



A Plea from Beyond the Grave

A One-Round D&D Adaptable LIVING GREYHAWK™ Adventure

version 2

by Nicholas Tulach

A poor, lost soul is locked away from his final peace. His efforts to avenge his family's deaths have cost him his life, and now must haunt his tower until he can achieve a symbolic victory over his murderers. Can you free him from his torment? An adventure for characters level 1-6.



Visit our Web site at:
www.wizards.com/rpga



DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, D&D, GREYHAWK, ROLE PLAYING GAMES ASSOCIATION and RPGA are registered trademarks owned by Wizards of the Coast, Inc. LIVING GREYHAWK and the D20 system logo are trademarks owned by Wizards of the Coast, Inc. All Wizards characters, character names, and the distinctive likenesses thereof are trademarks owned by Wizards of the Coast, Inc. Any reproductions or unauthorized use of material or artwork contained herein is prohibited without the express written permission of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. This scenario is intended for organized play use only and may not be reproduced without approval of the RPGA Network.

© 2001 Wizards of the Coast, Inc. All rights reserved.

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

Preparation

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Scoring

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

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

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

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

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

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

LIVING GREYHAWK Tier Structure

Because players bring their own characters to LIVING GREYHAWK campaigns, this adventure is tiered. Basically, the challenges in this adventure are proportioned to the average character level of the characters participating in the adventure. To determine the tier that you will use to run this adventure, add the character levels of all the characters. In addition, add the levels of any cohorts or animals according to the values on their certificates. Cross-reference the total and the number of players participating in the game using the chart below to determine the tier used for this adventure.

	4 players	5 players	6 players	7 players	Lvl Cap
T1:	4-12	5-13	6-14	7-15	4th
T2:	13-22	14-24	15-26	16-28	6th
T3:	23-32	25-35	27-38	29-41	8th

The level cap indicated is the highest level of character allowed to play this adventure. Characters of levels higher than the highest level shown for the highest tier cannot be played.

Is it a Full Moon?

Since the hazards of lycanthropy are a current part of the LIVING GREYHAWK campaign, it may be necessary to determine if this adventure takes place during a full moon. For game purposes, the full moon lasts three days of each month. For a given scenario that does not state the phase of the moon, roll 1d10 before play begins. On a result of 1, the first day of the scenario is a night of the full moon (roll 1d3 to determine where in the sequence of three nights it falls).

Lifestyle

At the beginning of every scenario, each PC is required to pay upkeep costs matching the level of lifestyle they wish to maintain. The lifestyles, and the effects that each has on play, are:

Destitute	You have no living space, and must carry all your gear everywhere. You eat poor quality food. You wear a peasant outfit, your only change of clothes.
Poor	You sleep in poor accommodations, and eat poor quality food. You wear a peasant outfit, and have two sets of clothing.
Common	You have common lodgings, and eat common quality food. You have normal clothing for your profession (adventuring); nothing fancy. You probably have two or three sets of clothing.
High	You stay in good quality lodgings, and eat good quality food. You wear anything in value up to courtier's outfits, and generally buy a new set of clothing every two weeks.
Luxury	You have luxurious accommodations (twice the cost of good accommodations), and you eat excellent foods. You can throw a banquet for your friends every day, and frequently do. You wear clothing up to the value of noble's outfit, and buy a new set of clothes every week.

Lifestyles come with bonuses or penalties to Diplomacy, Intimidate, Disguise, and Bluff skill checks. These penalties, shown below, should be applied at the DM's discretion, and can sometimes backfire—for example, a PC with a poor lifestyle would not have a penalty when talking to a beggar, but would when talking to a city official. A PC with a high lifestyle should have a penalty when dealing with a group of street thugs, where a PC with a destitute lifestyle might not.

DMs are encouraged to role-play these reactions whenever possible.

Lifestyle	Cost	Skill Modifier
Destitute	14 sp	-2
Poor	43 sp	-1
Common	12 gp	0
High	250 gp	+1
Luxury	500 gp	+2

About Adaptable Scenarios

This is an adaptable LIVING GREYHAWK scenario. Contact your Regional Triad (contact information available at www.livinggreyhawk.com) for specific information on how to adapt this adventure to your home region. Your triad will provide you with an Adaptation Sheet, which will dictate needed changes to make this adventure playable in your Home Region.

Some adventures simply are not appropriate for all regions. It's possible that your Regional Triad will not wish to adapt this adventure to your region. In that case, or in case you cannot or do not contact your Regional Triad, you may run this adventure as a "Default Core" adventure set in an unassigned or wild region. In this case, run the adventure essentially "as written." Do not attempt to "change history" in a nation that is not an assigned Triad region.

An Adaptable Scenario played as a "Default Core" scenario costs 2 Time Units. An Adaptable Scenario played as a regional event per the Triad's Adaptation Sheet costs 1 time unit for native characters, and 2 time units for visitors.

DM's Introduction

Plague of the Third Season

In the years leading up to the Greyhawk Wars, a group of maniacal priests unleashed an agenda of terror, disease, and famine known as the Plague of the Third Season. In the face of the Scarlet Brotherhood's revealing, and the skirmish that pitted Aerdy's southern province against Nyrond, a monastic order dedicated to Incabulos, named the Bronze Cabal, arose with a goal to furthering their god's call—they planned to unleash the most terrible plague and famine ever to occur on Oerth. These priests were dispatched in search of a number of holy relics and ancient artifacts that were necessary to their infernal plot. Disguised as priests of Rao and Pelor, the Cabal enlisted the aid of numerous unknowing "followers" to help them find the unholy ingredients for their planned terror.

After the god Vatun's historical "appearance" (Iuz in disguise) to the northern barbarian tribes, the priests of the Bronze Cabal entered the barbarian lands, and sought artifacts rumored to reside there. The barbarians caught the priests attempting to steal the timeless treasures of the northlands. Finding themselves trapped in the barbarian lands these desperate and seriously outnumbered priests executed their rituals prematurely and unleashed their plague onto the unsuspecting barbarian tribes. Much of the barbarian forces were fighting in the lands of Stonehold and Tenh, but the remaining forces fell victim to the plague and were unable to keep the armies in the south reinforced. This created a state of affairs that lead to the fall of the barbarian forces soon after their southern excursion began. The priests' demise was soon to follow. Discovering their plot to unleash a horrible disease unto Oerth, a group of heroes named the Defenders of the Light quested to the north and destroyed

the Bronze Cabal's faction there. But some damage was already done. For their remaining years, the heroes traveled throughout the Flanaess in search of the Bronze Cabal's remaining members and stop the group's evil plans from ever being set into motion again.

In the years following the Greyhawk Wars, the Defenders of the Light completed their mission. They destroyed all known remnants of the Cabal and removing any threat to the countries of the Flanaess that foul organization might have posed. In 587 CY, the Defenders fell upon their final encounter with a demon that was summoned by the last great priest of the Bronze Cabal—Feroxius the Plague-bringer. Defeating the priest and his foul minion took the lives of six of the seven members of the band. The only survivor was a young priest of Rao named Ploellin. Ploellin returned to his home, knowing that the threat had been extinguished, and has since led a life devoted to spreading the word of his god.

The Bronze Cabal

The Bronze Cabal was a loosely organized group of priests and followers of Incabulos. They preferred to use rituals and divine powers granted to them by their god instead of physical violence and confrontation to achieve their goals. They've been known to ally with lycanthropes at times. These cursed monsters assist the Cabal in combat and in searching out new followers. After the Greyhawk Wars and the Cabal's failed attempts to spread terror and disease across the Flanaess, they were forced to fracture their organization. Records of the rituals that were used to unleash the Plague of the Third Season were never found and are believed destroyed. Rumors of the Cabal's reformation and rise have surfaced from time to time in different regions of the Flanaess, but none have proven to be true.

