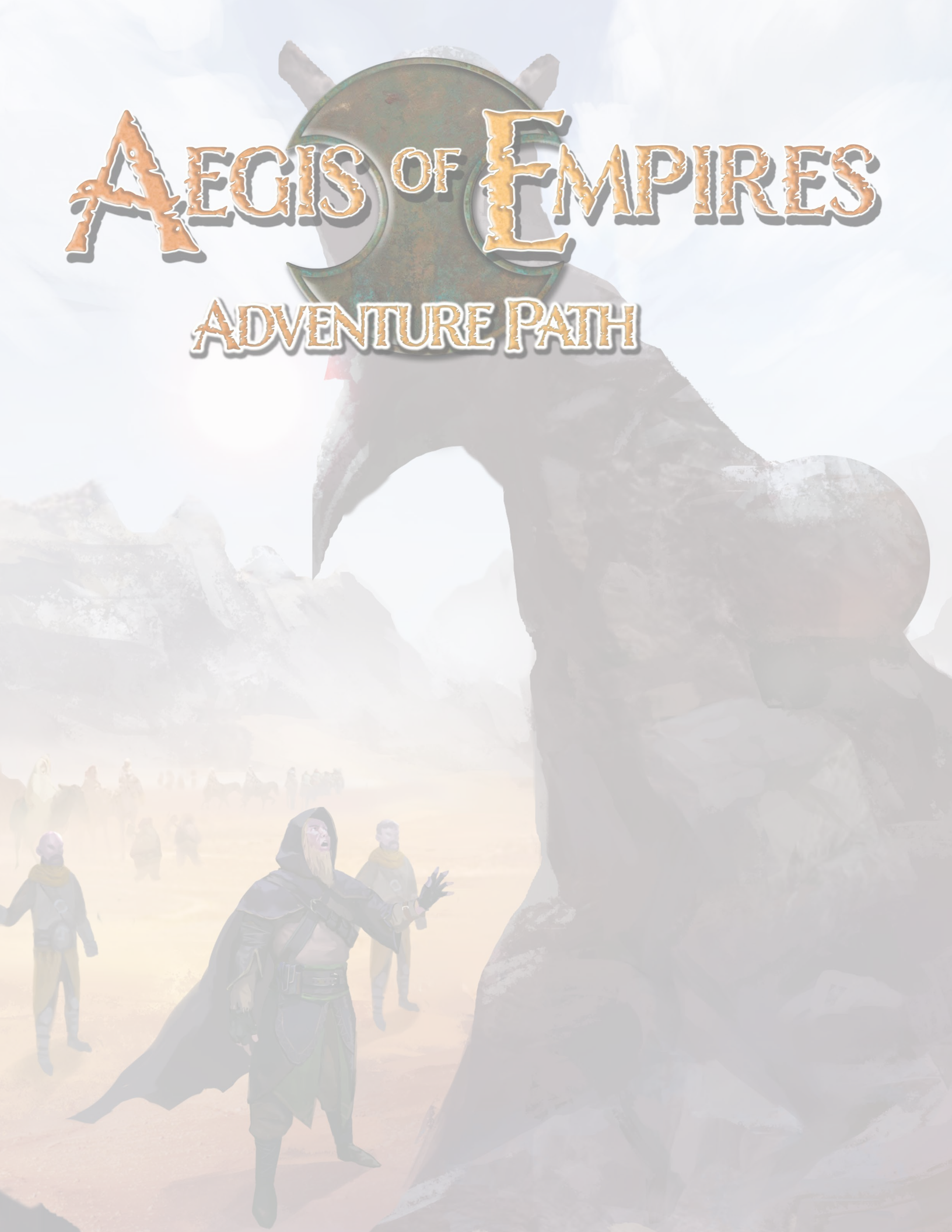
Aegis of Empires

Adventure Path



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Welcome to the Aegis of Empires Adventure Path

Welcome to the Lost Lands, the campaign setting of the adventures and books by Frog God Games and Necromancer Games before it! "But this is Legendary Games?" you say. Yes, yes it is, but as the principal developer of the Lost Lands setting — having the privilege and pleasure of combing through every single product, word-by-word, from those two companies' considerable catalog of books to determine how it all fit together into a coherent whole — I had the opportunity to continue my work with the setting. By mutual agreement upon the end of my tenure with Frog God Games in 2018, I was able to provide them with the bible of Lost Lands material I had been collating since 2010 and was graciously allowed to retain the rights to continue to make my own contributions to the setting I had poured so much into in Lost Lands-compatible products. I also purchased the rights to the ***Aegis of Empires Adventure Path*** that had already been in the works for some time (though under the name *Ashes of Empires* at that time, and changed due to similarities in titles from other companies that were being released in a similar timeframe), so I could continue the development I had already started on it and nurture it through to the end. That Legendary Games was willing to adopt such a project, was icing on the cake and what has allowed me to put this product into your hands.

Special Electronic Features

We've hyperlinked this product internally from the Table of Contents and externally with links to the official System Reference Document or 5eSRD. If it is in the core rulebook, we generally didn't link to it unless the rule is an obscure one. The point is not to supersede the game books, but rather to help support you, the player, in accessing the rules, especially those from newer books or that you may not have memorized.

About Legendary Games

Legendary Games is an all-star team of authors and designers, founded by Clark Peterson of Necromancer Games, Inc. Legendary Games uses a cooperative, team-based approach to bring you, the best expansion material for your game. We are gamers and storytellers 1st, and we believe that passion shows in our products.

So check us out, and Make Your Game Legendary!

Visit us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter, and check out our website at www.makeyourgamelegendary.com.

FOREWORD

Welcome to the *Aegis of Empires* designer notes. This ungodly huge document was what I sent to the poor writers that I hired to author the six adventures of the adventure path… er, five adventures actually, but more on that later. Yes, it's almost 30,000 words and 48 manuscript pages as I type it here on a Word document, though I'm sure that will change in the layout process. But here it is in all its glory for you to peruse at your leisure. And it leaves me with one burning question: Why?

My poor authors certainly weren't thrilled to receive a 40+ page outline to review before they could get started on writing their adventures. Why would I do that to them? And why would you, gentle reader, want to see it? To address the second question first: I guess it really doesn't matter why you want it; we offered it as bonus content in the Kickstarter, and some of you brave souls jumped on board and demanded it. Maybe you are absolute completionists and simply must have the entirety of any project you support. Maybe you just like seeing how the sausage is made. Maybe you hope for a glimpse into my sick, depraved, sadistic, Type A soul. Maybe you've got a little of that sickness yourself… Regardless of the reason, you have spoken, and so it shall be!

As to the former question: Why would I do that to them? Well, there's a story to that.

But before we go any further, it is imperative that you aware there will be…

SPOILERS!!!

These is a document about the design that went into the creation of the *Aegis of Empires* adventure path, and it must therefore, necessarily, contain spoilers regarding said path. So I hope it goes without saying, but if you intend to be a player of the adventure path rather than the GM, you should stop reading now. These notes will quite literally give away everything about the adventures to follow… oftentimes in excruciatingly specific detail. You have been warned.

So first, as to my earlier comment of mentioning five authors being sent the outline rather than six, well that's part of the story. And to understand it all we must go back to the origins of this adventure path. It predates my work on the Lost Lands, it predates my time with Frog God Games, and in many ways it predates my time as a professional writer. It goes all the way back to 1988 when TSR released a hardback game book that blew my young mind: *Greyhawk Adventures* by Jim Ward. The book came out during that weird quasi-transition from 1st Edition to 2nd Edition and was rather scattered in its contents: some class stuff, the concept of deities' avatars, some new monsters, key NPCs of the Greyhawk setting, a bunch of new spells, but most importantly—for me at least—were descriptions of legendary locations in the Greyhawk setting. I became hooked on those few paragraphs provided for each, reading and rereading them again and again. One place that I couldn't get out of my head were the Pits of Azak-Zil… a haunted meteor crater, filled with the ghosts of dwarf miners, and lost treasures, and a failed quest to find it that left behind a cryptic journal that could guide others. Almost immediately I set out to create the lost journal of Pont Sandmorg of Narwell—handwritten on plain copy paper. That sheaf of pages written in my teenage scrawl has been stuffed between the last page and back cover in my copy of that book for more than 30 years now. I imagine it'll be there another 30 at least.

Also around this time is when I began submitting adventure proposals to Dungeon Magazine. I assumed if I could get a few published, then it was only a matter of time before I could write my own adventure about the Pits of Azak-Zil. A mere 15 years later, my first adventure proposal was accepted ("Tammeraut's Fate" #104) and was followed quickly by the acceptance of a proposal for a trilogy (the Istivin trilogy in issues #117, 118, and 119). And they were all Greyhawk adventures! I had other submissions accepted, including one that was inspired directly from the material in Greyhawk Adventures when I visited the deadly valley of the Csipros Erd in issue #131's "The Hateful Legacy". As the submissions continued, I blew the dust off my Pont Sandmorg journal as I began to plan how to do justice with my ideas for Azak-Zil.

Then *Dungeon Magazine* came up with the idea for me. They had begun doing adventure paths with *Shackled City*, *Age of Worms*, and *Savage Tides*... all set in Greyhawk even! I began to work up my idea for an AP with Azak-Zil and the fallout of the Greyhawk Wars as its centerpiece. Eventually I submitted the proposal for a 4-adventure Greyhawk adventure path called *Ruins of Aerdy*. I never really got an answer on it; it was never accepted, but it was never really rejected either. It just languished in the submission pile with no end in sight. Then Paizo announced that Wizards

of the Coast was pulling the license for *Dungeon Magazine*, D&D, Greyhawk, etc. The submission was dead, so I turned my adventure writing to all things Golarion over the next few years.

However, when Bill Webb approached me about starting up Frog God Games, and incorporating all of the Necromancer Games catalog of adventures, and ultimately into creating a cohesive campaign setting that could encompass it all, I set out to put together the Lost Lands. Doing so allowed me revisit a great many ideas from my home brew games and how I would develop a game world if it were up to me, along with the near-endless wealth of already existing material through Necromancer Games and the fledgling publications of Frog God. In doing so, I was able to put together something of vast size and scope that could accommodate almost any style of play or campaign preference. The Lost Lands developed with iconic locations like Bard's Gate, and Rappan Athuk: The Dungeon of Graves, the Stoneheart Mountains, the Wizard's Wall, the temple-city of Tsar, the development of the Gulf of Akados and Sinar Coast regions with their rich historical, geographical, and cultural interplay. I had empires striving and falling and the successor states and the hidden drivers behind the scenes for more than 5,000 years of events.

We added exotic locales like Razor Coast, the Northlands, the blighted city of Castorhage, and name-dropped references of historical connections to places like Tircople, and the Kingdoms of Foere, and the Haunted Steppe. And finally as it all came together I remembered the *Ruins of Aerdy* and realized I had the means to rebuild it from the ground up and make it serve as a perfect showcase for many of the mentioned-but-never-seen locations of the Lost Lands we had been teasing for nearly a decade.

The Greyhawk elements had to be removed, of course, but the universal themes and adventure concepts were still good and held a flavor that I wanted for the Lost Lands. A lost meteor crater promising danger and wealth, a treacherous journey through hostile lands following a mysterious journal to reach said treasure. All of these were still viable options to make a great adventure path, and some of the organic developments of the Lost Lands by myself and other authors over the years lent themselves very nicely to fit the bill. I didn't need the rugged Abbor-Alz hills, I had a Haunted Steppe wracked by millennia of warfare and slaughter. I had lost colonies and lost expeditions seeking to find those colonies. I had a history of monstrous meteorite impacts upon the planet going back to the earliest years of Necromancer Games. I even already had the concept of radioactive exposures in the world from Tom Knauss's metallurgic amber in *Fields of Blood* and Bill Webb's mutant-infested wasteland in *Sword of Air*. There was nothing in my *Ruins of Aerdy* AP that couldn't be approached from a different angle specific to the Lost Lands, and so I set out to rework that outline into what was at first known as the *Ashes of Empire* AP to complement the release of the forthcoming Lost Lands world book.

My first problem was that by this time, the 6-adventure AP had more or less become the standard format. I realized that with the greater scope and scale of the Lost Lands compared to the relatively small land mass covered in the Greyhawk sub-continent, I could greatly expand on my meteor crater adventure and split it into two adventures: one for the investigation and journey and one for the exploration of the site itself. That brought me to five adventures, but I was at a loss for what to do for a sixth. I had a hole available for a low/mid-level adventure but I didn't have any ideas of how to fill it. I needed something urban really, so fit the themes and different aspects of the central Lost Lands that I wanted to explore but didn't have anything that was a good match. Then Jeff Swank sent me the unsolicited manuscript for his delightful *The Ebon Soul*, and I knew I had my sixth.

As a result of the reworking of the outlines for the different adventures I had previously intended to write, along with the inclusion of Jeff's adventure, I realized there was no way I would have time to knock out the writing on this six-adventure monstrosity. So almost 10 years of design notes coalesced into a single master document and I began recruiting authors to join me on this project. The lucky few turned out to be Alistair Rigg, Jeffrey Swank, Matthew Goodall, Steven T. Helt, Tom Knauss, and Anthony Pryor. The shifts in the industry and at Frog God Games resulted in me bringing this to Legendary Games in mid-stream to allow it to reach fruition, but at long last here it is in all its glory.

As I said to quote Jerry Garcia and company in my foreword to *The Slumbering Tsar* Saga in 2012, "What a long, strange trip it's been."

Amen to that, brother.

Greg A. Vaughan
October 31, 2020

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Adventure Path Introduction

The ***Aegis of Empires*** Adventure Path is a **Lost Lands** adventure path that is designed for a party of four to six PCs. It is written for the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game*, *Pathfinder Second Edition*, and **5th Edition** game systems. ***Aegis of Empires*** is not a traditional adventure path in that its constituent adventures do not run continuously from the first to the last. It is expected that the PCs will have other adventures in between the adventure path episodes and perhaps even concurrently for a truly ambitious GM. As such, the adventure path is not designed to take a party of 1st-level characters and advance them through their careers exclusively through its own events. So while the adventure path begins for low-level PCs, it does to require that they begin their adventuring careers with its initial adventure, nor will it provide the requisite XP and treasure to successfully propel them through its entire course without the use of supplementary materials. In a sense it is therefore a campaign arc rather than an adventure path.

The campaign arc provides a common theme around which a campaign can be built without forcing the PCs down a particular path or exclusively through a particular set of adventures. In fact, a GM could use the arc as merely one of multiple themes running through his campaign, as it inherently allows flexibility in character choice and plot direction. Of course, each adventure can be used as a stand-alone episode without using the arc at all, any of the adventures of the arc can be skipped at the GM's discretion. At the same time the campaign arc allows GMs to use published materials to unobtrusively tie elements of his campaign together and provide his players with "Aha!" moments as the plot themes develop without having to develop them all themselves or rely on the more structured format of a traditional adventure path.

Never fear, though. Just because this adventure path/campaign arc doesn't fulfill a party of player characters throughout their entire career doesn't mean it is incumbent upon you to fill in the blanks. While many GMs like to introduce their own adventures into their campaign and/or heavily modify existing adventures to serve this purpose, if that's not your thing this adventure path can still be for you. Included below are suggestions for other published adventures to plug into the gaps in order to make your own complete adventure path. Included in our suggestions are adventure path options made up of Legendary Games adventures and Frog God Game adventures, but these are far from the only available adventures out there that can be used. So brush the dust off your favorite adventures that you've always wanted to run and crack them open to fill up your players' dance card as they undertake the ***Aegis of Empires Adventure Path***.

The Lost Lands

As mentioned, this adventure path is ostensibly set in the **Lost Lands** campaign setting, the world setting of the many **Frog God Games** and **Necromancer Games** adventures that have been published since the launch of the SRD in 2000. As such, there are literally hundreds of adventures already set in the Lost Lands dating back more than two decades, and in 2019 **Frog God** Games published its ***World of the Lost Lands*** setting book. The ***Aegis of Empires*** adventure path, through the cooperation of **Legendary Games** and **Frog God Games**, is set in the Lost Lands setting and is compatible with that game world. However, though it is set in the Lost Lands, you as the GM can always lift it and set it in your own campaign world as you see fit. It is your adventure now; do with it as your will. However, since it is intended for use with the Lost Lands, and you may not be familiar with that setting, a little background is in order.

The history of the Lost Lands is both marked and marred by the rise and fall of great empires. Two great empires in particular: the **Hyperborean** Empire (1 I.R.–2509 I.R.* [or 2584 I.R. depending on how it is calculated]) and what is chiefly considered its successor state in the **Hyperborean Monarchy of the Foeredewaith**, aka the **Kingdoms of Foere** (2744 I.R.–3213*ish* I.R.) are those that are most universally recognized as the empires of Akados. These particular empires treated with, warred against, and otherwise interacted with other empires over the years including the Khemitian Triple Kingdom, the Ammuyad Caliphate, and the Huun Imperium of the eastern continent of Libynos, as well as, the foundational Borean Empire of the polar continent of Boros, and some of these interactions play a role in this adventure path. However, the true focus of the path is upon the empires specifically of Akados proper, i.e. the Hyperborean and the Foerdewaith.

Not overtly included in this tally but nonetheless integral to this adventure path is the often-forgotten third empire of Akados, an empire that warred with Hyperborea for 676 years and represented the single-greatest known threat

* I.R. is "Imperial Reckoning" established at the founding of the Hyperborean Empire of Akados.

to that empire for much of that time. That this empire ultimately disintegrated, allegedly under its own internal pressures, leads to much of the nonchalance regarding its passing and its place in history. But in truth this empire, the Invincible Horde of the Hundaei (7 I.R.–683 I.R.), known among their enemies as the Huns, forms perhaps the most significant backbone and contribution to all humanity on Akados and indeed the entire world of Lloegyr.

The adventure begins in 3517 I.R.

Adventure Path Background

The famed adventurer/explorer Aroldus Gravenfar—sometimes called Seeker Gravenfar for his reputation as an explorer and most often simply Gravenfar because of the extent to which his reputation preceded him—disappeared 80 years ago. According to who is telling the story, he either disappeared somewhere in the trackless wastes of the Haunted Steppe supposedly retracing the steps of the ill-fated Caleen colonization of almost six centuries earlier or somewhere high in the Stoneheart Mountains in search of what he called the "crèche of Hyperborea", a phrase found in one of his many published journals—though no one is certain what that phrase might mean exactly since the Hyperboreans are well known from history to have descended from the northern continent of Boros more than three-and-a-half-thousand years ago. Whatever the truth, none has ever find the final resting place of the legendary man.

Among Gravenfar's famed exploits, the one possibly most noted among true scholars was his alleged discovery of the legendary *Book of Aeons* in the long-considered-mythical ruins of ancient Ibnath in far Libynos. What became of the coveted book before his disappearance, none can say, and most assume that he took the ancient manuscript with him to wherever he disappeared. However, for countless years it has been searched for by those hungry for ancient knowledge or the cosmic powers it is said to control, or both. Despite the loss of this ancient text, the original is not the only version said to exist. According to old stories, at some point in the past the legendary bibliophile/thief Takh-Nir-E of Zabba (he who is most famous for stealing the equally legendary *Book of the Star-Seed*) is said to have likewise discovered Ibnath and spirited the *Book of Aeons* out from under the watchful eyes of its guardians. The story goes on to say that Takh-Nir-E elected to eventually sneak back in and return the book for unspecified reasons, but not before having made at least one translation of it into Semuric called the *Kitaab al-Zabba*. This translation was then later copied by the Khemitite artist and scholar Kulophon into both Khemitian and High Boros before he was burned alive for heresy by the Church Militans of Alcaldar. It was thought that all copies of these translations were destroyed, but rumor spoke of at least one copy of the High Boros translation, called the *Codex Ibnathi*, surviving when one of Kulophon's apprentices took it and fled the Khemitian city of Menefet where Kulophon had lived.

After that, all knowledge of the book's whereabouts is lost to history…

AE1: The Book in the Old House

By Alistair Rigg

2nd level

The ***Book in the Old House*** takes place in the city of Eber (EE-bur), once a part of the Kingdoms of Foere (fo-AIR) before serving as a time as the capital of Kear (KEER), the Infernal Realm of the vampire-lord known as the Singed Man. Eber was liberated by the paladin-hero Sir Varral the Blessed and ultimately became the capital of the independent Kingdom of the Vast nearly three centuries ago. The adventure tells the stories of an ancient alienist named Ellerby "Eb" Wallix driven from Courghais (coor-ASE) by the Knights of Macobert in 3367 I.R. for his aberrant practices. He was never hunted down due to the increasing persecution of the knighthood and the chaos that ensued following the Foerdewaith Wars of Succession and the dozens of revolts and civil wars they spawned. When the knighthood was largely destroyed and forced into hiding thirteen years later, the matter was forgotten except in the memory of a knight named Barivoren Wallix, nephew of the exiled Ellerby.

A century and a half later, a young knight named Urvitus Voren has come upon the papers of his ancestor Barivoren and his uncompleted life's task of destroying all that once remained of the villainous wizard Eb Wallix. Having learned that Wallix had relocated to a house in Eber, Urvitus sets out to destroy it only to find the legacy of the wizard very much alive and that he himself is a descendent of the crazed spellcaster. Only with the intervention of a party of adventurers is Ellerby's haunted house destroyed and Urvitus Voren redeemed from the possessing influence of a page from the foul *Codex* Ibnathi *hidden* in the house's basement 150 years before.

AE2: The Ebon Soul

By Jeffrey Swank

5th level

In ***The Ebon Soul***, the PCs are the invited guests of the widow of the Margrave of Tourse (tur-SAY) in the Duchy of Ysser (EE-sur). Margravine Cassandra proves to be something less than the perfect hostess she seems when the PCs' nightmares are visited by a demonic beast which, upon their waking they discover to have been the psychic attacks of the Margravine, a powerful psychic vampire, who has just completed the process of infecting all of the PCs themselves with vampirism with her as their mistress. She quickly flees, though, as the manor comes under attack by a company of foreign vampire hunters hired by persons unknown intent on purging the foul presence from the city.

The PCs, with their new vampiric abilities and weaknesses, must simultaneously search the manor for some clue to saving themselves from undead damnation while fighting off the vampire hunters who are wholly uninterested in hearing of their plight. In the course of their search, the PCs discover correspondence between the margravine and one of the oldest temples of Tourse. The information indicates that an ancient holy relic called the *Crimson Shroud* is held within this temple of Archeillus (ar-KAY-less), God of Nobility and Rulers, and is capable of curing any affliction—even that of vampirism. It seems that the margravine sought this artifact for her own unknowable ends.

Seeking out the temple before more vampire hunters can pick up their trail, the PCs are shocked to discover that it actually serves as a front for an underground cult of Grox (GROHKS), a god of civil corruption and blackmail, who used the shroud as a means of extorting those in need of its healing powers. Unfortunately, the PCs are too late as the shroud has just been stolen by vampiric agents of the Underguild, and the surviving Groxites assume that the vampiric PCs are more the Underguild's servitors sent to finish the job.

Surviving the fury of the Groxites and questioning survivors, the PCs are able to track the Underguild vampires to their hideout in the sewers beneath a local tavern and gambling hall. Making their way to this establishment, the PCs can pit their own prowess coupled with their new vampiric powers against the power and experience of the Underguild's vampires and their mortal agents. However, as the PCs battle their way through the minions, the margravine makes a reappearance as she sneaks into the fray and absconds with the *Crimson Shroud* herself. The PCs must pursue her back to her manor through the waning night before dawn catches and destroys them. Only there do they have the opportunity to try and overcome their mistress and gain the healing powers of the shroud for themselves.

AE3: When Comes the Moon

By Matthew Goodall

8th level

When Comes the Moon takes place on the far eastern fringes of the Kingdoms of Foere. More than a thousand years ago when the church of Thyr was still at its height, holding the positions over the Holy See and the Diocesan of Tircople, its influence as judges and scholars spread far and wide across the Hyperborean Empire. High on a remote mountaintop in the Cretian Range, the Thyrians constructed an abbey and observatory and established an order of militant clerics called the Asterian Order (a model for both the later Church Militans of Alcaldar and the Order of the Swan of Yolbiac Vale) to defend against otherworldly incursions of creatures from the moon, Narrah, that had long preyed upon the ancient inhabitants of the mountains (humans tribes of the Ancient Ones and elves of The Eldest alike) and now the fledgling Yolbiac settlements as well.

The Asterian Order was successful in ending these incursions and binding one of the most powerful of the moon creatures. However, with the corruption and subsequent humiliation and fall of the Hyperborean Empire in 2584 I.R., chaos reigned over Akados for more than a century. The much-diminished faiths of Thyr and Muir relocated to the Lyre Valley from Ticople, and distant outposts such as that of the Asterian Order were severely affected. The Thyrians ultimately abandoned support of the remote and nearly-forgotten abbey — isolation furthered by the location of Lyre Valley outside the boundaries of the newly arising Kingdoms of Foere. Finally, when the Red Plague struck Foere in 2781 I.R., the Asterian Order was wiped out and the abbey abandoned. Not until 3443 I.R. did émigrés from the Borderland Provinces seeking to escape the Fiend Rains of that region reoccupy the abbey to resume its purpose as an observatory (though even they have no clue as to its original purpose as a defensive fortification). Only while the PCs visit during Narrah's full moon phase does the true history of the Order and its abbey emerge and what begins as a lycanthrope hunt through the moon-limned peaks turns into a desperate defense against an otherworldly invasion.

AE4: Legend of the Burning Star

By Steven T. Helt

10th level

When the PCs stumble across old records detailing secrets behind the lost Conroi Expedition into the Haunted Steppe, they begin a journey to not only discover the secrets of that expedition but also the terrible truths that lie in wait out on the desolate plains of the North. Clues found in the writings take them from the cathedral-city of Nains to the regional capital of Panetoth in Reme where they come upon evidence of murders to keep someone from looking into the same information they seek and realize that this secret goes much deeper and is much more sinister than they suspected.

Following the trail of a man fleeing his attempted murderers brings the party to Dun Eamon, the Grey Citadel, in the lower Stoneheart Mountains. There they consult the wizard Elinda Bannon in search of a lost journal that once belong to the famed explorer Aroldus Gravenfar. Bannon confirms that Gravenfar left the journal with her grandfather before leaving on his last journey—a journey from which he never returned—but when she takes the party to the sealed study within her tower, they find the study sacked by a gang of ragged cultists accompanied by a terrible invisible creature. By defeating the cultists and their monstrous ally, the PCs are able to recover the journal that the cultists were in the process of stealing.

As the PCs depart Bannon's tower with the journal in tow, they are in turn accosted by a band of assassins. Following a survivor of this band to a hideout hidden beneath the cliffs of Dun Eamon they defeat the rest of the gang and discover the man who hired them to attack the PCs is a well-known "fixer" employed by the sinister Royal Family of Castorhage. Leaving the gang's hideout they are approached by messengers from a dwarven emissary, Goribald Ironskull of the Ironskull mountain dwarf clan. He explains that a contact of his discovered the correspondence of a member of the Conroi Expedition at the Nains Cathedral showing that the expedition 80 years ago had actually been a cover for the Queen of Castorhage to locate and exploit a meteor crater in the Haunted Steppe called the Pit of the Burning Star that potentially held immeasurable wealth in star metal. Reading through Gravenfar's journal they have recovered, the party realizes that he had come to the same conclusion and set out on his own expedition for the crater two years before the Conroi group—an expedition from which he never returned.

Goribald goes on to tell the PCs that he approached the Grand Duke of Reme about a partnership between the Ironskull Clan and the Grand Duchy to locate and mine the valuable star metal, but somehow word of the newly discovered documents got out and other parties—including the PCs became involved. Now the dwarves find themselves in a race to reach the lost crater site before multiple competing interests do and, as the PCs have just discovered, some of those groups are willing to use deadly force to achieve their goals.

Teaming up with the Ironskull dwarves, the party crosses the Wizard's Wall and enters the Conroi Settlements at the edge of Haunted Steppe, where they put together an expedition and prepare to cross the Wanaheeli River, the last boundary of anything resembling civilization as they set out onto the ill-rumored expanse of seemingly endless plains.

AE5: Race for Shataakh-Uulm

By Tom Knauss

12th level

Picking up where ***Legend of the Burning Star*** leaves off, the PCs and their expedition forge across the Wanaheeli River into the vastness of the Haunted Steppe where they must contend with the natural hazards to be found in its desolate expanse as well as hostile tribes of Shattered Folk and other threats. As the PCs get nearer to the Pit they begin to find traces of the prior expedition as well as encounter the strange burning dead that are described in the correspondence they have. They also run into additional factions seeking the fallen star including orcs from the Stoneheart Mountains and mercenaries from an unscrupulous noble of the Kingdom of Foere. Additionally they learn that their dwarven allies have been lying to them and are actually members of a cadet branch of the Ironskull Clan who murdered the actual emissaries of the Ironskulls in order to enrich their own side of the family at the clan's expense.

Dealing with the accumulating threats, the PCs finally reach the vast, smoking crater at the center of which a fire still roars as it has for millennia. They find the collapsed mine where the last survivors of the Conroi Expedition holed up and find their remains inside where they killed each other in the madness that possessed them. They also find the remains of the expedition chaplain who had written all of the correspondence they had been following but realize he couldn't have sent it from the sealed mine. Something else had brought the letters to the cathedral library in Nains where they would be found…and followed.

Attempts to explore the crater are met with hordes of burning undead, an encounter with a Castorhage specialist team, and a friendly rival group out of Bard's Gate. Managing to enter the mines and the caverns underneath the PCs discover that the dead have been extracting the molten ore leaking from the burning comet for centuries and have been using it and another highly radioactive metal called metallurgic amber that was contained in the comet to mint Rhemian coins tainted with the madness-inducing radiation of the metallurgic amber. Behind the entire operation they discover the powerful undead remains of Prince Cale, the twin of the Overking of Foere who had abdicated his claim on the throne so his brother could rule uncontested and was given the Grand Duchy of Reme as compensation. It was Cale who engineered the original Caleen colonies of Reme five centuries ago that had settled a stretch of the Haunted Steppe and Cale who had disappeared along with the colonies when the vast horde of shadow walkers descended from the north and utterly destroyed all colonists who lived in the Haunted Steppe.

Prince Cale disappeared and was presumed killed. In actuality he had found the Pit of the Burning Star and in his madness fell under the sway of the foul deity Hastur. Now with an army of undead slaving away for centuries and a burgeoning cult of Hastur to do his bidding, Cale prepares to let one of the many expeditions he lured to the Pit through the documents found in Nains discover the vast trove of ancient Rhemian wealth and transport it back to the civilized kingdoms of the south where the radiation-tainted money can spread throughout the population and spread madness in its wake, all to the glory of the King in Yellow.

AE6: Knight Fall in Old Curgantium

By Anthony Pryor

15th level

The PCs are approached by a representative of the Knights of Macobert to search for a lost group of knights who have gone on a mission into the ruins of the old imperial capital of Curgantium to try and locate the source for some impending doom that the omens speak of and then prevent it. Among this group of knights is the party's old acquaintance Sir Urvitus Voren of Tourne.

In the ruined city the PCs find its various sections overrun by different kinds of monstrous threats and that at night the gates of Hell seemingly open as undead creatures arise from the ashes of the ruined city and spontaneous gates open to the Plane of Shadow allowing all manner of deadly creatures to get through into the Material Plane. At the knights' base camp, the PCs find that all of the knights are missing except for one that has been turned into a horrible undead creature. They also discover a map of the city with different locations circled by the knights. Finally, they learn that when they sleep at night their dreams are assaulted by foul creatures that seek to steal their minds and souls.

Following the clues left by the missing knights, the party discovers that the city experienced dual calamities on the night of its destruction: the opera The King in Yellow had just been completed summoning Hastur into the city when the Tower of Oerson exploded in its devastating obliteration that burned half a continent. They also discover the rest of the forbidden tome, the *Codex Ibnathi*, that the wizard Eb Wallix had been experimenting with in the adventure ***The Book in the Old House***. Eventually they discover the missing knights had tracked the source of the dream invasions to a nightmare dragon residing in the dungeons beneath the Tower of Oerson and can slay it to rescue the knights.

After more exploration the PCs return to their base camp to discover the surviving knights have been murdered, Sir Urvitus is missing, and one of the knights previously thought dead has returned and betrayed them in all. Slaying this traitor, the PCs pursue the attackers that took Sir Urvitus and the codex into the sewers of the Underguild. There they learn that the Underguild has formed an alliance with the Cult of Hastur who seeks to once again draw their dark god to the city and bring about the destruction of the world. In the deep dungeons they find the graveknight, Barivoren, a distant ancestor of Sir Urvitus is using him in a ritual along with the codex to bring forth the power of Hastur through a horrific abomination growing in this deepest pit. Without the PCs' intervention Urvitus will be lost, Eb Wallix will walk again, and Hastur will return to finish what he started a thousand years earlier.

Connective Adventures for the *Aegis of Empires* Adventure Path

As has been mentioned, ***Aegis of Empires*** is more of a campaign arc than a straightforward adventure path, allowing you to insert your own adventure choices as you see fit to fill out your campaign. In general you will have the following level gaps available for adventures based on the spacing of the adventures in the AP. Of course, this is largely subject to the XP advancement of your player

characters which can fluctuate a great deal depending on their actions taken in any given adventure, especially the longer combined adventures of ***AE4: Legend of the Burning Star*** and ***AE5: Race for Shataakh-Uulm***. So be prepared to modify the placement of fill-in adventures according to the needs of your own campaign.

Assuming you are starting a campaign with a party of brand-new first-level characters, you will need a 1st-level introductory adventure as a lead-in before proceeding with ***AE1: The Book in the Old House***, which is an adventure for 2nd-level PCs. ***AE1*** should bring PCs to 3rd level, but it is unlikely to advance them beyond that. Since ***AE2: The Ebon Soul*** is an adventure for 5th-level characters, you will need to bridge the gap from 3rd or 4th level to prepare them for ***AE2***. Likewise ***AE3: When Comes the Moon*** is for 8th-level characters, so while ***AE2*** might bring them to 6th level, it is unlikely to get them beyond that, requiring another interstitial adventure to prepare for ***AE3***. ***AE4: Legend of the Burning Star*** is for 10th-level PCs, so a 9th-level adventure will probably need to serve as a fill-in between ***AE3*** and ***AE4***. ***AE4*** leads directly into ***AE5: Race for Shataakh-Uulm***, and should provide the necessary XP to bring the party up to 12th level by the start of that adventure. No adventure should be necessary to serve as fill-in between those. Likewise, it is probable that the vast scope of ***AE5*** will be sufficient to bring the PCs up to or near 15th level for them to undertake ***AE6: Knight Fall in Old Curgantium***, so it is less likely that a stop-gap adventure will be needed between ***AE5*** and ***AE6*** though it still remains a possibility.

Though the purpose of the loosely connected design of this adventure path is to give GMs maximum flexibility in how they organize and run their campaign, it is just as likely that a GM will not have the time or desire to fill in gaps with their own adventures. Additionally, the gap in XP is not the only issue to be considered when stringing together a coherent campaign. If you are running this AP in the **Lost Lands** (or in another campaign setting, as discussed later), there is the matter of geography to be considered. If that sort of consistency is important to you and your players, then you're going to want the fill-in adventures to make sense as to why the PCs are there and the feasibility of them being there.

To assist in this matter for those GMs who want it, we are providing lists of suggested adventures that make sense to be used to fill in those gaps between the AP's adventures. We approaching this list from two different directions. Since this is a **Legendary Games** publication, we will include a list of previously published **Legendary Games** adventures that can be used to fill in these areas of the campaign (with one exception noted below). Likewise, since this is a publication intended for the **Frog God Games Lost Lands** campaign setting, we will provide a list of previously published **Frog God Games** adventures that can be used in this capacity. Finally discussed at the very end will be a resource for placing this AP in another published campaign setting entirely and suggested drop-in adventures for those situations as well.

A Legendary Games Adventure Path

As a **Legendary Games** publication, this version of the adventure path will assume the (almost) exclusive use of published **Legendary Games** adventures to complement this AP.

1st Level — The Fiddler's Lament

by Greg A. Vaughan (2012)

The **Legendary Games** adventure path begins with the adventure ***The Fiddler's Lament*** from the ***Gothic Campaign Compendium***. ***The Fiddler's Lament*** is a self-contained, horror-based adventure that takes place in the small town of Raven. For the purposes of this AP, Raven can be placed anywhere upon the plains of the Kingdom of the Vast where ***AE1: The Book in the Old House*** is located. Not only does it provide a bit of a taste of horror to complement the horror theme of ***AE1***, the Kingdom of the Vast's not-too-distant history as the Infernal Realm of Kear under the tyranny of the vampire lord known as the Singed Man fits in very nicely with the haunted, disconsolate feel of Raven as presented in the adventure.

3rd/4th Level — Cold Mountain

by Jason Nelson (2013)

Following completion of ***AE1***, the PCs find themselves traveling through the fringe regions of western Foere—perhaps on their way to the Duchy of Ysser and the events that will occur there in ***AE2***—when they are approached by the vagabond Trindon Mosely, who is in search of a likely group of adventurers. In using this adventure for ***Aegis of Empires***, remove the reference to the PCs as rulers or explorers of new lands; they are simply adventurers of convenience whom Mosely finds and believes that they might fit the bill. Consider the Ughar to be one of the far-flung and isolated human tribes descended from the Ancient Ones that can still be found in the odd corners of Akados. Their village of Gloym lies deep beneath the eaves of the Elderwood, not far from the Broken Mountains where stands the Sacred Mountain of Istria.

6th/7th Level — The Horseshoe Calamity

by Ron Lundeen (2017)

This adventure is easily placed in the Plains of Eauxe, the great grassland wilderness between the Kingdom of Foere and the coastal kingdom of North Heath and The Vast. Perhaps the PCs are returning to more familiar lands to the south after having experienced the events of ***AE2*** in Tourse but before they are drawn east to the Cretian Mountains for ***AE3***. The PCs should be traveling through this barren plain during the winter months to account for the climate effects described in this adventure. Humans and centaurs have co-existed upon these plains for millennia, and the Ovoskich of Dolanni can be a combined clan group that descended from disparate peoples decimated and hunted during the dark years of the Infernal Tyrant's reign over Kear and who formed their own isolated society as a means of survival in that time. Now more connected to the outside world, they nonetheless retain their tight-knit clan identity when dealing with travelers from elsewhere.

9th Level — Feasting at Lanterngeist

by Greg A. Vaughan (2013)

Another visit to a ***Gothic Campaign Compendium*** adventure, ***Feasting at Lanterngeist*** involves an annual festival and its ill-fated haunting in the lakeside village of Marshtown. Another horror-themed adventure, Feasting at Lanterngeist serves nicely to bring a different, more down-to-earth brand of horror to the PCs as they recover from their ordeal at Asteria Point in ***AE3: When Comes the Moon.*** It easy to bring the PCs into an appropriate place to experience this adventure. Simply place Marshtown as a small nondescript village on the shores of one of the eastern arms of the Star Sea. The PCs pass through the village while making their way back into the heart of Foere after having ventured to its fringes among the peaks of the Cretian Mountains. The PCs just happen to arrive on the night of the Lanterngeist Festival and are drawn into the horrors of what appears to be a case of revenge from beyond the grave but is actually something perhaps far worse.

14th Level — The Winding Way

by Nicholas Logue (Dungeon #117, Dec 2004)

As I mentioned above, there is one exception to the suggested adventures for this AP being all from existing **Legendary Games** publications. Jason and I wracked out brains to come up with a suitable stand-in here, but of the ones available for this level range none fit thematically very well. So I am branching off from the **Legendary Games** catalog for the final suggestion here, though in doing so I'm drawing upon a classic Indiana Jones-esque tale by the inestimable Mr. Logue from the halcyon days of *Dungeon Magazine*. Herein the PCs return from their excursion deep into the Haunted Steppe in ***AE4/AE5*** brings them back to the Conroi Settlements on their return to southern lands. In the town of Stonebreach at the base of the Deepfells Range, they receive a request for aid from undead incursions descending from the nearby Darkmoon Mountain and an investigation of a mysterious monastic temple.

A Frog God Games Adventure Path

For **Lost Lands** purists, provided below is a version of the adventure path that utilizes only published **Frog God Games** adventures already set in the **Lost Lands** and adhering to their existing geographical locations within that setting.

1st Level — TB1: The Crooked Nail

by Brandon Hodge (2017)

TB1: The Crooked Nail allows the PCs to start out with a bad taste in their mouth for the **Lost Lands** already. This adventure can be run as written with the PCs discovering the horrors hidden within the depth of the City-State of Castorhage's Artists' Quarter and the secrets there better left undiscovered. And after dealing with the likes of Crux the apothecary and the legacy of the Fraternitatem Æternam, they will be likely more than ready to quit the precincts of The Blight altogether. Fortunately it is only a short jaunt across the Fetid Sea to bring the party to the shores of the Kingdom of the Vast and its capital city of Eber for the advent of ***AE1***. Furthermore, this campaign start gives the party a foretaste of the Castorhagers and their despicable ways that will be only all too familiar as they run afoul of representatives from this city in later chapters of the AP.

3rd/4th Level — QOD4: The Covered Bridge

by Kevin Wright (2017)

QOD4: The Covered Bridge, one of the stand-alone softcover releases of the ***Quests of Doom 4*** series, was practically written for this adventure path. In fact, its manuscript was received not long before that of ***AE2: The Ebon Soul*** and was already ear-marked for the **Quests of Doom** series or it might have found a place within ***Aegis of Empires***. The Covered Bridge takes place in the Saymere Valley at the western extent of the Kingdom of Foere. In fact, it lies along the old road which was once one of the main thoroughfares connecting the cathedral-city of Nains with

the Rheman regional capital of Panetoth—both locations that figure heavily into ***AE4***. Likewise the hero of Saymere Valley, Sir Varral the Blessed, played a major role in the western reaches of Foere and the Kingdom of the Vast, as it was he who led the resistance against and ultimately struck down the vampire tyrant, the Singed Man. The adventure can easily be placed in the AP as the PCs travel north from Eber towards Tourse and the coming events of ***AE2*** that take place there.

6th/7th Level — QOD: Perils of Ghostwind Pass

by Matt Finch (2015)

From the first ***Quests of Doom*** collection, **Perils of Ghostwind Pass** is an old-school wilderness hex-crawl combined with an evocative dungeon adventure centered around a compelling plot and internal mystery (the players might not even discover the true nature of the mystery until midway through the adventure). The adventure itself is set on the mountain pass at the north end of Yolbiac Vale. The adventure works best if, after having completed ***AE2***, the PCs make their way towards Yolbiac Vale by the northern route, through Aachen Province. They can winter in or around Elet before heading up into Yolbiac Vale after the spring thaw. When they reach the town of Coleum in the southern reaches of the Vale, they can then be introduced to the events of ***AE3***.

9th Level — LL9: The Mountain That Moved

by Gwendolyn Kestrel (2015)

From the ***LL9: Adventures in the Borderland Provinces*** adventure anthology, ***The Mountain That Moved*** brings the PCs to the area of headwaters of the Gaelon River on the eastern slopes of the Cretian Mountains. Following their return from Yolbiac Vale and the trepidations of the Asterian Abbey in ***AE3***, the PCs can travel along the eastern fringe of the mountains in the Duchy of the Rampart. While there they can come to the town of Deadfellows or hear rumors of the disappearance of Vulture Pass to draw them into the events of this adventure.

14th Level — QOD: The Isle of Eliphaz

by Casey Christofferson and Bill Webb (2003)

Another selection from the ***Quests of Doom*** collection (and the ***L2: Vampires and Liches*** anthology before that), ***The Isle of Eliphaz*** is set in the northern waters of the Crescent Sea, not far from the great port city of Reme. It is a simple matter for the PCs, upon return from their adventures beyond the Wizard's Wall in ***AE4/AE5***, to be traveling through Reme to find the quickest passage back to southern lands where their careers began in and around Castorhage, Eber, or points beyond. From there they are only a chance encounter with the isle upon the Crescent Sea or the research of old rumors of a lost wizard's tomb in Reme for them to make their way to that accursed island and the ancient entity imprisoned there.

What About Other Published Settings?

The options above include suggestions of using published adventures for **Legendary Games** or the official **Lost Lands** setting of **Frog God Games**. You can always use your homebrew setting or any other than you want, but what about suggestions for some of the other popular settings of the game's history. Of course, Neither Legendary Games nor Frog God Games holds the rights to any classic published settings, and therefore can't sell a product making use of their intellectual property. However, we can as fans produce a pdf and make it available to other fans for free with suggestions on how you can incorporate the Aegis of Empires Adventure Path into some of your own favorite campaign settings. We would do this, of course, not in any way to imply ownership or rights to any said settings but only because we are fans of them too and like to encourage our fans to be patrons of the companies that have made the roleplaying games hobby go for the last several decades.

So if you're interested in such a thing, you can download a free fan-based pdf at http://www.makeyourgamelegendary.com/products-page/5th-edition/aegis-of-empires-otherworlds-guide/ with suggestions on how to incorporate this AP into an existing published campaign setting. Again, we don't mean to imply any rights to such settings and we receive no remuneration recommending them; we just love them too and love to see them perpetuated throughout the gaming world by other fans. And if you're not currently using one of those settings, maybe blow the dust off your old campaign books and adventures and give them another look, or even go out and buy copies of the settings in the newest iterations of those worlds. I am sure that the publishers who make them will be only too happy to see new fans or the return of long-time fans. Good gaming!



Adventure 1:
The Book in the Old House

The job is simple: escort a nobleman as he explores the old, abandoned estate he purchased—fast and easy coin for a group of seasoned adventurers. But why is the entire neighborhood around the manor deserted, yet the house has never been vandalized nor would the most desperate vagrant venture under its roof? Glimpses of dark, furtive movements in the vacant windows and disappearances nearby bring whispered rumors about its mysterious former owner, and wild theories about things as mundane as the deafening nightly chorus of frogs in its wooded yards. Perhaps there is more to the story than meets the eye, and it is for good reason they say you can never judge a book by its cover.

Introduction

The Book in the Old House is composed of two parts and it is intended that some amount of time occurs between the two, providing the perfect opportunity for the GM to throw in another short adventure and throw the players off of any suspicion that there are more matters to attend to at the Old House. However, if preferred, the two parts of the adventure can be run one immediately following the other. It is recommended that the PCs are 3rd level before starting the second part of the adventure.

The Book in the Old House can be placed in any campaign setting but, though it is not an official Lost Lands adventure, it is designed for and fully compatible with the ***Lost Lands Campaign Setting*** of Frog God Games. In the Lost Lands, the primary adventure location is set in a run-down neighborhood of Eber (EE-bur), the capital of the Kingdom of the Vast, an independent kingdom located just southwest of the central Kingdoms of Foere (foh-AIR) across the Plains of Eauxe (OH). The adventure is ostensibly set in the year 1317 I.R. (though the GM can change this to whatever year best fits his campaign) and takes place during one of the hot, dry summers that regularly afflict the western central plains of Akados.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

In 3367 I.R., Sir Barivoren Wallix of Courghais, Knight of Macobert, discovered that his aged uncle Ellerby Wallix — commonly known as Old Eb — was an alienist and delver into forbidden lore. In his youth Old Eb had discovered a page from the *Codex Ibnathi* during his explorations beneath the ruins of ancient Tircople in the East. From the writings he acquired an ysaqqua (see **Appendix A**) named Kyssogga (kiss-OGG-ah) as a familiar, and with its help, he was able to make contact with all manner of foul beings and engage in horrific bargains in exchange for power and knowledge. After Sir Barivoren discovered his uncle's disturbing practices, he attempted to capture Old Eb and bring him to justice. Unfortunately, Old Eb's otherworldly contacts warned the sorcerer beforehand, and he was able to flee the city and disappear to the west of the kingdom before the knighthood could catch him.

It was Sir Barivoren's intention to continue the pursuit and cleanse the Wallix family of Old Eb's taint, but in his investigation into Eb's doings something inside Sir Barivoren snapped. With Eb Wallix out of sight and out of mind, the Knights of Macobert were largely content to drop the whole matter altogether, but Sir Barivoren's growing obsession with his uncle would not allow that. He enacted a crazed plan to spur his order into action by perpetrating the murders of no less than three of his Brother Knights. This plan which became known as the Courghais Macobert Murders backfired, and Sir Barivoren soon found himself declared anathema and pursued as a traitor by the Knights. He fled into the wilds and was never seen again.

Shamed by this cursed legacy, Barivoren's younger brother Reliman dropped the Wallix name and officially adopted the name of his father, Voren, as his surname. He then moved his family to Tourne (TORN) in the distant Kingdom of the Vast to escape the mark of pariah upon his family in Foere. Not insignificantly, because of the declaration of anathema against Sir Barivoren, his title of Knight of Macobert was transferred to Sir Barivoren's closest living relative. Reliman became Sir Reliman Voren of Tourne, Knight of Macobert. Oblivious to this honorific, Sir Reliman spent the rest of his days drinking himself to death in shame over his family's fall.

An unexpected consequence of the Macobert Murders and the publicity they caused was that the knighthood's inaction in the matter of Ellerby Wallix was unearthed along with a great number of grievances against them involving allegations of corruption, greed, and general malaise. The opinion of the kingdom, and specifically the peoples of the imperial capital of Courghais, turned against the beleaguered Knights of Macobert, and they soon found themselves assailed on all sides by political and legal challenges. Within six years, the unrest and a series of escalating political miscalculations caused the power of the Court of Courghais and the Crown of the Overking himself to turn against the knighthood, and the Knights were ordered to surrender all property and assets and turn themselves over to the Overking's inquisitors for royal questioning.

Many Knights packed their wealth and fled the prosecution of the Crown, while others resisted and were arrested or struck down. Some of those who fled were caught and arrested as well. More than a few of both groups were lynched by angry mobs turned against powerful men and women whom they had once seen as their protectors. When the smoke had cleared, the Knights of Macobert in Courghais were no more. The few survivors had fled or gone into hiding. The Overking issued a Writ of Outlawry against the knighthood, with all properties and assets confiscated by the Crown. Any future possibility for pursuit of Barivoren or Eb Wallix was lost in the turmoil.

TIMELINE OF THE BOOK IN THE OLD HOUSE*

Imperial Record (I.R.)	Erylle Cycle (E.C.)	Huun Chronicle (H.C.)	Event(s)
3291	9775	796	Ellerby Wallix born in Courghais
3312	9796	817	Ellerby "Eb" Wallix makes first journey to Tircople
3320	9804	825	Coram Poer builds home on Front Street in Eber
3351	9835	856	Eb Wallix discovers page of *Codex Ibnathi* beneath Tircople, begins research into dark and forbidden rituals
3367	9851	872	Barivoren Wallix uncovers his uncle Ellerby's atrocities; Eb Wallix flees west one step ahead of pursuing Knights
3370	9854	875	Sir Barivoren Wallix perpetrates Macobert Murders in Courghais
3371	9855	876	Sir Barivoren's deeds discovered, flees into wilds beyond Foere; Reliman Wallix inherits title as Knight of Macobert, relocates to Tourne and takes Voren as family name
3373	9857	878	Macobert Murders and Barivoren's subsequent escape reveals corruption and malaise within knighthood, public opinion turns against Knights of Macobert
3379	9861	882	Court of Courghais orders Knights of Macobert to surrender all property and submit to royal questioning
3380	9864	885	Knightly Order of Macobert largely destroyed in Courghais, the few survivors go into hiding
3382	9866	887	Old Eb Wallix emerges from hiding, purchases house in Eber to continue experimentation with *Codex Ibnathi*, acquires familiar Kyssogga
3390	9874	895	Old Eb driven mad by abominable practices and commits suicide; Kyssogga secures house on Front Street
3450	9935	955	Knights of Macobert removed from Crown's Writ of Outlawry, Order slowly begins to re-establish its reputation and standing in Foere
3498	9982	1003	Watchman kills intruder breaking into Old House, watchman disappears two days later
3515	9999	1020	Urvitus Voren discovers Barivoren's documents and begins researching the accusations against Eb Wallix
3517	10,001	1022	Current year

* Excerpted from the ***Lost Lands Campaign Setting*** timeline by **Frog God Games.**

To Old Eb, the fall of the Knights of Macobert was a stroke of luck. After years of hiding among the badlands of the Kingdom of the Vast, the old wizard emerged in the former provincial capital of Eber. There he purchased an abandoned home on Front Street and set up shop in earnest to continue his disturbed and disturbing studies. After several years the unseen inhabitant of the Old House — as the place had become known — became the subject of increasing rumor, with many locals suspecting all manner of depravities. None proved willing to investigate the house and its stories of curses, hauntings, and foul visitations, so Eb Wallix was left to continue his work unmolested.

However, all was not entirely of beneficence to the old alienist. After only eight years in the house his studies into sanity-shredding secrets resulted in revelations that caused him to knot a rope around his neck and happily



take his own life, seemingly ending the story of Ellerby Wallix. With Old Eb no more, Kyssogga set about sealing up the Old House and beginning preparations for the long vigil until his master's return.

More than a century after Old Eb's death, Urvitus Voren, descendant of Reliman Voren and heritor of his title of a Knight of Macobert, discovered papers belonging to his ancestor Barivoren that detailed the importance of destroying all that remained of the villainous alienist, Ellerby Wallix. Determined to discover what had become of this shameful forebear, Sir Urvitus began to investigate this strange relative of generations before. His digging eventually brought him to the Old House on Front Street as the last known whereabouts of Old Eb. The Voren family had seen considerable financial recovery over the past 120 years, and Sir Urvitus was able to purchase the property from an apathetic city with the intention to thoroughly investigate it and then ultimately demolish it to remove any trace of ancestral stain from his family line. However, aware of the sinister reputation of the Old House, Sir Urvitus decided to bring in professional help through his solicitors Abshire & Dunnage in order to assist in the initial exploration of the derelict's rumor-haunted interior.

EBER AND THE KINGDOM OF THE VAST

The Vast is relatively young as an independent kingdom, having only declared its independence from Foere in 3224 I.R., and having only achieved an armistice with Foere that informally recognized its independence in 3245 I.R., though the Court of Courghais continues to refer to the kingdom by its ancient vassalage name of the Duchy of Kear[QoD4:CB] in formal decrees and discussion even if it doesn't hold any true power over those lands.

The history of the Duchy of Kear as a vassal of Foere and province of Hyperborea extends back for thousands of years. Harmost Kear is mentioned in Hyperborean records as far back as the century following the Battle of Hummaemidon[LL4], and the Kear family continued to the lands west of the central kingdoms until the Plains of Eauxe[QoD4:CB] were calved off and reorganized into a marchland some centuries later, leaving a duchy somewhat reduced in area but strengthened in centralization and effectiveness of its authority.

The history of Akados's western plains remained relatively quiet, serving as a breadbasket and grazing lands for the greater kingdom until the time of the Second Great Crusade against the Huun of Libynos in 2970 I.R. At that time, as Overking Yurid rallied the lords of Foere and took them afield to the desert lands of the East[LL4], a threat rose unbidden in Kear. The vampire lord known as the Singed Man, rumored to have come from the curse-haunted streets of forbidden Vilik Strad, appeared and swiftly conquered the unsuspecting and depleted forces of the duchy. With its duke and a large portion of its fighting men battling the Huun in Tircople, the duchy proved little challenge to the undead fiend and his minions of the night. So swift was the duchy's fall that even King Prudus II of Castorhage was caught unawares as he traveled across the duchy and was slain, raising his widow Constance as queen of that city-state[LL7a]. In less than a fortnight, the Singed Man controlled nearly the whole of the duchy and had crowned himself as the Infernal Tyrant.

With the return of the main force of the crusader armies by 2977, Overking Yurid tasked his Battle-Duke, Ormand of the Rampart, with breaking the Infernal Tyrant's hold on Kear and liberating its hostage populace. However, the proud warleader Ormand proved no match for the guile of the Singed Man, and the army of the Foerdewaith was resoundingly defeated on the Plains of Eauxe at the Battle of Seilo Ford. Even Ormand was lost, though he was not slain. Instead the Singed Man enslaved him as a vampire spawn and placed him as general over the infernal armies of Kear. Under the former Battle-Duke's leadership, the forces of Kear went on a new offensive and spread the reach of the Infernal Realm of Kear from Tarry in the west to Eber in the east. Where a united front might have proven decisive, Castorhage and Foere were stunned by the atrocities committed against their respective nobility, and neither was willing to shoulder the burden of responsibility for curbing the vampire tyrant's ambitions. With a sea guarding the former and many miles of empty grassland separating the latter, both crowns turned inward and left the desolate folk of Kear to their fate[LL7a].

More than a century of internal unrest and plagues followed in Castorhage and Foere, and Kear continued its gradual consumption of surrounding lands. By 3102 the Infernal Tyrant's grasp had reached its largest extent, stretching from Tarry to Tourne and including most of the Plains of Eauxe to the north. The situation would linger another century still until in 3128 I.R. the paladin-lord and hero, Sir Varral the Blessed of Saymere Valley arose and challenged this tyranny. Sir Varral destroyed both the Singed Man and the Vampire Duke Ormand, freeing the remaining people of Kear from the darkness they had known for more than 150 years[QoD4:CB].

With the liberation of Kear, the duchy was reinstated. Rulership passed to the nephew of the Overking since its former ruling family had been wholly exterminated in the preceding century and a half. This new Duke of Kear ruled from Eber and retained Tourne as the second city of the depopulated realm. Castorhage used its naval presence to annex Tarry on the Fetid Sea as its own mainland port, and Foere and Kear found themselves in position to do little about this small encroachment on a distant town. As Kear was unable to sustain or effectively rule the desolate grasslands to the north, the Plains of Eauxe were once again apportioned from the duchy as a marchland of Foere and given to rule by marquises appointed by the Overking[LL7].

Though it had little direct effect on the Duchy of Kear, an important and ultimately alarming development that arose from the long oppression of the population was the appearance of an order of black-robed, mendicant monks that began distributing alms and feeding the impoverished refugees of the war-torn land. Over time this order grew and gained the official recognition of the Overking of Foere as a benevolence society, becoming known as the Black Brotherhood. As the Brotherhood expanded its influence and holdings, it largely moved on from its work in Kear into the central lands of Foere, building impressive temples and chapterhouses in major cities across the kingdom. They became a major financial institution of Foere after loaning great sums to the Crown in order to offset the disastrous losses of the Third Great Crusade in 3173. Matters ultimately came to a head when the Brotherhood's allegiance to dark powers was uncovered and its fortified monastery on the Hill of Mornay in the Old Tors was besieged and subsequently destroyed nearly two centuries later[BM].

The political turmoil of the Foerdewaith Wars of Succession following the disaster of the Battle of Tsar reached even to Eber until in 3224 I.R. Duke Oden declared the lands of Kear as the Kingdom of the Vast, independent from the Crown of Foere. With Foere largely occupied by the uprisings of their former vassal states in the east, the Crown could do little to immediately suppress this rebellion, and the Vast was soon joined in rebellion by the Margrave of Bret Harth who declared his own Kingdom of the North Heath carved from the northern reaches of the Plains of Eauxe in the following year[LL7].

Skirmishes occurred between Foere and the allied kingdoms of the Vast and the North Heath up and down the Meander River for the next few years, with neither side gaining a clear advantage, but resulting in the death of the last Marquis of Eauxe. Castorhage officially recognized the independence of the two kingdoms in 3228, placing additional pressure on the Kingdom of Foere and its sovereignty claims over those realms. After the Grand Duchy of Reme was finally able to secure its own independence from the Foeredwaith Crown, it too lent its support to the independence of the fledgling kingdoms[LL7].

Unable to sustain its fighting against Oceanus and other splinter states to the east while maintaining a belligerent stance in the west, Foere finally reached an armistice with Vast and North Heath in 3245 I.R. leading to the true independence of both nations[LL7]. Relations between North Heath and Vast remain cordial along with those of Reme. Vast maintains peaceful-if-strained relations with Foere and the close-by Principality of Olduvar and keeps a wary eye on ever-incorrigible Castorhage even while maintaining friendly diplomatic ties. The Plains of Eauxe are administered directly by distant Foere, but its people are friendly to neighboring Vast for all practical purposes. The halfling realms of The Dale[LL7] and The Low Country[LL7] south of the Worn Tooth Peaks[LL7], the elven Caer Myrddin[FGG1], and human Kingdom of Myrridon[FGG1] even farther to the south likewise maintain amiable ambassadors in Eber, leaving few if any true threats to the young, battle-scarred kingdom's security.

The Vast is a roughly triangular land of rolling plains that stretches 700 miles at its widest point in the north from where the Worn Tooth Peaks meet the Crescent Sea in the west, to where the Meander River flows from the Blackrock Mountains, and 300 miles from Streeth Ferry on the Meander River in the north to the fortress of Cailin Lee the south where the Vast borders the Principality of Olduvar, a vassal state of the Kingdoms of Foere. Its principal cities are the capital, Eber, and its sister-city of Tourne to the east. There are numerous other smaller cities, towns, and hamlets, but with the nation's recent history of war, oppression, and subjugation by an undead tyrant, it is much less densely populated than many of the other nations of the central Kingdoms of Foere.

The Vast is a fertile land with good grazing and cropland but is extremely dry during peak summer months. At this time the prevailing winds from the west bring storm systems from the Crescent Sea that dump their precipitation on the intervening Worn Tooth Peaks and then come down out of those mountains as howling windstorms. Known locally as *derechos*, these dry windstorms are often accompanied by spectacular lightning displays resulting from the static discharge of the accumulated dust they carry. In particularly dry years these can result in dust storms that sweep across the plains, and wind-blown wildfires are a constant threat to the Vastlanders during the summer months.

EBER

(EE-bur)

The capital of the Kingdom of the Vast is the ancient city of Eber. The statistics below apply if using the detailed settlement rules in ***Ultimate Kingdoms (5E)*** from Legendary Games. If not using those rules, you can simply apply the qualities and disadvantages as general narrative guidelines for adventures in and around the city.

EBER

N metropolis

Corruption +8; **Crime** +3; **Economy** +3; **Law** +7; **Lore** +8; **Society** –1

Qualities academic, insular, rumormongering citizens, strategic location

Disadvantages depopulated hinterlands, inflammable

Danger 10

CITIZENS

Government overlord

Population 38,849 (26,000 humans; 5,050 halflings; 4,273 half-elves; 2,330 half-elves; 777 elves; 419 other)

Notable NPCs

Oncellan FitzOden, King of the Vast (LN male human noble)

Bubrege Kirkenwald, Lord of Eber (N male human noble)

DISADVANTAGES

Depopulated Hinterlands Though freed from the grip of the Infernal Tyrant almost 400 years ago, the scars of his reign run deep. Eber is the capital of a vast kingdom still underpopulated from the massive slaughter perpetrated upon its citizens during that time. (*Economy and Society –2; Danger +10; reduce base value by 10%; reduce spellcasting by 1 level*)

Inflammable Eber and its surrounding lands are subject to the high risk of fires every summer due to the dry and windy conditions. This damages the economy and creates a certain breed of opportunism, corruption, and ruthlessness within some of its inhabitants. (*Corruption and Crime +2; Danger +5; reduce purchase limit by 10%*)

Eber is an old city that traces its days to an early Hyperborean military encampment in the days of Oerson, established during the consolidation of his kingdom following the Battle of Lake Crimmormere[LL8 – p. 18] and the beginning of the elven withdrawal from central Akados. It is a city that has outgrown its walls on several occasions over the millennia of its existence only to shrink back within them following one of the sporadic catastrophes that have marred its existence. Currently its inner city remains within the protection of well-maintained walls and is actually one of the newer sections of the town, expanded and refurbished after the undead forces of the Infernal Tyrant were ousted by Sir Varral the Blessed[QoD4:CB – p. 5].

The oldest part of the city lies to the west and is ostensibly encompassed by some of the city's oldest extant walls, though these are in universally poor repair and in some places require no more than taking a big step from the ground outside in order to surmount them. Front Street, which appears in this adventure, is found in this older, poorer section of town and runs from one end of the city section to the other, representing what was at one time the early town's outermost defensive line. The wall that ran along Front Street was torn down long ago to encompass the street within the enlarged district surrounded by its current dilapidated walls. Homes and businesses were eventually constructed along this original wall line, including the titular Old House that came to be occupied by the wizard Eb Wallix.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The PCs are hired by a young knight who has recently purchased an old house in the city of Eber. The house once belonged to an ancestor of the knight who was rumored to have been a practitioner of dark arts and, since his disappearance more than a century ago, the house has garnered a sinister reputation as a haunted and ill-rumored place. The PCs arrive to meet the knight on the morning of their appointment to find that he has already entered the house and stands mesmerized before a portrait of his foul ancestor. Once revived he is able to assist the party in exploring and clearing the house of several haunted manifestations and other strange phenomena, including a ghoulish mandrill locked in the basement that has languished as an experiment of the old wizard since his disappearance. Once the house is cleared, the knight pays the PCs for their services. They can go on their way, seemingly done with the adventure.

At some time later determined by the GM the PCs are contacted by the law firm representing the knight. One of the firm's solicitors has disappeared after going to the knight's newly purchased home, and the PCs are asked to follow up and find out what happened. The PCs arrive as night falls and a storm blows in. There is no sign of the solicitor, but the knight invites them inside for dinner. As the evening progresses the storm strikes and fully awakens the latent spirit of the house, the tormented soul of the old wizard that has begun to slowly possess the mind and body of his descendant. Faced with newly awakened threats and foul hauntings, the PCs must locate the knight and stop him before the old wizard can complete the possession and bring the full powers of his vile magical tome to bear upon the city once again.

STARTING THE ADVENTURE

The Book in the Old House begins at the law chambers of Abshire & Dunnage in the city of Eber, where the PCs meet with Myram Abshire (LG middle-aged male human commoner[SRD]), a partner of the firm.

The meeting room in the chambers of Abshire & Dunnage conveys the same air of solemnity and sobriety as the gentleman with whom you are here to discuss employment. An imposing antique table of stained wood with matching leather-upholstered chairs is surrounded by shelves of weighty tomes on a variety of civic and legal matters. Windows high up the walls bathe the room with the clear light of this early summer morning while affording the necessary privacy for such sensitive discussion.

A slight, middle-aged man with thinning gray hair and gray eyes magnified by thick spectacles formally greets you as you take your seats. "Good morning and thank you for your attendance," he starts, in a thin yet confident voice. "Our client, Sir Urvitus Voren of Tourne, has requested your presence here to discuss an opportunity we understand is in line with your skills and interests.

"Sir Urvitus, an honorable member of the Most Worthy Knights of Macobert and upstanding member of the chamber of commerce in our sister city of Tourne has recently charged this firm with locating trustworthy individuals of diverse talents to assist in the conclusion of some property matters here in Eber. Our research has led us to believe that you all will fit the bill nicely, so we wish to employ you on our client's behalf. Sir Urvitus has recently come into the ownership of a local property that has some significance to certain branches of his ancestry. This house has a certain sinister reputation and has sat vacant for more than a century.

"Sir Urvitus is not by nature a superstitious man, but he has not been successful to this point in his life by being foolish. He knows that rumors and tall tales often bear some kernel of truth. He seeks to hire professionals capable of dealing with any unexpected matters that come to a head during the exploration of this property and assisting with cleaning out any threats it may hold so that he can assess the property's current value and see to its ultimate disposition based on the findings of this survey.

"That is to say, the house is rumored to be haunted. While he tends to disregard such rumors as poppycock, Sir Urvitus nonetheless is aware that dangers could, in fact, exist within. He is seeking to hire someone to protect him and assist him in the house's exploration, and he wanted more than just dumb muscle hired off the streets. Hence, my offer to you. The offer is to pay your group a total of 300 gold shekels for your services, half up front to cover any equipping expenses you might have, and half upon the completion of the property's examination. The house is a small manor of the kind commonly constructed by the rising merchant class of a few centuries ago and is not overly large. Sir Urvitus expects that the job should not require more than a day to complete.*

"If all of this is agreeable to you, I have the contract of employment already prepared for you to sign, and the first half of the payment present. Upon execution of the agreement, Sir Urvitus is waiting in my office to meet you and answer any questions you might have at this time."

* Shekels are the gold coins of the City-State of Castorhage, adopted by the Kingdom of the Vast with its formal independence from Foere in 3245 I.R. See pages 216 and 220 of ***LL7: The Blight: Richard Pett's Crooked City*** by **Frog God Games**.

Myram Abshire does indeed have 150 gp in his valise and will allow the PCs to exam the employment contract if they wish. It is a standard short-term labor agreement that describes the PCs' role as "investigative specialists" and places them in the employ of Sir Urvitus for the duration of the house's exploration for the agreed upon sum of 300 gp. The property in question is described on the contract as "the Old House on Front Street, City of Eber". The contract already bears Sir Urvitus's signature, and Abshire will countersign as witness. A DC 11 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals it to be very standardized language with no hidden agenda or clauses. Likewise, a DC 8 Wisdom (Insight) check reveal Mr. Abshire to be completely on the up and up. The contract is nonnegotiable, however, as Sir Urvitus has allotted a strict budget for this endeavor.

Assuming the PCs agree to the contract, Abshire gives them their down payment and then escorts them to his office to meet their employer. Sir Urvitus Voren (NG male human) is a tall, lean man in his mid-twenties with an aristocratic brow and a noble bearing. His blond hair is tied back in a short ponytail, and he speaks in a refined manner but with a cordial tone. He greets the PCs with extended hand as they enter, obviously well-pleased that they have accepted his offer. See **Appendix B** for details on Sir Urvitus.

Sir Urvitus answers any questions the PCs may pose for him regarding the job. Attempts at Wisdom (Insight) checks confirm the earnestness of his proposition. Myram Abshire will leave the room to allow the discussion to proceed in private. Likely questions for Sir Urvitus and their answers are provided below.

What exactly must we do? "I want you to help me explore this supposedly "haunted" house and clear it of any hazards, such as infestations of dangerous vermin, criminal squatters, and, if there are indeed haunting spirits, those as well. I have purchased the house and everything in it from the city, so no looting if you please. I am doubtful that there is anything of value that remains within, but there could be still intact art or antiques that would be of value to me. Of course, anything that has clearly been brought in from outside by any inhabitants is fair game for you. I have no interest in acquiring "spoils". I also admonish you to strive not to damage anything if at all possible. Obviously, the exigencies of necessity could require a certain amount of damage in preservation of our life and limb, but I'd like to keep it to a minimum.

"Finally, though I have some skill with a blade and will be armed and prepared for danger, I am well aware that you are the professionals at this and will rely on you to deal with any unexpected menaces we may encounter and to protect my person. Though I am a Knight of Macobert, it is more of an honorific title in my family than any true martial description. It has been many generations since my ancestors thundered into battle atop an armored charger with lance at the ready. You will be in charge of security, though I ask that you defer to me on any decisions that must be made in regards to the house or its contents.

"I've never been in the house and could find no copies of its architectural designs in the city records, but from its size I estimate that it has approximately 20 rooms. I anticipate that it shouldn't take more than a day to explore all of them after which you will receive the second half of your payment, your duties successfully discharged."

Why have you purchased this house? "I believe that it has some possible connection to the history of my knightly order and may have served for a time as a residence of some ancestor of mine. So much was lost in the purges of the knighthood in 3380 and records of my family's flight to Tourne from Courghais are scant. I would like to fill in some of these blanks, and if in doing so determine some truly sinister association with my lineage then to set it aright and remove any stain upon my family once and for all.

"After that…I suspect I will demolish the house and finally put the past to rest. Perhaps I shall donate the land to become a city park. I honestly really don't know at this point. I think the investigation will play a large part in determining my course."

What do you mean by 'sinister association with your lineage'? "It's rather embarrassing unfortunately. My research over the last few years has uncovered the existence of an old outlaw by the name of Ellerby Wallix, usually referred to as Eb, who was rumored to be a sorcerer and practitioner of foul practices. He apparently fled Courghais just ahead of a manhunt conducted by the Knights of Macobert and led by his own nephew, Sir Barivoren Wallix. This all occurred only a few short years before the so-called Macobert Murders that ultimately led to the downfall of the Knights in Courghais and their suppression for decades across the rest of Foere. The records of this time are sketchy, but Sir Barivoren is known to have disappeared in the time of the murder scandal and the subsequent purges. He is either victimized or implicated in the affair, depending on which sources you consult.

"In any case my family line moved from Courghais to Tourne in the person of my many-times-great grandfather Reliman, and the records indicate that at the time of the move Reliman changed his surname from Wallix to Voren, the name of his father. Reliman appears to have been the younger brother of Sir Barivoren and subsequently inherited the knighthood after Barivoren's disappearance, the same title that I now carry. So, while not in my direct line of descent, there is nevertheless within my distant family both a vile sorcerer in Eb Wallix and possibly a murderous traitor in Sir Barivoren. It appears that after lying low for a decade or more, Eb Wallix may have purchased the very house we are going to explore and lived there as his last known residence. The rumors of hauntings and curses only seem to lend credence to this theory. As you can see, I would have a direct interest in not only discovering the truth of such matters but setting old dishonors aright."

What do you know about this property? "Not much. It was constructed in 3320 by a local merchant named Coram Poer. At that time Front Street was known as an affluent and growing part of the city, though since then it has become one of the older, poorer parts of town. Poer dealt in the import and export of textiles with lands to the west and appears to have died when a ship he was on went down during a storm on the Crescent Sea. A childless widower, Poer had no known heirs so the house reverted

SIR URVITUS VOREN OF TOURNE

Standing around 6 feet tall with a lean build, Sir Urvitus is a nobleman in his mid-twenties. He wears a gleaming silver breastplate and pair of bracers, each engraved with a heraldic device. A pair of short-bladed swords are cross-sheathed on his back, a hilt over each shoulder, and a pair of daggers are scabbarded at each hip. He speaks with a refined accent and a strong tone that seems accustomed to giving orders.

SIR URVITUS VOREN OF TOURNE

Medium humanoid (human), neutral good
Armor Class 16 (breastplate)
Hit Points 110 (17d8 + 34)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+1)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	8 (-1)	10 (+0)

Skills Athletics +3, Acrobatics +6, Animal Handling +1, History +3, Insight +3, Intimidate +3, Perception +3, Persuasion +4
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages Common, Elven
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Sir Urvitus makes three melee attacks or two ranged weapon attacks.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d4 + 4) piercing damage.

Gear mithral breastplate, 2 short swords, 4 daggers, engraved silver bracers (150 gp), noble's outfit, platinum signet ring (50 gp), belt pouch with 11 gp

Sir Urvitus Voren is a direct descendant of Reliman Voren. He is a knight of Macobert and, although still young at 23 years of age, of good standing within the Order. He usually resides at his family's estate in Tourne, a city around 200 miles to the east of Eber, located in the foothills of the Blackrock Mountains.

Sir Urvitus is thoughtful and reflective, considerate of his fortunate position yet proud of what he knows of his family's name, history, and tradition. It was, therefore, of great concern to him when he discovered the documents of his ancestor Sir Barivoren that ultimately revealed the change in his family name and the terrible scandal that started with the attempt to bring Ellerby Wallix to trial.

to the possession of the city and remained largely vacant with a few tenants renting it for short periods of time over the years.

"Eventually it came into the possession of one "Elling Walls" — which I believe to have been the alias of the missing Ellerby Wallix — in 3382, only two short years after the purge of the Knights in Courghais when any continued pursuit of the sorcerer would have ended. Over time, the house gained a sinister reputation as a place of evil, and eventually Elling Walls simply disappeared. Walls had no known heirs, and there was not even actual proof of death. He just wasn't seen anymore after 3390. No one wanted to buy the ill-rumored place, so once again it reverted to the ownership of the city.

"When I ran across information on the house in my own recent queries into my family history, I made the connection that Elling Walls was likely Eb Wallix and purchased the property from the city to complete my investigations into the matter and put the whole matter to rest once and for all…which is, of course, where you come in."

What are the rumors of curses and hauntings? "I honestly don't know much. Just the usual ghostly sightings, strange lights, disappearances, things of that nature. I must

Now that his research has brought him into possession of the Old House in Eber, his motivation is to render it safe, remove any valuable contents, and then have it demolished. Thus, while he will never condone damage to its contents, he will permit necessary damage to the house, such as breaking down locked doors.

As the PCs' employer, Sir Urvitus is placed in a natural leadership role. Despite his noble upbringing, he is never imperious or demanding in his tone. He values the talents and advice of the PCs highly and treats them as trusted allies. He does not seek to drive or control their exploration unless they begin to contradict or contravene his general guidance or wishes, such as by damaging or removing the house's contents or unreasonably refusing his requests.

As a sensate, Sir Urvitus is keen to attune himself to the house. While exploring it, he focuses on trying to gain a full sensory experience of each room that primarily derives from its sights, sounds, smells, and space. He communicates in this way with the PCs, looking for corroboration or challenges to his Wisdom (Perception)s.



DC	Result
5	An old house has stood at the far end of Front Street for as long as anyone can remember. It's far grander than the buildings nearby but it has always stood shuttered and empty. No one goes near it, not even vagrants.
7	There must be a frog pond in the yard behind the Old House, because on summer nights you can hear the things croaking from blocks away.
10	The Old House is haunted. There have been flickering lights and strange sounds heard over the years, like scratching or shrieking or rattling. Sometimes, it's said, the shutters open and a silhouette of a man can be seen inside.
15	The Old House isn't natural; it's too intact. It looks run down, but on closer inspection: no missing shingles, no broken windows. It should be a wrecked ruin after all this time but it's not. It's not normal, just too… whole. Even vandalism can't permanently damage it. It's like it doesn't want to be broken, and the vandals just gave up eventually.
17	People say that the man who lived in the Old House died inside and that his body and all his possessions are now guarded by his ghost.
20	One of the summer derechos hit the Old House with lightning years ago. The roof caught fire, and it looked like the whole structure was going to go up in a blaze, probably along with a good portion of the surrounding, tinder-dry city. But then the fire just went out. Even in the high winds without a drop of rain, it just extinguished. And just take a look at that old roof now, barely even a scorch mark left where half of it should be burnt off. That house doesn't want to die.
25	A night watchman caught an intruder trying to break into the Old House 20 or 30 years ago and killed him in the scuffle that followed. Two days later that watchman disappeared while walking his beat and was never seen again. They never did figure out what happened to that watchman or who the dead intruder was.
27	The house became the property of the city a long time ago after its owner disappeared, but nothing was ever done with it. Apparently, it has now been sold to some noble from Tourne.
30	The man who lived in the Old House last was the Anonymous Artist of Eber. His works still hang in buildings all around Eber, though mostly in private collections up on the Hill nowadays. There's still one in the Law Courts, as well as the College Library.

confess my research has been into more concrete matters of branches of the family tree, legal records, and titled ownership. That might be a line of query that you can look into more before we begin our actual entry into the property."

When do we go in? "I'll meet you at the house at first light tomorrow morning. I have some meetings that I have to attend this afternoon, and Abshire has to procure the keys to the property from the city assessor. Abshire can give you directions, and we'll convene there so we can go in together. In the meantime, you can use the funds you've been paid to make any last-minute preparations or do research of your own. I have no idea what we'll find, so we'll have to play it by ear from there."

What do you do? "I am somewhat embarrassed to say that my grandfather and father substantially reversed the family fortunes with lumbering in the southern baronies of Foere. As a result, I have been afforded the luxury to pursue my own interests. I still oversee the timber leases, but the actual work largely lies with the foremen and factotums that I employ to manage affairs. I spend most of my time engaged in antiquarian pursuits and, for the past few years, researching and piecing together the details of my family's history. I'm something of a dilettante, I guess you could say. Hence my need for persons such as yourself to assist me in this."

Sir Urvitus has no other useful information to convey to the party and will conclude the meeting with handshakes all around and the reminder to meet him at the house tomorrow morning at first light, giving the PCs the rest of the day to make their own preparations. PCs will be unable to accompany Sir Urvitus any further today as he will be sequestered in meetings with local merchants. Myram Abshire will provide the PCs with directions to the house and then depart to procure the keys to the property from the city and give them to Sir Urvitus, leaving the PCs to their own devices.



INVESTIGATING THE OLD HOUSE

If the PCs wish to gather information about the house before meeting Sir Urvitus, they can do so with Charisma (Persuasion) checks or Intelligence (History) checks. Characters who are natives of Eber have advantage on this check. Consult the table below to determine what each PC knows or has learned. They obtain the information for the DC they rolled as well as any DCs below their check.

ADDITIONAL INVESTIGATION

If the party wishes to follow up on any of the information gained during the gathering of information on the Old House, they can do so to a certain extent in the limited time they have. Below are the necessary checks to follow up on specific items and the information that can be obtained.

Night Watchman Disappearance

If the PCs wish to follow up on the rumored disappearance of the night watchman, they can do so by visiting the archives of the city's central watch station and succeeding at either a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check or DC 20 Charisma (Deception) check, or by offering a bribe of at least 20 gp to the clerk on duty. If successful they can confirm that a night watchman named Creutz Hasten allegedly killed an intruder at the Old House in 3498 and then did indeed disappear without a trace while walking his beat in that neighborhood two nights later. There were no leads or suspects, and the case was never solved.

If the PCs succeed on their check by 5 or more or issue a bribe of at least 30 gp they can also learn that the body of the intruder, an unidentified male human, disappeared from the cold cellar of the central watch station that same night before it could be interred in a pauper's grave and was never found. Its disappearance was likewise never solved.

The Anonymous Artist of Eber

Anyone making a DC 15 Intelligence (History) check is aware of the Anonymous Artist of Eber. PCs who are residents

of Eber have advantage on this check. Anyone who has identified Old Eb's self-portraits hidden in the paintings within the Old House can locate similar inclusions in these public displays with a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check (see **Paintings in the Old House**).

Visiting the House

It is possible that the PCs may decide to visit the house before meeting their employer there the next morning. The beginning of the adventure relies upon the PCs arriving at the house after Sir Urvitus. If they choose to do so, it is appropriate to advise them that anyone participating in such activities will be unable to take any of the other investigative activities mentioned above, requiring a separation of the party if they wish to do both. Most players tend to be loath to split the party, and this may be sufficient to dissuade them from a preemptive visit, especially if combined with the events of **A Strange Watcher** described below to truly pique their paranoia. And if they wish to investigate it during the night, they should be warned that they will be subject to the fatigue rules, with spellcasters requiring rest unable to obtain their full spell allotment. However, it is possible they will persist in such an endeavor regardless of the GM's gentle nudging. In this case, it is not unreasonable for them to get sidetracked in their efforts so that they can't make it to the house in time for their early investigations: perhaps some personal matter arises requiring their attention, an old friend spots them and engages them in a prolonged conversation, a watchmen suspicious of their armor and weaponry so blatantly on display stops them for questioning, it is market day and the streets so crowded that it will take too long to make the journey and get back in time for any other plans, etc. Likewise, if they simply intend to show up particularly early prior to the stipulated meeting time of sunrise, assume that Sir Urvitus has arrived just a little bit earlier and run the adventure as written.

A Strange Watcher

During the course of the party's investigations on the evening before they set out to explore the house, allow each PC to make a Wisdom (Perception) check. The PC who makes the highest check notices at one point in the early evening what appears to be a large gray frog the size of a cat. The frog sits quietly in the shadows and appears to be watching them. The PC catches only a glimpse of the creature, and upon looking again it is gone. Searching for the creature finds no trace of it.

Chapter One: An Exorcism in Eber

When the PCs arrive at Front Street for their scheduled appointment with Sir Urvitus outside the Old House, provide the following description.

The Old House is a grand structure for this part of the city, and clearly the largest in the area, both in ground area and height. Two stone stories, rising to a third at the back, all covered in patches of olive and mauve mosses, are capped by sloping, wood shingle roofs that protect an agglutination of dried mud bird nests beneath their eaves. A raised, vine-covered porch of dried hardwood stretches across the front and forms the base of a railed balcony above double doors. All the windows are shuttered, their once vibrantly colored paint now dull and flaking.

While of obvious great age with its dark green creepers, silvery lichens, and other plant life that has grown into its structure, the house's crumbling stone walls and wooden porch and roofs remain remarkably whole. No marks of vandalism mar its exterior, and no fragments of broken glass litter the ground, indicating that the covered glass windows are likely still intact. There are not even any missing shingles, which is in itself an oddity in this windblown region.

Of most immediate note, however, is the gray stallion that currently stands tethered to the porch rail by the front steps (A1).

PCs who wish to examine the exterior can determine, with a successful DC 10 Intelligence check that, although the old house is certainly weathered and dilapidated, it still appears to be structurally sound and in strangely good shape considering its many decades of abandonment. Likewise, anyone specifically examining the roof with a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check notes that one section of it bears faint scorch marks of an old fire, but even there the roof's integrity remains intact with no holes or missing shingles.

The tethered steed is a **combat-trained** warhorse[SRD] named Olomew. It is well trained and, though it appears a bit skittish, will allow PCs who make a DC 10 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check to approach. Anyone examining its gear finds the initials "U.V." worked into the leather of the fine saddle, confirming that this is indeed the mount of Sir Urvitus. It is carrying nothing of value other than its tack.

Development: If the party spends more than a few minutes on the porch or on the street outside the Old House, a neighbor, **Maeve Hollick** (N middle-aged female

human commoner[SRD]), emerges from a house farther down the street to voice her concerns. Maeve knows that people shun the house with good reason and is concerned for the man she saw enter earlier this morning. She noticed him arrive about a half hour ago and open the front door with a ring of keys he was carrying, so she assumed he was there on official business, but she has not seen any sign of him since and is worried. She can give a good description of the man as he was carrying a lantern in the predawn dark, and she watched him from her window as she ate her breakfast porridge. The description she provides matches that of Sir Urvitus, though unlike yesterday he was apparently armed and armored. She did not see any further details.

THE OLD HOUSE ON FRONT STREET

The Old House stands at the end of Front Street in the oldest quarter of Eber. Somewhat grander than the surrounding dwellings, the house was originally designed and constructed by a successful merchant, Coram Poer, as his home. After his death at sea, the home reverted to the city and was placed on the market where it had languished for years. Eventually it was sealed up and forgotten by the city until years later when Eb Wallix discovered it and decided it would make a perfect base from which to continue his macabre research. His combination of manipulative skills and arcane abilities ensured that he obtained the house and all of its contents for a song, and it remained in his possession until his own disappearance almost a decade later. The Old House has since reverted to the city's ownership again. A newly acquired sinister reputation and rumors of disappearances related to it has left it locked up and largely unmolested other than the occasional foolhardy and short-lived intrusion over the years.

FEATURES OF THE OLD HOUSE

The 1-foot-thick outer walls (AC 17, a damage threshold of 10, 35 hit points, DC 20 Athletics check to climb) are constructed of large mortared stones. Unless otherwise specified, ceiling height is 15 feet on the first floor, and 10 feet on the second and third floors. Floors are fitted with smooth floorboards, many of which have warped over the decades and creak when tread upon, imposing disadvantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks within the house.

Inside, gray dust and cobwebs cover surfaces in most open areas, and mildew and black mold growths are common but harmless. While the house is certainly in a state of abandoned disrepair, the influence of the *Codex Ibnathi* protects its sanctum from true structural damage. Broken

FEAR, DISTURBANCES, AND NIGHTMARES

The sinister influence of the *Codex Ibnathi* has prevented the evil soul of Eb Wallix from reaching the afterlife, and as a result the house is haunted by the trapped spirit of the insane alienist. Eb's supernatural presence in the house, however, does not reflect any consciousness or purpose, or exist as a single haunt or ghost. His spirit is shattered, its most potent shards usually manifesting as harmless, yet distressing, psychological phantasmagoria, but sometimes presenting as more dangerous phenomena.

These nightmares and disturbances exist not only to create dramatic tension for the characters and their players on their first visit to the house, but also to reveal otherwise undiscoverable aspects of Old Eb and his historical activities. However, many of them also place the PCs on edge, potentially calling for a madness effect as described in Chapter 15 of the SRD. Each nightmare or disturbance occurs only once, regardless of how many times a location is visited or a creature sleeps within the house, and they are only experienced by the PCs, not Sir Urvitus.

While disturbances and their effects are detailed in the areas in which they occur, nightmares can occur anywhere that a character loses consciousness inside the Old House, be it from physical injury, natural sleep, or magically or otherwise induced sleep effects such as from the wallixtabay's soporific pollen (**A16**). Attempts to use spells from the divination school might also grant a nightmare vision at the GM's discretion.

Each time a character is exposed to a nightmare, give out one of the **Handouts 1A–1G** detailed in **Appendix A** (selected or determined randomly) and award the PCs XP for a medium encounter for their level (see Chapter 13 in the SRD). Additionally, they must succeed at a DC 19 Charisma saving throw become frightened for 1d4 hours. This effect continues as long as they remain in the house, but it does not force them to flee from the house. A frightened PC cannot naturally fall asleep in the old house until they are no longer under a fear effect induced by a nightmare.

door locks, smashed windows, and the like are treated as normal but the walls and floors are treated as though they have hardness 10. Attempts to burn the house down also find it remarkably resistant to fire — individual pieces of furniture might burn fitfully, but the flames tends to fizzle and fail to spread. In addition, damages to the windows, doors, and structure of the home somehow seem to lessen over time until, years later, they are somehow wholly intact again.

The front and back doors lead into opposite ends of the central hall (**A2**). The house is fitted with good wooden doors (1-1/2 inches thick, AC 14, damage threshold of 5, hp 15, DC 25 Strength (Athletics) check to break down; referred to hereafter as a Break DC) throughout. Some interior doors have simple locks but most have none. All exterior doors have good quality locks. All doors and other objects with locks, as well as several without, are also affected by *arcane lock*. The relevant Dexterity (thieves' tools) check to pick a lock or Break DC include the +10 bonus for this spell. Keys for all of the locks in the house can be found within.

Entrance into the house can also be gained via the cellar chute (**A1a**) or through various windows, but all are locked or cannot be opened, and all have external wooden shutters that can be operated with a rotating handle on the internal wall. All window shutters are closed and their handles are arcane locked in place (DC 20 thieves' tools check) and cannot be reached from outside and so shutters locked in this way must usually be forced open (Break DC 26) to gain access to the glass windows.

It is also possible to climb up onto the wooden roof of the porch or verandah (Athletics DC 15) to gain access to various second story windows or to the front or rear balconies (**A13**, **A16**), though of all the house's covers, these exterior roofs have suffered the most over the years and are now worm-eaten and fragile. Medium creatures will crash through after 1 round and Small creatures must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw to avoid the same fate. Creatures smaller than size Small can safely traverse these roofs. If a creature attempts to scale the southern side of the house, it is a DC 25 Climb check to the roof of the second story from the top of the porch. The house's main roof is only moderately sloped away from the central peak but it still requires a DC 8 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to traverse to the south-facing windows of the attic.

Light sources within the house are detailed in room descriptions and, unless otherwise noted, are everburning candles (see sidebox). The rest of the house is dark or dimly lit if in an area with access to natural light from outside.

GM Note: There are several areas that contain sections marked "Urvitus" within their descriptions. These detail specific interactions with Sir Urvitus that occur if he is with the party when they are in that area. Therefore, they only become relevant once the party has located him in the drawing room (**A10**) and he has joined their further exploration. Refer to **Appendix B** for further description of Sir Urvitus.

There are two sets of area descriptions for the Old House. The descriptions for **Chapter 1** (denoted by area **A**) pertain to the initial visit to the house, and the descriptions for **Chapter 2** (denoted by area **B** to avoid confusion) pertain to the second visit to the house, when it is explored after **Event 2**. Not every room in **Chapter 2** has a **B** description, and when none is given assume that the room is in the state that it was left in by the PCs' initial incursion in **Chapter 1**.

EVERBURNING CANDLE[TB2]

Wondrous item, common

This otherwise normal candle has a *continual flame* spell cast on its wick. Due to the small size of its wick, it sheds light only as an ordinary candle, but it does not emit heat or deal fire damage. If the candle is broken, its *continual flame* no longer functions.

PAINTINGS IN THE OLD HOUSE

While most of the furnishings and other contents in the house originally belonged to Coram Poer, Eb Wallix developed skills as a master painter over the long years of his life, and it is his work that now adorns the walls. While these paintings are of various sizes, depictions, and individual values, they are all masterworks that would sell easily in Eber where the brushwork and colors are instantly recognizable to art collectors as works of the Anonymous Artist of Eber.

As Eb did not leave the house very often, those works that contain images of Eber and its citizens were created with the aid of *clairvoyance* and *scrying*. Many of the paintings that contain depictions of people also contain a self-portrait hidden somewhere within the scene. Eb did this precisely so that they could be used as sensors for his *scrying* spells, enabling him to spy on the prominent local families and

institutions he anonymously gifted them to. However, his skill at obscuring and varying his embedded self-portraits ensures that it is not at all obvious that many of the paintings contain his image. A character needs to study several different paintings that contain Eb's image before a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check (reduced to DC 15 if they are proficient with painter's supplies) reveals that they all contain a depiction of the same person—the person in the huge portrait in the drawing room (**A10**).

Eb achieved his unique style by replicating lucid visions of the dreamlands using paints produced from extraplanar pigments he bartered for with summoned entities. His paintings use blood and other richly colored ichors of angels and fiends, tempera from the eggs of void-stirges, and humors from the spawn of aquatic aberrations. They are combined to form vibrancies and subtleties of color that change with different lighting.

The paintings and many other valuable contents of the house are not detailed in the "Treasure" section of an area description, however, because these items belong to Sir Urvitus and are not intended to be taken by the PCs. Furthermore, many of these items will be destroyed before **Chapter 2**. If a PC steals an item — which may be difficult to achieve with Sir Urvitus present — assign a value that seems appropriate. Eb's paintings, in particular, which reflect an average Craft (paintings) skill result of 30, have values 1d4+2 times higher than their Craft value due to their unique colors, style, rarity, and reputation. Most of them will require some restoration to achieve that full value, however.

Items that *do* appear in the "Treasure" section, therefore, are intended for the PCs. Sir Urvitus may recommend that the PCs use them when they are found, or he will gift them to the PCs at the end of that part of the adventure.

First Floor

The ceiling throughout the first floor is 15 feet high except for along the corridor running parallel to the stairs, which slopes down from 15 feet high in the central hall (**A2**) to 10 feet high in the corridor running between the drawing room (**A3**) and dining room (**A6**) to accommodate the stairs above.

A1. Front Porch

A short flight of steps ascends to the wooden porch; its structure faded and worm-eaten, its interior obscured by an overgrowth of leafy vines. A notice is nailed to a rail post.



Dark green vines that grow over the porch bear tiny white flowers, and the exterior walls of the house are patched with mosses and lichens. A DC 12 Intelligence (Nature) check confirms that these are all normal local flora. The porch itself is devoid of any furniture and raised 2 feet off the ground. Wooden slats across the face of the base prevent access to the crawlspace below the porch unless they are broken or pried apart. However, the crawlspace only extends back as far as the stone of the house's foundation. The notice nailed to the rail post declares, "*Private Property. Trespassers and thieves will be prosecuted.*"

The wooden front doors and frames are warped but still function. They are fitted with brass door knockers shaped like leering gargoyles. A DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check from the base of the porch stair is sufficient to notice that one of the front doors is ajar.

At the northwest corner of the porch is a wooden box set in the ground with a sloped door bearing a padlock with an arcane lock, though the old, worm-eaten wood can be more easily smashed through. This opens to a cellar chute through which coal and wood were once delivered but which was never used while Eb was in residence. It descends at a steep angle to the storage cellar (**A22**) 10 feet below. The padlock key is in the observatory (**A20**).

Wooden Coal Chute Door: AC 8; damage threshold 5; 15 hit points; Break DC 17.

Arcane-Locked Padlock: AC 15; damage threshold 5; 30 hit points; thieves' tool DC 26, Break DC 28)

A2. Central Hall

The following description assumes the PCs enter by the front door. Modify it appropriately if they enter from another direction.

A wide hall hung with paintings runs the length of the house and is partitioned by a pair of dusty curtains. A long rug with vibrant green and blue patterning runs down the center of the hall. A narrow table stands against the east wall opposite a staircase with a mahogany balustrade. A burning candle in an iron candlestick atop the table dimly illuminates the central portion of the hall. Cream-colored wallpaper with thin, dark green vertical stripes peels in places from the upper portion of the walls while the lower section is simple, whitewashed stone. In the southern vestibule, an unused hat rack is positioned against a decorative entrance arch, while a dark green curtain blocks off the northern portion. A thin layer of dust covers every surface, and patches of black mold speckle the painted wooden ceiling and the walls.

There are 11 paintings hung along the hall, each showing a different scene of Eber life; three with hidden self-portraits of Old Eb (see **Paintings in the Old House**). The rug is of exquisite Ashurian[LL7 – p. 48] manufacture, and the candle is an everburning candle.

Beyond the curtain at the northern end of the hall, a line of coat pegs is mounted on the west wall and an empty wooden shoe rack is pushed against the wall opposite. The back door leads out onto the rear verandah (**A7**) but it is *arcane locked* (thieves' tool DC 28); its key is in the observatory (**A20**).

A character who makes a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) or Wisdom (Survival) check notices Sir Urvitus' footsteps in the dust. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check to follow his tracks notes that he advanced along the hallway, paused to look at several of the paintings, opened the midway curtain, ascended the stairs, carefully picked his way around the bones on the landing (**A8**) as he continued to turn to examine some of the paintings, and then walked into the drawing room (**A10**).

Disturbance: When the characters first begin to examine the paintings, the character with the highest Wisdom (Perception) check hears the squeak of a floorboard on the second floor directly above them.

Urvitus: If Urvitus is present he takes a moment to examine the paintings (he only glanced at them briefly upon first entering) and excitedly declares them to be the works of the Anonymous Artist of Eber — a virtual treasure trove of Eber culture.

A3. Parlor

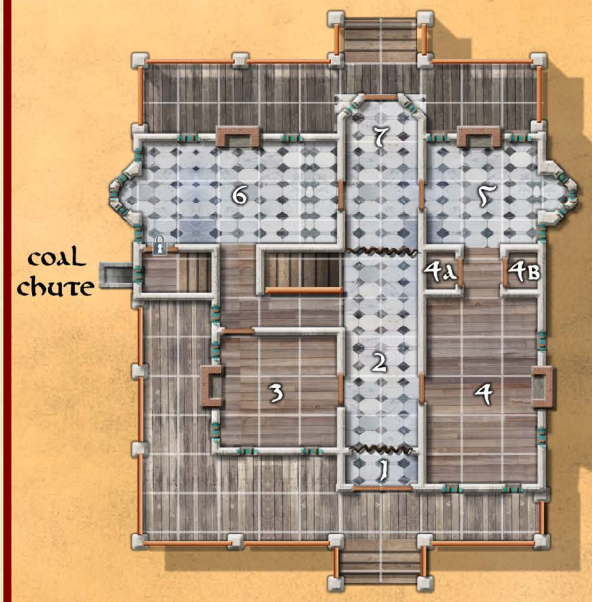
The walls of this parlor, on which paintings of various sizes hang, have wooden wainscoting on the lower parts and patterned wallpaper above. Items of furniture, including several upholstered but mildewed chairs and marble-topped wooden tables, are positioned on a woolen carpet. Cobwebs hang from a decorative, coffered ceiling and silver candelabra are positioned around the room in which several candles still provide illumination. An ornate alabaster fireplace is the focal point of the room. A wooden harpsichord strewn with books of sheet music stands to the northeast, covered in a fine dust.

Through a combination of lack of use and lack of exposure to the elements, the contents of the parlor are in relatively good condition despite their great age. This parlor was designed to be a formal room for guests to be received and entertained, though Eb Wallix never made use of it for these purposes.

The harpsichord is made of rosewood and, if played, anyone trained in a music-related skill will note that it is of masterwork quality and still — strangely — perfectly tuned. Eight paintings depict landscape views from within the city and major city landmarks, including the Royal College, temples, and Law Courts; two contain hidden self-portraits. The carpet is an Ashurian[LL7 – p. 48] masterpiece that, when cleaned, is revealed to be woven with arabesques in deep shades of green. Each of the 6 silver candelabra holds two unlit candles and one everburning candle.

Disturbance: A character who has heard the fugue in the west guestroom (**A14**), or who has the correct notation of it, may play its basic melody on the harpsichord with a

THE OLD HOUSE



First Floor





Second Floor



Attic



Basement

successful DC 15 Charisma (Performance) check. The first character to successfully play the melody receives a rush of triumphant joy followed by a brief vision of a thick, black leather-bound tome placed atop the harpsichord in front of them. The title of the book, written in Deep Speech, is applied in elaborate and exquisite gold leaf on the front: *Reflections on Hali*. A character who does not understand Deep Speech can decipher the title with a DC 22 Intelligence (Arcana) check or otherwise transcribe their vision of the script with sufficient accuracy for others to decipher with a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) or Intelligence (Investigation) check. This is a vision of Eb's grimoire that can be found in the study (**A21**).

If a character exceeds the Charisma (Performance) DC by 5 or more, the vision widens until they see a tiny gray frog-like creature with four tentacles protruding from its flanks crawl up onto the book. Its head is unlike a frog's though, with a flattened humanoid-like face that looks like a horrible old man's, and its front legs end in black-nailed hands instead of frog-like toes. As the vision fades, other characters witnessing this masterful performance see the harpsichord player's face briefly transformed into the same hateful leering visage as the weird toad's, and they must succeed on a DC 12 Charisma saving throw or be affected by a short-term madness for 1d10 minutes.

Once the melody has been played successfully, if anyone tries to play the harpsichord again the instrument is now horribly out of tune. A DC 15 Dexterity or Intelligence check with an appropriate tool or musical instrument proficiency is required to tune it — a process which takes at least one hour and which requires the relevant tools.

Urvitus: While he asks the PCs to be careful not to damage the sheet music or harpsichord, his attention is primarily taken by the paintings, which he declares to contain historical depictions of Eber. If a PC heard the music in the west guestroom (**A14**), Urvitus encourages them to play it on the harpsichord. If it does not occur to the PCs, he eventually also suggests that it may be recorded in one of the pieces of sheet music (see "Treasure" below).

Treasure: While the furniture and paintings hold considerable value, the books of sheet music are the real treasure here, which can be determined with a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) or music-related Charisma (Performance) check. There are well over 100 works for keyboard instruments. Several of the pieces, however, are unique or at least very rare, including some local compositions. One fugue piece, entitled (in Helvaenic) "Over the Brink" can be identified as the music heard in the west guestroom (**A14**) with a successful DC 12 trained music-related Charisma (Performance) check. Characters using this notation receive a +4 bonus to play the fugue and may do so without having heard it. The music is worth 120 gp and Sir Urvitus gifts it to the PCs when the contract is complete if they successfully played the melody.

Story Award: If the PCs receive the vision of Eb's grimoire, award them XP for a medium encounter. If they performed well enough to also see Kyssogga, award them XP for a hard encounter instead.

A4. Kitchen

The stone-tiled floor space of this large kitchen is dominated by a long table, heavily scored by knife and chopper and now infested with fungal blooms. Above the table, a panoply of pots and pans hangs from hooks on a ceiling rack. Cupboards and shelves containing more cooking equipment line walls once whitewashed but now black with mold. A glazed-brick hearth set with an iron oven is built into the east wall, flanked by two large stone sinks.

As Eb had no need to eat or drink and found little joy in doing so, having always associated the acts with distraction from his studies or mind-numbing social interaction, this room went virtually unused throughout his occupancy.

A knife block on one of the shelves contains two cooking knives large and sharp enough to be used as daggers, and a drawer contains, among other utensils, a steel meat chopper that can be used as a handaxe, and an iron meat mallet that can be used as a light mace.

Urvitus: Urvitus will thumb through the utensils thoughtfully but has no real comment to make here.

A4a. Pantry

This pantry is lined with shelves from floor to ceiling but is otherwise empty.

A4b. Larder

This larder has several deep shelves, a number of meat hooks hanging from the ceiling, and is thick with black mold but otherwise empty. It is noticeably cooler than the surrounding rooms, an effect of its enclosure against an outer wall and above the cistern in the basement.

A5. Scullery

The stained, stone-tiled floor of this scullery is sunk a step below the rest of the ground floor of the house. Slatted wooden mats are placed beneath two sinks to either side of a large stone hearth set against the north wall, as well as beneath a third, smaller sink against the east wall. Cobwebbed storage shelves crammed with all manner of dust-covered crockery, pans, wooden buckets, cleaning tools, and other mundane household items line the walls around a work table. Two empty wooden tubs sit in the southern corners, and a wooden mangle is positioned in a bay window in the east wall, fungal filaments drooping from its rollers.

A rotating wooden handle is set into the wall above the wooden tub in the southeast corner. The end of a rusted metal pipe protrudes from the wall next to it. If the handle is turned, it draws water from the basement cistern up through the pipe via a screw pump.

Urvitus: Urvitus marvels at the craftsmanship of the running water after confirming that it is still functional and wonders aloud if the house might be in good enough shape to salvage altogether.

A6. Dining Room

A long central table in this dining room is surrounded by thirteen chairs, all carved from the same dark hardwood that panels the walls. Shelves in the northeast and southeast corners of the room hold trays of fine-looking cutlery and crockery. Above the mantel of a large stone fireplace in the middle of the north wall hangs a framed painting, and smaller paintings hang on the south wall. A fine layer of dust covers the floor and furniture.

An iron fireguard stands in front of the fireplace and an iron bucket of tongs and pokers is placed to one side. The south door that leads to the basement is arcane locked (thieves' tool DC 28); its key is in the observatory (**A20**). The dinnerware contains fine silverware, a crystal decanter with 18 matching goblets, and a range of hand-painted plates, chargers, chafing dishes, and serving platters. The 3 paintings in this room each depict an Eber cityscape with the long masterpiece over the fireplace containing a hidden self-portrait.

Disturbance: The first character to approach the door in the southwest corner hears footsteps in the room above him. The footsteps seem to match the PC's relative position exactly and move as she moves. If she touches the door in this room, she hears the slow creak of a door opening directly above. If she moves away from the door, or stops to involve the other characters, the sound of the footsteps ends.

Urvitus: Urvitus admires the paintings and the fine selection of serving wares here. He is as startled as the PCs by a report of footsteps above. Once it occurs, he becomes visibly angry and want to charge upstairs to confront the "intruder". He will not leave his hired specialists behind to do so, however, deferring to their judgment in the matter.

A7. Rear Verandah

A wooden verandah, overgrown with vines and creepers that also cover an upper balcony, spans the rear of the house. Steps lead up onto the verandah, which grants access to the house's back door.

The verandah looks out over a short backyard that ends at an extension of the city wall. It is featureless and uninteresting. Despite rumors that the PCs may have heard, there is no pond present and no unusual presence of frogs croaking. The verandah itself is built in the same fashion as the porch (**A1**). The back door is closed and *arcane locked* (thieves' tool DC 30); its key in the observatory (**A20**).

The vines that grow over the verandah are the same as those on the porch. Characters who nevertheless take the time to examine the plant life here and succeed on a DC 12 Intelligence (Nature) check identify that, intermingled with and partially obscured by the creepers that cover the verandah, the tendrils of a different type of plant grow from the balcony above. These shoots descend to the ground to either side of the verandah stair. It's impossible to tell the type of plant — the **wallixtabay** (see **A16**) — from an examination of its tendrils alone, but the size and number of them suggest that the plant or plants are likely quite numerous or large.

The tendrils of the wallixtabay grow down to the ground around the sides of the verandah stair and along much of the face of the verandah itself. These tendrils do not bear thorns or flowers, and they do not provide the plant with sustenance, but they do extend the range of its tremorsense to effectively cover a 30-foot radius from the verandah. The wallixtabay keeps these tendrils dormant and "plant-like" but if enough of them are damaged, it immediately climbs over the sides of the balcony above and descends down the verandah to attack.

Development: In the upper northeast corner of the verandah is the distinctively layered, papery shape of a large wasp nest about 2 to 3 feet in diameter. It can be

spotted with a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. These inch-long, sand-striped wasps are native to the region of the Vast around Eber and are not aggressive unless their nest is disturbed, such as by someone cutting down the vines or climbing around that section of the verandah. If that occurs, they swarm to attack. Treat this as a swarm of insects (wasps)[SRD].

Urvitus: If the PCs discover the wasp nest, Sir Urvitus suggests that it might be best to leave it alone, rather than anger the wasps unnecessarily. They can be smoked out later when the house is demolished. If the PCs insist, however, he permits them to clear it.

SECOND FLOOR

The ceiling throughout the second floor is 10 feet high. All window shutters are arcane locked.

A8. Landing

Between the ground and second floor, this landing displays a grisly scene. The scattered bones of a humanoid skeleton, still clad in the frayed scraps of clothing, lie on a large, faded stain that covers the whole of the landing. Several paintings hang on the walls of the landing and along the stairs.

The skeleton is that of Creutz Hasten, the night watchman who disappeared in 3498 I.R. After interfering with the machinations of the Old House in seeking a new master, Hasten was abducted by Kyssogga while walking his beat two nights later, taken to the house, and left in one of the upper guest bedrooms. Severely mentally depleted by the ysaqquan's venom, Hasten only made it to the landing before he was ambushed by a swarm of ysaqquan toads that silently awaited him on the lower flight. His bones are randomly scattered across the landing, but his entire skeleton is present. A PC who examines the bones can determine, with a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Medicine) check, that they have been gnawed by many tiny teeth. Additionally, a gold ring can be found with successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. A successful DC 10 Intelligence (History) check will identify the ring's seal as that of the Eber City Watch. The inside of the band is etched with "*Watchman, Junior Grade C. Hasten*".

There are nine paintings hung along the stairwells and around the landing that show different scenes from ordinary life in Eber. Three of the paintings contain hidden self-portraits.

Urvitus: Urvitus noted the skeleton upon his arrival at the house and wishes it to remain undisturbed until identification and a proper burial can be arranged. He permits the PCs to carefully examine the bones, however, and is overjoyed if the ring is discovered and identified. He takes it from the PCs but promises an additional reward as thanks, which they can choose from among the house's contents. Use your discretion in what Urvitus will allow in exchange but note that anything that will potentially identify the occupant as his ancestor will not be permitted.

A9. Upper Hall

Characters ascending to the hall from the stairs can see into the drawing room (**A10**) through the open door. The drawing room is dimly lit but characters with low-light vision, darkvision, or who succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check see Sir Urvitus standing in that room with his back to them (see **A10** for more information).

More paintings decorate the burgundy papered walls of this upper hall. A rug patterned with tessellating shapes in various shades of green stretches along the hall's length between two archways obscured by thick, burgundy curtains. Single doors stand closed in the west and south walls, while the northernmost of two in the east wall is opened into a room beyond. On a small, circular stand in the northeast corner, opposite a carved wooden balustrade that overlooks a stairwell, an iron candlestick bears a lone candle with a flickering flame.

The four paintings in this hall, one of which contains a hidden self-portrait, depict landscapes surrounding Eber. The rug is of Virik design*. The candle is an *everburning candle.*

Behind the curtain at the north end of the hall, a lateral corridor runs between the master bedchamber (**A18**) and the salon (**A17**) with another curtained archway opposite leading to the library (**A15**). The door at the end of the hall beyond the southern curtain leads out onto the front balcony (**A13**) but it is arcane locked (thieves' tool DC 30); its key is in the observatory (**A20**).

Urvitus: Urvitus has already been in this area, having passed through to reach **A10**. He does not have anything to add to its exploration.

* Virik is the adjectival demonym of the Viroeni people. See page 50 of ***LL7: The Blight: Richard Pett's Crooked City*** by **Frog God Games**.

A10. Drawing Room

The first time the PCs enter the room, they find Sir Urvitus here. He is standing motionless, staring at a full-length portrait that is hung in the center of the east wall between two draped windows, an unlit lantern in his hand. He has his back to the door and he partially obscures the portrait.

Richly upholstered couches and chairs, arranged along with small side tables upon an arabesque carpet of gold and crimson, dominate the center of this drawing room. A well-stocked cellaret nestles against the northwest corner, and tall glass-doored bookcases stand to the southwest. Framed paintings decorate the room's burgundy-papered walls, and an elaborate wooden chandelier, from which several candles illuminate the drawing room with dim flickering light, spreads like the roots of a tree beneath a coffered ceiling.

The five paintings in this room are all unidentified portraits; four are of Wallix family members that Eb painted from memory, and the full-length piece on the east wall is a self-portrait. The family portraits, which include Barivoren, Reliman, their father (Eb's brother) Voren, and Rocshan (Eb's sister) are all grotesque caricatures depicted to appear simple-minded, a reflection of the artist's disdain for them that can be realized with a successful DC 15 Intelligence check (including proficiency in painter's supplies, if applicable) or Wisdom (Insight) check.

The self-portrait depicts a gaunt, old man wearing the refined clothing of the Courghais gentry of yesteryear, an expression of superiority and contempt on his wizened features. His advanced age gives the lie to a head of luxurious dark curls that fall to his velvet-mantled shoulders as naught but a wig kept in place by a finely wrought silver circlet and bejeweled diadem. He poses in front of a desk in what appears to be a library, his left hand obscured behind his back and his right hand resting upon the head of a cane, with a signet ring evident on the little finger. A successful DC 22 Intelligence (History) check will identify the seal as House Wallix, a noble family from Courghais who disappeared in the years following the Foerdewaith Wars of Succession around 150 years ago.

The bookcases contain 20 books that comprise plays both comedic and tragic, volumes of poetry of varying quality but which mostly focus on sagas and epics, biographies of the lives and deeds of famous adventurers, and a scattering of texts from local religions. The cellaret contains bottles of a variety of hard liquors along with goblets of metal and glass. The carpet is of Ashurian make, and there are 5 *everburning candles* in the chandelier.

Sir Urvitus is standing transfixed by the painting, the result of an initial fascination effect from the *Codex Ibnathi* that has now faded but from which Sir Urvitus has transitioned into a natural, trance-like state. He will remain so entranced for another 1d4 minutes after the PCs discover him unless he is snapped out of it. Any reasonable action to break Sir Urvitus's trance will work, including touching him, moving into his line of sight, or even shouting at him. Simply talking to him will not, however. A detect magic or similar spell or effect will discover no evidence of magic at work here; the initial magic was weak and has long gone.

SIR URVITUS VOREN OF TOURNE

hp 24 (See page 20)

Urvitus: When his attention is gained, Sir Urvitus quickly composes himself and apologizes for being so distracted by the portrait, claiming that he was entranced by its exquisite workmanship and detail. In truth, he also believes that it could be a depiction of Old Eb (see below), and he was fascinated by what he thinks could be his first detailed sight of his ancestor. The subtlety of the fascination effect is such that it seems completely natural to Sir Urvitus, and he will meet suggestions to the contrary with abrupt skepticism unless presented with evidence.

If asked why he entered the house alone, Sir Urvitus explains that he found the front door open, and then heard the creak of floorboards on the second floor. He assumed that thieves had entered and went in to investigate immediately. He is not positive that the creaking floorboards were caused by footsteps but has no idea why the front door would be open, and he openly wonders if there might be someone hiding in one of the unexplored rooms.

If asked what he has been doing since he entered, Sir Urvitus looks thoughtful for a moment before explaining that he has been captivated by the house and many of the paintings that he has discovered within, and he marvels at their craftsmanship. He can also provide a brief summary of the areas he explored (**A2**, **A8**, and **A9**) on his way to this room.

PCs suspicious of the painting and the apparent effect it has on Sir Urvitus receive no agreement or sympathy from the knight. He brooks no damage being done to any of the paintings or other furnishings as a result of simple speculation of their role in any claimed supernatural occurrences and dismisses any such concerns

as superstitious at worst and unlikely at best. Sir Urvitus recognizes the value of the various works of art, and he believes that the true source of any haunting in the house must be identified and dealt with directly, without resorting to the unnecessary destruction of valuable property.

Once all questions are answered, Sir Urvitus joins the party and assists them in the rest of the exploration.

Disturbance: The first time a character returns to this room without Sir Urvitus, they once again see him standing and staring at the portrait — even if they know he is elsewhere in the house. This time, however, as soon as a character tries to attract his attention or moves to try to gain a view of his face, his head slowly turns toward them, rotating at an unnatural angle to do so. When the character sees the figure's face, it is not that of Sir Urvitus, but of the wizened old man in the portrait, his features twisted into a predatory, malicious leer. In that instant, the character also notices that the portrait has changed, from a depiction of the old man, to a figure dressed in Sir Urvitus' armor, its face scratched out as though by claws. The figure then immediately disappears and the portrait returns to normal. As the PC experiences this disturbance, they are momentarily aware of an overpowering malignance enveloping them, and a noxious, charnel stench that fades as quickly as it threatened to turn their stomach. The PC must succeed at a DC 14 Charisma saving throw or suffer a short-term madness for 1d10 minutes.

Story Award: If a character experiences the disturbance in this room, award the PCs XP for a medium encounter.

A11. East Guestroom

A large wooden bedframe and mattress is positioned in the center of this room. A writing desk with a simple chair stands against the east wall near a polished stone fireplace in the northeast corner with a triple-branched candelabrum bearing unlit candles on the mantel. A wardrobe and chest of drawers stand against the west wall, and five paintings hang upon the walls.

The five paintings in this room are of Eber rooftop cityscapes, one of which has a self-portrait hidden in the window of one of the buildings. The wardrobe and drawers contain nothing but clothing hangers and old mothballs. A drawer in the desk contains a calligrapher's kit along with official stamps and seals.

Urvitus: Urvitus spends a few moments admiring the paintings in this room and even manages to catch sight of the shadowy figure hidden in the painting bearing the self-portrait. He points it out when he finds it, thinking it just an interesting detail that the Anonymous Artist included but wonders aloud if it might be a self-portrait.

A12. Bath & Privy

The floor and lower walls of this small room are tiled. It contains a wooden bath and privy, along with a couple of wooden buckets and a mop. A mirror is mounted to the west wall.

A13. Front Balcony

The front balcony is overgrown with the same local white-flowered vines that grow over the porch (**A1**) but is otherwise empty. The door into the house is arcane locked (thieves' tool DC 30); its key in the observatory (**A20**).

Treasure: A close examination of the exterior wall here can determine with a successful DC 20 Intelligence (Nature) check that one of the mosses is a rare species prized for its alchemical properties. It is worth 20 gp if sold to an alchemist or herbalist within 3 days of harvesting.

A14. West Guestroom

A wide wooden bedframe with a stripped mattress is pushed against the south wall of this bedroom. A writing desk and chair stand beneath a window in the west wall, opposite a door in the northeast corner. A metal bucket of blackened fireplace tools sits next to a stone hearth with an iron mesh fireguard in the middle of the west wall. A wardrobe and chest of drawers stand against the north wall. Six paintings hang around the walls. Unlit candlesticks sit on the desk and on the south end of the mantelpiece.

The six paintings in this room are of various streets in Eber as they looked in Eb's time. Two have self-portraits in them. A mirror is attached to the interior side of one wardrobe door, but the wardrobe and drawers contain nothing else but clothes hangers. A drawer in the desk contains materials for writing, including inkpens, ink wells (long dried), a blotter, and several sheets of fine vellum.

Disturbance: As the PCs first leave this room, the PC with the highest music-related Performance skill (or the character with the highest Charisma otherwise) hears a few isolated notes coming from the harpsichord in the parlor (**A3**) below. This is swiftly followed by an urge for that PC to close the door and remain in the room alone to listen to the music. If he does so, after a few seconds, the music from the harpsichord resumes and a strange, haunting fugue

plays — audible only to the PC alone in the room — for 1 minute. The music has recurrent passages of a captivating melody, but it immediately ends if the door to the parlor is opened. Characters who descend to the parlor while a character in this room hears the music find the doors to that room closed and the parlor empty.

Urvitus: If a character informs Sir Urvitus that they hear music from the parlor and of an urge to remain alone in the room to listen to it, he is intrigued and recommends that they do so while the rest of the group stands guard outside. If a PC wants to go down to the parlor to investigate, Sir Urvitus encourages them to descend quietly and remain outside the parlor so as not to disturb the musician until they're informed that the music has finished. Once the music has ended, Sir Urvitus is eager to understand what the PC heard and suggests that they try to hum it or, better still, play it on the harpsichord below. He is similarly eager to discover the musician and so advises another visit to the parlor.

A15. Library

Three free-standing tall bookcases in the west section of this library complement floor-to-ceiling shelving along its west and south walls. A desk of stained wood with an upholstered chair is pushed against the east wall, and a comfortable armchair is positioned in a canted bay window beyond, the view from which is obscured by leaves and vines that have grown over its windows and glass-paneled door from outside. A painting hangs on the wall over the desk.

The bookcases and shelves contain several hundred books that comprise dictionaries of 13 modern languages, encyclopedias from a number of noted academicians of varying expertise, and treatises on topics including architecture and engineering, carpentry, stonemasonry, weather, geography, medicine, herbalism, history, nobility, music and composition (which include instructional manuals for learning the harpsichord and other instruments), botany, and zoology.

The single painting in the room depicts a view of the Royal College from within its grounds. A self-portrait of Eb hides among a crowd of students.

The glass-paneled door in the alcove leads out onto the rear balcony (**A16**) but it is arcane locked (thieves' tool DC 30); its key is in the observatory (**A20**). The windows, however, can be opened. The plant life that grows on the rear balcony and verandah has grown up against the balcony door and both windows making it difficult to see beyond. PCs who spend at least a minute trying to gain a view of the exterior and who succeed at a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check see that the plants outside bear small white flowers, all of which are closed — an unusual behavior in the daytime as revealed by a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Nature) check. Opening or breaking the door or windows will elicit a response from the creature in area **A16**.

Urvitus: Urvitus is delighted to find this intact library and will immediately begin thumbing through the works present to get an idea of its value.

Treasure: A long, careful search through the library will discover 21 books of some value. They are worth 1d4 x 5 gp each.

A16. Rear Balcony

The white-flowered vines that grow over the verandah (A7) continue up and over the rear balcony in a dense mat of greenery. The door into the house is arcane locked (thieves' tool DC 30); its key in the observatory (**A20**).

The white-flowered vines intermingle with those of a plant creature called the **wallixtabay** (see **Appendix A**). Once a normal xtabay, over the years, while it has fed on local birds and other wildlife, it has been sustained and controlled by the power of the *Codex Ibnathi* and has slowly absorbed the influence of the haunting presence in the house. It has gained a semblance of intelligence and has slowly grown to match the surrounding flora in appearance, but the petals of its flowers still bear strange face-like patterns. However, the patterns now resemble the leering visage of a horrible old man — an old man the PCs may recognize from the portrait in the drawing room (**A10**). Additionally, creatures affected by the monster's pollen experience nightmares from Old Eb's tormented spirit (see **Fear, Disturbances, and Nightmares**).

WALLIXTABAY

hp 26 (see **Appendix A,** page 559)

Treasure: While the wallixtabay has caught and consumed a vast number of birds and other small wildlife over the years, its ability to break down and completely absorb flesh and bone means that there is little evidence of that fact. However, a few years ago, a brave halfling thief dared to defy the house's reputation and climbed up to the rear balcony to attempt to rob the house of its valuables. All that now remains of the plucky adventurer can be found scattered

beneath the plant if it is destroyed and a DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check is made. The halfling's belongings include a finely made short sword, 2 daggers, a silver belt buckle with a hidden compartment (Wisdom (Perception) DC 25) containing a magical skeleton key, and a beltpouch containing 27 gp and 31 sp.

The skeleton key functions as a *chime of opening*[SRD] that can also be used as a set of thieves' tools simply by inserting it into a locking mechanism but can only be used once per lock. The skeleton key retains this property even after it has expended its 10 uses.

A17. Salon

A DC 20 Strength check is required to force open the south door to this room as furniture has been piled behind it.

This room looks like it was a salon, but its once-fine furnishings are now stacked haphazardly in the southwest corner, blocking a door there. The mantel of a fireplace in the north wall bears a three-branched candelabrum, its three lit candles casting long, flickering shadows across a number of easels along the south wall that hold paintings of varying sizes and stages of completion. An array of artist's supplies and paraphernalia are scattered about, and the walls, floor, and ceiling bear paint spatters here and there.

The furniture stacked against the south wall includes a black walnut writing desk and chair, a long divan embroidered with floral patterns with three matching cushions, two upholstered, fan-backed armchairs, a rolled-up carpet of Virik design (see footnote, page 18), an assortment of small side tables, and a cherry wood spinning wheel. The artist's paraphernalia includes painting supplies and tools, a pestle and mortar, a finely ground hand-held mirror, and a variety of powdered pigments — many of them quite rare. There are also several jars of mixed paints, most of which have dried out but some of which are still well-sealed and usable. One small crate packed with straw holds three dark red leathery eggs roughly the size of a fist. A successful DC 24 Intelligence (Arcana) check identifies them as void-stirge* eggs, an extremely rare and valuable source of egg tempera. The lit candles are *everburning candles*.

There are nine unfinished paintings in this room, three each on primed canvas, primed vellum, and paper, and all pinned to panels on the easels or propped up against the walls. They depict portions of weird landscapes and bizarre creatures with charcoal sketching loosely suggesting what may have been to come. While they are unfinished, their state of incompletion makes them no less valuable to collectors of the Anonymous Artist of Eber's work.

Urvitus: Urvitus is instantly smitten with the unfinished artwork. He recognizes it as the work of the Anonymous Artist immediately and becomes very excited by this find. He will try to ensure the protection of the art from any damage.

Treasure: A successful DC 15 Intelligence check with alchemist tools proficiency confirms that 9 sealed flasks of oil paint are flammable and can be treated like alchemist's fire if ignited (a move action) and thrown (a standard action). The painting supplies and tools in the room are equivalent to two sets of painter's supplies. The pigments are worth a total of 1,300 gp for their combined rarity, and the void-stirge eggs could be sold to an artist or collector for 300 gp each.

A18. Master Bedroom

The bedroom is dimly illuminated by three candles in a triple candelabrum atop the mantel of a stone hearth in the northeast corner. Ancient ashes fill the grate behind a meshed iron fireguard, and pokers and other blackened fireplace tools hang from hooks at one side. A large bed beneath a window in the north wall is unmade, its blankets tossed to one side. A long, iron-bound chest sits along the foot of the bed, and an armoire and chest of drawers stand against the south wall. A padded armchair sits in a bay window to the west. Paintings hung on the walls around the bed and over the fireplace display vivid, warm colors that compliment those of a luxurious, deep carpet beneath the bed and chest.

The walnut armoire is beautifully carved with a branching design, and has a full-length mirror mounted on the inside of its left-hand door. It, along with its matching chest of drawers, contains expensive men's clothing, including footwear and a variety of wigs that were fashionable among the Courghais nobility some two centuries ago. A darkwood cane with a steel pommel shaped like the mantle of a squid is propped against the headboard. Careful examination reveals it to be a masterwork sword cane, the tentacles and arms of the squid delicately engraved along the length of its blade; it is worth 750 gp. The lit candles are everburning candles.

* Void-stirges are aberrations of the vastnesses of outer space where they soar through the darkness between worlds beholden to unknown powers. On some worlds they are known as byakhee, but that name is not Open Content and so cannot be assigned to them here. For more information on void-stirges, see ***AoE4: Legend of the Burning Star*** or ***AoE5: Race for Shataakh-Uulm***.

The door in the south wall leads to a staircase that ascends to the attic. It and the door into the master retreat (**A19**) are arcane locked but not physically locked (thieves' tools DC 20); their keys, along with that of the chest, are in the observatory (**A20**).

Disturbance: The first PC to view his reflection in the armoire's mirror suddenly notices that it has a terrifed expression on its face, and its eyes are weeping blood. A figure stands obscured behind the PC's reflected self, the dark curls of a wig falling across its shoulders. In that moment, the PC is acutely aware of an evil presence directly behind them, along with the nauseating odor of rotten meat. If the PC turns away from the mirror, the vision disappears and they see nothing behind them, but if they continue looking at the mirror, the figure comes into view; it is the same horrible old man depicted in the drawing room portrait (**A10**) but behind him they see the bed made, with an open book and a wand laid atop it. The vision then fades. In either case, the PC must succeed at a DC 14 Charisma saving throw or be subject to a short-term madness for 1d4 x 10 minutes.

Urvitus: Urvitus recognizes this as Old Eb's master bedroom and wants to take the time to thoroughly search and catalog the room's contents before venturing elsewhere in the house.

Treasure: Concealed beneath the blankets on the bed is a book by Cikzin Qiao written in her native Xaon* and entitled *Uncoiling Mortality*. It is a dense, theoretical treatise mixed with occult teachings that advances a convoluted and recursive argument — virtually impenetrable to anyone not trained in Xi'en philosophy — that mortality and its confinement of the mind is the result of an esoteric extradimensional parasite. Various "proofs" of this entity's existence are shown along with a ritual in which the final act of suicide results in the expulsion of the parasite and an escape from death. If any of the PCs shows an interest in this book, Sir Urvitus gifts it to them upon satisfactory completion of their contract. It is worth 100 gp.

A PC who searches the bed with a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check can also find a *wand of lesser restoration* (5 charges) fallen between the mattress and the bedframe. While subject to occasional failure, Eb used this wand to help recover from madness he sustained when using Kyssogga's venom to explore the Dreamlands.

The chest is arcane locked (thieves' tool DC 30) and **trapped**. It contains men's jewelry, gems, and precious stones worth 1,750 gp along with 27 pp, 310 gp, and a leather scroll case containing the deed to the Old House under the name of "Elling Walls".

Trap: The chest is **trapped** with a *glyph of warding* (*explosive runes* version that deals 22 (5d8) fire damage in a 20-foot radius, with a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw for half damage). If it is triggered, the carpet and bedclothes are set alight. The flames fail to find purchase in the dusty carpet and quickly go out leaving blackened patches, but the blankets continue to burn. If the fire is not extinguished with 2 rounds, the book concealed beneath them is destroyed, though the fire does not spread beyond the bed. If the group deals with the trap, award them XP as if they completed a hard encounter. The spell can only be removed with *dispel magic* and requires a DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check to notice the glyph.

ATTIC

The ceiling throughout the attic is 10 feet high at its central peak, sloping down to the north and south, and meeting those walls around 5 feet up. Heavy timber joists run throughout the top 3 feet of space. All windows are locked.

A19. Master Retreat

The door in the south wall leads to a staircase that descends to the second floor. It and the door into the master bedroom (**A18**) are arcane locked but not physically locked (thieves' tools DC 20); their keys are in the observatory (**A20**).

A pair of upholstered armchairs mark this garret space with sloped ceilings as a private sitting room; one is in the center of the room facing a small hearth and one faces outward in a bay window to the west. A small side table with a book atop it stands next to the central chair, both positioned on a finely woven rug of tessellating blue patterns that covers most of the wooden floorboards. A short stand bears a 2-foot diameter, painted wooden globe at the side of a window in the north wall. Low shelving packed with a variety of books, scroll cases, and loosely bound parchments and papers stretches along the west and south walls. Doors stand in the south and east walls, the latter ajar. Black iron candelabra on the shelves and mantelpiece bear single candles whose dim light illuminates several colorful paintings hung on the walls.

*Xaon is the language of the Xi'en Hegemony on the western shore of Akados. See page 56 of ***LL7: The Blight: Richard Pett's Crooked City*** by **Frog God Games**.

There are five candelabra around the room, each containing a single black everburning candle.

The globe is constructed from two overlapping hemispheres that portray the known world as of around 150 years ago and can be rotated around a tilted axis. Anyone who searches the device can make a Wisdom (Perception) DC 12 check to discover a concealed switch that unlocks the hemispheres, allowing them to be rotated apart to reveal a cellaret containing a bottle of brandy, a bottle of whiskey, two wooden goblets, and two vials of gray liquid which each contains a single dose of ysaqquan venom (see **Appendix A**).

The book on the side table is detailed in "Treasure" below. The rest of the texts in this room are concerned with the more esoteric foci of Old Eb's studies, covering specific elements within the domains of arcana, occultism, the planes, religion, and obscure languages, and they are written in a variety of modern, ancient, and extraplanar languages.

The eleven paintings around the room each contain a detailed depiction of extraplanar entities from realms of dreams and nightmares. A successful Intelligence (Arcana) check at the indicated DC allows identification of the creature depicted, though not much more about them other than their alien extradimensional nature and sinister reputation: a void-stirge (see **A17**; DC 19 and anyone who has experienced the nightmare in **Handout 1F** recognizes it as the same creature), a denizen of Leng (DC 18), a mi-go (DC 16 or Intelligence [Nature] DC 21), an urhag (DC 13), a zoog (DC 16 or Intelligence [Arcana] DC 11), a nightgaunt (DC 14 or Intelligence [Nature] DC 19), and an ysaqqua (see **Appendix A**: cannot be identified with an Intelligence check but anyone who has seen Kyssogga in the parlor disturbance [**A3**] or in one of the nightmares [see **Handout 1E**] recognizes it as the same creature).

A successful DC 12 Knowledge (Religion) check identifies the remaining creatures as imps and quasits, some of a typical fiendish stock and others mutated and warped versions that are scarcely recognizable.

The library in this room can be used to help identify all of the creatures in the paintings apart from the ysaqqua, on which it has no information. Using the library in this way takes 1d3 x 10 minutes per check and allows un untrained creature to add their proficiency bonus on the check, or a creature proficient in the skill to have advantage on the check.

Urvitus: Urvitus is fascinated by the paintings and books, quickly discovering that the books may be used to identify the strange creatures in the paintings. He would like to spend a bit of time perusing the books to do just that but will not press if the PCs refuse.

Treasure: The book on the side table is written in Old Suli* and is titled *Stirring the Dreamtea*. The author, Imru Halabassi, describes the use of herbal and spiced teas to induce lucid dreaming states, claiming that different such infusions provide access to different regions of the Dreamlands. It is face-up and opened to a section that discusses islands in the dreamsea. If any of the PCs shows an interest in this book, Sir Urvitus gifts it to them upon satisfactory completion of their contract. It is worth 200 gp.

A20. Observatory

This attic room is covered in dark paintings of constellations mounted around its walls and upon its sloped ceiling, with scattered stars and colored fields provide sparse points of light against backgrounds of deep purple and black. Two telescopes, elaborately constructed from polished wood and brass, are mounted on rotating pedestals, one in a wide bay window in the north wall, and the other at the easternmost of two south windows. Several tables stand against the walls, all cluttered with charts, mathematical and scientific tools and devices, recordings of observations, and various writing implements. In the center of the observatory, an overturned stool and a ring of keys lie beneath the frayed end of a rope dangling down from the rafters.

The paintings and charts are seemingly worthless but the other astromantic** equipment on the tables includes some finely crafted items that could be of some value. The keyring holds keys for the front and back doors (**A1**, **A7**), the cellar chute (see **A1a**), the front and rear balconies (**A13**, **A16**), the door to the attic in the master bedroom (**A18**), the master retreat (**A19**), the study (**A21**), the wine cellar (**A24**), and the cell and the chain's padlock (**A25**), making 11 keys in

* Old Suli is the language of the ancient tribes of eastern Akados in the Plains of Sull region spoken some 7,500 years ago and largely now extinct. See page 18 of ***LL4: Cults of the Sundered Kingdoms*** by **Frog God Games**.

Astromancy is a magical art combining astrology with the physical laws of astronomy. See page 197 of ***LL7: The Blight: Richard Pett's Crooked City* by **Frog God Games**.

total. Touching it, or the rope that hangs from the topmost beam down to 8 feet above, triggers the room's **haunt**.

Haunt: This room is where, following an epiphany of exquisite insanity, Old Eb's explorations into forbidden knowledge culminated in his suicide by hanging. At the moment of his demise, the *Codex Ibnathi* ripped the spirit from his body and trapped his evil soul within the house, after which Kyssogga undertook the laborious process of removing his body for storage in the cellar below (see **B23** in **Chapter 2**). Nevertheless, a fragment of Old Eb's psyche manifests here as a haunt.

SUICIDAL WHISPERS

Notice Wisdom (Perception) or Wisdom (Insight) DC 15 (to notice a shadow cast on the wall as if a body still hung from the rope in the center of the room)

Trigger touch (the ring of keys on the floor or the frayed rope tied to the rafter); **Reset** 1 day if not destroyed

Effect Ectoplasmic nooses appear hanging from the rafters, and each creature in the observatory who fails a DC 23 Wisdom saving throw is compelled (as per *dominate monster*) by mental whispering to walk to one, slip it around their neck, and expel air from their lungs in anticipation of the revelations beyond death's door. On the following round, the nooses tighten and haul the affected creatures off the ground, breaking the domination effect, and requiring a DC 17 Constitution saving throw. The nooses around the necks of creatures who succeed on their saves immediately snap and disappear, leaving their victims staggered for 1 round as they gasp for breath. Creatures who fail their saves, however, begin to suffocate, and can only survive for a number of rounds equal to their Constitution modifier (minimum of 1 round). After this time, they drop to 0 hit points and are dying at the beginning of their next turn, and they can't regain hit points or be stabilized until they can breathe again.

Destruction Each ectoplasmic noose can be severed with a slashing weapon (AC 12, 8 hit points) or broken with a DC 19 Strength check. Destroying a noose frees the hanging creature, though they fall prone and are stunned for 1 round. Destroying a noose does not affect the haunt itself.

A DC 14 Wisdom (Religion) check identifies the frayed rope as the focus of the haunting. The rope has 24 hit points and can be damaged only by fire or radiant damage. If the frayed rope is destroyed, the entire haunt is destroyed along with all nooses.

Disturbance: Any PC who is suffocated to unconsciousness by the haunt recalls a specific vision if they subsequently recover, rather than one of the usual nightmares of this place. This vision is that they are standing on the shore of a vast lake beneath a cloudless night sky. The air is quiet and still, and the lake's surface is a mirror unmarred by the slightest ripple. They can feel the presence of someone — or something — standing behind them; the hair on the back of their neck is standing up and their skin crawling, but they cannot turn around to see who or what it is. The more they are unable to ignore this presence, the greater their terror became. Suddenly, they felt the presence move into the sky above the lake, where the water at the lake's center rose up toward it in a liquid cylinder of perfectly reflected stars. The PC must succeed at a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or be subject to a short-term madness for 1d10 minutes.

Urvitus: Sir Urvitus notices both the whispering and the emotional despair as soon as the haunt is triggered but does not initially realize what it is. Nevertheless, he is unaffected by the haunt's effect, and attempts to rescue affected PCs. Once the haunt is defeated, he encourages the PCs to find a way to permanently destroy it (e.g., by burning the rope).

Treasure: Valuable equipment in the room includes an astrolabe, two sextants, and a masterwork spyglass. The two mounted telescopes are worth 3,000 gp each but are bulky and permanently affixed to the floor. Removing them will require considerable effort, and Urvitus will not hear of it. An obsidian globe suspended within a silver frame sits on a table against the east wall. Specks of silver are seemingly randomly distributed over its surface and within. Some constellations of these specks bear a resemblance to those in some of the unknown star charts around the room. This item is worth 700 gp, and Sir Urvitus gives it to the PCs as an additional reward if they permanently destroy the haunt.

Story Award: If any PC experienced the disturbance, award the party XP for a deadly encounter.

A21. Study

A flickering violet light suffuses this garret room. A long writing desk of stained wood stands before a large bay window in the east wall. In the center of the desk, a strange leaden candelabrum with curving branches seems to writhe in the quivering luminescence emitted by the numerous black candles it holds. More candelabra stand on wooden cabinets to either side of the door as well as on the mantel of a curiously carved stone hearth to the north. A painting hangs above the triangular firebox, which is filled with an inky darkness unperturbed by the violaceous light. Heavy black drapes are drawn across a window to the south. At each side of the bay window, paintings hang above square iron coffers.

On the desk is Eb's grimoire, *Reflections on Hali* (see sidebar). Inkpens, pots of colored inks, and a blotter pad are neatly arranged around it, along with several sheets of paper and vellum beneath an irregularly shaped, spiked paperweight of silvery metal. Closer examination of the large candelabrum on the desk reveals that it is fashioned like a squid, the pedestal its curved mantle and the branches its arms and tentacles. It holds 13 black *everburning candles*, each with a violet flame.

The two paintings depict views of alien landscapes. In one, a forlorn village huddles at the edge of a wasteland beneath jagged foothills that rise to towering mountains in the distance. Traders, their silhouettes concealed by robes, treat with hunched and twisted humanoids that emerge from the huts, while huge, reptilian winged horses with bird-like beaks look on. In the other, jagged slopes of a shattered caldera jut from a dark sea, a strange architecture of colonnades, minarets, and spiraling steps lining their flanks above black-sailed ships in the waves below. A successful DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check identifies these as depictions of the Plateau of Leng. The third painting is detailed in "Treasure" below.

The cabinets contain a large supply of material components and foci for spellcasting and arcane research. These includes several small boxes containing locks of hair from scrying targets (all of whom are now long dead) and several jars of preserved organs, eggs, and embryos which a successful DC 21 Knowledge (dungeoneering) check will identify as coming from a void-stirge (see **A17**).



The stone fireplace is carved with eldritch symbols that a DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check will reveal as linked to the conjuration and worship of the Outer Gods and Great Old Ones. The angles of the stonemasonry create overlapping areas of shadow into the firebox. A moderate conjuration effect doubles the duration of creatures summoned into its space.

The iron coffers are exceptionally well-made, large enough to hold a cubic foot of goods, and worth 200 gp each. Both are **trapped** and each contains 12 of Old Eb's research journals: the northernmost covering the years from 3365 I.R. to 3376 I.R. and the southernmost covering from 3377 I.R. to 3384 I.R., with the remaining four unbound and blank. The nature and content of these journals is up to the GM but note that Sir Urvitus does not grant permission for the PCs to attempt to decipher them (see "Urvitus" below).

Traps: Each of the iron coffers is trapped with a magical trap that summons a monster, causing it to erupt out of the black triangular gulf in the fireplace to attack. One contains

a gibbering mouther, the other a chuul. This summoning can be stopped only with dispel magic, and it is treated as a 4th-level spell effect. Noticing this magical effect before opening the coffer requires a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check or DC 17 Intelligence (Arcana) check. A creature using detect magic gains advantage on either check.

GIBBERING MOUTHER (SRD)

hp 67 (see SRD)

CHUUL (SRD)

hp 93 (see SRD)

Urvitus: Sir Urvitus does not grant permission to decipher the journals — he wants to understand them and his uncle first before deciding whether or not to share with anyone else.

Treasure: The valuable components and foci in the closets include a crystal lens worth 500 gp, 3 pieces of onyx worth 400 gp each, gold dust worth 100 gp, and 4 vials of lead-based ink worth 50 gp each. The third painting shows a self-portrait of Old Eb in the style of a mask. This portrait mask is described in **Appendix E**, as is the magical tome called *Reflections on Hali*.

The strange paperweight is composed of 1 pound of mithral and is worth 150 gp.

Story Award: If a PC identifies and uses the portrait mask, award the party XP for a hard encounter.

BASEMENT

The ceiling throughout the basement is 10 feet high. Floors are dry, hard-packed earth. Walls are plaster over brick, marred with many water stains and speckles of mold growth. Unless otherwise detailed, there is no light source other than whatever the PCs carry.

A22. Storage Cellar

This large, cobwebbed basement space is supported by two brick columns at its center. Logs and chopped wood are stacked in the northwest corner, with a hatchet and woodsaw laid on a large, score-marked stump between the western column and the wall. In the southwest corner, a wooden dust-screen door stands open to reveal a small mound of coal piled beneath a chute that slopes up to the west. A bucket lies on its side next to the coal pile, and a shovel and brush are propped against the west wall nearby. A stack of chairs, crates, chests, and other items of furniture are stacked in the northeast corner.

All the items in this room are mundane. The crates and chests contain old household supplies and tools including a mattock,osheets, linens, and the like. Other than the tools and a 20-foot coil of hempen rope — one end frayed as though roughly sawn through — nothing of use or value can be found here. A DC 25 Wisdom (Perception) check, however, does turn up an old portrait wrapped in a grimy dust cloth. The painting is old and in poor shape, cracked from drying and yet speckled with mildew from the damp. It depicts a regal, middle-aged man in fine clothing. A DC 22 Intelligence (History) check realizes that the portrait depicts Coram Poer, the original builder of the house who was lost at sea nearly 250 years ago.

Urvitus: Urvitus quickly guesses who is in the portrait even if the PCs don't and decides to keep it as a piece of historical memorabilia.

A23. Root Cellar

Dusty, dirt-lined shelving covers the cobwebbed walls of this musty space suggesting it may once have been a root cellar. Pallid fungal growths, like long etiolated toadstools, protrude from within some of the shelves.

There is nothing of interest here. A DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check will determine that, while certainly unusually large and possibly unique, the fungi are harmless specimens. Originally there was an archway to the south, but it was sealed off and plastered over at the time of Old Eb's death. It is indistinguishable from the surrounding walls and cannot be discovered as anything other than normal for this portion of the adventure. It is further detailed in **Chapter 2**.

A24. Wine Cellar

The door to this room is arcane locked (thieves' tools DC 28); its key is in the observatory (**A20**).

The smell of vinegar is strong in here. The room's walls are stacked with small wooden barrels, stoppered clay pots, and a few partially filled racks of corked glass and wooden bottles. A few wineskins and amphorae hang from thick cords threaded through small iron hooks embedded in the ceiling joists.

Almost all of the wines in here have turned to vinegar in the last 150 years ago, rendering them largely worthless as a comestible. However, despite the quality of the wine here, many of these ancient vintages still carry a high value to wine enthusiasts who will be willing to part with large amounts of coin for the experience and the hope. If sufficient effort to locate and court appropriate noble purchasers is made, the contents of this cellar could be sold for 2,000 gp.

Urvitus: Urvitus will open one bottle and quickly determine that it is ruined. He asks the PCs not to molest any more of them because he intends to investigate their resale value as described above.

A25. Cell

The door to this room is arcane locked (thieves' tools DC 28); its key is in the observatory (**A20**).

A central brick pillar with a length of thick, iron chain looped around the base reinforces this cellar space. A long-cold fireplace is built into the north wall, and a stone cistern stands in the southeast corner, its surface damp with condensation and fuzzy with growths of mold. Tiny bits of debris are strewn across the floor.

PCs who examine the debris notice, with a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check, that it primarily consists of fragments of bone and cloth. These are the remains of townsfolk or travelers who attempted to ransack or exorcise the Old House in the past. They were slain or disabled by Kyssogga, the haunt, or another resident or effect, and were then dimension doored to this room by Kyssogga as an offering to its resident.

This room was originally the servants' quarters, but Eb used it to house a mandrill he experimented on and infected with ghoul fever. This **Thing in the Basement** (see illustration on page 10) is huge for a mandrill, standing just under 4 feet tall (although it primarily moves crouched on all fours) and weighs 70 pounds. Its wrinkled pale gray skin is now mostly hairless, and contrasts sharply with the bright blues and reds of its snout and callused buttocks. The muscular canine-like maw above a gashed-open throat is filled with deadly fangs, and the creature's nails have lengthened into gruesome claws.

The tortured howls of this poor creature led Eb to cut out its vocal cords. It wears an iron collar attached to the chain that is wrapped around the central pillar and padlocked in place (thieves' tools DC 30); the key is in the observatory (A20). While the chain enables it to move up to 10 feet from the pillar but no farther, its Lunge feat may surprise opponents who think they're out of its reach.

THE THING IN THE BASEMENT

Small undead, chaotic evil
Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 121 (22d6 + 44)
Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	2 (-4)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Saving Throw Dex +5
Skills Athletics +6, Perception +4, Stealth +8
Damage Resistances necrotic
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Common, Halfling, Thieves' Cant
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Lunge. The thing in the basement can use its bonus action to extend the reach of its claws attack to 10 feet. If it does so, the next attack against it has advantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The thing in the basement makes three attacks: one with its bite, and two with its claws.

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

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage. If the target is a creature other than an elf or undead, it must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Tactics: The creature clings to the top of the central column, using its width to hide from the PCs' view so it

can leap with surprise on whomever enters the room first. Driven by an eternal craving for flesh, the ghoulish mandrill attacks in a frenzy of teeth and claws. It always takes the first opportunity to drag paralyzed creatures into the northern section of the room before continuing to attack other opponents. The ghoulish mandrill has no sense of self-preservation and fights to the death.

Urvitus: Urvitus is horrified by the presence of this disgusting creature and the implications of its long confinement. He lets the PCs lead the way in combat, but he takes part to assist them in destroying the creature however he can.

COMPLETING THE EXPLORATION

Sir Urvitus does not consider the PCs' contractual duties complete until every location in the house has been explored and rendered safe — except, of course, the sealed basement which should remain undiscovered until **Chapter 2**. Thus, all the creatures discovered should have been defeated and the haunt in the observatory (**A20**) permanently destroyed.

Once Sir Urvitus is satisfied that the house is safe, he locks it up, and thanks the PCs as he accompanies them back to Abshire & Dunnage to secure their final payment. Acknowledging the dangers that were faced in the house, Sir Urvitus gifts the PCs with any treasure that was found on the rear balcony (**A16**) and in the master bedroom (**A18**).

With the final payment made and further consideration noted, the PCs are released from their contract with some final signatures. They are requested not to discuss what they found inside until Sir Urvitus has properly cataloged and cleared the property of its contents and the planned demolition is complete. Within an hour Abshire & Dunnage has stationed guards hired from the mercenaries' guild outside the front and rear of the house to keep the property safe from intruders now that its veil of secrecy and fear has been broken. Four guards remain on watch day and night with orders to ensure that no one other than Sir Urvitus enters the property.

GUARDS (SRD) (4)

hp 11 (see SRD)

No further involvement from the PCs is required and, for all intents and purposes, this should appear to be the end of the adventure.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The PCs' activities should now occupy them elsewhere for at least several days, though this can easily be a month or more as they partake of other adventures sufficient to help them reach 3rd level in preparation for this adventure's unexpected second chapter.

CHAPTER TWO: BACK TO FRONT STREET

Despite the PCs' previous efforts, the dangers of the Old House are far from resolved. Over the course of the days following the PCs' exploration, Sir Urvitus went about his business of cataloging and boxing valuable contents while engaging Abshire & Dunnage to negotiate with local tradespeople regarding the property's demolition. But within the house, the awakening *Codex Ibnathi* coalesced Old Eb's fragmented soul into the portrait in the drawing room (**A10**) where its ability to beguile the knight increased in power and slowly leeched away at his mind and soul. In the process the portrait has, little by little, transformed from the image of his evil ancestor into the image of Urvitus himself.

These events have brought a change over the young knight. Urvitus has now changed his intentions towards the house. Where once he intended to demolish an eyesore and neighborhood hazard to replace it with something new and better, now he merely seeks to renovate the Old House enough to be habitable again and to move in. He can't articulate the reason for this change of mind, merely that it is what he wants to do. To that end he has discharged the services of Abshire & Dunnage as well as the tradesmen and guards they had engaged. He has become secretive and closed as his transformation into a new manifestation of Old Eb continues.

As preparation of this living receptacle for Eb Wallix's spirit approaches completion, the *Codex Ibnathi* summons additional guardians. These undead remains of a party of adventurers who dared the haunted grounds over a century ago have languished in shallow graves in the basement for all these years. Now they have awoken from dark dreams and claw their way out of the ground, ready to serve. This, unfortunately, coincides with the day that Myram Abshire goes by the Old House seeking some final signatures from Urvitus Voren to conclude their business relationship. Mr. Abshire has not returned.

EVENT 1: THE MISSING SOLICITOR

It has been at least several days since the PCs completed their contract with Sir Urvitus. They are again in Eber, though it is possible that they have just returned from some other foray abroad. In any case, they receive a sealed message marked with the stamp of Abshire & Dunnage. Breaking the seal, the party finds a message from Norrys Dunnage (see **Handout 1H**).

If the PCs decide to visit Norrys Dunnage first, they find him to be greatly distressed, both through worry for his partner, and for the fact that the PCs are delaying their investigation to speak with him. He confirms everything in the letter and urges them to hurry. He will once again pay half of the 300 gp agreement up front as a retainer if the PCs ask but insists that they haven't time to go shopping. Night is swiftly falling and Myram Abshire is still unaccounted for.

It is early evening by the time the PCs arrive at Front Street. Read the following when the party reach the property.

The dry winds of a central Akados derechos* *whirl through the increasingly deserted streets of this section of Eber, as the people head inside and close up their homes to take shelter from the weather. In the darkening skies to the west you can see the leading edge of the storm, silent flickers of orange heat lightning occasionally illuminating it from within. Ahead you see the shutters of the Old House now open, with the warm glow of lamplight peeping from behind drawn curtains. Smoke issues from the chimneys, quickly dissipated by the wind gusts that whip across the rooftops. It seems Sir Urvitus has indeed decided to make a home of the old place.*

All the exterior doors are arcane locked (thieves' tools DC 28) but if the PCs knock, the door is answered after a minute or so by **Sir Urvitus**. He is unarmed, unarmored, and wearing a long gray dressing gown. He looks disheveled and tired, with several days of beard growth and unkempt hair. Urvitus stares at the PCs for a few moments, thoroughly confused, until finally he recognizes them and welcomes them inside with a sudden smile. He apologizes, stating that he has not been sleeping well with all the recent renovation work. He invites the PCs in for dinner, leading them along the hall to the dining room (**B6**), seemingly oblivious to whether they are actually following or not. He is clearly out of sorts and keeps up a constant stream of chatter, failing to answer any questions asked of him.

Chests, crates, and other signs of recent packing are noticeable along the walls of the central hall (**B2**) and block the doors to **B3** and **B4** with their stacks as Urvitus leads the party into the house. The tantalizing smell of a roast hangs in the air, and Urvitus explains that he was just about to sit down to a meal. He insists that the party join him, promising to answer any questions they have over dinner.

EVENT 2: DINNER WITH SIR URVITUS

This event takes place in area **B6** of the Old House.

The dining room is warmed by the hearth, the flames adding to the illumination from several candles on its mantel and along the long table that is set for one. Most of its chairs are now stacked against the walls. The corner shelves are emptied, their contents boxed in crates at their bases. The room has been mostly cleaned of dust but marks are visible on the walls around where the paintings once hung.

As the PCs enter the room, Urvitus begins unstacking sufficient chairs for everyone and removing cutlery and plates from the crates in order to make a spot for each of the PCs. He continues to prattle on as he works and fails to answer any questions of import. After only a few moments, the PCs have a place setting for each of them. Sir Urvitus bids them to be seated while he goes to the kitchen to retrieve the food. If the PCs allow him to do so, he comes forth a moment later bearing a platter covered in succulent slices of roast and a delectable-looking selection of sautéed vegetables. In the crook of his arm he also carries a bottle of wine of a quality local vintage.

Sir Urvitus personally serves the food to each of the PCs and pours the wine himself before settling into his own seat and beginning to eat. Once he has had a few sips of wine, his nerves seem to calm somewhat and he becomes more able to converse intelligently and field questions. As the conversation continues, however, and the howls of rising wind buffeting the house and the growing rumble of thunder distract him, he frequently loses his train of thought, not resuming unless prompted by the PCs.

* A *derechos* is a violent summer windstorm common to the western plains of Akados. See **Eber and the Kingdom of the Vast**, page 15.

If asked about Myram Abshire, Sir Urvitus initially gives a blank look of unrecognition, but after a moment seems to remember him. He does not recall seeing Mr. Abshire recently and is vaguely concerned that he seems to have gone missing. If asked about the demolition of the house, he waves away the thought of those plans and indicates that he has discovered too many treasures in the house to warrant its complete destruction, whereas a renovation will serve his purposes even better. He does not inquire about the PCs' adventures or travels at all. If the PCs volunteer such information he listens politely, but it's clear with a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check that he is not quite sure why it is being shared with him and that he is not following much of what they say.

Over the course of the conversation the PCs are likely to grow increasingly worried — or even suspicious — about Sir Urvitus, but if they share concerns about his health, he replies that he is just overtired. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) or Wisdom (Medicine) check, however, indicates that there has been a severe degradation in his mental acuity that appears to go beyond simple exhaustion. In truth, and unbeknownst to both Sir Urvitus and the PCs, the *Codex Ibnathi* has afflicted him with an indefinite madness, driving his obsession.

After the PCs have had a few minutes to question Sir Urvitus and grow frustrated or suspicious, proceed with **Event 3**.

GM Note: If the PCs do not allow Sir Urvitus to head to the kitchen to retrieve the food or attempt to follow him, skip the rest of **Event 2** and proceed directly to **Event 3** below.

EVENT 3: THE WIND SQUALL

This event likely occurs in area **B6**, but if the PCs were uncooperative with Sir Urvitus in **Event 2**, it could just as easily occur in area **B2** or elsewhere in the house as necessary.

Unless the PCs have forced the issue as described under the "GM Note" in **Event 2** above, the dinner conversation with Sir Urvitus progresses until the PCs assert themselves, perhaps by beginning to explore the house or to examine Sir Urvitus more closely (attempting to manhandle him or cast spells, for instance). When that occurs (or at whatever moment seems right for your game), read the following description.

The constant howl of the wind is suddenly intensified as a sensation like a physical force striking the house in an explosion of noise and motion causes the entire structure to shake violently and for its timbers to creak and pop in protest. Windows explode in a shower of glass, immediately snuffing all light sources as the squall winds whip into the room like rampaging invaders.

In seconds the squall line has passed and the wind, though still intense, is somewhat reduced. The clunks and thuds of windblown debris striking the house and other nearby buildings are still audible, and the only light is provided by the crackles of lightning that sporadically illuminate the night. The house itself is quiet except for the wind that seems to now moan incessantly through its halls and rattle its doors, while glass debris on the floor tinkles in the shifting air currents. Elsewhere can be heard stranger sounds — a faint night chorus of croaking frogs and the isolated, prolonged notes of a harpsichord.

Of Sir Urvitus, there is no sign.

At the moment that the wind squall struck the house, two things occurred. The force of the wind blew out all of the house's windows on the north and west sides, rushing in to overturn light objects and extinguish all light sources, magical or mundane, including the continual flames of everburning candles. Any magical light sources carried by the party that were not being used (such as *everburning torches*, etc.) are still functional, but any active *light* spells, exposed *everburning torches*, and even flaming weapons are extinguished. Flaming weapons can be reignited as normal, and the PC's own *continual flame* spells will reignite on their own after 1d4 rounds of suppression, though the *everburning candles* of the house will not do so. This is not a normal function of storm winds, as the party will surely deduce. That it is an effect related to a manifestation of the *Codex Ibnathi*'s power, however, is less obvious.

Anyone inside the house in an area with windows on the north or west walls is exposed to the flying shards of shattered glass and must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw (areas **B2** [north section only], **B3**, **B5**, **B6**, **B8**, **B12**, **B14**, **B15**, **B17**, **B18**, and **B19**). The shards of glass deal 2d6 slashing damage on a failure, half as much on a success. Sir Urvitus is not subjected to that damage as explained below. The glass shards function as caltrops in those areas thereafter.

The second thing that occurred when the wind squall struck the Old House is that the *Codex Ibnathi*, long reposing sluggishly in area **B26**, at last becomes fully awake and immediately calls its new servant to it. Reacting to the threat that the PCs now pose, the codex rushes the

completion of the trompe l'oeil (see **B21**) by completing the leeching of Sir Urvitus's will. The knight falls unconscious as he is immediately whisked away by the power of the *Codex Ibnathi* to **B23** where the party can find him shortly. Its accumulated power largely spent, the codex falls quiescent, relying on its new portrait trompe l'oeil manifestation (**B21**) and Kyssogga (**B26**) to protect it. The PCs are now on their own and must search through the house for Sir Urvitus, for Myram Abshire, and for answers.

Though the winds continue to blow outside with the force of a windstorm, within the aboveground floors of the house they are only considered moderate winds, enough to disturb curtains, bang shutters, and throw up puffs of dust but with no game effect other than a -2 penalty on Wisdom (Perception) checks. There are no wind effects at all in the basement unless the PCs open the coal chute doors which will create moderate-force winds in **B22** but cause no further effects in the area.

SECOND TOUR

As the PCs explore the Old House a second time, use the room descriptions designated as B below. If a room does not have a **B** description, assume that it is unchanged from its **A** description in **Chapter 1** except for the general changes as noted. Most of the basic features of the old house remain unchanged for the party's second foray through the house. Unless otherwise noted all light sources, mundane or magical, have been extinguished by the fury of the seemingly supernatural winds that crashed into the house. Damages caused to the house by the PCs' first visit still exist and are awaiting repairs.

One major change to the house is the absence of nightmares and disturbances. The fragments of Eb Wallix's soul are now gathered within the portrait in **B21** and have formed the Wallix trompe l'oeil.

B2. Central Hall

The hall is now lined with stacked boxes, crates, and chests that Sir Urvitus was intending to fill with contents he wished to keep, some of which are already partially full. A 5-foot-wide path snakes between these stacks, which also block the doors to the parlor (**B3**) and the kitchen (**B4**).

Treasure: Among the containers here can be found the sheet music (unless already given to the PCs at the conclusion of **Chapter 1**), four paintings, and six silver candelabra from the parlor (**A3**), all three paintings and some of the crockery and cutlery from the dining room (**A6**), all nine paintings from the stairwell and landing (**A8**), and the Virik (see footnote, page 18) now rolled up and four paintings from the upper hall (**A9**).

B3. Parlor

When this room is approached after **Event 3**, the sound of the harpsichord discordantly playing to a choir of frogs croaking can be heard. The eastern door to this chamber is blocked by the stacked boxes in **B2**.

Broken glass covers the floor of the parlor. The two west-facing windows are shattered, their curtains blowing in the wind gusts. The harpsichord still stands where it was, seemingly none the worse for wear from the storm. Beneath the ripped-away wallpaper and paneling, numerous small holes are now visible in the walls, along with runes and glyphs that seem to writhe and crawl. A large hole can be seen in the coffered ceiling in the southeast corner of the room.

Originally lurking in the west guestroom (**B14**) above, after **Event 3** a **ghast** crawled into this room through the hole in the ceiling and began playing the harpsichord. Its flesh bears old deep wounds and new ones from which shattered glass still protrudes. Its face is hideously misshapen, with its maw freakishly wide and one eye socket lower than its cheekbone. It plays its discordant notes seemingly in a reverie, but suddenly leaps to attack if attacked or if a PC comes within 10 feet. Additionally, **6 ysaqquan toads** crawl over the walls, croaking ominous, barely intelligible threats about the "return of master" and praises to Kyssogga from their weird, old man faces. They watch the PCs intently but quickly disappear into the holes if approached. They only attack if they cannot escape. Once inside the holes, they are able to scamper through the dead spaces between studs and escape the PCs.

GHAST(SRD)

hp 13 (see SRD)

YSAQQUAN TOADS (6)

hp 6 (See **Appendix A,** page 563)

Hazard: Anyone who studies the strange, crawling symbols inscribed on the walls exposed by the torn wallpaper must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw or become charmed. This charmed effect is automatically broken if the subject is attacked. Every 2d4 rounds on his turn, the subject may attempt a new saving throw to end the effect. Charmed creatures must make a DC 17 Wisdom

(Insight) check when the charm effect ends, with a +1 bonus on their check for each round they remained charmed. If the check succeeds, they gain temporary insight into seemingly impossible spatial distortions that grants them advantage on saving throws against the impossible angles effect created by Kyssogga (see area **B26**), but it also causes them to gain a short-term madness, or a long-term madness if they are currently affected by another short-term madness.

B4. Kitchen

The western door to this chamber is blocked by the stacked boxes in **B2**

This room escaped the worst of the windstorm, its windows still intact and closed. The table has been partially cleared of the previous fungal infestation but, disgustingly, the rancid remains of the ghoulish mandrill corpse from the house's basement prison lie atop it, roasted in a savory sauce and apparently carved for dinner. Judging by its partially skeletonized corpse, it appears that most of the creature has already been consumed. The disconcertingly delicious aroma of the butchered corpse barely masks a more repugnant smell that seems to come from somewhere to the north.

The increasingly insane Sir Urvitus has been dining on the decayed mandrill corpse for several days, though his excellent culinary skills have made it into a palatable dish. Unfortunately, if any of the PCs partook of the meal provided by the deranged knight, they now realize what it was they were eating and must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned with nausea for 1 minute.

Anyone moving between the pantry (**B4a**) and larder (**B4b**) can make a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check. A successful check notices two things: one is that the air between these two doors is subtly cooler than elsewhere in the room, and the other is the sound of faint scratching coming from behind the pantry door (**B4a**). Within the pantry are **2 ysaqquan toads** licking the ancient wallpaper from the walls. They immediately flee into a small hole in the wall if the door is opened (see **B3**). Hiding within the larder (**B4b**) is a **ghast**. It is rail thin, and its pallid skin is covered in **brown mold**. It attacks if the door is opened but prefers to wait until it hears the door to **B4a** open before lurching forth and attacking with surprise from behind. The effects of the ghast's stench and the brown mold's heat absorption are blocked by the larder door, but once the door is open both have their normal effect on anyone and anything within range, including the extinguishing of open flames.

YSAQQUAN TOADS (2)

hp 6 (See **Appendix A,** page 563)

B6. Dining Room

See **Event 2** for a description of this room prior to the damage caused by the wind in **Event 3**. The door to the cellar is locked (thieves' tools DC 30), but if the room is searched a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check can locate a ring of keys that fell from the knight's pocket when he was magically taken from the room. This ring holds the keys previously found in area **A20** that open all of the doors in the house.

B8. Landing

The skeleton of the night watchman is no longer here, and all the paintings are now boxed in the central hall (**A2**).

B9. Upper Hall

Characters ascending to the hall from the stairs can see into the drawing room (**B10**) through the open door. The drawing room is dark, but characters with darkvision or who succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check with a light source see a mass of torn pieces of paper swirling in the air inside.

A strong wind whips and howls throughout the upper hall between the smashed windows of the library to the north, and a door to the south that hangs askew on its hinges. The curtains in all the archways along this hall have been torn from their hangings and two to the north lie in a heap one the floor, revealing the trashed library and its gyre of shredded pages, some of which have been scattered as far as the curtain to the south. The southern curtain has also been torn down but is now draped over what appears to be a person. This person stands perfectly still beneath the fluttering curtain folds, looking for all the world like someone wearing a sheet and pretending to be a ghost.

The wind throughout this hallway is of severe force as it creates a current between the broken window of **B12** and the windows of **B15**. Creatures attempting to move toward the broken window treat it as difficult terrain due to the force of the wind, and any creature beginning its turn in the hallway must make a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. Nonplussed by this wind is a creature that is indeed concealed beneath the drape. This is a ghoul that remains motionless until the curtain is removed, or either it or the creature in the drawing room (**B10**) is attacked.

