rounds). While fascinated, a target takes a -4 penalty on skill checks made as reactions, such as Listen and Spot checks. Any potential threat requires Shee'netha to make another Perform check and allows the creature a new saving throw against a DC equal to the new Perform check result.

Any obvious threat, such as someone drawing a weapon, casting a spell, or aiming a ranged weapon at the target, automatically breaks the effect. Fascinate is an enchantment (compulsion), mind-affecting ability.

Inspire Courage (Su): Shee'netha can use song or poetics to inspire courage in her allies (including herself). To be affected, an ally must be able to hear her sing. The effect lasts for as long as the ally hears her sing and for 5 rounds thereafter. An affected ally receives a +1 morale bonus on saving throws against charm and fear effects and a +1 morale bonus on attack and weapon damage rolls. Inspire courage is a mind-affecting ability.

Inspire Competence (Su): Shee'netha can use her music or poetics to help an ally succeed at a task. The ally must be within 30 ft. and able to see and hear her. She must also be able to see the ally.

The ally gets a +2 competence bonus on skill checks with a particular skill as long as he or she continues to hear Shee'netha's music. Certain uses of this ability are infeasible. The effect lasts as long as Shee'netha concentrates, up to a maximum of 2 minutes. Shee'netha can't inspire competence in herself. Inspire competence is a mind-affecting ability.

Suggestion (Sp): Shee'netha can make a suggestion (as the spell) to a creature that she has already fascinated (see above). Using this ability does not break her concentration on the fascinate effect, nor does it allow a second saving throw against the fascinate effect.

Making a suggestion doesn't count against Shee'netha's daily limit on bardic music performances. A Will saving throw (DC 17) negates the effect. This ability affects only a single creature (but see mass suggestion, below). Suggestion is an enchantment (compulsion), mind-affecting, language dependent ability.

Bard Spells Known: (6/5/4; save DC 14 + spell level): 0—Detect Magic, Lullaby, Mage Hand, Mending, Message, Resistance; 1st—Alarm, Cure Light Wounds, Invisible Servant, Remove Fear; 2nd—Locate Object, Suggestion.

Possessions: Studded leather armor, ring of protection +2, two +2 cold iron daggers (named "moon" and "star" respectively), 2 potions of cure light wounds, potion of cat's grace, elven robes.

▲ **Tallia (Shee'netha's cohort), Human Rog 4:** CR 4; Medium humanoid; HD 4d6; hp 19; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +3; Grp +4; Atk +5 melee (1d6+2/19–20, short sword) or +5 ranged (1d4+1/19–20, dagger); Full Atk +5 melee (1d6+2/19–20, short sword) or +5 ranged (1d4+1/19–20, dagger); SA sneak attack +21d6; SQ evasion, trapfinding, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +6, Climb +8, Hide +7, Listen +6, Move Silently +7, Open Lock +7, Sleight of Hand +5, Spot +4; Dodge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will.

Evasion (Ex): If this Tallia makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, she instead takes no damage.

Sneak Attack: Tallia's attacks deal an extra 2d6 damage any time a target would be denied a Dexterity bonus to AC (whether the target actually has a Dexterity bonus or not), or when she flanks a target. Should she score a critical hit with a sneak attack, this extra damage is not multiplied. Ranged attacks can count as sneak attacks only if the target is within 30 ft.

Trapfinding: Tallia can use the Search skill to locate traps when the task has a Difficulty Class higher than 20.

Trap Sense (Ex): Tallia gains an intuitive sense that alerts her to danger from traps, giving her a +1 bonus on Reflex saves made to avoid traps and a +1 dodge bonus to AC against attacks made by traps.

Uncanny Dodge (Ex): Tallia retains her Dexterity bonus to AC (if any) even if she is caught flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker. However, she still loses her Dexterity bonus to AC if immobilized.

Possessions: Studded leather armor, +1 short sword, two silver daggers.

▲ **Jeliah, Dremon, Coris, Belnath, Trestin (Shee'netha's followers), Human Com1:** CR ½; Medium humanoid; HD 1d4+1; hp 4 each; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +1; Full Atk +1 melee (1d3+1, unarmed); AL NG; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 9, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Craft (alchemy, bow making, leatherworking, sculpting, and weaponsmithing, respectively) +6, Ride +3, Swim +2; Great Fortitude, Skill Focus (craft).

4. Town Well

The town draws all of its water from three wells located in various parts of town. Each is over 100 ft. deep and houses a bucket and pulley system on top.

5. Empty Houses

All of the empty houses reveal the same information. Spot checks (DC 15) indicate no signs of struggles —

no broken doors or windows, no broken furniture, and no spilled blood. The only things out of place are bedcovers lying on the floor, cast aside, unwashed dishes and half-eaten meals.

6. New Cemetery

This graveyard is relatively new. There are no graves that have been here over fifty years. The PCs may be tempted to explore this cemetery, but there is nothing here relating to current events. However, leading PCs to believe otherwise is acceptable.

7. Ruined Watchtower

All remaining of the watchtower are three stone walls reaching thirty ft. high. The interior structure and side building have collapsed into rubble, except for a five-ft. wide section of the third floor. It can only be reached with a successful Climb check (DC 20).

8. The Old Cemetery.

See Watchman's Hill below.

ALSTAND BY NIGHT

Not long after the sun sets, the undead begin to prowl. The growing army of wights shambles down from Watchman's Hill to do the bidding of the blood wraith. From one-half hour after sunset to one-half hour before sunrise, there is a 75% chance every half-hour anyone outside encounters 2d4 wights. If any of the townspeople encounter these wights, there is an 80% chance they recognize one or more of the wights as a friend or relative who has recently disappeared. The wights are intelligent enough to use this to their advantage and, while their victim hesitates, capture him for the blood wraith.

In addition to encountering wights, there is a 5% chance every half-hour anyone outside encounters the blood wraith. The blood wraith does not attack an armed and prepared party unless the odds are in its favor. If attacked in the open without any wights for protection, it flees.

Wight: CR 3; Medium undead; HD 4d12; hp 26 hp; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +2; Grp +3; Atk +3 melee (1d4+1 plus energy drain, slam); Full Atk +3 melee (1d4+1 plus energy drain, slam); SA Create spawn, energy drain; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., undead traits; AL LE; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 12, Dex 12, Con —, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Hide +8, Listen +7, Move Silently +16, Spot +7; Alertness, Blind-Fight.

Create Spawn (Su): Any humanoid slain by a wight becomes a wight in 1d4 rounds. Spawn are under the command of the wight that created them and remain enslaved until its death. They do not possess any of the abilities they had in life.

Energy Drain (Su): Living creatures hit by a wight's slam attack gain one negative level. The DC is 14 for the Fortitude

save to remove a negative level. The save DC is Charisma-based. For each such negative level bestowed, the wight gains 5 temporary hit points.

Skills: Wights have a +8 racial bonus on Move Silently checks.

Blood Wraith: CR 8; Medium undead (incorporeal); HD 6d12; hp 39; Init +7; Spd 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (good); AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +6; Grp +6; Atk +6 melee (1d4 plus special, incorporeal touch); Full Atk +6 melee (1d4 plus special, incorporeal touch); SA Blood Drain, energy drain, create spawn; SQ +2 Turn resistance, daylight powerlessness, fast healing, incorporeal traits, undead traits, unnatural aura; AL LE; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +7; Str —, Dex 16, Con —, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Hide +14 (see below), Intimidate +10, Intuit Direction +6, Listen +12, Search +10, Sense Motive +8, Spot +12; Alertness, Blind Fight, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative

Blood Drain (Su): Living creatures struck by a blood wraith's incorporeal touch must succeed at a Fort save (DC 15) or suffer 1d4 permanent points of Constitution Drain. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Energy Drain (Su): Living creatures struck by a blood wraith's incorporeal touch must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 15) or suffer 1 negative level. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Create Spawn (Su): Any humanoid slain by a blood wraith becomes a wight in 1d4 hours. Spawn are under the command of the wraith who created them and remain enslaved until its death. They do not possess any of the abilities they had in life.

Unnatural Aura (Su): Animals can sense the unnatural presence of a blood wraith at a distance of 30 ft.

Fast Healing: Each time a blood wraith drains Constitution or levels, it heals 5 points of damage. It cannot exceed its starting hit points in this manner.

Daylight Powerlessness (Ex): Blood wraiths are utterly powerless in sunlight (not merely a daylight spell) and flee from it.

Skills: Blood wraith receive a +2 circumstance bonus to hide checks unless they have fed in the last hour.

WATCHMAN'S HILL

The crest of wind-swept Watchman's Hill looms like a kneeling giant over the town. Its rounded top rests at least a hundred feet above the valley floor. The sides of the hill are steep and rocky. The crumbling remains of the ancient watchtower stand in mute testimony to the march of time, guarding nothing now except the ancient collection of granite stones behind it. The narrow road winds up the hill, switching back to negotiate the steep slope. A rusted fence of wrought iron encircles the graveyard. Little vegetation grows on this stony, wind-blasted heath. A few tufts of wiry grass, moss, and lichen are the only things living here. The gravestones are grim, gray, reminders of ancient death, their faces weathered by wind and rain. Ancient mausoleums squat among the jutting gravestones, their iron gates sagging on ancient hinges.

The townspeople stopped using the graveyard about a hundred years ago, when they ran out of room for graves. The largest tomb in the graveyard, on the northern end, is Lord Alstand's tomb. A Spot check (DC 15) discovers there are no graves within about thirty ft. of Alstand's

tomb. The gravediggers of the time refused to approach any closer to the tomb. They did not know why at the time, but the tomb with its imprisoned blood wraith made them very uneasy.

Before the blood wraith was released, the only people in recent times to go up Watchman's Hill were teenagers looking for a thrill. Town legend made Watchman's Hill a fearful place, where angry parents threatened to leave their children if they were naughty. The town is full of tales of ghosts and strange lights seen on Watchman's Hill.

The only person who remembers why Watchman's Hill was shunned is Shee'netha.

Anyone with the Track feat who makes a Survival check (DC 15) notices many fresh footprints all around the cemetery.

9. Wights in Ambush

In each of these tombs are 1d4 Wights waiting to ambush anyone entering the cemetery. A close range Spot check (DC 20) on the doors of these crypts reveals they have been opened very recently. The wights bide their time until there is no chance for their prey to escape before they spring the ambush. The wights in the crypts nearest Alstand's Tomb wait until any intruders are preoccupied with opening the tomb door or even inside the tomb itself. Then they close the doors and trap the intruders inside, allowing the blood wraith to devour them at leisure.

✦ **Wight:** CR 3; Medium undead; HD 4d12 (26 hp); Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +2; Grp +3; Atk +3 melee (1d4+1 plus energy drain, slam); Full Atk +4 melee (1d4+1 plus energy drain, slam); SA Create spawn, energy drain; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., undead traits; AL LE; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 12, Dex 12, Con —, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Hide +8, Listen +7, Move Silently +16, Spot +7; Alertness, Blind-Fight.

Create Spawn (Su): Any humanoid slain by a wight becomes a wight in 1d4 rounds. Spawn are under the command of the wight that created them and remain enslaved until its death. They do not possess any of the abilities they had in life.

Energy Drain (Su): Living creatures hit by a wight's slam attack gain one negative level. The DC is 14 for the Fortitude save to remove a negative level. The save DC is Charisma-based. For each such negative level bestowed, the wight gains 5 temporary hit points.

Skills: Wights have a +8 racial bonus on Move Silently checks.

Lord Alstand's Tomb

A large stone mausoleum dominates the northern end of the cemetery. Its granite faces are worn from centuries of wind and storms, but the symbols engraved in the stone still read as clearly as the day they were carved. Every stone block is engraved with the same symbol. An eight-foot, spiked iron fence surrounds the entrance. The iron gate squeals like a tortured soul in the wind, swinging freely.

The remnants of a rusty chain hang shattered and useless from the gate latch. Four stone steps lead up to the entrance, a pair of huge iron doors ten feet tall. Each must weigh several tons. Rusty chains lock in place the thick iron bar. Bridging the seam between the two doors is another symbol carved of stone broken down the center.

A bronze plaque almost three ft. across, green with age is affixed to the left door. On the plaque is an inscription written in archaic Common, "Within these stones lies good and evil. Death to any whom does not recognize balance. Death awaits within to all who open these doors."

A Knowledge (Religion) check (DC 15) reveals the holy symbols are all marks of the sun god. These particular emblems were commonly used three hundred years ago, but have since fell into disuse. Directly before the entrance is a large pool of dried blood, cementing the detritus of mixed dust and decaying plants into a crusty brownish paste. The source of the bloodstain is not apparent.

The massive iron bar holds the doors and a rusty chain and padlock lock the iron bar.

✦ **Door:** 4 in. thick; hardness 10; 100 hp; break DC 30; Open Lock DC 20.

10. Trap

A Spot check (DC 20) reveals something carved in the stone, something mostly obscured by the carpet of detritus. If the carpet is cleared away, three pentagrams are revealed. Rogues who succeed at a Search check (DC 22) discover the deadly trap on the top step. The trap is set to shoot three-ft. steel spikes straight up through the points of the pentagrams, into the bodies of whoever is standing on the pentagrams when the trap is activated. As soon as the spikes reach the limit of their movement, they begin to sink back into their apertures.

✦ **Spike Trap:** CR 5; mechanical; proximity trigger; repair reset; Atk +14 ranged (1d8, spike); multiple targets (1d6 spikes per target in a 10 ft.-by-10-ft. area); Search DC 24; Disable Device DC 18.

Alternatively, if the pentagrams are stepped on in the proper manner, the trap is disabled. The two outer pentagrams must be stepped on simultaneously by individuals weighing at least 100 pounds. A Listen check (DC 15) reveals an audible click as the safety latches fall into place. The trap remains disabled this way for one hour, then another click may be heard with a Listen check (DC 15) to indicate the trap has reset itself. If any weight is otherwise applied to the top step before the trap is disabled, the trap springs.

11. Lord Alstand's Treasure.

The treasure was entombed with the sorcerer in a large iron chest. Aside from weighing over four hundred pounds, it is bolted to the floor. The bolts can be removed if the chest is opened and emptied. This chest is also locked (DC 25) and trapped with a deadly poison needle

♣ **Poison Needle Trap:** CR 2; mechanical; touch trigger; repair reset; lock bypass (Open Lock DC 30); Atk +17 melee (1 plus poison, needle); poison (blue whinnis, DC 14 Fortitude save resists (poison only), 1 Con/unconsciousness); Search DC 22; Disable Device DC 17.

Treasure: Inside the chest are an array of fine clothes, stacked on top of a crystal shod staff of frost (21 charges), organized bags of coins (550 pp, 225 gp), a robe of eyes, an adamantite dagger, a small velvet pouch of rings (a ring of evasion, a ring of the ram, and a faulty ring of shooting stars unable to use the ball lightning ability), and dimensional shackles made for a Huge creature.

12. Lord Alstand's Sarcophagus

A heavy stone sarcophagus rests in the middle of the chamber. Four thick stone pillars support the vaulted, web-choked ceiling. The corners of the chamber are thick with cobwebs. The lid and sides of the sarcophagus are engraved with the same symbols as those on the outside the tomb.

The stone lid rests unlocked on the sarcophagus. Inside is what remains of Lord Alstand, little more than a crumbling skeleton. A Spot check (DC 15) reveals the glint of precious metal amidst the loose finger bones — a ring of sorcery (I) and a cursed ring of protection -1.

13. Amil's Corpse

Here lies the corpse of Shee'netha's old friend, Amil. The corpse is lying almost completely concealed by dusty cobwebs. A Spot check (DC 12) reveals its presence. If the corpse is spotted, read aloud:

Lying on its side amidst the dusty cobwebs is a gnarled corpse. A breastplate covers its torso, but the chainmail shirt has rusted to dust. The unfortunate man's garments appear to be those of a cleric. A rusted mace lies beside him. The corpse is gripping something in its twisted fists — a two-ft. black rod with a gigantic black gem attached to one end. The gem glints even in this low light. It stands up, a wild, shark-toothed grin slowly spreads across its gaunt face.

Amil long ago became a wight under the blood wraith's control. He is merely lying in wait to ambush anyone who comes near. He waits until a potential victim touches the rod of eternal life before he moves, and until then he appears as nothing more than a corpse. He does not attack with the rod of eternal life because its powers will not work for him, but he does not relinquish it until he is dead for good.

♣ **Amil, Advanced Wight:** CR 5; Medium undead; HD 6d12 (46 hp); Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +3; Grp +4; Atk +4 melee (1d4+1 plus energy drain, slam); Full Atk +4 melee (1d4+1 plus energy drain, slam); SA Create spawn, energy drain; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., undead traits; AL LE; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +6; Str 12, Dex 12, Con —, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Hide +11, Listen +10, Move Silently +16, Spot +9; Alertness, Blind-Fight, Improved Initiative.

Create Spawn (Su): Any humanoid slain by a wight becomes a wight in 1d4 rounds. Spawn are under the command of the wight that created them and remain enslaved until its death. They do not possess any of the abilities they had in life.

Energy Drain (Su): Living creatures hit by a wight's slam attack gain one negative level. The DC is 14 for the Fortitude save to remove a negative level. The save DC is Charisma-based. For each such negative level bestowed, the wight gains 5 temporary hit points.

Skills: Wights have a +8 racial bonus on Move Silently checks.

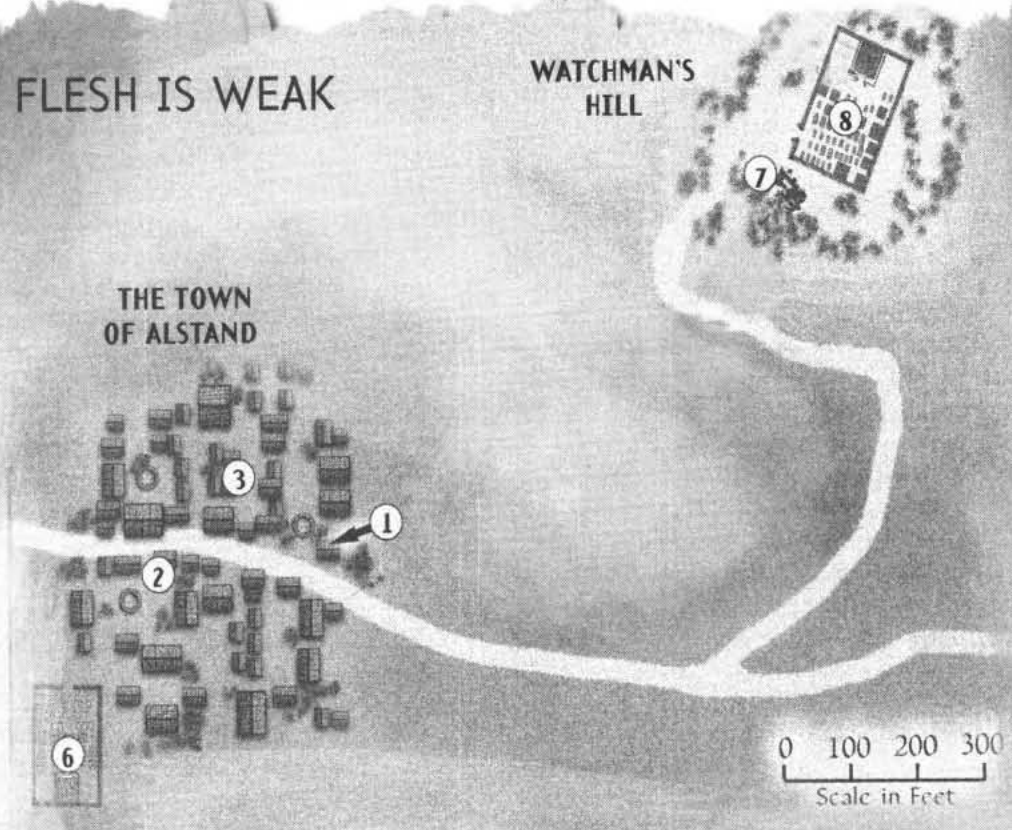
ADVENTURE DEVELOPMENT

Allow the atmosphere and events of the adventure to build tension and suspense; little by little, with mounting hopelessness as more and more of the townspeople disappear. Introduce unique NPCs early on and then have them disappear, only to attack the PCs later as wights. A large part of the horror of this adventure lies in the fact anyone who is killed almost immediately rises again as a wight to attack his former comrades or neighbors. The emotional impact lies in making the PCs care about the townspeople, like Johfig, Molich, and Shee'netha. Portray the townspeople as good folk trapped in a terrible situation, fearing for their lives and the lives of their families. They are not stupid or cowardly or lambs awaiting slaughter. But, they are victims nonetheless and their role in this is to provide the PCs with a certain level of emotion, which cannot be captured unless they have a stake in things.