The History of Nzevorikin

Nzevorikin began his study of Incabulos's scripture after contracting a terrible disease, which he survived, but it left horrible scars all over most of his face and torso. He believed his scared body was a sign from Incabulos, who chose him to prepare a new infested dawn and complete the previously failed attempt to spread the god's disease and faith across the Flanaess. Nzevorikin has moved throughout the Flanaess in search of the artifacts that were amassed during the Greyhawk Wars for use in rituals by the Bronze Cabal. He has been thwarted a number of times while pursuing artifacts in Furyondy, Veluna, the Vesve Forest, and the Lands of Iuz. Still, he continues to search lands across the Flanaess for the relics. Some believe that Nzevorikin possesses a number of the scriptures that were thought lost or destroyed during the Greyhawk Wars. These scriptures detail rituals that, when invoked, spread disease, and plague and call upon the divine powers of Incabulos to control the dreams of victims, instilling them with horrible nightmares that cause delirium or catatonia.

Nzevorikin is rumored to consort with remnants of the Bronze Cabal, and may be a member himself. Some have said that his activities point to an alliance with the Cabal while others believe him to be an extraneous and insane follower of Incabulos. Though they may disagree about his associations, good power groups agree that he is not to be taken lightly. His efforts have been brought to the attention of numerous groups in the countries of the Flanaess. Divinations have been used to track his movements, but recently such scryings have turned up little valuable information.

The Black Stone of Harrowing Dreams

One of the major artifacts that Nzevorikin is searching for is the *black stone of harrowing dreams*, one of the components taken by the Defenders of the Light during their raids against the Cabal. The stone disappeared about a decade after the wars ended. Among the stone's powers is a strange curse placed upon it causing nearby creatures to wildly attack any living creature near the stone. Just who bestowed this curse and why is a mystery. Also, anyone who comes into contact with the stone and lives suffers the most horrible nightmares on every quarter-mooned night.

The stone is approximately six inches tall, five inches wide, and an inch and a half thick. It has archaic runes engraved upon it. The runes were written in the blood of its first victim. Legend says anyone who can master the runes and read them back may command the powers of the stone (Bardic Knowledge, DC 25).

Adventure Synopsis

The heroes begin this adventure by encountering an odd, floating hand that beckons them to follow its gesture. It leads each of them to the door of an old and rundown tower.

When the heroes enter the tower, they are confronted by the spirit of Weslin Fraimekkian, actually a well-devised illusion by an evil priest of Incabulos. The priest is looking for unknowing minions to carry out his unholy tasks. Completion of these tasks will aid him in finishing his unsettling ritual. The illusionary ghost asks for the heroes' help in finding items that have recently been looted from his tomb. He informs the PCs that the items' theft is the reason for his haunting, and their return will reunite him with his family. The items are the *black stone of harrowing dreams* and a holy relic, the *holy chalice of Rao*.

As the heroes search outside of town for the stone, they come upon a desecrated church. The cemetery graves have been dug up and the corpses placed onto the ruined altar within. The stone is at the site, there is also a book hidden away within a small shed outside of the church. Inside the book are dark and strange religious parables written in blood. The night after leave the church, creatures attracted by the powers of the stone attack the PCs.

When the PCs search for the relic, they find that the supposed shady merchant's house is unguarded and easily plun-

dered. The shady merchant is really Ploellin, a holy man devoted to Rao. Ploellin does not know that the relic can be used as a component for an evil ritual. He has possessed it for years and it serves as a reminder of friends who had made the ultimate sacrifice for the greater good of the Flanaess.

If the heroes return both items to the illusionary ghost, or if they question the validity of the "spirit" too aggressively, Nzevorikin drops his cover and springs a trap that sends the PCs to his dungeon. There, they witness the torturous death of another captive and must find a way to escape.

After the characters escape the holding chamber and defeat the guards, they ascend to the top of the tower in search of Nzevorikin. When they reach his chamber, Nzevorikin flees with the help of a spell he has prepared and leaves his finest henchman, Duruuk, to battle the PCs.

If the heroes defeat Duruuk and return the items to Ploellin, the priest tells them that he is not comfortable keeping the stone. He hopes that they can have it destroyed before it falls into the wrong hands.

Player's Introduction

As the PCs are performing their daily activities a ghostly hand interrupts them. The "hand" seems very anxious and is trying to get the PCs to follow it. The "hand" is actually a *helping hand* spell. The DM should read the following passage to the players:

You notice, out of the corner of your eye, an odd, floating hand that seems eager to grab your attention. The hand approaches you and begins frantically waving in your face. It floats off, pausing here and there to ensure that you follow.

The characters each encounter the hand and, in each case, it annoys them until they follow, or the hand can beckon them as a group (though it chooses one person in the group to harass, as per the spell's description, *Player's Handbook*, page 213). The hand leads the PCs from their respective locations across the town in seemingly random directions. The hand twists turns down side streets and out of the city through a neglected hole in the city wall, and then leads the PCs into the wilderness. The hand then follows a trail for a short time, and the PCs are eventually lead to the door of a strange, dark tower:

After being led throughout town and into the wilderness, you come upon a mysterious, dark and twisted tower. The wind whips around the tower, creating a ghoulish moan.

After allowing a brief period for player introductions, if necessary, continue with the following passage:

As you approach the large wooden door, you can't help but notice two large statues of great warriors flanking the ornate entrance. Above there are two rather grotesque looking gargoyles, which, if they were living creatures, would be poised to strike out at anyone daring to trespass upon this eldritch manor. As your gaze moves from the imposing statues to the door in front of you, the portal mysteriously creaks and moans and finally swings open, like a bizarre invitation.

When the characters enter the tower, proceed to Encounter 1.

Encounter 1:

Spirit of Weslin Fraimekkian

The tower's main floor takes up a 30-foot diameter circle. There is a large fireplace opposite the door with a mantle above it. There are ornate tapestries hanging all around, depicting a family of great wealth. On the floor, there is a large rug of mangy fur. To the left of the entrance is a stairway that leads up, and, to the right, a doorway. Soon after initial investigation, an apparition—the “spirit” of Weslin Fraimekkian—greet the PCs.

Suddenly, you are frozen with fright, as a ghastly figure appears right before your eyes! With burning orbs of fire for eyes and chains dangling from its incorporeal limbs, the spirit moans a deep, chilling sigh before ascending to the ceiling. It speaks: “I am Weslin Fraimekkian, son of Jeriah Fraimekkian and owner of this decrepit manor. I have called upon you to assist me in avenging my family's unjust and cruel death.”

Sobbing and broken, Weslin continues to describe the events that led to his family's demise: “A gang of bandits came upon my humble home with the intent to destroy all that I had gained in life. Though I never learned their intent, I assumed that the bandits were hired by a rival merchant house. They took my wife and young daughter, Lenla, from me! I pursued them, out of my blinding love for my family, and found that my wife and daughter were murdered by the bandits. Those murderous thugs set an ambush for me. I did not resist, for I had nothing left to live for. Little did I know that I would not find peace in death. Instead I roam, seeking revenge against what these terrible men committed unto me!”

Weslin pauses to regain some composure, his ghastly features distorting under the torturous recounting of his tale. He continues:

“After my death, the bandits came again to my burial site and took from me the holy possessions that I had been given by my family and my faith. I have been imprisoned to haunt these halls, apart from my family for all eternity, until those symbols of my love and faith can be returned to me here.”

Weslin gives the heroes information regarding both the stone and the chalice and their locations.

He believes that the stone is somewhere in a graveyard at an old temple site about a half-day's journey southwest of the town. He has heard that the bandits once used the site as a base of operations.

The relic, he informs them, had been sold to a corrupt and greedy merchant named Ploellin. Any PCs with Knowledge (local) who succeeds at a check (DC 20) will recognize the name, know that he lives in town, but not much more. The “ghost” is lying about his personality (but not his identity). Ploellin does have the relic in his possession, but for an entirely different reason; he is the last remaining member of the Defenders of the Light—the group that set out to destroy the evil Bronze Cabal.

If asked, Weslin gives the following descriptions of the items:

“The stone was given to me by my daughter. She had found it while playing as a young child and thought it to be the most curious stone she had ever seen. It is a smoky gray hued stone with some writing on it. I was never able to read the writing, nor could I find anyone else who could.

“The other item was a relic given to me by my church for my unending faith in Rao. It is a beautiful chalice encrusted with jewels and blessed by the clergy of my faith.”