GHOUL

hp 22 (see SRD)

MOLD-COVERED GHAST

Medium undead, chaotic evil
Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 99 (18d8 + 18)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

Damage Resistances necrotic
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Common, Halfling, Thieves' Cant
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Brown Mold Growth. The mold growing on the ghast feeds on warmth, drawing heat from anything around it. Any creatures that starts its turn within 5 feet of the ghast take 10 (3d6) cold damage. Fire brought within 5 feet the ghast causes the brown mold patch to instantly double in size, effectively covering an adjacent 5-foot-square. Cold damage, such as from a ray of frost, instantly destroys the brown mold.

Stench. Any creature that starts its turn within 5 feet of the mold-covered ghast must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until the start of the creature's next turn. On a successful saving throw, the creature is immune to the stench of the ghoul for 24 hours.

Turning Defiance. The mold-covered ghast and any ghouls within 30 feet of it have advantage on saving throws against effects that turn undead.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The mold-covered ghast makes two attacks: one with its bite, and one with its claws.

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

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage. If the target is a creature other than an elf or undead, it must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.



B10. Drawing Room

The door to this room is open. The room itself is dark, but characters with darkvision or who succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check with a light source see a mass of torn pieces of paper swirling in the air inside.

The door to this room is open and the wind from the hallway lifts and swirls hundreds of pieces of torn paper within, partially concealing an occupant. This figure, dressed in priestly vestments, is standing in the room with its back to the door as though studying the large portrait of the old man, much as Sir Urvitus did the first time you visited this place. However, that portrait is now missing. In its place, the wallpaper has been ripped away to reveal eldritch symbols inscribed on the walls beneath, symbols that seems to writhe and crawl.

All of the contents of this room have been trashed by something in a frenzy, something other than simply the winds of the storm. Everything is damaged or destroyed, including all the remaining paintings and even heavier furniture. Nothing, however, has been subjected to as much destruction as the religious texts that once filled the now-shattered glass-fronted bookcases. Those texts have now been shredded into pieces, the very pieces that currently swirl throughout the room.

The wind in this room is severe, and if combat occurs here the swirling pages grant concealment to everyone in the room. Though it is currently dark outside, this is from the storm front that moved in and obscured the evening sun with its heavy cloud cover. It is actually still a few minutes until sunset. As a result, the standing figure, a **huecuva**, still appears as it did in life 119 years ago: a human priestess of Vanitthu* dressed in clerical vestments and wearing a bejeweled silver holy symbol of her god prominently around her neck.

HUECUVA

hp 16 (see **Appendix A,** page 546)

Development: The PCs are likely to be suspicious, The huecuva pretends to be a local cleric named Sara who entered the house to defeat its evil but became entranced by its symbols (she gets a +5 circumstance bonus to Charisma (Deception) checks on this as it is more or less true — albeit 119 years after the fact). She knows that Myram came to the house in search of Sir Urvitus, for it was she who tortured and killed the solicitor in the attic above. Sara claims that she is a friend of Myram Abshire's and is searching for him (no circumstance bonus to her +1 modifier to Charisma (Deception) on this lie). Her appearance is, of course, an illusion which will fade with the setting of the hidden sun 2d6+2 rounds after the PCs encounter her. She likewise drops the façade if she enters combat. In her true form, her vestments have completely rotten away to reveal withered, dead flesh speckled with a (harmless) yellow-brown mold, but the holy symbol of Vanitthu still hangs on a silver chain around her neck. This symbol can be snatched with a successful DC 16 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check and then used as an improvised silver weapon that deals 1d2 bludgeoning damage.

Hazard: The crawling symbols revealed beneath the ripped wallpaper have the same effects as those in the parlor (see **B3**).

Treasure: The holy symbol of Vanitthu is worth 110 gp.

B12. Bath & Privy

The door to this room has been nearly torn from its hinges by the force of the wind. Shards of glass and broken mirror litter the floor and are strewn inside the scratched and gouged tub.

This room's winds are of severe force as in **B9**.

B14. West Guestroom

All of the contents of this room are trashed apart from one of the paintings that now lies on the floor beneath a fragment of the shredded mattress. A strong wind blows through the shattered west windows, their glass in shards lying scattered throughout the room. A section of the floor in the southeast corner has been torn up revealing a hole through to below. Torn wallpaper reveals a number of small holes in the plaster and lath of the wall behind.

The hole torn through the floor leads to the parlor (**B3**) below. A ghast initially lurked in this room but crawled down into that chamber during **Event 3**. Currently an **ysaqquan toad** remains here and croaks praise to Kyssogga before fleeing into the wall space as the PCs enter. As elsewhere, it fights only if prevented from fleeing. If the ghast and toads in **B3** have not been encountered yet, they can clearly be heard through the hole in the floor, though they cannot be seen unless a PC dares sticking his head down into the room below.

* Vanitthu is the God of the Steadfast Guard, a deity of defense and justice. See page 44 of ***Freebooter's Guide to the Razor Coast*** by **Frog God Games**.

YSAQQUAN TOAD

hp 6 (See **Appendix A,** page 563)

B15. Library

The bookshelves here have been destroyed and their contents ripped apart in the wild, whipping winds. Hundreds of pages now swirl about as gusts continue to rush in through the shattered windows. Shards of glass cover the floor and crunch underfoot.

The wind in here is of severe force. A DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check notices a red stain slowly beginning to spread across the plaster in the center of the ceiling. This is blood slowly seeping through from B20 above, though it looks an awful lot like the manifestation of a haunt and causes anyone seeing it to make a DC 10 Charisma saving throw or be subject to a short-term madness for 1d4 x 10 minutes, or a long-term madness if they currently are suffering from any short-term madness.

B17. Salon

Someone or something has destroyed the unfinished paintings that once adorned the easels in this room, and it does not appear to have been the work of the wind. Nevertheless, the wind does blow into this chamber through the shattered northern windows and creates a further mess of the place.

The ghoul in **B9** destroyed the works in here in a fit of maniacal glee, but the stacked furniture to the south has escaped the destruction elsewhere in this room. The room is otherwise the same as the PCs remember it, though the leathery void-stirge eggs have been removed from where they were stored if the PCs left them behind. These were recently cooked with lentils and eaten by the increasingly deranged Sir Urvitus.

B18. Master Bedroom

While the windows here are likewise blown out, this room has otherwise largely been refurbished for use by Sir Urvitus. His clothing and other personal items are currently stored in the chest and armoire, but none of the gear he was carrying during the PCs' first foray into the Old House is present (see **B23**).

B20. Observatory

All the windows in this room are strangely intact, though the storm winds still clearly blow just beyond their glass. The chamber otherwise remains exactly as before with the notable exception of where once there was only a frayed rope hanging above an overturned stool, a fresh rope now dangles with a newly dead and mutilated corpse. You immediately recognize the familiar face of the solicitor, Myram Abshire, his congenial features frozen in a death rictus of fear and pain. But his death by strangulation did not come easily, as his legs have been stripped of their breeches and partially flensed, with the feet missing, and there are clear signs that something had been feeding messily upon the stumps. The smears and footprints in the still tacky blood pooled beneath the corpse provides further proof, if any were needed.



The dangling corpse is indeed the unfortunate missing Myram Abshire. The huecuva in **B10** caught him when he arrived and spent some time torturing him and letting the ghoul and ghasts feed on him as he slowly strangled. Anyone who witnessed the blood in **B15** immediately understands this to be the source of it and must make a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw o or be subject to a short-term madness for 1d4 x 10 minutes, or a long-term madness if they are currently suffering from any short-term madness. Other than Myram's presence (and the absence of the haunt that should have been previously destroyed by the PCs), this room is otherwise the same as it was left.

Development: While the PCs are present in this room, flashes of lightning in the storm outside momentarily illuminate the room brightly and cause the shadow of the disfigured corpse to loom large on the opposite wall. When this occurs, the shadow coalesces and emerges from the wall, floating towards the PCs and pleading for salvation. Poor Myram's spirit has become a tormented spirit called an **allip** from the shocking circumstances of his demise, and the insane spirit now seeks release from its torment or company in death.

ALLIP

hp 30 (see **Appendix A,** page 526)

Treasure: A search of Abshire's body finds a leather scrip tucked into a jacket pocket. Within are 30 sp and a single document on Abshire & Dunnage letterhead. It is a statement of reconciliation indicating that the solicitors made an accounting error and overcharged Sir Urvitus Voren for their services by the amount of 30 silver pilasters*. It merely required his countersignature so they could refund him that amount and square their books.

B21. Study

This chamber appears largely as before, whole and undamaged. Even the howling winds of the storm seem somehow muted herein. As in the rest of the house, the strange violet candles that once provided their garish glow have been extinguished, though the presence of the intact and closed windows belies exactly how this occurred.

The other difference of note is the large painting that now stands on the writing desk, propped up into the curtained alcove formed by the bay windows. It is the portrait of Old Eb Wallix from the drawing room, but now subtly different. PCs could swear the features are the same as they were before, but now can't help but see an uncanny resemblance to Sir Urvitus in the image of the old man that they had never noticed before. So closely do they favor one another that it is as if they are one and the same person, separated only by some great span of years, and it is impossible tell if it is that Sir Urvitus has come to look more like the painting or that the painting has come to look more like the young knight.

The portrait is the focal point of Eb Wallix's spirit in the house as well as the focus of Urvitus's leeched away soul. With the final effort of the energized *Codex Ibnathi* in **Event 3**, the last of Urvitus's conscious essence was drawn from him and absorbed into the painting, animating the old wizard's image as a **trompe l'oeil** (an animated painting) possessed of his vile spirit. As soon as the PCs recognize the portrait, its painted figure cackles evilly and moves out of the frame, disappearing to the left as though the frame was merely a window into another room. Using its switch paintings ability, the trompe l'oeil escapes to the portrait nearest to the root cellar (**B23**)—likely the old painting of Coram Poer in the storage cellar (**B22**).

There is no way for the PCs to enter the portrait and pursue the image (even if they wished to), but it did leave behind a tantalizing clue. If a PC examines the now-empty portrait, he sees parts of the background that were previously obscured by the figure — the surface of the desk the figure once stood in front of is now fully revealed. Upon it lies a single page covered in strange writings and glyphs. It is impossible to make out details, but the strange page gives off an almost palpable aura of menace and the sense that it is at the heart of the foul presence that inhabits the Old House. When the page from the *Codex Ibnathi* is discovered in **B26**, it will be easily recognized as the one represented in this painting.

WALLIX TROMPE L'OEIL

hp 45 (See **B23,** page 53)

Development: When the trompe l'oeil emerges in the basement, it immediately uses its connection to Sir Urvitus to command his catatonic body to take up the mattock or some similar tool in **B22** and begin to smash through the south wall in **B23**. At this point, the PCs can begin to hear the thudding strikes of Urvitus's efforts. This requires a DC 22 Wisdom (Perception) check from the house's attic level, a DC 17 check from the second floor, or a DC 12 check from the

* Pilasters are the silver coins of the City-State of Castorhage, adopted by the Kingdom of the Vast with its formal independence from Foere in 3245 I.R. See pages 216 and 220 of ***LL7: The Blight: Richard Pett's Crooked City*** by **Frog God Games**.

first floor, which is reduced to a simple DC 2 check if either the coal chute or the door leading from **B6** to **B22** is opened.

B22. Storage Cellar

Most of the stored supplies remain as they were left, though some of them have been pushed out of the way to reveal an area of the hard-packed earth north of the columns that has been disturbed, revealing four shallow pits. Dozens of frog-like creatures writhe and squirm through the stacked furnishings and other bric-a-brac pushed into the corners.

The shallow pits are the graves of adventurers who met their fates in the Old House more than a century ago and have since been revived as the ghasts and ghouls encountered upstairs. A DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check determines that several creatures dug their way up and out of the ground here, not down into it. If anyone thinks to look for the mattock that was stored here, it is missing if Urvitus has already fetched it for use in **B23**.

Though only a few dozen are visible at one time, there are hundreds of the strange ysaqquan toads present in this room, praising the "return of master" and promising the PCs imminent doom in their strange croaking voices. They flee deeper into the piled detritus if approached, but if they are attacked or the PCs attempt to exit towards **B23**, they stream forth to form an **ysaqquan toad swarm** and attack. They pursue anywhere the PCs go in the basement but will not go upstairs.

YSAQQUAN TOAD SWARM

hp 30 (See **Appendix A,** page 563)

Treasure: The remains of the adventurers' gear that has not completely succumbed to decay can be found within the four shallow graves. Each grave can be searched with an hour of digging and sifting combined with a DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check. They contain the remnants of mundane gear such as pitted sword blades, belt buckles, rusted buttons, and one of the following items: Grave 1. A *+1 silver mace* bearing the symbol of Vanitthu (see footnote, page 36) that glows with *light* upon command; Grave 2. A steel hipflask inscribed with "*For some warmth when you're not with me. —L.*" holding a still-good *potion of greater healing*; Grave 3. A *+1 shield*; and grave 4. a rotting belt pouch holding 7 pp, 3 gp, 34 sp, and 13 cp.

B23. Root Cellar

It is possible that the PCs will come here before having searched the rest of the house. If so, they will find the comatose form of Sir Urvitus lying upon the floor, but none of the other activities or changes to the room as described below. If that is the case, Urvitus is still unconscious due to the book's influence, and even if he is magically healed by a *greater restoration*, *heal*, or *remove curse*, he remains bleary-eyed and confused. Only when the trompe l'oeil has been killed will he regain his full mental powers and be able to recall what has happened to him. He is clearly in no shape to accompany the party or answer questions. Regardless of what the PCs do with him, the power of the House will ensure that he is magically brought back here after the PCs encounter the trompe l'oeil in **B21**, so this encounter can occur as written.

The following description assumes that the encounter with the trompe l'oeil in **B21** has occurred before the PCs arrive here.

The thudding noise that reverberates through the walls of the house comes from in here. This room has changed since the last visit. The shelving on the south wall has been removed and laid aside to expose the plastered wall behind it. Sir Urvitus stands before this wall, dust-streaked, slack-jawed, and staring. His hands hold an old, rusted mattock that he raises again and brings down with a crash upon the exposed wall. He has obviously been at it for some time. The plaster and lath of the wall have been broken through in dimensions almost the size of a man, revealing a hollow space beyond. Embedded within this space stands the desiccated, leathery corpse of an old man with a disheveled black wig upon his head and the ragged remnant of a noose around his neck. His jaw hangs agape and his eyes stare like black beads from the shriveled flesh of his face.

Sir Urvitus remains in a catatonic state, his body being used as a simple automaton by the will of the *Codex Ibnathi* manifested through the Wallix trompe l'oeil. He continues to hack at the wall but will make no move to attack or defend himself. A simple DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check can discern his state of catatonia and simple automation, and he does not resist any efforts to stop or disarm him. If Urvitus is forcefully ordered, he will stand peacefully in a corner or even exit the room, oblivious to the goings-on around him.

Urvitus's efforts in this state have succeeded in uncovering the mortal remains of Old Eb Wallix where they were sealed up in the wall by Kyssogga after his death. His restless spirit has remained within this corpse — not animating, but rather inhabiting it — until the catalyst of his brother's descendant enabled the *Codex Ibnathi* to draw

WALLIX TROMPE L'OEIL

Medium construct, neutral evil
Armor Class 16 (breastplate)
Hit Points 93 (17d8 + 17)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	17 (+3)	9 (-1)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Con +4
Skills Athletics +4, Deception +4, Perception +5, Performance +7, Stealth +8
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages Abyssal, Deep Speech, Common, Elven, Infernal
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Gallery of Dread. As an action, a trompe l'oeil can enter a painting it touches. When it does so, its physical body disappears, and its image appears in the painting. The trompe l'oeil can use its normal senses and attempt Perception checks to notice anything occurring near the painting. While within a painting, the trompe l'oeil can talk and move anywhere within the picture or even temporarily alter it (such as by picking a flower in the painting). It cannot use any spells or other abilities while within an image. In addition, the trompe l'oeil has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide in such a painting. The trompe l'oeil can use its bonus action to leave the painting. Once it leaves the painting, the image immediately reverts to the appearance it had before the trompe l'oeil entered. If someone destroys or damages the painting, the trompe l'oeil is unharmed, but exits the image in the nearest unoccupied space.

The Wallix trompe l'oeil can enter paintings within the Old House. As an action, the Wallix trompe l'oeil can move from a painting it has entered to appear in any other mostly intact painting in the house.

Finally, when it a tromp l'oeil is destroyed, it immediately reforms with half of its hit point maximum on one of the eligible paintings in the house. The only way to permanently destroy the Wallix trompe l'oeil is to destroy all the eligible paintings before destroying the creature.

Hellish Drippings (1/Day). The Wallix trompe l'oeil can cause paint to melt out of up to four paintings, forming into an amorphous, vaguely humanoid creature identical to a lemure devil[SRD]. These creatures attack as he directs them for up to 1 minute or until destroyed. The sympathetic connection between the trompe l'oeil and the lemures grants each of them a +1 bonus on attack and damage rolls against any target is threatened by any of the other lemures or the trompe l'oeil.

Immediate Rejuvenation (Su) The power of the *Codex Ibnathi* enhances allows the Wallix trompe l'oeil to return from death while in the Old House. When it is destroyed, it reforms 1 round later in one of the eligible paintings in the house. The only way to permanently destroy the Wallix trompe l'oeil is to destroy all the eligible paintings before destroying the creature.

Instant Portrait (2/Day). The Wallix trompe l'oeil can use its action to create a life-sized portrait of itself on any flat surface. The portrait can be destroyed by dealing at least one point of slashing damage, or two points of bludgeoning or piercing damage. The portrait is an eligible target for its Gallery of Dread ability.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Wallix trompe l'oeil makes three melee attacks or two ranged weapon attacks.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage and 3 (1d6) poison damage.

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon* Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage and 2 (1d4) poison damage.

upon the strength of the young knight's spirit and combine it with the gathered splinters of the alienist's shattered soul to animate Old Eb's portrait as a trompe l'oeil. The **Wallix trompe l'oeil** is also present in the room. It stands beside Urvitus, now wearing the knight's missing gear and instructing him in the demolition of the wall. This close to the recovery of the *Codex Ibnathi*, it immediately attacks and seeks to destroy the PCs before they can thwart its plans.

WALLIX TROMPE L'OEIL

hp 93 (see page 53)

Tactics: During combat the trompe l'oeil fights intelligently, responding to the greatest threats and retreating to more advantageous ground when available, making use of its Dread Gallery abilities to move into and out of paintings, using casting *instant portrait* to create one if necessary. It summons lemures with its Hellish Drippings ability, directing them to attack archers and spellcasters who remain at range or to team up on enemies that try to surround it. The trompe l'oeil fights until destroyed, relying on its immediate rejuvenation ability to keep returning it to the fight. Unless destroyed by the PCs, the following areas still contain an undamaged painting: **B3**, **B14**, **B21**, and **B22**. Each time it is slain, it collapses into a splash of multi-colored paint.

When the trompe l'oeil is destroyed, the paint versions of Sir Urvitus's equipment revert to their normal forms, including a *+1 breastplate* and *+1 shortsword*. These belong to Sir Urvitus, and he would like them back. However, if the PCs are insistent upon claiming them, he does not protest in gratitude for their efforts to save him.

Development: When the trompe l'oeil is permanently slain, the splinters of Eb's soul and the mind of Sir Urvitus are released. Sir Urvitus immediately recovers 5 points of ability damage to each of his mental ability scores (Int, Wis, and Cha) and awakens from his nightmare with a scream. He is bewildered and terrified from his ordeal and recalls nothing of his occupancy of the house for the past several days, but he is acutely aware that the source of the evil that infests the house lies behind the root cellar wall. He encourages the party to find that source and destroy it and joins them to lend his aid.

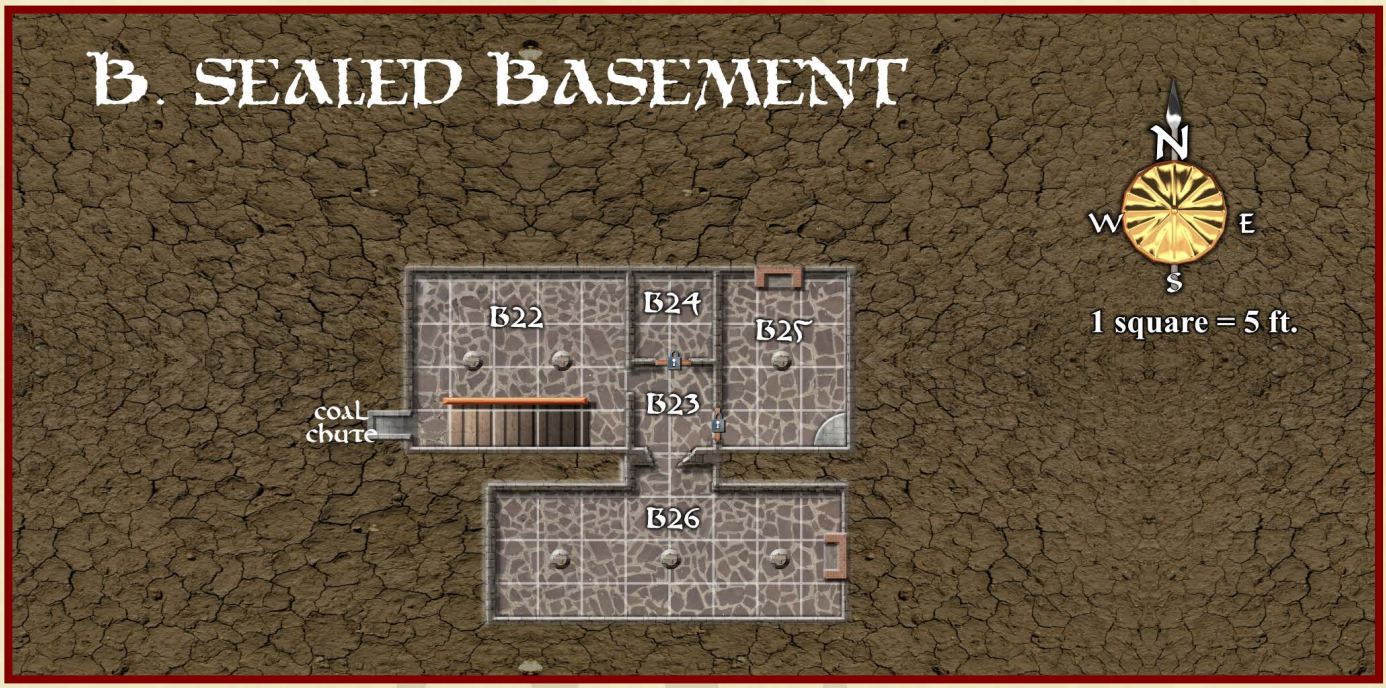


This can be accomplished by pulling the mummified body of Eb Wallix from its encasement in the wall. It is not animate. Removing it from the cavity where it has been encased reveals that it has been plugging up the opening into **B26** beyond. Once the body is removed, that room becomes visible and can be entered by chipping away just a little more of the plaster. See **Sealed Basement** below.

Treasure: A search of Old Eb's corpse turns up a *headband of intellect*, a *ring of mind shielding*, a non-magical jeweled ring worth 500 gp, and the remains of a spell component pouch.

B25. Cell

This room looks little different from how you left it, though the corpse of the ghoulish mandrill is obviously no longer present. The bones of a humanoid skeleton have been disarticulated and laid out before the long-cold fireplace in a strange, three-armed configuration.



It is apparent that the bones represent an entire skeleton, and a DC 12 Wisdom (Medicine) check reveals that they have been gnawed by many tiny teeth. Anyone who examined the bones previously discovered at area **A8** and makes a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check realizes that the skeletal remains are one and the same. These are the bones of the late-night watchman Creutz Hasten. A DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check can even locate his gold ring among the remnants as described in **A8**. It is possible that the PCs left these bones with Sir Urvitus to deal with after having explored the Old House in **Chapter 1**. However, if the PCs took the bones with them when they left in order to have them properly interred, returned to the city, etc., they are nonetheless present here once again and require everyone who knew they had been previously removed to make a DC 18 Charisma saving throw or become subject to a long-term madness.

Anyone examining how the bones are laid out can see that they form a rough triskelion configuration. A DC 21 Intelligence (Religion) check recognizes this as resembling the Yellow Sign, an unholy rune associated with the cult of the Great Old One Hastur[LL4 – p. 45].

SEALED BASEMENT

A passage once extended between areas **B23** and **B26**. Prior to his death, Old Eb undertook some minor renovation to seal off the chamber beyond by erecting a wall of plaster and lath that looked identical to the surrounding walls of the basement. Lead shavings mixed in with the plaster served to block magical detection of the sealed entry or the room beyond and its contents. With Eb's death, Kysogga and the power of the *Codex Ibnathi* undertook to embed his mortal remains within the wall to serve as the final seal of the concealed sanctuary and to ensure that his troubled spirit would remain inextricably attached to the Old House. Only by destroying the *Codex Ibnathi* page found in **B26** can the house truly be exorcised from the taint of the old wizard's essence.

The sealing wall itself is easily broken, which should have largely already occurred through the efforts of the catatonic Sir Urvitus.

Plaster and Lathe Wall: 2-1/2 feet thick; AC 14, damage threshold of 8, 60 hit points (currently 17); Break DC 19.

B26. Chamber of the Book

The walls of this ancient cellar are black with the mold seen throughout the house, though where before it was patchy, here it is all pervasive. It covers the walls in an almost-unbroken layer, except where occult runes that glow with a violet light have been inscribed. The mold doesn't extend where those runes mark the wall, as if recalcitrant to even touch the profane symbols. Three pillars, likewise coated in the black mold, support the sagging stone ceiling. At the eastern end stands a fireplace, its hearth now a pool of soot-black rainwater that has leaked down an ancient flue. The shallow dark waters roil with tiny toad spawn, and the cacophony of batrachian voices is louder here than anywhere else in the house. The whole place is filled with a swampy odor.

Between the central and western pillars an intricate circle of silvery runes and a five-pointed star have been dug into the earthen floor and decorated with ornamental designs. A wrought-iron bookstand is in the center of this circle. Upon it rests a single, dry leathery sheet of parchment covered in arcane runes and symbols visible even from the doorway. Its frayed edge reveals that it was clearly torn from some larger work at some time in the past.

This chamber was Eb Wallix's main workshop and summoning chamber and where he kept the single page of the *Codex Ibnathi*[AK:M] that formed the basis of his experimentation and study. He used this room to conjure and interrogate outsiders and other extraplanar beings. Now, it is the lair of Kyssogga, the yssaqquan's children, and the page.

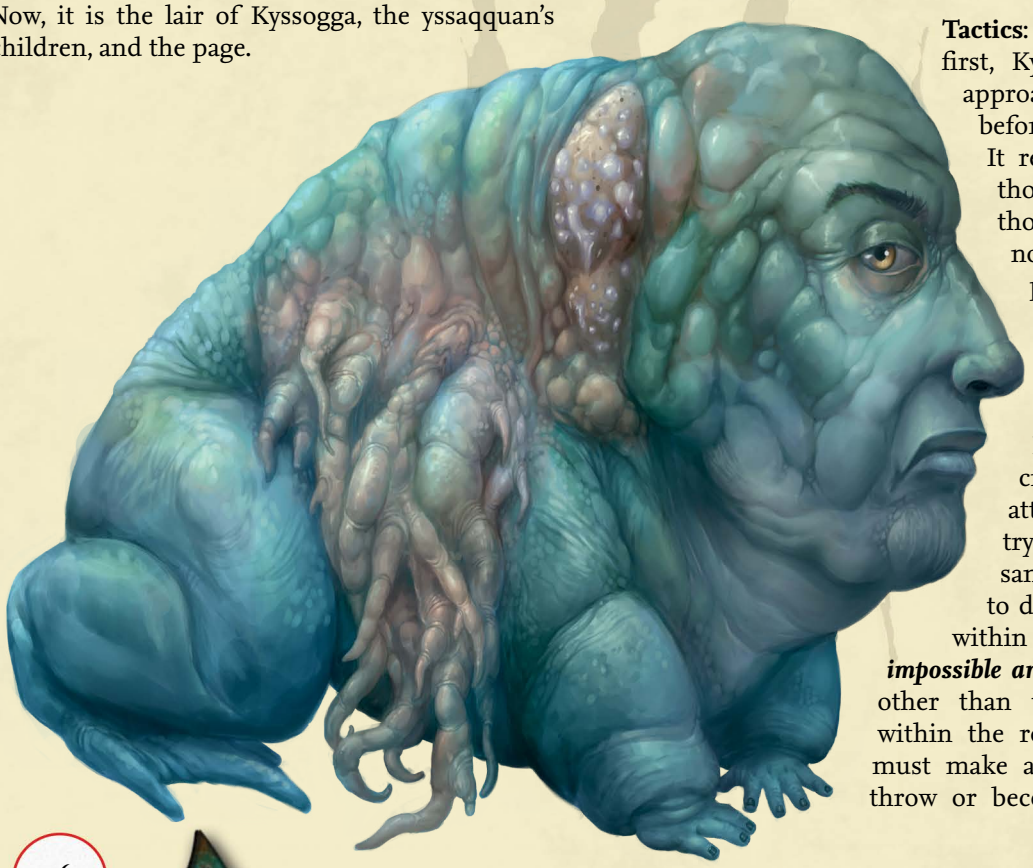
The shallow pool that fills the fireplace is the gathering place of the ysaqquan toads that inhabit the house and is full of their gelatinous spawn. Congregated around the pool is an **ysaqquan toad swarm**. Sitting in the conjuration circle next to the bookstand is a small, deformed, toad-like creature. This is the ysaqqua **Kyssogga**, a tiny aberration bound to the page of the *Codex Ibnathi* that Eb Wallix discovered. Its purpose is to protect the codex page against those who would destroy it and to guide those who would understand the page's secrets and fulfill its purpose. When Eb uncovered the codex page, Kyssogga manifested from a sigil inscribed upon it. Kyssogga became his familiar and set about guiding him in the interpretation of the text. Kyssogga is immortal and patient. Since Eb died, it has been awaiting the arrival of a new master. It has also created a colony of ysaqquan toads to help protect the codex page. The swarm does not attack unless attacked or ordered to by Kyssogga.

KYSSOGGA

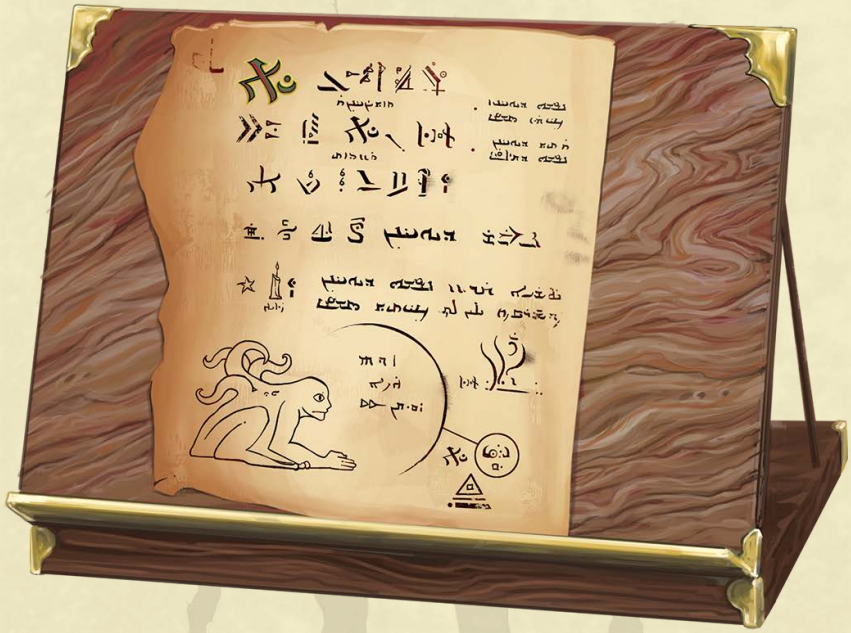
hp 19 (See **Appendix A,** page 526 "Ysaqqua")

YSAQQUAN TOAD SWARM

hp 30 (See **Appendix A,** page 564)



Tactics: Unless the PCs attack first, Kyssogga waits for them to approach the conjuring circle before initiating the combat. It remains within the circle as though it provides protection, though in truth the circle is not enchanted and does not protect or entrap anything within. Kyssogga remains observant and allows the PCs to approach. If any PC comes within 5 feet, Kyssogga lets out a massive croak ordering the swarm to attack and uses its tongue to try to poison opponents. At that same moment, the page awakes to defend itself and warps space within the chamber with eldritch ***impossible angles*** that disorient creatures other than the toad beasts. Creatures within the room or entering the room must make a DC 17 Intelligence saving throw or become poisoned and have to



treat the room as difficult terrain. Those that fail this save can attempt a new saving throw each round at the end of their turn to end the effect. Those that studied the arcane writings inscribed upon the walls through the house (see **B3** for details) have advantage on this saving throw. If all of the inscriptions on the walls in this room are covered somehow, this effect ends. Kyssogga then attacks using the pillars for cover.

Development: If Kyssogga is killed, his body dissolves into a foul-smelling mist which dissipates after 1 round. In the next round, a glyph on the codex page that resembles a stylized image of the tentacle-laden frog suddenly glows and Kyssogga leaps forth at full hit points to attack once again. As long as the page is intact, Kyssogga cannot truly be killed and will respawn 1 round after being destroyed. If the page is destroyed, this effect as well as all supernatural effects within the Old House cease immediately and any remaining ysaqquan toads scatter and disappear into the woodwork and surrounding debris to never be seen again.

Codex Ibnathi Page: AC 17, damage threshold of 5, 25 hit points; **Damage Immunity** cold, lightning, necrotic, poison, psychic, thunder; **Damage Resistances** acid, fire; Break DC 22.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Once the page of the *Codex Ibnathi* is destroyed, the evil that has haunted the Old House for almost 150 years is finally purged. If Sir Urvitus survives, he destroys all of Eb's journals but gives all of the remaining treasure in the house to the PCs as thanks for saving his life. He then arranges for the house's demolition. If asked about his relationship to Old Eb, Urvitus remains tight-lipped and indicates that public knowledge of the past should remain buried. He offers the enduring friendship of House Voren to the PCs, however, and offers hospitality whenever the PCs are in Tourne.

PLAYER HANDOUTS

HANDOUTS 1A–1G

The PCs may remember one of the following nightmares if they awaken in the Old House. For more information, refer to the **Fear, Disturbances, and Nightmares** sidebar.

HANDOUT 1A

You are walking through the Old House, from room to room, but the sense of someone or something following you — something horribly threatening, that you don't want to believe is there, that you don't want to set eyes upon for the terror of making it real — is growing with each step. You dare not turn around to see if anything is there, but the horror keeps rising until it is almost unbearable and then, as you are about to succumb and turn, a cold touch on the back of your neck snaps your muscles into painful rigidity as a noisome fetor overwhelms you. Your stomach turns and your failing body tries to retch but lacks the strength to expel the vomit. The rising gorge reaches your mouth, but then begins to slowly seep back into your lungs... blocking your airways, preventing you from drawing breath...

HANDOUT 1B

You are standing in a room with several easels bearing various paintings in progress. The one in front of you is a scene of Eber's octagonal law courts as viewed from outside the building. There are groups of advocates, judges, and citizens in discussion on the plaza. It looks complete, but you are holding something in your right hand as you carefully add an additional figure behind one of the groups, a figure dressed in finery with a wig of dark curls. As you begin to paint its facial detail, you glance at your right hand and see that you are holding a mirror. It is not your reflection that it bears, but that of an old man whose features instantly contort into horrific, murderous rage as you suddenly realize he is staring directly at you...

HANDOUT 1C

You are in a windowless room standing over an ape-like creature with a blue and red dog-like muzzle. The creature lies on the ground, a thick chain attached to a metal collar around its neck. It tries to snarl as you crouch down, but it is lethargic, weak, barely able to move. Still, it eats the strange crimson-frilled black fungus that you feed it, its tongue bruising and swelling in its throat. But then, gripped by a weird compulsion, you eat the disgusting repast too. You feel the pain in your throat, the grip of a fever, and an awful, insatiable hunger rising from the pit of your stomach...

HANDOUT 1D

You are standing over a man who lies on the floor. He is dressed in his nightclothes — torn in places where angry red welts were raised on his skin — and asleep, though obviously having a disturbing dream, as the sweat on his brow, the agitated moans, and involuntary twitches attest. You hold a journal and, as you utter a strange sound, "Ph'nglui," the script on the page shifts and crawls into a different language, with a different meaning. As you incant the new words, you stab downward with a curved knife, and an arterial spray soaks the orb-like body of a deep sea monstrosity that descends from above you to the man's throat, the creature's maw crammed with rows of mismatched fangs drooling expectantly as its piscine eyes roll idiotically.

HANDOUT 1E

You are sitting in an armchair in a shuttered room. You pick up a small vial of a milky fluid from a side table, carefully uncork it, and drink the contents. Your thoughts and perception swiftly become dull, blurring, dimming, until a wavering point of light begins to penetrate the cloying miasma. It slowly brightens and then accelerates toward you, becoming clearer as you break the surface of a dark sea, gasping for a breath that will not come… that cannot come. You see a shore — though it is far away — and twin mounts rising beyond, farther still. As you begin to swim toward it, a tiny frog-like thing surfaces ahead of you and leads the way. But the sea is like molasses, and your limbs are ensnared by slithering tentacles that rise from below and begin to drag you back under.

HANDOUT 1F

You are standing in a space suffused with a violet glow. In front of you a hideous creature appears, a vulture-headed thing with insect antennae, hunched on dog-like legs, large tenebrous wings folded around it. As it moves closer, an outstretched claw offering you a clutch of noxious, leathery eggs, you see that its flesh is rotten, infected, as though it was already dead and decomposing. You take the eggs and step back, inviting the creature to fall upon the sleeping form of a man on the ground below you. Its serrated beak punctures his neck and begins voraciously drinking his blood.

HANDOUT 1G

You are bursting with joy, a triumphant excitement, as you walk across a room with an angled ceiling. From a table covered in strange charts, you drag a stool back to the center and carefully step up onto it, standing up to reach a noose hanging from a rafter above. Almost laughing to yourself, you slip the rope over your head and draw it tight upon your neck before, without ceremony or hesitation, stepping off the stool. The rope tightens further, crushing your windpipe, pressure building in your eyes and rupturing a blood vessel in one. The blood pooling inside your eye blinds you faster in it than your air-starved sight in the other fades. The lines of the room becoming jagged, trembling, circling as the elation fills you.

HANDOUT 1H

Gentlefolk!

I humbly request your immediate assistance.

There have been some irregularities regarding the house on Front Street where you recently helped our client, Sir Uvritus Voren of Tourne, to "clear it of any dangers". Not long after you rendered your services, Sir Uvritus elected to keep the property and move in rather than undertake its demolition as planned. Shortly afterward, he discharged the firm of Abshire & Dunnage from his service and dismissed all of the hired guards and tradesmen we had engaged on his behalf. All of those decisions are, of course, well within his rights as a client, and Abshire & Dunnage takes no umbrage when a client has determined that we have rendered the maximum service to them of which they had need.

Nevertheless, I would be remiss if I did not say that Sir Uvritus's demeanor had begun to change during that same time period. Having never worked directly with him I could not say from personal experience, but Mr. Abshire mentioned to me on several occasions that his heretofore ebullient client had become more and more elusive and withdrawn. Matters seem to have come to a head this very morning, however, when Mr. Abshire dropped by the property to obtain some final signatures from Sir Uvritus in order to close our accounts with him. That was some ten hours ago and I have just learned that Mr. Abshire, normally a stalwart sort, has missed two meetings and a hearing before a magistrate today—totally uncharacteristic of him! By checking around I have determined that no one has seen him since he left to drop by the Voren property on Front Street.

I know it is possibly only the reputation of that property and the hinted changes mentioned by Mr. Abshire, but I am very concerned for the well-being of my business associate. I also respect the privacy of our clients and do not wish to bring unwanted attention upon Sir Uvritus for what may only be the worries of a nervous man. Because of your past experience with both Sir Uvritus and the property and the skills and discretion that you have previously demonstrated, I wish to engage your services once again.

The job is simple enough. Please proceed to the property on Front Street and determine if Mr. Abshire was there and where he may have gone afterward if he is there no longer. Your payment will be the same as per the previous engagement, to be paid in full by the firm upon your return. But please, I ask you, undertake this in all haste, for I truly fear that Myram Abshire and possibly even Sir Uvritus, as well, may be in dire jeopardy.

Very truly yours,

Norrys Dunnage, Esq.
Abshire & Dunnage
Solicitors-at-Law


2011 Melissa Rossi Spanish

Adventure 2:
The Ebon Soul

The legendary Crimson Shroud is a wondrous relic with miraculous healing powers, able to undo the deadliest of curses, but when the heroes go in quest of it they find they are not alone in its seeking. Dark agents work against them at every turn to find the prized artifact first, their shadowy fingers reaching through the very fabric of the city of Tourse. Who is a conspirator and who can be trusted are the questions the adventurers must answer as they race against time and a fate worse than death. In the end, their greatest test may be in facing the darkness awakened within their very souls.

THE EBON SOUL

"Life is more suffering than pleasure, more failure than success, and even the momentary relief of achievement is wiped away by one's life ending in pain. Yet, in darkness the soul can be free to fly where it will; this is the dream of the ebon soul."

—Yorguio Aledruchia of Tourse

The Ebon Soul is an adventure that causes the PCs to become stricken with the curse of vampirism and uses the vampire template, and the hunger and corruption rules for the characters to take on the role of the undead. As they attempt to satiate their own hunger, the PCs become embroiled in a power struggle for the very life's blood of the city.

In the **Lost Lands** setting the adventure takes place in the city of Tourse in the Duchy of Ysser (EE-sur), one of the remaining realms in the much-shrunken Kingdom of Foere that dominates the lands of central Akados in around the Star Sea.

VAMPIRE CHARACTERS

The Ebon Soul is an adventure with some unique aspects that should be reviewed prior to running it. Player characters at some point succumb to a plot device and are transformed into vampires. This may pose a problem for players not wishing to see their characters fundamentally altered. As the Game Master you should encourage your players to push past this and embrace the opportunity to play something different, but communicate with your players and use your best judgment as to whether this adventure suits your group. This adventure also uses the hunger rules. These additional rules can help players roleplay a vampire character meant to be tragic and dark, balancing the temptation for more power versus keeping one's humanity.

In addition, becoming vampires gives the players access to abilities not initially intended for use in typical adventure encounters, which may affect the style of play. For example, a vampire's gaseous form ability might allow the players to avoid some encounters or exploit certain situations. Playing a vampire character can also become problematic for players sensitive to graphic depictions.

While it a good idea to obtain your players' approval before running an adventure with such a stark change to the nature of their characters, you must also weigh it against the spoilers and potential meta-gaming that could ensue by giving your players this information ahead of time. If you feel like your players will misuse this information, then try to make the questions more vague (change the word "vampire" to "monster"), or perhaps pose the question at the very beginning of the campaign while all characters are still first level. It will provide some foreshadowing as well as an escalation in tension as the players realize something bad is going to happen but will have no idea exactly when.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Cassandra Mulvaya was born in the city of Tourse to a distinguished noble family that included soldiers, priests, knights, and magistrates. Though she counted many luminaries among her relatives, her family tree also featured some very deranged and disturbed kin. One of her uncles instructed her in dark psychic powers, while her aunt secretly introduced her to sadomasochism. Upon reaching adulthood, Cassandra caught the eye of the city's own Margrave Alhpert Vanderhaven, and the couple settled into Vanderhaven Manor. The margrave soon discovered the profound emotional and mental disturbances and consequent proclivities that his new wife had developed as a result of the years of abuse she had been subjected to, but at a total loss as to how to deal with this hidden dark side the margrave chose to try and indulge her in hopes of it proving to be a passing phase that merely needed to be indulged until it was outgrown. To this end, in his misguided efforts to please and appease his wife, Margrave Vanderhaven even went so far as to construct a torture chamber to her specifications.

For these activities, Cassandra first snatched her own housekeepers, servants, and relatives. However, she soon found herself without workers, and realized she must rein in her acts of terror or risk being discovered. Through her husband's arrangements, she contacted Yorguio, a member of the Underguild, a shadowy organization operating in the city's criminal underworld. He agreed to supply her with "playthings" for exorbitant fees. She readily agreed, thinking her new amusements could placate her desires, but over the next few months Cassandra actually became enamored with Yorguio instead. When she finally gathered the nerve to proclaim her love for this mysterious individual, he revealed that he was no mortal man but a vampire. Cassandra somehow knew in her soul that she had finally found her true place in the world. She begged him for the kiss of undeath and, after submitting to his embrace, she stormed into her husband's bedchamber and partook of her first meal as the living dead.

Cassandra cleverly orchestrated the "disappearance" of her husband and began the first years of exploring her new abilities. She reveled in her extraordinary abilities, the fear she caused, and the power of controlling those weaker than herself. These newfound talents were all that she dreamed they'd be. This eventually waned, though, and she began to loathe her sire after realizing the control he was able to exercise over her. A building rage began to seethe within her until eventually she lured Yorguio into a trap and destroyed him and then smiled as she burned his coffin to cinders.

Since that time, Cassandra has managed to moderate her blood lust. She finds the company of sycophants entertaining and throws outlandish gatherings at the slightest excuse. At one such soiree she felt the presence of others like her. She approached them and found that they were none-too-pleased about the murder of her former sire, a vampire who had been a member of their organization. They threatened that they would soon make her life extremely difficult if she did not comply with their ever-increasing demands. The margravine again felt the cold grip of being subjected to the will of others, as she had experienced since her own childhood, and soon chafed under the subtle yoke of servitude they had placed upon her, so she began plotting the means to free herself of the lordship of others…again.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The adventure begins with the PCs attending the party of the city' ruler where they impress her and for their efforts are hired to find an ancient artifact to cure her of a mysterious hereditary condition that she claims afflicts her. However, when they stay the night in the manor, after a night of nightmares they awake to find they have all been turned into vampires and realize the margravine is the unholy creature who has afflicted them with their undead condition.

As they come to grip with their new undead existence, the party becomes aware that the margravine herself—their controlling vampire master—is nowhere to be found, having apparently abandoned her manor in some haste. They soon discover the reason as vampire hunters intent on destroying the undead they have tracked to the manor assault the house intent on destroying all of its undead occupants—including the PCs. Fighting off these holy foes and simultaneously searching the manor, the party comes to realize that there may be a cure for their vampiric condition and that it appears to be the very artifact the margravine had intended for them to find and bring to her, the *Crimson Shroud*.

For long-time fans of **Frog God Games** and **Necromancer Games**, it is notable that the Duchy of Ysser is the site of such iconic locations as the hamlet of Hogshead Bend as mentioned on page 57 of ***DM1: The Book of Taverns*** by **Necromancer Games**. Southwest of Tourse lies the Barony of Vroulet just north of the Broken Mountains where the Senelast Clan of dwarves operates diamond mines for Baron Denar Craldan, while within Tourse itself lives the famed elven painter Corodolan Ielvian, both as described in ***FGG2: Strange Bedfellows*** by **Frog God Games**. At the duchy's far western border as the ancient highlands known as the Old Tors begin their slow climb stands a fortress called Torwatch Keep to keep a guarded eye over the mysterious Hill of Mornay not far south. For it was at Mornay where the Overking's Army besieged the foul Black Monastery only to watch it disappear in a conflagration of green flame some two centuries gone, as related in ***The Black Monastery*** by **Frog God Games**.

Farther afield beyond the duchy's borders where the neighboring County of Coutaine's (ku-TANE) westernmost fringe the rolling plains of central Akados meet the wooded slopes of the Broken Mountain's southern slopes at the wine country that encompasses the vineyards of Le Chateau Gluant as featured in the adventure "The Noble Rot" in ***Quests of Doom*** by **Frog God Games**. And to the north of the Duchy of Ysser stretches the vast grasslands of the Waymarch, bisected by the legendary Tradeway upon which lies the elegant coaching inn called The Dagger & Rose, also described in ***DM1: The Book of Taverns***, and the northeast border marks the beginning of the Stoneheart Valley made infamous in such works from its unnamed beginning in ***D1: The Tomb of Abysthor*** by **Necromancer Games** (and updated in ***LL1: Stoneheart Valley*** by **Frog God Games**) to its most recent incarnation in ***LL8: Bard's Gate*** by **Frog God Games**).

Many other locations of **Lost Lands** lore can be found as one proceeds outward on the map from the city of Tourse, but none of these references are required to play this adventure. They are merely included to provide an idea of Tourse's place in a larger, living, breathing world and give long-time fans of those titles the satisfaction of seeing old favorites revisited as part of the greater whole that is the **Lost Lands**.

Fighting of their own instincts to feed on the blood of the living and racing against the coming dawn, the party follows the clues left by the margravine to the city's oldest temple where the shroud is known to be housed. However, they arrive only to learn that Underguild in enacting their own vengeance upon the margravine have already taken the relic in order to lure her into a trap of their own devising. With no choice but to either pursue the stolen relic or surrender to an eternity of tortured undeath, the party pursues the Underguild agents to their hideout in a seedy gambling den.

Battling their way through the Underguild's trap, the PCs must make their way to the heart of the Underguild's demesne and confront its remaining forces. During this foray, the party discovers that the margravine has been following them as she makes her move to abscond with the artifact while the PCs are busy fighting for their lives against the Underguild. The PCs must then race back to her manor as dawn arrives in order to stop her from performing dark ritual with the *Crimson Shroud* that will grant her mastery over vampirism with none of its weaknesses at the cost of their very souls.

STARTING THE ADVENTURE

The adventure begins with the PCs in the city of Tourse, capital of the Duchy Ysser, where they receive an invitation to Vanderhaven Manor for an important banquet hosted by Margravine Cassandra Vanderhaven herself. The PCs can be from Tourse or may be there for whatever reasons best suits your campaign. Whatever the reason, it is merely important that they are present and have not yet had opportunity to meet the ruling margravine, though they have been in town long enough for her to have learned of their presence. Details on the Duchy of Ysser and the city of Tourse are included below.

If the players are reluctant to bring all their gear with them but not be personally carrying it, remind them that it would be inappropriate to attend the margravine's party outfitted for battle, yet she wants them to leave first thing in the morning if they accept her job offer so they can have their gear with them rather than traveling across the city to pick it up in the morning. A simple DC 15 Intelligence (History) check can confirm that the margravine's guarantee in the invitation to protect their equipment while it is unattended is legitimate and binding. Likewise, a DC 10 Intelligence (History) or Wisdom (Survival) check can confirm that the margravine would have no trouble replacing every single item they possess if something should happen to it, so any fears or misgivings are unfounded. If they simply cannot part from their equipment for the duration of a civilized social occasion, then they may not be fit for this sort of job opportunity. Besides, their gear is perfectly safe and will be returned to them when needed. The far greater concern, they will find, is the danger to themselves.

After receiving the invitation, the PCs have had the opportunity to learn something about the Margravine of Tourse. Allow each PC an Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma check, or using an appropriate skill if it makes sense, such as Charisma (Persuasion), Intelligence (History), or Intelligence (Investigation) check. This represents their personal knowledge or attempts to find out what they can before the upcoming party. Characters who are natives of Tourse gain a +2 bonus on this check. Consult the table below to determine what each PC knows or has learned. They obtain the information for the DC they rolled as well as any DCs below their check.

DC	Result
0	The aged Margrave of Tourse died some 7 years ago. His own children having died some years earlier, he left his young wife, Margravine Cassandra Vanderhaven, as ruler of the city.
5	The Margraves of Tourse hold little real power. In truth the Dukes of Ysser exercise the most authority over the city and always have, leaving only the minor day-to-day issues to the margraves.
10	Aside from her local interests, Margravine Vanderhaven is known to be a generous sponsor of expeditions to search for lost artifacts.
15	Vanderhaven Manor is haunted, and some servants spread tales of ghosts, spirits, and demons stalking the hallways at night.
20	The margravine wishes to find a powerful ancient relic that cures any disease or condition. She fears the fate that befell her husband and her husband's children from a prior marriage and seeks to stave it off from herself with this artifact.
25	Margravine Cassandra was the prime suspect in the death of her husband because of her rumored involvement in an illicit affair. As is the custom of such things in Tourse, the whole matter was soon hushed up and forgotten.
30	In certain circles Cassandra Vanderhaven is known as the Blood Margravine. It is believed that she is nowhere near as young as she appears and that she has bathed in the blood of her servants for many years in an attempt to stay young.

When the PCs board the carriage for the manor, refer to **Event 1** in **Chapter 1** for the margravine's party.



The Duchy of Ysser

The Duchy of Ysser (EE-sur) has long been a part of the Kingdoms of Foere. During the Wars of Succession when many of the kingdom's holdings broke away in rebellion or remained but with greater autonomy, often even palatinate status, the Dukes of Ysser stayed true to the Court of Courghais and held their fealty to the Crown of the Overking. Nevertheless, Ysser stands at the northernmost of edge of Foere's dominion, and the dukes wield great power in their own right, ruling from the capital at Tourse.

Ysser is a vast realm that at its widest point stretches 600 miles from the ancient highlands of the Old Tors in the west to mountains of Mons Terminus in the east. It borders the County of Coutaine to the south (another realm in the Kingdoms of Foere) and runs 300 miles north to an indistinct border with the Duchy of Waymarch[LL1] (a part of the Grand Duchy of Reme) somewhere south of the great Tradeway[LL1] that runs all the way from the City of Reme on the Crescent Sea, through the Stoneheart Valley[LL1] and its legendary city of Bard's Gate[LL8] all the way to Freegate[LL8] on the Gulf of Akados[LL3] in the east. Though the duchy holds no claim to the Tradeway, long have the Dukes of Ysser coveted it and the riches of its trade caravans.

For the most part the Duchy of Ysser consists of rolling plains with scattered farms, copses, and woodlands. It is grassy and fertile until it starts to reach the more arid and parched grasslands of Waymarch. It does not receive the abundant rainfall and gentle breezes of the weather systems migrating across central Akados only to become stalled over the Star Sea and the central lands of Foere by the enclosing March of Mountains[LL5] to the east, but neither does it suffer from the harsher north winds coming from the Haunted Steppe[FB] and the Stoneheart Mountains[LL1] that sweep across Waymarch. It enjoys a mixture of the two creating plentiful water for agriculture, grasslands for herds, and woodlands for game. It does not have the superb conditions for vineyards that its southern neighbor does but does quite well from a climate standard otherwise.

Three great roads cross the whole of the duchy and converge at the walls of Tourse. The Bishop's Road winds south from that city, crosses into Coutaine and passes through the Cathedral-City of Cantelburgh before crossing the Great Amrin River[LL5] and entering Foere Proper. The aptly named North Road extends northward from Tourse in a more-or-less straight line to the Tradeway. At this intersection the Duke of Ysser seeks to divert as much trade as possible south into his lands and encourages a major caravan stop and trading site to be maintained there, but it can't compete with the success of Fareme[LL1] farther east where the Tradewat enters the Stoneheart Valley and so remains little more than a sporadic way station for the great year-long caravans that ply the Tradeway.

Heading west from Tourse is the Duke's Road. The House of Passur would like to pretend that it was named in their honor, but it in fact extends much farther back into history when Cale, the son of Overking Paulus abdicated the throne to his twin brother Kennet and was given the port city of Reme and its surrounding lands as his own in what was to become the Grand Duchy of Reme. The Duke's Road heads west past the Broken Mountains before turning north again. Not far from this turn the Hill Road continues on west to Torwatch Keep and the hill lands. The Duke's Road continues north where it too meets up with the Tradeway some 200 miles east of the Rheman regional capital of Panetoth and 200 miles west of the North Road's own intersection. Where the Duke's Road meets the Tradeway stands the renowned inn known as The Dagger & Rose where a band of brigands known as the Highwaymen[DM1] have run rampant of late.

Ysser has no great woodland of its own, but the southwestern portion of its otherwise rolling plains is interrupted by the irregular heights of the Broken Mountains from whose western and southern slopes extends the old growth forest of the Elderwood extending into the Old Tors and reaching even the boundaries of the Kingdom of Foere itself to the south. The Barony of Vroulet stands in the embrace of the base of those peaks and some hill dwarves reside among them mining diamonds for the Baron Craldan[FGG2], but otherwise Ysser is a land of lowland farmers, herdsmen, and entrepreneurs, mostly human but with its fair share of halflings (rumored to descend from ancient halfling clans of the Old Tors) and half-elves. Few elves call the duchy home, and other than the Broken Mountain Senelast Clan[FGG2], few dwarves.

The lands of the duchy have been at peace and ruled over by the dukes of House Passur for many years. The last great upheaval to directly affect the duchy was the rise and subsequent fall of the infamous Black Monastery on the Hill of Mornay[BM] in the Old Tors. But even in that instance the armies of the Overking bore the brunt of campaign. The fortress at Torwatch Keep was built and garrisoned by duchy soldiers, but since then other than the haunted monastery's occasional reappearance on certain nights, things have relatively quiet. This situation may not last as the current Duke Passur has at last taken steps to claim the riches of the Tradeway for himself and has begun to secretly hire gnoll bands of the Stoneheart Valley to disrupt trade and waylay troops of Waymark cavalry[LL1], but so far this has neither borne much fruit nor been connected back to him. It is only a matter of time before he decides to escalate his tactics, and then his carefully laid plans are likely to backfire on him under the full pressure of the forces of Waymarch and the scrutiny of the Longhunters[LL8] of Bard's Gate.

THE CITY OF TOURSE

The capital of the Duchy of Ysser is the centrally located city of Tourse (tur-SAY).

Tourse is a large walled city at the intersection of the three main high roads that run through the Duchy of Ysser. The River Kambur meanders through the eastern portion of the city following the foot of a series of limestone Charisma (Deception)s capped by chert gravel, though these have been mostly built over or covered in gardens during the city's centuries of existence. The river serves to separate the high-born, noble, and affluent neighborhoods from the lower city below.

The city is ruled in name by Margravine Cassandra Vanderhaven since the death of her husband the margrave some years earlier, but in truth Duke Kanimar and his advisors hold the true reins of power. While Vanderhaven Manor is a marvelous structure set upon Paldiur Hill and Kast Hall is a vast structure near the river where the City Assembly and Courts meet in session, the duke's castle of Esterby at the northern edge of the city is clearly where the seat of government lies. What the duke chooses not to dictate he passes on to the city officials to oversee at the margravine's behest. In truth, the margravine has little to do with the day-to-day running of the city, and as long the high sheriff keeps lawlessness to an acceptable level on the streets and the city taxes continue to fill the duchy's coffers the duke gives the city functionaries are fairly free hand. This has made the city government extremely susceptible to corruption and infiltration by such entities as the Underguild and the Cult of Grox, but they are smart enough to use their influence lightly in order to not rock the boat.

With a population of its size, Tourse has temples and churches of virtually every religion common to central Akados and a great many that are less common. Its most distinguished temple is also its greatest local representative of the High Church of Foere in the Bastion of Righteous Decree, the Temple of Archeillus, the Foerdewaith god of noble rule. It is the oldest temple in the city and was established by the original duke and patronized by the dukes of House Passur for many generations. This patronage has steadily declined (as has the rectitude of the city in general), through succeeding dukes of lower moral fiber. The current duke has only darkened the door of the venerable edifice twice for his own weddings and on a handful of other state occasions. If he were more familiar with its current hierarchy, he might find it much more in line with his own proclivities than the stuffy, dogmatic, pomp that he imagines. The Bastion of Righteous Decree is detailed in **Chapter 2** of this adventure.

The other church in the city with the greatest following is the much newer House of the Revealed Sun, a temple of Mitra[LL5- 241], god of law, justice, and the sun, that stands in the lower portion of the city that has grown substantially in the last 40 years and stands in direct competition with the older, more traditional Foerdewaith faiths of Solanus[LL2 - 16] (goddess of the sun and healing and patroness of neighboring Reme) and Thyr[LL1 - 169] (god of law and justice). Though accepted as a part of the High Church of Foere in other parts of the Kingdoms of Foere, the staunch traditionalists of Tourse have kept its recognition as such in the Duchy of Ysser. As such, it is seen as an upstart faith of the unwashed masses but has experienced ever-growing popularity among these same masses who have found a true haven of goodness from the pall that touches their city. For his part, High Faithful Thesius Blathe prays continually for divine guidance in the face of the overwhelming shadow that he can sense creeping across his city but cannot put a name to.

TOURSE

A predominantly Neutral metropolis with rampant corruption. It has extensive academic areas, holy sites and is prosperous. It is also a strategically placed city with the dutchy.

The community has been infiltrated by dark forces. They are not numerous or bold enough for the community to be considered hunted, but their presence is nonetheless felt in myriad small ways that cast a shadow over the citizenry.

Government overlord

Population 117,721 (95,000 humans; 13,655 halflings; 6,888 half-elves; 2,178 other)

Notable NPCs

- **Kanimar Passur, Duke of Ysser** (NE male human aristocrat)
- **Cassandra Vanderhaven, Margravine of Tourse** (CE female human vampire)
- **Sir Geromin Vlank, High Sheriff** (LE male half-elf aristocratic swashbuckler)
- **Sir Voltix Calbrough, Bishop of Archeillus** (LN male human cleric of Archeillus[LL5] [actually LE cleric of Grox[MoM]])
- **Thesius Blathe, High Faithful of Mitra** (LG male human cleric of Mitra[LL5].)
- **Corodolan Ielvian, famed painter** (CN male elf)

Magic Shops: If you allow the purchase of magic items in your campaign, Tourse has the following stock refreshed on a monthly basis:

- Common: All
- Uncommon: 3d4 magic items.
- Rare: 2d4 magic items.

The invitation was quite elaborate, silver ink scribed on fine vellum wrapped in velvet ribbon and sealed in wax bearing the dove emblem of the Margrave of Tourse himself…or in this case herself. The old Margrave Vanderhaven having died some handful of years ago, childless, left rule of the city to his young wife, the margravine who now bears the Seal of House Vanderhaven and has used it to invite you to attend her party, though summon might be a better word.

The party is this very evening at Vanderhaven Manor and is to be attended by the usual local luminaries and social elite with the odd inclusion of yourselves. But it was no ordinary invitation because the margravine hinted that she had a special job offer for "heroes of your fine repute and unique skill set" that she wished to discuss with you. The invitation said it was a matter of some delicacy, so she is throwing the party as an excuse to invite a few folk to her manor whose arrival might otherwise raise eyebrows among her political rivals. The offer is described as "lucrative" and "well worth your while", and you were asked to bring your "professional equipment" with you as well. It will be stored during the party, but she wishes for you to leave first thing in the morning from her house if you agree to undertake her proposed engagement.

Now you await her carriage at a fine inn, wearing your best apparel and what armaments and equipment you feel are suitable for such an occasion. Several heavy trunks with strong padlocks are stacked nearby holding the rest of your adventuring gear, the keys kept safely upon your persons. When the carriage arrives to transport you, the footmen are to load the trunks atop it so that it will be on hand at the manor should you choose to accept the margravine's offer, and the carriage will await you there in case you should choose to depart instead. The margravine's invitation went so far as to vouchsafe your equipment in case it should be harmed or stolen while you attend her ball, and with the seal it is clearly legally binding, but you assume it is more for your own peace of mind than any real need or risk. The cost of replacing or restoring your paltry gear to someone with the resources of the Magravine of Tourse would scarcely be noticeable in her monthly spending, so you have no fear of intent to divest you of your meager possessions.

The clatter of hooves on cobbles signals the approach of the finely liveried carriage. You make one final check to straighten cravats and brush lint from coats as you prepare to meet the ruler of the city and find out what she has in mind for you.

CHAPTER ONE: THE MARGRAVINE VANDERHAVEN

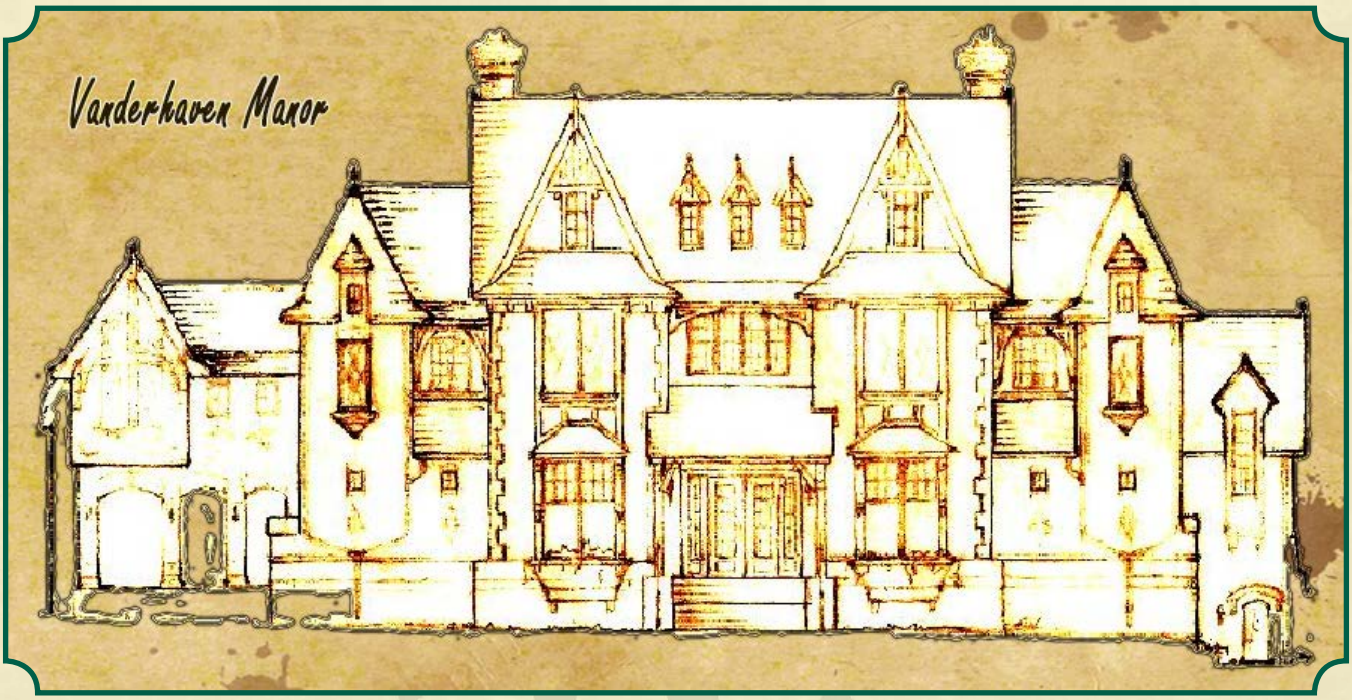
The first part of the adventure takes place at Vanderhaven Manor as the party attends the margravine's gala and in the hours that follow. As such this initial portion consists of a series of events that occur during and after the festivities. These are detailed under **Events at the Manor** below. In addition, a description of Vanderhaven Manor's rooms is provided as well. Refer to the map of Vanderhaven Manor and the room descriptions below as the PCs arrive at the manor and participate in the party.

A. VANDERHAVEN MANOR

Vanderhaven Manor was built on Paldiur Hill three generations ago, replacing a smaller, more defensively constructed keep at the edge of the upper city. Nevertheless, the manor is still a well-secured home, with a formidable quantity of antiques, art, and treasures on display or squirreled away here and there. The image of a dove is found throughout the manor. A DC 17 Intelligence (History) check recognizes that the dove has been the crest of House Vanderhaven since the earliest days of the duchy.

Vanderhaven Manor has exterior walls of mortared stone and interior walls of plaster and lathe over heavy oak. Doors are of sturdy wood and most can be locked, though only a few generally are. Keys are held by the margravine, Forsythee, and any house occupants that would require access to a room. Only the margravine holds keys for rooms A6, A19, and A25. Ceilings in rooms are 15 feet high, and rooms are lit by a combination of glass-paned windows, oil lamps, and chandeliers unless otherwise noted. All windows are closed and locked with inside latches unless a room description says otherwise. Rooms have parquet wood floors, those these are often covered by carpets.

- **Exterior Masonry Wall**: 1 ft. thick; Damage Threshold 8; hp 90; Break DC 35 Strength; Strength (Athletics) DC 20 to climb.
- **Interior Wooden Wall**: 6 in. thick; Damage Threshold 5; hp 60; Break DC 20 Strength; Strength (Athletics) DC 22 to climb.
- **Strong Wooden Door**: 2 in. thick; Damage Threshold 5; hp 20; Break DC 25 Strength (if locked); Dexterity (Thieves Tools) DC 25 to climb.



- **Leaded Glass Window**: 1 in. thick; Damage Threshold 1; hp 1; Break DC 10; Dexterity (Thieves Tools) 15.

A1. FOYER

Massive double doors of polished dark oak bound in brass open into a wide foyer. A high-domed ceiling with a crystalline chandelier dangles in this entryway. To each side of large, elaborate archways is a grand double staircase with a series of doves intricately carved along each railing that sweeps upward to a carpeted balcony.

A2. GREAT ROOM

This is a massive room with multiple columns of wood carved into slender spirals that ascend to the coffered ceiling above. Many doors open off to the sides as well as a pair of large double doors that opens out onto a terrace overlooking the grounds behind the manor. A grand balcony runs along the south side of the room 15 feet above.

A3. GALLERY

This room is filled with rare artwork collected by the Vanderhaven Margraves for generations. There are several thousand gold pieces worth of art in here, though it is bulky in the form of large painting, statuary, etc. If the PCs elected to steal it they would not only find themselves at odds with the margravine but with the city itself, as much of it is technically city property.

A4. MUSIC BOX CHAMBER

This high-domed room has a large music box set in the center of its floor. This ingenious mechanism has a cylinder crank that can be wound up and released to play a movement from a well-known Foerdewaith opera in tinkling tones and ringing bells. Around the edges of the chamber are simple wooden automata in the form of shepherds, flocks, huntsmen, and satyrs who dance in time with the music. The entire clockwork contraption is built into the floor and walls of the chamber and is worth many thousands of gold pieces, but it is intrinsically a part of the room. It is also extremely delicate and prone to breaking down. Arrayed around the edges of the room with a good view of the display are a number of elegant chairs with white-cushioned seats.

The mechanism of the clockworks buried under the floor hide another secret that is unlikely to be found unless the entire contraption is disassembled and closely examined. Small vents exist at the bottom of the hollows where the clockwork mechanisms lie. These lead down through the earth 10 feet and open into the ceiling of area **A26**. The vents can only be discovered if the clockwork mechanism is removed and the subfloor cavities closely examined with a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check. Other than that, likely the only way to locate them is to witness someone in gaseous form using them to gain access to the crypt below (see **Event 10** in **Chapter 3**).

A5. LIBRARY

Four large windows let the outside light fill this chamber. A long table surrounded by leather-cushioned chairs sits in front of a great fireplace on the room's west wall, and massive shelves with thousands of books line the room's remaining wall-space. A pair of openings to the east are accessed by small marble stairs whose oak finials are in the grinning likeness of the mischievous god Pan.

A6. CONSERVATORY

Though the doors to this chamber bear a veneer of fine wood, they are actually made of iron and secured by superior double locks (requiring two successful Dexterity [Thieves' Tools] checks). They are also airtight, preventing even a creature in gaseous form from bypassing them.

Locked Iron Doors: 2 in. thick; Hardness 10; hp 60; Break DC 28; Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) DC 40.

Beautiful and intricate stained-glass windows create the ceiling of this two-story room. The glass depicts a dove flying triumphantly through a rain of blood, as a symbol of victory in battle. The tiny panes of colored glass cast myriad beams of tinted light about the room. At regular intervals along the second-floor balcony, alcoves line the walls bearing displays of treasures and objets d'art. In the center of the chamber's floor is a raised circular dais with a pedestal bearing a delicately crafted, life-sized silver dove.

Treasure: The *silver dove* on the pedestal is a *figurine of wondrous power* that functions as a *silver raven*, though its form is that of a dove. It is a household relic and is recognizable anywhere in the city as belonging to the Vanderhavens. Within each of the second-floor alcove are the treasures of the Vanderhaven family. The margravine has sold off many of the original treasures since the death of her husband, but has been quite successful in business and investment as well (both legal and shady) so that one of the alcoves holds only a locked iron chest containing 5,800 gp, 2,340 sp, and 100 pp. The other treasures on display include a *+1 bastard sword of sharpness* with the image of a dove set in enamel in its hilt, a suit of *+2 full plate*, a *wand of cone of cold* (see **Appendix D**) in an intricate wand case made of leather with platinum filigree (worth 320 gp), and a finely crafted masterwork lute (worth 850 gp).

Locked Iron Chest: Hardness 10; hp 30; Break DC 26; Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) 30.

A7. LIVING ROOM

Sculptures and paintings decorate this area, their subjects ranging from the grisly to the erotic. Cushioned chairs and short tables holding small crates of smoking pipes line each wall.

A8. GUEST ROOM

Each of these rooms is identical. A large four-poster bed sits atop a plush area rug. Next to a broad armoire, a bookcase holds a few leather-bound books and small curios. A dresser and tall mirror occupy the opposite corner, and several paintings of serene landscapes hang from the walls. Each room sleeps two comfortably and can manage three or four with some crowding.

A9. TERRACE

This balcony provides a phenomenal view of the city below. The balcony's ornate balustrade is carven with doves in flight, and its tiled floor is highly polished and well cared for.

A10. STUDY

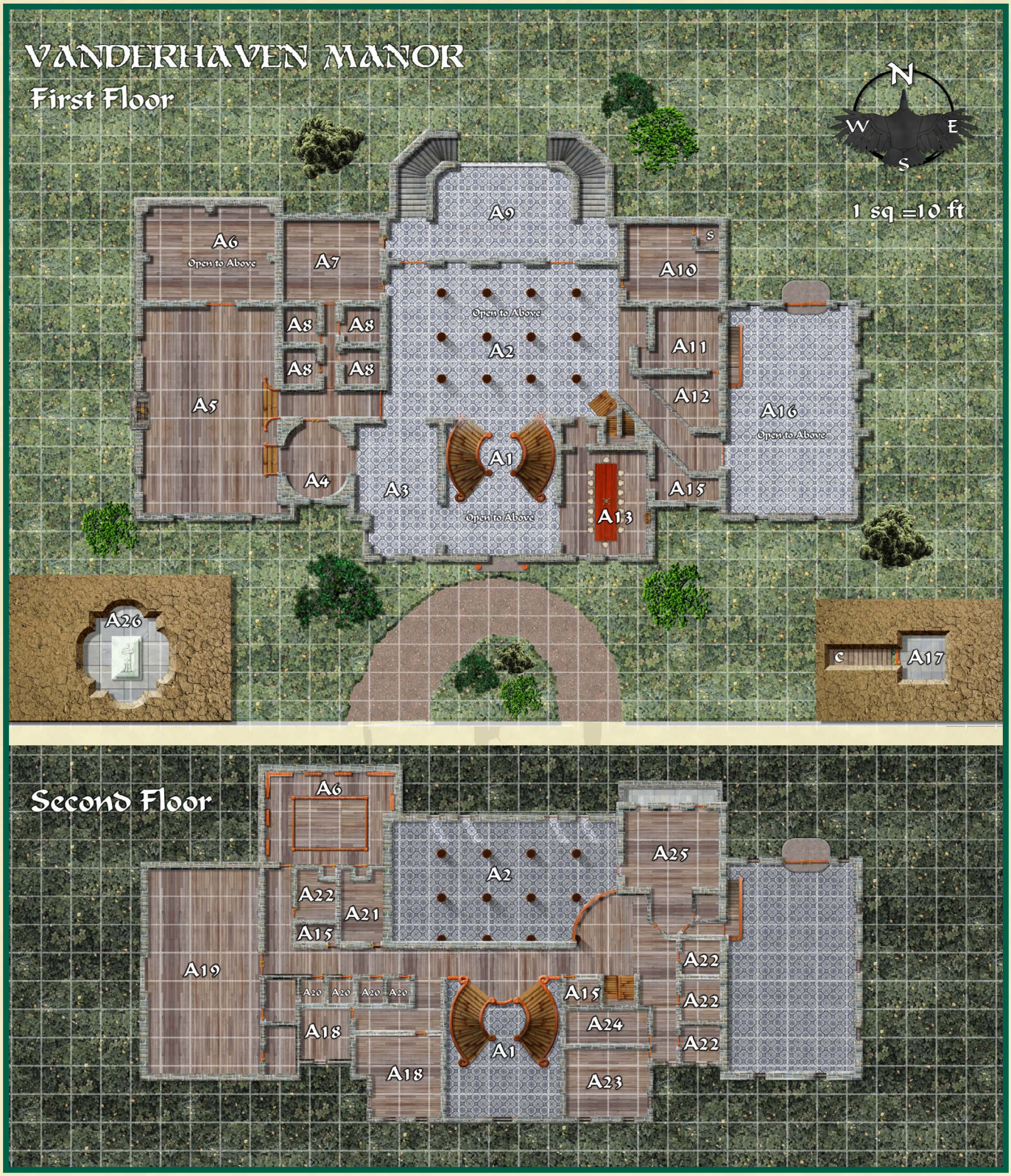
This chamber is lined with tall bookshelves. At a glance, the subjects of the books lining its shelves seem to be mainly art, history, and popular works of horror fiction. A mahogany writing desk sits along the wall, its surface covered in maps of the duchy and surrounding regions with notes scrawled on them, though none of these are of any particular interest. One older volume entitled *A Treatise on Talismans and Charms of the Second Century*[FGG2 - 70] (worth 105 gp) lies among these. A secret drawer in the desk (Wisdom [Perception] DC 25) contains a map of the City of Tourse with the local cathedral of Archeillus, the Bastion of Righteous Decree, circled in reddish ink (human blood!) and a note scrawled in black ink (regular ink) at the bottom that reads:

"The tales of the shroud are real! The Groxites hold it within the temple vault. It holds the key to overcoming the curse of vampirism."

At the back of the study is a closet containing writing supplies as well as the apparatus for amateur bookbinding (not used in some time). Hidden beneath this bookbinding apparatus is a secret door in the floor that can be found with a DC 30 Wisdom (Perception) check. It accesses area **A17**.

A11. KITCHEN

This large kitchen is immaculately clean and fastidiously ordered. Pots arranged in perfect rows by size hang from a rack suspended from the ceiling over a large preparation table. A large oven stands in the room's northeast corner.


VANDERHAVEN MANOR
First Floor
N
W
E
S
1 sq =10 ft
A6
Open to Above
A7
A9
S
A10
A8
A8
A8
A8
Open to Above
A2
A11
A12
A5
A16
Open to Above
A1
A4
A3
A15
Open to Above
A13
A26
C
A17
Second Floor
A6
A25
A2
A22
A21
A15
A19
A22
A20
A20
A20
A20
A15
A22
A18
A24
A1
A22
A18
A23

A12. LARDER

Enormous boxes of foodstuffs, wine casks, barrels of salted meats, jars of spices, and other supplies are stored here. Stacked in one corner are 10 small wine crates, each holding 4 bottles of a Coutaine merlot. Each of these wine bottles are laced with Cassandra's vampiric blood (Forsythe used a needle to inject her blood through each cork, noticeable to anyone examining the bottles with a DC 30 Wisdom [Perception] check). This quantity in each is sufficient to be noticed with a detect poison. Drinking any of this wine causes the imbiber to suffer a –4 penalty to Wisdom saving throws against the margravine's charm ability.

A13. DINING ROOM

A long, polished mahogany table dominates the center of the room. Ten high-backed chairs surround the table, each one bearing a carving of a dove resting its head within its feathers. The table and chairs sit upon a thick rug with a spiral pattern in shades of white, silver, and bronze.

A14. CLOAKROOM

This inconspicuous tunnel-like chamber lies beyond arches that extend between the dining room (**A13**) and the great room (**A2**). The walls on either side bear hooks for hats, cloaks, and coats, and there are two cane stands for canes and walking sticks. In one corner a small wooden shelf provides space for muddy boots and shoes.

A15. POWDER ROOM

This is a privy complete with wooden seat and porcelain basin as well as a mirror above a washstand and cupboard holding fine soaps, expensive powders, cosmetics, and flowery perfume. Bundles of sweet-smelling dried herbs hang from the back of the door.

A16. GRAND BALLROOM

This long, vaulted room is exquisitely furnished with beautiful oaken side tables, fine tapestries, and rows of tall, slender candelabras that bathe the room in a rich warm glow. Numerous windows, each rising nearly twenty feet high, line the walls. The upper halves—stained glass with scenes of doves and birds of prey—contrast with the polished wooden louvers of the lower halves, which are currently open to allow cool air into the room. A recessed alcove at the north end bears a small dais where musicians can perform. A narrow stair climbs to a balcony high on the west wall.

This hall is quite crowded when the PCs first arrive at the manor (see **Event 2** below).

A17. TORTURE CHAMBER

Accessed through the floor of the study closet (**A10**), a subterranean stair descends 20 feet into a hidden, brick-lined cellar. The walls are lined with rows of sadistic implements and tools. Every sort of torture device imaginable is present in this room. The floor and walls are stained black from years of work performed in the room. Aside from the torture implements, there is a wardrobe here that holds a few of the margravine's most prized dresses. These are white dresses she wore when she worked her torturer's arts. The margravine sees the spattered stains as works of art in their own right.

A18. LUXURY GUEST ROOM

Each of these rooms is identical in furnishings though of different size and shape. They are all lavishly furnished with a large, goose down canopy bed, stylish recamier couches, plush chairs, a round marble-topped table with four high-backed chairs and a full silver tea set, two spacious cedar wardrobes and various art objects hanging from the walls and upon small tables and pedestals. All sit upon thick carpets of the finest qualities. The contents of these rooms are worth 1d6 x 500 gp apiece, though they are bulky and difficult to steal. The margravine opens these rooms to only the most distinguished guests. Each is designed for two to three guests but can easily accommodate a half dozen in comfort.

A19. NEW SERVANTS' CRYPT

The doors to this room are identical to those in area **A6**, though they are not airtight (i.e. creatures in gaseous form can pass through the narrow crack beneath them). Beyond are a large windowless, unlit chamber and two smaller storage rooms that once served as a gaming room in the original days of the manor. Now the billiard and card tables have been haphazardly stacked in the storage rooms and left to collect dust. The chamber's high ceiling is decorated with a massive painting of the night sky with a large moon at its center. A long-cold fireplace stands across from the door, and the chamber is otherwise bare except for eight ornate black coffins, lined in crimson velvet, arrayed before the fireplace. A small amount of grave dirt has been placed in the lining of each coffin but is not noticeable unless the velvet interior is torn open to reveal its presence. Even without discovering the dirt, a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check (or automatic for anyone with an exceptionally keen sense of smell), this dirt gives the coffins a faint charnel odor.

These coffins have not yet been used and are intended for the magravine's newest vampire servitors; e.g., the PCs (see **Events 6** and **7** for more information).

A20. SERVANTS' QUARTERS

Each of these rooms is sparsely furnished with a bed, small dresser, and nightstand as befits the room of a household servant. There is a 20% chance (80% at night) of encountering a **house servant** (N male or female human) if this room is explored before **The Afterlife** below. If an encounter is rolled the servant will immediately ask if he or she can help the PC and will make every attempt to accommodate a PC's wishes. All house servants have been dominated by the margravine and will reveal no secrets of the lady, preferring death over disloyalty.

A21. BUTLER'S QUARTERS

The door to this chamber is locked with Forsythe and the margravine holding the only keys. Within the room is sparsely furnished yet still feels dingy and small. A simple bed and mattress are along one wall, and a wardrobe contains the clean and immaculately pressed uniforms of the butler. Everything is grimy and stained, including the walls and floors. The whole chamber has an odor reminiscent of decomposition and stale sweat, and anyone making a DC 23 Wisdom (Perception) check locates a secret compartment in the wardrobe holding the partially eaten corpses of two rats where Forsythe has attempted to replicate the sensation of when the margravine allows him to drink of her blood. Forsythe is rarely found in this chamber in the time before **Event 7** and has abandoned the house with his mistress by the time of **The Afterlife**.

A22. EMPTY BEDROOM

These dusty rooms hold nothing more than sheet-draped furnishings of high quality but outdated styles. They once served as bedrooms for family members for margraves past, though all have been disused since the deaths of Margrave Alhpert's children in a small outbreak of the Red Plague in Tourse several decades ago.

A23. LAUNDRY

A fireplace on the east wall heats water for two large copper wash tubs. Tables surround this holding scouring stones, wash boards, buckets of lye soap, buckets of urine for bleaching, folding tables, and drying racks.

A24. SEWING ROOM AND LINEN STORAGE

The house linens are stored in this chamber after laundering as well as any out-of-season clothing, neatly folded in large cedar chests. A table in the corner has an oil lamp and implements for sewing and seaming.

A25. MASTER SUITE

The walls of this comfortable bedroom glitter with mosaic inlays. On either side of the door are elaborate bas-reliefs rendered in marble, depicting doves and sunrises. A bed frame of white marble veined with red and adorned with a plushly appointed bed occupies the center of the room.

Locked doors lead from this room into the upper hallway and onto the balcony overlooking **A16**. Another door leads to a massive closet filled with elegant clothing of aristocratic quality. These are the equivalent of 12 courtier's outfits. In addition a jewelry box holds 3,500 gp in assorted jewelry.

This room is immaculately kept, with the exception of a large blood stain on the mattress underneath the bed sheets which can be discovered with a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check or anyone stating that they strip the bed sheets off. The stain serves as the only remnant of Cassandra's violent attack on her husband the former Margrave of Tourse. Since that time, her husband's spirit has lingered here. She rarely lingers in this chamber except to keep up appearances with guests, as it serves as a reminder of her once weak, mortal self. Anyone coming close to the bed triggers the Margrave's **ghost** to appear in his hateful rage; this rage increases his hit points to 80 and grants him a +1 bonus on attack rolls and saving throws (increasing his Challenge to 5). He does not manifest when the margravine is present, as he still fears her even in death.

GHOST OF MARGRAVE ALHPERT

hp 80 (see Ghost[SRD])

A26. SECRET CRYPT

It is unlikely that this chamber will be discovered prior to **Event 10** in **Chapter 3**.

This underground chamber has walls of fine masonry bearing beautifully carved and painted bas reliefs of ranks of angels locked in battle with hordes of devils. At the center of this carven throng is a pure white dove with blood upon its beak. In the center of the chamber on a raised stone dais is a large, elaborate iron coffin. Behind the coffin lie scattered coins of gold and silver, jewelry, and books.

This room can only be accessed through tiny vents in the ceiling that lead to the music room above (area A4). The iron coffin is the daily resting place of the margravine and is locked from within, but two tiny openings can be discovered at the foot of the coffin with a DC 30 Wisdom (Perception) that allow her to enter in gaseous form when needed. In addition, the coffin's lid is hollow and bears

a trap. If anyone tries to force the lid of the coffin open, they merely pull away this initial false top to reveal a **blood pudding** (a variant black puddingSRD) trapped within that immediately attacks. Only after the false lid has been removed can a second attempt be made to force open the true lid underneath.

Locked Iron Coffin: 2 in. thick; Hardness 10; hp 60; Break DC 28 (see above); Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) 35.

BLOOD PUDDING

hp 85 (see **page 109**)

Treasure: Within this crypt chamber lie some of the margravine's most prized possessions. Piled on the floor are 5,020 gp, 8,500 sp, and 10,800 cp. Scattered among the coins are various gemstones worth a total of 6,000 gp, and a few pieces of her late husband's gear including a +2 *greatsword* and the margrave's +2 *mithral breastplate*. Within the coffin are a few books on torture, the history of the Vanderhaven family, and the layout of the Tourse sewer system. In addition, there is a deed to the manor and a marriage license (signed by the Margravine, but unsigned by a groom). This license was Cassandra's marriage proposal to her progenitor, before she became angered and destroyed him.

EVENTS AT THE MANOR

The following events occur at specific times or when triggered by specific activities of the PCs in Vanderhaven Manor.

EVENT 1: ARRIVAL

The plush seats absorb the minor bumps of the road as the luxurious carriage speeds along. The city's sprawl thins out ahead as the road climbs towards the posh homes of Paldiur Hill, revealing a wide avenue. The street passes through a gate of coiled wrought iron into which depictions of doves have been elaborately cast. The roadway turns and runs along a gravel turnabout in front of a large mansion. The manor is one of the more impressive buildings within Tourse. The large two-story structure has an exterior wall consisting of courses of irregular ragstone, while its corners and window arches are made from finely shaped granite. Compared to the lower windows, the windows at higher levels are larger and more elaborate, bearing distinctive chevron carvings around their arches. Central to the manor is the massive stained-glass window depicting a large dove in flight looking down from above the main doors.



A DC 17 Intelligence (History) check recognizes that the dove has been the crest of House Vanderhaven since the earliest days of the duchy.

The carriage approaches Vanderhaven Manor and drops off the PCs at the front door. A group of 2 footmen (N male human guardsSRD) and 4 house servants (N male or female human commonerSRD) gather near the carriage by the manor's front entrance. As a valet opens the door to the carriage, Forsythe, the house steward, welcomes the PCs.

"Welcome honored guests, I am the steward of House Vanderhaven. My mistress, the Margravine Cassandra Vanderhaven, bids you greetings. You may ask for me by my name, Forsythe, and I will be at your service."

With that, Forsythe dips into a low bow and begins walking them to the door, as another servant opens the main doors to the mansion. The footmen remain with the carriage and the PCs' trunks of equipment, pending their acceptance or rejection of the margravine's offer. Forsythe appears to be, and is, by all abilities to detect, a human. Unknown to all but the margravine, Forsythe is her **sycophant** (see **Appendix A**). He appears as a human male of average height in his mid-thirties, with dull brown eyes, a thick nose, stubby hands and narrow shoulders. He is richly dressed and wears a powdered wig. Forsythe shows the PCs through the foyer (**A1**) and past the great room (**A2**), into the grand ballroom (**A16**) where other guests already mingle. He leaves them there and returns to his duties. Though the PCs can briefly glimpse the rooms as they pass through, they will not have time

for a closer inspection until later. Proceed with **Event 2** when the PCs arrive in the ballroom. See **Appendix A** for details of vampire sycophants. Forsythe's unique blood rage abilities increase his Challenge to 5.

FORSYTHE

Hp 82 (see **Appendix A,** page 555, plus see below)

Blood Rage. At the start of his turn, Forsythe can gain advantage on all melee weapon attack rolls and a +2 bonus on damage rolls during that turn, but attack rolls against him have advantage until the start of its next turn.

Blood Sense. Forsythe can precisely locate living creatures with blood within 10 feet. He does not have disadvantage on attacks he makes against such creatures that he cannot see, and they do not have advantage on attacks against him.

Uncanny Dodge. When an attacker Forsythe can see hits him with an attack, he can use his reaction to halve the attack's damage.

EVENT 2: THE PARTY

The festivities seem concentrated here at the moment, the room crowded shoulder-to-shoulder with party guests sipping wine from tall glasses and laughing. The chamber is filled with men and women dressed in expensive outfits. Some are dressed in regal armor and the accoutrement of knights, while others seem to be competing at how little they can wear, walking a fine line between fashion and indecency. Music from a group of minstrels on the northern dais competes with the raucous noise of merrymaking. The woman you assume to be your host, a slender middle-aged woman with high cheekbones, patrician nose, arched brows, and a head of luxuriant, stark-white hair, stands at the far end of the room surrounded by a small group of guests laughing at her every joke.

At this point the PCs find themselves among roughly 100 guests in the grand ballroom, many already intoxicated. This can be used as a roleplaying encounter, and the PCs can mingle with other party attendees or even get to know one another if they only recently met. They have only a short time before the beginning of **Event 3**. In that time can attempt to make their way to the margravine or interact with a few nearby NPC guests of note.

Development: If the PCs try to reach Margravine Vanderhaven immediately, they will only make it roughly halfway to her position before **Event 3** occurs. PCs who are intent on reaching the margravine will be surprised at the beginning of **Event 3**. PCs that instead choose to socialize can talk one of the following three guests who are close at hand. Details of these guests and what they know are given below, but more importantly, each PC engaged in socializing may make a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check to notice he Underguild agents in **Event 3** enter the ballroom behind them. PCs that successfully spot them entering can then make a DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check to realize they are trying to reach the margravine and appear to have malicious intent. At this point, a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) notices the flash of a blade concealed by the sleeve of one of the men. If at least one of these checks is successful, that PC is not surprised and can join the initiative order normally in Event 3. If at least two checks are successful, that PC actually gains surprise on the agents and can act before they themselves gain surprise on anyone else.

Social Encounters: Choose one of these three guests for PCs that seek to socialize or roll 1d3 to randomly determine which is encountered.

Corodolan Ielvian[FGG2 - 51] (CN male elf noble[SRD]) is a painter and artist of some renown who resides in Tourse. His works are well known in neighboring Coutaine and can even be found as far afield as Courghais. Corodolan is an indolent and laconic artist who, with a centuries-long lifespan before him, gives off an air of eternal boredom. He sighs heavily in conversations and makes frequent comments about the "pointlessness of it all" interrupted by occasional dropped references to his own works. He is generally unpleasant to talk to for more than a few minutes, but if the PCs succeed on a DC 22 Charisma (Persuasion) or Wisdom (Insight) check or a DC 15 Charisma (Performance) or other art-related ability, skill, or tool check, they make a favorable impression with the ephemeral artist.

Claudius Camrid (LN male human noble[SRD]), a short, stout man with a large white beard wearing elegantly tailored clothes and a silver hawk pendant. He is a wealthy banker always willing to give financial advice but is somewhat out of his depth among the cutthroat elite of Tourse. If the PCs succeed on a DC 17 Charisma (Persuasion) or Intelligence (History) check or a DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check they make a favorable impression on him.

Lady Ranee Galatry (CG female human noble[SRD]) is a tall, willowy woman who wears intricate gold jewelry and a red velvet gown. One of the duchy's premier operatic singers,

she speaks in a sonorous voice that belies her slender frame and holds forth at great length about the secretly satirical quality of sculptures by the unappreciated sculptor Ansiphian[H1 - 37] and their value to modern-day literary criticism. If the PCs succeed on a DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion), Charisma (Performance) or other art-related ability, skill, or tool check, or a DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) or Intelligence (History) check, they make a favorable impression with this diva.

The results of making a favorable impression on one or more of these individuals is discussed in **Concluding the Adventure**.

EVENT 3: PARTY CRASHERS

A trio of Underguild agents have infiltrated the party. They are casing the manor, checking its security to see if how they can get close enough to the margravine to assassinate her. When they spot the margravine in the open, they rashly decide to go ahead and make an assassination attempt and then slip away in the ensuing chaos and panic. The PCs enter the grand ballroom just ahead of the agents. See Event 2 for the chances of the party spotting the agents before they make their attack. Because of the crowded conditions, movement is considered difficult terrain and anyone not in an adjacent square has cover — improved cover if they are Small or choose to crouch down among the people. In any case no one can get closer to the margravine than 5 feet because of the mass of guests defending her (see "Development" below).

UNDERGUILD ASSASSIN

Hp 78 (as assassin[SRD])

UNDERGUILD AGENTS (2)

Hp 27 (as spy[SRD])

Tactics: The Underguild assassin and agents have fought and trained together for many years. They use a special Pack Attack ability to help them surround a single target and take it down before moving on to a new target. They are not used to noblemen giving any sort of resistance, but if the PCs join in, they fight to the death to complete their mission.

- ***Pack Attack***. The Underguild agents (including the assassin) have advantage on attack rolls against a creature if at least one of their fellow agents is within 5 feet of the creature and the agent isn't incapacitated.

Development: If the PCs do not attempt to help the margravine when the agents draw their weapons, other partygoers leap in front of her. She has either dominated those guests closest to her or has cast *charm person* on them at some previous point. In addition, 2d4 of her servants led by Forsythe rush to her aid in the third round of combat and throw themselves in front of her to block the attackers from reaching her. The margravine is able to entirely avoid the reach of the assassins with these distractions and will quickly make her way through the crowd (which easily parts for her, causing no penalty to her movement), ascends the stair, and passes through the locked door into area **A25** while the party and other partygoers take care of the problem. Once the party gets involved in the battle, Forsythe and the other servants step back and just try to contain the battle, only joining in again if things start to turn against the PCs.

Shortly after the battle is concluded, city watchmen will arrive (having been summoned the moment the attack began but only arriving now) who will take the bodies of the attackers into custody and ask a few questions. They will mainly deal with Forsythe, as the margravine will not emerge from her sequester, and are extremely conscious of the powerful individuals present at the margravine's soiree. As such they will keep their questions short and polite, mainly taking names of those present for future inquiry and praising the quick thinking and heroic actions of the PCs and any others who assisted in thwarting the assassination. In less than a half hour they will depart with the bodies in tow and promises to investigate the matter with the full resources of the city watch.

Treasure: Hidden in the pommel of one of the assassin's shortswords is a *pin of shared pain* (see **Appendix B**).

EVENT 4: MEETING THE MARGRAVINE

After the occurrences of **Event 3**, the PCs have certainly drawn the attention of their host. **Margravine Cassandra Vanderhaven** emerges from her rooms shortly after the watchmen have left and urges the partygoers to continue to make merry and enjoy the festivities. The attendees are only too happy to do so, though with a somewhat subdued air. As the party regains its momentum, the margravine makes her way over to the PCs to thank them for their valiant bravery and for saving her very life.

The margravine is a tall, slender woman dressed in a gown of purist white with a luxuriant powdered wig. Her lips are a bright cherry red in contrast to her pallor. A smattering of tasteful jewelry of obviously fine make completes her ensemble. If her cheeks appear a bit hollow



and her eyes perhaps slightly sunken with fatigue or illness, it is more than compensated for by her radiant smile upon approaching you.

"My dears, I cannot thank you enough!" the margravine declares. "I simply do not know what I would have done if it weren't for the bravery you've shown. I apologize for the need for such secrecy, but with the skills I had suspected, and you have now amply demonstrated, I implore you to stay with me after the party and enjoy my hospitality here at Vanderhaven Manor. We have matters of great import to discuss."

To all appearances, **Margravine Cassandra Vanderhaven** (see **page 82**) has the appearance of a middle-aged human woman. That she is secretly a vampire is kept hidden through disguise and her natural charisma and long experience of playing the part of the mortal aristocrat. To detect the margravine's ruse requires either magic or a DC 35 Wisdom (Insight) check. Since her disguise is not of a physical nature, a Wisdom (Perception) check is not able to detect the falsehood in the current setting. In addition, Forsythe remains silently and unobtrusively present while the margravine talks to the PCs and is on alert for any hostile actions taken against her. Any attempts at spellcasting or use of magical abilities on the margravine will be immediately noticed and intercepted or interrupted. A simple DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) or Intelligence (History) check is sufficient to realize that such an action is highly irregular and offensive in polite society. In addition, the margravine maintains a *nondetection* and *undetectable alignment* (as *nondetection* but protects only her alignment from being detected) spells while she mingles with mortals.

If the PCs appear injured, the margravine quickly requests one of the guests, a local clergyman named **Reider Asteri** (LG charmed male human acolyte[SRD] of Mitra 3), to attend to them with all of the healing abilities at his disposal.

Development: Assuming the PCs agree to linger after the party, the margravine goes back to mingling in the crowd for the next hour or two until things wind down. If some or all of the PCs decide not to accept her offer, Cassandra is patient. She doesn't require these particular adventurers for her plans; she will simply wait and find some other rubes to play her pawns at a future date, and this adventure is, for the PCs, effectively over.

EVENT 5: AN IMPASSIONED PLEA

The margravine continues mingling but stays close to the PCs while the party winds down. As the crowd thins, she again approaches the PCs and asks them to join her for a drink in private. She assumes their assent, and with Forsythe in tow, she walks off to her music box chamber (**A4**). There, second servant waits with tray of tall crystal goblets containing a fruity red liqueur. The liqueur is laced with Cassandra's vampire blood, and each PC that ingests any amount of the

beverage has disadvantage on Wisdom saving throws against Cassandra's charm ability for 1 week. The amount of blood in each goblet would show if a PC is using *detect poison*, but as before, casting spells of this type in the company of the margravine would be a horrible faux pas.

As everyone takes their seats with drink in hand, the margravine shows off the room's ingenious apparatus as she activates the clockwork mechanism for the party's entertainment. She opens a large box made of polished oak, reaches to its side and turns a large crank, which causes a grooved, metal cylinder to begin spinning. When she releases the handle a moment later, delicate metal bars extend and gently come to rest upon the cylinder, their vibrations against the cylinder's grooves producing a deep and resounding melody while the clockworks around the room begin their pantomime dance. The entire show takes approximately 5 minutes giving everyone plenty of time to get comfortable and sip the drinks they have been provided. It is assumed all the PCs drink of their beverages unless the player specifically states otherwise. The margravine is careful to not make use of her charm ability in this encounter though, so the PCs should not yet be tipped off that anything is amiss with the drinks.

At the end of the clockwork display, the margravine addresses the party. During this monologue the margravine is attempting to deceive the PCs. However, because of her careful wording her deception is very difficult to detect short of using magic. Even her characterization of her condition as a "hereditary blood disease" bears a core of truth considering the nature of its transmission between master vampire to vampire spawn creating a "family tree" of vampirism. As a result, she has advantage on her Charisma (Deception) check and is effectively taking 10 on her well-rehearsed story requiring a DC 30 Wisdom (Insight) check to see through her ruse. Any such checks should be made secretly by the GM unless the players specifically request to make Wisdom (Insight) checks.

"Friends, I would again like to thank you for intervening in the unpleasantness earlier this evening. The city watch is currently looking into the affair, but currently it appears that some of this city's sordid underworld simply saw the party as an excellent opportunity to sneak assassins in to eliminate me for some of the inconvenient stands I have made for law and order in this city. I'm afraid the criminal world's bottom line has no room for civic duty.

"In any case, though your presence was certainly beneficial, that was not the reason you were invited to the gala to begin with. Instead I had selected your group for the opportunity to help me in an adventurous quest of some import. The compensation is extraordinary, as I do not settle for anything but the best. But before you accept, I would like to share some additional details."

At this point, the Margravine's face becomes stern and her gaze falls. "I have to admit I was born with a...hereditary condition. This condition is blood disease, usually fatal, but which I have managed to stave off for many years thanks to the wealth and resources afforded by my position. However, even with my exceptional resources, I failed to find a cure, and the disease advances to the point where even my resources will no longer be able to avoid its most terminal effects. I have met with every faith within the city and beyond, and none of the clergy had answers or the ability to treat my symptoms. Because of the condition's hereditary nature, it is a 'natural' condition within my body and does not respond to the standard magical cures for ailments. At best such treatments grant me a temporary reprieve from the worst of its ravages. But even now these are becoming less effective, and I can feel my body…failing.

"Please understand, I am no coward. I fear death no more than the next man or woman, but having lost my beloved husband so early and seeing so much still left for me to do for the benefit of this glorious city, I find that I am simply not ready to depart this world."

She looks up and smiles and quickly turns in a graceful movement, billowing her dress.

"I am happy to announce, however, that I have finally discovered some promising news. Through extensive research and the dedication of a considerable portion of my fortune, I finally found a possible answer to my prayers. It is called the Crimson Shroud, an artifact of considerable healing power. It was held for many years within the cathedral of Archeillus as a boon for all people — noble or common alike — to benefit from its healing magic. That was before a change came over the clergy of that venerable church and it was locked away and for allocated for use by those of the nobility of sufficient wealth to bribe the priesthood and then later reserved even further for only those of the highest ranks within the cathedral itself. I'm afraid a dark shroud has come over what was once a bastion of goodness and law within the duchy and kingdoms of old. So you see my purpose is not for my personal interests alone, but also for the good of my entire community. Since it involves the corruption of such a venerable institution, you can no doubt likewise see the need for the absolute discretion that I require.

"My agents were nonetheless able to discover not only the old legends of this artifact but also confirmation of its presence still hidden away within the Bastion of Righteous Decree here in Tourse. I have a message from my agents in my study that…" here she grows ashen, paler than even her normal pallor and falters as she grasps the back of a chair to steady herself.

"It is late, or rather early, and my daily invigorating philters grow weak. I'm afraid I must retire lest I embarrass myself before you with some palsy or fit of discomfiture. Besides with strenuous

nature of what lies before you, I believe we can all use the rest. We can continue this discussion and address your compensation tomorrow over breakfast. I've taken the liberty to arrange for your lodging here in Vanderhaven Manor for the duration of this mission to provide you with some protection against the nefarious forces at work within the city that would seek to undo me."

She rubs the bridge of her nose with her thumb and forefinger, and her form visibly slumps. "Forsythe, if you could show them to their rooms, please."

Forsythe pauses and watches his mistress for a moment with clear concern on his face as she gracefully departs the chamber for her upstairs apartment and then motions for you to follow with a low bow. "This way, please," Forsythe says. "Your rooms are next to one another on the second floor."

As you follow the margravine's manservant up the sweeping stairs he takes up the narrative where his mistress left off. "The fact of the matter, as the margravine was about to explain, is that the clergy of Archeillus in Tourse were infiltrated years ago by followers of Grox[MoM - 90], the Deep Father. Their infiltration is complete and undetected save for the recent investigations of my mistress, and the entire cathedral is now staffed by their foul ilk. It is they who hold the shroud hostage from the people to whom it rightfully belongs, and it is they who should be exposed to the light of day and the judgment they deserve."

Forsythe leads the PCs up the grand stairs in area **A1** and guides them to the rooms labelled **A18**. He provides the PCs with a key to each room and informs them that fresh washbasins and a light snack have been left in each room to satisfy their needs for the night. He informs them that breakfast is served at sunrise in the manor's dining room, as the mistress is an early riser, and to look for him at in his quarters next to the balcony (**A21**) if they need anything else. He then retires to his own room and allows the PCs to organize themselves in the two guest chambers however they see fit. They can even all choose to stay in a single room if they so choose.

PCs making a DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check recognize Grox the Deep Father, God of Artifice and Darkness, as a subterranean god primarily revered by duergar, the evil gray dwarves. However, a cult of this chthonian god is known to have sprung up among the Foerdewaith as a secret cult who venerate his mastery of darkness and law in order to pervert the rule of the land in order to manipulate governments and courts to enrich themselves and pursue their own vile agendas beneath the very noses of the authorities they seek to suborn. When cultists of Grox are discovered they are inevitably rooted out and destroyed, but they are difficult to detect and destroy. If the church of Archeillus in Tourse has been corrupted, then this would be a discovery of major importance to the faith and to the Duchy of Ysser as a whole.

EVENT 6: NOCTURNAL VISITATION

The margravine waits until the small hours for all the PCs to be sound asleep before using her gaseous form ability to slip beneath their doors to sneak into their rooms. In gaseous form she is utterly silent and will not awaken any sleepers. Unless the PCs set up defenses to warn or protect themselves while they sleep, she is able to fall upon them with ease. If she detects wakeful guards with her keen senses or magical wards (with detect magic), she passes by that room assuming that once their friends are under her thumb, they will follow be more likely to follow succumb to her as well. For those PCs that do not or cannot sleep, the margravine attempts to dominate them or charm them with spells into docility if necessary after she has dealt with other PCs. Familiars and animal companions will likewise be subdued or, if necessary, killed once the vulnerable PCs have been dealt with. With some or most PCs likely incapacitated, holdouts may play out the encounter as indicated, albeit one heavily weighted in her favor as she is a CR 10 creature. Ideally all of the PCs should succumb to her ministrations, but if this is not possible, see the What If the PCs Don't Play Along? sidebox for suggestions on how to deal with disruptions to the intended course of play.

For those PCs that are asleep or dominated by the margravine, provide the following description to each player individually.

A deep sleep has washed over you in the luxuriant surroundings of the margravine's manor. Sometime during the night, a disturbing image begins to haunt your dreams. Smoke fills the room like roiling fog. Through the haze, a fiendish creature appears, its burning evil eyes piercing the smoke before its fangs rip into your flesh, splattering your blood across the chamber's walls.

This nightmare creature is, of course, is the **Margravine Cassandra Vanderhaven** in her fully revealed vampiric guise (see **page 82**). With a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check, the PC recognizes the feral nightmare as none other than Margravine Cassandra herself. Except for any PCs that are able to resist as described above, there is no reason to fully play out this encounter as the vulnerable PCs find themselves helpless against her ministration. Once the PCs are incapacitated, the margravine fully drains each one of blood and uses her create spawn ability to raise them as enslaved vampire servitors as described under **Event 7** below.

THE MARGRAVINE

The Margravine is a deadly vampire mistress with a cadre of thralls known as vampire sycophants.

MARGRAVINE CASSANDRA VANDERHAVEN

Medium undead, lawful evil
Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 204 (17d8 + 68)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	18 (+4)	18 (+4)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +9, Wis +7, Cha +9
Skills Deception +9, Persuasion +9, Perception +7, Stealth +9
Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Senses Darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 17
Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Elven
Challenge 15 (13,000 XP)

Shapechanger. If the margravine isn't in sunlight or running water, she can use her action to polymorph into a Tiny bat or a Medium cloud of mist, or back into her true form.

While in bat form, the margravine can't speak, her walking speed is 5 feet, and she has a flying speed of 30 feet. Her statistics, other than her size and speed, are unchanged. Anything she is wearing transforms with she, but nothing she is carrying does. She reverts to her true form if she dies.

While in mist form, the margravine can't take any actions, speak, or manipulate objects. She is weightless, has a flying speed of 20 feet, can hover, and can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there. In addition, if air can pass through a space, the mist can do so without squeezing, and she can't pass through water. She has advantage on Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution saving throws, and she is immune to all nonmagical damage, except the damage she takes from sunlight.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the margravine fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

Misty Escape. When she drops to 0 hit points outside her resting place, the margravine transforms into a cloud of mist (as in the Shapechanger trait) instead of falling unconscious, provided that she isn't in sunlight or running water. If she can't transform, she is destroyed.

While she has 0 hit points in mist form, she can't revert to her margravine form, and she must reach her resting place within 2 hours or be destroyed. Once in her resting place, she reverts to her vampire form. She is then paralyzed until she regains at least 1 hit point. After spending 1 hour in her resting place with 0 hit points, she regains 1 hit point.

Regeneration. The margravine regains 20 hit points at the start of her turn if she has at least 1 hit point and isn't in sunlight or running water. If the margravine takes radiant damage or damage from holy water, this trait doesn't function at the start of the margravine's next turn.

Spider Climb. The margravine can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Vampire Weaknesses. The margravine has the following flaws:

- *Forbiddance.* The margravine can't enter a residence without an invitation from one of the occupants.
- *Harmed by Running Water.* The margravine takes 20 acid damage if she ends her turn in running water.
- *Stake to the Heart.* If a piercing weapon made of wood is driven into the margravine's heart

while the margravine is incapacitated in her resting place, the margravine is paralyzed until the stake is removed.

- *Sunlight Hypersensitivity*. The margravine takes 20 radiant damage when she starts her turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, she has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

Spellcasting. The margravine is a 9th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 16, +9 to hit with spell attacks). The margravine has the following wizard spells prepared:

- Cantrips (at will): *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost*
- 1st level (4 slots): *comprehend languages*, *fog cloud*, *sleep*, *sonic scream* (as *burning hands* but thunder damage)
- 2nd level (3 slots): *detect thoughts*, *gust of wind*, *mirror image*, *murderous command* (as the command spell except the target attacks the nearest creature)
- 3rd level (3 slots): *bestow curse*, *nondetection*, *undetectable alignment* (as *nondetection* except she protects her alignment only from being detected)
- 4th level (3 slots): *blight*, *greater invisibility*
- 5th level (1 slot): *dominate person*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. (Vampire Form Only). The margravine makes two attacks, only one of which can be a bite attack.

Unarmed Strike (Vampire Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack*: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 8 (1d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage. Instead of dealing damage, the margravine can grapple the target (escape DC 18).

Bite. (Bat or Vampire Form Only). Melee Weapon Attack:+9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one willing creature, or a creature that is grappled by the margravine, incapacitated, or restrained. *Hit*: 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage plus 10 (3d6) necrotic damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and the margravine regains hit points equal to that amount. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces her hit point maximum to 0. A humanoid slain in this way and then buried in the ground rises the following night as a vampire spawn under the margravine's control.

Charm. The margravine targets one humanoid she can see within 30 feet of her. If the target can see the margravine, the target must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw against this magic or be charmed by the margravine. The charmed target regards the margravine as a trusted friend to be heeded and protected. Although the target isn't under the margravine's control, it takes the margravine's requests or actions in the most favorable way it can, and it is a willing target for the margravine's bite attack.

Each time the margravine or the margravine's companions do anything harmful to the target, it can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success. Otherwise, the effect lasts 24 hours or until the margravine is destroyed, is on a different plane of existence than the target or takes a bonus action to end the effect.

Children of the Night (1/Day). The margravine magically calls 2d4 swarms of bats or rats (swarm of bats, swarm of rats), provided that the sun isn't up. While outdoors, the margravine can call 3d6 wolves (wolf) instead. The called creatures arrive in 1d4 rounds, acting as allies of the margravine and obeying her spoken commands. The beasts remain for 1 hour, until the margravine dies, or until the margravine dismisses them as a bonus action.

REACTIONS

Instinctive Charm. The margravine tries to magically divert an attack made against her, provided that the attacker is within 30 feet of her and visible to her. Cassandra must decide to do so before the attack hits or misses. The attacker must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the attacker targets the creature closest to it, other than Cassandra or itself. If multiple creatures are closest, the attacker chooses which one to target.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

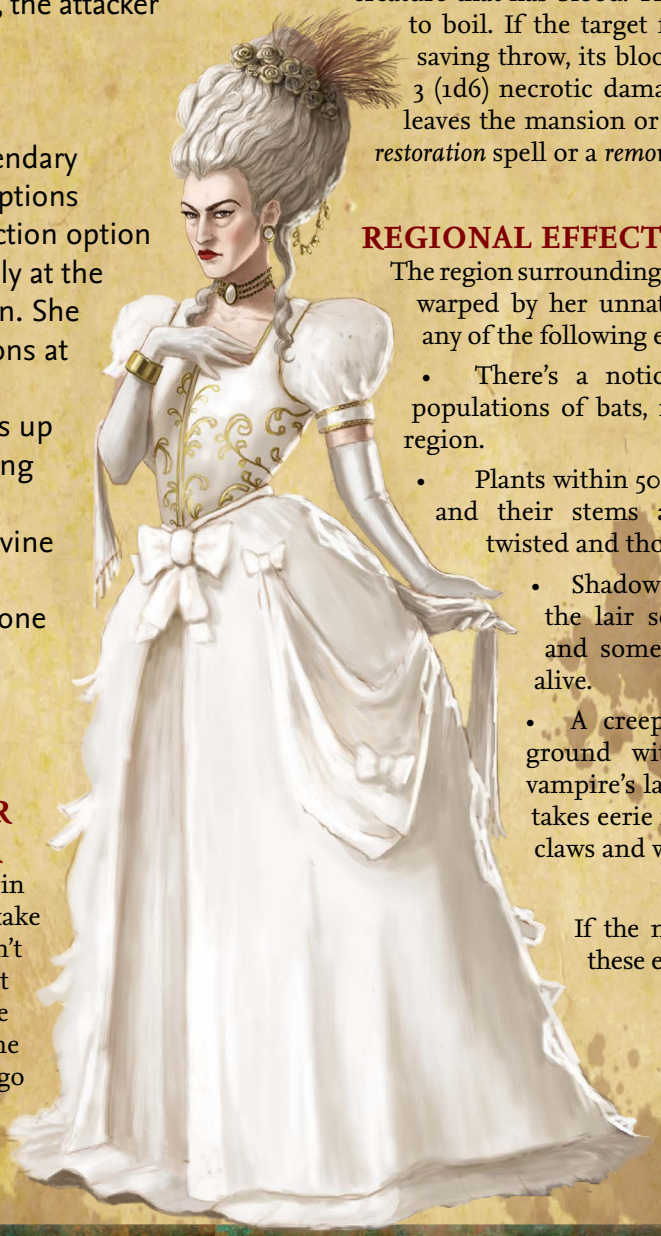
The margravine can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. She regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

- **Move.** The margravine moves up to her speed without provoking opportunity attacks.
- **Unarmed Strike.** The margravine makes one unarmed strike.
- **Bite.** The margravine makes one bite attack.
- **Cast a Spell.** The margravine casts a spell.

THE MARGRAVINE'S LAIR - VANDERHAVEN MANOR

While the margravine is in Vanderhaven Manor, she can take lair actions as long as she isn't incapacitated. On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the margravine can take one of the following lair action options, or forgo using any of them in that round:

- Until initiative count 20 of the next round, the margravine can pass through solid walls, doors, ceilings, and floors as if they weren't there.
- The margravine summons the angry spirit of one who has died in the castle. The apparition appears next to a hostile creature that the margravine can see, makes an attack against that creature, and then disappears. The apparition has the statistics of a specter.
- The margravine targets one Medium or smaller creature that has blood. The target's blood begins to boil. If the target fails a DC 17 Charisma saving throw, its blood begins to boil taking 3 (1d6) necrotic damage each round until it leaves the mansion or is cured using a *greater restoration* spell or a *remove curse* spell.



REGIONAL EFFECTS

The region surrounding Vanderhaven Manor are warped by her unnatural presence, creating any of the following effects:

- There's a noticeable increase in the populations of bats, rats, and wolves in the region.
- Plants within 500 feet of the lair wither, and their stems and branches become twisted and thorny.
- Shadows cast within 500 feet of the lair seem abnormally gaunt and sometimes move as though alive.
- A creeping fog clings to the ground within 500 feet of the vampire's lair. The fog occasionally takes eerie forms, such as grasping claws and writhing serpents.

If the margravine is destroyed, these effects end after 2d6 days.

EVENT 7: DARK AWAKENINGS

This event occurs for each PC that was successfully drained by the margravine in **Event 6**.

Hunger. Your eyes spring open as you are filled with a desperate hunger, and an insatiable thirst grips your dry throat. Grogginess fades as the night's dreams echo in your mind, a chilling reminder and comforting realization that the nightmare is over. Time seems to linger before you regain your composure, the darkness in the room creating an ominous, hollow, and fragmented feeling in your soul. You sense an odor of decay and a stale atmosphere in this seemingly normal and otherwise spacious room. You assume it must be morning, but time has somehow distorted, and no daylight spills into the room. Impenetrable darkness surrounds you. You tentatively reach out into this pressing darkness only for your hand to be abruptly stopped by a soft, cushioned wall. You quickly ascertain that you are no longer in your bed, but rather in a cramped enclosure with plush ruffles of velvet caressing your body from head to toe. As you regain your senses, a sudden realization washes over you; you are in a coffin!

The PCs awaken in **A19** 1d4 days later (though all at the same time), at nightfall after their mortal bodies died and have assumed their undead forms. Though they are technically dead, they retain all of their abilities and knowledge that they had in life with the addition of the vampiric abilities - see **page 88** for details of this transformation. As the PCs open their coffins, describe their newly advanced senses—darkvision, acute hearing, and increased perception. They can also feel a deep longing and loyalty — almost repulsive in its intensity — towards the Margravine Cassandra Vanderhaven whom they realize is both their hated creator and their mistress (see **Afterlife** below and "Enslavement" on **page 89** for more details regarding the margravine's control of the PCs).

The most immediate change that they notice, however, is the sudden and almost overwhelming hunger to feed upon the blood of a living, sentient creature. They likewise immediately understand that to do so is an act of possibly irredeemable evil that will likely banish any hope of ever being rescued from their current undead existence. This pang constantly gnaws at them throughout the adventure until they feed and requires a saving throw to avoid instantly attempting to feed any time they are exposed to the presence of a bleeding sentient creature — even during the midst of battle (see **page 89** for further details of this hunger).

The coffins are fanned out around the fireplace, with one for each of the PCs who were transformed by the margravine. They will likewise find that all of their equipment is stacked nearby. Though the PCs lack a key for the locked doors in this chamber, they can quickly discover that by assuming gaseous form it becomes a simple matter to pass beneath them and escape the room.

Give the PCs a few moments to get oriented with their new existence and abilities before proceeding with **The Afterlife** below.

WHAT IF THE PCS DON'T PLAY ALONG?

It's possible that PCs may be particularly suspicious and/or obstinate and refuse to cooperate with the margravine's invitation to stay in the manor overnight. If this is the case, she will allow them to take their leave while informing them that they will be forfeiting their chance to undertake this lucrative task for her. She also warns them to keep what they have learned in strictest confidence or they will face the full legal repercussions that that City of Tourse and Duchy of Ysser can muster. If these veiled hints are not enough to keep the PCs on track, then she allows them to leave freely.

In this case, the raid on the house occurs as described in **The Afterlife** below, and falsified information left by the margravine implicates the PCs in her plotting putting the inquisitors on the trail of the PCs anyway. In this case their attack occurs at the PCs current accommodations and/or residences. Information on these inquisitors should reveal the margravine's libelous machinations against them and put them on the trail of her quest anyway to try and clear their name. With a little tweaking you should be able to run the adventure largely as written with the PCs pursuing the margravine's movements but without the benefit of newly gained vampiric powers to help them.

THE AFTERLIFE

As the PCs begin to explore the world around them with their new senses, they notice an unusual silence over the manor. They can easily move from room to room (except area **A6**), and it quickly becomes obvious that neither the house servants nor the margravine are present in the manor. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check made during this exploration reveals that the margravine and her staff must have left only moments prior to the PCs' awakening, and in great haste, as the contents of rooms

tend to be in some disarray. The reason for her flight is suddenly made known to the players as a group of vampire hunters bursts through the front doors and rear windows simultaneously as described under **Event 8**.

Of particular note is that the margravine's enslavement of the PCs is incomplete. Perhaps because of her gluttony in draining and creating so many spawn at one time or because of being forced to abandon them before they completed their transformation and rose from their coffins, her enslavement of them is imperfect. All of the PCs begin as enslaved vampires under the margravine's control (though she is not currently present to exercise that control so they are essentially free to do what they will for the time being), but immediately upon waking each vampire PC gets a DC 21 Wisdom saving throw to try and break the margravine's hold over them and become a free-willed vampire. PCs that fail the initial save can make a new save each hour (with a +1 bonus to the saving throw for each one after the first) to try and throw off the slowly unravelling compulsion.

A side effect of this battle for control of their free wills has created a unique situation. Even though the PCs may have fought of the margravine's mental hold over them, they are still susceptible to her will. Though as undead they were ordinarily be immune to all mind-affecting effects, if the margravine attempts to use her charm ability on one of the PCs she has the chance to reestablish herself as their master and they must make a new DC 21 Wisdom saving throw (without the previous bonuses) or become dominated as per the normal vampire ability.

Though the passage of time in this adventure is somewhat arbitrary and subject to the plans of the PCs, it would be suitable to assume that 1d3 hours had passed by the time the PCs had finished **Chapter 2** of the adventure and that another 1d3 had occurred by the time they try to infiltrate The Lich's Laboratory in **Chapter 3**. By the time they return to Vanderhaven Manor at the end of **Chapter 3**, a full 8 hours has passed since they awoke, so ideally few if any of the PCs should still be enslaved by the margravine by the time they are ready to confront her as she uses the *Crimson Shroud*.

EVENT 8: THE HUNTERS BECOME THE HUNTED

This event is triggered as the PCs explore the manor and realize that the margravine and her servants have fled. Tipped off to the coming hunters by her agents, the margravine had hoped to flee with her new vampire adventuring group but realized she would be unable to fully awaken the fledgling vampires before the vampire hunters battered down her doors and was forced to abandon them to their fate.

Ideally the event should occur when the PCs are on the second-floor balcony between areas **A1** and **A2**. It begins with the following description.

Bursting through one of the large back windows of the great room, a pair of heavily armed individuals leaps into the room. The first is a hulking human clad in silver armor polished to a mirror shine and bearing a silver longsword. Directly behind him is a short, thin man with a tuft of hair that flickers like fire and a set of mottled horns that sprout from his brow. Simultaneously the great front doors blow inward from a powerful magical charge revealing a woman with curly, chestnut-brown hair that spills down over her mail hauberk. Her piercing gray eyes burn with a holy intensity and she bears a steel shield with the image of a sunburst surrounded by a wreath of leaves. Her other hand gauntleted hand holds a well-used heavy mace. Moving with the grace of a feline and wielding a longbow, a slender elven woman enters behind her.

These vampire hunters are led by **Sareez of Mitra**, a fanatical follower of the Sun Father in her lifelong hunt of the undead. She is joined by her colleagues **Ulaven**, an inquisitor of Darach-Albith, **Vonzizer**, a knight of Mitra, and **Iegen**, a tiefling that styles himself a "pyrokineticist." This group operates as a group of undead hunters-at-large for the Church of Mitra and have worked most recently among the wilds of the BuntesveldtLLo city-states. They recently arrived in Tourse after the desperate summons by High Faithful Thesius Blathe of the local Temple of Mitra who had become aware of the corruption of vampirism at the highest levels of the city. The hunters have staked out Vanderhaven Manor for the last two weeks watching Cassandra's patterns and decided that the day after her large party was the best time to launch their raid. The margravine only became aware of the pending attack in the nick of time through her own informants and chose to go into hiding to avoid the attack and rally her own forces in response.

SAREEZ OF MITRA

Hp 37 (as priest[SRD], but has CON 16)

ULAVEN

Hp 58 (as veteran[SRD], but he replaces a heavy crossbow with a mighty longbow)

Mighty Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack.* +5 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d10 + 3) piercing damage.

VONZIZER

Hp 52 (as knight[SRD])

IEGEN

Medium humanoid (tiefling), lawful good
Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armor*)
Hit Points 44 (8d8 + 8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Con +3, Int +6
Damage Resistances fire
Skills Arcana +6, History +6
Senses darkvision 60 feet, passive Perception 12
Languages Common, Celestial, Draconic, Infernal
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Friendly Fire. When Iegen casts a spell that causes fire damage, he can choose himself and any number of allies to be immune to the damage caused by the spell and to automatically succeed on the required saving throw.

Spellcasting. Iegen is a 5th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). The battle mage has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt*, *mage hand*, *poison spray*, *shocking grasp*
1st level (4 slots): *burning hands*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *thunderwave*
2nd level (3 slots): *flaming sphere*, *misty step*, *shatter*
3rd level (2 slots): *counterspell*, *fireball*

ACTIONS

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

Tactics: The vampire hunters assume the PCs are agents of the margravine and attack them on sight. You should familiarize yourself with Sareez and her companions' abilities before the battle begins. They have worked together for many years and know how to use their various specialties in combination to great effect. They typically attempt to neutralize a single target before moving onto the next. Vonzizer acts as a shield for Iegen, while the tiefling blasts away with his attacks fire, and Sazeer casts spells or uses divine eminence to harm undead while Ulaven launches ranged attacks from the cover she provides. The hunters are not foolish enough to split up further in pursuit of individual PCs and try to keep each other in sight as much as possible in battle.

Prior to battle, Sareez and Ulaven apply *silversheen* to their weapons while Vonzizer applies his oil of magic weapon. Vonzizer casts *veil of positive energy* and *divine favor*, Sareez casts *bless weapon* and *sun metal* on her mace, and Ulaven casts *weapon of awe* on her longbow.

With the PCs exposed on the balcony between **A1** and **A2**, Iegen and Ulaven attempt to pin them in place with ranged attacks while Sareez and Vonzizer make for the stairs in their own rooms respectively in order to meet up on the balcony and take the battle to the PCs. If the PCs head over the balcony edge to threaten one of the ranged attackers below, these two do not hesitate to make the 15-foot leap in order to defend their comrades from direct attack.

Remember to apply the Hunger rules (see Page 86) if the PCs injure any of these opponents in battle.

Development: If the PCs attempt to parley before engaging in battle, Sareez listens for 1 round, ordering her companions to hold their attacks as she does so. She knows that the PCs were attendees of the gala earlier in the evening and had not expected for them to be present as vampires. A successful DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check to change Sareez's attitude from hostile to indifferent is needed to get her to hold the attack longer and talk. If dialogue ensues, she takes into account the PCs' plight and attempts to discern the truth of their words through Wisdom (Insight) checks. If they convince her of their innocence in their recent transformation, Sareez spares them for now, but also offers to "put them down" as an act of kindness. If they insist on existing as vampires for the

VAMPIRES AS PLAYER CHARACTERS

VAMPIRE TEMPLATE

The main plot point of this adventure is that the PCs are turned into vampires at the beginning and must complete the adventure and find a cure before their condition becomes permanent. When a PC is turned into a vampire via the create spawn ability, make the following changes and additions to his character:

Type: Your type is now undead of your particular race.

Senses: You gain darkvision 60 ft.

Armor Class: You have +2 natural armor

Ability Scores: You gain the following ability bonuses to a maximum of 18 - Str +4, Dex +2, Int +2, Wis +2, Cha +4.

Saving Throws: You are now proficient in Dexterity and Wisdom saving throws if not already.

Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Traits: You gain the following additional traits:

- ***Shapechanger.*** If you are not in sunlight or running water, you can use your action to polymorph into a Tiny bat or a Medium cloud of mist, or back into your true form. While in bat form, you can't speak, your walking speed is 5 feet, and it you have a flying speed of 30 feet. Your statistics, other than your size and speed, are unchanged. Anything you are wearing transforms with you, but nothing you are carrying does. You revert to your true form if you die. While in mist form, you can't take any actions, speak, or manipulate objects. You are weightless, have a flying speed of 20 feet, and can hover, and can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there. In addition, if air can pass through a space, the mist can do so without squeezing, and it can't pass through water. It has advantage on Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution saving throws, and it is immune to all nonmagical damage, except the damage it takes from sunlight.
- ***Misty Escape.*** When you drop to 0 hit points outside your resting place, you transform into a cloud of mist (as in the Shapechanger trait) instead of falling unconscious, provided that it isn't in sunlight or running water. If you can't transform, you are destroyed. While you have 0 hit points in mist form, you can't revert to your vampire form, and you must reach your resting place within 2 hours or be destroyed. Once in your resting place, you revert to your vampire form. You are then paralyzed until you regain at least 1 hit point. After spending 1 hour in you resting place with 0 hit points, you regain 1 hit point.
- ***Regeneration.*** You regain 10 hit points at the start of your turn if you have at least 1 hit point and isn't in sunlight or running water. If you take radiant damage or damage from holy water, this trait doesn't function at the start of your next turn.
- ***Spider Climb.*** You can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.
- ***Vampire Weaknesses.*** You have the following flaws:
  - *Forbiddance.* You can't enter a residence without an invitation from one of the occupants.
  - *Harmed by Running Water.* You take 20 acid damage when you end your turn in running water.
  - *Stake to the Heart.* You are destroyed if a piercing weapon made of wood is driven into your heart while you are incapacitated in your coffin.
  - *Sunlight Hypersensitivity.* You take 20 radiant damage when you start your turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, you have disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

Actions: You gain the following additional actions. Calculate your to-hit and damage bonuses for these attacks normally:

- ***Unarmed Strike (Vampire Form Only).*** 1d8 bludgeoning damage. Instead of dealing damage, you can grapple the target (escape DC 18).
- ***Bite. (Bat or Vampire Form Only).*** You target one willing creature, or a creature that is grappled by you, incapacitated, or restrained and do 1d6 piercing damage plus 10 (3d6) necrotic damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and you regain hit points equal to that amount. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0. A humanoid slain in this way and then buried in the ground rises the following night as a vampire spawn under your's control.

- ***Charm.*** You target one humanoid you can see within 30 feet of you. If the target can see you, the target must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw against this magic or be charmed by you. The charmed target regards you as a trusted friend to be heeded and protected. Although the target isn't under your control, it takes the vampire's requests or actions in the most favorable way it can, and it is a willing target for the vampire's bite attack. Each time you or your ally do anything harmful to the target, it can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success. Otherwise, the effect lasts 24 hours or until the you are destroyed, is on a different plane of existence than the target, or takes a bonus action to end the effect.
- ***Children of the Night (1/Day).*** You magically call 2d4 swarms of bats or rats (swarm of bats, swarm of rats), provided that the sun isn't up. While outdoors, you can call 3d6 wolves (wolf) instead. The called creatures arrive in 1d4 rounds, acting as allies of the vampire and obeying its spoken commands. The beasts remain for 1 hour, until you die, or until you dismiss them as a bonus action.

Enslavement

As explained under **Afterlife** in **Chapter 1**, the PC vampires are originally created to be enslaved servitors of the margravine. However, because of the unusual circumstance surrounding their creation the PC vampires have the opportunity to break her control over them. Immediately upon waking each vampire PC gets a DC 21 Wisdom saving throw to try and break the margravine's hold over them and become a free-willed vampire. PCs that fail the initial save can make a new save each hour (with a +1 bonus to the saving throw for each one after the first) to try and throw off the slowly unravelling compulsion. PCs who remain enslaved behave as if under the effects of a *dominate person* spell but without additional saving throws to resist orders except those described above.



A side effect of this battle for control of their free wills has created a unique situation. Even though the PCs may have fought off the margravine's mental hold over them, they are still susceptible to her will. Though as undead they were ordinarily be immune to all mind-affecting effects, if the margravine attempts to use her charm ability on one of the PCs (or any spell that causes the charmed condition) she has the chance to reestablish herself as their master and they must make a new DC 21 Wisdom saving throw (without the previous bonuses) or become dominated as per the normal vampire ability.

Alignment

Vampire PCs begin with their original alignment. However, the first time a vampire gives into its hunger (see below), its alignment shifts one step closer toward evil on the good–evil axis (the law–chaos axis is unaffected). If a vampire PC's alignment shifts to evil, then it becomes an NPC under the control of the GM until cured of its vampirism. If free-willed, it may still work with the PCs against the margravine but will not seek to obtain a cure for its condition. If still enslaved by the margravine, then the vampire PC begins working for her against the party.

If a PC is already evil when he becomes a vampire, then the first time it succumbs to its hunger it becomes an NPC under the control of the GM.

HUNGER RULES

Vampire PCs are immediately beset by their overwhelming thirst for blood upon awaking in **Event 7** of **Chapter 1**. This desire to feed upon the life-giving sustenance is known as hunger. Rules for handling the hunger experienced by vampire PCs are provided below for dealing with the first night of the PCs' existence as vampires. If a PC ends up as a vampire for a longer period, you may want to consult that book for a fuller explanation of what the PC will be dealing with.

The PCs awaken in this adventure on their first night as vampires, having never sated their need to feed on blood. Their hunger for living blood is almost overwhelming, but they also instinctively know that to give in to that urge leads to the path of evil and corruption from which they may not be able to return (see "Alignment" above). Though, they may choose to feed upon the blood of a lesser animal which will provide them with sustenance (which is not the issue since this entire adventure takes place over a single night so that actual withdrawal is not truly an issue), it does nothing to rid them of the hunger to feed upon the blood of a living, sentient creature.

As a result of this nearly overwhelming hunger, the PCs face a test whenever they are faced with the presence of fresh blood from a living NPC in this adventure (feeding from a recently deceased corpse does not sate this hunger). There are occasions in this adventure when the exposure to fresh blood will trigger this hunger, and it always occurs whenever there is a battle in which one or more enemies is wounded.

Each time a PC who has not fed is exposed to the presence of the fresh blood of a living sentient creature, he must make a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw (the DC increases by +1 for each previous check). If this saving throw is failed, the PC is compelled to feed or fall upon the wounded individual to attempt to drain him. Until the PC has fed, he can take no other action than to try and feed from this creature (e.g. grappling and using his blood drain ability). In his wild frenzy, he will be careless and will continue to feed until the victim has been drained. During this feeding frenzy, the PC takes a –2 penalty to AC. Multiple PCs can feed on a single individual simultaneously.

If a PC feeds in this way, his alignment shifts as described above. The players should not know that it is sometimes possible to feed more than once before becoming an evil GM-controlled NPC and should be motivated to try and resist such a feeding at all costs. However, once a PC has successfully fed at least once during the adventure, the hunger no longer affects him and will not recur until the next night when he will fill the need to feed again (an occurrence that will hopefully not come to pass during the course of this adventure).

time being, she allows them to leave only if they immediately surrender and place themselves in the custody of Sareez and the Temple of Mitra in Tourse where High Faithful Thesius Blathe will determine their fate. If the PCs agree to these terms, they are in for an unfortunate fate as the High Faithful knows of no means of removing their vampiric curse and will opt to put a wooden stake into each of them so that they can be destroyed by the light of the coming dawn. A PC making a DC 20 Wisdom (Insight) or Intelligence check or a DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check will strongly suspect this to be the likely outcome and should balk at such an offer.

Even if the PCs are willing to place themselves in the hands of the hunters without a fight, they are unlikely to make it to the temple with Sareez as Ulaven cut herself on a splinter of wood as she made her way through the shattered front door. The fresh wound on her arm is minor but bleeds freely and has not received healing from Sareez. As a result, the scent of blood is overpowering to the fledgling vampires and the hunger rules apply (see **page 89**). If the PCs attack as a result, the hunters see them as unredeemable and give them no quarter.

WHERE TO GO FROM HERE

After defeating (or escaping) the vampire hunters, the PCs have the opportunity to thoroughly search the manor house. One of the consequences of this is likely to be a better understanding into the dark nature of the margravine — provided the vampire-haunted dreams she spawned weren't enough already. Additionally, in the margravine's study (**A10**) there can be found a clue that points the party fairly directly towards the cathedral of Archeillus. However, even if that clue is entirely missed, the somewhat cryptic information provided in the short interview with the margravine (and Forsythe afterward) should be sufficient to point the PCs towards that church as their next priority, if for no other reason than the *Crimson Shroud* seems to offer a potential cure for their vampirism (the only other alternative being death followed by a resurrection spell, which is likely beyond the PCs' means at their current level.

With it being currently nighttime, and knowing that they are likely to be drawn back to their coffins in **A19** with the coming of dawn, the PCs should feel some urgency in getting to the bottom of their predicament and finding a cure before

they find themselves at the hands of other vampire hunters or perhaps the margravine herself, since as their creator it seems likely she will be able exercise some level of control over them. Fortunately for the PCs, with their newfound abilities comes fast healing, so they should be in good shape to continue their quest in relatively short order. Exploration of the Bastion of Righteous Decree is detailed in **Chapter 2**.

CHAPTER TWO: GOING TO THE CHAPEL

This chapter explores Tourse's cathedral of ArcheillusLL5 - 236, the Bastion of Righteous Decree. This part of the adventure should occur on the same night as the attack of the vampire hunters on Vanderhaven Manor, and the PCs should be instilled with a sense of urgency to get across town and complete their task before the coming of dawn forces them into their coffins to rest or potentially catches them outside them and results in their destruction.

B. THE BASTION OF RIGHTEOUS DECREE

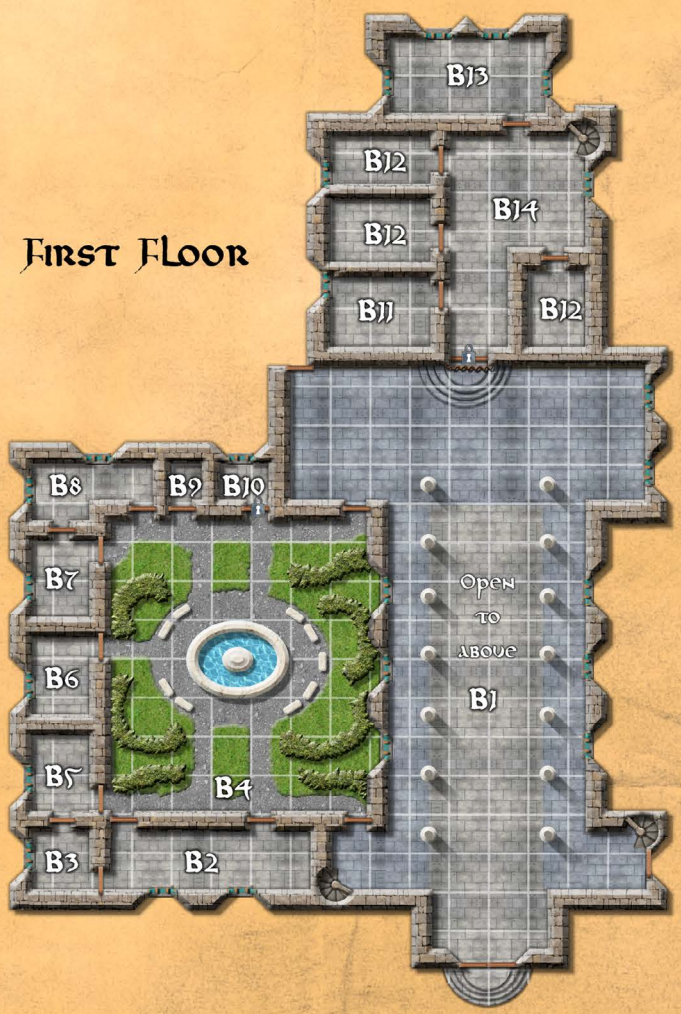
This majestic building is located in the oldest part of the city. Its doors, which might typically be supposed to be unlocked and open to the public, are not commonly found so. Dedicated to the God of Rightful Rule, the traditional Foerdewaith protector of the nobility, the cathedral is not much visited by the common folk. Rather its patrons are the various nobles and aristocrats of the city who, far from being devout followers of Archeillus themselves, nonetheless support the cathedral in recognition of how much its existence contributes to maintaining their own status and power within the duchy and throughout Foere as a whole.

The margravine and Forsythe did not lie about the church being a den of evil, as the clergy of this temple have a dark secret; they worship Grox, the subterranean God of Artifice and Darkness. The false clergy followers of Grox began infiltrating the ranks of the cathedral years ago and fully completed their silent takeover five years ago. They have successfully maintained the ruse after having removed the former true clergy through subtle manipulation, political maneuvering, and simple attrition. They maintain the appearance and forms of the cathedral's practices, and to date few have noticed anything amiss. If Archeillus himself is aware of the false clergy among the ranks of his faithful, he has not deigned to warn his followers.

As consummate profiteers, the clergy of Grox keep the artifact known as the *Crimson Shroud* in secret, hidden from all. The clergy of Archeillus had long ago resorted to only offering its benefits to those of the nobility that they deemed worthy, so the Groxite's own limitation to allowing only their own to use it has not been a truly significant difference from previous practices, such that most no longer remember the *Crimson Shroud* as anything but a legend and would be hard pressed to recall that it was once kept at the Bastion of Righteous Decree for all to use.

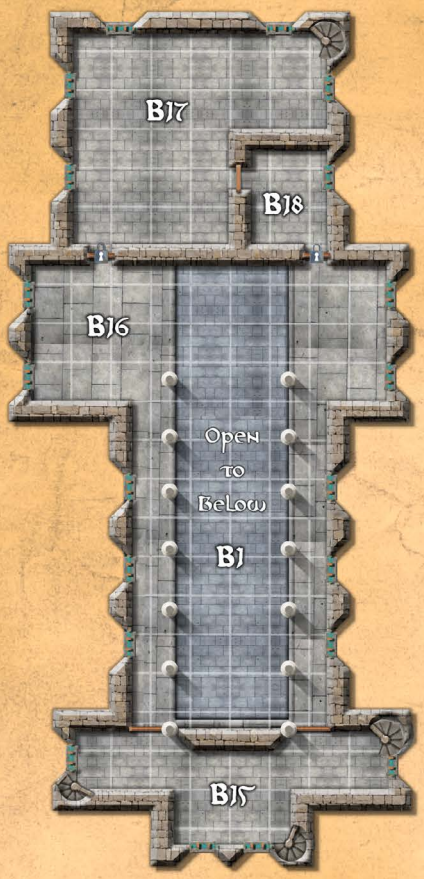


B. Bastion of Righteous Decree





1 square = 10 ft.





Despite the cathedral's long history as the caretaker of the *Shroud*, the margravine's agents are not the only ones who were recently able to dig up the secret of its existence. And in fact, the margravine's own intention to take the artifact has been slower than to develop that of others, for the cathedral has just lost the *Crimson Shroud* this very night in a raid by agents of the Underguild. As a result, the cathedral's surviving guards and clergy are still on high alert when the PCs arrive. They assume the PCs are Underguild agents and are instantly hostile.

The stone walls are decorated with flying buttresses and the lion head and crown symbols of the god Archeillus carved into the stonework. This stonework is magically treated reinforced masonry walls that are infused with potent wards that render them resistant to teleportation and transmutation effects (such as *teleport*, *passwall*, or *transmute rock to mud*). In order to successfully affect or bypass one of the cathedral walls with a spell of these types, the spellcaster must succeed at a DC 30 caster level check using their spell attack bonus. Interior walls are also of masonry but are not reinforced and lack the magical treatment of the exterior walls. The ceilings are 30 feet high in the nave, and just under 20 feet high in the surrounding rooms.

The doors throughout the temple are of strong wood and bear locks but no keyholes. Their locks are magical and require unconventional means to open—the touch of a holy symbol of Grox unlocks a door for 1 minute. Likewise, a successful *dispel magic* spell unlocks a door for 1d4 rounds. In the case of the Bastion of Righteous Decree the clergy all bear the depiction of the typical lion head holy symbols of Archeillus, but they have subtly been altered to show a blindfold over the lion's eyes. This change can only be noticed without closely inspecting the holy symbol by making a DC 22 Wisdom (Perception) check followed by a DC 18 Intelligence (Religion) check.

Lighting within most areas of the cathedral is provided by large stained-glass windows with depictions of Archeillus blessing the rule of various historical Foerdewaith monarchs and nobles that bear the same warding enchantments as the magically treated walls. These bathe the interior in softly colored light during the day, and sconces enchanted with *continual flame* are set about at regular intervals to provide illumination at night or in cloudy weather. Unless otherwise noted, all areas of the cathedral have normal lighting.

- **Exterior Magically Treated Reinforced Masonry Wall**: 5 ft. thick; Damage Threshold 16; hp 540; Break DC 70; Strength (Athletics) DC 18.
- **Interior Masonry Wall**: 5 ft. thick; Damage Threshold 8; hp 540; Break DC 60; Strength (Athletics) DC 20.
- **Locked Strong Wooden Door**: 2 in. thick; Damage Threshold 5; hp 20; Break DC 25 (if locked); Dexterity (Thieves Tools) DC 30 (due to a lack of keyholes).
- **Stained Glass Window**: 1 in. thick; Damage Threshold 5; hp 15; Break DC 10.

B1. GRAND NAVE

This chamber has multiple rows of marble pillars, skillfully carved to resemble a series of gavels and scales in interlocking columns. At the opposite end of the nave stand 15-foot high double doors of shining gold. Inscribed across the surface of both doors is the holy symbol of Archeillus. The scent of rusted iron wafts from within the temple's nave with the distinct sweet smell of fresh blood.

Within the cathedral are **8 cathedral priests** that have just finished putting down the remaining Underguild agents. The recent attack on the temple by the Underguild happened primarily in this chamber. There are 4 Underguild agents and 5 temple guards lying dead on the floor in here. The priests herein are checking for survivors among the fallen and finishing any Underguild agents that still live. They attack immediately upon seeing anyone enter the temple. The presence of the freshly spilled blood may cause one or more PCs to resort to feeding as described on **page 89**.

CATHEDRAL PRIESTS (8)

Hp 27 (as priest[SRD])

B2. DINING HALL

An immense, obsidian-topped table fills the center of this room. The temple priests take their meals here.

B3. KITCHEN

This chamber is a well-used kitchen with shelves holding foodstuffs lining the walls.

B4. CLOISTER GARDEN

Used for quiet contemplation, this large open space has paths of white gravel that merge at a large marble fountain depicting a majestic, rearing lion. Marble benches are spaced around the fountain. The lawn alongside the paths is well tended, and flower beds of red and white roses have been planted to provide the air here with a sweet aroma.

B5. STOREROOM

Stacked grain, dried meats, and other food supplies are stored here. The back area of the storage room is used to hold gardening implements, seeds, and mulch for use in the garden. One of the temple's priests hides among the supplies. **Vorlawn Hodge** peaks out from behind a stack of grain sacks (opposed Stealth versus Wisdom (Perception) checks). At the first sign of the Underguild's attack, he ducked into this room to wait out the battle and is not sure who won or who the PCs even are.

VORLAWN HODGE, CATHEDRAL ACOLYTE

Hp 9 (as acolyte[SRD])

Development: Vorlawn is a coward at heart and does not engage in combat if he thinks there is a way to escape. His initial attitude is unfriendly if discovered, but he will not attack and merely cowers if no opportunity to escape presents itself. If the PCs are able to change his attitude to friendly, Vorlawn tells what he knows about the church of Grox and how it took over the temple years ago. He knows the high priest of Grox exploits the artifact's healing magic to extort money from the sick. He also overheard a few of the Underguild agents discussing how they were going to use the *Crimson Shroud* to lure the "noble bitch to her destruction." Vorlawn does know the Ritual of the Crimson Shroud (see **Appendix D**) and is willing to perform it for the PCs at the end of the adventure in exchange for his life.

B6. WORKSHOP

This workshop seems to be focused on the creation of everything from clothing to forged-iron tools and weapons in support of the cathedral.

B7. GUEST QUARTERS

Guests or those awaiting friends or family in the infirmary stay in these sparse quarters. The chamber holds four beds, each with a small desk, chair and footlocker.

B8. LIBRARY

Floor-to-ceiling shelves filled with hundreds of books line the walls of this room. A long table with several chairs sits in the room's center. The books hold a myriad of texts covering the history of the religions of Foerdewaith and many prayer books and treatises on the worship of Archeillus. Interestingly there are a great number of texts on local law and jurisprudence.

B9. LAVATORY

This room houses a simple stone bench with a hole cut in it leading to a deep pit. There is nothing of interest here.

B10. BISHOP'S OFFICE

This small office contains a mahogany desk and leather chair. Three more chairs stand against the opposite wall. The office is strangely devoid of texts or records for the worship of Archeillus.

B11. SACRISTY

This room features several towering mirrors. Lining the room's walls are cabinets containing supplies such as incense, robes, clerical vestments, and other mundane items necessary for conducting services as well as a drawer holding an unusual collection of blindfolds (Knowledge [religion] DC 25 to recognize as associated with the worship of Grox). The cathedral's priests prepare for both public services as well as for secret rituals here.

Treasure: A successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals a hidden stash of 4 blocks of *incense of meditation.*

B12. PRIEST CELL

Each of these rooms is similarly furnished with four wooden beds, four simple footlockers, and a table with four chairs.

Treasure: A DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check uncovers 3d6 x 10 gp in assorted coins and small knickknacks.

B13. LARGE PRIEST CELL

This room holds beds and furnishings for eight but is otherwise identical to B12.

Treasure: A successful Wisdom (Perception) check reveals double the valuables to be found in **B12**.

B14. COMMON ROOM

A long table runs down the center of this room, and its walls are decorated with tapestries dedicated to worship of Archeillus. A DC 25 Wisdom (Perception) check and a DC 20 Intelligence (Religion) notices that these tapestries feature subtle references to Grox[MoM].

B15. INFIRMARY

Spiral staircases rise from the nave below to reach this area. A dozen beds in this room are separated by folding screens into semi-private areas. A third spiral stair rises into the cathedral's tower above. Next to this stair rests a wooden chair of enormous size.

For the right price, the priests of Grox offer healing and convalescence services. If monetary payment can't be arranged, the clergy gladly accept other forms of payment such as quests, blackmail, or other tasks performed for the church. With the high priest in the Inner Sanctum above, the guard **Slavtin Gran** is still on duty and assumes anyone other than priests of Grox coming into this room are agents of the Underguild that must be destroyed. Slatvin is a firbolg giant who was saved by the bishop from being lynched by an angry mob years ago and stayed on to become a warpriest of Grox in gratitude.

SLAVTIN GRAN

Large giant, neutral evil
Armor Class 15 (patchwork armor)
Hit Points 138 (12d12 + 60)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	9 (-1)	21 (+5)	9 (-1)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Con +8, Wis +3, Cha +4
Skills Athletics +9, Perception +3
Damage Immunities psychic
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages Giant
Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Divine Eminence. As a bonus action, Slatvin can expend a spell slot to cause his melee weapon attacks to magically deal an extra 10 (3d6) necrotic damage to a target on a hit. This benefit lasts until the end of the turn. If Slatvin expends a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the extra damage increases by 1d6 for each level above 1st.

Size Alteration. As an action, Slatvin can reduce his size to Medium and remain at this size for as long as he wishes. Resuming his normal size is a bonus action. When at Medium size, his greataxe and rock attacks deal half damage.

Spellcasting. Slatvin is a 5th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light*, *sacred flame*, *thaumaturgy*
1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds*, *guiding bolt*, *sanctuary*
2nd level (3 slots): *lesser restoration*, *spiritual weapon*
3rd level (2 slots): *dispel magic*, *spirit guardians*

ACTIONS

Multiattack: The giant makes two greataxe attacks.

Greataxe. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 25 (3d12 + 6) slashing damage.

Rock. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +9 to hit, range 60/240 ft., one target. *Hit*: 28 (4d10 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

Treasure: A successful DC 30 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals a hidden panel in the north wall containing five *scrolls of cure wounds*, a *scroll of remove curse*, and two *scrolls of remove disease*.

B16. CHOIR

This immense balcony overlooks the grand nave of the cathedral, and the ceiling above rises into a half-dome 50 feet overhead.

B17. RELIQUARY

This dusty chamber has a wide variety of items on display. Swords, shields, boots, belts, and framed parchments adorn the walls, and several mannequins stand in the corners, some of them clad in armor.

This room holds a variety of prizes traded for the use of the *Crimson Shroud*. The walls are lined with hangers holding shields, swords, contracts of service, and a variety of gear. The invading Underguild agents never made it into this room due to the battle with the priests being more of a struggle than they planned for. Wooden mannequins stand in the room's corners to hold armor displays, but three of them are actually 3 **wood golems** assigned to guard the chamber. If the PCs enter the room without fully presenting the holy symbol of Grox, the golems spring to life and attack.

WOOD GOLEM

Medium construct, neutral
Armor Class 12
Hit Points 93 (11d8 + 44)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	9 (-1)	18 (+4)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)

Damage Immunities poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't adamantine
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages understands the languages of its creator but can't speak

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)
Aversion to Fire. If the golem takes fire damage, it has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks until the end of its next turn.
Immutable Form. The golem is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.
Magic Resistance. The golem has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.
Magic Weapons. The golem's weapon attacks are magical.

ACTIONS
Multiattack. The golem makes two slam attacks.
Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

REACTIONS
Splintering (1/Day). When a wood golem is reduced to half its original hit point total it launches a barrage of razor-sharp wooden splinters from its body in a 20-foot-radius sphere. All creatures caught within this area take 21 (6d6) points of slashing damage or half as much on a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw.

Treasure: There are many items in this room, and the GM is encouraged to add or alter the treasure to suit the PCs and their campaign. Hanging on the walls are 10 sets of fine silk courtier outfits but adorned with even greater than normal embellishment and accoutrements (worth 50 gp each), a small display case holds a *ring of protection +1*, a *ring of sustenance*, and a unique *ring of the ram*. In addition, wall hangers hold two masterwork longswords that add a +1 bonus to damage on a successful hit, each with a fine silken baldric (worth 45 gp each), a *+1 sharp rapier*, a *+1 adamantine heavy mace* (a two-handed martial weapon that deals 2d6 bludgeoning damage on a hit), a *+2 longbow*, a set of *+1 platemail* bearing the arms of Ysser on the breastplate, a suit of *+1 chainmail*, a suit of *+2 leather armor*, and a suit of *+1 scale mail*. The *Crimson Shroud* is noticeably not on display in this chamber.

B18. BISHOP'S CHAMBER

This well-appointed room serves as both a lavish bedchamber and a personal shrine for the bishop overseeing the cathedral. A canopied bed with fine silk sheets (worth 250 gp) stands in one corner, while a 4-foot-tall statue of what appears to be Archeillus stands in the opposite corner but has a blindfold tied around its eyes (recognizable as a representation of Grox[MoM - 90] with a DC 20 Knowledge [religion] check).

B19. INNER SANCTUM

Normally the bishop would be a very difficult encounter, but due to his weakened condition it should be more manageable for the PCs. Unless the battle was magically silenced somehow, the bishop will have heard combat in **B15** below and will be ready for battle.

In the center of this square room stands a pedestal of black painted stone carved to resemble lion-headed humanoid wearing a blindfold and with arms and hands extended as if holding some object above his head. Blood is spattered about the room from some recent conflict, and two human forms are slumped near the pedestal—a circular scorch mark in the floor outlines their charred remains. A large pile of ash in the shape of a humanoid body with a wooden stake protruding from the pile lies nearby.

This area is under the effect of a *forbiddance* spell keyed to undead and dealing radiant damage. This is the room that held the *Crimson Shroud* and was only ever entered by the bishop until the Underguild managed to breach it during their raid. **Bishop Voltix Calbrough** remains in here now, but he is badly wounded (which should prompt Wisdom saving throws per the Hunger rules on **page 89**). He stands next to the charred remains of the vampire, clutching a wicked dagger in one hand, a female vampire's severed head in his other. He is horribly disfigured after having withstood a fierce assault, and his scorched facial skin is attached only by wisps of sinuous tissue. A number of Underguild agents perished at his hands, including the raid's commander, a vampire that went by the name of Eudoxia, but he was badly injured in the fight and was unable to prevent them from absconding with the *Crimson Shroud* (that once rested atop the pedestal). He has remained in this chamber since the battle and used his magic to recover some of his hit points. His currently diminished health and remaining spells is reflected in his stat block.

BISHOP VOLTIX CALBROUGH

Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil
Armor Class 17 (+1 *breastplate*, *shield of faith*)
Hit Points 117 (18d8 + 36) currently 58
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Con +6, Wis +7
Skills Intimidation +5, Religion +4
Damage Resistance fire; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks from *resist energy* and *stoneskin*
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages Common, Infernal, Undercommon
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Spellcasting. The bishop is a 9th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following cleric spells prepared*:

- Cantrips (at will): *light*, *mending*, *sacred flame*, *spare the dying*
- 1st level (4/2 slots): *divine favor*, *guiding bolt*, *healing word*, *shield of faith*#
- 2nd level (3/1 slots): *lesser restoration*, *magic weapon*, *prayer of healing*, *silence*, *spiritual weapon*
- 3rd level (3/2 slots): *beacon of hope*, *crusader's mantle*, *dispel magic*, *protection from energy*#, *revivify*, *spirit guardians*
- 4th level (3/2 slots): *banishment*, *freedom of movement*, *guardian of faith*, *stoneskin*#
- 5th level (1/0 slot): *flame strike*, *mass cure wounds*, *hold monster*

*Slots after the slash are how many the Bishop has left at the start of the battle.
#These spells are currently active.

Combat Gear. The bishop has a *necklace of fireballs* with 3 beads left.
Blessing of Grox. As a bonus action, the bishop can expend a spell slot to cause its melee weapon attacks to magically deal an extra 10 (3d6) necrotic damage to a target on a hit. This benefit lasts until the end of the turn. If the priest expends a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the extra damage increases by 1d6 for each level above 1st.



Madman's Vision. While the bishop is below half his original starting hit points, he may maintain any number of concentration spells.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The bishop makes two melee attacks.
Maul. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 10 (2d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage.
Atheist's Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 2 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage. If the target is a divine spellcaster (cleric or paladin for example) it must also make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or lose all its class abilities until the end of its next turn.

REACTIONS

Grox's Premonition. The bishop grants a advantage on an attack roll made by himself or another creature within 30 feet of him. The priest can make this choice after the roll is made but before it hits or misses.

Combat Gear *necklace of fireballs* (type III [7-HD *fireball* already used), *potion of delay poison*, *wand of shield of faith* (7 charges); **Other Gear** *+1 breastplate*, *+1 heavy steel shield*, *amulet of natural armor +1*, *cloak of resistance +1*, *atheist's dagger* (see **Appendix B**), *headband of inspired wisdom +2*, holy symbol of Grox (disguised as holy symbol of Archeillus)

Tactics: Bishop Voltix is weakened, low on hit points and spells. The sight of additional vampires coming up the stairs bends his will to almost a breaking point. He goes on the attack with the remaining spells and fight he has left in him. Never a particularly brave or fanatical man, if the bishop is reduced to 15 hit points, he drops his weapon and shield and surrenders, begging for his life. He screams that they "already took the shroud" and "what more do you want."

Development: PCs making successful Charisma (Deception) checks, with advantage on the check if they pretend to be agents of the Underguild, can squeeze the bishop for useful information which the bishop will reluctantly give. However, if they reveal that they are not agents of the Underguild, he becomes even more cooperative seeing an opportunity to strike back at those who dared invade his god's sanctuary.

From either direct questioning or my putting together bits of information that the bishop relays, the PCs can confirm that a score or more agents of the Underguild, led by a vampire (the one whose head the bishop still possesses) broke into the cathedral within the last hour. The priests put up a fight but were surprised and overmatched. Bishop Voltix fought them off (killing several singlehandedly) but was not able to stop them from stealing the *Crimson Shroud* during the battle. The last of the Underguild agents left only minutes before the PCs arrived. The firbolg was not on duty this night and arrived only moments before the PCs, taking up guard over the bishop in his sanctuary. Bishop Voltix claims that he was able to thin the attackers' ranks some despite their successful theft of the *Shroud*. He is unsure if the guild has more undead or vampires at their command but wouldn't be surprised.

Even if the PCs attempt to hide their undead nature, assume the bishop makes a successful Intelligence (Religion) check to discern the truth. If the PCs have admitted to not being members of the Underguild, he quickly senses the recent nature of their conversion and the likely internal conflict that they face and offers them a deal. If they can recover the *Crimson Shroud* and return it to them, he can use its ritual to cure them of their vampirism. If the PCs haven't recognized the truth of the cathedral's devotion to Grox, he hopes this will be incentive enough. If he believes they have learned of the cathedral's true faith, he attempts to get an oath of secrecy from them as part of the bargaining. If unsuccessful, he will agree to any conditions that they require including giving up the Shroud and/or leaving town (he knows he is in no position to make demands and will intend to double cross them later), but he does hold the fact that they need him to conduct the ritual over their heads in order to spare his life and get as many concessions as possible (keeping he cathedral's secret safe, leaving it unlooted, etc.).

In any case, the bishop will conclude any deal making with information on where to find the Underguild. Though the cathedral and the Underguild have never been openly opposed before, he has long known of the despicable guild's presence within Tourse (this House of Grox does to a great extent deal in secrets after all). He can tell them that The Lich's Laboratory, a gambling hall near the riverfront has long served as a front for the organization's operations within the city. If the PCs go there and press their case, they will surely be able to find the miscreants they seek and the stolen Shroud. He will add one extra bit of important information. While the *Crimson Shroud* can be used to heal conditions such as vampirism, it could also be used with only minor variations of the ritual to remove the weaknesses of a condition like vampirism. "Imagine a vampire able to withstand the holy rebuke of a churchman or with no fear of the sun's rays," he says. "I'd guess that's why those bloodsuckers from the Underguild came to steal it and why you have to find it first before they become too powerful for you to stop."

Bishop Voltix doesn't know it, but he was left alive during the raid on purpose. While the Underguild is unaware of the *Shroud's* ability to remove vampire weaknesses (or they would have taken it long ago), they know the margravine wants it and seek to set a trap for her to take vengeance for her past betrayals. They assume that her agents will be hot on the heels of the *Shroud's* theft. They know the bishop knows of their safe house and hope to lure the margravine in while pursuing the stolen artifact. If the PCs kill the bishop without obtaining the information, assume that

Vorlawn Hodge (**B5**) also knows the above information and of the safe house's whereabouts. If both are killed, you will need to arrange another clue to inform the party and lead them to The Lich's Laboratory (see **Chapter 3**) — perhaps a clue sent by the margravine or her other agents. In any event, after leaving the cathedral, the gambling hall should be the party's next target location with half the night already gone and a deadly sunrise looming.

Ad Hoc XP Award: If the PCs allow Bishop Voltix to live and obtain the Underguild's information from him, award them XP as if they had defeated him.

CHAPTER THREE: THE RIVALS AND THE RITUAL

After exploring the Bastion of Righteous Decree and discovering the theft of the Crimson Shroud, the PCs should be headed for the Underguild safe house hidden within the gambling hall known as The Lich's Laboratory. Locating The Lich's Laboratory is simple enough, requiring only a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) or DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check to gather information. This check receives a +2 bonus if the PCs ask around among unsavory types along the riverfront and by an additional +1 for every 5 gp that they spend in bribe money.

They sunrise is still some hours off, the PCs' hunger from their new forms and the danger of the sun's approaching rays should give this part of the adventure a sense of urgency. It is only a matter of time until they deadly sun's light traps them in whatever building they are lurking until the next night or their own blood thirst causes them to lose control of themselves and fully abandon themselves to their curse of vampirism.

THE LICH'S LABORATORY

The Lich's Laboratory is a gambling hall and tavern owned by the vampiress Eudoxia, leader of a local cell of Underguild agents. The operator of the hall is a man named Davius, a member of the Underguild who has been negotiating with another member of the Underguild, Valarit the vampiress, in an attempt to become a vampire himself. He secretly loathes Valarit and hopes that once he becomes a vampire, he will be powerful enough to destroy her and take over as leader of the local chapter. With the destruction of Eudoxia during the raid on the Bastion of Righteous Decree, Davius is hopeful that his time of ascension is near. However, Eudoxia's destruction at the hands of Bishop Voltix has also caused consternation and confusion among the Underguild cell here. They did not all know the extent of Eudoxia's plan — specifically, to lead the agents of the margravine into a trap — so while they are on alert after their raid, they are not truly expecting the arrival of the PCs this night and have not set up an ambush accordingly. A message has been sent to Valarit (who does not appear in this adventure) for instructions, and the Underguild survivors currently wait at their safe house waiting to hear back from her.

When the PCs first locate The Lich's Laboratory, read the following.

Not far from the dank riverfront, this single-story building is a misshapen construction of stone, wood and plaster, with a wood-shingled roof, wreathed in the night fogs off the river. The image of a grinning skull with a set of dice for teeth is crudely painted above the door. Despite the lateness of the hour, the windows of the establishment blaze with light and the raucous sounds from within indicate that the night's festivities are far from over.

The interior and exterior walls of the gambling hall are a crudely put together combination of wood, stone, and plaster and are the structural equivalent of wooden walls. Ceilings are low, only 7 feet high, crisscrossed by heavy support beams. The floors and ceiling are of wood, though the planks of the floor are obscured by a layer of old vomit-, urine-, and ale-oaked sawdust. Doors are made of wooden planks and do not have locks unless otherwise noted. Rooms contain cheap oil lamps for light, but these are only lit in rooms that are occupied. All other rooms are dark. Windows are made a parchment-thin horn that let in little enough light during the day and none at night. They are opaque and do not allow a view of what is beyond.

The lower levels consists of sewer tunnels and chambers dug out of the earth. Walls that aren't earthen are crudely dressed stone and are slick with moisture and slime. Ceiling heights are only 6 feet (except in area C5 where it is 10 feet). There are no light sources unless otherwise noted, and the air in these rooms is musty and foul.

Wooden Wall: 6 in. thick; Damage Threshold 5; hp 60; Break DC 20; Strength (Athletics) DC 18.