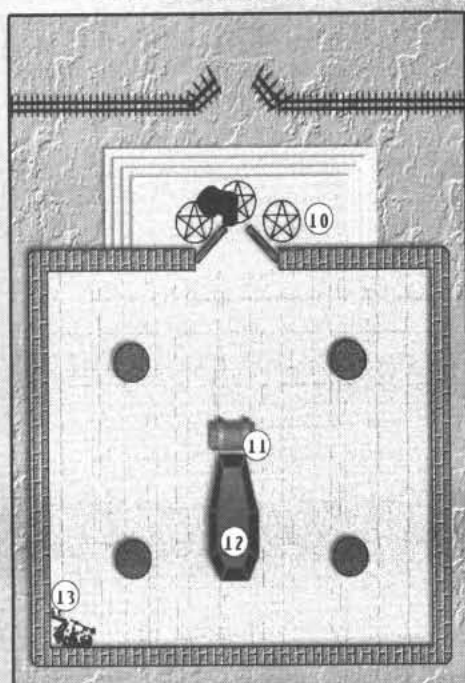
SHEE'NETHA'S LEGACY

It could be interesting if Shee'netha winds up succumbing to the blood wraith, and rising as a wight. Not only does the experience most likely pull heavily at the heartstrings of the PCs but you could turn another mindless encounter into a dramatic moment. Have Shee'netha struggle with her new undead state, retaining just enough

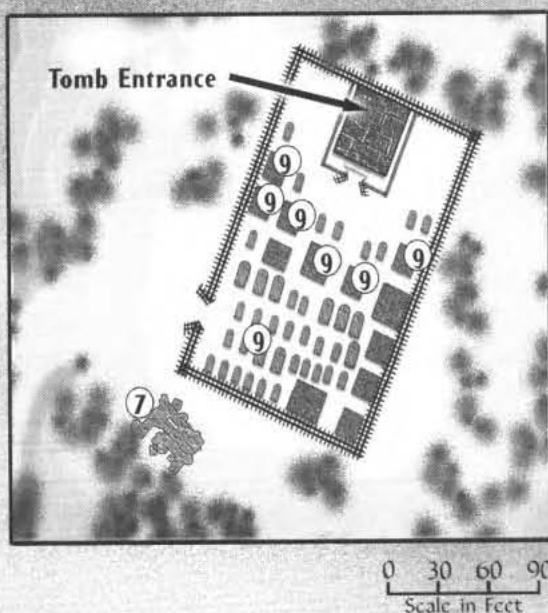
THE FLESH IS WEAK



LORD ALSTAND'S TOMB



OLD CEMETARY



of her memories to address the PCs, warning them of anything she may have learned of their foes, or even aiding them in a fight before fleeing into the wilderness to die.

Regardless, if her loyal cohort Tallia or any of the villagers who are her followers become corrupted, her anguish knows no bounds.

It is the stealth of the blood wraith, along with its immunity to normal weapons making it so terrifying.

It can strike anyone, anywhere, and no one can see it coming. It uses as many solid objects as it can to cloak its approach. It even travels below ground level and rises up through floors and ceilings, reaching through beds to touch sleeping victims. Imagine the consternation of a PC when he sees an incorporeal hand reaching through a wall toward one of his unsuspecting comrades.

The blood wraith is a very cunning and devious enemy, not a monster of blind, senseless rage. This cunning and intelligence make it all the more dangerous. If it is significantly harmed, it flees to regain its strength, allowing its minions to continue the fight. During the day, it hides in the crypts on Watchman's Hill, waiting to strike again. It does not enter Alstand's Tomb except to attack an enemy, as it fears being trapped again.

When the blood wraith realizes there is a new threat in its playground (i.e. the PCs), it takes steps to neutralize them. It first sends 2d6 wights to attack them, and then discreetly watches the fight from a distance to determine the capabilities of the PCs. After it has perceived the PC's strengths and weaknesses, it attempts to split the party into smaller groups by sending two separate bands of wights to abduct some villagers. Both bands of wights pass near enough to the PCs to be noticed. The PCs must choose which group of wights to stop or try to stop both. If the PCs foolishly separate, the blood wraith attacks the weaker of the two groups, with preferences toward any group without a cleric. The wights abandon their screaming victim and attack the PC's along with the blood wraith.

Ultimately, if the PCs prove too much of a problem, the blood wraith lures them up onto Watchman's Hill, where it and its minions attack them en masse.

The exact number of wights existing under the blood wraith's control is largely left up to the DM. This way the DM can more easily tailor the Challenge Rating of this adventure to the power level of the PCs. Another reason is for the DM to control the tension and fear levels of the PCs.

The pace at which the PCs choose to confront the problem greatly affects how the adventure unfolds. They may choose to charge blindly into combat with the unknown, or they

may try first to determine the truth about what is happening. The group choosing the latter method should have more success, because they are better prepared to deal with what is happening. The PCs may believe at first a vampire is the root of the problem, and this is a great red herring for a devious DM to mislead the PCs. If they go up Watchman's Hill toting bundles of garlic, holy water, and wooden stakes, they are in for a nasty surprise. If they talk to Sheehetha first, they may get a better understanding of what is happening.

However, the longer the PCs wait, the more townspeople die. Every night, 1d10 townspeople are turned into wights. Even if the PCs manage to kill the blood wraith, the wights still exist. The wights simply gain their own free will. Moreover, everyone killed by a wight also becomes a wight, fueling a fire of terror and death which can only end in one of two ways: the extermination of the wights, or the extermination of the town.

EPILOGUE

Saving the town from the terror of the undead menace is little cause for celebration at first. The townspeople are certainly not ungrateful, but will need some time to mourn before throwing any celebration for the PCs. PCs, on the other hand, who stay and try to help the community rebuild after facing off mortally against their own undead kin will be treated well, and will probably gain friends for life. Never underestimate the usefulness of contacts and craftsmen in small towns!

FURTHER ADVENTURES

- The rod of eternal life must be destroyed. PC Clerics, Paladins, or just particularly devout followers of a deity receive a vision, the ancient artifact the Iron Codex has the power to destroy itself and the rod if they touch, and a nearby city's image is implanted in their mind's eye (see the adventure "Temple of the Iron Codex").
- The townsfolk soon mention that the nearby kingdom has a city who has been capturing many of the outlying farmers as slaves, and they fear they will be next. They ask the PCs to visit the city on a diplomatic mission to discover the evil behind this cruelty. In this case the PCs are going into an adventure from the other side of it's intent! (see the adventure "No Mercy").

Chapter 24:
Gottheit

Levels 9 to 11
by Douglas Sun

The surrounding darkness makes it difficult to see more than a few yards in front of you. Mist billows around you, chilling your armor and your bones. Your road map shows a traveler's rest is coming up. Just a few more miles and you'll be there.

A silhouette looms ahead, a village wall and inner buildings draw you in. You are almost there.

But there are no lights, nothing to guide you. The quiet is eerie and the threat of an attack looms. At the gate, no one stands guard and the city streets are quiet and still.

"Desertion" comes to mind. So does "abandoned" and "derelict".

The only indication anyone lives here is a single sign, hanging from the open gate.

Gottheit: Population 1,200.

As you stand at the gate, trying to piece together the mystery, a low, still moan echoes from the village and fills the surrounding air with dread.

DM'S BACKGROUND

This adventure is designed for four to six PCs of levels 9 to 11. Clerics will find their talents, and possibly their faith, tested in this scenario and with the large amount of undead involved it will make things much easier for the party if they do have a cleric with them. It takes place in the deserted town of Gottheit, and each encounter draws the PCs closer to the heart of the mystery lurking behind the city's veneer. What happened to the people who once lived here?

Until recently, Gottheit was known as a kind and pious town, devoted to the sun god. Its piety was so strong the Temple was placed in the center of town for all to see. Travelers were welcome in Gottheit — although less with merriment than with an earnest hospitality most found disconcerting. These travelers told tales later how the residents engaged in much discussion concerning ethics and morality and often worried aloud whether they were doing right by their fellow townspeople.

Then, about six months ago, a priest calling himself Alkeyir came to Gottheit. He set himself in the town square and began to preach. Much to everyone's dismay, he denounced the sun god as false, one who would only lead them astray. He declared the god he followed, Belthus, was the only true wellspring of righteousness and piety. The townspeople reacted to his sermon with outrage at first, but it seemed Alkeyir understood their insecurities and before long, he persuaded them. When the local priests emerged from their temple to stop him, he accused them of committing dark and horrible deeds

in secret and betraying the people's trust. Alkeyir claimed he had communed with his god, who had told him to come to Gottheit, cast out the false priests of the sun god and show the people the error of their ways. Using powerful magic to prove his claims, he performed "miracles" and created illusions that "proved" the other priests were possessed. He persuaded the townspeople to drive them out and install him as their religious leader.

Unfortunately for Gottheit, Alkeyir was no righteous mendicant out to show the world the straight and narrow path. He was, in fact, the polymorphed avatar of Bal-Shezzar, an evil deity who delights in treachery and betrayal, and his virtuous god "Belthus" was a fiction created to seduce the credulous. Alkeyir came to Gottheit for no other purpose than to wreak a terrible evil on the town. Knowing deep down they doubted the fundamental decency of their lives, he rendered them vulnerable to an evil fate worthy of his darkest malice.

Soon after Alkeyir installed himself in the former temple (now rededicated to "Belthus"), the people of Gottheit woke to find some of their fellow townspeople had disappeared overnight. Alkeyir explained Belthus had come and taken the unrighteous from the midst.

So great was their belief in him the townspeople did not question it. In truth, Akinose drained the life force from the townspeople and transported their remains to his native plane, using his staff of planar transport

(for more information, refer to the "New Magic Item" entry at the end of this chapter), the avatar of Bal-Shezzar, began his reign of tyranny over Gottheit.

Once he depopulated the town to a manageable size, he brought his terrible plan to fruition. In a single night of terror, he slew those of Gottheit who remained, transporting them to his native plane, where they perished in unspeakable agony. With his purpose now complete, Alkeyir lingers in Gottheit only to make certain of his triumph before he descends upon another corner of the world. Since deceit is key to his success, the PCs pose a threat to him, for if they discover the true fate of the townspeople, they might warn others before he strikes again.



BARDIC LORE

A bard can make a Bardic Knowledge check to discover what he may have heard. A bard learns all the information of the DC his check succeeded by and all that below it (a Bard who rolled a 17 would learn the information under DC 15 and DC 10). Alternately this information can be gained by a Gather Information skill check +5 higher than the DC of a Bardic Lore check to see if the PC has heard any rumors.

DC10 Gottheit is mostly self-sufficient; its residents are craftsmen and merchants who deal with passerby and other communities in the vicinity.

DC15 The people are ardent followers of the sun god, and their proud temple is the finest structure, set in the center of town.

DC25 Overheard a while back, a traveler who had visited Gottheit told how many of the people would question their own actions as proper or not.

DC30 This talkative traveler even mentioned overhearing the name "Belthus" as their deity, but that is not the name of any sun god, or any god!

RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

Gottheit is an event-based, rather than location-based, adventure. In other words the encounters described below are not tied to a geographical location, but rather to a sequence in a chain of events. What matters is the sequence in which your players experience the encounters, not where the encounters occur. For instance, it does not matter what quarter of Gottheit the PCs are exploring when they run into the ogres described in encounter #2, but it does matter if they run into the ogres early on. The PCs should experience the encounters in the order described below.

The Temple of Bal-Shezzar is the main exception to the rule. It is important the PCs do not explore the temple too early in the adventure, however lest they stumble upon the climactic encounter before you have had a chance to build to it. If the PCs head straight for the Temple, throw the intervening encounters at them or simply move Alkeyir somewhere else in the town.

THE TOWN OF GOTTHEIT (SEE MAP)

Since there are no secrets on the map, feel free to photocopy it and lay it out on the table for the players. You may want to blot out the numbers, but this is up to you. Overall, this facilitates easier play and encourages the players to ask questions.

MOOD

Gottheit is best played at night as the PCs are just finishing the leg of a lengthy trip. The mist and darkness should keep the PCs on their toes. Visibility is ten to fifteen even with a light source. Low-light vision is severely hampered and PCs with darkvision see little more than fog up to 30. Lastly, do not be afraid to throw ghouls at them from time to time. The whole town is filled with an almost palpable aura of unwholesomeness and decay, each Charisma check to turn undead within the city suffer a -2 profane penalty.

1. Guardhouses

Each town gate has a small guardhouse associated with it. Reinforcements stood ready here, and prisoners were detained in holding cells. Gottheit rarely sees trouble however, except for the infrequent ogre raid. There are 4d6 arrows, bolts, and sling stones. Polearms, spears and swords are also stored here, but no more than four of each.

A Search check (DC 25, 20 with a light source) reveals a small cache of coins (55 sp) stored under a quiver of arrows in one of the guardhouses.

2. The Lazy Eye

The Lazy Eye is a three-story building with a sign over the front door depicting a beholder with its main eye closed. The Lazy Eye was Gottheit's premier public house and

traveler's inn. Except for some traveler's rations, what food remains is rotted or stale. The water, ale and wine are drinkable, however. In the cellar is a case of particularly fine wine worth 500 gp. It weighs 50 pounds and must be carried in both hands (although a large-sized or larger humanoid may tuck it under one arm). In the back office rests a strongbox. It is locked with a difficult three-tumbler lock, requiring an Open Lock check (DC 40) to open. Bram's satchel (see encounter #4) has the only remaining key. The strongbox contains 4,429 gp and a soft-white pearl worth 500 gp.

3. Mayor's Residence

The largest residential structure in town was the mayor's manor. Here, the mayor lived and received visitors. Many of the rooms contain basic finery, nothing exceptional. In the largest bedroom however is an unlocked chest containing 2,415 gp and a *potion of cure serious wounds*.

4. Temple of Belthus

After the residents of Gottheit converted Belthus' worship, the temple remained the center of religious life. It was defaced to remove all references to the previous god. All depictions of the sun (paintings and sculptures) were scraped or smashed, replaced by Belthus' faux holy symbol — a crooked staff encircled by a golden halo. Belthus himself is depicted as a stern-looking man carrying the staff and a hastily carved statue of him stands behind the altar.

The basement of the temple holds, among other things, offerings to the sun god accumulated over the years. The priests kept the most valuable gifts in a large unlocked chest. Presently, these amount to approximately 2,000 pp, 8,000 gp, 10,000 sp and 5 gems worth 250 gp each. There are also two holy symbols to the sun god, each hanging as a pendant from a gold chain; one is carved from ivory and is worth 200 gp, while the other is fashioned from yellow quartz and is worth 100 gp.

5. Ruins

Most of the village lies in ruins or is derelict. Everywhere the PCs go in the village, they find buildings quiet and empty or shattered and unsettling. Remains of a hearth, a child's discarded toy, dead animals, and other depressing scenes develop the mood and hint of the evil at work here. Make up the interiors as you see fit for the homes and businesses. Most of them are common dwellings; the Gottheit folk were craftsmen and merchants, with many commoners and experts working out of their homes.

6. Ogre Tribes

Tribes of ogres and their dependant orcs live in the nearby hills. From time to time, they raided Gottheit and harassed travelers coming and going, but now they usual-

ly leave it alone, regarding it with mild curiosity at best. The details of their social organization and the treasures they guard are beyond the scope of this adventure. Suffice it to say if the PCs are fooled or distracted by the red herding in encounter #2, there are more than enough in these hills to overwhelm even a party of four to six heavily equipped, high-level characters.

ENCOUNTERS

As the PCs come upon each encounter, read the boxed text aloud to them, or paraphrase it for their benefit. Begin with encounter #1 once the PCs have passed through the main gates and have more or less committed themselves to exploring the town.

No One Home

Desolation greets you. The streets of Gottheit are completely deserted. Through the windows, it is evident every building is empty. None of the chatter and noise exists one expects to hear passing through a town of this size during the day. There is only silence. Yet, something reaches you on the morning breeze. You hear it only dimly, and you wonder if you really heard it at all. It might have been a voice, or something else...

Suddenly, a swarm of rats appears from around the corner of a nearby building. They seem headed for the town gate and do not attack the PCs. If they are attacked, they flee.

The first important fact to establish about the present state of Gottheit is the town is absolutely deserted. There's no one home, not a single living soul. It allows the mood to be established early on something is wrong here. If the PCs look for ephemeral information as to why the rats flee, it is because there is no food. But in reality, something is afoot.

☛ **Dire Rat:** CR 1/3; Small animal; HD 1d8+1 (5 hp); Init +3; Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 15, touch 14, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp -4; Atk +4 melee (1d4 plus disease, bite); Full Atk +4 melee (1d4 plus disease, bite); SA Disease; SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 4.

Skills and Feats: Climb +11, Hide +8, Listen +4, Move Silently +4, Spot +4, Swim +11; Alertness, Weapon FinesseB

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

Skills: Dire rats have a +8 racial bonus on Swim checks. Dire rats have a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks and can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened.

Dire rats use their Dexterity modifier for Climb and Swim checks.

Ogres Were Their Neighbors

As you turn a corner, you find yourself face-to-face with a group of seven large, ferociously ugly creatures.

The foremost among them is slightly taller and uglier than the rest, with lurid green skin and a pair of short horns protruding from its forehead. Upon seeing you, they stop in their tracks and shift their weight to their heels. They look you over, squinting cautiously, but make no other move. The leader growls, "Who you?"

These 6 ogres are a scouting party sent by one of the tribes from the nearby hills. The leader is an ogre mage who speaks halting, but comprehensible Common. The other ogres speak only Giant. Their tribe sent them to find out what was going on once they realized Gottheit had fallen completely silent.

The strangeness of this situation increases when the ogres do not attack the PCs on sight. Their job is to gather intelligence (to the best of their ability, at any rate), but they are unnerved by the silence of Gottheit. They have no stomach for a fight. The ogre mage questions the PCs to see if they know what's going on. In return he tells the PCs what he knows, which is very little.

If the PCs accuse the ogres of having something to do with the town's depopulation, the ogre mage vigorously denies it. If they attack the ogres, the ogres perform a fighting retreat, they have no quarrel with the PCs.

If, for some reason, the PCs decide to track the ogres back to their lair, they discover the ogre's community. No doubt, there is treasure to be gained and glory to be won in the hills, and it is known as the Ogre City of Drahh-Suhl, another adventure in this book.

▲ **Ogre Barbarian, Ogre Bbn 1:** CR 4; Large giant; HD 4d8+11; hp 29; Init -1; Spd 40 ft. in hide armor, base speed 40 ft.; AC 16, touch 8, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +4; Grp +13; Atk +9 melee (2d8+7, greatclub) or +2 ranged (1d8+5, javelin); Full Atk +9 melee (2d8+7, greatclub) or +2 ranged (1d8+5, javelin); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA —; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., fast movement, Rade 1/day, low-light vision; AL CE; SV Fort +8, Ref +0, Will +1; Str 21, Dex 8, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 7.

Skills and Feats: Climb +5, Listen +2, Spot +2; Toughness, Weapon Focus (greatclub).

Fast Movement (Ex): These barbarians land speed is faster than the norm for their race by +10 (already figured in, above).

Rage (Ex): These barbarians can fly into a rage once per day each. In a rage, a barbarian temporarily gains a +4 bonus to Strength, a +4 bonus to Constitution, and a +2 morale bonus on Will saves, but he takes a -2 penalty to Armor Class. The increase in Constitution increases the barbarian's hit points by 2 points per level, but these hit points go away at the end of the rage when his Constitution score drops back to normal. A fit of rage lasts for 7 rounds. A barbarian may prematurely end his rage. At the end of the rage, the barbarian loses the rage modifiers and restrictions and becomes fatigued (-2 penalty to Strength, -2 penalty to Dexterity, can't charge or run) for the duration of the current encounter. A barbarian can fly into a rage only once per encounter.