This story is actually a well-devised plot by Nzevorikin. He has used his spells and a powerful magic item in his possession to create an uncanny illusion of Weslin's ghost. PCs using their Spellcraft skill to attempt to discern if this is indeed a creation of magic can make a check at DC 25. A successful Spellcraft check or *detect magic* spell reveals the magical presence, but the presence of numerous magical effects confuses the aura's source and type. Heroes succeeding at a Sense Motive (DC 20) will determine that, though his intentions are somewhat muddled, the ghost does have a sincere desire to have these items returned. After a short time (3 minutes) the magic creating the spirit runs out. At such time, if the PCs are still present, Nzevorikin's creation feigns that demons that are hounding him, are pulling him away. The illusion screams in agony as his pursuers haul his trapped soul back to the Ethereal Plane.

PCs now have two paths that they may follow: They can further investigate to find the sacred stone (Go to Encounter 2), or they can pursue the lead to find and return the ghost's holy relic (Go to Encounter 5).

What happens if the PCs search the tower? It is extremely possible that the PCs may decide to search the tower before searching for the stone or the relic. If this happens, all is not lost. The action in this adventure will just be played out in reverse. Nzevorikin will use his *mage hand* spell to release the floor trap and drop the PCs into the dungeon (See Encounter 7). He will make his escape when the PCs confront him. Run the rest of the adventure as a mystery, as the PCs attempt to find out the reasons why Nzevorikin needed the stone and the chalice. Ploellin will

help PCs put the pieces together where necessary, and will reward them with his favor and his masterwork flail at the end of the adventure.

Encounter 2: Decrepit Church

The decrepit church is located about a half-day's journey from town. The trip to the site is uneventful, except that the weather takes a turn for the worse—grayish clouds rolling in and the mist turns to light rain as they approach the church and its graveyard.

Mist becomes light rain and you're soon soaked. You can hear thunder crackle in the distance from the approaching storm. As you come over a small ridge, you see a peculiarly dense grove of gnarled and twisted oak trees that seem eerily out of place in this lightly wooded area. As you approach the thicket, the trees seem to turn toward you, engulfing you in their dark canopy, and blocking what little daylight there is. Traveling a short distance into the twisted woods you see a mangled, ruined church almost completely engulfed by the evil looking overgrowth. The ceiling of the main building has collapsed and, here and there, the branches of the enormous oaks have pierced and shattered the old stained-glass windows. You see a small cemetery just to the north of the church.

Upon approaching the site, the PCs may notice (Spot, DC 15)

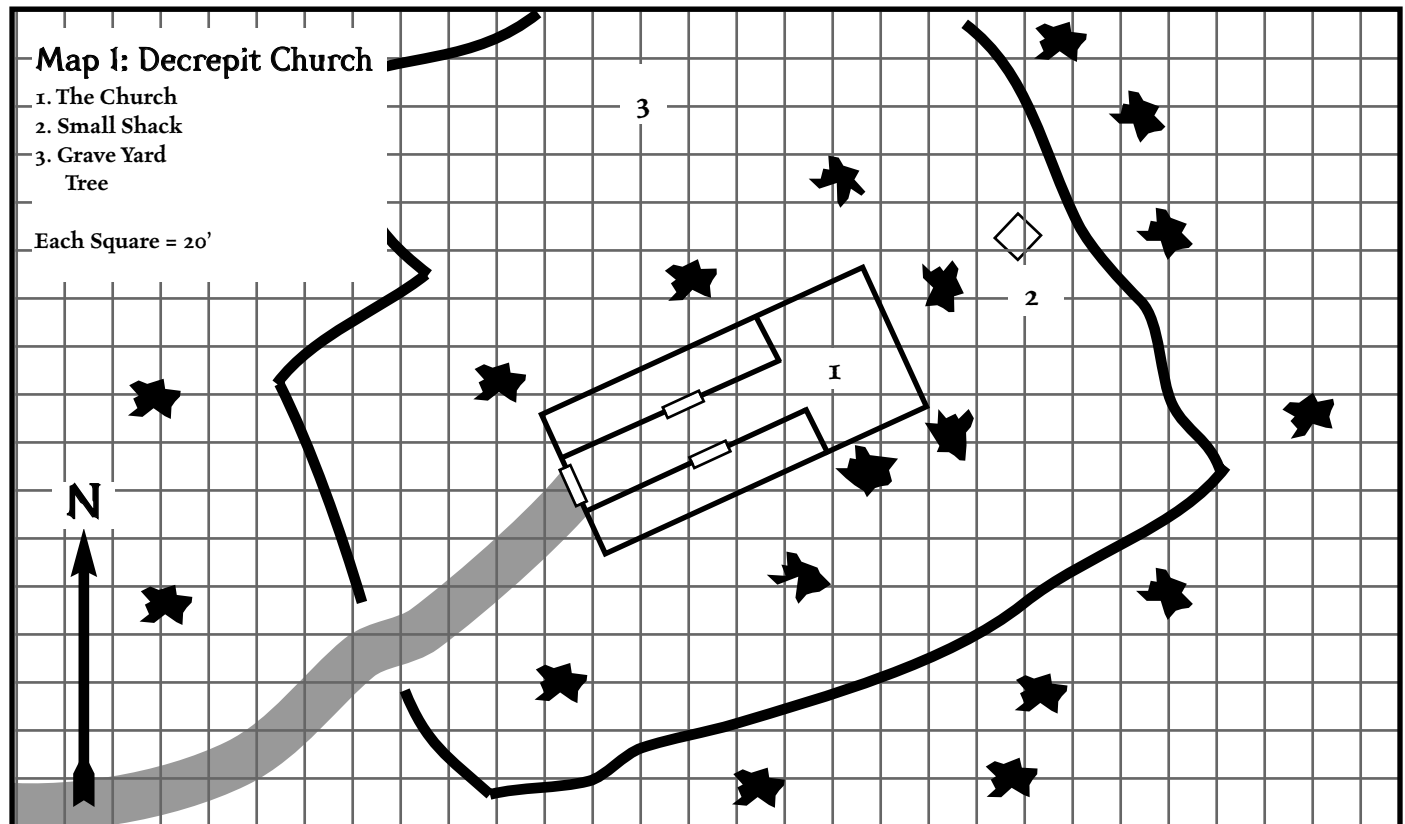
that not only has the forest overtaken this church, but the site has also have been rampaged by creatures.

The Churchyard: As the PCs approach and investigate the churchyard, signs of desecration become obvious. The church building is barely standing; its walls are slowly crumbling in on themselves, and its roof has long since collapsed. Around the churchyard the PCs will find that the holy statues have all been removed from their pedestals and smashed into pieces. Many of those pieces are scattered all around the church's grounds.

There is a small shed behind the church. Within this small building, the PCs will find interesting sets of runes inside, along the rickety door—vile markings written in dried blood. A PC who is able to read Infernal can read these markings. Give PCs that are able to read Infernal (and have examined the writings) Players' Handout #1. There is also blood dried on the floor and staining the walls. Succeeding at a Search check (DC 22) reveals a well-hidden book beneath the floorboards of the shed. The book has a plain charcoal-black cover adorned with gouges here and there. The tome is trapped. A needle, coated with an infectious disease, shoots out of the spine of the book, coated with an infectious disease. The judge should consult the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, pages 74-75, for the effects of disease on a character.

Tier 1 (EL 4)

Disease needle trap: +8 ranged (1) + filth fever disease (Fort save



to resist [DC 12]; incubation 1d3 days; 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Con damage); Search (DC 22); Disable Device (DC 20).

Tier 2 (EL 6)

Disease needle trap: +10 ranged (1) + shakes disease (Fort save to resist [DC 13]; incubation 1 day; 1d8 Dex damage); Search (DC 25); Disable Device (DC 22).

Tier 3 (EL 7)

Disease needle trap: +12 ranged (1) + slimy doom disease (Fort save to resist [DC 14]; incubation 1 day; 1d4 Con damage); Search (DC 29); Disable Device (DC 25).

The tome contains many pages that are still intact, but several pages have been torn out and a few have been destroyed by flame. The text is written in Infernal. PCs who can read Infernal can read the book.

The Graveyard: Investigating the graveyard reveals that all of the graves have been crudely and hastily dug up—the contents are nowhere to be found.