Dressed Stone Wall: 1 ft. thick; Damage Threshold 8; hp 90; Break DC 35; Strength (Athletics) DC 24.

Simple Wooden Door: 1 in. thick; Damage Threshold 5; hp 10; Break DC 15 (if locked); Dexterity (Thieves Tools) DC 20 (if locked).

Horn Window: 1/8 in. thick; Damage Threshold 0; hp 3; Break DC 5.

C1. TAPROOM

The massive heavy oak door opens into a tavern, complete with a bar and stools. Almost every table is filled by patrons swilling on leather jacks of ale and playing a variety of card and dice games. There is much shouting, swearing, and general revelry as many of the players are deep in their cups and seem to win or lose their entire stake on every hand. Oil lamps set in sconces on the walls illuminate the chamber.

This tavern and gambling hall has served as a front of the Underguild for many years now. The Underguild used the sewer network accessible beneath the hall to move agents in and out of the establishment to avoid drawing too much attention to the gambling hall. On occasion, Eudoxia would entertain city officials and allow them to win some of the house's gold to keep the right hands greased. Others would disappear in the night and were never heard from.

The kitchen staff and serving girls are locals, hired to give a sense of legitimacy to the establishment, no something of their employers' true operations but are well paid to ask no questions and mind their own business. They are aware that there is a secret basement but do not know how to reach it. Rough-looking men standing in the corners of the room are **4 bouncers** who are actual members of the Underguild, all whom know about the secret grate in the floor in the storage room (**C4**).

Many of the tavern's 26 patrons are engaged in games of cards and dice at various tables around the room. Overseeing the bar is the manager, **Davius**. The area behind the bar holds shelves and racks of ale barrels, wine bottles, and bottles of stronger liquors. Many of the bottles of liquor are highly flammable. Four of them are particularly potent, and if combat breaks out or Davius suspects the PCs are vampires (he recognizes all the local vampires in the Underguild), he uses a small box of 20 matches to ignite the bottles before throwing them at targets.

Patrons and staff at the bar other than the bouncers and Davius will not become involved in any battles, preferring to grab what cash they can and attempting to escape through doors and windows.

DAVIUS

Hp 112 (as gladiator[SRD])

UNDERGUILD BOUNCERS (4)

Hp 58 (as veteran[SRD])

Development: Despite the shady nature of the gambling hall, Davius and the bouncers don't initially attack or become hostile towards the PCs unless the PCs come in with swords swinging. Upon entry, a bouncer near the entrance immediately requests a 20-gp cover charge from each party member to enter. He instructs the PCs that the floor tables are open to anyone with coin, but the high stakes tables require an "invitation" (hinting strongly that an invitation can be obtained with a proper bribe — at least 500 gp). Davius is aware of the Underguild raid on the cathedral tonight but has no idea that the PCs might be looking for the *Crimson Shroud* so soon. If the PCs hint at or mention the cathedral in anyway, he immediately draws his weapon and yells an alarm. Likewise, if the PCs make no attempt to hide their vampirism, Davius will assume that they are agents of the margravine that he has been warned of and raise the alarm as well.

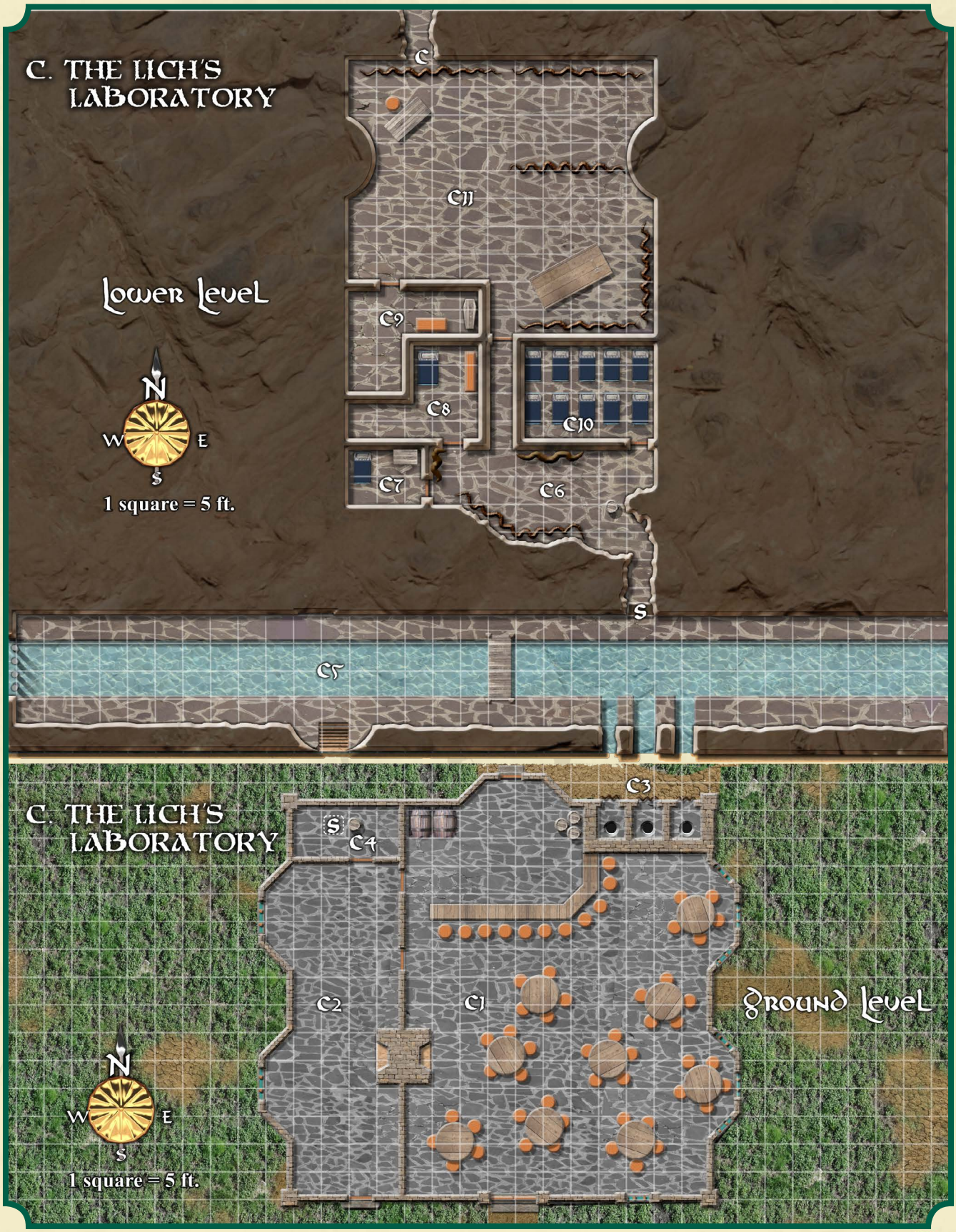
If the party refuses to pay the cover charge or picks a fight, all the bouncers immediately turn on them, but flee if near death. Otherwise, the party is free to interact with the patrons and even join in games of chance. Feel free to play out actual games of craps, poker, etc. or simply bet on high rolls or cutting the deck.

Treasure: The house's nightly bank and proceeds are held in an unlocked box behind the bar. The box contains various gems worth a total of 2,100 gp, and mixed coins worth a total of 4,505 gp.

C2. KITCHEN

This kitchen has suffered from long neglect. Shelves covered in grease, old food, broken crockery, and other refuse line the walls, while across the room a burned, rusty cauldron hangs over the cold hearth.

Treasure: One of the shelves conceals two *potions of owl's wisdom* (as *enhance ability*, but only affecting Wisdom) that can be discovered with a DC 22 Wisdom (Perception) check.


C. THE LICH'S LABORATORY
Lower Level
C
C11
C9
C8
C10
C7
C6
S
C5
N
W
E
S
1 square = 5 ft.
C. THE LICH'S LABORATORY
C3
S
C4
C2
C1
Ground Level
N
W
E
S
1 square = 5 ft.



C3. PRIVIES

Arranged out back behind the tavern, each of these thick-walled alcoves is concealed by a threadbare curtain and has only a hole cut in its earthen floor that drains directly into the sewers (area **C5**) below. The holes are too small for anything larger than size Tiny to navigate and descend a total of 15 feet before emptying into the sewage channel below.

C4. STORAGE

This room holds shelves and racks of spices, vegetables, grain, bottles of cooking wine, and bottles of stronger liquors. In the center of the floor sits a large oddly placed decorative rug and a barrel of dried meat.

PCs that succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check hear sounds of rushing water emanating from below the rug. Looking under the rug, the PCs find a large iron grate (damage threshold 10, hp 30, Break DC 28 Strength [Athletics]) that leads down to the sewers below. The grate is unlocked but **trapped**.

Trap: To discourage unwanted visitors from popping up from the sewers, the Underguild trapped this grate with a permanent *symbol of stunning* (DC 18) that triggers when someone touches the grate without uttering the password, "Phylactery." When triggered, the symbol also sets off an audible *alarm* spell, alerting anyone in area **C3** and **C11**.

Development: This *symbol of stunning* is most effective against living creatures; as vampires, the PCs gain advantage on their saving throw to resist its effects. In addition, they must deal with the consequences of setting off an alarm.

C5. SEWER

A 5-foot-wide walkway hugs both sides of the walls of this sewer channel. The sewage rushes swiftly west, frothing and gurgling under a rudely built wooden bridge as it makes its way through a grate and towards the nearby river.

The sewer system under Tourse was built with an incline towards the river create good flow and reduce required maintenance. Certain areas level off as storage areas, and it is at this point the Underguild found an old maintenance outpost's bricked-up entrance. After knocking the wall in, they found multi-roomed access tunnels. These 20-foot wide tunnels are 10 feet high above the level of the walkways, though with recent rains the sewer channel is filled almost to the level of the walkway and only 1 foot below the bridge. A **black pudding** has taken up residence in the sewage under the bridge. The infestation of the ooze is encouraged by the Underguild, who see it as a silent guardian. They know to bring down a piece of dried meat (from the barrels in **C4** or **C6**) to placate the guardian before crossing the bridge. The pudding attacks any creature that crosses the bridge without tossing a piece of food into the sewage.

A secret door on the opposite side of the bridge is almost seamless, so that if the sewer floods no water seeps in. This also conceals the door, making it more difficult to detect, though tracks in the muck between the bridge and the door can be found with a DC 20 Survival or Wisdom (Perception) check. If successful, these provide a +5 bonus on Wisdom (Perception) checks to find the secret door.

Secret Door: 2 in. thick; damage threshold 8; hp 40; Break DC 28; Wisdom (Perception) DC 25.

BLACK PUDDING

hp 85 black pudding[SRD]

C6. THIEVES' TUNNEL

Past the secret door, a tight, earthen passage runs to a small gathering area. The rough-hewn tunnel widens into a chamber that holds a large table with multiple wooden chairs surrounding it. Three oil lanterns give off a soft glow, illuminating the four doors that exit the room. Large tapestries cover the majority of the room's walls, and bloodstains cover a disturbingly large area of the floor. Next to the southern passage is a barrel half-full of dried meat.

A single lookout named **Jamus Hyne** stands guard here at all times. Currently, the lookout is wearing a unique magical *wolfskin cloak* that he stole from a priest during the raid on the Bastion of Righteous Decree. He paces back and forth in excitement, as he just recently learned of its hidden abilities and highly anticipates using it again soon. If battle is joined, Jamus attempts to assume werewolf form before going on the attack.

JAMUS HYNE

Hp 90 (see werewolf[SRD])

Treasure: Jamus has a magical *werewolf skin* (see **Appendix D**), a set of masterwork Thieves' Tools (granting him a +1 bonus on Dexterity checks made with them), and 18 gp.

C7. MERTIFRAX'S CHAMBER

The door to this room has been rigged with an *acid fog* **trap** that goes off if the door is opened without first flipping a small switch at the bottom of the jamb. The switch can be found on a successful DC 22 Wisdom (Perception) check to search for traps and the trap can be disabled with a successful DC 22 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check. This **acid fog** spell (DC 18; see **Appendix D**) fills a 10-foot radius centered on the door.

The pungent odor of strange chemicals and reagents hangs in the air of this chamber. The tables that fill the room are covered with glass bottles and flasks, some placed upon small burners, and some connected to each other with elaborate glass tubing. Among the bottles and liquids, a small bed with a nest of blankets lies on the floor.

This is the room of the Underguild's alchemist and sergeant-at-arms, Mertifrax the barghest. There is little of note here other than the complete alchemist's lab that can be found upon the tables. A search of the rumpled bedding reveals a number of canine-like hairs left by the bed's recent occupant which might lead the PCs to believe that the room belongs to some kind of lycanthrope (perhaps even the guard in **C6**). There is nothing else here to indicate the identity of the room's occupant.

Treasure: Five bottles on one table hold a recently concocted *elixir of antimordetis* (see **Appendix B**). In addition, a DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals a book hidden in brackets attached to the bottom of one table. This book is written in Infernal and includes the alchemical formulae as well as helpful hints for the distillation of all the poisons listed in the official 5E *Game Masters Guide*.



C8. BANDESTEI'S ROOM

A massive canopy bed dominates this chamber. A large dresser stands at the bed's side, and cheap paintings of the Ysser countryside hang on the wall. The bedding and frame of the otherwise grand bed is soiled and ruined by mildew and stains, and the dresser only holds the nondescript clothes many different trades and occupations found in the city — obviously for use as disguises. However, nothing is of any intrinsic value.

C9. EUDOXIA'S ROOM

The scent of wax faintly permeates this chamber. At the eastern end of the chamber rests an elegant coffin of bronze and polished wood. It is open revealing a lining of plush velevet. Beside this coffin stands a large open wardrobe, its interior overflowing with elegant dresses. In the southern portion of the room stands draconic beast, fully 16 feet long from snout to tip of tail. It has scales of blue and stands upon two clawed feet, wings splayed at its side, its tail tipped by a menacing horn-like stinger.

The head of the local chapter of the Underguild at the time of the temple assault was Eudoxia, a vampire of exquisite beauty and a furious temper. A member of the Underguild for over 50 years, it was she and her lover Yorguio who expanded the organization's reach into the underworld of Tourse. The raid on the cathedral to both recover the *Crimson Shroud* and use it as a lure to destroy the margravine. Unfortunately for her, she miscalculated the cathedral's defenses, and it cost her her eternal unlife at the hands of the bishop.

The draconic beast is recognizable as a wax mannequin with a simple DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check, but is an obviously skilled replica of a wyvern molded in wax. It also happens to be a **waxwork wyvern** that Eudoxia had brought in and assembled here piece by piece by Bandestei. The creature serves as a guardian for the chamber and attacks anyone who enters unaccompanied by Eudoxia. Despite their leader's recent death, the other Underguild survivors have not yet decided on the best way to deal with the automaton in order to recover their former leader's treasures.

WAXWORK WYVERN

Large construct, unaligned
Armor Class 13 (natural armor)
Hit Points 110 (13d10 + 39)
Speed 20 ft., fly 80 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	5 (-3)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)

Skills Perception +4
Damage Vulnerabilities fire
Damage Immunities lightning, poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages --
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

False Appearance. While the waxwork wyvern remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from an inanimate statue.
Immutable Form. The waxwork wyvern is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.
Waxen Regeneration. The waxwork wyvern regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn. If the waxwork wyvern takes fire damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of the waxwork wyvern's next turn. The waxwork wyvern dies only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

ACTIONS
Multiattack. The waxwork wyvern makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its stinger. While flying, it can use its claws in place of one other attack.
Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage.
Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 13 (2d8 + 4) slashing damage.
Stinger. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage. The target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 24 (7d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Treasure: A DC 22 Wisdom (Perception) check to search the coffin locates an *assassin's dagger* (see **Appendix D**), two *potions of invisibility*, and a bag of 10 emeralds (200 gp each). The dresses within the wardrobe are worth a total of 700 gp. Sitting on a shelf within is a pearl-handled hairbrush (250 gp). Hidden within the waxwork wyvern (Wisdom [Perception] DC 30 only if it is destroyed) is a leather bundle holding 2,200 pp.

C10. BARRACKS

This wide chamber has been set up as a barracks. It has rows of uncomfortable wooden bunks and footlockers. There are perhaps a dozen in total. Most show signs of recent use with soiled sheets and burlap pillows scattered in disarray.

Most agents of the Underguild in Tourse maintain residences within the city. When mustering for a major operation this room is used to house them while they prepare. The recent raid on the cathedral brought more than a dozen agents to this safe house and had them staying the previous night while they prepared. The few surviving agents that returned here quickly rifled through their fallen comrades' personal items, claiming anything of value.

C11. STAGING ROOM

The door opens into a wide audience hall decorated with elaborate tapestries and art befitting a noble bloodline. A massive table sits near the chamber's entrance. Set atop its surface is a long, detailed map of Tourse. The back of the chamber is partially divided by two rounded buttresses that support the low ceiling overhead. Between

these buttresses hangs a long curtain that can be stretched across for privacy, though currently it is only partially drawn. Draped across a desk in the back corner is a blood-red shroud.

The map on the table shows a number of marked locations of old Underguild robberies, stakeouts, burglaries, etc. Though none of it is of current relevance to the city. The front portion of the room is for staging before an Underguild operation while the back portion is used for storage of necessary equipment for an operation, storage of stolen goods waiting to be fenced, and even as a makeshift hospital based on the old bloodstains on the stone floor here and there. The desk has a number of drawers holding little more than some moldering remains of food, bits and pieces of old disguises, and a number of old Underguild passwords and phrases that are years out of date and no longer of use. Lying across the desk is the *Crimson Shroud*, where the Underguild agents have carelessly tossed it while trying to figure out their next move. Draped over the back of the desk's chair is a *bandit's cloak* (see **Appendix D**). A pair of mildewed tapestries hang along the back wall to try and keep the chill of the nearby river out of the room. Behind one of them is a concealed door. It requires a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check to notice without looking behind the curtain but is found automatically if a player states they look behind the tapestry. Behind this door is a dugout tunnel that leads to a concealed dell on the banks of the nearby river. It is from here that the Underguild sallies forth under cover of darkness to undertake their clandestine enterprises.



Currently within this chamber are **Bandestei**, the ranking Underguild lieutenant after Eudoxia's destruction, Mertifrax, this Underguild chapter's sergeant-at-arms and local alchemist, and **4 Underguild thugs**, all of whom survived the recent raid on the cathedral. If no alarm has been raised in area **C4** or **C6**, they may be able to surprise the remaining members of the Underguild gathered around the map table discussing how their attack on the Bastion of Righteous Decree went wrong. Anyone listening at the door and making a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check can hear Bandestei (see "Note" below), berating the other members for being sloppy in their execution. If the PCs listen for at least 2 rounds, after berating the group Bandestei turns his attention to the Mertifrax and asks if his latest "batch" is ready for use. The alchemist replies that his current batch is sufficient for five individuals. Bandestei closes by telling his men to make ready for the arrival of the margravine's goons who should have taken the bait and ought to be arriving to get the *Shroud* at any time now.

Note: Bandestei is under a constant *hide from undead* spell (see **Appendix D**), so if vampire PCs are unable to see or hear the lieutenant until he attacks, causing them only to hear the responses to his comments above and creating a potentially confusing situation for listeners.

If the PCs have not managed to obtain surprise, the group's actions are described under "Tactics" below.

BANDESTEI, UNDERGUILD LIEUTENANT

Hp 90 (see assassin[SRD])
Gear *potion of haste*, *potion of invisibility*

MERTIFRAX

Hp 90 (see werewolf[SRD])
Innate Spellcasting Mertifrax's fiend-tainted bloodline grants him the ability to innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14).
At will: *blink*, *burning hands*
1/day each: *blur*, *dimension door*

UNDERGUILD THUGS (6)

Medium humanoid, neutral evil

Armor Class 13 (studded leather armor)

Hit Points 67 (9d8 + 27)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Stealth +5

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Sneak Attack. Once per turn, the thug deals an extra 7 (2d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the thug that isn't incapacitated and the thug doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS

Greataxe. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 9 (1d12 + 3) slashing damage.

Longbow. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit*: 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage.

Tactics: If the inhabitants of the room become aware of the PCs entering their lair, they order Jamus in C6 to ambush and slow them in **C5**. If he doesn't know the PCs have become afflicted with vampirism, Badnestei uses his *potion of invisibility* on himself and hides beneath the map table. If he is aware of their condition, he relies on his *hide from undead* ability at the beginning of combat and uses his *potion of invisibility* later. He tries to assassinate a PC that has not acted in the first round of combat and otherwise tries to position himself with allies to use his sneak attack ability.

Mertifrax uses his *blink* and *blur* innate spells and waits around the corner from the entrance by the door to **C9**. He uses *burning hands* whenever he can get PCs in the area without endangering his allies if possible, though he is willing to risk harm to the foot soldiers if it is to his advantage. He *blinks* out of danger before repositioning himself for new attacks each round, or retreats blinking back and forth behind the curtain.

One of the thugs is wearing the *bandit's cloak* (see **Appendix D**) on the desk chair, and they all hide behind the curtain and spring out to attack with surprise when the party enters. They initially use their bows and to make concentrated sneak attacks on the first PC to enter the room and then switch to their axes to try and lure the party fully into the room and set up the attacks of their comrades using Stealth to stay out of sight. They try to gang up on PCs to continue their sneak attacks and will maneuver around the battlefield as needed to press their advantage. The thug wearing the *bandit's cloak* will only activate if none of his companions are within its area of effect or if he is on the verge of death.

Development: During the third round of combat, **Margravine Cassandra Vanderhaven** (see **Appendix A**) infiltrates the chamber in gaseous form through the secret entrance at the back, having located and breached the safe house using her own resources. When she realized the PCs were going to raid it, she opted to wait and see what mayhem they could cause. She tries to remain behind the tapestry as much as possible requiring an opposed Wisdom (Perception) check against her Stealth to spot her before she assumes her corporeal form. Anyone making at least a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check notices a slight chill draft in the room the round before she emerges due to her opening the concealed door behind the tapestry before assuming gaseous form. She materializes long enough to grab the *Crimson Shroud* from the desk before ducking back behind the tapestry and through the open door there. If attacked before she can make her escape, she tries to dominate any attackers with her gaze and orders them to cover her retreat. Unless you wish for the adventure to end here, you should orchestrate the margravine's escape with the Shroud. Once to the riverbank she assumes gaseous form again and disappears into the night mists over the river. If the PCs are having a hard time with the encounter, the margravine can make an early appearance and take down a few of the foot soldiers before she makes off with the *Crimson Shroud.*

Treasure: The desk contains a hidden compartment under its writing surface (Wisdom [Perception] DC 23) that is locked and trapped an **acid trap** (DC 18 Wisdom [Perception] to discover the trap, DC 18 Dexterity [Thieves' Tools] check to disarm) that shoots a stream of acid at anyone opening the compartment without using the key. This deals 4d6 acid damage on a failed DC 20 Dexterity saving throw, or half as much on a successful one.

Within this compartment is a bag of assorted gems worth 6,700 gp, a *hat of disguise*, and forged identification documents and credentials of a half dozen different "residents" of Tourse that the Underguild can use to

infiltrate or evade as necessary. Who these identities are and how they may be of use to the party is up to the GM.

Locked Secret Compartment: hardness 5; hp 25; Break DC 18; Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) 30.

RETURN TO THE MANOR

After the events at The Lich's Laboratory, the margravine has the *Crimson Shroud* and is in a rush to use its abilities to remove her vampire weaknesses. Once freed of these constraints, she plans on visiting any old enemies for a drink. In addition, she dreams of true immortality, and the ever-increasing power of her psychic abilities that will make here the region's one true master vampire.

The PCs will be unable to follow her through the river mists after absconding with the *Crimson Shroud* through the Underguild's backdoor. They don't know where she might be headed but a DC 15 Intelligence (History) check does not recall any other known holdings of any significance of the margravine in or around the city, and with the coming down only a few hours at most away she must be seeking shelter from the sun's rays. If the players don't think of it themselves, A DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that with the destruction (or at least temporary removal) of the vampire hunter threat, Vanderhaven Manor is likely the most logical place for the margravine to have retreated at least in the short term. The PCs don't have time to gather allies elsewhere in the city, so their only viable option seems to be heading back to Vanderhaven Manor and hoping to catch the margravine before she can complete her nefarious plans with the *Crimson Shroud*.

EVENT 9: VANDERHAVEN MANOR REDUX

The PCs can reach the manor before dawn, but its pink suggestion is beginning to show on the eastern horizon. It is only a matter of minutes before the sun's rays force the PCs to seek shelter within their own coffins.

The house is exactly as they left it, and if any members of the vampire hunters survived their attack, they have returned to Temple of Mitra to await the PCs. The margravine has retreated to area **A6** to conduct her ritual, though the PCs may need to search around a little bit to conclude that. During this process remind them of their urgency as the predawn darkness gradually grows lighter and lighter with the swiftly coming day. A DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check in **A2**, **A5**, or the hallway in between them notices many new muddy tracks. These are coming in through the broken window in **A2**. A DC 10 Knowledge (Nature) or Wisdom (Survival) check identifies them as large canine tracks, while a DC 15 on these checks confirms them to be wolves. Once the tracks have been identified, a DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check easily follows them into **A5** and the double doors leading into **A6**. See that area for the means of gaining entry to the room.

Assuming the PCs are able to enter the room, add the following description in addition to the previous one provided in **Chapter 1**.

The beautiful stained glass roof sparkles as small beams of sunlight filter through in a rainbow of colors. The rising sun provides slight illumination as it peaks over the horizon and pierces through city's haze and building's windows. Sunlight, the once-revered, life-giving radiance that is now to be feared. Standing before the central pedestal is the Margravine Cassandra veiled in the diaphanous folds of the Crimson Shroud.

Within the conservatory are the **Margravine Cassandra Vanderhaven**, her house steward and sycophant **Forsythe**, as well as her summoned children of the night in the form of a pack of **7 wolves**. From the start of this encounter, the clock is running for the PCs. The sun has begun to rise and the margravine is counting on it to complete the Ritual of the Corrupted Shroud (see **Appendix B**). The stained glass of the roof is magically warded against the rays of direct sunlight, but only enough to reduce the light level by one step. It still causes a full vampire to become exhausted under prolonged exposure. Cassandra has broken open a single 5-foot section directly above the central dais so that the sunlight through the roof will fall upon it and her as the sun rises. If she moves during the ritual, she must return to the dais by the final round of the ritual. The sun has begun to rise as the PCs gain entrance into the room (unless for some reason they refuse or are unable to, in which case she completes the ritual uninterrupted). Assuming the PCs gain entry into the conservatory, they will enter on Round 1 of the ritual (see "Tactics" below).

While she undergoes this process, Forsythe and her summoned wolves do everything they can to keep the party away from the margravine, including fighting to the death. In addition, she has Forsythe here for the ritual's sacrificial demands. However, when the PCs arrive, she focuses the sacrificial demand on one of them instead. This creates a second hazard for the PCs as the *Crimson Shroud* begins to pull blood from their bodies. On any round in which the targeted PC succeeds at his saving throw to avoid the blood sacrifice, Cassandra defaults to Forsythe instead. If Forsythe is slain, the margravine makes the sacrifice from her own hit points in that round counting on her fast healing to recover them.

MARGRAVINE CASSANDRA VANDERHAVEN

Hp 204 (see **page 84**)

FORSYTHE

Hp 82 (see **Appendix A**, page 555 vampire sycophant)

WOLVES (7)

Hp 11 (wolves[SRD])

Pack Tactics. The wolves have advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the wolves or vampires is within 5 feet of the creature and that ally isn't incapacitated.

Tactics: The margravine and her retinue use the following tactics to battle the PCs during the ritual, and the timetable of outside events occur as outlined below. Modify the tactics of the margravine's forces as necessary based on the actions of the PCs, but completion of the ritual remains her top priority — Cassandra knows she only gets one chance at this.

Round 1: Arrival of the PCs, initiative is rolled. Forsythe and the wolves rush forward to protect their master. On Cassandra's initiative she begins the Ritual of the Corrupted Shroud and the targeted PC begins to take damage. The margravine automatically succeeds on her skill checks and begins to have one vampire weakness removed each round (see the Ritual of the Corrupted Shroud in **Appendix D**).

Round 5: The morning sun filtering into the room is sufficiently bright to cause any vampire in the chamber (other than the margravine) to start taking half damage due to their sunlight hypersensitivity unless they succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. An additional saving throw is required each round with the DC increasing by 1 each round). Any vampire (again, other than the margravine) standing on the central dais is subject to direct sunlight and is staggered in the first round and destroyed in the second consecutive round of exposure.

Round 10: The margravine completes the ritual and immediately assumes gaseous form. She makes her way to **A4** in order to access her coffin in **A26** where she will be able to regain her material form after 2 rounds of rest.

Development: If the margravine is defeated before completing the ritual, she likewise assumes gaseous form in order to reach her coffin in **A26** as described above. Regardless of how the margravine is dealt with, the *Crimson Shroud* is left behind in this chamber.

EVENT 10: IN THE CRYPT OF THE MARGRAVINE

The most likely way for the PCs to discover area **A26** is to follow the margravine's gaseous form here after battling her in **Event 9**. If the PCs defeated her during the ritual, then Margravine Cassandra is here in her coffin recovering from her wounds. If she was able to complete the Ritual of the Corrupted Shroud, then she only needs to rest in her coffin for 2 rounds before being able to emerge whole and with none of the weaknesses of a normal vampire (see the Ritual of the Corrupted Shroud in **Appendix D**). One of her first actions in combat will be to pull the outer lid off of the coffin in order to release the **blood pudding** within to give the PCs something extra to worry about.

MARGRAVINE CASSANDRA VANDERHAVEN

Hp 204 (see **page 64**)

BLOOD PUDDING

Large ooze, unaligned

Armor Class 7

Hit Points 85 (10d10 + 30)

Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

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

Damage Resistance fire

Damage Immunities cold, lightning, necrotic, slashing

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, prone

Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 8

Languages --

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Amorphous. The pudding can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Bloody Miasma. A creature that touches the pudding or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 4 (1d8) necrotic damage. Any nonmagical weapon made of metal or wood that hits the pudding has its energy drained and ages prematurely. After dealing damage, the weapon takes a permanent and cumulative –1 penalty to damage rolls. If its penalty drops to –5, the weapon is destroyed. Nonmagical ammunition made of metal or wood that hits the pudding is destroyed after dealing damage. The pudding can eat through 2-inch-thick, nonmagical wood or metal in 1 round.

Spider Climb. The pudding can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

ACTIONS

Pseudopod. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage plus 18 (4d8) necrotic damage and the target is grappled (Escape DC 13). In addition, nonmagical armor worn by the target has its energy drained and ages prematurely and takes a permanent and cumulative –1 penalty to the AC it offers. The armor is destroyed if the penalty reduces its AC to 10.

REACTIONS

Split. When a pudding that is Medium or larger is subjected to lightning or slashing damage, it splits into two new puddings if it has at least 10 hit points. Each new pudding has hit points equal to half the original pudding's, rounded down. New puddings are one size smaller than the original pudding.

Development: If she is defeated her and get inside her coffin while she is still recovering, Cassandra attempts to charm the PCs, and if that fails she begs for her life. She offers up everything, even the *Crimson Shroud* and its secrets, her mansion, and her wealth, though course she attempts to double-cross the PCs at the first available opportunity.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

If the party is successful at the end of the adventure, they should have destroyed Margravine Cassandra and recovered the *Crimson Shroud* with at least one of the PCs still in control of himself as a free-willed vampire (as opposed to having succumbed to evil through feeding and becoming a GM-controlled NPC). It is possible that such a PC will need to try and put down any of his evil party members in order to have the *Crimson Shroud* cure administered to them even against their will. Since the dawn has come, the first order of business for the PCs will be to return to their coffins in A5 until the next nightfall which will give a canny PC the opportunity to stake his unsuspecting corrupted comrades in order to keep them in a state of suspended animation until such time that the cure can be administered. The PCs are in luck during this first day of rest because both the remoteness of access and the reputation of Vanderhaven Manor will keep anyone from trespassing at the house before nightfall when the PCs can become active again.

The PCs have the *Crimson Shroud* but do not know the Ritual of the Crimson Shroud to cure them of their vampiric affliction. In addition, their continual blood hunger (page 89) means they are unlikely to have time to research the ritual before succumbing to their foul impulses, so their best bet is to find someone who can do the ritual for them. The most obvious possibilities include any deals they have brokered with Vorlawn Hodge or Bishop Voltix at the Bastion of Righteous Decree or possibly even High Faithful Thesius Blathe of the local Temple of Mitra, who all possess the requisite knowledge of the Shroud and its ritual necessary to cure the PCs. If the PCs do not have any of these opportunities, the strange elven painter Corodolan Ielvian (from Event 2) seeks them out on the next night, having learned of their plight through his own mysterious network. If the PCs previously made a favorable impression upon the artist, he puts them in touch with an underground cleric of Bacchus-Dionysus who can perform the ritual they need in exchange for allowing him to paint their vampiric destruction (staking, sunlight, etc.) at the hands of the cleric. If they have not previously made a favorable impression on the painter, he demands a payment of 5,000 gp as well as the painting before he will put them in touch with the cleric. In any event, the cleric of Bacchus-Dionysus demands they turn over the *Crimson Shroud* to him before he will use the ritual.

Unfortunately for the PCs, regardless of whom they procure to perform the Ritual of the *Crimson Shroud*, they all know that to do so they first have to destroy the PCs and use the Shroud's true resurrection ability on each PC at the rate of once per week. They will propose to stake each PC and then expose them all to the light of sunrise to burn them to ash and permanently destroy them as undead. They will then resurrect one PC on the first morning (the ashes of the vampires are sufficient for the *Crimson Shroud's* power to work) and allow them to oversee and bear witness to the completion of the process over the next month or so. The clerics of Grox will, surprisingly, abide by any agreement they previously made with the PCs but will demand the additional concession of the return of the *Crimson Shroud* to them at the end as they suddenly realize the leverage that they have over the PCs in the situation. High Faithful Thesius will likewise willingly conduct the ritual — even if the PCs slew some or all of his vampire hunters in **Event 8** — but only on the condition that they concede ownership of the *Crimson Shroud* to the Temple of Mitra at the end of the process so that it may be used for the benefit of all. He will resurrect any of the slain hunters during this time to bolster his position against recalcitrant PCs.

It is entirely possible that the PCs may decide to renege on any deals regarding giving up the *Crimson Shroud* and instead intending to keep it for themselves. As GM, you

should be cautious about allowing an artifact of its potency to remain in the hands of the PCs. Its presence could easily unbalance a game. It would be better to have the respective church make its own contingency plans for just such a double cross that prevent the PCs from being able to do so. One possible alternative is to allow the party to come to an agreement with the church that they may return and receive the use of the Shroud on future occasions free of charge. This keeps it out of their immediate hands but also makes a potent resource available to them should they need resurrection or similar services later.

In any event, as long as the PCs have not attempted to double cross the benefactor providing the ritual, they have created at least something of an ally that can assist them in other ways — most notably in what amounts to the assassination of the Margravine of Tourse, no small matter within the duchy. It is possible that the PCs have managed to cover their tracks well with the margravine having "disappeared" (her body having been reduced to ash by the rays of sunlight after being defeated by the PCs in area **A26**), but they are still not above suspicion having been seen with her at the party which was her last public appearance and likely having stayed in residence at her manor afterward — and especially if they are seen possessing any items connected with her family and household.

There are several ways that this can play out. In truth Duke Kanimar Passur cares little for the passing of the House of Vanderhaven and assumes formal control of duchy's capital city himself with the ability to give out the hollow title of Margrave of Tourse to some other political toady at a later date. However, he does have a duty to keep up appearances and cannot allow nobles of the realm to be murdered and robbed with impunity. If the PCs have made no secret of their involvement and their possession of Vanderhaven property, the duke orders their arrest and the return of all the treasures taken from the manor. Having made a deal with Bishop Voltix Calbrough or a favorable impression with Claudius Camrid (**Event 2**) reduces this to return of 50% of the monetary treasures along with the silver dove and *+1 sharp bastard sword* from *A6* and the *+2 mithral breastplate* from **A26**. If the PCs have not allied with either of these individuals but have made alliance with High Faithful Thesius and bring forth proof of the margravine's vampirism and other unsavory practices, they are offered the same deal.

If the PCs have not openly displayed any of the Vanderhaven property or revealed their part in events, suspicion still falls heavily upon them. In this case the duke orders an investigation of them. If the PCs have allied with Bishop Voltix or made a favorable impression with Claudius Camrid or Lady Renee Galatry (both from **Event 2**), then the investigation finds nothing conclusive but does require the return of the dove, the sword, and the breastplate if they are found to be missing from the manor. Otherwise the investigation leads to the conclusion as described in the paragraph above.

The situation for the PCs in Tourse varies widely depending on how the adventure goes: anything from being wanted criminals on the run, to cronies with some of the city's corrupt leadership, to civic crusaders allied with the rising Temple of Mitra. Whichever it turns out to be, they are likely to have many uncomfortable memories of their time spent as blood drinkers among the city's night-shrouded streets that could serve to propel them towards or repel them from further adventures in the city. The Church of Grox will attempt to rebuild its influence while the Underguild is unlikely to abandon its own aspirations for the city and duchy. All of that combined with a crusading Church of Mitra and a thoroughly corrupt government ensures plenty of adventure opportunities should the PCs want them.



Adventure 3: When Comes The Moon

The famed observatory at Asteria Point has long endured upon its mountain heights, yet wars, plagues, and the ravages of time have dimmed its glory to a faint ember kept by a tiny order of faithful monks. When sinister forces stalk the night and even those faithful few begin to disappear, the church sends out a call for heroes to investigate and save this remnant of a wiser and more learned age. Yet all is not as it seems among the high peaks, and secrets grow darker and danger ever deeper with the moon's every rising.



Introduction

When Comes the Moon can be placed in a remote mountainous area of any campaign setting. In the **Lost Land**s it is set in a lonely corner of the Cretian (CREE-shin) Mountains at the northeastern corner of the old Kingdoms of Foere at the edge of Yolbiac (YOLE-bee-ack) Vale.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The Abbey of the Asterian Order has stood its mountaintop vigil since the days of the Hyperborean Empire when the Church of Thyr enjoyed a reputation and power above that of all other Hyperborean faiths. Through its magical observatory lens, the clerics of the order could study the greater and lesser moons called LunaLL1a and SybilLL1a, as well as the many other wonders of the night sky, from which they read omens and collect celestial observations. But just as the tides of history roll on and fortunes change, the Church of Thyr has fallen from its place of ancient prominence. At present, the Asterian Abbey stands upon its lonely point, nearly forgotten, and occupied by only a handful of clerics who maintain the abbey, unaware of the original purpose of the site and true mission of the Asterian Order.

Seven centuries ago, the Church of Thyr was in decline and the Red Plague struck the area, destroying most of the order, including the entire upper echelon of the church's clergy. The survivors abandoned the abbey and it was hundreds of years before Thyrian migrants reoccupied the site. Thus, the Order's original mission was forgotten and lost, new generations of clerics tended the abbey in the belief that the site was nothing more than an observatory to study the moons.

Long before this, Asteria Point was the site of a war against ghastly moon creatures called Lunites, which used the mountain peak as a navigational guide point for their stellar travels between the greater moon of Luna and the planet Boros*. The moon creatures journeyed through the ethers of space and sought to invade. However, the Ancient Ones and Eldest[LL5] elves of Yolbiac Vale[LL5] resisted, battling them to a stalemate. The ancient defenders of the Vale managed to slay many of the lesser creatures and bound a powerful moon-beast's essence into the standing stone at the peak of Asteria Point. This unearthly stone block was the pivotal tether point that allowed the Lunite invaders to cross into the terrestrial world on nights when the moon waxed full. By casting a powerful binding on the standing stone and trapping a portion of the powerful moon-beast's psyche within, the Ancient One followers of Myrddin blocked the tether point, preventing further invasion from the ethers of space.

Centuries later the Eldest population suffered an unknown catastrophe and virtually disappeared from the Vale. A debilitating war with a degenerate mountain tribe called the Jaundools[LL9] likewise left the Ancient Ones of Yolbiac Vale greatly reduced, leaving the wards of Asteria Point to weaken untended. With the coming of the Hyperboreans and gods, a new force entered the lands of Akados bringing their own peace on the tail end of conquest. As the Hyperboreans exerted their influence

* Boros was the common name in antiquity of the planet upon which the continent of Akados lies. It is now called Lloegyr. See page 4 of ***LL1: Stoneheart Valley*** by **Frog God Games**.

TIMELINE OF ASTERIA POINT*

Imperial Record (I.R.)	Erylle Cycle (E.C.)	Huun Chronicle (H.C.)	Event(s)
–4102	2383		Lunite invasion of Asteria Point stopped by combined efforts of Ancient Ones and Eldest tribes of Yolbiac Vale
–4098	2387		Druids of Yolbiac Vale focus energies of multiple sacred sites to defend Asteria Point against further invaders; Dykath imprisoned in standing stone
–591	5894		Eldest suffer unknown catastrophe, groaning spirits proliferate in Yolbiac Vale
–182	6303		Ancient One tribes battle degenerate Jaundools; Yolbiac Vale largely depopulated
–109	6376		Polemarch Oerson leads Hyperborean Legion out of Boros and into Akados; **Beginning of Hyperborean Age**
–71	6414		Polemarch Oerson visits Yolbiac Vale; Church of Thyr assumes protection of Asteria Point
1	6485		Battle of Hummaemidon; Birth of Imperial Record
1491	7975		New lunar invasion thwarted by priests and paladins of Thyr
1988	8472		Abbey of the Asterian Order founded at Asteria Point to carry on vigilance against lunar invaders
2781	9265	286	Red Plague strikes Kingdoms of Foere; One quarter of the population of the central lands dies including Magnusson II; Son Osbert I succeeds to the throne
2797	9281	302	Red Plague returns and strikes central Kingdoms of Foere again; Much of the kingdom's central territories are depopulated due to the high death toll; Plague claims Overking Osbert I who is succeeded by his son Osbert II; Asterian Order decimated by plague
2804	9288	309	Abbey of the Asterian Order abandoned
3153	9637	658	Thyrian migrants reoccupy Abbey of the Asterian Order
3517	10,001	1022	Current year

* Excerpted from the ***Lost Lands Campaign Setting*** timeline by **Frog God Games.**

even into the remote regions of the Cretian Mountains, they were met by a delegation of the remaining druids who still called the Vale home and were told of the invasions and the continuing threat posed by Asteria Point. In return for a peaceful transition of the remnant tribes of Yolbiac Vale to habitation by Hyperborean settlers, the Church of Thyr agreed to undertake the duty of guarding against further incursions of the lunar invaders.

The will of the Hyperboreans was soon tested as a weakening of the druidic wards allowed a new invasion of the point, and only after hard-fought battles were the mountain lands once again secured and the remaining Lunites hunted down. The Asterian Order was founded by the church to put an end to the atrocities of lunar creatures on the surrounding Valefolk, as civilization began to move into the area. Over time the incursions were largely forgotten and the assumption of the abbey as nothing more than an astronomical observatory came into vogue, but the Order's true purpose remained to watch the skies for signs of renewed threatening lunar activity, which might herald new potential incursions. Its true purpose, that is, until even memory of that among the Order was lost.

To this isolated and frozen mountain top come the heroes who stumble upon this ancient secret and a dire threat to the existence of everyone at the abbey as they stay there during the three nights of the full moon.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The party is sent to a lonely mountain abbey on the first day of the full moon to look into the disappearance of two of its brothers. At the abbey, the party finds only four monks remain of the ancient order that once occupied the fortress-like monastery with its magical, stargazing oculus. While interacting with the brothers over dinner the first night, the PCs realize that there are many secrets hiding in the abbey — possibly more than just the disappearance of the two monks. The abbot tells the PCs that the monks disappeared while exploring in the ancient crypts beneath the abbey but then confides in them that he thinks a werewolf has been stalking the mountains and is what actually took the monks. This statement is punctuated by the howl of some great wolf echoing across the mountains.

The next day the party begins its investigation and can explore the abbey as well as the crypt and surrounding grounds. They also begin to experience the strange phenomena and circumstances that surround the abbey, from superstitious peasants to restless elven ghosts. In the abbey's catacombs they discover one of the dead brothers, slain by undead long sealed within the crypt. They also discover the presence of more undead and hints of a danger upon the mountain that predates even the coming of the holy order. The PCs begin to understand that the magical *oculus* may have something to do with an ancient standing stone that sits upon the mountain's peak. The discovery of a female werewolf stalking the abbey leads the party to the second missing brother, now infected with lycanthropy compounding the troubles of the abbey.

The party can continue its investigations until finally on the third night of the moon things come to a head when one of the monks betrays his brother. It is revealed that this brother has an ancient connection to aberrant creatures from the moon in his bloodline which has allowed a moon-beast long petrified within the standing stone to gain control of his mind. Using that monk's body and the blood of the slain abbot, the moon-beast intends to open a bridge to the moon through which lunar invaders ravaged the lands millennia ago until stopped and the abbey was erected to guard against further incursions. The party must race to the mountain top battling an ever-increasing number of lunar invaders to finally confront the moon-beast and close the breach between worlds once and for all.



STARTING THE ADVENTURE

The adventure begins with the player characters in the town of Coelum, the nominal capital of the disparate folk of Yolbiac Vale. Why the PCs are in the Vale is entirely up to them, but its forested depths are known for their wilderness and adventure, so the presence of adventurers is extremely common. Shortly after their arrival in town, the PCs are met by an out-of-breath young acolyte in training from the Temple of Thyr. He bears a brusque summons to the temple by Tholberon of Thyr, the local high priest and the highest religious authority in the entire Vale. Assuming the PCs agree to accompany the flustered young man to the temple, he takes them into the presence of **Tholberon of Thyr** (LG male old human cleric of Thyr 9) and **Lualdthe Witch-Hunter** (LG male human paladin of Thyr 7). Read the following description.

The temple of Thyr in Coelum is no great affair, a rather shaky-looking assemblage of moss-grown timbers and fitted stone. Whatever comprises the materials of its roof is completely hidden beneath the moss and even what appear to be small shrubs and a sizable sapling that grow upon it. Within is little better with poor lighting, worse ventilation, and the musty smell of mildew.

You are ushered into a small cluttered reading room where you find an acerbic-looking, bespectacled older fellow dressed in the vestments of a Thyrian priest seated at a darkwood table. Glowering behind him stands a tall man who makes his seated compatriot

YOLBIAC VALE AND THE CRETIAN MOUNTAINS

Yolbiac Vale is a dark, forested series of valleys high in the central range of the Cretian Mountains. It is accessible by passes only at the northern and southern ends from the lowland towns of Elet and Metzel, respectively. Though it has a scattering of isolated settlements, Coelum is the only population center of any significance in the Vale. Yolbiac Vale, the Cretian Mountains, and the town of Coelum are detailed extensively in ***LL5: Borderland Provinces*** by **Frog God Games**, but game information for the town of Coelum is provided below to allow the player characters to resupply and equip themselves there in case you do not have access to that resource.

THE TOWN OF COELUM

(SEE-lum)

COELUM

N large town

Coelum is an insular, isolated town of superstitious folk that want little to do with outsiders.

Government overlord
Population 2,848 (2,602 humans; 181 hill dwarves; 65 half-elves)

Notable NPCs

- **Riaundo Groon, High Mayor of Coleum** (N male human noble)
- **Watchmeister Gustav Lampert, Husjaeger Commander** (LE male human fighter 13)
- **Tholberon of Thyr, High Priest of Thyr** (LG male old human cleric 9 of Thyr)
- **Blind Cynthiene, High Priestess of Narrah** (N female human cleric 12 of Narrah)
- **Lualdthe Witch-Hunter** (LG male human paladin 7, worshiper of Thyr)
- **The Drogas Mondu** (N male venerable human druid 12)
- **Cithinvere of Coleum** (CE female human cleric 7 of Hecate)
- **Augus Monticylaire, local vintner** (N male human)

seem cheery in comparison. Hooded, dark eyes peer at you intensely above hollow, pock-marked cheeks and a great beak of a nose. He wears an ornate breastplate, spotted with rust, and rests his hand casually on the hilt of a sword hanging from his belt. From the sour, curdled smell emanating from his presence, you get the idea he doesn't remove the breastplate to bathe very often.

"Please come in," the seated man states, "and close the door behind you. Child Roland, you may wait in the hall." The young acolyte swiftly departs under the elder's scrutiny, which then shifts to you. He does not offer you seats, and there are none present in any case.

"I am Tholberon of Thyr, High Priest of Coelum and Justiciar of the Vale. This is Lualdthe Witch-Hunter." He indicates the man standing behind him who doesn't so much as blink at the introduction. "I am told that you are newly arrived and hungry for work. I don't care about any of that, but you look like adventurers of some mettle so I have a job for you if you are up to it."

He doesn't wait for a response before pressing ahead. "There is a small abbey to our faith in the mountains not far from here called the Asterian Order. I have just yesterday received a letter from its abbot advising that two of the brothers at the abbey have disappeared under mysterious circumstances within the last week. They are a small order and can ill afford the losses to even maintain the upkeep of the place much less serve the will of Thyr. However, such a remote outpost doesn't warrant the attentions of the Witch-Hunter or the Knights of the Swan, so I turn to you instead, newcomers.

"Lualdthe's instincts tell him you're trustworthy enough—" the standing fellow still has yet to make any movement more than breathing. "And you seem affordable. So, can I count on you to head up to the abbey and sort out what's going on up there? I'd wager either the brothers have run away or gotten drunk and fallen off a cliff, but Abbot Quilm seems to be in a tizzy over it, so sending you is the least I can do."

He looks at you over the rim of the half-moon spectacles perched on the end of his nose as he awaits your answer.

DC	Result
10	No one dares go up on the slopes of Asteria Point except those crazy clerics of the Asterian Order. That's because Asteria Point is the home of the old gods.
12	That abbey has stood on mountain for centuries. It was once a very prominent religious site in the Vale but fell on hard times many years ago. No one goes up there much, and the brothers rarely come down.
25	The abbey on Asteria Point is an observatory where priests study the moons and stars in the clear air of the high mountains. They take omens from the movements of the celestial bodies and learn the future.
18	Much of Yolbiac Vale's population was wiped out by the Red Plague 700 years ago, and the abbey was abandoned for centuries afterwards. Thyrian priests only arrived to repair and reoccupy the place a couple centuries ago, though the abbey has never risen to the prominence it once had.
20	Wild elves known as the Eldest once inhabited Yolbiac Vale. They would never go on Asteria Point. No one knows why, though if anyone did it would be one of the few druids that are left in the Vale.

If the PCs accept the job, Tholberon tells them that the abbey lies 3 days' travel to the north on the side of a mountain called Asteria Point and can be reached by following a little-used road from Coelum. He thinks that the trip shouldn't be overly dangerous but that you can never tell with travel in the Vale outside the confines of "civilized" towns, so he recommends they be prepared for trouble just in case. He can't tell the PCs much about the situation stating only that Abbot Quilm sent a short, vaguely worded letter asking for help, which Tholberon has since misplaced.

If the PCs ask any questions about the Asterian Order, it quickly becomes apparent that he knows little about it. It is small (he's not sure exactly how small) and they generally stay up on the mountain tending to their own affairs. They receive a small (very small) stipend from the High Altar of Thyr in Bard's Gate[LL8-23,178] every few months with which supplies and the few necessaries for its maintenance are purchased and delivered by local carters, but other than that they are largely self-sufficient and keep to themselves. He quickly adds somewhat smugly that he also knows the order is in good standing with the Church of Thyr, as he would not allow any form of apostasy to proliferate on his watch. A DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) can detect a small hint of falseness, though this is merely regarding his role in affairs in Yolbiac Vale. While he is the highest-ranking member of Thyrian in the clergy, his proclamations of "High Priest of Coelum" and "Justiciar of the Vale" are entirely self-appointed. Any further queries receive a snort of derision and the comment that he's too busy to play question games and that they can ask around if they need to know anything else.

ASKING AROUND TOWN

If the PCs seek further information about the abbey or the Asterian Order in general, they can use Charisma (Persuasion) checks to gather information as they ask around Coelum while they equip themselves for their journey. Though neither Tholberon nor the Witch-Hunter have anything further to say to them, there are a total of 2 priests and 2 acolytes in training at the local temple in addition to 10 itinerant priests who proselytize the Vale of which 1d4+2 are present in Coelum at any given time. If the PCs think to question any of them, they gain a +2 bonus on their checks. Intelligence (Investigation) and Intelligence (History) checks can also be attempted, with characters native to Yolbiac Vale gaining advantage on such checks. Consult the table below to determine what each PC knows or has learned. They obtain the information for the DC they rolled as well as any DCs below their check.

ADDITIONAL RESEARCH

It's possible that the PCs might want to ask around on additional topics as well. A few of these are included below as well as the skill check and DC to find the information. As above, PCs who are local gain advantage on Intelligence (Investigation) and Intelligence (History).

Knights of the Swan

DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) or Intelligence (History)

The Order of the Swan is a company of itinerant knights based out of the castle of Sir Thyrian de Swan 20 miles north of Coelum. They devote themselves to hunting down the horrors of the wilds to protect the civilized folk of the Vale from the dark denizens that would otherwise prey upon them[LL5].

Local Druids

DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) or Intelligence (Religion); Druids gain advantage on this check

One of the Vale's druids, a white-robed old man called the Drogas Mondu tends a grove and sacred cromlech just outside of town[LL5].

Luald the Witch-Hunter

DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) or Intelligence (Religion); Followers of Thyr gain advantage on this check, questioning clergy at the Temple of Thyr likewise grants advantage

The Witch-Hunter is the churches local inquisitor and Tholberon's attack dog. He's got a sword called "Deadman" that can sniff out evil in any form. The man's a true zealot, but he's fair and he's saved a lot of folks from danger in the forests over the years[LL5].

THE DROGAS MONDU

If the PCs seek out this old druid, they can find him as described under Asking Around Town above tending to his sacred cromlech and muttering prayers in Druidic to such beings as Bel, Myrddin, and Annawn[LL5]. He is friendly if a bit doddering in his twilight years but can provide them with some information if questioned about Asteria Point and they succeed on a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check. If the check is successful, he will relate that long before the clerics of the "new god" (as he calls the ancient deity Thyr) built their house, the druids of old erected a standing stone upon the mountains peak sacred to the true gods of old. He can provide no further information, quickly losing his train of thought if pressed further.

THE ORDER OF THE SWAN

If the PCs elect to travel to the castle of Sir Thyrian de Swan north of Coelum, it will require at least 2 day's travel to get there and back (unless they have magical means of travel), though the knights will lodge them within the castle for standard lodging prices. Once there the PCs will be able to briefly meet with **Sir Thyrian de Swan** (LG male human paladin 12, a worshiper of Muir)[LL5-153]. He is friendly and knowledgeable of the Vale. He can relate any of the information available under **Asking Around Town** or **Additional Research** above. He has heard of the Asterian Order and its abbey but has no special knowledge of it. He can also confirm, as Tholberon previously stated, that his knights are much too busy patrolling the Vale and battling its dangers to spare any men to check in on a few cloistered monks up in the mountains, though he heartily endorses the PCs for the undertaking and can even provide them with an additional 50 gp each from the knights' own coffers if they will swear to assist the clerics of the Asterian Order in any way possible.

Though he won't bring it up himself, if asked about payment he'll assure the PCs that Abbot Quilm will see to that. However, if they succeed at a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check he'll reluctantly offer to front them 50 gp each to equip themselves, grumbling all the while about the responsibilities of his position. (Despite being fairly disagreeable and generally unpleasant, Tholberon is lawful good and truly does take his mission for the church seriously.) Luald remains taciturn throughout the interview. It should quickly become obvious to the PCs that if they don't elect to help the inhabitants of the abbey, they are unlikely to receive any help at all.

CHAPTER ONE: HOME OF THE OLD GODS

The trip up the mountain to the Abbey of the Asterian Order is uneventful unless you wish to add some wilderness encounters to spice it up. Wilderness encounters tables suitable for Yolbiac Vale can be found on page 231 of ***LL5: Borderland Provinces*** by **Frog God Games**, or you can use your own encounters suitable for temperate mountains. The adventure is set at altitudes between 5,000 and 15,000 feet, so use the **5E** *System Reference Document* standard rules for adventuring at high altitude and in extreme cold. An hour spent at altitudes above 10,000 feet counts as 2 hours for determination of how long a creature can travel. All creatures and NPCs the PCs encounter in this adventure will be acclimated to the altitude, so Constitution saving throws will not be required for them.

Regardless of the PCs' means of travel, they arrive at the abbey late in the day. It is the first night of Luna the Pale Sister's full moon, though do not relate this to the players unless they ask for the information.

The western sky glows red as the sun sinks behind the sharp peaks of the Cretian Mountains and the winds blow cold. The path leading up to the site is well-worn but very rough; many of the stones that mark the rugged road are broken or missing and ruts and potholes are frequent. The abbey's bluestone walls are windswept and marked with lichen but look to have stood the test of time and the freezing weather for centuries with signs of more recent patches and repairs. Though its grandeur has faded, the main building is solidly built and appears to be somewhat well maintained. However, the surrounding grounds and the outbuildings are decrepit and run-down, slowly surrendering to time, gravity, and the elements.

Brother Hector (see **Appendix B**, page 65) greets the PCs at the door of the abbey (**A13**) and enthusiastically welcomes them inside. He informs them the abbot is expecting them and looks forward to meeting them over dinner as he guides them towards their rooms. As he walks, he chatters incessantly, his hands waving excitedly as he discusses the abbey's architecture and his own life at the abbey. He stops

in a long corridor (**A16a**) and points to the simple wooden doors that line the corridor on both sides. He informs the PCs that these will be their quarters while they are at the abbey. Hector tells the PCs that they are warmly invited to join the monks for their evening repast, which will be served in approximately a quarter of an hour. Hector then politely excuses himself and leaves to freshen up while he informs the abbot of their arrival.

The PCs have a few moments to examine their rooms and wash off some of the trail dust, but there is little time to really explore, as within minutes Brother Hakkan (see **Appendix B**, page 65) arrives and beckons them to follow him to the refectory (**A20**) for dinner. If the PCs engage him in conversation, they notice he has a marked stutter and his speech is occasionally awkward as if he is unsure what to say. When the PCs arrive at the refectory, proceed with **Event 1** below.



INVESTIGATING THE ABBEY

Once the PCs arrive, they find an ever-more-tangled web of mystery that grows only deeper with the passage of time. Other than the abbey itself (area **A**), there are several locations which are central to the adventure. The abbey's catacombs (area **B**) are inhabited by the restless dead, and there is the ominous standing stone at the peak of Asteria Point (area **C**) which holds a vital significance. The PCs may also attempt to hunt down the werewolf that prowls the rugged hills near the abbey to the wolf's lair (area **D**). Locations **A** and **B** are described in **Chapter 1**, and **C** and **D** are described in **Chapter 2**.

OUTLINE OF EVENTS

The following is an outline of the events that take place over the three days of the full moon at the Asterian abbey. Much of this adventure is designed to allow freeform interactions by the party as they pursue various leads to discover the terrible truth of what is occurring at the abbey. Feel free to rearrange or alter events in response to the PCs' actions, reserving the climactic encounter for the adventure's end. **Events 1-3** are described in **Chapter 1**, and **Events 4–17** are described in **Chapter 2**.

Day 1 (after vespers)

The PCs arrive at the abbey and share a meal with the monks (**Event 1: Dinner with the Brothers**). After dinner the abbot shows the PCs the abbey's magical *oculus* (**Event 2: The Oculus**). Holy offices (**Event 3: The Offices**) are kept by the monks and continue throughout the adventure unless interrupted.

Day 2 (between lauds and vespers)

Although the day is colder than the previous one, the wind dies down and low clouds bring a thick fog (**Event 4: The Drawing of the Veil**). The PCs can search the abbey (area **A**), explore the catacombs and tackle the problems within (area **B**), as well as trek up Asteria Point to survey the standing stone at the peak (area **C**). The first time the PCs ascend the mountain they are caught in a strange thunderstorm (see **Event 5: Unseasonal Weather**). Abbot Quilm may also ask the PCs to hunt down the werewolf menacing the abbey depending on how things go at dinner the previous eveing (see **Event 1: Dinner with the Brothers** and **Event 6: Wolfsbane**). In addition to these possibilities, the abbey experiences the arrival of unexpected guests (**Event 7: The Hidden Bell**) and unexpected ghosts (**Event 8: Return of the Eldest**).

Day 2 (after vespers)

After dark the chilly fog continues to cover the abbey and the surrounding land, making the air glisten in the bright moonlight. Several unusual occurrences take place this evening involving the brothers (see **Event 9: Brothers Behaving Badly**) and a gruesome warning (**Event 10: A Dire Warning**) and concluding with the abbey's magical *oculus* pointing at the standing stone on the mountain peak (see **Event 11: The Eye Sees All**).

Day 3 (between lauds and nons)

The fog clears, but the day is an oppressive gray with ominous clouds roiling across the sky. The mangled body of Brother Belphorus is found just outside the abbey (see **Event 12: Belphorus' Abrupt Demise**). Believing that Belphorus was killed by a werewolf, Abbot Quilm beseeches the PCs to hunt down the beast, if he hasn't done so already (see **Event 6: Wolfsbane**). The PCs can also continue their investigations in and around the abbey.

Day 3 (between vespers and compline)

The clouds clear away late in the day leaving the night sky luminous under the white light of the full moon. Momentous events occur in quick succession, a wounded werewolf (**Event 13: Brother Wolf**) leads to revelations at the abbey (**Event 14: A Broken Order**) and a desperate climb up Asteria Point (**Event 15: Moonlit Ascent**) concluding with a climatic final battle at the mountain peak (**Event 16: Moonfire and Event 17: The Bridgehead**).

CHAPTER 1 EVENTS

The following events occur on the first night of the PCs' arrival at the abbey. The timing of the events is given as the day on which they occur as well as where they lie in relation to the times that the abbey celebrates the holy offices (**see Event 3: The Offices**).



EVENT 1: DINNER WITH THE BROTHERS

Day 1: after vespers

Location: the refectory (**A20**)

Brother Hakkan escorts you into the refectory for the evening meal. The large fireplace at the end of the hall provides adequate warmth to the room and the pleasant smell of cooking wafts out from a door at the end of the hall. The delicious aroma along with the sudden clatter of pans indicates that the kitchen can be found within. An elderly monk with a hooked nose and withered countenance, wearing the finer robes of the abbot, sits at the head of the long table with his head bowed seemingly in prayer. Brother Hakkan points you to benches along the sides of the table while he sits next to the odd-looking Brother Hector who greeted you upon your initial arrival at the abbey. Almost immediately a large, grimy, bearded monk emerges from the kitchen door carrying a large tureen of vegetable soup and places it at the head of the table with a thump, which seems to jolt the elderly abbot from his reverie with a start. He looks around, blinking, for a moment or two before his eyes alight upon you and a mirthless toothy smile draws across his face.

"Welcome, guests. I'm so glad you have arrived. I am Abbot Quilm. Please join us in our humble repast as we break bread and give thanks for the blessing of Thyr."

At each course of the meal, each PC can attempt to make an Influence check on one of the brothers as described under "Dinner Conversation" below.

The First Course

Brothers Hakkan and **Hector** are seated to the left of **Abbot Quilm**, and **Brother Belphorus** takes a seat across from them, leaving the rest of the ample table room for the PCs to find their places. The good abbot invites everyone to sit and makes introductions all around. Then, picking up the first bowl in the stack in front of him, he begins ladling soup into it before passing it to Brother Hector who proceeds to pass it down the table as the abbot fills the next bowl and repeats the process. This continues until a bowl of savory, steaming soup has been placed in front of everyone.

Brother Hector smiles benignly at the PCs but licks his lips and blinks his bulging eyes as he smells each bowl that he passes. Brother Hakkan is sits nervously, wringing his hands as he shoots occasional surreptitious glances at the abbot and the PCs while passing the bowls. Brother Belphorus quickly slurps down the first bowl to stop in front of him, slopping a noticeable amount over the front of his robes. He scratches his chin through his beard amiably before standing and wandering back into the kitchen to carry on with his cooking duties.

Once the PCs have been served their soup, the Abbot fills the conversational void by telling the party a little about the abbey. He tells them that the abbey has proudly stood for many centuries, since the days of the Hyperborean Empire. He can relate the information for DCs 10, 12, and 15 under **Asking Around Town** in the **Introduction**, if the PCs have not already heard it. He also proudly informs them the Church of Thyr — the largest and most prestigious faith at that time — used its considerable resources to install a magical oculus that allows them study the night skies in extreme detail and clarity. He offers to show the PCs the wondrous oculus after the meal.

At this point a particularly loud crash from the kitchen causes Brother Hakkan to jump and blink repeatedly before settling back in, after which Abbot Quilm resumes his lesson. He states that the abbey never truly recovered from the devastation of the plague and, though later reoccupied by the much-diminished order, now stands upon its lonely mountain, forgotten, and occupied by only a handful of loyal monks who carry on the mission of the Asterian Order. Quilm concludes by reciting the Asterian Order's vows to ever observe the greater and lesser moons, Luna and Sybil, and Charisma (Perform) the sacred astronomical studies of the skies. A DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check recalls no particular connection between the worship of Thyr and the study of celestial bodies or events, but there is no detectable falsehood in the abbot's words.

Allow each PC to make an Influence check as described under "Dinner Conversation" below.

The Second Course

Brother Belphorus soon comes out of the kitchen, wheeling a kitchen trolley with one hand while holding a large roasted potato in the other. He bites into the potato with gusto as he unloads a large covered dish onto the center of the table and places the now-empty soup tureen on the cart. A delicious smell wafts from the platter, and Belphorus lifts the lid to reveal a roast joint surrounded by herb-roasted vegetables. Abbot Quilm begins carving the roast and filling plates to be passed around the table while Brother Belphorus pours a weak wine into clay mugs for everyone. As he works, Abbot Quilm indicates that such a fine repast not the order's normal fare but is in honor of the PCs' arrival. If asked how he was aware of their arrival, he explains that the road to the abbey is visible farther down the mountain, so the brothers became aware of the PCs approach several hours ago.

Allow each PC to make an Influence check as described under "Dinner Conversation" below.

There is a lull in conversation as everyone digs into the main dish, and Brother Hector takes this opportunity to start speaking excitedly about some sort of glyphs he has found on an ancient stone monument atop Asteria Point. He describes them in excruciating detail yet manages to convey very little true information in his excite, staccato utterances. He admits he has yet to translate their meaning and repeatedly explains how excited he is at finding them, pondering what their meaning might be. The other monks exchange polite looks between them at Brother Hector's ongoing tirade giving the impression this is not the first time he has shared his enthusiasm on the topic. As Brother Hector begins stating his belief of their great importance to the abbey, Abbot Quilm finally interrupts by calling out to Brother Belphorus and asking when the dessert will arrive. This has the effect of cutting off Brother Hector's rambling stream, and he subsides with a resigned smile, obviously accustomed to being silenced by the other monks. Brother Belphorus gruffly replies that it will be ready in a moment and rises to make his way to the kitchen in the awkward silence.

If the PCs did not learn of the standing stone atop the peak by speaking with the Drogas Mondu in Coelum, Abbot Quilm can relate to them the information about it if he is asked, though he does not reference the "true old gods" as the old druid does.

Any conversation at this point is interrupted by eerie howl that echoes from somewhere outside on the mountain, its final notes ending in a snarling bark. Brother Belphorus flinches slightly at the sound in midstride and rushes off to the kitchen, his face pale and a sweat rising on his brow. Abbot Quilm shoots to his feet and crosses quickly to the nearest window, dragging the heavy drapes closed before moving along to the next window to repeat the action. He seats himself again and makes a muttered comment about the necessity of keeping the curtains drawn in the evenings to hold out the night's chill. Brother Hector's eyes slide in a sideways glance toward the abbot as Brother Hakken hunches forward in his seat and starts rocking back and forth on the wooden bench. It doesn't require a Wisdom (Insight) check to determine that all of the monks are disturbed by the eerie cry. A DC 5 Intelligence (Nature) check can identify the howl as that of a wolf, though if the check succeeds at DC 20 or higher it is identified as that of a dire wolf.

The Third Course

Brother Belphorus soon appears again with his cart, this time laden with steaming bowls of treacle dumpling. He places each one down unceremoniously in front of everyone and then thumps a large pot of cream in the center of the

table. He loads the empty plates and trays on the cart and pushes it back to the kitchen door, giving it a shove into the room. A definite crash can be heard as the trolley hits something but Belphorus ignores this and saunters back to the table, sits down with a massive thump on the bench and a sigh of delight as he takes in the sight of the sweet. His look lasts only a moment before he devours it with great gusto. After finishing his desert, Brother Belphorus gets up again and trundles to the kitchen, returning with a small keg of ale and places it on the end of the table. Abbot Quilm rolls his eyes and shakes his head as Belphorus fills everyone's cups and downs his own in a few gulps, refilling it again and quaffing it just as quickly.

Allow each PC to make a final Influence check as described under "Dinner Conversation" below.

Over dessert, Abbot Quilm somberly tells the PCs that the order's numbers have dwindled even further very recently, as two of the brothers have disappeared in the last month. Brothers Tyberus and Fagen have both mysteriously vanished. His fingers start to tremble, and he quickly clenches them and lowers his hands into his lap, hiding them in his robes. Brother Hakkan fiddles nervously with his spoon while Brother Hector looks on uncomfortably. Quilm tells the PCs that Brother Fagen was last seen in the vicinity of the crypts roughly 10 days ago, where he was working to decipher some ancient writings he had found within. Brother Tyberus disappeared the same day, and the abbot believes he may have gone down to assist Fagen in the crypt. Abbot Quilm's voice becomes lower and his eyes become hooded as he tells of his fears that the crypt is tainted with restless undead. He asks the party to enter the crypt and clear out the corruption that lurks below, and if possible, find and rescue the missing Brothers. Hakkan's eyes dart to Quilm as he speaks of the crypt, his eyes drop to his plate and he begins muttering to himself and rocking again, wrapping his arms around himself as he whispers to himself. The dinner finishes on this dour note.

DINNER CONVERSATION

The PCs have the opportunity to attempt to influence the monks at the dinner. Three times during the dinner each PC can attempt an Influence check by make a Charisma (Deception) check (to pretend to be friendly), a Charisma (Persuasion) check (to be genuine), or a skill check mentioned in the NPC's social stat block. The PCs earn 1 additional success for every 5 points by which the check exceeds the listed DC. Once an NPC has been successfully influenced a number of times equal to the number listed under Successes Needed, he is considered friendly toward the party and reveals his boon.

Alternatively, a PC may forgo an Influence check to instead attempt a Discovery check to learn more about a given monk. The PCs can gain information by studying an NPC's behavior, remembering key facts, and intuiting motivations, this is a Wisdom (Insight) check or a skill check mentioned in the NPC's social stat block. If successful, the PCs learn valuable information about the character. This also grants the PCs a +2 bonus on any future Influence checks against that target.

ABBOT QUILM

Personality vague, pompous, and doddering

Influence Intelligence (Religion) DC 17

Successes Needed 2 checks

Boon Quilm tells the PCs that he has more details about the disappearances in his office (**A17**) and that he will explain further tomorrow. When in private with the PCs, Quilm reveals his fears that one (or more) of the monks at the abbey has been infected with lycanthropy and become an evil, bloodthirsty werewolf. He didn't want to reveal this in front of the others for fear of tipping off "the werewolf". If the PCs successfully influence Quilm and gain his boon, he gives the PCs this information in the morning before they enter the crypts rather than after. See **Event 6: Wolfsbane** for more details. However, Abbot Quilm still needs the PCs to investigate the crypts, to hopefully find evidence of foul play by the werewolf.

Discovery Wisdom (Medicine) DC 17

Advantage Quilm has a form of degenerative senility which will worsen as time goes on. This affliction means he almost certainly has cognitive and memory issues, including struggling with following multistep processes and having trouble articulating himself because he sometimes can't recall simple words or names. Quilm also has difficulties remembering the details of recent events and often lives in the past.

BROTHER BELPHORUS

Personality jovial, complacent, and self-indulgent

Influence Any discussion related to food and drink. The PC makes a DC 15 Intelligence check as if

using a set of tools associated with food and drink, such as cook's utensils or brewer's supplies.

Successes Needed 1 check

Boon When Abbot Quilm speaks of the missing Brothers (during the "The Third Course"), Belphorus points out that Brother Tyberus was a bit of a hermit and probably would not have wanted to spend a large amount of time stuck with Brother Fagen in the confined quarters of the crypts.

Discovery Intelligence (Nature) or Wisdom (Animal Handling)* DC 17

Advantage There is something about Belphorus that makes animals uncomfortable around him. Whether this has something to do with his scent or is a combination of factors, not even the animal itself can discern, but any animal quickly becomes uneasy in his presence. This part of Belphorus' nature has made him quite wary of animals as they seem to have a tendency to lash out at him.

* The PCs can only use the Wisdom (Animal Handling) skill on this discovery check if there is an animal or animal-like creature, such as a familiar, at the dinner.

BROTHER HAKKAN

Personality callow, deferential, timid, anxious, and mistrustful

Influence Intelligence (History) DC 21

Successes Needed 3 checks

Boon The PCs overcome Hakkan's suspicions enough that he is prepared to mutter that the Order once had a greater purpose which was more profound than starwatching. At this point Hakkan doesn't know very much about the Order's true purpose, but he has found clues in certain texts and suspects that Abbot Quilm is keeping these secrets from the rest of the Order. If questioned any further about this, Hakkan repeatedly mumbles that he doesn't know.

Discovery Wisdom (Insight) DC 16, or a DC 16 Intelligence check with scribing or calligraphy tools.

Advantage Hakkan is an introverted young man who struggles with social interaction and noticing nonverbal cues. He also lacks an understanding of those around him and often misses social prompts. Hakkan prefers repetitive activities and structured routines, such as copying text from manuscripts, and deviation from these habits causes him stress. Something is agitating and deeply worrying Hakkan at the moment.

BROTHER HECTOR

Personality enthusiastic, fixated, and verbose

Influence Intelligence (Investigation) or Intelligence (History) DC 18

Successes Needed 1 check

Boon Hector offers to make the PCs a detailed copy of his sketches of the runes from the standing stone on Asteria Point.

Discovery Intelligence (Arcana) DC 20

Advantage The PCs notice that Hector's frog-like appearance is most likely caused by an abnormal magical bloodline. Hector knows nothing of this and none of his family as ever displayed any such traits. The PCs only gain the influence check circumstance bonus if they draw Hector's attention to his unusual ancestry and describe it in positive terms, such as calling it "a gift". Implying that it is abnormal or strange only serves to fluster and embarrass Hector.

EVENT 2: THE OCULUS

Day 1: after vespers

Location: the observatory (**A23**)

After dinner, Abbot Quilm offers to show the PCs the abbey's magical oculus. He guides them up to area **A23** and explains how the magical apparatus works. At some point during this conversation, a shadow momentarily passes across the moon in the oculus lens but no details of what caused it can be discerned. After concluding this brief tour, the PCs are free to make their way back to their quarters to rest up for the day ahead.

EVENT 3: THE OFFICES

Daily: lauds, nons, vespers, and compline
Location: chapel of Thyr (**A28**)

Despite being woefully shorthanded, the congregation at Asteria Point is a functioning abbey. Therefore, they follow the holy offices of the church at the prescribed hours — at least the primarch offices. The three offices that the brothers of the abbey follow daily are lauds (at 6 AM), nons (at noon), and vespers (at 6 PM). Because of the how short-staffed the brothers are, they typically do not Charisma (Perform) the secundarch office of compline (at midnight) except on holy days and other special occasions. Each of the services takes place in the chapel (**A28**) and lasts 15 to 30 minutes with Abbot Quilm leading the other brothers in prayer, hymns, and scripture readings. The PCs are invited to attend these services but are not required to do so, though any clerics of Thyr will be looked upon poorly by the brothers for failing to maintain the holy offices.

There is little applicable information to be gained for the party's investigation other than knowing where the brothers will be at certain hours of the day. Brother Belphorus is excused from the offices since his duties as cook require him to prepare the meals that the brothers will be partaking after the services' conclusion.

A. THE ASTERIAN ABBEY

Located in the upper foothills of the Cretian Mountains, the Asterian abbey sits on a piece of level ground on the lower reaches of Asteria Point overlooking the countryside below. Due to its elevation above sea level, the temperature is almost always cold, and it is not unusual to see the abbey surrounded by snow long after winter is over.

The abbey itself is constructed of thick bluestone blocks and was originally designed as a defensive fortification. The abbey's outer wall was never designed as a defense because simple battlements of any height would never stop a flying enemy. In any case, the abbey's low outer wall has also collapsed due to age in several places, making it a simple matter to bypass both the gates. Over time the abbey has changed with windows and arrow slits enlarged to allow in more sunlight and the chapterhouse built to extend the abbey. Small signs of this fortification remain, such as the extremely solid outer doors of the main entrance and the massive bar designed to secure them, which lies forgotten in the deserted monastic cells (**A13**).

THE HOLY OFFICES OF THE ABBEY

As is evident from the description above, the holy offices of the abbey are loosely based upon the seven canonical hours or *officium divinum* of the Roman Catholic Church and other religious groups. However, because the number seven bears no especial significance in the faiths of Lloegyr while the numbers four — as the perfect four sides in the two-dimensional representation of the Blessed Tesseract[LL1-4] (i.e. a square) — and three — for manifold reasons from the universal Rule of Three to, more specifically in the Thyrian faith, the veneration of the Three Gods (the siblings Thyr and Muir and the mysterious "Unknown God"[ST-731]) — do, there are only four holy offices. Of these three are considered primarch (or of prime importance in daily practice) and one is considered secundarch (of secondary importance). Likewise, they are based on the clock and means of timekeeping of the **Lost Lands***, as opposed to that of the original canonical hours.

The three primarch offices are:

Lauds – takes place at the 6th hour prime (6 AM); morning wakeup and breakfast, greets the day with praise

Nons – takes place at Non (noon); midday meal, provides a break for rest and thanksgiving in the midst of the day's labors

Vespers – takes place at the 6th hour non (6 PM); evening meal, ends the formal day's labor with a time for rest and reflection

The secundarch office is:

Compline – takes place at Prime (midnight); completion of the daily liturgical hours; exists as a nightly vigil to beseech the gods for strength, forgiveness, and perseverance against the trials of the world.

*The Lost Lands clock is based on counting hours from the Prime (midnight) and Non (noon).[LL7-367]

Each level in the abbey is 20 feet apart. Ceilings are 15 feet high unless otherwise noted with 5 feet of supporting beams, ceiling planks, and stone flooring between, except for the rooms on the ground level. These have only 8-foot ceilings with beams and mortared stone separating them from the level above. Rooms with windows have natural sunlight providing at least dim illumination during

daylight hours. All inhabited or frequently used rooms likewise have oil lamps that can be lit to provide visibility after dark. Exterior walls are superior masonry and require a DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check to climb. Interior walls are masonry treated with a layer of plaster, increasing the Athletics DC to 25 unless the plaster is first chipped off to expose the masonry beneath.

Tucked into an isolated hollow on the slope of the mountain and constructed of dark bluestone hauled up from the valley, the Asterian Abbey has survived for centuries but is showing signs of its age. It consists of a massive double tower with an adjacent chapterhouse of probably later construction squatting next to it. To its south a partly crumbled low wall surrounds the abbey grounds, extending almost all the way to the cliff's edge. Built to signify the place's seclusion from the outside world, the walled grounds also provides a partial windbreak from the icy air as it flows across the high, exposed landscape.

A rocky dirt track leads up to the abbey. One branch of it ends at steps leading to the main front gate, and the other branch wraps around to the gate into the walled grounds. This is the only road linking the abbey to civilization and is mainly used to bring supplies and food that can't be grown or produced at the abbey.

A1. ABBEY GROUNDS

A pair of wrought iron gates mark the main entry to the abbey grounds. The gates are black with age and heavily rusted but the abbey's symbol of a silver cross attached to a white stone disk is affixed to the iron and looks clean and cared for. Writing appears to adorn the margins of this disk. A 7-foot stone wall extends from the base of the tower before turning almost at the cliff's edge. A section of the cliff appears to have crumbled at some time in the past and taken a portion of this wall with it. Within the enclosure, the grounds poignantly reinforce the feeling of the abbey's fall from prominence, its once grand gardens are now a straggling mix of weeds, overgrown flower beds, and patchy grass. A path leads from the towns to a postern gate on the abbey's main tower, and a second gate exits from the back of the grounds towards the rugged mountains.

The gates are closed with a simple latch and their design hints at a time when the abbey was much grander. Any PC proficient in Intelligence (Religion) can identify the symbol on the gate as that of the abbey's patron deity, Thyr, and a closer look at the writing on the disk reveals the words "Justice", "Order" and "Peace" intricately inscribed around the edges.

A well stands in the center of the yard and provides fresh, icy cold water to the inhabitants of the abbey. A straggly garden grows at the tower's base, and to the south signs of the old formal gardens are still apparent, but these have fallen into disorder and ruin over the long years. It is still possible to see the shape of the original garden path stones amid the weeds and scraggly bushes.

The southeastern portion of the grounds has been made into a graveyard and bears the crooked forms of dozens of cross-shaped headstones marking where past brothers of the abbey have been interred. Anyone examining these headstones finds that each bears the name of a single monk and a death date sometime within the last three centuries. The most recent is a Brother Herosephus who died twelve years ago. When the abbey was reoccupied following the Red Plague, the brothers chose to start a new cemetery here rather than continue to use the crypts beneath the abbey which they believed might still contain traces of the plague among its corpses.

At the southern edge of the cemetery, next to the crumbling cliff, the large statue of a king stands tall, if somewhat canted to the southwest due to the subsidence of the ground. This monarch holds an ornate rod in one hand and a chalice in the other and can be recognized as a representation of Thyr holding his rod of kingship and chalice of peace with a DC 12 Intelligence (Religion) check. Chiseled around base of the plinth at the statue's feet is an ancient inscription in High Boros (see sidebox). If no one reads High Boros it can be deciphered with a DC 10 Intelligence check. It reads, "*Thine earth below doth point unto the skies*".

It is a 350-foot drop from the edge of the cliff to the mountain slope below.

A2. COW SHED

This barn is spacious enough to hold a dozen mounts but is currently home to only three scrawny cows. A half door in one wall leads to an adjacent pig sty where a large sow and her four offspring root through the kitchen scraps. In addition to fodder for the animals and assorted tools for cultivation, a dozen chickens can be found roosting in here, with one of the old horse stalls converted into a coup for them where Brother Belphorus collects their eggs each morning. A half dozen barn cats prowl the structure and surrounding grounds for mice and other vermin.

A3. BALNEARY

This bathhouse holds four large wooden tubs that can be given privacy by heavy blankets hanging from ropes strung between the rafters. A large fireplace holds an iron cauldron with buckets stacked nearby where water from the well


A. THE ASTERIAN ABBEY
Ground Floor
To Coelum Area D
A8
A8
A7
A10
A9
A11
A12
A3
A1
A4
A2
A5
A6
To Area C
N
W
E
S
1 square = 10 ft.

can be heated for baths, and cabinets hold an assortment of lye soap, scrub brushes, liniment, wash rags, and sackcloth towels. Partitions to the south have hanging curtains that can be closed for privacy in dressing and undressing. Around behind the building, a trough has been dug into the hard ground that drains towards crevices at the base of the mountain slope. This serves the monks as a privy.

A4. SMITHY

This small smithy is sufficiently equipped to handle the mundane repairs of the abbey. Fashioning or repairing armor or weapons requires the tools and skills available in Coelum in the valley below. It likewise holds tools for basic carpentry. This was formerly the domain of Brother Tyberus and has lain vacant since his recent disappearance, none of the other Brothers having any aptitude for this sort of work.

A5. DOVECOTE

This rickety shelter once provided roosts for domesticated pigeons kept by the abbey. The last of these were rousted long ago by an encroaching weasel, and the Brothers have never bothered to obtain any more.

Treasure: A DC 24 Wisdom (Perception) check to search among the roosts locates an old leather scrollcase, warped and cracked with age. Within is a still legible *spell scroll* (*gust of wind*) hidden here and forgotten long ago.

A6. LYCHGATE

Apart from the main entrance, there is also a lychgate which leads to the disused track up to the top of Asteria Point. This covered gateway provides cover during funerals in inclement weather and, as evidenced by the rusting support hinges, once also had an elaborate wrought-iron gateway, but this is long gone, replaced with a simple low wooden gate, designed more to keep the abbey's animal's from straying rather than present a serious barrier to anyone seeking entry. The trail beyond the lychgate ascends the mountain towards the peak of Asteria Point (see **Event 5: Unseasonal Weather** if the PCs head in this direction).

A7. POSTERN GATE

This strong wooden door bears a lock, but the mechanism has rusted and the key was lost long ago. This door sees regular use by the monks in order to access the abbey grounds (**A1**). A broken broom handle is propped against the wall inside the door. At night the last monk in is supposed to wedge the broom handle between the door handle and the jamb in order to hold it shut (DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check to break through).

A8. LOWER CELLS

The flagstone floors are dirty, their large blue, red, and white tiles worn and faded. The hallways are dusty and neglected, hanging with cobwebs, and have remnants from the past scattered along their length: old pews, chairs, and a broken washtub, all in various stages of neglect and disrepair, have been left abandoned here.

This floor of the abbey is lined with rows of monastic cells, each similar in design to **A16** though they tend towards a damp mustiness due to their construction in the foundations of the building. They were once filled with brothers of the Asterian Order but are now deserted and unused. The monastic cells are in the same state, holding unwanted furnishings, old curtains, fabric, and piles of monks' habits. These piles of cloth and material are faded and covered in dust with their folds cracking and falling apart from age. The room marked with an "x" holds a heavy iron bar, mottled with rust but still sound. This is the iron bar for the front doors at **A13**, deposited in this chamber and forgotten long ago.

Other than the access between the stairs to the second level and the door at **A7**, the area is coated with thick layers of dust and cobwebs, and the place has the musty smell of decay. A DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) or DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check is able to discern the telltale signs of passage (footprints in the dust, broken cobwebs) showing where someone recently traveled these corridors all the way to **A10** and back. These are the marks of Brother Fagen going to and from the crypts in the last few days before his disappearance. There is no way to tell how many people made these tracks or if the most recent are those going to **A10** or those coming from **A10**.

A9. SECRET ENTRANCE

Unknown to all of the monks except Brother Hector, a secret door provides entry through the outer wall of the abbey and a hidden stair that provides access to **A18a**. The secret door is easily spotted form the inside but from the outside requires a DC 32 Wisdom (Perception) check to locate. The ground outside the wall here is extremely rocky and does not hold the tracks of Brother Hector's passage unless followed to here as described in **Event 11: The Eye Sees All**.

A10. CRYPTS

The door to this area is of heavy wood, swollen in its frame, and requires a DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check to open. Anyone examining it and making a DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check finds gouges along its frame and jamb

where it was forced with a pry bar. Brother Fagen had to do this in order to enter the crypts that had not been opened in many years.

Beyond the heavy door, the walls of the corridors are made from bricks of thick bluestone and the floor is covered with worn and flagstone tiles. The height of the walls is approximately seven feet lined with sepulcher niches, and dust and cobwebs are prolific. The first few near the entrance are empty, perhaps awaiting some future interment, but every other niche is occupied with a linen wrapped corpse, its hands crossed across its chest and its feet tied together.

These upper catacombs hold the most recent dead out of all the crypts, but even these have not been used in many centuries, the crypts abandoned in favor of the graveyard outside. Each occupied niche holds the desiccated, skeletal corpse of a past monk of the abbey. None bear names, and all are largely unremarkable and mostly human with a scattering of half-elves, dwarves, and halflings, without items of interest or value. That the dust and cobwebs are disturbed by recent passage is noticeable with a DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check, and the passage takes place on both corridors leading to and from area **A11**. In the thicker dust of the floor here a DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check is able to determine that all of the marks are made by the passage of a single person who made multiple trips, evidence pointing to the fact that Brother Fagen made his exploration of the crypts alone — without the also-missing Brother Tyberus.

Lurking invisibly within this stretch of corridor are **2 rhu-chaliks**. These extraterrestrial creatures, also known as void wanderers, are small masses of spongy black tissue with four dangling tendrils and a large central, pupil-less white eye. These creatures are used as scouts by the Lunites for their invasion of Lloegyr, because they are able to travel across the void of space without the aid of a *moon bridge* like that described at **Event 17: The Bridgehead** or similar conveyance). These creatures are actually scouts from a Lunite sortie some 2,000 years ago that were sealed away in the lower catacombs. With no need to eat or breathe, the trapped creatures entered a state of hibernation from which Brother Fagen roused them with his recent intrusion. Not fully waking until after his demise, they have begun scouting around the catacombs to determine the current state of the world and report back to their lunar masters. They remain invisible and trail the PCs for as long as possible (though PCs have advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks to notice their presence, due to the disturbance their passage causes through the dangling cobwebs) using their detect thoughts and project terror abilities. If one is killed, the other will attempt to flee the catacombs and the abbey and may be encountered again at **Event 14** or **Event 15**.

RHU-CHALIKS (2)

hp 66 (see **Appendix A**, page 551)

A11. OSSARIUM

This chamber is a truly macabre display. The walls are lined with neat stacks of hundreds of bones divided into sections for skulls, long bones, ribcages, pelvises, etc. Before the far wall is a stone altar bearing the carven image of a cross on its front. Its surface is likewise carven with the images of dozens of skulls, staring passively outward, in bas relief. Behind this altar, the mortared bluestone of the wall has collapsed or been disassembled to reveal an opening leading into darkness beyond.

This ossarium was used long ago by the brothers of the Order to recycle the burial niches it the catacombs here and below. After a body had lain in repose for enough years to be reduced to dry bones, the burial shrouds were discarded and the skeletons disarticulated and carefully stored here with the generations of their brethren that had gone before. A door in the opposite wall once led to the



lower catacombs, but when these were sealed the door was crudely bricked over. Brother Fagen in his explorations discovered this brick seal and managed to break through it with a crowbar.

A search of the dusty floor here reveals the same trails as described in **A10**.

A12. OLD CATACOMBS ENTRANCE

The remains of an old wooden door stands propped against the wall beyond the broken masonry. It opens into a cramped circular room at the base of the abbey's stairwell tower. A narrow stairway has been chipped out of the solid rock of the abbey's foundation and leads down into unknown depths below. The musty smell of old tombs and long-dead air rises from this opening.

This formerly sealed stairway leads to the Old Catacombs (area **B**) below the abbey. Despite the foul smells, Brother Fagen allowed them to air out for a few days after opening them, so the air is safe to breathe, if unpleasant. The same footprints as described in **A10** and **A11** can be found leading up and down the stairs, indicating that Brother Fagen has visited below and returned several times during his exploration. There is no indication of if he ever returned on his last venture. The stairs descend steeply 20 feet to area **B1**.

A13. ENTRANCE

Entry is blocked here by a heavily reinforced, bronze-banded double door with an elaborate iron knocker in the shape of a downturned sword. It is usually locked from the inside with a sliding bolt, and, once inside, a DC 23 Wisdom (Perception) check notices that it has brackets for a heavy iron bar, though no bar is located in the vicinity. Normally knocking brings one of the Brothers to answer in 2d4 rounds, though when the PCs first arrive they are met at the door by Brother Hector as described at the beginning of **Chapter 1**.

Bronze-Banded Wooden Double Door: 3 in. thick; AC 16; hp 27; DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check to break, DC 25 Dexterity check with thieves' tools to unlock.

A14. FOYER

Light shining down through stained-glass windows high above in this massive dome chamber picks up the motes of dust dancing in the air from the draft caused by the door. The flagged tiles are worn with age and uneven in spots. Elaborately carved wooden benches line the walls and hanging above these are aged and faded tapestries depicting an elderly man with a rod in one hand and a chalice in the other. On a small dark wooden table in the center of the area sits a spherical bronze mechanism of overlapping circles, greenish brown with corrosion. A wide stair follows the curve of one wall to a balcony some 20 feet above, and 60 feet above a beautifully painted dome bearing an elaborate rosette window surmounts the tower.

A DC 12 Intelligence (Religion) check identifies the image in the tapestries as that of the god Thyr bearing his rod of kingship and chalice of piece. The spherical bronze mechanism is an ancient, pre-heliocentric armillary sphere dating back to the early days of Hyperborea. It is corroded and no longer functions but is worth 5,000 gp as an antique, though the PCs should not be looting the abbey of its treasures.

A15. CLOISTERS

The garden courtyard has a carefully maintained green lawn and a few small fruit trees surrounded by a sheltered gravel path, its portico supported by a gallery of gray marble columns. A statue graces either end of the courtyard facing each other, one an elderly king seated upon a throne, the other an armored woman with her sword upraised before her eyes. Between them and slightly to the side is a fountain of gray marble from which a trickle of water still flows into an algae-stained basin.

These cloisters allow the Brothers a sheltered area for quiet contemplation. Despite its care and maintenance, it still shows signs of its age, from the staining of the fountain to tiny cracks and seams in the portico columns. The fountain itself is fed by buried pipes from the well at **A1**, but these have become mostly clogged over the years so that only a trickle flows anymore, and it with an unpleasant metallic taste. A DC 12 Intelligence (Religion) check identifies the two statues of Thyr, God of Justice, and his sister Muir, Goddess of Virtue and Paladinhood.

A16. MONASTIC CELLS

Each of these small, cold rooms is almost identical with plastered walls bare and unadorned are except for a wooden cross, symbol of the Church of Thyr, hanging over the plain wooden single bed. The cotton tick mattress is firm, but comfortable enough and a thick white quilt is folded over the clean bed sheets. There is a small wooden cupboard with shelves to put clothes and another set of bookshelves run along the wall beside it, over the top of a tiny wooden desk. The rooms are clean, serviceable, and comfortable enough although they are quite plain. It is fairly evident from the number of rooms on this floor and the one below that the abbey originally housed a far larger contingent of Thyrian monks.

A16a. Guest Accommodations

These four empty monastic cells are provided to the PCs during their stay at the abbey. They possess the same simple amenities as the other monastic cells save that high up on the south wall is an arched leadlight window which can be cracked open to provide fresh air, making them the most desirable cells in the abbey. It is a show of great honor to the PCs that they are given these rooms. If there are more than four PCs, the others can take other unoccupied cells on this hall.

A16b. Hakkan's Cell

Hakkan's room is extremely neat and orderly. An illuminated manuscript written in Common on the early worship of Thyr sits open on his desk and a parchment beside it shows an exact copy of the words and drawings depicted in the book with amazingly precise duplication. Brother Hakkan is clearly a great talent as a copyist and illuminator. Other than that, his room is unremarkable, his clothes neatly folded and stowed on the shelves of his cupboard.

A16c. Fagen's Cell

Fagen's cell is in a state of disarray. The bed is made but the coverings are roughly placed, and there is a pile of dirty robes and foot wrappings in a pile on the floor in the corner. Stacks of books are piled haphazardly on his desk and more books are jumbled on the shelves. Pieces of parchment are scattered across the desk bearing sketched figures and scribblings. The figures are representations of some the bygone Hyperborean gods, including Thyr, his sister Muir, a faceless goddess bearing a kite shield[ST-680], Arden the Sun God[LL3-254], the goddess Diana[LL3-75], and Mithras the Soldier-God[LL7-126]. These are each recognizable with a DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check (save for the faceless goddess who can only be identified as the "Lost Goddess"[ST-722] with a DC 25 check). One of the parchments on the desk shows a sketch of several godly figures has been drawn in pencil along with the words, "Look to the Past" written carefully below it. A quick note scribbled next to those words asks, "who should?" This illustration shows the ancient Hyberborean gods at the end of the Gods' War when Thyr thrust his sister's sword into the ground to end the bloodshed (the scene can be identified as such with a DC 20 Knowledge [religion] check). It is a copy of the mosaic in area **B11** and may provide a clue to solving the puzzle in that location.

A16d. Belphorus' Cell

Belphorus' room is a disordered mess. The bed is a jumble of sheets and blankets, soiled garments lie strewn around, and the room smells of an unwashed body. An old ham bone pokes out from one end of the bookshelf and the desk is littered with crumbs and a half-eaten biscuit. A reed basket sits beside the desk and is filled with dried mushrooms (still good).

A16e. Hector's Cell

Hector's room is neat and orderly, but the desk is piled with parchments covered with repetitive drawings of strange glyphs and sigils. A journal sits on the desk, half filled with attempts to translate and decode these strange symbols. An entry at the end of the otherwise banal journal, dated one month ago, reads, "*Things are changing here, and I am at the same time frightened and strangely elated. Is it going to be me, a lonely insignificant monk who will bring salvation? If only I could decipher the meaning of the symbols, I'm sure they would give me the answers to the questions which seem to rise unbidden in my mind.*"

A16f. Tyberus' Cell

In Tyberus' room a beautifully carved wooden chess set rests on his desk, and carved figurines of animals and monks stand on the windowsill. There is one exceptionally well-carved figurine of a very pretty girl. All of the carvings are of fine quality (worth 1d6 x 5 gp each). A spare monk's habit is folded neatly on the shelf and some woodworking tools are stored in a locker at the foot of his bed.

A17. ABBOT'S OFFICE

A large heavy desk sits in the center of this room and wooden chairs are placed around the room, with two in front of the desk. A large leather chair with studded seams sits behind the desk. A large oil lamp hangs from the ceiling and the surface of the desk is littered with papers and letters. The paper on the desk is filled with reports on the state of the abbey and other correspondence related to running the place. However, an examination of it reveals that nearly all of this is a year or more old; Abbot Quilm no longer has the mental acuity to complete such recordkeeping.

A18. SCRIPTORIUM

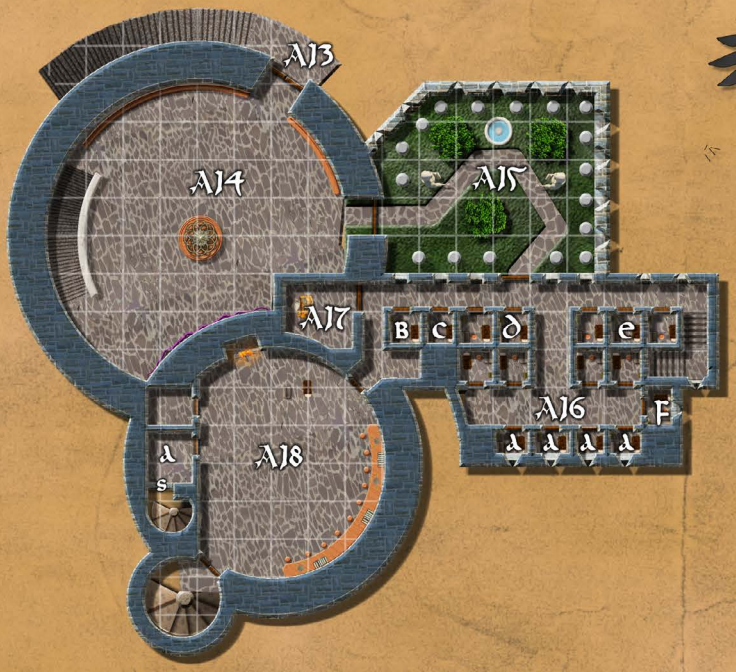
This is a high-ceilinged spacious room with large windows lining the walls 20 feet above to let in fresh air and the wan light of the sun or moons. This scriptorium has a tall desk running along the curve of the south and east walls that is mottle with ink stains. A long groove at the top of the desk has several feathered quills resting in it with ink blotters nearby, and from this groove varicolored bottles of ink glisten in the light from above. A number of high stools are pulled up to it. Shelves on the other walls contains voluminous rolls of parchment as well as a few large tomes, and several blank sheets of parchment rest at various work stations on the desk, awaiting inscription. A large fireplace in the north wall heats the otherwise chilly room.

A. The Asterian Abbey

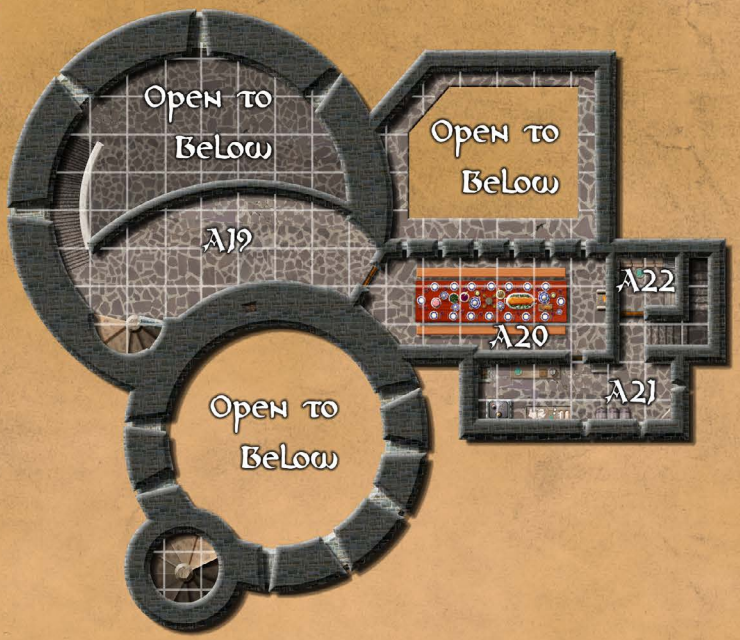


1 square = 10 ft.

Second Floor



Third Floor



This is the abbey's scriptorium and has space for dozens of monks to work in illumination and copying texts, though only Brothers Hakkan and Fagen regularly spent much time here, occasionally joined by Brother Hector. Brother Hakkan can still be found here for long hours every day, though with Fagen's disappearance he typically labors alone. Heavy leather-bound books on the arts of calligraphy, transcription, and illumination rest in large, heavy bookcases as well as a few mundane religious volumes brought down from the library for copying. In the west wall are two doors leading to supply closets that hold all the necessities for preparing and inscribing pages of parchment, illumination, and bookbinding stacked neatly upon stone shelves. There is a 25% chance that one of the tomes of knowledge (see **A26**) can be found herein with a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check.

A18a. Cupboard

Unlike the others storage cupboard in the scriptorium, this one has a well-concealed secret door (Wisdom (Perception) DC 25) behind the stone shelves on the south wall. It opens into a narrow spiral stair that descends within the wall of the abbey to a secret exit at **A9**. A DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) or Wisdom (Survival) check in this stairway reveals that the dust on the stairs has been disturbed by the passage of at least one set of footprints in recent days. This is the passage Brother Hector uses to return to the abbey after "sleepwalking" (see **Event 11: The Eye Sees All**). None of the other monks are aware of the secret door's existence.

A19. LOWER BALCONY

Broad stairs lead to this stone-tiled balcony 20 feet above the floor of the tower (at **A14**). It provides an expansive view of the chamber and is on the same level as the exquisite stained glass windows depicting holy warriors, angels in flight, and the scales of justice that line the northern wall. Anyone feeling the south wall with a bare hand notices a faint heat radiating from it. This is from the flue of the fireplace in **A18** that travels through the heart of this wall.

A20. REFECTORY

The refectory is a large hall with its walls rendered and painted white. A large fireplace is set at the end of the hall to provide warmth and heavy curtains and tapestries line the walls, to provide some insulation in the large space. The tapestries have ornate borders, and all depict the silver cross of Thyr on a white background. A large oak table, polished to a high sheen by years of use, runs down the center of the refectory. The table is set with brass candlesticks and laid out with simple bowls, pottery plates, and wooden eating utensils.

A21. KITCHEN

This long, tiled room has a heavy chopping block, crisscrossed with cut marks, sitting in the center. A rack hangs above this block from which dangle an assortment of ladles, knives, tureens, spoons, and other assorted utensils. The entire room is surrounded by shelves that bristle with pots and pans. A large black oven sits next to a griddle in one corner, and herbs and vegetables hang on hooks along the walls and upon side tables. The tables, griddle, and chopping block are grimy and could use a good clean.

A22. PANTRY

This is a well-stocked pantry with the usual assortment of flour, oats, preserved fruits, and vegetables from the garden. Bags of potatoes and onions rest on the floor and wooden crates packed with ice and straw hold cuts of freshly slaughtered swine and duck.

A23. OBSERVATORY

A wide balcony overlooks the entire interior of the tower here, stretching from the foyer 40 feet below to its vast dome rising to an apex 40 feet above. Offset from the center of the dome is a massive rosette window, an oculus that allows a shaft of light to descend directly onto the balcony's edge where there stands an ornate altar. The pure white alabaster altar is elaborately decorated in gilt and silver with the images of Thyr's cross as well as the sacred lions and eagles of his faith. More than a few griffons are interspersed combining the majestic aspects of the two holy beasts. Resplendent inset jewels line the edges of the altar, and the top of bears a silver chalice and an ivory rod flanking a silver orrery at its center. Next to the altar and arrayed along the edges of the balcony are three complex telescopes, all directed towards the oculus above. Next to these are mahogany tables bearing parchments and charts along with quills and inkwells, each set with a pair of comfortable chairs. The back wall of the balcony is hung with star charts and images of the moons in various phases and conjunctions with different stars and planets.

The observatory is the true purpose of the abbey and holds its most valued treasure, the magical oculus that allows it to make its detailed observations of the night sky. The oculus is a combination of the rosette window and the ornate altar, both of which bear a strong aura of divination magic. When a cleric of Thyr makes the proper obeisance at the altar, he can control what the oculus focuses on. In this way the oculus is able to view anything that can be seen from the peak of the dome whether it would be within the rosette window's line of sight or not. For instance, through the altar the oculus can be focused on anything in the sky, upon the visible faces and peaks of the surrounding mountains, and even into the forested vale below. However, the user has to know the

location of the image he is looking for (e.g. the oculus will not locate someone the user is hoping to spy on). Barriers to sight (such as foliage or clouds) still prevent visibility, but the ability to focus on anything even potentially visible from the highest peak of the dome is quite useful in stargazing. Once the user of the altar has selected the target to be viewed, its image is held steady in the rosette window above until it is no longer visible (as in the case of moonset, for example) or the user elects to focus the oculus elsewhere. With the image held in the rosette window, viewers can then use the telescopes on the balcony to focus on the image from multiple angles and obtain fantastically detailed resolution of the subject. During the day objects can also be seen, but the brightness of the ambient light makes stargazing problematic. It does make for easy observation of the road leading up to the abbey from the valley below, however.

If someone who is not a cleric of Thyr trained in its use attempts to use the oculus, they still have a chance. Any lawful good, neutral good, or lawful neutral cleric can attempt a DC 20 Intelligence (Religion) check to understand the basics of how to operate the oculus. Likewise, anyone can master its use with a DC 30 Intelligence (Arcana) check.

Development: When the Abbot Quilm shows the PCs the oculus for the first time in **Event 2**, they see an image of the moon, Luna, displayed in the rosette window above. The moon has just entered its full moon phase and appears huge in all its great detail, its radiance giving a pale, eerie light to the room. At other points in the adventure, the oculus may be focused on different images as described in the text. During the day it is likely not in use and merely shows the blue sky above. Be sure and describe what is in view through the rosette window each time a PC enters this area.

Treasure: The three telescopes[PPC:PofS] are wonders of engineering and are each capable of magnifying objects as much as 400 times; they are worth 15,000 gp each, though they are very delicate and weigh 80 lbs. apiece. In addition, the star charts and lunar illustrations hanging upon the walls are exquisitely artistic examples of astronomy dating back more than a thousand years and are worth 5,000 gp as a collection to a university or astromancer*. Among these charts is a rare full cosmogram[PPC:PotS] of Lloegyr's** star system (200 gp). The ivory rod is a replica of the rod of kingship (150 gp) and the silver chalice is a replica of Thyr's chalice of peace (250 gp). The orrery is a calculating grand orrery[PPC:PotS] made of silver and is worth 4,000 gp. The altar itself is worth 25,000 gp for its materials alone but weighs 1,500 lbs. and is an integral part of the oculus in combination with the rosette window. As such it is a priceless artifact of the Church of Thyr. If either is removed or destroyed, the magic of the *oculus* is ruined. The rod, chalice, and orrery are not fundamental parts of the *oculus*, but taking them would nevertheless be construed as a blackguard's act by the Church of Thyr.

A24. ABBOT'S QUARTERS

The abbot's bedchamber is well-appointed. The room is large, and the single arching leaded window has a thick, dark-red curtain tied back with a tasseled cord. A fireplace is primed with kindling waiting to be lit next to a large bin of firewood. The bed is a four-poster and has a plump mattress with fine white linen and a thick quilt with a fine chest of drawers next to it. One wall has a beautiful darkwood bookcase that extends from floor to ceiling. While still monastic in style and not elaborately decorated, this room clearly shows that the owner enjoys his creature comforts.

This chamber is occupied by Abbot Quilm, and signs of his increasing dementia can be seen in tasks half-finished and forgotten: letters that remain half-written and unfinished, a drawer left open with a pile of clean laundry beside it, and the general clutter of things not put back in their correct places. There are stacks of prayer books lying in messy piles around the room and the Abbot's desk is littered with uncompleted paperwork related to the abbey.

The books stored on the shelves here cover a wide range of subjects, and there is a large section devoted to Luna and its smaller sister Sybil. The most ornately illustrated spine of all the books is a tome called *An Illuminated History of the Asterian Order*. Under the title, the book's spine shows the outline of the Abbey with the mountain looming behind it. Although not obvious until the book is opened and closely inspected, several pages have been torn out from the middle of the tome. If questioned about the missing pages, Abbot Quilm denies having any knowledge of them and does not know when they were removed or where they went. These pages were taken very recently by Brother Hakkan (see the **Various Hidden Truths** section in **Appendix B**, see page 66). There is a 50% chance that one of the tomes of knowledge (see **A26**) can be found herein with a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check.

* An astromancer is a magical practitioner who combines astrology with the physical laws of astronomy. [LL7-197]

** Lloegyr is the modern common name of the planet upon which the continent of Akados lies. [LL1-4]

A. The Asterian Abbey

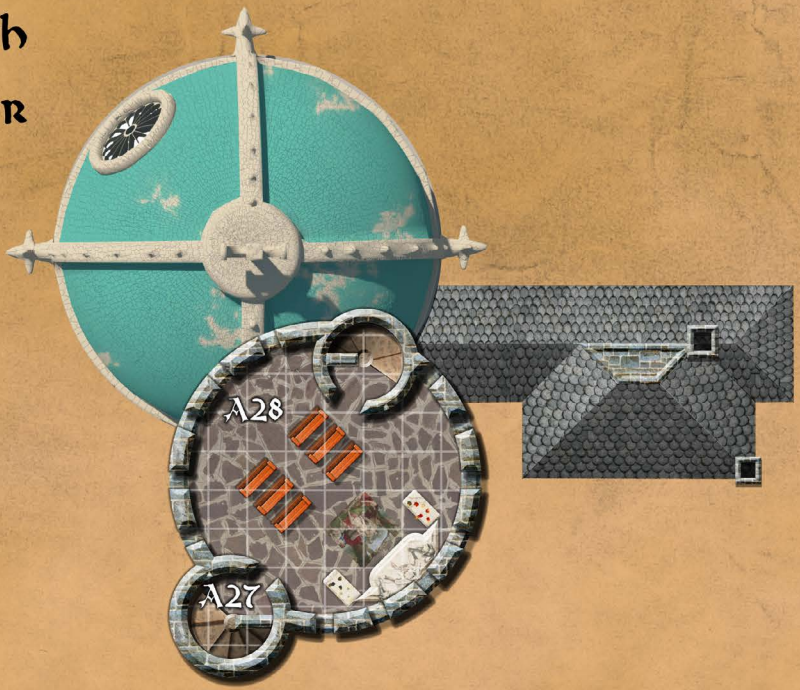


1 square = 10 ft.

Fourth Floor



Fifth Floor



A25. INFIRMARY

This large, echoing room is lined with rows of empty beds. Most of the beds are stripped of linen, and over half lack even a mattress. At the end of the room, only four beds are neatly made up with fresh linen and each of these beds has a polished metal bedpan beneath it. Next to these beds are white cabinets and a desk with a padded chair. On a shelf behind the desk, a row of apothecary bottles and other medical equipment are neatly arranged. A fireplace in the corner is laid out with kindling and wood to readily start a fire, and an iron hanger holds a metal kettle that can easily by swung over the flame to heat. Despite the signs of age, such as missing grout in the worn floor tiles, the room is neat and well ordered.

A26. LIBRARY

This large room lined with bookshelves and has star charts and beautifully illuminated illustrations showing the faces and phases of both of the moons on the walls. Desks and utilitarian wooden chairs fill the center of the room and there are a few padded chairs nestled beside a few of the shelves. The bookshelves here are full, but for the most part, the books here relate to Thyrian scripture and commentaries dating back to the time of the Hyperborean Empire or are lunar and cosmological reference books. Most are carefully and neatly aligned in their shelves and don't appear to have been read recently. In addition, a careful review of the shelves can discover a number of tomes of knowledge. Researching library's contents to find one of these tomes takes 1d4 hours and requires DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) or DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) checks to turn up useful books. For every 5 points by which a PC exceeds the DC, reduce the time taken by 1 hour (minimum 1 hour). A PC can only make one search at a time, but multiple PCs can conduct multiple searches simultaneously. If a tome is discovered, roll 1d8 or choose from those below as you see fit.

Tomes of Knowledge (roll 1d8)

The abbey holds a great many books but most of these are irrelevant to the adventure. Below are some of the tomes that hold information which is potentially useful to the PCs. These books are most likely to be found in the library (**A26**) or scriptorium (**A18**) but feel free to have the PCs find them in other parts of the abbey, such as the brothers' (**A16**) or abbot's quarters (**A24**) if needed.

1. *Ancient Peoples of the Cretian Mountains*
2. *A biography of Menkus Oronath*
3. *The Great God Thyr*
4. *The Lost Tribes*
5. *Creatures of Lunar Influence, Volume II*
6. *Ritualistic Arcana*
7. *Martyrs of Thyr*
8. *A Grand History of the Realm*

Each book requires an Intelligence check to read, and it takes 1d4+1 hours to read through the book to obtain the information it provides. By every 5 points that the reader exceeds the Linguistics/Intelligence check, reading time is reduced by 1 hour (minimum 1 hour). In addition, if a PC is unable to read the language in which the book is written, an Intelligence (Investigation) check against the listed DC is necessary to successfully translate it.

In addition to the general knowledge the book provides, each includes a "For the GM" section that includes some revelation that can be gleaned at a later point in the adventure from the knowledge gained in the book. These are explained individually under each tome entry.

1. Ancient Peoples of the Cretian Mountains

Language: High Boros

Read: Intelligence DC 10

Translate: Intelligence (Investigation) DC 14

This leather-bound book has a fine ink drawing inside the front cover of a human figure depicting the physiology of the prehistoric human peoples of the Cretian Mountains known as the Ancient Ones. As described in the book, the Ancient Ones are shown as having square jawlines, prominent foreheads, and strong curved noses. Anyone who peruses the book realizes that Abbot Quilm fits the physical profile of Ancient One ancestry. If asked about this, Abbot Quilm tells the PCs that he has lived in this region all his life and relates, with modest pride, that his family lineage can be traced back for many generations to when the Hyperboreans first came to the vale and encountered the tribes of the Ancient Ones that lived in this very valley some 36 centuries ago.

For the GM: Certain parts of the ritual to break the binding spell on the standing stone become more potent if Charisma (Perform) by the hands of a person with Ancient One ancestry. As will be revealed during the climax of this adventure (**Event 17: The Bridgehead**), Quilm's hands may be used to Charisma (Perform) this ritual… even if the rest of his body is elsewhere.

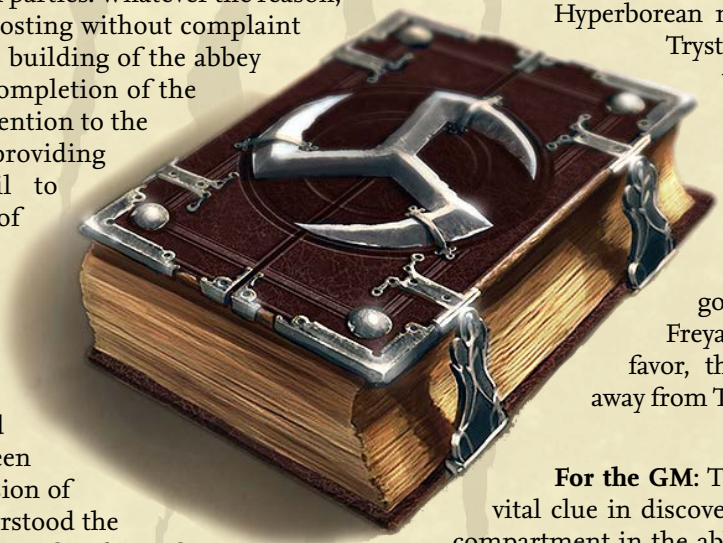
2. A biography of Menkus Oronath

Language: High Boros

Read: Intelligence DC 10

Translate: Intelligence (Investigation) DC 14

This untitled book lists the lifetime accomplishments of the founder and first abbot of the Asterian Order. A skilled warrior, brilliant strategist, and patriarch in the Church of Thyr, the Hyperborean Strategos* Oronath was famous for his quick thinking and prowess as a battle general. Why he was removed from his military post and sent to construct an outpost at the edge of the Cretian Mountains in 1988 I.R. remains one of the unsolved mysteries of military history of that time. The various theories as to why he lost his career and standing are covered in the book, ranging from jealousy of other military leaders, a scandal due to his close friendship with his superior officer's wife, or possible sabotage by external parties. Whatever the reason, Oronath accepted his new posting without complaint and was instrumental in the building of the abbey and its magical *oculus*. On completion of the monastery, he turned his attention to the surrounding settlements, providing support and wise council to them. He held the position of Abbot of the Order until his death as at the age of 103.



For the GM: The truth behind the mystery of why Oronath was sent to build the abbey is that he had been sent to create the secret mission of the Asterian Order and understood the vital importance of the site as a first line of defense against another lunar invasion.

3. The Great God Thyr

Language: Common

Read: Intelligence DC 10

Translate: Intelligence (Investigation) DC 7

While this book is a secular tome, it describes the god Thyr and provides an in-depth discussion of the Thyrian religion. A benevolent and just God, Thyr's symbol is a silver cross on a white field. This symbolizes the upturned cross-haft of his sister's sword, which he thrust into the earth to end the Gods' War. As so much blood was shed in the war of the gods, Thyr foreswore the use of swords in his religion and all priests were henceforth forbidden from using a bladed weapon. Many priests favor reinforced rods modeled after Thyr's own. Thyr is usually depicted as an old man in silver robes trimmed with silver, purple or gold, with the rod of kingship in one hand and the chalice of peace in the other. He embraces proper and traditional rule and as such, is often the favored god of royalty. He supports a class system, where each person has a fairly chosen role in a lawful world, intended to bring the greatest good for the greatest number of citizens. The eagle and the lion are his sacred creatures. His Three Principles are Justice, Order, and Peace.

Thyr has been represented in the Hyperborean pantheon for nearly 4,000 years and for much of that time was seen as one of the most powerful and influential gods, alongside his sister Muir and the now-deceased sun god Arden. In the last thousand years his church has seen its popularity wane and the numbers of his followers take a marked decline, especially after the loss and corruption of St. Harul's Hold in 2471 I.R.[ST-139], the decline and eventual collapse of the Hyperborean monarchy under Imperatrix Trystecce in 2509 I.R.[LL4-10/LL8-19], the tragic end of the Army of Light at the Forest of Hope in 3210 I.R.[ST-10], and most recently the capture of the High Altar of Thyr in the Lyre Valley by orc hordes in 3507 I.R.[LL1-77/LL8-22]. As other gods such as Mitra[RA-585] and Freya[ST-582] have gained in public favor, the slow creep of followers away from Thyr has continued.

For the GM: Thyr's Three Principles are a vital clue in discovering how to open a hidden compartment in the abbey's crypts (see area **B7** for more details).

4. The Lost Tribes

Language: Gasquen

Read: Intelligence DC 15

Translate: Intelligence (Investigation) DC 20

This book relates the history and details the culture of the tribes of Ancient Ones in the Cretian Mountain. Much of the book goes into the specifics of their society, arts, and beliefs but toward the end postulates theories on why this stable civilization, having survived for many generations, fell so sharply into decline. The author raises the theory that this may have been due to contact with another cultural group that had migrated into the region and started to colonize. While the author acknowledges that while there are no archeological signs of this other group today other than the semi-legendary Jaundool[LL9-4] who didn't seem to leave

a prominent enough of an imprint on the area's history to accomplish this, this still doesn't refute the possibility that another such a group could have existed.

For the GM: Toward the end of the adventure the PCs may realize that the "other cultural group" was in fact the invasion of horrific moon creatures which decimated the Ancient Ones.

5. Creatures of Lunar Influence, Volume II

Language: Common

Read: Intelligence DC 20

Translate: Intelligence (Investigation) DC 10

This book focuses on lycanthropic creatures and provides much useful information on how to identify and combat them. It mentions that the mere presence of some were-creatures can spook normal animals and many lycanthropes can empathically command animals of their own kind. Aside from describing the difference between natural and afflicted were-creatures, the book also mentions lycanthropic variations such as moonbound lycanthropes, which require magically enhanced silver weapons to harm, and fel lycanthropes, that are unusually powerful and are said to have their bloodlust completely overwhelm them when the moon waxes full.

For the GM: Perhaps the most revealing piece of information is that there was a *Volume I* written in this series, although this is nowhere to be found at the abbey. It was lost centuries ago but did hold some information on inhabitants of the moon itself, such as the mooncalf and moon-beast (see **Appendix A**). If the PCs mention this missing volume to Brother Hakkan, he says that he has also been seeking *Volume I*, but there no longer seems to be any copies in existence.

6. Ritualistic Arcana

Language: Draconic

Read: Intelligence DC 15

Translate: Intelligence (Investigation) DC 20

This elaborate illuminated tome is general in nature and doesn't delve into many specifics. It describes arcane rites and ritual magic and goes into the history of such practices. Toward the end of the tome there are descriptions of binding rituals including examples of ancient binding symbols that bear some slight similarity to the runes Brother Hector has copied from the standing stone. The book talks about how certain powerful bindings can only be undone (or are significantly easier to undo) by the hand of the one who bound the subject in the first place or a descendant of such a person. The tome speaks of how bloodlines often play a significant role in arcane rituals.

For the GM: There are a pair of small hints here. Brother Hector's tainted bloodline and close proximity has enabled the moon-beast to slowly gain control over the monk. Also, Abbot Quilm's Ancient One heritage means that his blood and hands are important factors in breaking the moon-beast's binding.

7. Martyrs of Thyr

Language: High Boros

Read: Intelligence DC 10

Translate: Intelligence (Investigation) DC 12

This spiritual volume contains parables of those who sacrificed their lives in service to Thyr. Aside from the tales themselves, the book also expounds upon the moral of each sacrifice and offers motivational guidance to the reader. One tale of note is that of Meverell, an abbot of the Asterian Order who was falsely blamed by the inhabitants of a primitive rural settlement for a devastating drought in the area. He was in the midst of being burned at the stake by the superstitious villagers when suddenly the heavens opened and it started to pelt down with rain, extinguishing the flames on the pyre. The villagers saw this as a condemnation from the gods and fled. Unfortunately, Meverell's burns were too great and he succumbed to his injuries. His body was returned to the Asterian Abbey where his remains were interred with great honor.

For the GM: This tale describing how a deluge of rain poured down on the execution scene may give the PCs a hint about how to solve the puzzle in Meverell's tomb in area **B4**.

8. A Grand History of the Realm

Language: Common

Read: Intelligence DC 15

Translate: Intelligence (Investigation) DC 10

Written by a modern-day scholar, this book is broad in its scope and describes the major events in the surrounding area and is written from a perspective that romanticizes the Hyperborean Empire. It reveals that the Abbey of the Asterian Order has stood its mountaintop vigil since at least 1988 I.R., having been founded by the former Hyperborean strategos-turned-abbot Oronoth in the days of the Hyperborean Empire when the Church of Thyr enjoyed a reputation and power above that of all other faiths. It relates that through its magical observatory lens, the clerics of the order could study the greater and lesser moons called Luna[LL1] and Sybil[LL1], as well as the many other

wonders of the night sky, from which to read omens and collect celestial observations. It records the coming of the Red Plague to central Akados and even Yolbiac Vale in 2781 I.R. and again in 2797 I.R., and how much of the Asterian Order was decimated in the second coming of the plague.

But just as the tides of history roll on and fortunes change, the Church of Thyr has fallen from its place of ancient prominence. At present, the Asterian Abbey stands upon its lonely point, nearly forgotten, and occupied by only a handful of clerics who maintain the abbey, unaware of the original purpose of the site and true mission of the Asterian Order. It describes the ultimately futile efforts of the Order to contain the pestilence both in the valley below and at the abbey itself and how the abbey was finally abandoned in 2804 I.R. as a result of the plague's devastation. Finally, it relates how Thyrian migrants reoccupied the abbey again in 3153 I.R. and took up the Order's old duties of stargazing. The books section the abbey closes by idly speculating on the oddity of the Church of Thyr delving into the discipline of celestial observation and wondering why it would venture to once again undertake those studies in a modern world where it already struggles to connect with even its core concerns much less peripheral issues more suited to astromancers astromancers (see footnote, page 21) or perhaps the followers of Narrah or Hecate[MM-102].

For the GM: The details about the Red Plague in this book may help the PCs put the plague haunt in area **B9** to rest. The closing comments likewise provide insight into the fact that there is likely more to the Asterian Order than it seems.

A27. VESTRY

Ceremonial robes hang from rows of pegs on the walls and a long set of cupboards in this robing chamber hold vestments and sacred vessels used in services in the chapel (**A28**).

A28. CHAPEL OF THYR

A large white walled room with vaulted ceilings and stained-glass windows depicting famous images and scenes of the Hyperborean gods run along each side of the rounded hall atop this tower. A dozen rows of simple, wooden pews sit in the middle of the hall and a small lectern stands at the front of the worship hall before an ornate altar flanked by two griffon statues. A series of small recesses around the walls of the church hold small wooden and gold leaf statues of eagles and lions. A DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check recognizes the eagle and lion as sacred animals of Thyr and the griffon as a sacred combination of the two sometimes invoked in worship services. The gold leaf on the statuettes is worth a total of 2,000 gp, but it would be an evil act for the PCs to despoil this chapel.

B. OLD CATACOMBS

Constructed in the early days of the abbey to hold the consecrated remains of the deceased, these old catacombs were filled fairly quickly due to the high casualty rate incurred when battling the Lunite incursions and the depredations of the Red Plague. The interments of these heroes of battle were deemed sacrosanct and were, therefore, not subject to eventual deposit in the ossarium (**A11**), and the dead from the plague were deemed infected and too dangerous to remove as well. As a result. Only the upper crypts (**A10**) saw much turnover in this regard before being ultimately abandoned in favor of the cemetery on the grounds outside (**A1**). As a result, the dead of these catacombs are mostly the original interments and have lain undisturbed for the most part for thousands of years.

B1. ENTRANCE

At the bottom of a set of stone stairs, an intersecting corridor continues to both the left and the right. Opposite the stairs is a deep alcove with a large statue at its center. The statue is of a monk in a cowl, his head is bowed, hiding his face and his stone hands clasped in prayer. At the statue's stone feet, a brass dish contains the recent remains of a burnt offering.

In the bowl are burned dried herbs, an offering of purification made by Brother Fagen when he first entered the crypts several weeks ago. If the PCs examine the remaining unburnt stems and make a DC 12 Intelligence (Nature) or Profession (herbalist) check, they recognize that the herbs are valerian, peppermint, and sage, often burned to ward off evil spirits. A small engraving rests behind the bowl at the base of statue in High Boros (DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check to decipher). It reads, "*Herewithin lieth the blessed embodiment of the Asterian Order*".

These catacombs are hewn directly from the stone beneath the foundations of the abbey. They are typically 5 feet wide and 7 feet high. The tunnels are cold and often slightly damp and festooned with cobwebs, with a constant stirring of air caused by the passage of the PCs. The walls are carved with burial niches that hold ancient, shroud-wrapped skeletons like those in **A10**. These are all original interments, having never been removed to the ossarium at **A11**. The corridors have thick dust on the floor and hold the tracks of Brother Fagen just as described in **A10**. The trails from his multiple trips can be followed and lead into **B1**, **B4**, up the western passage to **B7**, into **B8**, up the north passage between **B7** and **B8** to **B11**, through the western entrance of **B9**, and out the north passage from **B9** to **B10**.

B2. WET VAULT

The corridor opens into a small room here before turning and running perpendicular to its previous course. This low-ceilinged chamber, like the corridors themselves, has burial niches hewn into the stone of the walls which are occupied by the same shrouded bundles you have seen elsewhere. This area is different though in that the floor is flooded with murky water to a depth of 2 or 3 inches. The smell of mildew is strong here.

This junction is close in proximity to the shaft of the abbey's well at area **A1** (it is sunk just east beyond the eastern wall of this chamber), and the porous rock has allowed the moisture to collect here. What has been allowed to seep out into the well does not bear pondering. The water is not harmless, though. Over the long years of seepage, microscopic eggs have gathered and only recently with the influx of fresh air from Brother Fagen's passage hatched and grown into a **rot grub swarm**. This wriggling mass of horror has been devouring the bones of the dead to be found in this chamber but sensing the arrival of fresh prey the entire nauseating mass of white worms wriggles forth from the puddle to attack.



ROT GRUB SWARM

Huge swarm of Tiny beasts, unaligned
Armor Class 9
Hit Points 94 (9d12 + 36)
Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)	1 (-5)	4 (-3)	1 (-5)

Damage Resistances necrotic, piercing, slashing
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned
Senses blindsight 30 ft., passive Perception 7
Languages –
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Spider Climb. The rot grub swarm can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space. The swarm can move through any opening wide enough for a Tiny maggot. The swarm cannot regain hit points or have temporary hit points.

ACTIONS

Bites. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 0 ft., one creature in the swarm's space. *Hit*: The target becomes infested by 1d6+2 rot grubs. At the beginning of the infested creature's turn, it takes 1d6 piercing damage per rot grub infesting it. Application of fire to the wound before the end of the target's next turn does 1 fire damage and kills those rot grubs. After this, however, the rot grubs have burrowed too deep into the flesh to be affected in this manner.

If a creature infested by rot grubs ends its turns at 0 hit points, it dies as the grubs reach its heart and kill it. *Lesser restoration* or other effects that cure disease kill all rot grubs infesting the creature.

Engulf. The swarm engulfs a Medium or smaller creature. The engulfed target is considered grappled by the swarm (escape DC 10) and becomes blinded, restrained, and unable to

B. Old Catacombs



breathe. It must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw at the start of each of the swarm's turns or take 13 (2d10 + 2) piercing damage and be infested by 1d6+2 rot grubs (see the bites attack, above). If the swarm moves, the engulfed target moves with it. The swarm can have up to two creatures engulfed at one time.

B3. UNSAFE PASSAGEWAY

The floor of the passage becomes much more uneven here and in places the hewn stone of the wall and floor has lifted and cracked. The passage turns and near the corner, several of the niches have collapsed and fallen, creating a chaotic jumble of dust, rubble, torn linen, and protruding bones. A skull from one of the niches lies on its side in the corridor.

Any loud noise or movement in the corridor brings small showers of dust down from the ceiling.

Hazard: The structure of the walls and ceiling of this part of the crypts have weakened over time and are likely to collapse. This can be spotted with a DC 15 Intelligence check. Those with the stonecunning ability (such as dwarves) can make such a check by simply passing within 10 feet of the area; if actively searching, they have advantage on the check. PCs wanting to move through the area must succeed at a DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth) check or the ceiling collapses. This buries anyone within 15 feet of the corner and sliding debris damages anyone in a 10-foot slide zone on the periphery of the collapse. Characters in the bury zone take 28 (8d6) bludgeoning damage, or half that amount if they succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. They are subsequently buried. Characters in the slide zone take 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage, or no damage at all if they succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. Characters in the slide zone who fail their saves are buried.

Characters take 1d6 points of damage per minute while buried. If such a character falls unconscious, he must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw once per minute. If it fails, the character also gains one level of exhaustion. Characters who aren't buried can dig out their friends. In 1 minute, using only her hands, a character can clear rocks and debris equal to five times her heavy load limit. The amount of loose stone that fills a 5-foot-by-5-foot area weighs 1 ton (2,000 pounds). Armed with an appropriate tool, such as a pick, crowbar, or shovel, a digger can clear loose stone twice as quickly as by hand. Buried characters can attempt to free themselves with a DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check.

B4. ABBOTS' VAULT

The room has white stone plaques set into its walls, with names craved into them. Several of these are blank and open with empty interment niches behind. In the center of this chamber with an ornately vaulted ceiling rests a marble sarcophagus. The image of an elderly monk is carved into the white marble top of the sarcophagus, and the sides are carved with images of a monk following a king into battle. One of the etchings shows the king lying fallen on the battlefield with the priest kneeling and praying beside him. Surrounding the fallen king is some sort of divine light and the next image shows the risen king, his hand on the kneeling priest's head issuing a royal decree. The wall behind the sarcophagus is covered with a large mosaic depicting a king sitting on a throne. The floor is a checkered blue and white tile, and in front of the mosaic, it is set with larger tiles carved into the symbol of the Church of Thyr.

The marble plaques list the names of past abbots stating their dates of service and their dates of birth and death. The mosaic depicts the god Thyr sitting on a tall throne, his rod of kingship in one hand and a chalice of peace in the other. Along the border of the mosaic are the words, "*Honoring thy ruler shall bring justice to thy kingdom*". A DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check notices that several of the larger tiles in the symbol are slightly raised and may trigger something if downward pressure is applied to them. The PCs might suspect a trap, but there are no signs of anything being triggered by these pressure plates. If a PC kneels on the center of the symbol facing the mosaic, then the weight on the tiles under the supplicant's feet and knees click audibly and triggers one of the four mechanisms needed to unlock the secret compartment in area **B8**. The mechanism remains activated for 30 minutes before resetting itself, requiring that a character depress the tiles again to reactivate it.

B5. ABBOT MEVERELL'S VAULT

A large sarcophagus lies in the center of the room, its lid and sides engraved with exquisitely wrought carvings. The elderly monk carved into lid holds a bunch of leafy herbs in one hand and an alabaster pestle bowl rests in the other. Perched on his stone toe is a white marble dove. The etchings around the stone casket depict a monk praying, bandaging the leg of a wild creature, and tending a garden. These normal scenes of monastic life are at odds with the last carving which shows the man looking skyward in prayer, his hands clasped as flames lap around his feet and lick up the edge of his robes. The wall behind the coffer shows an inset carving of a village scene with swirling clouds above. A praying monk standing on a low platform is the centerpiece with figures of villagers in simple clothes standing to either side.

The herbs depicted on the sarcophagus are part of the carving, and a DC 11 Intelligence (Nature) check identifies them as depicting holy basil, the symbol of peace.

Below the wall carving is a small mosaic with a white background and gold border. Picked out in tiny chips of tile are the words, "*Those who bathe in the pure waters of faith will know peace*". A character proficient with mason's tools or similar stoneworking tools looking at the wall carving, or who succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check in examining it, notices something unusual about the wall carving. A lot of seemingly unnecessary work has been done to deeply inset the area of the carving above the monk and the positions of the peasants to either side form a funnel of sorts. Very close examination of the wall carving and a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals that there are tiny holes drilled into the stone behind the carved platform. If a character pours water (or other liquid) near the top of the inset carving, then the shape of the sculpted features caused the liquid flow down the background making the scene appear as if it is raining upon the standing monk. The liquid funnels into the tiny holes behind the platform and disappears into the wall. If the PCs pour an amount of liquid equal to the capacity of the pestle (1 pint, which is 1 pound of water) onto the carving, then a few moments after the last of the liquid disappears, a clicking grinding noise sounds in the wall behind the carving. This is one of the four mechanisms needed to open the secret compartment in area **B8**. The amount of liquid doesn't have to be exact and can vary more or less by up to 2 ounces, as the measuring mechanism in the wall allows some variance. However, pouring too much liquid causes the mechanism to temporarily jam for 10 minutes until the liquid dribbles away through the mechanism. Pouring too little water also has no effect as this only partly fills the mechanism.

Treasure: The marble dove and alabaster pestle are separate pieces of stonework. The marble dove has been set into the stone of the lid and would require significant damage to the carving to extract, but the alabaster pestle simply rests in a cavity and can be easily removed. It is worth 60 gp.

B6. ABBOT ORONATH'S VAULT

A sarcophagus rests in the very center of the room. The statue carved into the top of the coffer shows an excellent representation of a bald-headed abbot in robes with bare feet. The images around the outside of his coffin show this man constructing an abbey. He is also shown magically healing the sick and providing food to people in front of a simple-looking village. On the wall behind the coffer is a large mosaic of this region. Asteria Point is shown in the foreground with the Cretian Mountain range receding back into the distance.

Inscribed across the top of the mosaic are the words, "*The building blocks of order hold back the winds of chaos*". Astute PCs may realize that there is no abbey pictured in the mosaic even though it should be shown near the center of the picture. A DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check or searching the mosaic at the position that the abbey should occupy discovers a small section of mosaic tiles that are not affixed to the wall and can be easily removed, revealing an inset section with a tiny hole. A DC 28 Wisdom (Perception) check or a meticulous inspection of the coffin lid reveals the abbot has his hands clasped on his chest, but his fingers are interlinked and his hands are slightly raised up off his body, creating a small space underneath. Searching the space finds a piece of golden mosaic tile with a small clear dome of glass. This represents a small model of the abbey with the glass dome symbolizing the magical *oculus*. The PCs can push the golden mosaic tile into the inset section of the mosaic with a click to trigger one of the four mechanisms needed to unlock the secret compartment in area **B8**. Alternatively, the inset hole can be unlocked with a DC 30 Disable Device check.

B7. ABBOT MUIRIN'S CRYPT

In the middle of the room is a heavy stone casket of white marble. Depicted on the top of the casket is the carving of a man dressed in the garb of a simple monk, his feet clad in leather sandals with a cincture around his waist. Etchings around the casket depict a man in monk's robes working among other figures. One scene shows him speaking with a group of simply dressed figures, another him working in a field with a plow, and a third shows him providing medicine to others. In the walls around the vault are thick marble plaques with names engraved upon them. On the rear wall there is a bas-relief of the god Thyr and below it a grid of white tiles with words engraved upon them.

The words beneath the bas-relief say, "*Those who worship faithfully must follow the true path.*" Below this is a grid of white tiles each carved with a word related to the things that followers of Thyr might be expected to be or immerse themselves in: *Acceptance*, *Belief*, *Commitment*, Compassion, *Conscience*, *Courage*, *Devotion*, *Divinity*, *Excellence*, *Fortitude*, *Goodliness*, *Gratitude*, *Humility*, *Justice*, *Kindness*, *Loyalty*, *Mindfulness*, *Order*, *Patience*, *Piety*, *Peace*, *Prayer*, *Repentance*, *Respect*, and *Sacrifice*.

When pressed, each tile pushes in slightly with a click. Unless the correct three tiles are pushed in, once three tiles are pressed, the tiles all pop out, resetting the puzzle. Pressing the *Justice*, *Order*, and *Peace* tiles (in any order) causes a chiming sound followed by a grinding noise from the wall and the three tiles remain pushed in. This unlocks one of the four mechanisms needed to open the secret compartment in area **B8**. A DC 20 Intelligence (Religion) check allows a character to recall these Three Principles of Thyrian worship. At the GM's discretion, characters who are very familiar with Thyr gain advantage on this check. The PCs can also research this information in books stored in the abbey or simply ask the monks. Astute PCs may also realize that each of the inscriptions in the three other vaults uses one of the key words, "Honoring thy ruler shall bring ***justice*** to thy kingdom," "The building blocks of ***order*** hold back the winds of chaos," and "Those who bathe in the pure waters of faith will know ***peace***." Attentive PCs may also remember the words carved on the symbol on the abbey's front gate (area **A1**).

B8. SHRINE

This chamber holds a large stone altar with a statue overlooking it. The figure is that of an older man, his stone beard reaching down to his waist. His hands are clasped around an elaborately engraved cross and held in front of his chest.

Hidden under the altar there is a concealed cache of holy treasures secreted here by members of the Asterian Order centuries ago. Opening the cache requires the PCs to trigger a mechanism in each of the four vaults surrounding the shrine (**B4**, **B5**, **B6**, and **B7**). The concealed hollow inside the altar and the mechanisms that allows the stone to slide aside have been carefully hidden and are covered in layers of dust, but DC 30 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals the presence of the hidden area. There are no mechanisms in this room the PCs can access to open the cache but once the four mechanisms are activated in the other vaults, the altar slides aside with a loud grinding noise, revealing the cached items inside. Smashing the stone altar open is possible, it has AC 17 and takes 150 hit points of damage to break open a large enough area to reveal the cache. However, this forceful approach is likely to damage some of the items stored within the cache (see **Treasure** below).

Treasure: The cache contains an elaborate crystal chalice carved from a single chunk of purple amethyst which is worth 2,000 gp. This chalice is quite fragile and is very likely to be shattered if the PCs break their way into the cache reducing its value to a mere 200 gp. In the middle of the cache, covered by a decaying wooden frame is a small embroidery woven from gold and silver thread. This treasure depicts a stylized map of the surrounding lands illuminated with images of lions and eagles around the edges. Places of note, such as the Asterian Abbey, are marked on the map with tiny gemstones. These markers represent places that were important to the Asterian Order, and the abbey has one of the largest and most prominent gemstones. This map is worth 1,500 gp as an art object but may also provide clues that could lead the PCs to other adventure sites after this adventure at the GM's discretion. If the PCs hack their way into the cache they are likely to tear this delicate golden map, reducing its value by two-thirds. The cache also holds a platinum *ring of resoluteness* (see sidebar) *ring of the sublime*[PPC:TEoG] embossed with the cross holy symbol of Thyr and an ancient golden torc of Ancient One design engraved with swirling symbols (protective runes in the Old Tongue [see sidebar] — Intelligence (Investigation) DC 30 to translate). The torc is a *mind sentinel medallion* (see sidebar).

Ring of Resoluteness

Ring, rare (requires attunement)

While wearing this ring, you have advantage on saving throws to resist becoming frightened. In addition, once per day when you fail a saving throw to resist being frightened, you can ignore the condition for a number of rounds equal to your proficiency bonus. Once this time elapses, you become frightened until the duration of the effect ends.

Mind Sentinel Medallion

Wondrous Item, uncommon (requires attunement)

This medallion provides you with advantage to Wisdom saving throws against being charmed. If you fail a saving throw and become charmed, you can reroll your save to resist the effect, but after using this ability the medallion loses its magic and become an ordinary piece of jewelry.

B9. PLAGUE INTERMENT ROOM

The southern entranceway is blocked with a makeshift barrier of wood. Painted on the side of the barrier facing south is a large red cross, the paint now faded and peeling with age. There is a similar barrier on the west side, but this has been partly pulled down recently leaving an opening a Medium creature can squeeze through. Removing these barriers is simple; they fall apart from age after the first few planks are pulled away with a DC 5 Strength (Athletics) check.

This room lies in dusty, ancient shambles. A scarred wooden table stands in the middle of the room and rough loops of rope lie in rounds on the floor. The remains of heavy linen shrouds lie strewn around and piled in the corners of the room. Wooden tools and planks likewise lie scattered about. Each of the niches in the walls are haphazardly stuffed with shrouded remains with at least two or three linen wrapped bodies, and their shrouds have a hastily painted red cross on them, the paint now dulled and darkened with age. Everything is coated with a thick layer of dust. There are scuffed footsteps in the dust on the floor, leading from the western entranceway to the northern passage.

Anyone making a DC 15 Intelligence (History) or Intelligence (Religion) check recognizes the red crosses as symbols to denote plague victims back during the Hyperborean Empire when Thyr's religion was still ascendant and its cross symbol universally recognized. The same symbol is sometimes to denote plague houses today, though not with the same universality.

The scuff marks in the dust are relatively recent and were made by Brother Fagen during his explorations. If living creature are in this area for more than 1 consecutive round, it triggers the **virulent plague haunting** event. Brother Fagen never triggered it because he recognized the significance of the red crosses and chose to quickly cross the room to avoid any chance of becoming infected with latent plague.

Detection: Upon first entering this room, a creature can attempt a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check to notice the faint, barely perceptible scent of rot and disease that lingers here, followed by a dip in the ambient temperature.

Description: Anyone in the room smells the foul corruption of disease and feels a cold rushing wind fill the room. The shrouds and cords swirling around and lift into the air as those in the room catch a glimpse of heavily garbed figures with cloth-covered faces hurriedly shoving shrouded bodies into niches. The plague haunt causes the skin of anyone affected to start exuding red, purulent boils that burst and spread to other parts of the body.

Effects: Each living creature in the room must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or begin to erupt in red, purulent boils that burst and spread to other parts of the body. Likewise, any creature that touches an infected creature must succeed at this save or become infected themselves.

A creature infected by this red plague becomes poisoned and gains a level of exhaustion. Each hour thereafter, an infected creature must make another DC 13 Constitution save or have their hit point maximum reduced by 10 (3d6). Once a creature succeeds at two saving throws, they are cured of the plague.

Once this haunt has triggered, it cannot be triggered again until the coming of the next dawn.

Destroying the Haunt: Casting lesser restoration upon the room itself ends the haunt event and cures all those afflicted by this occurrence of the red plague.

Destroying the haunt requires the casting of lesser restoration as well as a cleansing ritual—a variation of a Thyrian funerary rite. The cleansing ritual requires 200 gp in sacred herbs and anointing oils and takes 10 minutes to complete. Determining the necessary words and prayers involved in this requires a DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check.

Once the haunt is cleansed from the room, all those infected by the red plague are cured and all effects are healed.

B10. FAGEN'S FATE

A stale and fetid smell hangs in the air here. One of the cloth-wrapped bundles that once rested within the cavities on the wall lies torn open on the ground. The floor is littered with tiny bones and a few tiny scraps of fur. Lying in the center of the room is a fairly fresh corpse still clothed in tattered monk's robes. It faces away from you, but from the chamber entrance you can see that hunks of flesh hang from his frame, including large chunks of his face and a blonde-haired, tonsured scalp.

This is where Brother Fagen met his grisly end. The inquisitive monk disturbed a **sinew cadaver**, an animate fleshy abomination that has haunted the crypts since the time of the Red Plague centuries ago devouring the occasional rats it has encountered. Fagen was slain and has transformed into another sinew cadaver. The old sinew cadaver is a skinless boneless thing, its ancient gray flesh forming a sagging roughly humanoid shape that lies huddled within its burial shroud waiting to spring forth with surprise when Brother Fagen attacks.

SINEW CADAVER (2)

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 15
Hit Points 45 (6d8+ 18)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	20 (+5)	16 (+3)	7 (-2)	17 (+3)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Wis +5
Skills Perception +5, Stealth +5
Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages Understands the languages it knew in life but can't speak
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Regeneration. The sinew cadaver regains 5 hit points at the start of its turn. If it takes fire or radiant damage, this trait does not work at the start of its next turn. The sinew cadaver only dies if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and can't regenerate.

Turn Resistance. The sinew cadaver has advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The sinew cadaver makes two slam attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 8 (1d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage. If the sinew cadaver hits the same target with two slam attacks in a round, it constricts the creature for an additional 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Treasure: Brother Fagen's equipment is here on and strewn about his body. It includes a crowbar, two candles (one half-burned down), chalk, a hooded lantern with 2 flasks of oil, flint and steel, a spell component pouch, a half-full wineskin, 3 flasks of holy water, and a wooden holy symbol of Thyr. In a satchel there is a scroll case, two vials of ink, an inkpen, 5 sheets of paper, and Fagen's journal. This journal documents much of what he discovered including translations of inscriptions found in the crypts. The notes in the journal can provide a clue to solving the puzzle in area **B4**, by saying, "*You honor your ruler and your god by kneeling before them.*" Fagen did not take notes on area **B7** because he felt the answer was too obvious to need them and he did not relish wading through the puddle at **B2** and so had not yet searched **B5** and **B6**.

B11. HISTORY'S SECRET

This corridor also has burial niches along one side, but the other wall is bluestone bricks without indentation. Midway along the side with niches are three alcoves, each contains a statue of a monk with his hands clasped before him in prayer. The center monk is wears elaborate religious robes and faces a cross of Thyr carved into the back of the alcove. The two more-plainly garbed monks on either side face toward the center monk. Across from the statues is a circular picture depicted in mosaic with a series of words carved around the outside.

The mosaic depicts a stylized version of the end of the Gods' War many age ago. Most of the major Hyperborean gods are depicted, with Thyr thrusting his sister's sword into the ground to symbolize peace and an end to the bloodshed. The mosaic conceals a well-hidden secret door (Wisdom (Perception) DC 25 to notice). Even if discovered, the mechanism for opening it is not readily apparent and must still be ascertained as described below.

Across the top of the mosaic are the words, "*All must look to the past to learn history's lessons,*" in the High Boros (Intelligence (Investigation) DC 12 to translate). Examining the statues closely with a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals that their circular bases can be rotated. If the statues are all turned to face the mosaic, then the secret door slowly rumbles opens by descending into a track in the floor and finishing with a heavy thump. Dust and other grime around the now revealed entrance reveal that it hasn't been opened for a long time.

B12. CRYPT OF THE ANCIENTS

The walls of this now-revealed passage differ greatly from the hewn stone of the abbey crypt.

The smooth irregular stone of this chamber gives the feeling of a natural cavern. On the walls are faded pictographic murals of people and animals. There are two low passages to either side of the chamber's far wall.

Exploring the left or right tunnels reveal that the tunnel is horseshoe shaped, arching around and leading back to the central chamber. On the walls of this tunnel are a series of primeval paintings which tell the story of the Ancient Ones that once inhabited the area long before the abbey was founded. Pictographic symbols show drawings of a great battle between the Ancient Ones and some strange creatures that seem to be emanating from a great circle drawn next to a lesser circle (the greater and lesser moons). A larger opening set with an archway of carved stone can be found at the far end of this curved hall.

B13. BURIAL CHAMBER

This large cavern has an irregular ceiling arcing some 15 feet overhead. Primeval runes and sigils are carved into it, the incised lines then filled with ochre and vermilion paint. Ancient dusty, desiccated bodies — little more than bundles of bone — sit propped up against the walls or rest against stone slabs that hold their bones in upright, seated positions. In the middle of the cavern is large rough stone block carved and painted with swirling petroglyphs. On the block rests a strange leathery lump of dried tissue and sagging protuberance. The aberrant amalgam is as big as a horse.

A DC 18 Intelligence (History) check identifies the skeletal bundles as Ancient One burials from before first contact with the Hyperborean Legion in –71 I.R., some 35 centuries ago. A DC 20 Wisdom (Medicine) or Intellience (Nature) check recognizes that the desiccated pile in the center of the room is the corpse of some creature not of this planet. If the check exceeds the DC by 5, the creature is identified specifically as a lunar creature called a mooncalf (see **Appendix A**, page 548).

As the PCs enter the cavern a harsh, breathy gasping sound starts to echo off the stone walls and ceiling. The sound rises as more join the first and the sound of the rattle of bones echoes in the darkness. All the corpses in the room start to breathe as the chamber's guardians, 2 ancient void disciples, chosen by their peers to remain as eternal protectors of this burial, wake from a long, dark slumber. The unnerving breathing continues even as the guardian attacks the interloping PCs.

ANCIENT VOID DISCIPLES (2)

Medium undead, lawful evil
Armor Class 20
Hit Points 93 (11d8 + 44)
Speed 45 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	20 (+5)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)	20 (+5)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Wis +8
Skills Acrobatics +8, Athletics +7, Perception +8, Stealth +8
Damage Resistances necrotic
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 18
Languages Old Tongue
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Evasion. If the ancient void disciple is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to only take half damage, the void disciple instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the save, and only half damage if it fails the save.
Unarmored Defense. As long as the ancient void disciple wears no armor and wields no shield, its AC includes its Wisdom modifier.



ACTIONS

Multiattack. The ancient void disciple makes two unarmed strikes.

Unarmed Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage. This is a magic weapon attack.

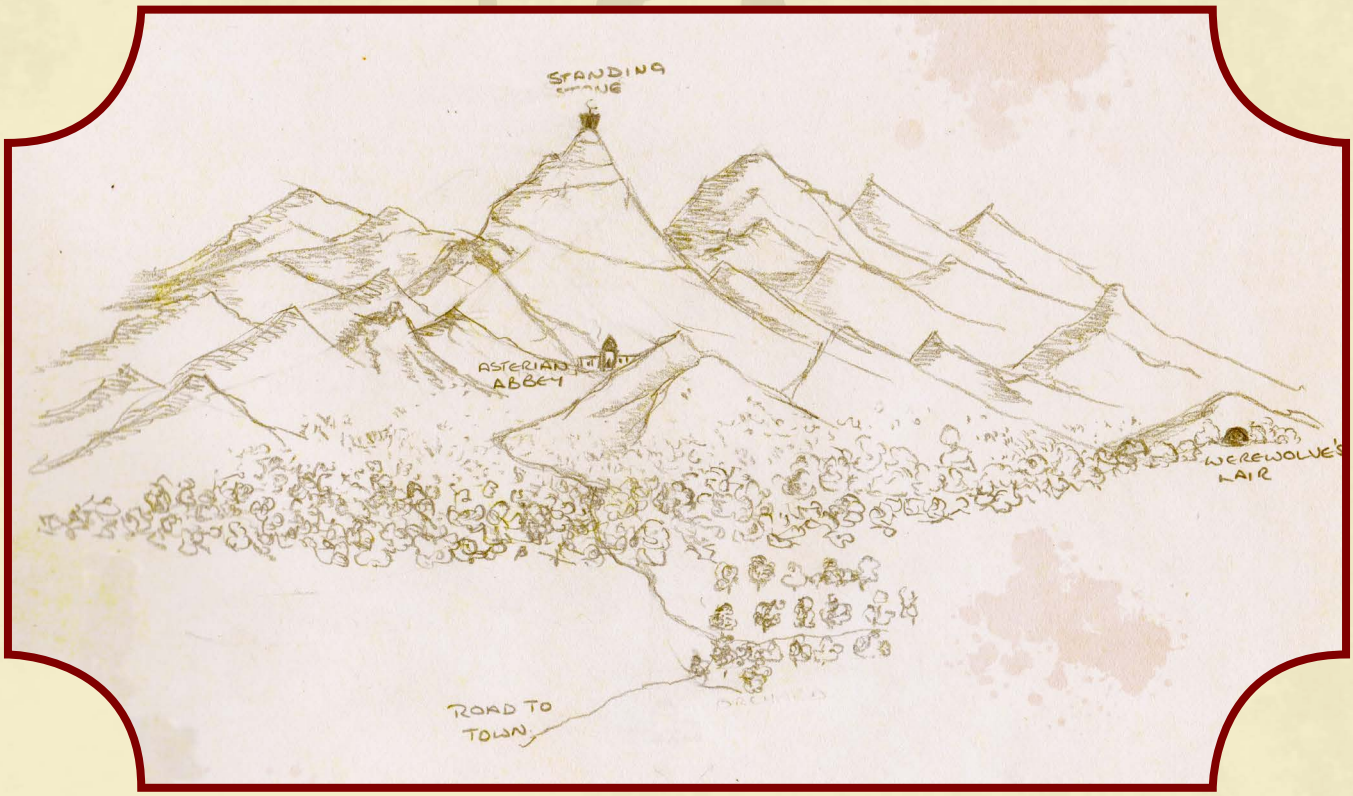
Stunning Strike (recharge 6). *Melee Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage. This is a magic weapon attack. In addition, the target must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of the void disciple's next turn.

REACTIONS

Steal Breath. The ancient void disciple steals the breath from an incapacitated (this includes stunned) creature that it can see within 30 feet. The target creature must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or have its hit point maximum reduced by 7 (2d6) and the ancient void disciple gains an equal number of temporary hit points. Regardless of whether the creature succeeds at its save or not it, it remains incapable of speaking for 1 minute after being revived.

Development: When the last void disciple is defeated, the susurrating sound changes. The breathing slows, and the gasping breaths turn into a sibilant whisper. All of the ancient bodies softly chant the same words in unison, "Opacin…Naraya…" They take a collective hissing inhalation and the uncanny whisper repeats, growing fainter and slowing fading away into silence. Anyone who speaks the Old Tongue, or who can translate the language of the Ancient Ones (DC 25 Intelligence (Investigation) check), hears that they are whispering "beware…the moon…" over and over again. As the last whisper dies away, all of the Ancient One bodies collectively collapse into heaps of dust, the last of their ancient influence over the chamber expended.

Treasure: The mummified bodies of the Ancient Ones are still adorned with 24 jade and lapis lazuli talismans designed to protect the wearers' spirits in death (worth 50 gp each for their materials, but worth 500 gp to a collector of antiquities). At the back of the area on a raised platform of rock, is a large chunk of quartz thickly seamed with veins of opal (worth 800 gp).



CHAPTER TWO: ON THE MOUNTAIN

Either because they have finished exploring the abbey and its environs or because events have drawn them away, at some point the PCs will set out to investigate the mountains surrounding the abbey. Those locations and events are described in this chapter.

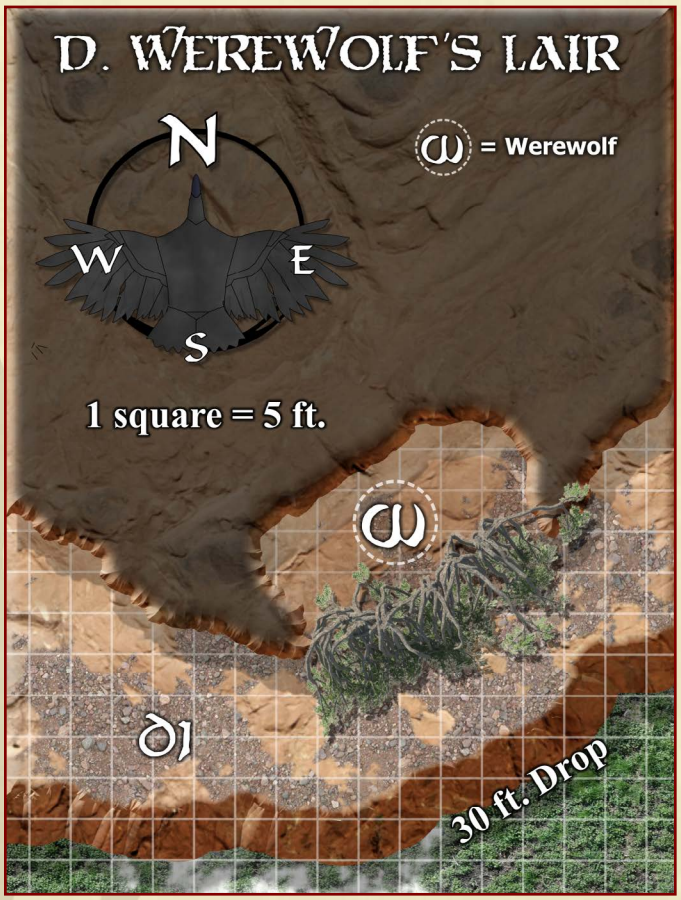
C. ASTERIA POINT

Do not use the map for this area until the PCs arrive for **Event 17: The Bridgehead**. Until then just make use of the general description provided below.

One of the taller peaks in the Cretian Mountains, Asteria Point is a forbidding mount which towers over the abbey and rises nearly 2 miles above it. Perhaps following up on Brother Hector's description of his work, the PCs seeking a way up find that there is a climbing track which leads from the lychgate of the abbey (**A6**) that reaches all the way to the mountain's peak. Apart from Hector making his way up to the stone and back, this has been long disused and is little more than a series of markings on the steep rocky slope.

A creature following the path need not make Strength (Athletics) checks to climb the mountain. Straying off the path requires Strength (Athletics) checks with a typical DC of 15 on average, but several areas are steeper, increasing the DC to 20. The eastern face of the mountain leading up to the summit is littered with shale. It takes approximately two hours to climb to the top. As the path winds upward, the stunted bushes and shrubs fall away and by the time the climbers reach the top, there is very little vegetation left, with only a few strands of extremely tough undergrowth clinging to life between the crevasses of rock and shale.

At the summit of the mountaintop the terrain levels out leaving a relatively flat area roughly 60 feet across. Here stands an ancient and timeworn standing stone, a silent sentinel under the lonely sky. Its worn surface and eroded edges reveal that it has been here for long ages but is bare of any of the markings which Brother Hector most likely spoke with the PCs about at great length during **Event 1**. Only under the light of the full moon or to one who has an aberrant lunar ancestry (such as Brother Hector), can more be discerned. If the PCs observe the stone under the light of the full moon or they scrutinize



Brother Hector's transcribed glyphs, they discover that the symbols are indecipherable symbols that resist any translation. If questioned about how he found them, Hector merely states that the writings are very faint and extremely indistinct, requiring examination in painstaking detail to read or copy.

If the PCs use *detect magic* or similar divination spells upon the stone, it radiates a lingering aura of magic. A successful DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check reveals only that this aura is of an ancient but indeterminate nature. If the PCs attempt to damage or destroy the standing stone, it requires no less than 12 hours of exhausting, back-breaking labor even with proper tools such as picks and hammers.oEven if the PCs spend time seriously damaging or destroying the standing stone, the stone is an etheric tether point that exists in other dimensions and the magic woven into it there slowly reconstruct its physical form here on the Material Plane. It regains 1 hit point every 2 rounds, meaning that even if the PCs manage to totally destroy the stone, it is fully restored if they return 8 hours later. The peak is the scene for the final climactic events of this adventure, see **Events 15–17** for more details.

D. WEREWOLF LAIR

If the PCs decide to hunt the werewolf, Abbot Quilm tells the PCs that the last known sighting of the beast was on the low ridge which runs to the southeast from the base of Asteria Point. Finding and following the beast's massive paw prints are relatively easy as it hunts regularly in the area and doesn't bother to conceal signs of its passage. The DC of the Wisdom (Survival) checks is 14 +1d6 (the extra d6 determines how many days old the tracks are). A DC 11 Intelligence (Nature) check is readily able to identify as belonging to a dire wolf, indicating that the alleged werewolf is a beast indeed.

D1. ROCKY OVERHANG

The trail of massive wolf tracks lead for several miles to a low overhang of rock on the lower slopes of the mountain. The forward extension of the rock appears to make a natural shelter, though ivy trails over its edge and drapes down over the front of the opening, forming a screen, so you are not able to see inside. The smell of animal and decay are both strong around this opening.

This is indeed the creature's lair, though anyone continuing to examine the tracks and making a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Survival) check notices that there is a second set of dire wolf tracks intermingled with the first. This set is slightly smaller (though still quite large) and relatively fresh. They head up the slope above the vine-grown overhang where they disappear into the brush and rocks above. The rock shelter beneath the overhang has been used on and off as a seasonal shelter for the beast for several years. The **werewolf** who lurks within the concealment of the shelter is a barbaric Erskaelosi* woman named Gelexi, one of the nomadic peoples of eastern Akados. She normally roams the wild mountains and avoids civilization, but recently she has been instinctively drawn to the area by the strong lunar emanations focused around Asteria Point. Gelexi has also feeling the instinct to breed, so she kidnapped the monk Tyberus and has infected him with lycanthropy to obtain him as a mate. As the apex predator in the area, Gelexi doesn't see the need to conceal signs of her habitation, and she takes exception to any intrusion in her territory.

GELEXI THE MOONBOUND DIRE WEREWOLF

Medium (or Large) humanoid (human, shapechanger), chaotic evil

Armor Class 14 in humanoid form, 16 in dire wolf or hybrid form

Hit Points 152 (16d8+ 80) in humanoid form, or 168 (16d10 + 80) in dire wolf or hybrid form

Speed 40 ft.



STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	18 (+4)	20 (+5)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws Str +9, Con +9
Skills Athletics +9, Perception +6, Stealth +8, Survival +6
Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical Attacks that aren't silvered
Damage Resistances cold
Senses passive Perception 16
Languages Common, Erskin[LL4] (can't speak in dire wolf form)
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Shapechanger. Gelexi the dire werewolf can use her action to polymorph into a dire wolf-humanoid hybrid or into a wolf, or back into her true form, which is human. Her statistics, other than her size, AC, and hit points, remain the same for each form. Any equipment she is wearing or carrying is not transformed. Gelexi reverts to her human form if she dies.

Blood Frenzy. As a bonus action, Gelexi enters a battle rage. She gains advantage on Strength checks and Strength saving throws. During this rage, Gelexi does +2 bonus weapon damage with her melee weapon attacks.

Reckless Attack. When Gelexi makes her first attack on her turn, she can attack recklessly. This gives her advantage on melee weapon attack rolls using Strength during her turn, but attack rolls against her have advantage until the start of her next turn.

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

Lycanthropic Empathy. Gelexi can communicate with wolves and dire wolves and can make Charisma (Persuasion) checks with advantage to alter such animals' attitudes. When she deals with humanoids or other civilized creatures, however, she suffers disadvantage on Charisma (Deception) and Charisma (Persuasion) checks, as well as Wisdom (Insight) checks due to her animalistic nature.

Moonbound. When the moon is full, Gelexi's Strength and Constitution each increase by +4. These increases are already figured into her statistics.

ACTIONS

Multiattack (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only). Gelexi makes three attacks: three with her spear (humanoid form) or one with her bite and two with her claws (hybrid form).

Bite (Dire Wolf or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack*: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 12 (2d6 + 5) piercing damage. If the target is a humanoid, it must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or become cursed with dire werewolf lycanthropy.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d8 + 5) slashing damage.

Spear (Humanoid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack*: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft. or ranged 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit*: 8 (1d6+ 5) piercing damage.

Daredevil Boots

Wondrous Item, uncommon (requires attunement)

When held to the light, these boots shimmer in bright red and orange hues. Once attuned, these boots give you advantage on Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks made while moving through difficult terrain or hazardous areas such as a narrow walkway, ground littered with caltrops, a cracking sheet of ice, and so forth.

As a bonus action, you can activate the boots to gain the ability to leave an enemy's threatened area without taking the Disengage action to avoid an opportunity attack. This feature also allows you to move through an enemy's space without provoking an opportunity attack. You can use this feature for up to 10 rounds per day, although they need not be consecutive. This power recharges at dawn the next day.

* The Erskaelosi are a nomadic people of eastern Akados. See page 17 of ***LL4: Cults of the Sundered Kingdoms*** by **Frog God Games** for more information.