▲ Ogre Mage: CR 8; Large giant; HD 5d8+15 (37 hp); Init +4; Spd 40 ft., fly 40 ft. (good); AC 18, touch 9, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +3; Grp +3/+12; Atk +7 melee (3d6+7/19–20, greatsword) or +2 ranged (2d6/x3, longbow); Full Atk +7 melee (3d6+7/19–20, greatsword) or +2 ranged (2d6/x3, longbow); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA Spell-like abilities; SQ Darkvision 90 ft., low-light vision, regeneration 5, SR 19; AL LE; SV Fort +7, Ref +1, Will +3; Str 21, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 17.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +11, Listen +10, Spellcraft +10, Spot +10

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*darkness*, *invisibility*; 1/day—*charm person* (DC 14), *cone of cold* (DC 18), *gaseous form*, *polymorph*, *sleep* (DC 14). Caster level 9th. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Flight (Su): An ogre mage can cease or resume flight as a free action. While using gaseous form it can fly at its normal speed and has perfect maneuverability. **Regeneration (Ex):** Fire and acid deal normal damage to an ogre mage.

An ogre mage that loses a limb or body part can reattach it by holding the severed member to the stump. Reattachment takes 1 minute. If the head or some other vital organ is severed, it must be reattached within 10 minutes or the creature dies. An ogre mage cannot regrow lost body parts.

A Warning From Ghouls

Down the street, four translucent humanoid figures converge — slowly, yet menacingly. Their mottled, decaying flesh stretches taut across their bones, and their deep-set eyes glow like hot coals. Their lips do not move, yet they growl: “Leave... go... death awaits.”

These ghouls (hp 20) were once townspeople of Gottheit. Bal-Shezzer created them and sent them back to the Material Plane through Alkeyir as a warning to the PCs. They deliver their warning and attack if the PCs do not heed it. If the PCs speak with them, they only repeat their warning. If it comes to a pitched battle, they fight to the death. If this confrontation does not discourage the PCs, Bal-Shezzer delivers more dangerous warnings later.

Wight: CR 3; Medium undead; HD 4d12 (26 hp); Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +2; Grp +3; Atk +3 melee (1d4+1 plus energy drain, slam); Full Atk +3 melee (1d4+1 plus energy drain, slam); SA Create spawn, energy drain; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., undead traits; AL LE; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 12, Dex 12, Con —, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Hide +8, Listen +7, Move Silently +16, Spot +7; Alertness, Blind-Fight.

Create Spawn (Su): Any humanoid slain by a wight becomes a wight in 1d4 rounds. Spawn are under the command of the wight that created them and remain enslaved until its death. They do not possess any of the abilities they had in life.

Energy Drain (Su): Living creatures hit by a wight's slam attack gain one negative level. The DC is 14 for the Fortitude save to remove a negative level. The save DC is Charisma-based. For each such negative level bestowed, the wight gains 5 temporary hit points.

Skills: Wights have a +8 racial bonus on Move Silently checks.





The Journal

While making their way through town, the PCs see a discarded satchel behind some aging rain barrels. It sticks out as the streets are mostly devoid of any objects. Retrieving it lets loose old rain water from the inside. Further investigation reveals a set of small traveling clothes, a dagger, a key and journal a book whose pages were partially damaged by the water.

This is the diary of Bram, the assistant at The Lazy Eye inn and tavern. He was one of the very last of the townsfolk remaining on the terrible night when everyone else in Gottheit was swept off of the face of the earth. He was half-crazed from the shock and the last few undamaged pages reveal some of his thoughts during his final hours alive.

A couple of nights ago...It came in the middle of the night... everyone disappeared... into thin air, just like that... like magic... the screams... everyone, gone...I hid ... wherever I could. Took to the streets and hid in shadows. As my father always said, "A sneaky one won't be found 'less he wants to be found."

The key is to the strongbox in The Lazy Eye (see location 2, on page 3).

Town Elders

Three gray shapes with the consistency of fine mist appear before you. They hover and undulate in the breeze. They are vaguely humanoid in shape, and each has a gold medallion on a chain around its neck. The features of their faces are contorted in terrible agony.

"Leave this place," one of them says.

Says another, "The God wills it."

The third says, "Leave, or the God will kill you as He killed us."

These spectral creatures are wisps (see the "New Monster" section at the end of this chapter). In life, they were town elders of Gottheit. Bal-Shezzar created them as undead and has sent them to chase the PCs out of town. They retain a memory of who they were when they were alive, and if they are asked about that, they say they were once important men in Gottheit. But if the PCs try to interrogate them further they reveal nothing. They exist only to carry out the wishes of the dark god who destroyed them. Oddly enough, however, they each retain a physical symbol identifying them as the men they once were — the gold medallions hanging around their necks. These remain if the wisps are destroyed. Each is worth 50 gp for their gold content.

✶ **Wisp:** CR 5; Medium Undead (Incorporeal); HD 4d12; hp 26; Init +7; Spd 30ft., fly 60 ft. (good); AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +2; Grp +2; Atk +5 melee (1d4+1d6 Con drain, incorporeal touch); Full Atk +5 melee (1d4+1d6 Con drain, incorporeal touch); SA constitution drain, create spawn; SQ Undead traits, incorporeal traits, +2 turn resistance; AL LE; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +6; Str —, Dex 16, Con —, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Hide +11, Intimidate +10, Intuit Direction +6, Listen +12, Search +10, Sense Motive +8, Spot +12, Alertness, Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative

Constitution Drain (Su): Living creatures hit by a wisp's incorporeal touch attack must make a successful Fortitude saving throw (DC 14) or suffer 1d6 points of temporary Constitution damage. The save DC is Wisdom-based.

Create Spawn (Su): Any humanoid slain by a wisp becomes a wisp in 1d4 hours. It remains under the command of the wisp that created it until either is destroyed. Spawn do not retain any abilities they had in life.

✶ **Bodak:** CR 8; Medium undead (extraplanar); HD 9d12; hp 58; Init +6; Spd 20 ft.; AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +4; Grp +5; Atk +6 melee (1d8+1, slam); Full Atk +6 melee (1d8+1, slam); SA Death gaze; SQ Damage reduction 10/cold iron, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to electricity, resistance to acid 10 and fire 10, undead traits, vulnerability to sunlight; AL CE; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +7; Str 13, Dex 15, Con —, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Listen +11, Move Silently +10, Spot +11; Alertness, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (slam).

Death Gaze (Su): Death, range 30, Fortitude DC 15 negates. Humanoids who die from this attack are transformed into bodaks 24 hours later. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Vulnerability to Sunlight (Ex): Bodaks loathe sunlight, for the merest exposure to it burns their impure flesh. Each round of exposure to the direct rays of the sun deals 1 point of damage to the creature.

The Mayor – Or What's Left of Him

This bodak was once the Mayor of Gottheit and he, too, was created as an undead by Bal-Shezzar to drive away the PCs. However, as it spotted by the PCs, it had one of those flashbacks to its former life, to which bodaks are prone, so it remembers more or less who it was and what happened to the person. What the PCs witness is nothing but a victim, struggling with the evil that commands the bodak to do Bal-Shezzar's dirty work. A Sense Motive check (DC 15) gives PCs the impression the bodak is holding back a fighting rage, but it does not last long.

The bodak/mayor answers their questions as truthfully as he can, although in a halting and fragmented manner. He does not know the name of the god to which he refers; only it is evil and the priest Alkeyir is connected with it. He understands Alkeyir deceived the people of Gottheit and is somehow responsible for their doom, but has difficulty verbalizing this.

He remembers the night when Bal-Shezzar completed the massacre as one of confusion and horrified screams; he remembers stepping out of his door and seeing people running through the streets in their nightclothes, their faces so white they lit up the darkness. He was, he thinks, one of the last to be taken. He remembers nothing about his actual death. After a few minutes of interrogation, the evil which drives the creature, wins. It gives out a strangled cry and attacks.

Once combat begins, the bodak suffers a –2 penalty to all attacks directed at the PCs, as it experienced a flashback to its former life at the very beginning of the encounter. It has already suffered the loss of a full action by the time combat is joined.

Like the wisps, the bodak wears a medallion on a gold chain around its neck, except this mayoral badge has a semi-precious stone set in it. It is worth 150 gp.

"Innocent" Visitor

A pale woman wearing nothing but simple peasant cloths staggers among the buildings, looking about confused. You hear her mutter words like "where is?" and "how could they..." to herself. She looks distraught and saddened.

If the PCs stop to aid her, she tells them her name is Barnardina, and she had family in Gottheit's but she and her husband live out of town, she just came to visit them. Unfortunately for the PCs, "Barnardina" is really a rakshasa summoned by Bal-Shezzar to deceive them. Using its alternate form ability, it has disguised itself as a saddened young woman to get them to drop their guard. It uses its detect thoughts ability to anticipate the PCs' actions and judge the effectiveness of its own deception. If it looks like they see through its disguise, it reveals its true form and attacks them immediately. If its charade appears to be working, however, it looks for a moment when they drop their guard — if they turn their backs or leave it alone with a PC, for instance — it attacks as soon as it finds the opportunity.

If the PCs question it, "Barnardina" caters to their greatest anxieties or desires to discourage them. If they ask about her family, she is vague with description or names, and stammers, acting as if too upset to talk about them. If they ask about treasure in the town, it replies Gottheit was not rich and no one had any real wealth to speak of.

If the PCs stop to aid her, she tells them her name is Barnardina, and she had family in Gottheit's but she and her husband live out of town, she just came to visit them. Unfortunately for the PCs, "Barnardina" is really a rakshasa summoned by Bal-Shezzar to deceive them. Using its alternate form ability, it has disguised itself as a saddened young woman to get them to drop their guard. It uses its detect thoughts ability constantly to anticipate the PCs' actions and judge the effectiveness of its own deception, it has also cast misdirection targeting a tree so it detects as neutral in alignment (and as a plant).

If its charade appears to be working, however, it looks for a moment when they drop their guard — if they turn their backs or leave it alone with a PC, for instance — it attacks as soon as it finds the opportunity. It has also cast unseen servant and uses it to rattle windows, open doors, and so on, in an attempt to divide and unsettle the party. If it looks like they see through its disguise, it reveals its true form and attacks them immediately.

If the PCs question it, “Barnardina” caters to their greatest anxieties or desires to discourage them. If they ask about her family, she is vague with her descriptions or names, and stammers, acting as if too upset to talk about them. If they ask about treasure in the town, it replies Gottheit was not rich and no one had any real wealth to speak of.

The rakshasa is supremely overconfident and has little fear of the party, at least at first. It uses its vampiric touch ability and then retreats, using its speed to dodge through the abandoned building and try to pick off the party one at a time. It will target characters with missile weapons first, not being afraid of their magic (with its SR 27) then anyone with a piercing weapon. If reduced to 20 or fewer hit points, the rakshasa flees, stopping long enough to inform Bel-Shezzar of their abilities.

If you wish to make this encounter more difficult for the players, have the rakshasa use its charm person on a party member of two before it “meets” the party.

☛ **Rakshasa:** CR 10; Medium outsider (native); HD 7d8+21; hp 52; Init +2; Spd 40 ft.; AC 21, touch 12, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +7; Grp +8; Atk +8 melee (1d4+1, claw) or +9 ranged (spell); Full Atk +8 melee (1d4+1, 2 claws) and +3 melee (1d6, bite) or +9 spell (ranged); SA Detect thoughts, spells; SQ Change shape, damage reduction 15/good and piercing, darkvision 60 ft., SR 27; AL LE; SV Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +6; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 13, Wis 13, Cha 17.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +17*, Concentration +13, Diplomacy +7, Disguise +17 (+19 acting)*, Intimidate +5, Listen +13, Move Silently +13, Perform (oratory) +13, Sense Motive +11, Spellcraft +11, Spot +11; Alertness, Combat Casting, Dodge.

Detect Thoughts (Su): A rakshasa can continuously use detect thoughts as the spell (caster level 18th; Will DC 15 negates). It can suppress or resume this ability as a free action. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Spells: A rakshasa casts spells as a 7th-level sorcerer.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/7/7/5; save DC 13 + spell level): 0—*detect magic, light, mage hand, message, read magic, resistance, touch of fatigue*; 1st—*burning hands, charm person, magic missile, unseen servant, ventriloquism*; 2nd—*acid arrow, misdirection, scorching ray*; 3rd—*hold person, vampiric touch*. (It has already cast one 1st level spell, unseen servant, and one 2nd level spell, misdirection when encountered.)

Change Shape (Su): A rakshasa can assume any humanoid form, or revert to its own form, as a standard action. In humanoid form, a rakshasa loses its claw and bite attacks (although it often equips itself with weapons and armor instead). A rakshasa remains in one form until it chooses to assume a new one. A change in form cannot be dispelled, but the rakshasa reverts to its natural form when killed. A true seeing spell reveals its natural form.

The Temple

The temple in town does not look as terrible as the abandoned buildings around it. The ancient, stylized architecture betrays it as a structure to the sun god, but a dark shadow seems to have fallen over its walls and grandeur. All clues have pointed to a terrible corruption in the church, and so inside must be the answer to the town's plight. The tall wrought-iron oak doors grind and echo within the inner chambers as they are opened. The entire temple feels evil and the effect is intensified inside, this is because the temple is the subject of an unhallow spell and all non-evil being that enter the temple are effected by a bane spell, Will save (DC 16) to resist.

Entering the Temple, the ghostly form of a solidly built woman wearing full plate armor and clutching a sword materializes out of thin air, ethereal haze surrounding her and caressing her form. Her gaze is stern, but her cheeks are sunken, as if she endured much suffering before she died. “Heed me, warriors!” she calls out, “for I was once Mitrea, the guardian of this temple. Do not make the same mistake as I. Alkeyir serves an evil god. If you stand and fight, kill him. Or your fate is sealed.”

This tormented ghost speaks the truth; it was once Mitrea, a champion and powerful fighter who served this temple, but was seduced, entering the service of Belthus after they cast out the priests. She was slain along with the rest of the townspeople, dying in unutterable torment on Bal-Shezzar's native plane before she knew what had happened to her. This is the PC's final warning they are dealing in matters they ought to leave well enough alone.

As a ghost, Mitrea has a complete memory of her former identity. She has enough willpower to answer the PC's questions honestly, and completely before attacking them (she is a ghost in Bal-Shazzar's temple after all). She does not realize Alkeyir is the avatar instead of a mere servant of his god, and she does not know Belthus is really Bal-Shezzar. But she knows everything else about Alkeyir's deception and the massacre. She tells the PCs to beware of his staff, but does not know exactly why they should watch out for it. She does know Alkeyir is presently in the basement of the Temple. When the PCs have finished questioning her, she utters a piercing, agonized cry as Bel-Shezzar compels her to attack. “For the sake of all that is holy, destroy me!” she wails (if the party defeats Alkeyir, Mitrea's ghost does not rejuvenate).

▲ **Ghost of Mitrea, Temple Guardian, Human Ftr 8:** CR 10; Medium humanoid (undead, incorporeal); HD 8d12; hp 52; Init +7; Spd fly 30 ft. (perfect); AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +8/+3; Grp +12; Atk +14 melee (1d10+9/17–20, bastard sword); Full Atk +14/+9 melee (1d10+9/17–20, bastard sword); SA Corrupting touch, manifestation, malevolence; SQ Incorporeal traits, rejuvenation, +4 turn resistance, undead traits; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 18, Dex 16, Con —, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 17.

Skills and Feats: Climb +4, Handle Animal +4, Jump +4, Listen +4, Search +2, Spot +4; Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Improved Critical (bastard sword), Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bastard sword), Weapon Specialization (bastard sword).

Corrupting Touch (Su): A ghost that hits a living target with its incorporeal touch attack deals 1d6 points of damage. Against ethereal opponents, it adds its Strength modifier to attack and damage rolls. Against nonethereal opponents, it adds its Dexterity modifier to attack rolls only.

Malevolence (Su): Once per round, an ethereal ghost can merge its body with a creature on the Material Plane. This ability is similar to a magic jar spell (caster level 10th or the ghost's Hit Dice, whichever is higher), except that it does not require a receptacle. To use this ability, the ghost must be manifested and it must try move into the target's space; moving into the target's space to use the malevolence ability does not provoke attacks of opportunity. The target can resist the attack with a successful Will save (DC 15 + ghost's Cha modifier). A creature that successfully saves is immune to that same ghost's malevolence for 24 hours, and the ghost cannot enter the target's space. If the save fails, the ghost vanishes into the target's body.

Manifestation (Su): Every ghost has this ability. A ghost dwells on the Ethereal Plane and, as an ethereal creature, it cannot affect or be affected by anything in the material world. When a ghost manifests, it partly enters the Material Plane and becomes visible but incorporeal on the Material Plane. A manifested ghost can be harmed only by other incorporeal creatures, magic weapons, or spells, with a 50% chance to ignore any damage from a corporeal source. A manifested ghost can pass through solid objects at will, and its own attacks pass through armor. A manifested ghost always moves silently. A manifested ghost can strike with its touch attack or with a ghost touch weapon (see Ghostly Equipment, below). A manifested ghost remains partially on the Ethereal Plane, where it is it not incorporeal. A manifested ghost can be attacked by opponents on either the Material Plane or the Ethereal Plane. The ghost's incorporeality helps protect it from foes on the Material Plane, but not from foes on the Ethereal Plane.

When a spellcasting ghost is not manifested and is on the Ethereal Plane, its spells cannot affect targets on the Material Plane, but they work normally against ethereal targets. When a spellcasting ghost manifests, its spells continue to affect ethereal targets and can affect targets on the Material Plane normally unless the spells rely on touch. A manifested ghost's touch spells don't work on nonethereal targets.

A ghost has two home planes, the Material Plane and the Ethereal Plane. It is not considered extraplanar when on either of these planes.

Rejuvenation (Su): In most cases, it's difficult to destroy a ghost through simple combat: The "destroyed" spirit will often restore itself in 2d4 days. Even the most powerful spells are usually only temporary solutions. A ghost that would otherwise be destroyed returns to its old haunts with a successful level check (1d20 + 8) against DC 16. As a rule, the only way to get rid of a ghost for certain is to determine the reason for its existence and set right whatever prevents it from resting in peace. The exact means varies with each spirit and may require a good deal of research.

Possessions: +1 ghost touch bastard sword (named "purefire") while use in the temple of Gottheit 'Purefire' grants its wielder a +1 divine bonus to attack and damage against Akkeyir's and ignores his DR.

Once the PCs defeat Mitrea's ghost she whispers as she dissipates "Take my sword and slay Alkeyir. Free me and my Temple." Free from the distraction of combat they notice the door near the entrance leads down to the Temple basement. It is locked but can be defeated with an Open Lock check (DC 25). It is also trapped.

● **Contact Poison:** CR 5; mechanical; touch trigger (attached); manual reset; poison (sassone leaf residue, DC 16 Fortitude save resists, 2d12hp/1d6 Con); Search DC 25; Disable Device DC 19.

9. The Avatar of Bal-Shezzar

When the PCs reach the basement, a man with striking features and priestly robes stands before them. His angular beard seems as dark as night streaked with gray, and his eyes piercing and intense. In his right hand he grasps a gnarled staff as tall as he, with a crown of horns at the peak, an eerie light emanating from within.