Even closer investigation of the graveyard reveals numerous tracks of many types of animals. Succeeding at a Track check (DC 15) reveals that the tracks are mostly wolf and bear, but also some large rat tracks. PCs searching the graves will see that all the headstones have been overturned. Closer examination (Search DC 10) also reveals that some headstones are scarred with deep scratch marks, and that the graves appear to have been dug up with claws rather than tools.

Inside the Church: Searching the church reveals even more disturbing and gruesome scenes. Within the church, the stench of rotting flesh is overpowering, enough to force to make the PCs attempt a Fortitude save (DC 12). Anyone who fails is sickened, and suffers a -1 penalty to all rolls for the next 1d8 hours. Upon entering the church, the heroes immediately notice a horrific pile of corpses stacked nearly to the ceiling in place of where the altar must have once stood. The dead bodies are in various states of decay, from skeletal remains to rather fresh corpses. Succeeding at a Heal check (DC 15) reveals that some of the bodies have been placed on the pile as recently as the previous night.

If the PCs inspect the corpses further, succeeding at a Search check (DC 20) reveals an interesting stone shoved into one of the body's gaping stomach wound. The stone is a four-inch by four-inch smoky dark gray hued and jagged-edged stone. A single word is chiseled on its face, and written in Infernal: "nightmare". If a hero in possession of the stone speaks that command word aloud, take the player of that character aside and let the player know that their character feels a strong compulsion to keep the stone, and may act aggressively towards those that wish to take it from him or her. The hero may not voluntarily give up the stone at any time (even if they are the subject of a *charm* or *command*

spell, but they can give it up if subject to a *remove curse* spell. That spell does not remove the curse from the stone itself, though).

Development: The PCs are likely to spend a considerable amount of time searching this site. If they decide to stay the night the PCs encounter a group of beasts dragging fresh kills to the site. This encounter is similar to (and replaces) Encounter 3. Combat ensues as the PCs are potentially surprised (Spot or Listen, DC 15). See Encounter 3 for details.

Encounter 3: Dire Situation

When the PCs leave the site, and if they haven't rested at the church, they will need to on the way back to town. If they have found the stone, they will be awoken in the middle of the night by a number of creatures that emerge from the wilderness to attack—dire wolves, rats, or both depending on the Tier. Strangely, some of them dragging freshly killed kobold corpses.

Quickening from the shadows, you see several animals emerge from the brush. Some of them are clutching what looks like dead humanoids in their jaws. Gore drips from their mouths as they begin to frenzy and charge at you in a bloodlust.

Tier 1 (EL 3)

Dire Rats (6): hp 7, 6 (x3), 5 (x2); *Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 56.

Tier 2 (EL 5)

Dire Rats (3): hp 7, 6 (x2); *Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 56.

Dire Wolf (1): hp 45; *Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 57.

Tier 3 (EL 8)

Dire Rats (6): hp 7, 6 (x3), 5 (x2); *Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 56.

Dire Wolves (2): hp 49, 45; *Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 57.

Tactics: The rats and/or wolves are in a frenzy. They will fight to the death and will not break to flee. They will always charge the nearest PC and will be unaffected by enchantments spells, spell-like abilities, or supernatural effects.

Encounter 4: Return to the Tower

If the heroes return to the tower after finding one of the items but not both, the "ghost" speaks to them, reiterating the information that he had told them before.

If they have not yet visited the home of Ploellin, the ghost gives them directions to the priest's home. He also tells them that it is best to approach at night, since Ploellin lives in a busy part of

town and that it would be best to not draw attention to themselves while searching for the chalice.

If they have not yet searched for the stone, he tells the PCs that he believes that the stone may be in a glade southwest of town where an old church sits about a half-day's journey from town.

Sobbing mournfully again, Weslin speaks: "For helping me find my peace and returning me to my family's side, you have my unending gratitude. Go now and seek out the final piece to my salvation and return here with it so that I may be set free of this horrible curse. Make haste, for the tortures of this existence are unbearable."

Development: If the heroes voice skepticism about stealing the relic, which is likely if there are lawful good or adventurers of conscience, Nzevorikin casts *charm person* (Will save, DC 14) on one of them. Weslin then implores charmed hero to help and convince the party that it is right to return the lost soul's relic and allow the ghost his final peace. If possible don't alert the PCs to the charm. It may be a good idea to take each player aside and roleplay Weslin's pleas, the other PCs can wrestle with their conscience, while target of the spell must succeed at the saving throw. If that person fails explain to him or her that her or she feels compelled to aid the ghost. If the spell fails the PCs who was charmed will know an attempt was made, and Nzevorikin will know it failed. The villain then springing his trap and send the heroes tumbling into the dungeon. Proceed to Encounter 6.

If the PCs decide to confront the ghost on the issue of the relic, the priest drops his cover and surprises them, sending them tumbling to the dungeon, if possible. If not he alerts Duruuk and the bugbears who will make haste to confront the PCs. Go to Encounter 6.

If the PCs accept the mission (either they have no problem stealing the relic, or they have been successfully manipulated by Nzevorikin's wit and spell), the ghosts fades away. Its fading is followed by a horrible groan that echoes throughout the chamber.

Encounter 5: Rectory of Rao

The PCs may attempt to retrieve the relic a couple of different ways: they will approach the priest's rectory at night, under cover of darkness, or they may want to confront Ploellin.

The PCs might also be compelled to check up on Ploellin's background using the Gather Information skill (DC 12). Attempting the check will cost 1d4 gp worth of drinks and bribes, and succeeding at the check reveals that Ploellin is not a merchant at all, but rather he is a devote priest of Rao. He does, though, reside at the location given to the PCs by the ghost—a part of the city that hosts many religious buildings, but also the homes of some lesser merchants. A successful Gather Information check will not yield any information about the relic,

but a successful Bardic Knowledge check may (DC 25) remind bards that the a small rectory of Rao in this city is rumored to house a holy, gem-encrusted chalice.

Approaching at night: If the PCs approach Ploellin's residence at night, read the following:

You approach the building that the spirit directed you to, finding it to be much less grandiose than you had expected. The house's weather-beaten exterior seems to be out of place among the surrounding temples. The flicker of candlelight from the second-story window cuts through the darkness that surrounds the building and a howl in the distance makes the tiny hairs on your neck stand on end. A moment later, the light from the window goes out and all is now dark below. Stairs lead up to the front porch of the residence and a small step in back leads to a door at the rear.

Regardless of which way the heroes enter the house at night, Ploellin does not wake. He is a very sound sleeper. The characters quickly locate the relic sitting in Ploellin's den atop a bookshelf.

Atop the bookcase, you spot a bronze chalice, emeralds encrust its base. The stunning item stands out as the only ornate article on the old dust-covered bookshelf.

Any characters that search the area do not find any evidence that Ploellin belonging to a merchant guild, merchant family, or other trade organization. The entire dwelling is rather Spartan. The only telling items in the den are several manuals written in Common, each devoted to the teachings of Rao, and all of which are arranged in alphabetical order on the bookshelf.

In the Daylight Hours: If the heroes decide to confront Ploellin during the day, read or paraphrase the following:

You approach the building that the spirit directed you to, and find it to be much less grandiose then what you had expected to find. The house's weather-beaten exterior seems to be out of place among the surrounding temples. The streets are filled not with merchants, but with clergymen and those persons who wish the services of priests. Stairs lead up to the front porch of the residence and a small step in back leads to a door at the rear.

If the PCs decide to approach Ploellin, he invites them in as his guests. If asked he shows them the relic, and explains to them that it was found during his adventuring days in the marshes of the Vast Swamp in southern Sunndi. Other than its powers as a minor relic to Rao, he is not aware of any other significance the item might have. Ploellin has holds the relic in this rectory in remembrance of his fallen comrades.

Development: If the heroes suspect Weslin (Nzevorikin) is up

to no good, and shares these thoughts with Ploellin, the priest will express his concern. He is willing to help a poor soul in need, but flinches at the thought that the ghost could want the relic for some evil end. He tells the PCs of the relic's powers and how to use them. He encourages the PCs to take the relic and to use it if necessary. Ploellin tells the PCs that he would like the relic returned when the PCs are done, if such a return is possible.

Encounter 6: The Ghost Revealed

When the PCs return to the tower, the Nzevorikin is expecting them to have the items in their possession. When they enter the tower, Weslin's voice instructs the heroes to place the items on the mantle above the fireplace.