Tactics: The screening ivy over the cave opening provides Gelexi with total concealment until the PCs come within 10 feet of her. She carefully watches them as soon as her keen senses detect the PCs and prepares to attack. She uses the rugged, sloping ground outside the shelter (treated as difficult terrain) to force the PCs to come close before springing to attack with a rumbling growl. Due to her great size she is unaffected by the terrain. During combat Gelexi uses Power Attack and her reckless abandon rage power to quickly put down interlopers in her domain. She uses her trip ability and her knockback rage power to keep the PCs from ganging up on her in melee. While defending her lair, Gelexi fights to the death.

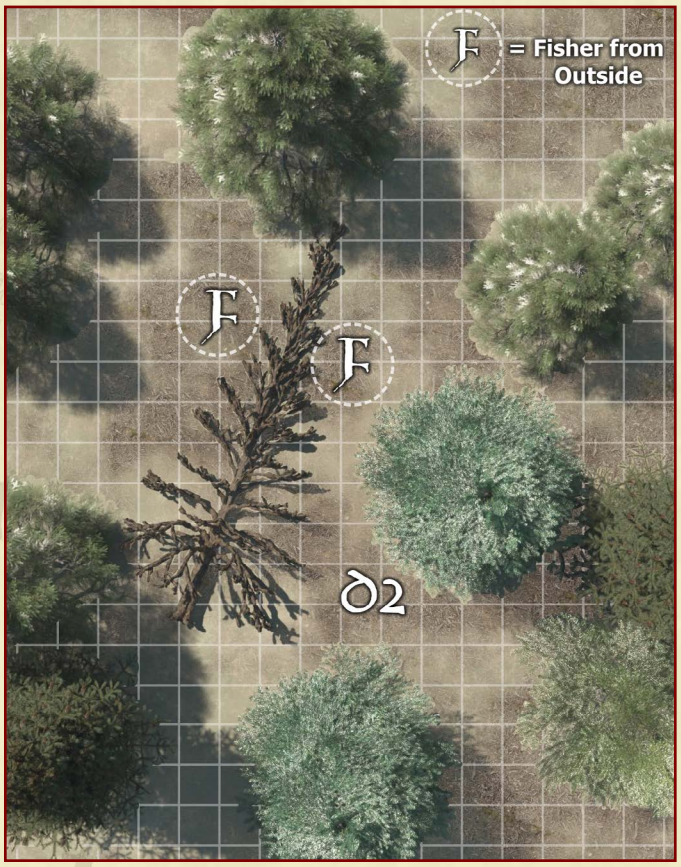
Development: When Gelexi dies, she reverts to near-naked human form. Her lair contains little apart from a large amount of animal bones and other remains (mostly deer, moose, and bear). There also is a pile of rags lying in the corner and broken strands of rope. Some of these are a primitive explorer's outfit sized for a female that Gelexi uses when she wants to travel in human form, but there is also a ripped and mangled monk's habit bearing recent bloodstains. This was Brother Tyberus' and further investigation of the rope reveals the signs that someone had been held captive here until very recently. This captive hasn't been gone for more than a few days at most. However, the second set of tracks do seem to indicate that the captive was, or now is, a werewolf and recently headed off, climbing the slope above the cave.

Treasure: If the PCs spend an hour searching through the lair, they can find scattered about a total of 45 pp, 100 gp, 256 sp, 450 cp, a *mithral breastplate* bearing the heraldry of the Hyperborean Legion (a valuable antique worth 5,000 gp alone as an heirloom), a pair of *daredevil boots* (see sidebar), and a jeweled scrollcase (550 gp) with a *spell scroll* (*suggestion*) and a *+1 wand of the war mage* stuffed into it.

D2. COLD TRAIL

Following the second set of tracks leads the PCs upslope and are extremely steep and difficult terrain. After a few hundred yards the slope levels off a bit and presents a copse of pine trees. Anyone making a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check hears some sort of ruckus or thrashing coming from within this copse, and if the check beats the DC by 5 or more (or automatically for creatures with keen scent or a similar ability) detects the strong odor of blood as well. The still-faintly visible wolf tracks head into the stand of trees.

In the center of the copse is a place where a deadfall created a cleared area. Currently within this clearing are



two horrifying, one-legged, one-eyed birds. These **2 fishers from outside** are identifiable as being no part of the natural world of Lloegyr with a DC 12 Intelligence (Nature) check. They are currently worrying at the corpse of a mountain goat one has slain, making a mess of it as they pull it apart with their serrated maws. If they notice the PCs they go into a frenzy in order to obtain more fresh prey. The pine trees are too dense for the fishers to go under, so anyone within 5 feet of pine tree trunk is beyond the reach of the creatures, but unless some one dares lead them away, they are patient and remain perched among the tops of the trees waiting for their prey to emerge.

FISHERS FROM OUTSIDE (2)

hp 76 (see **Appendix A**, page 535)

Development: It is mere coincidence that these creatures are in this location where Tyberus' trail passed. Unfortunately for the PCs it has been a few days since Tyberus passed through, and his trail can no longer be found where it leaves the copse of trees, presenting the PCs with a dead end in their tracking.

CHAPTER 2 EVENTS

The following events occur over the course of the PCs' stay at the abbey of the Asterian Order, starting on the morning of their first full day. The prior events occur on the night of the first day of arrival and are described in **Chapter 1**. The timing of the events is given as the day on which they occur as well as where they lie in relation to the times that the abbey celebrates the holy offices (see **Event 3: The Offices**).

EVENT 4: THE DRAWING OF THE VEIL

Day 2: from before lauds until after vespers

Location: the Asterian Abbey (**A**)

Clouds hang low over Yolbiac Vale as the second day dawns, and as a result a thick fog covers the grounds of the abbey. The wind has died and all is quiet outside except for the drip of condensation from eaves and tree limbs. Outside objects and creatures more than 10 feet away have concealment, and those more than 30 feet away have total concealment. The monks are seem subdued by the oppressive fogs, and Abbot Quilm upon looking out at the fog can be overheard muttering to himself, "And our eyes are blinded to sin, as the drawing of the veil blinds to light…," recognizable with a DC 20 Intelligence (Religion) check as a quote from a prayer book of the Thyrian faith.

The PCs are unaffected by the fog while they explore indoors, and if they travel to the mountain top (area **C**) or follow the werewolf's trail to its lair (area **D**), they will emerge above and below the fog, respectively. Only while exploring outside in the vicinity of the abbey is the fog a factor.

EVENT 5: UNSEASONAL WEATHER

Any Day: first visit to Asteria Point

Location: en route to Asteria Point (**C**)

The first time the PCs climb Asteria Point, when they are three quarters of the way up the mountain, something unnatural happens with the weather in the area. The clouds overhead start to move faster and then roil and churn indicating an abrupt change in the weather is coming. The breeze drops and there is complete stillness for a few minutes. Mountain terns which were wheeling in the sky earlier are gone, and there is an eerie silence on the mountain. Suddenly, with an ominous clap of thunder, the skies open up and heavy rain sluices down, drenching everything. A sudden, fearsome wind picks up, blowing the rain in every direction. The wind is gale force, making it hard to stand upright and the gusts pick up pieces of rock and shale skittering them along, seemingly under the PCs' feet. The path becomes very slippery as dirt turns to mud under them. Wisdom (Perception) checks based on hearing have disadvantage, as do Strength (Athletics) and Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks. Strong gusts of wind cause flying creatures to be forced to the ground and knocked prone or pushed 1d4 x 10 feet in a random direction; treat this as a Shove attack with a +10 bonus on the attack roll for the wind. The sky grows darker and a feeling of oppressiveness presses the air in around the PCs, and then suddenly a jagged bolt of lightning strikes down from the sky, enveloping the party for a split second.

Hazard: Use the following steps to determine exactly where they are when the lightning strike lands. Randomly determine one of the members of the party and choose one of the grid intersections at the corner of her space at random. Then roll 1d8 to move the target intersection by 5 feet in a random direction. The lightning strike deals 45 (10d8) lightning damage to creatures adjacent to the target intersection. The electrical shock is transmitted by moisture in the air and water rivulets streaming down the mountainside to anyone within 20 feet of the target intersection. Creatures 10 feet away from the intersection take 36 (8d8) lightning damage, creatures 15 feet away take 27 (6d8) lightning damage, and creatures 20 feet away take 18 (4d8) lightning damage. A successful DC 15 Dexterity saving throw halves this damage.

Several more lightning strikes lash the mountain sides but none of these hit near the PCs, unless of course the PCs engage in foolish activities, such as flying aloft in full metal armor. Gradually, the rain becomes lighter and the wind drops. Within minutes the storm is over, the air becomes lighter and the sky brightens. The cloud patterns return to scattered grayish-white clouds, and the wind drops back to a gentle breeze, as if nothing untoward had happened. Normality returns once more to the mountainside without any explanation as to why the storm occurred. This event only happens on the first occasion that the PCs climb towards the peak.

EVENT 6: WOLFSBANE

Day 2 (Day 3 at the latest): after lauds

Location: Abbot Quilm's office (**A17**)

Abbot Quilm approaches the PCs and asks to speak to them privately in his office. The abbot relates his fears that the abbey is being terrorized by a werewolf. His anxiety is plainly evident; he is close to tears and drops any pretense of composure. He claims to have heard and seen glimpses of the beast on a few occasions on a nearby ridge on the

lower inclines of Asteria Point. If **Event 12: Belphorus' Abrupt Demise** has already occurred, then Quilm also attributes Brother Belphorus' death to the werewolf and tells them the werewolf must be dealt with or it will pick them all off like sheep in a pen.

He confesses that he was aware of the werewolf before the party came to the abbey. He feared that one or more of the brothers had become a werewolf and was horrified and traumatized when both Fagen and Tyberus disappeared. Their disappearance fed his fear and made him believe even more firmly that the abbey had been infested with the curse of the lycanthropy and that one or more of the monks may actually be werewolves.

He took Hakkan's increasing wariness and Hector's manic behavior of venturing up to the standing stone glyphs as possible indicators of the monks losing control before a possible lycanthropic transformation. His other grave fear was that they had realized he knew their secret and were about to murder him before he could intervene or get help.

In the end, he realized he needed external help and sent the letter to Tholberon of Thyr in Coelum to request the aid of adventurers under the guise of calling on them to clean out the crypts — although he half expects the PCs to find that the crypts are where the werewolf has disposed of the remains of its victims. He didn't write anything of his concerns in the letter he sent, for fear one of the infected brothers might intercept it and read it. He was also concerned that the heroes might not be willing to enter a den of werewolves.

Apologizing profusely, he begs them to stay and help him sort out what is going on and, if possible, clear the abbey of the werewolves. See area **D** if the PCs decide to track the werewolf to its lair.

EVENT 7: THE HIDDEN BELL

Day 2: between lauds and nons

Location: outside the abbey

At some point when the PCs are outside, near the front door (**A13**), or near any window, they hear the sound of a bell clanking from the mist-shrouded terrain outside. In the thick fog it is difficult to tell where it is coming from or how far away it is, but it seems like it might be approaching from the road to Coelum. Anyone going outside sees a cart drawn by a donkey and accompanied by two cloaked and hooded men emerging from the fog. One of the men leads a cow by a rope tied to its neck, and the cart holds a cage of chickens as well as assorted tools, and sacks. If approached the men identify themselves as **Juliac** and **Bernart** (N male human commoner[SRD]) from a farm outside the village of Coelum contracted to make a supply run for the abbey. Any of the brothers recognizes and can confirm the truth of their statement, though they weren't expecting them for another two or three days. If asked why the farmers have come early, they simply give a shrug — they came when it was convenient to do so.

If allowed to continue unmolested, they take the cart onto the grounds (**A1**). There they begin unloading food supplies, tools, and various sundries such as needle and thread, seeds, and other small necessities. The chickens and seeds are taken into the barn (**A2**), while the food is carried through the entrance at **A7** up to the pantry (**A22**). The sundry items are given to the brothers as they come out to greet the farmers and pick up such items as they had requested. After the distribution, the farmers produce a mallet and billhook from the bed of the wagon and proceed to slaughter and butcher the cow. This process them takes them several hours with cuts of meat wrapped in burlap and carried to **A22** where they are packed in bins of ice taken from higher up the mountain.

These superstitious men know nothing of recent events of the abbey and, while they find working in the thick fog disconcerting, they would rather finish their work and be on their way before dark than stay at the abbey overnight. Unless prevented from doing so, the men will leave just before vespers to start back down the mountain.

EVENT 8: RETURN OF THE ELDEST

Day 2: between nons and vespers

Location: the abbey near the cliff (**A1**)

The PCs learn of this either because they are in area **A1** and witness it themselves or because the men working out there become panicked and run inside the abbey for help crying that there are "ghosts in the fog!" Abbot Quilm will immediately request that the PCs check into it. If asked, the men can point the PCs to out by the "old king" (the cemetery statue at **A1**).

When the PCs investigate their report, read the following description.

The soupy fog has reduced the grounds of the abbey to a world of swirling gray. You can barely make out the great bulk of the abbey towers, looming ominous shadows in the mist, and the mountain

slopes beyond are completely invisible, as is the sky or the sweeping vista of the valley below. The steady drip-drip of the fog condensing on the roof eaves is the only sound that breaks the silence other than the harsh cry of some distant bird, lost in the haze.

Near the southern edge of the grounds the statue of a regal king holds scepter and chalice, his countenance forever frozen in a stern gaze. Something appears to be resting in his chalice… it's a disembodied head! Your shock is momentary as you realize it's just a trick of perspective. It's actually the head of someone standing in the fog behind the statue that gives it its strange appearance. There are actually multiple people standing in the mist beyond the statue. However, your shock returns as you realize they are standing well beyond the edge of the cliff as well!

Anyone coming within 5 feet of the cliff's edge can get a good look at the figures seemingly floating in midair. There are three of them, and all appear to be wizened elves wearing outfits of rough hides and bearing feathered spears, the central figure likewise wears an elaborate headdress. Their faces are lined with centuries of wisdom, and their eyes are little more than dark hollows. They are clearly standing in midair and make no move or response unless attacked or someone comes to the cliff edge and hales them. If either occurs the central figures speaks in a gravelly voice in archaic Elven, saying, "The doom has come. The time of night is upon us all." Even someone who understands Elven must make a DC 10 Intelligence check to understand.

The figures are 3 Eldest ghosts, restless spirits of the elves who fought the Lunite invaders millennia ago. The renewed activity of the moonstone has disturbed their long slumber, and the arrival of the PCs has drawn their attention as moths to the flame — they see in the PCs the possibility of righting the wrongs left unfinished long ago. But their unnatural existence of perpetual despair has warped them to evil, so they first intend to test the PCs to ensure they are worthy. Unfortunately for the PCs, the testing involves trying to slay them. After the central figure has made his statement, the two flanking ghosts attack. Likewise, the translucent figure of a female Eldest, a groaning spirit, rises from the fog below the edge of the cliff and attacks as well.



ELDEST GHOST

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 66 (12d8 + 12)

Speed 0 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Str +5, Dex +6

Skills Perception +5, Stealth +6

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

Damage Immunities cold, necrotic, poison

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

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Druidic, Elven, Gnome, Sylvan

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Ethereal Sight. The Eldest ghost can see 60 feet into the ethereal plane when it is on the material plane, and vice versa.

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

Ghost Touch. The Eldest's attacks with its ghost spear ignore

intervening objects and creatures, allowing the Eldest to attack through cover or other barriers between it and its target. In addition, when attacking with its ghost spear, the Eldest ignores the AC bonus provided by any shield the target wields.

Relentless Hunter. As a bonus action, the Eldest ghost designates a creature it can see as its quarry. The Eldest knows the exact distance to and direction of any creature designated as its quarry, even if the ghost and its target are on separate planes of existence. The Eldest ghost knows if its quarry dies. It can switch to a different quarry as a bonus action.

Turn Resistance. The Eldest ghost has advantage on saving throws to resist effects that turn undead.

Magic Weapon. The Eldest ghost's attacks with its ghost spear are magical.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Eldest ghost makes two ghost spear attacks.

Ghost Spear. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 12 (3d6 + 2) necrotic damage.

Corrupting Gaze. The Eldest ghost targets a creature it can see within 30 feet of it and that it has marked as its quarry. The target must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. If the creature fails, it suffers 11 (2d10) psychic damage and has its hit point maximum reduced by an equal amount. The creature also becomes frightened for 1 minute. A frightened creature can repeat the save at the start of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself with a success. Once a creature succeeds at this saving throw, it is immune to the frightened effect, but not the psychic damage, for 24 hours.

GROANING SPIRIT

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 58 (9d8 + 18)

Speed 0 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
2 (-4)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)	18 (+4)

Skills Perception +6, Stealth +6

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

Damage Immunities cold, lightning necrotic, poison

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

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Druidic, Elven, Gnome, Sylvan

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Detect Life. The groaning spirit can magically detect the presence of living creatures up to 5 miles away. It knows the general direction they are in but not their precise locations.

Frightful Presence. Each creature of the groaning spirit's choice that is within 30 feet of the spirit and aware of it must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can attempt this save at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself with a success. If a creature's save succeeds or the effect ends for it, that creature is immune to the spirit's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours.

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

Turn Resistance. The groaning spirit has advantage on saving throws to resist effects that turn undead.

Magic Resistance. The groaning spirit has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Vulnerability to Dispel Evil and Good. If a creature protected by the *dispel evil and good* spell succeeds at a melee spell attack against the groaning spirit, the spirit must make a Wisdom saving throw against the spell save DC or be immediately destroyed.

ACTIONS

Chill Touch. *Melee Spell Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d6 + 4) necrotic damage plus 9 (2d8) cold damage. The creature struck cannot regain hit points until the start of the groaning spirit's next turn.

Keening (1/Day). Provided it isn't in sunlight, the groaning spirit unleashes a death wail audible to a distance of 1 mile. Any living creature within 30 feet that hears this wail must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or drop to 0 hit points. On a success, a creature takes 14 (4d6) psychic damage and is frightened until the end of their next turn.

Tactics: Only two of the ghosts attack. The third ghost hangs back and if attacked fades back into the fog out of sight. The two attacking ghosts begin with their corrupting gaze attacks and then swoop over the PCs and come down behind them. They attempt to use their Pushing Assault feat with their *ghost touch* spears to drive the PCs over the cliff edge. Otherwise they use their corrupting touch attacks. The groaning spirit likewise swoops in, activating her fear aura. Since it is daytime, she is unable to use her keening ability and must rely on her incorporeal touch attacks. These undead fight until destroyed, though they will not pursue fleeing PCs into the abbey. If all the PCs retreat inside, they will depart and not be seen again. The Eldest ghosts can only be permanently destroyed if the *moon bridge* at Asteria Point (see **Event 17**) is locked once again. Otherwise they rejuvenate in 2d4 days. The ghosts' spears are not left behind when they are defeated.

Development: If the PCs defeat the ghosts and the groaning spirit, the central ghost with the headdress once again addresses them (if it had retreated into the fog, it reappears to do so). It stares hard upon the PCs, its empty eyes almost seeming to bore holes into their souls (though it does not use its corrupting gaze attack), and in the same archaic form of Elven it states, "Perhaps it is not too late after all. Close the span… close the span or join us in our failure." It is referring to sealing off the *moon bridge* as described in **Event 17**. After it makes this statement, it fades from view never to return.

Ad Hoc XP Award: If the PCs defeat the undead and hear the third ghost's final declaration, award XP as if they had defeated it in battle as well.

EVENT 9: BROTHERS BEHAVING BADLY

Day 2: after vespers

Location: the Asterian Abbey, various locations (**A**)

This consists of four separate events involving the four surviving monks of the abbey. They take place individually and can occur anywhere within the abbey that is a convenient time and place for the PCs to run across the monk, though the monks are unlikely to be in the crypts (**A10–12**) or catacombs (**B**). Likewise, none of them will be utilizing the secret door at **A9** at the time of this event. Any or all of these can be used as you see fit; all serve to heighten suspicion of the various monks and prevent the PCs from becoming too comfortable with their investigative conclusions so far.

Abbot Quilm: The aged abbot is discovered wandering in an unusual place, acting very furtive. When the PCs first spot him, he notices and attempts to escape detection (though not very well). If the PCs wish, they can easily reach him before he gets away. If this occurs, he acts very irritated and secretive. He is doing nothing incriminating (other than acting weird) and refuses to explain what he is doing, claiming he is the abbot of this abbey and it is none of the PCs' business. He is resistant to intimidation and magical coercion as explained below.

The truth of the matter is that the abbot is "sun-downing". On this evening as darkness descended, his dementia manifested and he became confused and then lost as he wandered the abbey. When he spotted the PCs, he suddenly realized what he was doing, but his embarrassment and pride prevent him from admitting his reduced mental acuity to himself, much less the PCs, and as a result he ends up inadvertently behaving very suspiciously. A DC 17 Wisdom (Insight) can determine he is hiding something (as can a *detect thoughts*), but neither can determine what exactly because there is not a specific thing he is hiding other than his internal humiliation. If the PCs learned of his dementia as described under "Dinner Conversation" in **Event 1**, then his behavior makes sense in that context. After leaving the PCs, he retires to his room for the evening.

Brother Belphorus: Belphorus is spotted moving quietly down a darkened hall carrying what appears to be a heavy cloth bundle in his arms. A DC 19 Wisdom (Perception) check notices what appears to be blood soaking through this bundle and spatters of blood on his robes. If Belphorus is confronted, he is startled and drops the bundle with a splat. Anyone examining the bundle discovers that it contains a freshly removed heart. If the PCs make strong accusations, Belphorus is flustered and unable to provide a good explanation. Anyone making a DC 13 Wisdom (Medicine)

check realizes that the heart is much too big to belong to a human, and a DC 13 Intelligence (Nature) identifies it as probably belonging to a cow or some similar animal.

If the PCs calm Belphorus with a DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check, he can recover himself enough to explain that it is the heart of the cow that was butchered in the yard. He explains that he just finished stirring the jars of blood from the slaughtered animal in the smithy (**A4**) and is now allowing them to cool overnight so he can use them for a blood pudding. Meanwhile he is currently taking the creature's heart to the kitchen to use as a base in a stew, a common culinary practice. No amount of intimidation or magical examination can detect any falsehoods in his statements, but Belphorus always seems at least a little oily and untrustworthy, a trait that does not work in his favor here. After leaving the PCs he carries the heart to the kitchen and places it in a pot of boiling water to steep.

Brother Hakkan: The PCs spot Brother Hakkan moving surreptitiously, clearly sneaking through the abbey. He also is noticeably hiding some object under his scapular. If confronted, Brother Hakkan is visibly nervous and refuses to make eye contact. He is unable to verbally articulate what he is up to and remains silent instead. He resists being searched and begins to panic and scream, throwing a fit if forced unless calmed with a DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check or with the use of magic. A panicked fit will bring the other brothers in 1d4+4 rounds who will admonish the PCs for frightening the lad but also quickly realize he is hiding something and force him to reveal it to all assembled anyway. If the PCs learned of his anxiety-inducing condition as described under "Dinner Conversation" in **Event 1**, then it only requires a DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check to calm him and gain access to seeing what he is hiding.

If Hakkan is forced to reveal what he is carrying, it is revealed to be one of the tomes of knowledge described in **A26** (pick one or determine which one randomly). He has just discovered it in the library (**A26**) and believed it might shed additional light on the suspicions he is already harboring. As a result, he was looking for a private place where he could examine it. He will confess to having found the book and wanting to examine it but will not admit to his suspicions about Abbot Quilm and how they relate to it. Brother Hakkan returns to his room after leaving the PCs. If he retained the book, he immediately begins examining it in hopes of enlightenment.

It should be noted that Hakkan is not carrying the pages stolen from the book in **A24** at this time. Those will only be discovered on his person during **Event 14: A Broken Order**.

Brother Hector: As with others, the PCs spot Brother Hector attempting to move quietly through the halls and avoid notice. He carries a sack that holds something that occasional squirms in his grasp. If spotted, he hunkers down and tries to appear inconspicuous, likely appearing much more conspicuous in the process. If confronted he laughs nervously and sweats prodigiously, saying he's just out to stretch his legs before retiring for the night. All the while he attempts to conceal the sack behind his back that continues to squirm and twitch. He sheepishly surrenders the sack if ordered, and opening it reveals it to contain a live black rooster within, its beak tied shut with a bit of twine.

Hector states that he obtained it from the farmers when they visited a few hours earlier and had just gone outside to retrieve it. He cannot provide a good reason for why he has it only mumbling something about "saving the abbey". If successfully Charisma (Intimidation) or magically coerced, he admits that he was going to use it for a ritual his gammer taught him long ago for use in warding off evil spirits. While a DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana) or Intelligence (Arcana) check does not reveal the existence of any such ritual, A DC 17 Knowledge (local) check realizes he is referring to an old superstition involving the sacrifice of a black capon to make a bargain with the Devil*. While the superstition is false, it has carried weight among the simple folk for thousands of years and is still practiced on the sly by those seeking to avert the evil eye or some other calamity. That even a brother of a Thyrian order would subscribe to it only confirms its pervasiveness. Brother Hector is clearly embarrassed by the discovery, and if it is presented to Quilm he tut-tuts judgmentally over the brother's superstitious nonsense and lack of true faith. In either case, an abashed Hector aborts his plan and returns the rooster to the barn at **A2**.

EVENT 10: A DIRE WARNING

Day 2: between vespers and compline

Location: the entrance to the abbey (**A13**)

*Though there are many devils and arch-devils known on Lloegyr, there is also an underlying superstition of the Devil, "Old Scratch", as well. See page 39 of ***LL7: The Blight: Richard Pett's Crooked City*** by **Frog God Games**.

The PCs are located by Abbot Quilm and Brother Belphorus' Belphorus looks nervous and Quilm looks agitated. Quilm demands that the PCs accompany him and Belphorus to the entrance at **A13**. Along the way he explains that Belphorus was making his nightly rounds to make sure all the doors were secure before retiring for the night. When he opened the front entrance, he made a terrible discovering and immediately rushed to find Abbot Quilm.

When the PCs arrive at the door, Quilm opens it and shows them the disturbing discovery. Nailed to the front of the left door is a bloody mass of black fur and viscera. It requires a DC 17 Intelligence (Nature) check to recognize it as a cat, and both Quilm and Belphorus can confirm that one of the mousers that lives in the barn (**A2**) was black. Someone clearly slaughtered the cat most gruesomely and then nailed it to the abbey's front entrance without anyone noticing. It was certainly not there before vespers when the farmers left. If Brother Hector was discovered in **Event 9** and the intended purpose of his black rooster discerned, then the PCs recognize this slaughter and display something akin to the same superstitious ritual he was going to Charisma (Perform). In fact, a black cat is considered a viable substitute for a black rooster in that particular superstition.

Whomever Charisma (Perform) this act left no footprints and no traces of themselves. If the other brothers are questioned, they all decry their innocence (Brother Hector, in particular, seems extremely embarrassed by the act he had previously been contemplating), and their claims stand up under interrogation and magical detection alike. A specific examination of the nail embedded in the door reveals that it is actually a bronze nail, a rather odd and interesting fact. All of the nails possessed by the abbey are made of iron, as is the general custom throughout Yolbiac Vale and the Kingdoms of Foere at large. A DC 12 Intelligence (History) check reveals that casting a nail of bronze is a very antiquated practice that has been out of use since shortly after the coming of the Hyperborean Legion more than three thousand years ago, though this particular nail is clearly not of great age itself. Only the use of magical divination or a DC 25 Intelligence (History) check will reveal that the elves known as the Eldest[LL5-153], a small number of whom are thought to still inhabit the deepest forests of Yolbiac Vale, are known to use bronze in their metalworking rather than iron or steel.

The truth of the matter is that there is a small population of Eldest that remain within the Vale. The awakening of the ghosts in **Event 8: Return of the Eldest** caught the attention of the some of the more spiritually sensitive members of the tribe, one of whom has come up the mountain to investigate. Having spotted the ghosts earlier and realizing what it portends, the wild elf caught one of the cats in the barn and sacrificed it as a means to ward away the evils that are about to befall the abbey. The wild elf then departed without leaving a trace to warn her kin down in the valley of the coming invasion.

EVENT 11: THE EYE SEES ALL

Day 2: before compline

Location: the observatory (**A23**)

As the hour of compline approaches and quiet has fallen over the abbey, the PCs again hear spine-chilling howls in the distance echoing off in the mountains — much as during dinner on the first night (see **Event 1**). The mist has thinned but still dampens the air and curls over the ground like a wet curtain, making it difficult to determine the direction of the noise. While thin, these vapors still reduce visibility to three-quarters of the normal ranges, resulting in disadvantage on vision-based Wisdom (Perception) checks and on ranged attack rolls.



If for any reason, the PCs go to the observatory (**A23**), they find that the *oculus* has been refocused and instead of depicting the moon, it now points at the peak of Asteria Point showing a magnified view of the standing stone. There above the mists a hooded humanoid figure stands before the stone and a monstrous abomination is faintly visible behind the stone. The image of the abomination is weirdly distorted, like the air above a roaring fire, making the aberrant thing extremely difficult to identify. The PCs can observe that the bestial monstrosity is pale, far larger than the figure standing before it, and the thing's visage consists of fleshy tentacles. A DC 25 Intelligence (Arcana) check discerns that it is some form of moon-beast with a sinister unearthly aspect surrounding it. The humanoid figure wears a monk's cowl and its voluminous folds make identifying the monk impossible. If the PCs search the abbey and wish to speak to the monks, they discover that both Belphorus and Hector seem to be missing.

Hector's consciousness has been taken over by the moon-beast. He snuck out of the scriptorium by the secret door there (**A9**), then a mooncalf carried him up the mountain so that he could Charisma (Perform) a ritual at the standing stone. Brother Belphorus, meanwhile, was out collecting alpine sweetroot from a small patch growing near the abbey and he happened to spot a figure in a monk's cowl leaving the abbey grounds. Belphorus was curious and followed and saw the monstrous mooncalf float down to meet Hector in a rocky clearing near the abbey. Unfortunately, portly Belphorus couldn't conceal himself from the mooncalf's otherworldly senses. The floating monster swooped down and scooped Belphorus up, and following a telepathic command from its master, flew the portly monk up to a considerable height before dropping him. Under orders not to harm Hector, as he is still needed, the mooncalf carried Hector and flew him up to the mountain peak and then, when the ritual is complete, deposits him safely back in the clearing outside the abbey. Brother Hector can remember none of this and wakes the next morning in the scriptorium (**A18**) with no memory of these events (see **Event 12: Belphorus' Abrupt Demise**). If his footprints are found, the best explanation he can give is "sleepwalking", as he honestly has no idea of what occurred.

If the PC's decide to climb to the summit to see what is happening, it takes over two hours to reach the peak. If this is the first time they are ascending the mountain, they experience strange weather (see **Event 5: Unseasonal Weather** for more details) on their way to the summit. The climbing is more difficult at this time as moisture and ice coats the rocks and increases the DC of Strength (Athletics) checks to climb due to the slipperiness.

EVENT 12: BELPHORUS' ABRUPT DEMISE

Day 3: before lauds

Location: just outside the abbey on the Coleum trail

Early on the morning of the third day, Brother Hakkan heads out to the chicken coop to collect eggs for breakfast (one of his daily assigned tasks). Upon opening the barn door one of the hens became agitated and flew away over the fence. Hakkan chased it out the gate and down the road towards Coelum, though he didn't get far before discovering Brother Belphorus' mangled body sprawled among the stones beside the trail. Hakkan runs screaming into the abbey, where he is discovered in his cell by Abbot Quilm, and it takes some time to find the reason for his distress, as he only repeats "I...i...it got away... I couldn't catch it. Where w...wi...ill it lay the eggs now?" (in reference to his morning duties). After 30 minutes or if calmed through magical means such as a calm emotions spell or a DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) or Wisdom (Insight) check, Brother Hakkan will be able to lead the abbot and the PCs to the body. Searching the abbey during this time finds Abbot Quilm and Brother Hakkan present, of course, Brother Belphorus missing, and Brother Hector asleep in the scriptorium (**A18**) where he claims to have worked nearly all night on the glyphs (his falsehood cannot be detected by Wisdom (Insight) or magic because he is truly unaware that he ever left).

The body lies not far from the abbey's main entrance on the track leading back to Coelum and is easily identifiable as Brother Belphorus. Belphorus' limbs are broken and unnaturally splayed, and the monk's skull has been fractured and split, a trickle of tacky blood escaping from the wound. While there is extensive damage to his torso there is no blood under the body. A DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check notes there are no signs of lacerations, breaks in the skin, or bite marks. Anyone examining the corpse and making a DC 20 Heal check notes that the cleric does not appear to have been attacked by an animal or creature of any sort but instead appears to have died from a fall.

In addition to his sickle, frying pan, 2 doses of wolfsbane, and wooden holy symbol of Thyr, Belphorus's scapular holds a sprig of mistletoe, a half-eaten wedge of cheese, and some freshly picked small, dark blue, woody lumps of plant life. A DC 12 Intelligence (Nature) check reveals that the plants are fresh alpine sweetroot and which is uncommon and only grows in mountainous regions like this one. The herbs are fresh and while there is none growing in the garden (**A1**), searching near the abbey for around an hour or so and making a DC 10 Intelligence

(Nature) or DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check finds the patch of sweetroot that Belphorus occasionally harvests in a nearby dell. Observing the footprints and other signs on the ground at the dell and successful DC 14 Wisdom (Survival) check to track reveals some of what occurred last night. For every 2 points by which the PCs beat the DC include an extra detail from the table below to give hints as to what happened. Do not reveal the portions in parenthesis; they are included only to provide the GM with context.

Survival

DC	Information Discovered
14	Tracks in the soil show that two people came to the clearing within the last day.
16	Both sets of tracks were left by human-sized sandals. One of the individuals was significantly heavier than the other based on the depth of the tracks.
18	The heavier footprints (made by Belphorus) only go into the dell but don't come out, their maker apparently "vanishing" (he was picked up by the mooncalf).
20	The lighter footprints (made by Hector) are overlapped by the heavier ones showing that they arrived in the clearing first, but then briefly overlap the others showing that the lighter individual did not leave the clearing until after the heavier one had "vanished". The lighter tracks then continue on up the mountain towards the peak of Asteria Point.
22	The heavier tracks indicate he was turning and starting to run before his footprints end with a slight drag on the final print indicating he was swept or knocked off his feet.
24	The lighter tracks follow a normal walking pace but the heavier tracks (Belphorus') are closer together indicating he was moving slowly and cautiously. His meandering path to patches of brush and other areas of cover indicates he was potentially hiding while following the maker of the lighter tracks.
26	Fresh gouges in the bark of a nearby pine tree some 12 feet above the ground gives a hint that a flying creature took the maker of the heavier tracks.
28	The heavier tracks can be backtracked to the main entrance to the abbey grounds (**A1**). (Brother Belphorus left from there to collect the sweetroot.)
30	The lighter tracks can be backtracked to the blank stone wall at the base of the abbey's south tower. (This is the location of the secret door at A9 where Brother Hector egressed from the abbey. Following the tracks to this point gives a +4 bonus to Perception checks to locate the secret door.)

Based on the finding of sandal prints (all of the monks wear sandals), the PCs are likely to want to compare the size of the sandals worn by the monks. Unfortunately, all of their sandals are rather crudely made by the same leatherworker in Coelum and are all essentially the same size. Hence, the size of the tracks do not provide the same potential to identify the individual that the depth of the tracks does.

Casting *speak with dead* on Belphorus' body is possible, and with the right questions he can posthumously recount the events leading up to his death. He never saw the face of the other monk, but Brother Belphorus did recognize that the figure moved too sure-footedly to be someone of Abbot Quilm's senior years. His description of the mooncalf is vague as it is totally outside his experience, and he only saw it for a brief amount of time before it grasped him in its tentacles. The best he can do to describe it is to say it was a "floating pale thing with tentacles and a maw of teeth."

EVENT 13: BROTHER WOLF

Day 3: after vespers

Location: outside the abbey (varies)

As evening falls on the third night of the full moon and Luna climbs into the night sky, the stillness of the night air is rent by sounds of a fierce struggle somewhere outside but near the abbey. There are fierce growls and then the noise of vicious battle with aggressive baying and snarling, as heavy bodies struggle against each other. As the PCs react to this, the growls turn into a pained, tortured yelp that transforms partway through into a man screaming, the pained cries echoing off the nearby slopes. This occurs regardless of where the PCs have positioned themselves; choose a site for this battle based on where the PCs are located. For example, if the PCs are in the abbey, the sound could be coming from out in the yard (**A1**). If the PCs are keeping watch outside, it could be somewhere on the rocky slope above the abbey, outside their immediate line of sight.

It is important that the PCs leave the abbey at this point to investigate the noises. If they seem reluctant to do so, have Abbot Quilm in a panic demanding that they "protect them from the beasts". Considering that the PCs are hired adventurers, this shouldn't be too difficult. It's possible, however, that the PCs may leave someone behind to keep an eye on things while the others go. If this occurs, all is not lost. Remember, the abbey is a really big place, and **Event 14: A Broken Order** includes the means to have the action take place away from any watcher left behind. Likewise, you can have the events leading to

Event 14 occur while the watcher is distracted elsewhere. If necessary, you could have a surviving (or another) rhuchalik from **A10** appear to distract and lead the watcher away for a few minutes or perhaps a fisher from outside (**Appendix A**, page 58) attack, attracted by all the sudden carnage. Don't do anything to deliberately eliminate the PCs left behind, just keep him engaged long enough for events to transpire as described below.

Assuming the PCs head out to investigate the uproar, they find an area on the rocky soil that has been churned, the underbrush flattened and ripped out by some violent struggle that occurred there. There is blood everywhere that looks black in the moonlight. Long fine streaks of blood leave dark wet droplets on the rocks and the sparse flattened grasses are stained red. Canine paw prints the twice the size of a normal wolf lead away from the scene, along with a heavy blood trail. The dark wet trail of blood makes the trail easy to follow, while a DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check reveals that the unsteady gait of the tracks hints that the creature is badly wounded. The blood trail continues for a half mile over arduous terrain before the PCs find its source. How quickly the PCs can track down the wolf creature depends on their speed, perceptiveness, and tracking abilities but should also take sufficient time for certain events to play out at the abbey, see **Event 14: A Broken Order** below.

At the end of the blood trail is a badly wounded **werewolf** in hybrid form, its left arm torn from its shoulder, leaving it hanging only from a few shreds of skin. Unbeknownst to the PCs, a mooncalf ambushed and assaulted the werewolf causing this grievous injury. The werewolf lies in the curve hollow of a rotten log, licking his wound as his life's blood seeps from the tattered stump. The werewolf turns in a maddened rage and attacks as he senses the PCs.

BROTHER TYBERUS
THE MOONBOUND DIRE WEREWOLF

Medium (or Large) humanoid (human, shapechanger), chaotic evil

Armor Class 12 in humanoid form, 14 in dire wolf or hybrid form

Hit Points 65 (9d8+ 45) in humanoid form, or 74 (9d10 + 45) in dire wolf or hybrid form (currently injured)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	14 (+2)	20 (+5)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Wis +6, Cha +4

Skills Athletics +8, Perception +6, Religion +4, Stealth +5, Survival +6

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered

Senses passive Perception 16

Languages Celestial, Common (can't speak in dire wolf form)

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Shapechanger. Tyberus the dire werewolf can use his action to polymorph into a dire wolf-humanoid hybrid or into a wolf, or back into his true form, which is human. His statistics, other than his size, AC, and hit points, remain the same for each form. Tyberus has no equipment, but normally any equipment he is wearing or carrying is not transformed. Tyberus reverts to his human form if he dies.

Bare and Wounded. Tyberus's wounds, including a severed arm that deprives him of one of his claw attacks, and his lack of equipment, have decreased his CR by 1.

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

Lycanthropic Empathy. Tyberus can communicate with wolves and dire wolves and can make Charisma (Persuasion) checks with advantage to alter such animals' attitudes. When he deals with humanoids or other civilized creatures, however, he suffers disadvantage on Charisma (Deception) and Charisma (Persuasion) checks, as well as Wisdom (Insight) checks due to his more animalistic nature.

Moonbound. When the moon is full, Tyberus's Strength and Constitution each increase by +4. These increases are already added into his statistics.

ACTIONS

Multiattack (Hybrid Form Only). Tyberus makes two attacks: one with his bite and one with his remaining claw (hybrid form). Tyberus has no attacks in humanoid form.

DEATH SCENES ARE TRICKY

Tyberus' final words are a useful clue, but his death is by no means guaranteed. The PCs may use nonlethal means to defeat Tyberus or use an effect that somehow restrains him without killing him. Fortunately talking in combat is a free action, so having Tyberus linger for a moment to give his last words, before succumbing to whatever effect the PCs finish him off with is appropriately dramatic. If the PCs rush to heal Tyberus during or after he speaks his last words, remember that Tyberus loses the fel lycanthrope template when he drops, effectively losing another 82 hit points. Even if the PCs subdue Tyberus and then rouse him to consciousness, the lycanthropic priest will have to continually struggle to resist the full moon in the sky and the urge to transform back into a ravening beast.

Bite (Dire Wolf or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack*: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 12 (2d6 + 5) piercing damage. If the target is a humanoid, it must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or become cursed with dire werewolf lycanthropy.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 9 (1d8 + 5) slashing damage.

Development: When defeated, the werewolf transforms back into his fully human form. His body is naked and his handsome features reveal this to be the missing Brother Tyberus based on the description given by his brother monks. As he dies, Tyberus' one remaining arm grasps out frantically, his eyes desperate and pleading as he gasps, "The servants of the moon!" His eyes close and his head falls back as the last of his life leaves him. His body falls limply to the ground, and he passes into death. Continue with **Event 14: A Broken Order** below when the party returns to the abbey or proceed with **Event 15: Moonlit Ascent** if they for some reason head directly towards the mountain peak.

EVENT 14: A BROKEN ORDER

Day 3: between vespers and compline (after **Event 13**)

Location: the foyer (**A14**) or the scriptorium (**A18**)

Upon returning to the abbey following their investigation of the unfortunate Brother Tyberus in **Event 13: Brother Wolf**, the PCs find the front doors (**A13**) standing open and signs of a struggle in the foyer (**A14**). Alternatively, this event can occur in the scriptorium (**A18**) with the secret door at **A9** standing open if the PCs are maintaining a watch on the foyer. Overturned furniture and/or scattered books show that a fight took place here. Brother Hakkan lies beaten and unconscious on the floor. He is at –4 hit points but is stable. When the PCs revive him, he is almost incoherent from stress and the horror of recent events, especially Belphorus' death. Things he has witnessed have fractured his mind and broken his grip on sanity. He can no longer form long sentences but keeps muttering, "He's m…m…mad! He's becoming the b…b…beast. He's going to let it out…the s…s…stone, the s…s…stone…" as he gestures frantically up the direction of the peak of Asteria Point.

Hakkan lies on the flagstone floor and closes his eyes trying to shut out reality. He mutters erratically in his delusion, rambling on about irrelevant things such as the shape of Belphorus' head (when Belphorus' body was crushed by the fall), and little more can be gained from speaking with him. Hakkan starts to disassociate and even seems to stop realizing there are people in the room with him. However, if the PCs tend to him at this time, a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check also notices that Hakkan's cassock is lumpy as if something is been stuffed inside it. If the PCs notice this, or search Hakkan's person, in a pocket they find several thick vellum pages that have obviously been torn from a book.

The illustrated pages tell a chilling tale of an invasion of this world by moon creatures from Luna, the larger moon. The Ancient Ones, some of the earliest inhabitants of the area the abbey was later built on, fought pitched battles against these moon creatures, but were pushed back by their pure strength and brutality. The moon creatures flooded into the area, decimating and enslaving the surrounding Valefolk. Unable to suffer these losses, the Ancient Ones sought help from the Eldest elves from Yolbiac Vale and only with their aid were able to drive the moon creatures back and battle them to a stalemate. Together, they were able to slay many of the creatures and eventually captured a lunar moonstone. On the nights of the full moon, this magical crystal could activate a portal to and from the moon at a navigational tether point atop the mountain now called Asteria Point. Using the magical moonstone crystal, the elves opened a *moon bridge* at the standing stone on Asteria Point. As a powerful moon-beast crossed through the ether to investigate, the Ancient One followers of Myrddin cast a powerful entrapment ritual, completing the binding just as the beast began to emerge, effectively trapping it in a stone prison. The imprisoned

moon-beast's psyche blocked the portal, sealing it, and successfully preventing any further invasion of creatures from the moon.

Realizing the need to guard the standing stone over the long centuries to come to prevent the portal from being reopened, the Eldest elves and Ancient Ones established an organization which would remain committed to the task of keeping the moon-beast contained indefinitely. Thus were the nascent Asterians brought into being. Over time the then powerful Church of Thyr, renowned for its wisdom and justice, saw both the need and the righteousness of this mission and took on the duty of monitoring the moon and the standing stone, creating a religious order dedicated to the purpose. They constructed the abbey on the slopes of the mountain, housing a magical *oculus* to aid them in their chosen quest to watch for a new invasion from above with the knowledge that a loss of vigilance could lead to the weakening of the moonstone's defenses and a reopening the *moon bridge*.

The Order stayed loyal to their vow for many centuries. However, such powerful and dangerous knowledge is not to be bandied about lightly. The Order's true purpose became a sacred secret. New initiates would join the Asterian Order, in the belief that they were to simply study the moons and the stars. As they proved their loyalty, trustworthiness, and commitment to their faith and the Order, they would be ceremonially inducted into the abbey's true purpose of protecting this world from lunar invasion. Here the pages end, but scribbled notes in a margin list the year 2797 I.R. (some 7 centuries ago) with the addendum "*Red Plague*!" The PCs may already be aware from their other investigations in and around the abbey, but a DC 15 Intelligence (History) check recalls how this plague swept across the continent in 2781 and again in 2797, wiping out entire towns, killing no less than two Foerdewaith[LL4-14] Overkings, and likely almost wiping out the monks at the Abbey. The Abbot and upper echelon of priests all succumbed to the plague and the true mission of the abbey was lost, leaving only the humblest novices of the Order with only the knowledge of their simple task of surveying the stars. The abbey effectively became a religious observatory and the threat of lunar invasion was forgotten.

With this revelation, the PCs should now realize the true gravity of the situation. The portal at the peak of Asteria Point seems to be on the verge of being reopened, releasing terror and invasion from the moon once again after all these centuries. Continue to **Event 15: Moonlit Ascent** below.

Treasure: If the PCs attempt to search Brother Hakkan further, he does not resist. Turning out his pockets reveal his *spell scroll* (*purify food and drink*, *spare the dying* [x2]), 2 flasks of holy water, wooden holy symbol of Thyr, and scrivener's kit. He does not protest if the PCs decide to take any of these.

EVENT 15: MOONLIT ASCENT

Day 3: before compline

Location: en route to Asteria Point (**C**)

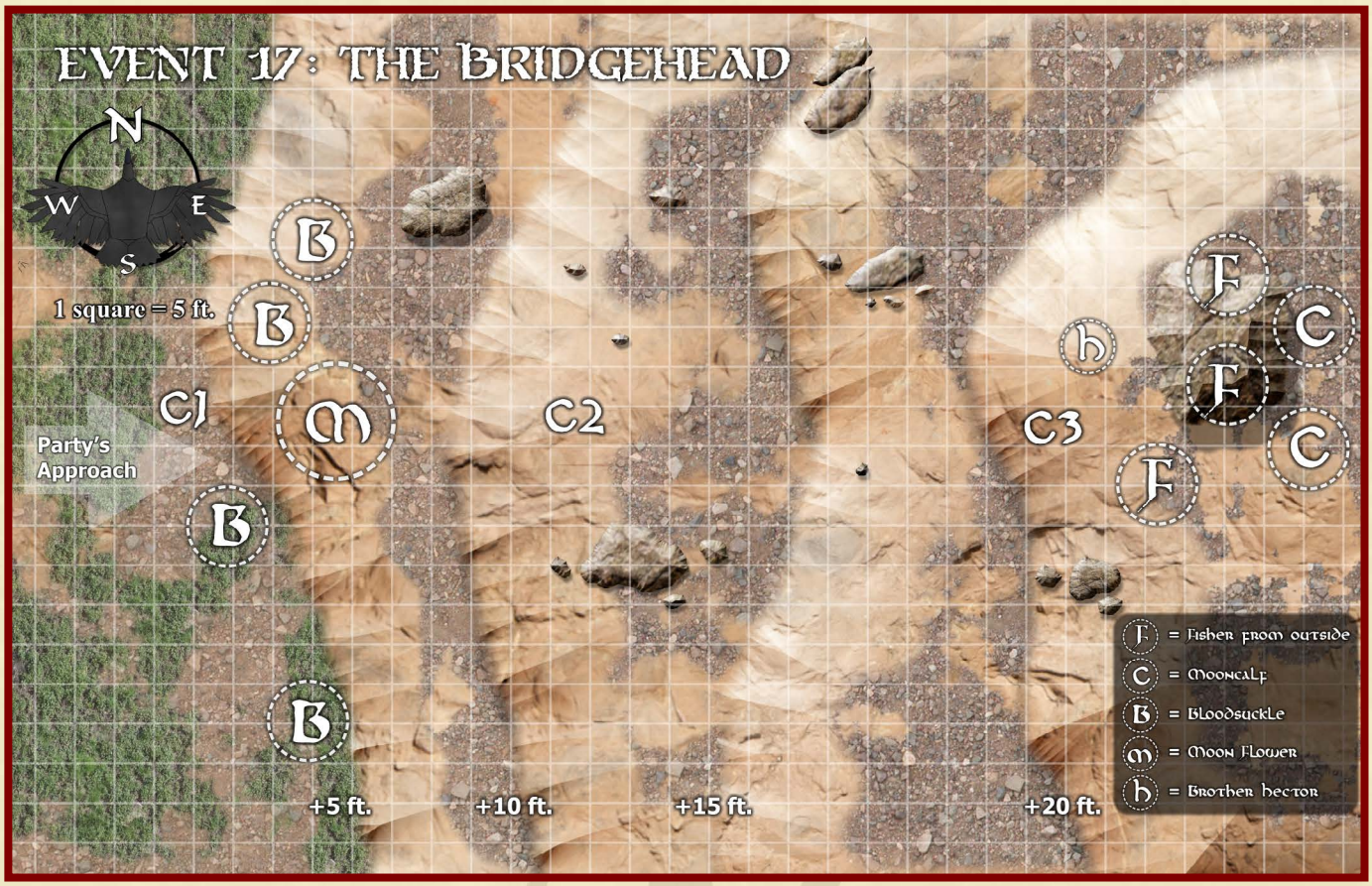
Just over halfway up the mountain track to the peak, you come upon a horrific sight in the light of full moon. A human corpse wearing the familiar cowled robe of the abbey's monk lies on its belly in a pool of dark blood, head pointing down the trail back towards the abbey, with a smeared blood trail leading from a few feet further up the path. Most distressingly, the victim's hands have been brutally hacked off at the wrists and are missing.

The corpse is easily identified as that of Abbot Quilm. In addition to the severed hands, there are bruises and contusions on both his head and arms, and his face appears misshapen due to a large swelling on his cheek from a powerful blow. His skin is blue and icy, and a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check notices on his sandaled feet the formation of chilblains on his toes. A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Medicine) check reveals that the abbot died less than an hour ago, and from the large amount of blood on the ground, it appears his hands were cut off while he was still alive. It's difficult to determine whether the abbot died from blood loss or exposure to the cold, but a smeared trail of blood indicates that Quilm managed to crawl a short distance back down the path before his demise.

While the PCs were away from the abbey during **Event 13: Brother Wolf**, Brother Hector incapacitated Brother Hakkan and then roused Abbot Quilm from his sleep. He managed to convince the abbot that the abbey was under attack and the

FOERDEWAITH

The Hyperborean Monarchy of the Foerdewaith was the formal designation of the Kingdoms of Foere and the spiritual inheritor of the Hyperborean Empire. It rose under Overking Macobert in 2744 I.R. and persisted until its eventual decline and Wars of Succession beginning in 3213. Today the Kingdom of Foere still holds sway over much of central Akados (including Yolbiac Vale, at least on paper) but nowhere near to the extent of the Overkings of old.



only chance for their Wisdom (Survival) was to seek protection at the standing stone on the mountain peak. While Quilm's sleepy and muddled mental state when he woke meant that the abbot fell for Hector's story, the laborious walk in the cold night air eventually brought Quilm back to his senses. Hector managed to entreat and cajole Quilm this far before the abbot flatly refused to go any farther. At this point Brother Hector violently surprised Quilm, knocked him out, and then hacked off his hands with a hatchet taken from the barn. Hector then took these severed appendages to the mountain peak to use in the ritual there.

Development: As the PCs make their examination of the scene, Quilm's body suddenly shudders horrifically and lurches upright. The abbot's face is a gruesome death mask contorted with fury, his mouth hanging open inhumanly wide to reveal newly elongated, chisel-like teeth. The brutal nature of his death, combined with dark etheric energies from the awakening *moon bridge* above have animated Quilm's corpse, transfiguring it into a **lunar wight**. It launches itself at the PCs and fights until destroyed. If any of the rhu-chaliks from **A10** survive, they are encountered here as well as they attempt to delay the PCs from reaching the peak and interrupting Hector's ritual.

LUNAR WIGHT

hp 97 (see **Appendix A**, page 561)

Treasure: The gear on Quilm's body consists of a *potion of greater healing*, a dose of wolfsbane, his gold ring of office (125 gp), and his gold holy symbol of Thyr (50 gp).

EVENT 16: MOONFIRE

Day 3: before compline (after **Event 15**)

Location: en route to Asteria Point (**C**)

This occurs as the PCs continue their ascent towards the standing stone atop the mountain.

As you climb the benighted mountain side, the surrounding landscape begins to be eerily illuminated in silvery flashes. Pale streaks of moonlight descend from the night sky, like silver fire, towards the mountain top above. Stopping a moment to catch your breath, you watch the celestial display and notice pale, indescribable shapes, clearly visible, descending seemingly on this rain of light coming from the swollen face of the moon above. It seems the invasion has begun

The partially reopened *moon bridge* on the mountain's peak is allowing groups of mooncalves to filter through from the etheric reaches of space to peak of Asteria Point. These groups of mooncalves appear at roughly 10-minute intervals. The first group consists of **2 mooncalves**, the second has **3 mooncalves**, and each group beyond that contains **4 mooncalves**. If the PCs do not quickly ascend to the peak, then they will soon face an overwhelming horde of enemies. If uninterrupted, the mooncalves scour the mountainsides, destroying any terrestrial creatures they come across, but remaining close to the summit to safeguard and fortify their breach into this world as the rest of the invasion force descends.



MOONCALF

hp 85 (see **Appendix A**, page 526)

Development: From where the PC find Quilm's body, the ascent to the peak is a little under a mile (4,500 feet) but this distance is steeply upward and over difficult rugged terrain, even if the PCs stick to the mountain path. Most creatures ascend at one-quarter speed (half speed for mountainous terrain, half speed for the steep slope), meaning that a creature with a speed of 30 feet can make the climb in just under 30 minutes, and a creature with a speed of 20 feet reaches the peak in 45 minutes. If the PCs can move more quickly, such as by flying, teleporting, or other magic, they can reach the summit and reduce the number of mooncalves that can descend upon them.

EVENT 17: THE BRIDGEHEAD

Day 3: compline

Location: Asteria Point (**C**)

It is possible that the PCs have investigated area **C** previously. If so, they find that with the awakening of the moonstone and its *moon bridge*, things have changed.

The full moon of Luna rises above the mountain top at such an angle that it almost looks as if it is balancing atop the ancient standing stone. The silvery fire continues to rain down towards your world from the now-sinister face of the moon, and the moon seems to bathe it in a constant beam of light that appears almost solid — like a physical bridge of light. Great birdlike creatures perch atop the stone and sway in time with an eerie chanting that echoes around the mountain peak, and strange plant life has spring up upon the formerly snow-laced bare stone of the mountain peak, creating a garden of exotic and forbidding allure.

The standing stone itself is transformed. It now glows with a pale light and has taken on a strange gelatinous consistency. It seems to pulse and throb, appearing to almost wink out of this existence for a moment before refocusing again. Brother Hector, his hood lowered to reveal his misshapen face, stands before the stone with his hands raised above his head and his voice uttering an undulating chant. A pair of blood-smeared, severed human hands lies at the base of the stone, arrayed as if in propitiation of the pulsing monolith.

The landscape around the standing stone has changed in the hours since moonrise with the influx of magical power from the awakening *moon bridge*. These changes are reflected in the encounter areas below. As the PCs make their way towards **C3**, Brother Hector continues his ritual chanting to release the moon-beast trapped within the stone. See that area for more details.

C1. THE GARDEN OF UNEARTHLY DISMAY

The mountain peak was once nothing more than windswept stone with patches and stone and ice and the occasional hardy lichen, but the rays of the full moon amplified by the eldritch power of the moonstone have activated latent spores left over from the wars of millennia ago causing strange plants alien to the world of Lloegyr to spring to life and grow to full size in only minutes. As shown of the map, there are **4 bloodsuckles** that block the approach to the stone, woody, tumorous brambles with vines covered in needle-like thorns. Standing at their center is the twisted and bulbous, maw-split stalk of a full-grown **moonflower**.

BLOODSUCKLES (4)

hp 90 (see **Appendix A**, page 530)

MOONFLOWER

hp 104 (see **Appendix A**, page 549)

C2. GUARDIANS FROM THE OUTSIDE

Whether they fight their way through or somehow bypass the deadly plants at **C1**, once the PCs have breached that barrier, the 3 fishers from outside perched upon the moonstone launch themselves into the air and swoop towards the party. They are joined by 2 mooncalves that have come down the opening moon bridge and currently lurk behind the stone. These creatures fight to the death to prevent the PCs' approach to the ritual at **C3**.

FISHERS FROM OUTSIDE (3)

hp 76 (see **Appendix A**, page 535)

MOONCALVES (2)

hp 85 (see **Appendix A**, page 548)

C3. THE MOONSTONE

Upon approaching the moonstone, the PCs can see that trails of bloody glyphs writhe and squirm across its pulsating surface. These glyphs match those that Hector may have shown the PCs earlier, but they now twist and reform into sigils in the Old Tongue, revealing the remnants of the ritual binding that imprisons **Dykath** the moon-beast. Hector's body is now merely a husk, his mind and identity enslaved by the dominant moon-beast psyche. Sensing the threat that the PCs hold and recognizing that its plans can still be all too easily thwarted, the moon-beast realizes that it must sacrifice its human pawn if its goals of freedom and conquest are to be realized. Dykath can project itself out of the standing stone using its link with Brother Hector. As the PCs watch, Hector utters a short shrieking cry and then his body bursts like an overripe melon, the moon-beast emerging from the gory pulp to attack.

Though the moon-beast is able to project itself from its dimensional prison by sacrificing its humanoid pawn, it is still bound to the standing stone and cannot move more than 60 feet from the stone. Only when the moon sets, will the stone's ancient binding be completely broken and the moon-beast finally free of its prison. At that time the *moon bridge* will be fully unblocked, allowing a horde of etheric moon creatures to flood across the cosmic span and invade at the next full moon. The people of the surrounding lands will be brutalized and destroyed, their bodies used for meat or enslavement, their minds completely dominated by these ruthless creatures. It is crucial that the PCs defeat Dykath or all is lost for the people Yolbiac Vale and beyond.

DYKATH

Huge aberration, chaotic evil
Armor Class 20 (natural armor)
Hit Points 171 (18d12 + 54)
Speed 50 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	19 (+4)	17 (+3)	22 (+6)	18 (+4)	22 (+6)

Saving Throws CON +7, INT +10, WIS +8
Damage Resistances lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities cold, poison
Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned, prone
Skills Athletics +10, Perception +8, Stealth +8
Senses Blindsight 90 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 18
Languages Aklo (cannot speak), Telepathy 300 ft.
Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Amorphous. Dykath can move through a space as narrow as 2 inches wide without squeezing.

Innate Spellcasting. Dykath's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 18). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

At will: *detect thoughts*

3/day each: *charm monster*, *dispel magic*, *dominate person*, *dream*, *suggestion*

1/day each: *compulsion*, *confusion*, *feeblemind*, *major image*, *modify memory*, *mirage arcane*, *phantasmal killer*, *plane shift* (self only, can't use)

Fear Aura. Dykath emits a constant aura of fear in a 60-foot radius around him. A creature within this area of effect that can see Dykath must make a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can attempt a new save at the end of each of its turns, with success ending the effect on itself. Once a creature succeeds at this save, it cannot be affected by Dykath's fear aura again for 24 hours.

Immutable Form. Dykath is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Magic Resistance. Dykath has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Magic Weapons. Dykath's weapon attacks are magical.

Nightmare Slave. Dykath targets a living creature frightened by its fear aura within 30 feet of it. As a bonus action, Dykath can cast *dominate person* against the charmed creature. If the target fails its saving throw to resist this spell, it becomes permanently in thrall to Dykath. *Dispel magic*, *wish*, or similar magic can break this domination. Otherwise, the dominated creature can attempt a new saving throw following each long rest, ending the domination on itself with a success. If it fails three such consecutive saving throws, only *dispel magic* or similar spells can end the effect.

No Breath. Dykath does not need to breathe.

Wind Walk. As a bonus action, Dykath transforms into a gaseous form as if he had cast *wind walk*. It can end this effect and solidify as a bonus action.



ACTIONS

Multiattack. Dykath makes two claw attacks and two tentacle attacks.

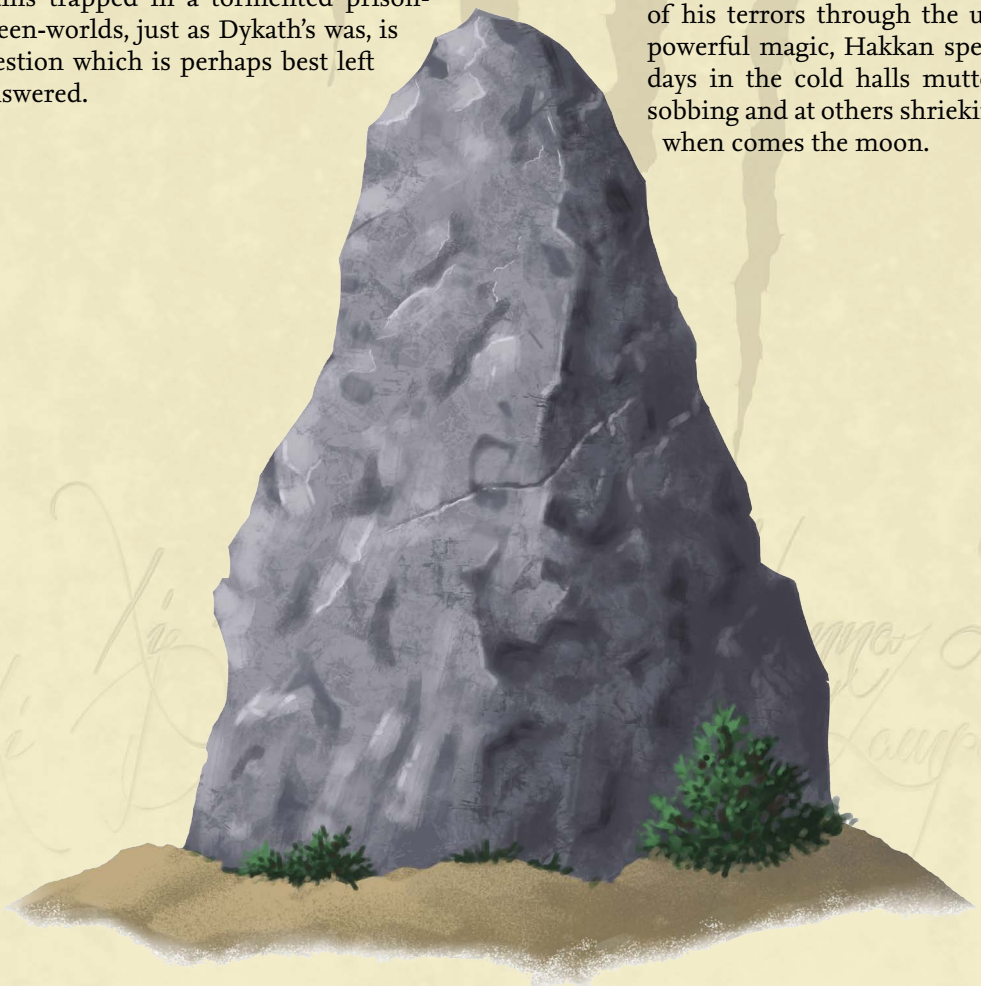
Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 15 (2d8 + 6) piercing damage.

Tentacle. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 13 (2d6 + 6) bludgeoning damage. If Dykath hits a target with two tentacle attacks on the same turn, it does an additional 14 (4d6) bludgeoning damage.

Tactics: Dykath uses its *wind walk* ability to loom over the PCs while remaining out of reach, though it can climb no higher than 45 feet in the air due to his prohibition from being more than 60 feet away from the moonstone. Dykath uses its fear aura to cow the PCs and targets a bunched group of PCs with *confusion*. It uses *dominate person* against likely targets, preferably

those affected by its fear aura. It casts *compulsion* against a group of targets close to one another. Dykath reserves *feeblemind* for difficult spellcasting opponents, or it simply attempts to rip them apart with tentacle attacks. Dykath fights to the death rather than remain trapped in the standing stone for eternity.

Development: When Dykath is finally defeated, its body swells and then explodes in a gory ectoplasmic burst, revealing Hector's intact and alive within. As the moon-beast expires, Dykath's tethered link to Hector snaps back, dragging Brother Hector into the standing stone as the moon bridge shimmers and dissolves flinging its Lunite travelers into the depths of space between the moon and the surface of Lloegyr. Hector's body is pulled into the standing stone just as the moonstone transforms from its quivering gelatinous form back into a solid surface, his terror-stricken but lifeless face and hands now all that emerge from the now-quiescent monolith. Brother Hector's soul with its otherworldly bloodline now blocks the etheric moon bridge, sealing it just as the moon-beast had done for long centuries. Whether Hector's mind remains trapped in a tormented prison-between-worlds, just as Dykath's was, is a question which is perhaps best left unanswered.



CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

The PCs have saved the inhabitants of the surrounding lands from terror, enslavement, torture, and horrific death. The moon-beast has been destroyed, and with Brother Hector's essence infusing the standing stone — ironically fulfilling his wish to be the salvation of the abbey — the *moon bridge* is blocked once again. If this occurred, three months after the adventure the PCs will receive a strongbox from the Church of Thyr holding 25,000 gp as a reward for their efforts. Even with the loss of the Asterian Order, the overseers of the church did some divinatory delving to determine what happened and learned of the PCs' heroics.

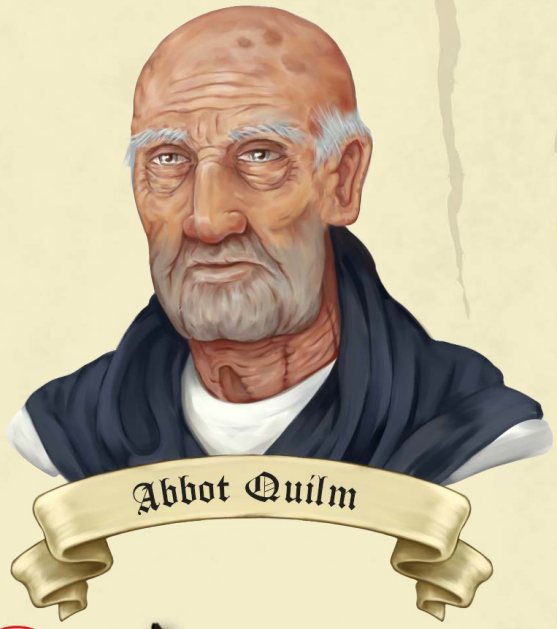
As for the Asterian abbey, it stands empty now, perhaps apart from one lonely, tormented soul, the gentle Brother Hakkan, who wanders the deserted halls. Hakkan's piteous cries echo through the dusty corridors, his sanity stripped away by what he has witnessed. Unless somehow cured of his terrors through the use of heal, miracle, or other powerful magic, Hakkan spends whatever remains of his days in the cold halls muttering to himself, sometimes sobbing and at others shrieking as he recalls the horrors of when comes the moon.

THE ASTERIAN MONKS

The monks of the Asterian Abbey are central to the investigation and action of **When Comes the Moon**, and the small group of cloistered clerics are described in detail below, along with several missing members of their order and the dark secrets hidden within the abbey's walls.

Abbot Quilm, age 67: Age has not been kind to Abbot Quilm. His strong jaw and a hooked nose would have given his face strength as a young man, but in his old age these features make him look like a withered turnip. He has a gaunt countenance and his aging skin is crepe-like, hanging in folds upon his thin frame. A few stray strands of white hair remain on his bald, liver-spotted pate, and his yellowing teeth can be seen behind the mirthless grin he regularly offers, as he surveys others through hooded eyes. In conversation, Quilm has a frequent habit of steepling his fingers and peering over them at his audience in a most disconcerting manner.

Quilm suffers from senile dementia which is steadily growing worse. He works to put on a good front for his fading mind, pretending — even to himself — that there is nothing wrong, but in truth it has cost him his spellcasting and other clerical abilities due to the loss of Wisdom. He often struggles to find the right word or name for people or simple objects. While he has seniority over the other monks, his form of authoritative management is somewhat confused and he often congregates the brothers to allocate duties and give broad directives but leaves them to handle the task themselves without interruption. Quilm may forget what he has told them to do and rarely checks up on their progress.



ABBOT QUILM, Retired Priest of Thyr

Medium humanoid (human), lawful neutral
Armor Class 10
Hit Points 22 (5d8)
Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	9 (-1)

Skills Insight +2, Religion +3
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages Common, Elven, Gasquen (see sidebox), High Boros (see sidebox)
Challenge 0 (10 XP)

Senile Dementia. The onset of senile dementia has cost Abbot Quilm the ability to cast spells or use his clerical abilities and has decreased his Wisdom and Charisma ability scores.

ACTIONS

Unarmed Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +1 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 1 bludgeoning damage.

EQUIPMENT. *potion of healing*, 1 dose of wolfsbane, monk's habit and scapular, gold ring of office (125 gp), gold holy symbol of Thyr (50 gp)

Brother Belphorus, age 43: Belphorus is a dirty and unkempt man with a wide girth and noticeable body odor, and he walks with a slight limp. Food crumbs liberally litter his stringy beard and robes, and said garments bear many stains of grease and old food leavings upon them. His hairy forearms are continually grimy, and an unruly tuft of graying hairs sprouts from the neck of his robe. His thick fingers have blackened, uncut fingernails.

When conversing, Belphorus is quite genial and responds openly to the PCs' questions, although he can be fairly set in his opinions. Belphorus is a happy-go-lucky fellow who in some ways fell into becoming a monk as a means of gaining a comfortable lifetime profession. Belphorus is a little indolent and self-serving but is still willing to go to some effort if he can see a direct benefit from it.

While both gluttonous and finicky, Belphorus holds the position of cook, and he also tends the garden as well as the abbey's few livestock. This sometimes proves difficult, as Belphorus has some quality about him that animals seem to dislike and tend to shy away from.



BROTHER BELPHORUS, Servant of Thyr

Medium humanoid (human), neutral
Armor Class 10
Hit Points 18 (4d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	8 (-1)

Skills Religion +3, Perception +2
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages Common
Challenge 0 (10 XP)

Unnatural Aura. There is something fundamentally unpleasant about Brother Belphorus to animals. They do not willingly approach within 10 feet of him, unless a master first makes a DC 15 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check.

ACTIONS

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

Frying pan (improvised weapon). *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +3 to hit, 2 (1d3 + 1) bludgeoning damage.

EQUIPMENT. 2 doses of wolfsbane, sickle, frying pan, monk's habit and scapular, wooden holy symbol of Thyr, sprig of mistletoe, half-eaten wedge of cheese.

Brother Hakkan, age 21: Mildly autistic and afflicted with a stutter, Brother Hakkan's expression is usually somewhat distant and his gaze is difficult to meet, as his eyes constantly flicker away under direct scrutiny. Clearly the youngest of the monks at the abbey, Hakkan is thin featured and has a fragile look about him. His light curly hair is cut short with his tonsure shaved into. He is shy and self-conscious, rarely initiating conversation. When nervous, his visage spasms with blinks and facial tics. Hakkan is truly a gentle soul and has a sensitive, sympathetic nature.

Hakkan's duties are to tend the scriptorium and library and he has an exceptional ability for copying writings and illustrations exactly, though he struggles with simple tasks and requires a regimented daily routine to avoid freezing with anxiety. Abbot Quilm monitors him more closely than the others due to his struggles. Hakkan recently stumbled across part of an important secret (see the "Dinner Conversation" section of **Event 1** below), and this has increased his anxiety and self-isolation substantially as he struggles with this knowledge but does not know what to do about it.

BROTHER HAKKAN, Priest of Thyr

Medium humanoid (human), lawful good
Armor Class 11
Hit Points 9 (2d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	7 (-2)

Skills History +4, Medicine +4, Perception +4, Religion +4
Senses passive Perception 14
Languages Common, Gasquen (see sidebox), High Boros (see sidebox)
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Acute Perception. Brother Hakkan experiences greater stimulation from his sensory input. This grants him advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks, but on any Perception check DC 15 or higher he must make a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw or be confused for 1 round.

Spellcasting. Brother Hakkan is a 1st-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). Hakkan has the following cleric spells prepared:
Cantrips (at will): *guidance*, *light*, *sacred flame*
1st level (3 slots): *bless*, *detect magic*, *protection from good and evil*

ACTIONS
Unarmed Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +1 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 1 bludgeoning damage.

EQUIPMENT. *Spell scroll* (*purify food and drink*, *stabilize* [x2]), 2 flasks of holy water, monk's habit and scapular, wooden holy symbol of Thyr, scrivener's kit, stolen book pages (see **Event 14: A Broken Order**)



Brother Hector, age 31: Hector is an odd-looking fellow, with bulging eyes, thick lips, and perpetually clammy skin that combine to give him a strangely batrachian visage. This along with his thin, wispy hair, large paunch, and gangly limbs add to his seeming froglike aspect. When conversing, Hector often gestures broadly with his hands and swallows or clears his throat loudly to emphasize a point.

Brother Hector has an impulsive personality but once he latches on to a topic he becomes completely immersed in it. He is excitable and doesn't always think before he speaks. Hector isn't very good at reading other people and doesn't realize that his slightly obsessive interest in things can make him tedious at times. Instead, he will keep harping on about a given subject long after others have lost interest. The other monks are used to this and either humor him or have ready excuses to avoid a prolonged conversation.

BROTHER HECTOR, Priest of Thyr

Medium humanoid (human), lawful good
Armor Class 9
Hit Points 26 (4d8 + 8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	8 (-1)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	13 (+1)

Skills Arcana +4, Religion +4
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages Aklo, Common, Draconic, Elven, Gasquen (see sidebox), High Boros (see sidebox)
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Aberrant Bloodline. Brother Hector is an unknowing carrier of an aberrant bloodline, revealed by his bulging, froglike features. He can see the runes etched into the standing stone at the peak of Asteria Point and copy them even by light of day. Due to the ancestral and subconscious nature of this bloodline, neither detect magic nor Wisdom (Insight) checks can discern anything amiss with Hector, nor can protection from evil and good or dispel evil and good remove its effects.

Spellcasting. Brother Hector is a 3rd-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 11, +3 to hit with spell attacks). Hector has the following cleric spells prepared:
Cantrips (at will): *guidance*, *light*, *mending*
1st level (4 slots): *bless*, *create or destroy water*, *cure wounds*, *detect magic*
2nd level (2 slots): *calm emotions*, *spiritual weapon*

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

EQUIPMENT. *spell scroll (cure wounds*, 3rd-level slot), monk's habit and scapular, silver holy symbol of Thyr (25 gp), magnifying glass.



THE MISSING BROTHERS

Two other brothers of the order are currently missing. Their descriptions are included below, as the PCs are likely to ask for details about them.

Brother Fagen (LN male human cleric 4 of Thyr), **age 48**: Fagan is a middle-aged man with a long pock-marked face and fine blonde hair. He regularly cuts his hair short revealing a deep widows peak and shaves his crown in a monk's tonsure. He is also attempting to cultivate a straggly goatee. Curious of nature and inquisitive, Fagan is a scholarly fellow who serves as the abbey's librarian with part of his duties being to mentor Brother Hakkan. Fagan is quiet and introspective and frequently undertakes vows of silence as part of his worship. He prefers to study and labor alone, and often takes on menial tasks which allow him to work in solitude. Roughly a month ago he discovered the catacombs entrance at **A12** and began researching the ancient burials he discovered.

Brother Tyberus (N male human commoner), **age 36**: A handsome man, Tyberus is of average height with swarthy skin and thick, dark wavy hair. Blunt, stubborn, and curt, Tyberus is good with his hands and skilled at working with wood. He serves as the laborer and general handyman for the abbey. Tyberus is a solitary individual who finds it easier

ANCIENT LANGUAGES OF AKADOS

Gasquen

Gasquen was the language of the original tribe of Foere from whom Macobert descended. Unique in its linguistic etymology, its scope of use was originally limited to central Akados around the Star Sea. With the spread of the Foerdewaith empire, Gasquen was picked up in many places to identify with the new overking. Ultimately replaced by the common vernacular of Westerling, Gasquen is now found only in isolated areas or noble courts that wish to strongly identify with Old Foere.

High Boros

High Boros is the dead language of the ancient Hyperborean Empire, and its written form was the official language of the Crown, Courts, and Clergy. After the fall of the Hyperborean Empire, High Boros was supplanted by the common tongue known as Westerling that came to predominate among the Foerdewaith. However, in some ecclesiastical and legal settings, use of High Boros has been retained. Once the formal language of the Church of Thyr, most of the church's older manuscripts are written and continue to be copied in High Boros.

Old Tongue

Old Tongue is virtually a lost language. It was spoken in many dialects by the Ancient Ones, the original inhabitants of Akados and Libynos long before the coming of the Hyperboreans. It was usually only a spoken language, though some pictographic forms of writing have been found by antiquarians. The closest living languages related to the Old Tongue include Druidic, Ogham among the Daanites of Ynys Cymragh, Old Suli among the wildmen tribes of the Moon Fog Hills, and Vanigothic spoken by the Vanigoth barbarians of the Wilderland Hills.

Gasquen and High Boros are first detailed for their roles within the primary languages of Akados on page 18 of ***LL4: Cults of the Sundered Kingdoms*** by **Frog God Games**.

Ogham and the Daanites are described on pages 48 and 56 of ***LL7: The Blight: Richard Pett's Crooked City*** by **Frog God Games**.

Old Suli and the wildmen of the Moon Fog Hills are described on pages 18 and 226 in ***LL4: Cults of the Sundered Kingdoms*** by **Frog God Games**.

The Vanigoths and the Vanigothic tongue appear on pages 13 and 14 in ***LL5: Borderland Provinces*** by **Frog God Games**.

to avoid social contact whenever possible. A failed love affair and his brusque nature were the principle reasons that he took his vows and joined this isolated order. He is a loner who prefers the simple company of animals and nature to that of civilized society.

HIDDEN TRUTHS OF THE ORDER

The first of the missing Brothers, **Brother Fagen** is indeed dead. He was killed by an undead abomination 10 days ago while investigating ancient writings in the abbey's crypts; his undead corpse now haunts the crypts as well.

The other missing brother, **Brother Tyberus** has suffered what many might consider a worse fate. While out enjoying a peaceful walk near the abbey the day before Brother Fagen's disappearance, the handsome monk was attacked, badly wounded, and then captured by a werewolf. Seeking a mate, the female werewolf infected Tyberus with lycanthropy, transforming him into a bestial werewolf as well. Recently, the feverish and delirious Tyberus managed to escape, but in truth, the she-wolf let him go, knowing that animalistic urges assaulting Tyberus' mind and the lure of the full moon will inevitably draw him back to her.

Brother Hector is an unknowing carrier of an aberrant bloodline, revealed by his bulging, froglike features. This allows him to see the runes etched into the standing stone at the peak of Asteria Point and copy them even by light of day. Hector's presence and ancestry has reawakened the psyche of the moon-beast trapped within the standing stone, and it has been slowly subliminally calling to the monk. Over time, the moon-beast has been subtly subverting and taking over the cleric's body and being. This process has been gradual and insidious and thus Hector isn't consciously aware that anything is wrong. Hector has become a psychic slave and puppet to the moon-beast. The aberrant creature often exerts control over Hector when he is asleep causing him to "sleepwalk". At the present time the moon-beast finally has almost complete control over Hector and is using its mortal puppet to break the binding spell holding it imprisoned in the standing stone. Unfortunately for the PCs due to the ancestral and subconscious nature of this domination, neither *detect magic* nor Wisdom (Insight) checks can discern that there is anything amiss with Hector, nor can *protection from evil* or *dispel evil* remove its effects.

Over his time at the abbey **Brother Hakkan's** exacting intellect and focus picked up on subtle clues and signs in many of the order's books during his transcriptions. These clues led him to believe that the Asterian Order once served a greater purpose than simply studying the celestial rotations of the skies. These hints have acted like a jangling nerve in Hakkan's mind, tugging at him to seek out the answer. Less than a week before the PCs arrive at the abbey, Hakkan snuck into Abbot Quilm's quarters to examine books from the abbot's personal collection and found the proof he was looking for. With only a few moments before Abbot Quilm returned, Hakkan ripped the pages from the book to study later. Hakkan incorrectly assumed that Quilm had been intentionally keeping this information from the brothers. This evidence combined with the abbot's increasingly erratic behavior and the missing brothers have caused Hakkan to believe that Abbot Quilm is acting against the order. In truth, Hakkan's suspicions of the abbot are unfounded. Quilm is simply a doddering old man who has never bothered to deeply study the obscure reference tome buried in the collection of books he inherited from his predecessor.

Brother Belphorus is a simple fellow with no dark secrets, though the fact that animals are uneasy around him may lead the PCs to suspect that he is the rumored werewolf. However, on the second night of the full moon Belphorus stumbles upon the dominated Brother Hector on his way to conduct the unbinding ritual at the peak of Asteria Point (see **Event 12: Belphorus' Abrupt Demise**). When this occurs, Hector hurriedly kills Belphorus to ensure his silence.



Adventure 4: Legend of the Burning Star

Aged documents discovered in a cathedral archive provide clues to the fate of a lost expedition of nearly a century ago. But the subsequent murder of the priest who discovered them and the connections between the expedition leaders and various competing nation-states that are hinted at within the documents give tantalizing implications of a treasure being sought as the expedition's ultimate goal and of a darker conspiracy to keep the whole matter from the public eye. Now the adventurers must follow the decades-old trail of secrecy and treachery to discover the truth of the Conroi Expedition while avoiding its deadly fate.

INTRODUCTION

Unlike the other adventures of the ***Aegis of Empires Adventure Path*** which are capable of serving as stand-alone scenarios, ***Legend of the Burning Star*** is Part One of the only two-part adventure of the series. Where it ends, Part Two: ***Race for Shataakh-Uulm*** picks up immediately. In addition, this two-part adventure is much longer than the others in the adventure path (Part Two is about three times as long as a typical adventure in Aegis of Empires), so plan your campaign accordingly to allow the PCs to be available for an extended expedition into unknown lands following an ill-rumored trail discovered in ***Legend of the Burning Star***. The PCs should be 12th level by the time they begin the next adventure.

In the Lost Lands setting the adventure takes place in and around the Kingdoms of Foere, the central lands of known Akados and the former seat of the ancient Hyperborean Empire. The PCs will travel beyond from these "civilized" lands, though, as the adventure progresses until, by the time they reach Part Two, ***Race for Shataakh-Uulm***, they will be journeying far afield into the unknown spaces of the continent.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The story of the lost Conroi Expedition's sojourn into the Haunted Steppe remains a tragic tale even nearly a century after its disappearance. In truth, the venture is simply a chapter in a much longer cycle of greed, loss, and obsession that has long marred the central plains of the Haunted Steppe. Throughout this region's miserable history, thousands of otherwise civilized folk have died at the hands of savage beasts, dark energies, foul undead, and other so-called "civilized" folk. But to understand the fate of the Conroi Expedition, one must know the legend of the Burning Star.

More than two thousand years ago, a pair of falling stars graced the skies over the northern hemisphere on the same unlucky night. They finally crashed onto the surface of Lloegyr*, hours and thousands of miles apart, leaving behind a trail of smoke and destruction. In the Assurian Plains of northern Libynos to the east, one meteor impacted in the desolate Red Waste creating its own tale beyond the scope of this one[AK:M]. In the northern steppes of Akados, entire tribes of nomadic peoples were vaporized by the second meteor's impact. Camps and settlements more than a week's ride away felt the tremors, and even those hundreds of miles away beheld the giant plume of smoke and debris. Feuds and alliances within the immediate vicinity were forgotten as all sought to flee and put the accursed region as far behind as possible.

Word of the devastation even reached the civilized world. Astromancers** and the learned had observed the phenomenon of the falling stars from afar, though the points of impact were calculated through the work of educated conjecture at best. And though seers and the scholars variably interpreted the event as a dread omen or simply an interesting cosmic accident, some far-sighted individuals saw opportunity in the ashes. Though little was done to pursue such speculation for more than twelve centuries. But some 1,339 years after the sky fell to the earth, Prince Cale, ruler of the newly created Grand Duchy of Reme, set out to lead the colonization of the long-abandoned lands of the Haunted Steppe.

A series of new homesteads and settlements called the Caleen Colonies reached ever farther across the vast northern steppes until savage humanoids began to arise and strike at the Rhemian colonists with shocking violence. At first Cale's people resisted, but then came the strange and terrible shadow walkers from the farthest northern reaches of the plains who led the humanoid invaders and bid them slaughter the colonists as the Rhemian encroachment was driven back. A devastating invasion of the southern lands of the Kingdoms of Foere was forestalled only by the intervention of the archmages Margon and Alycthron and the raising of the Wizard's Wall in 2947 I.R.[LL1-100]. The Grand Duchy of Reme abandoned its plans of taming the Haunted Steppe and withdrew to grieve the loss of thousands of its colonists as well as the death of its first Grand Duke, a Prince of Foere.

With the shock of the colonies' loss and the creation of the daunting Wizard's Wall, over time interest in the Haunted Steppe and its legends was again forgotten. The tales of the Burning Star passed into obscurity along with rest of the plains' lore, except as a cautionary tale for the overly curious who poked about where they were not welcome. It was renowned adventurer and explorer Aroldus Gravenfar who again took interest in the Caleen Colonies centuries after their loss. Following on the heels of his own research into the falling stars of the Red Wastes and the Haunted Steppe, the famed Gravenfar set out from Dun Eamon and crossed the Wizard's Wall in 3437 I.R. To some he reported his goal to be finding the location of the mythical "crèche of

Hyperborea" in the northern Stoneheart Mountains and to others he gave no indications as to his goals at all. But if he did indeed seek the source of that long-ago empire among lost mountain peaks, it did not explain why he didn't just travel north along the more settled lands of the Gulf of Akados to the east rather than try to cross the unknown desolation of the Haunted Steppe along the mountains' western flank[GA]. In any event the legendary explorer was neither seen nor heard from again, whatever theories or discoveries he may have made were lost with him.

Two years after Gravenfar's disappearance, the Conroi Expedition organized in Reme at the regional capital of Panetoth and set out on its own venture into the heart of the Haunted Steppe. The expedition attempted to follow the original colonists' course along a route that had come to be known as the Road of Sorrows. While the expedition was ostensibly an academic pursuit of the lost Rhemian colonies, in truth it had more lucrative underpinnings — the secret purpose of the expedition was a mission sponsored by Queen-Regent Lotheria Tredici of Castorage[LL7-232,320] to find and exploit the rare mineral resources of the fallen star from almost two millennia earlier.

An internal power struggle developed within the Conroi Expedition between the Rhemian scholars who championed the purely research-oriented mission of the expedition and those secretly in the pocket of Castorhage's Royal Family. In the end the loyalty of expedition leader Colonel Sixtun Conroi to the Castoragi coin he was receiving won out. A portion of the expedition undertook a slow, methodical examination of the southern Caleen Colonies and founded what would eventually become known as the Conroi Settlements on the Haunted Steppe's Campacha Plains[FB-171]. The rest of the expedition under Col. Conroi and accompanied by chaplain Azmerius Thade continued northward on the Road of Sorrows along what quickly proved to be the route originally followed by Aroldus Gravenfar himself.

After many travails recorded in reports to the Archdeacon of Nains by Azmerius Thade, the survivors of the northern expedition reached the Pit of the Burning Star at last. There they discovered the madness and monstrous inhabitants that now controlled the ancient crater, and this last remnant of the expedition was slain to a man and lost from all knowledge in the southlands for the next 78 years.

Since that time, memory of the Conroi Expedition itself has also slipped into obscurity. Its southern branch remained on the Campacha Plains beyond the Wizard's Wall and conducted its archaeological and historical research in this area of the Lost Colonies of the Caleen. It never sought to trace the steps of its ill-fated northern branch. The secret of the Royal Family of Castorhage's involvement in the Conroi Expedition was lost with those questing members who fell at the Pit of the Burning Star and with the arrest and eventual execution of Queen-Regent Lotheria[LL7-232,320] for her attempted filicide. Most in the south preferred to let the legacy of the Road of Sorrows rest at last. However, with the discovery of long-lost correspondence from the expedition's northern branch, that eight-decade rest is about to come to an end.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The PCs become involved when an archivist at the Cathedral of Saint Angeline in Nains is murdered, and documents lost from the murder scene prove to be of great historical value. The party is hired by the church to retrieve the documents from an antiquarian's shop and in doing so learn that there are sinister forces still afoot and centered around the documents and what they portend.

After recovering the documents, the party learns that they are correspondence from the legendary Conroi Expedition and reveal previously unknown correspondence between a member of the expedition and the cathedral's archdeacon. This correspondence, only partially intact in the documents recovered by the PCs, hints of a greater purpose behind the expedition's journey and of the governments of nation-states willing to stop at nothing in order to gain the prize secretly sought by the lost expedition — a lode of star metal believed to be at the site of an ancient meteorite impact.

With the knowledge that some of the documents for which the archivist was murdered are still in the hands of unknown parties, the PCs set out on behalf of the church to follow the clues of the Conroi Expedition, learn of its fate, and document whatever momentous discoveries it may have made. In the city of Panetoth, the PCs find clues

* Lloegyr is the name of the planet currently most commonly in use in Akados, when a name for the planet is used at all. See page 4 of ***LL1: Stoneheart Valley*** by **Frog God Games**.

** Astromancy has a long history in the **Lost Lands**. An astromancer is a magical practitioner who combines astrology with the physical laws of astronomy. See page 88 of ***Bard's Gate*** by **Necromancer Games**, page 197 of ***LL7: The Blight: Richard Pett's Crooked City***, and page 281 of ***LL8: Bard's Gate***, both by **Frog God Games**.

AK:M See "The Pit of Yhath" in ***Ancient Kingdoms: Mesopotamia*** by **Necromancer Games**

that indicate the expedition may have been following in the footsteps of the famed explorer Aroldus Gravenfar who had likewise disappeared in the Haunted Steppe only two years before the expedition's fateful mission. The information further indicates that Gravenfar may have left some of his own writings on the subject in a wizard's library in the distant city of Dun Eamon. The PCs also find themselves under attack by mysterious marauders and uncover evidence that others following the trail of the expedition to Panetoth and Dun Eamon have been murdered.

In Dun Eamon the party gains access to the library of the wizard Elinda Bannon just as a group of intruders who have magically infiltrated her tower make off with the journal of Gravenfar. Stopping these interlopers and recovering the journal, Elinda grants the PCs the use of the book to continue their quest and find out what other forces are out to get them. They are soon thereafter ambushed by thieves and discover that the thieves' guild of Dun Eamon has been contracted by the distant City-State of Castorhage to eliminate the PCs and gain the journal to allow that nation's own expedition for the star metals.

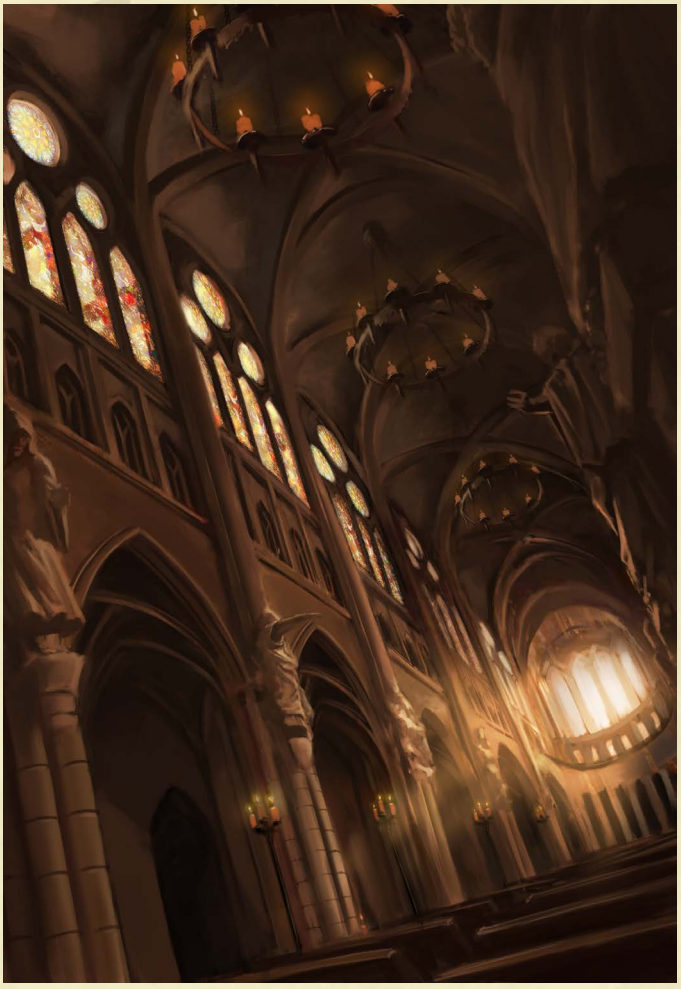
Further investigation in Dun Eamon reveals that a group of mountain dwarves who were the original recipients of the missing documents has launched their own expedition in agreement with the government of the original Conroi Expedition's charter through the Grand Duchy of Reme in order to find the star metal and obtain a lucrative contract in mining and refining it for the grand duchy. But their expedition has also been plagued by assassins and marauders, and they wish to join forces with the PCs. Since the PCs have the journal and the dwarves have the missing documents, if they pool their resources, they might together claim the final prize and overcome the forces at work against them.

Heading for the Haunted Steppe beyond the Wizard's Wall, the joint caravan discovers signs that some of the marauders have been cultists of a dark power known as the King in Yellow and are able to trace them to their hideout on the Wizard's Wall which also provides a secret route down to the plains below. However, at the hideout the party discovers more than mere cultists as they are confronted by horrors from beyond the stars and a foul high priest of the Yellow Sign who will stop at nothing to prevent the PCs from continuing their expedition. Once these challenges have been overcome, the PCs and their caravan find themselves on the Campacha Plains, at the very edge of the Haunted Steppe, preparing to begin their own expedition into the unknown expanse.

STARTING THE ADVENTURE

Legend of the Burning Star begins with the PCs in the Foerdewaith city of Nains. Nains is a major city in the central Kingdoms of Foere serving as both the capital of the County of E'stil and as a Cathedral City of the Cathedral of Saint Angeline, the primary focus of the worship of the sun god Mitra[LL5-241] within the High Church of Foere. As such, there are many reasons why the PCs might have chosen to visit Nains, from a religious pilgrimage to major commercial dealings to sightseeing to even having originally hailed from the region and simply returning home for a visit. Whatever the reason for being in Nains, the PCs will soon discover that the influence of the High Church in Nains is not to be ignored as they are quickly drawn into the business of the Cathedral of Saint Angeline.

The party is drawn into the adventure when they receive a summons from Daryus Flommescal, the Magnate of Books for the Archdeacon of Ste. Angeline's. As such he is a fairly powerful individual within Nains and not a summons to be dismissed lightly. However, it is written more as an



invitation and in a cordial manner, promising reward if the PCs will respond with timeliness and discretion. Assuming the PCs agree to hear the Magnate out, they are to come to his offices in the library of Ste. Angeline's. Upon presenting themselves, they are ushered in by an armed retainer who looks askance at any weapons they bear but allows them to pass nonetheless. They are then brought into a conference room off the private office of the Ecclesiastical Magnate of Books, His Worthiness Daryus Flommescal of Mitra.

You are ushered into a well-appointed conference room off the cathedral's library. The thick stone walls and bound wooden doors ensure that voices can't be discerned from outside the room. The impressive wooden table that dominates the room's center holds modest refreshments, and the walls are decorated with religious iconography depicting the Sun Father, resplendent in his glory. Through a single small window looking out over the cloisters can be heard the distant peel of the cathedral's bell and the drone of holy brothers in worship below.

Seated at the head of the table in the gold and white garb of the clergy of Mitra and deep purple stole of an ecclesiastical magnate is a portly man of middling years and a nearly bald pate surrounded by a graying fringe. A small sheaf of parchments lies before him next to a quill and inkwell, and a larger stack of parchments rests to the side. You can only assume that he must be His Worthiness, Daryus Flommescal, the Archdeacon's Magnate of Books.

He rises as you enter and ushers you to comfortably padded chairs arranged around the table while he instructs the retainer who let you in to close the door and see that you are not disturbed. He then directs your attention to the small leather pouches that rest upon the table before each seat.

"I am Flommescal," he begins in a friendly tone. "I oversee the library and archives of Ste. Angeline as the Archdeacon's Magnate of Books. This is no small undertaking as the cathedral holds texts and codices that date back to the days of Hyperborea before the faith of Mitra had even arrived from the East. It is my directive to not only care for these many records of a bygone era — many worth more than a king's ransom for their great antiquity — but also to catalogue, reference, and examine these countless records to learn more of our faith, of our great kingdom, and of our place in the cosmos.

"It is no small endeavor and deals in matters of great import. But please," he gestures to the small pouches before you, "Those are yours in thanks for you coming to hear me out. They are but a paltry offering of gems, but I hope they will whet your appetite for what is to come."

There is one pouch for each PC present, and each holds 100 gp worth of precious stones. They are for the PCs to keep simply for agreeing to meet with the Magnate. Once the PCs have finished with the pouches, Flommescal continues.

"I pay you in advance because this matter requires your utmost secrecy, even if you should elect to not undertake the task I have for you. The gemstones are yours to keep with my thanks for your time. That should give you some idea of the importance in this matter, and I hope you will approach it with the same gravity of purpose and integrity.

"To put it bluntly there has been a murder most foul in the cathedral. One of my archivists, a dwarf named Kisarus Thrun was found dead — his throat cut from ear to ear — late one night last week. His tongue was also removed so that his spirit could not be contacted magically and interrogated as to the identity of his killer. This matter has been kept quiet for the time being while it is looked into without potentially alerting the culprit and will continue to be so until the issue is resolved. Only you, the Archdeacon, and my own staff are aware of it at this time. However, I have not called you here to investigate this crime or bring his killer or killers to justice. I have my own coterie of retainers working on that as we speak. They are rattling doors from here to Seber Hall in search of answers, and they assure me that they are not far from finding their quarry.

"No it is not to investigate who killed Archivist Thrun that I seek to retain your services but rather to look into the matter of why he was killed. Because while the mutilation of the corpse and certain magical countermeasures can stymy some means of identifying the culprit and what exactly occurred, my own communications with the archivist before his death and our divinatory efforts around that subject matter have borne fruit. It is for this that I seek your services…if you are agreeable."

Ecclesiastical Magnate Daryus Flommescal (LN male human cleric of Mitra[LL5-241] 8) waits for the PCs to reply in the affirmative before he offers any more details. If the matter of further payment is raised, he will simply say that the pouches of jewels should be considered a down payment to retain their services and that the party will be amply rewarded beyond this payment by the Church of Mitra if they are able to complete the task that he has for them. If not, they are free to leave the cathedral and keep the pouches of gems in return for simply staying silent about what they have learned so far.

Assuming the PCs are interested, Magnate Flommescal will fill them in on what he knows. Almost a month ago Archivist Thrun came upon some old documents that had been miscataloged in the archival stacks. As he set about determining their contents, he discovered them to be of a historically valuable nature dating back almost 80 years and relating to the infamous Conroi Expedition and its journey into the Haunted Steppe along the Road of Sorrows. PCs making a DC 10 Intelligence (History), (local), (nobility), or (geography) check are familiar with the tale of

the Caleen Colonies and the Road of Sorrows. If they are not, Flommescal can fill them in. Provide the players with the information below.

KNOWN HISTORY OF THE CALEEN COLONIES

In 2861 I.R. Grand Duke Cale of Reme led colonists into the vast Haunted Steppe and established a series of new homesteads and settlements called the Caleen Colonies that reached ever farther northward across the plains. These colonies thrived and grew under the Grand Duke's personal supervision for many decades until savage humanoids began to arise and strike at the Rhemian colonists with shocking violence. At first Cale's people resisted, but then came the strange and terrible shadow walkers from the farthest northern reaches of the plains who led the humanoid invaders and bid them slaughter the colonists as the Rhemian encroachment was driven back. A devastating invasion of the southern lands of the Kingdoms of Foere by this force was forestalled only by the intervention of the archmages Margon and Alycthron and the raising of the Wizard's Wall in 2947 I.R. The Grand Duchy of Reme abandoned its plans of taming the Haunted Steppe and withdrew to grieve the loss of thousands of its colonists as well as the death of its first Grand Duke, a Prince of Foere, who had fallen with his people upon the cursed prairie. In time the northwestern path of the colonies became known as the Road of Sorrows and sank into little more than legend and a cautionary tale in the southlands.

Likewise, a DC 15 Intelligence (History) or (local) reveals the information below, though, again, the Magnate can provide this information if the PCs fail on these checks.

KNOWN HISTORY OF THE CONROI EXPEDITION

The Conroi Expedition was an exploratory and scholarly venture outfitted in the Rhemian regional capital of Panetoth in 3439 I.R. The expedition was organized and led by Col. Sixtun Conroi, a retired officer of the Rhemian cavalry. That year the expedition crossed the Wizard's Wall with the purpose of discovering what remained of the long-lost Caleen settlers and their destroyed colonies. The expedition initially limited its search to the Campacha Plains region of the southern steppes where they found traces of colonies dating back to the time of Cale that had extended westward along the Deepfells mountain range rather than north along the Road of Sorrows and had apparently survived for some time after the fall of the rest of the colonies to the shadow walker hordes. While one portion of the expedition remained in the Campacha area and established what eventually came to be known as the Conroi Settlements, another portion led by Col. Conroi crossed the Wanaheeli River and embarked northward to trace the path of the Road of Sorrows. This portion of the expedition was never heard from again, its members presumed to have all been lost to the dangers of the Haunted Steppe.

Flommescal goes on to explain that after reviewing these documents Archivist Thrun prepared a short report on their contents and requested a meeting with the Magnate to discuss them. Of course, because of the nature of the Magnate's duties and the oppressive number of reports he reviews on a daily basis it was several weeks before he read Thrun's report and scheduled a meeting with him to review the newly discovered documents. Apparently, this was too long, because the murder occurred on the night before the scheduled meeting. Flommescal thinks that perhaps somebody saw Thrun's report, which alerted them to his discovery, because even the short report that Thrun prepared for Flommescal has since disappeared. All of his retainers and staffers have stood up to magical scrutiny so he doesn't believe it was an inside job but rather that someone found out the nature of the discovery and then sent someone either very skilled or very powerful in magic — of both — to assassinate the archivist and remove any trace of his discovery. In any case Kisarus Thrun was murdered, and the documents he had discovered disappeared. Magnate Flommescal believes that the murder investigation is well in hand, but he'd like to know more about what was in those documents and what made them so important that they were worth killing for. That's why he wants to hire the party.

Flommescal explains that there was one bit of good fortune. The documents were in poor shape and only loosely bound, and his spies have picked up hints that some documents were discovered in the street outside the cathedral on the night of the murder and subsequently sold to a local book dealer. He is not so naïve as to think that the totality of the documents were lost or discarded by the assassin but believes it is possible that a few leaves of parchment might have been loose and fallen unnoticed in the darkness as the perpetrator fled the scene of the crime. He knows who the book dealer is, but he doesn't want to send his own people to recover the parchments because he doesn't want to tip his hand to the assassin that some of the documents are still out there; he doesn't want the book dealer murdered and these documents stolen before he has a chance to act. Therefore, he would like to discreetly hire the party as unaffiliated buyers to obtain the documents for the Church. He would prefer that the PCs purchase them legally — for which they will be reimbursed for the expense as well as rewarded for success — but ultimately he doesn't care how they are obtained as long as the PCs don't hurt any innocents or get arrested in the process.

TIMELINE OF THE PIT OF THE BURNING STAR*

Imperial Record (I.R.)	Erylle Cycle (E.C.)	Huun Chronicle (H.C.)	Event(s)
681	7165		Civil war erupts among Hundaei clans
683	7167		Hundaei cease to exist as a people; Survivors flee to Libynos or become the Shattered Folk of the Great Steppes
1522	8006		Meteors strike in Red Wastes of northern Libynos and in central Haunted Steppe
2840	9324	345	Foerdewaith settlers push through Crynomar Gap
2843	9327	348	Twin royal heirs Kennet and Cale born to Overking Paulus
2858	9342	363	Cale abdicates claim to throne and given port of Reme
2861	9345	366	Cale leads Colonization of Great Steppes
2899	9383	404	Caleen colonists discover Pit of the Burning Star
2931	9415	436	Caleen colonies reach shore of Lake Hali; Humanoid attacks begin
2947	9431	452	Shadow walkers lead humanoid hordes from Lost Mountains; Caleen colonies destroyed, Prince Cale is lost; Wizard's Wall raised at Crynomar Gap
3437	9921	942	Disappearance of the explorer Aroldus Gravenfar after a short stopover in Castorhage
3439	9923	944	Conroi Expedition crosses Wizard's Wall to begin exploration of Haunted Steppe
3517	10,001	1022	Current year

* Excerpted from the ***Lost Lands Campaign Setting*** timeline by **Frog God Games**.

If the PCs request more information about the murder or access to the deceased archivist's corpse, the Magnate will deny all such requests. He will reiterate that the party's mandate is solely to recover the documents, not to look into the matters surrounding the murder. PCs might find this suspicious, but a DC 20 Wisdom (Insight) check will confirm Flommescal's sincerity; while he is willing to bring outsiders in on the relatively minor task of the document recovery, he is not yet willing to trust them with something of the importance of the murder and will stick to the skills of his own retainers for that.

Once the PCs have agreed to the job, Flommescal informs them that the documents have been traced to the book dealer Vidrac Dorse of Dorse's Paper Shoppe. He gives them directions to the shop's location on the Street of the Four Winds not far from the County Enclave of Seber Hall and admonishes them once again to be discreet and lawful in their endeavors, as the Count's men might be only too eager to put strangers beyond the protection of the Archdeacon to the question in the dungeons of Seber Hall. With this final word, he turns his attention to some of the amassed paperwork and silently dismisses the PCs from his presence. The retainer outside the door escorts them from the cathedral grounds and tells them to report back to him when they have finished their mission and he will get them another audience with the Magnate.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED TO THE ARCHIVIST

Magnate Flommescal and his divinatory investigations are only partially correct in his deduction of what occurred leading up to and following the murder of Archivist Thrun. Neither he nor the PCs know what really occurred, though the PCs may be able to piece together some of it through the course of the adventure. Archivist Thrun did, in fact, discover the documents relating to the Conroi Expedition. In reviewing them he learned about the Burning Pit that

the expedition sought for the potentially vast amounts of the star metal noqual that it possibly contained. This piqued the archivist's attention greatly and brought about his ultimate doom.

Most dwarves encountered in an around the civilized lands of Foere are the hill dwarves who have been allies of Man for millennia or the street dwarves[LL8-382/K9-49] who have come to appear in the great metropolises of Akados in recent centuries. Unbeknownst to his human peers at the cathedral, however, Kisarus Thrun was a mountain dwarf[MoM-10] of the Ironskull Clan. Unlike most of the Great Mountain Clans of dwarves who have hated humanity ever since the Battle of Hummaemidon[LL0] in 1 I.R., the Ironskulls of the Blackrock Mountains are one Great Mountain Clan that has maintained friendly relations with the humans first of Hyperborea and subsequently Foere in the past three-and-a-half thousand years. However, largely isolated in their mountain fastness of Iron Hall, they remain a rarity and largely a mystery in the lowlands. Thus, none of Kisarus's fellow archivists knew of his lineage or the sorrowful heritage of that lineage.

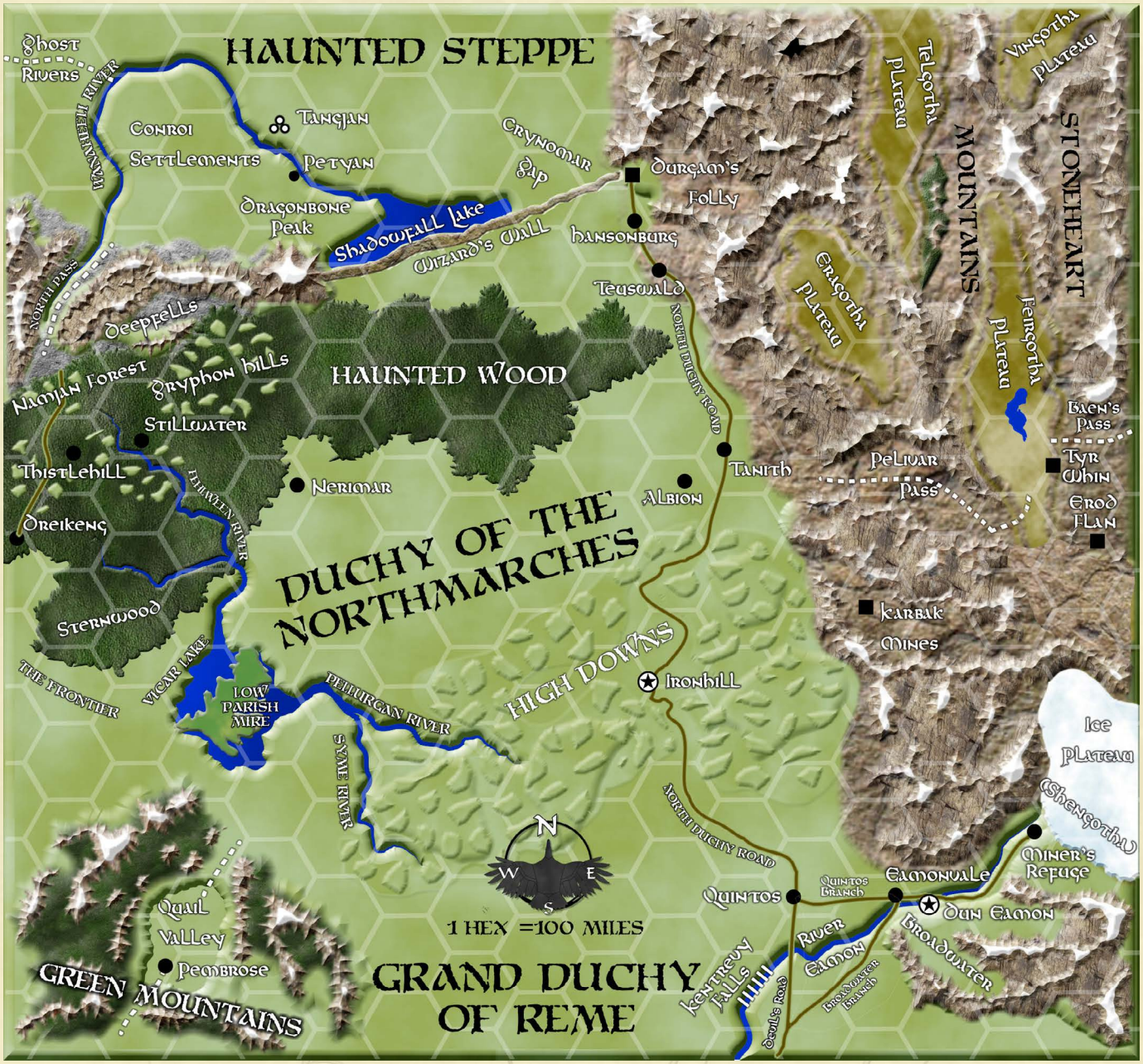
Once a powerful kingdom ruled by the House of Ironskull, the Ironskull Clan's most famous scion was the legendary High Thane Cole of a century ago, sometimes referred to in legend or nursery rhyme as Mad Thane Cole or even Old Thane Cole. It was this venerable monarch who sowed the seeds of destruction among his house and clan when he became obsessed with claiming the treasures of the Dragon Temple of West Talon Island in the Crescent Sea, for which he built an unheard-of dwarven armada. The armada was subsequently destroyed along with the old thane by the dragons of said temple*. The death of Old Thane Cole and loss of so much of the clan's able-bodied folk caused rule of the clan to pass to the cadet House of Brazzegard, whose own reign was relatively short-lived after High Thane Tramhan Brazzegard was destroyed along with his house's King City of Tir'Oen 60 years ago at the fangs and flames of a great red wyrm thought to have come from West Talon with vengeance on its mind for the Ironskulls' prior perfidy. The High Thane's surviving son, Trameht passed rule of the clan back over to House Ironskull and disappeared on his own quest of vengeance against the dragon some 40 years ago and has yet to reappear. For the last four decades, the House of Ironskull has ruled over the Great Mountain Clan Ironskull's Kingdom of Dorriden from their King City of Iron Hall at the headwaters of the Iron River deep in the Blackrock Mountains. The current High Thane, Klanghorn Ironskull, has maintained friendly relations with the surrounding lowland Foerdewaith realms, but the Iron Kingdom, as it was once called, has fallen on hard times this past century due to the repeated catastrophes it has endured.

Such hard times are what prompted a young Kisarus Thrun to leave his homeland three decades ago and seek a life of study and reflection among the clergy of a primarily human god in the Cathedral City of Nains.

When Kisarus Thrun read of the wealth of precious star metal that was believed to rest undiscovered in the Pit of the Burning Star, he immediately thought of the desperate times that had afflicted his own people for so long — a people he had nearly forgotten in the long years of his absence. Overcome by a sudden surge of guilt and homesick longing for his childhood home, Thrun securely packaged the most detailed portions of the documents and sent them by courier to his people, sure that they would be able to put such knowledge to good use towards reversing the fortunes of the clan. Not wishing to be derelict in his own responsibilities, he dutifully prepared a report of the remaining documents and sent it to the Magnate of Books, requesting an audience to ascertain their historical value. It was this report which languished too long in transit before crossing the Magnate's desk that caught the eyes of certain watchers in the employ of foreign powers among the cathedral's inner workings.

The contents of Thrun's report were relayed to handlers in the distant City-State of Castorhage where it was recognized to be in reference to an old operation sponsored by the Castorhagi Crown 78 years ago when they secretly backed the Conroi Expedition under the ruse of a scholarly endeavor in order to claim the riches of its star metal for themselves. When none of that portion of the expedition ever returned or reported in, the matter was dropped as being considered too costly to pursue, but with the summary provided in Thrun's report it became apparent that there remained more potential than had been previously recognized. Learning this new information through his network of spies and magical thralls, Justice Burr[LL7-44], Lord Protector of the City of Castorhage and its de facto spymaster, activated a trusted agent in Nains to assassinate the archivist who had discovered the information and recover the documents regarding the Conroi Expedition.

* See page 101 of "Dread Dragon Temple" in ***Quests of Doom*** by **Frog God Games**



It was this Castorhagi sleeper agent, the slayer Ioris Flenn, who subsequently murdered Kisarus Thrun and stole the documents he possessed before he could brief the Magnate of Books about them. However, upon reviewing the documents Ioris quickly realized that the most valuable of them were missing and had likely been hidden somewhere by the archivist. Planning quickly, Flenn left the documents in the street outside the cathedral so that they would look like they had been carelessly dropped by the culprit. He then resolved to monitor them and see who took them and for what purpose in hopes of being led to the cache of the remaining documents (which, unbeknownst to him, had already been received by Thrun's kin in Iron Hall). When the documents were discovered by a street urchin who subsequently sold them to the book dealer Vidrac Dorse, Ioris became even more intrigued in who would show up to claim them and to this end has been secretly casing the book dealer's shop for several days. He is aware that the Magnate's retainers are seeking him but is not yet concerned that he might be discovered, as he largely considers them to be pompous, incompetent buffoons.

CHAPTER ONE: THE HEART OF THE KINGDOM

The events of ***Legend of the Burning Star*** primarily take place in a string of cities on a northward path through the heart of the Kingdoms of Foere. Beginning in Nains, this course continues on through Panetoth[LL4-156/LL8-44], Dun Eamon[G6], and finally Tanith[F2-3] before it heads out into the wilderness around the Wizard's Wall. Each of these cities has its own history and personality as explored in previous works by **Frog God Games** and/or **Necromancer Games**, however, none of those sources are required to run this adventure. It is in Cathedral City of Nains, however, where the adventure begins and where the PCs are first put upon the trail of the Legend of the Burning Star.

THE CATHEDRAL CITY OF NAINS

Nains is a major city of the central Kingdoms of Foere. It is the Cathedral City of the Cathedral of Saint Angeline, the major center of the Church of Mitra in Foere, and serves as the capital of the County of E'stil, one of the Kingdom of Foere's major realms. Cathedral cities are designated centers of worship within the High Church of Foere, the official religion of the Foerdewaith that encompasses all of the good and neutral religions recognized within the kingdoms under a single quasi-political umbrella. The High Church has little impact over the official doctrine and worship of the deities that comprise its whole, but it does command a great deal of the money that comes to these different churches through the auspices of its tithes and therefore holds a great deal of influence over their practices at least within the borders of Foere when it wishes to. The High Church of Foere is overseen by the Archbishop of Cantelburgh who is appointed by the Overking of Foere, usually for life.

The cathedral cities are an example of this ecclesiastical control exercised by the Crown of Foere. The cathedral cities are independent of the territories in which they stand, answer only to the Archbishop, and are under the protection of the Overking. Individual cathedral cities are ruled ecclesiastically by an Archdeacon of the High Church who oversees the cathedral and local administration with Ecclesiastical Magnates under his supervision. These Ecclesiastical Magnates are typically lay local rulers with bands of men-at-arms, called retainers, who serve under the authority of the Archdeacon. Most cathedral cities have multiple ecclesiastical magnates.

Issues of royal interest in the cathedral cities such as taxation, defense, lay courts, etc. are under the purview of a Mayor of the Palace who oversees civil authority in the name of the Overking. In practicality, most Mayors of the Palace possess much less influence in the cathedral cities than the Archdeacons themselves and the Magnates' combined, and the Magnates' retainers often far outnumber the royal soldiers stationed in the city.

Some cathedral cities, such as Nains, serve as the de facto capitals of various regions of Foere as the largest, wealthiest city in the area. But technically the capital is some small side area or fortress within or near the city known as an enclave that falls fully under the local lord's rule. In these cases, the local lord often rivals or even surpasses the influence of the cathedral's Archdeacon, and there is usually a constant political tug-of-war occurring in these places.

EXPERT

Medium humanoid (human), lawful neutral
Armor Class 10
Hit Points 27 (6d8)
Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills History +5, Investigation +3, Persuasion +3
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages Common
Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

ACTIONS

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

VARIANT EXPERTS

An expert can have a different area of expertise, replacing History with the appropriate skill. For instance, an expert could be an arcane scholar (Arcana), natural philosopher (Nature), or theologian (Religion).

NAINS

LN metropolis
Corruption +7; **Crime** +0; **Economy** +7; **Law** +7; **Lore** +5; **Society** +1
Qualities academic, cathedral city, holy site, prosperous, strategic location, tourist attraction
Disadvantages dual government
Danger 15

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government overlord
Population 533,685 (441,200 humans; 37,940 half-elves; 23,069 halflings; 13,285 dwarves; 9,500 gnomes; 6,180 elves; 2,511 other)

NOTABLE NPCS

Preston of Mitra, Archdeacon of Ste. Angeline (LG male human **expert** (see sidebar) proficient in Religion)
Oristan the Pious, Count of E'stil (LG male human cleric of Mitra[LL5-236,241] 3)
Phiser Slatterly, Magnate of Coins (LE male old human wizard [transmuter] 11)
Silas Afferbale, Magnate of Bells (NG male gnome cleric of Mitra[LL5] 1)
Lady Krystus Kolem, Magnate of Orders (LN female human cleric of Mitra[LL5] 12)
Daryus Flommescal, Magnate of Books (LN male human cleric of Mitra[LL5] 8)
Baron Ivan Turesco, Mayor of the Palace (LE male human **knight**)
Sir Langstrom Treist, High Sheriff (N male aasimar fighter [eldritch knight] 13)

SPECIAL QUALITIES

Cathedral City Being one of the cathedral cities of Foere, Nains receives special dispensations and revenue for the High Church from the Overking. This freedom and largesse directly affects the opportunities of the city's citizens and visitors as well as the infrastructure of the city itself.
Dual Government The political structure of Nains is built around the primacy of the Archdeacon and the High Church of Foere, while at the same time the city also serves as the county seat of E'stil. This creates a certain amount of political friction between the Crown-backed clergy government and the local feudal government of the Count of E'stil. This friction is relatively mild in Nains due to the Count's own devotion to the Church of Mitra, but the resentment among the lesser nobles does create some tension.

NOTE: City stat blocks such as this use the kingdom and settlement rules from ***Ultimate Kingdoms*** by Legendary Games. If you are not using those rules, the above information can simply be used as a narrative guide to describe what each city is like.

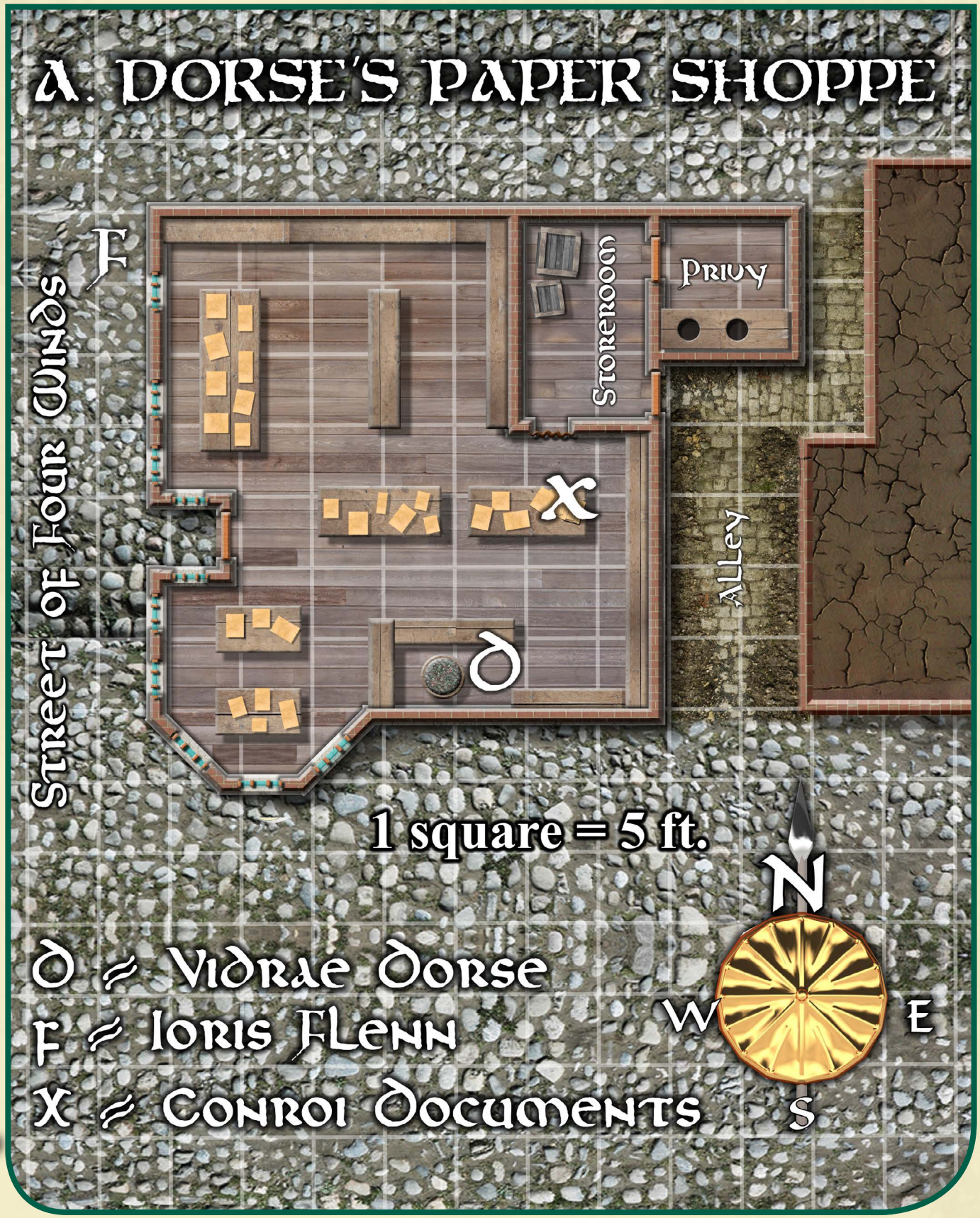
Nains is the Cathedral City of Ste. Angeline, a matron saint of the Church of Mitra, and also serves as the capital of the County of E'stil, though the Count of E'stil's enclave is actually a fortress called Seber Hall that lies within the boundaries of the city of Nains. Count Oristan the Pious is a devout follower of Mitra, so there is less of the usual politicking between the local lord and the Archdeacon, but as a result many of the Count's own liegemen bear a grudge against the High Church for what they see as the usurpation of their natural feudal powers and noble rights. Thus did Magnate Flommescal issue his cautionary warning to the PCs about falling afoul of the Count's men. However, unless the party decides to do something truly rash or outrageous, they are unlikely to need fear any reprisals from the county.

NAINS

The capital of the County of E'stil is the centrally located Cathedral City of Nains (pronounced NINS). The heraldry of the County of E'stil is three pinecones on a field of green[QoD4-10].

A. DORSE'S PAPER SHOPPE

The PCs can find Dorse's Paper Shoppe strategically located in one of Nains' many market squares. The shop is lined with wooden tables covered in books and loose leaves from books. Dorse uses lead paperweights that radiate a faint aura of transmutation magic — a simple enchantment


A. Dorse's Paper Shoppe
Street of Four Winds
F
Storeroom
Privy
X
Alley
D
1 square = 5 ft.
N
W
E
S
D ≈ Vidrae Dorse
F ≈ Ioris Flenn
X ≈ Conroi Documents

that increases the paperweights' weight should anyone but Dorse himself try to move them. This system increases the DC of Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) checks to steal from Dorse by 5. A PC who browses through Dorse's shelves and makes a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check to understand his organization system can locate the likely spot where historical documents regarding the Conroi Expedition are displayed.

Vidrac Dorse (N male old human **spy**; Wisdom (Insight) +6) is amicable when discussing business or academia, but he has a keen nose for profit and his interest is immediately piqued if the PCs begin showing too much attention towards the documents they seek. He can confirm that he recently acquired a small bundle of loose leaves of parchment that consisted of letters pertaining to the Conroi Expedition of 3439 I.R. He will not give any details as to whom he purchased them from, as his policy is always strict confidentiality for his clients. He has confirmed their provenience though and guarantees the authenticity of any purchase. A DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check or magic can confirm that he is telling the truth. He will not, however, let them examine them for more than a moment or two without purchasing them — insufficient time to absorb their contents.

None of the items in Dorse's shop are marked with a price, as he prefers to read his customers in order to set a price he thinks he can get out of them. In the case of the PCs, unless they succeed at a Charisma (Deception) check (without anyone able to help) opposed to his Wisdom (Insight) he quickly discerns that the papers are extremely valuable to them. If the PCs mention the Magnate, the cathedral, or the High Church in any way, his Wisdom (Insight) check is automatically successful. If he succeeds on his Wisdom (Insight) check, he sets the asking price at 1,500 gp. Any PC making a DC 15 Intelligence (History) can determine that the true value of the documents to an antiquarian is probably closer to 150 gp, but Vidrac will not budge from his price. If he failed the aforementioned Wisdom (Insight) check then his asking price is only 175 gp. If the PCs attempt to strong arm the book dealer or outright rob him, he doesn't resist but immediately blows a small whistle that he keeps in his pocket. This will summon **2 county guardsmen** that arrive in 1d4 rounds and pursue anyone that has stolen the documents. They blow their own whistles which calls **1d4 men-at-arms** or **1d6 county guardsmen** from nearby Seber Hall every 1d3 rounds to a maximum of 16 men-at-arms and 30 guardsmen. Anyone arrested by these men will be locked in the dungeons below Seber Hall for later questioning by High Sheriff Treist and will undergo torture for 1d3 days before Flommescal can have them released. Of course, if any guards or men-at-arms are killed, the Magnate will be unable to obtain their release and they will face either a long prison sentence or execution, either of which is beyond the scope of this adventure. Anyone being tortured gains one level of exhaustion and must make a DC 15 Constitution or Wisdom saving throw (player's choice) each day (+1 to the DC per previous save) or confess the details of their mission, and there are later repercussions as the PCs' involvement in the matter gets out sooner than it otherwise would have.

These repercussions come in the form of an extra attempt by the City-State of Castorhage to eliminate the party and/or find out what they know at some point on the road between Nains and Panetoth or perhaps shortly after they reach that city. Its set-up and the statistics for its thugs are identical to those described in **Event 6** in **Chapter 2**. However, in this case they are independent brigands rather than members of the Ebon Union and are after the documents recovered from Dorse's shop. Unlike in **Event 6**, no survivors of the group flee to nearby safehouse, and the PCs are just left to wonder at who might have orchestrated the ambush.

COUNTY GUARDSMAN

Medium humanoid (human), lawful neutral
Armor Class 18 (plate)
Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +5, Con +4
Skills Animal Handling +2, Insight +2, Intimidation +5, Perception +2
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages Common
Challenge 1 (200 XP)
Special Gear. Each county guardsman carries a *potion of healing.*

Bravery. The country guardsman has advantage on saving throws against being frightened.

ACTIONS

Halberd. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 8 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage.
Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit,

reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Net. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +3 to hit, range 5/15 ft., one target. *Hit*: The target is restrained (escape DC 10).

MAN-AT-ARMS

Medium humanoid (human), lawful neutral

Armor Class 17 (half plate, shield)

Hit Points 66 (12d8 + 12)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)	11 (+0)	9 (-1)

Saving Throws Str +5, Con +3

Skills Insight +2, Intimidation +1, Perception +2, Survival +2

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Common

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Special Gear. Each man-at-arms typically carries a *potion of greater healing*.

Bravery. The man-at-arms has advantage on saving throws against being frightened.

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

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The man-at-arms attacks twice with its longsword.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage, or 8 (1d10 +3) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +2 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit*: 4 (1d8) piercing damage.

Even if the party is willing to pay Vidrac's asking price, they still must deal with another potential buyer. This is **Ioris Flenn** who has been casually observing the shop to see who might show up to claim the documents. He has identified which pile they are in, so he loiters on the street, occasionally glancing in to see if anyone is showing interest in that particular stack. He is also making Wisdom (Perception) checks to listen in on any discussions through the nearby open window. Once the subject of purchasing the Conroi Expedition documents is brought up he enters the shop and requests the same documents and is willing to pay double the asking price immediately. He is doing this to size up the PCs and hopefully rattle them. He wouldn't mind whittling down one or two of them as well so he can follow them and capture them later for questioning. At this point he assumes that the PCs are just some of the Magnates retainers and has no real fear or respect for them.

Once Ioris makes his offer, Vidrac is inclined to immediately accept it unless the PCs make a higher bid. Vidrac is perfectly willing to allow the two buyers to engage in a bidding war to his benefit. Ioris cultivates a drab image; his clothes and armor appear run-of-the-mill, and his expressions are dry and unmemorable. He answers no questions that the PCs may pose, simply making bids in an expressionless tone. He will go as high as double the asking price in his bids before pausing and proposing that he and the PCs settle the matter with a duel. Dueling is not forbidden in Nains if both parties agree to it, and if the PCs refuse, he slaps one to insult his or her honor. Ioris isn't bluffing. The man is an experienced killer and excels in a one-on-one fight. If the party accepts his challenge, he fights their representative in single combat. Not wishing to acquire life-long enemies, he keeps his promise to yield if his adversary asks, but he fights with lethal intent to that point. If the PCs still refuse, he leaves and allows the PCs to purchase the documents while he prepares to ambush them on their route back to the cathedral, dropping all pretense at an honorable duel.

IORIS FLENN

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 17 (chain shirt +2)

Hit Points 99 (22d8)

Speed 30 ft.

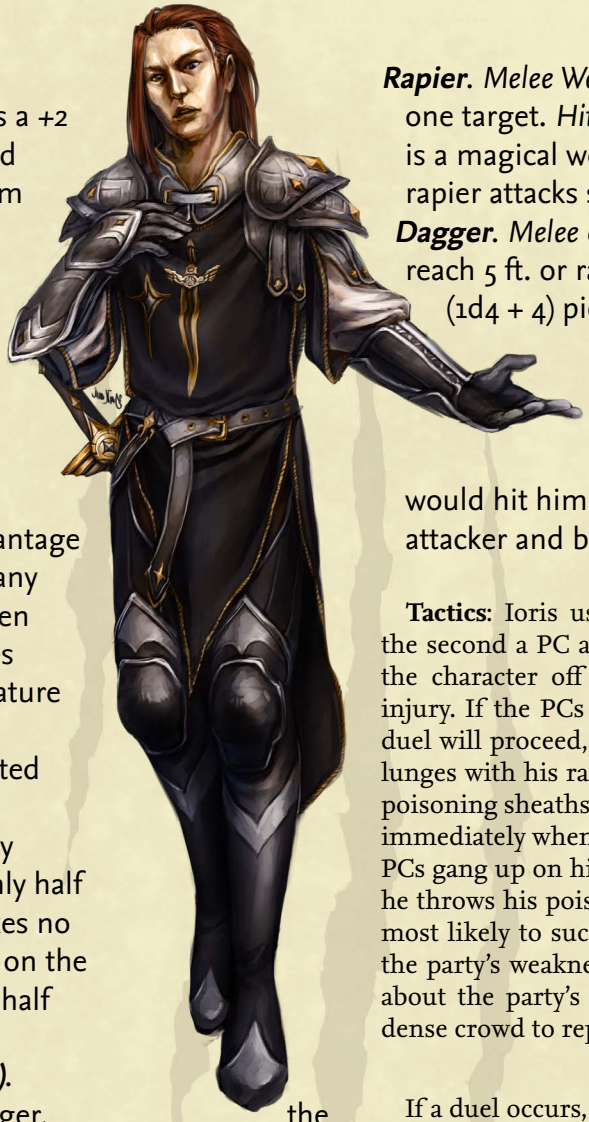
STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	18 (+4)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Int +5

Skills Acrobatics +10, Deception +2, Intimidation +2, Perception +6, Sleight of Hand +7, Stealth +7, Survival +3

Senses passive Perception 16

Languages Common



Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Special Gear. Ioris carries a +2 *chain shirt*, +1 *rapier*, and two vials of purple worm poison. He has two dagger sheaths that, when prepared ahead of time, allow him to poison a dagger as an action.

Assassinate. During his first turn, Ioris has advantage on attack rolls against any creature that hasn't taken a turn. Any hit he scores against a surprised creature is a critical hit.

Evasion. If Ioris is subjected to an effect that allows him to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, he instead takes no damage if he succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if he fails.

Poisoned Dagger (2/Day). On a hit with Ioris' dagger, the target must make a DC must make a DC 19 Constitution saving throw, taking 42 (12d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Sneak Attack. Once per turn, Ioris deals an extra 10 (3d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Ioris that isn't incapacitated and Ioris doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Ioris makes three rapier attacks. If he has a dagger in his off hand, he makes an additional dagger attack. Alternatively, he can wield two daggers and make two dagger attacks.

Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 9 (1d8 + 5) piercing damage. This is a magical weapon. Due to his ability, Ioris's rapier attacks score a critical on a roll of 19 or 20.

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d4 + 4) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Parry. Ioris adds 3 to his AC against one melee attack that would hit him. To do so, Ioris must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

Tactics: Ioris uses his studied target as a swift action the second a PC agrees to fight him. His hope is to catch the character off guard and win quickly with minimal injury. If the PCs are still in conversation about how the duel will proceed, he simply announces it already has and lunges with his rapier. Both of Ioris' daggers are stored in poisoning sheaths with poison already applied. Ioris yields immediately when reduced to 20 or fewer hit points. If the PCs gang up on him or continue the fight after that point, he throws his poisoned daggers at the character he deems most likely to succumb (using Wisdom (Insight) to gauge the party's weaknesses). He then runs with a final remark about the party's lack of honor and disappears into the dense crowd to report his failure to his superiors.

If a duel occurs, the county guardsmen will not interfere because Vidrac confirms that it was agreed to. However, 2d6 **county guardsmen** and 1d4 **men-at-arms** will arrive to monitor the clash and make sure both parties abide by its rules (no outside help, yielding when called for, etc.). Anyone violating the rules of the duel will be arrested as described above, though if they attempt to arrest Ioris, he quickly slips away.

Development: If the party fails to defeat Ioris or convince Dorse to sell the documents to them, the slayer pays the vendor for the papers and leaves immediately. Following Ioris in the city is difficult, as his training allows him to disappear in crowds with ease. A PC with ranks in Intelligence (History) can follow Ioris without losing him with a Wisdom (Perception) check with a DC equal to Ioris' Dexterity (Stealth) check. If the PCs obtain the letters from Dorse or Ioris, they can be seen to be a series of short pieces of correspondence between the chaplain of the Conroi Expedition and the Archdeacon of Nains, who was the

chaplain's church superior. They are each on worn, travel-stained leaves of parchment and are clearly old enough to be authentically from the time of the expedition. Provide the players with **Handout 4A** (see page 70), which combines the short missives into a single handout.

EVENT 1: A HISTORY LESSON

The Magnate expects delivery of the papers as soon as the party acquires them. Assuming the PCs did not break the law or otherwise embarrass the Cathedral of Ste. Angeline, the PCs are brought immediately to Flommescal's private study when they arrive at the cathedral with the documents.

The Magnate's study is much more spartan in its layout than the conference room you met in before, and much more secure with no windows breaking its heavy masonry walls and the only entrance leading from the Magnate's personal apartments. However, there are a few comfortable chairs surrounding the clerist's wooden desk, a desk now covered in old books and crinkled parchment maps. Magnate Flommescal motions you to sit as he spends a few moments perusing the documents you have recovered.

A PC making a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check can catch a glimpse of the books and maps open on the desk. Those that do can make a DC 20 Intelligence (history) check to recognize them as old history texts about the original colonization of the Haunted Steppe by Prince Cale of Reme and incomplete maps of the steppe lands beyond the Crynomar Gap at the northern boundary of the Grand Duchy, including one well-known tome of historical geography called Oldranui's Geogrammatica, written nearly 600 years ago. A DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check after identifying the map reveals that the Wizard's Wall is not marked across the Crynomar Gap confirming that it was drawn before the time of the shadow walker invasion in 2947 I.R. It is apparently a (largely speculative) map of the Caleen Colonies as they existed before their fall.

After a few minutes of reviewing the documents he sets them down on the desk and addresses the party.

"Well it's abundantly clear that these are not all of the documents connected with Archivist Thrun's discovery," he begins with a sigh. "As to the whereabouts of the rest of them we can only guess, though I'd wager the thief has already sold them to other interested parties. It's pure chance that we came across these.

"I'm sure from your review of them that you were able to piece together at least the bare facts: Azmerius Thade was a priest of Mitra and served as the official chaplain of the Conroi Expedition. He was a disciple of Archdeacon Leofric, who did indeed preside over Ste. Angeline at the time, and who apparently felt it his duty to record the events of the expedition and report them back to the High Church. We also already know that the expedition split after crossing the Wizard's Wall with one portion remaining in Campacha and forming what became the Conroi Settlements, and the other portion under Col. Conroi — and apparently our illustrious chaplain, as well — crossing the Wanaheeli River to follow the Road of Sorrows and ultimately disappearing from history…until now.

"However, we also learn some things of certain historical interest — like for instance they crossed the Wizard's Wall at Fort Prudence[G1-2]. This is not really very surprising as it's the only known pass to the bottom of the cliff, but it is somewhat interesting that in 3439 that fortress's nickname of Durgam's Folly[G1-27] was not yet in wide use. But we also learn some things that are very, very interesting — like the true purpose of the expedition. Look here," Flommescal points at the first of the missives, "Thade mentions funding from a silent backer. This is interesting because it has always been commonly held that the Grand Duchy of Reme funded the expedition to learn something of the fate of their lost colonies. But Conroi apparently secured additional backing, and by the sound of it this silent backer actually composed the lion's share of the expedition's funding. This becomes important when we see how the silent backer's goals differ from those of the Rhemian scholars, and how Col. Conroi chooses the silent backer over that of his own homeland."

Flommescal grows visibly excited as he pores over the ancient letters with you.

"But who might this silent backer be? What might this secret goal have been?" he asks the air rhetorically. "Thade is trying to be coy with his words, but it's clearly all right here if you know what to look for. Here in the fifth letter he refers to the backer as the 'island queen.' Isn't that an interesting turn of phrase? It seems like it could mean anything, but when you think about it not really. It has to be someone from beyond the boundaries of Foere, for there are no lesser kings or queens within the realms of the Overking. And it has to be somewhere close enough to be relevant and to specifically have a queen — not a king. That becomes very specific indeed. It also just so happens that the City-State of Castorhage, an island nation of the western coast of Foere and Reme has had its own independent monarchy for the last 3,000 years and more. And while the monarchy has traditionally been a king, there was a two-year span from 3439 to 3441 when there was a queen-regent, the duplicitous Lotheria Tredici, who presided over Castorhage while her husband King Worrn IV was too infirm to rule. In 3441 she was deposed for attempting to murder her own infant daughter and only a few short years later she was executed when it was discovered she had been slowly poisoning the king to bring on his debilitating illness[LL7-232,320]. She's just the sort of person who would have used subterfuge and double-dealing to undermine some foreign nation's interests if it meant lining her own coffers.

"And there's more, because something that almost everyone knows yet somehow never bothers to put together is that the Conroi Expedition wasn't the first to cross the Wizard's Wall in that same timeframe. No, the famed explorer Aroldus Gravenfar had crossed the wall only two years earlier on some expedition of his own that he never returned from. There are vague reports that he searched for some cradle of the ancient Hyperborean Empire among the farthest peaks of the Stoneheart Mountains, but why would he enter the Haunted Steppe to do that rather than take an easier route along the mountains' eastern flank through more civilized lands. When looked at in that light, it could almost be said that the Conroi Expedition was following in the missing explorer's footsteps. Still not convinced? Well, how about if I told you that before embarking on his fateful quest, Gravenfar is known to have stopped for a short time in Castorhage. To consult the archives there? To gain financial backing? To eat one last meal of their wretched meat pies sold by street vendors[LL7-227]*? Who knows? But there is clearly an interesting connection in light of an 'island queen' serving as a silent backer for a similar expedition only two years later."*

The normally staid Magnate visibly calms himself and mops his now sweat-beaded brow with the cuff of his magisterial robe. "So now we get to the heart of it. What was old Conroi about out on the steppes that cost him his life and that of all his men…and likely that of the most famous explorer to ever trod the dust of Lloegyr. That is something truly of great value. And I don't mean whatever sort of treasure it was. I'm the Magnate of Books, not the Magnate of Coins — let old Slatterly** worry about that — I'm interested in the discovery and recovery of knowledge. Profound knowledge. Important knowledge. What do you fellows say, are you interested in another job?"*

The discovery of the documents has clearly gotten Flommescal quite excited. There is not usually this much of interest in the day-to-day matters of the cathedral's chief scholar and librarian. If the PCs enquire about payment for their previous job he becomes embarrassed and quickly repays them whatever they spent on the documents (a DC 18 Charisma (Deception) check allows unscrupulous PCs to inflate this amount by up to 25% without him getting suspicious, but if the check fails he cuts the rest of the payment offer by half in punishment) as well as another 100 gp per person for recovering the documents.

If the PCs show interest in this job, he says it is very simple. He wants them to find out what became of the Conroi Expedition after it crossed the Wanaheeli River and determine what it was that they and the Crown of Castorhage were looking for along the Road of Sorrows. He doesn't require that they recover anything for him and honestly doesn't care whatever treasure it is that they might find. What they do with it is up to them. All he wants is for them to record their expedition and provide him with a copy of the records so he can add it to the Ste. Angeline archives and close one of the greatest mysteries of the last century. In return he will provide them 3,000 gp with which to outfit their expedition and another 3,000 gp when they return to them with an accurate account of what occurred and what they discovered that will stand up to scrutiny under *zone of truth* and similar spells. Anything they find along the way is theirs to keep.

He will also provide them with two pieces of advice. One, they should start their search in Panetoth as that is where the expedition originally started from and where evidence may still exist to provide them with some guidance before they head out into the vast expanse of the Haunted Steppe. Two, he dissuades them from going to Castrohage to find out what Gravenfar was up to there. He has had some experience in that city and believes their chances of finding anything of use in that morass of degeneracy is far outweighed by the inherent dangers it would provoke. This reminds him to also provide one final warning as well: He suspects that the murder of the archivist might have the stink of Castorhage about it, so the discovery of the documents might have renewed the interest of that decadent kingdom's current monarch, Queen Alice[LL7-40]. If so, the party should beware of competitors who might even now be on a similar course to claim whatever prize lies at the end of the journey.

If the PCs ask further about the murder investigation he will inform them that his agents suspect it was the work of a killer-for-hire named Ioris Flenn, whom he believes the PCs may have already encountered, and that it was likely at the behest of some shadowy backer — the discovery of Castorhage's involvement in the affair suddenly makes them look like the prime suspect. In any case, he doesn't want the PCs to waste any time on that angle. His retainers will finish the murder investigation from here. If the PCs wish to be the first to discover the secrets of the Conroi Expedition they'd best start sooner rather than later when others might gain a head start on them.

* Lloegyr is the name of the planet currently most commonly in use in Akados, when a name for the planet is used at all. See page 4 of ***LL1: Stoneheart Valley*** by **Frog God Games**.

** Phiser Slatterly, Magnate of Coins of the Cathedral of Ste. Angeline (see Nains above)

PANETOTH

N large city
Corruption +8; **Crime** +3; **Economy** +6; **Law** +7; **Lore** +4; **Society** –4
Qualities military district, prosperous, regional capital, strategic location
Disadvantages water poor
Danger 15

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government overlord
Population 22,470 (18,110 humans [Foerdewaith]; 2,455 humans [Plainsmen]; 785 half-elves; 580 gnomes; 368 dwarves; 172 other)

NOTABLE NPCS

Lucius Qellinroque, Duke of Waymarch, Harmost of Panetoth (LN male human **knight**)
Amirlaine Qellinroque, Duchess of Waymarch (N female human wizard 12)
Quinn Hardalinger, Epistates* of Waymarch (LN female half-elf expert [see page 10])
Royster Geddrun, Pater of Mithras (LN male human cleric of Mithras[LL7-126] 14)
Calebi Venzenccio, High Faithful of Mitra (LN male halfling cleric of Mitra[LL5-236/241] 6)
Verethorne the Elder, Prelate of Quell (NG male old human cleric of Quell[RC:FBG-42] 9)
Count Kessiar Ulthol, Lord-Knight Commander of the Waymarch (LG male old human **knight**)
Davulosa Printetha, City Guard Commander (N female human **knight**)
Baron Bluto Heinsvith, Lord Chamberlain of the Gate (NE male human [Heldring[LL4-17]] **noble**)

SPECIAL QUALITIES

Military District The famed Waymark cavalry's mustering field lies just north of the city causing a constant influx of soldiers, knights, and their many support personnel and retainers. This boosts the city's economy but brings with it a greater frequency of brawls between rival units and frequently a harsher dispensation of justice for even minor criminal infractions.
Regional Capital Panetoth has been the administrative capital of the region for thousands of years and, as a result, has a well-entrenched and robust bureaucracy that is able to keep it afloat in even the harshest of circumstances but can bog down the evolution of even the smallest changes.
Water Poor Panetoth lies in an arid region with uncertain supplies of water during the dry months. This leads to black market trading, extortion, and the threat of disease and famine along with an over-reliance on the clergy to keep and maintain the supply.

* Much as the Hyperborean title of harmost as a regional governor has been preserved, so too the Hyperborean position of epistates, the chief bureaucratic administrator, has been retained within the Grand Duchy of Reme and a few other ancient cities.

THE JOURNEY TO PANETOTH

The journey from Nains to Panetoth is one of approximately 650 miles as the crow flies but for which no direct route exists. PCs traveling overland will need to head east to the city of Sion on the Star Sea and take ship to Pentalis before heading north up the Bishop's Road through the County of Coutaine and the Duchy of Ysser before heading northwest along the Duke's Way towards the Tradeway and Panetoth. Parties that have previously played through ***The Ebon Soul*** from the ***Ashes of Empires Adventure Path*** will find much of this journey familiar from their prior visit to the city of Tourse in that adventure. Alternately the party could elect to strike out cross country along the back roads and farm lanes through the County of Barresque and the Saymere Valley to reach the Old Tors and try to pick their way along the long-abandoned road that once crossed those lonely peaks by way of the halfling enclave of Oldhome and the much-more-sinister ruins atop the cursed Hill of Mornay[BM]. This is a much shorter distance but cuts through wilderness for most of the way and is much slower going with a much

higher chance of hostile encounters. Each of these routes requires several weeks of travel, so feel free to sprinkle in encounters as you see fit to liven up the journey.

Alternately the PCs may be capable of magical flight that could enable them to pass directly over the Elderwood and Old Tors. This is still a 650-mile journey and would require many days of travel at best with commensurate encounters. It is also likely, however, that PCs of the party's level have some other means of magical travel like teleportation or ethereal travel that could make the trip significantly faster. Whatever the case, the next portion of the adventure takes place in Panetoth, so however you get the PCs there is up to you and your players.

PANETOTH, DUKE'S CITY OF THE WAYMARCH

Panetoth is the regional capital of the Waymarch, the Grand Duchy of Reme's easternmost marchland. The Waymarch stretches from just west of Panetoth, across the sere plains to the mouth of the Stoneheart Valley at the caravan city of Fareme, some 8 days march from the village of Fairhill[LL1-7]. Like all of the marches of the Grand Duchy, Waymarch is ruled by a duke who owes fealty to Grand Duke Iltobarus of Reme[LL:TG-3]. The Duchy of Waymarch has been ruled by House Qellinroque (Gasquen[LL5-14] for "Rock of Quell"[RC:FBG-42], the house's patron deity) for as long as anyone can remember, and the current Duke's grandfather and great grandfather[LL8-328] both bore the name of the original Grand Duke Borell I who famously defeated the hobgoblin demigod Kakobovia at the Battle of Ironhill in 1573 I.R.[MoM-100/LL3-255] In addition, the Dukes of Waymarch hold the ancient title of Harmost[LL3-78] of Panetoth (a term dating from the Hyperborean Empire as the military administrator of a city) as well as the grandiose title of Voice of the Grand Duke in the East. The current Duke of Waymarch is Lucius Qellinroque, a loyal subject of Grand Duke Iltobarus and staunch ally of the City of Bard's Gate[LL8-44].

The Duchy of Waymarch is an arid plain of rolling hills and dry grass prairies. The land boasts no major rivers and the water supply is limited to rain catch pools and the runoff from the annual snowmelt of the Stoneheart Mountains that fills a number of temporary lakes and washes in the eastern portions of the duchy. As a result, the duchy is a sparsely populated land that always stands on the verge of famine during the dry season each summer and fall. Within Panetoth itself, each year's dwindling water supply is protected and overseen by the clergy of the Church of Mitra who make liberal use of their magical abilities to create and purify water in order to stave off the dual specters of dysentery and cholera.

Vast herds of sheep, cattle, and horses roam the plains in a constant search for new pasture, and the famous Waymark cavalry patrols its vast stretches on their sure-footed, locally bred mounts. A large perpetual cavalry encampment lies just north of Panetoth which serves as the cavalry's mustering ground and is under command of the venerable Lord-Knight Commander of the Waymarch, Count Kessiar Ulthol, but despite its constant influx of mounted troopers the camp is rarely full. This is because the duchy's many contracts with foreign governments (primarily the Free City of Bard's Gate) to hire its cavalry forces out as mercenaries[LL8-38] keeps a goodly portion of these soldiers abroad at any given time.

Of final note, is the significant number of nomadic Plainsmen that call the Waymarch home and are found as frequent visitors to the city of Panetoth. These horse-riding tribes are all descended from the Shattered Folk of the Haunted Steppe who have been allowed to cross the Wizard's Wall, one tribe at a time selected through a lottery held every 50 years, and take up their migratory ways in the great open expanse of the northern and eastern marches of Reme. These groups range as far east as Bard's Gate and the Lyre Valley and as far north as the fringes of the Haunted Wood in the Northmarches of Reme. They exist peacefully among the folk of the Grand Duchy, most of them having lived for generations south of the Wizard's Wall since their initial lottery selection, though there are rivalries among the tribes that have existed since even before and still erupt sometimes into bloodshed. Nevertheless, they generally keep the peace between their groups while in and around Panetoth. The tribes of the Plainsmen that can be encountered in the Waymarch are the Grass Sailors, Quick Knives, Stone Faces, Thunder Riders, Stone Walkers, and Beast Takers (see page 26 of ***LL8: Bard's Gate*** by **Frog God Games** and ***K12: The Eamonvale Incursion*** by **Necromancer Games** for further information).

PANETOTH

Panetoth (pronounced PAN-uh-tawth) serves the regional capital and administrative center for the Grand Duchy of Reme's eastern marchlands, known as the Waymarch.

Panetoth is a bustling trade city straddling the Tradeway, the great caravan road that spans the vast plains of central Akados between the great cities of Reme in the west and Bard's Gate in the east. As such there is always a roiling mix of traders, travelers, soldiers, and locals treading upon its wide dirt streets, peppered liberally with the droppings of the thousands of horses that are bred upon the surrounding prairie.

Though nowhere near as large as the great cities of the Kingdom of Foere to the south or even of the closer metropolises of Bard's Gate or the port of Reme, Panetoth nevertheless gives off an air of busy commerce and cosmopolitan variety in the many faces that walk its broad streets: the sun-wrinkled faces of traders mingle with the steely-eyed soldiers of the Waymarch's famed cavalry and the ageless complexions of elves and half-elves from the Forest Kingdoms[LL8-44] beyond Bard's Gate to the east or the grim, dour-faced gnomes and dwarves of the Stoneheart Mountains. It seems one could run into anyone from anywhere on the streets of a city like Panetoth and lends credence to the fact that the great expedition of Col. Sixtun Conroi could begin right here.

As busy as Panetoth is, there is a certain impermanence to it. Its population triples to more than 70,000 during the prime trading months, and businesses come and go with the traders. Many establishments never set up more than a tent as its retail location, and more permanent structures change hands swiftly as business ventures come and go with the tide of the Tradeway. Even the great cavalry post visible to the north of the city is more an encampment of tents than a fortified structure. The duke's citadel and the residential districts that skirt to the south of the Tradway are some of the few areas of truly permanent construction. As a result, it may not be clear where the party should begin looking for clues as to the origins of the Conroi Expedition.

Anyone making a DC 10 Intelligence (History) check can learn that there is a monument to the Conroi Expedition located near the center of the city just off the Tradeway. Someone could instead spend an hour making a DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation) or Charisma (Persuasion) check to gain the same information from locals.

A result of 20 or better on any of these checks reveals that a small museum dedicated to the expedition and curated by a man named Lartan is located on a side street near the monument. A result of 25+ also makes the PC aware that it is rumored that a single survivor of the original Conroi Expedition may still be alive and dwelling in an invalid's hospital for veterans a couple of miles northwest of the city on the Devil's Road.

B. THE CONROI MEMORIAL AND EXPEDITIONARY MUSEUM

This location lies in a small square just north of the Tradeway near the center of town.

B1. MEMORIAL STATUE

Standing at the center of a small square is a stone statue upon a pedestal rendered in the classic equestrian style of Foere. It heroically depicts the image of a bearded man in the uniform of a commander of the Waymark cavalry, scabbarded saber at his belt, and helmet in hand, gazing northward with a look of intense concentration on his furrowed brow. He sits astride a gallant light horse of the Waymarch plain, its forehooves raised in the air as if about to leap forward into a gallop. A plaque is visible upon the base, but other than evidence of passing birds no one seems to pay much attention to the sculpture.

The plaque at the base of the pedestal is badly corroded copper that can be recognized with a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) or DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check to read in Common:

Col. Sixtun Conroi, Cdr. Conroi Expedition

Departed from this square on Mithrond 26, 3438 I.R. to discover the fate of the Caleen Colonies. Crossed the Wizard's Wall and entered the Haunted Steppe on Oeros 7, 3439 I.R.

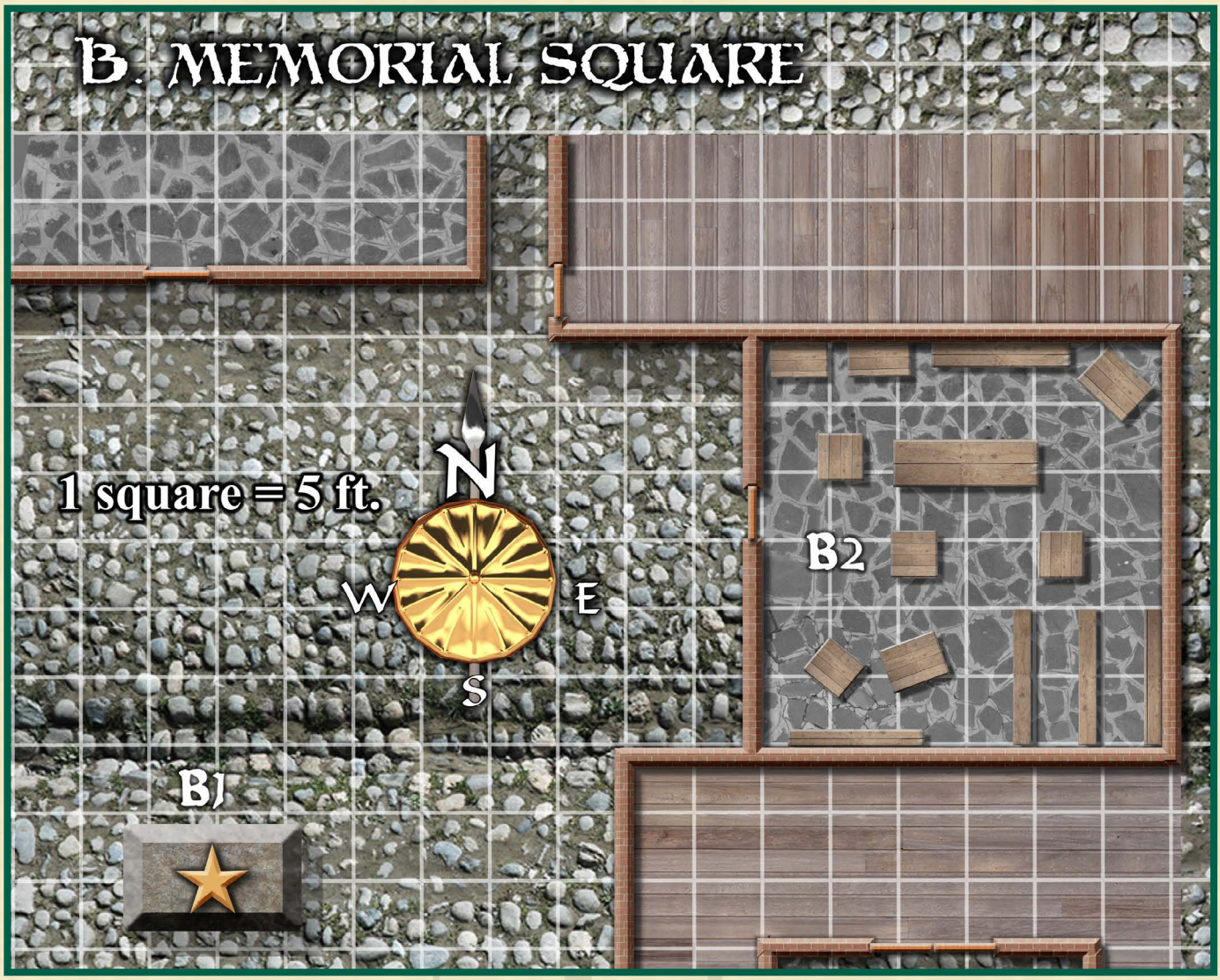
Last known position crossing the Wanaheeli River on Freyrmond 5, 3439 I.R.*

Knowledge comes in discovery. Hope comes in the seeking.

Anyone making a DC 15 Intelligence (History) check recognizes that the Foerdewaith equestrian style of the statue with the horse's hooves rampant (both front hooves lifted as it rears up) is intended to indicate that the subject of the statue died in battle**. Though the ultimate fate of Col. Conroi and his expedition are unknown, it is assumed

* September, January, and March, respectively in the **Lost Lands** calendar. See page 219 of ***LL7: The Blight: Richard Pett's Crooked City*** by **Frog God Games**

** While this is a commonly held (though ultimately incorrect) belief about real-world statuary, it is in fact true in the Foerdewaith-style of equestrian sculpture: Rampant (front hooves up in a rearing position) indicates death in battle, *passant* (one front hoof up in a striding position) indicates being mortally wounded in battle, and *statant* (all hooves down in a standing position) indicates survival in battle.



by historians that he died in battle with foes or simply the elements in his doomed journey. If the PCs are not aware of this aspect of the sculpture, Lartan can fill them in.

B2. THE CONROI EXPEDITION MUSEUM AND REPOSITORY

This humble structure is tucked in between two other buildings fronting on the square and has seen considerably less maintenance over the years. Its boarded walls are silver with age, bearing only the faintest hint of the whitewash that once graced its surface, and its roof is low-slung and sagging towards the street, its shingles as gray as the building's walls with many missing and their absence carefully patched with tarpaper. A faded sign nailed to the eaves directly above the small entrance declares this to be "The Conroi Expedition Museum and Repository".

The interior of the museum is a cluttered space occupied by displays of "artifacts" of the expedition and a small library of tomes, journals, and documents related to the expedition. Most of the artifacts are actually tools, weapons, or goods of the Plainsmen tribes of Waymarch that have been misidentified as relics of the Shattered Folk tribes of the Haunted Steppe or are mundane pieces of gear or articles of clothing (most well-worn or in otherwise poor shape) that purport to be examples of items carried by the expedition but are more likely just pieces of discarded rubbish collected over the years and put on display. The truth of these displays can be recognized with a DC 15 Intelligence (History) check.

The curator of the museum is a gray-headed, stooped old man with a pair of spectacles perched precariously on his nose named **Perite Lartan** (CG male old human **expert** [see

page 10]; Deception +5). Lartan is a self-styled expert on the Conroi Expedition and has put the museum together over the years with a fanatical dedication. He charges 2 sp per person for admission to the museum, but as the PCs are his only visitors in some time, he gives them a personal guided tour once the admission fee has been paid. Lartan is well aware of the dubious provenience of most of the displays (and is responsible for the majority of them) but will wax philosophical over them until such time as he gets the idea that the PCs are aware of their false nature at which point he will quickly usher them on to the archives saying something about "unreliable field researchers."

The archives are Lartan's true pride and joy because most of the books and documents present do truly relate to the expedition. Though the affair happened generations ago, records still exist — names of merchant suppliers, purchase orders, and personal correspondence, etc., leading up to the departure of the expedition, its initial leg across the Northmarches of Reme, and its journey over the Wizard's Wall onto the Haunted Steppe. There is also a section filled with books about the research conducted by the expedition's scholars on the Campacha Plains, but these are all reproductions of the accounts published from the Royal Archives at Reme for whom the scholars were working. None of them specifically deal with the northward portion of the expedition across the Wanaheeli River, and Lartan has nothing associated with that portion of the expedition other than the fake artifact displays. All in all these assorted accounts of the build-up to the expedition and the research conducted in Campacha don't seem to provide any useful information the PCs don't already know, apart from an overwhelming sense of discovery and optimism that pervades them throughout. However, anyone spending an hour to search through these books and documents and making a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds a reference to something called the *Tellio Manuscript*.

Development: Though he is happy to tell all kinds of tall tales about what befell the expedition after Col. Conroi sojourned north, a DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check is sufficient to tell that he is simply embellishing and building on what few rumors made the rounds about the fate of that group and that none of them bear any true merit. If confronted with this he will hesitantly admit that really no one knows what became of the expedition once it crossed the Wanaheeli and, truth be told, even attempts at magical divination as to its fate (beyond the fact that everyone was dead) were unable to uncover anything. This last bit is actually one of the more valuable pieces of information that Lartan possesses because it reveals that something very powerful must have blocked any such divination attempts, which also reveals something of the true nature of the expedition's goals.

Nonetheless, the PCs can question Lartan about what he may know, and potential questions and the answers the curator is able to impart are given below.

Have any others come by seeking information about the expedition recently? Lartan smiles grimly at this and states that few have any interest anymore in the history upon which our very existence is built. However, he does admit that a stranger came through just over a week ago to see the collection. He was a nondescript, middle-aged man who had the accent of a southlander (i.e. from the central Kingdom of Foere region). He did not give his name and only spent a few hours scouring through the archives after questioning the curator for a bit. He did not give a name or a reason and left without comment. Lartan has not seen or heard from him since and is not sure he could identify him again on sight if he tried beyond recalling that the man had a sailor's tattoo of a sea serpent on his left forearm, probably former Foerdewaith Navy.

Other than that one man, no one else has been through in months, though he pauses a moment after saying that. A DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check made at this point will notice that the question did seem to spark a sudden recollection in the old curator, though. If pressed, he admits that there was a break-in less than a week ago. Nothing was stolen, but some of the tomes in the archive were shuffled around a bit. Since nothing was missing, he repaired the lock on the door and didn't think anything else about it until this moment. If they ask him what was shuffled around, he directs them to the *Tellio Manuscript* (see below).

What/where is the Tellio Manuscript? He tells them it's one of the journal fragments among the archive collection. He can locate this unmarked folio for them if asked (see "Tellio Manuscript Trap" below).