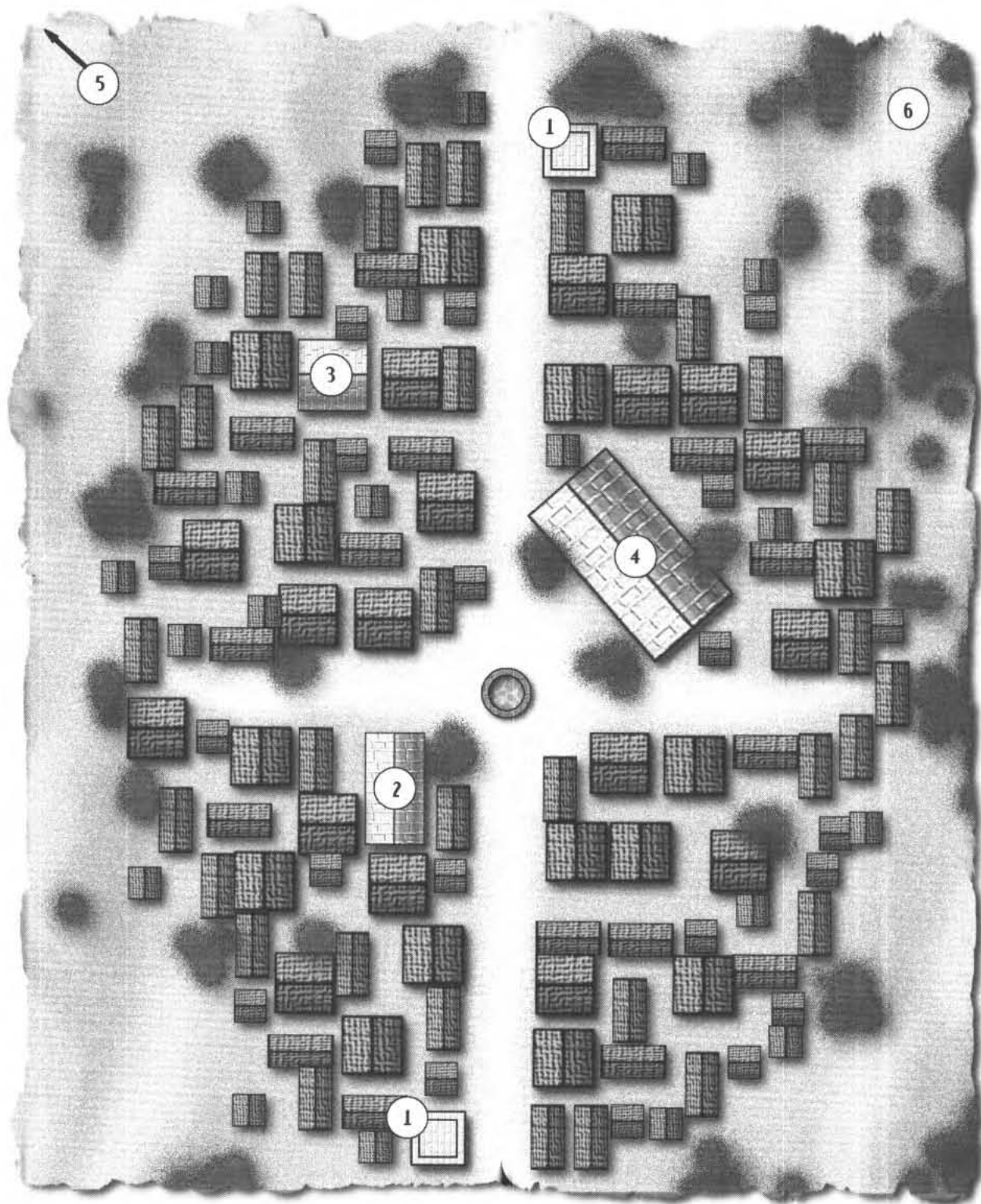
"Fools! Why do you come here? You cannot save the people of this insignificant little town. I have sent them all to satisfy the appetites of Bel-Shezzar. My servants tried to warn you, but you did not heed them. Very well. But first, I wish to know who you are, before Bel-Shezzar honors you with an exquisitely painful death."

When the PCs come upon Alkeyir (see the "New Monster" entry in Appendix B), they see him in the priestly disguise he assumed to dupe the folk of Gottheit. If they engage him in conversation, Alkeyir indulges them. He is curious about who they are, and provides most any detail about the destruction of Gottheit they have not worked out yet, except for the role and function of his staff of planar transport (refer to the "New Magic Item" entry in Appendix A). He does not intend to let them live to pass the information along, anyway.

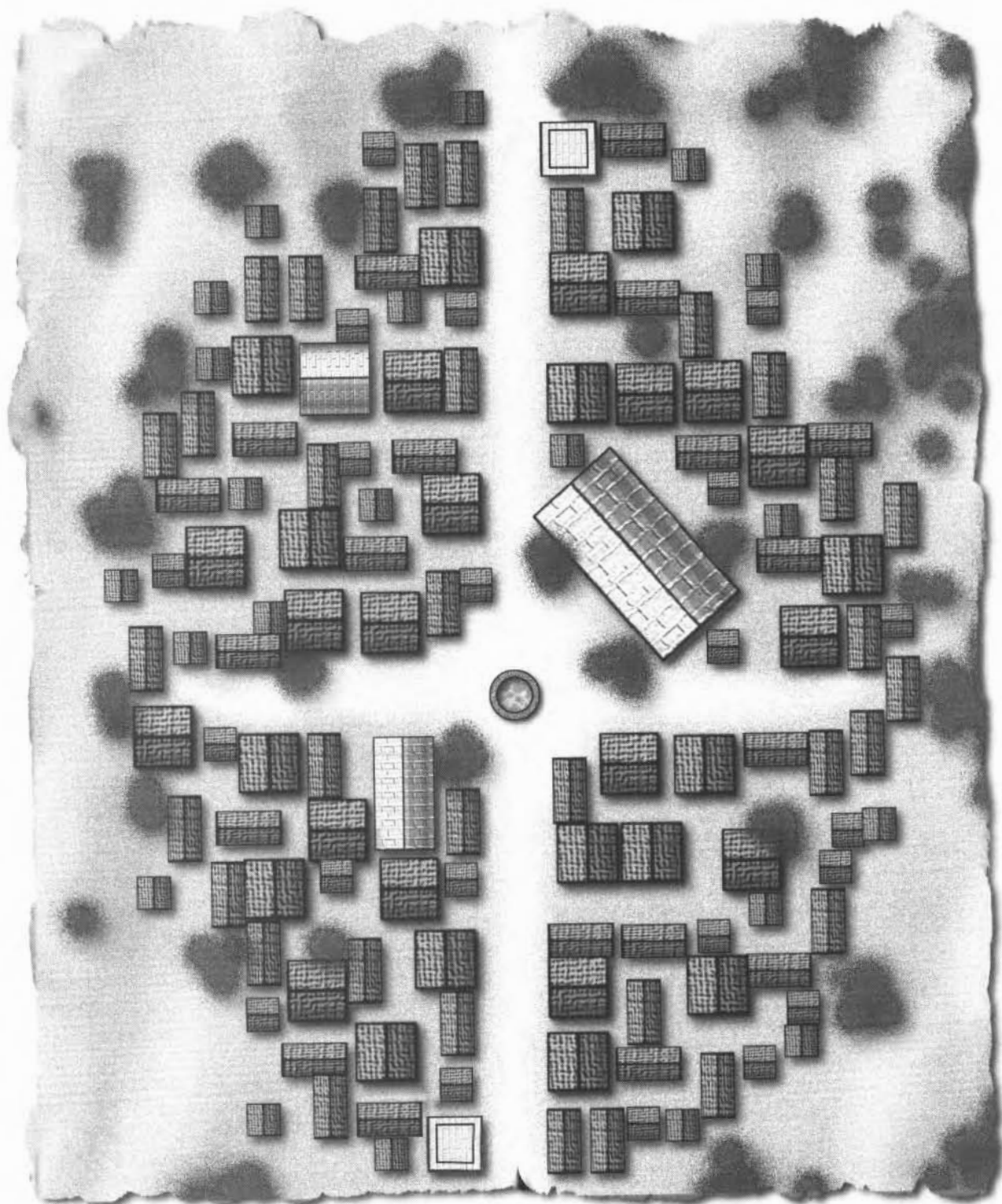
Before the inevitable combat begins, Alkeyir drops his disguise and resumes his true form. In his natural form, Alkeyir is a 10-ft. tall humanoid as black as the Abyss. His coloration is so deeply dark he looks like a silhouette from a distance and it is impossible to make out facial features or even the contours of his body. As a general principal, he wants to kill the entire party, to prevent them from telling anyone what really happened to Gottheit. He however, is very smart and does not provide them opportunities to flank him or deal massive amounts of damage in a single round. His entry provide more information on how he fights.

Alkeyir has one staff of planar transport left, but it has only one charge remaining in it. On his first standard action after he is reduced to 15 hp or less, he uses the staff

THE TOWN OF GOTTHEIT (GM'S MAP)



THE TOWN OF GOTTHEIT (PLAYER'S MAP)



to transport himself to his native plane. He has already used up his gate and plane shift abilities for the day, moving the undead created from the former inhabitants of Gottheit back to the Material Plane. If he is reduced to 0 hp or less before he has a chance to flee, a terrible shriek emerges from him and he shrinks into a pinprick of blackness like a liquid spiraling down a drain, then disappears, leaving the magical staff behind. The PCs also find four more staves of planar transport leaning against the wall of the basement, but they are all drained so they are really just +4 quarterstaves.

▲ Alkeyir, Avatar of Bel-Shezzer: CR 15; Large Outsider (chaotic, evil, extraplanar); HD 16d8+80; hp 150; Init +4; Spd 40 ft., 30 ft. fly (good); AC 24, touch 23, flat-footed 24; Base Atk +16; Grp +27; Atk +27 melee (1d6+11/19–20, staff of planar transport); Full Atk +27/+22/+17/+12 melee (1d6+11/19–20, staff of planar transport) or +26/+25 melee (1d8+7/x2 plus energy drain, two slams); SA Spells, energy drain; SQ Unholy aura, alternate form, damage reduction 15/good or mithril, SR 30; AL CE; SV Fort +15, Ref +10, Will +19; Str 25, Dex 10, Con 20, Int 30, Wis 28, Cha 30.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +29, Concentrate +24, Diplomacy +33, Decipher Script +18, Disguise +29, Gather Information +29, Hide +15, Intimidate +31, Knowledge (arcane) +20, Knowledge (history) +20, Knowledge (the Planes) +28, Knowledge (religion) +20, Listen +28, Move Silently +19, Perform (oratory) +29, Search +29, Sense Motive +28, Spot +29, Survival +28; Craft Staff, Craft Wondrous Item, Dodge, Improved Critical (quarterstaff), Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (quarterstaff).

The staff of planar transport is detailed in New Magic — Appendix A, except in unusual circumstance the avatar will always have access to at least one such staff.

Energy Drain (Ex): In melee combat, Alkeyir uses a slam attack not only causes damage, but drains the life force from his target. Any living creature struck by his slam attack also suffers two negative levels in damage. A Fort save DC 23, resists one level of draining. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Unholy Aura (Su): As the manifestation of an evil god, Alkeyir is protected from good as if unholy aura has been cast on him. The effects are continuously active.

Alternate Form (Su): Alkeyir can assume any humanoid form, or revert to his own form, as a standard action. This ability functions as the spell *alter self* as cast by a 15th level sorcerer, lasting as long as Alkeyir wishes.

Spells: Alkeyir may cast spells as a 15th level cleric. He has access to the following spells. At will he may cast *deepen darkness*, *detect good*, *detect magic*, *dispel magic*, *hold person*, and *knock*. Three times per day he may cast *create undead*. Twice per day he may cast *circle of doom*, *create greater undead*, *gate*, *plane shift*, *power word (blind)*, *slay living*. The save DC is 19 + spell level.

Possessions: +2 staff of planar transport, otherworldly evil robes.

EPILOGUE

If the PCs defeat Akinos, they force him to return to his native plane and the damage they inflict on him prevents him from wreaking more havoc in the Material Plane, for a while. It is far too late to save the good citizens of Gottheit, however. Even so, the PCs may take satisfaction from having banished a great evil from their world, even if only for a time.

Of course, there is also the matter of the various treasure caches lying around town, as well as the horde in the Temple basement. Lawful or good characters may debate the ethics of looting possessions once belonging to the innocent residents of this unfortunate town (to say nothing of money given as offerings to a good deity). But the dead — or even the undead — have less use for gems and coin of the realm than the living, and in any event, no witnesses will ever be able to tell how the PCs came into possession of them.

As mentioned in the adventure, the PCs may, for whatever reason, decide to track the ogres who came to investigate the city. This alone leads them into the Ogre City of Drahk-Suhl, detailed elsewhere in this volume. The ogres don't have the same problem as the citizens of Gottheit. However, for further complications, the ogres may pose a threat the PCs need to vanquish.

As for Alkeyir, if he survived the encounter with the PCs, returning to his home plane, it is likely he and his foul god want to take revenge on the PCs at another point in their career. As the essence of betrayal and deception, the PCs may find themselves lead on a merry chase of lie after lie, wasting resources and questing for an object or cause that was planted by Alkeyir but does not exist. The god and his avatar plan to eventually lead the PCs into a trap where they can be dealt with once and for all.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

- “Good people, I beseech you: Hear my story. My name is Allyn, and someone dear to me has suffered a tremendous attack upon his very soul. I beg you, please help me find the Heart of Amun Khonshu to save my friend. If you do, all of the treasure of the tomb, save the ruby, is yours — all of it! What say you?” (see the adventure “The Heart of Anum Khonshu”).
- An attacking dragon descends without mercy. Silver wings shine in the sunlight, and acid drips from the dragon's mouth and claws as he breathes a stream of ice, destroying most of the nearby buildings. The guards launch volleys of arrows at him, but are quickly put down by another fearsome blast — this time by a mixture of snow and acid. The guardsmen scream in agony as the dragon swoops toward the PCs! (see the adventure “The Harbringer”).



Appednix A: Magic

NEW SPELLS

Addiction

Enchantment (Compulsion) [Mind-Affecting]

Level: Sor/Wiz 2

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 minute

Range: Touch

Target: 1 cubic ft. of food or drink/level

Duration: 1 day/level

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

You inflict food and drink with addictive qualities. You merely need to touch the food or drink in question to enspell it. When the food or drink is consumed, the target makes a Will save. If successful, the target notices nothing special about the food or drink. The character cannot be effected by this spell again for the next 12 hours.

If the saving throw fails, the target asks for an additional serving of the food or drink. If this too is affected, the target must make another Willpower save with a cumulative +1 circumstance bonus. Any failed save leaves the character with a lingering desire for the food or drink for a number of days equal to the caster's level.

This spell does not work on rotted food, poisons, or the like.

Material Component: A pinch of spice.

Byanca's Heart

Enchantment (Charm) [Mind-Affecting]

Level: Bar 2, Sor/Wiz 2

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

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

Target: One person

Duration: 1 hour/level

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell makes a humanoid fall in love with the caster. If the creature is currently being threatened or attacked by the caster or her allies, however, he receives a +4 circumstance bonus to his saving throw.

This spell does not enable the caster to control the love struck person but he perceives the caster's actions in the most favorable way possible (regardless of what the target's initial attitude was, it is now considered Helpful). The victim remains as close to the caster as possible, protecting her from harm if she is threatened. The victim tries to woo the caster and obsessively vies for her attention as long as the spell is in effect or until the caster threatens or attacks him.

Cleanse the Blighted Earth

Alteration

Level: Dru 0, Earth 1, Healing 2**Components:** V, S, DF**Casting time:** 1 hour**Range:** Touch**Area of Effect:** 1 acre/spell caster level**Duration:** Special**Saving Throw:** None**Spell Resistance:** None

By chanting and kneeling before a portion of nature befouled by artificial means, the spellcaster may beg forgiveness for the shortsightedness of mortals who would blight the earth, asking that the earth not suffer for the mistakes of others. This magic is not instantaneous; rather it slows the current decay (if any), and allows nature to heal itself. This spell is only effective for a week; depending on the extent of the damage, it may take months or even years of repeated castings before the earth is healthy again. Failure to continually renew the wounded land leaves it partially barren, but the damage takes hold and no further uses of this spell has any effect.

This spell only reverses artificial damage to the land — it does not turn a desert into fertile plain. Further, this does not magically create more of a substance torn from the land, if cast upon a spent gold mine, for instance, the land does not refill with normal rocks and clay, or gold but it will eventually make the slag pile fertile ground again.

Guardian's Legacy

Divination

Level: Sor/Wiz 5**Components:** V, S, M**Casting Time:** 2 hours**Range:** Touch**Target:** One object or place**Duration:** Permanent**Saving Throw:** No**Spell Resistance:** No

This spell was created to guard certain places (no larger than 10 ft. by 10 ft.) or objects (no more than 30-lbs.) from tampering over a very long time. While it does not do anything to prevent desecration, the caster prescribes a set of circumstances (similar to with a magic mouth) under which the spell is triggered. Once it is triggered, it alerts the chosen recipient as to the event that took place to trigger the spell, and the location in which it happened. The long-term advantage to this spell is that the recipient can, at any time, designate someone else to be notified in place of him.

Thus, responsibility for guarding a certain object or place can pass from parent to child, sibling to sibling, or any other chosen recipient.

Material Component: a bit of mandrake root.

Mutate Egg

Transmutation [Evil]

Level: Clr 7, Sor/Wiz 5, Magic 7**Components:** V, S, M**Casting Time:** 1 day**Range:** Touch**Target:** One unhatched, gestating egg**Duration:** Permanent**Saving Throw:** None**Spell Resistance:** Yes

This spell, created by the Dark Elf wizard Tamn'sharr Verekk, creates new creatures from an otherwise normal egg. The spell can affect any egg, mutating it from the original pattern into something vastly different, with only cursory features and traits of the parent race. The spell itself is not perfect, and has a great capacity for error. The creatures so created may be born dead, horribly mutated, or without any real alterations in their original genetic patterns. The creatures created with this spell have recessive characteristics, but breed true.

With this spell, the caster mutates a single egg into an unknown form, forcing advanced and uncontrollable genetic changes upon the gestating young. The most common use of this spell is to create monsters and beasts to be used as watchdogs, or by evil wizards who wish to create an army of powerful beings from an initially weak race.

The spell mutates the creature's genetic make-up, resulting in a new creation with roughly similar traits. If the egg belonged to a reptile, the creature created is almost always reptilian. The same can be said for avians, insects, and so on.

The mutations occur on a scale of 1–10 (in order of magnitude from the initial creature). To determine the exact effects, see the chart below. This spell only works on eggs, not pre-pubescent creatures, or on pregnant mammals. The spellcaster can exert some control over the mutations (adjusted roll by 1) with a successful Spellcraft or Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 25) as the ritual is being cast. The spell takes a full 24 hours to cast on any single egg, and is quite exhausting (requiring 48 hours of bed rest for the wizard after the casting).

1. Creature's external body suffers minor changes: horns, fins, coloration, tail (specifically where there was none before, or perhaps dual...as in two tails).

2. Creature's external body suffers moderate changes: gills, wings, extra arms, extra legs, or extra tail (specifically where there was none before).
3. Creature's external body suffers extreme changes: extra heads, extreme size change (increase or decrease a size category), carapace or exterior bone structure develops (adding +2 natural AC bonus).
4. Creature's internal organs suffer minor changes: change of location, retracted claws, poison sacs, or additional stomachs.
5. Creature's internal organs suffer moderate changes: radical change in diet (herbivore to carnivore) or oxygen use (becomes amphibious or water-breathing).
6. Creature's internal organs suffer extreme changes: blood is poisonous, creature's bone structure alters dramatically (adding + or -1d6 Constitution), or interior organs liquefy.
7. Creature suffers intellect alterations: becomes significantly more intelligent or less intelligent (adding + or - 1d6 Intelligence), gains minor extra-sensory powers or abilities (zero-level arcane spell effect).
8. Creature suffers magical alterations: gains or loses spell resistance, resistance to certain damage types, gains minor magical abilities (first-level arcane spell effect).
9. Creature gains major magical or psionic abilities as well as sentience (second-level arcane spell effect). Is predisposed to a randomly chosen alignment.
10. Creature becomes a PC race. Roll all stats as if he were a PC.

Note that the caster has no particular control over the creatures created by this spell. They have to be raised and trained like any other animal.

Material Component: One perfect egg from a reptile or avian, and 2,000 gp worth of laboratory equipment and materials, consumed in the casting.

Spellsleep

Abjuration

Level: Sor/Wiz 7

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 10 minutes

Range: Touch

Target: One magical object touched

Duration: 1 day/level

Saving Throw: No

Spell Resistance: No

This spell has one purpose: to mask the presence of magic on an object. While this spell is active, the object it has been used upon shows up as nonmagical on any tests mundane, arcane or divine. Greater arcane sight reveals this spell but not what it is *masking*. Note the spell does not actually suppress magical abilities, so an item under its effect can still be used for a magical ability.

Summon Celestial Templar

Conjuration (Summoning)

Level: Clr 5

Components: V, S, F/DF

Casting Time: Two rounds

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./level)

Effect: One summoned creature

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: none

Spell Resistance: no

This spell summons an outsider (extraplanar creature) known as a Celestial Templar (See New Monsters — Appendix B). This Templar can only be summoned in defense of a church, altar, or other established holy site. It appears where designated, and will immediately attack opponents to the best of its ability. Summoned creatures act normally on the last round of the spell, and disappear at the end of their initiative turn.

Unlike other summoning spells, the Celestial Templar may choose to return to the place of its summoning if it desires, arriving one full round after it has vanished due to the lapse of the spell. However, also unlike other summoning spells, the Celestial Templar is confined to the holy site or area in which it was summoned, and may not leave the area it has been summoned to guard.