A voice booms throughout the room as you enter. "You have retrieved my items, for that I am grateful. Leave them here now, so that I may rest in peace." You recognize the voice as that of Weslin, but his incorporeal form is nowhere to be found.

If the PCs place the items on the mantle: As soon as they place the items on the mantle, Nzevorikin begins to walk down the stairway toward the heroes. If the heroes have returned both items, read or paraphrase the following:

As you place the items upon the mantle, you hear the clicking of footsteps from staircase above. A dark figure in a black robe trimmed with bronze emerges from around the corner and stops about halfway down the stairs. Glaring in your direction he spits, "I've been expecting your return! I see you've succeeded in bringing what I need to complete my ritual. Since you have been so cooperative, I would like you to be my guests for the culmination of my work."

The evil man sneers at you as he pulls a lever on the wall, cackles, and retreats to his upper abode.

If they do not place the items on the mantle: If the PCs return to the tower after speaking with the relic's rightful keeper and decide not to place the items on the mantle, the priest uses a *mage hand* to spring the trap on the heroes from a distance.

The floor of the room begins to shake. You are jarred and tossed as a pit opens in the middle of the room, sending you sprawling to avoid falling into the darkness below.

Nzevorikin springs a trap on the PCs by pulling a lever on the wall on the staircase.

Trap: Any PCs that have entered the tower and are standing atop the floor trap must succeed a Reflex save or fall into the dungeon below the tower.

Tier 1-3 (EL 4)

Trap door trap: No attack roll needed (Reflex save to avoid (DC 20); 1d6 subdual damage); Search (DC 18); Disable Device (DC 20).

Nzevorikin quickly retreats to his upper chamber and dispatches Duruuk from the basement dungeon if the remaining PCs give chase. The remaining PCs may act, but are hindered by the unstable floor. Movement is halved and attacks and skill checks suffer a -4 circumstance penalty, and spell casting requires a Concentration check (DC 10, the -4 circumstance penalty applies to this roll as well) in order to succeed. If the PCs try to pursue Nzevorikin up the stairs, Duruuk bursts from the door and engages the PCs (See Encounter 7 for Duruuk's stats).

PCs who are outside: Any PCs remaining outside hear the rumble and commotion from within. They find the door locked. There are no other entrances, visible or otherwise. The PCs who are outside must either pick the lock (DC 15) or bash open the door; otherwise they are trapped outside, helpless to aid their companions.

Encounter 7: Capture and Escape

After the trap is sprung, some heroes will undoubtedly end up in the large circular holding room under the floor trap. The floor is covered with old and moldy straw (reducing the falling damage, so that Nzevorikin's victims live just a little longer...).

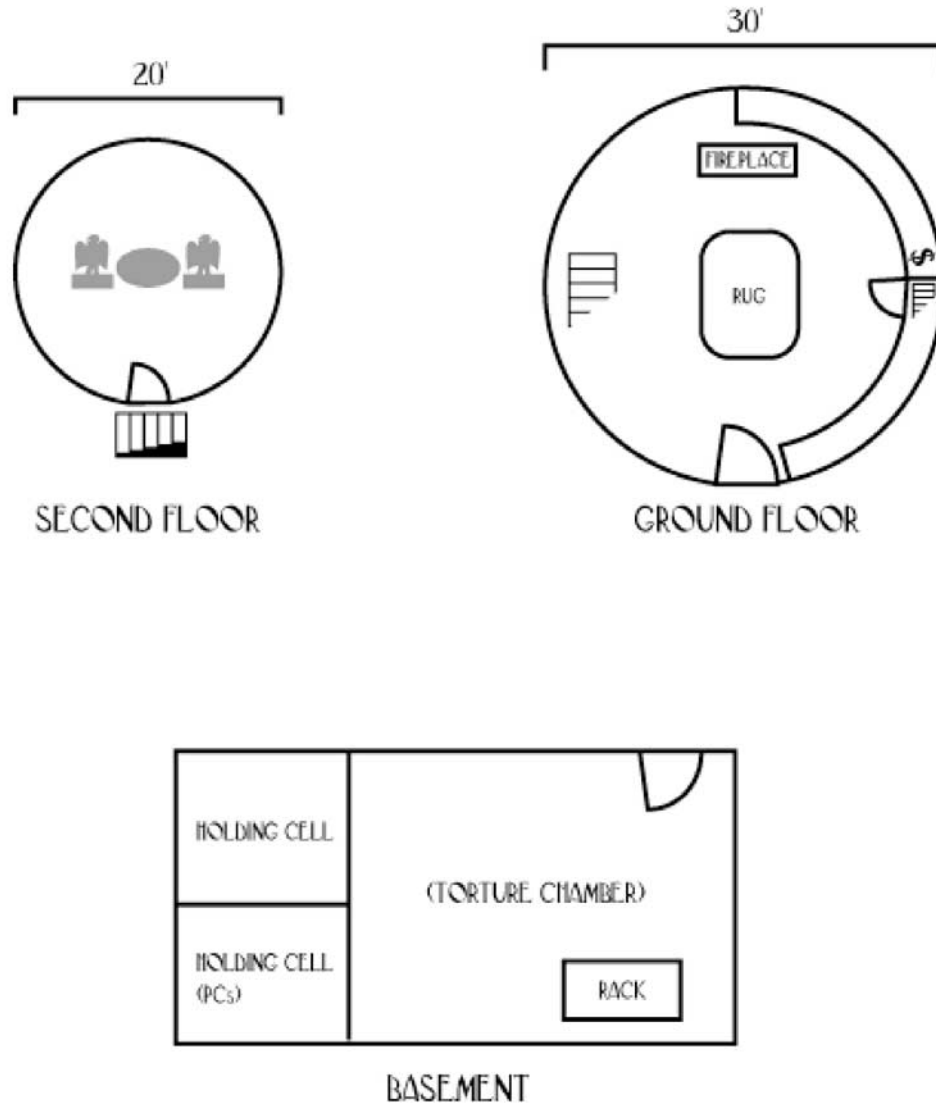
As you come to your senses again, you realize that you are now trapped in a damp and musty stone circular cell. Flickering light enters the chamber through a small grate in the wall, and screams of agony come from outside the cell.

Nzevorikin's henchmen are busy torturing their latest victim in the torture chamber. If a PC looks at what lies beyond the grate, read the following:

Various torture implements line the walls of this dungeon. A large rack, stained red with the blood of many victims, is propped in the corner of the room. A human-sized casket-like box also stands in the room. Though it is closed, ominous crimson contents dripping down its sides and onto the floor, suggest as how the box may be employed.

A man lies face down on a flat stone slab. Two large and hairy goblinoids flank the man. Each has wedge-shaped ears, a mouth full of fangs, and is wearing light armor. From behind one of the goblinoids, a man covered nearly head-to-toe in gore strides toward his victim on the stone slab. He carries a large hook in one hand and a serrated blade in the other. After a skilled flick with his serrated blade his victim's mouth bubbles over with blood, his eyes roll back, and his body falls limp. The gore covered man cackles evilly, just before he glances your way.

Map 2: The Tower



Development: The man (Duruuk) calls for the bugbears to guard the new prisoners while he finds out what Nzevorikin wants to do with the new dungeon inhabitants. He then exits the room.

The PCs must come up with a creative way to escape their captivity. You may want to roll initiative here and take it round by round. The bugbears are distracted by the dead man's corpse (continuing to poke and prod it, as well as making grotesque jokes in Goblin about the dead man) and pay the heroes only a passing interest. The heroes can use the bugbear's ghoulish distraction to their advantage. Still, a fight is a very possibility as the PCs attempt to escape. The heroes should then find their way out of the dungeon and up to the top of the tower.

Tier 1 (EL 4)

Bugbear (2): hp 16 (each). See *Monster Manual* page 27.

Tier 2 (EL 6)

Bugbear Ftr2 (2): CR 4; Medium-size Humanoid (Goblinoid); HD 3d8+6 + 2d10+4; hp 35 (each); Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19 (Touch 11, Flatfooted 18); Atks +7 melee (1d10+3/19-20, bastard sword) or +5 ranged (1d6+3/x3, half spear); SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Climb +3, Hide +2, Listen +3, Move Silently

+6, Spot +3. Bugbears have a +4 racial bonus to Move Silently checks; Alertness, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Power Attack.