Were there/are there any survivors of the expedition who could be questioned? He states that no one who traveled northward on the final leg of the expedition escaped the fate of his peers. Of those who remained behind in Campacha to conduct their research and ultimately establish the Conroi Settlements, all have long since died of advanced years or assorted mishaps over the intervening eight decades. However, a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Insight) check allows a PC to realize the old curator is holding something back in a seemingly protective way.

To gain this omitted detail, the PCs must convince Lartan they are sensitive to the privacy and peace of mind of anyone who might be able to help them. This requires a successful DC 25 Charisma (Persuasion) check or a magical *charm*. Should they gain his trust, the historian admits that one person still lives who may know something more, but Lartan prefers no one bother the man in the final years of life. If the PCs promise to keep their visit short and not press him, Lartan agrees to tell them where to find the final surviving member of the expedition, an old fellow named Ambrose Hallet who is the sole survivor of the Campacha portion of the expedition. He returned to Panetoth years later and eventually moved into the Devil's Rest Hospital for Invalids as a long-forgotten, but nonetheless-true hero of the Grand Duchy of Reme.

Who is the survivor at the Devil's Rest Hospital for Invalids? If the PCs have already heard of the resident of the Devil's Rest and question Lartan specifically about it, he answers as above, initially denying the existence of Ambrose Hallet but can be swayed as described.

What/where is the Devil's Rest? Lartan can provide directions to the Devil's Rest, and even explain the meaning of the name (see area **C** below).

What is Gravenfar's manuscript at the Grey Citadel (see "Tellio Manuscript Trap" below)**?** Lartan is no Gravenfar expert but does have some knowledge of the famed explorer. He knows that he disappeared in the Haunted Steppe only two years before the Conroi Expedition. As he recalls, the story is that the explorer spent some weeks in Castorhage before taking ship to Reme to begin his quest. Lartan doesn't know any details of Gravenfar's quest beyond something about a "cradle of Hyperborea" in the mountains somewhere, but he does seem to remember that Gravenfar made one final short stopover in the Grey Citadel of Dun Eamon before crossing the Wizard's Wall. Lartan doesn't know why Gravenfar stopped by Dun Eamon, nor is he aware of any Gravenfar manuscript related to that stopover.

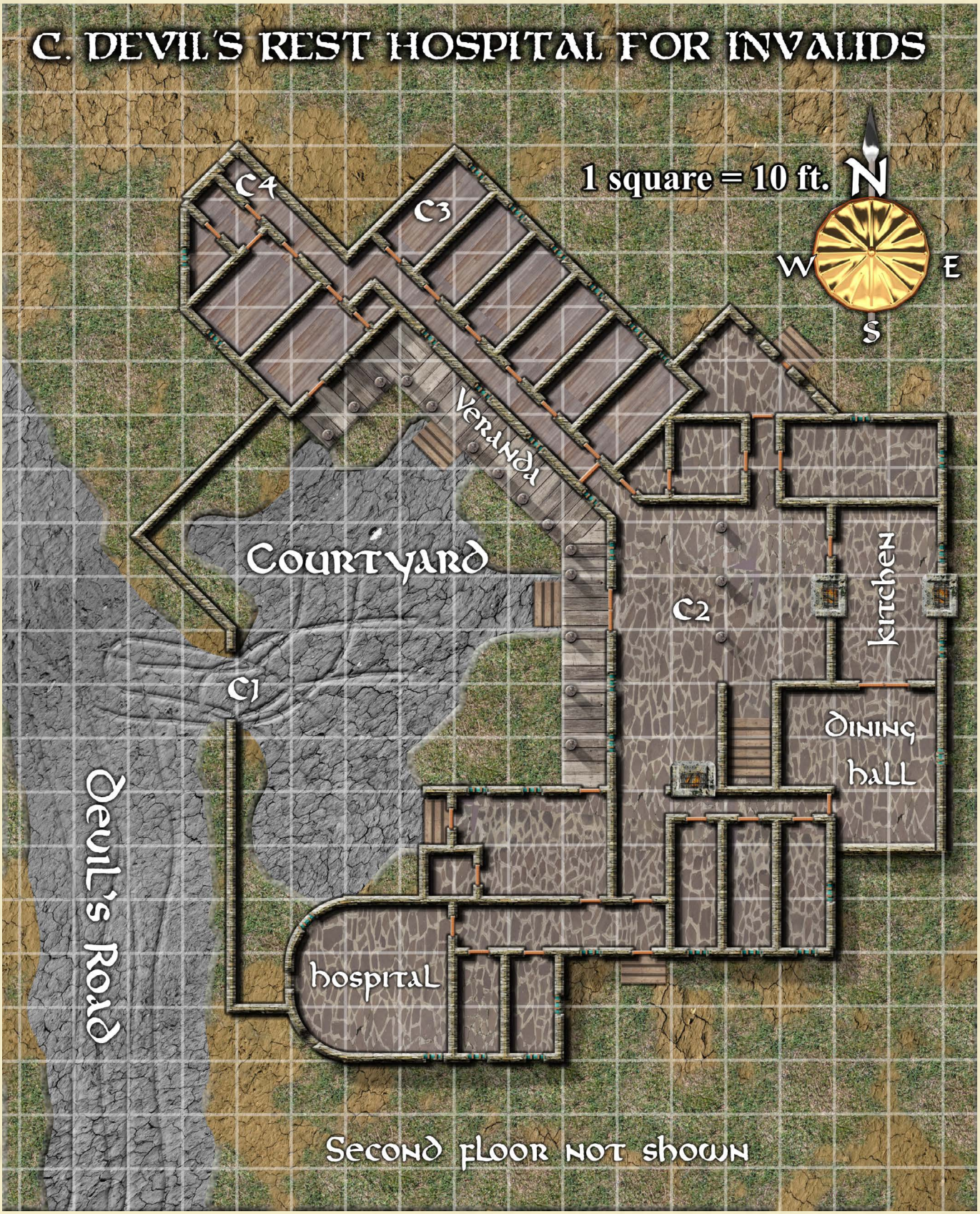
Tellio Manuscript Trap: This is an unmarked folio of loose parchment leaves held in a worn cloth cover that bears many stains of age and wear. If asked, Lartan can confirm that this folio was moved after the break-in of 5 days ago, but after a cursory glance within he saw that none of the leaves were missing and so simply re-shelved it in its proper place. If the PCs wish to peruse the documents, Lartan willingly provides it to them (touching the pages for the first time in the process). The documents are the partial journal of a member of the expedition referred to within only as "Tellio". They hold only items of mundane interest like those described previously except for one entry that is noticed with a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check. This one makes brief mention of the "consultation of the manuscript of Gravenfar at the Grey Citadel." Other than that, it holds no information of interest. Lartan or a DC 5 Intelligence (History) check reveals that the Grey Citadel refers to the city of Dun Eamon in Eamonvale, on the eastern edge of the Grand Duchy.

Unfortunately for the PCs and Lartan, other interested parties broke in and discovered the folio themselves after learning through their own channels of the resurgent interest in the Conroi Expedition. These unknown individuals found the information they were looking for and then left a trap for any that would follow after. The edges of the pages in the folio have been treated with a contact poison that affects Lartan (assume he fails his save) and any PCs handling the pages who fail their own saves. Noticing the poison requires a DC 25 Wisdom (Perception) check. The onset of the poison is in 1 minute, so there is plenty of time for Lartan and multiple people to handle the pages before the effects of the poison are noticed. Creatures that fail their saving throw take 55 (10d10) poison damage and are poisoned for 1 hour.

C. DEVIL'S REST HOSPITAL FOR INVALIDS

Anyone seeking this invalid soldier's hospital can locate it with a DC 15 Intelligence (History) or Charisma (Persuasion) check to gather information. A result of 25+ on either of those checks learns that a few years ago a group of deranged ruffians attempted to break into the hospital for unknown reasons. They were repelled though three caretakers and two visiting soldiers were killed in the process. Since that time members of the City Guard have volunteered their time to keep watch over the facility and protect the vulnerable residents within.

This retirement home for invalid soldiers takes its seemingly sinister moniker from the road upon which it lies. The Devil's Road stretches between Panetoth and the city of Yalendir some 260 miles to the north. The city of Yalendir is named for an old Gasquen[LL5-14] word for devil: "yalen" and refers to the campaign two millennia ago when Grand Duke Borell I faced and defeated the hobgoblin demigod Kakobovia[MoM-100/LL3-255]. The hobgoblin god was commonly referred to as the Great Yalen ("Great Devil") by the common folk of Reme at that time, and the city from which Borell sallied forth to face him, previously known by the unassuming name of Riverborg, was thereafter


C. DEVIL'S REST HOSPITAL FOR INVALIDS
1 square = 10 ft.
N
W
E
S
C4
C3
Veranda
Courtyard
C2
Kitchen
C1
Dining hall
Devil's Road
hospital
Second floor not shown

renamed Yalendir, or "Devil's Door". The road between Panetoth and Yalendir subsequently came to be known the Devil's Road in honor of Borell's victory. Anyone making a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check (DC 5 for an individual who speaks Gasquen) or Intelligence (History) check is aware of the meaning of the road's name. For others, it might provoke a more cautionary response.

Once a small country manor, this estate has clearly seen better days. A low stone wall separates it from the main road revealing a dusty yard and sagging veranda. One wing of the house shows signs of repairs and painted letters on a newly white-washed wall reads, "Heroes of Bard's Gate," but otherwise the rest of the building seems to be slowly succumbing to the passage of time like the residents within that call it home. A few old codgers dodder around the courtyard or sit in the shade of the veranda, while a handful of armed and armored men stand near the entrance. A faded sign mounted on the wall next to the front gate says, "Devil's Rest Hospital for Invalids."

This tiny run-down estate once functioned as a private manse before ownership reverted to the duchy after the last owner died without heirs. It was then converted into a convalescent hospital and rest home for war veterans. Since then the facilities have become more and more decrepit as its residents have slowly succumbed to age and their injuries. Recently attempts were made to refurbish parts of it to accommodate a number of new maimed veterans home from the Huun invasion that struck Bard's Gate only three years ago[LL8-17,22], but other than a few modest repairs the hospital has remained largely decrepit with most rooms unoccupied save for a few crusty old veterans that have hung on far beyond their time.

C1. GUARDED ENTRANCE

The main entrance to the veterans' hospital opens off the front veranda. There are always **1d4+2 city guardsmen** standing around here. Even though these volunteers are off duty, they remained armed, armored, and wearing the livery of the Panetoth City Guard. They are wary of visitors they don't recognize and are very protective of the residents of the hospital. They have an initial attitude of indifferent towards the PCs and will converse with them but will not let them in.

If made at least friendly they can explain why the stand guard (the attack by hooligans as described above). If at least friendly and asked about Ambrose Hallet, they will admit that he resides here and will even reveal that a pair of men came by only a week ago to see him. They can describe the pair as a nondescript man of medium build and a sailor's tattoo on his arm and a younger-seeming man with blonde hair and a short beard that had the look of elven blood about him. The pair could not provide adequate reason for wishing to disturb Old Ambrose and were rebuffed, going on their way without giving any trouble. If their attitude is changed to helpful, they will allow the PCs to go in to see Old Ambrose and give directions to his room. But one guard and one caretaker will accompany them and will only allow the visit for 15 minutes as he is very frail and can't withstand much strain. If the PCs can't obtain entry through diplomacy, they must find some other means, though attacking the guards is a very bad idea if they wish to avoid becoming fugitives from justice in the Waymarch.

CITY GUARDSMEN (1D4+2)

hp 22 (see page 189)

C2. HOSPITAL PROPER

This estate is small and run down with plaster peeling from walls and mismatched pieces of furniture used by the few residents. More rooms are bare and empty of occupants, their ceilings stained and sagging from old water leaks in many places. The southern wing has seen some refurbishment and includes the working kitchens and cafeteria for the residents as well as the rooms for a handful of Waymark cavalry veterans of Bard's Gate who are much younger than the other residents but are in poor shape with many missing limbs or eyes and some badly burned or virtually comatose. The rest of the manor is populated by a dozen or so veterans ranging in age from their late 50s to even a pair in their 90s. These broken-down human beings shuffle quietly about their abode, closer akin to ghosts than any living person. Also present in the manor are a total of **6 caretakers** (NG male or female **commoner**) and a **physiker**[LL7-197] (a professional doctor; LG female human **expert** [see page 182]; Medicine +5) who care for the residents.

C3. OLD AMBROSE'S ROOM

If a caretaker walks the PCs to Ambrose's room, he relates that the old veteran mainly sleeps and otherwise keeps to himself. However, during violent storms he hobbles down the hallway and mutters nonsense to himself while watching the lightning from a window that faces northwest. When a caretaker or fellow resident does ask him about his experiences, he either goes catatonically mute or starts trying to hurt himself. Some of the caretakers and resident think he would rather end his life than remember the things he's seen.

The trip down the hallway passes several dusty empty rooms. Most don't even contain beds or tables anymore; just old drapes pulled over dirty windows. At the end of a long, lonely hallway,

a caretaker uses a ring of keys to open the last small room. The musty smell of too many years and not enough cleaning pervades this aged chamber. Once cheering paper curls from the walls like sickly, yellowing fingers, and a single small window provides the only light and but the feeblest hints of fresh air. A metal-frame bed with thin, threadbare mattress sits near one wall bearing upon it the blanketed form of a mummified figure. The wizened, virtually hairless head lies, with neck extended above the covers, its sunken eyes closed and toothless mouth agape over sallow, hollow cheeks. From the smell and the flies buzzing about your hearts sink with the realization that this old-timer has been dead for some time, abandoned and alone back in his tiny room, unnoticed and uncared for by the other residents who haunt these ruinous halls. Then a low gurgle and whistle escapes the gaping mouth and you realize with a start that the cadaverous form snores softly.

This old fellow is **Ambrose Hallet** (CN male venerable human **commoner**; dementia has reduced his Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores to 2). A soldier in the Waymarch army assigned as a guard to the Conroi Expedition, Hallet accompanied them to the Campacha Plains and remained behind with the researchers in the Conroi Settlement. After a decade working there, he returned to Reme and worked for many years as a caravan guard before eventually becoming too old for the work and ultimately moving into the hospital as he became too infirm to care for himself. Now at 116 years old, Old Ambrose is barely conscious and sleeps away most of his days here in his room, eating only little and rarely conversing. He has no visitors and lives solely on the pension he received for his years of service to the state.

Unbeknownst to all (including Ambrose himself), the Cult of Hastur has been aware of his existence for many years. Over the decades they systematically eliminated anyone that they feared might know of their plots and plans on the Haunted Steppe while making it look like accidents and misadventure, but by the time they had tracked Ambrose down he was already old. They managed to ambush a caravan he guarded in the guise of simple raiders, but he escaped with only deep wound to his hip left by a cultist's arrow. Shortly thereafter Ambrose retired and became a resident of the hospital. Assuming that he would die soon on his own, they bided their time and waited, but the old warrior has hung on for more than 30 years and his increasing age and dottiness have begun to cause some concern. Three years ago, a small group of cultists finally decided to permanently silence the old man but ran afoul of several able-bodied visitors and caretakers who managed to thwart their plan. Since then the hospital has been under guard, and the cult has refused to risk an overt altercation…until now.

The cult fears that Ambrose may know something that could endanger their operations in the Haunted Steppe, even though he never crossed the Wanaheeli with Col. Conroi's ill-fated venture. Though it is possible that the cult may have been correct years ago when the hospital had more patients and Ambrose had a stronger sense of self, the sad truth is that though he is the only surviving member of the expedition, his existence barely qualifies as such. Now he speaks to no one and rarely leaves his bed as his mind has made the long slide into dementia.

Development: Old Ambrose wakes shortly after the PCs enter the room and stares around in confusion. Ambrose suffers from dementia brought on by advanced age. When awake he is largely catatonic, but a few situations trigger behavior and cause him to become confused (as the *confusion* spell). These triggers include if anyone asks him to think back to his time on the Conroi Expedition or if there are any loud noises, including the sounds of battle. If he enters this confused state, the **city guard** (see page 13) caretaker immediately demands the PCs stop bothering their ward and let him rest and can only be dissuaded if the old man is calmed or the PCs succeed on a DC 25 Charisma (Persuasion) check. Ambrose can be calmed by such means as a *calm emotions*, *suggestion*, *hypnotism*, or *charm person* spell (or similar magic) or by soothing him with a DC 25 Charisma (Perform) check. A heal spell removes his dementia and leaves him clear headed, though it does not reverse the other debilitating effects of his age. If this occurs, see **Event 2** below.

Another means to remove his confused condition is for the PCs to convince him that there is a thunderstorm outside. This could be done with spells like *call lightning*, *control weather*, or even something as simple as a *phantasmal force* at the window or a particularly skillful DC 25 Charisma (Performance) check to imitate the sound of thunder. If one of these methods is successful, Ambrose immediately climbs from his bed and shuffles down the hall towards **C4** where he stands and stares out the window for 1d4 x 10 minutes continuing to mumble to himself. Anyone making a DC 25 Wisdom (Perception) check can make out that he is mumbling "If the lightning is white, we're all fine." Ambrose doesn't know he repeats this phrase continuously and can't explain its meaning.

C4. NORTHWEST WINDOW

The hallway ends here are a wall with a single window that looks northwest along the Devil's Road. Its shutters are broken, and any glass panes are long since gone. A single drab curtain partially covers its view. There is nothing of particular note beyond the window, but whenever there

is a rainstorm, Old Ambrose shuffles to this window and stands mumbling to himself as described under **C3** above. If Ambrose comes to the window in the course of the PCs' interactions with him, proceed with **Event 2** below.

EVENT 2: THEY SHALL KNOW YOU BY THEIR SIGN

Whether the PCs have managed to make Old Ambrose lucid or he has shuffled to the window at **C4** because of a thunderstorm, this event is triggered when one of those conditions is met. In either case, an arrow flies through the window (of his room or the hallway) and thuds into the venerable man's sunken chest. This is immediately followed by an attack of **4 quiet thugs** led by a ruffian named **Furney One-Eye**. The archer who fired the arrow never reveals himself and does not appear during the rest of the battle, having fled after taking his fatal shot.

Furney and his thugs are insane cultists of Hastur, though they will not reveal this to the PCs. The quiet thugs have all voluntarily had their tongues removed, and Furney gave up an eye in his devotion (as a bard he opted to keep his tongue). He doesn't wear a patch over the eye revealing his gruesome empty socket scarred over years ago. Furney and the thugs have already slain the guards at the gate and any caretakers and residents that got in their way. Any guard with the PCs will assist them to the best of his ability, and the caretaker will try to shield Ambrose's bleeding body with his own.

CITY GUARDSMAN

hp 22 (see page 189)

FURNEY ONE-EYE

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic evil
Armor Class 16 (chain shirt)
Hit Points 77 (14d8 + 14)
Speed 60 ft. (30 ft. without *haste*)

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

Saving Throws Dex +7, Cha +6
Skills Acrobatics +7, Deception +6, Insight +6, Performance +9, Persuasion +6
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages Common
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)
Gear. Furney carries two *potions of greater healing*, his rapier, and a handbill for The Canary Crown Theater in Tanith (see **Handout 4B** sidebar)

Defense. Furney adds +1 to his AC when wearing armor, included in his statistics.
Go First. Furney adds his proficiency bonus (+3) to initiative checks.
Slippery Thoughts. Furney has advantage on saving throws against being charmed.
Spellcasting. Furney is an 8th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14). Furney has the following bard spells prepared:
Cantrips (at will): *light*, *minor illusion*, *prestidigitation*
1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds*, *detect magic*, *identify*, *longstrider*, *sleep*
2nd level (3 slots): *alter self*, *heroism*, *silence*, *suggestion*
3rd level (3 slots): *haste*
4th level (2 slots): *freedom of movement*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Furney attacks twice with his rapier.
Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Parry. Furney adds 3 to his AC against one melee attack that would hit him. To do so, Furney must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.



QUIET THUG

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic evil
Armor Class 17 (splint mail)
Hit Points 82 (11d8 + 33)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	8 (-1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Skills Athletics +7, Intimidation +2
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages Common (cannot speak)
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)
Gear. Each quiet thug carries two *potions of greater healing* and two daggers.

Devotion. The quiet thug has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

ACTIONS
Multiattack. The quiet thug attacks three times with its longsword or dagger.
Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 9 (1d8 + 5) slashing damage, or 10 (1d10 + 5) slashing when used in two hands.
Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d4 + 5) piercing damage.

Tactics: Furney casts *haste* and *freedom of movement* on himself and longstrider on his thugs before combat and then silence to conceal the attack on the guards at the hospital entrance. If his thugs are hard-pressed, he casts heroism on his thugs before they attack the PCs. One-Eye avoids melee if possible, interposing thugs between himself and any aggressors and casts *suggestion* to get opponents to "run back to the city to get the guards" while using *sleep* and *silence* to impede spellcasters. If forced into melee or if victory seems assured, he casts dances into combat with haste and focuses on the weakest combatant he can reach. Furney doesn't care if any of his thugs die, but once he is below 15 hit points, he flees back into town. As soon as he believes he is no longer followed, he heals himself with a quick spell or two, casts *alter self* to avoid discovery, and then continues to his hideout. If in danger of capture, he attempts to take his own life.

If any are somehow captured and questioned, they will not reveal their affiliation with any cult even under duress and will say only that the "old man had been marked". However, a search of his body will reveal a flyer for a theater in distant Tanith called The Canary Crown (see area **G**). A copy of the flyer can be found in **Appendix B** (see page 70). A DC 10 Intelligence (History) check or Charisma (Persuasion) check made to gather information reveals that Tanith is the name of a city in the Duchy of the Northmarches in northern Reme. Intelligence (Arcana) and Intelligence (Religion) checks and magical divinations are unable to decipher or comprehend the mystical symbols that appear on the handbill. Additional information about Tanith and the Canary Crown Theater can be found in **Chapter 3** (see page 51). See **Appendix B** for details of this player handout.

Development: Regardless of any efforts made by the PCs, Ambrose's wound is mortal. Even if healed, the shock is too much for his aged system to handle. He will hang on until the end of the battle or until a PC attempts to heal him if in the midst of battle. At that point his rheumy eyes will clear for a moment as lucidity takes hold one last time. He will look at the nearest PC and softly say, "White lightning means we're fine, but the yellow…the yellow is death." He pauses a moment and closes his eyes as a single tear slides down his cheek and mutters, "Gravenfar sleeps just like the rest of 'em; every last one. I wish they'd never followed that man's journal." Then he breathes his last. No means of artifice or magic can save the man nor contact his spirit to gain more information, the last member of the Conroi Expedition finds peace at last. If Ambrose's body is searched for a mark, among many old scars and injuries can be found a single unusual scar on his right hip. It appears to resemble a circle with three wavy lines radiating from it, but it is too distorted by time and aging to be recognized. No one asked knows what the scar means or where it could have come from, but Old Ambrose clearly carried it for many years.

EVENT 3: JUST THE FACTS

Before the PCs leave town, they are approached by the City Guard. It is possible this has occurred after the poisoning (or attempted poisoning) of Perite Lartan at area **B** or the assault on the veterans' hospital at **C**, or likely both. In any case the party are persons of interest, though they are unlikely to be suspects unless they have acquitted themselves particularly poorly. Preferably this event occurs only hours before the PCs are preparing to depart for Dun

Eamon. The PCs are approached by **3 city guardsmen** and a **guard captain** who respectfully requests that they follow him to the central guard station at the Duke's Citadel. The captain, an affable dwarf named Nyman, explains the City Guards' interest in the PCs based on the events that have occurred since they've arrived. He knows they are involved in researching the Conroi Expedition somehow and that is why they've been summoned.

CITY GUARDSMEN

hp 22 (see page 189)

NYMAN, GUARD CAPTAIN

Medium humanoid (dwarf), lawful neutral
Armor Class 16 (half plate)
Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)
Speed 25 ft.

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

Skills Intimidation +2, Perception +3
Senses passive Perception 13, darkvision 60 ft.
Languages Common, Dwarf
Challenge 1 (200 XP)
Special Gear. Nyman carries a *potion of greater healing* for emergencies.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Nyman makes two melee weapon attacks.

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

Halberd. Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (d10 + 1) slashing damage.

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +3 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d10 + 1) piercing damage.

Captain Nyman takes them into the morgue at the guard station and shows them a body. It is a nondescript human male, with brown hair and brown eyes. His throat has been cut from ear to ear and his tongue removed. He is partially decomposed and appears to have been dead for several days. Clearly visible on his forearm is the faded tattoo of a sea serpent.

The captain explains that the corpse was found stuffed in a rain barrel behind a brothel. No one knew his name or where he had come from. He had been seen several days ago in the company of a blond, bearded man, a human or perhaps a half-elf, and one witness stated that the blond man was spotted leaving town hurriedly on the Devil's Road. Captain Nyman suspects that the blond man didn't kill the fellow but was rather running from someone, but he admits he has no idea who. He only knows that the two had been previously been seen in some of the same locations as the party has visited. He doesn't know exactly what the connection is but believes there is one and hoped that the PCs could shed some light. The PCs should recognize the description of the man from what they've heard previously, but unless they act particularly suspicious, Captain Nyman lets them go after only a few minutes with a request that they let him know if they turn up anything new about the murder.

Though the PCs likely suspect that the same thugs who beset them at the hospital (and probably believe them to be connected to Castorhage somehow), the truth of the matter is that the two men were agents of the Ironskull Clan doing some advance scouting for their own retinue. Unfortunately, treachery within led to the man's murder at the hands of Cherbaud Brazzegard (see **Event 8** in **Chapter 2**). His partner fled town only to run into an ambush set for him and now lies in a shallow grave in the wilderness. The PCs have no real way of knowing all the wheels moving behind the scenes but should have a sense that they are not alone in their pursuit of the Conroi Expedition and that the others also seeking it are willing to kill to stop any rivals.

THE JOURNEY TO DUN EAMON

The Grey Citadel lies midway up the Eamonvale on the western flank of the Stoneheart Mountains. Dun Eamon lies some 500 miles north as the crow flies, but again the route is not that direct. An overland journey first involves traveling up the Devil's Road to Yalendir followed by a trek northeast up the North Duchy Road with a turn onto the Broadwater Branch. From there it is a straight shot to the city of Broadwater at the entrance of the Eamonvale and then a short journey up the valley to the great citadel built upon the River Eamon. However, as with before, it is possible that the PCs have magical means of reaching the city that do not require so much in the way of slogging. Like Panetoth, Dun Eamon is a well-known city and can be reached faster by magical means if the PCs possess the necessary resources. As a result, no details of the journey from Panetoth to Dun Eamon are included, though you can feel free to add encounters to the road as you see fit.


DUN EAMON
N
FORD
RIVER EAMON
RIVER EAMON
FORD
LOWER RIVER EAMON
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2
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CHAPTER TWO: THE GREY CITADEL OF DUN EAMON

Dun Eamon stands dauntingly in the mists atop a great waterfall in the midst of the River Eamon. Originally an outpost of the ancient gnome kingdom of the High Downs[LL7-325] and later a stronghold of the Clan Krazzadak of mountain dwarves, the Angus are some of the few — perhaps the only — humans with whom the Krazzadak's have had quasi-peaceful relations in the last 3,500 years. Eventually when their King City of the Shengotha Plateau came under a powerful winter curse, the dwarves withdrew up the valley to the mountain highlands and ceded the Eamonvale and the ancient foundations of their fortress of the Grey Citadel, which the humans built upon and expanded into the mountain city of Dun Eamon[MoM-106].

Since the human founding of Dun Eamon by the insular Uplander clans and their eventual rise to dominate even the Eamonvalers of the lower valley, Dun Eamon has prospered. Its huge waterwheel-driven forges have produced much of the finest metalwork to be seen outside the dwarven smithies of the Ironskulls and is renowned for its quality far and wide[G6-6]. Trade has brought prosperity to the city, and the lawful and just rule of the dour Angus clan has ensured that such prosperity has not corrupted the hardworking Uplanders.

The city is positioned at a ford between two waterfalls which causes it to be constantly shrouded in a misty spray. Outdoor surfaces are uniformly slippery (increase DC by 2 for all Dexterity (Acrobatics) and Climb checks outdoors). In addition, the omnipresent mist outdoors provides concealment to anyone more than 20 feet away. At night, even with a light source, this is reduced to 10 feet. Additionally, the saving throws to avoid catching fire always have advantage due to the wetness. These conditions do not prevail inside or underground unless otherwise noted.

DUN EAMON

The Grey Citadel of Dun Eamon (pronounced DUHN EE-muhn) is the capital of Eamonvale and has served as the hereditary seat of the Uplander clan of Angus for generations.

DUN EAMON (AKA THE GREY CITADEL)

LG small city
Corruption +3; **Crime** –2; **Economy** +3; **Law** +5; **Lore** +2; **Society** –1
Qualities insular, prosperous, rumormongering citizens, strategic location
Danger 5

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government overlord
Population 5,722 (4,520 humans; 401 dwarves; 229 gnomes; 216 half-elves; 171 halflings; 114 elves; 71 other)

NOTABLE NPCS

Arb Angus, Lord of Eamonvale (LG male human [Uplander[LL7-49]] ranger 4/fighter 4)
Bron Angus, Captain of the Mist Watch (LG male human [Uplander[LL7-49]] **knight**)
Semerion, Chief Steward (LG male human [Uplander[LL7-49]] expert [see page 10])
Cael Angus, Master of Stryme (CG male human [Uplander[LL7-49]] cleric of Stryme 8[LL4-168])
Brother Melph, Priest of Belon the Wise (NG male human cleric of Belon the Wise[LL5-237] 5)
Elinda Bannon, arcane advisor to the Angus (LG female human [Uplander[LL7-49]] wizard 9)
Devlin, Guildmaster of the Ebon Union (NE male half-elf **assassin**)

DUN EAMON MAP KEY

1. Gatehouse
2. Public Stables
3. Caravan Camp
4. Market Tavern
5. Market
6. Crafthall
7. Temple of Stryme
8. Mist Watch Garrison
9. Angus Keep
10. Bannon's Tower
11. Shrine of Solanus
12. The Hole Tavern
13. The Bathhouse
14. Ironworks
15. The Millworks
16. The Root-Cutter's Shop
17. Waterfront

Unless they have devised some other means of travel, the party arrives at the southern bank of the River Eamon where the ford leads into the shallows towards the citadel's southern gate.

The trade road leads directly to the river's edge where a ford has been clearly marked allowing access to the gatehouse beyond. Not a quarter mile to the west the river flows over one of the massive waterfalls that flank the Grey Citadel's perch, sending up its perpetual shroud of gray mist that lends the fortress its name. Though water of the ford is shallow, the current is strong and will undoubtedly pull anything lost to it over those churning falls. Across the ford a grim gatehouse stands guard over entry into the fortress's lower bailey where the main city is located. The banner of the Angus flies above this gatehouse, and men with the mail and longspears of the Mist Watch keep an eye over the travelers entering and exiting the city.

Dun Eamon is a vibrant and living trade city, its streets bustling throughout the day, and its taverns and festhalls boisterous into its fog-cloaked nights. However, few details of the city are provided. A listing of the major locations to be find is included for your convenience, but only a few of them are of importance in this adventure. These are detailed below. For more information on The Grey Citadel itself or the Eamonvale as a whole, see ***G6: The Grey Citadel*** and ***K12: The Eamonvale Incursion*** by **Necromancer Games**.

The party has little to go on upon its arrival in Dun Eamon. They know that Gravenfar visited here before heading over the Wizard's Wall. They know that individuals that appear to be connected with their quest were also in pursuit of this Gravenfar secret, and they know that at least one of those individuals was murdered in Panetoth with his companion last sighted headed in the direction of Dun Eamon. Beyond that, they have little information. If they used magic to reach Dun Eamon, then they have arrived far sooner than the blond man who fled Panetoth would have — unless he also commanded some magic — so their best idea may be simply to wait and watch for him to arrive or seek him out in the city if they arrived by more mundane means.

In the course of either of these strategies, they can also do their own investigation around to see what they can turn up about Gravenfar or anything related to the Conroi Expedition. Attempts to gain these sorts of information in town can be made through Intelligence (History) or (history) or with Charisma (Persuasion) checks to gather information. The information that can be gained from the types of checks made are included below. They obtain the information for the DC they rolled as well as any DCs below their check. Some lines of questioning may lead to more specific inquiry; the results of these are provided separately below. Any PCs making checks in regards to matters specifically about Gravenfar (see the "Gravenfar" table below) gain advantage on their checks if they consulted the *Tellios Manuscript* and if they successfully spoke to Ambrose Hallet in Panetoth. If they think to consult with the Mist Watch Garrison and reveal the information obtained from Captain Nyman in Panetoth, they gain advantage on Charisma (Persuasion) checks made with the local watchmen.

General Charisma (Persuasion) or Intelligence (History) checks

DC	Result
10	The town has been plagued of late by "dark visitors from below". These are short, dark-cloaked figures are sometimes seen moving furtively through the misty streets at night.
15	Old gnomish and dwarven tunnels run beneath island, many of which are played-out mines. These tunnels have been known to host dangerous creatures from below that come up and threaten the city from time to time.
20	The current noise [slang for "rumor" or "news"] is that the short figures seen at night are dark creepers stealing babies or serving as advance scouts for a dark folk invasion — or perhaps some more nefarious purpose.
25	The dark visitors have not come from the tunnels below but are actually based out of a black pavilion tent that's been set up for over a week in the caravan grounds. No one sees anyone come or go from the tent, but it's heavily guarded by a troop of sinister-looking lowland mercenaries.

Charisma (Persuasion) or Intelligence (History) about Dun Eamon

DC	Result
5	The Angus clan has ruled Eamonvale for countless generations, but before them the dwarves of Great Mountain Clan Krazzadak once ruled from the upper reaches of the vale. The Grey Citadel served as their southernmost mines and as a stronghold against the humans of the lowlands.
10	The Krazzadak dwarf clan retreated up into mountains many centuries ago after some disaster befell their homeland in the high mountains, and they allowed human settlers to occupy the upper vale after they left. There is even some trade and peaceful relations still maintained between the Uplanders and the Krazzadak dwarves through the Upvale town of Miners' Refuge[MoM-106].
15	Old dwarven mine tunnels run beneath Dun Eamon, but there are other tunnels thought to be older still, some of them from a gnomish stronghold that predated even the coming of the dwarves; no one ever dares to explore these.

Intelligence (History) about Gravenfar

DC	Result
10	Aroldus Gravenfar was known to write extensive journals about his travels and discoveries that he would then publish and make available to scholars.
15	Gravenfar never published a journal about his last journey, whose purpose remains a jumble of conjecture even to this day. He disappeared while on this journey and any journal notes were presumed to have been lost with him.
20	The famed explorer Aroldus Gravenfar stopped by Dun Eamon in the same year as he disappeared on his last journey into the Haunted Steppe. He consulted the Angus's chief steward, the wizard Bannon, in private before departing only a short time later.
25	Gravenfar left his final journal with his good friend, the wizard Bannon, before traveling over the Wizard's Wall because he feared he might be unable to return from that journey and publish it. Whether Bannon was supposed to publish the journal or simply hold it for safekeeping, no one knows.

Charisma (Persuasion) or Intelligence (History) about Bannon

DC	Result
5	Elinda Bannon serves as informal advisor to the Angus on all matters arcane. Her father and grandfather served as stewards to the Angus clan as did their ancestors for generations before.
10	Elinda Bannon lives in the tower built by her grandfather's grandfather at the southwest corner of the Grey Citadel.
15	Elinda Bannon is a powerful wizard and artificer of great power. She advises the Angus informally on magical matters but mainly keeps to herself and her own experiments.
20	Bannon's Tower is known to possess many items of great magical power and an extensive library of ancient books of great value.
25	In the time of Elinda's grandfather, both the famous explorer Aroldus Gravenfar and representatives of the ill-fated Conroi Expedition came to visit the Angus's chief steward over a period of only a few years. What was discussed was never revealed, but both parties soon disappeared over the Wizard's Wall shortly after their visits.

ENCOUNTERS AT THE GREY CITADEL

The following encounter areas are likely visited in the order mentioned, though it is possible that the PCs will find a way to encounter them in a different order. If so, you will need to modify them accordingly to make sure that the PCs still have the opportunity to experience all three. The only points of true importance are that **Event 6** occurs before the PCs find area **E** and **Event 7** occurs before they explore area **F**.

D. BANNON'S LIBRARY

Elinda Bannon's tower is area 10 on the city map. It is accessed by a single iron door at ground level. Assuming the PCs arrive during the day, she will answer their knock but is reluctant to admit visitors. Her initial attitude is indifferent, but if she can be made helpful, she allows entry. If the PCs mention Gravenfar, working with the City Guard of Panetoth, or their discovery in Nains they gain advantage on the Charisma (Persuasion) check. Assuming that she becomes helpful, Elinda allows the PCs to enter and escorts them to her sitting room on the second floor of the tower.



D: Bannon's Library

Elinda Bannon is an attractive female Uplander[LL7-49], tall and slender, with braided brown hair and the simple blouse and trousers of a common craftsman. She is curious as to the party's purpose in visiting her and will listen politely to their explanation. She can confirm that when her grandfather was chief steward of the Angus, the explorer Gravenfar did come by and visit. She remembers her father telling her that he left behind one of his traveling journals for safekeeping before departing on his last fateful trip over the Wall. A year or so later, men from Panetoth came regarding an expedition they were putting together, and her grandfather allowed them to copy portions of the journal for their own use. She supposes these men were with the Conroi Expedition but does not know for certain. For her own part, she was always more inclined towards magical invention and never gave the journal much thought. She keeps an extensive library in her tower, collected by her family over many generations, and is willing to allow PCs she is friendly with to take a look at it, though she doesn't want to part with it due to its extreme historical value.

ELINDA BANNON

Medium humanoid (human), lawful good
Armor Class 14 (+1 leather armor)
Hit Points 49 (9d8 + 9)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +1, Dex +2, Con +3, Int +8, Wis +4, Cha +2
Skills Arcana +7, History +10, Investigation +10
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Infernal, Terran
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)
Special Gear. Elinda is equipped with +1 *leather armor*, a *vicious shortsword*, a *wand of magic missiles*, a *ring of protection*, an *amulet of proof against detection and scrying*, a *circlet of comprehending languages* (as the helm), and a spell scroll of *teleportation circle.*

Spellcasting. Elinda is a 9th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). Elinda has the following wizard spells prepared:
Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt*, *light*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*
1st level (4 slots): *detect magic*, *identify*, *magic missile*
2nd level (3 slots): *enlarge/reduce*, *invisibility*, *locate object*, *mirror* image
3rd level (3 slots): *dispel magic*, *lightning bolt*, *stinking cloud*
4th level (3 slots): *stoneskin*
5th level (1 slot): *scrying*, *teleportation circle*

ACTIONS

Vicious Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 8 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage. When she rolls a 20 on her attack roll with this magic weapon, her critical hit deals an extra (7) 2d6 piercing damage.
Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit*: 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage.



When the PCs are ready, she will escort them up the stairs to her third-floor library.

This vast circular chamber is sizable library with 360-degree floor-to-ceiling shelves on its walls accessible by a rolling ladder, an ornate writing desk, a comfortable red velvet divan with decanter-laden sideboard, an assortment of small tables bearing unrolled maps and schematics, and a number of comfortable chairs. The entire chamber is lit by floating points of light that resemble the flames of torches, though none seem to be giving off any heat. However, despite the chamber's comfortable and even extravagant surroundings, your first impression is one of surprise. This is because a number of shelves have had their contents upended, books and scrolls strewn chaotically across the floor. Strangely a handful of books seem to be floating momentarily in midair as they are plucked from shelves before being tossed haphazardly aside.

Elinda Bannon is stunned by the desecration of her sanctum. Barely audible is the sound her mumbling to herself, "They didn't breach the tower so they must've come from…" before suddenly turning to you and exclaiming, "Take care of whatever that — thing — is," as she points towards the floating books. "I'll find the others!" Then with a single utterance of magic she is gone.

Bannon's library has obviously been ransacked, and the fact that some sort of invisible intruder remains is immediately evident to her even if it is not to the PCs. She, however, has quickly determined that the intruders must have entered through her *ring gate* (see **Appendix B**) and teleports to her workshop before they can escape, leaving the PCs behind with the **alchemically-invisible advanced nithu** that the intruders have left behind. A nithu is a Large aberration that resembles a floating, four-tentacled blob of semi-translucent protoplasm, but this one has been additionally treated with an alchemical concoction to render it invisible. It has chosen to remain behind and look for other texts of interest while its compatriots have already retreated from the tower. Upon the PCs' entry into the chamber, the nithu moves to attack, though its inherent madness may cause it to act unpredictably in any given combat round. If the nithu is reduced to less than 20 hit points, it opens the false top of the writing desk to try and escape back to the Trackless Mire through the *ring gate* there, but its bulk is too much to pass through the gate without the help of its fellows and it is effectively trapped in the library.

TH'GHERU

Large aberration, neutral evil
Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 97 (13d10 + 26)
Speed 5 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non-magical attacks; cold, fire
Saving Throws Con +5, Wis +5
Skills Perception +8, Stealth +8
Senses passive Perception 18, darkvision 60 ft.
Languages Common (can't speak)
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Madness. At the beginning of any combat round, Th'gheru must make succeed at a DC 15 Wisdom save or be confused (as the spell confusion) for 1 round.

Natural Invisibility. Th'gheru is invisible and does not become visible when it attacks.

Stench. Any creature that starts its turn within 10 feet of Th'geru must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until the start of its next turn. On a successful saving throw, the creature is immune to the nithu's stench for 24 hours.

ACTIONS

Tentacles. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 18 (4d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (Escape DC 15). Until this grapple ends, the creature is restrained, and the nithu can't use its tentacles on another target. A target that is hit must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the target is infected with the disease sight rot.

Development: Once the PCs have defeated the nithu they can search the library. Elinda Bannon will not return for several minutes. A DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check can figure out Bannon's simple organization system, and a quick perusal shows them that the shelf where Gravenfar's journal should be is one of the ones that has been ransacked. There is no sign of the book elsewhere in the room either. A search of the room with a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals a number of muddy boot tracks on the floor that seem to go between the writing desk and the ransacked bookshelves. If the nithu has not already opened it, a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals the false top of the writing desk and the *ring gate* that has been mounted within. Though the intruders clearly used some means to shrink themselves small enough to fit through (the amorphous nithu rode through in a *portable hole*), the PCs will have to find their own means if they wish to traverse it. Anyone who has mastered Elinda's cataloguing system can easily locate a cache of scrolls among which are four *spell scrolls of enlarge/reduce* that could allow them to slip through without exceeding the gate's weight limit. Likewise, the PCs can simply wait in the room for Elinda to return in a few minutes (**Event 5**) and request that she cast *teleportation circle* for them. If the PCs wish to travel through the *ring gate*, proceed with **Event 4**.



EVENT 4: ELINDA'S WORKSHOP

This event only occurs if the PCs elect to travel through Elinda's *ring gate*. Otherwise she returns to her tower after a few minutes having successfully recovered the journal (see **Event 5**), and this event can be ignored. If some or all of the PCs chance the *ring gate*, read the following.

You have emerged from a similar ring embedded in the top of a worktable. You are in large chamber with a floor of stone flags, wooden walls, and a thatched roof overhead. Two long tables covered in tools, books, and unknown devices flank either side. Two shuttered windows are set in opposite walls, and a single door exists in one wall. The door is slightly ajar and allows daylight to stream in through the gap. A thunderous blast and the yells of several men can be heard from beyond this door.

The party has arrived at Elinda's secret magical workshop, a secluded cottage she has erected in the great peat bog known as the Trackless Mire. The workshop lies 80 miles from Dun Eamon and is not reached by any roads. Anyone opening the door or windows can see the dingy, gray-green landscape extending as far as they eye can see in all directions, with the shapes of mountains just barely visible on the hazy horizons. The Cult of Hastur, seeking Gravenfar's journal, discovered the secret of the workshop and its *ring gate* and used this knowledge to travel into the mire in order to sneak into her library. Elinda realized this as soon as she saw her library ransacked and teleported here. She has just slain two fleeing cultists with a *lightning bolt*. If the PCs look out the front door or the south window, they see the two smoldering corpses and **4 cultists** fleeing across the boggy ground. Elinda Bannon stands just outside the door preparing to smite the others with her spells. Anyone opening the north window sees another **3 cultists** and their **cult leader** sneaking around to ambush the wizard. Anyone out front can make a DC 22 Wisdom (Perception) check to notice the approaching cultists and be able to act in the surprise round. As soon as the ambushing cultists attack, the other turn back and join the battle. Like the thugs at the invalids' hospital, these

cultists are entirely fanatical and will sacrifice their lives to destroy Elinda and the PCs. The ground outside the cottage is considered shallow bog for movement purposes.

ELINDA BANNON

hp 49 (See page 210)

CULTISTS (7)

hp 27 (as spy[SRD])

CULT LEADER

Medium humanoid (half-elf), chaotic evil
Armor Class 17 (studded leather armor)
Hit Points 55 (10d8 + 10)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	20 (+5)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Int +2
Skills Acrobatics +7, Arcana +2, Deception +6, Investigation +2, Perception +5, Stealth +7
Senses passive Perception 17, darkvision 60 ft.
Languages Common, Deep Speech, Draconic, Elven
Challenge 3 (700 XP)
Special Gear. The cult leader has a *wand of paralysis*, *portable hole*, Gravenfar's journal (see page 244), map (see **Handout 4C**), handbill for the theater The Canary Crown in Tanith (see **Handout 4B**)

Evasion. If the cult leader is subjected to an effect that allows her to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, the cult leader instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if she fails.
Fey Ancestry. The cult leader has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put her to sleep.
Sneak Attack. Once per turn, the cult leader deals an extra 17 (5d6) damage when she hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the cult leader that isn't incapacitated and the cult leader doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.
Use Magic Device. The cult leader ignores all class, race, and level requirements on the use of magic items.

ACTIONS
Multiattack. The cult leader attacks twice with her dagger.
Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d4 + 5) piercing damage.
Wand of Paralysis. The cult leader uses her *wand of paralysis*.

Development: Once the thieves are dispatched, Elinda thanks the party for assisting her and searches the bodies for the stolen journal. As in Panetoth, the run-of-the-mill cultists have had their tongues removed. The leader has not but is wholly insane and can give no meaningful information on questioning. Though they seem well equipped (especially the leader's many wands), they are poorly dressed in general with a ragged, cast-off look about them. It seems highly likely that they are homeless vagabonds of some sort, but what could have united them in purpose, brought them out 80 miles into the Trackless Mire, and given them the magical ability to penetrate Elinda Bannon's private library seems anyone's guess. The obvious connection, however, is the handbill for the playhouse in Tanith the leader carries that matches the one carried by the thug in Panetoth.

After locating the journal on the leader's body, Elinda secures it to take back to her tower. If the PCs followed her here through the *ring gate*, between their passage and those the cultists, its powers are exhausted for the day. It's a long slog back to the Grey Citadel, but if the PCs will consent to being reduced and placed in the leader's portable hole Elinda will use her *scroll of teleport* to return them all to her library and let them out there. Otherwise, they can wait until the following day when the *ring gate* has recharged itself or find their own means of returning to the city. Regardless of how they get there, proceed with **Event 5** when the PCs are back at Elinda's tower.

EVENT 5: THE READING

This event occurs whether the PCs followed Elinda Bannon to the Trackless Mire in **Event 4** to help her recover the

READING THE MAP

This is a crudely drawn and labelled map. The only indication that it depicts of northern Reme and the Northmarches is a town labelled as "*Tanith*" near the bottom. Based on that, tree symbols appear to indicate the Haunted Wood, a pair of lines likely represent the Wizard's Wall, and wavy lines of water would be Shadowfall Lake. Likewise the representation of a tower labelled as "*Folly*" no doubt refers to Durgam's Folly with a downward arrow referencing it as a location where the Wizard's Wall can be descended. If the players have trouble reaching these conclusions allow a DC 10 Knowledge (geography) or Intelligence check to deduce its meaning.

Additional points of interest include a dashed line pointing to a location south of the Haunted Wood called "*Landry's Cross*", another dashed line going through the forest to a location on the Wall labelled as "*Two Rock Point*", and another dashed line with the caption "3 miles" pointing along the Wall to a location marked "*X*" with another down-pointing arrow and the label "*waterfall*". One final enigmatic mark is a circular area in the Haunted Steppe beyond the Wall labelled only as "*Burning Pit*".

A DC 15 Knowledge (geography) check can identify Landry's Cross as a landmark south of the Haunted Wood and Two-Rock Point as a landmark on the Wizard's Wall. The players can deduce from this (with a DC 20 Intelligence check if a hint is needed), that the map indicates a route to an unknown means of descending the Wizard's Wall at some nameless waterfall that entirely bypasses the known road at Durgam's Folly. The map shows the route by guiding its bearer to two local landmarks and then indicating that the waterfall lies 3 miles west of Two Rock Point. No indication is given as to the meaning to the area labelled "*Burning Pit*", though the PCs can likely make their own inferences based on the nature of their investigations. The map does not provide any means of locating this Burning Pit once beyond the Wizard's Wall.

stolen journal or if they remained behind at area **D** to await her return. Events that occur during **Event 4** are described in that encounter. If the PCs wait in the tower, then Elinda returns after only a few minutes. In this case, assume that the insane cult leader carrying her companions crammed into her *portable hole* forgot to let them out in her own psychotic confusion. Elinda defeated the cult leader and recovered the journal, the map, the flyer, and the *portable hole* (see **Event 4**) and teleported back to the library. Under these circumstances, whenever the party checks the *portable hole*, they find that all of the cultists were still trapped inside and have suffocated. In any event, Elinda willingly gives the party the *portable hole* in reward for helping her deal with the break-in (do not award XP for the cultists if the PCs did not travel through the *ring gate* to fight them).

Once all the foes have been dealt with and everyone is secure back in the library, the PCs can examine what they've found. The handbill (**Handout 4B**) is identical to the one from **Event 2** in Panetoth and connects the two groups of ruffians together. **Handout 4C** is a crude map (see page 249). The final item of note is the plain-bound book that is, in fact, Gravenfar's infamous journal (see page 244 for details).

After reviewing the journal with the PCs and assessing the other information, Elinda Bannon can see that something much bigger is going on here than a simple break-in of her tower. She realizes that the PCs are a part of something monumental and, assuming they acquitted themselves as something other than scurrilous knaves, does not wish to hinder them in their quest. She will offer to give the PCs the journal in exchange for a promise that they will publish it once they have finished their current task, just as Gravenfar would have no doubt wished it. Since the PCs are already working on behalf of the great library at Nains, adding the journal to the record of their deeds and convincing the Magnate of Books to publish such an important historical tome should be no problem at all.

If the PCs wish, Elinda will allow them to stay and rest at her tower until they are ready to go, but at some point, they will have to leave. When this occurs, run **Event 6** if you have not already had opportunity to do so.

EVENT 6: KEEP AWAY

This event assumes that the PCs have obtained Gravenfar's journal (see **Event 5**). It is possible to run it without that occurring first, but you will need to modify the assailant's tactics accordingly.

This event occurs at some time when the PCs are traversing the streets of the Grey Citadel after dark. The local thieves' guild of Dun Eamon, an outfit called the Ebon Union, has been hired to relieve the PCs of Gravenfar's journal by a contact from Castorhage. Castorhage believes that the PCs



came to Dun Eamon to acquire the journal from Elinda Bannon and also believe that the PCs have done so by this point (whether the PCs actually have or not). If the PCs have, then the thugs have tracked the PCs' location through the journal with a *scroll of locate object*. If the PCs do not yet have the journal, then the thugs have simply been tailing the party discreetly and managed to successfully anticipate the route the PCs were going to take down this alley.

A group of **5 Ebon Union** thugs wait to ambush the party in a darkened side street of Dun Eamon. The normal misty conditions prevail in this alley, and there are no light sources other than faint lights from the street ahead (the alley is considered to be dark in addition to the normal concealment from the mist). Each of the thugs is under the effects of a *potion of darkvision* and are, therefore, not hampered by the dark. They hide in the shadows of side alleys, nooks, and crannies, though a PC making a DC 27 Wisdom (Perception) check becomes aware of them just as they spring their trap and is able to roll for initiative to act in the surprise round.

EBON UNION THUGS (5)

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil
Armor Class 15 (chain shirt)
Hit Points 65 (10d8 + 20)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Int +3
Skills Acrobatics +6, Athletics +3, Deception +1, Perception +4, Sleight of Hand +6, Stealth +6
Senses passive Perception 14, darkvision 60 ft.
Languages Common
Challenge 3 (700 XP)
Special Gear. Each thug carries a *potion of heroism* (see **Appendix B**).

Evasion. If the thug is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, the thug instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.
Sneak Attack. Once per turn, the thug deals an extra 17 (5d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the thug that isn't incapacitated and the thug doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The thug attacks twice with a melee weapon attack, or twice with its shortbow.
Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage.
Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Tactics: The Ebon Union thugs each consume a *potion of heroism* as the PCs draw near and attempt to attack by surprise from their ambush spot. They make Dexterity (Stealth) checks to avoid detection to gang up on the PC they believe has the journal (either through their *locate object* spell or simply by picking the most bookish-looking PC). One of these makes a sneak attack while the other uses the steal combat maneuver to try and obtain the book

from the characters. The thug makes a Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check contested by the target's Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check (the target chooses the ability to use). If the thug wins the contest, it snatches the journal away. If the character with the journal uses both hands to hold onto the journal, they have advantage on their check. If the PCs are aware of the thugs' objective, the thug must use Strength (Athletics) to wrestle the book away rather than Dexterity (Sleight of Hand).

Development: Once one of the thugs has the journal, she immediately flees towards area E while the others attempt to cover her escape. If the PCs are successful in following her, she should manage to always stay at least one turn ahead of them until reaching E, so they are able to find her lair. If they are unable to follow, her tracks in the foggy, puddled streets can be followed with a DC 22 Survival check or a DC 18 with a light source.

The other rogues have been promised a tidy sum and resurrection should they be killed, so they fight to the death in hopes of being able to loot the bodies. However, if no thug managed to steal the journal, the courage of one of them breaks during the fight, and he flees if reduced below 30 hit points. Run any chase as indicated above, but even if not chased his footprints and blood trail can be followed back to E with a Wisdom (Survival) check as above.

If the PCs have already been to Bannon's Tower, even a cursory examination of these thugs can tell that they have little in common with the raggedly dressed ruffians that assaulted Elinda Bannon's library, indicating that they are likely agents of a different group than those were.

E. EBON UNION SAFEHOUSE

The PCs can only find this location by following a thief from **Event 6**.

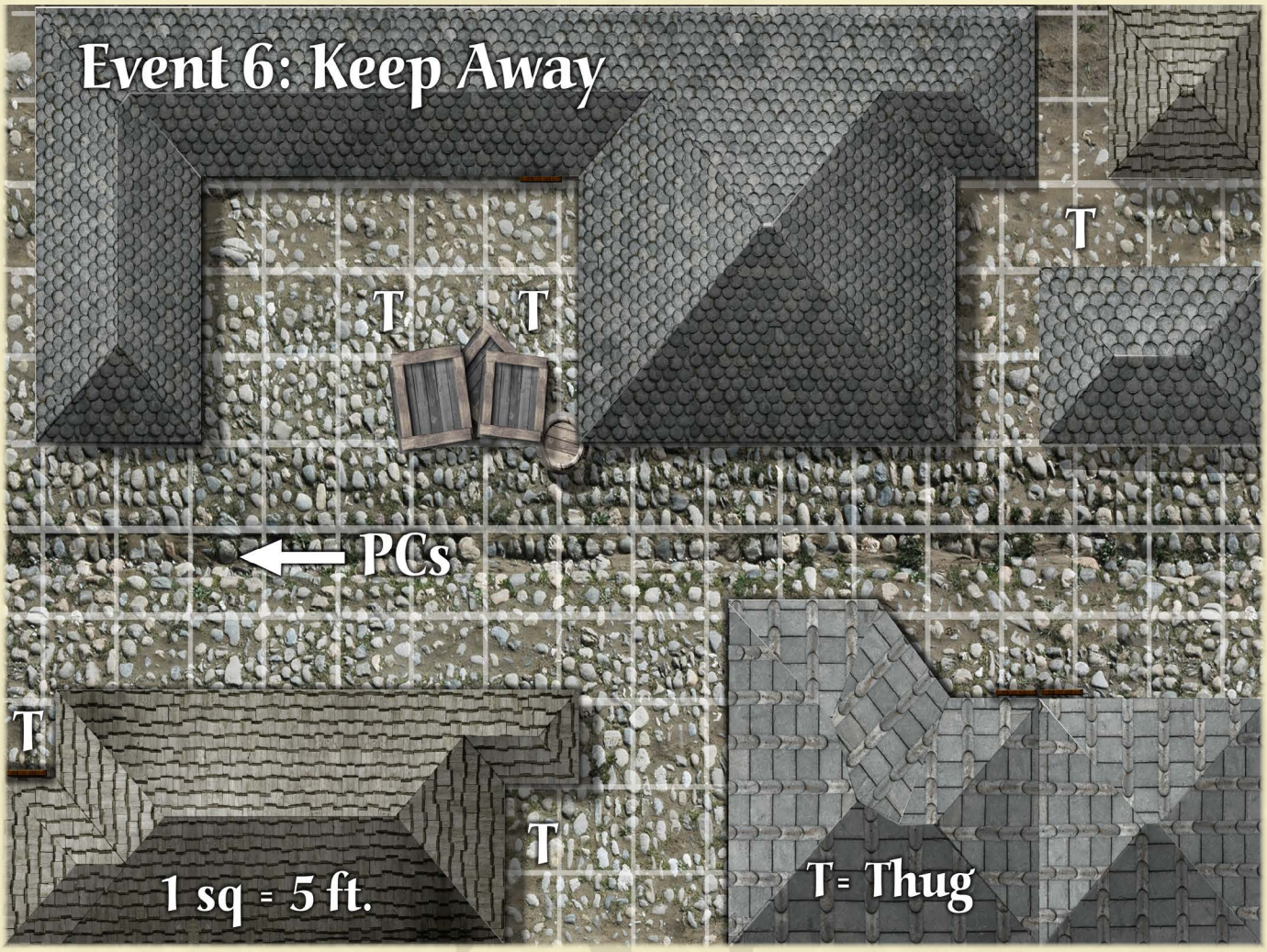
The thief's trail ends here where this alley stops abruptly at the great stone wall of the citadel. There is nowhere else for it to go. The cobbled streets dips in the middle here creating a drainage channel through which the constant mist collects as does as the evening's light precipitation, so that flow of water travels down the center of the lane and washes away any tracks or other signs of passage. To either side, the blank faces of masonry buildings block any access other than their dripping tile roofs some 30 feet above, and ahead the sheer stones of the city wall bar further progress. It seems the thief either disappeared or grew wings in order to escape into the darkness. There is no sound other than the gurgling of the water sluicing past your ankles and the muffled roar of the great Eamon Falls that lie just beyond the city's wall. The roar is somewhat louder here than elsewhere because a barred drainage grate no more than a foot high and two feet wide pierces the base of the wall to allow the runoff to exit the city and tumble down into the darkness beyond.

Anyone searching the surrounding walls or building will find no sign that anyone climbed or flew upon them. A close examination of the iron-barred drainage grate with a DC 23 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals, however, that it has been cleverly hinged to swing upward and out of the way when pulled on, creating a crawl space beneath the city's curtain wall. The passage is large enough for a Medium creature to squeeze through at 1/4 speed and a Small creature to crawl through at half speed with little impediment. The drainage channel is half-full of frigid runoff, though, so those navigating it must keep their head above the flow and pass through in no small discomfort, making a DC 10 Constitution save to avoid gaining one level of exhaustion from hypothermia (maximum exhaustion level 3).

The drainage channel runs beneath the wall for 30 feet and exits at another similarly hinged iron grate on the far side. Beyond this is the sheer drop of the cliff below the citadel walls of some 200 feet to the churning pool of the Lower River Eamon below. However, anyone making a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check here can find hand and foot holds carefully cut into the rock that descend 10 feet to a small cave opening, concealed from above by an overhang of rock. The rock is slick and wet, and even with the footholds, a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check is required to navigate the rock face and prevent a fall into the pool far below, taking 56 (16d6) bludgeoning damage from the fall and then having to make a DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check to make it to the river's edge a quarter mile downstream). A successful Strength (Athletics) check brings the climber to area **E1**.

E1. SAFEHOUSE ENTRANCE

A trickle of water flows down the sloped narrow tunnel from this cave to the cliff entrance. At the back of the cave another small drainage sluice opens in the far wall 6 feet above the floor and puddles the floor. This drainage sluice was also blocked by a grate of iron bars, but these bars have been sawn off into nubs at the very top of the opening to create a crawl space up the drainage channel. The chamber is of natural stone with only minimal marks of stonework, the low ceiling only 7 feet high. An **Ebon Union thug** is stationed in here as a lookout to make sure the thug the PCs were chasing was not followed (the thug has already crawled up the drainage channel to **E2**). If the PCs are using a light source as they enter or do not succeed on Dexterity (Stealth) checks against the lookout's Wisdom (Perception) check, he is alerted to their presence and gives a sharp



whistle to let the occupants of **E2** know, while drinking his potion of invisibility and preparing to ambush the first intruder to enter the room.

EBON UNION THUG

hp 65 (see **Event 6**, page 215)

Trapped Drainage Grate: The bars to the grate granting access to the drainage sluice crawlspace have been sawn through to allow for Medium and Small creatures as described under **E** above, though a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check is needed to surmount the 6-foot wall to reach it. However, the Ebon Union has placed a trap on this entrance as well. One of the sawn-off bars has actually been rigged with gears and springs so that if anyone crawls through without first throwing a hidden lock at the lip of the crawlspace, the sharpened iron rod suddenly springs down to impale the crawler and pin him in place.

SPRING-LOADED IRON ROD TRAP

The trap attacks with a +8 bonus, dealing 22 (4d10) piercing damage on a hit. If the attack hits, the target is pinned and takes 5 (1d10) piercing at the end of each of their turns until they succeed in escaping with a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check.

E2. SAFEHOUSE

The entrance to this chamber is blocked by a thick, moldering curtain that is nailed into the stone above the crawl tunnel to keep any light from escaping.

Partially natural, partially cut from the native stone, this chamber sprawls unevenly away from the drainage tunnel at a slight slope. The ceiling ranges from 5 to 8 feet above, and narrow channels and fissures bring trickles of water that collect on the floor here to flow out the drainage tunnel. A pair of lanterns placed atop stones

out of the constant runoff cause their flickering light to glimmer of the many damp surfaces.

The Ebon Union thieves' guild of Dun Eamon has long made use of some of the ancient tunnels cutting through the citadel's bedrock for their own dark purpose. This expansion of an ancient drainage channel has served them as a hidden safehouse beyond the view of the Mist Watch for many years, and it is from here that they have launched their plot against the PCs. Within this chamber are the **Ebon Union thug** that escaped the PCs in **Event 6**, a Castorhagi agent named **Mortis Tremaine**, and an Ebon Union tough named **Garme** sent by Guildmaster Devlin[G6-72,93], to ensure that Tremaine pays the promised fee when the journal is recovered and provide resurrection for any thugs slain. Tremaine is a thin, sallow-faced, blighted[LL7-69] human from Castorhage. He has an extra knuckle on each finger making him particularly nimble and deft, though he wears gloves that disguise this deformity from all but careful inspection.

EBON UNION THUG

hp 65 (see **Event 6**, page 215)

GARME

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil
Armor Class 16 (breastplate)
Hit Points 117 (18d8 + 36)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Int +4, Wis +2
Skills Deception +3, Insight +2, Intimidation +3, Perception +5, Sleight of Hand +5, Stealth +8
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages Bridge-Cant[LL7], Common, Thieves Cant
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Evasion. If Garme is subjected to an effect that allows him to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, he instead takes no damage if he succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if he fails.

Scorpion Venom (2/Day). When Garme deals piercing or slashing damage with a weapon attack, he can force the target to make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw. The targets take 22 (4d10) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.



Sneak Attack. Once per turn, Garme deals an extra 10 (3d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Game that isn't incapacitated and Garme doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Garme makes three handaxe attacks, or two shortbow attacks.

Handaxe. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d6 + 4) slashing damage.

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

MORTIS TREMAINE

Medium humanoid (human, blighted), neutral evil
Armor Class 17 (*chain shirt* +1)
Hit Points 156 (24d8 + 48)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	9 (-1)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +4, Dex +8, Con +3, Int +2, Wis +0, Cha +2
Skills Acrobatics +7, Deception +4, Perception +2, Sleight of Hand +7
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages Bridge-Cant[LL7], Common, Elvish, Thieves Cant
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)
Special Gear. Mortis wears a +1 *chain shirt* and a *vest of protection* (as a *cloak of protection*, included in statistics above). Mortis wields a +1 *rapier*.

Citysoul. Within the Blight, Mortis has advantage on Wisdom (Insight), Wisdom (Perception), and Dexterity (Stealth) checks, as well as on initiative checks. The minds of blighted humans intuitively understand the ever-changing layout of the city, as though they have a mental model that is somehow always kept up to date. As an action, Mortis can know which district he is in, even if he cannot see his surroundings.
Duelist. When Mortis is wielding a melee weapon in one hand and no other weapons, he gains a +2 bonus to damage rolls with that weapon.
Evasion. If Mortis is subjected to an effect that allows him to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, he instead takes no damage if he succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if he fails.
Know Your Own. Mortis has advantage on Charisma (Persuasion) and Wisdom (Insight) checks against other blighted humans.
Mobility. When Mortis makes a melee weapon attack against a target, the target cannot make opportunity attacks against him until the beginning of Mortis's next turn.

ACTIONS
Multiattack. Mortis makes three melee weapon attacks.
Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 11(1d8 + 7) piercing damage.
Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d4 + 4) piercing damage, or 8 (1d4 + 6) piercing damage if used to make a melee attack with no weapon in his other hand.

REACTIONS
Parry. Mortis adds 3 to his AC against one melee attack that would hit him. To do so, Mortis must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

Tactics: If this group has not been alerted by the lookout in **E1**, then they can be surprised here as they listen to the thug from **Event 6** relating what occurred and turning over the journal if she has it. If she was wounded, she has drunk a *potion of healing*, so modify her hit points accordingly. If they have been alerted to the presence of the PCs, they react as follows. Garme takes position hiding beside the crawlway entrance to ready a sneak attack against the first one coming through, while Tremaine and the thug remain in the open in the center of the room to draw the PCs in. Garme focuses his studied target on that individual he sneak-attacked while Tremaine and the thug spread out and ready actions to strike at any who come forward to melee. Retreat is difficult from this chamber, Tremaine is half insane, and the Ebon Union guildsmen do not want the secret of its existence exposed, so all of these criminals will fight to the death here.

EVENT 7: FRIEND OR FOE

This event occurs at some point before the PCs head over to investigate the black pavilion in the caravan camp (area F). Ideally it occurs after the PCs have obtained Gravenfar's journal from Elinda Bannon and fought off the attempt by the Ebon Union to steal. It could be dramatically inserted as the PCs climb their way back through the drainage sluice that pierces the city's curtain wall after dealing with the rogues at area E. However, you can modify the text accordingly so that it can occur at any point during their stay in Dun Eamon as long as it's before their visit to **F**.

A pair of short figures appear from the darkness. They are completely muffled head to toe in hooded black cloaks that reveal nothing of their feature save piercing dark eyes that look out from the enshrouding folds. The pair radiate menace almost palpably.



If the PCs have done any asking around town since their arrival, they have likely heard of the short, dark-cloaked figures seen skulking about at night that many suppose to be dark creepers or worse. If so, they realize that these are surely those figures that have been spotted. However, before the party can take any hostile actions, the figures push back their hoods to reveal the curly brown hair and smiling cherubic faces of **2 halfling envoys**. They quickly introduce themselves Bono Curlytop and Val Nannygarter. They explain that they work on behalf of a certain benefactor who would like to make the party's acquaintance. They invite the PCs in an extremely non-threatening way to meet their employer, at which point Val reveals a small iron brooch cast as a cracked and bearded dwarf skull. Anyone making a DC 15 Intelligence (History) check recognizes the symbol as the crest of the Great Mountain Clan Ironskull, the mountain dwarves of the Blackrock Mountains. A dwarf has advantage on this check. If the PCs do not recognize the symbol the halflings identify it for what it is, the halflings will do so and assure that their employer means them no harm. Each is under the effects of an undetectable alignment cast by their hired bard, but a Wisdom (Insight) reveals no malice in their invitation.

BONO CURLYTOP & VAL NANYGARTER, CLAN IRONSKULL HALFLING ENVOYS (2)

Small humanoid (halfling), lawful evil
Armor Class 15 (studded leather)
Hit Points 27 (6d8)
Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	17 (+3)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Skills Deception +5, Insight +4, Investigation +5, Perception +6, Persuasion +5, Sleight of Hand +5, Stealth +5
Senses passive Perception 16
Languages Common, Dwarvish, Halfling
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Brave. The halfling has advantage on saving throws against being frightened.
Cunning Action. On each of its turns, the halfling envoy can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.
Halfling Nimbleness. The halfling can move through the space of any creature that is of a size larger than it.
Lucky. When the halfling rolls a 1 on the d20 for an attack roll, ability check, or saving throw, it can reroll the die and must use the new roll.
Sneak Attack. Once per turn, the halfling envoy deals an extra 10 (3d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the halfling envoy that isn't incapacitated and the halfling envoy doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS
Multiattack. The halfling envoy makes two melee attacks.
Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.
Hand Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Development: The PCs are free to refuse the invitation. The halflings don't press and will allow the PCs to depart with no hard feelings. However, they will persist in their efforts again and again as long as the PCs remain in Dun Eamon. Ultimately the PCs should either accept the invitation or decide to visit area **F** on their own.

Once the PCs are aware of the clan's identity, they can make a DC 20 Intelligence (History) to know the general history of the Great Mountain Clan Ironskull. A success on this roll reveals all of the information in the third paragraph under **What Really Happened to the Archivist** in the **Starting the Adventure** portion of this adventure (see page 8). Likewise, if the PCs ask about the clan, the halflings can provide the same information. The halflings themselves are obviously not members of the clan but have served as hired retainers for their employer for many years.

F. THE BLACK PAVILION

The caravan grounds of Dun Eamon are a busy place any time of day or night. Situated right next to the city livery stable, wagons and porters are always moving about. At night bonfires spring up between the many tents over which hang spits of meat, kettles, and cauldrons, while men and women huddle close in the chill misty air. However, one corner of the campground is distinctly different than the rest, for here a great black pavilion tent has been erected without banner or emblem. Mules and horses are picketed neatly nearby along with bundles and barrels of supplies. No one is seen coming or going from this tent but arrayed around it are more than a dozen lowland mercenaries, heavily armed and armored, who keep a mistrustful eye on everyone.

Despite its sinister appearance, this great tent is actually the encampment of members of the Ironskull clan of mountain dwarves (see **Event 7**). They have come to the Grey Citadel under great secrecy and security and hired a band of Rhemian mercenaries to prevent anyone from entering the tent without a pass. This band is led by **Feldar Ironspur**, a former captain cashiered out of the Waymark cavalry for acts unbecoming an officer, and he has gathered a formidable group around him. Ironspur's company is comprised of his lieutenant, **Hanley Marfival**, two sergeants, **Gumber Been-Fine** and **Ashlock Two-Fingers**, and a total of **13 Rhemian mercenaries**.

Despite their less-than-friendly demeanor and general lack of scruples, they are well paid and extremely loyal to their employer as long as his gold is good. This group stops anyone that attempts to approach the tent unless accompanied by a member of the caravan (probably the halfling envoys since none of the dwarves shows his face outside the tent). If the PCs have come without being accompanied by the envoys in **Event 7**, the two halfings recognize them and come out of the tent to tell Captain Ironspur that they are invited guests before quickly ushering them inside.

CAPTAIN FELDAR IRONSPUR

hp 52 (as knight[SRD])

HANLEY MARFIVAL

Medium humanoid (elf), chaotic neutral
Armor Class 15 (mithral chain shirt)
Hit Points 38 (7d8 + 7)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Wis +2
Skills Deception +5, Performance +7, Perception +1, Sleight of Hand +6, Stealth +4



Senses passive Perception 11, darkvision 60 ft.
Languages Common, Gnome, Elven, Orc, Sylvan
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Fey Ancestry. Hanley has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put him to sleep.

Spellcasting. Hanley is a 6th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13). Hanley has the following bard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *mending, message, minor illusion*
1st level (4 slots): *charm person, comprehend languages, faerie fire*
2nd level (3 slots): *calm emotions, detect thoughts, enthrall, suggestion*
3rd level (3 slots): *hypnotic pattern, nondetection*

Trance. Elves don't sleep. Hanley gets the same benefits from four hours of meditation that a human gets from eight hours of sleep.

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit*: 4 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Light Crossbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

GUMBER BEEN-FINE

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil
Armor Class 18 (chain mail, shield)
Hit Points 78 (12d8 + 24)
Speed 30 ft.

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

Saving Throws Str +6, Con +4
Skills Athletics +6, Handle Animal +3, Intimidation +4, Survival +3
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages Common, Elven
Challenge 3 (700 XP)
Special Gear. Gumber carries a +1 *battleaxe* and a *potion of growth.*

Shield Bash. As a bonus action, Gumber may target one creature of Medium or smaller size within 5 feet of him. Gumber makes a Strength (Athletics) check opposed by the target's Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics). If Gumber wins, the target is knocked prone or pushed back 5 feet.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Gumber makes two melee attacks.

+1 Battleaxe. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 9 (1d8 + 5) slashing damage, or 10 (1d10 + 5) slashing damage when used to make an attack two-handed.

Mace. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

REACTIONS

Parry. Gumber adds 2 to his AC against one melee attack that would hit him. To do so, Gumber must see the attacker and be wielding a shield.

ASHLOCK TWO-FINGERS

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil
Armor Class 16 (bracers of defense)
Hit Points 88 (16d8 + 16)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +3, Dex +6. Wis +3
Skills Athletics +3, Intimidation +4, Perception +5, Survival +3
Senses passive Perception 15
Languages Common
Challenge 3 (700 XP)
Special Gear. Ashlock carries a +1 *rapier*, a +1 *musket*, and fifteen musket cartridges.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Ashlock attacks twice with his rapier or twice with his musket.

Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 9 (1d8 + 5) piercing damage.

Musket. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, range 40/120 ft., one target. *Hit*: 11 (1d12 + 5) piercing damage.

RHEMIAN MERCENARY

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic neutral
Armor Class 15 (half-plate)
Hit Points 44 (8d8 + 8)
Speed 30 ft.

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

Saving Throws Con +3
Skills Animal Handling +2, Athletics +4, Intimidation +2, Perception +2
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages Common
Challenge 1 (200 XP)
Special Gear. Each mercenary carries two flasks of alchemist fire, one vial of holy water, and a *potion of healing*.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The mercenary makes two melee weapon attacks.
Flail. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d8 + 2) bludgeoning damage.
Halberd. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d10 + 2) slashing damage.
Pike. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d10 + 2) piercing damage.
Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 40/120 ft., one target. *Hit*: 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

EVENT 8: UNKNOWN ALLIES

Despite the tent's large size, it is comfortable and cozy within, almost crowded. It has been divided by thick curtains into a large common area in the front and two separate private rooms in the back. Rugs, lamps, braziers, personal equipment, camp furniture, and assorted bedrolls — all sized for a dwarf — are scattered throughout, though in a fairly regimented and organized manner. The front common room serves not only as the dining area for the tent (cooking is done on fires outside by the mercenaries, who likewise bed down outside) but also as the quarters of **6 Clan Ironskull guards** (mountain dwarves) and **4 Clan Ironskull** envoys (halflings). The back two rooms serve as the personal quarters of **Captain Okrem Kresh** and the expedition's leader, **Goribald Ironskull**, respectively.

GORIBALD IRONSKULL*

Medium humanoid (dwarf), neutral evil
Armor Class 18 (mage armor), 15 (without mage armor)
Hit Points 88 (16d8 + 16)
Speed 25 ft.

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

Damage Resistances acid, poison
Saving Throws Str +3, Dex +8, Con +2, Int +5, Wis +4, Cha +4
Skills Arcana +7, Deception +9, Perception +7, Persuasion+9, Sleight of Hand +10, Stealth +10
Senses passive Perception 17, darkvision 60 ft.
Languages Common, Dwarven, Giant
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)
Special Gear. Goribald has a *dagger of venom*, a *ring of mind shielding* that appears to be non-magical, a *ring of protection*, and a *wand of magic missiles*.



Assassinate. During his first turn, Goribald has advantage on attack rolls against any creature that hasn't taken a turn. Any hit he scores against a surprised creature is a critical hit.

Dwarven Resilience. Goribald has advantage on saving throws against poison.

Elemental Power. When Goribald deals acid damage with a spell, he can add his Charisma modifier (+3) to the damage inflicted on one target.

Evasion. If Goribald is subjected to an effect that allows him to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, Goribald instead takes no damage if he succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if he fails.

Poison Expert. Goribald has one dose each of assassin's blood, oil of taggit, and torpor, and two doses of purple worm poison. Goribald can apply an injury poison to a weapon or apply a poison on an object (such as food) as a bonus action.

Sneak Attack. Once per turn, Goribald deals an extra 17 (5d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of him that isn't incapacitated and Goribald doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Spellcasting. Goribald is a 4th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14, spell attack bonus +6). Gorinald has the following sorcerer spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *acid splash*, *message*, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost*, *true strike*

1st level (4 slots): *detect magic*, *fog cloud*, *mage armor*, *shield*

2nd level (3 slots): *shatter*

Stonecunning. Whenever Gorinald make an Intelligence (History) check related to the origin of stonework, he is considered proficient in the History skill and adds double his proficiency bonus to the check, for a total of +7.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Goribald makes two melee attacks.

Dagger of Venom. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d4 + 5) piercing damage. As a bonus action, the wielder can use an action to cause thick, black poison to coat the blade. The poison remains for 1 minute or until an attack using this weapon hits a creature. That creature must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 11 (2d10) poison damage and become poisoned for 1 minute. The dagger can't be used this way again until the next dawn.

Blowgun. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, range 25/100 ft., one target. *Hit*: 5 piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Uncanny Dodge. When an attacker Goribald can see hits him with an attack, he can use his reaction to halve the attack's damage against him.

Among "Goribald's" magic items is a *deceiver's ring* that assists him in maintaining his deception. This item first appeared in ***LL4: Cults of the Sundered Kingdoms*** by **Frog God Games** but is included here for your convenience.

DECEIVER'S RING **PRICE 6,000 GP**

Aura faint abjuration; CL 3rd
Slot ring; Weight —

A *deceiver's ring* is a gold ring of virtually any design but always appears to be quite valuable — at least 500 gp. Anyone wearing the ring is considered to be of any alignment the wearer chooses for any spells or effects that detect alignment or the presence of chaos, evil, law, or good. The wearer sets the alignment of the ring once per day as a standard action and cannot change it again for 24 hours. In addition to its alignment-masking properties, the ring itself does not detect as magic. The wearer of the ring is not protected from alignment-based spells, such as *protection from evil*, *chaos hammer*, etc., to which the wearer's natural alignment applies. In addition, the ring's masked dweomer is not resistant to spells such as *identify* or *analyze dweomer* that are cast upon it. Few outside the Cult of Fraz'Urb-luu are aware that these rings exist, as they are a closely guarded secret.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS Cost 3,000 gp

Forge Ring, *undetectable alignment*

CAPTAIN OKREM KRESH

Medium humanoid (dwarf), lawful neutral

Armor Class 20 (plate +1)

Hit Points 204 (24d8 + 96)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)	8 (-1)	10 (+0)

Damage Resistances poison

Saving Throws Str +10, Dex +3, Con +9, Int +2, Wis +4, Cha +1

Skills Athletics +9, Intimidation +4, Perception +3, Survival +3

Senses passive Perception 13, darkvision 60 ft.

Languages Common, Dwarven, Terran

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Special Gear. Captain Okrem has a +2 *glaive*, a *belt of giant strength (hill giant)*, a *cloak of protection*, a *potion of greater healing*, and two *potions of growth*. Without the belt of giant strength, his Strength is 15.



Dwarven Resilience. Captain Okrem has advantage on saving throws against poison.

Stonecunning. Whenever Captain Okrem make an Intelligence (History) check related to the origin of stonework, he is considered proficient in the History skill and adds double his proficiency bonus to the check, for a total of +7.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Captain Okrem makes four melee attacks.

Glaive. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 12 (1d10 + 7) slashing damage.

Javelin. Ranged Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit*: 8 (1d6 + 5) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Parry. Captain Okrem adds 4 to his AC against one melee attack that would hit him. To do so, Captain Okrem must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

CLAN IRONSKULL GUARD

Medium humanoid (dwarf), neutral

Armor Class 18 (plate)

Hit Points 105 (14d8 + 42)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

Damage Resistances poison

Saving Throws Str +5, Con +5

Skills Athletics +5, Intimidation +1, Perception +2, Survival +2

Senses passive Perception 12, darkvision 60 ft.

Languages Common, Dwarven

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Special Gear. Each guard carries a *potion of healing* and *potion of heroism* (see **Appendix C**, page 86).

Dwarven Resilience. The guard has advantage on saving throws against poison.

Stonecunning. Whenever the guard make an

Intelligence (History) check related to the origin of stonework, it is considered proficient in the History skill and adds double its proficiency bonus to the check, for a total of +4.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The guard makes two melee attacks.

Battleaxe. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage, or 8 (1d10 +3) when used to make an attack with two hands.

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d10 + 2) piercing.

CLAN IRONSKULL ENVOYS (4)*

hp 27 (see page 220)

*Includes Bono Curlytop and Val Nannygarter (see **Event 7**)

Development: When the party is ushered into the tent, Goribald Ironskull comes out of his quarters to greet them warmly. He asks them to sit on the (slightly undersized) camp chairs in the room and orders one of the halflings to bring hot tea for all against the chill of the citadel's mists. If the PCs refuse his offer of tea, Goribald is not offended but takes a cup himself regardless. He thanks them profusely for coming at his invitation and says he has been eager to meet them ever since they arrived in town and he realized what they were. He believes that their current goals align with one another quite well and hopes to create an alliance of mutual benefit.

If the PCs have not learned the history of the Ironskull mountain dwarves, he quickly fills them in as described in **Event 7**. He then identifies himself as a lesser cousin of High Thane Klanghorn's extended family. He goes on to admit that the archivist at the cathedral in Nains, Kisarus Thrun, is also a member of the clan though he had foresworn his heritage to serve the god Mitra in human lands. He adds that when poor Thrun discovered the Conroi documents he must have remembered his old impoverished clan folk fondly and saw an opportunity for them to maybe reclaim some of their dragon-lost glory. He sent the documents directly to the Ironskulls at Iron Hall, but must have missed some of them which ended up getting him killed and is no doubt what brought the party to this very spot. Goribald regrets the loss of his distant kinsman and is extremely happy that the PCs were involved in bringing the killer to justice. He said the clan has had eyes and ears in Nains ever since and became aware of the party's quest on behalf of the Church shortly after they departed. Though the Ironskull group had a considerable head start on the party, he said he'd hoped to run across them eventually and compare notes. To this end he makes the PCs an offer.

Goribald has the nearly complete travelogue of the Conroi Expedition's chaplain, Azmerius Thade, sent to him by the archivist Thrun. It is undoubtedly more detailed than what scraps of information the PCs have. From these travel reports the Ironskulls learned about the secret reason for the expedition to find the trove of priceless star metal. He believes it is likely noqual because of the lack of divinatory ability to probe the site (a conclusion reached by Gravenfar as well). The cash-strapped Ironskulls, unable to finance such an expedition on their own but with the

GM'S NOTE ON GORIBALD IRONSKULL

Goribald Ironskull is in actuality an imposter. The truth is that the mountain dwarf that the PCs meet is Cherbaud Brazzegard, a cousin of Goribald Ironskull. Cherbaud is a member of the cadet branch of the Ironskull Clan that once ruled the clan entire until the fall of Tir'Oen some four decades ago. He managed to get himself and several of his cronies assigned to Goribald's secret mission, and once they were far out in the wilderness he and his men murdered Goribald and those loyal to him, including two human agents that were in Panetoth at the time. Cherbaud then assumed the identity of his cousin (what lowlander would know the difference between the insular mountain dwarves) and resumed the mission but with the intent of enriching his own branch of the clan and bringing them back to power over the Ironskulls.

It is very important that Cherbaud's ruse not be discovered until the next adventure ***Race for Shaatakh-Uulm***. To this end he is very careful to keep any lies he tells very close to the truth (really anything other than his name is more or less true and grants him a +10 circumstance bonus on Bluff checks for cleaving so closely to the truth). For his actual identity assume he successfully beats any Sense Motive checks made to discover his true identity and successfully saves against any spells cast to detect his falsehoods. The PCs will have ample opportunity to expose his charade and gain their revenge in the next adventure. In the meantime, this adventure and the next will refer to him by the name Goribald to prevent any accidental GM slip ups by saying the wrong name aloud.

technical know-how to be able to recover, refine, and utilize rare alloys like the star metals, approached the Grand Duchy of Reme with an offer. The dwarves would mount an expedition to discover and claim the lost star metal deposit that was more rightfully the duchy's than anybody's because of the duchy's own history with the Caleen Colonies in their vicinity. Thus, the duchy would not have to devote any more manpower to this lost prize. In return, the duchy would help finance the expedition and enter into an exclusive trade agreement with the Ironskulls to mine and process the star metal ore. The Grand Duchy gets a vast, unexploited deposit of extremely valuable star metal as well as the means to recover and make use of it, while the Ironskulls gain an extremely valuable contract to work the star metals for decades, if not centuries to come, depending on how great the deposit is (based on the meteor's ability to block all divinatory effects related to it, the Ironskulls believe the deposit is likely to be massive). It's a win-win situation for all parties involved.

However, the dwarves ran into some trouble in Panetoth, Goribald mentions. The Royal House of Castorhage somehow got wind of the expedition and now seeks to reassert their old claim to it from the missing Conroi Expedition. Goribald says that assassins of Castorhage managed to get to a pair of Rhemian agents who were working for him on loan from the Grand Duke. One was murdered and one disappeared on the road, causing his group to hasten to Dun Eamon in pursuit of the Gravenfar journal evidence of which the murdered agents had just recently discovered. Now he and his group have remained hunkered in their camp since their arrival because his halfling spies learned that a deadly Castorhagi agent named Mortis Tremaine was in town and could spell disaster for the mission. If the PCs describe the distinctive extra-knuckled man with the Castorhagi coins from area E, Goribald can confirm that he was Tremaine, and the old dwarf is visibly relieved if he has been disposed of.

In any case, Castorhage knows about the expedition and is unlikely to give up on the trove of star metal at stake. And that is where the PCs come in. Goribald says he believes the party has (or will soon have) Gravenfar's journal, and it and Azmerius Thade's letters together provide the best chance of discovering and claiming the Pit of the Burning Star that Gravenfar had written of. Goribald also knows that the PCs primary mission is one of information gathering for the Magnate of Books in Nains rather than one to claim the star metal for themselves — nor do they have a nation-state to back such a claim or provide the ability to exploit such a find if they wanted to. So Goribald makes a proposition beneficial to all. He invites the PCs to join his expedition, or as he calls it, "the only lawful and legitimate expedition". They can combine their resources to have the best chance of finding the star metal. The PCs can write their report for the Magnate, the Grand Duke of Reme can claim his treasure, and the Ironskulls can experience some prosperity again for the first time since the fall of Tir'Oen.

In addition, the Goribald will gladly cut the PCs in on some of the Ironskull's profits for mining and refining the ore, say a 1% stake in their net profits — an investment that will turn into tens of thousands of gold pieces a year in the coming decades once the mine is up and running — as well as any ancillary treasures they recover in the course of the expedition. All he wants in return is for the party to partner with his own group for the journey. He mentions that his Rhemian mercenaries will only stay with him until they reach the Wizard's Wall, and with Castorhage lurking about along with the dangers of the Haunted Steppe his little group will stand no chance on their own. He can be bargained up as high as 2% of the Ironskull net profits with a DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check (1.5% with a DC 15), but no higher because his thane would not allow him to. However, his offer is more than generous and does dovetail nicely with the party's own interests in the matter.

If the PCs mention the ragged assassins that assailed them in Panetoth and at Bannon's Tower or their connection to Tanith (per **Handout 4B**), Goribald has no idea who they are but is not surprised. He says that once the word gets out — if it hasn't already — there's going to be a gold rush of every cutthroat, pirate, and soldier-for-hire in a race to claim the star metal first. He and the PCs hold the keys to finding it though, in Thade's letters and the journal, and they have a head start. All the more reason to team up, Goribald adds. If the PCs mention the map they recovered (**Handout 4C**), Goribald is especially happy as it appears to show a secret way down the Wizard's Wall that will cut weeks off of their journey that would otherwise have to go all the way around the Wall at Durgam's Folly[G1] and will give them an even larger lead on their competitors.

Once the party reaches an agreement and enters into a handshake with Goribald (plus whatever legal documents they wish him to draw up, which he can have the Grey Citadel's chief steward witness and countersign within a matter of hours), Goribald shares the sheaf of letters from Azmerius Thade to High Deacon Leofric that the archivist Kisarus Thrun discovered in Nains. These extensive documents are provided as **Handout 4D** (see **Appendix B**, see page 74). Once an agreement has been reached, Goribald calls for his caravan to be packed and ready to go by noon of the following day. The party has until then to acquire

any additional supplies and equipment around the city (though the caravan will provide basic food supplies for the PCs for the duration of the trip).

GM's Note: Because the party may have traveled between Nains, Panetoth, and Dun Eamon by many means, and the travel time could have varied by days or even weeks, there is no set time frame of when Goribald's group traveled where. This is by design so that there is no discontinuity in the adventure background. All of the information Goribald gives about his group's timing and travel is true, so you will need to modify it accordingly so that it fits the adventure timeline to this point even if it means stretching some plausibility across the long distances covered. Goribald can cryptically mention magical mountain dwarf "highways" or some such that can allow faster travel times. These play no role in this adventure and will not be encountered further. Whatever the case, assure your players that any timing issues are because of the variability of player timing in the game and were a part of the adventure's intentional design to remain flexible and are not part of a plot by the GM to trick them about how the dwarves knew about them or got there in time (the tricking of the players is about wholly different matters as related in the **GM's Note on Goribald Ironskull** sidebar, see page 48).

CHAPTER THREE: TO THE WIZARD'S WALL

The Ironskull caravan departs the gates of the Grey Citadel at noon. It consists of the Rhemian mercenaries in **F** and the dwarves and their envoys in **Event 8** in **Chapter 2**, as well as, the player characters. Each of the Rhemian mercenaries is mounted on a **warhorse**, while the dwarves ride **riding horses**, and halflings ride **ponies**. A remuda of an additional **4 warhorses**[SRD], **6 riding horses**[SRD], and **2 ponies**[SRD] accompany the group as remounts along with a string of **11 pack mules**[SRD] for supplies and equipment. If the PCs do not have mounts of their own, the dwarves can procure an additional **riding horse** or **pony** (dependent on the character's size) for any unmounted PCs.

THE JOURNEY TO TANITH

With the larger group in tow, even party's with magical means of faster locomotion are limited to the pace of the caravan while traveling. The journey downriver from Dun Eamon to the mouth of the Eamonvale at the caravan city of Broadwater[K12] is 132 miles on good roads and takes the group just over 8 days of travel. The lower valley is relatively civilized and well-patrolled, so the only encounters are with other groups of travelers and caravans. Staying only a single night in Broadwater before departing on the Quintos Road for the easternmost Rhemian city of Quintos, which oversees trade between the Waymarch, the Northmarches, and Eamonvale. This is well-maintained road across the plains and is likewise uneventful, save for the frequent caravans.

After that the route is north and west on the North Duchy Road as the caravan follows the land's slow ascent towards the High Downs. There among the chalky, domed hills and windswept high plains the road follows a series of switchbacks to Ironhill, the capital of the Duchy of the Northmarches and site of the legendary battle between Grand Duke Borell I and Kakobovia almost 2,000 years ago[MoM-100/LL3-255] and the theorized site of the even more ancient gnome empire of Granith that formed after the raising of the Stoneheart Mountains[ST-382] and that once held sway over the High Downs and what is now much of northern Reme and the Northmarches according to gnomish tradition[LL7-289,325].

After spending a few days obtaining warrants of passage to the Wizard's Wall from the Lady Candrella, Duchess of the Northmarches and Harmost of Ironhill, the caravan departs once more north along the winding road of the High Downs before descending into the Northmarches Proper and journeying on across the plains once again to Tanith, the northernmost city of civilized Akados west of the Stonehearts. Again, this stretch of the journey is along the fairly well-traveled and well-patrolled roads of the Northmarches, and the presence of the PCs and Rhemian mercenaries prevents any sort of hostile encounters from occurring.

TANITH TRAVEL TIMETABLE

Departure	Destination	Miles	Travel Time
Dun Eamon	Broadwater	132	8-1/4 days
Broadwater	Quintos	125	5 days
Quintos	Ironhill	375	17 days
Ironhill	Tanith	375	20-1/4 days

TANITH

Tanith is considered the northernmost civilized city of Akados west of the Stoneheart Mountains, with only Apothasalos on the Gulf of Akados[LL3-64] east of the Stonehearts lying farther north. Towns and thorps of

TANITH

The northernmost city of the Duchy of the Northmarches, Tanith (pronounced TAN-ith) is a city that combines the features of supply depot and administration city for the northern duchy as well as a military outpost against any incursions by hostile monsters or mountain dwarves that might come by way of Pelivar Pass[GA] in the Stoneheart Mountains to the east. This is the westernmost known pass of the Stoneheart Mountains; it accesses the Feirgotha Plateau from the Duchy of the Northmarches (See ***The Gulf of Akados Region Map*** by **Frog God Games**).

TANITH

CN large city

Corruption +2; **Crime** +3; **Economy** +3; **Law** +0; **Lore** +1; **Society** +6

Qualities insular, magically attuned, notorious, racially intolerant (mountain dwarves), strategic location

Danger 20

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government council

Population 12,630 (8,350 humans [Foerdewaith]; 2,548 gnomes; 730 humans [Plainsmen[LL8-26]]; 622 half-elves; 380 other)

NOTABLE NPCS

Count Wolfort Hyde, High Councilman (N male human spy)

Nograri Silanthos, City Councilwoman (CG female human [Khemite[LL7-49]] sorcerer 13/cleric of Bast[DD-106] 5)

Pilsdun, City Councilman (CN male human wizard 15)

Iliondi Vesperos, City Councilman and Thieves' Guildmaster (NE male human rogue 12)

Contrary Granith, City Councilwoman (N female gnome noble)

General Antigon Uth, Military Overseer (LE male human fighter 12)

Bresiden the Petulent, High Priest of Solanus (NE male human cleric of Solanus[LL5-242] 9)

Brother Tranton, Chaplain of Kudrak (LG male gnome cleric of Kudrak[LL4-92] 7)

the Northmarches do exist along the North Duchy Road as it makes its way to its terminus at the Wizard's Wall and the fort known as Durgam's Folly[G1-2], towns such as Teusowald and Hansonburg[G1-7], but neither of these qualify as anything like a city and are little known even among folk of the March, much less those farther south.

Beyond its northern position, Tanith itself is of little note other than as the former abode of the banished wizard and crime lord Crithian Raine who led his mercenary army called the Ghul Legion into the western Stoneheart Mountains in search of lost dwarven treasures of the Great Mountain Clan Koth[F2-3] and has yet to be heard from since.

Connected to Raine's rise, overthrow, and banishment and search for lost dwarven magic is the little-known fact that the city is magically attuned to the land. This has spawned an unusual number of sorcerers and other spellcasters in the city as well as many specialists in the creation of magical items. This is because of the city's and region's unknown past dating back some 14,500 years to the time of the Gods War's[LL1-169] end and the destruction of the Doomspire of Krezzel Dul, abode of the Witch King Osenkej who had ruled these lands for almost 3,000 years[F2-3,21].

There is little of interest in Tanith that applies to this adventure as well other than a single site to investigate, a place to resupply and prepare for the final leg of the journey, and the point at which the Rhemian mercenaries detach themselves from the caravan and head back to the south for greener pastures and safer purses to draw wages from. As a result, few details of the city are provided beyond those of immediate utility to the adventure.

PREPARING FOR THE FINAL PUSH

Based on the map (**Handout 4C**) the PCs recovered in **Event 4**, Tanith is the point at which the caravan will leave the main roads and strike out cross country to the northwest, through the Haunted Wood and towards

the supposed secret access point allowing descent of the Wizard's Wall, a route cutting roughly 300 miles off of their journey to the Haunted Steppe and bypassing Durgam's Folly entirely. As such, Goribald announces that the caravan will encamp outside Tanith for 7 days while the animals rest and feed and the necessary supplies and any last orders of business (see "GM's Note" below) are attended to before their departure. Despite the local antipathy towards mountain dwarves, the halfling envoys can obtain the necessary supplies and equipment from the city. Goribald pays the Rhemian mercenaries the last of their contracted fees before bidding them farewell and lets the PCs do what they will during this rest period. The PCs can take this opportunity to re-equip themselves as needed and, if they choose, track down the location mentioned in the handbills (**Handout 4B**) they may have found upon their attackers in **Event 2** and **Event 4**.

GM's Note: As will be learned at area **H** in the next adventure, ***Race for Shataakh-Uulm***, the treacherous Goribald has arranged for some of his kinfolk who have traveled ahead of the caravan to prepare an ambush for the PCs in the mountain pass near Durgam's Folly. After Goribald learned that his caravan would not be following that route but instead heading cross country from Tanith, it is here in this city that he hires a courier and attempts to send a message to his assassins about the change of plans in order to redirect their ambush to a new location. Unfortunately for him, the roads north of Tanith are much wilder and less safe than elsewhere in the Northmarches, and the courier is attacked and killed by a band of marauding ogres from the Stonehearts. As a result, the mountain dwarf assassins near Durgam's Folly are never alerted of the change of plans and end up dying when their ambush goes awry while attacking the wrong group. None of this, however, will be discovered until hearing Rannulf's Tale in ***Race for Shataakh-Uulm***.

G. THE CANARY CROWN

If the PCs recovered the handbills (**Handout 4B**) in **Events 2** and **4**, then they should realize the connection between those two groups and may want to investigate the location mentioned in the handbills: The Canary Crown Theater. If so, they can locate this theater in Tanith and learn more about it with an Intelligence (History) check or a Charisma (Persuasion) check to gather information. A successful check reveals the information at the DC listed and all those DCs below it.

DC	Result
5	The location of The Canary Crown Theater
10	The Canary Crown Theater was shut down suddenly almost 10 years ago by order of the Military Overseer of Tanith after a midnight raid was conducted on it by soldiers of the March.
15	The Canary Crown was raided on the night before it was to open its greatest stage production to date, though no record remains of what that show was going to be.
20	Two members of the Tanith City Council were arrested the same night the theater was raided. Both disappeared and were replaced on the council by the High Councilman within a week.
25	The two City Councilors arrested during the raid on The Canary Crown were Aldreth Spiel and Marwina Javenora. Both were secretly tried and found guilty of leading a cult called The Unspeakable that used the theater as a front. Both Councilors were taken to Ironhill and executed shortly thereafter.
30	The Military Overseer and the High Councilman who oversaw the raid on the theater and subsequent trials were both dead within a year, both under mysterious circumstances.

If the PCs learn of the Cult of the Unspeakable[TD-45] mentioned in one of the rumors, they can identify it with a successful DC 25 Intelligence (Religion) check as a little-known amoral sect dedicated to hedonism and physical debauchery as the means to explore the reality of a hidden "Other Realm." It has been officially proscribed by the High Church of Foere for centuries and actively stamped out wherever it is found, but there have been no recorded instances of its existence in decades — though this might be to records of such pogroms being expunged.

Likewise, if the PCs seek further information regarding the raid, the arrests, secret trials, the condemned City Councilors, or even the deaths of the previous High Councilman and Military Overseer they will discover there to either be no official records of such things or only sealed records that to which they cannot gain access.

Once they have managed to learn its whereabouts, they can make their way to the decrepit venue, arriving just as the sun is beginning to set unless they choose to wait until the next morning to seek it out.

THE YELLOW SIGN

The Yellow Sign first appeared as a cursed runic symbol in the 1895 Robert W. Chambers book *The King in Yellow*. The symbol's appearance is never described in the story and remained undefined for almost a century. In 1989 (or 1986 depending on the source you're referencing) Kevin Ross designed a version of the Yellow Sign for Chaosium's *Call of Cthulhu Roleplaying Game* as the now-familiar triskelion symbol. The Yellow Sign in literature is in the Public Domain, but the Kevin Ross symbol does not appear to be so. Green Ronin Publishing illustrated the Ross Yellow Sign in its original *Freeport* trilogy in 2001 and again in its 3.5 revision in 2005 and credited the Kevin Ross copyright but does not mention what sort of permission has been extended for use of the sign in game products. As a result, we have opted not to illustrate the Yellow Sign in this or subsequent adventures out of respect for Mr. Ross's and/or Chaosium's copyright of the symbol. However, these adventures do assume that the Yellow Sign is the particular three-armed (tentacled!) symbol created by Kevin Ross.

If you wish to view the Yellow Sign appearing in the *Ashes of Empires Adventure Path* or show it to your players, an illustration of it exists at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yellow_Sign (albeit in black-and-white rather than yellow), and many other excellent color versions of it can be found with a simple Google search.

The run-down building stands a little bit to itself on this back street of the city. Empty lots laden with rank weeds and the scorched timbers of a building burned out long ago are its only immediate neighbors. At one time it must have been a theater of modest success and accommodations, though it has clearly been many years since that proved true. Its formerly glamorous façade and marquee now sag alarmingly above the main entrance, the wood rotten and warped from many decades of exposure. The once-bright yellow paint and gold trim that formerly gave it a garish allure have now faded to the silver of aging boards and the sallow tint of a dying man's skin. The grand sign that once proudly proclaimed it as the "Magnificent Canary Crown Theater" is now broken and missing sections, so that its message is now barely legible. The whole affair has a feeling of long abandonment, lost glory, and an air of subtle menace with just a hint of corruption hidden somewhere within its bent and buckled walls.

The front door of the building is chained shut and locked by a heavy padlock that has since rusted into uselessness and can no longer be unlocked. An old parchment nailed to the door serves notice that the building has been condemned by order of the Tanith City Council. Getting in requires breaking the chain or lock (hardness 10, hp 20) or removing the heavy boards nailed over the structure's few windows (hardness 5, hp 10). Both of these activities are noisy and will attract the attention of a city watch patrol of **1d3+1 guards**[SRD] who order the PCs away from the building. However, PCs taking a little bit more time to search around the premises can find a section of the building's siding around back that can be swung aside to allow entry within (treat as a secret door, DC 22 Wisdom (Perception) check to locate).

Within the party finds what is to be expected of a theater that has been abandoned for a decade or more. Rotting, molded furniture and decorations and copious amounts of debris, rat droppings, etc. A DC 23 Wisdom (Perception) check notices what appears to be old bloodstains on the golden carpet in a few places (signs of the military raid perhaps?). A DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check locates a single handbill for the theater's final show that has been partially hidden behind a piece of peeling wainscoting for many years. It is almost illegible from water damage, but the title of the play is still visible as *The King in Yellow: A Hyperborean Revival*. A PC making a DC 25 Intelligence (Religion) check can identify this composition with Cult of Hastur, but otherwise this obscure title is completely unfamiliar to any patrons of the arts.

Finally, anyone who seeks to explore backstage finds with a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check that a hidden cellar exists for storage of props. Though this space is also in tatters, unlike the building above, there are signs that it has seen use more recently. Individuals or groups appear to have met and camped here from time to time. Whether homeless transients or others is unclear. It has, in fact, been used by the remnants of the Cult of Hastur for some time when infrequent meetings have been called by the Sagging Man (see **H4**). Both groups the PCs met in **Events 2** and **4** stemmed from this cult of madmen and unrepentance decadents.

A search of the downstairs area turns up a stack of old, moldering handbills for the theater (identical to **Handout 4B**) with a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. A DC 25 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that the candle can be removed from a prop candleholder shaped like a human skull and within the hollow beneath is a small amulet crudely painted with a yellow glyph. A DC 20 Intelligence (Religion) recognizes this as the Yellow Sign (see sidebar), the unholy rune associated with the cult of

the Great Old One Hastur. If the Cult of the Unspeakable was identified from the rumors gleaned earlier, anyone recognizing the Yellow Sign for what it is will realize that there is an association between the two.

THE JOURNEY THROUGH THE HAUNTED WOOD

The caravan heads northwest from Tanith towards the Haunted Wood, leaving the main roads behind. The landmark known as Landry's Cross can be located with a DC 20 Wisdom (Survival) check, or an Intelligence (History) or Charisma (Persuasion) check to gather information before leaving Tanith. The route follows farm roads, cart paths, and foot trails when possible, but is frequently required to cut directly across country to stay on its course. The ground of the Northmarches is gently undulating grasslands, cooler and better watered than the arid rolling plains of the Waymarch. The route follows a slight incline as the ground slowly but steadily rises towards that titanic edifice that is the Wizard's Wall nearly 400 miles to the north.

NORTHMARCHES RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

It is 162 miles from Tanith to the eaves of the Haunted Wood, and it takes the caravan 10 days to cover it. Civilized lands are left behind farther and farther along with the duchy's patrols, so chances of random encounters begin. Roll 1d6 to check for encounters twice during the day and once during the night. An encounter takes place on a roll of 1. If an encounter occurs roll d6 and consult the table below. If an encounter occurs, the members of the caravan will protect themselves and the animals to the best of their ability but will expect the PCs to take primary responsibility in taking the fight to the enemy. A thunderbird can be encountered only once.

d6	Encounter
1	1d6 **giant scorpions**
2	1d4 **wyverns**
3	2d4 **saber-toothed tigers**
4	1d2 **rocs**
5	1d6 **hill giants**
6	Thunderbird*

THUNDERBIRD

Statistics as a **roc** except as noted below.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
28 (+9)	10 (+0)	20 (+5)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	9 (-1)

Damage Immunities lightning, thunder
Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

Storm Rider. The thunderbird is continuously surrounded by stormy weather, as if it had cast *control weather*, making all weather conditions within 5 miles one step more severe and all conditions within 500 feet two steps more severe. Its movement and senses are never impeded by wind, fog, rain, snow, or other weather effects. If the thunderbird is killed, these stormy weather conditions persist for 1d6 days centered on the site of its death.

ACTIONS

Thunderstrike. All of the thunderbird's melee attacks deal 7 (2d6) lightning and 7 (2d6) thunder damage in addition to their normal damage. In addition, if the thunderbird hits a creature two or more times in one round, that target must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw, being stunned for 1 round on a failed save, or deafened for 1 round on a success. If the thunderbird hits with all three attacks in one round, the target must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw or be blinded for 1 round.

REACTIONS

Thunderflash. When the is struck in melee with a metal weapon, the attacker takes 7 (2d6) lightning and 7 (2d6) thunder damage and must make two saving throws as the thunderbird's thunderstrike ability, as if struck by three attacks in the same round.

HAUNTED WOOD RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

After crossing the northern plains, the caravan arrives at the eastern arm of the Haunted Wood and wends its way northwest as directly as possible using such game trails and clearings as exist. This forest is a vast woodland stretching across the Duchy of the Northmarches along the southern



side of the Wizard's Wall from the Deepfells Range in the west to the Stoneheart Mountains in the east. Older even than the Great Akadonian Forest[LL5-7] that once covered much of the continent of Akados, the Haunted Forest has long been considered a fey and cursed place. It was under its eaves that the elves made their great defense of the Crynomar Gap in 712 I.R. against the first humanoid horde from the steppes before withdrawing west in their Third Exodus little more than a decade later, and the blood and suffering of so many of the elves has long been a catalyst for dark influences and dire hauntings. In addition, a shadowy curse has seemed to settle upon much of the wood over the centuries[ONS6]. Today the woods are largely unexplored with only a tiny remnant of reclusive wild elf tribes still calling the place home, and these more confined to the western extent of the woodland[ONS6-4,8].

The caravan's route crosses about 225 miles of the forest, though it is unable to travel in such a direct manner among the towering, shadow-shrouded trunks. As such the journey takes an additional 19 days. Roll 1d6 to check for encounters once during the day and twice during the night. An encounter takes place on a roll of 1 during the day and a roll of 1–2 at night. If an encounter occurs roll d12 and consult the table below. Encounters marked with an asterisk can only occur once and should be considered as no encounter if rolled again.

d12	Encounter
1	Hangman tree (see **Appendix A,** page 543)
2	1d3 **wraiths**
3	1d6+2 **shadows**
4	1d8+4 shadow wolves (see **Appendix A,** page 552)
5	1d4+2 **ettins**
6	1d6+2 **phase spiders**
7	Moon-beast* (see **Appendix A,** page 547)
8	Catoblepas* (see **Appendix A,** page 531)
9	1d4+1 tenebrous worms (see **Appendix A,** page 554)
10	Adult forest dragon* (see **Appendix A,** page 533)
11	Hobgoblin hunters
12	Chain devil slavers*
* Encountered only once. If rolled again, reroll.	

Forest Dragon: If the PCs manage to kill the dragon or drive it away, the PCs might attempt to find its lair. The lair is 1d10 miles away and contains a level-appropriate hoard.

Hobgoblin Hunters: The great foreboding massif of Dragonbone Peak looms over the western end of the Haunted Wood where is climbs the foothills of the Deepfells Range. Once the demesne of the hobgoblin demigod Kakobovia before he was defeated by Grand Duke Borell I and driven from the Material Plane, the ill-starred mountain has remained a stronghold of hobgoblin-kind ever since. See page 100 of *Mountains of Madness* by Frog God Games and page 255 of *LL3: Sword of Air* by Frog God Games for additional information.

The hobgoblins of Dragonbone rarely enter the Haunted Forest in force, but warriors or leaders who wish to prove themselves occasionally venture within to test their mettle against its denizens. And the hunt leader who returns with a forest dragon's head or tenebrous worm's hide as a trophy is considered to be destined for greatness. This hunting band consists of 2d6 hobgoblin **veterans** and 1d6 hobgoblin **scouts**, led by a hobgoblin **priest** and a hobgoblin captain. The hobgoblins are all mounted on battle-trained **elk**.

HOBGOBLIN CAPTAIN

Medium humanoid (hobgoblin), lawful evil
Armor Class 19 (half plate, shield)
Hit Points 82 (11d8 + 33)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Intelligence +4, Wisdom +4, Charisma +4
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages Common, Goblin
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Martial Advantage. Once per turn, the hobgoblin captain can deal an extra 14 (4d6) damage to a creature it hits with a weapon attack if that creature is within 5 feet of an ally of the hobgoblin that isn't incapacitated.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The hobgoblin captain makes three melee attacks or two ranged attacks.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage, or 8 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage if used with two hands.

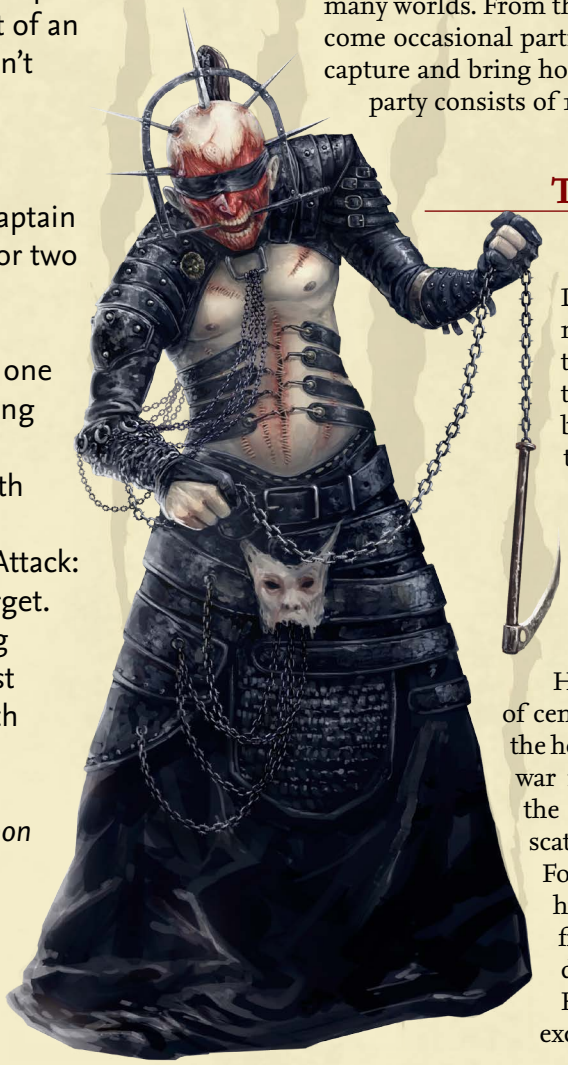
Shield Bash. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (2d4 + 3) bludgeoning damage and the target must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Leadership (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). For 1 minute, the hobgoblin captain can utter a special command or warning whenever a nonhostile creature that it can see within 30 feet of it makes an attack roll or a saving throw. The creature can add a d4 to its roll provided it can hear and understand the captain. A creature can benefit from only one Leadership die at a time. This effect ends if the hobgoblin captain is incapacitated.

REACTIONS

Parry. The hobgoblin captain adds 3 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, it must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.



Chain Devil Slayers: The strange, shadowy depths of the Haunted Wood attract visitors from many lands and many worlds. From the Shadowfell and the infernal realms come occasional parties of chain devils seeking mortals to capture and bring home for their own amusement. Such a party consists of 1d4+1 chain devils[SRD].

THE WIZARD'S WALL

The Crynomar Gap once stretched unblemished between the mighty Deepfells of the west with the even mightier Stoneheart Mountains to the east and allowed access between the forested verge of what would later be known as the Haunted Wood and the seemingly endless plains of the vast Great Steppes. In the time of the Hundaei Empire, the nomadic peoples of the plains considered the elf-haunted forest to be taboo and refused to travel by that route, even in the later Hun Wars between the Hundaei and the Hyperborean Empire of central Akados. However, with the fall of the horselords in their own cataclysmic civil war in 683 I.R. and the plains becoming the Haunted Steppe populated only by scattered refugee tribes of the Shattered Folk, nothing barred the newly roused humanoid tribes of the Lost Mountains from gathering in a great horde and descending upon the unsuspecting Hyperboreans to the south — nothing except the wild elves of the forest.

The wild tribes put up the great Elven Defense of the Crynomar Gap against the endless numbers of the humanoids and eventually turned them back to their far northern homes, all while the Hyperborean peoples lived completely oblivious to the disaster that had been averted. Yet so great was the slaughter that the wild elves could no longer maintain their hold against the ever-expanding human settlements and undertook the Third Elven Exodus, retreating to the west beyond the Green Warders. Finding their northern borders empty, the humans of Hyperborea expanded into the virgin territory comprised largely of what is now the Grand Duchy of Reme, but even they balked at the ominous shadow of the blood-soaked forest and named the forest the Haunted Wood much as they had so labelled the Great Steppes to the north of it.

Centuries later Reme was founded and expanded under Prince Cale into the Caleen Colonies extending past the Haunted Wood and across the Haunted Steppe, only to run afoul of those same humanoid tribes to be found in the Lost Mountains and around forbidden Lake Hali. Once again, the humanoid hordes rolled south, though this time with the terrifying shadow walkers of the Shadowlands spurring them onward. They cut through the Caleen Colonies in only a few short years and, with the wild elf warders of the Haunted Forest long gone, seemed unstoppable as they approached the Foerdewaith forces gathered at the Gap. However, here fate intervened again and the legendary archmage brothers Alycthron and Margon appeared and spared the southlands from what seemed certain destruction. By combining the might of themselves and their magical staffs and extracting a primordial word of power from the earth spirit of the Stoneheart Mountains, the archmages sacrificed themselves in a burst of power that broke the continent. In a great upheaval, the entire lands of northern Reme and the Haunted Wood tilted and rose upward even as the lands of the southern Haunted Steppe subsided until a great escarpment stretching from the Deepfells to the Stonehearts completely closed off the Gap[LL1-100]. Unable to surmount such an obstacle, the shadow walker horde was repulsed and eventually melted back into the great wilderness of the north.

In time a precipitous trail was blazed at the eastern end of the escarpment that gave narrow access to the plains below anchored at a stronghold that came to be known as Durgam's Folly[G1] — the route used long after by both Gravenfar and the fateful Conroi Expedition — but otherwise the Wizard's Wall remains a sheer rock escarpment as high as 1,000 feet in some places and averaging 700 feet frequented only by the blood hawks of the plains and air spirits of the flanking mountains. To this day it is as much a barrier to the steppes beyond as it was at its raising. At the base of the Wall are the waters of Shadowfall Lake, created by the newly formed depression of the southern steppes and the rerouting of water courses that resulted. Beyond stretches the Haunted Steppe itself, visible from the top of the Wall for as far as 40 miles on especially clear days.

H. THE HIDDEN CLEFT

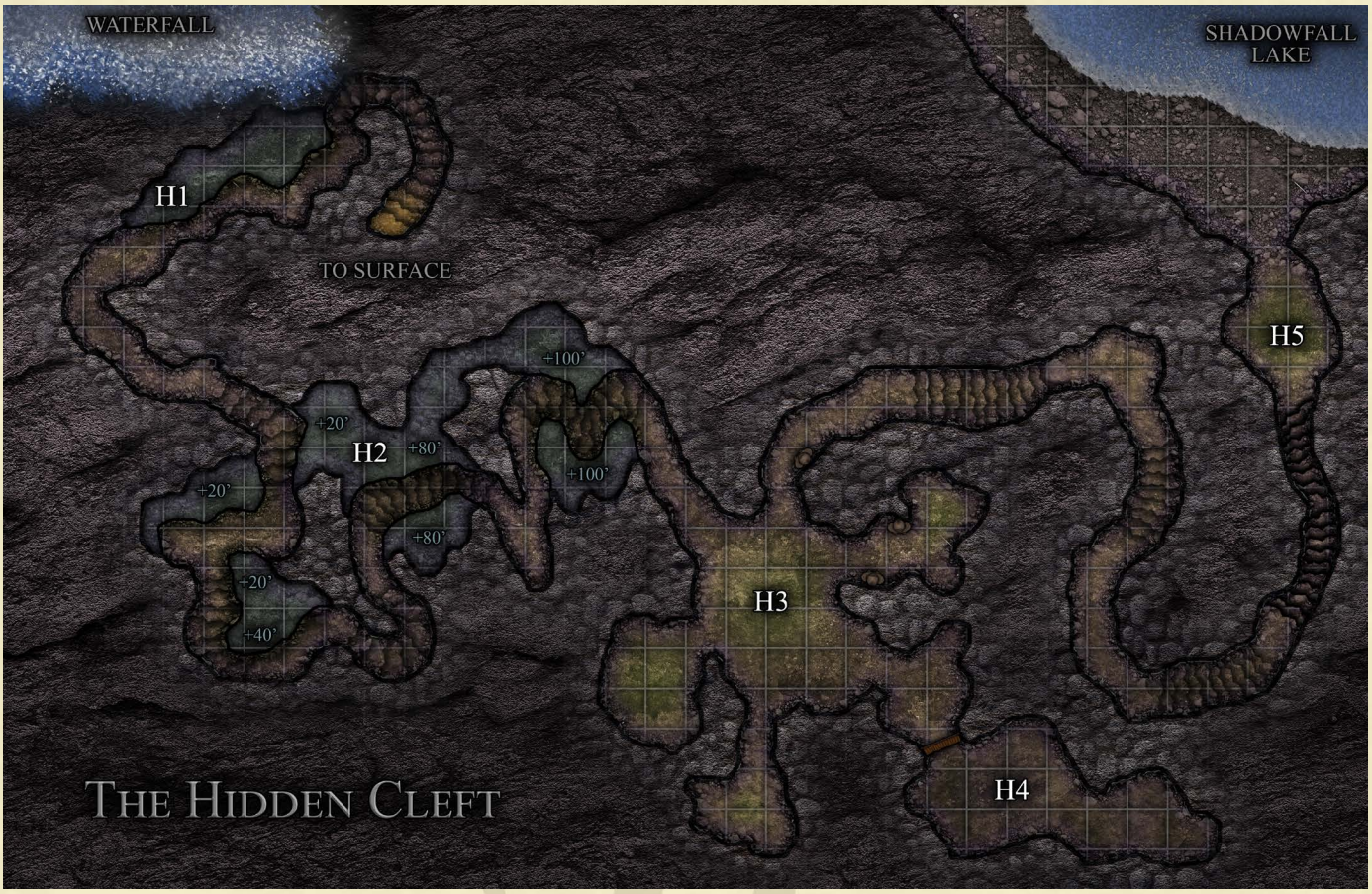
Once the PCs reach the Wizard's Wall the location of Two-Point Rock can be found with a DC 20 Intelligence (History), Intelligence (Investigation), or Wisdom (Survival) check. This check is reduced by 2 for each day spent searching along the Wall's edge (roll for encounters as normal from the Haunted Wood Random Encounters Table while this search is underway). Once Two-Point Rock is located, it is a simple matter of following the edge of the Wall westward for 3 miles until reaching a small waterfall. To all appearances it is just a narrow crevice with a thin waterfall that tumbles into the lake 800 feet below. It would look like one of dozens of such minor falls that lace the Wall's face without the map to point it out, but anyone searching along the edge of this crevice with a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check finds a hidden path that leads to a hollow behind the falls.

The cascade falls through a narrow fissure at the edge of the cliff, and just visible inside this fissure is a precarious rock trail, almost like a natural stair that descends beside and then turns behind the falling waters. There, behind the cascade, a cave entrance cuts deep into the cliff face disappears into darkness.

The rocky path is puddled and slick with a sheer drop of 600 feet to the base of the cliff below. However, the path is wide enough that no Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks to balance are necessary. The mules and mounts of the caravan can even traverse the ledge carefully, but Goribald and his retainers will remain atop the cliff and wait for the PCs to explore the dangers below before entering themselves.

H1. TRAPPED LEDGE

The tunnel beyond the ledge is roughly 10 feet wide and 12–15 feet high. The walls appear mostly natural but show some evidence of stonework to widen it in places. All surfaces and slick with moisture, and there are no light sources. The air smells of wet earth with an underlying stink of foulness and rot. Before reaching the tunnel, though, the PCs must first pass a **trap**.



COLLAPSING LEDGE TRAP

Where the ledge behind the falls becomes a tunnel and enters the cliff face, the stone beneath has been purposely undermined and weakened (the shaded area on the map). A PC must make a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check to notice the danger. A character who makes a close inspection of the ledge can make an Intelligence (Investigation) check against the same DC to realize it has deliberately been undermined. Otherwise, the target character must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the character falls and takes 20d6 bludgeoning damage as they drop down the face of the cliff to shore of Shadowfall Lake 600 feet below.

Development: If the trap is triggered, the sound alerts the occupants of **H2** to intruders, and they come flying out in 1d4 rounds to attack any PCs who are still on the ledge behind the waterfall. If the PCs have already moved on towards **H2** by that time, then they meet the PCs in the tunnel and quickly retreat back to their chamber to battle the intruders there. If combat occurs on the ledge, the void-stirges attempt to bull rush opponents off or even grapple them and then leap, trusting their ability to disentangle themselves from falling PCs and catch themselves with their wings before striking the water at the end of the round (assuming the PC doesn't choose to grapple them back, which he might).

H2. TANGLED OVERWATCH

The smell of decomposition and refuse has become almost unbearable here as the tunnel begins to descend crude steps cut into the surface of the stone. However, the ceiling doesn't descend at the same rate, revealing this to be a deepening crevice rather than a true tunnel course. Along the length of this winding course, ledges are visible upon the heights of the cavern walls above the descending path.

This labyrinthine corridor is in a sense a single, multilevel chamber. The passage continues to descend for a total of 100 feet, but a series of connected ledges above the course of the passage remains at the same level. The relative height of the ledges above the adjacent path is given on the map. Walls are damp, natural stone, so climbing to these ledges requires a DC 17 Strength (Athletics) check. The ceiling of the passage and connecting ledges is 25 feet above the level of the ledges. The ledges and the connecting tunnels serve as the abode of a flock of **11 void-stirges** (see **Appendix D**,

page 88). These strange creatures hail from another world and star system altogether, having spent years travelling through the void of space to settle in the Lost Mountains. They responded to the call of The Sagging Man (area **H4**) and serve him in this place. These aberrations are vaguely humanoid in shape with two upper limbs and two lower limbs on a torso with a head in the usual location, but there the resemblance ends. They are not altogether crows, nor moles, nor buzzards, nor ants, nor vampire bats, nor decomposed human beings, but something both more and less, and when not flying they flop limply along, half with their webbed feet and half with their membranous wings.*

Tactics: The void-stirges reside on the ledges but fly to area **H1** if they hear the trap activated. Otherwise they engage intruders here. They initially remain in total concealment and cover atop the many ledges and within the connecting passages between and wait for the intruders to reach the section of passage between the two 80-foot ledges. Then they swoop down to attack from all directions — above, in front, and behind — in a frenzy of bloodlust. If intruders climb up the ledges rather than following the descending path, the void-stirges try to swarm them there rather than waiting for them to descend.

Treasure: The void-stirges lair upon the ledges and within the caves connecting them. These areas are a nightmare of partially devoured decaying animal carcasses and feces from the filth and squalor in which the void-stirges live. Spending any time searching through this area requires a DC 1 Constitution saving throw to avoid contracting sight rot[SRD]. Among the rotting wildlife can be found a few barely recognizable carcasses of unfortunate humanoids, mainly Shattered Folk or forest travelers. Anyone taking the time to search through the refuse and making a DC 28 Wisdom (Perception) check can locate the scattered treasures that have been dropped and forgotten. These include 1,800 sp, 170 gp, 37 pp, and a large black pearl (600 gp) in assorted rotten pouches and packs as well as a still-usable suit of *+1 padded armor* of Shattered Folk make, a *ring of swimming* still on a skeletal finger, a *miser's mask* (see **Appendix C**, Page 88), a *spell scroll (blink)* being used to line the sole of a ragged boot, and a *ring of animal influence*.

H3. CAVERN OF THE THAWNS

As the PCs approach this area, the foul air becomes worse, adding the sharp odors of stale sweat, urine, feces, and ammonia. This miasma requires a DC 20 Constitution saving throw; on a failure, the target is poisoned until the PC is able to breathe fresh air again, after which they can attempt a new saving throw each round to end the effect.

The smell of rotting meat and unwashed bodies is almost overwhelming in this large, low-ceilinged chamber. The floor is strewn with the partially devoured remnants of animals and puddles of suspicious origin. Small beetles and rodents scurry among this collection of filth and scatter at your approach. Despite the apparent haphazard squalor, there is a sense of order to the place, as if someone or something has made an attempt at tidying up — or some version of that. Numerous side caves open off of the central area with shadowy forms barely visible lurking in two of them.

The ceiling of this cave is only 7 feet high, though the hunched stature of its occupants allows them move through it unimpeded. It and the surrounding caves serve as the home of a gang of **6 thawn slashers**. These malformed creatures appear to be giants under some sort of melting curse as their loose flesh hangs from their deformed frames like the folds of a robe, and their tumorous arms end in clublike hands with elongated, scythe-like claws, all partially concealed beneath tattered, rotted cloaks and robes. These creatures have constructed crude statues of themselves out of mud, rock, and frames of bone which are placed in two of the side caves. If alerted by combat in **H2**, the thawns themselves lurk in the other caves and wait for intruders to be lured by the decoys before rushing out to attack from behind. Noticing that the decoys are little more than piles of debris requires a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check while they remain in shadows but is readily apparent with adequate light.

The side caves are as filthy as the main cavern and are where the creatures keep their bedding and few possessions (mainly additional layers of cloaks and blankets used to shroud their hideous forms). The entrance to **H4** is shrouded by a thick, woolen black-out curtain that prevents any light from escaping. Anyone searching through the muck in this area is exposed to the same disease as described in **H2**. Anyone breaking down one of the mud and stone effigies (AC 17, hp 25) and making a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check can find the thawns' treasure in the debris. Likewise, anyone making a DC 23 Wisdom (Perception) check notices signs of digging in the bases of the sodden lumps where the thawns of buried their valuables.

* See "The Festival" by H.P. Lovecraft



THAWN SLASHER

Large giant, chaotic evil
Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 127 (15d8 + 60)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	10 (+0)	18 (+4)	7 (-2)	14 (+2)	4 (-3)

Saving Throws Con +6
Skills Athletics +7, Perception +6, Stealth +2, Survival +4
Senses blindsense 30 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages Giant
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Earthen Camouflage. The thawn has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide in rocky or muddy terrain.
Reckless. At the start of its turn, the thawn can gain advantage on all melee weapon attack rolls during that turn, but attack rolls against it have advantage until the start of its next turn.
Repulsive. Thawns find the appearance of themselves and others of their kind revolting. As such, most wear heavy cloaks or otherwise obscure their countenances. Should a thawn be confronted with its own reflection (such as being presented with a mirror), it must succeed at a DC 15 Wisdom save or be frightened until the next of its next turn.

ACTIONS
Multiattack. The thawn makes two claw attacks.
Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 12 (2d6 + 5) slashing damage.
Rock. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, range 50/100 ft., one target. *Hit*: 12 (2d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

Tactics: The thawns are fanatically loyal to the Sagging Man and fight to the death to prevent the PCs from entering area **H4**.

Treasure: Hidden within the thawns' effigies are there compiled treasure that consist of 924 cp, 687 sp, 75 gp, a carnelian (65 gp), a *spell scroll (lesser restoration)*, a *potion of tongues* (as the spell), and a *wand of ash storm* (se **Appendix C**, page 88made from the serrated horn of a steppes ibex.

H4. THE CAVE OF MIRRORED MADNESS

This room is completely dark, but if a light source is brought in it flashes brightly as it is reflected a hundred times over. This erratic illumination is highly distracting, and all creatures other than the Sagging Man and his minions must make a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw each round at the beginning of their turn; on a failure, they take a -1 penalty on attack rolls and vision-based Wisdom (Perception) checks for one round.

Piles of moldering books and scrolls are stacked on the stone floor, some obviously fused to the ground with mildew. There's no sign of a fire pit or bedding, but mirrors of many shapes and sizes rest against or hang from nails driven into the cavern wall. Several mirrors hang on ropes from iron spikes in the ceiling ten or twelve feet overhead. Several crystals of varying colors rest on the piles of books and next to the mirrors. A peculiar rune, painted the yellow of a diseased liver, occupies the middle of the west wall.

This strange chamber is the abode of a dread creature known as **The Sagging Man**. Perhaps the most powerful servant of the King in Yellow south of the Wizard's Wall, The Sagging Man is a hideous undead thing called a keeper of the Yellow Sign. The Sagging Man's corpulent body is barely contained by an ancient moth-tattered bison hide beneath an intricately designed colorful felt hat with a wide brim on either side, upturned in the front and back, and bearing a number of shiny bangles. His flesh is the color of a drunkard in the last throes of cirrhosis and hangs flaccidly on his corpulent frame. The remains of his uniquely shaped straggly beard and moustache and his piercing, slightly upturned eyes complete the picture along with his exotic garb to identify his original race with a DC 20 Intelligence (History) check as that of the Hundaei who once roamed the Haunted Steppe and have been extinct for some 2,800 years, and his current state of corporeal corruption does nothing to disprove that extinction.

The Sagging Man was one of the first Hundaei chiefs to dare to trod upon the Nam-i-Budhani[FB-106] — the forbidden Lost Mountains at Lake Hali — and to discover and walk upon the ruined streets of ancient Carcosa, and he paid with his sanity, his life, and ultimately his soul. Centuries later he wandered south by the will of his master and eventually took up residence in this lair after dominating a tribe of thawns who resided here. From here he has formed and coordinated the various cults of Hastur the Unspeakable throughout Reme and lands farther south by means of *dream* spells and occasionally direct meetings at the Canary Crown Theater established by the Tanith cult, though he largely attempts to stay behind the scenes and reclusive.

As is not unusual for disparate cults of a chaotic and capricious god, The Sagging Man has not remained aware of all the machinations of the agents of Hastur throughout the **Lost Lands** and thus had no knowledge of the planting of the Conroi Expedition documents to be discovered in Nains (a plot point detailed in the forthcoming ***Race for Shataakh-Uulm***). As such, when his cult members heard rumors of outsiders seeking the location of the Pit of the Burning Star, The Sagging Man sent his minions to suppress this activity, unknowingly going against the will of his Yellow King. Whether the PCs' arrival at his lair was the inevitable result of his meddling or some greater punishment by the will of Hastur for this failing, in either case The Sagging Man has found himself alone and exposed to his enemies for the first time in more than two millennia.

THE SAGGING MAN, KEEPER OF THE YELLOW SIGN

Medium undead, chaotic evil
Armor Class 21 (natural armor)
Hit Points 218 (23d8 + 115)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	16 (+3)	20 (+5)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)

Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned
Saving Throws Str +6, Dex +4, Con +6, Int +3, Wis +7, Cha +11
Skills Arcana +7, Insight +6, Perception +6, Stealth +8
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages Common, Deep Speech, Giant

Challenge 15 (13,000 XP)

Special Gear. The Sagging Man has a *hat of scintillating colors* (which functions as the *robe*).

Innate Spellcasting. The Sagging Man's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 18). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

3/Day each: *darkness*, *invisibility* (self only)

1/Day each: *bestow curse*, *dream*

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the Sagging Man fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Spellcasting. The Sagging Man is a 10th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 18). The Sagging Man regains his spell slots after a short or long rest. The Sagging Man knows the following warlock spells:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch*, *guidance*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *minor illusion*, *true strike*, *vicious mockery*

1st-5th level (2 5th-level slots): *charm person*, *comprehend languages*, *contact other plane*, *dimension door*, *fear*, *hideous laughter*, *hypnotic pattern*, *mirror image*, *scrying*, *sending*

Turn Resistance. The Keeper of the Yellow Sign has advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead.

Yellow Sign Affinity. While the Keeper of the Yellow Sign stays within 1 mile of an active Yellow Sign for at least 24 hours it gains a +1 bonus to its AC and a +1 bonus on all saving throws. The Sagging Man's yellow sign is on display at **H4** and is powered by the will of Hastur himself. These changes are included in the statistic block above. If the Sagging Man somehow leaves the area, he loses those bonuses until he again spends 24 hours within 1 mile of an active Yellow Sign.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Sagging Man uses Glare or Scintillating Chapeaux. Then the Sagging Man makes two slam attacks or uses Entropic Drain.

Entropic Drain. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +10 to hit, reach 5 ft. one target. *Hit*: 22 (4d8 + 5) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

A Keeper's use of its energy draining ability can result in a surge of entropy that consumes its body and disrupts life all around it. Every time the keeper's entropic drain attack results in a creature's death, the keeper must succeed at a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be destroyed. If the keeper is destroyed, all creatures in a 15-foot radius around the keeper with an Intelligence of 4 or greater must make a DC 18 Consitution saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 20 necrotic damage and the creature's maximum hit points are reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. A creature that fails its saving throw must then make a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, the creature suffers from long-term madness and dies after an hour unless the creature's maximum hit points are restored (such as by greater restoration).

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +10 to hit, reach 5 ft. one target. *Hit*: 8 (1d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

Glare. The Sagging Man chooses one creature within 30 feet he can see. The target suffers disadvantage on Wisdom saving throws and attack rolls until the end of the Sagging Man's next turn. The effects end if the Sagging Man becomes incapacitated or dead, the target moves more than 30 feet away, or the Sagging Man uses this action again. If the Sagging Man is blinded, he must succeed at a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw or the effect ends on his target.

Scintillating Chapeaux (Recharge 5-6). The Sagging Man's enchanted hat unleashes a cascade of dazzling colors in either a 10-foot radius or a 20-foot cone. Creatures in this area must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw. Those failing the save are blinded for 1 round, while those succeeding are dazzled for 1 round, gaining disadvantage on

attack rolls and vision-based Wisdom (Perception) checks. Creatures that fail their save can attempt a new saving throw each round at the end of their turn; success ends the blindness and leaves them dazzled (as above) for 1 round.

REACTIONS

Painful Glare. When the target of Glare takes damage, the damage is increased by 10 (3d6), and the target must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw, taking an additional 22 (2d10) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half that much on a successful save.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The Sagging Man can take 2 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The Sagging Man regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Cantrip. The Sagging Man casts a cantrip.

Detect. The Sagging Man makes a Wisdom (Perception) check.

Shadowy Step (Costs 2 Actions). The Sagging Man magically teleports, along with any equipment it is wearing or carrying, up to 30 feet to an unoccupied space he can see.

Spell (Costs 2 Actions). The Sagging Man uses his spellcasting ability to cast a spell.



LAIR ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing all initiative ties), the Sagging Man can use one of his lair action options. He can't do so while incapacitated or otherwise unable to take actions. If surprised, he can't use one until after its first turn in the combat.

- **Scatter**. The Sagging Man uses the dozens of carefully placed mirrors and assorted colored crystals to reflect light from his *hypnotic pattern* spell and his Scintillating Chapeaux and increases the size of the area to affect the entire room, for 1 round.
- **Dazzle**. The room alternates between pitch black and radiant, scattered illumination. The PCs must succeed at a DC 15 Wisdom check or be blinded until the end of their next turn.
- **The Yellow Sign**. One PC must make a DC 18 Wisdom check or suffer the effects of *confusion* (as the spell) until the end of their next turn.

Tactics: The Sagging Man is preternaturally aware of his followers and knows of any interaction between the PCs and the thawns in **H3**, so is always prepared for intruders. He casts *invisibility* and *displacement* on himself before combat. When the PCs first enter his chamber it is pitch dark, and he is hiding in the eastern portion. As soon as a light source is brought, he uses his Scatter lair action with his Scintillating Chapeaux. Once one of these has occurred, he casts *hypnotic pattern* on the most heavily armored PC in the group. He then fixes his Glare on the brawniest-looking warrior (other than any already charmed by the *hypnotic pattern*). He ducks back behind the cover of the rear room and casts dimension door or uses his Shadowy Step to get behind the party into their weaker rear ranks. He then wades into the confusion, attacking lightly armored foes or the object of his Glare until that character is dead. He then begins a new stare and focuses on that character, and so on. The Sagging Man fights until destroyed gaining the sudden insight in his last moments that if he falls defending his cavernous lair after 2,837 years of cursed, mad unlife, then he has at least lain eyes on the harbingers of Hastur's will 'ere the end.

Treasure: If the PCs examine the book titles, they see a range of topics from children's adventure tales to metaphysical theory and the nature of the planes that extend back over the history of the Hyperborean Empire, the Grand Duchy of Reme, and even the more recent Conroi Settlements. The pages between the covers are stuck together and almost uniformly unreadable from the effects of damp and worms. One worn felt scroll case, however, holds two ancient and crumbling scrolls that have avoided the worst of these effects. A DC 22 Intelligence (History) check identifies them as rare historical documents written in Imperial Tielethae, known as "Hundish" to the southlands of Akados, that date to the days of the Great Khanate of the Hundaei Clans prior to their civil war in 681 I.R. Anyone able to read them can see that they relate to the court of the last Great Khan, Ogedan, and give amazing details of everyday life in the Great Khan's court prior to its fall. As historical documents, these fragile scrolls are virtually priceless, but someone like the Magnate of Books in Nains would willingly pay up 100,000 gp for them.

Also hidden among the piles of ruined books are a few magical items that have proven resistant to the ravages of their environment. These include a *spell scroll (feeblemind)*, a *spell scroll (magic jar)*, and an unused *tome of clear thought*.

H5. WINDING STAIR

A stair of roughly cut stone follows a natural fissure as it winds its way down hundreds of feet to the base of the Wizard's Wall and exits on the rocky shores of Shadowfall Lake. At this cavern exit the thawns have rigged a trap to ward against anyone entering unbidden.

FALLING STONES TRAP

A thin cord is placed as a tripwire across the cave mouth. The cord runs up the wall and attaches to an iron spike driven between large stones that have been wedged in place at the tunnel's ceiling 10 feet above. Tripping this cord causes the spike to be dislodged and the stones to fall across the entrance of the cave. Not only does the trap threaten to crush anyone beneath it, but the stones constitute a cave-in. It requires a DC 19 Wisdom (Perception) check to notice the trap. Each target must make a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw. Anyone who fails is pinned under the rocks, still inside the tunnel (the cave-in has no slide zone), takes 10d6 bludgeoning damage, and is buried. Anyone who succeeds on the save takes half damage and can choose to remain in the cave or leap out of it.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

The death of the Sagging Man is the end of the ragged cult that has plagued Reme for the past several years. While other devotees to Hastur lie in wait to the north, they have very little knowledge or connection with the mesmerist and his doings, as disorganization inherent to the disparate nihilistic cults of Hastur is not uncommon.

It only takes a few days to skirt the Shadowfall Lake and enter the Campacha Plains[FB-181] and its scattered population of a mixture of colonial descendants and the native Shattered Folk primarily of the Campacha Tribe that comprise the Conroi Settlements. These groups have lived together in peace south of the Wanaheeli River for some eight decades. There are no large population centers or cities, but settlements do exist where the party and their dwarven companions can rest and resupply before their big push across the Wanaheeli and into the interior of the Haunted Steppe.

Petyan is an example of a typical village of the Conroi Settlements, and there are likewise many small outposts and wayside inns scattered along its dusty roads. An example of one of these is the Galloping Ghost Inn. Both of these locations are further detailed in the adventure "Madness Grows" in ***Fields of Blood*** by **Frog God Games**.

PETYAN

CG village
Corruption –1; **Crime** –2; **Economy** +0; **Law** +1; **Lore** –1; **Society** –2
Qualities holy site, strategic location
Danger 0

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government overlord
Population 168 (104 humans, 22 half-elves, 18 elves, 24 others)

NOTABLE NPCS

Quanata, village priest (LG male human [Shattered Folk] cleric of Thaka[FB-96] 5)
Donhowee, village elder (LG female human [Shattered Folk] **expert** [see page xx])
Shatan, trapper (CN male human [Shattered Folk] scout[SRD])

THE GALLOPING GHOST INN

N Large roadhouse
Sign Majestic white horse in full gallop
Prices average; **Quality** high
Qualities crooked game, defended, specialized accommodations, tourist attraction

DEMOGRAPHICS

Staff 24 (19 humans, 4 gnomes, 1 halfling)

NOTABLE NPCS

Dardennell Verglade, proprietor (CG male gnome illusionist 5)
Zayla Verglade, concierge (CG female gnome **expert** [see page xx])
Dwanda, bartender (N male human [Shattered Folk] commoner[SRD])
Batsu, crooked pharo dealer (LE male human [Shattered Folk] rogue 5)

Though the Conroi Settlements do not have a single large population center from which the party can make bulk purchases or acquire individual items of greater value, if they are willing to remain for 1d4 weeks and make DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) checks to work through the many local channels and connections between the scattered settlements, the Conroi Setlements as a whole can be regardes as having the amenities of a town rather than a village. Guides, mounts, services, etc. are all available at the standard prices listed in the 5E System Reference Document.

GUIDES

No hirelings are willing to travel north beyond the Wanaheeli River other than guides. And, while these have no specific knowledge of the territory beyond the Wanaheeli, they can provide normal guide services to keep employers on course and avoiding natural hazards through the use of Survival checks. Guides hired to work south of the Wanaheeli River are available for the trained hireling rate of 3 sp per day plus the cost of provisions for guide and mount. Once the river is crossed, however, that rate goes up to 1 gp per day with 2 weeks paid in advance for deposit at home by the guide due to the unknown dangers to be faced in that ill-rumored expanse.

Hired guides will defend themselves in battle and will participate in a general defense of the PCs' caravan if attacked, but they will not take unnecessary risks upon themselves and their first choice will always be to retreat back to the safety of greater numbers in the caravan if attacked while scouting. They will not accompany the PCs into any dungeons or other adventure areas that are beyond the scope of their duties as simple guides and will always attempt to flee (or surrender if flight is not an option) if reduced below a third of their hit points. A guide for travel north of the Wanaheeli can be found with a successful DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check for each week spent asking around, to a maximum of three guides total. Guides hired in the Conroi Settlements have a 50% chance to be of either Campachan or Foerdewaith descent. Each guide will have his own mustang as a mount.

CAMPACHAN GUIDE

Medium humanoid (human), neutral
Armor Class 15 (studded leather)
Hit Points 104 (16d8 + 32)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)

Skills Athletics +5, Perception +5, Stealth +5, Survival +5
Senses passive Perception 15
Languages Common, Kirkut[LL8]
Challenge 3 (700 XP)
Special Gear. Each Campachan guide carries a *potion of healing* for emergencies.

Speak With Animals. The guide may cast speak with animals as a ritual spell.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The guide makes two attacks with a melee weapon or three attacks with a shortbow.

Handaxe. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Spear. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage, or 7 (1d8 +3) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

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

FOERDWAITH GUIDE

Medium humanoid (human), neutral
Armor Class 15 (chain shirt)
Hit Points 40 (9d8)
Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Animal Handling +6, Athletics +2, Perception +6, Stealth +6, Survival +6
Senses passive Perception 16
Languages Common, Elven, Gnoll, Gnome, Halfling, Orc, Sylvan
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The guide makes two melee weapon attacks.

Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit*: 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Spear. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +2 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit*: 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, or 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

When the PCs and the dwarven caravan have finished their preparations and are ready to depart, they travel to banks of the Wanaheeli River at its northernmost extension where Gravenfar and the Conroi Expedition made their departure into the Haunted Steppe. The adventure concludes as they prepare to step off into the unknown, and is continued in the next adventure, ***Race for Shataakh-Uulm***.

GRAVENFAR'S JOURNAL

Gravenfar's journal is a plain volume of vellum sheets bound between cloth-board covers. It is 112 pages long, and each leaf is covered in the handwriting of the venerated explorer, including daily entries, side notes, maps, sketches, and various and sundry marginalia. It is written in Westerling[LL4-18] (the common tongue of Akados), and the handwriting is relatively legible, though somewhat cramped in places. A reader taking an hour to skim through the book and making a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check can determine that it is divided roughly into four sections and can identify the subject matter of each section. Each individual section requires an hour of study and a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check to reveal all the information that can be gleaned from it. Once a check has been made for a section, that reader does not require a new check to study that section. After the entire book has been successfully read, a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check concludes that the accounts in the journal are internally consistent and use expression common to Gravenfar's time and other writings. The journal passes muster as the authentic writing of Aroldus Gravenfar, and as such it could be worth as much as 15,000 gp to an avid collector of such literature.

Pages 1–38; On matters of stars and star fall: Gravenfar relates his years of research into legends regarding falling stars. He was very interested in locating a particular ancient, esoteric tome called *The Book of the Star-Seed* that described a star fall in the Red Wastes of Libynos far to the east that created a crater called the Pit of Yhath. The book was said to give many

eldritch secrets of the falling star and the realms beyond the void of space where it originated[AK:M-8,74]. He also takes note of strange Eastern occult activities that seem to have sprung up around the Yhath star fall. Gravenfar never located the book or the fabled pit, but did locate some excerpts of the book that spoke of a second star that fell the same night thousands of miles to the west. When he compared these to certain known oral histories of the Shattered Folk as obtained through interviews with the Plainsmen of Reme, he concluded that there was a second meteor impact somewhere in the midst of the central Haunted Steppe. Attempts to magically divine information about this second "Burning Star" all failed to provide any information, though. Anyone making use of this section as a reference source gains a +2 bonus on Intelligence (History) or (religion) checks involving the Burning Star or the Pit of Yhath.

Pages 19–36; On the properties of star metals: This section consists of a discussion on the properties of a number of special ores and alloys identified by alchemists and metallurgists. It includes that several of these special metals — the most common being adamantine — are originally of extraterrestrial origin and are often ascribed to have come from falling stars, earning them the moniker of "star metals". These star metals are of extreme value to metalworkers and magical practitioners alike, making the craters left by falling stars potential treasure troves for those who can find and exploit them. It further connects the discussion of the falling star in the "stars and star fall" section to the subject of this section by indicating that attempts to magically locate the landing site of the legendary Burning Star of the Haunted Steppe have all been unsuccessful but notes that such spells don't give a false indication of its location, rather they simply fail to give any indication at all as if they are being somehow blocked or thwarted. Gravenfar posits from this that said Burning Star could, in fact, be made of the rare star metal noqual, a star metal is noted for its antimagic properties. He goes on to say that a large find of such a star metal would be unprecedented and of virtually incalculable value. Anyone making use of this section as a reference source gains a +2 bonus on Intelligence (Arcana) or Craft checks involving star metals.

Pages 37–74; On the location of the Pit of the Burning Star: Further research among the Plainsmen into the legend of the Burning Star convinced Gravenfar that it must have indeed landed somewhere in the central Haunted Steppe. In fact, he discovered ancient oral traditions among these former Shattered Folk tribesmen of a cursed place called *Shataakh-Uulm*, or "The Pit of the Burning Star" in the Kirkut[LL8-30] language of the Shattered Folk. From these legends and the migrations and movements of the Shattered Folk tribes over the years — or more importantly where they didn't migrate or move through — he narrowed down a section of the Haunted Steppe where he believed the Pit of the Burning Star must lie. However, its location placed it near the Road of Sorrows, the area of the old Caleen Colonies. The indication was that these centrally located settlements of the colonies must have been built very near the Pit itself. Yet, search though he might, Gravenfar could find no mention of anything like the discovery a crater or pit referenced among the old colonial records still available in Reme. Gravenfar concludes from the fact that no such discovery is mentioned combined with the complete lack of information revealed by divinatory magic indicates an at least equal chance of a true-but-purposely-concealed Pit of the Burning Star rather than an only-fictional Pit of the Burning Star. He is intrigued by this possibility and resolves to look into it further. Anyone making use of this section as a reference source gains a +2 bonus on Intelligence (History) or (local) checks involving the Caleen Colonies or the Shattered Folk of the Haunted Steppe.

Pages 75–112; On safely traversing the Haunted Steppe: The final section of the journal relates how Gravenfar made a final trip to Castorhage to consult the records at the Royal Cartography Society[LL7-261], as that city-state had made efforts to explore and colonize the western shores of the Haunted Steppe since 3262 I.R.[LL7-216]. From the puzzle pieces of oral Shattered Folk traditions, Caleen Colony written accounts, and the available Castorhagi charts, he has put together a tentative route into the Haunted Steppe from a specific point on the Wanaheeli River that he believes will enable his to locate the Pit of the Burning Star. He makes mention of his better-known desire to seek the "crèche of Hyperborea" in the Stoneheart Mountains and indicates that the route he has roughly devised to the Pit should not take him far off his intended course to reach the upper Stonehearts, which he intends to depart for in 3437 I.R.

Unfortunately, this is where the journal abruptly ends. The pages wherein the explorer recorded the actual route itself have been torn from the volume. Apparently, the representatives of the Conroi Expedition who sought to "copy" his route from the journal in the Bannon's possession tricked the wizard and outright stole the pages instead. Nevertheless, the journal still retains a wealth of information and detail about the hazards of crossing the Haunted Steppe and provides the location of a starting point for an expedition at the northernmost curve of the Wanaheeli River. Anyone making use of this section as a reference source gains advantage on Intelligence (History) or Wisdom (Survival) checks involving locations to be found upon or for traveling across the Haunted Steppe.

PLAYER HANDOUTS

HANDOUT 4A

Your Worshipful Grace, We prepare to depart on the morrow. Col. Conroi has assembled a glorious corps to undertake this grand venture. I shall keep a detailed journal and provide you with updates of our progress. Conroi was able to obtain the funding he had hoped from the silent backer, so we will be well equipped and mounted to ensure our success. May the Sun Father smile on our endeavor. Your humble servant, Azmerius Thade, Expedition Chaplain

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Your Worship, Leofric, We crossed the Wizard's Wall today at Fort Prudence. Tomorrow we trek along the shore of Shadowfall Lake at the wall's base to reach the plains-lands beyond. It is there we will begin our investigation into the ancient Taleen settlements. Humbly, Az. Thade, Conroi Exp.

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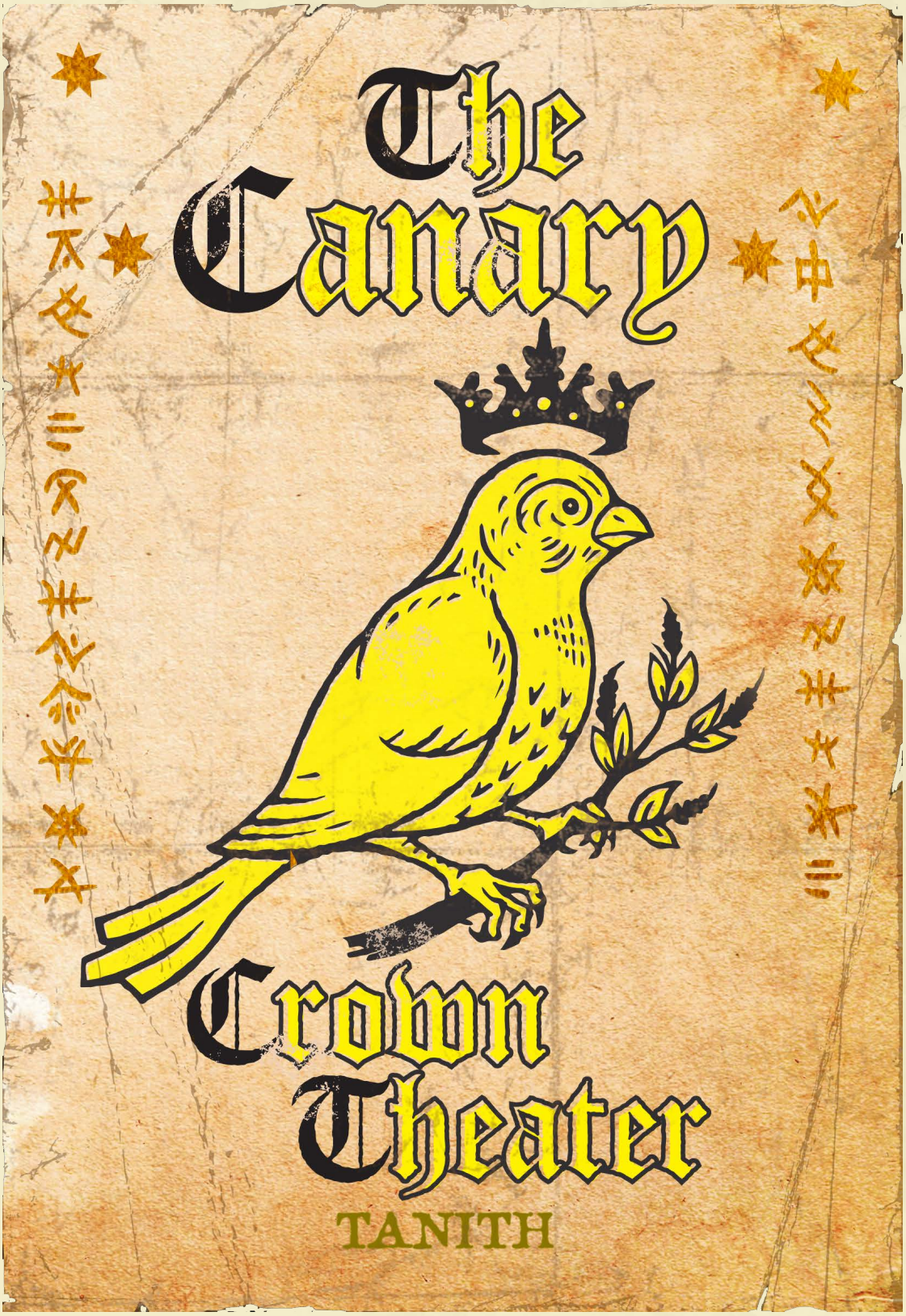
These plains are peopled by a peaceful horsefolk called the Campacha. They have welcomed our expedition and even told us of some "old stone houses" left by the "people that lived before the dark times". I can only assume they refer to the Taleen colonists prior to the great shadow walker invasion. We shall soon see the physical remnants left by our long-lost cousins. Your servant, Azmerius Thade, chaplain

Your Most Worshipfulness, The Rhemian scholars are extremely excited by the archaeological remains they have found and confirm it was indeed the colonists of Cale who built them. They claim there is evidence that more recent colonies may exist to the west and wish to head in that direction, but Col. Conroi will brook no discussion. He reminds them that his backer provided far more funds for the expedition than did the Grand Duchy, and the backer's goal lies across the Wanaheeli in the great steppes beyond. Your humble servant, Az. Thade, chp.

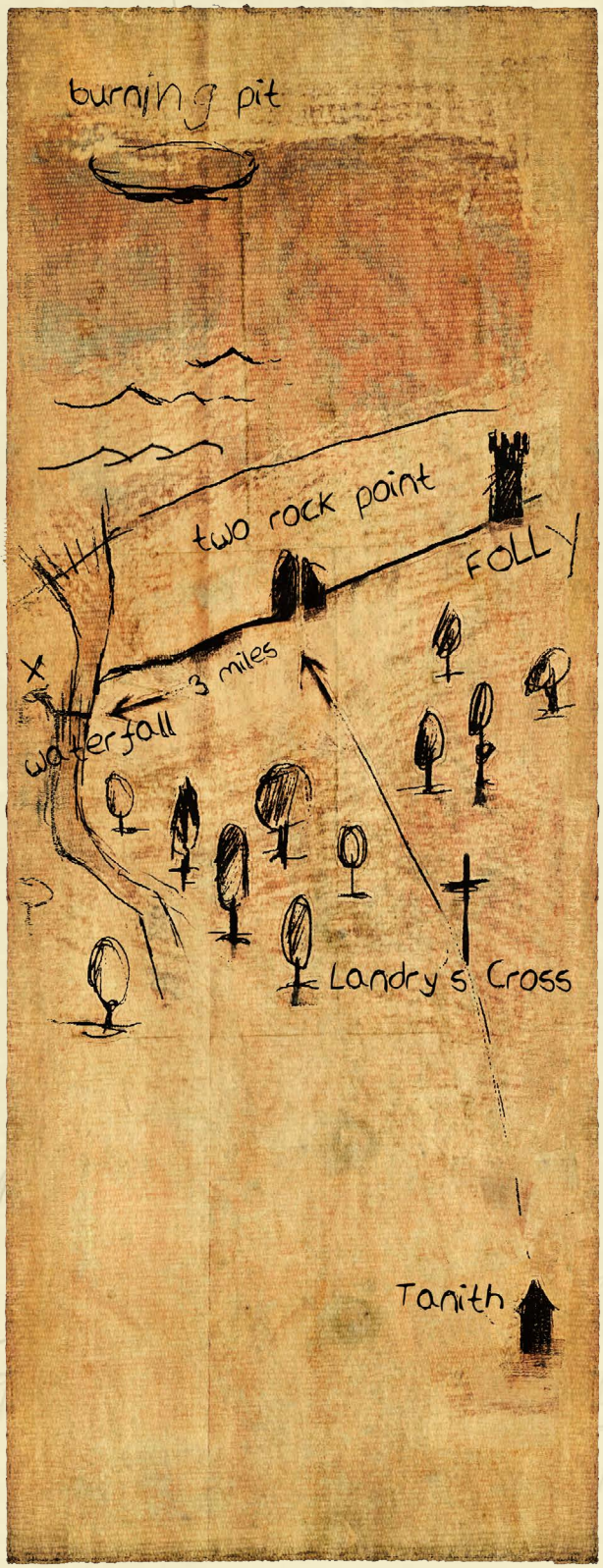
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Your Worship L'fric, It has been decided. The expedition will split. The Rhemian scholars and their underlings will remain on the Campacha Plains and sift the dust for arrowheads and potsherds while Col. Conroi will lead the soldiers and specialists provided by the island queen's gold to cross the river and claim the scholarly riches to be found there if old Gravenfar was right. I will purchase more pigeons from the Campacha and keep you updated on our route and progress. All for the glory of the great Sun Father and Truth-Speaker. Ever his humblest slave, A. Thade, Con. chp.

HANDOUT 4B



HANDOUT 4C


burning pit
two rock point
FOLLY
3 miles
waterfall
Landry's Cross
Tanith

HANDOUT 4D

Freyrmond 5th of Year 3439 by the Imperial Reckoning —

Your Most Worshipful Leofric, Archdeacon of Nains

From Your Humble Servant, Azmerius Thade of Mitra, Chaplain of the Conroi Expedition

Greetings,

Let today be my first official communique as the chaplain and informal historian of this auspicious expedition to push back the shadow of savagery and the unknown and bear the light of Mitra and Civilization to the Heathen North.

Today we cross the Wanaheeli River at that point dictated by Aroldus Gravenfar in his own recent sojourn. We officially leave behind the Campacha Plains and their now-familiar grasses and friendly tribesmen as we venture forth to retrace the route of our ancestors these five-and-a-half centuries gone. May we tread boldly into the unknown as did their beloved Prince Tale and bring to the light of knowledge with honor and reverence the path and record of their endeavor — that now so-named Road of Sorrows where they left their hopes, dreams, and blood on the wind-blown plains. Mitra rest their souls and grant us the wisdom to learn from their lives.

We are 163 this merry company following Col. Sixtun Conroi: soldiers, explorers, adventurers, cartographers, engineers, historians, craftsmen, scouts, hunters, drovers, porters, teamsters, and the assorted women, children, and entrepreneurs that congregate with any expedition of merit — patriots all. And though most are humans of the central kingdoms, we include many Campachan scouts and hunters, as well as gnomes, half-elves, a handful of elves, dwarves, and even four of the smallfolk among our number.

I am the official chaplain of the expedition in service to our own Sun Father and Truth-Speaker, Mitra, but there are clergy and laymen to other faiths including that of Thyr, Sefagreth, K'udrak, Stryme, Freya, Oghma, and Jamboor. I greatly look forward to sharing the faith of the Sun Father with my fellows and guiding them as we provide succor and comfort to our mates on this great victory for the many peoples of Foere.

Truly we make a splendid sight in our myriad panoply of sizes, shapes, mounts, wains, and herds. Mitra must look upon us and smile as we proceed in his work on this land.

Freyrmond 9th —

Today we encountered our first settlement among the "Shattered Folk" tribes who people this lonely land. They are not so different than the Campacha we encountered south of the Wanaheeli. Their language is understandable though somewhat different than that of the Campacha; clearly they diverged from some common ancestral tongue. Their village is composed of leathern conical tents which they call "tipi" and which they can pack up on their ponies and move at a moment's notice. These people are guarded but willing to trade and share their ways with us. They laugh at the notion we have arrived in the North, pointing farther along our direction of travel and saying, "North is that way."

Freyrmond 10th —

The journey proceeds, though it is unseasonably dry for the late spring. And, O how the wind howls. The Campacha guides tell us that summer — which they call "Thaka" — sometimes gets lost making its way to the Haunted Steppe. In the afternoon we were challenged by a great dust storm and lost our way for nearly an hour afterward. One of the porters and a small child, the son of one of the washerwomen, went missing during the storm and have yet to be found. If our search party cannot locate them, they will be the first casualties of what is becoming a rather unpleasant journey.

Mitra protect them and rest their souls.

Freyrmond 13th —

It seems that disaster strikes already. We were ambushed today. A native tribe hiding among rocks on a nearby hill rained black-feathered arrows upon us. By the time our skirmishers could reach them they had melted back into the broken terrain. The native guides refused to pursue beyond sight of the column.

The watch captain thinks it was the tribe we passed some 4 days past, but the Campachans shake their heads and look stoically at the black-fletched shafts. Alas but the first volley put a shaft into neck of a fellow man of the cloth, a priest of Thyr named Kimilus. Two other men died and one more was wounded.

Col. Conroi has ordered the camp followers to the center of the column and shields kept at hand in the future.

Freyrmond 14th —

The wounded man, a muleskinner named Frankis Thome, sickened and his wound festered. I fear the savages poisoned the bolt that took him in the foot. The colonel's physiker had to take the leg at the knee with a saw to stop the poison, and only my own healing ministrations by the blessing of Mitra were able to staunch the bleeding. Sun Father bless him.

Ides of Freyrmond —

We buried Frankis Thome at daybreak.

Freyrmond 19th —

The dust storms are more severe now, hastening us to learn how to spot them in the distance and survive. Added to this is a new worry. A party of primitives attacked us today, rising out of hidden pits in the dust and dirt. The savages swarmed us with stone spears and black arrows but also with teeth and nails too. They use the same black-feathered shafts that assaulted us 6 days gone and accounted for 3 of our number at that time. They battle with a wild savagery unlike any I have seen and use their teeth and fingers to tear at the flesh of the men and consume it even as they fight. They are cannibals, and they like us raw. Gods save us.

The battle was long and bloody, but we put down full two dozen of them with another dozen captured. For their part, 13 good men found early graves. Only the magical healing and elimination of poison that we had to offer prevented that number from being twice again as much. Even the seasoned soldiers seem to have never encountered such barbarism. Watch Captain Jaggert has advised us all that everyone is a fighter now if we want to survive.

We have camped at the battle site for two days to bury our dead. Interrogating the near-mindless savages availed us nothing, and the Campachans only look on them with fear and make the sign to ward off evil. Col. Conroi's physiker, a fellow called Manx, seems to be more than a mere mender of broken bones. After dark he took the prisoners outside the camp under guard, and we heard his mystical chanting while the captives screamed, only to be silenced one by one. When he and the soldiers returned, they were alone.

Their shallow graves make a hideous circle as warning to others.

Col. Conroi announces that on the morrow we will make a course correction based on the writings of Gravenfar we have been following. I will use this Circled Twelve as a waymarker so that future travelers can retrace our route. But I dare not reveal our bearings as yet in case these missives should fail to make it to your hands, Your Eminence. It amuses me, so I will concoct a riddle to disguise our new direction of travel from here. Imagine if you will, a circle of twelve points aligned between the cardinal and ordinal directions, as I have described the burials. Here is the means to know which way to proceed:

> The rose's needle always points you where to start.
> March with time to the God of War,
> Then Planting's number retrace before.
> Then count the just graves too, plus three more that are true.

If you have not deduced the answer by my return, Excellency, I will happily share the secret with you over a cup of mulled wine.

Freyrmond 24th —

A soldier called Osfeldt disappeared while on guard duty last night. There was no sign of a struggle. The men whisper of ancient curses and the supernatural, while the children cry and whine in the followers camp. I think the lout deserted.

Freyrmond 27th —

Two more men who walked the night watch were missing this morning along with a young cobbler girl. Not even the Campacha scouts can discover traces of them beyond the camp.