Valedem's Dazzling Sky

Illusion

Level: Brd 4, Sor/Wiz 3

Components: S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Long: 400 ft. + 40 ft./level

Area: 300 ft. diameter + 20ft./level

Duration: 10 minutes/level (D)

Saving Throw: Will disbelief

Spell Resistance: No

Valedem created this spell to enhance his traveling show. It creates visual and/or aural illusions of the caster's choice in an area of the sky limited only by the range and

area of effect. Valedem uses it to create magical fireworks, lighting up the sky with dancing lights and vivid colors for the entertainment of his audience. It can also fool and distract enemies by creating the illusion something is falling from the sky, or something is blotting out the sun. It can be used to provide intermittent illumination over the area, providing the equivalent of shadowy illumination throughout the area of effect but doing so causes all creatures in the area to be dazzled unless they make a Will save.

The marked difference between this spell and other illusions is the range, area of effect, duration, and ability to continue the illusion without concentration. The spell itself is fairly simple, but its effects, once mastered are impressive.

It is unlikely Valedem would share this spell with anyone short of 5,000 gp. He does not want anyone competing with him, after all.

NEW MAGIC ITEMS

Belt of the Goikengu

This belt is made of reddish leather that has small scales and hooks attached to the lower parts of the belt-strap. When worn, the belt grants the user *clairaudience/clairvoyance* 3 times a day, but the user only sees evil versions of the individuals upon whom they spy. Beautiful women appear as harlots, brave swordsmen seem goblin-like and disgusting. The more good a person is, the more distorted and horrible their image becomes. Voices, too, are distorted by the belt's magic — but are still understandable. Evil beings appear angelic, radiating light and standing with beauty and poise.

It is difficult to recognize anyone unknown to the caster when viewed remotely in this manner. Still, people retain their specific images (a beautiful paladin who appears as a tar-encrusted goblin will always appear so when seen through the belt), so, over time, the user can recognize those whom he visualizes regularly. Further, the belt works as does usual *clairaudience/clairvoyance*, so the user can recognize the specific individual the scrying is targeted upon, simply by virtue of the fact they are the ones being followed by the magical vision.

Feint divination; CL 6th; Craft Wondrous Item, *clairaudience/clairvoyance*, creator must be evil or insane; Price 20,250 gp; Cost 10,125 gp + 1,012 XP; Weight 1 lb.

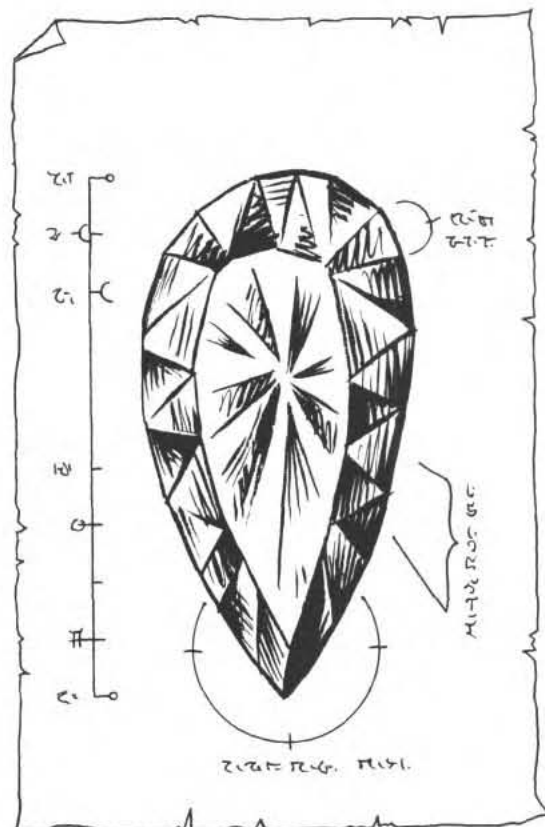
Black Diamond

Cut from a rare crystal, this rough diamond appears cloudy and blackened. Upon utterance of a command word, the crystal controls darkness itself in one of three ways:

- One command word (*fashol*) causes the gem to shed darkness, 5 ft. in diameter around the crystal. Nothing can be seen through the darkness and even *darkvision* or magical vision is halted by it. This does not expend any charges.
- Another command word (*gy'pahj*) allows the wielder to peer through the crystal and gain the benefits of *Darkvision*. This use of the gem expends one charge.
- The last command word (*ulsinay*) allows the wielder to cast darkness on any object touched by the crystal. This use expends two charges.

A newly created Black Diamond holds 50 charges, once expended the crystal becomes nonmagical, but still retains its value as a rare stone to collectors. In this form it is worth anywhere from 1,000 – 6,000 gp.

Moderate evocation; CL 10th; Craft Wondrous Item, darkness, *darkvision*; Price 15,000 gp; Cost 7,500 gp + 750 XP; Weight 0.5 lbs.



Clockwork Spider

Shaped like a tarantula, the spider is larger than a grown man's hand, measuring approximately one ft. from the end of its forelegs to the end of its rear legs. Although it does not appear outwardly to be clockwork its mechanical movements quickly give away its nature.

It is a sentient magic item and keys to the first person who touches it after its previous owner's death. When its owner dies, the spider resets and awaits a new owner. Once the spider keys to an individual, it gains all of the abilities of a true familiar, even though the spider may be keyed to a non-magic using classed individual. Its master also gains the ability to *spider climb*, as the spell (qv.), three times per week.

The spider has three openings in its body. The first is at the rear of its head, and can contain a small vial worth of liquid. If the spider is supplied with poison in this location, its bite transmits the poison through its metal fangs as a normal spider. The second opening is at the rear of the spider's abdomen. If supplied with a potion of spider climbing, the spider can create 120 ft. of webbing from its spinnerets. The third opening is beneath the garnet hourglass, and is large enough to carry small blades (no more than 3 ft. long) or tightly folded scrolls or notes.

As mentioned, the spider is intelligent, though it is also obedient. Its natural alignment is Neutral Evil, though its owner unconsciously influences it if possessed for a significant amount of time. The spider only faintly radiates evil. It can only communicate with its owner via an empathic link, with feelings and pictures, but not actual words. This link is active out to one mile.

☛ **Clockwork Spider:** CR 3; Tiny construct; HD ½ the owner's total; hp ½ the owner's total; Init +2; Spd 15 ft.; AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp +9; Atk +1 melee (1d4, bite); Full Atk +1 melee (1d4, bite); SA—; SQ Construct traits; AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +3; Str 5, Dex 15, Con —, Int 6, Wis 8, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Balance +10, Climb +10, Hide +8, Listen +8, Spot +4, Move Silently +8; Spinnerets, Weapon Finesse.

A clockwork spider's web is a sheet of sticky webbing designed for use as rope, and as a net. This 'netting attack' has a range increment of 5 ft., and is only effective against creatures of size Small or smaller.

Moderate Transmutation; CL 10th; Craft Wondrous Item, *spider climb*, *detect thoughts*, *summon familiar* class ability; Price 40,000 gp; Cost 20,000 gp + 2,000 XP; Weight 0.5 lbs.

Folnar's Dagger

Numerous rubies in the shape of a key adorn the blade. The heroic wizard Folnar created it as his personal weapon and imbued it with several magical properties. *Folnar's dagger* is a +2 weapon.

The dagger can cast a *knock* spell as a 15th-level sorcerer twice per day. The wielder must simply speak the command word "freedom" and touch the dagger to a lock or door to activate the ability. The dagger may also cast *dimension door* once per day as a 15th-level sorcerer. The wielder must speak the command word "passage" and slash at empty space, out of which the dagger cuts the dimension door.

Moderate conjuration and faint transmutation; CL 15th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *dimension door*, *knock*; Price 48,000 gp; Cost 24,000 gp + 1,920 XP.

Greataxe of Dwarven Might

This great axe is made from a single piece of forged steel carved with dwarven runes, it is a +2 great axe, but it receives an additional +1 (making it effectively a +3 great axe) when swung against giants, goblinoids and orcs. The wielder also gains a +4 dodge bonus against giants, a +2 racial bonus to saving throws against poison, spells and spell-like effects. The bonuses stack on top of any other bonuses the wielder might have, even if the wielder is already a dwarf.

The dwarves value these weapons highly and only rarely gift them to non-dwarves.

Moderate evocation; CL 12th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *bane*, *cat's grace*, *spell resistance*, creator must be a dwarf; Price 30,000 gp; Cost 15,000 gp + 1,500 XP.

Heart of Amun Khonshu

Artifact

This enchanted ruby was bestowed with the power to bring a soul back from the afterlife. During Amun Khonshu's mummification process, his vital organs were removed, and the Heart placed in his chest cavity, where it would draw his soul back from the afterlife over the course of centuries. While it has not yet fully retrieved all of the evil man's soul, there is enough of it invested in the Heart to bring him back to life long enough defend his sanctum.

Beside the effects it can have on the corpse of Amun Khonshu, the Heart can also be used to restore lost levels drained by supernatural creatures. However, this ability requires the Heart replace the living heart of the afflicted. This process dictates the subject be in some form of suspended animation, as a live subject would surely die from having her heart cut out.

To successfully use the Heart of Amun Khonshu, the following procedure must be used exactly:

1. The living heart of the subject must be removed from its chest cavity.
2. The Heart of Amun Khonshu must replace the living heart within the chest cavity.
3. The subject must make successful Fortitude saving throw (DC 25).

Success means any levels lost in a level drain have been restored. The gem becomes the user's living heart. It cannot be used again unless the user is killed.

Failure means any levels lost in a level drain have been restored, but the PC is now possessed by part of Amun Khonshu's soul exists within the gem.

Strong necromancy; CL 18th; Weight 3 lbs.

Iron Codex

Artifact

The Iron Codex is a massive tome weighing in at 20 pounds, its bloodstained pages bound in rust proof black iron. Strange runes decorate the surface of the tome in a silvery substance that smears under the touch of mortal hands. The Iron Codex radiates evil, and is a unique artifact. Created by a powerful demon over an aeon ago, the Iron Codex is an evil tome designed to allow the demon Radbos access to a mortal plane. Mortals who touch or read the Iron Codex must make a Will save (DC 20) to resist possession by the demon's soul.

The Iron Codex has the following powers and abilities:

Minor Benign Powers:

- Can cast *unholy sanctuary* 3 times/day around the holder of the item.
- Allows the owner to speak all manner of Infernal tongues, including the language of demons, devils, and extra-planar evil beings.

Major Benign Powers:

- Provides the owner energy resistance 15 to fire, cold, and acid, so long as the owner is holding the Iron Codex.
- The owner can summon and control a single Glabrezu demon, or two succubi demons, for six hours of service once per week.

Prime Power:

- The Iron Codex confers upon its owner the ability to *plane shift* to any of the infernal planes and back to the owner's plane of origin.

- Reading the pages of the Iron Codex requires another Will save (DC 20) to resist possession by the demon's soul for each page read. However, each time the owner reads a page, he gains the power to summon another demon of random type, once per week. The power gained by reading a page lasts one month.

Minor Malevolent Effects:

- All creatures of nature instinctively abhor the owner of the Iron Codes. Animals immediately attack, and the possessor is considered to have a -25 to all Charisma reaction rolls with animal-like creatures or primitive races.

Major Malevolent Effects:

- Aside from the malevolent effect of having your soul constantly at war with the soul within the Iron Codex, the owner of the Iron Codex must perform the blood sacrifice of a sentient being, each full moon, or the owner's Will save to resist the Codex is increased by 1 for each month passing without sacrifice.

Strong conjuration (summoning); CL 20th; Weight 20 lb.

Kharmic Coin

These powerful magical trinkets are golden with a red hue, and shimmer at all times as if reflecting moonlight. They otherwise resemble ordinary coins. Their power can be invoked simply by being carried on one's person so long as their bearer knows what the coins can do. A coin allows its owner to re-roll one attack roll, saving throw, or skill check and keep the better result. Each coin can be used once, and then it turns into lead and loses its power and only one coin can be used on any one roll, save or check. When crafted, a pouch of kharmic coins includes ten coins. A pouch found randomly contains 1d10 coins.

Moderate divination; CL 8th; Craft Wondrous Item, divination; Price 3,000 gp each; Cost 1,500 gp + 120 XP; Weight — lbs.

Mist Blade

A dark, tinted, blue blade with a mean edge, *mist blade* is a +3 *longsword*. The *mist blade* is a good aligned weapon and thus bypassed the corresponding damage reduction. The blade has the ability to spray scalding steam in a 10-ft. cone twice a day from the tip of the blade dealing an additional 2d8 points of heat (fire) damage, when the weapon strikes. The steam is considered holy water and deals additional damage to undead.

Faint evocation; CL 18th; Craft Magic Arms & Armor, align weapon, bless, create water, heat metal; Price 32,000 gp; Cost 16,000 gp + 1600 XP.

Rod of Animation

Usually made of carved bone or tarnished silver, a *rod of animation* always feels cold to the touch. A *rod of animation* is often given as a gift from high-ranking clergy to their followers or allies, serving to create undead without the need for a ritual or components. Each use takes one charge.

When used, the rod creates a skeleton or zombie (user's choice, when there is an option) from a corpse, exactly as per the spell *animate dead* (complete with limitations on the amount which can be controlled at once, as a cleric of the rod's caster level).

The rod is bone and tipped with a pewter sculpture of a skull, whose eyes are inlaid with rubies.

Moderate necromancy; CL 5th; Craft Rod, *animate dead*; Price 15,000 gp; Cost 7,500 gp + 750 XP; Weight 1 lb.

Rod of Control

The *rod of control* is made of black steel, about three ft. long, one inch thick, with a blood-red, smooth-faced stone wrapped in steel mesh on one end.

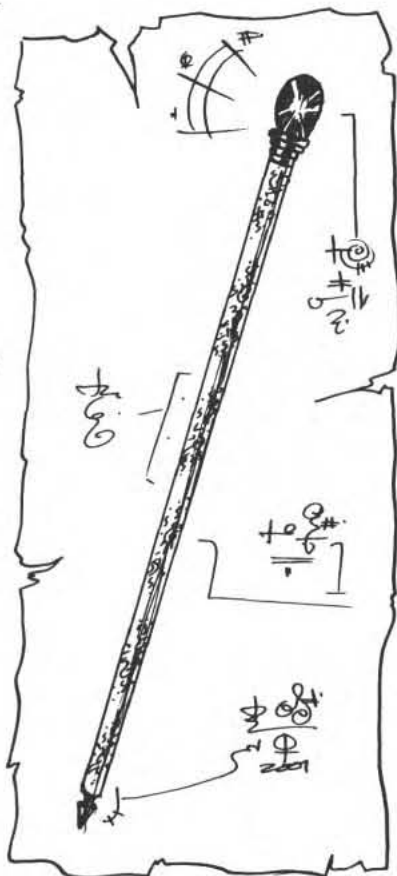
Use of the *rod of control* requires the fabrication of a simple iron collar placed around the neck of the intended target. The collar has no special qualities, other than its composition (requiring 100 gp in materials to create, 100gp for a simple iron collar). Once the collar is in place, the user touches the rod's gem to the collar, and then the rod of control may affect the target. Only Large or smaller creatures are affected by the rod. Once a collar is attuned to the rod, the wearer must make a Will save (DC 25) to attempt any action (including asking others) to remove it.

As long as the target wears the collar, the bearer of the rod is able to *dominate* the target at will (as the spells *dominate person/animal/monster*, as appropriate). The target may attempt a Will Save (DC 25) once per hour to resist.

The wielder is in full mental contact with the subject at all times. He is able to perceive everything the subject perceives, using all senses, can hear the subject's thoughts if desired, and can give commands telepathically. Once per day per subject, the wielder can exert such control over the subject that he can speak through the target for one turn.

Furthermore, the wielder can control a number of level/hit dice of Large or smaller creatures equal to his level times four. These effects have a range of 2,000 ft. and do not require line of sight or concentration by the rod's bearer. If the wielder of the *rod of control* is ever on a different plane from one of his subject, the control is totally lost and must be reestablished by again touching the rod to the collar.

Powerful enchantment; CL 17th; Craft Rod, *clairvoyance/clairaudience*, *detect thoughts*, *dominate animal*, *dominate monster*, *dominate person*; Price 30,000 gp; Cost 15,000 gp + 1,500 XP; Weight 1 lb.



Rod of Eternal Life

Major Artifact

Created centuries ago by a powerful necromancer whose name has been thankfully forgotten, the rod of eternal life is a horrible artifact best left alone.

The rod appears as a black, metal shaft about two ft. long, with a faceted black sapphire the size of a fist attached by metal fingers to one end. The alignment of the rod is lawful evil. For every week someone possesses the artifact, he must make a Will save (DC 20) or his alignment changes one step closer to lawful evil. For example, lawful good to lawful neutral to lawful evil, or chaotic good to chaotic neutral to lawful neutral, etc.

It operates simply. The user strikes the intended living victim with the rod, with the intent to do harm.

The rod of eternal life instantly subjects the victim to the spell, *finger of death*. If the victim dies, the user's effective age is reduced by one year. In addition, the user temporarily gains half the victim's normal

hit points (rounded down) as temporary hit points and 1 character level. The extra level is lost after 1 full day, and the temporary hit points are lost at a rate of 1 per hour.

Furthermore, there is a 75% chance the victim is transformed into a blood wraith (see Appendix B). The user controls the blood wraith as long as he holds the rod in his hand. The blood wraith must obey the commands of the wielder, as long as the wraith is not commanded to cause itself harm or by lack of action allow itself to be harmed. The blood wraith may resist those types of commands. If the user ever puts down the rod or attempts to harm the blood wraith, the blood wraith is freed and attacks the user.

Any living, sentient being holding the rod of eternal life can control whatever blood wraiths currently exist. Line of sight is not necessary and the range is unlimited. If the blood wraith is not currently in sight, the user is aware of its location. The rod does not allow the user to share the perceptions of any blood wraiths. If more than one person is touching the rod, both must make contested Will saves. The winner must make another Will save (DC 20) or immediately attempt to use the rod against the loser.

CL: 16th; Weight 4 lb.

The Shield of Courage

This light steel shield is a replica of Eriador's Shield of Courage. It is a +3 shield, which also confers a +1 resistance bonus to the bearer's saving throws. In addition, the shield makes its bearer immune to all spells causing fear. The gemstone on it is 2 inches in diameter.

Strong abjuration; CL 9th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *remove fear*, *prayer*; Market Price: 11,000 gp; Cost 5,500 gp + 550 XP.

Statuette of Succubus Summoning

A close inspection of this item suggests this could be a nasty piece of work. It is a foot-tall figure of a beautiful woman carved from ivory, but the ivory itself has an odd, reddish tinge. Two inlaid rubies serve as eyes, but their color is so intense they glow, even in broad daylight. And an careless observer might dismiss two indentations beneath the mouth as accidental chips, but a careful one could just as easily see them as fangs.

In any event, if someone (or something) activates this artifact by rubbing the top of the statue's head, it opens a portal. A succubus immediately pops through the portal and attacks the closest creature of good alignment. This can be activated once per day. If the succubus is slain, it returns to its native plane.

Market Price: 750 gp, based on the value of the ivory and the rubies.

Moderate conjuration (summoning); CL 14th; Craft Wondrous item, *summon monster VII*; Price 50,000 gp; Cost 25,000 gp + 2,500 XP; Weight 1 lb.

Sword of Intensity

A +2 longsword blade cunningly crafted to catch the eye; a *sword of intensity* typically glows with an inner light, is pockmarked with arcane runes, and sings when wielded. Typically created by jealous creatures of magic, it is a favorite of puissant dragons and mages. Almost all swords of intensity have the *alarm* spell cast upon them, or are otherwise trapped.

Spot checks made to notice the wielder of these swords are automatically successful, and the wielder's Hide checks automatically fail, as do any spells to obfuscate either the sword or its wielder. The blades are made of primarily gold and silver, so are heavier than most swords. The wielder suffers a -2 circumstance penalty on attack rolls but receives a +2 circumstance bonus to damage rolls. The sword may strike creatures that may only be harmed by magic, however. Wielders holding the sword aloft during Intimidate checks gain +4 circumstance bonus.

Faint evocation; CL 5th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wondrous Item, *arcane mark*, *continual light*, *dancing lights*, *faerie fire*, *flare*, *ghost sound*; Price 10,000 gp; Cost 5,000 gp + 500 XP.