Possessions: Studded leather armor, large wooden shield, bastard sword, half spear.

Tier 3 (EL 8)

Bugbear Ftr4 (2): CR 6; Medium-size Humanoid (Goblinoid); HD 3d8+9 + 4d10+12; hp 58 (each); Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 22 (Touch 13, Flatfooted 19); Atks +10 melee (1d10+5/19-20, bastard sword) or +9 ranged (1d6+3/x3, half spear); SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Climb +2, Hide +3, Listen +4, Move Silently +7, Spot +4. Bugbears have a +4 racial bonus to Move Silently checks; Alertness, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bastard sword), Weapon Specialization (bastard sword).

Possessions: chain shirt, large wooden shield, bastard sword, half spear.

The PCs still have their equipment, and may cast spells or fire ranged weapons at the bugbears. The bugbears aren't intelligent enough to remain out of line of sight of the heroes until the PCs starting firing. The trapped heroes see no conceivable exit from the cell other than trying to climb back up the way that they came in. A Search check (DC 18) reveals a one-way door leading to the torture chamber (it opens from the torture chamber's side, of course) that the PCs can open with a *knock* spell or bashing it open. If they enter the room, the bugbears attack.

One Way Door: 2 inch thick; hardness 5; hp 20; AC 5, break DC 20.

Their best chance at escape is to climb back up the way they fell. The bugbears are distracted and do not pay much attention to the PCs unless they are directly harassed. If the PCs attempt this, they should succeed at a number of climb checks equal to the Tier the PCs are playing at (DC 12) in order to climb back up. When they reach the top of the tunnel, there is a large, wooden trap door that they can pound on to try to gain the attention of the PCs above. The PCs above should be able to open the trapdoor by force (DC 25), or by pulling the lever on the staircase.

Heroes that didn't fall: For the heroes that didn't fall, they have numerous options.

If there are heroes outside the tower, the heroes inside will need to open the door to let them back in. It is a simple lock (DC 20) that can be opened from the inside.

If the heroes decide to give chase up the stairs after Nzevorikin, Duruuk bursts forth from the door opposite the staircase and engages them. See Encounter 7 for Duruuk's stats. If the heroes try to assist the trapped PCs, they will likely search

the room and may (Search, DC 20) find the trap door in the middle (where the heroes fell) and or (Search DC 25) another door that leads to a staircase going down. There is a secret door in this staircase opposite the stairs going down that leads up to Nzevorikin's chamber, which Duruuk uses to get to the top of the tower. If the PCs don't give chase. If the remaining heroes go down the passage to the basement, they end up in the torture chamber with the bugbears. A battle ensues and the PCs that are in the cell can here the battle and try to assist.

If the heroes remain in the foyer, they can assist the trapped PCs' escape through the trap door by opening it with the lever.

Front Door: 1 inch thick; hardness 5; hp 10; AC 5; break DC 18.

Development: During the actions taking place in this encounter, the stone and relic both begin to emanate an eerie green glow. Nzevorikin has begun his ritual and the stone and relic need only be within within the tower to begin the ritual. If the relics are not inside the tower, Nzevorikin will send Duruuk and the bugbears to find them and get them within the tower.

Encounter 8: Villain's Flight

Upon reaching the top of the tower, the heroes finally see the priest's evil plot in all its horrific repulsiveness. Read the following passage:

As you enter the chamber atop the tower, you see a repulsive sight. The room is walled with human skulls, all of which seem to glare at you as you enter. A large pool of crimson fills the middle of the room. Stone statues of winged and fanged creatures from another time and place flank the pool.

If the PCs have not faced Duruuk already, he is with Nzevorikin to aid with the ritual.

Two men are standing on the other side of the pool. The dark robed man stands next to a shimmering oval of blue light. The other man, whose brawny and scared frame swaggers like a sellsword, scowls at your entrance. As soon as they notice you, the chanting man steps through the shimmering vertical gateway. The other draws his serrated blade. His eyes full of fury as he lets out an enraged battle cry.

If the PCs have already defeated Duruuk, read the following passage instead.

A solitary, dark robed man stands on the other side of the pool, next to a shimmering oval of blue light. As soon as he notices you, the chanting man steps through the shimmering vertical gateway and disappears, leaving you in this horrific, unholy place.

The heroes must battle Duruuk while Nzevorikin uses the opportunity to escape (Nzevorikin gets a free partial action before initiative is rolled, giving him enough time to escape); the gateway he opened closing quickly behind him. The ritual has amplified the stone's power and whoever picks it up at this point is subject to its curse, even if the command word has not already been spoken. Be sure to pull the player aside and explain the effect to him or her. If the heroes did not return the stone to Nzevorikin, the ambient evil within this room triggers the curse on whoever now holds the stone.

Tier 1 (EL 4)

Duruuk, male human Ftr 4: Medium-size Humanoid; HD 4d10+4; hp 32; Init +6; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16 (Touch 12, Flatfooted 14); Atks +8 melee (2d4+3/18-20, falchion); AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 16, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +10, Escape Artist +5, Intimidate +3, Jump +10, Speak Goblin; Cleave, Expertise, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (falchion).

Possessions: Scale mail, falchion.

Tier 2 (EL 6)

Duruuk, male human Ftr 6: Medium-size Humanoid; HD 6d10+6; hp 46; Init +6; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16 (Touch 12, Flatfooted 14); Atks +10/+5 melee (2d4+5/crit 18-20, falchion); AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 16, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +12, Escape Artist +6, Intimidate +4, Jump +12, Speak Goblin; Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Expertise, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (falchion), Weapon Specialization (falchion).

Possessions: Scale mail, falchion.

Tier 3 (EL 8)

Duruuk, male human Ftr 8: Medium-size Humanoid; HD 8d10+8; hp 60; Init +6 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 20 ft.; AC 16 (Touch 12, Flatfooted 14); Atks +12/+7 melee (2d4+5/15-20, falchion); AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 16, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Skills: Climb +14, Escape Artist +7, Intimidate +5, Jump +14, Speak Goblin.

Feats: Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Expertise, Improved Disarm, Improved Critical (falchion), Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (falchion), Weapon Specialization (falchion).

Possessions: Scale mail, falchion.

"This is very disturbing indeed. This horrible ritual sounds strikingly similar to my encounters with the Bronze Cabal in the past. I do not know what actions you should take now. It is very disheartening that this evil priest still roams free. Please, take this stone, as I cannot guard it from the evils that pursue it. It needs to be destroyed as soon as possible, for it is obviously a component to this terrible plot reborn. I trust you as bearers of good to follow through and destroy the stone as soon as you can."

If the heroes inquire as to how they can destroy the stone, Ploellin tells them that it will take powerful magical invocations that he is not able to call upon. He thanks them for their efforts and warns them that the stone emanates a great amount of evil. The bearer of the stone should be under the influence of the curse and will be happy to "hold on to it for safe keeping." If the heroes have concerns that their companion is potentially cursed, Ploellin informs them that he is not able to help them but that they should seek out the services of another, more powerful priest to assist them. The cursed character may likely protest any action taken against him.

If the heroes return the relic to Ploellin, he thanks them and gives them his flail and offers them his favor should they seek him out in the future. The PCs are only awarded the favors and the flail if they return the chalice to Ploellin to conclude the adventure.

The favors can be used at this time by the PCs to cure diseased characters by pooling three of the favors together, or the favors can be saved for a later date.

THE END

Conclusion

After defeating the priest, it is likely that the heroes will return to Ploellin's dwelling to bring him the relic and report their findings. He tells the heroes the following:

Experience Point Summary

To award experience for this adventure, add up the values for the objectives accomplished. Then assign the discretionary roleplaying experience award. The roleplaying award should be given for consistent character portrayal and contribution to the fun of the game. You can award different roleplaying amounts to different characters.

Award the total value (objectives plus roleplaying) to each character.