Eostre 3rd —

Tonight I dare to write of a victory for our expedition. Though we have lost a score of men to date, this afternoon we found old ruins — remnants of abandoned structures we suspect belong to the old Caleen settlements. I believe this might have once been the Caleen fort of Remeria that Oldranui wrote of in his Geogrammatica. The walls are battered by these storms of dust and now lightning, but several are still defensible and serve as foundations upon which we can pitch or tent covers and circle up our wagons and stock. For once with solid stone around us we can rest without fear of waking up with missing men in the morning. We have sacrificed much and our supplies dwindle in this desolate region, but for tonight, we are as safe as we have been in weeks.

As I finish today's entry, a ferocious wind rips through the camp with a howl like some stalking beast. The camp women complain of other noises too, but they are always prone to such superstitious prattle. The sound is eerie, I confess. But I am favored of Mitra, and in any event I am exhausted. There will be much exploration of the ruins tomorrow.

Eostre 8th —

I petition Mitra for strength and ask that you, Holy Eminence, pray for the spirit of our errand to be restored. There has been open fighting these last few days. Our Compachan companions complained loudly this morning of short equipment and shorter rations. Everyone has had to tighten their belts, and one blessed child was laid to rest last evening having finally succumbed to hunger and fatigue. The mothers are barely able to eat enough to stay upright, and if they fall there is no one to care for their little ones. Conroi will not allow the expedition members to take in any of the children, saying we can't afford to support beyond our own and the camp followers should have known better than to bring their babes along. I confess to having used Mitra's gifts to provide some small food for a few of the worse-off children, but my own resources are already stretched to the limit just keeping the expedition and its stock fed and watered.

For his part the quartermaster, Balhombris, turns a blind eye and a deaf ear to the privations, and the colonel sides with him. He says the Campachans and the camp followers can turn back for home if they wish — though no man doubts that setting out across this dusty, savage-hunted land without the full column is anything but a death sentence.

It is clear that, like Manx, Balhombris is Conroi's man through and through. That they have an agenda, it is clear. But I confess to Your Eminence I don't know what that means. This is surely more than just seeking to follow the northern reach of the Taleen Colonies of old. If only that, why need Gravenfar's writings? We have the Geogrammatica and any number of Rhemian maps and atlases from the old days. What do they hope to find amid these scattered ruins and tribes? And why does our quiet quartermaster seem so content to cause such division?

I fear the matter is beyond my feeble wisdom. Perhaps your own sagacity can find some meaning in it, Your Eminence.

Eostre 21st —

I must apologize for writing less often, Your Eminence. I have the time to write, and the setting down of our journey is important, but the pigeons I employed have stopped returning from Tanith and I only have a few left. I will write every day, but I must now trust that my letters will reach you according to the Sun Father's timing.

We have been encamped for 2 days now after discovering the most amazing thing. In a small hollow in the ground we found a cave. And within the cave the most wonderful contraption you have ever seen. It is a map of the surrounding area built in topographical relief in almost perfect miniature. It is a work of art is what it is. And it is marked with an indicator — of direction, I believe. Manx says this was a created by Gravenfar, though how he knows and what's its purpose is, he will not say. However, I can only assume it is related to whatever the true purpose of our expedition is. Col. Conroi is remaining extremely tight-lipped and has barred entry to the cave to all but himself, Manx, and a few of the engineers. Whatever they are doing, I'm sure it is to prevent others from following as we once again shift course. We head out tomorrow.

Scouts captured a member of one of the cannibal bands attempting to sneak up on us. Col. Conroi has turned him over to Manx for questioning. We hear his grunts and cries at night from the interrogation, but he spends the day with hands bound and a burlap sack over his head.

Some of our rapidly diminishing flock of sheep have begun to show signs of illness.

Eostre 24th —

There is sickness in the column. It affects the very young or those already injured or infirm. It is a malaise and includes a yellowing of the eyes and under the tongue. Three sheep and one horse have died. Some of the other animals are beginning to look sickly as well. The Campachans say that the ground here is bad.

The cannibal attacks have stopped.

Eostre 26th —

The Campacha guides are all gone. They left in the night without a word, heading back to the south. Conroi considered pursuing them but chose to press on.

Somehow I don't believe they will make it.

Eostre 30th —

Last night the missing guard Osfeldt returned to our camp. From a distance he appeared tired and travel-worn, perhaps stricken by the same malaise. Hammas, our youngest man (barely 15) ran out to greet him. The treachery was revealed when Osfeldt tore out his neck with sharp claws and fangs. No cannibal, was Osfeldt. He had returned as an undead monstrosity. The ghoul disappeared into the night before the crossbowmen could fire. We burned Hammas's body.

Calends of Tiwemond —

We doubled the guard last night. There was a ruckus, and our guards found a poor teamster named Mildren paralyzed on the ground. A vicious claw wound marked his left arm. When he came to, he said strange ghouls appeared out of the dark and attacked. He saw they bore burn scars upon their emaciated bodies. If the guard hadn't been doubled, we surely would have been overrun. I fear Mildren won't ever regain full use of his numbed arm.

Tiwemond 6th —

Mitra preserve His children. I have witnessed many things today, and I cannot say that one of them is more pleasant to report than any other.

A mercenary called Billij was found rended at his post with the morning's light. More unsettling, the skin around each bite was red and blistered as if his attacker had scalded his meal with boiling water before sinking its fangs in. Then tragedy struck again. At dusk a howling pack of ghouls beset our column. Among them was Osfeldt and Billij (who we failed to burn, building only a small cairn in our haste to depart) and 4 or 5 others. After a pitched battle, the remaining ghouls retreated. We killed 2 of their number. They killed 3 of our men and left 2 others paralyzed and helpless. There being only a half dozen left, Watch Captain Taggert took 12 of the men and pursued to avenge our dead and end their menace for good. The rest of the column formed a defensive perimeter and burned the bodies in a great pyre in the center that we made by breaking up 3 of the wagons.

Tiwemond 7th —

Today is Beltane, the first day of summer, by my reckoning of the calendar — even though we only celebrated Lover's Day less than a fortnight ago. Despite the sparse growth of the ground cover, the plains remain as arid as ever, though now the ceaseless wind grows uncomfortably hot by the middle of the day. I am beginning to miss the chill breeze of less than a month ago. But I am stalling... trying to avoid putting to parchment that which I must as part of this cursed record.

The sortie didn't return last night. At noon 6 of the men returned to camp tired and wounded. They said the ghouls showed a ferocious cunning they had never encountered before. They led Taggert and his riders into a narrow, dead-end gulch. Then once all the riders were committed, more ghouls pounced from above. Watch Captain Taggert was the first to go down. These 6 managed to escape only because the ghouls stayed to devour their hapless paralyzed companions rather than pursue.

At this Col. Conroi gave the order that I never thought I would hear another civilized man say. All who had steeds were to mount up and leave behind the camp followers, and drovers, and porters. I argued that there was room on the two wagons for at least the few remaining children, but he would brook no argument from myself or the other clergymen present. Many tears were shed as Conroi's officers looked on with loaded crossbows to defy shirkers. More than a few of my canonical compatriots chose to stay behind with those afoot to continue to guide them towards safety — though what that safety might be, I cannot say.

I am sworn to the service of the expedition, so I had no choice to stay behind, but I clasped hands with every one of those fine fellows who did. I admit my own eyes were not dry either. As we rode off, condemning those innocents to who knows what fate, I demanded an explanation from the colonel. But he brushed me off. Our very purpose for braving these undocumented dangers was to find the remains of the Taleen Migration of nearly 6 centuries ago, but apparently that story covers up Conroi's true motivation. He says we seek something far more important and rewarding. Several men balked at this secrecy, but their objections lasted only until the remaining watch captain, a fellow named Ossel, forbade me to use my healing abilities on any deserters or dissenters... and sickness still runs through the company.

We serve a strange master now; Conroi seems obsessed with something and many men feel more lives will be lost before we find it.

Tiwemond 23rd —

I believe now that we are in dire need of rescue. We are far removed from home but traveling slowly. This morning we woke to find that our quartermaster, his deputies, and the entirety of the morning watch have taken our stores and gone their separate way. We are left with the food in our personal packs and the weapons under our bedrolls. The company seems united in purpose with their absence, but that purpose has become survival instead of discovery — or perhaps it is now revenge. Col. Conroi has ordered everyone who can ride in pursuit of the deserters.

Daan 2nd —

We have been camped at this crossing for 7 days. Yesterday we hanged the quartermaster and his accomplices from the strange rock formation over the river. I protested it as a waste of manpower in this, our time of peril, but Col. Conroi scoffed. He has taken to calling our makeshift gallows "Azmerius's Angle" in mockery of me. I dare say nothing further; I am too weak. There is no one now to stand up to Conroi, and Manx, and his coterie of fellow conspirators. Those of us that are left — and few enough it is, our entire company is less than three dozen now — have no choice by to stay together to survive.

The disease has weakened everyone, and the strange burns persist despite my best attempts at healing. Col. Conroi has ordered that we will rest here another few days before making our final push.

Daan 5th —

The guards claim they saw a watcher in the night. An apparition in tattered saffron robes who stands silent in the dark beyond the firelight and disappears before he can be approached. Manx scoffs, but I believe them. What else could be expected from this cursed land.

Daan 7th —

We have departed from the natural bridge, and Col. Conroi assures as that we are near our prize and that loyalty will be amply rewarded and in sufficient largesse to make us easily forget the hardship and trials we have faced thus far. I no longer trust his motives, but I have devised my own plan. I have fished for a way to guide others in our steps even though the colonel's paranoia prevents me from recording much detail of our route. Yes, I have fished indeed, and I have "caught" a solution.

I sent a rider from the Angle along our back trail. A loyal lad and faithful follower of Mitra. He is ostensibly to look for any sign of our refugee party left behind, but in reality I secretly gave him a map and a box to deposit at the springs. I have devised a series of six clues from the six points on our journey where we changed course. I am calling them my Path of the Six: the Circled Twelve, Conroi's Wall, Gravenfar's Cave, Sixtun's Spyglass at the tower, the Hallelujah Springs, and my own Azmerius's Angle where I fished for inspiration. By following the trail and the clues left at each, another exploration party should be able to retrace our steps and bring jusice where Col. Conroi has denied it.

I hope the boy makes it back. Only 17 years old. He reminded me of poor dead Hammas.

Daan 9th —

A column of unbroken dark smoke on the northern horizon. Col. Conroi says that is our goal where all will be revealed.

The guards continue to claim that the apparition is watching. It seems to draw closer each night. I fear what will be revealed when it finally appears within the bounds of the firelight.

Daan 11th —

What nightmare is this?

We have discovered the nature of our doom; the object of our obsessive march north. We neared the black smoke, and came to the edge of a vast crater seemingly almost a mile across. I believe it must have been caused by a falling star in some long-bygone era. The smoke rises, unbroken, from a fissure at the center of the crater but with no discernable source. The floor of the crater is peopled by the shambling forms of the burned and burning walking dead, no few of them resembling missing members of our own troupe even at this distance.

Col. Conroi and that blasted Manx held a hushed conference but seem intent upon entering those haunted depths. Of our original 163 only 34 remain, but he is obsessed with somehow winning through to whatever prize he claims it holds.

I don't wish to enter those depths nor can I focus on the makings of a plan, because on the opposite lip of the crater a lone figure stands and silently watches us. And though I can't make out the details from here, somehow I know it wears tattered yellow robes.

Daan 12th —

I fear that this will be my last message to Your Eminence. Forgive me for my ignorance and lack of foresight in falling into this unholy trap of an expedition. I have saved the last pigeon to release to you as soon as I set down these final thoughts.

Conroi and his men entered the pit at nightfall under cover of darkness. I know not what has become of them. A dozen men refused to accompany him, and for a moment I thought he might order the rest to attack, but I think the odds seemed too great even for him. He left the dissenters with me while he and Manx led the rest down a path to the crater floor. We heard sounds of struggle but saw little in the gloom.

As the shadows lengthened the burning dead began to rise forth from the pit a few at a time. Fearing greater numbers we retreated to a defensible cave we had scouted in the crater's rim earlier. It is an old mine shaft from at least the days of the Taleen if not before. We will hold here and wait for daylight to make our escape.

The stranger is here! The yellow apparition stands at the mouth of the mine and insanity has come. The men tear at each other like animals, deep brown burns appearing on their skin. Some of them are hammering at the supports of the mine entrance to bring it down upon us and block that hateful apparition from sight. I must make haste and away with the bird before it is too late.

He comes

A PRINCE KEEPS HIS PRIZE



Adventure 5: Race for Shataakh-Ulm

Following the Legend of the Burning Star, the adventurers retrace the Conroi Expedition's path out into the seemingly endless plains of the Haunted Steppe and face the legendary perils to be found there. Braving the harsh elements, hostile cannibal tribes, and eerie burning undead, the party must piece together the hidden trail left by the expedition nearly a century before. In doing so they discover the true prize sought by that ill-fated group as well as an ancient evil from the Lost Lands' past that could arise to threaten all the civilized realms if left unchecked.

INTRODUCTION

The adventure's events immediately follow those begun in ***Legend of the Burning Star***, at the edge of civilization preparing to cross the Wanaheeli River and enter the bleak Haunted Steppe. From there, the PCs trek across this desolate landscape in the doomed footsteps of the explorers that came before them as they search for the elusive answers to their many questions surrounding their final destination: the fabled Pit of the Burning Star.

In the ***Lost Lands*** setting ***Race for Shataakh-Uulm*** takes place in the midst of the Haunted Steppe, the trackless plains that comprise the whole of the northwestern quarter of the continent of Akados. The Haunted Steppe is a shunned and desolate land steeped in a history of tragedy and bloodshed on a scale seen nowhere else on the world of Lloegyr. And, as the name implies, the entire accursed region is considered by most to be haunted. It is into this daunting wilderness that the player characters must sojourn.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Two millennia ago, a meteor composed of exceedingly rare starmetals — a crust of siccatite wrapped around a core of noqual — fell from the sky and landed in the midst of the vast plains of northern Akados. Its plummet was only hours behind a sister meteor that landed in the desolate Red Waste, thousands of miles to the east in the distant Assurian Plains[AK:M]. The devastating impact from this enormous celestial projectile vaporized the earth with its heat and force and delved a crater deep into ground, while throwing up massive crater walls high above the surrounding plains. The superheated matter bored deep into the ground and buried itself beneath the debris thrown up by its own force. What plains dwellers weren't instantly annihilated by the destruction of the landing, by virtue of being many, many miles away, nevertheless witnessed the fiery streak of its descent and felt the tremor of its arrival. All those within hundreds of miles saw the plumes of black, caustic smoke that rose taller than the highest mountains the surrounded the Haunted Steppe causing devastation to the wildlife of the region, turning the already arid landscape into an even harsher environment in the thousands of square miles surrounding the point of impact.

Because of the remote location of the devastation, only the wandering tribes of Shattered Folk noted the site where the great stone fell to earth. To scholars and astromancers* of the civilized southlands it was merely a mysterious falling star of great magnitude and was soon forgotten. And even among the Shattered Folk, beyond a general avoidance of the region, knowledge of the cataclysmic event faded from most collective thought and memory over time. The tribes of the Shattered Folk did keep the legend of the Pit of the Burning Star — or *Shataakh-Uulm* in their language of Kirkut — alive in their folklore, but little was made of it beyond a simple fable about a barren region of the central steppes where no one much wanted to travel anyway.

Nonetheless, an occasional curious or unwise soul would turn his mind's eye in the direction of the lonesome, smoldering hellhole in the middle of a godsforsaken waste and wonder what secrets it might yet hold. When more than a thousand years later, in 2861 I.R., Prince Cale, twin brother of the Foerdewaith Overking Kennet and first grand duke of the recently established Grand Duchy of Reme turned his eyes towards the open lands of the Haunted Steppe as a new frontier for colonization, he began the trek down the long road of destiny that made him perhaps the most noteworthy of the Pit's misguided visitors.

Prince Cale led the ill-fated colonization of the Haunted Steppe in what became known as the Caleen Colonies. His Rhemian colonies stretched far to the west along the Deepfells Mountains at the southern edge of the steppe and far to the northwest across the interior of the plains in what was to later become known as the Road of Sorrows. The elven heritage that ran in the veins of the overkings of Foere ensured that Cale lived to see his colonies reach all the way to the forbidden shores of Lake Hali and the foothills of the Lost Mountains in 2931 I.R., and it was this act that triggered the 16-year onslaught of ever-mounting humanoid raids that ultimately developed into a full-scale shadow walker-led invasion that rolled across the Caleen Colonies as it streamed down from the north. This devastating invasion was only prevented from penetrating into Reme and the heartlands of Foere beyond by the timely creation of the Wizard's Wall in 2947 by the archmages Margon and Alycthron[LL1-100], blocking Crynomar Gap from

*Astromancy has a long history in the **Lost Lands**. An astromancer is a magical practitioner who combines astrology with the physical laws of astronomy. See page 88 of ***Bard's Gate*** by **Necromancer Games**, page 197 of ***LL7: The Blight: Richard Pett's Crooked City***, and page 281 of ***LL8: Bard's Gate***, both by **Frog God Games**.

the shadow horde until it finally dispersed back into the fringes of the Haunted Steppe from which it had spawned.

Great was the grieving in Reme and the whole of the Kingdoms of Foere for the loss of the many thousands of colonists, not the least of which was the beloved Grand Duke Cale of the House of Macobert himself. But little did the southlanders know that this object of their grief deserved no such lamentation, for Cale, the Grand Duke of Reme and Prince of Foere, had died in the Pit of the Burning Star long before the shadow walker invasion.

It was almost 1,500 years before interest in the Legend of the Burning Star reared again in the southlands. This time it was the famed explorer Aroldus Gravenfar who began researching it after searching for the infamous *Book of the Star-Seed*[AK:M] relating to the Burning Star's sister meteorite in distant Libynos. After the legendary Gravenfar disappeared upon the Haunted Steppe, it was only two years later that the Conroi Expedition likewise crossed the Wizard's Wall to explore the vast steppes beyond. Ostensibly the Conroi Expedition was to follow in the footsteps of the long-lost Caleen Colonies and find what they could of the fates of their ancestors, but while a portion of the expedition was actually successful in establishing the Conroi Settlements at the southern edge of the Haunted Steppe, a less well-known portion of the expedition indeed travelled far up the Road of Sorrows — but not all the way to Lake Hali. No, this expedition sought not the remnants of the Caleen Colonies but rather the discovery that Cale himself had made and that ultimately led to his own doom and that of his people. This expedition sought the legendary Pit of the Burning Star. The expedition suffered mightily from the privations and dangers of the Haunted Steppe, but its survivors managed to reach their intended destination, only to fall to the insidious powers that now controlled the site. In the end, the land, its inhabitants and the treasure itself devoured them in a bloody revelry of carnage and madness upon the verge of the very prize they sought.

Gravenfar and the Conroi Expedition vanished into anonymity, causing the trail to once again grow cold. Yet, the Pit of the Burning Star's patience wears thin. Its existence continues to appeal to Man's greed, and magnificent tales of rich star metals once again reach voracious ears. In response to the tantalizing rumors, several states and powerful individuals launched their own bids to acquire the Pit's riches. While dreams of fabulous riches dance in the heads of the seekers, nightmares of eldritch lore and sheer lunacy swirl about in this remote stronghold and await only the arrival of those in pursuit of the valuable star metals to be unleashed upon the lands of Akados.



ADVENTURE SUMMARY

With the events of Legend of the Burning Star behind them and civilization at their backs, the PCs and their expedition cross the Wanaheeli River and enter into the ultimate uncharted territories of Akados — the Haunted Steppe. Here, numerous natural hazards and hostile creatures, including the vicious Shattered Folk, dog their every step across the unforgiving grasslands. The PCs, following Aroldus Gravenfar's journal recovered in Dun Eamon and Azmerius's writings that they unearthed in Nains, discover the landmarks known as The Path of the Six left by those that came before them. Along the way, they encounter the strange burning dead monstrosities that their predecessors described in their writings. In addition, the PCs soon realize that they are not alone in their quest, as other factions also desire the impact site's legendary wealth. Orcs from the Stoneheart Mountains and mercenaries under the employ of an unscrupulous noble of the Kingdom of Foere stand in the way of their mission. Worse still, they may also learn that their dwarven allies have deceived them and pursue an agenda of their own that does not include the good fortune or even the survival of the PCs.

Beating back the living, unliving, and natural obstacles barring their path, the PCs finally glimpse the millennia-old, roaring fire that still burns inside the heart of an immense, smoking crater. A thorough search of the surrounding area reveals the final resting place of the Conroi Expedition inside the collapsed mine where the deranged members tore each other to pieces in wild fits of madness along with the surprising discovery that the correspondence they have followed was never sent by the survivors but somehow made its way to the archives of Nains by other unknown means.

Hordes of burning undead, a Castorhagi team of mercenary specialists, and a rival group from Bard's Gate hamper — or can potentially aid the PCs' efforts — to delve deeper into the crater. However, in the mines and caverns beneath the crater, the PCs discover the undead creatures' peculiar handiwork. They have been extracting the molten ore seeping from the burning comet for centuries and combining it with another highly radioactive crystal leeched from the comet called metallurgic amber to mint coins tainted with that isotope's madness-inducing properties as part of a greater scheme begun centuries ago by none other than the Great Old One, Hastur the Unspeakable. Now controlled by undead in service to the King in Yellow, it is Hastur's will that the madness spawned by the radiation of the Pit of the Burning Star be spread throughout the Lost Lands so that the nations of Akados can be brought into the fold of a new Carcosa with the spreading of his madness. The arrival of the PCs proves to be the means of stopping this ancient plot but could well also prove to be the very means of its success if they are not careful.



CHAPTER ONE: INTO THE HAUNTED STEPPE

Unlike its predecessors in the ***Ashes of Empires Adventure Path***, the previous adventure, ***Legend of the Burning Star*** segues directly into ***Race for Shataakh-Uulm***. Accompanied by their Ironskull dwarf allies, the PCs stand on the bank of the Wanaheeli River that straddles the boundary between civilization — such as it is in the Conroi Settlements — and the largely uncharted expanse of the Haunted Steppe. A long journey across the arid grasslands awaits them on the other side of the swift waterway.

If you have chosen to run ***Race for Shataakh-Uulm*** without running ***Legend of the Burning Star*** first, you can involve your players in this adventure in multiple ways. The simplest way is to simply bring the PCs into the quest for the Burning Pit by having them hired directly by Goribald Ironskull who instructs them to meet him to undertake the quest at the Wanaheeli River at the northern edge of the Conroi Settlements. This brings the PCs immediately into the adventure at the point where ***Race for Shataakh-Uulm*** picks up without requiring the skullduggery and misdirection that they must endure in ***Legend of the Burning Star*** just to reach this point. This creates a more straightforward method of getting the PCs directly into the hunt for the Burning Pit yet still leaves the many surprises and deceptions that lie in store for them intact.

Alternately, you can have the PCs pursuing the legendary Burning Pit for their own reasons. Perhaps they are scholars of Aroldus Gravenfar seeking to retrace the steps of his last journey, or perhaps like that erstwhile explorer they too hope to locate the Burning Star whose tale parallels that of the Pit of Yhath[AK:M-74] in Libynos. If you opt to go in this direction, you will either need to find a reason for the PCs to ally with the Ironskull expeditionary group — perhaps sharing a mutual goal and an agreement to share what is found between them — or substantially rework the adventure itself to remove the references to the PCs accompanying that company of mountain dwarf company explorers. You will also need to account for the revealed Ironskull betrayal that occurs later in the adventure.

THE IRONSKULL EXPEDITION

The expedition had opportunity to purchase supplies and mounts and hire guides at the end of the previous adventure. If you did not play that adventure, then the materials available for hire in the Conroi Settlements on the Plains of Campacha include any items with a general value of 4,000 gp or less. Spellcasting services can be acquired from NPCs as well, for spells up to 6th level. At the GM's option, there also may be magic items for sale, up to 1d6 rare or even very rare items, 2d6 uncommon items, and 3d6 common items.

Prices for supplies and mounts are available at the standard prices listed in the core 5E rulebooks or SRD, though the only kind of horses that can be purchased are mustangs (see **Appendix A**, page 554).

The only hirelings that will cross the Wanaheeli River with the expedition are guides, and these must be paid 5 sp per day with a two-week advance. The expedition must also provide provisions for the guides and their mounts. No more than three guides can be hired in the settlements, and any guide has a 50% chance of being of either Foerdewaith ancestry or Compachan ancestry (for Shattered Folk). All guides ride mustangs.

CAMPACHAN GUIDE

Medium humanoid (human), neutral
Armor Class 15 (studded leather)
Hit Points 104 (16d8 + 32)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)

Skills Athletics +5, Perception +5, Stealth +5, Survival +5
Senses passive Perception 15
Languages Common, Kirkut[LL8]
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Speak with Animals. The guide may cast *speak with animals* as a ritual spell.
Special Gear. Each Campachan guide carries a *potion of healing* for emergencies.

ACTIONS
Multiattack. The guide makes two attacks with a melee weapon or three attacks with a shortbow.

Handaxe. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Spear. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage, or 7 (1d8 +3) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

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

MUSTANG

XP 100
hp 22 (see **Appendix A**, page 545)

FOERDEWAITH GUIDE

Medium humanoid (human), neutral
Armor Class 15 (chain shirt)
Hit Points 40 (9d8)
Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Animal Handling +6, Athletics +2, Perception +6, Stealth +6, Survival +6
Senses passive Perception 16
Languages Common, Elven, Gnoll, Gnome, Halfling, Orc, Sylvan
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The guide makes two melee weapon attacks.

Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit*: 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Spear. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +2 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit*: 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, or 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

In addition to any hired guides and the PCs themselves, the rest of the expedition consists of the expedition leader, **Goribald Ironskull**, his captain, **Okrem Kresh**, **6 Clan Ironskull guards**, and **4 halfling envoys** named Bono Curlytop, Val Nannygarter, Silas Soggybottom, and Billie Pumpkin. Remove any of expedition members that were slain in the previous adventure. The dwarves ride **riding horses**, and halflings ride **ponies**. A remuda of an additional **6 riding horses** and **2 ponies** accompany the group as remounts along with a string of **11 mules** for supplies and equipment.

CLAN IRONSKULL ENVOYS (4)

Small humanoid (halfling), lawful evil
Armor Class 16 (studded leather)
Hit Points 88 (16d6 + 32)
Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)	16 (+3)

Skills Acrobatics +6, Deception +5, Perception +3, Sleight of Hand +6, Stealth +8
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages Common, Halfling
Challenge 4 (1,100) XP

Cunning Action. On each of its turns, the envoy can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Halfling Traits. The envoy has advantage on saving throws against being frightened, and can move through the space of any creature that is Medium sized or larger.

Sneak Attack (1/turn). The envoy deals an extra 14 (4d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the nevoy that isn't incapacitated and the envoy doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The envoy makes two attacks.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d6 + 4) budgeoning damage.

Hand Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d6 + 4) budgeoning damage.

CROSSING THE WANAHEELI

Once you have determined the reasons for the party's involvement in this quest across the Haunted Steppe, the adventure begins at the Wanaheeli River (area **A** on the Haunted Steppe map) as they prepare to cross into the wilderness of the vast and uncharted plains.

The serrated points of several stones pierce the roiling veneer of the fast-moving Wanaheeli River that carves a path across the desolate grasslands. The rocky riverbed is visible in some shallow spots, but the churning, frothy water conceals much of the bottom beneath the foam. The land beyond the river stretches for as far as the eye can see, a seemingly tireless monotony of hardy, greenish-brown grasses covers the parched swells of the rolling plain.

For most travelers, the Wanaheeli River can present a significant obstacle. Several pontoon bridges and even a few stone bridges are known to cross it, but none of these are in the area where the PCs' expedition intends to cross to start their journey as indicated by the writings of the Conroi Expedition. To do so would require a journey of at least 100 miles just to reach such a crossing and then make it back to point **A** on the wilderness map. Roughly 70 feet wide, the fierce current and jagged stones that line the waterway make it impassable to any vessel larger than a small kayak or canoe. Even then, the boatman must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom (Survival) check to safely navigate to the opposite bank. On a failed check, the boat crashes into the rocks, tearing a hole that causes it to rapidly sink. Someone in a capsized or destroyed boat as well as those that attempt to swim across the channel must succeed on a DC 17 Strength (Athletics) check to get to safety or the other side.

The Wanaheeli River averages 3d4+2 feet deep along its length, but in some areas are shallows only 1d3 feet deep. These shallows can be located with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) or Intelligence (Nature) check and can be used to walk across the river, although those crossing must still contend with the current which is strongest at these shallower sections. A creature that walks atop the shallow rocks and the accompanying rapids must succeed on a DC 13 Strength check to fight against the powerful current to avoid being swept away. A Small creature has disadvantage on this check, and a Large creature has advantage. Additionally, creatures crossing the river at these locations receive advantage if they have more than two legs. Unlike normal Strength checks, wearing heavy armor grants disadvantage to this roll, as does any degree of encumbrance.

Any creature swept away by the current is carried 1d6 x 10 feet before getting clear of the shallows section, taking 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage for every 10 feet traveled in this way. At the end of this movement, creatures swept away must make a Strength (Athletics) check with a DC of 18 to avoid drowning and make it to shore. The current carries those swept away at a speed of 100 feet per round for those who try to keep pace along the shore.

Development: Obviously, as high-level characters, the party can probably easily circumvent the river by magical or other means. However, the dwarves of the Ironskull Expedition and the many riding and pack animals will be forced to use more mundane means unless the party intends to whisk them across as well.

Goribald intends to try to locate an area of shallows where they can attempt a crossing (see above). He will then send two of the strongest dwarves in his company to wade across bearing heavy ropes tied to their waists unless the party volunteers to take this duty upon themselves. These dwarves bear the normal risk of being swept away as detailed above, but with the advantage that they can be pulled out by the comrades after 1 round of being buffeted for 1d6 x 5 feet. If the dwarves make it across, they secure their ends of the ropes to hardy scrub trees growing on the opposite bank while Goribald and company secures their ends to similar trees on the near bank. Then using carabiners[MoM] to attach themselves and their animals to the crossing ropes, the dwarves will attempt the crossing. The use of the rope and carabiners provides advantage to any rolls related to the crossing attempt, and means on a failed check the individual is only delayed for 1 round as they slip and are buffeted for 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage after which they can regain his footing and make another Strength (Athletics) check until the crossing is complete.

TRAVELING THE HAUNTED STEPPE

From an ecological standpoint, the Haunted Steppe is just that — a steppe. It is a cool, semi-arid biome overrun with short grasses. Water and food can be scarce, especially during the winter months. The land is overwhelming flat with some modest undulations and the occasional small hill. This fact coupled with the lack of trees — other than scrubs that proliferate along waterways — and other tall plants increases visibility throughout much of the Haunted Steppe to 6d6 x 40 feet. The range decreases slightly in regions that contain swales and other changes in elevation. The absence of undergrowth also significantly eases overland travel through the area. Horses are perfectly suited for this terrain, as any visible natural and manmade obstacles are easily avoidable in most circumstances.

THE HAUNTED STEPPE

HISTORY OF THE HAUNTED STEPPE

Thirty-five hundred years ago the vast empire of the Hundaei people dominated the grasslands of the Great Steppes — later to become known as the Haunted Steppe. These nomadic horse archers and peerless warriors literally lived off the land, hunting the plentiful game and reaping the wild grains that grew in abundance on the endless steppes. Joined from thousands of disparate tribes into a single great people in 7 I.R. by the Great Khan Jaganga, he formed his legendary Invincible Horde, and for the next 650 years dominated the entirety of the steppes and provided the only real and credible threat to the burgeoning Hyperborean Empire since its battle for independence from its Borean forebears. Always the threat of the "Hun" lances and arrows were poised at the throats of the Hyperborean imperators, and though they fortified themselves against the horselords' incursions they could never be said to have truly felt safe.

Then something happened that significantly changed the balance of the two empires and the very shape of life on Akados forever, and the Hundaei ceased to exist as a people in only three short years. Known to only the most thoroughly invested scholars of the Hundaei and understood by none known to be alive today, some clans of the Hundaei dared to settle in the shadow of the Nam-i-Budhani — the Lost Mountains — on the very shores of distant Lake Hali. Much like what occurred with the Caleen Colonies more than 2,000 years later, a bloodbath quickly ensued. But this bloodbath was no invasion at the hands of savage humanoid tribes or near-mythical shadow walkers, this was a bloodbath wrought by the hands of the Hundaei themselves.

Long had the lands around Lake Hali and the slopes of the Lost Mountains been strictly taboo to the folk of the Hundaei. None could say for sure why, but many clan elders and shamans spoke of bloodlust and madness that must always ensue from those who dare to break the taboo.

Within the span of three short years, the Hundaei inexplicably descended into anarchy. The formerly unified clans fought a brief but ferocious civil war that left Hundaei civilization and its people in ruins. Some survivors fled to distant Libynos, but many refused to abandon their ancestral homeland. Over time, the Hundaei's descendents devolved into the Shattered Folk, a scattered, utterly broken people that scratch out a meager existence in this unforgiving realm. Whether it was the rebellious Hundaei settlers or the orthodox members of the greater empire who drew first blood has been lost to history and hardly matters, for once blood was spilled over the broken taboo the flames of bloody civil war swept across the millions of inhabitants of the Great Steppes in almost no time at all.

It is estimated that more than 23 million Hundaei lived upon the Great Steppes at the height of the Hundaei Empire in or around 680 I.R. By 683 scholars believe there were no more than 100,000, split up into tiny, scattered clan and family groups, many of which fled the steppes altogether to find homes in northeastern Akados or across the Isthmus of Irkaina. The few intrepid explorers that dared breach the suddenly silent grasslands where once had thundered the hooves of countless horselords described vast battlefields of the dead — of all ages — left to decompose in the sun and at the talons and teeth of vultures and other scavengers. Such was the carnage that one nameless witness with a bit of a poetic bent was known to have famously said that the skulls of the dead lay so thick across the plains that one could walk from the Crynomar Gap to the Lost Mountains without once ever stepping foot upon the earth. An obvious exaggeration of outrageous proportions, this summation nevertheless held enough truth that what were once the Great Steppes of the Hundaei Empire became indelibly changed to become known as the cursed and forlorn Haunted Steppe, home to only the few scattered and furtive tribes of survivors — now known as the Shattered Folk — that remained.

And so it was that after the passage of a thousand years, only these few tribes of Shattered Folk were present to bear witness to a burning star that fell from the sky and landed in the center of the steppes.

COINAGE IN THE HAUNTED STEPPE

Many forms of currency and coinage can be found across the Haunted Steppe, but those from Foere are perhaps the most common. Gold sovereigns (sometimes referred to as "crowns") are the standard coinage of Foere[LLo, TBM-41]; which includes the following coins of the realm.

Emperor (platinum) "rex" = 1 pp

Sovereign (gold) "crown" = 1 gp

Noble (silver) = 1 sp

Silver penny (silver) = 5 cp

Penny (copper) = 1 cp

TIMELINE OF THE HAUNTED STEPPE*

Imperial Record (I.R.)	Erylle Cycle (E.C.)	Huun Chronicle (H.C.)	Event(s)
7	6491		Great Khan Jaganga arises among Hundaei and unites them into Invincible Horde
11	6495		Vengeful mountain dwarves show Hundaei secret passes through Stoneheart range
678	7162		Hyperborean Legions push into Great Steppes
680	7164		Hundaei settle in Nam-i-Budhani due to Hyperborean pressure
681	7165		Civil war erupts among Hundaei clans
683	7167		Hundaei cease to exist as a people; Survivors flee to Libynos or become the Shattered Folk of the Great Steppes
687	7171		Beginning of Pax Hyperborea
711	7195		Massive host of humanoid tribes rises in Haunted Steppe and marches towards Crynomar Gap and central Akados
712	7196		Elven defense of Crynomar Gap
717	7201		Remenos extends marchlands north; Clear cuts forest
725	7209		Wild elves withdraw to the west in Third Exodus; Green Warders Established
1522	8006		Meteors strike in Red Wastes of northern Libynos and in central Haunted Steppe
2494	8978		Ulnat tribe of the Shattered Folk arrives in the Far North and begins to settle beyond Wailing Mountains in abandoned cities of lost Boros
2840	9324	345	Foerdewaith settlers push through Crynomar Gap
2843	9327	348	Twin royal heirs Kennet and Cale born to Overking Paulus
2858	9342	363	Cale abdicates claim to throne and given port of Reme
2861	9345	366	Cale leads Colonization of Great Steppes
2899	9383	404	Caleen colonists discover Pit of the Burning Star
2931	9415	436	Caleen colonies reach shore of Lake Hali; Humanoid attacks begin
2947	9431	452	Shadow walkers lead humanoid hordes from Lost Mountains; Caleen colonies destroyed, Prince Cale is lost; Wizard's Wall raised at Crynomar Gap
3437	9921	942	Disappearance of the explorer Aroldus Gravenfar after a short stopover in Castorhage
3439	9923	944	Conroi Expedition crosses Wizard's Wall to begin exploration of Haunted Steppe
3517	10,001	1022	Current year

* Excerpted from the *Lost Lands Campaign Setting* timeline by Frog God Games.

Nonetheless, the roughly 900-mile trek to the crater proves to be a grueling trip that stretches out over the course of many weeks or even months. A human traveling on foot covers 20 miles of ground per day, although gear and their dwarven allies may slow the pace even more. Mounts travel faster than the average man, but the trackless terrain reduces the animals' speed to three-quarters normal speed. (See the "Movement" section in Chapter 8 of the **5E SRD** for more details about overland movement.) The planned route is to follow in the footsteps of the Conroi Expedition in order to locate the Road of Sorrows that points them towards the impact site. This course of action takes a considerable amount of time and puts the PCs and their counterparts in harm's way, but it is also the only reliable method of finding the Pit of the Burning Star from the clues they have been given.

As was discovered by Gravenfar and can be confirmed by the PCs' own efforts, no form of magic provides guidance to the location of the Burning Pit because of its high concentration of magic-nullifying noqual. In addition, while aerial reconnaissance may prove to be of some value, until the expedition is actually in the vicinity of the Pit it will likely prove fruitless. It is true that the Pit continues to exude a column of thick smoke to this day, but with only the vaguest notion of where the Pit might lie and the fact that the central Haunted Steppe covers more than 1.4 million square miles of terrain, the chances of finding this landmark without guidance is still like trying to find a needle in a stack of needles, and includes with it the very real danger to those doing the aerial recon of losing track of their own expedition caravan. And while hiring local guides from among the Shattered Folk of the Conroi Settlements is likely to be of value in navigating safely across the steppes, no one that the PCs can locate has ever made the journey up the Road of Sorrows to find the Burning Pit. The locals remain in the dark to its location as much as the expedition members. While short range aerial patrols and local guides might prove to be of some benefit, in general the long overland route following the clues left in the journal of Azmerius remains the surest way of reaching their destination.

Naturally, a grinding slog across the expansive grasslands may seem like an unattractive option especially in light of the fact that the PCs and their allies are competing against a slew of rivals aspiring to reach Shataakh-Uulm before they do. Compounding this problem is the fact that the Haunted Steppe deservedly earned its moniker from the inordinate numbers of undead that roam the desolate landscape. In addition to these abominations, natural hazards, aggressive tribesmen, warmongering orcs, and a host of other monstrosities also inhabit the barren grasslands in their quests for prey, riches, or to temporarily sate their uncontrollable bloodlust. But the PCs can take some small comfort in the fact that that's why they are called adventurers.

HAUNTED STEPPE RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

Whether the PCs choose the long road or try a shortcut, the journey across the windy grasslands is fraught with substantial peril. While traveling through the Haunted Steppe, roll 1d8 to check for encounters once during the day and once during the night. During the day, an encounter takes place on a roll of 1; at night, an encounter takes place on a roll of 1–2. If an encounter occurs, roll d% and consult the table below or substitute creatures or hazards of your own choosing.

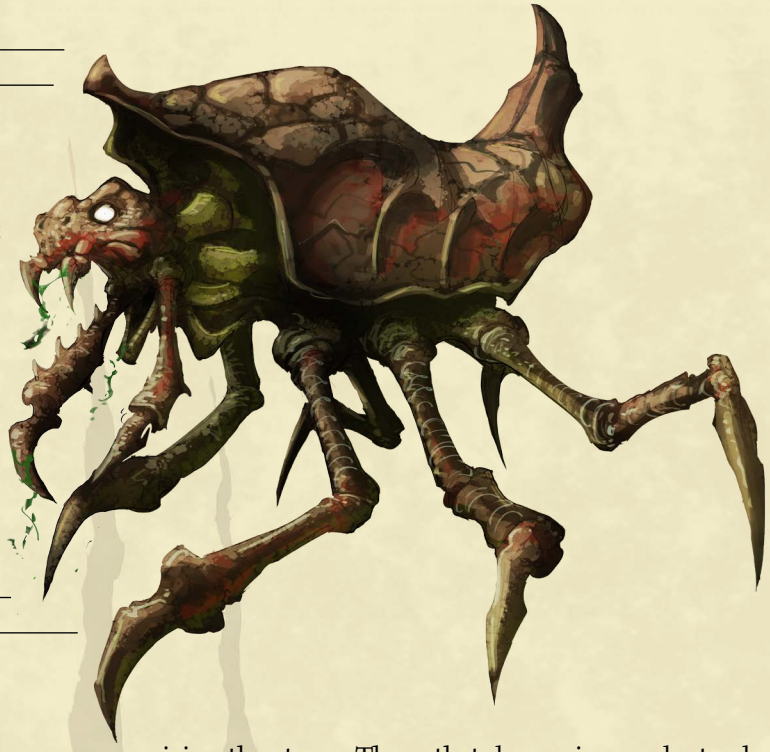
d%	Encounter	
01–10	Black blizzard	see below
11–15	Grassfire	see below
16–25	1d4+2 swarms of bats	
26–30	1d4+2 ankhegs	
31–35	1d6+6 ghouls plus 1 ghast	
36–40	Orcs War Party	see below
41–45	2d10 Shattered Folk	see below
46–50	1d8+2 worgs	see below
51–55	3d6 locust swarms	see below
56–60	2d4+4 cockatrices	
61–65	1d3+4 swarms of poisonous snakes	
66–70	1d3+1 hestovatos	
71–80	4d10 mustangs[1] (see **Appendix A**, page 545)	
81–90	3d10 bison[1]	see below
91–95	3d6 mammoths[1]	see below
96–00	Sinkhole	see below

[1] These creatures may stampede (see "Stampede" below for details).

Ankhegs: These plains burrowers attempt to attack from below ground. Creatures with a passive Perception score of 16 or higher can detect the telltale vibrations of their digging before they attack. Otherwise they are able to attack with surprise.

ANKHEG[SRD]

XP 450
hp 39



Swarm of Bats: This encounter only occurs at night, the early morning hours, or the late evening hours. Insects are perhaps the most abundant form of life on the steppe, and vast swarms of bats feed upon them when they are most active during the hours of darkness. If this encounter occurs, the PCs just happen to be in an area where a particularly juicy bug population is present, and the bats are as happy to sup on the blood of the PCs as on their normal insect prey.

SWARM OF BATS[SRD]

XP 50
hp 22

Bison: A herd of these ungulates grazes out on the prairie. There is a 20% chance that they are encountered as a stampede (see below). If so, trample damage is 2d6+12 damage and the Strength saving throw DC is 19. Otherwise they do not attack unless provoked or otherwise threatened. If they are not stampeding and you wish to determine if the PCs might provoke them into doing so, consult the table under "Stampede" below.

BISON

XP 450
hp 45 (statistics as rhinoceros[SRD])

Black Blizzard: A black blizzard is a dust storm that sweeps across the plains carrying tons of the loose dry topsoil with it so that it creates a thick, black cloud that covers miles of terrain. Black blizzards are windstorms with wind speeds of 51–74 mph. Ranged weapon attacks have disadvantage, and creatures in the storm must make a DC 16 Strength saving throw to avoid being knocked prone each minute. Small sized creatures that fail by 5 are blown away into the storm and take 8d6 bludgeoning damage when they finally land. Flying is this weather is impossible.

Likewise, their approach can cause pack animals to panic, requiring DC 12 Wisdom (Animal Handling) checks for each to prevent them from stampeding away in a panic. Normal animals that panic and flee have a 20% chance of not surviving the storm. Those that do survive can be tracked down in 1d3 days with a DC 15 Wisdom (Survival)check (–1 day for every 5 that the check exceeds 20, to a minimum of one-half day).

BLACK BLIZZARD (HAZARD)

XP 1,200

Fields of Blood 18

Black blizzards reduce vision to 1d4 x 5 feet and turn the sky so dark that it blocks out the sun turning day into night (dim light). They smother unprotected flames and can even choke protected flames (50% chance). Black blizzards are accompanied by windstorm-magnitude winds. The fine particulates deal 1d6 points of slashing damage each hour to anyone caught out in the open without shelter and also pose a choking hazard. (A creature with a scarf or similar protection across his mouth and nose does not begin to choke until after a number of rounds equal to 10 + their Constitution score). A character that begins to choke also has a chance of contracting dust pneumonia, a potentially deadly disease (see below). The dust creeps in through all but the most secure seals and seams, chafing skin and contaminating gear. In addition, there is also a 10% chance that the swirling dust generates enough static electricity to deal 1d6 points of lightning damage to anyone that suffered damage from prolonged exposure. Black blizzards typically last for 2d10 hours and leave 1d6–1 feet of fine dust in their wake, to a minimum of 1/2 a foot. These dusty storms can travel for hundreds and even thousands of miles before finally dissipating.

DUST PNEUMONIA

Type disease, inhaled; **Saving Throw** Constitution DC 13
Onset 1d4 minutes; **Frequency** 1/day
Effect 1 exhaustion level at the end of each long rest, and an inability to remove exhaustion levels through rest. As long as creature suffers from this disease, it also has disadvantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks and has a 20% chance of failing when casting spells with a verbal component due to excessive coughing. The diseased creature makes a saving throw after finishing a long rest and is rid of the disease with a success.

Cockatrices: This flock is territorial and hunts insects among the long grasses that provide them with total concealment. However, they are only too happy to look for larger fare if presented to them.

COCKATRICE[SRD]

XP 100
hp 27

Ghouls: The sheer magnitude of bloodletting that has occurred over the last 3,000 years ensures that there are always undead wandering about. Likewise, the isolated terrain and distinct possibility of death by starvation for the scattered inhabitants of the plains increases the likelihood of any undead being ghouls. This ghoul pack is led by a ghast and is composed of Shattered Folk tribesmen that have fallen to ghoul fever and now hunt their own kind.

GHOUL[SRD]

XP 200
hp 22

GHAST[SRD]

XP 450
hp 36

Grassfire: Grassfires can start in an instant from an errant lightning strike, an untended campfire, or even the spontaneous heat found in a large quantity of compost basking in the sun. Whatever the cause, whenever a grassfire starts on the steppes, the buffeting winds can immediately whip it into a raging inferno that races across the plain.

GRASSFIRE (HAZARD)

XP 1,100

Fields of Blood 17

The flat terrain makes it relatively easy to spot a burgeoning grass fire from afar. A character who succeeds on a DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check and can spot a grassfire from as far away as 2d6 x 800 feet. The leading edge of a grassfire (the downwind side) moves extremely quickly, traveling at a speed of 2d6 x 20 feet per round in light to moderate winds, 2d6 x 30 feet per round in strong to severe winds and 2d6 x 40 feet per round when influenced by winds in excess of 51 mph. Grassfires exhaust their fuel supply relatively quickly, so once a particular portion of the steppe is ablaze, it remains so for only 1d4 minutes before it reduces the withered grasses and plants to fine ash, rather than burning for 2d4 x 10 minutes as in a forest fire. Lastly, characters engulfed in the blaze have disadvantage on Dexterity saving throws to avoid catching fire because of the fire's speed as its races across the plains. Those who fail take 7 (2d6) fire damage at the start of each round until they spend an action to put out the flame. Thos who succeed only take 3 (1d6) fire damage whenever they start their turn in the fire. Creatures caught within the smoke for more than a minute must make Constitution saving throws to avoid gaining an exhaustion level. This check is made for each additional round they spend in the smoke. These checks reset if the creature spends a minute outside of the smoke.

Hestovatos: These vicious killers are the bane of the plainsmen who inhabit the steppe. At night they attempt to sneak into the party's camp in their normal form and slay the weakest as quickly as possible. In the daytime they wear hooded cassocks and simple rope belts, claiming to be holy men on a pilgrimage across the steppe in search of enlightenment. If the PCs have any Shattered Folk with them as guides, these individuals gain advantage on Wisdon (Perception) checks to see through the disguise. If discovered or able to get close to likely targets, the bloodthirsty hestovatos immediately attack.

HESTOVATO

XP 3,900
hp 187 (see **Appendix A**, page 544)

Locust Swarms: Clouds of voracious locusts descend on the PCs' group seeking to feed off of whatever edible materials are available on the arid steppes.

LOCUST SWARM

XP 100
hp 22 (statistics as a swarm of insects[SRD])

Mammoth: Relatively rare in all but the northernmost portions of the Haunted Steppe, these massive grazers have migrated south in search of better forage as dry conditions to the north have left the steppe almost bare of grasses. There is a 10% chance that they are encountered as a stampede (see below). If so trample damage is 2d8+18 damage and the save DC is 31. Otherwise they do not attack unless provoked or otherwise threatened. If they are not stampeding and you wish to determine if the PCs might provoke them into doing so, consult the table under "Stampede" below.

MAMMOTH[SRD]

XP 2,300
hp 126

Mustangs: Herds of wild mustangs roam the endless grasslands of the steppe and serve as the primary source of mounts for the Shattered Folk tribes, when they are able to capture and train them. There is a 30% chance that they are encountered as a stampede (see below). If so, trample damage is 2d6+7 damage and the save DC is 16. Otherwise they do not attack unless provoked or otherwise threatened. If they are not stampeding and you wish to determine if the PCs might provoke them into doing so, consult the table under "Stampede" below.

MUSTANG

XP 100
hp 22 (see **Appendix A**, page 545)

Orc War Party: The barren plains don't support large numbers of humanoid tribes, the vast majority living in the mountainous regions along the edges of the steppe. However, some humanoids have adopted the nomadic horseman life of the Shattered Folk that allows survival on the arid plainslands. This war party of orcs consists of **1d10+10 orcs** led by **2 champions** and a **subchief**, all mounted on **mustangs** (see **Appendix A**, page 544). These orcs wear the buckskin hides, furs, and feathers common to the Shattered Folk tribes. They are marauders and will attack any group that they think they can defeat. Even if facing superior numbers, they will attempt to raid and drive away the groups mounts that they can recover for their own later. And if such raids should leave the outsiders stranded afoot upon the plains…that will just make for easier pickings later in the eyes of the orcs.

ORC[SRD]

XP 100
AC 13 (hide armor)
hp 15
Gear hide armor, spear, 4 javelins
Skills Animal Handling +4
Languages Kirkut, Orc

ORC CHAMPION

Medium humanoid (orc), chaotic evil
Armor Class 14 (hide armor)
Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	8 (-1)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Intimidate +4
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Kirkut, Orc
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

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

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The orc champion makes two spear attacks.

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60, one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage, or 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

ORC SUBCHIEF

Medium humanoid (orc), chaotic evil
Armor Class 16 (breastplate)
Hit Points 88 (16d8 + 16)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)	6 (-2)	12 (+1)

Skills Animal Handling +2, Intimidate +5
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8
Languages Kirkut, Orc
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

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

Brute. A melee weapon deals one extra die of its damage when the orc subchief hits with it (included with the attack).

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The orc subchief makes two attacks with its longsword, or two attacks with its longbow.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 12 (2d8 + 3) slashing damage, or 14 (2d10 + 3) slashing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.



Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

Command (Recharge 6). The orc subchief can command up to two other orcs to attack. Those orcs can use their reactions to move half of their speed and make a melee attack, if able. The orc subchief can then make an attack as a bonus action.

Shattered Folk: Nomadic tribes of Shattered Folk wander throughout the Haunted Steppe, though the central region through which the party journeys is perhaps the least populated next only to the northern lands around Lake Hali and beyond. Of those tribes that do dwell in this region, there is a 60% chance that any given tribe is cannibals who will see the PCs' expedition as a source of food and spoils. A non-cannibal tribe will have an initial attitude of indifferent towards the PCs and will not make contact unless approached, preferring instead to chance course and move away from the intruding travelers. If needed, non-cannibal tribes have the statistics of **tribal warriors**. A cannibal tribe has only a 25% to immediately charge to the attack. Otherwise they will react the same as a non-cannibalistic tribe and hope the PCs are either lured in closer or that they are ignored and can begin following the PCs and attack after they make camp for the night. Shattered Folk are always mounted on **mustangs** (see **Appendix A**, page 554).

If a third of their number are killed or knocked unconscious, the remainder flee the encounter, leaving their compatriots behind. Even so, they may well begin stalking the PCs for a more opportune chance for revenge later.

SHATTERED FOLK CANNIBAL

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic neutral
Armor Class 13 (hide)
Hit Points 30 (4d8+12)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)

Skills Athletics +4, Perception +3, Stealth +3, Survival +3
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages Kirkut
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Reckless. At the start of its turn, the cannibal can gain advantage on all melee weapon attack rolls during that turn, but attack rolls against it have advantage until the start of its next turn.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The cannibal attacks twice: once with its greatclub and once with its bite.

Greatclub. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d8+2) bludgeoning damage.

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

Handaxe. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit*: 5 (1d6+2) slashing damage.

Sinkhole: While natural-forming sinkholes are relatively rare upon the steppe, the abundance of burrowing creatures that call the plains home can be a different cause of soil subsidence. If this encounter is rolled, there is a 25% chance that it is the discovery of an already existing sinkhole, perhaps even forming a pool of collected rainwater. If the sinkhole is already present, then there is a 5% chance that another one will form nearby, though the PCs can spot its telltale signs and avoid it with a DC 18 Wisdom (Survival) check.

SINKHOLE (HAZARD)

XP varies

Fields of Blood 20

The typical sinkhole measures 4d6 feet in diameter and descends to a depth of 2d4 x 10 feet, though they can be larger or smaller depending upon the circumstances surrounding their creation. Terrain conducive to creating a natural sinkhole can be spotted with a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Natura), though a successful check does not verify the presence of sinkhole or pinpoint one's exact location. It merely tells the character that a sinkhole is more likely to be found in a given region than elsewhere. Likewise a character moving at a normal pace can notice a potential sinkhole with a successful DC 18 Wisdom (Survival) check. (A character not actively searching or looking for a sinkhole should be treated as if he were taking 10 on his Wisdom (Survival) check.) Creatures that fail to detect the sinkhole walk 1d6 feet past the edge before the ground suddenly collapses. A creature can avoid falling into the sinkhole by succeeding on a Dexterity saving throw (DC 15 + 1 per foot beyond the sinkhole's edge). Those that fall into the sinkhole suffer the appropriate falling damage (1d6 points of damage per 10 feet fallen). The damage caused by the sinkhole determines its CR. (usually CR 0 with a +1 for every 20 feet of depth).

Stampede: Several of the animals listed on this table have the potential to be encountered as a stampede as indicated under their individual entries. Even if they are not a stampede, the actions of the PCs may provoke them into becoming a stampede based on the table provided below.

STAMPEDE (HAZARD, ANIMAL)

XP varies

Fields of Blood 24

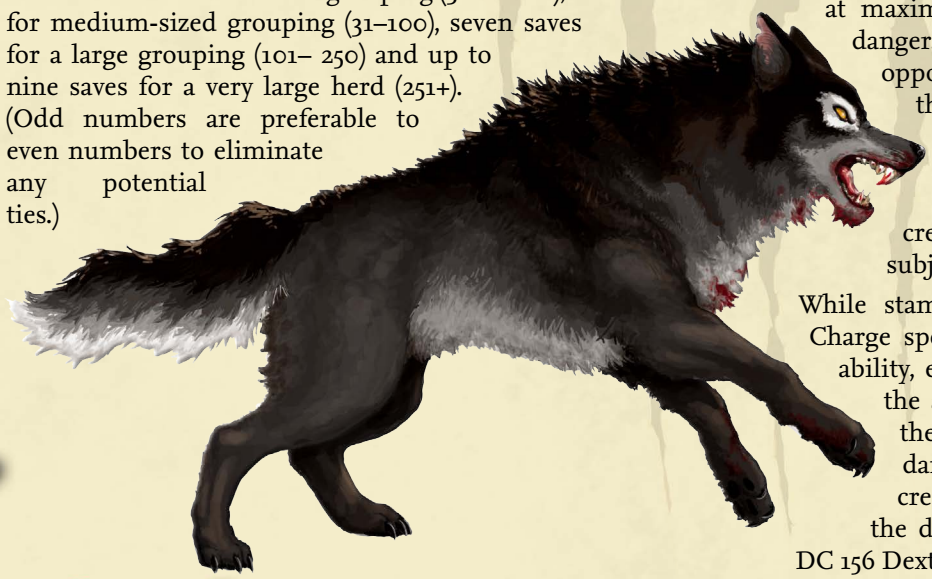
Herd animals sometimes react en masse to a singular event that can be as mundane as a clap of thunder and as extraordinary as a ghostly presence walking among them. In most cases, the sight or scent of a fearsome predator is responsible for frightening the herd. What ensues is a stampede — a chaotic, mad dash to escape the danger as quickly as possible regardless of what stands in their way.

The first step in the process of adjudicating a stampede is to determine whether it takes place at all. Herd animals are the only creatures that behave in this manner; therefore, a stampede requires herd animals, even if there are several different species present at any given time. (Some animals, such as horses and mastodons, are not specifically identified as herd animals; however, their descriptive text and ecology implies that they organize themselves into herds. At the GM's discretion, these animals may also be classified as herd animals.) The next ingredient is a catalyst — an event that potentially triggers a stampede. It can be as simple as an inexplicable sound from the opposite bank of a watering hole or as unusual as a fear spell. Once these two conditions are met, the GM must determine whether a stampede takes place. This is done by rolling Wisdom saving throws for the herd animals. The following table provides the appropriate Wisdom saving throw DC's based upon the particular situation.

Event	Wisdom Saving Throw DC
Inexplicable noise[1]	5
Sight or scent of an unknown creature[1]	5
Peal of thunder[1]	10
Sight or scent of a nearby humanoid[1,2]	10 + 1 for every two additional humanoids beyond the first
Sight or scent of a recognizable predator[3,4]	10 + 1/2 predator's HD + 1 for each additional predator beyond the first
Partially submerged in water[1]	15
Herd member attacked[1,5]	15 + attacker's HD + 1 for each additional attacker beyond the first
Completely submerged in water[1]	20
Fire[1]	20
Unnatural aura	20

Sight or scent of an unnatural creature[6]	20 + creature's HD + 1 for each additional creature beyond the first
Spell or spell-like effect	DC of spell or spell-like effect
1 Aggressive (combative) herd animals gain a advantage on their Wisdom saving throw to resist panicking against these events.	
2 A humanoid that makes a successful DC 18 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check grants the herd a advantage on its Wisdom saving throw.	
3 The herd animals must be able to identify the creature as a predator through past experience. In the event that two or more different types of predators are present, use the creature with the most Hit Dice to determine the Wisdom saving throw's DC.	
4 Aggressive (combative) herd animals gain advantage on their Wisdom saving throw to resist panicking whenever they encounter other animals, plants and vermin. They do not get this bonus against any other creature type.	
5 If the herd does not stampede, aggressive (combative) herd animals fight back against the attacker(s) on a one for one basis.	
6 Unnatural creatures include aberrations, outsiders, and undead	

It is impossible to roll several hundred or even several dozen individual Wisdom saving throw to determine how the entire herd responds to the potential crisis; therefore the GM should roll a sampling of Wisdom saving throws to accurately gauge the herd's overall mood. Depending upon the herd's size, it is recommended that the GM attempt at least three saves for a small grouping (30 or less), five saves for medium-sized grouping (31–100), seven saves for a large grouping (101– 250) and up to nine saves for a very large herd (251+). (Odd numbers are preferable to even numbers to eliminate any potential ties.)



If there are several different types of herd animals present, such as sheep and cattle, each creature type should receive at least one saving throw. If there are any remaining saving throws to be divided up based upon the herd's size, the GM may allocate them on a pro rata basis or distribute the rest to the most numerous type of animal within the herd. The following table details the outcome of these saving throws.

Result	Outcome
Majority of animals fail their saving throws	stampede
At least one animal fails its saving throw	herd is on edge but does not stampede, suffers disadvantage on any future Wisdom saving throws to avoid stampeding
All animals succeed	herd remains calm, gains aadvantage to any future Wisdom saving throws to avoid stampeding

Bonuses and penalties accrued during this phase expire 1 hour later. A Wisdom saving throw must be made for each separate event (even if the herd is stampeding), unless the herd encountered an event within the last hour that had a Wisdom saving throw DC equal to or higher than the current event, and the herd did not stampede. If that occurs, the herd does not need to attempt another saving throw to avoid stampeding. For instance, if the herd spotted a pride of 10 lions thirty minutes ago and did not stampede (DC 21), a saving throw would not be needed to avoid stampeding because of a peal of thunder (DC 10).

If a stampede occurs, the entire herd turns and flees at maximum speed away from the perceived danger. In most cases, the animals run in the opposite direction from the threat; however, that may not always be possible. Another obstacle or potential threat may stand in their way, in which case, the herd bolts in a random direction. Any creature or object in the herd's path is subject to being trampled.

While stampeding, the herd animals gain the Charge special attack and the stampede special ability, even if the base creatures do not have the ability. If the herd animal already has the Charge special attack, it deals the damage listed in its description to any creature occupying its path. Otherwise, the damage is 10 (3d6) budgeoning, with a DC 156 Dexterity saving throw.

Venomous Snake Swarms: The steppe is home to many varieties of snakes, and the PCs are unfortunate enough to have stumbled upon a knot of deadly pit vipers during their breeding season.

SWARM OF POISONOUS SNAKES[SRD]

XP 450
hp 37

Worgs: Among the apex predators of the steppe, these intelligent hunters always try to attack at night when their quarry is sleeping or otherwise has its guard down. If this is rolled as a daytime encounter, the worgs simply shadow the party and wait until after nightfall to make their attack. If this occurs, spotting the shadowing worgs requires a DC 16 Wisdom Perception) check. If scouts or outriders are used by the party, then these require only a DC 12 check to spot the worgs or signs of them but also have a 60% chance of being attacked by the worgs while isolated from their companions. The worgs of the steppe are crafty and deadly pack hunters, with the following special abilities noted below.

WORG[SRD]

XP 200
hp 30

Pack Attack. A worg gains advantage on its attack rolls against any target adjacent to at least two other worgs. In addition, when a worg scores a critical hit against a target, any other worgs adjacent to the same target can use the Hamstring reaction.

REACTION

Hamstring. The worg makes a bite attack against the same target that was just critically hit by another worg. If this attack hits, the target's speed is reduced by 10 feet for 1 minute. If this reduces the target's speed to 0 feet or less, the target falls prone and is treated as restrained.

CHAPTER TWO: ALL ROADS LEAD TO SORROW

The journey to find the crater resembles a multiple-stage race more than a mad dash to the finish line. The unmistakable plumes of smoke rising from the smoldering comet's carcass can be seen from roughly 20 miles away in all directions. However, the Haunted Steppe's enormity makes it nearly impossible to find the impact site without following in the footsteps of the expeditions that went before them. (In real-world terms, the central portion of the Haunted Steppe where the PCs travel is roughly three times the total area of the American Great Plains at almost one-and-a-half million square miles.) The documents and correspondence that the PCs gathered during the course of the previous adventure, most notably Azmerius's dispatches are critical in locating the impact site as they describe six crucial landmarks and markers that point the way to the Pit. (See **Path of the Six** sidebar for more details regarding these objects.) PCs that foolishly opt to go it alone and wander blindly across the vast grassland run the risk of falling behind their competitors, a fact that the GM may reinforce to the wayward adventurers through the impatient pleadings of their dwarven allies. Furthermore, these characters run the substantial risk of running into more of the Haunted Steppe's numerous monsters and unwelcoming residents than they bargained.

PATH OF THE SIX

The details found in the written records of Azmerius Thade fall far short of those present in a typical map. Instead, they consist of a series of cryptic clues buried within the recorded narrative of the trip that point the reader in the direction of six landmarks and manmade markers that lead to the Pit of the Burning Star. These locales appear as areas **B** through **G** on the overland map of the Haunted Steppe. The following section provides general details about each of these locations. Additional information appears under the description for each location.

The Path of the Six consists of the following sites:

The Circled Twelve: Located 160 miles north of the Wanaheeli River, this lonesome, neglected graveyard contains the earthly remains of a dozen cannibals that the Conroi Expedition slew during a pitched battle. To punish these savages the expedition members mutilated their

corpses and cursed them to forever guard the way to the Pit of the Burning Star. The twelve graves are arranged in a circular pattern. In order to gain the clue leading to the next marker, the PCs must exhume the correct grave.

The Conroi Wall: Lying 167 miles north-northwest of the Circled Twelve, this ruin, now occupied by a party of orcs, is one of the few surviving structures that remain in an ancient Caleen settlement. Currently, the encoded message found on the wall has the orcs completely stumped. If the orcs gain the upper hand on the PCs, they may be willing to spare their lives or give them a merciful death in exchange for their assistance in reading the message.

Gravenfar's Cave: This crater/cave can be found 188 miles due north of The Conroi Wall. A pitched battle between a war party of orcs and a band of cannibalistic Shattered Folk barbarians rages just outside of the cave's entrance. The PCs can join the battle on one side or the other or try to slip into the cave unnoticed and obtain the next clue on their perilous journey.

Sixtun's Spyglass: An obviously out-of-place, 20-foot-high stone tower with a window facing north lords over the flat landscape surrounding it. Built 259 miles north-northeast of the cave, this manmade structure is the only surviving remnant of another of the Caleen colonies. The tower is empty save for one object — a mounted spyglass set to the precise coordinates of the next landmark 23 miles away slightly east of due north.

Hallelujah Springs: This natural geothermal hotspot constantly circulates steaming hot water. According to the text, Azmerius concealed a watertight stone coffer deep within the hot springs, requiring someone to dive into the scalding hot water and retrieve it. A map inside the container directs the reader towards the last landmark 94 miles east-northeast of the hot spring.

Azmerius's Angle: This refers to a ravine where a natural stone bridge cut from the surrounding rock overlooks a gentle, meandering stream beneath it. An enigmatic passage scribed on the bottom corner of the hot springs map says *To iron out the line, angle from the apex.* If the PC drops a ferrous object into the stream below from the highest point on the stone bridge, a magnetized "key" buried beneath the silt affixes itself to the ferrous object. This key also points in the direction of the greatest concentration of noqual, leading the PCs to the Pit of the Burning Star some 45 miles away.

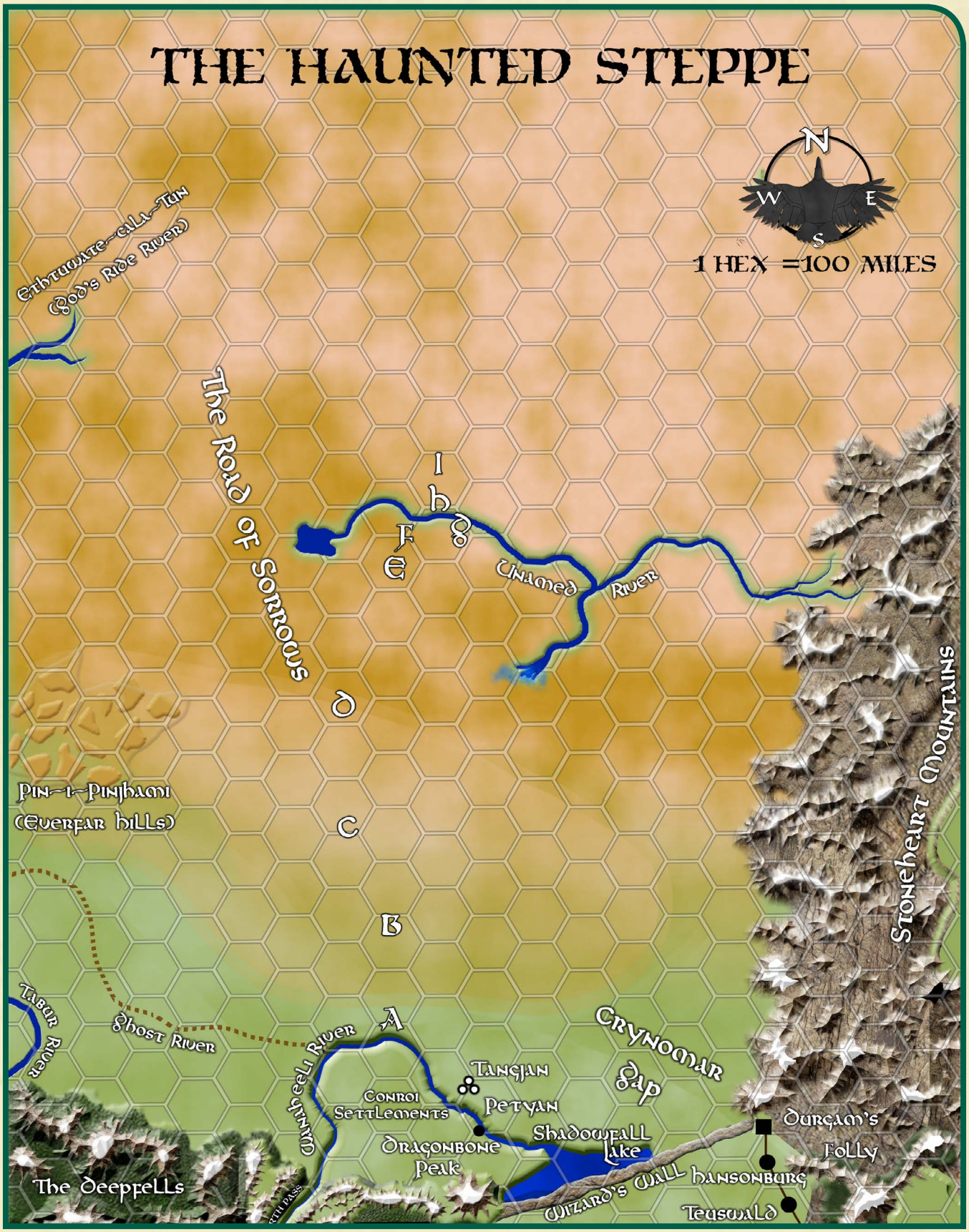
FOLLOWING IN THE FOOTSTEPS

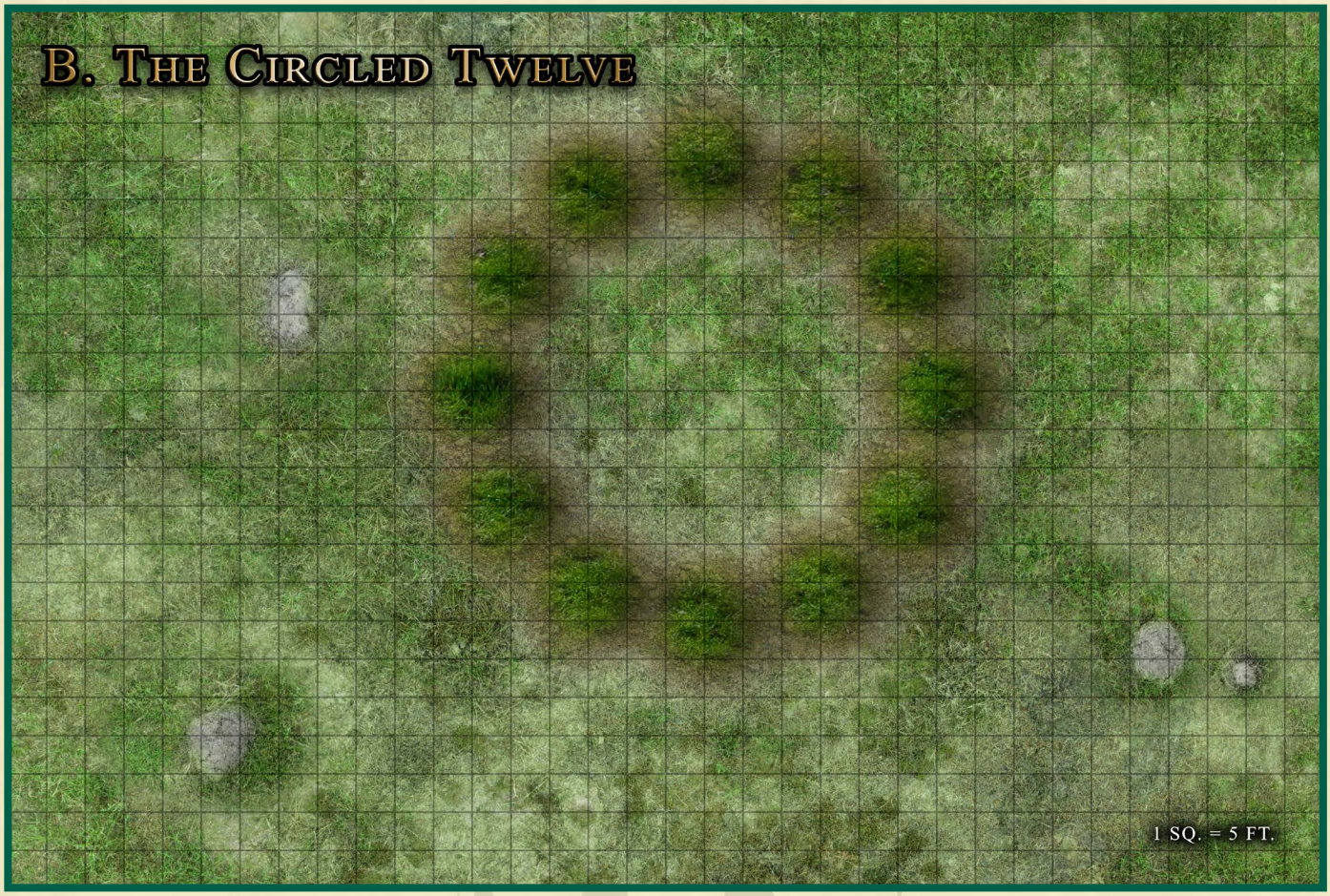
It is impossible to physically track the Conroi Expedition or Aroldus Gravenfar using conventional means or divination magic. Their footsteps and even wagon tracks were erased by time many years earlier, and the descriptions of the landmarks that appear in the journal and correspondence are far too generic and vague to rely upon for teleportation spells and similar magic. Even an aerial overview would demand weeks or even months of flight time to spot a plume of smoke that on any particular day may be obscured by clouds, fog and precipitation or dispersed by strong winds. In addition, the Campachan guides that the PCs hired in the preceding adventure are aware of the ancient Caleen settlements that line the swath of ground known as the Road of Sorrows, but the exact location of these ruins and the road itself remains a mystery even to them. Despite the moniker, the Road of Sorrows is not a true thoroughfare, and is instead an incongruous trail of ruined small, scattered hamlets and villages that the colonists established almost a thousand years ago and were subsequently destroyed by the shadow walker hordes.

Armed with Azmerius's correspondence, the PCs and their expedition head out into the great unknown that is the Haunted Steppe. Each of the landmarks that comprise The Path of the Six appears on the overland map as areas B through G. According to their information, the first leg of their journey leads to something called the Circled Twelve which, fortunately for the PCs, is relatively easy to find. The small, lonely gravesite lies 160 miles due north of a specific bend in the Wanaheeli River mentioned by Gravenfar in his journal (likely the location where the PCs choose to cross unless they wish to do otherwise). A PC DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check or find the path spell can point the adventuring party due north. Unlike any of the other landmarks, any Campachan guides that accompany the PCs know the way to the locale they describe as "The Cursed Graves" because of their reputation for being haunted. This spot serves as the apparent launch point for the remainder of their journey.

B. THE CIRCLED TWELVE

A ring of twelve marks in the earth mar the ground here, clustered in four groups of three. Some are small, grassy mounds, others are sunken like old graves. From each of these sites the bony remains of arms rise among the grasses, some still bound in the dried remains of old cords, and some still bearing the remnants of skeletal hands. These twelve burials are arranged in a circle approximately 40 feet in diameter.


THE HAUNTED STEPPE
N
W
E
S
1 HEX =100 MILES
Ethtuwate-cali-Tun
(God's Ride River)
The Road of Sorrows
I
h
g
F
E
Unamed River
Stoneheart Mountains
D
C
B
A
Pin-i-Pinjhami
(Everfar hills)
Tabur River
Ghost River
Umbeeli River
Crynomar Gap
Tanqian
Conroi Settlements
Petvan
Shadowfall Lake
Dragonbone Peak
Durgam's Folly
Hansonburg
Wizard's Wall
Teuswald
The Deepfells
Pass



Weeks after crossing the Wanaheeli, the Conroi Expedition was beset by a war band of Shattered Folk tribesmen. The expedition was able to fend off the attackers in a pitched battle that left them bloodied but intact. In an attempt to dissuade other Shattered Folk groups from staging further attacks, the expedition sent an ominous warning. They buried a dozen Shattered Folk captives alive, forcing them to kneel, bowed and face down in shallow pits. Their arms were wrenched backwards and up with hands bound so that when the shallow pits were filled in, the captives' bound wrists and hands remained visible above the ground, twisting and clawing in desperate agony as they slowly suffocated in their graves. These lost souls were then cursed by the expedition's spellcasters to serve as guardians against any who dared follow them on their route across the steppe.

A DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check or *find the path* spell confirms that the graves perfectly align with the four cardinal directions (north, south, east, and west), and though the ordinal directions (northeast, southeast, southwest, and northwest) are not marked by burials, the spaces between the burial groups do align perfectly with these. Using the precise grave placement, the expedition chaplain made use of the site as a way marker for their journey and left a cryptic riddle to enable his employers to follow the expedition's course on future journeys to the Pit of the Burning Star. If the PCs consult Azmerius's writings, they find a passage about a locale referred to as the "Circled Twelve." (This riddle and its solution appear in the accompanying sidebar.)

As a result of their torturous deaths and the curses laid upon their burials, the Shattered Folk interred in the ground transformed into **12 gravebound** that lie beneath the restless soil. When a living creature disturbs the ground or touches one of the skeletal hands or arms, all of the undead monstrosities arise from the soil and attack in a chaotic frenzy. Half of the monsters use their gravedigger ability to create pits beneath the interlopers, while the others wade into melee with their fearsome claws. It is important to note that the gravebound are made from animated grave dirt rather than the victims' actual bodies, hence their rising does not in any way disturb the actual interred corpses or the skeletal remains protruding above. The fact that they arise if these remains are disturbed is

what has allowed their visible remains to continue to be even partially intact after 78 years — scavengers are quickly slain and buried.

GRAVEBOUND (12)

Medium undead, neutral evil
Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 99 (18d8 + 18)
Speed 30 ft., burrow 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)

Skills Acrobatics +3, Intimidate +7, Perception +5, Religion +4, Stealth +3
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages Common
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Tied to the Grave. A gravebound can't venture more than 1,000 feet from the spot where its body is buried.

Vulnerable to Consecration. Whenever a gravebound starts its turn within the area of a hallow effect or a magic circle, it must succeeed at a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the start of its next turn.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The gravebound makes two attacks with its claws.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 13 (2d8 + 4) slashing damage, and the target must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or become diseased. A creature diseased in this way is considered to have a Charisma score of 1, and has disadvantage on Charisma checks and saving throws. The diseased creature must make another Constitution saving throw at the end of each long rest, noting failures and successes. Three accumulated successes ends the diease, while three accumulated failures sends the creature into a weeklong coma, after which they awaken with their Charisma score restored.

Dig Grave. The gravebound can open up a 10 foot cubic pit in the earth, under a single creature within 30 feet. That creature must make a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw, falling in the pit on a failure. The pit remains for 1 hour unless filled.

REACTIONS

Bury Alive. The gravebound can bury a creature that has fallen into a pit that the gravebound

THE CIRCLED TWELVE RIDDLE

The rose's needle always points you where to start.
March with time to the God of War,
Then Planting's number retrace before.
Then count the just graves too, plus three more that are true.

Solution: The first verse refers to the compass's needle always pointing north. That is the PCs' starting point for solving the riddle: the north grave.

The second verse gives the direction that the initial clue indicates. It says "march with time" which implies the direction of a clock. Clocks of the **Lost Lands** have three hands rather than two[LL7-367], but they travel in a clockwise direction just as their real-world counterparts. With the knowledge that the direction of movement around the circled graves is clockwise, the instruction to march to the God of War refers to the ubiquitous war god Mithras who is revered throughout Akados and much of Libynos as well. His month of Mithrond[LL7-219], the Month of War, is the ninth month of the year and therefore instructs the PCs to count nine graves in a clockwise direction, leaving them on the grave pointing to the east.

The third verse instructs the PCs to retrace their steps, i.e. to go back counterclockwise, for a number equal to "Planting's number". The month of Freyrmond[LL7-219] is dedicated to Freya, Goddess of Fertility, and is the traditional month for planting crops. Freyrmond is the third month, so the PCs are instructed to move backward three graves to the south grave.

The final verse is a play on words. "Just" and "true" also mean "right". The word "too" is a homophone for the number "two". Therefore, if the reader faces the south grave and then counts two graves to the right plus three more to the right, he arrives at the eleventh grave, the north-northwest grave.

created. Any creatures restrained inside of the pit are buried, and begin to suffocate (see suffocation in the SRD). A restrained creature can use their action to attempt to break free with a Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check, both with a DC of 15. Otherwise, an ally can use their action to attempt to free a trapped creature with a Strength (Athletics) check with a DC of 16.

Development: If the characters exhume the corpses, the skeletal remains still have long, dark hair and wear tattered clothing and armor made from cracked leather and hides, and some show signs of injuries (broken bones, steel arrowheads lodged in ribs or long bones, etc.) A successful DC 20 Intelligence (History) check can identify the clothing and armor as being the typical types worn by Shattered Folk tribesmen, though the specific tribe cannot be identified. A PC who performs a forensic examination can, with a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Medicine) check, determine that they have been buried for decades but probably less than a century, a timeframe that fits the travels of the Conroi Expedition.

If the north-northwest grave is exhumed, it is found to have a large 1-foot-cubic block of worked stone upon which the deceased tribesman kneels. The surface of the stone bears the chiseled image of a compass with its needle pointing between 22° and 23° west of due north. This north-northwesterly orientation in the north-northwest grave provides the intended clue that the expedition turned here to a north-northwesterly course along the route of the legendary Road of Sorrows (see below), the necessary course that will bring the PCs to the next landmark on the Path of the Six.

ROAD OF SORROWS

The Road of Sorrows remains alive in the verse of bards and poets. The name was first coined in 2963 I.R. by the celebrated Rheman poet Veshira Selith[K1-31] in her classic "Lament for a Lost Prince" in which the doomed colonies of Prince Cale were described in contrast as both the Path to Promise (for the sense of optimism and modern progress held by the colonists about their venture) and the Road of Sorrows (for the horrific and ignoble ending that virtually all of the hopeful colonists met). It was never referred to as the Road of Sorrows in the time of the Caleen Colonies, and though roads did extend between the colonies the Road of Sorrows did not refer to any specific road per se. Rather they referred to the general line upon which the colonies' route lay, extending from the Crynomar Gap towards the distant ill-starred Lost Mountains, a concourse measuring some 2,000 miles and claiming the lives of some 20,000 Rheman colonists and a Prince of Foere of the line of Macobert.

The course correction made at the Circled Twelve brought the Conroi Expedition (and subsequently the PCs) onto the route of the Road of Sorrows as it extends in its north-northwest course. No trace of the original roads remain (little more than trails for carts and mounts), but the ruins of some of the Caleen settlements, the stones of which were first laid by Grand Duke Cale some 650 years ago, can occasionally still be seen here and there. In most cases old stones, cracked foundation slabs, and depressions in the ground offer the only testimony that civilization once established a tenuous foothold in this otherwise feral domain. In some instances, the telltale signs of any humanoid presence are so faint that observers must succeed on a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check to even spot the ancient building blocks covered by thick grasses. A PC examining these ruins can Recall Knowledge to confirm that they do indeed belong to the Caleen settlements with a successful DC 15 Intelligence (History) check.

ROAD OF SORROWS RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

While few pieces of physical evidence remain from the Caleen settlements, hateful spirits linger long after stones and wood disappeared from the locales. Some residents refused to leave even after the shadow walkers decimated their homes and slew their loved ones. Every 20 miles spent traveling along or in close proximity to the Road of Sorrows gives the PCs a 30% chance of stumbling upon the sundered remnants of an ancient Caleen village or farmhold. When one of these sites is discovered, whether in the day or at night, there is a 50% chance of encountering some of the restless spirits that still linger within and around the ruins. These encounters are in addition to the normal daily rolls for encounters on the Haunted Steppe. None of the regular Haunted Steppe encounters will ever occur in one of the ruins, as the locals always give them a wide berth. If an encounter is determined to have occurred, roll d% and consult the table below.

d%	Encounter
01–10	3d4 skeleton champions
11–20	2d4+2 shadows[SRD]
21–30	Bhuta[1]
31–40	Harionago

41–50	1d4+6 specters[SRD]
51–65	3d4 wights[SRD]
66–80	1d6+2 wraiths[SRD]
81–90	Gashadokuro
91-00	Ghost[SRD]
[1] Roll on the Haunted Steppe Random Encounter Table. If the result is an animal, then the bhuta has taken the form of one of those animals and hides among them.	

Bhuta: A bhuta is a wrathful spirit that appears as a clawed, wild-eyed apparition with backwards feet. It has an affinity for animals and wild places. It tends to react to strangers with fury and vengeance over unfinished business from its life.

BHUTA

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 14
Hit Points 178 (21d8 + 84)
Speed 0 ft., fly 30 ft. (can hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (-5)	19 (+4)	18 (+4)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Wis +4
Skills Perception +8, Stealth +12
Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 18
Languages Common
Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

Animal Guise. The bhuta can use its action to take on the form of a Small or Medium beast, or back into its true form. This is an illusion, and fools the senses of sight, hearing, and touch. The illusory form always has backwards feet, like a bhuta. The bhuta may accidentally reveal its feet when performing such motions as flying, pretending to walk on the ground, and so forth. A successful DC 17 Intelligence (Investigation) check detects the illusion for what it is. Careful inspection of the bhuta's feet will immediately reveal the flaw in its disguise.

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

Legendary Resistance (1/Day). If the bhuta fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

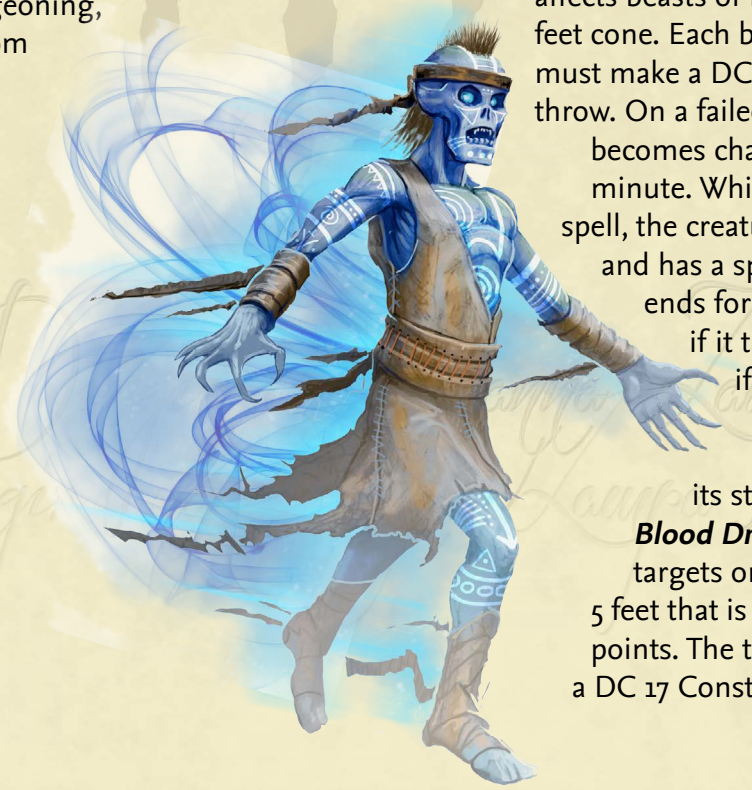
Speak with Animals. The bhuta can speak and communicate with beasts. It may be able to ask them for small favors or influence them.

ACTIONS

Spectral Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 22 (5d8) necrotic damage.

Beast Gaze. The bhuta gazes and affects beasts of its choice in a 60 feet cone. Each beast in the area must make a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the creature becomes charmed for the 1 minute. While charmed by this spell, the creature is incapacitated and has a speed of 0. The effect ends for an affected creature if it takes any damage or if someone else uses an action to shake the creature out of its stupor.

Blood Drain. The bhuta targets one creature within 5 feet that is at less than full hit points. The target must make a DC 17 Constitution save. The



target takes 22 (5d8) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half the damage on a successful save. the bhuta regains hit points equal to half the amount of necrotic damage dealt. Creatures without blood or bodily fluids are immune to Blood Drain.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The bhuta can take 2 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The bhuta regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Move. The bhuta flies up to its speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

Claws. The bhuta makes one spectral claw attack.

Gashadokuro: The gashadaokuro is an undead that spawns from mass starvation events. It appears at first glance to be a giant, grimy skeleton, but is actually composed of a mass of decomposition of numerous bodies.

GASHADOKURO

Huge undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 180 (19d12 + 57)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
25 (+7)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	6 (-2)	15 (+2)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Wis +7, Cha +8

Damage Resistances necrotic; piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Common (can't speak)

Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The gashadokuro uses Starvation Curse. It then makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 16 (2d8+7) bludgeoning damage and the target is grappled (escape DC 21). Until this grapple ends, the gashadokuro can bite only the grappled creature and has advantage on attack rolls to do so.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 14 (2d6+7) slashing damage.

Starvation Curse. A gashadokuro emits a powerful aura that causes all creatures within range to feel the intense pains of starvation. Each creature within 60 feet must make a DC 14 Constitution save. On a failed save, the creature gains a level of exhaustion. Even after leaving the area or slaying the gashadokuro, an affected creature cannot recover exhaustion inflicted by this curse until it consumes food.

Vomit Bone Shards (Recharge 5-6). The gashadokuro exhales bone shards in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw, taking 39 (6d12) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Harionago: The harionago appears as a young woman, lost, bruised, and dressed in worn clothing. A harionago often seems sympathetic, despite her pallor and battered looks. However, the harionago is motivated by an insatiable desire for vengeance. When she attacks, her nails become elongated claws, and she attacks with her prodigiously long, barbed hair.

HARIONAGO

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 20 (natural armor)

Hit Points 159 (14d8 + 96)

Speed 30 ft., fly 10 ft. (can hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	17 (+3)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Wis +6, Cha +8

Skills Perception +6, Stealth +7

Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered

Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages Common, Elven, Sylvan
Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The harionago attacks with her claws and hair barbs.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 10 (2d6+3) slashing damage. If the target is a creature other than an undead, it must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Hair Barbs. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 17 (4d6+3) slashing damage plus the targer must make a DC 16 Constitution save. The target takes 44 (8d10) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half that on a successful save.

Vampiric Touch (Recharge 5-6). *Melee Spell Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 21 (6d6) necrotic damage, and the harionago regains hit points equal to half the necrotic damage dealt.

Infectious Laughter. The harionago lets out ringing, scornful laughter. All non-harionago within 60 feet who can hear the harionago must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or fall prone, becoming incapacitated and unable to stand up for 1 minute. A creature with an Intelligence score of 4 or less isn't affected. At the end of each of its turns, and each time it takes damage, a target can make another Wisdom saving throw. The target has advantage on the saving throw if it's triggered by damage. On a success, the laughter ends for that target.

Suggestion (Recharge 5-6). The harionago suggests a course of activity (limited to a sentence or two) and magically influences a creature it can see within 30 feet that can hear and understand it. Creatures that can't be charmed are immune to this effect. The suggestion must be worded in such a manner as to make the course of action sound reasonable. Asking the creature to stab itself, throw itself onto a spear, immolate itself, or do some other obviously harmful act makes the creature automatically immune. The target must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, it pursues the course of action to the best of its ability. The suggested course of action can continue for up to 1 minute. If the suggested activity can be completed in a shorter time, the spell ends when the subject finishes what it was asked to do. If the harionago or any of its companions damage the target, the suggestion ends.

Ghost: A ghost isn't necessarily hostile. Roll the NPC's traits randomly or select them. If the ghost is evil, there is a 50% chance of 1d4 dead bodies in the vicinity, representing its victims. Regardless, if the PCs disturb its resting place, threaten it, or remind it of something upsetting, the ghost will attack, starting with its Horrifying Visage.

Skeleton Champions: These are the desiccated remains of ancient warriors whose restless spirits animate their bones in endless repetition of wars long forgotten.

SKELETON CHAMPION

Medium undead, lawful evil
Armor Class 15 (armor scraps)
Hit Points 58 (9d8 + 18)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Damage Vulnerabilities bludgeoning
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison
Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned
Skills Athletics +5, Perception +2
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages understands Huandei or another ancient language but can't speak
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The skeleton champion makes two scimitar or shortbow attacks.

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage, or 8 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage if used with two hands.

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

ON THE ROAD OF SORROWS

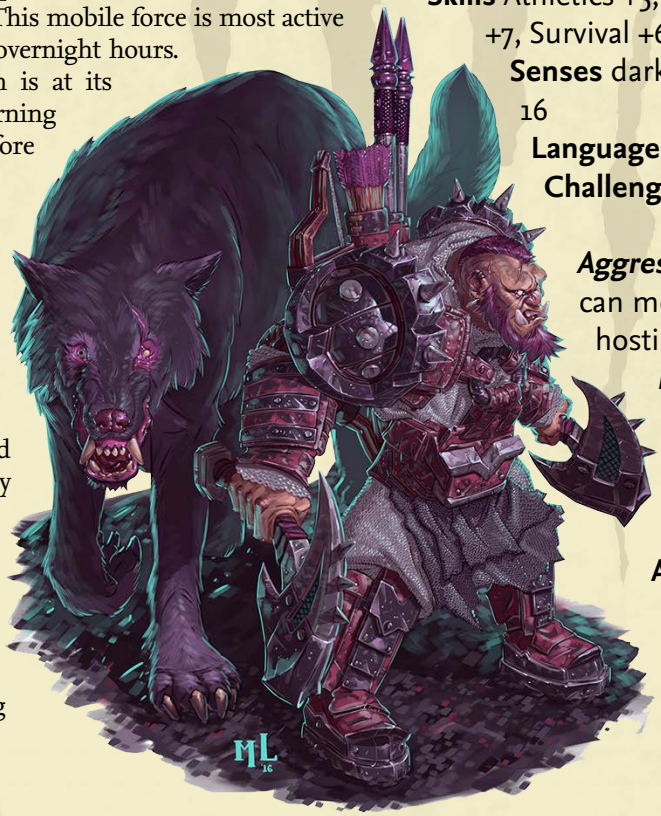
The path that the party follows from the Circled Twelve leads 167 miles north-northwest where the trail ends at a site referred to as the Conroi Wall. However, the PCs don't know how far they will need to journey exactly in this direction, so they must keep a careful eye out for their next landmark and make a DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check or make use of find the path each day to avoid becoming lost. If the party's expedition gets off course, it will take them 1d2 days to realize it and an equal amount of time to backtrack to where they went awry to continue on in the proper direction. Random encounters occur normally during this time.

ORC SCOUTING PARTY

When the PCs are within 50 miles of area **C**, they begin to have a cumulative 25% chance per day of running into an orc scouting party. This group is a squad from the orcs at area **C** that have been sent to scour the countryside in hopes of finding something to help them with their predicament at the Conroi Wall (**C**). This troop consists of **6 orc scouts** on foot and **1 orc gorthek rider**. This mobile force is most active during the evening and overnight hours. They rest when the sun is at its brightest from mid-morning until mid-afternoon before resuming their patrol.

The scouts on foot fan out with a roughly 100-foot gap between each individual. The gorthek rider takes up a position near the center of the formation 200 feet behind his counterparts. They are more concerned with locating hidden objects than avoiding detection. Therefore, the patrol moves at just under their normal speed, imposing disadvantage to their Stealth checks. The PCs can spot the orc scouts moving through the grass with a successful DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check (be sure to have the PCs make the roll with disadvantage if they are further than 30 feet of the orcs). The gorthek rider is much easier to notice and only require a successful DC 9 Wisdom (Perception) check (with the same distance penalties as above).

Conversely, the scouts and gorthek rider are keeping a careful watch and excel at detecting the presence of other creatures. It takes a successful DC 20 Dexterity (Stealth) check to elude the orc scouts' keen senses, while the adventurers and their allies must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity (Stealth) check to avoid attracting the gorthek's attention and a DC 10 Dexterity (Stealth) to escape its rider's gaze. The orcs scouts are also extremely skilled trackers. If the PCs previously passed through the area, the scouts can locate and follow their trail with a successful Wisdom (Survival) check.



ORC SCOUT

Medium humanoid (orc), chaotic evil

Armor Class 13 (leather armor)

Hit Points 58 (9d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)

Skills Athletics +5, Nature +5, Perception +6, Stealth +7, Survival +6

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Common, Orc

Challenge 3 (100 XP)

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

Keen Hearing and Sight. The orc scout has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or sight.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The scout makes two melee attacks or two ranged attacks.

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

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, ranged 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

GORTHEK RIDER

Medium humanoid (orc), chaotic evil
Armor Class 16 (half plate)
Hit Points 120 (16d8 + 48)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	7 (-2)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Animal Handling +2, Intimidation +2
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Common, Orc
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

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

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The gorthek rider makes two melee attacks or two ranged javelin attacks.

Lance. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 10 (1d12 + 4) piercing damage. The rider has disadvantage to attack a target within 5 feet.

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

GORTHEK

XP 700
hp 85 (see **Appendix A**, page 542)

Tactics: At the first signs of trouble, the orc scouts cast *longstrider* on themselves to increase their mobility and then train their shortbows on their targets. The archers constantly move about the field sniping at their foes in a deliberate attempt to avoid engaging in melee combat. The gorthek rider and his powerful mount adopt the opposite approach; they charge headlong into the fray as the mighty beast lowers its terrifying horns and barrels into any foe that stands in its way. The orc scouts and gorthek rider coordinate their assaults against the opponent they deem to be the weakest rather than simultaneously attacking multiple foes. If half of the force is defeated, the survivors retreat away from the Conroi Wall and flee into the Haunted Steppe rather than risk being executed for failure. PCs that capture and interrogate the orcs by Coercing or magically compelling them to speak learn that they hail from the Stoneheart Mountains and were sent here on a secret mission known only to their leader Ornadox the Merciless. They can tell the location of their main camp at an old stone wall covered in unknown markings and glyphs (area **C**).

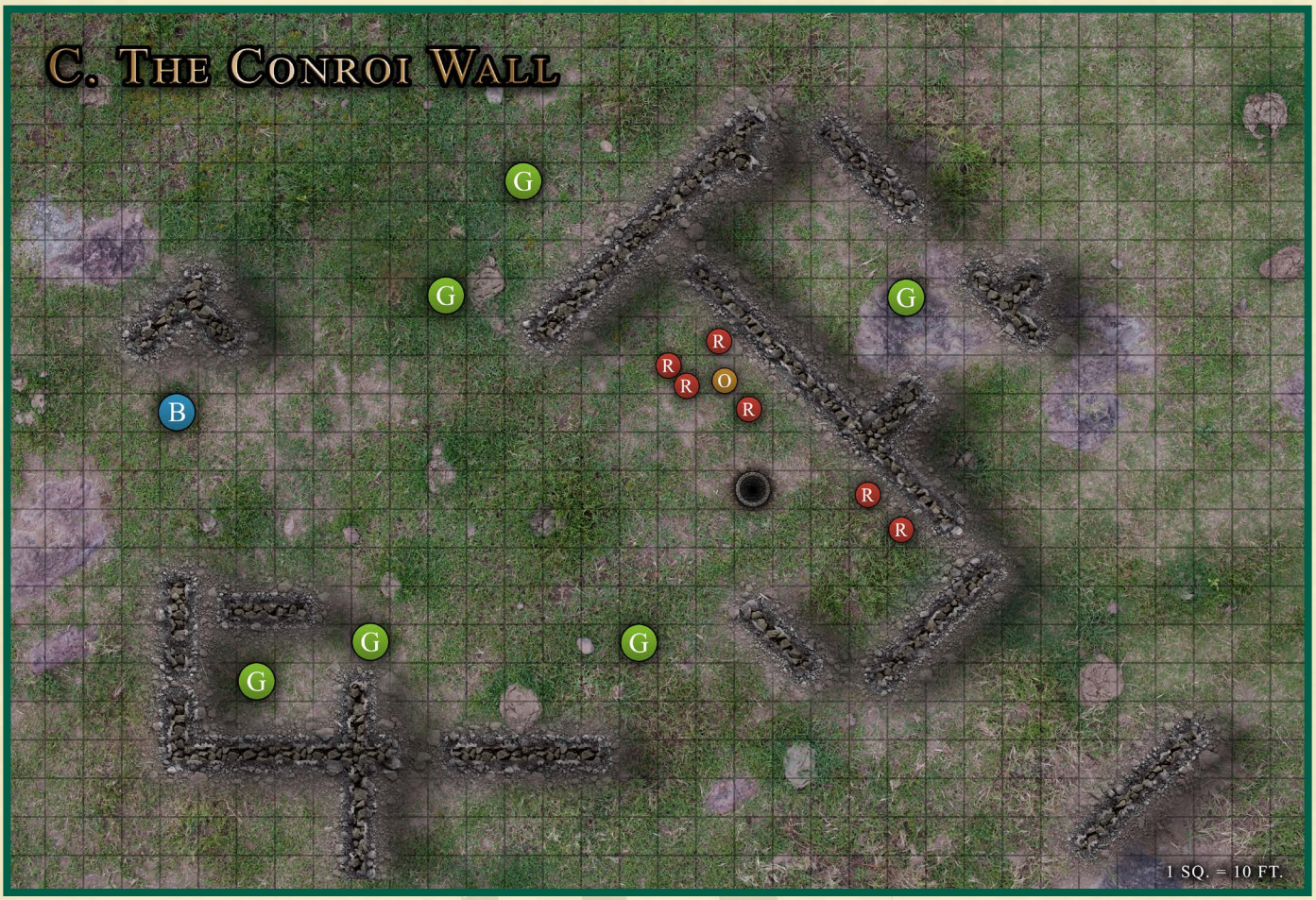
Treasure: In addition to their normal gear, one of the orc scouts carries a *potion of greater healing*.

C. THE CONROI WALL

Fragments of shattered stone walls in the rough outlines of formerly grand structures span the breadth of an open area awash in thick grass. The broken lines of rock and mortar are several hundred feet long in every direction, though most of these ruins reaches no more than two feet in height. One intact wall covered with letters and symbols towers over the northern portion of this area, casting its shadow across a nearby stone well.

During the Caleen Settlement's heyday, the fortress of Remeria stood along the western edge of what later became the Road of Sorrows. Although far more of the stronghold's mighty walls withstood the shadow walkers' attack than the neighboring towns and villages, a portion of the keep's inner wall and a nearby covered well are the only structures that survived the invasion relatively intact. The well's wooden cover is obviously newer, and lifting the cover reveals that an intact and functional winch, rope, and bucket are still affixed to the inside lip. The stone-lined well itself is 40 feet deep and still filled to a depth of 7 feet with cold, pure water from the steppe's aquifer. When the Conroi Expedition located this ruin (giving it its name), they repaired the well as a valuable water source in the arid plain and then incorporated it into an encoded message they etched into nearby section of intact wall.

Unfortunately for the PCs, they are not the first visitors to arrive here. A contingent of orcs from the Stoneheart Mountains have made their camp here for the last four days while they try without success to crack the cipher that the Conroi Expedition left behind. Encamped here



are **6 gorthek riders** and their befuddled leader **Ornadox the Merciless**. They congregate in the area around the wall with Ornadox and four of their number futilely wracking their thoroughly taxed brains as they examine the carved symbols, while the remaining pair sleep in bedrolls tucked against the wall's base. Meanwhile, their **7 gortheks** roam the grounds around the wall feasting on the overgrown vegetation or lying atop a bed of grass for a quick snooze.

In a vain attempt to find a solution to their current predicament, Ornadox the Merciless recently dispatched a part of his force to scout the surrounding area in hopes of finding something that can help them in their translation of the wall. Unlike the scouting party, Ornadox and his cohorts are solely focused on deducing the solution to the mystery in front of them, causing them to pay no attention to their surroundings. Likewise, the normally aggressive gortheks behave in an oddly lackadaisical manner partially attributable to their full bellies and masters' indifference.

Their disinterested state gives the characters an ideal opportunity to catch the orcs and their allies completely unaware. The short grasses offer cover to the smallest humanoids only, but the bits and pieces of sundered walls scattered around the area make for ideal hiding spots for creatures of up to Medium size.

ORNADOX THE MERCILESS, ORC CHIEFTAIN

Medium humanoid, chaotic evil
Armor Class 19 (+1 *plate*)
Hit Points 150 (20d8 + 60)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	7 (-2)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +8, Con +7
Skills Animal Handling +4, Intimidate +8, Perception +4
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages Common, Orc
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

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

Archery. Ornadox gain a +2 bonus to attack rolls he makes with ranged weapons.

Brave. Ornadox has advantage on saving throws against being frightened.

Brute. A melee weapon deals one extra die of its damage when Ornadox hits with it (included in the attack).

Special Gear. Ornadox has +1 *plate armor*, and a *gorthek mask* (see **Appendix B**, page 570). He carries a *potion of major healing*, but he won't use it as long as there are opponents to attack.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Ornadox attacks three times with his greataxe, or he attacks twice with his bow. He then makes another attack with the same weapon against a different creature that is within 5 feet of the original target and within range of his weapon.

Greataxe. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 17 (2d12+4) slashing damage.

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit*: 4 (1d6+1) piercing damage.

GORTHEK RIDER

XP 1,100
hp 120 (see page 291)

GORTHEK

XP 700
hp 85 (see **Appendix A**, page 542)

Tactics: When the orcs become aware of intruders, they quickly rouse to action. The sleeping orcs keep their arms and armor close at hand. However, unless they get at least 5 minutes of advance notice, the two slumbering gorthek riders forego their armor (reduce their AC by 5) and make for their already saddled beasts 100 feet from the wall. Under Ornadox's leadership, the gorthek riders lower their lances and charge into battle atop their mounts, concentrating their attacks against their opponents' vulnerable flank or against a few isolated individuals. With no realistic options for retreat or surrender, the orcs fight to the last man.

HANDOUT 5A

V6TP VJ2 J4PFN2 H5T H56T H6NN F4AU
WK2Q J5 E4FN W5 WK2 VW4UW 5I B2VW2UG4B
M3GU 3U 6Q 4OE M2U 3U G4MM
4MC RG5V SG2 V4X EQ5L SG2 V4KK

Development: Orc captives compelled to speak will reveal that they are from the Stoneheart Mountains far to the east. They state that their tribal chiefs and shamans sent them weeks ago in search of a mysterious burning pit somewhere in the center of the Haunted Steppe. They do not know anything about this pit, why it burns, or why they were sent. They just know that they are to locate it, secure it, and report back to their chief. They can provide no other useful information and have not had any success in deciphering the message of the wall other than to say that they are sure that it provides a clue to the pit's location.

With the orcs out of the way, the PCs are free to examine the writing on the wall without any outside interference. The message on the wall is encoded (**Handout 5A**), and the details of the message can be found in the nearby sidebar.

Treasure: Among the saddlebags of Ornadox and his troop can be found a total of 1,406 gp as well as a bone scroll case sealed with copper wire (worth 15 gp). Inside the scroll tube is a parchment document given to Ornadox by the Great Chief Ekree Two-Tusk of the Stone Beast tribe of the Stoneheart Mountains. The document is written in Orc. If it is translated, provide the players with **Handout 5B**.

THE CIPHER OF THE CONROI WALL

The Conroi Expedition used a cipher to encode this secret message. The cipher includes a system of numbers and letters from the Common alphabet as explained below.

Deciphering Vowels

Each number corresponds to a specific vowel throughout the message as expressed in the following table.

#	Corresponding Vowel
2	E
3	I
4	A
5	O
6	U

Deciphering Consonants

Consonants appear as letters, but the ciphers change on each line. In order to decode consonants, the reader must shift the letter forward or backward in the alphabet as expressed in the subsequent table. For instance, on a line where the alphabet is shifted two letters forward, the letter D would appear as the letter F instead. If the shift forward or backward takes the reader past the beginning or end of the alphabet, the cipher wraps around the alphabet. Therefore, if the reader must shift three letters forward, the letter Y would appear as the letter B instead.

Line	Key
1	Shift two letters backward
2	Shift three letters backward
3	Shift one letter backward
4	Shift one letter forward

Solution

V6TP VJ2 J4PFN2 H5T H56T H6NN F4AU

Turn the handle for four full days

WK2Q J5 E4FN W5 WK2 VW4UW 5I B2VW2UG4B

Then go back to the start of yesterday.

M3GU 3U 6Q 4OE M2U 3U G4MM

Lift it up and let it fall.

4MC RG5V SG2 V4X EQ5L SG2 V4KK

And show the way from the wall.

The wall's message relates to the nearby stone well. It directs the reader to turn the handle four complete rotations in a clockwise direction, and then turn the handle one complete rotation in a counter-clockwise direction. The creature must then vertically lift the handle, allowing it drop back into position where it will then point due north from the well towards the next landmark.

HANDOUT 5B

Translated from Orcish

The shamans of Grotaag say that the time of the Burning Star has come. Go to the plains and scour the humans dead settlements. Grotaag has shown the shamans a wall with writing on it. Find the wall and follow the instructions to the next landmark. They will lead to the giant column of smoke. Tell none about your mission. Others also pursue the smoldering rock. Kill any that stand in your way.

Since *comprehend language* does not decipher codes, the PCs find themselves in much the same situation as the orcs before them. Allow your players to take a crack at the code and try to decipher it through trial and error. Decipher Writing checks can be made if necessary to give them a hand. A successful DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check provides the means to deciphering one piece of the puzzle (e.g. the vowel substitution or the consonant shift for one line of the message), so each separate part of the cipher requires an additional check. If the PCs manage to make a DC 25 check, they can decode the entire message outright — though they may still struggle with the meaning of the message.

If your players are struggling to solve the riddle, you can lend a hand and gently point them in the right direction without blatantly revealing the solution. Magic such as *contact other plane*, *divination*, *legend lore* and similar spells can be used to bestow useful information similar to the results to achieving a DC 25 Intelligence (Investigation) check, as described above. In a similar vein, mechanically inclined characters that examine the well and succeed on a DC 20 tool proficiency check with an Intelligence-based tool can discern that the crank mechanism has several unusual notches that suggest it can move in an unanticipated manner with the proper coaxing. The check does not reveal the combination needed to elicit this counterintuitive motion, but it reveals an important clue that may lead the adventurers to attempt to unravel the mystery through sheer trial and error. However, regardless of how many times the PCs turn or twist the handle, it never falls into the correct position unless that individual follows the sequence detailed in the ciphered message.

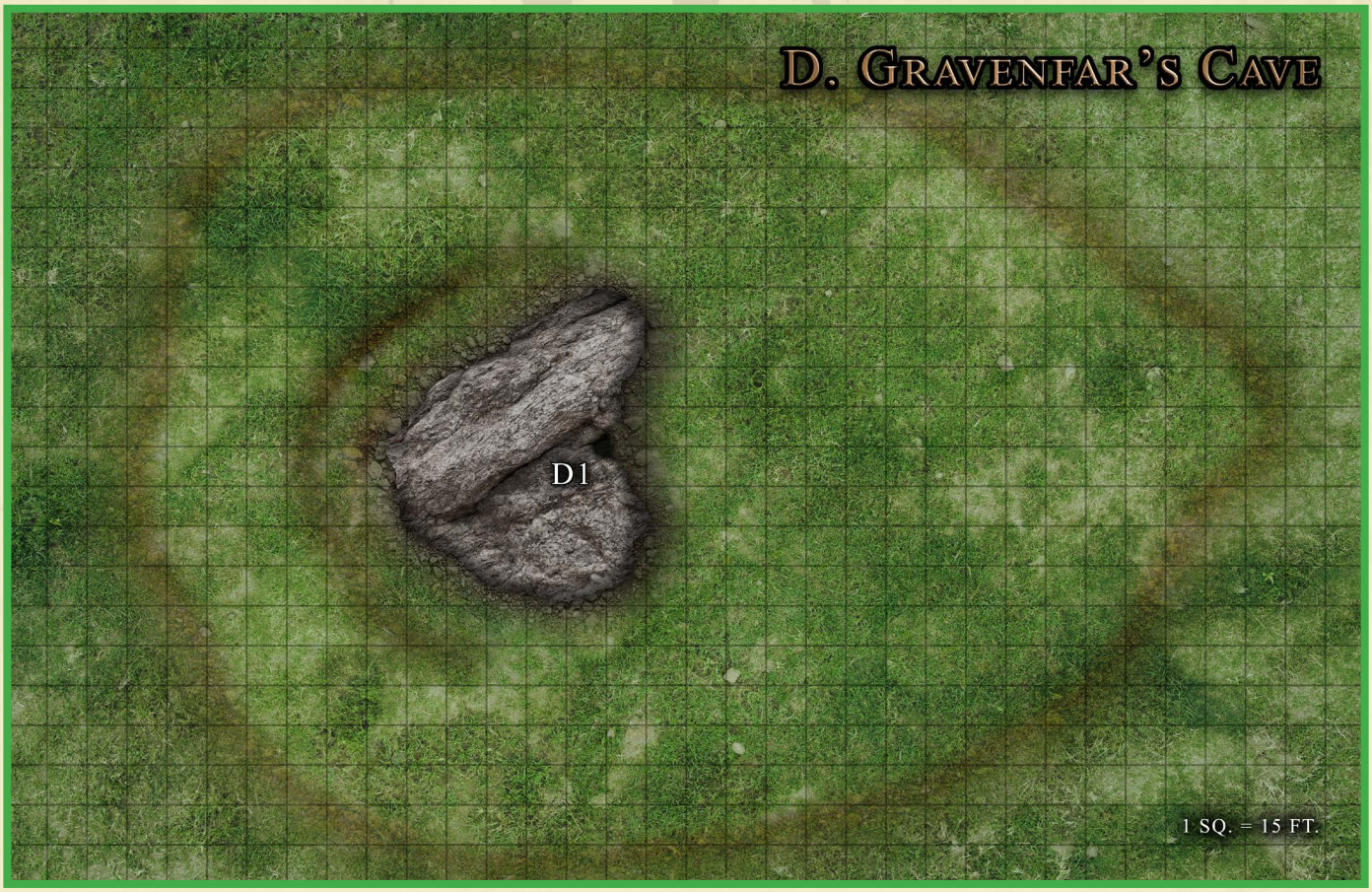
THE CONROI WALL TO GRAVENFAR'S CAVE

The trail from Conroi's Wall leads 188 miles due north to the next landmark, Gravenfar's Cave. The path across the Haunted Steppe continues more or less along the Road of Sorrows, so continue to roll for encounters with Caleen ruins as detailed under **On the Road of Sorrows** above as well as the normal Haunted Steppe random encounters. Also, as word of the search for the Pit of the Burning Star has begun to circulate in certain circles, the orcs and Shattered Folk wandering throughout the intervening area seem to have multiplied overnight.

In addition to any randomly generated encounters, an encounter will occur with these two groups: At least one Orc War Party and group of Shattered Folk tribesmen will attack the PCs en route to their next destination at times of the GMs choosing. Use the statistics for these groups as indicated in the **Haunted Steppe Random Encounters** table in the previous chapter. It should be noted that the orcs encountered in these encounters are of the orc tribes native to the Haunted Steppe, not members of or in any way affiliated with Ornadox's Stone Beast tribe detailed in the **Orc Scouting Party** and area **C** encounters above.

In addition, unlike the previously encountered Shattered Folk tribesmen, this Shattered Folk encounter is with cannibals who bear the partially shaved heads and chalk face paint of the Kwajubinay tribe, a fact that the PCs can discern with a successful DC 20 Intelligence (History) check. The Kwajubinay are not a numerous tribe and are thankfully only rarely encountered out on the vast steppes because in addition to their savage and cannibalistic ways, they are known to have formed a quasi-religious cult that worships an entity known only as The Shadow. Details about the religion are scant at best, but a successful DC 20 Intelligence (Religion) check confirms that the faith known as The Shadow (see **Appendix C**, page 589) is thought to have first emerged when the mighty Hundaei Empire collapsed over 2,800 years ago and is speculated to have been at least partially responsible for its calamitous civil war and sudden downfall.

These extra encounters are intended as a prelude to the pitched battle that awaits the PCs outside Gravenfar's Cave between a large contingent of orcs and the followers of a Kwajubinay undead lord in The Shadow's mysterious service.



D. GRAVENFAR'S CAVE

The details of this site are not apparent because of its situation in a depression in the plain, however, a successful DC 19 Wisdom (Perception) check detects the sounds of war cries and screams in the distance from 200 yards before the tableau itself comes into view.

The landscape gently slopes down into a wide, remarkably uniform depression. Battered and bloodied corpses litter the field in the vicinity of a grassy earthwork inside the sweeping basin, while a battle between savage orcs and shaved-head human tribesmen rages around it. A tunnel, crudely cut, in the exposed face of the earthwork opens into the ground. A closer look at the battlefield reveals that many of the combatants, both orc and human alike appear to be the shambling corpses of recently deceased combatants returned to life and now serving the cause of the Shattered Folk warriors.

An odd swale roughly 100 yards across dips to a gradual depth of 30 feet here, its grassy sides gently sloping to its nadir where a strangely regular grassy mound lies. The entire depression as well as the grassy wrinkle of earth at its center were formed by a fragment of noqual that separated from the Burning Star as it plummeted through the atmosphere of Boros and crashed here. For most of its history, the 30-foot deep, gently sloping depression escaped scrutiny from men and beast alike. However, now the blood and clash of battle mar the small crater.

The orc warlord Aggarak leads his company of Stone Beast orcs in a pitched battle against a smaller yet no-less-determined tribe of Shattered Folk cannibals under the direction of Kiwaha Star-Eye, a shaman of the Kwajubinay tribe of the Shattered Folk. Like the Stone Beasts the PCs encountered at area **C**, Aggarak and his band have been dispatched from the Stoneheart Mountains by Great Chief Ekree Two-Tusk in search of the Pit of the Burning Star. The Kwajubinay have an idea of where the Pit lies but have no such interest themselves; the cannibals have just taken note of the increase in visitors to the central steppes and seek to bring more souls to The Shadow.

The two enemy forces are arrayed across the entire depression in clusters of bloodshed, but none of them have yet entered the cave in the side of the hillock at the basin's center other than an initial exploratory group detailed below.

AGGARAK'S WARBAND

This orc band consists of the following members:

- Aggarak Stub-Ear
- 1 orc war drummer
- 4 gorthek riders mounted on gortheks
- 6 orc scouts
- 61 orcs
- His dead include a total of 33 orc warriors, sergeants, and lieutenants, though not all of them currently rest easy (see below).

AGGARAK STUB-EAR

Medium humanoid, chaotic evil
Armor Class 13 (hide)
Hit Points 105 (14d8 + 42)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	7 (-2)	11 (+0)	9 (-1)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Common, Orc
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

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

Reckless. At the start of his turn, Aggarak can gain advantage on all melee weapon attack rolls during that turn, but attack rolls against him have advantage until the start of his next turn.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Aggarak makes two weapon attacks.

Greataxe. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 10 (1d12+4) slashing damage.

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d6+4) piercing damage.

ORC WAR DRUMMER

Medium humanoid, chaotic evil
Armor Class 13 (hide)
Hit Points 45 (6d8+18)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	7 (-2)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)

Skills Intimidate +5, Perform +5



Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Common, Orc
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

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

Inspiring Fervor. If the war drummer hits with an attack, it may choose one ally within 30 feet who can see it. The ally gains Advantage on their next attack before the end of its next turn.

Spellcasting. The war drummer is a 4th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13). The war drummer has the following bard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *mage hand*, *minor illusion*, *prestidigitation*
1st level (4 slots): *bane*, *detect magic*, *hideous laughter*, *thunderwave*
2nd level (3 slots): *hold person*, *shatter*

ACTIONS

Greataxe. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 10 (1d12+3) slashing damage.

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d6 +3) piercing damage.

ORC SCOUT

XP 700
hp 58 (see page 290)

GORTHEK RIDER

XP 1,100
hp 120 (see page 291)

GORTHEK

XP 700
hp 85 (see **Appendix A**, page 542)

THE KWAJUBINAY TRIBESMEN

This tribe consists of the following members:

- **Kiwaha Star-Eye**
- **6 Kwajubinay deathriders** mounted on **mustangs** (see **Appendix A**, page 554)
- **24 Kwajubinay cannibals**
- **15** common **zombies**[SRD] (7 humans, 8 orcs)
- **2 mummies**[SRD]
- Another 5 dead tribesmen still litter the field but have yet to be animated.

KIWAHA STAR-EYE

Medium humanoid (human, Shattered Folk), neutral evil

Armor Class 14 (breastplate)
Hit Points 55 (10d8+10)
Speed 30 ft.

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

Saving Throws Wis +5, Cha +5
Skills Arcana +3, Insight +5, Persuasion +5, Religion +3
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages Kirkut, Orc
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)
Special gear. Kiwaha has the staff of unholy life (see **Appendix C**, page 145; 5 charges remaining) and four *spell scrolls* (*divination*, *flame strike*, *insect plague*, *prayer*).

Spellcasting. Kiwaha is a 9th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13). Kiwaha has the following cleric spells prepared:
Cantrips (at will): guidance, light, thaumaturgy, resistance
1st level (4 slots): *bane*, *cure wounds*, *detect magic*, *shield of faith*
2nd level (3 slots): *blindness/deafness*, *hold person*, *spiritual weapon*
3rd level (3 slots): *speak with dead*, *vampiric touch*
4th level (3 slots): *blight*, *death ward*
5th level (1 slot): *hallow*

Unholy Strike. Once per round, when Kiwaha hits with a melee attack, he deals an additional 4 (1d8) necrotic damage.

ACTIONS

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 4 (1d6+1) bludgeoning damage, or 5 (1d8+1) bludgeoning damage if used in two hands.

KWAJUBINAY DEATHRIDER

Hit Points 67 (9d8 + 27)
Statistics as **berserkers**[SRD] but also have the following abilities:
Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +3 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit*: 4 (1d6+1) piercing damage).
Ride Down (Recharge 4-6). If the deathrider and his mount move at least 20 feet and then attack on the same turn, the deathrider's mount can make a hooves attack as a bonus action. If this attack hits, the the mount also can make an Athletics check (using a +5 modifier) to Shove the target and knock it prone.

KWAJUBINAY CANNIBAL

XP 100
hp 30 (statistics as **Shattered Folk cannibal**, page 278)

COMMON ZOMBIES[SRD]

XP 50
hp 22

Seven of these zombies are fallen Kawjubinay cannibals and the other 8 are orc warriors raised from the dead but their statistics as zombies are identical.

MUMMY[SRD]

XP 700
hp 58

Tactics: The orcs rely upon numerical superiority and their heavy gorthek cavalry to mow through the Shattered Folk tribesmen and mindless undead. The orc foot soldiers gang up on any overmatched targets, leaving their stronger troops to deal with their foes' leader and his deathriders. Meanwhile, the outnumbered Shattered Folk tribesmen fight a defensive battle trying to take down as many of the lesser orcs as quickly as possible so their leader can reanimate them and bring them back into the battle. For his part Kiwaha splits his time between defending himself and using his staff to bolster his undead servitors. He knows he is down to 5 charges and is being careful about their usage.

Development: With the battle already raging before them, the PCs have options as to how they wish to proceed. Depending on what option the PCs choose, the reactions by the other combatants is provided below. If the PCs choose an option not covered here, you will need to determine its outcome using the information provided here as a guide as to the likely actions of the other parties.

Wait out the battle: The PCs may choose to sit this one out. They can pull back out of range and wait for the sounds to die down or simply observe from the fringes. If they are visibly observing from the fringes, there is a 50% chance each round that they are noticed by the combatants. If they are noticed and do not make an obvious effort to help one side or the other, there is a 50% chance that each of the sides assumes that the PCs are an enemy and engage them as well, which could likely lead to a three-way free-for-all melee. In any case, whether engaging one or both sides or remaining unobserved, the PCs can then opt to deal with the victors however they see fit.

Barring an intervention by the PCs, the orcs will withdraw from the battle in 1d4+4 rounds. They will lose another 20 of their orcs plus the orc war drummer, 2 gorthek riders, and a gorthek. Whereas the Kwajubinay will lose another 11 cannibals and 4 deathriders as well as all of their current zombies, but they will gain another 15 zombies (10 orc and 5 human) as well as a wraith with the use of 4 more of the Kiwaha's staff's charges. At the battle's conclusion, the Kwajubinay will turn on the PCs as soon as they become aware of them, and at the GM's discretion the PCs could run afoul of the orc survivors at some later point.

Join forces with the orcs: Though the orcs are a race almost universally hostile to the PCs and the mountain dwarves of their company, the clearly cannibalistic and undead-employing tribesmen seem to make a natural common enemy. The dwarves will attempt to hang back and avoid becoming engaged in the conflict, but if the PCs enter the battle and immediately begin attacking the tribesmen and their undead allies, the orcs will welcome the addition and battle wholeheartedly alongside the PCs. Assuming a victory over the Kwajubinay, the wary orc survivors assess the odds of killing the PCs too in one fell swoop. Aggarak will make this decision based on how effective the PCs were in battle and how injured they appear to be. If Aggarak was slain, the orcs will not attempt such a double cross. If the PCs are successfully able to parley with the orcs, see "Parley" below.

Join forces with the tribesmen: By comparison, Kiwaha and his fellow tribesmen are much less receptive to the PCs' assistance. The tribal shaman serves only one master — the mysterious entity known as The Shadow. Nonetheless, Kiwaha will not look a gift mustang in the mouth. In battle he will try to concentrate his followers and undead on the orc soldiers and leave the gorthek riders and leader to the PCs. He will try to conserve spells while using the ritual in his staff to increase the forces available to him. He intends to keep his forces as intact as possible in order to deal with the newcomers after the orcs have been dispatched. Assuming a victory over the orcs, the PCs may attempt to parley with the tribesmen (see "Parley" below).

Use the battle as cover to sneak into the cave: As is the way of adventurers, the PCs may opt to avoid the carefully prepared encounter entirely and simply use the chaos and confusion to sneak into the cave mouth which appears to be the obvious destination of this leg of the journey. Unaided Dexterity (Stealth) checks will be difficult simply because of the sheer number of combatants on the field but the use of magical assistance such as *invisibility* or *teleport* could certainly make it possible. Unfortunately for the PCs, the effects of the noqual fragment within the cave extends that substance's potent magic suppression all the way to the cave entrance. As a result, any attempts to scry the interior of the cave will fail and any magical means of invisibility or instantaneous travel also fail at the cave entrance. This might be sufficient to gain entrance into the cave unnoticed but leaves the prospect of the dwarven caravan left unprotected nearby, which will certainly be noticed by the victors of the battle outside and subsequently attacked. If the PCs are noticed at the mouth of the cave or going to the cave, see the results in Wait out the battle above for what occurs if the PCs are spotted.

Parley: Assuming the PCs have allied with one side or other in the conflict outside the cave, depending on the battle's conclusion they may attempt to parley with their erstwhile allies regarding access to the cave.

Parley with the orcs: If the PCs are successful in achieving parley with Aggarak, he initially is indifferent to the PCs. He will agree to allow the PCs to explore the cave first but little else. If the PCs successfully Make an Impression and he becomes friendly, he will reveal that he is of the Stone Beast tribe of the Stoneheart Mountains and was sent by his Great Chief Ekree several weeks ago to find the pit where lies the Star That Burns after the tribe's shaman experienced a dream-vision from Grotaag about its discovery. He doesn't know much about it and was sent as one of several orc bands dispatched onto the steppe in search of this prize. Aggarak does not know the numbers or fates of any other orc troops sent on the Haunted Steppe but believes that this shallow crater and cave might be the very pit he is seeking. He can relate that he and his company had just discovered it when they were ambushed by the tribesmen who they believe had been tracking them for several days. He will offer to let the PCs have the honor of exploring the cave first if they agree to share anything they find within. He makes vague promises of cooperation with his Great Chief over sharing this Burning Star, but no Wisdom (Insight) check is necessary to realize that even he is unconvinced of his chief agreeing to such a thing. But that is a matter to be worked out later in his mind. If the PCs enter the cave while Aggarak is indifferent toward them, he and his orcs will attack the caravan if they are aware of it and the PCs have left it undefended. If Aggarak is friendly toward them, he will not order such an attack.

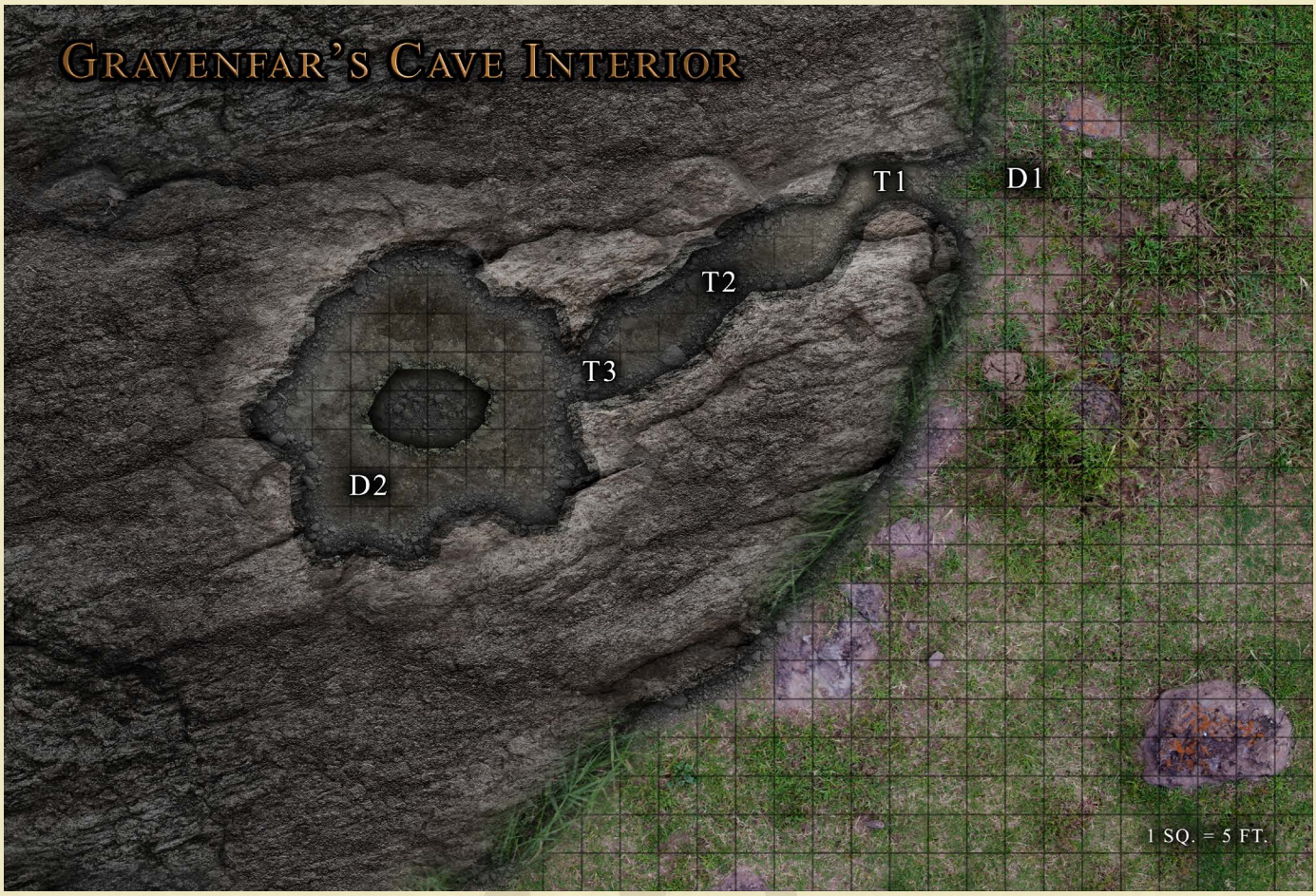
If Aggarak's attitude is shifted to helpful, he can provide the PCs with all of the above information as well as two additional items of interest. One is that shortly before being attacked they discovered that something within the cave suppresses magical effects beyond the entrance. Second, he will relate that he had sent a group of four scouts into the cave just before the attack. Three were almost immediately decapitated by some hideous trap that lies not far beyond the cave mouth, and the fourth has yet to return. They assume the worst, though. Aggarak proposes they explore the cave together and share whatever is found within. If questioned about what his chief will say, he simply chuckles and says, "It takes many weeks to walk from the mountains to here. Who knows who will be Great Chief by the time Ekree learns of what we've discovered?" A DC 20 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals that there is no deception in this statement. Aggarak defers to the PCs' expertise upon entering the cave mouth, but he and his war drummer and any surviving gorthek riders (dismounted, of course) will tag along. His remaining orcs will remain wary and distrustful but will not make any trouble with the members of the caravan.

How the PCs handle the sharing of any discoveries with the orcs is up to them, but Aggarak's initial reaction will be consistent with his current attitude as detailed above. This can change based on circumstances as the adventure progresses, of course, and the orc warlord's priority is always to obtain at least a share of the burning star's discovery for himself. In any event, a true lasting alliance is unlikely as the first moment he sees a clear advantage for himself Aggarak will seek to betray the PCs.

Parley with the tribesmen: At the conclusion of the battle, the Kwajubinay's first inclination will be to turn on the PCs. In their eyes they are agents of destruction in the service of their lord, The Shadow, and see the PCs as little more than heretics and a potential food source. If the PCs recognize the tribesmen as Kwajubinay and as servants of The Shadow (see **The Conroi Wall to Gravenfar's Cave** above for details of doing this), they may pretend to share that tribe's faith in order to gain their trust. This is difficult to do and requires succeeding at a skill contest of their Charisma (Deception) check against Kiwaha's Wisdom (Insight) check; the PCs have disadvantage on their Deception checks for this purpose due to the priest's suspicious nature). However, if the ruse is successful Kiwaha will relay that his group arrived just as the orcs were starting to enter the cave. They had been tracking the orc band for 4 days and managed to catch up to them here.

He personally knows nothing about the cave other than that it is death for anyone to enter and is avoided by his tribe. He does not know why the sudden influx of mountain orcs has occurred in recent weeks but refers to them gleefully as "good hunting." If he was to hazard a guess, he'd say they are likely hunting for Shataakh-Uulm. He doesn't know the exact location of that site, as even the Kwajubinay don't venture near it, but waves vaguely in a northeasterly direction saying it is many days' ride. He does warn that the nearer one gets to the legendary site the more one runs into the walking dead bearing strange burns and that prove exceedingly resistant to being commanded. He has no interest in the cave or Shataakh-Uulm and, if the PCs have convinced him of their own allegiance to The Shadow, he will leave them to it in peace, oddly wishing them luck in their quest before heading on in his own quest to continue harvesting souls for The Shadow. Unfortunately, if the PCs leave the dwarven caravan unattended, the Kwajubinay will likely attack it in the PCs' absence seeking more souls for The Shadow and corpses for food.

Treasure: The gortheks' saddlebags contain 2,450 gp and a mahogany jewelry box (250 gp) that contains 24 assorted gems (worth a total of 2,400 gp). In addition, searching the



bodies of the dead who were slain before the PCs arrived locates a *potion of giant strength (hill giant)*, two *potions of greater healing* and 1,269 gp.

D1. CAVE MOUTH

Everything beyond the cave opening is under the effects of an *antimagic field*. Because the magical suppression property emanates from an inherently nonmagical object, there is no way to end the effect other than physically removing the small fragment of noqual from the cave.

An apparent natural fissure in the rocky face of this hillock leads down into darkness. At some time in the past, someone has enlarged and reinforced the walls of this fissure with fieldstone masonry. The freshly decapitated bodies of three orcs lie slumped just inside the cave mouth. Their heads loll haphazardly nearby. From the splatters of blood on the tunnel floor it's clear that something farther down the corridor took the orcs' heads with great force and then flung them back to lie at the tunnel entrance. Other than a few fat, blue flies that have landed on the remains and puddles of congealing blood, there are no other signs of life in the tunnel.

When the noqual meteorite struck here 2,000 years ago, it blasted out this small basin and piled up a mound of displaced earth that came to cover its resting place. The heat of the impact caused a cyst to form at the center of this debris, and millennia of weathering created a natural fissure descending to that cyst. This location was initially discovered by Aroldus Gravenfar, who made his way down into the cyst where he camped and created a trail glyph as described at area D2. When members of the Conroi Expedition discovered the location two years later, they spent some time studying Gravenfar's work. In the process they bricked the walls of the tunnel to stabilize them and added the traps described below so that only they could safely make use of Gravenfar's work. The tunnel descends at a gradual angle, though it is not steep enough to inhibit movement. Its floor and 8-foot ceiling are hard-packed stone and earth, but its walls are constructed of dry-stacked masonry. The entry tunnel boasts three mechanical traps that were installed by the explorers of the Conroi Expedition. The DC to locate each trap with an Intelligence (Investigation) check or Wisdom (Perception) check and to disarm it with a Dexterity (thieves' tools) check are listed individually for each trap.

Trap 1: The first trap is a huge scythe blade placed on a rotating assembly that swings across the cave's entrance when a creature passes through the location marked **T1** and then resets itself. It is this trap that accounted for the three orc corpses at the cave mouth.

HUGE SCYTHE TRAP

Mechanical trap
Notice DC 20; **Disable** DC 22
All targets in a 15-foot length of tunnel take 21 (6d6) slashing damage or half as much with a successful DC 18 Reflex saving throw. A creature reduced to 0 hit points by this trap is decapitated and dies instantly (if the loss of its head would kill it).

Trap 2: The second trap is covered pit at the location marked **T2** on the map. Anyone making a DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check after the scythe trap notices a fresh blood trail on the floor, evidence of a fourth orc that survived that trap and continued on his way. However, a second DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check notices that the blood trail suddenly ends at the square marked as **T2**. While it takes a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check to actually notice the trap, this lesser check can at least give warning of some sort of danger at the location. The pit's cover is skillfully camouflaged to blend in with the earthen floor, and the pit itself is a smooth-walled, magically excavated shaft that drops trespassers 100 feet onto a spike-lined bottom. The cover mechanism automatically resets, forcing adventurers dropped into the chasm below them to climb its walls (successful DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check) and pry the cover mechanism open (damage threshold 5, AC 15, HP 20). The slope of the passage inclines up towards area **D2** after the pit, so the bottom few inches of the pit are covered in scummy, stinking water that has drained here from the infrequent rain showers on the steppes above. Lying in this rank stew is the fresh corpse of the fourth and final orc lieutenant that made it this far, but also the skeletal remains of a group of three adventurers that explored the cave several decades ago.

CAMOUFLAGED SPIKED PIT TRAP

Mechanical trap
Notice DC 21; **Disable** DC 23
All creatures in a 10-foot square area plunge into a 100-foot-deep pit, taking 35 (10d6) bludgeoning damage). In addition, the spikes at the bottom of the pit deal an additional 17 (5d6) piercing damage, or half as much with a successful DC 20 Dexterity saving throw. In addition, all creatures falling into the pit are exposed to tetanus and must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw each time they complete a long rest.

TETANUS

The Blight: Richard Pett's Crooked City 615
Type disease, **injury**; Save Constitution DC 14
Frequency 1/day
Effect On finishing a long rest, the target must make a saving throw, taking 4d4 poison damage gaining an exhaustion level on a failure. Exhaustion levels gained in this way cannot be removed through long rest until the disease is cured or removed.
Cure 3 successful saving throws.

Treasure: The fresh corpse of the orc lieutenant still wears masterwork hide armor (with the broken condition due to damage from the spikes), a cloak of protection (miraculously intact), a falchion, a *bag of holding*, 127 gp, and a gold necklace (250 gp). His bow, arrows, and a potion bottle were all destroyed in the fall. The three skeletal remains (all human) still bear between them *+1 half-plate*, a rusty but intact longsword, a *bottle of air*, and a total of 1,450 gp and 188 sp tucked into their tattered pockets and moldy leather pouches.

Trap 3: A sinister insanity mist trap is the final barrier standing between the characters at the location marked T3. In the 80 years since the Conroi Expedition left its calling card in this subterranean complex, the PCs are the first to get this far. This trap does not automatically reset itself.

INSANITY MIST TRAP

Mechanical trap
Notice DC 18; **Disable** DC 22
All creatures in a 10-foot radius are exposed to a toxic mist and must attempt a DC 18 Widsom saving throw. If the creature fails, it develops a random long-term madness (see **madness** in the SRD). If it fails by 10 or more, it instead gains a permanent madness. Creatures that succeed on their saving throw suffer no permanent harm, but their minds

and senses are temporarily addled, and they have disadvantage on all Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma ability checks. They can attempt a new saving throw after completing a short rest to end these effects or can end them immediately with *neutralize poison*.

D2. GRAVENFAR'S MAP

A miniaturized topographical mosaic depicting a large basin with several geographical features covers much of the floor in the middle of the room. A black line of stones leads from a small cave mouth near its center to an indeterminate point somewhere off the tiled artistic piece.

Although the Conroi Expedition members created the traps that guard this cave, Aroldus Gravenfar actually discovered the cave first and meticulously handmade the wondrous map. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check confirms that the mosaic is an exact replica of the region surrounding the cave. The black line points the characters in the direction that Gravenfar and subsequently the Conroi Expedition went from here. Coordinating the points on the map with those found outside requires a successful DC 20 Intelligence (Nature) or Wisdom (Survival) check or magical assistance with spells such as *find the path* or similar effects.

Aroldus Gravenfar realized there had to be a noqual deposit somewhere within this mound based on the magical suppression it caused, but he had no great need to recover and so built his mosaic map directly over the top of it. Retrieving the small piece of starmetal from the ground, therefore, requires the character to first locate it 6 feet below the soil just under the mosaic's southeastern quadrant. The remnants of smaller fires, gnawed bones and small waste holes dug in the earthen floor along the chamber's edge confirm that someone made camp here many years ago (members of the Conroi Expedition), and a pair of slender steel pegs with a 10-foot length of twine tied between them can be found among the debris with a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check. If this is discovered and anyone thinks to examine the mosaic closely, with a DC 19 Intelligence (Investigation) check they can find a tiny hole near the center of the mosaic that perfectly fits one of the pegs. Stretching the twine to its full extent and searching along the northeastern edge of the room locates a second hole where the peg at the opposite end of the string fits with another DC 20Wisdom (Perception) check. When the pegs are in place, the string between them lies directly along the route of the black line of stones. On either side of the far peg, small lines have been scratched into the floor and given number designations. Anyone making a DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check can tell these are degrees of arc and provide an exact reading of the black line's direction as 21° north-northeast. This calculation was determined by the Conroi Expedition who then left their measuring instruments here in case they needed them again in the future.

Treasure: If the PCs excavate the fragment of noqual, it weighs a mere 2 lb. and is worth 100 gp.

This noqual ore has been uniquely warped by its cosmic journey and traumatic arrival in that rather than simply absorbing magic into itself, it is amplified and actively extends its own *antimagic field* in an area sufficient to cover the entire interior of the mound. However, if the ore is excavated, it immediately begins to oxidize and within a matter of minutes functions as normal noqual ore (see **Appendix B**, page 570).

GRAVENFAR'S CAVE TO SIXTUN'S SPYGLASS

The black line imbedded into Gravenfar's wondrous mosaic points the party towards their next critical landmark, a lonely tower literally in the middle of nowhere 259 miles north-northeast of the cave. This leg of the journey culminates at the literal crossroads where the Road of Sorrows and the lush grasslands proper end, and the patchy, divergent landscape in the ominous shadow of the Pit of the Burning Star begins. The ancient Caleen settlements slowly, yet steadily trail off as the PCs draw closer to their distant objective. To reflect this change, the chances of coming across these sundered ruins (see **Road of Sorrows Random Encounters**, page 286) while traveling are cumulatively reduced by 5% for each 50-mile segment of this trek. Therefore, when the adventurers reach Sixtun's Spyglass 259 miles north-northeast of Gravenfar's Cave, there is only a 5% chance of encountering these lifeless communities. As before Haunted Steppe random encounters continue to occur as normal.

On the other hand, there is a (non-cumulative) 10% chance for every 10 miles traveled of stumbling across some remnant of the Conroi Expedition of old. These mementos can include one or more of the items from the following table that the members discarded or left behind on their way to their final destination. Items marked with an asterisk can only be discovered once and should be rerolled if indicated again.

CONROI EXPEDITION ARTIFACTS

d20	Item
1	A broken and rusty shaving kit
2	A dry leather pouch holding 2d8 gp in century-old Rhemian coins
3	An unmarked grave (contains a human corpse if exhumed)
4	A broken compass
5	A human skull broken by some powerful blow
6	An empty ink vial
7	A brass button stamped with the Grandy Duchy of Reme coat-of-arms
8	A warped wooden tent pole
9	A rusty saber with the broken condition (as scimitar)
10	A jar of thick glass now filled with dirt
11	A broken set of manacles
12	A sheaf of 1d6+1 bodkin arrows, the arrow heads rusted and the shafts warped (they have the broken condition)
13	A ring of stones with fragments of a campfire buried in the dirt
14	A torn and rotten stretcher bearing old bloodstains
15	A ragged bit of windblown cloth snagged in the branches of a scrub tree
16	The bones of a mule or horse bearing marks of having been slaughtered and eaten
17	A set of ivory false teeth (worth 75 gp)*
18	The soiled and brittle bicorn hat of a captain of Rhemian Cavalry*
19	A tarnished silver mirror*
20	A pewter tankard bearing the initial LVD*

E. SIXTUN'S SPYGLASS

The most easterly surviving remnant of the Caleen colonies is ideally situated. The ancient tower overlooking the surrounding area was built upon a 500-foot-high plateau, giving the site a strategic vantage point for peering across the low-lying areas around it. The ascent to the higher elevation is relatively gradual and thus has no effect on the party's speed or movement. The lonely structure is visible from five miles away, although the observer cannot discern any specific features of the stone building from that distance. When the PCs come within 500 feet of this location, the GM may read or paraphrase the following description.



A solitary, 40-foot-tall stone tower stands atop a broad, gently sloping plateau rising over the surrounding lands. The masonry walls of the structure are astoundingly intact and unbroken, save for a lone window facing northeast roughly 30 feet above the ground.

As the PCs draw near to the structure, they can make out other features as well. The building's original design featured a doorway facing to the south that once granted access to the tower's interior. The Conroi Expedition bricked over the portal, a fact that can discerned with a successful DC 15 Intelligence check or DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check. More importantly, a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check notes that the upper window has also been bricked over and leaves only a small opening through which a brass spyglass has been mounted. A DC 15 Intelligence (Mason's Tools) check determines that the bricking of the portal happened much more recently than the construction of the tower, probably sometime within the last century (i.e. at the hands of the Conroi Expedition).

It is possible from the positioning of the spyglass and height of the tower that the PCs may conclude that simply following the direction of the spyglass's gaze will take them to the next location in their journey. However, magic spells like *divination* either dissuade from that course of action or at least seem to hold some unidentified caveat. Nevertheless, the PCs can try and determine some information simply from a ground vantage point.

Set at a height of approximately 530 feet above the surrounding ground (the height of the tower plus the plateau), the spyglass's view of the horizon is slightly over 28 miles (see sidebar). Therefore, the spyglass can be trained upon any point within a 90° arc within that distance, though because it appears to be fixed in place the entire arc does not seem to be relevant. This fact may lead the PCs to deduce that they must simply follow a line from the spyglass to some designated location within the instrument's line of sight. While it is true that the spyglass is fixed on a specific point, the arrangement of mirrors and lens inside of the device have been slightly altered causing anyone peering through the eyepiece to see everything 5° west and 4° north of where the spyglass appears to point. Therefore, if the PCs opt for the preceding approach and walk in the direction that the spyglass points, they find themselves 5° east and 4° south of their actual target, bypassing the target entirely by several miles. Characters following the incorrect line find nothing but the usual random encounters and an otherwise featureless grassland, requiring them to backtrack and take another crack at it.

Whether as a result of trial and error or simply because they want to get inside and have a better look at things, the PCs must find a way to get inside the otherwise sealed tower. They can do this simply by breaking through the 1-foot-thick masonry over the former doorway or by smashing the actual tower walls and their 2 feet of reinforced masonry. Likewise, the PCs could attempt to smash through the masonry of the bricked over window, but it is quite evident that doing so will undoubtedly jar the positon of the spyglass and potentially cause it to lose its intended point of focus. Of course, as high-level characters the PCs could also easily make use of such magic as dimension door or passwall and make short work of the purely physical obstacle represented by the tower's walls.

Bricked-Up Doorway/Window: 1-ft. AC 17 8; hp 18; Damage Threshold 10.

Reinforced Masonry Wall: 2-ft. thick; AC 18; hp 27; Damage Threshold 15.

CALCULATING VISION RANGE

Using the Pythagorean Theorem, distance to the horizon can be calculated using the formula of multiplying the square root of the altitude in feet by 1.225 to determine the horizon distance in miles. This formula assumes a perfectly spherical, Earth-sized world. The planet Lloegyr is significantly larger than Earth but due to its natural atmospheric moisture content, the haze of humidity even in clear conditions approximates the Earth in the visibility distance that it allows.

E1. SIXTUN'S TOWER—GROUND FLOOR

The smell of decomposition in this unlit interior chamber is almost overwhelming. The tower's interior has two floors accessible by a staircase that rises along the western wall. The heavy timbers of the second floor 25 feet above still appear to be sound after all this time. Three corpses clad in armor lie on the bare stone floor of the chamber — the apparent source of the foul odor.

The steep staircase connects the ground floor with the observation level above it. If the PCs examine the bodies on the first floor they are revealed to be two humans and a half-elf. A DC 20 Wisdom (Medicine) check to perform a forensic examination confirms that they have been dead for approximately one week and are in an advanced stage of decomposition; however, none of them has any sign of a wound that might have caused their demise. A DC 15 Intelligence (History) check is able to recognize the red hair and ruddy complexions of the humans (apparently brothers) as Uplanders, and the kilt and tartan worn by one of them confirms their point of origin as Eamonvale on the eastern border of the Grand Duchy of Reme[K12].

Development: If the PCs remain in this chamber for more than 2 rounds, they draw the attention of the guardian in area **E2**. It will then move downward to attack the intruders.

Treasure: The adventurers from Eamonvale were a fighter, a rogue, and a bard in the employ of the Angus of Dun Eamon[G6] to try and locate the starmetal for working in the famous forges of the Grey Citadel. The half-elf bard gained their entry to the tower with a *dimension door* spell, but they almost immediately fell afoul of its guardian. The first human corpse wears a breastplate and carries a *flame tongue longsword*. The human rogue in the kilt wears +1



studded leather and *boots of striding and springing* and carries a longsword and a dagger. The half-elf bard wears a *mithral chain shirt* and carries a *+1 rapier*, a *+1 light crossbow* with 60 bolts and a masterwork dagger. Their pouches hold a total of 64 pp, 183 gp, 205 sp (all in Eamonvale coinage), and 8 pearls (100 gp each). Hidden in the bottom of the bard's boot (DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check to find) is a folded scrap of paper (see **Handout 5C**).

HANDOUT 5C

Find the lone tower on the plateau and peer through the glass to find the way. The Angus will reward you well.

E2. SIXTUN'S TOWER—UPPER FLOOR

A spiraling stair rises through the floor and ends in this circular chamber. The tower roof 15 feet above is composed of heavy rafters holding tiles of slate and still appears sound after all the long years it has stood here on the steppe. A wooden support frame, of much newer construction, has been bolted to the floor before a bricked-over window, and upon it rests a large brass spyglass, held firmly in place by both the bricked window and thick coils of rope that tie it to the frame. Huddled at the base of the frame is the dark form of a frail, humanoid form bound into a fetal position and lying beneath a thick layer of dust and cobwebs.

The Conroi Expedition used this unique vantage point on the plain to sight their next landmark objective and then carefully secured the spyglass in place so they could retrace their route in the future if needed. They then bricked up the tower entrances to prevent tampering by any plains dwellers that just happened by. Still, the passage of time and dry rot has steadily weakened the cords holding it in place. Carelessly bumping into the spyglass with significant force will dislodge the device from its position. An accidental bump has a 25% chance of causing it to shift. PCs can intentionally remove the spyglass from its mounting with a successful DC 20 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check or a DC 23 Strength (Athletics) check. If the spyglass's perspective is shifted, the PCs can only learn what it was viewing by carefully trying to replace it in its original position using the alignment of the wooden frame and the bricked window's small opening to guide it. This is only successful with a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

To further guard against tampering with the device, Colonel Conroi ordered the execution of a Shattered Folk prisoner that the expedition had been interrogating for several weeks to try and glean any useful information it might have regarding the terrain ahead. Having depleted the prisoner's store of useful knowledge, Conroi had the expedition's wizard, Manx, kill the bound unfortunate with a *phantasmal killer* and then curse the body in hopes of creating an undead guardian for their landmark. Manx's cruel ministration worked all too well, and the cursed soul of the murdered tribesman arose as the **Luckless Watcher** shortly after the expedition continued on its way. Examining the bound form reveals it to be the desiccated remains of a bound Shattered Folk, the parchment-like skin of his facial features frozen forever in a silent scream. The Watcher himself arises from the corpse 1 round after the PCs enter the room unless they have already encountered him downstairs.

THE LUCKLESS WATCHER

Medium undead, chaotic evil
Armor Class 17
Hit Points 90 (12d8 + 36)
Speed 0 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (-5)	25 (+7)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	17 (+3)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Dex +12, Wis +8, Cha +10
Skills Arcana +7, Deception +10, Insight +8, Perception +13, Persuasion +9
Damage Resistances acid, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities cold, necrotic, poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, poisoned, prone, restrained
Senses darkvision 60 ft, passive Perception 23
Languages Kirkut
Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

Aura of Misfortune. Creatures within 10 feet of the luckless watcher have disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

Calamitous Mishaps. Any time a creature rolls a natural 1 within 10 feet of a luckless watcher, it suffers some calamity. The event is circumstantial, but always deals 3d10 damage. The damage type is dependent on the situation, such as a pillar falling and dealing bludgeoning damage. Whenever this happens, there is a 50% chance that the calamity affects the luckless watcher as well.

Cursed. If the luckless watcher rolls a natural 1 on an attack roll or ability check, it has disadvantage on ability checks and attack rolls until the end of its next turn. If it makes an attack that is a critical hit, the luckless watcher must roll a d6. If the result is 4 or lower, the attack is not a critical hit. Finally, the first two saving throws that the luckless watcher makes in each combat have disadvantage.

Incorporeal Movement. The luckless watcher can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 10 (3d6) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

Innate Spellcasting. The luckless watcher's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 18, spell attack bonus +6). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring only verbal components:
3/day each: *locate person*, *dispel magic*
1/day each: *finger of death*, *spirit guardians*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The luckless watcher makes two melee attacks.

Lifetouch. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 34 (6d8 + 7) necrotic damage. The luckless watcher regains a number of hit points equal to half of the damage dealt.

Phantasmagoria (2/day). The Luckless Watcher can create a phantasmal image of the most fearsome creature imaginable to all creatures within 30 feet. An affected creature must make a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw. A creature that fails takes 40 (9d8) psychic damage and is frightened, or half as much damage and is not frightened on a success.

Development: A PC peering through the spyglass's eyepiece sees a steaming hot spring surrounded by a shocking array of bright, multi-colored stones. Every few minutes the spring erupts with a geyser of scalding hot water dozens of feet into the air. By looking through the eyepiece and taking a bearing on the surrounding terrain, a PC can calculate the exact location of this hot spring as slightly east of due north with a DC 20 Intelligence (Nature) check. If unsuccessful in obtaining the exact direction, aerial scouting in the generally correct direction can locate the distinct landmark, though this adds 1d3 days to the caravan's travel time.

Treasure: The great brass spyglass itself is a considerable treasure in and of itself. It is much larger and heavier than a typical spyglass — weighing 20 pounds — and provides much greater magnification, giving a view more akin to a telescope. Objects viewed through this masterpiece spyglass are magnified by 20 times, however its lenses and mirrors are slightly off causing its viewpoint to be a few degrees off of true (see above). This can be overcome with trial and error and a DC 15 Intelligence check, after which the user is able to manually compensate for this slight incongruity. Adding even further value to this treasured find is its historical value, as etched into the barrel of the spyglass are the words *Col. Sixtun Conroi, 4th Rhemian Cavalry, Ret. Presented in honor of 22 years faithful service this 17th day of Daan*[LL7-219, 3436]. (Daan is the sixth month of the calendar year in Akados.) As a scientific instrument the spyglass alone is worth 2,500 gp. As an artifact of extreme significance in the history of Akados a collector could pay as much as 25,000 gp for it.

SIXTUN'S SPYGLASS TO HALLELUJAH SPRINGS

The abandoned settlements of the Road of Sorrows found in the previous few legs of the trek now exclusively consist of isolated bare remnants of solitary cabins or sod houses built by the most pioneering souls from that bygone era. The chances of finding these ruins decreases to 1% for every 10 miles traveled across this terrain. Conversely, the odds of uncovering evidence from the previous **Conroi Expedition Artifacts** table increases to 20% for every 10 miles traveled. In addition, this is the last leg of the journey in which the normal Haunted Steppe random encounters occur.

F. HALLELUJAH SPRINGS

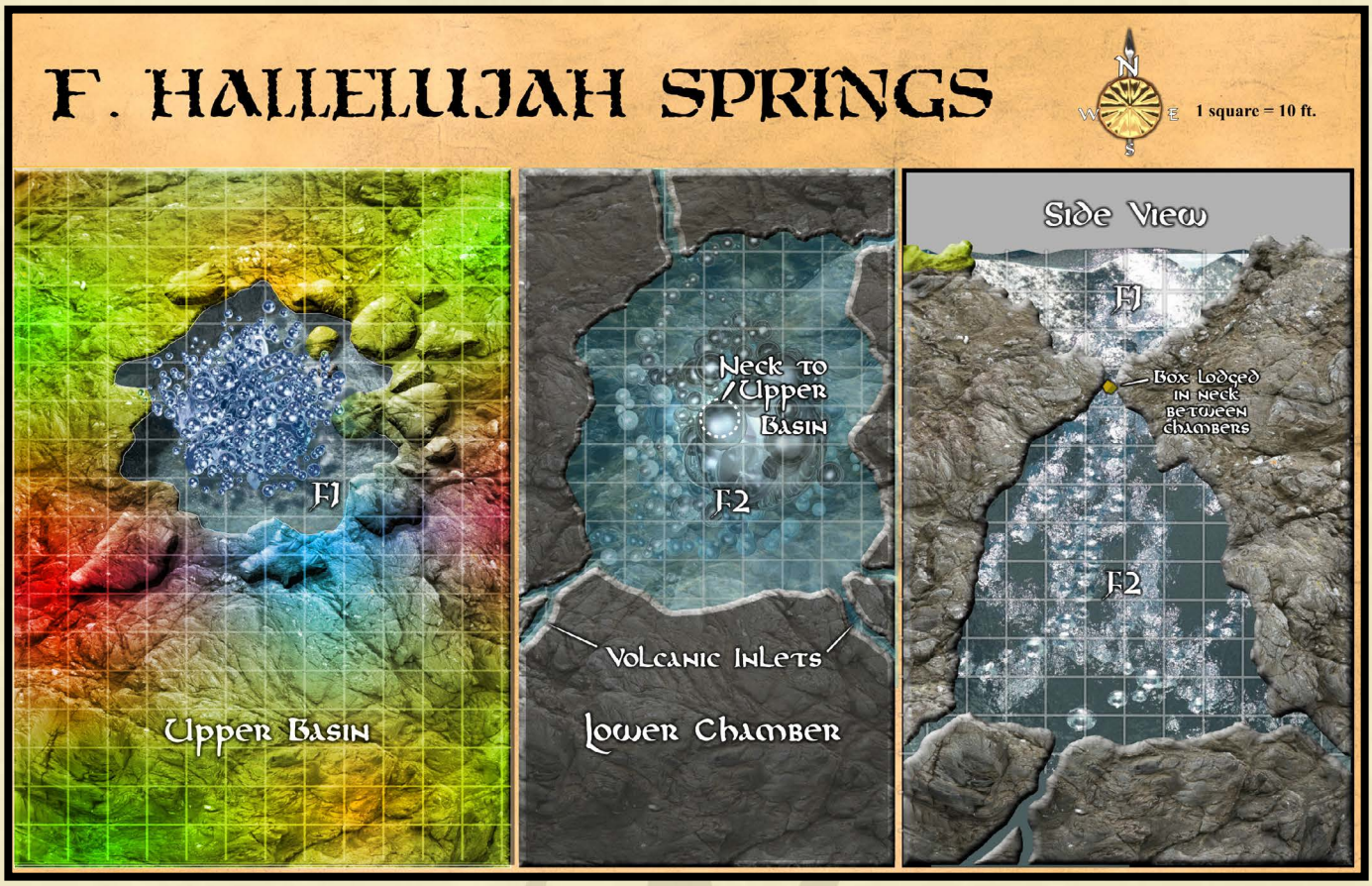
The trail from the lonely tower to Hallelujah Springs takes the adventurers from one of the most elevated points in the Haunted Steppe to its nadir within a caldera that formed in the wake of a prehistoric volcanic eruption. The ancient catastrophe's visible scars vanished long ago, but the region still boasts numerous reminders of the earth's fiery anger in the form of hot springs. There are approximately 60 of the boiling springs clustered in a 5-mile-wide belt that starts approximately 20 miles from the Caleen tower.

The omnipresent grasses found through the Haunted Steppe temporarily cede dominance to patches of greenish-brown stubble and bare earth in this region pockmarked with small pools of frothing water and strangely molded exposed rock. If the PCs successfully unraveled the mystery of Sixtun's Spyglass and triangulated the hot spring's correct position, they readily locate the boiling spring where Azmerius hid the next clue to the Pit of the Burning Star. Otherwise, the characters must rely upon ingenuity and even blind luck to find the next piece of this cryptic puzzle.

The hot spring that the Conroi Expedition's chaplain used to hide his box looked no different than the others in the region when Azmerius chose it as a hiding cache 78 years ago. However, in addition to its now drastically changed appearance (see below), a PC within 1 mile of this spring that succeeds on a DC 20 Intelligence (Nature) check notices an anomalous feature in this particular hot spring when they observe an eruption (which occurs every few minutes). The plume of steam and boiling water expelled from this geyser frequently bifurcates, suggesting an unseen obstruction beneath the surface. Read the hot spring's description when the players actually reach this location.

The field of boiling pools and fluming geysers stretches for miles across the bare rock of this lowland. Everywhere the rocky surfaces are smooth and molded from the dual actions of heat and water and form fantastical shapes: dreamlike mountains, dragons, clouds, and castles in myriad profusion, all encased within an ever-present patina of condensation that never quite seems to dry in the incessant winds of the steppes. The bubbling pools that break up these rocky features range in colors from deep blue, to crystal clear, to muddy brown, to murky yellow, and the smells of sulfur and mildew are strong on the breeze.

One rocky pool, however, is quite different from the others. It has the same fantastical rock formations and bubbling pool that sends forth streams of water at irregular intervals, but its rocks are quite different. Whereas the other rock formations of the geyser



field bear contours of whimsy and childlike imagination, their colors conform to the same chalky, dull brown of the rest of the landscape, this pool's rocks scintillate with unimaginable colors: vivid greens, vibrant reds, golden yellows, and lustrous blues mix in an a wild profusion, like a dollop dropped from the painter's palette by the gods of creation when these otherwise dismal plains were first formed.

Hallelujah Springs is a pool formed by thick sinter deposits that measures roughly 70 feet across that also happens to possess a geyser at its center that spews a column of scalding water and steam 80 feet into the air every 2d4 minutes. The eruptions last 1d4 rounds before the pool settles again, and each time an eruption occurs there is an 80% chance that it bifurcates at its base, as if some obstruction under the surface of the pool is altering its flow — which, of course, it is. When the PCs first arrive, it is 2d10+10 rounds before the geyser's next eruption. A successful DC 20 Intelligence (Nature) or Intelligence (Alchemist's Tools) check can confirm that the coloration of the rocks in and around the pool are from long exposure to certain metals (including tin, lead, and copper) that have leached into the water for many years and caused the strangely colored deposits.

F1. UPPER BASIN

Although not boiling, the water within the upper basin is a balmy 160° F. A character fully immersed in the hot spring takes 1d6 fire damage per round of exposure (no save). The waters of the pool are a vivid bluish-green because of the coloration of the rock beneath it, and visibility is poor. Anyone standing at the pool's edge can discern that the pool is approximately 30 feet deep with a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check. If the viewer succeeds at a DC 23 on the check, he can see the funnel-like opening at the base of the pool — obviously the source of the geyser's spout. If the Wisdom (Perception) check is successful at a DC 26, then the viewer can faintly make out some rectangular object, clearly not naturally formed, that partially obstructs this opening — the apparent source of the geyser's bifurcation. The DCs of these checks are all reduced by 5 for anyone actually submerged in the pool, and reduced by 10 for anyone within 5 feet of the geyser funnel.

The water in the pool is calm (DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check), except when the geyser erupts. When that occurs, the waters are considered stormy (DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check) for the entire pool except for the central

10 feet where the geyser is erupting. That portion of the pool exerts considerable upward force requiring a DC 22 Strength (Athletics) check to avoid being lifted 1d3 x 10 feet into the air and then falling back into the waters of the pool. Anyone who makes this Swim check is able to escape into the surrounding waters of the pool without being lifted. Anyone failing this Swim check takes 3d6 points of bludgeoning damage from the force of the plume.

In addition, when the geyser erupts, the water in the pool reaches boiling temperature, dealing 10d6 fire damage per round to anyone immersed in the pool or the geyser's plume. Anyone standing within 20 feet of the pool when the geyser erupts is showered with its scalding droplets and takes 2d6 fire damage per round (DC 30 basic Reflex save).

Development: Anyone that swims down to investigate the strange object in the funnel can tell that it is a metal coffer wedged into a crevice down in the neck of the opening. The opening itself is 3 feet in diameter and appears to extend downward into another basin below (see **F2** for details of that area and the coffer). A swimming creature has a cumulative 10% chance per round of attracting the attention of the denizens of area **F2**. Attempts to remove the coffer automatically attract their attention.