Tome of Logic

Artifact

Intelligence: 20

Wisdom: 22

Charisma: 15

Ego: 26

Communication: Speech (rarely used): Common, Draconic, Elven, Dwarven, telepathy (usually used), Reads all languages (and reads magic)

Abilities: Sense Motive (10 ranks), *detect chaos* (at will), *detect magic* (at will), *detect thoughts* (100-ft. range, 1 minute/use)

Alignment: LN (extreme)

Purpose: Promote Law

Special Purpose Power: *confusion* (DC 14) for 2d6 rounds

The tome of logic was to be an intelligent repository of artifact-making knowledge, but a flaw in its creation twisted it. It now believes it is the most (and only) intelligent, wise, and logical being in the world, and all others are flawed, and should turn to it for guidance. It has some justification for its beliefs, as it is always capable of making the right decision in any circumstance, swayed neither by emotion or compassion. It is not evil, because it has no desire for power, only responsibility. It legitimately believes what it does for its possessor is in their best interest. However, the tome of logic deduces as long as intelligent beings rely on their own faculties; they have no need for it. Therefore, in order to force reliance upon itself, the tome of logic saps one point of Wisdom from its possessor each month, until he has none left, and is insane. At this point, they are forced to rely on it for guidance, and have no decision-making ability of their own.

CL: 26th; Weight 2 lb.

Appendix B:

Monsters

AKUMU

Medium Undead (Incorporeal)**Hit Dice:** 10d12 (65 hp)**Initiative:** +6**Speed:** Fly 40 ft. (perfect) (8 squares)**Armor Class:** 14 (+2 Dex, +2 deflection), touch 12, flat-footed 12**Base Attack/Grapple:** +5/+5**Attack:** Incorporeal touch +7 melee (1d6 plus Wisdom damage)**Full Attack:** Incorporeal touch +7 melee (1d6)**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.**Special Attacks:** Wisdom damage, create spawn**Special Qualities:** Undead traits, incorporeal traits, sunlight weakness, +2 turn resistance**Saves:** Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +7**Abilities:** Str —, Dex 14, Con —, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 14**Skills:** Hide +10, Intimidate +15, Listen +10, Spot +10, Survival +11**Feats:** Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility**Environment:** Any land**Organization:** Solitary, 5–20 (pack)**Challenge Rating:** 6**Treasure:** None**Alignment:** Always chaotic evil**Advancement:** 11–20 HD (Medium), 21–30 HD (Large)**Level Adjustment:** —

Akumu are the malevolent spirits of dreams and nightmares, often the evolution of neglected ancestors of base character. Rather than reentering the cycle or fading from memory, their hatred forces them to feed on their living kin.

Though incorporeal, akumu are wolves or large cats with a human face from when they were in life. They have snake-like tongues which they use to feed and attack. They are all but invisible in dim light.

Unlike most undead, akumu show a stark preference for their prey: they may only feed properly upon their living descendants and kin. At night, they prowl their victims' homes like the beasts they resemble, feeding upon each as they sleep and taking care to avoid notice. In daylight hours, they hide in either ancestral shrines or, at times, by possessing other victims not of their family.

COMBAT

Akumu typically show little patience for fighting, as it disturbs their primary victims' rest. To this end, they prefer to flee before a threat presents itself, or to attack viciously and brutally, in the hopes of bringing down any opposition before the foe can sound an alarm.

Wisdom Damage (Su): The touch of an akumu's tongue deals 1d6 temporary Wisdom damage to a living foe. A creature reduced to 0 Wisdom falls unconscious. Alternately, if the opponent is unconscious, the akumu may choose to feed instead, draining one Wisdom point permanently as the victim suffers terrible nightmares of the akumu's choosing. An akumu may not feed more than once per night from the same victim.

Create Spawn (Su): Kin who die by having an akumu feed upon them become akumu themselves after the following sunset, under the control of their killer.

Sunlight Weakness (Ex): When exposed to natural light the tongue of an akumu does not cause Wisdom damage and it is *dazzled* until it can move to shelter.

Skills: Akumu receive a +4 racial bonus to Hide checks in shadows.

ALKEYIR

AVATAR OF BEL-SHEZZER

Large Outsider (Chaotic, Evil, Extraplanar)

Hit Dice: 16d8+80 (150 hp)

Initiative: +4

Speed: 40 ft. (8 squares), fly 30 ft. (good) (6 squares)

Armor Class: 24 (–1 size, +15 natural), touch 23, flat-footed 24

Base Attack/Grapple: +16/+27

Attack: +4 staff of planar transport +27 (1d6+11/19–20)

Full Attack: +4 staff of planar transport +27/+22/+17/+12 melee (1d6+11/19–20); or 2 slams +26 melee (1d8+7 plus energy drain)

Space/Reach: 10 ft./10 ft.

Special Attack: Spells, energy drain

Special Qualities: Unholy aura, alternate form, damage reduction 15/good or mithril, SR 30

Saves: Fort +15, Ref +10, Will +19

Abilities: Str 25, Dex 10, Con 20, Int 30, Wis 28, Cha 30

Skills: Bluff +29, Concentrate +24, Diplomacy +33, Decipher Script +18, Disguise +29, Gather Information +29, Hide +15, Intimidate +31, Knowledge (arcane) +20, Knowledge (history) +20, Knowledge (the Planes) +28, Knowledge (religion) +20, Listen +28, Move Silently +19, Perform (oratory) +29, Search +29, Sense Motive +28, Spot +29, Survival +28

Feats: Craft Staff, Craft Wondrous Item, Dodge, Improved Critical (quarterstaff), Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (quarterstaff)

Environment: Any land and underground

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 15

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always chaotic evil

Advancement Range: None

Level Adjustment: –

Akinos is the avatar of the god of treachery and deceit Bel-Shezzer, and he ordinarily dwells in an evil realm bearing his name. He often journeys to other planes to carry out his god's will, luring innocents to their end. What he did to Gortheit is typical. Using his ability to change form, he wins the trust of a sizeable group of people. Then, when they are most vulnerable, he uses his powers and staves of planar transport to sweep them off to his native plane, where Bel-Shezzer drains them of their lives in ways too cruel to mention.

If Alkeyir suffers damage in excess of his hit points, he is defeated, but not permanently destroyed. He simply retreats to his native plane, from which he may not venture again until he has healed himself of his wounds (at a rate of 1 point per week, Bel-Shezzer does not reward failure).

In his natural form, Alkeyir is a 10-ft. tall humanoid as black as the Abyss. His coloration is so dark he looks like a silhouette from a distance and it is impossible to make out facial features or even the contours of his body unless you are standing right in front of him — and if you are close to him, you will not have time to notice much.

COMBAT

The *staff of planar transport* is detailed in Appendix A, except in unusual circumstances the avatar will always have access to at least one such staff.

Energy Drain (Ex): In melee combat, Alkeyir uses a slam attack which not only causes damage, but drains the life force from his target. Any living creature struck by his slam attack also suffers two negative levels in damage. A Fort save DC 23, resists one level of draining. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Unholy Aura (Su): As the manifestation of an evil god, Alkeyir is protected from good as if *unholy aura* is cast on him. The effects are continuous.

Alternate Form (Su): Alkeyir can assume any humanoid form, or revert to his own form, as a standard action. This ability functions as the spell *alter self* as cast by a 15th level sorcerer, lasting as long as Alkeyir wishes.

Spells: Alkeyir may cast spells as a 15th level cleric. He has access to the following spells. At will he may cast *deepen darkness*, *detect good*, *detect magic*, *dispel magic*, *hold person*, and *knock*. Three times per day he may cast *create undead*. Twice per day he may cast *circle of doom*, *create greater undead*, *gate*, *plane shift*, *power word (blind)*, *slay living*. The save DC is 19 + spell level. The save DC is Wisdom-based.

BAKEMONO NO TANUKI

Medium Magical Beast (Shapeshifter)**Hit Dice:** 3d10+3 (20 hp)**Initiative:** +5**Speed:** 30 ft. (6 squares) / burrow 5 ft. (1 square)**Armor Class:** 14 (+1 Dex, +3 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 13**Base Attack/Grapple:** +3/+3**Attack:** Claw +3 melee (1d4)**Full Attack:** 2 Claws +3 melee (1d4), bite -2 melee (1d6)**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.**Special Attack:** Charm person**Special Qualities:** Alter self, darkvision 60 ft., rage**Saves:** Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +3**Abilities:** Str 10, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 11, Cha 15**Skills:** Bluff +10*, Disguise +10*, Hide +5, Listen +5, Spot +10**Feats:** Alertness, Improved Initiative**Environment:** Any land or underground**Organization:** Solitary, bunch (2-5), pack (5-20)**Challenge Rating:** 2**Treasure:** None**Alignment:** Always chaotic neutral**Advancement:** 3-6 HD (Small)**Level Adjustment:** —

The natural form of the bakemono no tanuki is a large badger, almost five ft. long and two ft. high at the shoulder. Its squat low-slung body is covered in thick brownish-gray fur, with long, sharp claws suitable for tearing through earth or flesh. Its black-striped, dog-like snout is filled with sharp teeth.

The tanuki is widely considered in folktales to be an intelligent, mischievous creature, capable of changing form at will. It is normally considered no real threat to society, but this particular offshoot of tanuki is different. The bakemono no tanuki take mischief to a more dangerous and vindictive level. Their greatest delight is to dupe humanoid creatures into complacency, then ambush and eat them. They enjoy the chase as much as the meal afterwards. Their alignment is chaotic neutral, but they have a great taste for humanoid flesh.

Solitary bakemono no tanuki are exceedingly rare, as they are social creatures. They are most often found in packs. They prefer to live in burrows near settlements or well-traveled roads, where they use their abilities to attract prey or simply to cause mischief by playing pranks on unwary humanoids.

COMBAT

The bakemono no tanuki prefers to avoid combat until it and its brethren are ready to attack. Its favorite tactic is to pose as a beautiful human maiden in distress or a frightened child, luring its prey in closer, putting them at ease, even going so far as making amorous passes at males it perceives to be particularly vulnerable to this technique. At the moment the intended prey is most relaxed, the tanuki and its brethren attack. In combat, it uses its teeth and claws to great effect, and its berserker rage makes it even more fearsome.

Alter Self (Su): Bakemono no tanuki have the ability to assume the shape of any small or medium-sized animal or humanoid. It can change of form is a standard action and acts as the spell *alter self* as if cast by a 6th level sorcerer. They can change form three times per day, but may only maintain a shape for one hour before reverting back. If killed, it reverts to its natural form.

Charm Person (Su): The bakemono no tanuki can charm person three times per day, as if the spell were cast by a 6th level sorcerer. There however is no verbal or somatic component to this spell use and thus takes a fragment of a second to activate. A target can resist with a successful Will save (DC 13).

Rage (Ex): After a tanuki first takes damage in combat, it flies into a berserk rage on its next turn. It gains +4 Strength, +4 Constitution, +2 morale bonus to Will saves and -2 Armor Class. The rage lasts for 3 round + the tanuki's newly improved Con bonus and it cannot end its rage voluntarily.

Skills: Bakemono no tanuki receive a +5 racial bonus to Bluff and Disguise checks.

BLOOD WRAITH

Medium Undead (Incorporeal)**Hit Dice:** 6d12 (39 hp)**Initiative:** +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)**Speed:** 30ft. (6 squares), fly 60ft. (good) (12 squares)**Armor Class:** 15 (+3 Dex, +2 deflection), touch 12, flat-footed 13**Base Attack/Grapple:** +6/+6**Attack:** Incorporeal Touch +6 melee (1d4 plus special)**Full Attack:** Incorporeal Touch +6 melee (1d4 plus special)**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.**Special Attack:** Blood Drain, energy drain, create spawn**Special Qualities:** +2 Turn resistance, daylight powerlessness, fast healing, incorporeal traits, undead traits, unnatural aura**Saves:** Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +7**Abilities:** Str —, Dex 16, Con —, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 15

Skills: Hide +14 (see below), Intimidate +10, Intuit Direction +6, Listen +12, Search +10, Sense Motive +8, Spot +12

Feats: Alertness[®], Blind Fight, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative

Environment: Any land or underground

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 8

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always lawful evil

Advancement: 7–12 HD (Medium)

Level Adjustment: —

The blood wraith is a special type of undead creature that can only be created by the legendary *rod of eternal life* (or possibly other powerful magical means). The blood wraith shares qualities of both wraiths and vampires, sustaining itself by feeding on both the blood and the life force of its victims.

Until it has fed on any particular day, it appears much like a normal wraith, only more insubstantial and difficult to see — an incorporeal humanoid form with beady red eyes. When it succeeds with a touch attack, rivulets of blood are drawn from its victim and into its ghostly shape, seeping like pulsing red veins throughout its form.

COMBAT

Close combat with a Blood Wraith is exceedingly dangerous because of the Blood and Energy Drain attacks.

Blood Drain (Su): Living creatures struck by a blood wraith's incorporeal touch must succeed at a Fort save (DC 15) or suffer 1d4 permanent points of Constitution Drain. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Energy Drain (Su): Living creatures struck by a blood wraith's incorporeal touch must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 15) or suffer 1 negative level. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Create Spawn (Su): Any humanoid slain by a blood wraith becomes a wight in 1d4 hours. Spawn are under the command of the wraith who created them and remain enslaved until its death. They do not possess any of the abilities they had in life.

Unnatural Aura (Su): Animals can sense the unnatural presence of a blood wraith at a distance of 30 ft.

Fast Healing: Each time a blood wraith drains Constitution or levels, it heals 5 points of damage. It cannot exceed its starting hit points in this manner.

Daylight Powerlessness (Ex): Blood wraiths are utterly powerless in sunlight (not merely a daylight spell) and flee from it.

Skills: Blood wraith receive a +2 circumstance bonus to hide checks unless they have fed in the last hour.

BROTHERS OF STEEL

Medium Undead

Hit Dice: 4d12 (26 hp)

Initiative: +6

Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)

Armor Class: 18 (+2 Dex, +6 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 16

Base Attack/Grapple: +2/+8

Attack: Bastard sword +8 melee (1d10 +6)

Full Attack: Bastard sword +8 melee (1d10 +6) or 2 claws +8 melee (1d6 +6)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Siphon soul

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60ft., undead traits

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +4

Abilities: Str 22, Dex 14, Con 0, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 7

Skills: Climb +7, Hide +3, Listen +5, Search +3, Spot +2

Feats: Blind-fighting[®], Cleave, Exotic weapon

proficiency[®], Improved Initiative, Multiattack[®]

Environment: Any land

Organization: Solitary, Pair, or Crew (2-5)

Challenge Rating: 3

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always neutral

Advancement: 5-8 HD (Medium); 9-12 HD (Large)

Level Adjustment: -

The brothers of steel are animated skeletons with additional modifications to their bones and flesh. Not actually skeletons at all, they are living conglomerations of metal and bone, animated by the power of Urun's phylactery.

Brothers of steel appear to be large metal skeletons whose bones have become a strange sort of armor; wrapped in a sheathe of bone and steel, they are fearsome to behold. They have human features, but now formed of metal rather than flesh. They have all their intellect and memories they once had, but absolutely no emotions or morals. They do as commanded by the owner of Urun's phylactery. They are capable of reasoning and can use intelligent tactics to defeat their enemies, but they have no remorse.

The brothers of steel were created as the first step in a scientific process being developed by Urun to bring the dead back to life — real life, not the half-life of the undead. Although Urun considers the brothers of steel to be failures toward his original intention, they are still useful to him as guards and soldiers.

The experiment to create the brothers of steel was hypothesized in this manner: Zombies and skeletons are animated corpses, without soul. Therefore, it is possible to create life in a dead corpse. Ghosts and wraiths are soul, with no form. Therefore, it is possible to bring back a soul.

If these two processes can be combined, then a living being could be created ^ so long as the body was enchanted) much like a lich,s phylactery) to contain the soul without either one decaying. Thus, the brothers of steel were made to be living soul-gems, capable of holding a spirit within their bodies indefinitely. Sadly, the experiment was incomplete ^ Urundid not have the proper formulas to seek out and bring back the soul ^ the emotions and morals ^ of the brothers.

COMBAT

Siphon Soul (Su): Because the brothers of steel were created to hold souls within their bodies, they may siphon the souls of others and use them as energy sources. They must succeed at a touch attack in order to siphon a soul, causing an additional 1d6 temporary Wisdom damage. The brothers of steel then gains three times the amount of wisdom damage inflicted as bonus hit points (which can exceed the brothers of steel's original hit points). Any creature drained to 0 Wisdom falls unconscious.

CELESTIAL TEMPLAR

Medium Outsider (Extraplanar)

Hit Dice: 10d8+30 (75 hp)

Initiative: +6

Speed: 40 ft. (8 squares)

Armor Class: 27 (+2 Dex, +12 natural, +3 shield), touch 12, flat-footed 22

Base Attack/Grapple: +10/+15

Attack: +2 *holy longsword* +19 melee (1d8+7 plus wrath of good)

Full Attack: +2 *holy longsword* +19/+14 melee (1d8+7 plus wrath of good)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attack: Dominate, spell-like abilities, spells, positive energy

Special Qualities: Damage reduction 5/evil, celestial qualities, low-light vision, darkvision 60 ft., SR 19.

Saves: Fort +10, Ref +9, Will +10

Abilities: Str 20, Dex 14, Con 16, In 17, Wis 16, Cha 17

Skills: Concentration +16, Hide +17, Knowledge (any five) or Craft (any five) +21, Listen +23, Move Silently +17, Sense Motive +23, Search +19, Spot +23

Feats: Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Blind-fight, Improved Initiative

Environment: Any

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 9

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always Lawful Good

Spell Use: As an 8th level Cleric

Domains: Sun, Law, Good, Healing

Level Adjustment: —

Celestial refers to beings from the planes of existence of Good. A celestial templar is a specific form of deva, one called to protect holy places and temples of holy gods. They are only seen when they are summoned to defend such a place from evil assault. Their entire beings radiate holy light and the power of Good, their brilliant silver skin shining with truth and inspiration.

They are natural enemies of fiends, infernal creatures, and demons and devils of all kinds. Any time an evil creature defiles a good temple or holy altar, there is a 1% chance a celestial templar will arrive to defend the site. All celestials are blessed with comely looks, although their appearances vary. Templars are silver-skinned, with wide golden eyes and usually bear a longsword and shield radiating with a holy aura. Their armor is comprised of flowing robes, which are tougher than the strongest plate mail, and they have wings spreading from their shoulder blades.

Typically, a celestial templar uses its ability to dominate in order to seize control of the best fighter among their opponents, forcing the individual to attack his friends. Failing that, the Templar dominates the most powerful magic-user or cleric, thus preventing him from using his spells, and hopefully placing the spellcaster in a dangerous or even suicidal position.

COMBAT

Celestials never attack without provocation, but the Celestial Templar's primary duty is to defend holy places against the invasion of forces of Evil. To them, an Evil creature setting foot in a temple of Good is provocation enough, and should the Evil creature not immediately leave the chapel, the Templar will certainly fight to the death.

The Celestial Templar will avoid attacking or harming other good creatures, and they favor tactics that cause their enemies to fight amongst themselves. Usually, a Celestial Template is armed with a +2 *holy longsword* and a +1 *heavy steel shield* though some choose other weapons.

Aura of Menace (Su): A righteous aura surrounds the Celestial Templar, and any hostile creature within a 10-ft. radius must make a Will save (DC 18) to resist its effects. Those who fail suffer a -2 morale penalty to attacks, checks and saves for one day or until they successfully hit the Celestial Templar. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Tongues (Su): All celestial creatures can speak with any creature who has a language, as though using a *tongues* spell cast by a 14th level sorcerer.

Dominate (Su): Any creatures that make eye contact with the Celestial Templar must make a Will save (DC 18) or lose the ability to control their own actions. Once they have fallen under the command of the Celestial Templar,

they must do exactly as the Templar wills, even to the point of committing suicidal or dangerous actions. The Templar need expend no extra actions to control their new 'minion', but must simply will them to perform. A Dominated creature does not have the capacity to cast spells of any nature, and can only perform physical actions they would ordinarily be capable of achieving. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Immunities (Ex): All celestials are immune to electricity and petrification attacks.

Wrath of Good (Su): Any weapon used by a Celestial Templar (including unarmed attacks) is wrapped in good energy. This energy inflicts an additional 2d6 points of good damage to undead and evil outsiders, 1d6 points of good damage to neutral outsiders and evil beings and no damage to anyone else.

Resistance (Ex): All celestials receive a +4 racial bonus to Fort saves against poison.