Encounter 1

Revealing that magic is at work 25 xp

Encounter 2

Finding the Black Stone 50 xp

Finding the book 25 xp

Deciphering the runes 25 xp

Encounter 3

Defeating the dire animals 75 xp

Encounter 5

Waking Ploellin and talking to him 25 xp

Revealing concerns about the "ghost" 50 xp

Encounter 7

Escaping the dungeon (individually awarded) 25 xp

-Or-

Helping trapped PCs escape the dungeon (individually awarded) 25 xp

Defeating the bugbears 50 xp

Encounter 8

Defeating Duruuk 75 xp

Conclusion

Returning the relic to Ploellin 25 xp

Discretionary roleplaying award 0-50 xp

Maximum possible XP award: 500 xp

Treasure Summary

Player characters may keep items from the scenario that are listed on the treasure list below or which meet the following conditions:

1) The item must be non-magical and specifically listed in the text of the adventure (e.g armor on foes). If it is not listed in the text, the characters cannot keep it. Items of this nature can be sold for 50% of book value, or recorded on a log sheet.

2) Animals, followers, monsters, henchmen, and so forth (any living being, basically) may not be kept from a scenario for any reason unless the treasure summary lists the being specifically. It is okay for the player characters to form relationships with NPCs, but these will not be certified and cannot bring material benefit to the character. Contacts (sources of extra information) must be specifically certified.

3) Theft is against the law, but may be practiced by some player characters. Items that are worth more than 250 gp that are of personal significance to the owner (including family heirlooms), and all magical items, will be discovered in the possession of the character by one means or another. The character must return the item and pay a fine equal to three times the value of the item stolen. In addition, the PC caught receives campaign-decided penalties for being known as a thief, such as Infamy. For other stolen items which meet the criteria in #1 above, use your judgment and the circumstances within the game to determine whether a PC thief gets away with the theft or not.

Any item retained according to these rules, which does not have a certificate will not ever have a certificate issued for it.

The campaign staff reserves the right to take away any item or gold acquired for things it later finds unreasonable but which were allowed at the time.

Encounter 2

The Black Stone of Harrowing Dreams (500 gp, weight —, stone, rare): This stone is a four-inch by four-inch smoky dark gray-hued and jagged-edged stone. A single word is written in blood on its face in strange cuneiform script. The stone emits a strong aura of evil that can be detected by *detect evil* or another similar effect. Unless the command word is spoken by its possessor, the stone summons vile beasts that hunt down creatures near the stone and then, once those creatures are killed, piles their bodies atop the stone. Each night if the possessor of the artifact does not recite the command word there is a 50% chance of attracting a beast from the chart below. The attracted creature shows up sometime around midnight. The beast will not act aggressively toward the possessor unless the possessor attacks that creature. The creature will attack any creatures around the possessor. The possessor may not voluntarily give up the stone, even if her or she is the subject of a *charm person* or *command* spell, but he or she can give it up if subject of a *remove curse* spell. That spell does not remove the curse from the stone itself, though.

1d10 roll	Resulting monster
1-6	Dire rat (see <i>Monster Manual</i> , page 56).
7-9	Dire bat (see <i>Monster Manual</i> , page 57).
10	Dire wolf (see <i>Monster Manual</i> , page 57).

Command Word: The command word is written in blood on the face of the stone in the Infernal language. A PC that speaks the command word while he or she is in possession of the stone (directly held or carried on his or her person) is cursed and compelled to keep it on his or her person, and will defend it aggressively if anyone attempts to take it away from him or her. The PC will always deny any claims that he or she is cursed, claiming that he or she is the stone's rightful keeper.

Also, the PC suffers from horrific nightmares on each quarter-moon night.

Book of Torment & Torture, Volume I: (50 gp, 3 lbs, leather, wood, paper, unusual): *The Book of Torment & Torture, Volume I* is bound with a charcoal-black cover that has numerous gouge marks on it. There are several pages torn out and a few that seem to have been burned, but for the most part the tome is intact.

The tome's text is written in Infernal. PCs must have the ability to read Infernal in order to gain the insight bonuses the book provides. This text gives the owner a +2 insight bonus to Knowledge (religion) skill checks involving the unholy faith of Incabulos. If the owner of the text does not possess the Knowledge (religion) skill, that individual can still make a Knowledge (religion) skill check for matters involving Incabulos (without the +2 bonus mentioned above, but this ability is considered an insight bonus). It takes at least 5 minutes of reading to gain the insight bonus. The book must be read no more than 5 minutes before the check that the PC wishes to gain the insight bonus for is made.

Encounter 5

Holy Chalice of Rao: (400 gp/100 gp after the charges have been spent, 3 lbs, bronze, emeralds, unusual): This chalice is made of fine bronze and is encrusted with small but beautiful emeralds around its base. It has been blessed by high priests of Rao.

This relic allows the user to cast *bless* or *prayer* as a spell completion effect. Only a spell caster of good alignment who has both of these spell on their spell list may use this item. It has 12 charges remaining. Casting *bless* with the relic uses a single charge, casting *prayer* uses three charges.

Conclusion

Favor of Ploellin, Priest of Rao

For returning the relic and defeating the evil priest's infernal plot, the characters receive a favor from Ploellin, a priest of Rao. This favor grants the holder a single spell, should he/she seek out the services of Ploellin in the town of _____.

This favor is used as follows: if one is used, Ploellin grants either a *cure light wounds* or a *bless water* spell, if two are used, he

grants either a *cure moderate wounds* or a *delay poison* spell, and if three are used, he grants a *cure serious wounds* or a *cure disease* spell. No more than three can be combined together at a time.

The judge should fill in the name of the town in which Ploellin was found during the scenario, as it varies from region to region.

Masterwork Light Flail (308 gp, 5 lbs, wood and steel, common): Returning the relic to Ploellin after their harrowing encounter with the minions of Nzevorikin earns the PCs this weapon, which Ploellin never expects to use again. This flail is finely crafted with a ram's head hilt and a twisted ivory handle.

Major NPCs

Nzevorikin, The Villain

Nzevorikin (pronounced ZEH-vor-EH-kin), **male human Clr7 (Incabulos)/ Wizz(illusionist)**: Medium-size Humanoid; HD 7d8-8 + 2d4-2; hp 35; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10; Atks +6/+1 melee (1d4/19-20, dagger), +6 ranged (1d4, sling); SA Command undead; AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +11; Str 10, Dex 11, Con 9, Int 15, Wis 17, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Alchemy +6, Concentration +2, Heal +10, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (the planes) +6, Knowledge (arcana) +14, Knowledge (religion) +14, Scry +6, Speak Draconic, Speak Infernal, Spellcraft +14; Craft Wondrous Item, Extend Spell, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (illusion), Spell Penetration, Silent Spell, Still Spell. Divine Spells Prepared (6/5+1/4+1/3+1/1+1; Spell DC = 13 + spell level): 0—*cure minor wounds, detect magic, guidance, light, resistance, virtue*; 1st—*cause fear, cure light wounds, doom, obscuring mist, protection from good*, sanctuary*; 2nd—*death knell, enthrall, hold person, shatter*, undetectable alignment*; 3rd—*bestow curse, contagion* (x2), helping hand*; 4th—*poison, unholy blight**.

* Domain spells; Domains: Destruction: Nzevorikin can use a smite power once a day. It is a supernatural ability to make a single melee attack with a +4 attack bonus and a damage bonus equal to his cleric level (+7, and only if he hits). Evil: You cast evil spells at +1 caster level.

Arcane Spells Prepared (4+1/3+1; Spell DC = 12 + spell level): 0—*arcane mark, daze, ghost sound, mage hand, read magic*; 1st—*charm person, shield, sleep, ventriloquism*.

Description and personality traits: Nzevorikin is a ghastly, grotesque man, with a bent stature and an icy glare. He chooses dark vestments trimmed with copper, as is typical for a follower of Incabulos. What he lacks in appearance, he makes up for substantially in force of will and intimidation. Though his demeanor is typically calm and calculating, he is known to go into furious fits of rage that can prove very disparaging to those that surround him. He tends to shy away from close alliances with others and prefers to work in command of small groups of humans or humanoids.

Nzevorikin has a notorious history of ruthlessness. Torture and pain are his tools when dealing with his captives. Typical forms of torture include infecting his captives with slow-working, deadly diseases and watching them slowly die, noting every detail in his personal journal devoted to the subjects of torture and disease. There have been numerous accounts of him sacrificing his prisoners in bizarre rituals aimed at increasing his divine power in the eyes of his god.