F2: LOWER CHAMBER

A narrow passage connects the upper pool of the spring to a lower flooded chamber that lies beneath. This chamber opens out into a much larger area than the one above, and the water temperature within is much higher. The colors of the rock are even more striking in this narrow tunnel with a brilliance far surpassing that of the rocks above, though the colors stop altogether past the neck into the chamber below. Partially blocking this narrow passage can be seen an oblong object projecting from a niche in the stone, like a small chest or coffer. A thick layer of rough calcification covers this object, and this stony layer has the brightest swirling colors of all, as if this is where the colors originate.

The waters of the neck and lower chamber are just below the boiling point, dealing 10d6 fire damage per round of immersion, and are fed by small inlets at the base of the chamber that reach down to volcanic cavities not far below. In addition, the constantly roiling waters require a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check to swim in. However, this does not increase when the geyser occurs as the geyser is caused by the expulsion of the heated waters from the top of the chamber and causes no great additional effect in the chamber itself.

The narrow neck that connects the upper basin to the lower chamber is 4 feet wide and 8 feet long, with the strange object lodged only 2 feet below its top end. The waters within the neck are the same temperature as the waters of the lower chamber. A crevice in the side of the neck is where Azmerius deposited his coffer (see **The Box** below) and wedged it in tight enough that the eruption of the geyser doesn't dislodge it. Over time colorful silica deposits have built up on the 2-foot x 3-foot box so that it is now fused in with the surrounding rock. Removing the coffer requires a DC 26 Strength (Athletics) check or dealing at least 80 points of damage to the surrounding stone (damage threshold 8). Alternatively, spells such as *passwall* or *shape stone* will allow easy removal of the box.

The coffer itself is made of pewter, and its composition of mixed metals has leached into the water over the last eight decades creating the rainbow deposits. In addition, the coffer is lined with lead to prevent its discovery by divination. Unfortunately, this lead lining has likewise leached into the water and settled even into the lower chamber below. At some point after Azmerius's visit a group of elemental nagas emerged from the volcanic fissures below and took up residence in the lower chamber. Over the long years of lead exposure these creatures have been tainted by the high levels of lead in the lower chamber and are now **4 poisoned scalding nagas**. They are easily able to navigate the narrow neck because of their serpentine bodies but generally only visit the upper basin if they spot intruders. However, once engaged in battle, they pursue their quarry relentlessly until it or they are destroyed. Despite the high levels of lead in the water here, the PCs will not be harmed by its toxicity unless they remain exposed to it for weeks.

POISONED SCALDING NAGAS (4)

Large monstrosity, chaotic neutral
Armor Class 21 (natural armor)
Hit Points 105 (10d10 + 50)
Speed 30 ft., fly 50 fly, swim 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	26 (+8)	20 (+5)	5 (-3)	19 (+4)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Con +9, Wis +8
Skills Perception +12, Stealth+12
Damage Immunities fire, poison
Damage Vulnerabilities cold
Condition Immunities charmed, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft, passive Perception 22
Languages understands Aquan, but can't speak

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Amphibious. The naga can breathe air and water.

Cloud Sight. The naga can see through clouds, gases, mists, and fogs as if they were not there.

Poisoned. Though normally immune to poison, the abnormal minerals around it have suffused the creature's being and affected it, removing its ability to speak. However, it can still use somatic componetns and cast spells. A greater restoration cast on the scalding poisoned scalding naga returns its Intelligence score to 11, and restores its ability to speak Aquan and Common.

Spellcasting. The naga is a 5th level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 16, +8 bonus to hit with spell attacks), and it needsonly verbal components to cast its spells. The naga has the following sorcerer spells prepared:

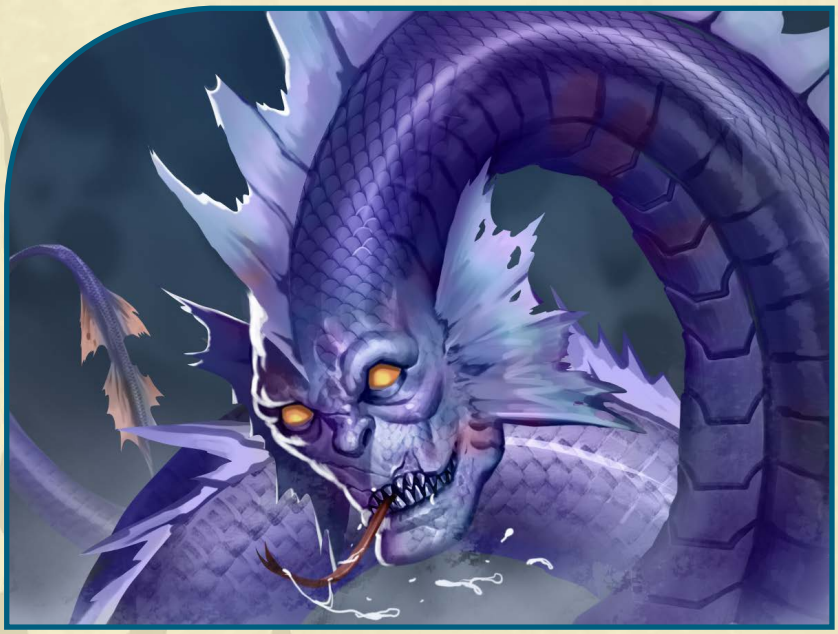
Cantrips (at will): acid splash, mage hand, poison spray, true strike

1st Level (4 slots): expeditious retreat, fog cloud, magic missile, shield

2nd Level (3 slots): acid arrow, invisibility, mirror image

3rd Level (2 slots): protection from energy, gaseous form

Steam Form. When the scalding poisoned naga casts its gaseous form spell, it can alter the spell, changing its duration to (concentration, up to 1 minute), and taking the form of steam. All creatures that enter the steam's area or end their turn in it must make a Constitution saving throw or take 10 (3d6) fire damage on a failure, or half as much on a success. This special casting of the spell can only be done once, after which the naga must finish a long rest to do so again.



ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 17 (2d8 + 8) piercing damage and 10 (3d6) fire damage, and the target must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) poison damage on a failure, or half as much on a success.

Steam Breath (Recharge 5-6). The naga exhales a cloud of superheated steam. The steam can be expelled either as a 60 ft. line or in a 10 ft. radius centered on the naga. Creatures caught in the steam must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw or take 48 (8d12) fire damage on a failure, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Tactics: When the nagas spot intruders, they cast defensive spells, such as *shield*, *mirror image* and *protection from energy (cold)* and then wade into battle with their breath weapon, bite attacks, and tail slaps. Even when threatened with destruction, the deranged outsiders fight to the death rather than abandon their beloved hot spring.

Treasure: The nagas' hoard includes 105 agates (10 gp each), a huge clear opal from the Plane of Water (6,500 gp), a *box of straws*[FB], and a *naga-scale bindi* (water naga). See **Appendix B**, page 566 for details of these treasures.

The Box: If the calcified pewter coffer is recovered from the spring and its stony casing chipped away (damage threshold 8, AC 13, HP 40), the PCs discover that it is sealed with an *arcane lock*. Within the chest are several items that Azmerius returned and deposited here after the discovery

of the next landmark as an emergency cache that he thought would be of use at a later date. The items include 2 *potions of superior healing*, three *potions of lesser restoration*, a water-logged leather pouch holding 3 emeralds (1,500 gp each), and a watertight bone scroll case. Within the scroll case is a *scroll of wind walk* and a detailed map showing the location of the next landmark at Azmerius's Angle (area **G**). This map is reproduced as **Handout 5C**.

Arcane-Locked Pewter Coffer: Damage threshold 12; AC 16; HP 75; Disable Device 26.

HALLELUJAH SPRINGS TO AZMERIUS'S ANGLE

The Road of Sorrows and Caleen Settlements are distant memories as the PCs seek the final landmark leading to the Pit's location 94 miles east-northeast of Hallelujah Springs. At this point in their journey, the adventurers are no longer facing random encounters or chances of encountering creatures associated with the ancient Caleen ruins. Instead they begin coming across the strangely burned undead attackers that Azmerius described in his writings. There is a 20% chance of an encounter with these for every 10 miles traveled after leaving Hallelujah Springs. If an encounter occurs, consult the table below. See **Appendix A**, page 526 for statistics for these creatures.

d6	Encounter
1–4	2d3 radioactive combusted
5	1d4+1 cinder ghouls
6	3d12 radioactive combusted plus 1d3 cinder ghouls

G. AZMERIUS'S ANGLE

Gently running water fills the channels of a shallow, muddy river that carves a meandering path across the steppe. On either side rocky bluffs rise above its waters. Between them a narrow, steeply peaked, natural stone arch spans this shallow gorge.

Following Azmerius's map from Hallelujah Springs brings the PCs to the south side of this arched span. The rocky bridge remains stable after its many centuries of weathering and provides a safe, 5-foot-wide path over the river below. Though the bluffs themselves only rise 40 feet above the river, the natural arch of the bridge rises somewhat steeply to a height of 75 feet at its highest point before sloping back down along its length to the far bluff

HANDOUT 5D

This crude map created by Azmerius shows the route to the next landmark 94 miles east-northeast of this hot spring but does not indicate any cardinal directions on the map. It takes a successful DC 20 Knowledge (geography) to correlate the points on the map with the proper direction. Unlike the preceding clues, this one includes the following passage in the lower right corner, *"To iron out the line, angle from the apex."*

200 feet away. The stream that runs beneath the natural arch has an average depth of only 1d3 feet and is only 1d20+40 feet wide as it meanders along its course, so it can be easily forded though doing so will require the scaling of the rocky bluffs (DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check to Climb), but doing so misses the opportunity to discover Azmerius's final clue as described under "Development" below.

Unfortunately for the PCs the benign nature of the stone bridge does not extend to its current unintentional occupants. On this spot 78 years ago, with their numbers dwindling under the increasingly deadly attacks of the strange undead of the region, seven members of the Conroi Expedition attempted to desert and follow the river out of the Haunted Steppe. Their attempt to leave in the middle of the night was unsuccessful, and all seven deserters were captured. They were brought before Colonel Conroi for judgment who handed the sentence given to deserters during his long service in the cavalry. At dawn on the day when the expedition was to head out on its final leg of the journey to the Pit the seven were left swinging from nooses affixed to the bridge, their corpses slowly swaying in the steppe winds. The ropes long ago broke and dropped the corpses into the river where they were subsequently taken away by scavengers and floods over the years, but the spirits of the deceased still linger at the site to this day as a **haunt** that relives their execution any time living creatures seek to once again cross the stone bridge.

Haunt: As soon as anyone reaches the apex of the natural stone bridge, the spirits of the executed deserters arise and seek others to join them in an imitation of their execution. Ghostly nooses appear around the necks of those nearest the center of the bridge (to a maximum of seven targets) and an unseen force attempts to push them off to be hanged until dead just like the deserters were so long ago.

DESERTERS' DEATH

Magical trap (haunt)

Every character within the haunt's area can attempt a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check to hear the creak of ropes swaying in the wind. The haunting triggers when someone reaches the apex of the bridge. When it triggers, all creatures on the bridge must make a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be grappled. Creatures that did not hear the ropes have disadvantage on this saving throw. If successful, the ghostly rope is affixed around the victim's neck and they are shoved off of the bridge to dangle below its arch. These individuals are then subjected to suffocation. If the haunt is destroyed, any hanging victims are still subject to a 60-foot fall into the shallows of the river below (6d6 falling damage) unless their drop is arrested by some means. Once all characters escape from the ghostly nooses or the haunt is destroyed, it goes dormant for 1 hour, reactivating the next time creatures reach the bridge's apex.

Destruction: A *hallow* spell cast in the area where the haunt manifests permanently lays these spirits to rest. Likewise, a *heroism* spell cast on the area of the haunt can suppress the haunt for a night. Casting the *heroism* spell over the course of three nights removes the haunt entirely.

XP Award: Characters earn 5,000 XP for surviving this haunting, or twice as much if they permanently destroy it.

Development: The cryptic message scrawled at the bottom of Azmerius's map from area F provides the clue to this landmark. Azmerius wrote, "*To iron out the line, angle from the apex.*" This refers to the natural bridge's unusually high arch and directs the reader to "angle," or in this case to "fish" from the apex of the bridge. The use of the words "iron" and "line" refers to placing a piece of iron or some other ferrous metal at the end of the fishing line (simple rope will suffice) and use it to fish in the river directly below the apex. Dropping a fishing line with a piece of iron or other ferrous object into the river at this point will cause a javelin head of magnetic hematite buried in the riverbed in the spot to adhere to the ferrous fishing lure, which can then be easily hauled up by the "angler."

The javelin head is of obvious Shattered Folk make and is very old. It has no magical properties but can be identified to have been of extraterrestrial origin with a successful DC 20 Intelligence (Nature) check to Recall Knowledge. It was, in fact, a fragment thrown off by the Burning Star when it crashed to earth two millennia ago. Found by a Shattered Folk warrior, it was shaped into a serviceable javelin head and used for years until discovered by the Gravenfar and later the Conroi Expedition and used to locate the Pit of the Burning Star. If a new shaft is attached to the javelin head, it works as a normal javelin. However, if the javelin shaft is then suspended from a string or rope and then allowed to hang freely, its magnetic hematite head will slowly turn until coming to rest at a point directly to the northwest. Every time the javelin is moved and allowed to swing freely again its head, naturally attracted to the larger deposits of hematite in the meteorite, will swing back around and point on the same bearing. In this way, the route of the journey's final leg can be discovered; the PCs simply need to carry the javelin and use it like a compass to guide them directly to the Pit. If the magnetic hematite head is taken more than 100 miles away from the Pit, the draw of its magnetic source is no longer powerful enough to attract the javelin head. But since the PCs are currently only 45 miles from their final destination, the javelin-compass can guide them unerringly to it.

SMOKE ON THE HORIZON

The unusual javelin found at area G will provide the PCs with the path to the Pit of the Burning Star. Although their goal is nearly in sight, the 45-mile journey to the smoldering crater also reinforces the fact that others seek the same prize too. In addition to the chance of encountering radioactive combusted or cinder ghouls as described under **Hallelujah Springs to Azmerius's Angle** above, the PCs are destined to meet predators of another sort when they first reach sight of the smoking pit's plume.

Despite the passage of 20 centuries since the meteor's impact, the intense heat of its siccatite core still sends a column of black smoke hundreds of feet into the air. On a clear day, the plume of burnt dust, ash and cosmic debris can be seen from 20 miles away. Upon reaching this distance from the Pit of the Burning Star, provide the following description.

A thick column of black smoke rises, faintly visible, on the northwest horizon ahead until dispersing in the sky above. How such a fire could still be burning in the millennia since the falling star came to earth is a great mystery, but the heading is true. Perhaps the Pit of the Burning Star gained its name from more than just legend.

Estimating the exact distance to the smoke's source requires a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Survival) Intelligence (Navigator's Tools) check, a DC 22 Intelligence (Nature) check, a DC 25 Wisdom (Perception) check, or advanced scouting of some sort. More importantly, a rival group making its way across the steppe has also spotted the burning landmark. As they scout towards it, they catch sight of the PCs' caravan and set an ambush to test the

mettle of their competitors in the race for the meteorite. They are currently camped about 8 miles from the crater and set their ambush to spring upon the PCs before they can reach area **I**. See **Riders in the Dark** below.

RIDERS IN THE DARK

The rival group times its ambush to occur as soon as darkness begins to fall. The PCs can still be traveling or can have stopped to make camp when the attack occurs.

RIVALS AND RUMORS

The party's encounter with Earl Rannulf's men gives them a choice: They can ignore the unwelcome intrusion and press forward toward the Pit of the Burning Star (area **I**), or they can opt to follow their attackers' trail and turn the table on the ambushers (area **H**). To undertake the latter course of action, the PCs can simply interrogate a survivor among the raiders or follow the trail left by the horsemen with a successful DC 10 Survival check. Any mention of the earl's "secret" regarding the PCs may well pique their interest to explore further.

However, if Goribald Ironskull has become aware of this secret, he too is greatly concerned, as he rightly fears that the revelation involves him. In this case, the mountain dwarf expedition leader who has up to this point remained reserved and allowed the PCs to take point on major decisions involving the route and activities of the expedition's caravan suddenly reverses course and vocally takes exception to the idea of "picking a fight" with an unknown adversary. He vehemently protests any decision to take the battle to the Foerdewaith force citing the many unknowns as to their numbers, disposition, abilities, etc., reasoning that any questioned prisoners could be lying and that this closer to the goal of their quest they must stay the course and try to beat their rivals to the prize. There they can lay plans to ambush and overcome any other takers if they wish. The force of his change in personality will likely seem jarring to the PCs with only a DC 10 Sense motive check, though it will require a DC 35 Sense Motive check to discern that it is anything more than natural anxiety of the closeness of the Pit and the proximity of a competing expedition. Only if that DC is exceeded will the PCs get an inkling that there may be something more to Goribald's protests and that he perhaps doesn't want the PCs to encounter this other group for his own reasons. If the PCs are adamant about finding the Foerdewaith expedition, Goribald and his dwarves reluctantly agree to follow the PCs as they have done throughout the expedition.

A line of perhaps a dozen dark mounted figures appear out of the dark. Their bodies are little more than dark smudges in the gloom of dusk, but red flecks of glowing coals are still visible on their bodies and those of their mounts, and the smell of char is strong in the air. They ride in eerie silence save for the clop of their mounts' hooves and the jingle of their harness. In an instant they lower their lances and spur their steeds onward, raising a trembling beneath the thunder of their hooves.

These riders serve the Foerdewaith earl Rannulf d'Becwith who also discovered some of Azmerius's writings and has been making his way across the plains for several weeks with his coterie of retainers in search of the prize for himself. The riders are **10 Foerdewaith men-at-arms** riding **war horses**. Having encountered the cinder ghouls and radioactive combusted of the steppe in this region, they have attempted to disguise themselves to appear to be more of the same. They hide their faces beneath dark hooded cloaks and have blackened their armor, weapons, and mounts from their campfires and tied small burning embers to their armor and tack to augment their appearance. These men-at-arms have no disguise kit but improvise with the garb and accoutrementsTherefore, it takes a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check to recognize the cavalrymen as living creatures and not undead (from a distance, especially at night, it is nearly impossible to recognize them as ordinary humans, making this Deception DC higher than it would normally be).

They charge directly into the PCs and attempt to break through their line and run amok among the dwarven caravaneers behind them, spreading as much death and chaos as they can. They try to avoid getting into prolonged melee with individuals, preferring to use their mounted mobility to strike swiftly and move among their faces hoping to cause a route. Like the earl himself, these men revel in success and flounder in defeat. The near darkness grants concealment against all combatants who don't have low-light vision or darkvision (including the riders themselves) which certainly adds to the confusion of the battle. When reduced to half of their original strength, the survivors turn and flee back towards their own camp.

FOERDEWAITH MAN-AT-ARMS

Medium humanoid (human), neutral
Armor Class 18 (splint mail, shield)
Hit Points 90 (12d8 + 36)
Speed 30 ft.

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

Senses passive Perception 11
Languages Common, Kirkut
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Brave. The man-at-arms has advantage on saving throws against being frightened.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The man-at-arms makes two weapon attacks.

Lance. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 10 (1d12 + 3) piercing damage. The man-at-arms has Disadvantage to attack a target within 5 feet.

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit*: 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage.

WARHORSE[SRD]

XP 100
hp 19

Development: Any of the men-at-arms captured alive gives only his name, the name of his earl, and that his mission is to carry out the duties of his liege. If the PCs magically compel him to speak or use Intimidation to Coerce him, he reveals the numbers of his group (see area **H** below), the location of their camp 8 miles due south of the Pit of the Burning Star, and that they have also come to claim its cosmic riches and hoped to scare away any rivals. A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals that the prisoner appears to be holding something back and if pressed further will admit that he heard that Earl Rannulf had learned the identities of the PCs' group and had discovered a "fascinating secret" about them, though he does not know what it might be. If Goribald Ironskull is present when this information is obtained, he immediately fears that any encounter with the earl and his minions may undermine his own cause. The **Rivals and Rumors** sidebar details how he and his cronies react to this potential threat.

Treasure: In addition to the gear they carry, one of the men-at-arms' baggage contains a *wand of illusion* (see **Appendix C**, page 145) that he pilfered from a wizard among the Conroi Settlements as they headed out to the Haunted Steppe. If any of the riders is captured, assume it is in his saddlebag.

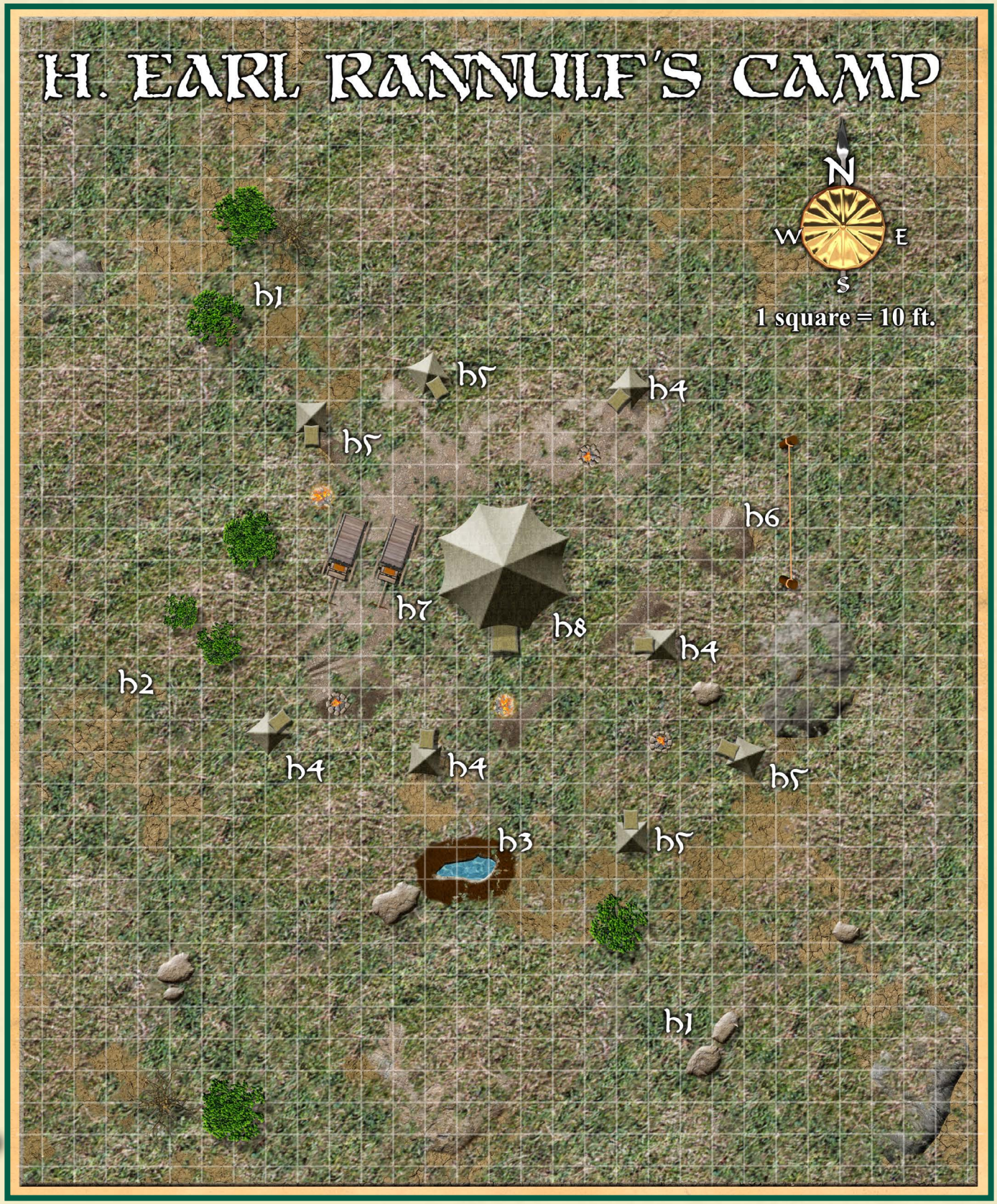
H. EARL RANNULF'S CAMP

Lying only 8 miles south of the Pit of the Burning Star, the PCs can locate this camp as described in Riders in the Dark above. If they choose to press on through the night after the initial Foerdewaith attack, they can arrive at the camp before dawn and catch it completely by surprise. If they wait through the night before setting out, the riders sent by the camp will be overdue and the camp will be on alert.

A bright orange pavilion tent, large enough to sleep a dozen comfortably, has been erected among a scattering of the small scrub trees that dot the plains sporadically. A pennant fluttering at the top bears a horse made of stars coat-of-arms. Around this large tent are clustered a number of smaller tents suitable for three or four occupants apiece. A pair of covered wagons are situated next to the central tent. A picket line has been set up to the east of the main tent, though it has only a few horses tied along its length. The drying remains of a pond lies at the edge of this encampment.

A DC 20 Intelligence (History) check to Recall Knowledge can recognize the horse constellation coat-of-arms as that of the Earl of Becwith. Earl Rannulf is an ambitious man whose father and older brother both disappeared on King Ovar's crusade two years ago. Taking the role left to him by his kin, he has sought to maneuver for greater influence with the Court of Courghais ever since. Having learned of the possible location of the Pit of the Burning Star from other writings of the Conroi Expedition, he hastily put together his own expedition in hopes of beating anyone else to the prize and securing for himself a very comfortable and rich position in the Court as a result. Earl Rannulf has already destroyed another small expedition out of Foere, and when his scouts reported the presence of the PCs' caravan he sent out raiders to eliminate them as well rather than risk sharing the reward that he knows is so close.

Having sent out a portion of his men-at-arms already to hunt the PCs, the earl retains only **6 men-at-arms** with him as well as his **2 squires**, his **4 limbjack bodyguards**, his seer **Milgrem**, and **25 footmen** levied from his own earldom. His limbjack bodyguards are all Foerdewaith veterans maimed or crippled in various conflicts and who Earl Rannulf paid the finest machinists and smiths of Courghais to replace their arms and legs with mechanical prosthetics. These men wear normally clothing and armor which covers most of their modifications, though anyone succeeding on a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check notices their mechanical hands clutching sword. Having been given a new lease on life by the earl, these men are all unfailingly loyal.


H. EARL RANNULF'S CAMP
N
W
E
S
1 square = 10 ft.
h1
h5
h4
h5
h6
h7
h8
h4
h2
h4
h4
h5
h3
h5
h1

EARL RANNULF

XP 700
hp 52 (statistics as a knight[SRD])

MILGREM THE SEER

XP 450
hp 27 (statistics as priest[SRD])

SQUIRES

XP 25
hp 11 (statistics as a guard[SRD])

LIMBJACK BODYGUARDS (4)

Medium humanoids (human), neutral
Armor Class 18 (chain mail, metal body)
Hit Points 119 (14d8+56)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Skills Intimidate +4, Insight +5, Perception +5
Senses passive Perception 15
Languages Common
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Metal Body. The bodyguard's limbs are powerful. A melee weapon deals one extra die of its damage when the bodyguard hits with it (included in the attack). However, these limbs make the bodyguard vulnerable to effects that target metal explicitly, such as spells like heat metal and shocking grasp.

Limb Defense. The bodyguard's limbs confer additional AC (included in Armor Class). If an attack or effect would try to damage them, they have a damage threshold of 20, 20 HP per limb, and an AC of 20. As objects, they are immune to poison and psychic damage.

Tireless. The bodyguard can march, run, or walk without risk of fatigue, and gains no exhaustion levels related to these activities.



ACTIONS

Multiattack. The limbjack bodyguard makes three melee attacks or three ranged attacks.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 13 (2d8+4) slashing damage, or 15 (2d10+5) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d10+1) piercing damage.

FOERDEWAITH MEN-AT-ARMS

XP 700
hp 90 (see page 314)

FOOTMEN

XP 25
hp 11 (statistics as a guard[SRD])

Tactics: During the night, the camp is overseen by the guard posts (area **H1**) and a walking patrol of 2 men-at-arms and 4 footmen carrying torches who make the rounds from the picket line (**H6**) counterclockwise to the guard posts (**H1**) with a short stop by the central fire in front of H8 on the way. The entire circuit takes approximately 10 minutes. One of the limbjack bodyguards is always awake in H8 as well. There is also a 20% chance at any time that one randomly determined member of the camp is relieving himself at the trench (**H2**) and will be armed and armored. Everyone else will be asleep in or around their tents. If an alarm is raised, the men-at-arms will grab armor and arms and rush to the central tent (**H8**) to guard the earl. They will attempt to hole up there and help each other put on their armor for as long as possible until ready to attack or forced from the tent by circumstances. One squire will rush to the picket line to retrieve the earl's horse to bring back and into the pavilion tent while the other assists the earl in putting on his armor. The footmen sleep in their armor and quickly grab weapons. The five in the closest tent will rush to defend the horses while the rest form up in front of the earl's tent, half forming a wall of glaives and the other half firing their crossbows at any targets they glimpse in the dark. The fires in front of the earl's tent will all be stoked high providing light throughout the south portion of the encampment. The seer remains near the wagons to guard his equipment.

During the day a third of the footmen and one man-at-arms are asleep at any one time with the rest awake in and around the camp carrying out various duties, preparing or eating meals, or maintaining their equipment. All are spooked by the Haunted Steppe and the strange undead they have been encountering, having already lost more than a third of their force, and wear their armor and carry their equipment at all times. If an alarm is raised, the earl, his bodyguards and squires, and the men-at-arms attempt to reach the picket lines to mount up and take the battle to any attackers while the footmen try to provide close support with their glaives or ranged support with their crossbows, depending on the needs of the situation. The seer reacts as above, staying near the wagons to guard the valuable equipment therein.

Development: Despite his ambitions, self-preservation remains atop Earl Rannulf's list of priorities. When faced with certain defeat, the Foerdewaith nobleman calls out, "Peace! I am an earl! I can be ransomed!" and barters for his life. If the PCs seem inclined to spare him, Rannulf order his surviving men to lay down their arms. He informs the PCs that he owns many rich estates in northern Foere and can guarantee a ransom payment of 50,000 gold sovereigns for his life (a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals this is an exaggeration but not an outright lie). A DC 20 Intelligence (History) check confirms the Becwith estate as modest holdings outside Châlaix* (a major city of northern Foere situated northeast of the Star Sea at the commencement of the Aachen Province Road) that could reasonably support a ransom of 10,000 gp.

Despite his evil alignment, Rannulf is not without honor and is very much invested in the dignity of his good name and will, therefore, hold to any agreement of surrender for ransom, giving his oath to that effect. Therefore, the equipment and goods carried by himself and all his men are the property of the PCs, but if the PCs wish they can leave him and his men equipped and trust them to not attempt any escape or double-cross of the terms of their surrender. Because of the dangerous nature of the location they are in, Earl Rannulf would prefer this arrangement simply for their own protection against the known hazards associated with the Pit of the Burning Star. He and his men will fight in defense of the PCs and their expedition, though as a stipulation of the earl's surrender it is incumbent on the PCs to protect him from harm if they wish to collect as ransom. As a result, the earl will refuse to accompany the PCs into the Pit and will fight only in a defensive battle. He can be trusted to guard mounts and baggage for the party while they make their own forays, however.

If the PCs succeed on a DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check, the earl can be convinced to lend them up to 2 of his men-at-arms and 6 of his footmen (if that many survive) to accompany them inside the Pit. For every 3 by which the Diplomacy check exceeds 20, he will agree to 1 more man-at-arms and 3 more footmen if the PCs should wish it. Under no circumstance will he lend his bodyguards or squires to their service, and the seer will refuse as well. He and his men have no expectation of a share of treasures recovered, though they will not turn one down if offered. To collect the 10,000 gp ransom, the PCs need only return Earl Rannulf alive to Foere; the rest of the men are ultimately expendable. However, the squires are both the scions of minor Foerdewaith houses, so if they are not returned safely as well there is the possibility of assassins, mercenaries, or other engineered calamities to befall the PCs in the future at the GM's discretion.

* Châlaix[LLo] is major city of northern Foere situated northeast of the Star Sea at the commencement of the Aachen Province Road.

If questioned about his reason for being on the Haunted Steppe, he readily admits that he seeks the treasures of the Pit of the Burning Star. His seer, Milgrem, was led by his study of astrological studies to a private collection in Cantelburgh where he uncovered writings of one Azmerius Thade. It was a missive apparently intended for some unknown benefactor that merely mentioned the Conroi Expedition's true purpose in following the footsteps of Aroldus Gravenfar in seeking the Pit of the Burning Star and gave the suspected location of the Pit as the expedition neared its destination. The location is given as north of an unnamed river that cuts across the plain, traveling northwest from a strange arching rock formation. The report gave no mention of the landmarks that the PCs have been following, and Earl Rannulf's group simply traveled north until they hit the unnamed river and were lucky enough to stumble upon the arch (area **G**) fairly quickly.

The writings made mention of undead monstrosities and unseen fires that burn, so the earl prepared his expedition for just such occurrences. They encountered one other smaller group out of Foere that they defeated and stranded without supplies or horses (they are long since dead), which the earl shrugs at and says, "All's fair… Their leader could offer no ransom." The expedition has had several encounters with the eerie burned undead and some of the plains' other denizens, but their numbers have served them well, and they've buried less than a dozen of their own on the way (in fact, the PCs' expedition was drawing more attention from the undead of the Pit as it proceeded along the landmarks — essentially Rannulf has just been lucky up 'til now).

If the PCs wish to question Earl Rannulf about his "secret" that he knows about them, see "**The Big Secret**" below for details.



H1. GUARD POSTS

Each of these posts is manned at all times by 2 footmen. The posts are concealed among the rocks and scrub trees of the plain, so that these watchers have greater cover and concealment. They Hide while keeping watch; with the cover and time spent finding secure location, their Stealth DC is 21 to avoid being observed by a PC who Seeks. If they spot intruders, they shout an alarm to alert the camp and begin firing their bows from cover.

H2. LATRINE TRENCH

Rannulf's men have dug a slit trench 1 foot wide by 2 feet deep by 10 feet long which they use a latrine and general dumping area. It buzzes with flies but is downwind so the smell is not noticeable from the camp. The expedition has been camped here for only a few days and has not come close to filling it yet.

H3. POND

A shallow, dusty, oblong depression breaks the grasses here. This low-lying point forms a seasonal pond that reaches depths of up to 4 feet during rains. Currently it is only about a foot deep and surrounded by the cracked remains of dry mud churned up by boots and hoof prints. The water itself is murky and full of weeds, tadpoles, and mosquito eggs. Milgrem must magically purify it before the man can drink it, but the mounts are still able to safely drink from it. A giant leech lurks in the muck at the bottom of the pool, though it lies buried and still during the heat of the day. Anyone who approaches the pond after dusk, however, stands a cumulative 25% chance per round of being attacked by the hungry creature.

GIANT LEECH

Medium beast, neutral
Armor Class 11
Hit Points 52 (8d8+16)
Speed 5 ft., swim 25 ft.

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

Skills Stealth +3
Condition Immunities blinded, prone
Senses blindsight 30 ft (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 10
Languages —
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Amphibious. The giant leech can breathe air and water.

Swamp Stealth. When in a swamp, the leech makes stealth checks with advantage.

Vulnerability to Salt. A handful of salt burns a giant leech, dealing 1d6 points of acid damage.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 9 (2d6 + 2) piercing damage, 7 (2d6) poison damage, and the creature is grappled (escape DC 13). While grappled in this way, the leech doesn't attack. Instead, at the start of each of the leech's turns, the target loses 9 (1d6+2) hit points due to blood loss. A creature can spend their action carefully applying fire to the giant leech, causing it to end the grapple.

H4. MEN-AT-ARMS TENTS

Each of these tents houses four men-at-arms, though currently each only has 1 or 2 occupants (possibly more if any of the men-at-arms escaped from Riders in the Dark above).

Treasure: A DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check in the tent locates 2d10 gp scattered amid the beddings along with 1d4–1 gems (50 gp each).

H5. FOOTMEN'S TENTS

These tents each house six footmen, though the quarters are so cramped that up to half of them spread their bedrolls on the ground outside.

Treasure: A DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check in these tents uncovers 1d10 sp and 1d6 x 10 cp scattered among mundane personal belongings.

H6. PICKET LINE

This line has been strung between two stout poles driven in the ground to which the mounts and pack animals of the expedition have been tethered. Currently there are **13 war horses** (belonging to the earl, his squires, the bodyguards, and the remaining men-at-arms) as well as **4 riding horses** (shared by the seer and the footmen), **6 pack mules** (statistics as **pony** if needed) and **4 draft horses** (statistics as elite **riding horse** if needed) for pulling the wagons. There is space for another dozen or so mounts from those taken by the raiding party in **Riders in the Dark**.

H7. SUPPLY WAGONS

These two covered wagons are used to carry the supplies, equipment, and specialized gear not carried by the men or pack animals. One of the wagons holds barrels of water and sacks and chests of dried food stuffs sufficient to supply the expedition for another month — more if supplemented by wild game. The other wagon is mostly empty and is used for hauling the tents and assorted pieces of camp furniture. However, it does still hold a pair or large trunks bearing good padlocks, requiring a DC 25 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check to unlock. These hold the survey, assayer, and specialized equipment to be used by Milgren when the Pit of the Burning Star is found in order to ascertain the extent of the site and its potential for mineral exploitation. This equipment amounts to 2 sets of alchemist supplies, a cartographer's tools, mason's tools, smith's tools, jeweler's tools, a dungeoneer's kit, an astrolabe, a set of high-quality drills, a magnifying glass, a magnet, a sextant, a compass, a levered crowbar, pitons, rope, and assorted shovels, picks, hammers, and other tools. This gear is worth over 500 gp in total but weighs 200 pounds.

Treasure: With a successful DC 19 Wisdom (Perception) check, a PC searching the equipment wagon finds a hidden compartment beneath the driver's seat. Within is a padded box that holds 4 vials of antitoxin, 4 additional vials of antiplague (see **Appendix C,** page 145), 4 herbalism kits, 3 *potions of superior healing*, 1 *potion of resistance (fire)*, 3 *scrolls of remove disease*, and 2 jars of *restorative ointment*. Anyone cataloguing all of these items and making a DC 20 Wisdom (Medicine) check draws the conclusion that this collection has been prepared for the eventuality of dealing with burn injuries as well as the effects of radiation sickness.

H8. EARL RANNULF'S PAVILION

This large pavilion tent is curtained off into three rooms: a large entry chamber that takes up half of the tent and openings that lead into two smaller areas that occupy the other half of the tent. The larger area of the tent is furnished with a fold-out camp table, racks for armor, weapons, and equipment and cots for the limbjack bodyguards and Rannulf's squires. The back chambers are occupied by Earl Rannulf and Milgrem, respectively and each bears a folding cot and a pair of chests for clothing and personal items.

Treasure: A DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check to search the outer chamber turns up 2d4 x 10 gp and 1d4 gems (50 gp each) scattered among the occupants' personal belongings. One of the chests in Rannulf's chamber has a heavy lock (DC 25 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) to open) and holds the expedition's payroll as well as spoils that have

been taken on the trip so far. These include: 1,589 gp, 3,559 sp, an assortment of gems worth a total of 6,400 gp, 3 chain shirts, a +2 *warhammer*, a *rope of climbing*, a well-thumbed copy of *Illuminatus Geographica**, and a set of maps and old parchments written by Azmerius Thade that contain the information described under area **H** above. One chest in Milgrem's quarters is also locked (Disable Device DC 18) and holds 3 vials of activated charcoal*, a bundle of 12 potion testing sticks*, a book called *Introversions of Toxins**, a fortune-teller's deck, a Jamboorian Wheel of Inquiry[LL5-240], an *wand of enemy detection*), and six *scrolls* (*branding smite, conjure elemental, dispel magic, shatter, shield of faith, wall of stone*). Items marked with an asterisk (*) are described in **Appendix C**, page 145.

"THE BIG SECRET"

Goribald Ironskull endeavors to be present for any questioning of Earl Rannulf. If the PCs question Earl Rannulf about any alleged secrets he has learned about them, he looks meaningfully at Goribald Ironskull and suggests that perhaps it would better to not discuss it in the presence of "foreigners" (see sidebar). This confirms Goribald's suspicion about the nature of the secret Rannulf holds. Goribald balks at Earl Rannulf's proposal and counters that the earl's false appeal is merely trying a ploy to divide and conquer the expedition and that he probably has more men-at-arms nearby and is hoping to stall until they can arrive. The PCs can attempt a skill contest of their Wisdom (Insight) against Goribald's Charisma (Deception) check to detect the hint of fear and desperation in the dwarf's words and his apparent animosity towards Rannulf. Even if they fail, however, a DC 20 Wisdom (Insight) check on Rannulf is enough to realize that he truly is unlikely to go back on his word as a prisoner for ransom — his entire reputation as a nobleman of Foere is at stake.

Goribald insists that Rannulf should be bound and gagged to prevent him from fomenting dissent within the expedition. Rannulf argues against such treatment but realizes he has little clout in the situation and hopes he can maybe cut a separate deal with the mountain dwarf if the party won't hear him out. He is not aware that Goribald intends to murder him at the first opportunity and try to cover it up to look like it was during an escape attempt.

If the PCs send Goribald away and hear Earl Rannulf out, read or paraphrase Rannulf's Tale below. See "Development" below for how Goribald reacts. If the party refuses to send Goribald away but intends to hear the earl out, Rannulf swallows nervously but will continue with his tale after reminding the PCs once again that they have vouchsafed his life and health. For his part Goribald will calmly defer to the PCs and stand nearby to listen, though he secretly Marks Rannulf for Death. Rannulf will tell his tale, but at the point indicated in the text box below Goribald will scream that he is a liar and will make a Death Strike against the earl. His shout will bring his followers to his defense as the earl's surviving men-at-arms and bodyguards will immediately jump to his own defense. The dwarves will not attack the PCs unless the PCs turn on them but will attempt to eliminate as many of Rannulf's followers as possible before the PCs can stop them. If Goribald's Death Strike is successful, don't announce it as such, but rather play it off as a critical hit that did sufficient damage to finish the earl.

The earl's men will fight to the death if the earl is killed. If the PCs turn against the mountain dwarves they will likewise fight back, assuming the jig is up. See "Development" below for the results of a fight with the dwarves.

HUMAN-DWARF RELATIONS

Though the animosity between humans and mountain dwarves is well known and dates all the way back to the Battle of Hummaemidon in 1 I.R., the Great Mountain Clan of Ironskull is one of the few mountain dwarf clans that have maintained friendly relations with humans over the centuries. More information of the history of human-mountain dwarf relations can be found in ***LLo: The Lost Lands Campaign Setting*** and in ***Mountains of Madness*** by **Frog God Games**.

RANNULF'S TALE

"I first heard of your own expedition during a stopover outside Broadwater[K12], at the mouth of the Eamon valley. We were watering our horses — and ourselves — at a place called Finnegan's Barge[K12] when we heard tell of a group of adventurers and mountain dwarves recently come through from upvale at the Grey Citadel[G6]. From the rumors we picked up we guessed where you were headed and hoped to catch up to you on the road, but never overtook you. I'm guessing you found another way across the Wizard's Wall, because we never saw any sign of you after that until now. In fact, I'd rather come to believe you were probably all dead, your bones getting picked over by the vultures by now based on what I later learned.

"We took the North Duchy Road over the High Downs and through Tanith[F2], and by that way came to the mountain trail that skirts the Wizard's Wall by way of the fortress at Durgam's Folly[G1].

We didn't stop in at the fort — got a sinister reputation that place does — but a few miles down the trail we came upon the site of a battle. We found a couple graves off to one side and the corpses of a half-dozen mountain dwarves piled in a nearby creek bed. They had the look of assassins to them based off their gear and clothing, and the gods know the mountain dwarves of the Stoneheart have no love for Man, but usually they keep to their affairs in the peaks and leave matters in the lowlands to the likes of us.

"Well, we assumed these mountain dwarf assassins had hit your party maybe — rival clans like the Craenog or Krazzadak[MoM-10] *or something like that — and you'd given 'em what-for. We were considering digging up your mates to see if any goodies had been left when Milgrem, the seer, manages to question one of them dead dwarves with some scroll of his. And what a pretty trick that was, considering what he learned. He learned that these poison-hearted fellows had been waiting for you and your group, but not because they were rivals of the dwarves you traveled with; no, they worked with the dwarves you were traveling with, and you were being led into a trap like lambs to the slaughter. Only it was not your group that tripped their ambush but some other fellows, maybe out of Bard's Gate, who proved a little more than they could handle. They left two of their own dead buried there by the road but managed to take out the likes of some scruffy mountain dwarf killers.*

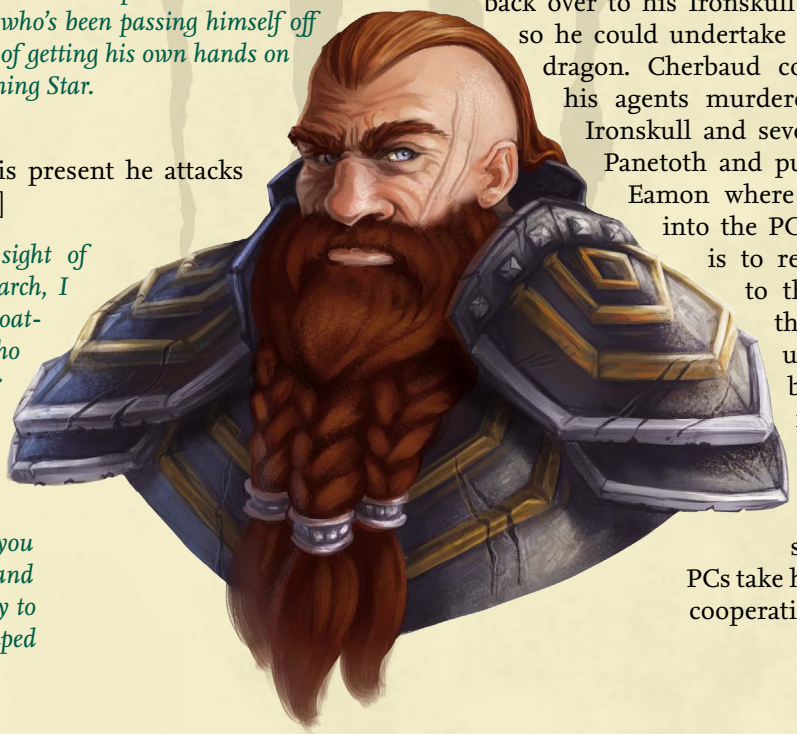
"I couldn't understand why the vaunted Goribald Ironskull would stoop to that kind of treachery after his many years of honorable dealings on behalf of his clan when the seer plucked another tidbit out of that corpse's mouth. It wasn't Goribald Ironskull at all that you were traveling with; that's just what he had been telling anyone who had half an ear to listen. No Goribald Ironskull lies in his own shallow grave somewhere outside Panetoth, right where his cousin put him. That same cousin, Cherbaud Brazzegard, who's been passing himself off as Goribald for weeks in hopes of getting his own hands on the action at the Pit of the Burning Star.

[At this point, if Goribald is present he attacks Rannulf as described above.]

"When my scouts caught sight of your group coming from the arch, I assumed it was just those throat-cutting mountain dwarves who were left. If I'd known your band was still with them, I'd have sent my whole company to cut you down and make sure of the job. Oh well, such is the dicing of the gods. Here you are with me at your mercy, and all this time me holding the key to your salvation. You've been duped fellows, and I'm honestly surprised that you're still breathing."

Development: If Goribald is unsuccessful in silencing Earl Rannulf but a fight does not immediately break out, the canny dwarf bides his time. He waits for an ideal opportunity to slay the PCs by assassinating them in the night, poisoning their food, or betraying them and joining forces with an adversary during a pitched battle. On the other hand, if the PCs accept the earl's account and turn on Goribald as a result of his tale, the imposter and his troops fight back and make a bold proposition of their own: They offer Rannulf and his men a chance to join them and eradicate another potential rival. The earl ponders Goribald's overture but will not join him unless the PCs seem to be on the verge of defeat. If the earl and his men are still armed, the PCs can attempt a skill contest of their Charisma (Persuasion) or Charisma (Intimidation) against Goribald's Charisma (Persuasion) check. On a success, the earl orders his men to assist the PCs. Otherwise, the earl and his men remain out of any fight that occurs. In any case, the earl and his men will defend themselves if attacked.

Like the earl before him, Goribald surrenders if reduced below 30 hit points or if Captain Okrem and half of his other remaining followers are killed. If so captured and pressed for information, he admits that he is the scion of the cadet Brazzegard branch of the Ironskull Great Mountain Clan who had ruled the clan ever since the disappearance of Old Thane Col IronskullQoD-101, and is a descendant of the old high thane Tramham Brazzegard, slain by the great red wyrm Tir'oen's Doom, whose son Trameht passed rulership of the Great Mountain Clan back over to his Ironskull cousins 60 years ago so he could undertake his quest to hunt the dragon. Cherbaud confesses that he and his agents murdered the real Goribald Ironskull and several rival searchers in Panetoth and pursued others to Dun Eamon where they fortunately ran into the PCs. He claims his goal is to return the Brazzegards to their rightful place as the Clan Ironskull's undisputed leaders. He believes that the riches found in the Pit of the Burning Star will give him the clout and the resources to affect such a bold plan. If the PCs take him prisoner, he feigns cooperation but will use all of



the skills at his command to try and escape and possibly even turn up later to eliminate the PCs.

"GORIBALD IRONSKULL" (CHERBAUD BRAZZEGARD)

Medium humanoid (dwarf), neutral evil
Armor Class 18 (*mage armor*), 15 (without *mage armor*)
Hit Points 88 (16d8 + 16)
Speed 25 ft.

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

Damage Resistances acid, poison
Saving Throws Str +3, Dex +8, Con +2, Int +5, Wis +4, Cha +4
Skills Arcana +7, Deception +9, Perception +7, Persuasion+9, Sleight of Hand +10, Stealth +10
Senses passive Perception 17, darkvision 60 ft.
Languages Common, Dwarven, Giant
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Assassinate. During his first turn, Goribald has advantage on attack rolls against any creature that hasn't taken a turn. Any hit he scores against a surprised creature is a critical hit.
Dwarven Resilience. Goribald has advantage on saving throws against poison.
Elemental Power. When Goribald deals acid damage with a spell, he can add his Charisma modifier (+3) to the damage inflicted on one target.
Evasion. If Goribald is subjected to an effect that allows him to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, Goribald instead takes no damage if he succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if he fails.
Poison Expert. Goribald has one dose each of assassin's blood, oil of taggit, and torpor, and two doses of purple worm poison. Goribald can apply an injury poison to a weapon or apply a poison on an object (such as food) as a bonus action.
Sneak Attack. Once per turn, Goribald deals an extra 17 (5d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of him that isn't incapacitated and Goribald doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.
Special gear. Goribald has a *dagger of venom*, a *ring of mind shielding* that appears to be non-magical, a *ring of protection*, and a *wand of magic missiles*.
Spellcasting. Goribald is a 4th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14, spell attack bonus +6). Gorinald has the following sorcerer spells prepared:
Cantrips (at will): *acid splash*, *message*, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost*, *true strike*
1st level (4 slots): *detect magic*, *fog cloud*, *mage armor*, *shield*
2nd level (3 slots): *shatter*
Stonecunning. Whenever Gorinald make an Intelligence (History) check related to the origin of stonework, he is considered proficient in the History skill and adds double his proficiency bonus to the check, for a total of +7.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Goribald makes two melee attacks.
Dagger of Venom. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d4 + 5) piercing damage.
The wielder can use an action to cause thick, black poison to coat the blade. The poison remains for 1 minute or until an attack using this weapon hits a creature. That creature must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 11(2d10) poison damage and become poisoned for 1 minute. The dagger can't be used this way again until the next dawn.
Blowgun. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, range 25/100 ft., one target. *Hit*: 5 piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Uncanny Dodge. When an attacker Goribald can see hits him with an attack, he can use his

reaction to halve the attack's damage against him.

CAPTAIN OKREM KRESH

Medium humanoid (dwarf), lawful neutral
Armor Class 20 (plate +1)
Hit Points 204 (24d8 + 96)
Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)	8 (-1)	10 (+0)

Damage Resistances poison
Saving Throws Str +10, Dex +3, Con +9, Int +2, Wis +4, Cha +1
Skills Athletics +9, Intimidation +4, Perception +3, Survival +3
Senses passive Perception 13, darkvision 60 ft.
Languages Common, Dwarven, Terran
Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Dwarven Resilience. Captain Okrem has advantage on saving throws against poison.
Special gear. Captain Okrem has a *glaive +2*, a *belt of giant strength (hill giant)*, a *cloak of protection*, a *potion of greater healing*, and two *potions of growth*. Without the *belt of giant strength*, his Strength is 15.
Stonecunning. Whenever Captain Okrem make an Intelligence (History) check related to the origin of stonework, he is considered proficient in the History skill and adds double his proficiency bonus to the check, for a total of +7.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Captain Okrem makes four melee attacks.
Glaive. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 12 (1d10 + 7) slashing damage.
Javelin. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +9 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit*: 8 (1d6 + 5) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Parry. Captain Okrem adds 4 to his AC against one melee attack that would hit him. To do so, Captain Okrem must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

CLAN IRONSKULL GUARD (6)

Medium humanoid (dwarf), neutral
Armor Class 18 (plate)
Hit Points 105 (14d8 + 42)
Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

Damage Resistances poison
Saving Throws Str +5, Con +5
Skills Athletics +5, Intimidation +1, Perception +2, Survival +2
Senses passive Perception 12, darkvision 60 ft.
Languages Common, Dwarven
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Dwarven Resilience. The guard has advantage on saving throws against poison.
Special gear. Each guard carries a *potion of healing*.
Stonecunning. Whenever the guard make an Intelligence (History) check related to the origin of stonework, it is considered proficient in the History skill and adds double its proficiency bonus to the check, for a total of +4.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The guard makes two melee attacks.
Battleaxe. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage, or 8 (1d10 +3) when used to make an attack with two hands.
Heavy crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d10 + 2) piercing damage.

CLAN IRONSKULL ENVOYS (4)

XP 1,100
hp 40 (see page 270)

CHAPTER THREE: THE PIT OF THE BURNING STAR

This entire chapter is devoted to the exploration of the Pit of the Burning Star itself, the great crater left by the impact of a meteor 2,000 years ago, at area **I** on the Haunted Steppe Map. Characters should be 13th level by the start of this chapter. The sandbox nature of this part of the adventure means that the PCs can encounter any of the locations at any level, although the more difficult encounters, for which characters should be 14th level, are placed deeper in the pit and in areas harder for them to find.

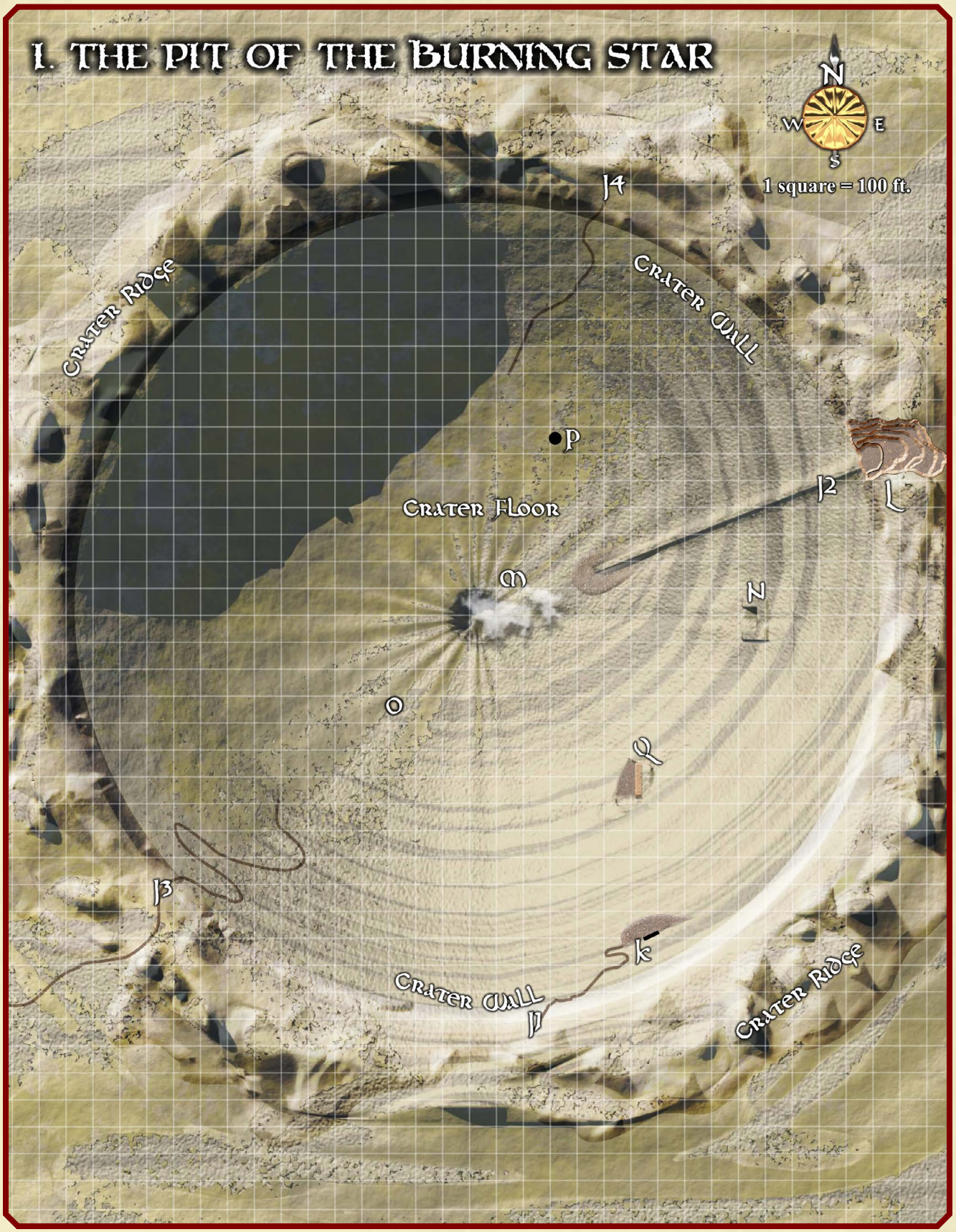


After a grueling slog across the Haunted Steppe, the omnipresent column of smoke gives way to tangible reality in the form of an immense impact crater. The Pit of the Burning Star appears much as Azmerius described in his correspondence with one notable exception — the hordes of monstrosities teeming in the interior are surprisingly absent. Indeed, the giant 3,000-foot-diameter hole with a 100-foot-high rim and a maximum depth of 525 feet at its center appears to be completely abandoned.

The grasses abruptly end and relinquish their ubiquitous presence to a huge patch of bare earth dominated by a massive ridge —100 feet high — of broken rock and sterile soil. Beyond it the column of black smoke silently rises from somewhere close at hand. It takes a moment to comprehend the enormity of what you're seeing, but it becomes clear that the ridge is circular in nature, forming a ring several thousand feet across. This ridge's sides have been eroded and weathered by millennia of exposure into an easily surmounted slope and doing so gives a view of the contents of the earthen ring. It is a vast crater more than half-a-mile across, it's bowl-like sides sloping downward more than 500 feet into a basin. At its center the thick column of smoke boils out of some unseen rift at its base. Not a breath of air stirs in the burning pit, and it is as equally devoid of plant or animal life as the surrounding impact ridge. Your prize awaits below.

Unlike the outer slope of the ridge that was formed when the dirt from below was pushed up and out and tumbled into place, the inner slope of the circling ridge and of the crater itself is quite steep and in many places nearly sheer from the explosion that originally excavated it. The Burning Star — as the meteor that struck the Haunted Steppe is known — was travelling at a speed of approximately 10 miles per second when it struck, and its impact released a blast equal to a roughly 10 megatons. The explosion vaporized much of the impact site as well as about two-thirds of the outer portion of the meteor itself, leaving the remaining meteorite as described at area **M5**. The result of the impact blast was to create a massive crater basin nearly 600 feet deep, though a combination of rubble from the blast as well as the sediments of the last two millennia of erosion have filled the bottom 75 feet of to its current depth of 525 feet and created a fairly flat basin floor in the center of the crater.

The crater's inner slope from the outer rim is fairly steep for the first 200 feet. This slope is rocky and dangerous with the chance of rock falls from its exposed layers of local strata, packed ejecta, and eroded sediments. There are a few trails identified on the map, which can be traversed with reasonable care, but otherwise attempting to scale this slope requires a DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check, and for every 50 feet traveled there is a 25% chance of a minor landslide, 10 feet wide, causing 4d6 points of damage to anyone in its path (DC 20 Dexterity saving throw for half), and climbers must make a new Strength (Athletics) check to avoid falling unless somehow anchored in place.


1. The Pit of the Burning Star
N
W
E
S
1 square = 100 ft.
14
Crater Ridge
Crater Wall
p
12
Crater Floor
m
n
o
q
l
13
k
Crater Wall
11
Crater Ridge

Below this steeper area of the crater wall, the slope lessens to an angle ranging from 51° to 70° (1d20 + 50°) for another 200 feet. Where the slope is less than 60°, the incline is treated as a steep slope covered in scree (requires a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check or successful DC 15 Acrobatics check to traverse). In areas where the angle is 60° or more, that particular portion is treated as a wall, requiring a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check to negotiate. Below that the slope becomes a gradual slope covered in scree until finally reaching the relatively flat crater floor another 125 feet below.

EXPLORING THE BURNING PIT

Exploring the Pit of the Burning Star is a very different experience depending on if the PCs are on the outer crater ridge, climbing upon its inner wall, or exploring the various features of the crater floor. Likewise flying above the crater brings its own unique dangers. However, all of them have one hazard in common. One of the layers of the meteor that was destroyed upon impact was composed of a material largely unknown on Lloegyr but has come to be known, somewhat misleadingly, as metallurgic amber[FoB-202] by some few scholars over the years. Metallurgic amber is described in detail in **Appendix C**.

This mysterious material is extraterrestrial in origin with no known natural occurring sources on the world of Lloegyr and few enough sources derived from the rare meteorite remnant. When the Burning Star struck the surface, the layers of the metallurgic amber that had not already been incinerated in the meteor's descent through the atmosphere were vaporized and scattered far and wide. Small fragments of the substance have been found as far as 50 miles from the crater, but in general most of the heavy metal was deposited in and around the crater out to a radius of approximately 2 miles. Most of this meteoritic layer was turned to dust which has since suffused the landscape in this area to such an extent that every 5-foot-square in this area is considered to be one in which a piece of the metallurgic amber is contained (see sidebar for effects). There are also small fragments of the substance melted in the heat of the impact and cooled into tiny lumps and pellets that scattered throughout this area or buried in the walls and rim of the crater.

The PCs begin to notice the effects of exposure to the ambient radiation 2d4 hours after entering this area. Fire resistance or immunity is ineffective against the burns caused by the metallurgic amber as their mechanism is induced cell death as opposed to the application of heat. The living creatures that dwell in and around the crater are either immune to the effects of this radiation or have already suffered its effects to the point where they have built up enough of a resistance so that they incur no further damage from its exposure.

FLYING ABOVE THE CRATER (ENCOUNTER VARIES)

As high-level characters, the PCs may well decide that a little aerial reconnaissance of the site might be in order. Those doing so are likely to discover that a number of hazards, foreseen and unforeseen exist. The most obvious of these is the column of thick black smoke that rises from area **M** at the crater's center. This midnight black reek roils forth in an unbroken column 50 feet wide at its base but rapidly expanding to 200 feet wide as it rises above the rim of the crater. It then rises another thousand feet or so before being dispersed by the winds. Anyone flying into this cloud discovers that it provides concealment and total concealment beyond 5 feet as well as the usual effects of smoke: requires a Constitution saving throw each round (DC 15) or spend the round choking and coughing and causing 1d6 points of necrotic damage for every 2 consecutive rounds of choking. They also discover that these fumes, while certainly warmer than the surrounding air are not as hot as might be expected.

A less obvious hazard of flying above the crater is that the enclosed-basin nature of the crater causes the air of the steppe to not flow in and out freely and become trapped. This isn't significant enough to cause a hazard to breathing, but the lack of a cooling air current combined with the pale sand and rock of the crater's base causes the air in the crater to become much hotter than the surrounding plain. During the day, conditions in the crater are considered very hot (90–109° F). These conditions require a Constitution saving throw each hour (DC 15) to avoid gaining a level of exhaustion. Characters in heavy armor or clothing make this saving throw with disadvantage, but the use of the Wisdom (Survival) skill can be used to grant advantage (and negate disadvantage). This unlikely to prove much of a problem for high level parties. Rather the effects this has on flying creatures is much more sinister.

Because of the increased temperatures and stagnant air within the confines of the crater walls the air gains high density altitude conditions, meaning the air is actually lower density, as it would be at a higher altitude. This has no effect on magical forms of flight, but for any flight that relies on wings or other forms of natural lift this thinner air makes flying much more difficult. Winged creatures attempting to fly within the confines of the crater's basin have their

flying speed halved. Finally, once a flyer has entered the confines of the crater, it is difficult to gain the altitude to be able to fly back out again, and doing so requires a DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to avoid crashing into one of the crater walls. As long as flying creatures remain above the level of the top of the crater's surrounding ridge where the air currents flow freely, they are not in danger of these effects. Only if a flyer dips below the altitude of the top of the rim does it become subject to this hazard.

The final hidden danger to flight over and within the crater becomes evident 1d4 rounds after a flying creature larger than size Tiny enters the air space beyond the perimeter of the surrounding crater ridge. When this occurs, a flight of **1d4+1 baykoks** emerge from concealment in the column of smoke at the crater's center and quickly fly to converge upon the aerial intruders. The flesh of these distorted corpses is cracked and split with charred desiccation, and they are immune to the smoke's effects. In addition, because they do not rely on wings to fly they do not suffer the normal penalties for flight within the crater. Every 1d4 rounds another **1d2 baykoks** will emerge to join in the battle. There is essentially an unlimited number of these creatures, so smart PCs will quickly retreat and no longer attempt to violate the crater's air space.

The baykoks immediately attack any flying creatures and pursue relentlessly within the bounds of the crater's air space up to an altitude of 1,000 feet. Once above the level of the smoke's dispersal, they break off any pursuit and return to wait within the smoke. Likewise they ignore creatures that are on the ground within the crater, though if a flying creature lands to escape them they will continue to attack that individual as long as he remains visible to them. They will not pursue beyond the boundaries of the crater rim nor into any of the crater's tunnels.

PCs witnessing the attacking baykoks can make a DC 10 Intelligence (History) check to recognize their ragged trappings and equipment as belonging to Shattered Folk of the distant past. It doesn't take much insight to guess that these creatures are the remains of steppe-dwelling tribesmen who were slain by the impact blast when the Burning Star struck almost 2,000 years ago. Their bows and arrows quickly deteriorate into dust and fragments of scorched wood when one is killed, and they carry nothing else of value.

Flying above the crater ridge but not inside the crater itself also carries the hazard of coming under attack by the thrown boulders of ash giants as described under **Crater Ridge and Surrounding Area** below.

BAYKOK

XP 2,300
hp 97 (see **Appendix A**, page 529)

CRATER RIDGE AND SURROUNDING AREA

Though the crater's location is remote, it is not entirely without inhabitation. It is unclear whether the ash giants of the crater ridge came from elsewhere and chose to live beside the iconic landmark or if they were perhaps originally survivors of some race of plains giants in the vicinity who were so decimated and twisted by the calamitous explosion that they chose to take up residence in a new form warped by their generations of exposure. Whatever their origin, the fact remains that scattered groups of hideously deformed ash giants dwell in and upon the outer slopes of the crater ridge.



Every hour spent upon the crater ridge or within a mile of it during daylight hours has a 10% chance of running into **1d2 ash giants of the pit**. Anyone who is flying above the ridge has the same chance anytime they pass over it or for every 10 minutes spent above it of being spotted and attacked with thrown rocks. These creatures are always hungry and interested in making a meal of strangers they encounter. They stay inside their dwellings at night in superstitious dread of the crater's inhabitants. They pursue prey that they spot for miles across the plains but do not enter the crater itself.

Ash Giant: Towering above a typical human, these misshapen giants are covered in purulent sores and bulbous tumors adoring their exposed pale flesh.

ASH GIANT OF THE PIT

Huge giant, chaotic neutral
Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 161 (14d12 + 70)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
26 (+8)	14 (+2)	21 (+5)	9 (-1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Con +9, Wis +5
Skills Athletics +12, Perception +5
Damage Resistances poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages Giant, Kirkut
Challenge 9 (5000 XP)

Radiation Sickness. The ash giants of the Burning Pit carry a contagious form of radiation poisoning that blisters and burns the flesh of those exposed. A creature that is poisoned by the giant's attacks must make a DC 17 Constitution save at the end of each long rest. On a failed save, the creature gains a level of exhaustion. This exhaustion cannot be removed by a long rest until the creature is no longer poisoned. The radiation sickness ends for the creature if the poisoned condition ends. A creature that succeeds in two consecutive saving throws is no longer poisoned.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The giant makes two greatclub attacks.

Greatclub. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +12 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 21 (3d8+8) bludgeoning damage and the target must succeed at a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned.

Rock. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +12 to hit, range 60/240 ft., one target. *Hit*: 30 (4d10+8) bludgeoning damage and the target must succeed at a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 20 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

REACTIONS

Rock Catching. If a rock or similar object is hurled at the giant, the giant can, with a successful DC 10 Dexterity saving throw, catch the missile and take no bludgeoning damage from it.

Development: The ash giants dwell in enlarged crevices or crude rock shelters upon the ridge and hunt the surrounding plains for their food. They never, under any circumstances enter into the crater and consider it to be entirely taboo. They live in scattered dwellings (not shown on the map), singly or in pairs — sometimes with 1d2 young ash giants. Locating the well-disguised lairs of these giants is all but impossible until they are met. Once a giant is encountered, its trail can be followed back to its lair with a DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check.

A captured ash giant that is successfully interrogated will only tell of the "cursed dead" that walk within the crater in horrified whispers. They sometimes see them stalking among the rocks below. When an ash giant dies, its body is wrapped in grass-woven burial shroud and dropped over the edge into the crater. They never see the body taken, but by the next morning it is always gone.

Treasure: Though the ash giants of the Burning Pit are exceedingly poor, they are not entirely without wealth. Anyone searching one of their shelters has a 30% chance of discovering 1d4 of the following items. Items marked with an asterisk can only be found once and should be rerolled if indicated again. Unless otherwise indicated, all coins found are a mix of Rhemian and Foerdewaith currencies.

d20	Object Found
1	Chipped stone chert hand chopper
2	1d4 throwing rocks
3	Battered pewter bowl and spoon from a Conroi Expedition mess kit
4	1d3 brass buttons dating to time of the Caleen Colonies* (2 gp each)
5	Bag of caltrops crudely made from bone and shards of tektite glass
6	Wedge of hard, slightly moldy and stinky cheese
7	Shabby, lice-infested fur cloak
8	Bone comb and hairpins
9	Crude cooking pot forged from meteoric iron* (worth 50 gp)

10	Aurochs drinking horn (worth 25 gp)
11	Skinning knife stamped with a Castorhagi maker's mark*
12	Haunch of jerked unidentifiable meat
13	Scattering of mixed centuries-old Rhemian coins (1d4 x 20 cp, 2d4 x 5 sp, and 1d4–1 gp)
14	Wash leather pouch holding (roll d6): 1–3. 1d4 x 100 cp, 4–5. 2d4 x 10 sp, 6. 1d4 x 10 gp
15	Mangy fur bedding
16	2 100-ft. coils of good, newly made rope, obviously stolen*
17	Large well-licked block of rock salt (infused with metallurgic amber [see sidebar above])
18	Pair of *boots of speed* of Shattered Folk make*
19	An orcish war spirit pouch (treat as a *potion of false life*) with fresh blood stains*
20	1d8 broken mustang[FB] or bulette teeth (no value)

CRATER WALL

Whether climbing down the crater wall or following one of the few trails that mark paths to the bottom (see area **J**), the PCs have the chance of running across some of the denizens that make their home among the exposed and inverted layers of rock strata that were stacked haphazardly by the impact of long ago. Among the many fissures, crevices, and broken crags that mar the sides of the crater lurk creatures unbothered by the crater's heat, radioactive emissions, or the presence of the undead below. For every 10 minutes spent traversing the crater's inner walls there is a 25% chance of an encounter. If an encounter occurs, roll on the following table to determine its result.

d6	Encounter
1	Death worm
2	Shard slag
3	1d4+2 xorns[SRD]
4	1d4 crystalline earth elementals[SRD]
5	1d4+1 mutant salt drakes
6	Cherufe

Encounters in the Pit: Any creatures encountered on this table, apart from their typical characteristics, are immune to radiation.

Cherufe: This towering reptilian biped seems to be made of obsidian scales over a molten magma core. Cherufes make their homes in the caverns of active volcanoes, where they have not only adapted to survive in these extreme conditions, but actually thrive in the pools of molten lava found therein.

A single cherufe dwells within the Pit of the Burning Star. The beast revels in the crater's heat and the radiation that emanates from the metallurgic amber scattered throughout the region. Although it prefers to wallow in the crater's smoky depths, the huge monster periodically ascends to the surface to feed on stragglers that attempt to scale its walls. Like the combusted of the region, the cherufe's fires burn with the radiation of metallurgic amber and bypass ordinary fire resistance. Once this cherufe has been defeated, treat any future rolled encounters with it as no encounter.

CHERUFE

Huge monstrosity, neutral evil
Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 189 (18d12+72)
Speed 40 ft., swim 30 ft., burrow 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	13 (+1)	19 (+4)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +11, Dex +6, Con +9
Skills Perception +7
Damage Immunities fire
Damage Vulnerabilities cold
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 17
Languages Common
Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

Fire Healing. Whenever the cherufe is subjected to fire damage, it takes no damage and regains a number of hit points equal to the fire damage dealt.

Rubble Stalker. The cherufe does not spend extra movement to move through difficult terrain caused by rock, rubble, and earth, including the effects of its own Seismic Disturbance.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The cherufe attacks three times: twice with its claws and once with its bite.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +11 to hit, reach 5 ft.,

one target. *Hit*: 15 (2d8+6) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) fire damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 13 (2d6+6) slashing damage plus 7 (2d6) fire damage.

Rock. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +11 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 60/240 ft., one target. *Hit*: 18 (3d8+5) bludgeoning damage plus 7 (2d6) fire damage.

Seismic Disturbance (Recharge 6). An intense tremor rips through the ground in a 100-foot-radius circle centered on the cherufe and shakes creatures and structures in contact with the ground in that area. The ground in the area becomes difficult terrain. Each creature on the ground that is concentrating must make a DC 19 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature's concentration is broken. Each creature on the ground in the area other than the cherufe must make a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is knocked prone. There can be additional effects depending on the terrain in the area, as determined by the GM. The tremor deals 50 bludgeoning damage to any structure in contact with the ground in the area. If a structure drops to 0 hit points, it collapses and potentially damages nearby creatures. A creature within half the distance of a structure's height must make a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes 5d6 bludgeoning damage, is knocked prone, and is buried in the rubble, requiring a DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check as an action to escape. The GM can adjust the DC higher or lower, depending on the nature of the rubble. On a successful save, the creature takes half as much damage and doesn't fall prone or become buried.

Death Worm: These solitary horrors burrow among the rock of the cliff walls eating the deposits of meteoritic iron and metallurgic amber that they find. They are fiercely territorial and immediately attack any that intrude into their area. Like the combusted of the region, a death worm's lightning spit is infused with the radiation of metallurgic amber and bypasses ordinary lightning resistance. Its acid spit is not affected in this way.

DEATH WORM

Large monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 119 (14d10+42)

Speed 20 ft., burrow 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	3 (-4)	11 (+0)	5 (-3)

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +5

Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 14

Languages -

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 12 (3d8+3) piercing damage,

Spit Acid (Recharge 5-6): The death worm spits acid in an 30-foot line that is 5 feet wide. Each creature in that line must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 14 (4d6) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Death worms are immune to their own acid and that of other death worms.

Spit Lightning (Recharge 5-6): The death worm exhales lightning in an 20-foot line that is 5 feet wide. Each creature in that line must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) lightning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Earth Elementals: These elementals came to the area of the crater shortly after the time of the impact, drawn by the immense elemental powers released by the explosion and the vast quantity of unusual metal salts created in its wake. The elementals appear to be made of black and white volcanic crystal with red glowing eyes. The amount of salt they contain is deadly to living beings. Instead of slam attacks, they have blade-like claws that do an equivalent amount of slashing, and a creature that is hit must make DC 16 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is poisoned for 1 minute. The creature may repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success.

Mutant Salt Drakes: These creatures survive by eating each other, salt mephits, and occasionally other creatures. They somewhat resemble blue dragons, but gaunt and wingless.

MUTANT SALT DRAKE

Large dragon, unaligned
Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 118 (14d10+42)
Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	3 (-4)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Dex +4, Con +7, Wis +4, Cha +3
Skills Perception +3, Stealth +3
Damage Resistances poison
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages -
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The drake makes three attacks: once with its bite and twice with its claws. Then it makes an attack with its tail against a creature it has not attacked with its bite or claws.

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

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d8+4) slashing damage.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d8+3) bludgeoning damage.

Salt Breath (Recharge 5–6): The drake exhales shards of salt in an 30-foot cone. Each creature in that line must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) slashing damage and 10 (3d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Shard Slag: These mindless oozes tend to resemble a lump of tektite (impact-fused glass) and mostly remain somnolent among the crags of the crater wall, absorbing the heat and radiation given off by the crater's strata. However, when approached their irregular surface suddenly transforms into a mass of razor-sharp blades as they attack to attempt to consume the interesting new food sources. Like the combusted of the region, a shard slag's fires burn with the radiation of metallurgic amber and bypass ordinary fire resistance.

SHARD SLAG

Huge ooze, unaligned
Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 126 (12d12 + 48)
Speed 30 ft., burrow 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	6 (-2)	19 (+4)	1 (-5)	1 (-5)	1 (-5)

Damage Immunities poison
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non-magical attacks; acid, lightning, poison
Damage Vulnerabilities cold
Condition Immunities blind, charmed, deafened, frightened, prone
Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 5
Languages -
Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Amorphous. The ooze can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Molten Form. Any creature that begins its turn within 5 feet of a shard slag takes 3 (1d6) fire damage. A creature that strikes the shard slag with a natural weapon or unarmed strike takes 7 (2d6) fire damage. A creature that grapples a



shard slag or is grappled by one takes 10 (3d6) points of fire damage each round the grapple persists. A creature that strikes a shard slag with a non-magical weapon must attempt a DC 15 Strength save; if it fails, it's unable to pull the weapon away from the shard slag's molten body quickly enough, and the weapon takes 7 (2d6) fire damage. Unattended objects in contact with a shard slag take 2d6 points of fire damage per round. It can burrow through solid stone.

Vulnerability to Water. If a significant amount of water—such as the contents of a large bucket, the liquid created by a create water spell, or a blow from a water elemental—strikes a shard slag, the creature must make a DC 15 Constitution save. On a failed save, the shard slag's speed is reduced by 10 feet and it cannot use Multiattack until the end of its next turn. A shard slag that is immersed in water automatically suffers these effects, and at the end of its turn must succeed at a DC 15 Cosntitution save each round (this DC increases by 1 each subsequent round) or be petrified, reverting to its molten metal form once the water is gone once it is no longer immersed.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The shard slag makes 1d4+2 slag blade attacks.

Slag Blade. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 8 (1d8+4) slashing damage, plus 7 (2d6) fire damage. Unless the target is immune to fire damage, it cannot use reactions until the beginning of the shard slag's next turn.

Xorns: These creatures were originally attracted to the area of the Pit by the unusual flavors of minerals available for consumption. Unfortunately, the long exposure to the meteor's radiations has affected them strangely, turning their alignment to neutral evil and making them exceptionally aggressive. When they encounter PCs, they will immediately demand that they depart the area and leave behind all metal items. If the PCs do not immediately comply, they will attack. If the PCs do comply, the xorns will gather up their gear and hide it in a nearby crevice and then follow the PCs to ambush and slay them.

CRATER FLOOR

As mentioned above due to the lack of air circulation and presence of internal fires below, during the day at this time of year, conditions in the crater are considered very hot (90–109° F). These conditions require a Constitution saving throw each hour (DC 15) to avoid taking 1d4 points of fire damage. Creatures that fail this saving throw by 5 or more also gain a level of exhaustion. This saving throw must be made every 30 minutes. Characters in heavy armor or clothing have disadvantage on this saving throw, and the use of a DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) skill can be used to provide advantage on this saving throw.

After reading Azemrius's writings, the PCs were likely expecting to see the floor of the crater abuzz with activity. Yet from the moment of their arrival, no matter how long they observe during the day there is no sign of movement. Regarding observations at night, see **Event 1: Nightscream**. However, the floor of the crater is not as deserted as it appears. Several locations exist on the crater's floor that the PCs can explore, however, at least on the first day they will not have opportunity to. For on their first foray into the crater, the PCs will encounter an inkling of the forces that defend it from outsiders.

Upon reaching the crater floor for every round that the PCs spend therein, there is a cumulative 25% chance of them being noticed and accosted by the guardians of the Pit. Their first realization of this is when foes begin to emerge from the smoking chasm at **M**. When this occurs read the following description.

There is no wind, but it almost seems as if one has come up as a thin keening wail begins to rise on the air. In seconds it resolves itself into a cacophony of screams, cries, and growls and movement becomes visible from the edge of the smoking pit at the crater's center. Pouring out of the burning haze come dozens of forms—burning forms, shambling forms, smoking forms, dead forms. It is as if the bowels of Hell have let loose its denizens. They are the limping, raging burned figures that you have seen previously. Corpses, both ancient and fresh, bearing disfiguring brown burns and terrible wounds yet having eyes alight with hate. Smoky, skeletal figures whose charred bones glow with burning coals. And something you haven't seen before, charred human forms, not skeletal but far more burned than the others you have seen. These too have orbs of burning fear and move swiftly towards you.

Worse, even as this horde disgorges from the smoking maw of the crater, the sands and rock of the crater floor around you begins to shift and churn as more of these burned-yet-living forms rise from hidden pits to add their own increase to the growing horde. The formerly empty floor of the crater is quickly becoming crowded, and it appears the living are not to be long among its occupants.

The horde that emerges from the central crater consists of **4d6 radioactive combusted**, **1d6 cinder ghouls**, and **2d4 radioactive blast shadows**. They do not necessarily converge upon the PCs immediately, depending on where the party was when the undead started spilling forth. The radioactive blast shadows and cinder ghouls quickly outrun the radioactive combusted in order to attack the PCs. However, of more immediate concern are the undead emerging from the shallow burials all around the crater floor. These creatures are all within 1 round of the party's position. These consist of **1d6 radioactive combusted**, **1d2 cinder ghouls**, and **1d3 radioactive blast shadows**. In addition, every 2 rounds another **1d6 radioactive combusted**, **1d2 cinder ghouls**, and **1d3 radioactive blast shadows** join them. All of these creatures swarm towards the PCs in wave after wave in a great mindless attack. If the PCs try to take to the air to avoid these attackers, they will likely run afoul of the witchfires as described under **Flying Above the Crater** above.

The cinder ghouls and radioactive combusted have the same appearance as those earlier, but the radioactive blast shadows bear the crude remnants of hide clothing, bone pectorals, and crude stone weapons identifiable with a DC 25 Intelligence (History) check as belonging to Shattered Folk tribesmen of more than a thousand years ago. This observation makes it quickly apparent that these creatures were created from Shattered Folk killed by the actual meteor impact in 1522 I.R.

RADIOACTIVE COMBUSTED

XP 700
hp 84 (see **Appendix A**, page 551)

CINDER GHOUL

XP 2,900
hp 75 (see **Appendix A**, page 532)

BLAST SHADOW

XP 1,800
hp 117 (see **Appendix A**, page 530)

Development: Though the PCs are likely formidable in a fight, it should quickly become apparent from the seemingly endless supply of undead that continue to arise from the smoking pit and hidden burials around the crater floor that they are in danger of becoming overwhelmed. Nevertheless, the wild abandon and lack of coordination in the attacks of the undead do work to the advantage of the PCs. They never seek to encircle the PCs and trap them within the crater. Whenever the PCs realize they danger of their situation, they should be able to make a fighting retreat back to the slopes of the crater wall. The undead will follow only until the steep part of the wall is reached at which point they will howl in frustration and make their way back into the depths of the Pit to disappear once again into new shallow burials or the smoking maw itself. However, if the PCs descend to the crater floor again, the undead emerge to attack once more in similar numbers. They continue to do this throughout the first day, making the PCs' initial foray into the crater to devolve into what at best could be considered a stalemate.

EVENTS AT THE PIT OF THE BURNING STAR

In addition to the general areas of the Pit described above and the specific locations within the Pit described below, a number of events occur as well while the PCs are visiting. These events should occur in chronological order and have been given a specific time at which they should occur. If the actions of the party make these timings impossible, you should try to still fit the events in in a feasible way, as they provide clues and potential assistance to the party's exploration of the Pit.

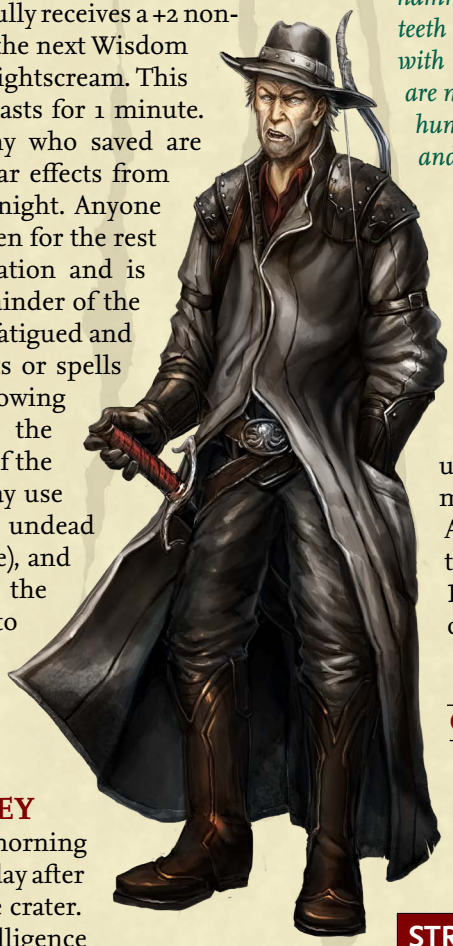
EVENT 1: NIGHTSCREAM

This event occurs at moonrise on the party's first night at the crater, and for every night thereafter. The Nightscream is a phenomenon that occurs in the crater each night when the light of the primary moon Luna, the Pale Sister, hits the fuming chasm at the center of the crater. It is caused by the wailing despair of the souls who were destroyed in the meteor's impact as well as by the victims of the meteor in all the centuries since. The precise time of the Nightscream varies depending on the time of year, anywhere from an hour before to an hour after midnight. It does not occur on the three nights of Luna's new moon each month, but occurs at full strength on all other nights, affecting every living thing within a quarter mile of the crater regardless of location. Only those underground are unaffected by its effects.

In the minutes leading up to the Nightscream the PCs will find themselves feeling nervous and uneasy. They then hear a faint moaning sound, so quiet that it might even be their imaginations. After a few seconds however the moaning rises to a near-deafening scream, as of hundreds

of loud voices screaming in fear and agony. The scream lasts a full hour, then fades away to nothing, leaving only a fading echo over the benighted crater.

Any living creature in the area of effect must make a DC 24 Wisdom saving throw or be affected as if by a fear spell. Anyone who saves successfully receives a +2 non-cumulative bonus against the next Wisdom saving throw against the Nightscream. This is a sonic, fear effect and lasts for 1 minute. After the first minute, any who saved are immune to any further fear effects from the Nightscream for that night. Anyone who failed the save is shaken for the rest of the Nightscream's duration and is unable to rest for the remainder of the night, causing them to be fatigued and unable to regain hit points or spells through rest until the following night. In addition, for the entire one-hour duration of the Nightscream, creatures may use channel divinity to turn undead (or to use the Preserve Life), and all living creatures within the area gain vulnerability to necrotic damage during the Nightscream.



EVENT 2: TIDINGS OF THE LYRE VALLEY

This event occurs when morning breaks at dawn of the first day after the PCs have arrived at the crater. PCs making a DC 20 Intelligence (Nature) check notices a gyrfalcon circling nearby. Any PC can notice this, but the Intelligence (Nature) check is necessary to recognize it as being notable — there have been no birds of any sort seen within a mile or so of the crater since the PCs' arrival. If this skill check is successful and raises the party's suspicions, they gain advantage on Perception checks to avoid being surprised when the newcomers in this event appear.

Where moments before there had seemingly been only the empty plains around the great crater, now there stands a man not 20 feet away, looking directly at you and smiling. He wears a chain shirt under a dusty gray cloak trimmed in thread of turquoise and gold as well as a brown feathered cap on his head, cocked at a jaunty angle. A sheathed short sword hangs at his belt, and a crossbow is slung over his shoulder, though neither is at hand. Next to the crossbow is slung a well-worn, but lovingly cared-for harp.

Suddenly next to him where you could have sworn was only more of the drab, brownish-gray landscape you realize there stands a small brownish-gray man. He is a Shattered Folk tribesman stooped with age with his long, pleated hair the color of iron. His dark face is seamed with the lines of countless years on the plain, and the left side is sunken where some past blow from mace or hammer must have shattered his cheek and removed most of the teeth on that side. But his dark eyes are unwavering and filled with quiet confidence. Unlike his companion, this man's hands are not empty. One clutches a tribal waraxe and the other an old hunting knife, though both dangle loosely — almost casually — and somehow that makes him seem even more menacing.

The men standing before just outside the party's camp are Gabriel Targus (a **tuul**[FB-84] human) and his Shattered Folk scout **Two-Cuts**. The gyrfalcon, if it was noticed, is the wild-shaped elven druidess **Iracina Ravenspur**. They spotted the PCs' camp last evening and approached with first light, Iracina first scouting in gyrfalcon form and then Gabriel under the guise of an *invisibility* spell and Two-Cuts making use of stealth and his mastery of the terrain. Approximately a quarter mile away, behind cover, await the rest of their group: Iracina's older brother **Huldir Ravenspur** and **3 hired swords** who tend to their string of **8 mustangs** (see **Appendix A**, page 554).

GABRIEL TARGUS, TUUL

Medium humanoid (human), lawful neutral
Armor Class 18 (+2 *chain shirt*, *ring*, *cloak*)
Hit Points 75 (10d8 + 30)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Str +5, Dex +5, Con +5, Int +3, Wis +3, Cha +7
Skills Arcana +4, Deception +6, History +4, Perception +4, Perform +9, Persuasion +9
Senses passive Perception 14
Languages Common, Elven, High Boros, Kirkut
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Battlefield Experience. A weapon attack deals an extra 1d8 damage of the same type when Gabriel hits with it.
Special Gear. Gabriel has a +1 shortsword, a +2

chain shirt, a cloak of protection, and a ring of protection. He has a potion of greater healing.

Spellcasting. Gabriel is a 10th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). Gabriel has the following bard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *dancing lights*, *light*, *mending*, *message*

1st level (4 slots): *charm person*, *cure wounds*, *detect magic*, *heroism*, *sleep*, *unseen servant*

2nd level (3 slots): *invisibility*, *tongues*

3rd level (3 slots): *haste*, *slow*, *tongues*

4th level (3 slots): *confusion*, *freedom of movement*

5th level (2 slots): *legend lore*, *scrying*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Gabriel makes two shortsword attacks.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 12 (1d6+1d8+4) piercing damage.

Light crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit*: 10 (2d8+1) piercing damage.

IRACINA RAVENSPUR

Medium humanoid (elf), neutral

Armor Class 17 (green dragon scale mail)

Hit Points 49 (11d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	18 (+4)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	18 (+4)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Int +6, Wis +7

Skills Arcana +6, Deception +3, Nature +6, Perception +7, Survival +7

Damage Resistances poison

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 17

Languages Aquan, Common, Druidic, Elven, Gnoll, Gnome, Kirkut, Sylvan

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Fey Ancestry. Iracina has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put her to sleep.

Spellcasting. Iracina is a 10th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). Iracina has the following druid spells prepared:

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

1st level (4 slots): *create or destroy water*, *cure wounds*, *fog cloud*, *speak with animals*

2nd level (3 slots): *barkskin*, *lesser restoration*, *protection from poison*

3rd level (3 slots): *conjure animals*, *water breathing*

4th level (3 slots): *control water*, *freedom of movement*, *ice storm*, *stone shape*

5th level (2 slots): *wall of stone*

ACTIONS

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d6+4) slashing damage.

Dart. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d4+4) piercing damage.

Change Shape. Iracina magically polymorphs into a beast that has a challenge rating of 1 or less, or back into her true form. She reverts to her true form if she dies. Any equipment she is wearing or carrying is absorbed or borne by the new form (her choice). In a new form, she retains her alignment, hit points, Hit Dice, proficiencies, languages (but cannot speak), and Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores, as well as this action. Her statistics and capabilities are otherwise replaced by those of the new form, except any class features or legendary actions of that form.

HRULDIR RAVENSPUR

Medium humanoid (elf), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 16 (studded leather)

Hit Points 88 (16d8+16)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws Str +3, Dex +6

Skills Athletics +3, Nature +3, Perception +3, Stealth

+6, Survival +5
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages Common, Elven, Orc
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Brave. Hruldir has advantage on saving throws against being frightened.
Fey Ancestry. Hruldir has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put him to sleep.
Spellcasting. Hruldir is a 10th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12). Hruldir has the following ranger spells prepared:
1st level (4 slots): *animal friendship*, *cure wounds*, *hunter's mark*
2nd level (3 slots): *barkskin*, *pass without trace*
3rd level (2 slots): *protection from energy*

ACTIONS
Multiattack. Hruldir makes three melee weapon or three ranged weapon attacks.
Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d6+4) slashing damage.
Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit*: 8 (1d8+4) piercing damage.

TWO-CUTS, RUSTLER

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic neutral
Armor Class 16 (+3 leather)
Hit Points 67 (15d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	12 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +4, Int +4
Skills Deception +4, Acrobatics +4, Animal Handling +8, Perception +6, Stealth +6, Survival +6
Senses passive Perception 176
Languages Common, Kirkut
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Evasion. If Two-Cuts to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, he instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if he fails.
Scalper. When Two-Cuts hits with a handaxe, he deals an additional die of weapon damage, included in his attack.
Sneak Attack. Once per turn, Two-Cuts deals an extra 21 (6d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of him that isn't incapacitated and he doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.
Special Gear. Two-Cuts has +3 *leather armor*, a corncob *pipe of dreaming* and a *mojo amulet (luck)* (see below for both). Two-Cuts carries a scalping axe (*vicious handaxe*), most commonly found among nomadic peoples living in the temperate grasslands. The haft is always fabricated from the bone of a large predatory animal, and etched images of fearsome birds adorn the blade. See **Appendix C**, page 145 for details of these items.

ACTIONS
Multiattack. Two-Cuts makes two melee attacks with his handaxe or dagger. Then, if he is holding a dagger in his off-hand, he makes another dagger attack. Or, Two-Cuts attacks twice with his shortbow.
Handaxe. *Melee or Range Weapon Attack*: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit*: 8 (2d6+1) slashing damage. When two-Cuts rolls a 20 on his attack roll with his vicious handaxe, hit critical hit deals an extra 2d6 slashing damage.
Dagger. *Melee or Range Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit*: 4 (1d4+2) piercing damage.
Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit*: 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage.

REACTIONS
Uncanny Dodge. When an attacker Two-Cuts can see hits him with an attack, he takes half the damage.

HIRED SWORDS

XP 700
hp 58 (statistics as veteran[SRD])

Development: Gabriel Targus is careful not to make any threatening moves or approach any closer once his *invisibility* spell ends, and no threatening actions are made, though Two-Cuts continues to keep his weapons handy and Iracina continues to circle above in gyrfalcon form. Gabriel hails the camp and introduces himself as the leader of the adventuring band called The Spurious Tidings out of Bard's Gate[LL8]. He asks for permission to come into the camp to talk with the PCs in peace. If the PCs attack, he and his comrades make a fighting retreat back to their fellows and will consider the PCs enemies going forward. Otherwise, they are friendly to the PCs, and are interested in talking. Descriptions of the members of The Spurious Tidings are provided in the accompanying sidebar.

Assuming the PCs are willing to hear Gabriel out and act in nonthreatening manner themselves, he calls Iracina to transform back into her elven form and join them and then opens up a friendly dialogue. He explains that he and his band have come from Bard's Gate at the behest of High Burgess Cylyria[LL8] to locate the Pit of the Burning Star. The high burgess's own network of spies and informants had caught wind of the unearthing of writings of the Conroi Expedition and the whispers of what they were searching for and its potential value. When she and her confidants consulted with learned priests of Oghma and Yenomesh* and conducted various divinations, they learned much of what was going on and surmised a great deal about the nature of the Pit. She then approached Gabriel's group to make an expedition on behalf of the City of the Lyre (i.e. Bard's Gate).

Gabriel's group only just arrived and witnessed any unsuccessful forays by the PCs into the crater on the previous day. He is aware of the PCs' group as representing the interests of the Grand Duchy of Reme, and although he understands that both groups represent competing interests, he points out that Bard's Gate and the Grand Duchy of Reme are staunch allies in trade and partners in many endeavors. Having witnessed the horrors that the crater has to offer, he believes it likely that neither group will be able to succeed alone but may have a much better chance together. He further adds that High Burgess Cylyria has entrusted him with full discretion in such matters and that he is therefore empowered to make such a cooperative arrangement with the PCs and their Rheman sponsors in good faith if they are willing to do so themselves.

Though he is not aware of Goribald Ironskull's duplicity, if Goribald Ironskull and his followers are still with the expedition after the potential events of "**The Big Secret**" in **Chapter 1** or if asked about their trip to the crater, Targus will make mention that his group came to the steppe by way of the pass at Durgam's Folly[G1] where they were ambushed by a group of mountain dwarf assassins. The Spurious Tidings defeated the dwarves but buried their mage Lysander and a hired sword by the side of the trail after the ambush. None of the dwarves survived, and they didn't bother to question them assuming them to have been cutpurses out of the Stonehearts. However, if they are aware of the mountain dwarves traveling with the PCs, Targus will put two and two together and warn the PCs that the mountain dwarves maybe should not be trusted. If Goribald is alive and free, he vehemently opposes any cooperation agreement and suggests that the newcomers are spies and thieves attempting to eliminate any rivals for the crater's prize. His response to Targus and any accusations will be similar to those described in "**The Big Secret**," though Gabriel Targus and his companions will readily jump to the defense of the PCs against any aggression by the mountain dwarves.

As to how they arrived at the crater, Gabriel attributes his success to the siblings' tracking and expertise in slaying orcs. They stayed somewhat close to the Stoneheart foothills as they made their way north and ran into several orc parties coming down onto the plains in search of the same prize. By tracking some, fighting others, and ultimately catching sight of the smoke plume they finally arrived. Indeed, he marvels at the fact that The Spurious Tidings survived the harrowing trek at all, let alone found the impact site. He proudly declares the mission to be a triumph, and anything that the adventuring group accomplishes going forward is merely a bonus.

If questioned further about his proposal, Targus suggests that the two groups combine forces and conduct a joint mission to survey the Pit. He is interested in scouting the basin to first determine if anyone could survive a descent into the crater's interior and secondly to assess whether the noqual contained within could be extracted and successfully returned to civilized lands to the south. He

*Oghma is the God of Bards and patron deity of Bard's Gate and Yenomesh the God of Glyphs and Writing, both of whom are known as repositories of vast and ancient knowledge. [LL8]

has no desire to delve into the column of smoke in search of riches or to destroy the undead hordes that mass in the pit. Gabriel and his crew are content to leave the actual mining and prolonged exploration to others better suited for the task. Unlike some of the PCs' previous associates, The Spurious Tidings abide by the terms of any agreement that they strike with the party.

THE SPURIOUS TIDINGS

Sent by the High Burgess of Bard's Gate to locate the Pit of the Burning Star and ascertain its potential as a resource for the city, The Spurious Tidings consists of the bard, Gabriel Targus, the elves Huldir Ravenspur and his younger sister Iracina Ravenspur, a Shattered Folk guide named Two-Cuts, and three hired swords out of Bard's Gate to provide additional muscle. The group left their mage and a fourth hired sword in shallow graves along the way. They obtained their guide after reaching the steppes and traded their own mounts for the better-suited mustangs. Since then Two-Cuts has managed to "acquire" another mustang from an unwary traveler. If the PCs make an alliance, they will find that The Spurious Tidings serve as loyal and trustworthy companions during the exploration of the crater. They are not suicidal and will not undertake an unreasonable share of the risk, but they will not abandon their allies in a tight spot either. You should use them as a way to supplement the PCs in particularly tough situations without having them take over the limelight. It might be advisable for them to hang back sometimes and guard the PCs' route of retreat if their presence in an encounter will be too unbalancing.

Gabriel Targus: Targus is a human bard in his early thirties. A graduate of Bard's College, he has become loosely affiliated with the Fellowship of the Note[LL8] and has undertaken several secret tasks for the high burgess leading up to being given this mission. Gabriel is a "tuul[FB-84]", a bard well versed in the traditions of the Plainsmen of the Waymarch, tribal descendants of the Shattered Folk, and it was for this reason that he was such a likely candidate to undertake this mission. He is affable with a magnetic personality and a fondness for breaking into the haunting, rhythmic songs of the tribes, tunes and chants that date back thousands of years before the coming of the first Hyperboreans to Akados. He is honest and loyal, and if allied with the PCs will defer to their opinions but not if something seems foolish or unnecessarily risky. He is an effective combatant and fond of tales of daring-do, but he is not stupid.

Iracina and Huldir Ravenspur: Brother and sister, these elves hail from the Forest Kingdoms[LL8] and first came to Bard's Gate as members of the Farseekers of Twilight[LL8]. After working with Gabriel Targus on a shared venture against orcs in the Stoneheart Forest, they gravitated towards his charismatic leadership and the clandestine nature of his work with the Greycloaks[LL8], eventually obtaining their release from the Farseekers with Oberon Thanlaus' blessing in order to better serve the Queen of Parnuble from within the allied human city. Having spent the better part of a century battling threats to the Forest Kingdom—and evil humanoids in particular—this pair has developed a special animosity towards orcs. They have enjoyed their time on the steppes and the opportunity for orc hunting it has afforded. They follow Gabriel's lead regarding any alliance with the PCs, however their racial hatred of orcs runs so deep that they never directly assist an orc or a half-orc, even if doing so also endangers them as well.

Two-Cuts: An irascible Shattered Folk horse thief of indeterminate age, Two-Cuts has been relieving horses from their owners for longer than most PCs have been alive. He took a mare's kick to the face as a young man which caused his facial deformity, but he has never let it affect his good humor and sense of orneriness. While he does not reveal his given name, he has been called Two-Cuts for so long because of his propensity for fighting with a weapon in each hand, that it is all he answers to anymore. He is fond of smoking his corn cob pipe if a situation appears to be heading towards trouble so he can make ready use of that item's special powers at a moment's notice. Two-Cuts has been well paid by Targus for his services and is loyal to him to a point, but he will not enter any situations that look overly dangerous or where there is not an easy route of escape available.

Hired Swords: Named Jaym, Sheth, and Coburn (with a fourth named Markus slain near Durgam's Folly[G1]), these warriors are members of Bard's Gate's Society of Arms[LL8] and are under contract with The Spurious Tidings until they have returned to that city. They have no particular interest in the value of the crater as a resource for the city — seeing such considerations as being generally above their pay grade — but they are honorable and loyal to their employers. Of any of the members of The Spurious Tidings, these are the most likely to take on particularly dangerous tasks feeling that they must uphold the honor of their organization if necessary rather than allow a report of cowardice make it back to Commandant Rahonse.

For more information on the peoples, groups, and lands mentioned above, see ***LL8: Bard's Gate*** by **Frog God Games**.

EVENT 3: THE DAY AFTER

With the new day, calm has been restored to the floor of the crater. There is no sign of the hordes of undead that once boiled up in the basin and perhaps even patrolled the air. Even any bodies of those slain by the PCs (or slain PCs and NPCs themselves) are nowhere to be seen. The marks of battle — footprints, bloodstains, etc. — still mark the sandy floor, by there are no further signs of the combatants themselves.

The hordes that guarded the crater the previous day have received a new directive from their master. Now that he knows adventurers of potential worth have found his lair, he hopes to lure them into exploring more fully and discover the cache of Rhemian coins that lie hidden below (area **N**) as part of his master plan (see that area for more details). In any case the PCs are now free to explore the depths of the crater without fear of the undead hordes that lurk within nor of the witchfires emerging from the smoke plume. Once the PCs reach the mine tunnels of the crater, though, that is a different story entirely.

EVENT 4: THREE PRIZE MEN

The Spurious Tidings are not the only competitors to arrive on the scene. The more pressing concern is the sudden appearance of three spellcasters from Castorhage that have established camp in a strip mine in the crater's northeast rim (area **L**). These Castorhagi agents refer to themselves as The Prize Men because of their knack for recovering priceless items for Her Majesty. The trio started out with a contingent of thirty hired guards and a half dozen Shattered Folk scouts, but despite traveling primarily by magical means the Haunted Steppe has winnowed their numbers to **8 guards** and **3 scouts**. The Prize Men themselves are the magus **Poirot Kenkery** and his extraplanar thralls **Ethos** and **Pathos**, the elven sorcerer **Jeriveau Lancolmb** and his thrall **Mr. Peepers**, and the witch **Linas Huth-Borxia**, his familiar **Avernos**, and his thrall **Gargizar**.

These agents prefer to spy on the PCs and other parties at the crater through a combination of scrying, scouting, and invisibly spying. For every 6 hours that the PCs remain in the vicinity of the crater there is a 50% chance of being observed by The Prize Men. If such an encounter indicated, roll on the table below to indicate the type of spying that is being used. If any of these individuals or groups is defeated, it will not be encountered again, and if rolled again should be treated as no encounter.

d20	Encounter
1–6	Scrying
7–9	Pathos
10	Mr. Peepers
11–13	1d2 Elitan-i-Pan scouts
14–15	Combat patrol
16	Poirot Kenkery
17	Linas and Gargizar
18	Poirot and company
19	Jevireau Lancolmb
20	Three Prize Men

Combat Patrol: The Prize Men have sent out a combat patrol of 1d4+1 hired guards (statistics as **veteran**[SRD]) and an **Elitan-i-Pan scout**. This group tries to stay to cover as much as possible but begins to follow the PCs from a distance of 50 feet. If spotted, the scout engages with his shortbow to try and drive the PCs off. If the PCs attack effectively, the scout runs to report back to area **L**, while the guards make a fighting retreat to cover him.

Elitan-i-Pan scouts: Shattered Folk scouts from the Elitan-i-Pan Confederation[LLo] working for The Prize Men are scouting around the crater and have spotted the PCs. They attempt to follow the PCs from cover, maintaining a distance of 60–150 feet (1d10+5 x 10). They can be spotted by a Wisdom (Perception) check opposed by their Stealth check (+9) with a –1 penalty to the PCs' Wisdom (Perception) checks for every 10 feet of distance. They will shadow the party for 1d4 minutes before breaking off contact and returning the area **L** to report. If spotted, they attempt to reach the crater rim as quickly as possible without leading the PCs directly back to their base camp. Roll for encounters for them normally on the crater wall and ridge — it is entirely possible that they run afoul of something over their heads on the trip and may never make it back to the camp at all. It is also possible that their cries could attract the PCs' attention and bring them to their aid.

ELITAN-I-PAN SCOUT

*These scouts have not brought their mounts with them.

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (chain shirt)

Hit Points 104 (16d8 + 32)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)

Skills Animal Handling +5, Medicine +2, Nature +2, Perception +5, Stealth +5, Survival +5
Senses passive Perception 15
Languages Common
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Spellcasting. The elitan-i-pan scout is a 5th level spellcaster. Their spellcasting ability is Wisdom (Save DC 11, +3 to hit with spell attacks. The scout has the following ranger spells prepared.
1st level (4 slots): *alarm*, *hunter's mark*
2nd level (2 slots): *locate object*, *spike growth*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The scout makes two ranged attacks or two melee attacks.
Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 5 (1d6 + 2) slashing damage, or 9 (2d6 + 2) if hunter's mark has been cast.
Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, range 100/250 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage, or 10 (2d6 + 3) if hunter's mark has been cast.

Jevireau Lancolmb (see Area L): The primitive sorcerer uses fly to scout out the PCs from 100 feet above. He can be spotted in daylight with a Wisdom (Perception) check (–10 for distance) opposed to his Stealth check. He will swoop down to a height of 50 feet and attempt to *dominate person* on one heavily armored PC before flying back up to a height of 300 feet and returning to area **L**. He hopes to keep tabs on the PCs by means of a dominated minion.

Linas and Gargizar (See Area L): The witch Linas Huth-Borxia and his yeth hound thrall, Gargizar, scout from 200 feet in the air. Neither is invisible, so during the daytime, the PCs can spot them with a Wisdom (Perception) check (with a –20 penalty for distance) opposed to their Stealth checks. Whether they have surprise or not, they attack when they spot the PCs. Gargizar bays and Linas uses his empowered *ice storm* to pound the PCs. He follows that with *cloudkill* and *lightning bolt*. He uses *dispel magic* on anyone who attempts to fly up to attack him. After 5 rounds or if he takes 20 points of damage or it seems like there might be several effective flyers in the party, Linas retreats directly back to area **L** to warn his colleagues.

Mr. Peepers: The shulsaga Mr. Peepers soars above the crater atop his floating disk at an altitude of 300 feet. He is not hidden in anyway, but his distance makes spotting him difficult nonetheless (DC 30 Wisdom (Perception) check in daylight). If spotted, he drops to an altitude of 100 feet and uses his *spiritual weapon* spell to manifest a scimitar against anyone with ranged weapons or who appears lightly armored. After the spell expires or he takes more than 10 points of damage, he quickly rises back up to 400 feet and departs. At night, this will likely mean he is lost from sight, however, during daylight, the PCs can attempt Wisdom (Perception) checks to keep track of his flight and follow him back to area **L**.

MR. PEEPERS, THRALL (SHULSAGA)

Medium monstrosity, neutral
Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 58 (13d8)
Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	20 (+5)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)

Skills Acrobatics +7, Arcana +5, Perception + 7, Stealth +9, Survival +5
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 17
Languages Auran
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Astral Recoil. A shulsaga can use an action to touch a silver cord that tethers mortals to the material plane. The creature attached to the cord must make a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be shunted to their bodies harmlessly.
Disk Rider. The shulsaga flies on a floating disk that it can summon as an action. The floating disk can otherwise carry its creator and equipment as per a floating disk spell. Only the shulsaga can ride the *floating disk* in this way.
Sense Rift. The shulsaga can sense any planar rift within 20 miles, automatically learning its direction and distance. This includes natural portals, non-instantaneous planar spells, such as gates, and other tears in reality.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The shulsaga makes two melee attacks or two ranged attacks.

Trident. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit*: 4 (1d6+1) piercing damage or 5 (1d8+1) piercing damage if used with both hands to make a melee attack.

Longbow. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit*: 9 (1d8+5) piercing damage.

Pathos: Pathos the cacodaemon is scouting from the air invisibly. He flies 100 feet above the ground but will swoop down to within 20 feet to get a better look at the PCs, with the normal chances of being spotted for distance and *invisibility*. He will observe the PCs for 1d10 minutes before returning to area **L** to report to his master.

PATHOS, THRALL (CACODAEMON)

Tiny fiend (daemon), neutral evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 28 (8d4 + 8)

Speed 5 ft., fly 50 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	8 (-1)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)

Skills Arcana +3, Deception +5, Perception + 5, Stealth +5

Damage Resistance. cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunity. acid, necrotic, poisoned

Condition Immunity. poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Abyssal, Common, Infernal, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Fiendish Health. The cacodaemon is immune to disease.

Innate Spellcasting. The cacodaemon's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 11). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring only verbal components:

At will: *detect evil and good, detect magic*

1/day each: *hideous laughter, invisibility*

Shapechanger. The cacodaemon can use its action to polymorph into a beast form that resembles a lizard (speed 15 ft.), octopus (5 ft., swim 30 ft.), a small scorpion (15 ft., climb 15 ft.), venomous snake (15 ft., swim 15 ft.), or back into its true form. Its statistics are the same in each form, except for the speed changes note. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 4 (1d4+2) piercing damage, and the creature must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw against disease or become poisoned until the disease is cured. Every 24 hours that elapse, the target must repeat the saving throw. A creature is cured after three successful saving throws. If a creature dies while it is poisoned and diseased in this way, its soul automatically becomes trapped as a soul gem in the cacodaemon's gut.

REACTIONS

Soul Lock. When a sentient creature dies within 60 feet of the cacodaemon, it can ingest its spirit. This causes a soul gem to grow inside of the cacodaemon's gut, which it can regurgitate as an action. A soul gem is a fine sized object with 1 hit point. Destroying a soul gem frees the soul, though it does not return the deceased creature to life. Attempting to resurrect a creature who'se soul is in a cacodaemon's soul gem requires the caster of the spell to make a spellcasting ability score check with a DC of 9. If the check succeeds, the soul gem shatters, and the creature is resurrected as normal.

Poirot and Company: Having spotted the PCs, the magus Poirot Kenkery and a company of 4 hired guards has prepared an ambush at some likely position where they can attack from cover from a distance of 20 feet. Poirot leads with a *fireball* and his guards hurl javelins after which the magus calls for the PCs immediate surrender. Assuming the PCs to do not surrender, the magus and guards will

continue to attack. If Poirot is reduced to 30 hit points or at least three of the guards are defeated, the magus will teleport back to area **L** to report and recover. Once the magus is gone, any surviving guards will immediately attempt to retreat back to their camp by the most direct route possible.

POIROT KENKERY

XP 5,000
hp 143 (see page 353)

GENTLEMEN'S EXPLORERS CLUB HIRED GUARDS (4)

XP 700
hp 58 (veteran[SRD])

Poirot Kenkery: The magus uses *fly* to scout out the party from a height of 60 feet (30 feet at night). He only reconnoiters the PCs for 1 minute before departing because he wants to make sure he gets back to the strip mine before his spells wear off. If he is spotted, he immediately retreats and returns to his camp.

Scrying: Linas Huth-Borxia is making use of his *crystal ball* to scry on a randomly determined PC. The Wisdom saving throw to avoid the scrying is DC 16, and if successful will cause Linas to move on to attempt a different PC (with the save DC reduced by 1 each time). After three failed attempts, Linas will no longer try to scry the PCs that day (treat subsequent occurrences of this method as no encounter). A DC 24 Wisdom (Perception) check is able to notice the sensor from the crystal ball's scrying.



Three Prize Men: The three spellcasters and all of their thralls set up an ambush at a location where they can attack from cover. The spellcasters prefer to swoop in from the air, while the thralls attack by air or on the ground depending on their means of travel. The group attempts to attack with surprise and overwhelm the PCs before they can organize an effective defense. If one of the spellcasters is reduced below half hit points, he immediately retreats back to area **L** by the fastest means possible. Once a spellcaster departs, his thrall(s) retreat as well. If two of the spellcasters retreat, the third retreats as well rather than remain to take on the party alone.

POIROT KENKERY

XP 5,000
hp 143 (see page 353)

ETHOS, THRALL

XP 0
hp 13 (lemure[SRD])

PATHOS, THRALL (CACODAEMON)

XP 450
hp 28 (see page 342)

JEVIREAU LANCOLMB

XP 7,200
hp 90 (see page 353)

MR. PEEPERS, THRALL (SHULSAGA)

XP 700
hp 58 (see page 342)

LINAS HUTH-BORXIA

XP 5,600
hp 112 (see page 354)

AVERNOS

XP —
hp 39 (see page 355)

GARGIZAR, THRALL (YETH HOUND)

Medium fiend, neutral evil
Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 58 (9d8 + 18)
Speed 40 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception + 6, Stealth +6, Survival +6
Damage Resistance bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages understands Abyssal and Infernal but can't speak them
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 10 (2d6+3) piercing damage and the target must make a DC 11 Wisdom saving throw or take 10 (3d6) psychic damage. Creatures that are frightened have disadvantage on this Wisdom saving throw.

Bay (1/Day). The yeth hound can howl, causing all creatures other than fiends that can hear within 300 feet to make a Wisdom saving throw. Those who fail are frightened for 1 minute. A creature frightened by this effect can make another saving throw at the end of each of their turns, ending the effect on a success. A creature that successfully saves is immune to this yeth hound's bay for 24 hours.

LOCATIONS IN THE PIT OF THE BURNING STAR

Once the PCs begin to explore the crater in earnest, they will find that there are a number of noteworthy locations. When the Caleen colonists discovered the pit, it wasn't long before they began sinking mineshafts to try and recover the valuable starmetals they suspected lay buried below. It was this intrepidness that ultimately led to their undoing but not before they had a made a good start of it. And in the centuries since, their undead forms have continued the work until there is a fairly extensive system of subterranean tunnels beneath the pit and in the surrounding ridge.

An exploration of the basin floor discovers scores, if not hundreds, of small pits and shallow shafts from aborted dig attempts. These are empty and uninteresting, and many of them were where undead ambushers lay concealed on the first day at the pit. The smoking aperture at the center of the crater is an obvious ingress point into these subterranean realms, but it is not the only one. PCs surveying the crater from the surrounding ridge or from the air can notice additional likely points of entry based on the Wisdom (Perception) checks indicated below. These DCs account for the PCs' being anywhere around the edge of the crater and assume full daylight. Obviously if the PCs come upon one of these areas by other means, they notice it automatically. You may need to modify these checks with bonuses or penalties depending on what other manner of surveying the PCs might come up with.

J1. Conroi Trail: DC 13 (DC 9 with Azmerius's correspondence)

J2. Strip Mine Ramp: DC 5

J3. Caleen Road: DC 10

J4. Fortune's Folly: DC 18

K. Azmerius's Adit: DC 16 (DC 12 with Azmerius's correspondence)

L. The Prize Pit: DC 7

M. Fuming Chasm: DC –10

N. Caleen Cache: DC 9

O. The Nest: DC 31 or 6 (see area **O** for details)

P. The Traveler's Tomb: DC 21

Q. The Mother Lode: DC 20

J. RIDGE TRAILS

Each of these is a steep, winding trail that makes its way down from the rim of the crater to its base. Chances for encounters on these trails are described under **Crater Wall** above.

J1. CONROI TRAIL

This trail leads from the rim down to Azmerius's Adit (area **K**). After that mine entrance it only extends another 60 feet before ending at a sheer precipice where the trail has collapsed in some long-ago rockfall. Continuing any further will require the PCs to climb down as described under **Crater Wall** above. From the trailhead it is not obvious that the trail dead-ends, so the PCs will actually have to scout this to determine it for themselves.

J2. STRIP MINE RAMP

This is a vast ramp constructed of rubble and talus that extends from the strip mine at area **L** down to the floor of the crater. A trail leads down into the strip mine itself as described at that area, and the ramp extends the rest of the way down into the crater at a fairly smooth 16° grade.



J3. CALEEN ROAD

The bare traces of an ancient cart track can be found at the crater's rim that leads to this trail, as it was once the main route for moving the heavy freight wagons in and out of the crater for the Caleen mining operation. The trail itself averages 20 feet wide and could even allow two of the huge wagons to pass one another. However, its greater width and exposure to the elements as well as its history of heavy use have caused it to erode more than its fellows, so its broken and rutted surface is difficult terrain along its length. In addition, it has become the lair of the **Stone Eater**. This massive monstrosity from the Plane of Earth appeared in the crater at some point in the past and after tangling with the undead off and on for years eventually made its way up here where it found a convenient hollow in the road. The behemoth is the shape of an irregular boulder with dun-colored chitinous plates surrounding a vast, toothed maw and an underbelly of pebbled flesh.

STONE EATER

Gargantuan aberration, unaligned
Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 259 (14d20+112)
Speed 20 ft., burrow 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
30 (+10)	7 (-2)	26 (+8)	6 (-2)	17 (+3)	2 (-4)

Saving Throws Str +15, Dex +3, Cha +1
Skills Athletics +15, Perception +13, Stealth +8
Damage Resistances cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities acid
Condition Immunities frightened, paralyzed, prone, stunned
Senses blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., tremorsense 60 ft., passive Perception 23
Languages Terran
Challenge 14 (11,500 XP)

Ground Manipulation. The Stone Eater can use an action to cause stone and earth within its space to grow soft and muddy in a radius of 100 ft, centerd on itself. The ground remains muddy for 1 minute after the Stone Eater moves off from the location. The Stone Eater can move through these areas with ease, but other creatures treat them as difficult terrain. If the Stone Eater has

buried itself and uses the ability, the muddy ground forms a slippery funnel to its mouth. This muddy funnel requires a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw to avoid sliding to its center where the creature's mouth awaits. Any creature sliding to its mouth is immediately subjected to a free bite attack and a swallow whole attack. Attempts to climb out of the slippery funnel require a DC 16 Strength (Athletics) check.

Regeneration. The stone eater regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point.

Seige Monster. The stone eater deals double damage to objects and structures.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The stone eater makes two attacks: one with its bite, and one with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +15 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 19 (2d8 + 10) piercing damage. If the target is a Huge or smaller creature, it must succeed on a DC 19 Strength saving throw or be swallowed by the stone eater. A swallowed creature is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the stone eater, and it takes 17 (5d6) acid damage at the start of each of the stone eater's turns. If the stone eater takes 20 damage or more on a single turn from a creature inside it, the stone eater must succeed on a DC 19 Constitution saving throw at the end of that turn or regurgitate all swallowed creatures, which fall prone in a space within 10 feet of the stone eater. If stone eater dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse by using 10 feet of movement, exiting prone.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +15 to hit, reach 30 ft., one target. *Hit*: 21 (2d10 + 10) piercing damage.

Barrage (Recharge 5-6). The Stone Eater releases a swarm of rock in a 30-foot-radius spread. Those within the area of effect must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw, taking 45 (10d8) bludgeoning damage on a failure, or half as much on a success.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The stone eater can take 2 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The stone eater regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Claws. The stone eater makes one attack with its claws.

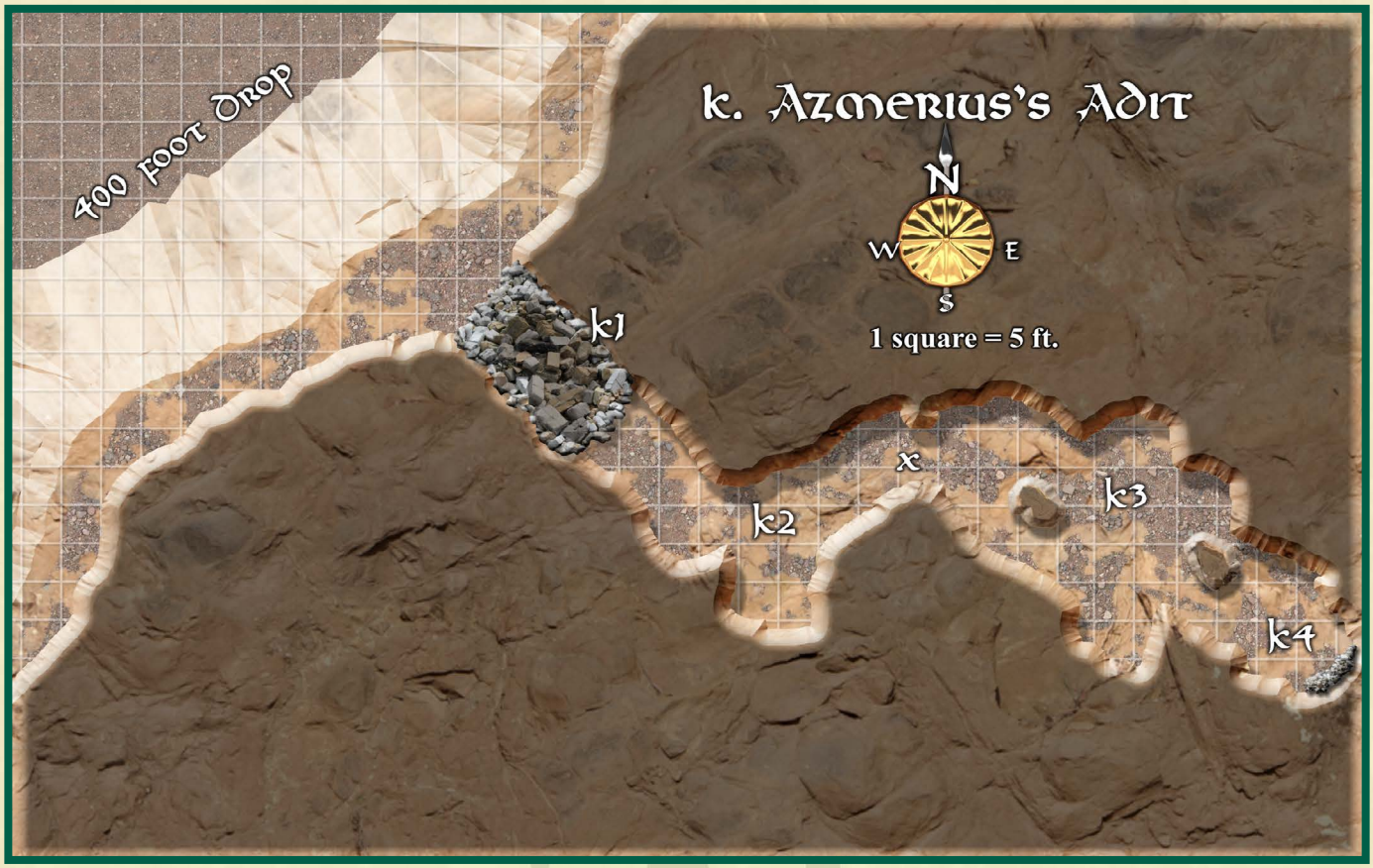
Burrow. The stone eater moves at its full burrow speed and does not provoke oppourtunity attacks.

Tactics: The Stone Eater sleeps for years at a time as its glacial metabolism slowly digests the occasional meal that comes along, and as a result it settles into its hollow and buries itself in earth and rubble so that only its mouth is exposed. When closed, this orifice just resembles a crease in the rough rock of the roadway. Noticing the creature in this buried state requires a DC 27 Wisdom (Perception) check. Its tremorsense awakes it if the PCs walk down the trail (though flying PCs will not disturb its slumber unless they are loud). When it detects approaching prey, it uses its ground manipulation ability to draw prey towards its suddenly opening maw and attacks with its claws. While it remains entrenched in its lair, it gains cover from attacks that are not launched from directly above. If reduced to less than 60 hit points, it attempts to burrow deeper into the ridge and cover itself in tens of feet of dirt and rock to escape its attackers.

Treasure: If the Stone Eater is slain and its Gargantuan body somehow moved, the treasures that it proved unable to digest and subsequently excreted beneath it can be uncovered. These include 110 gp, 147 sp, 752 cp, 133 pp, a *+1 shield* pitted and scarred but functional, a small tobacco tin holding a *dark blue rhomboid ioun stone (awareness)*, and a *wand of paralysis* made of corroded bronze.

J4. FORTUNE'S FOLLY

This steep and seemingly treacherous trail descends over broken terrain and crumbling cliffs and was originally abandoned as too precipitous at the time of the Caleen mining. However, today it provides the most secure and least dangerous path to the bottom of the crater. There are no random encounters when the PCs use this trail.



K. AZMERIUS' ADIT

Armed with Azmerius' writings as a guide, the PCs may search for the collapsed mine that is sure to be the Conroi Expedition's final resting place. The chances of locating the Conroi Trail (**J1**) and the adit itself (**L**) are given above. The collapsed entrance lies down the trail 105 feet below the crater rim and more than 400 feet from the bottom.

Loose rocks, earth, and debris along the trail here reveal the telltale marks of a rock fall. However, the crater wall above this collapse show no signs of the fall indicating that these rocks must have come from an internal collapse, giving evidence that a tunnel once pierced the crater wall at this location. The narrow ledge continues around this collapse and winds a convoluted path down the basin's edge.

K1. COLLAPSED ENTRANCE

The adit used by Azmerius's surviving band is a horizontal shaft burrowed into the rock of the crater rim at a slight upward angle to provide access, ventilation, and drainage for a vertical mineshaft deeper in. The tightly packed material that collapsed into this entrance completely fills the first 20 feet of the adit, making the area beyond it inaccessible to most creatures. Clearing a 5-foot-wide by 5-foot-high passage through this debris will require moving 8,000 pounds of rubble as well as providing shoring or logs or heavy beams as support at least every 5 feet. Without digging tools, a character can clear rubble equal to 5 times his heavy load limit per minute, though only a single Medium or Small creature can work on a 5-foot-wide workface at a time with another required for each 5 feet of depth to move the rubble out of the tunnel at the same rate. Armed with appropriate tools, the work can go twice as fast. However, this sort of activity increases the likelihood of a random trail encounter to 25% every minute as predators are likely to be attracted by all the hubbub. Of course, at the PCs' level, spells and effects such as *move earth*, *passwall*, *stone shape*, or *dimension door* to either physically move the collapsed material out of their way or bypass the entrance altogether are likely to be options.

While digging through or otherwise penetrating this rubble-choked barrier, there is a 30% chance in each 5-foot-square cleared to come upon the crushed skeletal remains of one of the members of the Conroi Expedition who worked to collapse the tunnel as described in Azmerius's journal entry. These skeletal remains are too crushed and decomposed to provide any useful information or anything of value, but the rusted remains of a prybar or the head of a sledgehammer might rest nearby giving mute testimony to the horrific nature of their final labors.

Beyond the collapse, the tunnels are of hewn stone with 7-foot ceilings unless otherwise noted. There are no light sources.

K2. CONROI'S LAST STAND

Stale air fills the dust-choked tunnel beyond the collapse where rusty pickaxes, broken pieces of equipment and gear, and the dried and tattered remains of clothing rest on and among at least a dozen humanoid skeletons sprawled on the floor. Many have broken bones or fractured skulls and some still have their skeletal hands locked around another's neck as if they died in the course of some horrifically lethal brawl.

As described in Azmerius's writings (**Handout 4A**), in a desperate gambit to save their necks from impending doom Azmerius and his remaining associates deliberately collapsed the mine's entrance to secure their subterranean bunker against intruders. Although they successfully sealed off the adit, several tons of rock and earth could not protect them against the meteorite's baleful influence. An examination of the skeletons with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check confirms the manner of death. The eleven individuals not killed in the tunnel collapse died from injuries consistent with those incurred during a wild melee as the metallurgic amber suffusing the site took its toll on their already thinning sanity. Two of the corpses lying at the point marked "X" on the map show signs of multiple fractures as if some powerful force from the eastern tunnel blasted them, as identified with a successful Wisdom (Medicine) check. A DC 23 Intelligence (Arcana) check can identify these as being consistent with the effects of a sonic blast, such as from a *glyph of warding*, which Azmerius cast in his final moments to ward off his insane companions.

Not all of these dead rest easily after dying in pain, insanity, and darkness. A few of them have arisen as **3 advanced spectres** and still haunt this chamber. However, they have long been somnolent and do not awake to rise and attack unless a PC begins channeling positive energy in this chamber. Doing so enrages the spirits and causes them to arise and attack immediately. They pursue relentlessly, though they will not follow fleeing PCs out of the mine into daylight. If no positive energy channeling is used here, the spectres remain quiet within the floor beneath their remains with their unnatural auras suppressed and can only be detected with magic such as *detect evil* or *detect undead*. In this case, they all arise and attack if Azmerius Thade manifests in area **K3**.

ADVANCED SPECTER (3)

Medium undead, lawful evil
Armor Class 16
Hit Points 110 (17d8 + 34)
Speed 0 ft., fly 80 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (-5)	22 (+6)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)	20 (+5)	19 (+4)

Skills History +7, Intimidate +7, Perception +9, Religion +7, Stealth +9, Survival +7
Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 19
Languages Common
Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Incorporeal Movement. The specter can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 10 (3d6) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.
Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the specter has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.
Turn Resistance. The specter has advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead.
Unnatural Aura. Beasts can sense the unnatural presence of a specter at a distance of 30 feet. They do not willingly approach nearer than that and are frightened if forced to do so unless they success on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw. The beast is frightened until it can no longer see the specter.

ACTIONS
Multiattack. The specter makes two life drain attacks.
Life Drain. *Melee Spell Attack*: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 27 (6d8) necrotic damage.

The target must succeed on a DC 1Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the creature finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0. A creature slain in this way rises as a specter spawned under the command of the advanced specter within 1 hour of dying. Killing the advanced specter returns the spawned specter's free will, but it remains a specter.

Treasure: Other than Azmerius most of the high-level leaders of the expedition were killed by the undead of the crater before ever making it to this mine shaft, so all of the weapons and gear present of no special value and have rusted or deteriorated to the point of uselessness over the years here. However, each of these skeletons bears a pouch containing 5d10 gp. One of them wears a *ring of protection* and another carries a *martyr's salvation* (see **Appendix C**, page 145).

K3. AZMERIUS'S UNREST

The mine tunnel widens into a chamber of sorts. Columns of hewn stone have been left in place to serve as supports for the ceiling in this larger area. Dust lies thick throughout, and the chamber seems to hold a sense of long silence and undisturbed peace. Barely visible beneath the omnipresent layer of dust, a withered, desiccated corpse sits propped against the far wall. Its posture is stooped and head bent, focused on something in its lap.

This corpse has mummified in the dry air rather than succumbing to decomposition like the bodies in the prior chamber. A closer examination reveals it to be a Foerdewaith human male of middle age with a short-cropped graying beard and a balding pate with his remaining hair held back in a short pony tail. Though weathered and smeared with travel stains and blood, his golden robes bear the still-recognizable sunburst and leaves symbol of a priest of Mitra[LL5], identifiable with a DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check. If the check exceeds a DC 20, the indications of him being a servant of the Cathedral of Ste. Angeline in Nains are evident. This can be none other than Azmerius Thade, the chaplain of the Conroi Expedition and author of the travel reports that have guided the PCs on their way to the Pit of the Burning Star.

Inspecting the corpse reveals it still clutch a long dry quill and a small strip of crumbling parchment, the ink appearing as fresh as the day it was written from its time in the dry, lightless cave. Next to the corpse on the floor rests an inkwell (long dry) and a small cage holding the mummified remains of a single carrier pigeon. The cause of death for the corpse it difficult to discern, but a DC 25 Wisdom (Medicine) check can detect that its dry leathery flesh is covered in the telltale burns seen upon so many of the undead here. Examining the piece parchment it holds reveals that it tells of the final days of the Conroi Expedition upon reaching the crater and ends with the harrowing retreat to this mine. concludes with the eerily familiar scrawled line of, "A prince keeps his prize—" and, in fact, proves to be identical to the wording of the very sheaves of copied correspondence from Azmerius recovered from Nains and have carried by the PCs since Dun Eamon. They are in fact the final three entries from **Handout 4D** from the adventure ***Legend of the Burning Star***. The fact that they match these entries perfectly and that Azmerius's final carrier pigeon with which he intended to send this last missive appears to have never been removed from its cage raises the very serious question of how his final words ever made it out of this sealed cave and into the archives at Nains to begin with.

The PCs do not have long to ponder this strange conundrum, however, because like his fellows in K2, Azmerius's own soul has not remained untainted and rested easy. One minute after the PCs enter this chamber or as soon as the corpse is disturbed, the corpse of lurches to its feet, its eyes burning with a hellish light and flickering shadows encompassing it. Azmerius Thade now exists as a powerful undead and seeks to destroy the living creatures that have dared to defile his tomb.

AZMERIUS THADE

Medium undead, lawful evil
Armor Class 14
Hit Points 105 (14d8 + 42)
Speed 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (can hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Str +7, Dex +8, Con +7, Wis +5
Skills Perception +5, Stealth +8
Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning, radiant, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages Common
Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Incorporeal Movement. Azmerius can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. He takes 5 (1d10) force damage if he ends his turn inside an object.

Legendary Resistance (2/Day). If Azmerius fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Scorn the Light. If Azmerius takes radiant damage and drops to 0 or less hit points, he must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of the damage taken. On a success, Azmerius drops to 1 hit point instead.

Special Gear. Azmerius wears a blazing robe.

Turn Resistance. Azmerius has advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead.

ACTIONS

Fist. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 6 (1d6+3) bludgeoning damage, plus 17 (5d6) necrotic damage.

Life Drain. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 22 (4d8 + 4) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

Ray of Darkness. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +8 to hit, range 100 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 22 (5d8) necrotic damage.

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

Dismay (1/Day). All creatures within 30 feet must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw. Creatures with an Intelligence of 2 or less are immune. On a failed save, a creature is incapacitated. Creatures that are incapacitated may do nothing but bicker or argue and cannot speak in a way to make themselves understood by other creatures. Creatures that fail their saving throw by 5 or more are affected as per the spell confusion. This effect has a duration of 1 minute. A creature may make a new saving throw at the end of each of its turn, ending the effect on a success.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Azmerius can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Azmerius regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Fly. Azmerius flies up to its speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

Attack. Azmerius makes a fist attack or uses Life Drain.

Shadow Embrace (2 actions). Azmerius regain 15 (1d10+10) hit poins, and he radiates magical darkness in 15-foot sphere until the beginning of his next turn. A creature with darkvision can't see through this darkness, and nonmagical light can't illuminate it, but it does not affect Azmerius.

Tactics: When Azmerius rises, his unholy presence attracts the spectres in **K2** who arrive in the next round if they haven't already been dispatched by the PCs. If the **hungry fogs** in **K4** haven't been dealt with, they likewise respond to the battle and arrive in 2 rounds. Azmerius's first action is to assume ghost form. He then attacks with his dismay ability. He then uses his dangerous attacks and *blazing robes* against combatants. He fights until destroyed to prevent the PCs from recovering his final correspondence (unaware that they already possess a copy) and will pursue relentlessly until it is recovered. The specters attack as long as Azmerius hasn't been destroyed, though they cannot follow into sunlight. The **hungry fogs** will likewise not leave the mine tunnels but will continue to fight as long as living prey remains within.

Development: As he fights, the angry Azmerius speaks, though his broken mind cannot converse in a conventional sense. He constantly reiterates his desire to acquire the crater's treasures in addition to obsessing about sending his dispatches safely back to his glorious king[LL7-232], giving credence to the fact that the Conroi Expedition was secretly backed by the Crown of Castorhage and loyal to it rather than the Grand Duke of Reme as was publicly stated. A DC 20 Intelligence (History) check reveals that at the time of the Conroi Expedition King Worrn IV sat upon the throne of Castorhage, though he was debilitated with illness and Queen-Regent Lotheria Tredici ruled in his stead. Any questions posed to Azmerius go unanswered, as he is incapable of anything but his mad perseveration.

K4. HUNGRY END

The passage here ends at an old collapse, much older than the one that sealed the mine entrance. The floor begins to incline steeply upward here and some source of water must exist somewhere farther up because a thin mist seems to cling to this ancient rock fall, though it extends no farther than a few feet before dissipating in the dry air of the tunnel.



This tunnel provided drainage for the main mine shaft deeper in the crater rim but collapsed not long after the fall of the Caleen Colonies. Though the tunnel is sealed by hundreds of feet of earth and is impassible to the PCs, it has allowed a small quantity of the moisture in the farther tunnels to seep through. Along with this natural mist have ventured **2 hungry fogs** that have come here seeking living creatures to feed upon. Their misty forms cling to the rock fall awaiting prey unless they have already responded to the sounds of battle in area **K3**. In that case, only harmless mist remains in this area.

HUNGRY FOGS (2)

Huge ooze, unaligned
Armor Class 7
Hit Points 94 (9d12 + 36)
Speed 0 ft., fly 15 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (-5)	4 (-3)	18 (+4)	1 (-5)	1 (-5)	1 (-5)

Saving Throws Con +7
Damage Resistances cold; bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities acid, lightning, necrotic
Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, prone
Senses blindsight 120 ft. (blind beyond this radius, passive Perception 5)
Languages Common
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Aura of Fear. Creatures that enter the hungry fog's space for the first time in a turn, or that start their turn inside the hungry fog's space must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened of the hungry fog for 1 minute. A creature affected in this way can make another saving throw at the end of each of their turns, ending the effect on a success. A creature that succeeds on this saving throw is immune to this hungry fog's aura of fear for 24 hours.

Mist Form. The hungry fog can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there. It can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Necrotic Absorption. Whenever the hungry fog is subjected to necrotic damage, it takes no damage and instead regains a number of hit points equal to the fire damage dealt.

Wind Vulnerability. The hungry fog can be dispersed by a strong wind. A hungrgy fog takes 10 thundering damage when it starts its turn in a strong wind. While in the strong wind, it has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

ACTIONS

Negative Energy Burst. The hungry fog forces all creatures inside of its space to make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. A creature takes 21 (6d6) necrotic damage on a failure, or half as much on a success. If a creature fails by 5 or more, it also gains an exhaustion level, and the hungry fog heals up to 10 hit points.

L. THE PRIZE PIT

An expansive pit has been dug into the rim of the crater here, an impressive terraced excavation replete with perilous trails, precarious ledges, treacherous talus slopes, and strangely colored pools. A great ramp of gravel and rubble extends upward to this pit from the crater floor. Ropes bolted into the stone walls above several precarious outcroppings as well as the ledge adjacent to the ramp presumably allow climbers up and down from the heights and seem to provide access to a makeshift camp of some sort.

When the Caleen colonists discovered the crater, a large deposit of copper and lead was found in this section of the rim, and a large strip-mining operation was begun. It was the largest and most successful of the colonists' endeavors at the Pit before the destruction of the colonies. The colonists built the great ramp at **J2** with the tailings of the strip mine, and the structure has weathered the centuries since in excellent condition.

The drops between levels of the pit are generally sheer cliffs (DC 18 Strength (Athletics) checks to Climb), and are indicated by their height above the pit floor (area **L1**), so the drop off of any ledge can be determined by subtracting the indicated height of the ledge below from the height of the ledge where the fall occurred. Trails between different levels of the pit are narrow and treacherous, having eroded greatly over the centuries. Each varies from 2–4 feet in width (roll 1d6 divided by 2 +1), requiring DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks to balance on them. In several places, ropes have recently been secured to the pit walls by pitons and grant advantage on Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks to negotiate the ledges.



In the last few days some new inhabitants have taken up temporary residence in the shelter of the strip mine and effectively driven off any of the local denizens that lurked in the crater rim here. A group of contracted explorers and professional agents out of the City-State of Castorhage calling themselves The Prize Men have set up camp in this semi-sheltered location. Powerful spellcasters and their assorted underlings, the Prize Men were hired by the Crown to keep tabs on the progress being made in searching for the Pit of the Burning Star, a task for which the Crown of Castorhage secretly hired the Conroi Expedition nearly eight decades ago. Though the Prize Men have pieces of Azmerius's writings as well, they have mainly kept tabs on the multiple expeditions by means of scrying, and then instantly travel with their entourage in 100-mile increments by means of shrink spells, and their leader's wand of teleportation. They recently arrived after tracking the progress of Earl Rannulf's band and to a certain extent the Ironskull dwarves, with some peeping in on the Spurious Tidings. They have avoided scrying the PCs directly, because early on they decided that they were likely the most formidable of their rivals as well as the ones most likely to notice being scried. Now that they have arrived, they witnessed any initial foray by the PCs and have possibly already been encountered to some extent from their activities in **Event 4**.

The Prize Men consist of a trio of spellcasters: **Poirot Kenkery**, a magus and their informal leader, **Jevireau Lancolmb**, an elven dilettante sorcerer and artist, and **Linas Huth-Borxia**, a witch and offspring from one of the most powerful families in Castorhage. Each of these arcane casters keeps at least one extraplanar **thrall** (see page 120 of ***LL7: The Blight: Richard Pett's Crooked City*** by **Frog God Games** for more information on thralls), though Poirot actually keeps **2 thralls**, and Linas has his **familiar** as well. The thralls are allies (rather than minions) and are fiercely loyal to their masters, even fighting to the

* See pages 225 and 260 of ***LL7: The Blight: Richard Pett's Crooked City*** by **Frog God Games** for information on the Gentlemen Explorers Club.

death if so ordered, even though they know a death on the Material Plane is permanent for them. In addition to these extraplanar subordinates, The Prize Men travel with **8 hired guards** from the Gentlemen's Explorers Club of Castorhage* and **3 Shattered Folk scouts** from the Elitan-i-Pan Confederation[LLo]. Remove any of The Prize Men or their underlings who have already been slain or captured by the PCs.

GENTLEMEN'S EXPLORERS CLUB HIRED GUARDS (8)

XP 700
hp 58 (statistics as veteran[SRD])

ELITAN-I-PAN SCOUTS (3)

XP 1,100
hp 104 (see page 340)
*These scouts have not brought their mounts with them.

POIROT KENKERY

Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil
Armor Class 16 (+1 breastplate)
Hit Points 143 (26d8+26)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Con +5
Skills Arcana +11, Deception +5, History +7, Intimidate +10, Nature +7, Persuasion +10, Survival +5
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages Common, Dwarven, Kirkut, Orc
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Dreamspeaker. Words.
Special Gear. *+1 breastplate, cape of the mountebank, 2 potions of superior healing, 2 potions of darkvision, everburning torch,* silver hunter's flask (25 gp), belt pouch with a snuffbox holding 9 pinches of snuff, 114 gp, 86 cp, and a small tiger eye agate.
Spellcasting. Poirot is a 7th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). He regains his expended spell slots when he finishes a short or long rest. He knows the following wizard spells.
Cantrips (at will): *dancing lights, light, prestidigitation, shocking grasp*
1st level (4 slots): *expeditious retreat, feather fall, grease, magic missile*
2nd level (3 slots): *acid arrow, invisibility, mirror image*
3rd level (3 slots): *fireball, fly, vampiric touch*
4th level (1 slots): *black tentacles*

ACTIONS
Multiattack. Poirot makes two longsword attacks and casts shocking grasp.
Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d8+2) slashing damage or 7 (1d10+2) slashing damage if used with two hands.
Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, range 80/320, one target. *Hit*: 5 (1d8+1) piercing damage.

ETHOS, THRALL

XP 0
hp 13 (lemure[SRD])

PATHOS, THRALL (CACODAEMON)

XP 450
hp 28 (see page 340)

JEVIREAU LANCOLMB

Medium humanoid (elf), chaotic neutral
Armor Class 16 (mage armor)
Hit Points 90 (20d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	24 (+5)

Skills Arcana +9, History +9, Intimidate +9, Insight +5, Nature +5, Perception +9, Persuasion +9
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 19
Languages Celestial, Common, Elven
Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

Dreamspeaker. Jevireau can tap into the powers of sleep. Jevireau's sleep spell affects 100 hit points of creatures, as if Jevireau had rolled that number as part of casting the *sleep* spell.

Fey Ancestry. Jevireau has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put Jevireau to sleep.

Innate Spellcasting. Jevireau's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma. He can innately cast the following spells (spell save DC 17), requiring no material components:

3/day: *hideous laughter*, *sleep*

1/day: *dream*

Special Gear. 2 elixirs of love, scroll of *wall of force*, *ring of protection*, *cloak of resistance*, *hat of disguise*, platinum and copper bracers (700 gp), gold and chalcedony ring (135 gp), armored insectum case[LL7] with a Blake's sanguisuga, 2 festerfew, 3 howling nighshade grubs, and 5 misery slugs (see sidebar), belt pouch with 825 gp.

Spellcasting. Jevireau is a 12th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). He regains his expended spell slots when he finishes a short or long rest. He knows the following sorceror spells.

Cantrips (at will): dancing lights, mage hand, message, minor illusion, prestidigitation, ray of frost

1st level (4 slots): *charm person*, *entangle*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*

2nd level (3 slots): *false life*, *scorching ray*, *see invisibility*, *suggestion*

3rd level (3 slots): *fly*, *hold person*, *lightning bolt*

4th level (3 slots): *bestow curse*, *blight*, *charm monster*

5th level (2 slots): *dominate person*, *tree stride*

6th level (1 slot): *mass suggestion*

ACTIONS

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

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60, one target. *Hit*: 5 (1d4+3) piercing damage.

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, range 80/320, one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d8+3) piercing damage.

MR. PEEPERS, THRALL (SHULSAGA)

XP 700

hp 58 (see page 341)

LINAS HUTH-BORXIA

Medium humanoid (aquatic), lawful evil

Armor Class 14 (*mage armor*)

Hit Points 112 (15d8 + 45)

Speed 30 ft., swim 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)	20 (+5)

Skills Arcana +9, Intimidate +9, Insight +7, Medicine +3, Perception +3, Survival +3

Damage Resistances cold

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Aboleth, Aquan, Common, Gnome, Infernal, Undercommon

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)



Amphibious. Linas can breathe air and water.

Familiar. Linas has a **crab** familiar named Avernos. As long as Linas is within 100 feet of Avernos, Linas can communicate with it telepathically. As an action, Linas can see through Avernos's eyes and hear what it hears until the start of Linas's next turn. During this time, Linas is deaf and blind with regard to his own senses.

Innate Spellcasting. Linas's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma. He can innately cast the following spells (spell save DC 17), requiring no material components:

At will: *disguise self*, *mage armor* (self only)
3/day: *shield*
1/day: *eyebite*, *finger of death*, *dominate monster*

Special Gear. 2 potions of *cure moderate wounds*, *potion of displacement*, *potion of invisibility*, 4 doses purple worm poison, *decanter of endless water*.

Spellcasting. Linas is a 15th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). He regains his expended spell slots when he finishes a short or long rest. He knows the following warlock spells.

Cantrips (at will): *eldritch blast*, *message*, *minor illusion*, *prestidigitation*
1st-5th level (3 5th-level spell slots): *alter self*, *bestow curse*, *black tentacles*, *burning hands*, *dispel magic*, *cloudkill*, *fly*, *hideous laughter*, *hypnotic pattern*, *lightning bolt*, *phantasmal killer*, *see invisibility*, *shatter*

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

Water Mastery. Linas has advantage on Dexterity checks when immersed in water. This includes initiative checks.

ACTIONS

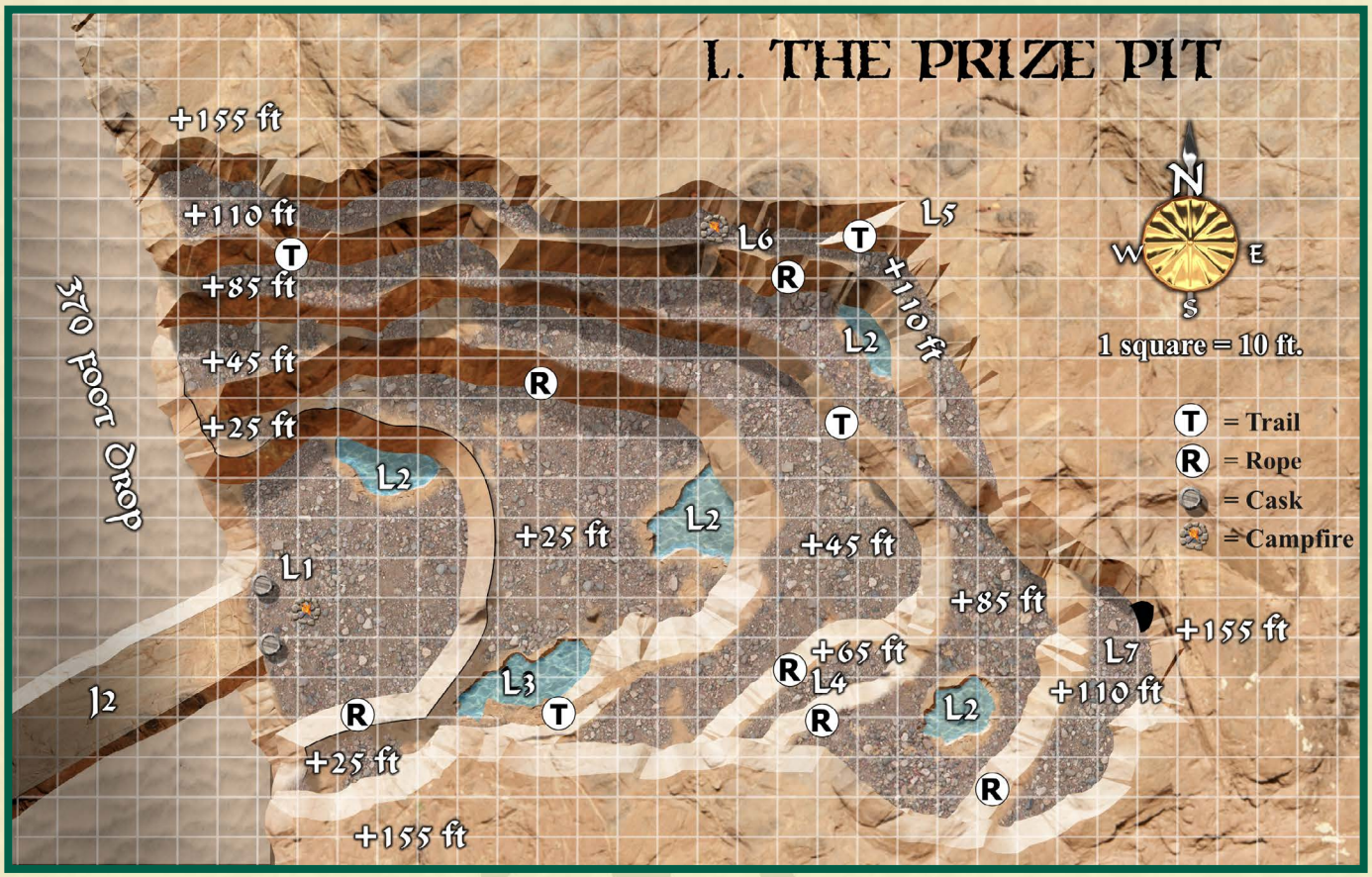
Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60, one target. *Hit*: 3 (1d4+1) piercing damage. If purple worm poison is used, the target creature must make a DC 19 Constitution saving throw, taking 42 (12d6) poison damage on afailed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

GARGIZAR, THRALL (YETH HOUND)

XP 700
hp 58 (see page 343)

Tactics: When encountered in their camp, the Prize Men and their minions take maximum advantage of their surroundings. The scouts take up high positions among the cover of the boulders and rubble of the strip mine to fire on intruders with their composite shortbows, while the hired guards take up position at trails, ropes, and other choke points where they can fend attackers off with their longspears, javelins, and alchemist's fire for as long as possible before closing for direct melee. The spellcasters prefer to keep to the high ground and remain mobile with their various means of flight for as long as possible. Poirot Kenkery doesn't shy away from melee combat — though he always seeks to minimize the number of opponents who can attack him at any one time — but the other two try to remain at range for as long as possible. Ethos remains near Poirot, but the magus sends Pathos to bite through ropes or otherwise hinder the PCs as they traverse treacherous ledges and trails. Mr. Peepers (not his real name) for his part remains airborne near Jevireau seeking to provide cover from ranged attacks and take out threatening spellcasters with his *spiritual weapon* (which he manifests as a scimitar to gain its greater critical threat range). He prefers to ready the attack of the *spiritual weapon* for when a PC begins casting a spell so he can attempt to interrupt the casting. Gargizar remains by Linas's side and only uses his bay ability when the witch is directly threatened. The other members of the expedition are not immune to this effect, so Linas does not allow him to use it earlier.

Development: A member of The Prize Men who is captured or is in fear of death does not long remain loyal to his fellows. These "gentlemen explorers" are only as reliable as the coin they receive, and as soon as the price seems too high (usually when reduced to 20% of their maximum Hit Points), they'll seek to escape through whatever means are available. Their first choice will always be to rejoin their companions and regroup, second choice is to seek to flee somewhere as far away as possible even if it means leaving friends and underlings behind, and third choice will be surrender. If successfully captured alive and Coerced, any of these men will gladly spill everything he knows about his fellows in exchange for his life and freedom. For their part, the scouts and guards are much more loyal and will continue to fight as long as one of The Prize Men remains in the fight. A captured scout or guard can likewise be Coerced into talking, but they don't know much other than their bosses have magic which they've used to move quickly across the steppes and that their bosses are particularly lazy and loathsome.



L1. MINE FLOOR

The lowest level of the strip mine is accessed here by the great ramp from the crater floor (**J2**). The drop from this level of the strip mine to the crater floor is 370 feet. Add this to the height of the ledge if someone falls from a higher ledge into the depths of the crater. If not already encountered in **Event 4**, there will usually be **3 hired guards** and **1 scout** on guard duty here to make sure that nothing approaches from the depths of the crater. They have a small campfire and have set a small cask of lamp oil on either side of the ramp. If intruders approach from the ramp, two of the guards broach the tops of the casks with their morningstars while the scout provides covering fire. They then roll the open barrels down the ramp covering a 30-foot-long swath of it with the oil. As soon as intruders reach that area, one guard will throw a burning brand from the fire onto the oil and ignite. The oil burns for 5 rounds and deals 2d6 points of burn damage per round for anyone in it and requires a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw for each round of exposure to avoid catching fire.

GENTLEMEN'S EXPLORERS CLUB HIRED GUARDS (3)

XP 1,200

hp 58 (statistics as veteran[SRD])

ELITAN-I-PAN SCOUT

XP 1,100

hp 104 (see page 340)

*These scouts have not brought their mounts with them.

L2. TOXIC POOLS

Each of these locations marks a pool of rainwater collected in a hollow in the strip mine's work faces. The pools vary in depth from 5–20 feet (1d4 x 5) and are strangely tinted in reds, blues, and greens with an oily sheen. These pools are highly polluted with heavy metals and other wastes from the mine. Anyone exposed to the waters risks being poisoned, and anyone actually drinking them especially so.

TAINTED WATERS

Type poison, ingested or contact; **Save** Constitution DC 15 (contact), DC 20 (ingested)
Effect poisoned for 1d4 minutes. Once the poison runs its course, the victim must make another Constitution daving throw with a DC of 15. If the victim fails, they gain 1 level of exhaustion.

L3. INHABITED POOL

This pool is tainted like the toxic pools (**L2**) but is shallow in its western half (only 3 feet deep) and provides easy means to wade to the trail leading up to the next ledge of the strip mine. Wading through the waters is considered contact, unless the individual is wearing watertight boots or waders. In addition, as the Castorhagi expedition discovered, this pool is also occupied. The deeper (25 feet deep) eastern half of the pool is home to **3 giant hellgrammites**, and unlike the other crater wall denizens that The Prize Men were able to drive away with a show of force, these massive water insects have refused to leave. After losing one Shattered Folk scout to the creatures, the Castorhagi now avoid the pool and use a rope they have affixed on the opposite side of this level to reach the ledges above. For their part, the centipede-like horrors do not bother anyone that does not actually enter the water or fly immediately above its surface. They are, of course, immune to the toxins of the water.

GIANT HELLGRAMMITES (3)

Large beast, unaligned
Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 115 (11d10 + 55)
Speed 30 ft., swim 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	19 (+4)	20 (+5)	1 (-5)	13 (+1)	6 (-2)

Skills Perception +7, Stealth +9
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 17
Languages —
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Amphibious. The hellgrammite can breathe air and water.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The hellgrammite makes two attacks: one bite attack and one tail attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 19 (3d8+6) slashing damage and the target is grappled (escape DC 16). Until this grapple ends, the creature is restrained, and the hellgrammite can't bite another target. A hellgrammite has advantage to bite a creature it is grappling. If a creature is still grappled when the hellgrammite is reduced to 0 hit points, the grappled creature takes an additional 13 (3d8) slashing damage at the start of each of its turns, and the grapple continues until the creature successfully escapes, or 10 damage is dealt to the hellgramite's corpse.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 22 (3d10+6) bludgeoning damage.

Treasure: Lying at the bottom of the deep portion of the pool amid the stripped bones of the scout and a few ash giants can be found a masterwork chain shirt, a masterwork scimitar, a *cloak of protection*, a total of 115 gp, assorted gems worth 225 gp, and pieces of broken or ruined equipment and potions.

L4. WATCH LEDGE

A lone **scout** is normally perched atop this ledge, keeping watch over the top of the ramp and the crater below. If the strip mine comes under attack, he shouts an alarm and provides ranged support with his bow. If any of the scouts have previously been eliminated in **Event 4**, the one on this ledge is removed first.

ELITAN-I-PAN SCOUT

XP 1,100
hp 104 (see page 340)
*These scouts have not brought their mounts with them.

L5. UPPER ENTRANCE

A trail leads down from the crater rim into the strip mine here. The Prize Men have posted a guard here of **2 hired guards** and a **scout** to prevent any interlopers from coming up on their camp from this direction. The guards here have a good view over the entire strip mine and surrounding rim from this position. If more than one scout has already been eliminated in **Event 4**, then there is no scout here. If more than 3 guards have been defeated already in that event, then extra missing guards are removed from here.

GENTLEMEN'S EXPLORERS CLUB HIRED GUARDS (2)

XP 700
hp 58 (statistics as veteran[SRD])

ELITAN-I-PAN SCOUT

XP 1,100
hp 104 (see page 340)
*These scouts have not brought their mounts with them.

L6. HIRELINGS CAMP

The main camp for The Prize Men's hirelings has been made here at the base of the upper trail and at the top of a rope they have affixed that reaches down to the next ledge 25 feet below. There are bedrolls for eleven here, situated around a small campfire, and crude shelters have been erected over them with tarps and rope to keep the worst of the sun and the wind off of them. Normally there are 3 hired guards resting here who switch out in shifts with those at areas L1 and L5, but if any guards have already been defeated by the PCs in Event 4, then subtract their numbers from here first.

GENTLEMEN'S EXPLORERS CLUB HIRED GUARDS (3)

XP 700
hp 58 (statistics as veteran[SRD])

Treasure: In addition to the mundane gear, water barrels, and packs of supplies to be found here, one of the guards has stashed 12 chunks of nickel he has found (10 sp each) underneath his bedroll.

L7. THE PRIZE MEN'S CAMP

A hollow delved 10 feet into the side of the ledge wall here serves as the makeshift camp of The Three Prize Men themselves, **Poirot Kenkery**, **Jeriveau Lancolmb**, and **Linas Huth-Borxia**, as well as their thralls **Ethos**, **Pathos**, **Mr. Peepers**, and **Gargizar** unless some have already been defeated in **Event 4**. The three spellcasters have situated their bedrolls and assorted cushions and creature comforts within the natural rock shelter and erected small awnings over them using tarps and rope. Anyone in these shelters can't be observed by and has greater cover from anyone on the crater rim above or any ledge other than this one. Unless an opponent is directly in front of the rock shelter, creatures inside still have cover and are hidden even from anyone on this ledge. None of the thralls require sleep, so they remain on watch around the ledge with the cacodaemon Pathos periodically flying above the strip mine pit under the effects of his *invisibility* spell to scout for any possible intruders.

Statistics for all of The Three Prize Men and their minions are found at the beginning of **L. The Prize Pit** (see page 85).

Treasure: In addition to their normal gear, the camp includes an explorer's kit, two *everburning torches*, a scholar's pack with finely made implements (80 gp), a folding table with three folding chairs holding a carved jade pachisi[FB-161] set from Far Jaati[LLo] (325 gp), and a locked (thieves' tools check DC 20) medium chest holding a dungeoneer's pack, 2 vials of acid, 2 alchemist's fires, seven bottles of Sgor Craoabh: Black Isle Whiskey[LL7-534] (54 gp each), and 2,174 gp as payroll for the hired hands. In the back of the shelter, shaded by the awning is a brass spittoon (5 gp) filled with fresh water where Linas keeps his crab familiar in the harsh, arid environment.

M. FUMING CHASM

As described under **Flying Above the Crater** and **Crater Floor**, the great smoking chasm at the crater's heart provides concealment and a lair for a great deal of undead that lurk within the blasted valley. However, after the PCs' initial foray into the crater, they find that these undead hordes appear to have dispersed, and they are now free to explore this gaping pit which represents the meteor core's actual point of impact. When the PCs approach the chasm's opening, provide the following description.

Dense clouds of grayish-black smoke billow out from a wide fissure in the ground. Heat likewise accompanies the thick fumes surging from the depths of the earth, though perhaps not as much as you expected for such a hellish pit. Despite the horrors that emerged previously from this smoggy chasm, there is no sign of the undead horde that previously boiled forth.

Flying or climbing down into this pit involves dealing with the smoke which provides concealment and total concealment beyond 5 feet as well as requiring a Constitution saving throw each round (DC 15) or spend the round choking and coughing and causing 1d6 points of fire damage for every 2 consecutive rounds of choking. The temperature within the smoking pit is very hot at approximately 105° F, day or night. These conditions require a Constitution saving throw each hour (DC 15) to avoid taking 1d4 points of fire (they begin taking lethal damage

if reduced to unconsciousness in this way). Characters in heavy armor or clothing have disadvantage on this saving throw, and the use of a DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) skill can be used to provide advantage on this saving throw.

Even a cursory search around the edge of the pit reveals the rickety remains of a wooden scaffold and staircase that provides access to the bottom of the pit. Though shaky, the stair is still stable. Otherwise the broken walls of the pit can be climbed with a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check.

M1. PIT OF HELL

Exploration of the smoking pit reveals that its jagged and broken walls descend only 40 feet before ending at a base of sand and rubble. When the meteor's intact core punched through the earth here, the passage it left collapsed back in upon itself. The smoke rises from tiny fissures and vents that still exist within this collapse as well as from side tunnels that open off from it, but the heat of the meteor's core is greatly blunted by the thickness of the earth that separates it from this pit.

The ground at the bottom of the pit is broken and footing is uncertain causing it to be difficult terrain. However, a road of smoothed gravel leads from the base of the scaffold stairs to a mine tunnel at the pit's southern edge. The ground along this road is not difficult terrain. Barely visible through the clouds of smoke that obscure vision are the remains of centuries-old mine carts that have been abandoned. In some cases, the skeletal remains of draft horses still lie within the harness attached to the carts, though none of these skeletons are animate. These and the stairs are what remains of the Caleen mining operation that once occurred in the pit. The tunnel is the adit to the main Caleen mine that once pulled nickel, lead, trace precious metals, and valuable siccatite off of the meteorite below, though doing so was extremely hazardous work in the pit's dangerous environment.