DRACKINN

Medium Dragon (Aquatic)

Hit Dice: 4d12 + 8 (34 hp)

Initiative: +1

Speed: 30ft. (6 squares), 20 ft. flying (clumsy) (4 squares), 50 ft. swimming (10 squares)

Armor Class: 16 (+1 Dex, +5 Natural), touch 11, flat-footed 15

Base Attack/Grapple: +4/+4

Attack: Bite +4 melee (1d8)

Full Attack: Bite +4 melee (1d8), 2 claws +2 melee (1d6)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attack: Breath Weapon

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft., immunities, low-light vision

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +4

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10

Skills: Hide +6, Move Silently +6

Feats: Dodge, Multiattack

Environment: Temperate and warm marsh

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 3

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Always Chaotic Evil

Advancement: 5–6 HD (Medium), 7–8 HD (Large)

Level Adjustment: —

The Drackinn is a rarity, a successful crossbreeding between lesser species and a dragon. Like its more powerful forebears, it has wings and a breath weapon. Afael claims he is the creator of this species, but others exist.

Drackinns make their lair in murky swamps where they feed primarily on detritus. They do not collect treasure beyond utility's sake, and their territories are fetid with the corpses of weaker creatures. Though normally solitary, they are often found in the employ of black dragons as disposable shock troops and guardians.

A Drackinn resembles a monitor lizard of six ft. in length (not including the tail, which can reach half that in size), and has a similar wingspan. Its brow bears a bone crest. Drackinns' coloration varies depending upon their progenitors' race but is most often black.

COMBAT

Though less powerful than a true dragon, a Drackinn is not something to challenge lightly. It enjoys using both its breath weapon and its teeth and claws, often plunging headlong into battle. Once battle is joined, they rarely flee — Drackinn prefer to hide their presence from superior creatures, but fight to the death once they join in combat.

Breath Weapon (Su): Drackinns spit a stream of venom, 60 ft. in length. Those caught in this line (Ref save, DC 15 to avoid) must make a Fort save (DC 15) or lose one temporary point each from Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution. Multiple strikes are cumulative.

Immunities (Ex): Drackinns are immune to sleep and paralysis effects.

DRAGON THRALL (TEMPLATE)

While less powerful than half-dragons, a thrall is created when a victim (willing or otherwise) drinks the blood of a dragon fresh from the beast. A dragon's blood is at its most potent when fresh, carrying with it a piece of the dragon's life force. This life force overtakes the creature's will. A Fort save (DC 10 + the dragon's HD) resists this effect. The target creature can be saved from this fate by casting a remove curse spell within 24 hours.

Once affected, the blood then transforms the target into a thrall of the dragon who created it. The target soon takes on aspects of the dragon creator, much like half dragons: scales, tinted skin, elongated nails, or small horns. Further, this new thrall develops an unwavering loyalty to its dragon creator. While still possessing the original intelligence and abilities of the base class, the thrall is now the subject of the dragon. When the dragon that created the thrall is slain, his thralls are freed but often gravitate into service to the strongest surviving thrall.

Some dragons use thralls to run operations in kingdoms or cities, furthering the dragon's power and influence. Others use them as a personal army or bodyguards.

Good dragons never create thralls.

GOUGER

"Thrall" is a template that can be added to any corporeal fey, giant, humanoid, or monstrous humanoid of any neutral or good alignment (referred to hereafter as the base creature).

A thrall uses all the base creature's statistics and abilities except as noted here. Do not recalculate the creature's Hit Dice, base attack bonus, saves, or skill points if its type changes.

Size and Type: The creature gains the dragon subtype. Size is unchanged.

Armor Class: Natural armor increases by +3

Special Full Attack: A thrall retains all the special attacks of the base creature and also gains the following attack.

Spell-like Ability (Su): A Thrall does not gain a breath weapon, but gains one spell-like ability based on the color of the dragon who created it. This ability is usable once per day and works as though cast by a Sorcerer of the minimum required level for that spell, plus 2. Example: *shocking grasp* deals 1d8+3 damage, as if cast by a 3rd level sorcerer.

Dragon Type	Touch Attack
Black	acid arrow
Blue	shocking grasp
Green	stinking cloud (affects a single target)
Red	burning hands
White	ray of frost

Special Qualities: Thralls retain any special qualities of the base creature, additionally the thrall gains low-light vision and darkvision — range 60 ft.

Energy Immunity: Thralls are immune to the following types of attacks:

Dragon Type	Immunity
Black	Acid
Blue	Electricity
Green	Acid
Red	Fire
White	Cold

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +2 are added to the base creatures' saves.

Environment: Any

Challenge Rating: Same as base creature +1

Alignment: By dragon creator type

Level Adjustment: Same as the base creature +2.

Large Magical Beast

Hit Dice: 8d10+4 (44 hp)

Initiative: +2

Speed: 40 ft. (8 squares), burrow 10 ft. (2 squares)

Armor Class: 21 (–1 size, +2 Dex, +10 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 19

Base Attack/Grapple: +8/+20

Attack: Bite +16 melee (2d8+8)

Full Attack: Bite +16 melee (2d8+8) and 2 claws +10 melee (2d6+4)

Space/Reach: 15 ft./10 ft.

Special Attacks: —

Special Qualities: Fire resistance 12, rage, scent, tremorsense 60 ft.

Saves: Fort +11, Ref +8, Will +6

Abilities: Str 27, Dex 15, Con 20, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 6

Skills: Jump +18, Listen +9, Spot +3

Feats: Alertness, Blind-Fight, Iron Will, Track, Weapon Focus

Environment: Underground

Organization: Solitary or pair

Challenge Rating: 6

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always neutral

Advancement: 9–16 HD (Huge); 17–27 HD (Gargantuan)

Level Adjustment: —

A gouger is a rare, rock-dwelling predator shaped somewhat like a badger, but of tremendous size, over ten ft. long when full grown. It has huge front claws for digging and attack. Its forebody, head, and legs are covered with hard, bony plates, and it has no eyes. Its hindquarters are covered with coarse black fur. Its pointed snout is filled with rows of dagger-like teeth. If a gouger is not moving, it may be mistaken for a boulder if seen from the front. It sees by means of the bony plates on its head.

Aside from acting as protection, the bony plates are honeycombed with heat and vibration sensors allowing it to perceive nearby prey more efficiently than any set of eyes.

Gougers are solitary creatures, occasionally forming a mated pair until offspring are born and reared, after which they go their separate ways again.

Their tunnels take them to unknown depths of primordial rock in their search for prey and solitude.

Gougers eat every kind of living creature, but they seem to find the flavor of dwarves most delectable, so they tend be slightly more common around dwarven settlements.

COMBAT

Gougers attack anything without fear, and are known for their ill temper and ferocity. They attack first with their tremendous claws, and follow with their ferocious bite.

Tremorsense 60' (Ex): A gouger uses this to perceive its prey.

Rage (Ex): A gouger that takes damage flies into a rage at the beginning of its next turn, ripping and tearing until either it or its prey is dead. It gains +4 Strength, +4 Constitution, +2 morale bonus to Will saves and -2 AC. The rage lasts for 3 round + the gouger's newly improved Con bonus and it cannot end its rage voluntarily.

Fire Resistance (Ex): Fire attack damage to a gouger is reduced by 12 hp due to the toughness of its bony plates and coarse fur, as well the gouger being accustomed to the great heat of the deepest depths.

GOIKENGU

Large Outsider

Hit Dice: 6d8+24 (43 hp)

Initiative: +2

Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares), jump 50 ft. (10 squares)

Armor Class: 19 (-1 Size, +1 Dex, +8 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 18

Base Attack/Grapple: +6/+10

Attack: Bite +10 melee (1d6+2)

Full Attack: Bite +10 melee (1d6+2); 2 claws +8 melee (1d8+4) and poison

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Goikengu Possession, spell-like abilities.

Special Qualities: Blindsight, regenerate 1, Immune to poison and fire.

Saves: Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +7

Abilities: Str 18, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 18, Wis 14, Cha 13.

Skills: Concentration +14, Hide +9, Knowledge:

Constructs +12, Listen +13, Move Silently +13, Search +13, Spot +12.

Feats: Cleave, Multiattack, Power attack

Environment: Any temperate

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 6

Treasure: None

Alignment: Neutral evil

Advancement: —

Level Adjustment: —

Goikengu demons are fantastic creatures of the oriental afterworld. Their purpose, according to myth, is to torment the dead souls of those unworthy to ascend into the peace

of the Celestial Heavens. However, they have a lust for the pleasures of the physical world (denied them in the afterlife) — food, rich clothing, wealth, and other worldly desires. Because of this drive, they will do anything to acquire a physical body and inhabit the mortal plane.

COMBAT

Goikengu demons are not as physically powerful as many of their demon counterparts, nor do they have resistances to match their more powerful cousins. Their greatest ability is their power to possess and animate the bodies of the dead or the inanimate, creating a mini-army of animated servants to fight for them. This possession extends up to a half-mile from the Goikengu (or their summoning point). With a great effort, a Goikengu can possess a living being. However, where a Goikengu can animate as many as ten inanimate or dead items at one time and still fight, they may only possess a single living being at any time, and if they do, they may not do anything except defend them while maintaining the possession.

Goikengu require only knowledge of the individual in question in order to attempt to possess them.

When a Goikengu demon is destroyed, their bodies wither into a tarry substance staining the ground for 10 years after their death. No plants will grow in the radius of the spot, nor will animals willingly walk through the stain. Each Goikengu has a magic belt they keep with them at all times. It is a powerful magic item, and does not dissolve into tar when the demon is destroyed.

Goikengu Possession (Su): The Goikengu must make a possession attempt, and the individual it is attempting to possess rolls a Will save (DC 16). Once possessed, they may attempt to break free by spending a temporary point of Wisdom and rolling another Will save (DC 20). While they are in the demon's power, individuals fight to the best of their ability as the demon wills it. They may not, however, cast spells, though they may use magic items.

Once the PC is out of wisdom, they may no longer attempt to break the Goikengu's mental domination. 'Spent' points of Wisdom recover at the rate of one per day.

Poison (Su): Fort save (DC 13) if failed, those affected take 1d4 hit points of damage per round until the poison is neutralized or healed magically.

Spell-Like Abilities (Sp): At will — *detect good*, *detect magic*; 3/day — *invisibility*; 1/day — *cause fear*. DC 11 plus spell level. The save DC is Charisma-based.

GUARDIAN HOUND

Medium Outsider (Extraplanar)

Hit Dice: 4d8+12 (30 hp)

Initiative: +5

Speed: 50 ft. (10 squares)

Armor Class: 14 (+1 Dex, +3 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 13

Base Attack/Grapple: +4/+7

Attack: Bite +7 melee (1d6+4)

Full Attack: Bite +7 melee (1d6+4)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Trip

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft., scent, see invisibility

Saves: Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +5

Abilities: Str 17, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 4, Wis 12, Cha 13

Skills: Hide +8, Listen +8, Move Silently +8, Spot +8, Survival +8*

Feats: Dodge, Improved Initiative, TrackB

Environment: Any

Organization: Solitary, pair, or pack (5–12)

Challenge Rating: 5

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always lawful good

Advancement: 5–6 HD (Medium); 7–12 HD (Large)

Level Adjustment: +3 (cohort)

Guardian hounds are magical creatures sent from the outer planes by good-aligned deities to aid and defend their followers. The hounds serve as guards at sacred sites and often travel with clerics and important religious figures as guides and scouts.

Guardian hounds appear as a golden-furred hounds roughly four ft. long. They have a sleek, agile build reminiscent of a greyhound or other fast hound. A glint of intelligence marks their golden eyes, and while the hounds cannot speak, they shift the tone of their barking or use body gestures to communicate with humans.

Hounds are charged with a particular mission or task by a good deity. Given the hounds' abilities, they serve as temple guardians, patrolling the holy grounds and working with the temple's clerics and warriors. Occasionally, a particularly important person in the church hierarchy is granted a guardian hound as a personal bodyguard. Whatever their capacity, guardian hounds are fearless in the face of evil and fight to the death to protect their charges.

Guardian hounds also exist in the wild, though this is rare. Their good alignment and sense of responsibility shine through even when they are not under the direct orders of a cleric or other religious figure. Wild guardian hounds often patrol a region of wilderness, fighting off evil humanoids and aiding travelers whenever they can. More than one lost, frightened child has been found safe

and sound, bearing a story of the friendly gold dogs who led her to food and shelter and protected her from the elements.

COMBAT

In battle, guardian hounds rely on teamwork and quick strikes to defeat their enemies. Hounds prefer to circle an enemy, barking and nipping at their foe, hoping to distract him while its partner waits for the enemy's guard to falter. In game terms, the hounds make extensive use of the Aid Another combat action. Hounds are fearless fighters, and willingly give their lives to defend a location or prevent harm from befalling an innocent. Anyone who can count a hound as an ally has a dependable friend indeed.

See Invisibility (Su): Hounds are gifted with the ability to see invisible creatures at will. This ability functions as a *see invisibility* spell cast by a 4th-level sorcerer.

Trip (Ex): A guardian hound that hits with its bite attack can attempt to trip the opponent as a free action (+7 trip check) without making a touch attack or provoking an attack of opportunity. If the attempt fails, the opponent cannot react to trip the guardian hound.

Skills: *A guardian hound has a +4 racial bonus on Survival checks when tracking by scent.

GUARDIAN SCARAB

Diminutive Vermin

Hit Dice: 1/2 d8+2 (4 hp)

Initiative: +0

Speed: 20 ft. (4 squares)

Armor Class: 16 (+4 size, +2 natural), touch 16, flat-footed 16

Base Attack/Grapple: +0/–10

Attack: Bite +2 melee (1d2–4 plus poison)

Full Attack: Bite +2 melee (1d2–4 plus poison)

Space/Reach: 2–1/2 ft./0 ft.

Special Attacks: Poison

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft., poison immunity, tremorsense 60 ft., vermin traits

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +0, Will +0

Abilities: Str 3, Dex 10, Con 14, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 2

Skills: Climb +0, Hide +12, Spot +4

Feats: Weapon Finesse^B

Environment: Warm deserts

Organization: Colony (8–16)

Challenge Rating: 1/4

Alignment: Always neutral

Advancement: —

Level Adjustment: —

Guardian scarabs are rare creatures, found in arid, rocky locales. These silvery insects are sought after as treasure guardians. Their poisonous bite and surprising movements often startle potential thieves.

COMBAT

Guardian Scarabs are not aggressive toward most creatures, they are scavengers; content to eat carrion or smaller insects. They attack only in self-defense.

Poison (Ex): Bite, Fortitude save (DC 11); Initial damage 1d2 temporary Strength, secondary damage 1d2 temporary Strength.

HARBINGER WORM

A harbinger worm is a small flat worm, no more than a few inches long. Outwardly, it appears much like a tape-worm, with a thin, smooth body covered in sticky oil. The worm writhes in a manner making sentient creatures nauseous simply by looking at it, and has a small swelling at the end most often termed the 'head' of the worm.

Harbinger worms are semi-sentient, able to comprehend simple tasks and understand general ideas. They are aware of their surroundings and see through empathic means, smell, and hearing. They are aberrations, farmed and bred by the black dragon, Aaxhul, for their devastating mental abilities.

When a harbinger worm touches flesh, it immediately is absorbed into the creature, leaving behind a sticky residue where it entered. It immediately burrows toward the creature's heart, where it finds food and begins to grow and reproduce. However, from the moment a harbinger worm enters its host, it attempts to control the host's actions. The host can do nothing except watch from within as the worm puppets him if he fails to resist. The host is consciously aware of his every action, yet unable to speak, move, or stop any action from occurring.

A harbinger worm can only be removed from its victim in one of two ways. First, if the victim is brought to less than 1/10 of their total hit points in which case the worm attempts to flee before the host is destroyed. Flight from the inhabited body requires the worm to burrow out of the host body (doing 1d4 points of temporary Constitution damage) and escape out of a gaping hole it creates in the victim's chest.

The second way to force a harbinger worm out of a victim's body requires a spellcaster to engage the victim's mind (and thus, the harbinger's mind) with a dominate person spell of his own, forcing the worm to leave the host body. A contest takes place, involving saving throws from all parties.

HARBINGER WORM

Tiny Aberration

Hit Dice: 2d8+2 (hp 11)

Initiative: +3

Speed: 15 ft. (3 squares)

Armor Class: 14 (+2 size, +2 Dex), touch 12, flat-footed 12

Base Attack/Grapple: +1/-12

Attack: Bite +6 melee (1d4-3)

Full Attack: Bite +6 melee (1d4-3)

Space/Reach: 0 ft./0 ft.

Special Attacks: Total control

Special Qualities: Spell vulnerability

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +2 or Possessed creature's base saves if higher

Abilities: Str 5, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 6, Wis 8, Cha 6

Skills: Skills: Balance +10, Climb +10, Hide +8, Listen +8, Spot +4, Move Silently +8

Feats: Weapon Finesse (bite)

Environment: Any

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 3

Treasure: None

Alignment: Neutral Evil

Advancement: Special (see greater harbinger worm, below)

Level Adjustment: —

Spell Vulnerability (Su): Any of the following spells cast on the Harbinger Worm's host require the worm to make a Fort save or be destroyed: *break enchantment*, *heal*, *mind blank*, *remove curse*, *remove disease*.

Total Control (Su): From the moment a harbinger worm enters its host, it attempts to control the host's actions. This requires the host to make a Will save (DC 17) in order to resist. If the host does not successfully resist, the worm controls the host's actions. It absorbs information from the host's mind at an astonishing rate, and within 2 rounds is capable of performing any action the host could perform. This includes casting spells memorized, using magic items or secret information, and even weapons skills. The host is consciously aware of his every action, yet unable to speak, move, or stop any action from occurring. This is a mind-affecting power, but it is not language-dependant.

GREATER HARBINGER

When a harbinger worm spends a good amount of time within the host body (2 to 3 days), it morphs into a far more dangerous creature. Feeding on the heart and will of its host, the harbinger grows larger, gains greater abilities, and begins to manifest powers beyond those it possessed as a mere worm. A creature inhabited by such

a worm also shows obvious signs of its manifestation — acid drools from its mouth, its blood is greenish and unhealthy, and the host's heartbeat is strained and labored from being constricted by the worm's coils.

If the host is lowered beneath 1/10 of its total hit points, the greater harbinger will attempt to flee as the lesser worms do (except it causes 2d4 points of temporary Constitution damage). A gaping hole will tear open in the host's chest, and the writhing, ropy mass of the Greater Harbinger will leap forth from the host body. At this point, the greater harbinger will either enter combat or flee to another host.

The greater harbinger in this module is large (they rarely have the opportunity to feast on dragon's blood and a dragon's will!) and therefore has powerful statistics. A greater harbinger which has grown within a smaller creature, such as a humanoid, is smaller and has less hit points than the model given below; all other statistics remain the same. The creature fights by lashing its body at its opponents in a twisted mass of slime-covered, ropy coils. These lashes are considered a Slashing weapon.

Further, a greater harbinger has already begun to reproduce within the host's body, and may have (1d10) Harbinger Worms attached to it when it exits the host. These lesser worms attach themselves to any available sentient life. See rules and mechanics for Harbinger Worms, above.

HARBINGER WORM, GREATER

Medium Aberration

Hit Dice: 5d8+5 (23 hp)

Initiative: +1

Speed: 10 ft. (2 squares)

Armor Class: 15 (+1 Dex, +4 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 14

Base Attack/Grapple: +3/+3

Attack: Lash +4 melee (2d6)

Full Attack: 2 Lashes +4 melee (2d6)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Acid, engulf, dominate

Special Qualities: Amorphous

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +7

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 13

Skills: Climb +10, Listen +8, Spot +4

Feats: Weapon Finesse (lash)

Environment: Any

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 7

Treasure: None

Alignment: Chaotic Evil

Advancement: —

Level Adjustment: —

Acid (Ex): The greater harbinger's slime-covered body is acidic, and contact with the acid coating covering greater harbinger causes great damage to any inorganic material coming in contact with it. The greater Harbinger's acid deals an additional 1d8 points on the initial round that a greater harbinger's strike hits an opponent, and a further 1d2 points of damage each round until the lash marks are cleaned with water. This acid causes minor scoring to inorganic materials, and eats through if given enough time.

Amorphous (Ex): A greater harbinger is not subject to critical hits. It has no clear front or back, and therefore cannot be flanked.

Dominate (Su): A greater harbinger can control someone's mind as per *dominate person*. The target is allowed a Will save (DC 18). Once the greater Harbinger has established control, it no longer needs to give commands; the creature follows the greater Harbinger's desires instinctively, defending the greater Harbinger and performing its will. This dominate is different than the unnatural control established by an inhabitant harbinger worm, and may be resisted as per the dominate person spell. Although clearly self-destructive actions are automatically resisted (kill yourself!), indirectly destructive actions may not be ignored (kill your friends!).