Nzevorikin's weakness lies in his devotion to his god. He is blindly move to the furthering of Incabulos's cause to the detriment of his own personal wellbeing. He tends to become enthralled by his plans and schemes and underestimates his foes'

abilities to thwart his efforts. His power has grown considerably in the last few months, and as a result he has grown even more careless and distracted, despite being closer then ever to completing his series of diabolical rituals. In preparation for his rituals, Nzevorikin uses defensive precautions to protect him, as he is well aware of the cost that distractions could cause.

Encounters: Characters typically encounter Nzevorikin by hearing about the remains of his gruesome rituals and seeking him out to stop his plans before they escalate to uncontrollable proportions. Nzevorikin typically has a host of henchman at his disposal and more often then not he has prepared traps and defensive wards against intruders into his domains. He rarely takes offensive actions toward others, preferring to allow curious parties to stumble upon him and using them for his bizarre experiments. If confronted directly, he will not typically fight unless provoked or directly threatened. He will use all his divine magical ability to escape, while sacrificing his henchman to do so.

Nzevorikin has been known, at times, to call upon adventurous types to perform tasks for him. He uses any number of methods to attract the unknowing visitors to his lair and entices them with charm spells and false promises of reward for their efforts. His efforts usually include some means of concealing his true appearance as well as his identity, since he is a fairly infamous villain.

He prefers to live in towers and typically has a number of torture devices at his disposal at any given time. This includes a chamber devoted to the "art". He also usually fashions a dungeon beneath his towers to keep any captives at bay while he prepares his evil plots.

Ploellin, Cleric of Rao

Ploellin (pronounced PLOH-lin), **male human Clr6 (Rao)**: Medium-size Humanoid; HD 6d8; hp 33; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16 (Touch 10, Flatfooted 16); Atks +5 melee (1d8+1, light flail), +5 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow); SA Turn undead; AL LG; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +8; Str 12; Dex 13; Con 10; Int 12; Wis 16; Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Heal +12, Knowledge (history) +4, Knowledge (the planes) +4, Knowledge (religion) +14, Scry + 6, Spellcraft +10; Alertness, Extra Turning, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (Knowledge [religion]).

Spells Prepared (5/4+1/4+1/3+1): 0—*create water, guidance, purify food and drink, read magic, resistance*; 1st—*bless, bless water, divine favor, protection from evil*, shield of faith*; 2nd—*augury, aid, detect thoughts*, shield other, zone of truth*; 3rd—*clairaudience/clairvoyance*, daylight, magic vestment, searing orb*.

*Domain Spells: Domains: Good: Ploellin casts good spells at +1 caster level. Knowledge: All Knowledge skills are class skills for Ploellin. He also casts divination spells at +1 caster level.

Equipment: Light flail, light crossbow, crossbow bolts (10), chain shirt, small wooden shield, cleric's vestments, healer's kit, vial of ink, ink pen, paper (3 sheets), belt pouch, waterskin.

Description and personality traits: Ploellin is a stout, portly man with a good sense of humor and booming voice. He did a little adventuring in his youth (he is well past middle aged) and loves to tell the tales of his days spreading Rao's word throughout Flanaess. He is compassionate and cooperative toward people he deems to be good folk. He is kind and caring to those that he holds dearest to him and to the members of his church and priestly order.

Ploellin, during his journeys, acquired a holy relic of Rao, which he believed to be a sign from his god that he should give up adventuring and begin preaching to the masses about the Shining One. Unknowing of the relic's significance, Ploellin has left the item unguarded in his rectory for quite some time. The object had no discernable powers until the priest blessed it, but is needed as part of a twisted ritual that a dark cleric of Incabulos is trying to complete.

Quick Statistic Reference

Encounter 2: Decripit Church

Tier 1 (EL 4)

Disease needle trap: +8 ranged (1) + filth fever disease (Fort save to resist [DC 12]; incubation 1d3 days; 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Con damage); Search (DC 22); Disable Device (DC 20).

Tier 2 (EL 6)

Disease needle trap: +10 ranged (1) + shakes disease (Fort save to resist [DC 13]; incubation 1 day; 1d8 Dex damage); Search (DC 25); Disable Device (DC 22).

Tier 3 (EL 7)

Disease needle trap: +12 ranged (1) + slimy doom disease (Fort save to resist [DC 14]; incubation 1 day; 1d4 Con damage); Search (DC 29); Disable Device (DC 25).

Encounter 3: Dire Situation

Tier 1 (EL 3)

Dire Rats (6): hp 7, 6 (x3), 5 (x2); *Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 56.

Tier 2 (EL 5)

Dire Rats (3): hp 7, 6 (x2); *Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 56.

Dire Wolf (1): hp 45; *Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 57.

Tier 3 (EL 8)

Dire Rats (6): hp 7, 6 (x3), 5 (x2); *Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 56.

Dire Wolves (2): hp 49, 45; *Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 57.

Encounter 6: Ghost Revealed

Tier 1-3 (EL 4)

Trap door trap: No attack roll needed (Reflex save to avoid (DC 20); 1d6 subdual damage); Search (DC 18); Disable Device (DC 20).

Encounter 7: Capture and Escape

Tier 1 (EL 4)

Bugbear (2): hp 16 (each). See *Monster Manual* page 27.

Tier 2 (EL 6)

Bugbear Ftr2 (2): CR 4; Medium-size Humanoid (Goblinoid); HD 3d8+6 + 2d10+4; hp 35 (each); Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19 (Touch 11, Flatfooted 18); Atks +7 melee (1d10+3/19-20, bastard sword) or +5 ranged (1d6+3/x3, half spear); SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Climb +3, Hide +2, Listen +3, Move Silently +6, Spot

+3. Bugbears have a +4 racial bonus to Move Silently checks; Alertness, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Power Attack.

Possessions: Studded leather armor, large wooden shield, bastard sword, half spear.

Tier 3 (EL 8)

Bugbear Ftr4 (2): CR 6; Medium-size Humanoid (Goblinoid); HD 3d8+9 + 4d10+12; hp 58 (each); Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 22 (Touch 13, Flatfooted 19); Atks +10 melee (1d10+5/19-20, bastard sword) or +9 ranged (1d6+3/x3, half spear); SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Climb +2, Hide +3, Listen +4, Move Silently +7, Spot +4. Bugbears have a +4 racial bonus to Move Silently checks; Alertness, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bastard sword), Weapon Specialization (bastard sword).

Possessions: chain shirt, large wooden shield, bastard sword, half spear.

One Way Door: 2 inch thick; hardness 5; hp 20; AC 5, break DC 20.

Front Door: 1 inch thick; hardness 5; hp 10; AC 5; break DC 18.

Encounter 8: Villain's Flight

Tier 1 (EL 4)

Duruuk, male human Ftr 4: Medium-size Humanoid; HD 4d10+4; hp 32; Init +6; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16 (Touch 12, Flatfooted 14); Atks +8 melee (2d4+3/18-20, falchion); AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 16, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +10, Escape Artist +5, Intimidate +3, Jump +10, Speak Goblin; Cleave, Expertise, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (falchion).

Possessions: Scale mail, falchion.

Tier 2 (EL 6)

Duruuk, male human Ftr 6: Medium-size Humanoid; HD 6d10+6; hp 46; Init +6; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16 (Touch 12, Flatfooted 14); Atks +10/+5 melee (2d4+5/crit 18-20, falchion); AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 16, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +12, Escape Artist +6, Intimidate +4, Jump +12, Speak Goblin; Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Expertise, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (falchion), Weapon Specialization (falchion).

Possessions: Scale mail, falchion.

Tier 3 (EL 8)

Duruuk, male human Ftr 8: Medium-size Humanoid; HD 8d10+8; hp 60; Init +6 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 20 ft.; AC 16 (Touch 12, Flatfooted 14); Atks +12/+7 melee (2d4+5/15-20, falchion); AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 16, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Skills: Climb +14, Escape Artist +7, Intimidate +5, Jump +14, Speak Goblin.

Feats: Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Expertise, Improved Disarm, Improved Critical (falchion), Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (falchion), Weapon Specialization (falchion).

Possessions: Scale mail, falchion.