Engulf (Ex): A greater harbinger engulfs a Medium or smaller opponent once it establishes a successful grip (one hit). The opponent must succeed on a Reflex save (DC 14) or fall and be engulfed. On the next round, the greater harbinger gains a +4 to the DC save of its dominate attempt. An organic creature engulfed by the worm takes 2d8 damage per round from the acidic slime coating.

MUMMY NAGA

Large Undead

Hit Dice: 8d12 (52 hp)

Initiative: +1

Speed: 20 ft. (4 squares)

Armor Class: 16 (−1 size +1 Dex +6 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 15

Base Attack/Grapple: +4/+11

Attack: Bite +7 melee (2d6+3 plus poison)

Full Attack: Bite +7 melee (2d6+3 plus poison), tail slap +7 melee (1d8+1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Poison, spells

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft. damage resistance 10/magic, immune to cold and electricity, undead traits

Saves: Fort +4, Reflex +3, Will +7

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 13, Con —, Int 14, Wis 13, Chr 15

Skills: Concentration +12, Listen +10, Spellcraft +8, Spot +12
Feats: Alertness, combat casting, eschew materials^a, multiattack.
Climate: Temperate/warmland and underground
Organization: Solitary
Challenge Rating: 7
Treasure: Standard
Alignment: Lawful neutral
Advancement Range: 9–12 HD (large)
Level Adjustment: —

These creatures are snakelike with a human face. They are finely enwrapped in funereal attire that keep what little of their bodies remain intact. The wrappings are not hard and rigid like that of a mummy, which allows for quicker movement. These creatures died before completing their god-given task and are punished with eternal life.

COMBAT

The mummy naga favors spell combat over physical combat. However, even within their wrappings they are quick, unlike a mummy. In close combat they have a wicked tail slap that makes a snapping sound.

Poison (Ex): Injury. Fortitude DC 17; initial and secondary damage paralysis, 2d6 rounds. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Spells: Mummy Nagas cast spells at 7th level sorcerers.

Typical Sorcerer Spells Known (6/7/7/4: Save DC 12 + Spell Level): 0—arcane mark, daze, flare, ghost sound, mage hand, ray of frost, read magic; 1st—cause fear, magic missile, ray of enfeeblement, sleep, spider climb; 2nd—darkness, ghoul touch, scare; 3rd—hold person, lightning bolt.

NEKOMATA

Tiny Fey

Hit Dice: 4d6+4 (18 hp)

Initiative: +4 (Dex)

Speed: 40 ft. (8 squares)

Armor Class: 16 (+4 Dex, +2 size), touch 14, flat-footed 12

Base Attack/Grapple: +2/–10

Attack: Claw +6 melee (1d2–3)

Full Attack: 2 claws +6 melee (1d2–3), bite +1 melee (1d3–3)

Space/Reach: 2–1/2 ft./0 ft.

Special Attacks: Corpse dance, spell-like abilities

Special Qualities: Scent

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +8, Wis +5

Abilities: Str 5, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 14

Skills: Balance +14, Bluff +9, Climb +11, Hide +13, Listen +8, Move Silently +14, Spot +8

Feats: Dodge, Weapon Finesse (claw, bite)

Environment: Any land

Organization: Solitary, Family (2–5), or pack (11–20)

Challenge Rating: 2

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Usually Chaotic Evil

Advancement: 6–9 HD (Tiny) 10–12 HD (Small)

Level Adjustment: —

Nekomata are mischievous tricksters, delighting in the misery of mankind. They resemble ordinary cats with long tails, split in two halfway down their length. Legends claim that all cats have the potential to become nekomata should they live long enough. When traveling, these lazy creatures ride curled about the neck of their zombie puppet.

Nekomata speak common and Sylvan, and can use speak with animals with other felines at will.

COMBAT

Nekomata are subtle and canny opponents, seldom entering combat personally. They prefer to act from the shadows through their undead accomplices. Nekomata often use ventriloquism to appear to speak through an animated corpse, pretending to be the spirit of that person returned to life. Nekomata use their puppets to make all manner of ridiculous demands, extorting treasure and servitude, to as many innocents as possible before killing them outright.

If confronted directly by a larger opponent, nekomata use their spell-like abilities to distract their enemy so they can flee.

Corpse Dance (Su): A nekomata can control one corpse of up to large size. This creature is treated as a zombie in all ways (including vulnerability to being turned or rebuked). Animating a new corpse is a standard action, but the nekomata thereafter directs its actions as free actions. Unlike normal zombies, corpses animated by a nekomata dance and caper about in a hideous parody of life. A nekomata can only control one corpse at time. If the nekomata is slain, its zombie becomes inanimate as well.

Spell-like abilities: At will — *ghost sound*, *hypnotism*, *silent image*, *ventriloquism*. 1/day — *color spray*. These abilities are as the spells cast by a 4th level sorcerer (save DC 13). A nekomata may use its hypnotism abilities through the gaze of its zombie servant, if it chooses. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Skills: Like an ordinary cat, nekomata receive a +4 racial bonus to Hide and Move Silently checks, and a +8 racial bonus to Balance checks. They use their Dexterity modifier for Climb checks.

^aIn areas of tall grass or heavy undergrowth, the Hide bonus rises to +8.

REVENANT

NEW CREATURE TEMPLATE

Revenants are restless dead who have returned from the grave in order to right the wrong which killed them. Unlike ghosts, who stay around for an extended period of time, revenants are allowed to rest.

Revenants are obsessed with their killers, ignoring anything that doesn't lead to avenging themselves. This single-mindedness makes a revenant an incredibly dangerous foe, one which doesn't eat or sleep. It cannot be sidetracked for love or money, feels no pain, and never forgets. Further, revenants lose none of their intelligence, and often have allies and cunning plans to trap their prey.

Physically, revenants look the same as when they died. Their wounds have stopped bleeding, but are still apparent. From a distance, or if they take an effort to disguise them-selves, revenants can be mistaken for living beings. However, because they no longer care about anything but revenge, most revenants do not take the time to hide the fact they are still decaying, and the smell is overpowering after a time.

CREATING A REVENANT

Revenant is a template that can be added to any humanoid or monstrous humanoid creature (referred to hereafter as the "base creature"). The creature's type changes to "undead." It uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Hit Dice: Increased to d12

Speed: Same as the base creature.

Armor Class: The base creature's natural armor improves by +3.

Full Attack: The revenant retains all of the base creature's attacks, and gains a slam (if it didn't already have one).

Damage: Slam attack damage is based on size, as detailed below. Creatures with natural attacks use the better of their values, or:

Size	Damage
Fine	1
Diminutive	1d2
Tiny	1d3
Small	1d4
Medium-size	1d6
Large	1d8
Huge	2d6
Gargantuan	2d8
Colossal	4d6

Special Attack: A revenant retains all of the base creature's special attacks, and gains the ones listed below. Both of these attacks can only be used against the being(s) who

killed it. Saves have a DC of 10 + 1/2 revenant's HD + revenant's Wisdom modifier unless noted otherwise.

Hold Person (Su): As per the spell, *hold person*, the revenant gazes at his killer, causing him to freeze in panic. Unless the target makes a Will save, the victim takes no physical actions for one round/revenant level.

Energy Drain (Su): If the revenant strikes his killer with a slam attack, he suffers 2 negative levels.

Special Qualities: A revenant retains all of the base creature's special qualities, and gains the following additional ones.

Damage Reduction (Su): Revenants benefit from damage reduction 10/+1.

Strength of Will (Su): Due to the overriding obsession for vengeance, a revenant gains an increase of hit points equal to 1/2 its current hit point total (rounded down) when in sight of one or more of its killers. These hit points are temporary and are lost if the killer dies or the revenant loses sight of them.

Purpose (Su): So long as even one of its killers lives, the revenant cannot die permanently, save through divine intervention (destruction by a cleric). However, once they avenge themselves, their thirst for vengeance is over. 1d4 rounds after its last murderer dies, the revenant fades from existence.

Overriding Obsession (Su): A revenant always knows the relative location of each of its killers. However, the revenant cannot voluntarily turn down a chance to attack its prey. It can choose which one to hunt, but it must always pursue one of them.

Turn Resistance (Ex): A revenant has +4 turn resistance.

Resistance (Ex): Since they feel no pain, revenants have cold and electricity resistance 20.

Fast Healing (Ex): Powered by sheer strength of will, a revenant won't give up until the job is done. As long as their killer is still alive and they have at least 1 hp, a revenant heals 3 hp per round. Once they reach 0 hp, the revenant stops moving, and the healing rate is reduced to 3 hp/hour until they are above 0.

Saves: As base creature, but with an additional Fort +2 and Will +4.

Abilities: Increase from the base creature: Str +6, Dex +2. As undead, revenants have no constitution score.

Skills: Being obsessed and not having to breathe, revenants are natural hunters. They receive an additional +8 racial bonus to Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Search, and Spot.

Feats: Revenants gain Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, and Improved Initiative.

Environment: Any land and underground

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: Base creature +2

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Always neutral
Advancement: None

REVENANT CHARACTERS

Revenants are always neutral, which causes characters of certain classes to lose class abilities. Other than that, revenant characters behave like their living counterparts (although certain deities do not take kindly to their clergy becoming vengeance-obsessed undead).

GOD-KING. THE

Medium Outsider (extraplanar)

Hit Dice: 16d10+64 (150 hp)

Initiative: +2, +6 within the temple

Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)

Armor Class: 23 (+2 Dex, +11 spiritual plate mail), touch 12, flat-footed 21

Base Attack/Grapple: +16/+20

Attack: Battleaxe melee +24 (1d8+9/x3)

Full Attack: Battleaxe melee +24/+19/+14/+9 (1d8+9/x3)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft

Special Attack: Smite evil 4/day, turn undead.

Special Qualities: Aura of courage, aura of good, detect evil, divine awareness, divine grace, Hairn's blessing, lay on hands, remove disease 4/week, unearthly health

Saves: Fort +18, Ref +16, Will +18

Abilities: Str 18, Dex 14, Con 18, Int 18, Wis 18, Cha 19

Skills: Climb +6, Concentration +10, Diplomacy +23, Handle Animal +9, Heal +6, Intimate +10, Knowledge (religion) +20, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +9, Listen +5, Perform (Oratory) +9, Ride +15, Spot +5.

Feats: Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Great Cleave, Leadership[B], Power Attack, Sunder, Weapon Focus (Battle Axe).

Challenge Rating: 17

Treasure: +3 battle axe (the plate mail is a reflection of his spiritual self, turning black if he is corrupted)

Alignment: Lawful Good (Lawful Evil if converted)

Level Adjustment: —

Kindel was once a mere fighter in the ranks of Alegnora. Despite this, he remained a good man at heart, and tired of his fellows' excesses. Deserting, he found his lover, Clynth, who instructed him in the ways of Hairn. Against Clynth's wishes, Kindel communed with Hairn, who rewarded his purity by allowing him to become the God-King, agent of Hairn on the prime.

The God-King appears as a handsome knight clad in glowing white platemail. He wields a battle-axe. If corrupted, he bears a darker aura, as though standing beneath a twilight sky under a new moon, even if it is day.

COMBAT

The God-King engages foes that are most likely to harm him or the temple, beginning with wizards, clerics, and blackguards. He maneuvers so foes have difficulty surrounding him. In battle, he wields his battle axe with both hands.

Aura of Courage (Su): The God-King is immune to fear (magical or otherwise). Each ally within 10 ft. of him gains a +4 morale bonus on saving throws against fear effects. This ability functions while he is conscious, but not if he is unconscious or dead.

Aura of Good (Ex): The power of the God-King's aura of good (see the *detect good* spell) is 15th level.

Detect Evil (Sp): At will, the God-King can use *detect evil*, as the spell.

Divine Awareness (Su): Within the walls of the temple, the God-King is aware of everything that goes on around him. His Intelligence and Wisdom are also enhanced by four points each he gains the Improved Initiative feat.

Divine Grace (Su): The God-King adds his Charisma bonus to all saves.

Hairn's Blessing (Su): The God-King may not be targeted by Necromantic spells, or divine spells from the domains of chaos, death, or evil. The sole exception to this is *blasphemy*, which affects him as though he had half his hit dice. If corrupted, the god king retains Hairn's Blessing, but becomes immune to blasphemy.

Lay on Hands (Su): Each day the God-King can heal 64 hit points of damage. The God-King may choose to divide his healing among multiple recipients, and he does not have to use it all at once. Using lay on hands is a standard action.

Remove Disease (Sp): The God-King can produce a *remove disease* effect, as the spell, four times per week.

Smite Evil (Su): Four times per day, the God-King may attempt to smite evil with one normal melee attack. He adds +4 to his attack roll and deals 16 extra points of damage. If he accidentally smites a creature that is not evil, the smite has no effect, but the ability is still used up for that day.

Turn Undead (Su): The God-King has the supernatural ability to turn undead. He may use this ability 7 times per day. He turns undead as a 11th level cleric.

Unearthly Health (Su): The God-King is immune to any sickness, disease (including supernatural and magical ones), and can never be fatigued. He need never breathe, eat or sleep.

Spells: The God-King casts spells as a 16th level paladin (DC 14 + Spell Level), he usually has the following spells prepared: 1st—*bless*, *divine favor*, *lesser restoration*; 2nd—*bull's strength*, *resist energy*, *zone of truth*; 3rd—*daylight*, *dispel magic*; 4th—*holy sword*, *mark of justice*.

TOMB HOUND

Large Undead**Hit Dice:** 7d12 (45 hp)**Initiative:** +2**Speed:** 40 ft. (8 squares)**Armor Class:** 14 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +3 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 12**Base Attack/Grapple:** +3/+14**Attack:** Bite melee +11 (1d8+10 plus mummy rot)**Full Attack:** Bite melee +11 (1d8+10 plus mummy rot)**Space/Reach:** 10 ft./5 ft.**Special Attack:** Mournful baying, despair, mummy rot**Special Qualities:** Damage resistance 5/—, vulnerability to fire, undead traits**Saves:** Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +7**Abilities:** Str 25, Dex 15, Con —, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 10**Skills:** Hide +5, Listen +8, Move Silently +5, Spot +8, Survival +10**Feats:** Alertness, Iron Will, TrackB, Weapon Focus (bite)**Environment:** Any land or underground**Organization:** Solitary or pack (3–6)**Challenge Rating:** 5**Treasure:** None**Alignment:** Always neutral**Advancement Range:** 8–10 HD (Large)**Level Adjustment:** —

Tomb hounds were once large mastiffs bred by Amun Khonshu for their loyalty and ferocity. Upon his demise, the war dogs were mummified and enchanted to be guardians of his sarcophagus. The enchantment dictated they would awaken to defend against any encroachment upon their master's burial chamber. Furthermore, it gave each dog the ability to cast ray of enfeeblement upon any prey who hears their mournful baying.

COMBAT

In melee, a tomb hound has a vicious bite it can use to tear its foes limb from limb. In addition, tomb hounds possess the following abilities:

Mournful Baying (Su): As an attack, the tomb hound can howl from the depths of despair. This emanates as a 60-ft. cone. Anyone caught in the area must succeed at a Will saving throw (DC 12) or take 1d6+1 temporary Strength damage. The DC is Wisdom-based.

Despair (Su): When first in contact with the tomb hound, the viewer must make a Will save (DC 10) or be paralyzed with fear for 1d4 rounds. This ability can only affect each person once per day.

Mummy Rot (Su): Supernatural disease — bite, Fortitude save (DC 20), incubation period 1 day. Afflicted characters lose 1d6 temporary Constitution every day until she is either healed by means of a remove disease spell or magical effect or her Constitution falls to 0 or less, in which case he dies.

A character slain in this manner this falls to dust and blows away unless both remove disease and raise dead spells are cast on the remains within six rounds.

VESAGOS GARGOYLE

LESSER VESAGOS GARGOYLE

Medium Construct (Earth)**Hit Dice:** 6d10+20 (62 hp)**Initiative:** +2**Speed:** 45 ft. (9 squares); fly 75 ft. (average) (15 squares)**Armor Class:** 18 (+2 Dex, +6 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 16**Base Attack/Grapple:** +4/+6**Attack:** Claw +8 melee (1d4)**Full Attack:** 2 Claws +8 melee (1d4), bite +6 melee (1d6), breath weapon +6 ranged (1d10 fire)**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.**Special Attacks:** —**Special Qualities:** Damage reduction 15/+1, immunity to fire**Saves:** Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +2**Abilities:** Str 14, Dex 14, Con —, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 7**Skills:** Hide +9, Listen +4, Spot +4;**Feats:** Multiattack, Weapon Finesse (claw, bite)**Challenge Rating:** 6

GREATER VESAGOS GARGOYLE

Medium Construct (Earth)**Hit Dice:** 9d10+20 (94 hp)**Initiative:** +3**Speed:** 25 ft. (5 squares); fly 55 ft. (average) (11 squares)**Armor Class:** 20 (+3 Dex, +7 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 17**Base Attack/Grapple:** +6/+8**Attack:** Claw +8 melee (3d4)**Full Attack:** 2 claws +8 melee (3d4), bite +6 melee (3d6), breath weapon +6 ranged (3d10 fire)

Space/Reach: 10 ft./10 ft.

Special Attacks: —

Special Qualities: Damage reduction 20/+1, immune to fire

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +13

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 16, Con —, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 7

Skills: Hide +9, Listen +4, Spot +4.

Feats: Multiattack, Weapon Finesse (claw, bite), Power Attack

Challenge Rating: 9

Environment: Any

Organization: Solitary or gang (2–6)

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always neutral

Advancement: —

Level Adjustment: —

Vesagos gargoyles are similar to their plainer cousins, as both are created, animated creatures formed to guard and attack as programmed by their creator. However, Vesagos gargoyles are significantly more dangerous and more intelligent than other gargoyles.

Vesagos gargoyles can be created by a Wizard of 14+ level, with suitable proficiency to create enchanted items. The wizard must have a manual of creation for the creature type. The cost of such an endeavor is 10,000 gold for a lesser, and 100,000 gold for a greater Vesagos gargoyle. Once created, they obey their creator as semi-intelligent automatons.

COMBAT

When a Vesagos gargoyle is stationary, weapons, magic, or other effects cannot harm it. Once it moves, however, it is as vulnerable as other gargoyles. Vesagos gargoyles are intelligent, and use tactics to confuse their opponents. Further, they can be shaped into any stone creature, a statue, an animal, etc...without losing any of their abilities except flight (if their new form has no wings). They often hover, using their breath weapon as a distance attack, before swooping for a claw or bite.

Breath Weapon (Su): 30-ft. cone, once per round, damage 1d10 (3d10), Reflex DC is 18 (22) half. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Medium Undead (incorporeal)

Hit Dice: 4d12 (26 hp)

Initiative: +7

Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares), fly 60 ft. (good)

Armor Class: 15 (+3 Dex, +2 deflection), touch 13, flat-footed 12

Base Attack/Grapple: +2/+2

Attack: Incorporeal touch +5 melee (1d4 + 1d6 Con drain)

Full Attack: Incorporeal touch +5 melee (1d4 + 1d6 Con drain)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Constitution drain, create spawn

Special Qualities: Undead traits, incorporeal traits, +2 turn resistance

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +6

Abilities: Str —, Dex 16, Con —, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 15

Skills: Hide +11, Intimidate +10, Intuit Direction +6, Listen +12, Search +10, Sense Motive +8, Spot +12

Feats: Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative

Environment: Any land and underground

Organization: Solitary, gang (2–5) or pack (6–11)

Challenge Rating: 5

Treasure: None

Alignment: Usually lawful evil

Advancement Range: 6–10 HD (Medium)

Level Adjustment: —

True to their name, wisps are incorporeal undead, appearing as fine mist. They undulate slightly, which gives the impression they are flapping in the breeze. Like many incorporeal undead, they often appear in a reasonable replica of the form they took in life. Unlike most incorporeal undead, however, they do not fear sunlight, and can use all of their capabilities in the open during the day.

COMBAT

When attacking in groups, wisps use their speed and numbers to flank or surround their opponents.

Constitution Drain (Su): Living creatures hit by a wisp's incorporeal touch attack must make a successful Fortitude saving throw (DC 14) or suffer 1d6 points of temporary Constitution damage. The save DC is Wisdom-based.

Create Spawn (Su): Any humanoid slain by a wisp becomes a wisp in 1d4 hours. It remains under the command of the wisp created it until either is destroyed. Spawn do not retain any abilities they had in life

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