Anyone descending into the pit by flight, climbing the walls, or using the stairs attracts the attention of **4 belkers** that call the smoky pit home. These elementals ignore the undead that frequently occupy the pit but gladly attack any living creatures that dare to invade their domain. They do not pursue into the tunnels or out of the pit itself but attack relentlessly until destroyed as long as intruders remain within the pit. Each round of fighting on the rickety stairs has a cumulative 5% chance of causing them to collapse into the pit, causing the appropriate falling damage to anyone of the stairs when they collapse.

BELKERS (4)

Large elemental, neutral evil

Armor Class 15

Hit Points 93 (11d10 + 33)

Speed 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	21 (+5)	17 (+3)	6 (-2)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +6, Stealth +11

Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, prone, unconscious

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Auran

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Air Form. The belker can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there. It can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Smoke Form. The belker can use its bonus action to assume a smoke form, much the same as the effects of the *gaseous form* spell. The belker must concentrate on this effect. A creature that enters the belker's space for the first time in a turn or ends their turn there must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 18 (4d8) necrotic damage on a failed save, and half as much damage on a success. The belker can also move to another creature's space, triggering the Constitution saving throw.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The belker makes two attacks: one with its bite, and one with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 14 (2d8+5) piercing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 15). While grappled in this way, the belker moves into and occupies the grappled creature's space, even if it has used its movement for the turn.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 15 (3d6+5) slashing damage. If the target is grappled, it takes an additional 13 (3d8) necrotic damage.


M. FUMING CHASM
N
W
E
S
1 square = 10 ft.
M1
M1
M2
M3
to M4
N
W
E
S
1 square = 10 ft.
M4
M4
M4
M5
M4
M4
M4
to M3
= slag heap

M2. MINE HEADQUARTERS

The heavy wooden door to this side room is still locked with an extremely durable lock (Thieves' Tools check DC 20), the key long since lost.

Beyond the sturdy door, the air is less smoky. It opens to reveal an excavated room of rough-hewn walls. A number of wooden bunks remain standing around the room, their straw tick mattresses unadorned by blanket or sheets with open footlockers, tables, and chairs interspersed among them. At the far side of the room stand a line of four wooden wall lockers.

Once a headquarters for the mining operations in the central pit, at one time summoned air elementals and small vents helped keep this room clear of the smoke that permeates the pits and mines. The elementals are long gone, but the air quality in here remains superior to that outside due to good ventilation that still exists. Miners could rest and gather here between shifts. A search of the room reveals the long-mummified remains of a human miner, a Caleen colonist who was ultimately overcome by the fumes here and perished in the mine's last days, but his worn coveralls hold nothing of importance and his corpse is not animated.

Searching the first three wall lockers finds a total of seven sets of miner's coveralls, three pickaxes, and two shovels. The fourth locker is locked (Thieves' Tools check DC 18) and holds a small strongbox containing six small unrefined gold nuggets (worth 1d6 x 10 gp each), two *potions of darkvision*, and a *bottle of air*. Hanging in the back of the locker are six still-functional facial bellows (see **Appendix C**, page 145) and two 10-foot-long metal poles that end in round scoops that show signs of exposure to great heat (these are skimmers for the molten pool at **M5**, though that may not be immediately obvious).

M3. UPPER MINE TUNNELS

These tunnels meander around the circumference of the Burning Pits central chasm. The valuable minerals to be found in them are largely played out, though one tunnel near the entrance intersection descends at a 30° slope down to area **M4**. These tunnels are largely unoccupied and uninteresting. They are not as smoky as the pit outside or the lower tunnels, so that no one is concealed or undetected from the smoke, and a DC 15 Constitution saving throw against the smoke's effects is only necessary every minute rather than every round.

M4. LOWER MINE TUNNELS (ENCOUNTER VARIES)

These tunnels descend below and around the fuming pit at the crater's center. Not all of the tunnels are shown on the map as many extend out and around and the central rift, but those shown are the ones the lead to the heart of the crater. They descend a total of 80 feet from area **M3** and have a general downward slope towards area **M5**. This slope is 1d10+20° at any given location. The fire raging deep underground pushes smoke and heat into these twisting passageways. The effects of the smoke and heat are the same as those described into area **M1**.

For every minute spent traveling through these circuitous tunnels, there is a 25% chance of an encounter with the creatures that lurk here awaiting further orders from their master. Although prevalent throughout this network of passages and old workfaces, these creatures never enter area **M5**. If an encounter occurs, roll on the following table to determine its result.

d%	Encounter
01–15	1d6 blast shadows
16–40	2d6 radioactive combusted
41–60	1d4 cinder ghouls
61–70	2d6 fire phantoms
71–80	1d6+1 baykoks
81–00	Roll twice and ignore this result

BAYKOK

XP 2,300
hp 97 (see **Appendix A**, page 529)

BLAST SHADOW

XP 1,800
hp 117 (see **Appendix A**, page 530)

CINDER GHOUL

XP 2,900
hp 75 (see **Appendix A**, page 532)

RADIOACTIVE COMBUSTED

XP 700
hp 84 (see **Appendix A**, page 551)

FIRE PHANTOM

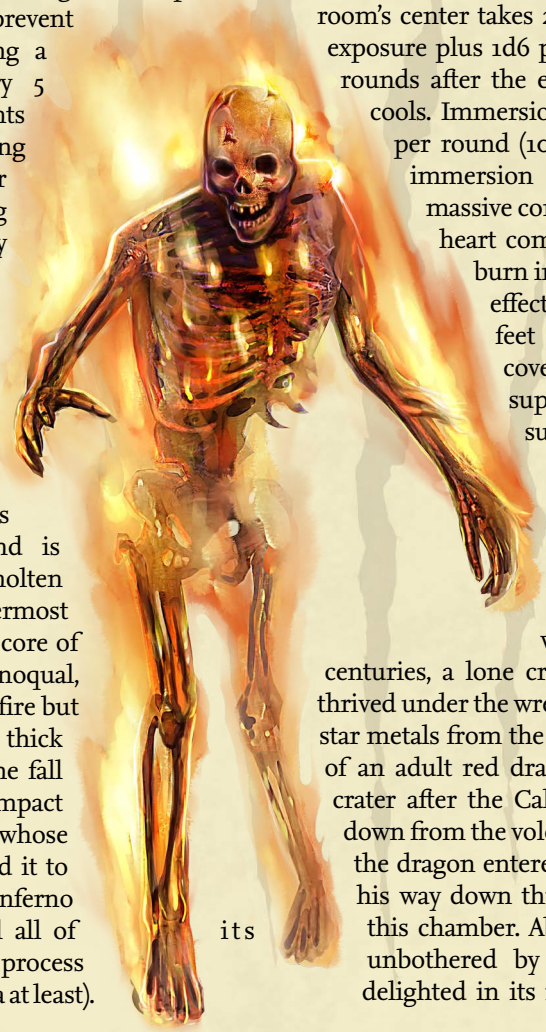
XP 1,800
hp 104 (see **Appendix A**, page 534)

M5. HEART OF THE CRATER

This room has the same smoke effects as the pit at M1. The description assumes that the PCs have some way to see through the obscuring fumes.

The smoky haze is lit by the red glow of molten rock. At the center of the large chamber is an open pool of molten material with fire licking from its surface. Around this central pool are irregularly heaped piles of cooled slag, the remnant of the mining operations that once took place here long ago. The fumes coming off of this pool fill the sweltering air with thick smoke making it nearly impossible to see anything other than the red-hot tendrils of fire dancing in the infernal pond.

The molten pool intensifies the heat in the chamber to extreme heat (approximately 150° F) dealing 1d6 points of fire damage (no save) per minute of breathing in the superheated air (the facial bellows do not prevent this damage) as well as requiring a Constitution saving throw every 5 minutes (DC 15) to avoid 1d4 points of nonlethal damage. Those wearing heavy clothes or any sort of armor have disadvantage on their saving throws. See below in regards to any protective magic that the party may be using.



The molten pool at the center of the chamber is the uppermost remnant of the meteorite that struck here 2,000 years ago. The entire core mass measures roughly 50 feet in diameter and is surrounded by another layer of molten metals of which only the uppermost surface exposed in this room. The core of this extraterrestrial fragment is noqual, liquefied by the intense heat of the fire but surrounded and held in place by a thick shell of the star metal siccatite. The fall of the meteor and its subsequent impact ignited the volatile siccatite shell whose natural heat properties have caused it to burn for all this time in a raging inferno that cannot be extinguished until all of its siccatite fuel has been consumed (a process that will take several more millennia at least).

The siccatite basin rests within a much larger outer lining of ordinary metals and stone that is roughly 20 feet thick, thus making a large scale excavation of the more valuable star metals virtually impossible. As a result the noqual could only be theoretically removed by extracting it in liquid form from the center of the molten pool more than 30 feet below the surface unless the burning siccatite could be somehow extinguished or removed itself. The molten layer exposed in this pool is composed primarily of stone and dozens of different metals from which the purified metals constantly leach and were formerly skimmed off by the Caleen miners, though now they simply settle back into the molten stew only to resurface again later. Fortunately for the PCs (and any other living creatures in the chamber), the meteor's outer shell composed heavily of metallurgic amber largely disintegrated upon impact and spread itself to infuse the soil in a massive radius so that this chamber is no more filled with that material's deadly radiation than any other location in and around the crater.

Anyone touching the molten metal and rock in the room's center takes 2d6 points of fire damage per round of exposure plus 1d6 points of fire damage per round for 1d3 rounds after the exposure ceases as the molten material cools. Immersion in the pool causes 20d6 fire damage per round (10d6 per round for 1d3 rounds after the immersion ends). However, more critically, the massive concentration of liquid noqual at the pool's heart combined with lead and other metals that burn in the raging conflagration duplicates the effects of an *antimagic field* spell within 100 feet of the molten pool's edges (effectively covering the entire chamber). This effect suppresses spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural abilities while within the chamber.

Without magic, few creatures could see through the dense clouds of smoke let alone survive the brutal conditions within this chamber. Yet, for the last four centuries, a lone creature has not only endured here but thrived under the wretched conditions. The allure of precious star metals from the meteorite eventually drew the attention of an adult red dragon name Fuagruun to investigate the crater after the Caleen Colonies had all been lost. Flying down from the volcanic heart of the Stoneheart Mountains, the dragon entered the smoking central rift and wormed his way down through the mine tunnels until reaching this chamber. Able to see through the smoky haze and unbothered by the hellish heat, the greedy dragon delighted in its newfound cache of invaluable treasure.

However, even the dragon's formidable defenses were not immune to the effects of the metallurgic amber infusing the entire area, and the *antimagic field* effects likewise muted his resistances until finally Fuagruun succumbed to the baleful radiations and underwent the unholy transformation into a **red dragon ravener.**

FUAGRUUN

Huge undead (dragon), chaotic evil
Armor Class 20
Hit Points 184 (16d12 + 80)
Speed 40 ft., fly 120 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
27 (+8)	10 (+0)	21 (+5)	20 (+5)	21 (+5)	22 (+6)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Con +10, Wis +10, Cha +11
Skills Arcana +10, Deception +15, Insight +10, Intimidate +11, Perception +15, Stealth +10
Damage Vulnerability cold
Damage Immunities fire, poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned, unconscious
Senses blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 25
Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Ignan, Orc
Challenge 15 (13,000 XP)

Consumptive Soul. Whenever a creature dies within 30 feet of Fuagruun, the creature's soul is drawn into Fuagruun's maw and is consumed. A consumed soul becomes a charge, and Fuagruun can have up to three charges that last up to 1 hour. Any time Fuagruun would be reduced to 0 hit points, Fuagruun can use a reaction to expend a charge, and instead be reduced to 1 hit point. A creature who'se soul is consumed in this way cannot be revived until Fuagruun is destroyed within an hour of the soul being consumed, even if Fuagruun uses the charge. After an hour, only a *wish* or divine intervention can restore the soul.

Fire Aura. A creature that touches Fuagruun or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 11 (2d10) fire damage. In addition, a creature that starts its turn within 5 feet of Fuagruun takes 11 (2d10) fire damage.

Innate Spellcasting. Fuagruun's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 20, spell attack bonus +12). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring only verbal components:
At will: detect magic, message, see invisibility
3/day each: freedom of movement, lightning bolt, scrying
1/day each: confusion, polymorph

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Fuagruun fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. The Fuagruun has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Turn Resistance. Fuagruun has advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Fuagruun can use its frightful presence. It then makes three attacks; one with its bite and twice with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 19 (2d10+8) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 15 (2d6+8) slashing damage.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 15 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 15 (2d6+8) bludgeoning damage.

Frightful Presence. Each creature of Fuagruun's choice that is within 120 feet of Fuagruun and aware of him must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature that fails this saving throw by 5 or more is also restrained as long as it is frightened. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the Fuagruun's Frightfil Presence for the next 24 hours.

Fire Breath (Recharge 5-6). Fuagruun exhales fire in a 60 foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw, taking 56 (16d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Fuagruun can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The dragon regains spent legendary actins at the start of its turn.

Detect. Fuagruun makes a Wisdom (Perception) check.

Tail Attack. Fuagruun makes a tail attack.

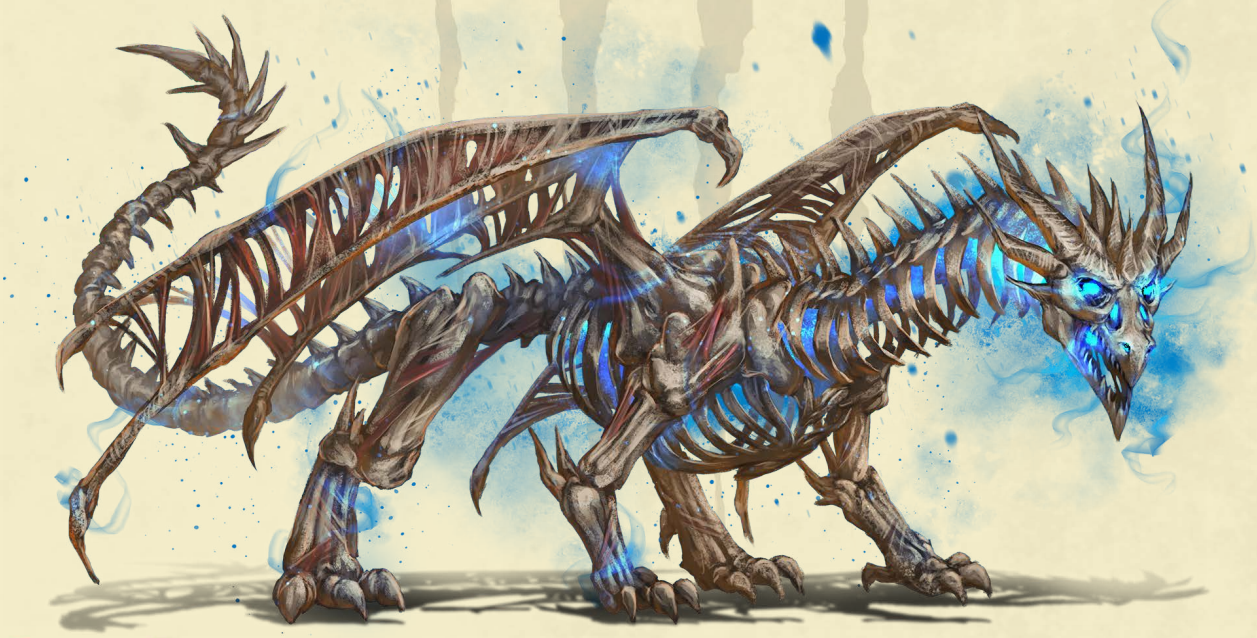
Cast a Spell (Costs 3 actions). Fuagruum casts an innate spell, consuming a daily use as normal.

Tactics: Although deprived of his full repertoire of spells within this cavern, Fuagruum's extraordinary senses and vision give him a decided advantage against any adversaries that might make their way down to his lair. Even though he is without his most potent attacks, Fuagruun's CR is only reduced by 1 due to the extremely hostile conditions to be found within his lair. He prefers not to leave his lair, but if somehow lured into traversing the tight mine tunnels all of his spells and abilities return to him and his CR returns to its normal value of 15.

Development: Singularly devoted to his precious star metal, the greedy dragon consigned his own treasure hoard to the roaring conflagration, destroying all of his former wealth in the process. Yet, the arrogant Fuagruun cannot bear to part with a single drop of his beloved noqual. Throughout the encounter, Fuagruun refers to the trespassing adventurers as worthless thieves, spies and fodder for the domain's undead master. If the PCs engage him in conversation and succeed on a Charisma (Deception) check opposed by his Wisdom (Insight), he inadvertently mentions that "The Pit's master outlasted the destruction of the settlements that bear his name and now worships the King in Yellow," though he will not reveal any more than that. For his part, the ravener owes no allegiance to Hastur and instead venerates the valuable star metal that consumes his every thought. When faced with potential defeat, Fuagruun cannot envision being separated from his precious noqual. He dives into the molten liquid in one last desperate gambit to be forever united with the object of his desire. Even his natural fire immunity cannot resist the inferno of the activated siccatite, and his lifeless carcass sinks into the lake of fiery alloy, completely disintegrating his remains within minutes.

Treasure: If the PCs somehow manage to skim the molten ore from the surface of the pool, they must use some sort of a heat resistant device such as the skimmers from area **M2**. These devices can be used to skim 1 pound of material off the surface of the pool, though unless the individual is wearing some sort of heat resistant gloves, doing so deals 1d6 points of fire damage by conduction through the metal handle. For every pound of molten material that is recovered, it is possible to extract 1/2 ounce of siccatite, 1/4 ounce of adamantine, 1d4 ounces each of nickel and lead, a 15% chance of 1 ounce of gold, and a 5% chance of 1/2 ounce of noqual. The rest is worthless slag.

For reference, the value of 1 pound (16 ounces) of these materials is as follows:



Material	Price (1 pound)
Adamantine	300 gp
Siccatite	100 gp
Noqual	50 gp
Gold	50 gp
Nickel	2 gp
Lead	5 sp

N. CALEEN CACHE

The faint traces of a road are barely visible on the hardpan of the crater floor here. It extends towards a buckled rise where the eastern crater wall begins its ascent. A tunnel entrance pierces this earthen rise and appears to be the intended destination of this ancient pathway.

This short system of mine tunnels has been repurposed by Prince Cale to serve as the receptacle of his cache of tainted Rhemian coins. He purposely chose this location because its road remnant and proximity to the very visible strip mine (**L**) and ramp (**J2**) make it likely that explorers will notice it and investigate it first.

N1. ENTRANCE APIARY

The broken-down remnant of an old cart lies in the dust next to the opening of this mine tunnel. In a hollow at the edge of the ridge that the tunnel delves into, a small wall of stacked stone has been constructed to shelter a collection of four large earthen jars that stand in the rocky ridge's lee. These jars are almost perfectly concealed by the stone wall such that from any distance they would be virtually impossible to spot.

The cart is merely an old wagon and is no longer operable. Anyone making a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check from this location hears the faint sounds of eerie singing coming from within the tunnel. If they succeed on a DC 21, they also detect a strong, sickly sweet odor emanating from within. If the check exceeds a DC 24, they can detect a faint sound of buzzing coming from the earthen jars.

The earthen jars stand approximately 4 feet tall and are actually beehives made from local clay. Each of the hives holds **2 bee swarms**. The swarms are quiet during the heat of the day and at night, but if the PCs approach during the early morning or late evening hours the bees buzz around their hives aggressively, though they are difficult to see in the shadowy light and still require the same DC as above to notice. The bees must travel far out of the crater to find local pollen but have proven largely resistant to the effects of the metallurgic amber infusing the countryside. It does, however, make them very aggressive. If the PCs approach beyond the 3-foot-stone wall during the morning or evening hours, all the hives swarm and attack. During other parts of the day or night the bees are quiescent, but if the party disturbs any of the hives its bees swarm out to attack and the rest of the swarms attack and become agitated in the following round.

BEE SWARMS (8)

Medium swarm of Tiny beasts, unaligned
Armor Class 12
Hit Points 27 (5d8 + 5)
Speed 5 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3 (–4)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	1 (–5)	7 (–2)	1 (–5)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned
Languages —
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

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

ACTIONS

Sting. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +3 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in the swarm's space. *Hit*: 10 (4d4) piercing damage, or 5 (2d4) piercing damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer. The target must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw, taking 14 (4d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Treasure: If the swarms are dispersed, the party can recover 1d4 pounds of honey from each hive worth 2 gp per pound. However, this honey is tainted by metallurgic amber and has the same effects as **Metallurgic Amber** (see **Appendix C**, page 145) on anyone exposed to it unless first treated with a *purify food and drink* spell.

N2. INTERSECTION

The tunnel diverges at this point. The sounds of the eerie music can be heard coming from the direction of **N4**, along with additional sounds of grunting and shuffling like some sort of quiet melee is occurring, and the sickly-sweet smell of fermenting honey comes from the direction of **N3**.

N3. BREWERY

A thick wool blanket serves as a curtain over the entrance of this chamber. Rough-built wooden tables stand along the walls of this room, their surfaces stained with sticky brown patches, and upon them sit a number of crudely made clay jars and bowls. The smell of honey is so strong in this room as to be almost sickening.

The occupants of area **N4** brew honey mead in this chamber in their handmade clay jugs. The room is kept cool with the thick blanket curtaining its entrance to lessen the chances of the honey gathered from the hives at **N1** from undergoing inadvertent pasteurization that would prevent it from naturally fermenting. Stored in various jugs and amphorae are a total of 105 pounds of raw honey in various stages of fermentation (worth 210 gp). In addition, there are 32 sealed 1-gallon jars of new honey mead (2 gp each). Unfortunately, all of it is tainted by metallurgic amber requiring *purify food and drink* spells before being safe for consumption.

N4. MAD REVEL

The temperature in this chamber is warmer, and the air seems thick and sticky with moisture and the smell of unwashed bodies and smoke. The floor is covered in the broken fragments of pottery that have been ground to tiny pieces underfoot, and torches made of tightly bound grass bundles burn in sconces on the walls. To the north is a muddy pool or spring, and next to it the ground and cave wall has been churned and excavated. Across the room stands a clay kiln, smoke and heat emanating from the fire burning within. The sound of the eerie singing is louder here and clearly emanates from a passage across the room.

This room is the lair of **5 maenads**. These mad creatures resemble wild Shattered Folk tribeswomen smeared in blood and filth. They were attracted in recent years to the crater by the emanations of madness and entropy of Prince Cale and his operation. They are not aligned with the crater's undead overlord but have a tentative peace



with him and his minions and allow him to store his "treasure" in their lair (area **N6**). They are unaffected by the metallurgic amber other than, if anything, becoming more volatile and violent than is normal for their kind.

The maenads keep the bees at area **N1** and use the honey to make the mead they use in their wild revels. A natural ground water seep and its clay bed provide the raw materials for the countless pottery vessels they make and ultimately destroy in their rages, and they have constructed the kiln in this chamber to maintain the constant supply that they require. Stored in rough-spun sacks and wicker baskets around the room are their few articles of clothing and other possessions as well as hunks of spoiling, fly-specked raw meat taken from animals and even humanoids that they have slain for food.

MAENAD

Medium fey, chaotic evil

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 110 (13d8 + 52)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	16 (+3)	19 (+4)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	19 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Con +6, Wis +6

Skills Deception +7, Intimidation +7, Perception +5, Persuasion +7

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Common, Sylvan

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Impassioned. A maenad is immune to the spell calm emotions.

Magic Resistance. The maenad has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The maenad uses Maenad Dance. Then the maenad attacks twice, once with its bite and once with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 7 (1d6+4) piercing damage, plus the target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the target takes 21 (6d6) poison damage, or half on a successful save.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 9 (2d4+4) slashing damage, plus the target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the target takes 21(6d6) poison damage, or half on a successful save.

Mad Feast (1/Day). The maenad conjures a supernatural feast. Creatures eating from this feast gain advantage on Strength and Constitution ability checks and saving throws, 1d8 temporary hit points, and advantage on saving throws against being frightened for 12 hours. Creatures affected also have disadvantage on Wisdom saving throws (except against being frightened), and find it more compelling to engage in debauchery, excess, and violence.

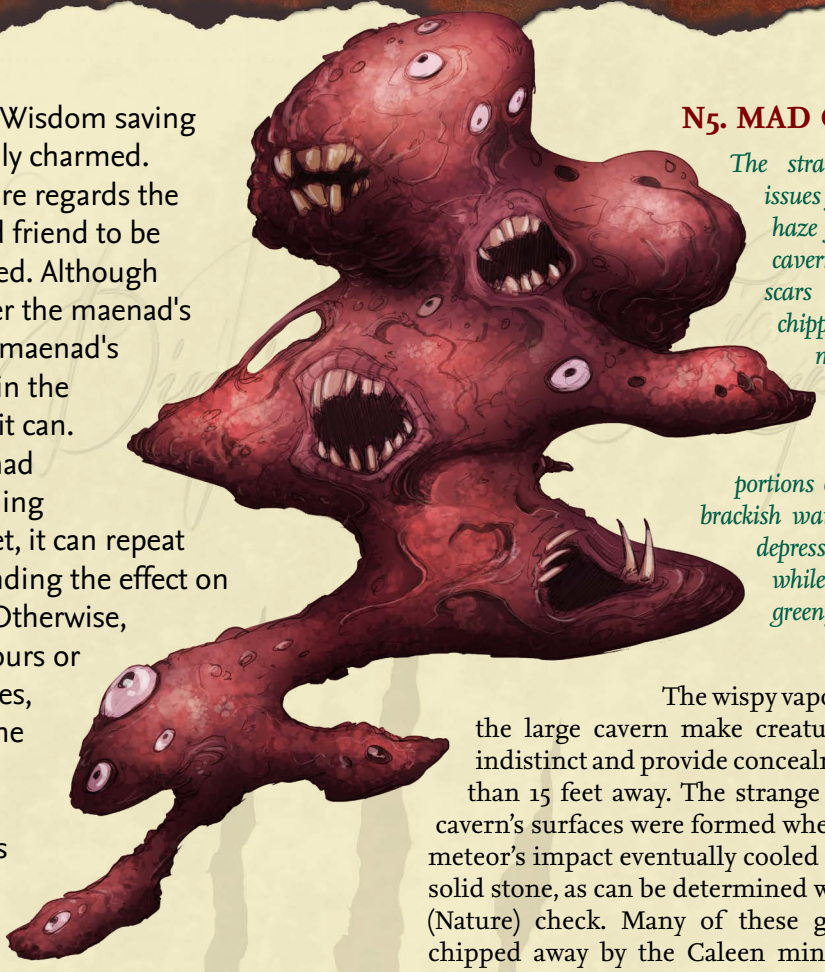
Maenad Dance. Each creature within a 60-foot radius of the maenad who can see the maenad must must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be affected as the spell confusion with a duration of 1 minute. At the end of each of its turns, an affected target can make a new saving throw. If it succeeds, this effect ends for that target. A creature that successfully saves is immune to that maenad's Maenad Dance for 24 hours. Creatures that are immune to being charmed are unaffected.

Murderous Command. A creature within 30 feet the maenad can see must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, on the affected creature's next turn they must make an Attack using a melee weapon attack or unarmed strike against its nearest ally. The affected creature must use its movement to move closer to its ally if it is not within reach. The affected creature attacks to the best of its ability using its most effective melee attack but does not use features with a limited number of uses. Creatures that are immune to being charmed are unaffected.

Panacea (3/Day). The maenad removes poisoned or one level of exhaustion from a creature it touches.

Weird Charm (3/Day). The maenad targets one humanoid or beast that it can see within 30 feet of it. If the target can see the maenad, it must

succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be magically charmed. The charmed creature regards the maenad as a trusted friend to be heeded and protected. Although the target isn't under the maenad's control, it takes the maenad's requests or actions in the most favorable way it can. Each time the maenad or its allies do anything harmful to the target, it can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success. Otherwise, the effect lasts 24 hours or until the maenad dies, is on a different plane of existence from the target or ends the effect as a bonus action. If a target's saving throw is successful, the target is immune to the maenad's Weird Charm for the next 24 hours. The maenad can have no more than one humanoid or beast charmed at a time.



Tactics: The revel of crazed women is engaged in a drunken infectious dance when the PCs first arrive, but once they sight intruders, they become enraged. They fight to the death in a fit of murderous joy.

Treasure: Resting at the edges of the room are a total of seven of the metallurgic amber-tainted jars of mead (2 gp each). There is also one jar of rare wasp mead that the maenads brewed from special wasp honey found out on the steppe. It is miraculously untainted and worth 400 gp for its rarity. The maenads keep their more valuable objects in a clay amphora hidden behind the kiln (DC 19 Wisdom (Perception) check to locate and DC 18 Dexterity saving throw to avoid taking 1d6 fire damage from being burned by accidentally touching the hot kiln). This stash includes a *flametongue scimitar*, a rolled up +2 *chain shirt*, two jars of *restorative ointment* with 5 doses in each jar, an alabaster votive statue (1,000 gp), and a ruby (500 gp).

N5. MAD CHORUS

The strange, cacophonous melody issues from this area, and a gray haze fills the air in this stifling cavern. The walls still show the scars where seams of ore were chipped out by the long-ago miners. Odd globules of stone hang precariously from the ceiling and walls in addition to covering large portions of the floor. Large ponds of brackish water collect in the numerous depressions spread throughout, while colonies of purple, black and green fungus cling to the walls.

The wispy vapors that float throughout the large cavern make creatures and objects appear indistinct and provide concealment to anything farther than 15 feet away. The strange globules that cover the cavern's surfaces were formed when molten rock from the meteor's impact eventually cooled and hardened back into solid stone, as can be determined with a DC 25 Intelligence (Nature) check. Many of these globules are what were chipped away by the Caleen miners. Temperatures here hover around 85° F, slightly below the threshold for any detrimental effects, but the warmth and moisture allow countless species of ordinary fungi to thrive. The puddles are only a few inches deep, though the floor is slick and uneven and considered difficult terrain.

Lurking amid the fungi and puddles on the floor are **12 gibbering mouthers**. These nearly mindless abominations have formed a sort of symbiosis with the maenads next door, consuming all of the wastes and food scraps left by the vicious humanoids, and the maenads for their part have become immune to the creatures' constant gibbering. The mouthers have been exposed to the environs of the crater for so long, their gibbering has taken on the eerie howl-like qualities of the Nightscream (see **Event 1**), except the many mouths of the creatures cause tonal fluctuations that rise and fall and give the howling scream a haunting, musical quality, as if madness incarnate had found purchase in this cavern. For their part, the maenads consider the "music" delightful and are fond of dancing to it in their orgiastic violence.

GIBBERING MOUTHERS[SRD] (12)

XP 450
hp 67

Tactics: The mouthers constantly emit their almost-musical gibbering, but begin spitting acid as well when intruders other than the maenads enter the chamber. They try to do so from at least 20 feet away so that they have concealment and their amorphous forms look like the uneven floor. They are unaffected by the difficult terrain of the room and their all-around vision actually allows them to ignore the concealment provided by the room's humidity. When attackers close for melee, they attempt engulfing and blood drain attacks on what they consider food sent to them by their neighbors. They will not pursue beyond this room.

Treasure: Over the years, the creatures have accumulated an eclectic collection of items between scraps thrown to them by the maenads and their days of hunting the crater from before the maenads' arrival. They have deposited these treasures behind a stone globule in the far southwestern corner of the room. It takes a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check to locate their hoard in a tattered and rotten burlap sack. Within this sack are six gold nuggets (200 gp each), a rough tourmaline (300 gp), a *crown of blasting* (see **Appendix B**, page 569), a *brooch of shielding*, and an *obsidian steed figurine of wondrous power*.

N6. "LOST" CACHE

Entry to this chamber is blocked by a heavy wooden door with a good lock (Thieves' Tools DC 26 to open, due to rust in its mechanism).

Beyond the stout door is a small, dusty room. Its walls have extra wooden buttresses to reinforce them from collapse — and perhaps prevent easy access for someone trying to tunnel in. The reason for this extra security quickly becomes evident. Rough tables made of thick planks sitting on old sawhorses hold four small chests, while three larger chests rest on the floor underneath. All of the chests are open, and the glitter of coins is visible even beneath the thick layer of dust.

The chests in the room all hold what appear to be freshly minted Rhemian coins, though the images of Prince Cale and other emblems that they bear easily date them to the early 2900s with a DC 20 Intelligence (History). To all appearances it would seem that this cache holds the coins that were minted from the precious metals recovered from decades of mining the Pit of the Burning Star, and that is in fact what they are. However, they are also all tainted with metallurgic amber so that anyone taking these coins is subject to that substance's insidious effects.

Each of the coins in this cache is minted with only trace amounts of the radioactive isotope (roughly 0.6%), so that the coins' appearance and malleability is unaffected. Only a spells like *divination* or *detect poison* would be able to distinguish them from ordinary Rhemian currency of the same time period, though anyone specifically examining them and making a DC 18 Intelligence, Alchemist's Supplies, or Smith's Tools check to detect that the coins have been alloyed with some other material. The traces of metallurgic amber in the coins are so minute and dilute that they do not cause their normal radioactive burn damage. However, they do still require a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw after 24 hours of exposure to avoid developing a short-term madness (see Metallurgic Amber in **Appendix B**, page 580, for details).

The four smaller chests hold 2,032 Rhemian marks (sp), 1,877 Rhemian marks (sp), 2,534 Rhemian ducats (gp), and 546 Rhemian galleons (pp) respectively, while the larger chests underneath hold a total of 33,602 Rhemian furrows[FB-182] (cp).

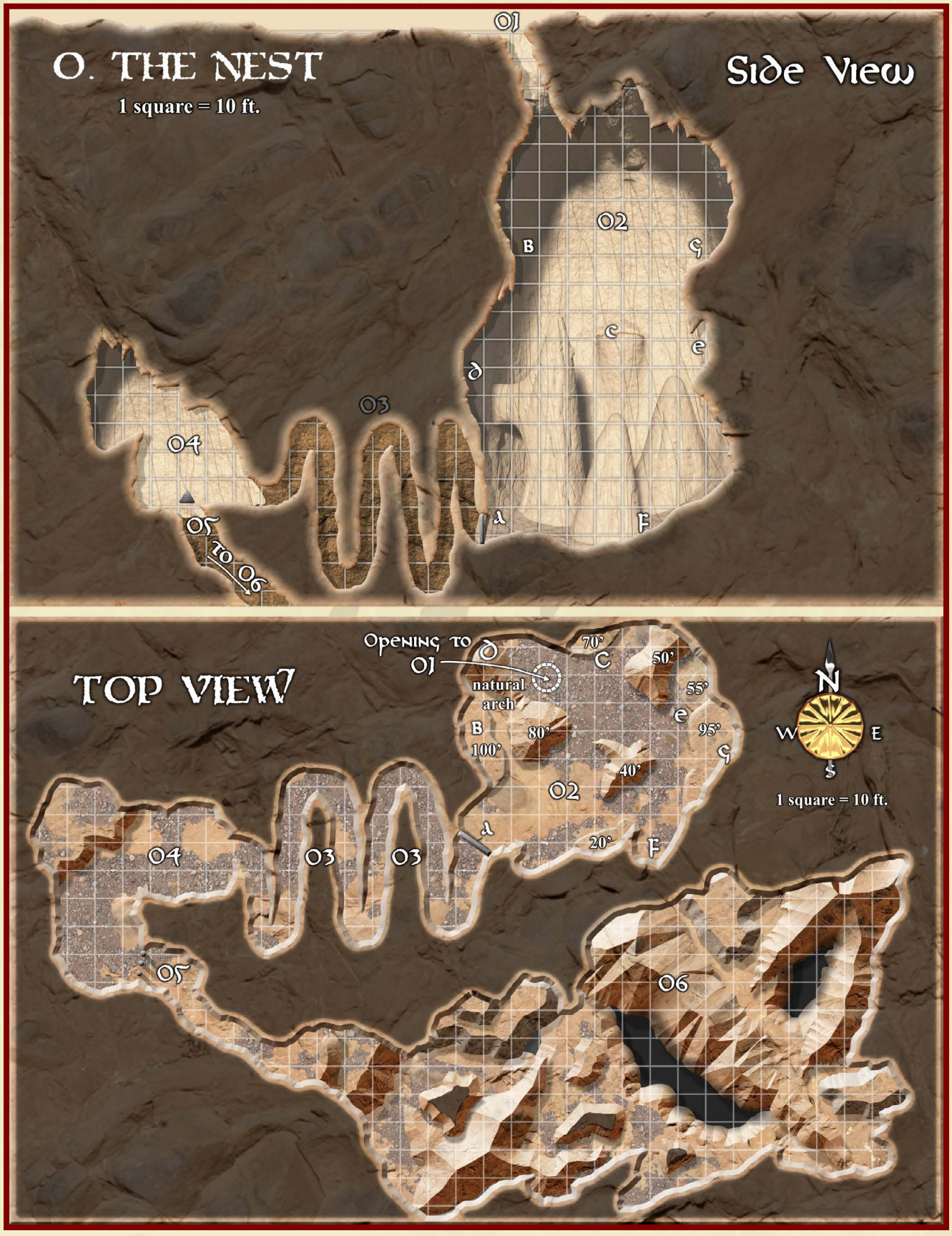
O. THE NEST

This small fissure in the floor of the crater has no tracks around it or leading to it and would be difficult to locate at all were it not for one particular feature: Once or twice per day at some random time a geyser of windblown sand blasts explosively from it for a few seconds. When the geyser occurs or for the next 1d10 minutes as the airborne dust plume slowly settles, PCs gain advantage on checks to spot this opening. Anyone who is nearby when the dust geyser erupts is unharmed but may notice (DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check) that immediately before the dust blast occurs a sucking sensation comes from the fissure drawing air into it as if it were taking a deep breath. Both of these occurrences are harmless and are a result of the occupant of **O6** using its Wind Blast and Sucking Wind abilities, augmented and amplified by the strange air currents and baffles within these caverns. There is a cumulative 10% chance per hour of daylight of this phenomenon occurring. Once it occurs, the chance is reset and begins to accumulate again. It does not occur more than twice in one day, however.

There are no light sources within these caves, so all descriptions assume that the PCs have provided some means of seeing.

O1. ENTRANCE FISSURE

If located, this narrow fissure is little larger than a Medium creature. Unlike the other excavated tunnels seen throughout the crater, this one seems to be a natural fissure that has occurred in the blasted bedrock of the crater. Its walls are rough and natural and descend at a steep 70° angle


0. THE NEST
1 square = 10 ft.
Side View
01
02
03
04
05 to 06
A
B
C
D
E
F
TOP VIEW
Opening to 01
natural arch
70'
50'
55'
95'
100'
80'
40'
20'
N
W
E
S
1 square = 10 ft.
02
03
03
04
05
06

(DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check to Climb). Old pitons embedded at the lip of the fissure hold the ragged upper rung of a rope ladder, but the blasts of air from the fissure have long since destroyed the actual ladder that descended down into the opening leaving no further trace of who left the ladder or for what purpose.

O2. THE HOURGLASS

The descending fissure abruptly opens into the roof of a large, hourglass-shaped cavern that teems with ledges, precipices and the broken remains of natural stone columns that create rough perches throughout. From this vantage point the cavern almost resembles a spiraled canyon pockmarked by various animal nests, outcroppings, niches, and similar voids in the walls. The faint whistling of the wind can be heard from somewhere far below, though no breeze disturbs the air herein.

The 7-foot-diameter entrance tunnels slopes downward where it immediately ends in a sheer drop, opening into the 160-foot-high ceiling of this roughly hourglass-shaped underground chamber that measures 90 feet across at its widest and 60 feet across at its narrowest point. The end of the entrance tunnel is a precipitous drop, so unless PCs are careful they may take a considerable tumble when entering. The walls of the chamber are natural stone that appear to be worn and eroded by high winds (Strength (Athletics) check DC 15) and there are number of natural ledges as well as outcroppings, rock formations, and arches in the chamber that have all been strangely shaped by scouring winds. The heights of the various ledges and natural pedestals are indicated on the map of this room. An iron door and six hidden caches in this cavern are described below under **O2a–g**.

This strange chamber serves as the abode of a flock of 16 void-stirges. These strange creatures hail from another world and star system altogether, having spent years travelling through the void of space to answer the call of the King of Yellow that resounds so strongly in this place.

VOID-STIRGE (16)

XP 700
hp 67 (see **Appendix A**, page 557)

Tactics: The void-stirges dwell among the ledges and outcroppings that comprise this chamber but have cover and total concealment from anyone looking down from the entry tunnel. Once intruders dare to enter their nesting cavern, they fly forth from all around and swoop past their targets trying to grapple their prey and feast on their blood. They are able to remain airborne with a grappled creature as long as the creature is Medium-sized or smaller. If a grappling void-stirge takes more than half its hit points in damage from a creature it is grappling, it will release its opponent and let it drop to the rocky floor far below. They have not fed in several weeks and will pursue intruders relentlessly, even outside their cavern homes into the crater above. They will not pursue into area **O3**, however, unless summoned by the Doorkeeper and will under no circumstances pass beyond area **O5**.

O2A. IRON DOOR

At the base of the cavern a heavy iron door, 12 feet high by 8 feet wide, has been fitted into the stone wall. The whistling of wind grows louder as one approaches the door, and it is readily apparent that the blowing air currents are behind this portal. The door itself is made of thick iron plates banded with iron straps riveted in place. The metal of the door is rusted and stained, but still appears sturdy. The hinges are nested in the stone frame that surrounds the door. A keyhole pierces the door's plating on its left-hand side. The door is trapped with a powerful glyph of warding.

Reinforced Iron Door: 3 in. thick; damage threshold 10; AC 18; hp 90; Thieves' Tools check DC 20.

GLYPH OF WARDING TRAP (BLAST)

Magical trap
Locate DC 22; **Disarm** DC 22
The trap is triggered if anyone other than the Doorkeeper (see area **O4**) touches the door and resets itself 1 minute after it has been activated. When triggered, all creatures within 10 feet take 42 (12d6) lightning damage, or half as much with a successful DC 20 Dexterity saving throw.

Anyone who searches the door notices on a DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check that the floor immediately in front of the door is scoured clean of sand and dust as if freshly swept. The reason for this becomes apparent if the door is opened. If the door is opened the inside of it is revealed to also be of iron, but this side has been burnished to a high polish by the action of the winds. Opening it releases the powerful air currents that have been constrained in area **O3**. The change in air pressure caused by the opening of the door is immediately felt by the occupant of **O6** who begins to use its sucking wind ability. Outside of **O3**, the PCs are unaffected beyond noticing the air current that is suddenly

being drawn in through the open doorway. Anyone through the door into **O3** during this time is affected as described in that area. This suctioning effect lasts for 2d6 rounds.

After the suctioning effect ends, there is a 1-round pause after which the occupant of **O6** cuts loose with its wind blast ability. This effect is augmented by the configuration of the tunnels between **O6** and here so that anyone within 10 feet of the open doorway when the wind blast occurs takes 14d6 points of bludgeoning damage (DC 21 Dexterity saving throw for half), and the entirety of area **O2** is filled with tornado-strength winds (175+ mph) for the next 1d10 minutes. Those that fail find themselves caroming off the walls and many rocky formations in area **O2** with a cumulative 10% chance each round of being flung up and out of the tunnel entrance at area **O1**. Anyone flung out this entrance, in addition to taking the normal tornado damage for that round, also takes 70 (20d6) points of bludgeoning damage as they tumble into the crater outside, after which they are no longer within the effects the tornadic winds.

During the release of these winds every part of the cavern (**O2**) is affected by them except for the cache niches at **O2b–g**. Each of these niches is able to hold up to 3 Medium creatures, 6 Small creatures, or 1 Large creature. Creatures within these niches are completely sheltered from the winds and unaffected by them. If the PCs manage to open the iron door before defeating the void-stirges, all of the creatures immediately retreat to the nearest niches and fight to prevent their removal during the initial suction portion of the winds so that they will be protected from the effects of the wind blast portion.

Unless the iron door has been secured open by some means able to succeed on a DC 23 Strength check versus the pull of the winds, at the end of the tornadic winds the door slams shut, its lock and trap reset.

O2b. Cache 1

Unless the PCs observe the void-stirges returning to this niche, it can only be located with a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. A hollow in the cavern's west wall situated on a 100-foot-high ledge serves as a nesting area for the void-stirges and a cache for some of their accumulated treasures. The treasure here consists of a leather sack containing 4,059 gold shekels[LL7-220] (gp) of Castorhagi currency. This treasure is untainted and was recovered from trade between Castorhage and the Shattered Folk of the distant Elitan-i-Pan Confederation to the west.

O2c. Cache 2

As before, this niche requires a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check unless void-stirges are observed going back to it. This hollow lies on a small ledge on the cavern's north wall, 70 feet above the floor. It holds a rusted-but-serviceable suit of +2 *full plate*, a +1 *shield* bearing the red and white sword-and-crown heraldry of the Duchy of the Rampart[LL5-100], and a quiver holding fourteen arrows and six +2 *arrows*.

O2d. Cache 3

The Wisdom (Perception) check for this cache is DC 22. It is a hollow at the junction where the chamber's natural arch meets the northwest corner. Crumpled within it is a human skeleton in ragged shreds of clothing still *ring of ki resonance* and an *amulet of mighty strikes* +1 (see **Appendix B**, page 568).

O2e. Cache 4

Even more difficult to locate than **O2d**, this niche requires a DC 21 Wisdom (Perception) check to locate. It is a near-vertical alcove 20 feet above a ledge that itself lies 55 feet above the cavern floor. Searching it requires flight or a DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check, and even if located it appears to be empty unless another DC 19 Wisdom (Perception) check is made to notice a tiny ledge at its rear. Crammed into this small niche is a small leather pouch holding six rubies (500 gp each) and a *pearl of power*.

O2f. Cache 5

This niche requires only a DC 7 Wisdom (Perception) check to locate this floor-level alcove. However, the ribcage and partial human skeleton on the sandy floor here obscures the treasure held within. A detect magic or DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check is necessary to notice *rod of sorcerous might* (see **Appendix B**, page 575) lying among the skeleton's ribs.

O2g. Cache 6

A DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check locates this niche 95 feet above the floor on the cavern's floor. A tattered canvas knapsack here holds four potion vials: two *superior healing potions*, a *potion of lesser restoration*, and a *potion of heroism*. However, the knapsack is extremely dry rotted, so if it is picked up by a PC who does not expressly state that he is supporting the sack to prevent it from tearing, the bottom will tear out when it is lifted and drop 1d3+1 of the potions. Anyone within 5 feet can make a DC 20 Dexterity check to catch a single potion bottle (determine randomly) that drops. Any that are not caught shatter of the floor below and are ruined.

O3. THE CORKSCREW

Beyond the iron door, a round tunnel twists through the stone. It rises in a curving arc, its walls scoured smooth by the wind that whips along its length.

This tunnel extends between areas **O2** and **O4** in a triple corkscrew, each loop covering a 60-foot diameter. The tunnel averages 8 feet in diameter and has no discernable handholds, requiring a DC 25 Strength (Athletics) check to Climb to traverse it without flight. In addition, the relatively small diameter of the tunnel makes flight for winged creatures larger than size Small impossible because of a lack of space in which to stretch out the wingspan. However, flight of that sort is really not even an option because of the nature of the air currents here.

As described in **O2a**, a howling wind is always churning in this tunnel, contained behind the iron door. Anyone stepping into the confines of this tunnel can use the air pressure generated by the wind to quickly fly the entire length of the corkscrew tunnel. The wind is normally pushing from area **O4** to **O2**, so anyone stepping in at the western end is carried to the eastern end in only 2 rounds, regardless if normally capable of flight or not. However, unless successful at a DC 20 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to maneuver in flight each round, the flight involves rebounding off of the walls along the tunnels length and dealing 5d6 bludgeoning damage per round. An individual with a natural fly speed that doesn't involve the use of wings gains advantage on this check. Creatures of up to size Large can travel along the tunnel by this method (larger creatures must Squeeze).

When the iron door at area **O2a** is opened, the west-to-east wind dies off for 1 round and then begins blowing from **O2** to **O4** for 2d6 rounds. During this time, an individual can travel from east to west along this tunnel by flying just as above. After the 2d6 rounds, the wind changes to its west-to-east direction again for 1d10 minutes. At the end of this time, the wind dies down for 1 round followed by suctioning (east to west) again as the process repeats itself. However, if the door is shut during this time (such as by the suctioning of the wind), the wind reverts to its normal flow of west to east.

The geyser of sand seen at **O1** a few times a day is caused by the occupant of **O4** traveling to **O2** occasionally and opening the door at **O2a**.

O4. THE DOORKEEPER

The spiraling tunnel opens into a large curving cavern that bends from south to east towards the entrance. Directly across from the entrance the wall rock wall rises to another branch of the cave that extends to the northwest from a terrace nearly 30 feet above the floor. The walls of this chamber are worn smooth, though not so much as the nearly glass-like surface of that in the spiral tunnel, but clearly affected by the actions of the strong winds here. There is an obvious flow to the air currents as evidenced by the worn stone showing where it flows from the south, rebounds from the curved overhang from the terrace and then onto the roof of the eastern portion of the cavern where it is funneled into the spiraling tunnel.

The winds swirl into here by way of area **O5** and is shunted along the streamlined walls of this cavern directly into **O3** where the spiraling course focuses and intensifies it as described in that area. However, in here it's never particularly strong, whether blowing into **O3** or being sucked out of **O3**. The space of this room and the way it's directed by the curving walls mean the wind in here is never more than severe in strength (31–50 mph), causing disadvantage on hearing-based Wisdom (Perception) checks and on physical ranged attacks, and making the area difficult terrain for flying creatures. Small or smaller creatures must succeed on a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check at the beginning of each round or be unable to move effectively. They are not restrained; they simply are unable to make headway against the swirling winds. Because of the curved lip below the upper terrace, that upper portion of the chamber is not subjected to the winds at all, so in combats that occur its occupants are unaffected while combatants on the main floor are affected as described above. Climbing walls in this chamber requires a DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check.

Just around the corner from the entrance (and not visible until moving farther into the room) is a heavy steel winch whose chain runs through rings spiked into the stone wall of the chamber and out the sloping passage to the south. This winch operates the portcullis in O5 and can raise or lower that gate if they spend one full round operating the winch. The portcullis is currently down.

This chamber serves as the lair of the **Doorkeeper**, a strange servant of Hastur, and his **2 terrible hybrid things** (see **Appendix A**, page 558). The fiend is as incomprehensible looking as the void-stirges. Most of his form is covered by a threadbare burlap robe that appears to have possibly taken from an anchorite of one of Foere's many faiths, but though the robe gives him the appearance of a generally humanoid shape and the hood conceals his head and face it cannot entirely disguise that his body shape appears to writhe and contort unnaturally, and his face appears to undulate in the shadows of the hood. That in addition to the great, membranous wings that sprout from his shoulders quickly give truth to the picture that he is definitely not a humanoid. Beneath

the robes his body is almost entirely composed of a writhing mass of intertwined snakes, and his head appears vaguely reptilian but with no mouth or sensory organs, having a smaller undulating mass of tentacles in their place. For their part, the terrible hybrid things look like void-stirges of prodigious size but with a blood-red tint to their skin rather than the grayish-black of their compatriots.



The Doorkeeper came to the Pit of the Burning Star many centuries ago seeking to exploit its tragedy and the awe it has inspired to set himself up as a "demigod" over the traumatized plains folk. Instead he was confronted with the truth of the King in Yellow's power and presence and became suddenly gifted with strange powers. The will of the King in Yellow sent him into this cavern system where he found an affinity with the nesting void-stirges that inhabited and felt a peculiar compulsion to serve as warden over the beast trapped in **O6**. Now calling himself the Doorkeeper, the fiend has become an apostate among his kind, bowing to the will of the Great Old One, Hastur, and tending to the flock of void-stirges brought here from across interstellar space by the King in Yellow's powerful presence at this site. The Doorkeeper never leaves these caverns and has seen himself as the sole caretaker of the creature dwelling beyond.

THE DOORKEEPER

Medium fiend, neutral evil
Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 240 (32d8+96)
Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)	16 (+3)	21 (+5)

Saving Throws Dex +9, Int +8, Wis +8, Cha +9
Skills Arcana +8, Perception +13, Religion +8
Damage Immunities poison
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non-magical attacks
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, poisoned
Senses truesight 60 ft., passive Perception 23
Languages Abyssal, Aklo, Auran, Celestial, Common, Infernal; telepathy 50 ft.
Challenge 14 (11,500 XP)

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

Innate Spellcasting. The Doorkeeper's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 18). The Doorkeeper can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:
At will: *detect thoughts*
3/Day: *bestow curse*, *invisibility*
1/Day each: *feeblemind*, *geas*

Magic Resistance. The Doorkeeper has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Site-bound. The Doorkeeper has disadvantage on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws, if it moves more than 1 mile from the caverns.

Spellcasting. The doorkeeper is a 6th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 16). The doorkeeper has the following cleric spells prepared:
Cantrips (at will): *guidance*, *light*, *resistance*, *thaumaturgy*
1st level (4 slots): *bless*, *command*, *cure wounds*
2nd level (3 slots): *enthrall*, *gust of wind*, *hold person*
3rd level (3 slots): *sending*, *spirit guardians*, *wind wall*

Writhing Snakes. When the Doorkeeper beings its turn with a creature grappled, the serpents of its body writhe around the grappled foe, biting whenever they can gain purchase. The creature takes 12 (2d6+5) piercing damage and must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the creature is poisoned for 1 hour, and has disadvantage on Wisdom saving throws against the Doorkeeper's spells and abilities as long as it is poisoned.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Doorkeeper attacks twice with its claws.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 18 (3d8+5) slashing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 20).

Lightning Breath (Recharge 5–6). The Doorkeeper magically exhales lightning in an 30-foot line that is 5 feet wide. Each creature in that line must make a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw, taking 21 (6d6) lightning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Teleport (3/Day). The Doorkeeper magically teleports, along with any equipment it is wearing or carrying, up to 120 feet to an unoccupied space it can see.

TERRIBLE HYBRID THINGS (2)

XP 5,900

hp 216 (see **Appendix A**, page 558)

Tactics: The Doorkeeper and his minion's lair upon the chamber's upper terrace. Unless the PCs have magically transported themselves into this chamber, they will not be surprised because of the changes in wind patterns caused by the opening of the iron door at **O2a**. When the PCs arrive, the Doorkeeper stands at the edge of his terrace, flanked by the hulking girth of the terrible hybrid things squatting on either side. The Doorkeeper has already activated his air barrier revelation and cast detect thoughts to prepare to interrogate intruders. The terrible hybrid things have likewise used their blood pool to activate their regeneration and caustic blood abilities.

If the PCs attack, the Doorkeeper first blows a long blast on his horn, which will summon any surviving void-stirges from area **O2** to his aid immediately. The Doorkeeper remains upon his perch (which gives him cover from anyone on the floor below) and uses his lightning breath. It uses *feeblemind*, *bless*, and *bestow curse* to help its minions. If engaged in melee, it attempts to grapple and use its writhing snakes to geas that PC to, "raise the gate and travel down the windy way and feed the baleful beast beyond," forcing them to open the portcullis to **O5** and head down to **O6** to face the beast within.

If no void-stirges have arrived to help within 4 rounds or if both of his terrible hybrid things are killed, the Doorkeeper blows short blasts on his horn as a full-round action each round. This provokes attacks of opportunity, but it does not require concentration and cannot be interrupted short of sundering the horn. These blasts serve to agitate the flying polyp in **O6** who then uses its wind blast at the tunnel entrance to **O5**. It is not enhanced and focused by the spiraling tunnel at **O3**, so it only lasts for a single round as normal, but the shaping of the chamber walls in **O4** causes the wind blast to affect every creature that is in that room who is not on the upper terrace. The creature will continue to use this ability every 1d4 rounds for as long as the Doorkeeper continues making the short blasts.

While the Doorkeeper directs the battle from the terrace, the terrible hybrid things launch themselves to attack and attempt to feed on foes in the room below. Each should have 11 blood points left in its pool to use to cast spell-like abilities in alternation with physical attacks to grapple and drain blood. If either is reduced below half hit points that are not recovered by its regeneration, if retreats back to the terrace to defend the Doorkeeper from there. If the Doorkeeper begins to blow the short blasts to summon the flying polyps attack, they both know to retreat to his side and defend him and try to force the PCs off of the terrace and into the effects of its wind blast.

Development: If the PCs are not immediately hostile, the Doorkeeper delays in its attacks to converse with the PCs while it uses its *detect thoughts* to probe their identities. It speaks to them simultaneously in Aklo while projecting the message to them telepathically, so the effect is rather disconcerting. It identifies itself as the "Doorkeeper of the King in Yellow" and asks if the party has "come to pay homage or to feed the caged beast." If the party acts in a friendly manner, it tries to detect their true intentions through its *detect thoughts* and Wisdom (Insight) skill. If it believes the PCs will willingly enter area **O6** on their own or leave its lair peacefully, it allows them to do so. However, if they linger for more than 3 rounds or it doesn't believe their intentions are peaceful, it will attempt to *enthrall* them to prepare them for a surprise attack by its minions before launching its own attacks as mentioned in "Tactics" above.

Treasure: Though his days of seeking treasure and personal power are past since his strange calling to the King in Yellow, the Doorkeeper has still haphazardly accumulated some treasures that are collected in two piles near the back of his terrace lair. The first pile includes 3,568 sp, 1,508 gp, and a long sword. The other pile contains a heap of 2,405 gp, a leather pouch that holds two diamonds (1,000 gp each) and four scrolls (*bless*, *divination*, *raise dead*, *true strike*).

O5. THE SILVER DOOR

A portcullis made of silver bars blocks a steeply sloping tunnel here. Only 20 feet or so down this tunnel, evidence of a past collapse constricts it down to a mere 5 feet wide and 5 feet high, making it a potentially tight climb. A constant wind whistles out of this tunnel.

The portcullis is a standard iron portcullis, but its bars are sheathed in silver. It is controlled by the winch in area **O4**. Inscribed on the eastern side of the portcullis's central crossbar is a symbol that looks like a twig with 5 branches. This is recognizable as an image of an *Elder Sign* with a DC 21 Intelligence (Religion) check. It keeps the flying polyp in O6 from trying to leave its prison and keeps the Doorkeeper and his void-stirges at least 10 feet away from the portcullis unless the portcullis is raised. When the portcullis is raised, the *Elder Sign* is obscured and does not serve to hold anything back, though the flying polyp does not attempt an escape simply out of long habit. In addition, this means that unless the portcullis is in the lowered position while the PCs are on the east side of it, they have no chance to notice the *Elder Sign*. If they should happen to notice the *Elder Sign* and are able to remove it from the portcullis intact (such as by cutting off the crossbar), they can wield the sign in one hand. If presented boldly in this way against any of the undead or unnatural denizens of the rift dedicated to the King Yellow (the Doorkeeper, void-stirges, maenads, etc.), it will cause those creatures to recoil from it exactly as a vampire would from a strongly presented religious symbol.

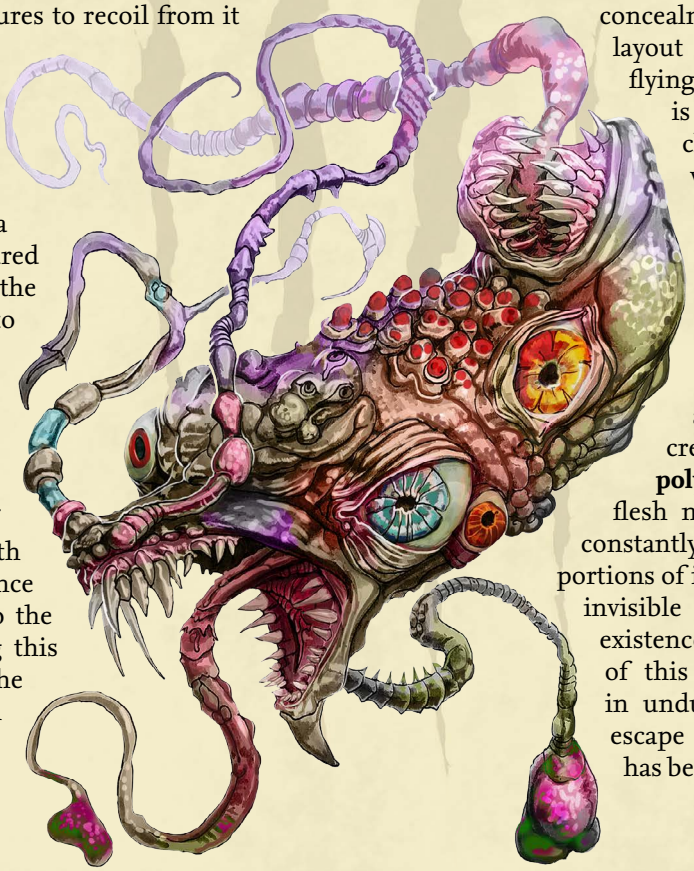
The passage beyond the portcullis descends at a roughly 45° slope and is scoured smooth by the winds so that the Strength (Athletics) check to climb it is DC 22.

Treasure: If the time is taken to pry the silver sheathing from the portcullis (requiring approximately 5 hours), a total of 8 pounds of silver can be recovered (worth 5 gp per pound). However, since the *Elder Sign* is scribed into the silver of the crossbar, doing this destroys it. If the silver of the crossbar is left intact, then only 7 chunks of silver can be recovered.

O6. THE PRISON

The sloping passage ends on a ledge overlooking a cavern of massive proportions. Its floor dips down from the ledge for at least another 100 feet, but even that is difficult to tell because the cavern floor is a chaotic geography of cliffs, crevices, rocky pillars, ledges, ridges, saddles, rock arches, pinnacles, and pits. It's as if a canyon had been dug under the earth here, or perhaps the tumbled blocks of some mad god. Despite the depth underground and lack of any other apparent openings to the surface, currents of air continually whip and swirl throughout this enormous chamber creating a loud whistling that reverberates from the thousands of surfaces and angles.

As mentioned, the floor of this cavern is a jumble of broken and wind-carved stone ranging in depth of 10–100 feet below the level of the ledge at the entrance, while the ceiling rises as much as 40 feet above as the cavern extends away from the entrance. As such, the floor is wholly unsuitable for overland travel. Every 5-foot square traversed requires a Strength (Athletics) check to Climb (DC 15 + 1d12) with a possible drop of 2d6–1 x 10 feet for a critical failure. Even with effects like *spider climb* or some other climb Speed, navigation is problematic as it takes 10 feet of movement to cross each 5-foot square. The upside is that every 5-foot square at ground level provides cover and may provide concealment from anyone more than 5 feet away (roll d6: 1–3 no concealment, 4–6 concealment). In short, this cavern's layout is especially conducive to flying creatures. However, even that is no sure thing as the constantly changing air currents that whip throughout the cavern are severe (31–50 mph) — see area **O4** for these effects — and shift in directions continuously.



This cavern serves as a prison for a strange creature known as a **flying polyp**. This tapering cylinder of flesh measures 30 feet long and is constantly shifting in and out of view as portions of its body and hide seem to turn invisible before flickering back into existence. It roils among the winds of this cavern, riding the currents in undulating maneuvers but seeks escape from this chamber where it has been held for over a millennium.

FLYING POLYP

Huge aberration, chaotic evil

Armor Class 20 (natural armor)

Hit Points 202 (15d12+105)

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
28 (+9)	15 (+2)	24 (+7)	19 (+4)	20 (+5)	21 (+5)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Wisdom +10

Skills Arcana +14, History +9, Nature +14, Perception +14, Stealth +7

Damage Immunities acid, cold, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks

Damage Vulnerabilities lightning

Senses blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft, passive Perception 24

Languages Deep Speech

Challenge 14 (11,500 XP)

Amorphous. The flying polyp can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Deflecting Winds. The flying polyp has an aura of wind. Ranged attacks against the flying polyp have disadvantage if they are made with arrows, bolts, and other ordinary projectiles. This effect is considered a strong wind and can disperse gaseous effects.

Magic Resistance. The flying polyp has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Partial Invisibility. The flying polyp moves in and out of visibility outside of its own control. The flying polyp can use its bonus action to concentrate and become either fully visible or fully invisible, but it cannot maintain this invisibility if it makes an attack or casts a spell.

Sucking Wind. The flying polyp can use its action to create a wind vortex as an aura out to 100 feet in every direction. The flying polyp must concentrate on this effect as if it were a spell. While the flying polyp concentrates on this effect, the space within this area is difficult terrain. A creature that ends its turn in this area must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, it moves 10 feet closer to the flying polyp, unless it is already adjacent. If a creature fails by 5 or more, it also restrained after it involuntarily moves, and remains so until the end of its next turn. The *control winds* spell can be used to negate this ability as an action.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The flying polyp uses its Frightful Presence. It then makes four tentacle attacks.

Frightful Presence. Each creature of the flying polyp's choice that is within 120 feet of the fying polyp and aware of it must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the savin throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itsef on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the flying polyp's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours.

Tentacle. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +13 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit*: 18 (2d8 + 9) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 15). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained. The flying polyp has eight tentacles, each of which can grapple one target.

Wind Blast (Recharge 5-6). The flying polyp creates a powerful blast of wind within a 120 ft. range, in a 30 ft. radius sphere. Creatures in this each creature in that area must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw, taking 52 (15d6) bludgeoning damage on a failure, or half as much on a success. If a Large sized or smaller creature fails this saving throw by 5 or more, they are blown 15 away in a random direction.

Tactics: When faced with intruders the flying polyp relies upon its mastery of wind to buffet and bludgeon its foes. If it obtains a grapple on a foe, after constricting for 1 round it hurls that victim down among the peaks and crevices of the floor below dealing 28 (8d6) points of falling damage to any that can't fly (DC 19 Dexterity saving throw for half). Even a victim capable of flying must make a DC 20 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to be able to pull out of the dive it has been thrown into. If the check is successful, the victim only takes 4d6 points of damage on a failed Dexterity saving throw and no damage if the save is successful.

Development: After fighting for 1d4 rounds, the flying polyp will realize that the silver gate at **O5** must be open and will attempt to fly up and out of area **O**. Because of its bulk, the cramped tunnels between here and the entrance are difficult terrain for it, and its absence from this chamber removes the wind effects from area **O3** so that pursuing PCs will have to make their own way through the corkscrew tunnel. If it is successful in escaping it will fly up and out of the crater and begin hunting on the surrounding steppes. It kills several ash giants, and there will be no further random encounters Flying Above the Crater or on the Crater Ridge and Surrounding Area other than possible run-ins with the polyp itself. Every hour spent in the air above the crater or on the ground surrounding the crater has a 15% chance of encountering the raging beast. In addition, there is a cumulative 25% chance each day of the polyp locating any camp or allies left by the PCs outside the crater. If this occurs, the flying polyp utterly destroys this, leaving only 1d2 random survivors who managed to flee with no more than 50% of their Hit Points remaining.

Treasure: Anyone taking several hours to Search among the bizarre floor of this chamber who succeeds at a DC 26 Wisdom (Perception) check or uses magic to locate any treasures discovers the item that first attracted the flying polyp to this strange cavern long ago, a fist-sized piece of stone, jet black with a rough texture that, upon closer inspection of its surface, appears to actually swirl very slowly, as if containing a ceaselessly shifting smoke. This is the *Holocaust Stone of Gun'Ta* (see **Appendix B**, page 577) that came to the **Lost Lands** upon the meteor that struck in the Haunted Steppe and that formed this cavern with its own unleashed power upon impact. The flying polyp both covets the stone and abhors it for causing it to become trapped for so long and will abandon the stone for 1d2 weeks while it rampages across the steppes above before returning to reclaim it.

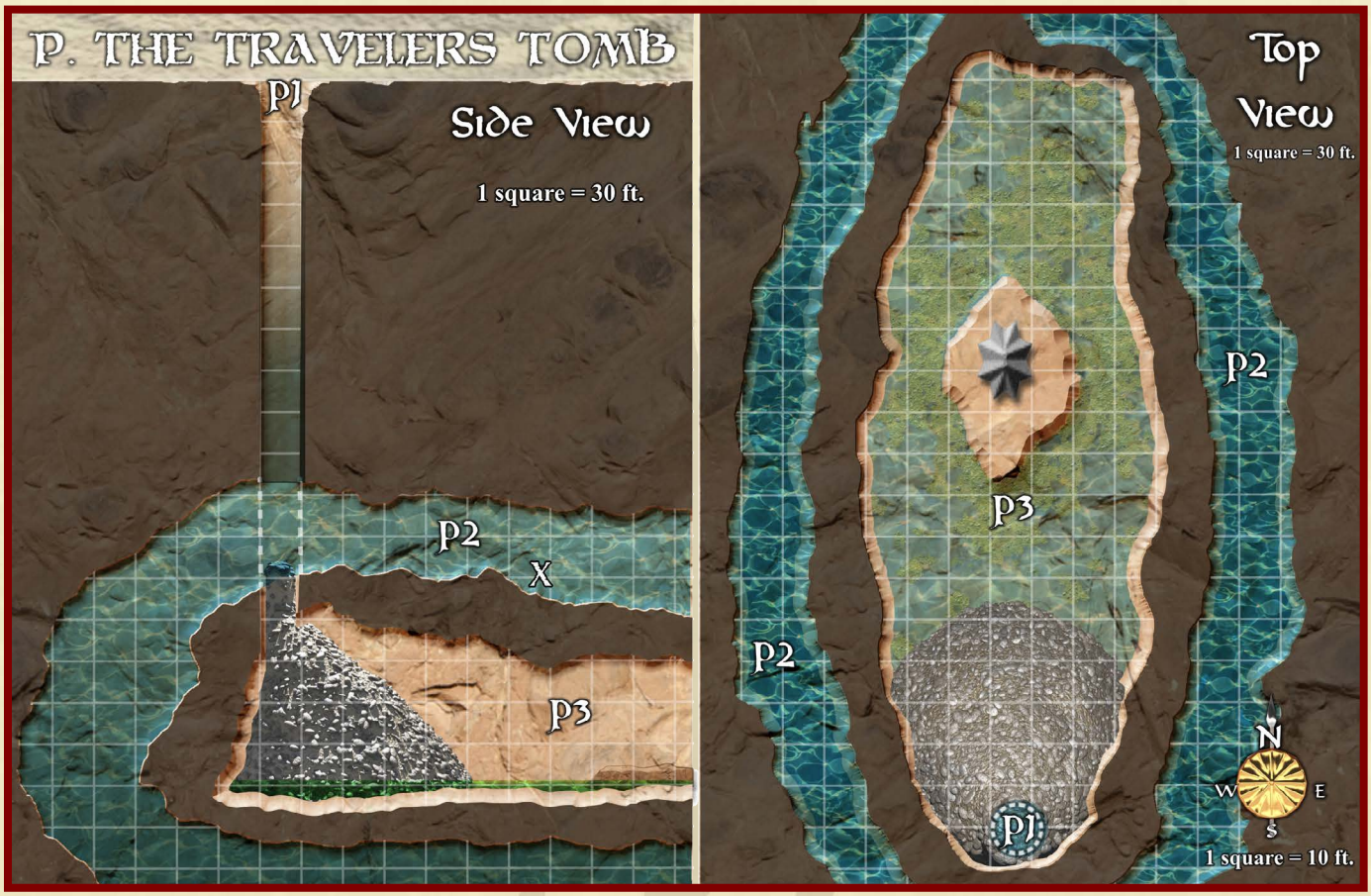
P. THE TRAVELER'S TOMB

This is one of the oldest features of the crater, having been formed in the weeks and years following its initial impact. There are no footprints or trails leading to this almost perfectly round hole, so it is more difficult to spot than some of the other features of the Pit.

The fall of the Burning Star, and its twin that struck in the distant Red Waste of Libynos, came to the **Lost Lands** by no accident. The power of Hastur, as he lay near-dormant in his primordial prison, long stretched out his senses across the Dark Tapestry to locate some means of escape. For 20 million years he languished in his goddess-built incarceration after suffering his fate as a result of the impact of the much greater asteroid known alternately as the Hammer of Mercy or the Judgment of Xtu[LL6-591], but finally through what was perhaps fate or just the will of the imprisoned Great Old One, Hastur was able to ensnare the two asteroids that would eventually fall to earth.

The reason Hastur sought these two asteroids rather than just any of the millions that float through the vast void of space was that he could sense the presence of the *Holocaust Stone of Gun'Ta* (see area **O6**) in one of them. He intended to bring them down as meteors directly into Lake Hali in the northwestern reaches of the Haunted Steppe, reasoning that the devastation caused by the activated artifact might be sufficient to loosen the bindings that held him. He was not to experience any such salvation though, as he discovered the work of Erce, The Goddess, who had banished him with Xtu and millions of years later at the end of the Age of Dragons would sacrifice herself to create the Blessed Tesseract to save the world once again and protect the fledgling new gods of Boros, even though it cost her life and the loss of almost all memory of her beyond the persisting vague beliefs in the Blessed Tesseract. However, this Blessed Tesseract served not only to protect the fledgling world and gods from her husband, the god Boros, now remembered only in myth as The Father[LL5-239], but its still-active mandate caused the falling meteors to be partially deflected. This caused them to enter the atmosphere several hours apart, and also shifted the latitude of their impact more than 800 miles south of Lake Hali. The first struck in far Libynos and the second (containing the *Holocaust Stone of Gun'Ta*) struck central Akados. The devastation was great from this collision, but rather than being focused upon the wards of The Goddess — Erce — it was instead expended upon the vastness and desolation that already existed at the center of the near-deserted Haunted Steppe. Thwarted in his plan, Hastur turned his attention to other means by which to once again rise ascendant over the world. But that was not the end of the story for the Burning Star.

Like its sister meteor in the Red Waste, which carried at its core the Pit-Worm of Yhath[AK:M-74-79], the meteor of the Haunted Steppe held more than just the coveted Holocaust Stone. It too held a sleeping passenger encapsulated at its heart, the **chyzaedu** traveler Talethqueh-Gun'Ta, who had been selected by his people prior to the destruction of their homeworld to serve as chief attendant to the *Holocaust Stone*. Talethqueh was killed in the impact of the meteorite, but the proximity of the powerful *Holocaust Stone* caused his body to be infused by necromantic energies and arise as a horrific undead known as a **dread mohrg**. Undaunted by



his new undead existence, Talethqueh began the laborious process of burrowing his way up through hundreds of feet of rock to reach the surface of the new world he had reached. But even though Hastur had turned his attention away from the Burning Star for the time being, the Elder Spirits of the Shattered Folk tribes — many of whose peoples had been obliterated by the Burning Star's fall — could sense the danger of the *Holocaust Stone of Gun'Ta* and the awakening of its guardian and potential user.

The Ethtuwate[FB] (as these Elder Spirits are known) called Thaka the Golden Rider[FB] summoned his tribal greatest heroes, fearing the hand of the spirit Drethra, Mother of Mayhem[FB], in the stone's fall and the interstellar traveler's awakening. By the time Talethqheh-Gun'Ta was able to reach the surface, he found dozens of the most powerful heroes of the Shattered Folk waiting in the newly formed meteor crater to confront him and prevent his escape. Even though suffering badly from the effects of the meteor's radiation, these were the greatest heroes among the tribes of the Haunted Steppe and, with Thaka's blessing, were able to drive the undead chyzaedu back down into the hole he had burrowed from below. Many of these heroes followed him into his former lair to keep him occupied while companions on the surface above labored to prevent him from ever escaping.

Druids of the Ethtuwate used their mastery over elemental earth to collapse a portion of Talethqueh-Gun'Ta's borehole and prevent him from quickly accessing it, though doing so meant trapping dozens of their comrades under the earth with him. Then a powerful shaman of Thaka blessed a special clay jar with his mastery over the rain and rivers and caused it to give forth a continuous bounty of flowing, pure water. The druids used their magic to excavate a secondary cavern around the lair of Talethqueh-Gun'Ta and placed the blessed jar within it as it spilled over in its abundance, while other spellcasters among the Shattered Folk enacted a ritual to place a permanent *forbiddance* over the entire area.

By the time the dread mohrg chyzaedu had finished off the heroes pitted against him, the blessed jar of Thaka had begun to fill this newly created cavern and created an aquifer that encapsulated the traveler's cavern lair. It was then that it discovered that its newly undead form created in the fires of meteoric impact had a debilitating weakness

to the touch of water. Thaka's insight into the nature of this invading creature had permitted the Shattered Folk to create a means of imprisoning Talethqueh-Gun'Ta by completely surrounding his underground home with an aqueous cocoon that has successfully kept the beast trapped and unable to recover the nearby *Holocaust Stone* for 2,000 years.

P1. THE BOREHOLE

The near featureless surface of the hardpan is broken here by an almost perfectly circular pit, 30 feet in diameter. On closer inspection, it can be seen that the walls of the pit are certainly not natural as it maintains its circular diameter as it extends straight down for as far as the eye can see and its walls remain virtually smooth, as if dug with great skill and precision.

This circular pit is what remains of Talethqueh-Gun'ta's borehole as the newly undead monstrosity burrowed its way up and out of the pit. It is also where he was driven back by the Shattered Folk heroes who sacrificed themselves to keep him contained in the pit. Those events all occurred two millennia ago, so no trace remains of that battle.

The walls of the pit are hewn through stone and, though smooth, are not perfectly so. They require a DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check to climb. The 30-foot-diameter pit descends straight down for 300 feet before reaching the surface of murky water. Anyone diving through these depths finds that the pit extends another 60 feet before ending abruptly. Anyone digging through the 2,000 years of silt that have built up can discover that the floor of the pit is actually the compressed remains of rubble and broken stone, as if the deepest portion of the pit had collapsed in upon itself at some point long ago. A shimmering emerald field covers the surface of the rubble (but hidden beneath the silt). A DC 19 Intelligence (Arcana) check can identify this as an active *forbiddance* that covers the rubble and appears to extend into the walls surrounding the pit as well. Likewise, anyone examining the walls of the pit below the waterline and making a DC 20 Intelligence (Nature) check realizes that the walls are fairly porous and that the pit appears to be part of some sort of aquifer beneath the meteor crater.

If PCs wish, they can break through this relatively thin rock wall (3 in. thick, damage threshold 8, AC 15, HP 45) to breach area **P2**. This does not cause any rush of water, because the water level of the pit and the aquifer are already equalized. If the PCs wish to dig down through the rubble below at least 20 feet and horizontally at least 10 feet will breach area **P3**. In this case, water will begin to pour into area **P3** through this breach, though because of the size of the cavern it will take months for it to fill and, as long as the water source in **P2** remains in place, the aquifer itself will never drain. If the undead chyzaedu remains undestroyed, he will prepare a stone shape and plug the leak into **P3** long before the water level begins to threaten his lair.

P2. AQUIFER

Rough, seemingly natural caverns extend in ragged rises and drops in all directions beneath an irregular ceiling. The entire space is completely filled with cold, clean water. Strangely the rock floor glows with a faint emerald sheen providing just a hint of green illumination to this eerie aquatic cave system.

This vast area is more a series of interconnected caves that extend outward and down from area **P1** like the surface of an oblong bubble, the interior of the bubble being a layer of intact stone surrounding the hollow interior of **P3**. This serves to completely surround that area in a barrier of water that prevents Talethqueh-Gun'Ta from burrowing out. The emerald sheen is the visible manifestation of a permanent *forbiddance* that completely encapsulates area **P3** and prevents the chyzaedu from using magic to escape.

Anyone able to breath underwater taking the time to thoroughly explore this aquifer can discover its spheroid shape, though the water is cold (40° F) and requires a Constitution saving throw (DC 15) every 10 minutes to avoid taking 1d6 cold damage. The frequency of the save is increased because of the PCs being immersed in the water.

If anyone makes such a search, allow them a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check to notice an ancient clay jar of Shattered Folk design and incised with symbols of the sun, sheaves of grain, and rivers, lying on the floor of the cavern at the point marked "X" on the map. This is the jar blessed by Thaka and functions as a *decanter of endless water*. It is currently set on its "fountain" setting and pours forth 5 gallons of fresh water per round in a 5-foot-long stream. Changing the setting to "geyser" has no effect on the aquifer, as excess water drains into the local water table, but removing the jar or turning it on a lesser setting will cause the aquifer to drain away over the next 6 months. After only 2 months, the upper portion of the aquifer will be dry and will allow Telathqheh-Gun'Ta to burrow out of his prison once again.

P3. THE TRAVELER'S LAIR

Beyond the mound of rocks, soil and debris that fills the southern end of this place lies an expansive cavern that reeks from the foul, stale air that fills it. The rough-hewn vaulting ceiling drips a

constant precipitation into the murky pool that covers the floor of the place. In the center of the room a mound of the rubble and debris has been collected to create an island of sorts. A portion of the island is covered by some sort of tent-like structure.

This cavern served as the hibernation cocoon of Talethqueh-Gun'Ta as his asteroid home hurtled through space, and it became his temporary tomb after he died in the impact only to arise as a dread mohrg chyzaedu shortly thereafter. When he was driven back into this cavern two thousand years ago, a warband of Shattered Folk heroes followed him. He was eventually able to overcome them all, but not before the Shattered Folk on the surface above had discovered his weakness and sealed him within the chamber. The water of the aquifer (**P2**) drips through tiny pores in the stone above and has filled this chamber to a depth of 3 feet (treat the flooded portions of the floor as a shallow bog, difficult terrain for Medium creatures and greater difficult terrain for Small creatures). To stay out of the water, the chyzaedu used his minions to construct a 15-foot-high rubble platform to rest on. He then used all of their clothing, equipment, and eventually even their skin to construct a tarp that he must constantly use magic to repair in order to keep the dripping water off of his sensitive undead flesh.

Talethqueh-Gun'Ta awaits intruders on the island beneath the shelter of his tent while the remnant of the attacking Shattered Folk warriors, now **23 fast zombies**, lurk in the surrounding waters and follow the mohrg's commands. The fast zombies have all been skinned leaving only their decaying muscle and bone visible. Only the mohrg's animating magic keeps them from collapsing into ruin from the long exposure to the wet cavern.

TALETHQUEH-GUN'TA, UNIQUE MORHG CHYZAEDU

Gargantuan undead, lawful evil
Armor Class 21 (natural armor)
Hit Points 189 (14d20+42)
Speed 30 ft., burrow 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
28 (+9)	17 (+3)	17 (+3)	17 (+3)	18 (+4)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Con +8, Wis +9
Skills Perception +14, Religion +8, Stealth +8
Damage Immunities poison
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non-magical attacks; cold, fire, lightning
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; passive Perception 24
Languages Common, Deep Speech, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.
Challenge 14 (11,500 XP)

Alien Vestment. A chyzaedu wears a sheet of undulating metallic material blessed by its inscrutable gods. This garment causes a critical hit to be treated as a normal hit (like adamantine armor), and makes the chyzaedu immune to be being charmed or frightened, having its throughts read, or having its alignment determined. The vestment also serves as a divine focus for any spell the chyzaedu casts. This vestment doesn't function for any creature other than the chyzaedu for which it was originally crafted. If a chyzaedu's vestment is stolen or destroyed, the chyzaedu can create a replacement with a month of work.

Dread Mohrg. Normal mohrgs and zombies never attack Talethqueh-Gun'Ta unless compelled.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Talethqueh-Gun'Ta fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Spellcasting. Talethqueh-Gun'ta is a 10th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 17). Talethqueh-Gun'Ta has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *guidance, light, resistance, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*
1st level (4 slots): *command, create or destroy water*
2nd level (3 slots): *blindness/deadness, darkness, silence, shatter, spiritual weapon*
3rd level (3 slots): *fear, magic circle, sending*
4th level (3 slots): *banishment, control water*
5th level (2 slots): *flame strike, hallow*

Water Vulnerability. Water acts as an extremely strong acid to a chyzaedu. A splash of water deals 1d6 acid damage to Talethqueh-Gun'Ta, exposure to a full gallon deals 2d6, and full immersion

in water deals 10d6 points of damage at the beginning of each of his turns.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Talethqueh-Gun'Ta uses Ecstatic Hunger. Then he attacks three times, once with his bite, once with his claw, and once with his tongue.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 18 (2d8+9) piercing damage. If the target is a Huge or smaller creature, it must succeed on a DC 22 Dexterity saving throw or be swallowed by the chyzaedu. A swallowed creature is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the chyzaedu, and it takes 21 (6d6) acid damage at the start of each of the worm's turns. If the chyzaedu takes 30 damage or more on a single turn from a creature inside it, the chyzaedu must succeed on a DC 21 Constitution saving throw at the end of that turn or regurgitate all swallowed creatures, which fall prone in a space within 10 feet of the worm. If the chyzaedu dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse by using 20 feet of movement, exiting prone.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 16 (2d6+9) slashing damage.

Tongue. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 27 (4d8+9) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the targer is paralyzed for 1 minute. At the end of each of its turns, the target can make a new saving throw. On a success, the target is no longer paralyzed.

Command Mohrgs and Zombies. All zombies and mohrgs of any sort within 30 feet must make a DC 18 Charisma saving throw. On a failed save, the undead falls under Talethqueh-Gun'Ta's sway and obeys him for 24 hours, as the spell create undead. Creatures with a CR of 8 or higher are immune.

Create Spawn. Talethqueh-Gun'Ta targets a humanoid within 10 feet of it that has been dead for no longer than 1 minute and died violently. The target's body rises as a fast zombie in the space of its corpse or in the nearest unoccupied space. The fast zombie is under the chyzaedu's control.

Ecstatic Hunger. A chyzaedu's zealous drive to consume infects the minds of those around it. Any living creature within 30 feet of a chyzaedu must succeed at a DC 18 Wisdom save or immediately consume any food and beverages (including potions and the like) on its person or within its reach. This effect continues for as long as it takes the creature to consume all the food and beverages within its reach. The creature defends itself normally but takes no other actions while eating and drinking. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the chydaedu's Ecstatic Hunger for the next 24 hours.If the creature succeeds at the saving throw, it cannot be affected again by the aura for another 24 hours.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Talethqueh-Gun'Ta can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Talethqueh-Gun'Ta regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Move. Talethqueh-Gun'Ta moves up to his speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

Create Spawn. Talethqueh-Gun'Ta uses Create Spawn. When he creates an undead in this manner, he regains 28 (8d6) hit points.

Tongue (Costs 2 Actions). Talethqueh-Gun'Ta makes one tongue attack.

Chyzaedu: Chyzaedu resemble massive pale earthworms, save that each has a hard beaks at one end and a knot of short tentacles at the other. Their bodies are extremely flexible and ringed with powerful muscles. Chyzaedu have very efficient, well-developed digestive systems, allowing them to ingest a wide variety of materials, although they prefer to eat sentient creatures in order to share the religious experience

of consumption. Chyzaedu have a ring of tiny eyes around their beaklike maws, mostly hidden by the folds of their skin. These eyes are particularly keen and can dilate to allow the creature excellent night vision. Their eyes are supplemented by the lumpy and irregularly sized parietal eyes that line the area just behind their beaks; these serve as supplemental sensory organs, pinpointing the location of other nearby creatures in contact with the ground. The cloaca at the end of a chyzaedu's body is ringed by five flexible, ridged tentacles, which can wind together to form a clawlike appendage. A chyzaedu has significant control over this appendage and can use it to grasp items, manipulate devices, or cast spells with somatic components.

FAST ZOMBIES

Medium undead, neutral evil
Armor Class 12
Hit Points 52 (8d8+16)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	1 (-5)	10 (+0)	4 (-3)

Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft, passive Perception 10
Languages understands Common but can't speak
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The fast zombie makes two slam attacks.

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

Tactics: If a battle occurs, the dread mohrg chyzaedu prefers to remain under the shelter of his tent. It provides concealment form anyone not on the island but not cover. In fact, the tent is very fragile, and anything inflicting at least 10 points of damage to it (or any damage at all if delivered by an area effect) causes it to fall in shreds and tatters. Once the tent is ruined, Talethqueh-Gun'Ta is exposed until he can take the time to repair it and takes 1d6 points of damage per round from the cavern's dripping water. If battle occurs, the mohrg prefers to stay high and dry using spells while his zombie minions converge on the PCs to attack.



Treasure: As a hibernating traveler before arriving in the **Lost Lands**, Talethqueh-Gun'Ta has been effectively confined to this cavern for thousands of years. Other than his personal items, the only treasures he has accumulated are what was recovered from the Shattered Folk heroes that has managed to not be ruined by the two millennia of exposure to the damp cavern. A hollow concealed by a stone on his islands (DC 25 Wisdom (Perception) check to locate) contains his few valuables: a small collection of strangely shaped coins of ancient Hundaei minting (heirlooms that were old even at the time of the Burning Star's crash) consisting of 45 gp and 332 sp, though each is worth 10 times as much if sold to a collector of antiquities, a *ring of water walking* (largely useless to the mohrg since it still puts him in contact with the surface of the water), a *+2 lance*, and a torn and mildewed (but still functional) r*obe of stars*.

Q. THE MOTHER LODE

This serves as the locus of activity in the crater and serves as the focal point for the party's entire reason for coming. When the area is discovered and first explored, read the following.

A short bluff rises where the crater wall begins to slope upward towards the rim. Penetrating this bluff are two cave openings. Both appear to be excavations based on the worked stone surrounding them and the tailings that lie scattered beyond their mouths, so it seems likely they were once mines of the old Caleen operation. However, one of the openings is much larger than the other, measuring 30 feet high and 30 feet wide, whereas the other is only roughly 10 feet high and 10 feet wide. A stone lintel has been carved into the rock face around the largely opening, and faint lettering can be seen chiseled into its surface.

These caves were indeed part of the earliest Caleen mines, though after the fall of the colonies they have been transformed into much more. The writing around the larger opening is discernable with a DC 30 Intelligence (History) check to Recall Knowledge as High Boros[LL8-30] and a speaker of that dead language or anyone succeeding on a DC 30 Intelligence (History) check to Decipher Writing can translate it as saying, "Crater Mine Adit #1: The Heart of New Reme." Underneath that, more crudely chiseled has been added the phrase, "The Mother Lode."

A search for tracks on the ground outside this entrance uncovers signs of the frequent comings and goings of Medium bipedal creatures with a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check. These are the various undead of the crater who enter and exit with some frequency. A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Wisdom (Survival) check to Track notices that none of these tracks enter the smaller entrance, though there are tracks from some heavier bipedal creature with large, clawed feet (the ghole at **Q2**). For every 10 minutes spent outside this entrance, there is a 20% chance of an encounter as a creature arrives or is departing. If an encounter occurs, roll on the following table to determine its result. An encounter marked with an asterisk can only occur once. If an encounter designated as "only at night" occurs during daylight hours, treat it as no encounter.

d%	Encounter
01–12	1d6 blast shadows
13–24	2d6 radioactive combusted
25–34	1d4 cinder ghouls
35–44	3d4 void-stirges
45–54	2d6 fire phantoms
55–60	Ossuary golem*
61–70	1d6+6 specters[SRD] (only at night, otherwise reroll)
71–80	1d4+2 wraiths[SRD] (only at night, otherwise reroll)
81–85	Ghole*
86–95	1d6+1 baykoks
96–00	Roll twice and ignore this result

* This creature can be encountered only once, otherwise treat as no encounter.

BAYKOK

XP 2,300
hp 97 (see **Appendix A**, page 529)

BLAST SHADOW

XP 1,800
hp 117 (see **Appendix A**, page 530)

CINDER GHOUL

XP 2,900
hp 75 (see **Appendix A**, page 532)

RADIOACTIVE COMBUSTED

XP 700
hp 84 (see **Appendix A**, page 551)

FIRE PHANTOM

XP 1,600
hp 104 (see **Appendix A**, page 534)

GHOLE

XP 5,000
hp 165 (see **Appendix A**, page 539)

OSSUARY GOLEM

XP 7,200
hp 168 (see **Appendix A**, page 542)

VOID-STIRGE

XP 1,100
hp 67 (see **Appendix A**, page 557)


Q. THE MOTHER LODE
Upper Tunnels
N
E
S
W
1 square = 10 ft.
Q1
Q2
Q3
Open
to
Below
Lower Tunnels
650 ft.
Q4
Q4
210 ft.
deep
Q3
Q5
Q7
Q6
Q8
= Dross

Q1. CALEEN MEMORIAL

Note: If the ossuary golem has been encountered and defeated at area **Q1** already, then the bone obelisk is absent, leaving only a scattering of a few fresh and old bones on the floor where it once stood. Modify the description accordingly.

This wide cavern has a flat ceiling 30 feet overhead supported by a complex series of wooden support struts. On the southern wall a smaller opening, only 15 feet high exits the chamber. The entire room has a charnel reek to it, and with good reason. The eastern wall is dominated by a construction fully 25 feet tall. It is an obelisk of sorts but is composed entirely of bones: long bones, rib cages, pelvises, spinal columns, and the frequent inclusion of a gaping-eyed skull. Most of the bones are humanoid, though a smattering of giant-sized or non-humanoid bones appear among the rest. For the most part the bones seem very old, yellowed and cracked with time and exposure, but some of them look surprisingly fresh even still tacky with blood or with gobbets of flesh still clinging to them.

What makes this even more unusual is that these fresher pieces do not appear to be recent additions to the obelisk but rather are interspersed throughout its structure, some even in the lower foundational courses of the structure which would have to have been deconstructed to insert them there seamlessly. Yet there are no signs that any such reconstruction has occurred. Standing to either side of this bone obelisk is a 7-foot limestone statue. One depicts an angelic being with a long robe and wings, though its face has been broken away leaving a strangely disturbing blank where an expression should be. The other is a bird-headed humanoid cradling a book in one arm and holding the other extended, though it has been broken off at the elbow.

This chamber holds an impromptu memorial to the thousands of Caleen colonists and those who came after and lost their lives to the hazards of the Pit of the Burning Star. The skeletal remains are mostly human, a mix of Rheman* and Shattered Folk, though this is not evident through any means short of an involved anthropological study or use of divination magic. However, mixed in among them are a few other creatures, including the odd ash giant here and there. These have all been stacked here by the ghole in **Q2** who finds the structural arrangement strangely pleasing. It spends most of its time scouring the crater for the myriad skeletal remains to be found and has been constructing this obelisk for many years. The presence of the strangely fresh corpses mixed in is because of its use of Restore Corpse on random portions for the purposes of snacking, though it doesn't actually remove the restored segments because it doesn't want to upset its construction. Rather it just gnaws away at the exposed flesh it has created and allows its leavings to rot.

The presence of the bone obelisk is not the most interesting thing about the room. Rather the fact that the bones of the obelisk have spontaneously animated as an ossuary golem should provide much more excitement to the PCs, unwelcome though it may be. The bone obelisk is the **ossuary golem** in its Disassembled form. It is not disturbed by any of the creatures normally found in the mines, nor even by the ghole occasionally feeding on it. However, if touched by a PC or even examined closely for more than 1 round, the golem reassembles into its normal form as a hideous multi-legged, multi-armed conglomeration of thousands of bones haphazardly fitted together and viciously attacks. It will pursue intruders from this chamber regardless of where they go.

OSSUARY GOLEM

XP 7,200
hp 168 (see **Appendix A**, page 542)

Treasure: The statues on either side of the obelisk are actually of ancient construction. They are of marble and can be identified with a DC 18 Intelligence (History) or Painter's Supplies check to recognize them as authentic Rhemian works of art dating to the time period of the Caleen Colonies. The angelic being can be recognized with a DC 20 Intelligence (History) or DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) as Kirasaan, a deva known to serve as herald to Solanus, The Light of Civilization, Goddess of the Sun and Healing. The same checks can be made to recognize the bird-man as Arturak the Fair, a legendary tengu merchant and follower of Dame Torren, Goddess of the Four Winds. He is typically shown holding an account ledger and a merchant's scale (that was once held in the statue's broken arm). A DC 12 Intelligence (History) is sufficient to recall that Solanus and Torren are two of the three ancient patron deities of the city of Reme[LL3-289] (the third being Mithras) and, though largely in decline now, would have been very prominent at the time that the Caleen Colonists departed the grand duchy. Despite being damaged, each could be sold to a museum or collector for 500 gp (though each weighs 450 pounds).

Q2. HARVESTER'S HOME

This irregular cave reeks of carrion and excrement. The floor is strewn with bones in various stages of consumption and decomposition, most with pieces of gnawed flesh still clinging to them. In fact, it seems like a fairly large assortment of carrion

* Rheman/Rhemen are the singular and plural demonyms for citizens of the Grand Duchy of Reme. Rhemian is the adjectival demonym for things from Reme.

considering how desolate the general area of the crater is and how little potential prey exists close by. Some sort of nest or bed composed of sticks, bones, and great tangles of filthy hair occupies the eastern portion of the cave.

The reason for the strangely abundant supply of carrion for feeding is because of the inhabitant's penchant for using Restore Corpse to feed upon on the many, many ancient skeletal remains to be found within the area of the crater. This **ghole** can be found in here 25% of the time during the day and 60% of the time at night, unless already encountered and defeated as a random encounter outside. If the ghole is not present when the PCs arrive, there is a cumulative 10% chance per hour of his return. He attacks intruders relentlessly but will not pursue deeper into the mine.

GHOLE

XP 5,000
hp 165 (see **Appendix A**, page 539)

Treasure: Stashed in the ghole's bed are some treasures it has been able to collect. Each of these can be found with a separate DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check while searching the bedding. They include: a pair of moldering belt pouches holding a total of 82 gp in assorted currency (none tainted by metallurgic amber) and a black pearl (450 gp), a suit of *+1 leather armor* of Shattered Folk make, a *ring of swimming*, a *vest of healing*, a *scroll of fire shield*), and a *major crown of radiance* (see **Appendix B**, page 569).

Q3. PRECIPITOUS STAIR

Steam and the odor of a lit forge waft up through a nearly vertical mineshaft bored into the earth here. Though rough and uneven, the shaft averages around 30 feet in diameter as it disappears into the darkness below. The remains of a wooden platform still exist at the lip of the shaft, though the rotten beams have given way long ago carrying what was apparently a winch and lift of some sort — based on the remaining fragments — down with it into the darkness below. Access to the depths of the shaft has not been entirely lost, a spiraling staircase has been cut into the stone walls of the shaft, though staircase is, perhaps, a generous term. It's more of a steep ledge averaging no more than 2 feet in width that descends at a sometimes near-vertical slope into which shallow steps have been chiseled. In many cases, these steps are little more than hand and footholds on what is essentially a stone ladder.

Anyone succeeding at a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check can hear the faint but discernable sound of what is apparently organ music coming from somewhere far below. The shaft is 210 feet deep (20d6 falling damage), and the rough stairs that have been carved along its length provide a precarious access to below. They are treacherous to use and require a DC 5 Strength (Athletics) check to navigate. They are also the home of **2 ropers**. These aberrations have adapted to the vertical orientation of their lair and have developed climb speeds. They cling to the walls of the shaft in natural hollows in the rough stone and resemble nothing more than natural, stony protuberances unless the PCs have truesight. One of the ropers lurks just underneath the remains of the collapsed platform, while the other clings to a shallow hollow on the south wall of the shaft 30 feet below.

ROPERS[SRD] (2)

XP 1,800
hp 92

Tactics: The roper beneath the platform has cover and total concealment from anyone on the ledge above. To be able to see it, the PCs will have to fly or work their way 10 feet down the stairs. This, of course, brings them in range of the second roper clinging to the wall 20 feet



below that portion of the stairs. The intelligent creatures prefer to ambush their prey by waiting until at least one PC approaches the edge above. Then the first roper attacks with its strands and attempts to pull a PC off the ledge. A PC successfully pulled is then released to drop to the base of the shaft 210 feet below. When PCs move down the stairs or shaft to try and get at the first roper, the second will use the same tactic to try and grab PCs and pull them off of the stairs to release them to fall down the shaft. They then concentrate their attacks on any flying PCs or those who attempt to stay up top and out of range. Only after all the PCs up top have been dealt with will the ropers descend the shaft to pick over any bodies below.

Treasure: The treasure kept by these creatures is tucked into the hollow in which the roper beneath the platform lurked. Only by closely examining that hollow can the treasure be located with a DC 21 Wisdom (Perception) check. If successful, the PCs find a *periapt of wound closure* stuffed into a small crack in the wall.

Q4. THE FACE OF DESPAIR

From the base of the shaft, a long mine tunnel extends as far as you can see to the northwest. Regular wooden beams still support its ceiling, though some of these are bowed or appear to be rotting. The steam and metallic smell of a forge are much stronger down here and are clearly coming from somewhere down this tunnel.

This tunnel extends for 650 feet at a slight downward slope towards the center of the crater. Despite the appearance of the support beams, the tunnel is sound. It is only a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check here to hear the sound of organ music coming from the tunnel.

This tunnel was the site of one of the final tragedies of the Conroi Expedition. While most of the survivors followed Azmerius Thade after their disastrous initial foray into the crater and ended up holing up at area **K**, two other members of the expedition also survived that deadly first encounter unbeknownst to the chaplain. Those two survivors were the expedition's mage, Manx, and the expedition's leader, Colonel Sixtun Conroi. Manx used *dimension door* to reach the interior of the crater, and Colonel Conroi was able to break free from the press of undead astride his *obsidian steed wondrous figurine* (currently located in area **N5**). Well aware of the dangers the crater represented by the time the expedition had reached it, Manx had reasoned that if the seasoned explorer Aroldus Gravenfar had already been here, he would have found some safehold or way out. From a reconnaissance by his familiar, Manx had located these mine entrances and determined that they led into the heart of the crater and would have been Gravenfar's objective.

Manx made it to this tunnel with his magic only to fall to the undead that inhabit it. Not long after, Col. Conroi was able to make it here, sick with radiation poisoning, nearly mad with fear, and fixated upon finding the trail of Gravenfar in hopes of affecting an escape. Here he came upon the corpse of Manx and was also slain shortly thereafter without ever truly realizing that his cause was already lost — Aroldus Gravenfar had never come to the crater. Though the bodies have long since been removed and devoured by the assorted inhabitants of the crater, the spirit of Col. Conroi lingers on in this tunnel as a **haunt**.

Haunt: Shortly after entering this hallway, a DC 22 Wisdom (Perception) check notices a humanoid figure shuffling down the tunnel from behind the PCs (also coming from area Q3). This figure does not respond to any attempts to make contact and ignores attacks (which cannot harm the haunt). He reaches the PCs' position in 1 round and will be automatically noticed if they have not already done so. When this occurs, read the following.

The figure is among you almost before you can react. It is a man, a human, easily in his mid-sixties with thick-set features and a completely bald pate and a thick, bristling white moustache that extends into thick mutton chop sideburns that never quite reach his head. His skin seems pale and unhealthy and is blotchy with brown burn patches. He wears a cavalry officer's coat showing much wear and mending and missing several buttons and one epaulette, and a pair of large gashes in the side stain the dark-gray fabric with dark blood. He limps and shuffles, his red-rimmed, watery blue eyes staring straight ahead, never noticing you.

As the man half-limps, half-shuffles in obvious pain, he keeps mumbling the same mantra, "If Gravenfar came, he would've come here…Manx said he'd know an escape…Manx said. If Gravenfar came, he would've come here…Manx said he'd know an escape…Manx said. If Gravenfar came, he would've come here…Manx said he'd know an escape…Manx said."

He suddenly stops and looks at the floor, seeing something not visible to the rest of you. "Manx," he whispers, stooping down to the floor, "Manx? I thought you had fallen in the crater. You made it here? Was he here…was Gravenfar here? Did he find an escape?"

This entire scene plays out over the course of 1 round during which, if the PCs had noticed the figure approaching, they can make whatever actions they wish against the haunt. Regardless of their actions, the figure continues to ignore them. Unless the haunt is destroyed, at the end of the round the figure suddenly looks up, an expression of utter despair in his eyes. "*He was never here,*" it says incredulously. "*Did he never come this way?…but then where—*" It cuts off its own sentence and arches its head back and unleashes a wail of hopeless despair before disappearing in an instant.

Anyone seeing the figure and making a DC 18 Intelligence (History) check can identify the man's uniform as that of a colonel of cavalry in the army of the Grand Duchy of Reme. It is possible that the players will remember (or if not, a DC 23 Intelligence (History) check reveals) that Sixtun Conroi, the leader of the Conroi Expedition was a retired colonel formerly of the Rhemian cavalry and that Manx the Marvelous was the name of the expedition's wizard and was known to be a close confidant of Col. Conroi.

FACE OF DESPAIR

Magical trap (haunt)

The lingering psychic residue of Col. Sixtun manifests when the PCs enter the corridor section 10 feet wide by 60 feet long, unleashing a wail of unimaginable despair. All creatures within the corridor must make a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw, taking 18d8 (81) points of psychic damage on a failure, and none on a success. Col. Sixtun's spirit then disappears but returns after 1 minute and replays his deathless march for 1 round before unleashing his psychic scream once more.

Destruction: Successfully identifying the haunt as the spiritual essence of Colonel Sixtun Conroi and verbally confirming to him that the explorer Aroldus Gravenfar seemingly did not ever come to the Pit of the Burning Star, allows the spirit to realize that there was nothing he could have done to enable the escape of himself or his men. Doing so allows the incredulous spirit to let loose its grip on the Material Plane and go on to its judgment.

Note: If creatures survive the haunt, they earn 4,800 XP, or 19,200 XP if they succeed in destroying the haunt.

Development: After dealing with the haunt and possibly being rewarded (see "Treasure" below), they PCs may still encounter other inhabitants in this long tunnel. Whenever they travel the length of this corridor, roll twice for encounters on the table below — once at the midway point and once just before reaching the end. An encounter occurs 20% of the time and represents the fairly constant stream of undead that come and go from this area.

d%	Encounter
01–12	1d6 blast shadows
13–24	2d6 radioactive combusted
25–34	1d4 cinder ghouls
35–44	3d4 void-stirges
45–54	2d6 fire phantoms
55–64	1d4+2 specters[SRD]
65–74	1d6+6 wraiths[SRD]
75–84	1d6+1 baykoks
85–00	Roll twice and ignore this result

BAYKOK

XP 2,300
hp 97 (see **Appendix A**, page 529)

BLAST SHADOW

XP 1,800
hp 117 (see **Appendix A**, page 530)

CINDER GHOUL

XP 2,900
hp 75 (see **Appendix A**, page 532)

RADIOACTIVE COMBUSTED

XP 700
hp 84 (see **Appendix A**, page 551)

FIRE PHANTOM

XP 1,600
hp 104 (see **Appendix A**, page 534)

VOID-STIRGE

XP 1,100
hp 67 (see **Appendix A**, page 557)

Treasure: If the haunt is permanently destroyed, a shoki psychopomp appears before the PCs 1 round later. This ram-horned outsider was sent years ago to collect the soul of Sixtun Conroi for judgment, however, the haunt has proven particularly resistant to the psychopomp's soul lock ability. Only if the haunt is permanently destroyed by the PCs does the soul suddenly appear in the psychopomp's staff causing the shoki (who was lurking ethereally nearby) to manifest himself in the party's presence. He thanks the party for the service to the balance of the Great Beyond and rewards them with Conroi's +2 *scimitar* that the psychopomp had recovered long ago and hoped (incorrectly) that it might somehow hold the key to finally laying the spirit to rest.

Once he has bestowed the sword upon the party, the shoki immediately *plane shifts* back to the Outer Planes to report on his success. If attacked, the psychopomp defends itself for 1 round before using *plane shift* to escape.

SHOKI

Medium celestial, neutral
Armor Class 18
Hit Points 102 (12d8 + 48)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	26 (+8)	18 (+4)	23 (+6)	25 (+7)	25 (+7)

Saving Throws Dex +12, Int +10
Skills Arcana +10, Deception +11, Insight +11, Intimidate +15, Perception +15, Persuasion +15, Religion +10, Stealth +12
Damage Resistances lightning, necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't adamantine
Damage Immunities acid, cold, poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft, passive Perception 27
Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Infernal, Common
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The shoki's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 19, spell attack bonus +11). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring only verbal components:
At will: *etherealness*, *invisibility* (self only)
3/day each: *detect magic*, *mass cure wounds*, *protection from evil and good*
1/day each: *plane shift* (self only)
Magic Weapons. The shoki's attacks are magical.
Spirit Sense. A shoki can detect the undead as though it had blindsight out to 60 feet.

ACTIONS
Multiattack. The shoki attacks twice with its quarterstaff.
Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +13 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 11 (1d6 + 8) bludgeoning damage and 13 (3d8) necrotic damage or 12 (1d8+8) bludgeoning damage and 13 (3d8) necrotic damage if used with two hands.

REACTIONS
Soul Lock. The shoki attempts to trap a creature's soul when its hit points are reduced to 0. That creature must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw Creatures that fails dies and has its soul trapped in the shoki's staff. This ability can even affect incorporeal creatures. A trapped soul cannot be brought to life through any magic short of a divine intervention, *true resurrection*, or *wish*. The shoki can use its turn to free a trapped spirit. A *banishment* or d*ispel evil and good* spell cast directly upon the staff can also free a soul. Finally, destroying the staff will also free the soul trapped within. The staff can only contain one soul.

Q5. CALEEN MINT

By the time the PCs reach the corridor outside this chamber, the sound of the organ music coming from area **Q8** is clearly audible.

The chamber is oppressively hot, and the steam of the passage outside has made its way in here as well. The smell of ozone and seared metal is strong, yet this room is nothing like you would have come to expect in the hellish depths of this mine. The chamber has been very neatly arranged as some kind of workshop. A large furnace stands across the way, though its fire is banked. Wooden bends stand near it with a pair of quenching buckets nearby between them and a small anvil that stands before the furnace. Next to this is a table covered in coins and small tools, next to which sits a handcart near the chamber's entrance. By the chamber's north wall stands a large hand press.

Anyone examining the contents of this room and succeeding at a DC 12 Jeweler's or Smith's Tools or DC 17 Intelligence check quickly grasps that this chamber has been set up for the minting of coins. The worktable holds coin molds and small tools for extracting them amid many freshly minted coins. The press holds additional molds. All of these are for different denominations of Rhemian currency that date to some 600 years ago, and this room is the source of the cache of coins found in area **N6**. The three bins hold processed gold and copper respectively as well as one with a green, crystalline substance (metallurgic amber — see **Appendix B**, page 580).

Treasure: Scattered on the table are a total of 81 gp and 390 cp in ancient Rhemian currency. These coins have all been tainted with metallurgic amber identically to those found in area **N6**. The mint has not been used in several weeks as more ore is being prepared in the smelter (**Q7**) so a new batch can be made. The metals currently in the bins consists of 17 pounds of the crystalline metallurgic amber, 2 pounds of raw gold (50 gp/pound) and 4-1/2 pounds of copper (5 sp/pound).

Q6. DROSS DISPOSAL

Discarded heaps of cooled slag litter the floor all along this stone passage. The omnipresent haze and stench of burning metal is even more pronounced here, and the previously heard discordant pipe music is now discernable as the chords of some unholy chorus whose pitch and tone seem to closely mimic that of a pipe organ, all of which seem to emanate from around a corner at the end of this tunnel.

The tunnel is larger here, with a ceiling that rises to 18 feet in height. Worthless piles of slag separated from the ore in area **Q7** are deposited haphazardly where they cool into the dross to be found here. The dross is primarily composed of stone and lead. However, the resourceful Prince Cale has put some of this dross to good use over the years in the creation of **3 lead golems**. These constructs crouch among the other piles of dross; they can be noticed with a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check. They remain inert unless the entrance to area **Q8** is approached, in which case they lurch to life and attack until destroyed. One unexpected benefit of the lead in the dross and golems in here is that the effects of metallurgic amber do not function in this room as well as **Q7** and Q8.

LEAD GOLEMS (3)

XP 5,900
hp 178 (see **Appendix A**, page 541)

Q7. SMELTER

The air in this room is oppressively hot. A furnace roars in one corner, and large vats hold molten stone from which metals are separated. Next to it are bins of ore. A table holds an assortment of assaying equipment and various jars of chemicals and reagents. Hand carts stand by to carry away dross and pure metals.

The temperature in here hovers around 145°, considered incredible heat. At the end of each minute spent in this heat, creatures not immune or resistant to fire must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 2d6 fire damage and gain 1 level of exhaustion. On a successful saving throw, they take half damage and do not gain a level of exhaustion. The DC increases by 1 for each previous failed saving throw.

This smelting forge is where the ores coming from area **Q8** are separated from the dross. The undead of the crater are ill-suited to this technical task, so Prince Cale has managed to ally with emissaries from Hell. These devils are not followers of Hastur, nor do they particularly care about "the local politics" as they call the goings-on at the Pit of the Burning Star. Rather they are under contract to smelt for Prince Cale and that is what they do. This group consists of a barbed devil, known as a hamatula, overseeing a workforce of **4 hellstoker devils** who actually do the smelting. If the PCs enter here, the barbed devil initially warns them away telling them to go find some "stinking walkers" (undead) to kill. If the PCs immediately depart, the devils pay them no further mind, and if Prince Cale is slain their contract is fulfilled allowing them to immediately *dimension door* away. If the PCs attack or linger in this area longer than a single round, however, the devils immediately attack and fight to the death. They do not parley and will provide no information for fear of breaking their contractual obligation to Cale.

BARBED DEVIL[SRD]

XP 1,800
hp 110

DEVIL, HELLSTOKER

Medium fiend (devil), lawful evil
Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 39 (6d8 + 12)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +4, Con +4, Wis +2, Cha +2
Skills Athletics +4, Intimidation +2, Perception +2
Damage Resistances cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered
Damage Immunities fire, poison
Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages Infernal; telepathy 120 ft.
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Devil's Sight. Magical darkness doesn't impede the devil's darkvision.

Magic Resistance. The devil has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Oily Hide. A hellstoker devil gets +10 on checks to escape being grappled or restrained.

ACTIONS

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 9 (2d6+2) slashing damage.

Pike. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d10+2) piercing damage.

Bellows (Recharge 5-6). *Ranged Spell Attack*: +2 to hit, range 30 ft., one target. *Hit*: 13 (3d8) fire damage.

REACTIONS

Fiery Body. When the hellstoker devil would take fire damage, all creatures within 5 ft. take 3 (1d6) fire damage.

Treasure: The assaying equipment on the table is the equivalent of an alchemist's lab. Waiting in one of the hand carts is separated metal ready to go to the mint (**Q5**). This metal consists of a total of a half-pound of gold (worth 25 gp) and 6 pounds of copper (worth 3 gp). The devils keep the payments that have been made for their services to date in one of the bins beneath a lair of cooled slag (DC 19 Wisdom (Perception) check to locate). It consists of 15 pounds of adamantine (4,500 gp), 21 pounds of gold (1,050 gp), 7 pounds of noqual (350 gp), 1 pound of siccatite (100 gp), and a *chime of opening* (10 charges).

Q8. CATHEDRAL OF THE KING IN YELLOW

As the entrance to this room is approached, it is evident that much of the steam and fumes in the hallway emerge from here. In addition, the strange organ music clearly emerges from within, though it is now discernable as a chorus of incomprehensible grunts and howls that only resemble the music of a pipe organ through the acoustic echoes of the long tunnel.

A massive cavern has been carved out of the earth here. Polished stone walls, a vaulted ceiling and the architectural features resembling those of a classic cathedral convey a sense of grandeur that rivals the most magnificent churches of Foere. Condensation covers the floor and walls, and heat radiates from an unusual, glowing reddish-gold triad-shaped pattern in the ceiling 80 feet above. It takes a moment for you to realize that it is molten rock that has burned through the cavern's ceiling in that unusual pattern. Drippings of the molten material falls and sizzles when they hit the moist stone floor. Shambling humanoid shapes shovel the still glowing, steaming drippings into mine carts and assorted other metal containers that are stacked among older piles of cooled slag.

Perhaps even stranger than this tableau is the cavern's version of a choir loft that sits elevated upon a ledge 12 feet above the floor along the southern wall. A stair of chiseled stone leads up to this gallery, and a crude balustrade of wrought iron runs along its edge. Upon the ledge itself stands a hideous conglomeration of flesh, sinew, and dozens of gaping mouths. It is as if dozens of corpses were stitched haphazardly together into one massive pipe organ whole, with each mouth capable of emitting only one wheezing, groaning musical note. It is from this monstrosity that the eerie, arrhythmic chords echo forth like a netherworld choir. Standing before this disgusting conglomeration is a 9-foot creature that is little more than a conglomeration itself. At its heart is a mass of dripping wet organs and viscera from which protrude many arms, legs, and bladed limbs. It is these limbs that wildly wave as it conducts its ghastly chorus.



Finally, at the far end of the chamber, the cavern floor has been smoothed and carved into a two-tier dais upon which sits a low stone altar that appears to be covered in dried blood and gobbets of viscera. Perched upon this block of rough stone looking like nothing so much as a fat and satisfied vulture is a blood-hued, beaked and winged creature that looks like a hideous mix of corpse, mole, insect, and bird that lazily watches the labors of the workers on the floor below.

The cathedral's glowing ceiling is in fact the still-burning meteorite's underbelly. The molten alloy fills in lines and fissures in the cavern's cathedral ceiling and forms a Yellow Sign, the malignant symbol of the King in Yellow, fully 40 feet across. Fortunately for the PCs this Yellow Sign is not active (as the spell or Hastur's special ability), it is merely a massive — if mundane — example of the symbol, though its unique nature does give the entire room the effects of an *unhallow* over the whole chamber. Because the sign is formed by the leaching of molten rock through the stone of the cavern's ceiling, it cannot be sealed without it eventually melting back through in the same pattern unless the internal flames of the burning siccatite are somehow extinguished — an unlikely outcome considering that the meteorite has a couple thousand years of fuel remaining.

The air in this chamber is very hot (approximately 92° F), but not nearly as much in other portions of the tunnels. Constitution saving throws are only required every hour to avoid any gaining exhaustion levels. The dripping slag however, is extremely hot and deals 1d6 points of fire damage for 2 rounds on anyone touching it. A dotted line on the map shows where the molten drippings fall. Anyone in that area has a 10% chance per round of being hit by a drop of the falling slag unless they makes a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw. The undead are unaffected by the molten material, and the void-stirges avoid flying through that portion of the room.

Toiling away here in the bowels of the crater are **6 combusted** and **3 fire phantoms**. They use metal shovels to load the still-smoldering drippings from above onto the mine carts for transportation to area **Q7** while awkwardly flapping above them are **4 void-stirges** who keep watch for intruders. Overseeing them from the altar is a **terrible hybrid thing** while in the choir loft an interlocutor kyton called **The Conductor** that has become an adherent of Hastur conducts a symphony of despair on the fleshgine he has created called the **Unholy Choir**.

RADIOACTIVE COMBUSTED (6)

XP 700
hp 84 (see **Appendix A**, page 551)

FIRE PHANTOMS (3)

XP 1,600
hp 104 (see **Appendix A**, page 534)

VOID-STIRGES (4)

XP 1,100
hp 67 (see **Appendix A**, page 557)

TERRIBLE HYBRID THING

XP 9,600
hp 125 (see **Appendix A**, page 558)

THE CONDUCTOR

Large fiend, lawful evil
Armor Class 19
Hit Points 189 (17d10 + 85)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	17 (+3)	21 (+5)	15 (+2)	22 (+6)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Con +9, Wis +10, Cha +9
Skills Medicine +14, Insight +10, Intimidate +14, Perception +14, Persuasion +9, Religion +9, Stealth +7
Damage Resistances cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered
Damage Immunities fire, poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft, passive Perception 24
Languages Infernal, Common
Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The conductor's spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 18, spell attack bonus +10). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring only verbal components:
At will: *plane shift* (from the material plane to the

shadow plane, self only), *spare the dying*
3/day each: *lesser restoration*, *cure wounds* (cast with a 3rd level spell slot)
1/day each: *revivify*

Magic Weapons. The conductor's attacks are magical.

Magic Resistance. The conductor has advantage on saving throws against spells and magical effects.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The conductor can use its unnerving gaze. It then makes four attacks with its claws.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 16 (2d10 + 7) slashing damage. The conductor's claws attacks are a critical hit on a roll of 19-20.

Unnerving Gaze. One creature of the conductor's choice that it can see within 60 feet of the conductor and is aware of it must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the conductor's unnerving gaze for the next 24 hours.



UNHOLY CHOIR (FLESHGINE)

Gargantuan construct, unaligned

Armor Class 17
Hit Points 198 (12d20 + 72)
Speed 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
26 (+8)	6 (-2)	23 (+6)	1 (-5)	10 (+0)	1 (-5)

Saving Throws Dex +2
Damage Resistances fire; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't adamantine
Damage Immunities acid, poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft, passive Perception 10
Languages Infernal, Common
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Berserk. Whenever the unholy choir starts its turn with 90 hit points or less, roll a d6. On a 6, the unholy choir attacks the nearest creature it can see. If no creature is near enough to move to and attack, the unholy choir attacks an object with preference for an object smaller than itself. Once the unholy choir goes bersek, it continues to do so until it is destroyed or regains all its hit points. The unholy choir's creator or designed operator, if within 60 feet of the berserk unholy choir, can try to calm it by speaking firmly and persuasively. The unholy choir must be able to hear this designated person, who must take an action to make a DC 15 Charima (Persuasion) check. If the check succeeds, the golem ceases being berserk. If it takes damage while still at 90 hit points or fewer, the golem might go berserk again.

Magic Weapons. The conductor's attacks are magical.

Vulnerability to Silence. The unholy choir's entire purpose for existence is built around its choral abilities. At the end of each turn that it is in an area of magical silence (such as from a silence spell), the unholy choir must make a d6 roll at the end of each turn, going berserk on the roll of a 6. While in an area of silence, the fleshgine's creator cannot attempt to soothe it and regain control.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The unholy choir can use its Infernal Chorus, or its Viscous Spittle, if able. It then makes four attacks with its bites. The conductor can instead make four attacks with its bites against a single target that is Gargantuan.

Bites. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +12 to hit, reach 20 ft., one target. *Hit*: 25 (4d6 + 8) piercing damage.

Infernal Chorus. The unholy choir emits music, causing a number of different effects, each of which requires concentration to maintain, up to 1 minute. Choose one of the following effects:

- **Dirge of Doom**: Creatures other than fiends and constructs that can hear the unholy choir and are within 30 feet of it must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened until the music stops. A creature is no longer frightened if it cannot hear the dirge.
- **Dissonant Sound**: Creatures that can hear the unholy choir and are within 60 feet of it must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned by deleterious music. A creature is no longer poisoned if it cannot hear the sound.
- **Inspire Courage**: The unholy choir can bolster up to six allies within 60 feet that can hear it and are within 60 feet. These allies are granted the effects of the bless spell.
- **Nightscream**: Any living creature within 30 feet of the unholy choir that can hear it can't regain hit points until it can no longer hear the scream. A creature that can hear the scream at the start of its turn must make a DC 15 Charisma saving throw, taking 14 (4d6) necrotic damage on a failure, or half as much on a success.

Viscous Spittle (1/Day). Once per round as a free action, the Unholy Choir can spew a spray of this mucus in a 15-foot cone. Anyone within the cone's area must make a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw or be covered in the viscous goo and become restrained. At the start of each round that a creature remains restrained by the goo, it takes 4 (1d8) acid damage. At the end of a restrained creature's turn, it can make another saving throw. If it succeeds, it is no longer restreained.

Tactics: When the void-stirges notice intruders, they immediately swoop to attack. This catches the attention of the combusted and fire phantoms after 1 round, who drop their shovels and move to join in the attack. The Conductor attempts to remain out of the fray and instead uses the Unholy Choir to inspire courage in their allies fighting below. If the PCs attempt to attack the choir loft, the Conductor has the Unholy Choir change to its distraction chorus, and then they both defend themselves as best they can. If the Conductor is slain, the Unholy Choir immediately begins moving to trample and attack intruders, almost as if it had gone berserk but careful enough to avoid harming its allies. The terrible hybrid thing only joins the fray if the Conductor is killed, if the Unholy Choir is silenced, if all the combusted and fire phantoms are killed, or if it is attacked itself. All of the creatures here fight until destroyed, though none of them will leave this room.

Development: If the terrible hybrid thing is killed, the altar stone suddenly cracks and bursts asunder as if struck by a powerful thunderbolt. If this occurs, the true master of the Pit of the Burning Star is roused from his slumber. When this occurs, read the following.

As the blood-covered stone altar splits and falls to pieces, a wind seems to rise around it raising a small cloud of dust. However, after a moment it becomes clear that it is no cloud of dust but rather a cloud of whirling, translucent spirits, and rising from the center of them is a single corpselike figure. It too is translucent, but it retains something of its mortal appearance: that of a regal-looking man with aquiline features, marred only by hollow cheeks and sunken eyes, in robes of gold and bearing a shining circlet upon its brown. Its withered countenance gazes at you above the sparse remnant of a once-neatly trimmed beard, and it speaks in a strangely accented, archaic version of the common tongue.

"Welcome," it says. "Welcome to the Eternal Colonies of Caleen Reme."

The creature that has risen from beneath the broken altar is none other than the spirit of the long-lost Cale, Grand

Duke of Reme and Prince of Foere who now exists as an undead known as a **nemhain** fully corrupted and twisted into devotion to the King in Yellow. Swirling about him are the spirits of the many, many Rhemen who followed him on his ill-fated expedition to colonize the Haunted Steppe. He does not immediately attack, but his appearance does cause the giant Yellow Sign in the cavern's ceiling to activate as a *Yellow Sign* spell (see sidebar) and requires all in the cavern to make a secret DC 23 Wisdom saving throw or become dominated under the command of Prince Cale (as the closest representative of Hastur's will).

Prince Cale avoids combat and instead congratulates the PCs on their endeavor and finally breaking the "curse" that has plagued him and his people ever since their cursed venture centuries ago. He states that the gods have deserted him and the remnant of his loyal subjects who came to this place but that the PCs can at least set some of it aright by taking word of what happened and the cursed nature of the crater to the outside world to finally answer the question of what happened to the Lost Prince of Foere. He provides them with directions to his treasury at area **N6** (though will warn them that they will have to deal with some rather nasty creatures that have since taken up residence there) and encourage them to take his riches as a reward for their efforts and considering that he has no further need of such worldly goods.

This is all a part of the plan the Prince Cale has been building towards since first succumbing to the allure of Hastur's worship. And with the vast store of these coins he has been able to mint over the last 5 centuries, he knew that the time to unleash madness and bring Hastur back to dominance in the world was near at hand. To this end, he recently sent a cultist of Hastur far to the south — to the city of Nains, as well as other places — to plant the sheaves of correspondence Cale had found upon the body of poor Azmerius. Having only brought a few carrier pigeons on the Conroi Expedition and losing most of them to harsh conditions or misadventure, Azmerius never actually sent many of his letters but rather held onto them and saved his final pigeon to carry actual news of the Pit's discovery, news that he was never able to send before his death. Only the incorporeal Cale was able to read their contents and have cultists reproduce them and present them as the authentic original.

Though it was a cultist of Hastur that initiated the entire race for Shataakh-Uulm, he did not survive to return to his master. Fearing the instability of a typical cultist of the King in Yellow, Prince Cale sent orders to the Sagging Man at his outpost in the Wizard's Wall (see ***Legend of the Burning Star*** for details) to dispatch void-stirges to find and devour the hapless cultist once his mission was fulfilled. Other members of the Cult of Hastur across of Foere were unaware of Cale's grand plan to reveal the location of the Pit and heard the rumors of its discovery just like everyone else. It was they who followed the trail of the letters to Dun Eamon and broke into Elinda Bannon's tower to steal Gravenfar's journal in an attempt to prevent the Pit's discovery, not realizing they were actually working against the will of Prince Cale, their cult's earthly master.

Any PCs hearing Prince Cale's offer can attempt a skill contest of their Wisdom (Insight) against his Charisma (Deception) to detect the malicious intent behind his words, but anyone dominated by the effects of the Yellow Sign spell will believe him unconditionally. If his offer is rejected or the PCs attack, Prince Cale ends the pretense. He compels the Unholy Choir (if still alive) to begin its Nightscream Song, and orders any of his remaining servitors in the room to attack, including any dominated PCs (giving them a new saving throw with a +2 bonus). He then has his bound spirits fan out and make ranged touch attacks against all enemies within range, while his minions assault opponents beyond the spirits' reach. When he exhausts his spell-like abilities the apparition resorts to melee attacks and moves into the area beneath the molten dripping to force the PCs to risk its effects (Cale cannot be harmed by the molten drops). Cale fights until destroyed, confident in the knowledge that he will regenerate 1d4 days later. His bound object is the sundered altar stone. It is made from meteoric iron cast off from the Burning Star, and the two individual halves must each be destroyed (hardness 10, 240 hp) in order to permanently eradicate the nemhain.

PRINCE CALE

Medium undead, neutral evil
Armor Class 18
Hit Points 170 (20d8 + 80)
Speed 0 ft., fly 30 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (-5)	26 (+8)	18 (+4)	23 (+6)	25 (+7)	25 (+7)

Saving Throws Con +9, Int +11
Skills Arcana +11, Deception +12, Insight +12, Intimidate +17, Perception +17, Persuasion +12, Religion +11, Stealth +18
Damage Resistances acid, fire; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities cold, poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, poisoned, prone, restrained
Senses darkvision 60 ft, passive Perception 27
Languages Common, Telepathy 100 ft.
Challenge 15 (13,000 XP)

Bound Spirits. Prince Cale is surrounded by a whirling cloud of spirits that are bound to him—often the spirits of close relatives or friends she had in life. He can direct these bound spirits to touch at any creature within 30 feet as if Prince Cale had touched the target with her incorporeal touch, reflected in the attack's range.

Prince Cale can also send these spirits as a group up to 1 mile away to act as scouts; they have a fly speed of 60 feet (hover). Prince Cale can observe and listen through them, but they cannot make any attacks or deliver spells for Prince Cale. These spirits are immune to nonmagical attacks, but only have 20 hit points collectively, as a swarm would.

Incorporeal Movement. Prince Cale can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. He takes 10 (3d6) force damage if he ends his turn inside an object.

Innate Spellcasting. Prince Cale's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 20, spell attack bonus +12). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring only verbal components:
3/day each: *harm*, *blight*, *telekinesis*
1/day each: *antilife shell*, *wall of force*

Profane Regeneration. Prince Cale regains 10 hit points at the start of his turn. If he takes lightning or radiant damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of Prince Cale's next turn. Prince Cale dies only if he starts his turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

Prince Cale is a nemhain and is tied to a ritual object used in his creation. In his case, it is the sundered altar stone. Until it is destroyed, Prince Cale automatically rejuvenates back to full hit points 1d4 days after he is destroyed, always appearing adjacent to his ritual object.

Turn Resistance. Prince Cale has advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Prince Cale casts one of its spells and makes one melee attack.

Lifetouch. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack*: +13 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30 ft., one target. *Hit*: 30 (5d8 + 8) necrotic damage. Prince Cale regains a number of hit points equal to half of the damage dealt.

Treasure: The 80 pounds of metal drippings in the mine carts that have been gleaned from the meteorites drippings consist of 40 ounces of siccatite (worth 250 gp), 20 ounces of adamantine (worth 375 gp), 12 pounds of nickel (24 gp), 10 pounds of lead (5 gp), 12 ounces of gold (37 gp, 5 sp), and 2 ounces of noqual (6 gp, 2 sp, 5 cp). The rest is worthless slag.

In addition, digging into the stone 1 foot beneath the altar (damage threshold 12, AC 21, 150 hp) reveals the mortal remains of Prince Cale, where he was magically sealed at his death long ago. His remains consist of little more than a partially intact human skeleton that shows signs of significant burn damage. But is still wears the platinum coronet that Cale wore as a Prince of Foere (worth 7,500 gp for its metal content but 50,000 gp to a collector, the Grand Duchy of Reme, or the Court of Courghais). In addition, interred with the remains are an *amulet of health*, a *scroll of plane shift* and a *scabbard of keen edges* containing the rusted and useless remains of a longsword (see **Appendix B**, page 575).

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

If the PCs have fully explored the Pit of the Burning Star, they will have discovered not only the fate of the last remnant of the Caleen Colonies but that of the long-lost Prince Cale as well. Unfortunately, they will have also discovered the undead prince's devotion to serving the Great Old One, Hastur, and possibly have figured out his plan to sow madness throughout the Lost Lands through the spread of tainted money.

Adventurers that participated in the **Frog God Games** adventure "Madness Grows" from ***Fields of Blood*** cannot help but recognize this familiar pattern. In fact, it is not a coincidence, as Prince Cale used the unwitting Tibula Ottika to test his devious scheme. If the PCs haul Cale's tainted Rhemian coins back to civilization and place them into circulation, deliberately or accidentally, Hastur's machinations take hold as the metallurgic amber within the contaminated coins spreads insanity like wildfire throughout the civilized lands bringing an unholy apotheosis for the Great Old One that much closer… word of a new play called The King In Yellow soon begins to spread throughout the lands. It is also likely that the prolonged exposure to the radioactive substance takes a significant physical and mental toll on the adventurers, which may prompt astute characters to more closely scrutinize the ancient Rhemian coins.



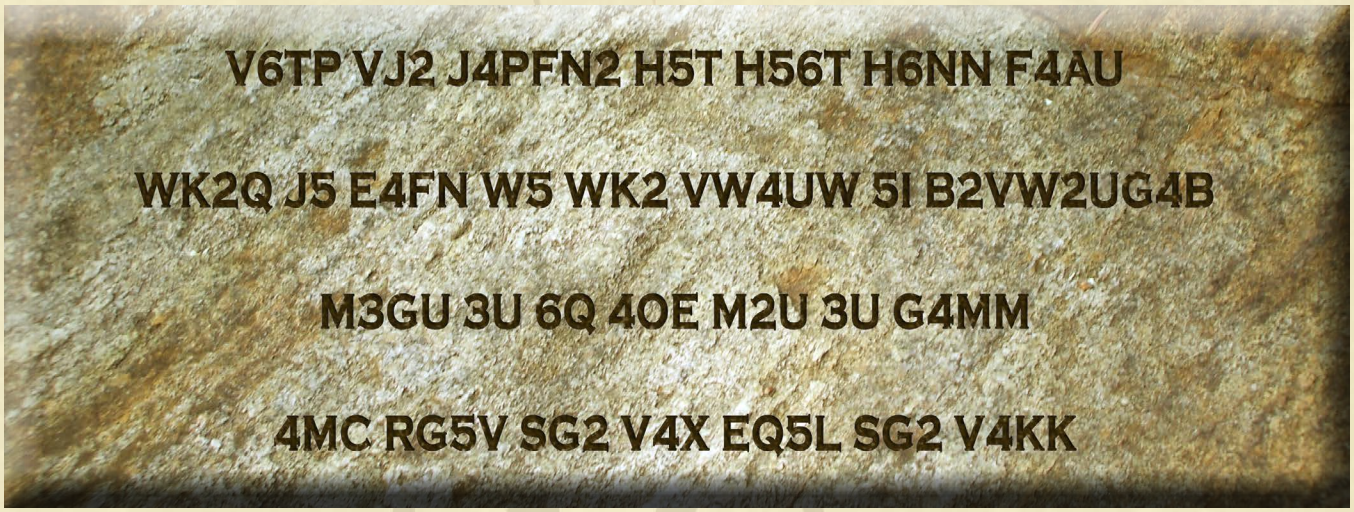
PCs returning to their prospective employer(s) can also confirm that the Pit of the Burning Star contains vast quantities of star metals, specifically noqual and the combustible siccatite. If the PCs somehow still count Cherbaud Brazzegard among their numbers, he and his faction of Ironskull double agents try to kill the adventurers in their sleep during the long journey back and lay claim to the star metals for their familial line. For their part, the Spurious Tidings amicably part with the PCs and then report back to the authorities in Bard's Gate about their astounding discovery. If the party avoided the other adventuring companies on their journey to the impact site, most notably Earl Rannulf and The Prize Men, these individuals wait for an ideal opportunity to pounce on the hopefully wounded and exhausted explorers and claim their secrets for themselves.

Prince Cale, for his part, if not permanently destroyed resumes mass production of his tainted coins. He then sets about seeking to recruit others and to entice them to venture to the Pit of the Burning Star to disperse madness and chaos throughout the continent. However, this time the correspondence dispenses with pretenses and instead provides precise directions to the impact site in the hopes that the prospect of acquiring immense wealth may ignite wars between rival political and military powers seeking to control these valuable resources.

Finally, the fate of Aroldus Gravenfar looms as the only remaining unanswered question of any great note. Although it appears likely that he saw the Pit of the Burning Star, there is no evidence supporting the theory that he ever delved into the crater or even investigated the locale beyond merely locating it for his own purposes. Why else the famed explorer might have ventured across the Haunted Steppe and what fate he ultimately met remains a mystery, but the truth remains that his alleged quest to locate the Pit of the Burning Star was the last time he was sighted in civilized lands and produced the last correspondence known to have ever come from him. Where his remains lie — if he is indeed dead — remain a tale of the **Lost Lands** for another day.

PLAYER HANDOUTS

Handout 5A



Handout 5B

(Translated from Orc)

The shamans of Grotaag say that the time of the Burning Star has come. Go to the plains and scour the humans dead settlements. Grotaag has shown the shamans a wall with writing on it. Find the wall and follow the instructions to the next landmark. They will lead to the giant column of smoke. Tell none about your mission. Others also pursue the smoldering rock. Kill any that stand in your way.

Handout 5C

Find the lone tower on the plateau and peer through the glass to find the way. The Angus will reward you well.

Handout 5D

"To iron out the line, angle from the apex."



Adventure 6:
Knight Fall in Old Curgantium

The glorious capital city of legendary Hyperborea fell to ruin two thousand years ago in a fiery night of destruction that burned half a continent and heralded the end of an ageless empire. New auguries brought a fellowship of valiant knights to the scorched ruins seeking an ancient danger that threatened the world anew, but those champions themselves disappeared among the broken stones of the shattered city. New heroes must now take up their mantle, whether to rescue or avenge them, and by all means to complete their desperate mission to forestall a new cataclysm. However, those daring to tread the ancient streets quickly discover that the ruins do not rest easy, and ancient memories can be as deadly as new perils in Old Curgantium.



INTRODUCTION

In the Lost Lands setting, ***Knight Fall in Old Curgantium*** takes place within the ruins of the former imperial capital city of Curgantium[LL5-17] (kur-GAN-tee-um) — sometimes referred to as "Old Curgantium". These ruins lie on the border between Aachen (AH-khin) Province[LL5-22] and the County of Coutaine (ku-TANE) on the western bank of the Great Amrin River.

Curgantium is the ancient imperial capital of the Hyperborean Empire which fell into ruin and abandonment after a massive explosion and continent-spanning wildfire. The capital was relocated to Tircople far to the east on the continent of Libynos until it too fell to the besiegement of Daan which spelled the end of the empire. More information about Aachen Province and this ruined border city can be found in ***LL5: Borderland Provinces*** and in the short story "In for a Pound" in ***Tales of the Lost Lands: Tales Pack 5***, both by Frog God Games

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

THE HYPERBOREAN EMPIRE AND THE FALL OF CURGANTIUM

When Oerson, the great polemarch of Boros — northernmost of the continents of Akados — marched his Legion south, he discovered a vast continent of untamed forests, impassible mountains, scattered human tribes, and a great elven empire. As was the tradition of the imperators of Boros, Oerson set about the task of conquest. For 18 long years Oerson's Legion battled the elves along the eaves of the Great Akadonian Forest[LL5-7] in a perilous contest with the high lords of the wild elves. He subjugated human tribes as he went and incorporated them into his Legion until their might became too great for the elves to overcome in piecemeal skirmishes and ambush. He finally provoked them into a single pitched battle in the foothills of the Stoneheart Mountains in what would become known two millennia later as the Valley of the Lyre[LL8-46]. There in a masterful stroke of diplomacy and military acumen, Polemarch Oerson revealed the secret alliance he had formed with the dwarves of the Stonehearts and crushed the elves in a great victory. So great was the defeat suffered by the elves that their own society began to show cracks and in less than a century had fallen so far that the elven

court and most of its lords withdrew into the West in the Second Exodus, abandoning the lands of central Foere to the human invaders.

The Legion claimed the lands and remained, setting up colonies among the verdant forests and fields. In time they came to refer to themselves as the Hyperboreans as a mark of their origin in distant northern Boros and came to develop their own cultures and customs separate from their homeland. Such was the wax and wane of fate that less than two decades after the death of the aged Polemarch Oerson, the Hyperboreans declared their own independence and rose in rebellion against their Borean masters. They began construction on a grand citadel called the Tower of Oerson, built to honor their founder, and prepared themselves for the assured reprisals from the Imperator of Boros. But when the Borean Legions came, the Hyperboreans met them at the Battle of Hummaemidon near the shores of the Gulf of Akados. There in a twist of fate as the battle turned against the Hyperboreans, their dwarven allies of the Stoneheart Mountains were abandoned and suffered great slaughter whereas the high elves — descended from the remnant of the wild elves of old — joined the Hyperborean cause and turned the tides to save the day. Boros was forever barred from its claims on Akados, the mountain dwarves declared eternal enmity for their faithless human allies, the humans and high elves forged enduring bonds of peace and cooperation, and the Hyperborean Empire was established with Oeric, the grandson of Oerson, as the first Imperator of Hyperborea.

Imperator Oeric soon abdicated to his own son Oesson so that he could follow a divine vision and establish the holy city of Tircople[LL1-98] in far Libynos, and Imperator Oesson took the Throne of Hyperborea with the Tower of Oerson as the seat of his power. Around the Tower of Oerson sprang up Curgantium, First City of Hyperboea along the banks of the Great Amrin River. After a long war with the Hundaei of the Great Steppes, there followed an extended peace known as the Pax Hyperborea. Then almost 2,500 years after the founding of the empire, a calamitous event occurred that shook the very foundations of the world: The planetary poles shifted eastward.

The world's northern pole now rested in the center of the continent of Boros, freezing over that ancient land and causing the loss of knowledge as to its people and its fate in the south. Likewise, powerful storms and unnatural weather wracked the land and the seas the rest of the world over. A great deformation of the globe in its far eastern ocean appeared and came to be called The Goitre, and any attempts to understand its nature or what it portended were obstructed by two permanent walls of impassible sea storms encompassing it and extending from one pole to the other that became known as the Tempest Meridians. Great was the suffering across the Hyperborean Empire, such that the Imperator called together the greatest minds and practitioners of magic to the Tower of Oerson in Curgantium to learn the reasons for the catastrophe and to devise the means to repair the changes that had been wrought.

Despite the suffering to the greater empire, Curgantium avoided the worst of the devastation as its place at the center of the empire ensured its continued Wisdom (Survival) and support. While great territories of the empire starved or froze or sweltered, Curgantium remained the cosmopolitan epicenter of humanity in the world and scarcely noticed these dire developments save for through the news that came from abroad. For five long years during this time the great minds and weavers of magic worked tirelessly to understand and counteract the effects of the polar shift. Though they were never able to fully determine the nature or reason for the change, they believed they had found the means through combining and focusing their collected magical power to force the planet to shift its axis back westward and resume its former spin in the cosmos. Through elaborate planning and timing, they arranged for a great ritual to occur within the Tower of Oerson to save the empire and the whole of the world.

Unfortunately for these mighty practitioners, something went awry in their casting. As they wove layer upon layer of unimaginable arcane and divine power in their ritual, some other unexpected expenditure of great power in the vicinity caused a disruption in the ritual and a feedback loop. The vast powers they had barely harnessed were expended in a great cataclysmic explosion that vaporized the tower and reduced much of the mighty city to rubble. The fires that spawned from this explosion became the Great Conflagration which swept across the lands of Akados in a devastating swath that burned for more than a year. Ruined Curgantium was abandoned, the surviving remnant of the Hyperborean Court relocated far away to distant Tircople and made it the capital of the ravaged empire, and the disparate peoples of the empire from its many subjugated cultures were left to fend for themselves.

The diluted blood of the Hyperborean imperators did not last long either, as the Hyperboreans of Tircople fell to corruption and ruin until finally overthrown in the great rebellion led by the hero Daan less than a century later, though the legendary Daan fell too in the conflict. The end of the seemingly eternal Hyperborean Empire

had come and left a great void in its former lands — lands now routinely ravaged by famine, disease, and unchecked marauders. In this state the chaotic realms of central Akados remained until the rise of a warlord called Macobert from the insignificant domain of Foere[LL4-10].

THE MOST WORTHY KNIGHTS OF MACOBERT

The half-elf Macobert of the House of Foere ruled his small commote on the eastern shore of the Star Sea and served as general for the Prince Verand of Cantref Couraigne. Foere was an ancient house, said to have descended from the Hyperboreans of old, but it was not a rich house, with only the villages surrounding Macobert's family hold at the town of Chantry. However, as a commander Lord Macobert was peerless. Many compared him to the legendary Daan who had slain the evil Queen Trystecce of Tircople and overthrown the corrupt Hyperborean dynasty of old. Macobert's elven mother told him of the time when Daan rode across the Plains of Suilley with his heavy cavalry of knights. These Cataphracts of Daan were his personal guard and boon companions and were the brave souls who gave their lives to see him through to the very end so that he could throw down the Lich-Queen.

Macobert studied everything he could of Daan and his battles as he grew up and became an avid student of warfare, which served him well when his father was killed in battle against a rival cantref and he was placed in charge of the aging Prince Verand's small army. In short order, Macobert's military expertise completed the process his father had begun in defeating Cantref Couraigne's rival, and Prince Verand confirmed the son of Bertram as his warleader. Shortly thereafter Macobert accompanied Prince Verand to the Plains of SuilleyLL4 on a trading trip. There he witnessed the great destriers of Suilley firsthand and convinced his lord to purchase a stallion and a dozen mares. These Macobert brought to his lord's estate and began to breed them while training a hand-selected group of Verand's men-at-arms in the tactics of heavy cavalry and the chivalric tradition of Daan's Cataphracts. He armed and armored them with the finest weapons and coats of plate and mail taken from those who had been defeated in their attacks on Couraigne. In a few short years, the first of the Suilley-bred destriers had been raised and trained as war mounts for these heavily armed and armored warriors. They became known informally as Macobert's knights and served as the backbone of Cantref Couraigne's military forces.

Five years later, when jealous rival princes poisoned Prince Verand and his family and attacked Couraigne simultaneously, the cantref's soldiery was on the verge of falling apart and scattering in defeat. Macobert kept his forces together, staying one step ahead of the numerous enemies and making small strikes when possible, until one night encamped on a hill overlooking the waters of the Star Sea the desperate warleader released all of the men-at-arms from their service to Couraigne. He told them to flee and save themselves and their families. The other commote lords of Couraigne had already fallen to the attackers so that only Foere remained and Macobert was the last scion of that ancient line. Then one by one the men-at-arms foreswore their oaths to lost Couraigne and lay their swords at the feet of Macobert as the Prince of a newly declared Cantref Foere.

Word of this new dynasty of old Couraigne rallied many of the peasant folk and heartened much of the soldiery that had been in hiding. Backed by his corps of heavy cavalry, Macobert struck the castle of Couraigne, which the most powerful of the rival princes had occupied. Catching them completely unawares, Macobert's skirmishers were able to scale the castle walls and open the gates before the alarm was raised. As the defenders emerged into the bailey they discovered the thunder of dozens of heavy knights charging through them. The recapture of the castle and fall of the invading prince rallied the entire cantref and soon Macobert's army was moving swiftly across the land, engaging each of the invading forces separately before they could gather together in force. In each case the charge of his heavy cavalry carried the day.

Macobert was ultimately able to defeat each of the rival princes and gathered those who survived together on the streets of his home of Chantry. There he gave them mercy rather than death and offered them their lives in exchange for oaths of nonaggression. So moved were they by the lord's generosity after his exhibitions of valor and invincibility in battle, that one by one the defeated lords bent the knee and pledged themselves and their households to the House Foere. To these newly sworn brothers he gifted coats of plate and mail just as he had his personal retainers, and thus on that wet spring day of 2698 I.R. was formally organized the Most Worthy Knights of Macobert and the beginnings of the fledgling Kingdom of Foere. The kingdom would eventually grow to encompass the entirety of the former Hyperborean Empire as the newly proclaimed Hyperborean Monarchy of the Foerdewaith, with Macobert as its first Overking. This empire would reign on Akados and Libynos for 515 years and continue its existence — albeit in a lesser capacity — as the Kingdoms of Foere another three centuries even to the present day.



Throughout all this time the Most Worthy Knights of Macobert have continued to serve Foere in defense, crusade, justice, and administration, surpassed in reputation by none save perhaps the Holy Order of Justicars of Muir established in 2744 I.R. by Sagrilaer of Tircople, High Sword of Muir and first High Lord of that order[LL1]. However, the last of that renowned order died in battle in 3209 I.R. whereas the Most Worthy Knights continue today, albeit as more of an inheritable honorific cherished by the families who carry the title. Lost somewhere in the annals of the knighthood was the betrayal perpetrated by the knight Barivoren Wallix, nephew of the vile alienist wizard Eb Wallix (see ***The Book in the Old House***). But this forgotten betrayal only serves as a coda to a long list of atrocities committed by a slumbering evil that has waited centuries to once again rear its foul head.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The party is asked to help in the search for nine knights who disappeared while exploring the ruins of the old imperial capital at Curgantium. The knights were seeking evidence of a terrible threat to the entirety of the Kingdoms of Foere that was hinted at in portents and divinations but lost contact with the wizard who had remained behind to monitor their mission. Following his information, the adventurers find the city overrun by savage monsters and, after sunset, shadow and nightmare creatures of all descriptions. In addition, when they sleep, their dreams are beset by strange and dangerous intrusions.

The party locates the missing knights' base camp, but it is abandoned and appears to have been thoroughly ransacked. They also discover one of the knights who has been transformed into a horrifying undead creature.

TIMELINE OF HYPERBOREA AND CURGANTIUM*

Imperial Record (I.R.)	Erylle Cycle (E.C.)	Huun Chronicle (H.C.)	Event(s)
–109	6376		Polemarch Oerson leads Hyperborean Legion out of Boros and into Akados; Beginning of Hyperborean Age
–91	6394		Elves defeated by human and mountain dwarf alliance at Lake Crimmormere
–28	6457		Death of Oerson
–11	6474		Hyperborean Rebellion; Construction begins on Tower of Oerson
–3	6482		Polemarchs Crassin and Odontius march south from Boros
–2	6483		Tower of Oerson completed
1	6485		Battle of Hummaemidon; Birth of Imperial Record
4	6488		Libynos expedition; Khemitites defeated at Battle of Phillistia; Khemit made vassal kingdom, effectively bringing northern Libynos into Hyperborean Empire
5	6489		Oeric receives vision of Sacred Table, begins construction of Tircople
7	6491		Great Khan Jaganga arises among Hundaei and unites them into Invincible Horde
12	6496		Oesson crowned as imperator; First Huns appear in empire
14	6498		Huns besiege Apothasalos, defeated by Gnassus; Beginning of Hun Wars
678	7162		Hyperborean Legions push into Great Steppes
680	7164		Hundaei settle in Nam-i-Budhani due to Hyperborean pressure
681	7165		Civil war erupts among Hundaei clans
683	7167		Hundaei cease to exist as a people; Survivors flee to Libynos or become the Shattered Folk of the Great Steppes
687	7171		**Beginning of Pax Hyperborea**
			Planetary Poles Shift
2491	8975		Poles of Boros shift; Goitre emerges forming Tempest Meridians; Ice sheet begins forming over continent of Boros and World Roof
2496	8980	1	Tower of Oerson destroyed; Wild fires ravage Curgantium and spread across Akados burning Plains of Suilley and Matagost Forest
2499	8983	4	Imperial Court relocated to Tircople; Western empire abandoned by Hyperboreans; Chaos descends among survivors
			End of Hyperborean Age in the West
2516	9000	21	Hyperboreans withdraw from Akados
2632	9116	137	Last Hyperboreans quietly disappear from Tircople
2654	9138	159	Birth of Macobert of House Foere
2690	9174	195	Knights of Macobert formed, mounted upon destriers bred in eastern Suilley
			Rise of the Foerdewaith
2698	9182	203	King Macobert begins uniting Akados as Kingdom of Foere
2744	9228	249	Macobert crowned Overking of the Hyperborean Monarchy of the Foerdewaith

TIMELINE OF HYPERBOREA AND CURGANTIUM* (CONT)

Imperial Record (I.R.)	Erylle Cycle (E.C.)	Huun Chronicle (H.C.)	Event(s)
2765	9249	270	Death of Macobert; Son Magnusson succeeds to the throne
2768	9252	273	Overking Magnusson completes imperial capital at Courghais
2840	9324	345	Foerdewaith settlers push through Crynomar Gap
2843	9327	348	Twin royal heirs Kennet and Cale born to Overking Paulus
2858	9342	363	Cale abdicates claim to throne and given port of Reme
2861	9345	366	Cale leads Colonization of Great Steppes
2947	9431	452	Shadow walkers lead humanoid hordes from Lost Mountains; Caleen colonies destroyed, Prince Cale is lost; Wizard's Wall raised at Crynomar Gap
3213	9697	718	Foerdewaith Wars of Succession begin
3380	9864	885	Knightly Order of Macobert largely destroyed in Courghais, the few survivors go into hiding
3517	10,001	1022	Current year

* Excerpted from the ***Lost Lands Campaign Setting*** timeline by **Frog God Games**.

Following clues found in the camp, the party ventures out into the greater ruins following the knights' trail and hoping to find whatever secret it was they sought. Beneath the ruins of the great citadel at the city's center, the party finds the source of the dreams and shadow horrors: a powerful nightmare dragon and its hag ally who have captured the surviving knights.

Rescuing the surviving knights from these horrors, the PCs learn that the knights have discovered among the ruins the mysterious and dangerous *Codex Ibnathi* and had hidden it in their camp before being overcome by the dragon. From their research, they had discerned that a mothman had visited the city upon the night of its destruction a thousand years earlier. They hope that by contacting the mothman's spirit they can learn what caused the city's original destruction and what new threat now looms from its haunted ruins. By locating and defeating the undead remains of the mothman, they party is able to learn that on the night of the city's destruction the foul opera known as *The King in Yellow* was being performed, which threatened the existence of the entire world if the city's timely destruction had not forestalled it.

Upon returning to the base camp with this information, they discover that it was attacked by vampires in their absence. All the knights were slain except two: one who still survives, though badly wounded, and another who was taken by the vampires along with the *Codex Ibnathi*. Tracking the vampires to their sewer lair, the party must fight its way through the defenses of the Underguild and save the captured knight before the *Codex Ibnathi* can be used to possess him with an evil, ancestral spirit and bring a new era of devastation upon the world with the awakening of an ancient evil.

STARTING THE ADVENTURE

Having won fame over a career of glorious adventure and astounding treasures, the PCs have come to the attention of the Knights of Macobert as worthy potential allies. If the party has already participated in the first adventure of the ***Aegis of Empires Adventure Path***, ***The Book in the Old House***, they may have already earned the friendship of the Knight, Sir Urvitus Voren of Tourne. As written, this adventure assumes that the PCs did participate in that adventure and that Urvitus survived its events, naming them as friends. If this is not the case, you will need to make minor adjustments accordingly to bring the party into play. It is possible if the PCs participated in that adventure that Sir

Urvitus did not survive it. If that is the case, assume that his wealthy family paid to have him resurrected in the wake of those events and that the knight has gone on to have an honorable and successful career. Likewise, if your players did not go through ***The Book in the Old House***, assume that they know Urvitus in some other way. This will require only minimal changes to the adventure.

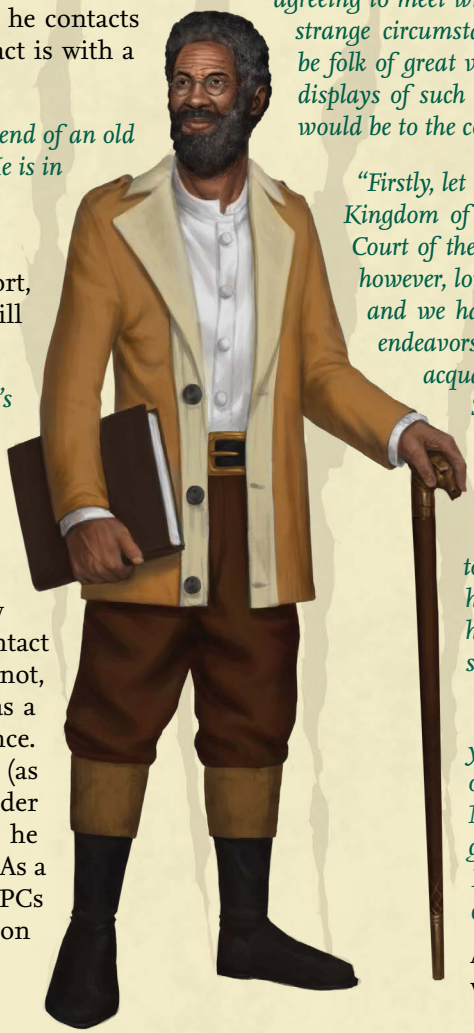
This adventure begins when the party is contacted by a wizard named **Navellis Antriliev** (N male human archmage), a close friend and ally of the Macobertine Order. It does not matter where the PCs are located at the time, because the wizard tries to contact them magically. To do so, he first makes use of a *scrying* spell against a random PC (DC 23 Wisdom saving throw). He has only heard of the PCs, so the PC gains advantage on the saving throw. He has adequate scrolls to attempt this on each PC in hopes that one of them will fail his save. If every PC saves, he makes a final attempt with a henchman or acquaintance of the PCs' who is known to frequent their company. Assume that this individual fails his save. Once Navellis has successfully scried a PC or henchman, he contacts that individual via *sending*. If the contact is with a PC, the message is as follows:

"Greetings [PC's name]. I am Navellis, a friend of an old acquaintance of yours, Sir Urvitus Voren. He is in danger and bid me contact you."

If the contact was with a cohort, follower, or other NPC, the message will instead be:

"I am Navellis and seek to contact [PC's name] on behalf of Sir Urvitus Voren. Please convey this and ask to allow my scrying to succeed."

If the PC purposely fails the subsequent Wisdom saving throw versus the *scrying*, Navellis makes contact via the sending as described above. If not, Navellis agrees to use the henchman as a go-between, but it is not his preference. He has a fully charged *wand of sending* (as a *wand of enemy detection*[SRD], but the wielder can spend 1 charge to cast *sending*), so he can manage a prolonged conversation. As a show of good faith, Navellis allows the PCs to make their own scrying attempts on him is they choose.



Once Navellis has initiated a dialogue with the PCs, he requests a meeting as soon as possible at the location of their choosing. He indicates that he will teleport in to attend the meeting and that Urvitus is in great jeopardy so it must be accomplished quickly. Navellis is based out of the imperial capital at Courghais[LL4-11] but has no means of arranging for a meeting there (unless they are already present in that city) without being physically present in their location first.

Once the PCs have agreed to the meeting and the details have been arranged, Navellis uses teleport to arrive and immediately makes his proposal.

The man is of indeterminate age, but his close-cropped, steel-gray hair and seamed lines of his face seem to belie the posture and bearing of quiet strength of a much younger man. He wears robes of red velvet and a close-fitting skull cap trimmed in gold threadwork. He wears a stole bearing mystical symbols and has a number of pouches and wands hanging at his belt.

"Greetings, I am Navellis Antriliev," he says. "Thank you for agreeing to meet with me on such short notice and under such strange circumstances. I know you by your reputations to be folk of great valor and considerable experience, so I trust displays of such magic are not so unsettling to you as they would be to the common peoples.

"Firstly, let me explain that I am a private citizen of the Kingdom of Foere and have no official capacity in the Court of the Courghais or any other institution. I have, however, long been a friend of the Knights of Macobert, and we have mutually assisted each other on certain endeavors on many occasions in the past. So great is my acquaintance with the Knights that I have heard Sir Urvitus of Tourne — whom I believe you know — speak highly of you on several occasions. It is because of this trust that Sir Urvitus has in you and the confidence he displayed in your abilities that I endeavored to learn more about you. In the last few days, I have learned much of your past exploits, and I have no doubt that I have barely scratched the surface of your heroics.

"It is for this reason that I chose to contact you. You may be the individuals most capable of dealing with the situation that has arisen. Members of the Macobertine Order are in great danger — Sir Urvitus included — and I believe that you may be the only ones who can save the situation. Will you hear me out?"

Assuming the PCs agree to this, Navellis will fill them in on the current situation.

"You are familiar, I'm sure, with the decline and fall of the great Hyperborean Empire of old. At the zenith of its power, a mighty catastrophe shook the world and caused the poles to shift by some 15 degrees. This wrought damaging changes in the weather, a freezing over of the old continent of Boros, chaos throughout the lands, and a whole host of dire portents and omens. Imperator Obraskius, himself a magical practitioner of some reputation, summoned the greatest arcanists and priests from across the empire to the Tower of Oerson in Curgantium to determine the cause of this shift and find some means to reverse it. For five years those brilliant minds worked at the problem until they arrived at a powerful ritual that they believed could move the world back to its natural axis and undo the damage that had been caused. The Imperator himself would lead this ritual. However, something went terribly wrong and the Tower of Oerson as well as much of the imperial capital were devastated in a catastrophic explosion. Fires swept out of control and across much of the lands of central Akados for over a year, killing untold thousands and sentencing tens of thousands more to a slow death by starvation and exposure in the years thereafter.

"It was after this event that the imperial line of Oerson appeared to stagnate or dilute. The new Imperator moved the Hyperborean capital to distant Tircople where it slowly sank into decadence and depravity while the rest of the empire was left to wallow in the aftermath of the destruction. Less than a century-and-a-half later, the great Daan led his army east in revolt and discovered that the Imperatrix Trystecce was a vile undead lich and had been corrupting the empire from within for many years. Daan liberated the empire from her foul rule, but there was no one left to take the reins in the ensuing void, and soon the last of the Hyperboreans were gone. The greatest empire the world had ever known was dead after little more than 2,500 years. And it was almost another century of violence before the blessed Macobert was able to wrest order from the chaos and lay the foundations for the new empire of Foere.

"Of course, after 800 years the empire of the Foerdewaith has seen its own decline, especially beginning 300 years ago with the Wars of Succession following that debacle of a crusade against the Temple-City of Tsar under Overking GraeltorST-10 and the subsequent loss of the entire Army of Light in the Forest of HopeRA-6. But even after all the years of civil strife and wars of independence that followed, a peace of sorts has settled again upon Akados. The Court of Courghais has loosed its grip on many of the surrounding lands creating a patchwork of separate-but-largely-united nations, and the Kingdoms of Foere still stand at their heart providing a bulwark against the threats of evils both at home and from distant lands such as the Huun ImperiumLL8-17. Whether everyone likes it or not, Foere is good for Akados and serves to stabilize the entire region so that the smallfolk can live in peace and prosper.

"Throughout all this time the Most Worthy Knights of Macobert have persevered and attempted to preserve not only the dignity of Foere but also to champion the causes of the late Overking Macobert and his goals of protecting the weak, wherever they be. And it is this ongoing cause that leads us to where we are today.

"Though the Macobertine Order has in many ways become a gentrified club of aristocratic scholars and merchant lords of ancient noble title, its core principles of preservation and benevolence nonetheless still hold true. Few are the adventurous spirits of old, but natural and supernatural laws as well as the curation of economic and mercantile stability have done much to benefit the peoples of Foere in their daily lives. Yet stodgy old men and women smoking pipes in private clubs over discussions of politics are not all that remains of the Order. The Order still seeks to identify and thwart threats to the Kingdoms of Foere before they arise. To this end, many of the knights devote their fortunes to employing powerful practitioners of the magical arts to take on this task, and no few members of the Order have devoted themselves to this study themselves, commanding considerable magical skill themselves. It is through these auspices that I have become acquainted with the Knights of Macobert and count many among their number as personal friends.

"Though I was not personally involved in these particular matters, one knight, Sir Nimulus Cantarthy of Courghais, stumbled across some curious omens and began studying them through research and divination. Assisted by another knight, Lady Elgierbid Palitroix of Cantelburgh, Sir Nimulus came to believe that some dire fate awaited the Kingdoms of Foere in the not-too-distant future. This ambiguous threat, he learned, would rival the destruction caused by the catastrophe at the Tower of Oerson in 2496 and would — like that devastation of a millennium ago — also arise from the area of the city of Curgantium.

"Unlike a thousand years ago when it was the vibrant capital of the empire, Old Curgantium, as it is now frequently known, is little more than an ill-rumored and fiend-haunted ruin in the wilds on the border between the County of Coutaine and Aachen Province where the Imperial Peaks of Mons Terminus meet the shores of the Great Amrin River. None go to the ruins except perhaps the vile or the mad, and foul things are rumored to lurk among the ruins. Even the river traffic of the Great Amrin gives the city's stone wharves a wide berth as they pilot its broad flow. However, despite its seclusion, the ruins of Old Curgantium do lie upon one of the most heavily trafficked waterways that connects the central Kingdoms of Foere to its outlying provinces and even the sea. Likewise, Vermis, the capital of Aachen Province lies barely 100 miles from the ruins, and upstream lie Châlaix, the capital at Courghais, and the many great cities of the Star Sea. So you can see why a threat of even a fraction of the Tower of Oerson's destruction arising from those same ruins could be of great devastation to Foere and the surrounding lands.

"To this end, Sir Nimulus and Lady Elgierbid put together an expedition of some of the more adventurous and capable Knights of Macobert of their acquaintance. This group included your own compatriot Sir Urvitus. They took ship downriver to a point some few miles south of the ruins and set up a checkpoint from which they began keeping in magical contact with me to monitor their progress and provide additional assistance should they require it. They then moved into the ruins of the city to investigate the nature of this prophetic doom and remove it if possible. Within the ruins they had some initial success in exploring the city and managed to establish a safe base camp. They described many threats existing in the city but were able to manage these well enough and continue about their mission. Then, five days ago, I stopped receiving their reports. Their base camp is magically shielded from detection and scrying, so I have been unable to determine what has occurred and likewise have been unable to detect any of the individual knights on the mission to determine if they are dead or alive or what their current situation might be.

"So that is why I have approached you. I am putting together a rescue mission. I need capable individuals such as yourselves to enter Old Curgantium, locate the missing knights, and render them aid if necessary or carry out their original mission if they are no longer capable of doing so. I expect the dangers present to be extreme and could ask no one less worthy than yourselves, but I can promise you reward commensurate with the difficulties faced. What say you? Can your comrade Sir Urvitus and the Knights of Macobert — nay, all of Foere — count on your assistance in this hour of need?"

Navellis expects questions and answers them to the best of his ability. Attempts to use Wisdom (Insight), *discern lies*, or similar abilities reveals he is telling the truth, though if he notices PCs attempting to cast spells on him without first asking permission, he becomes perturbed and demands explanations and apologies.

Some of the questions the PC' might ask and Navellis's answers are as follows:

Why don't the Knights of Macobert just send in another team of knights to check on their fellows? "If they could, I'm sure they would. Alas, most of the other knights currently available are more of the retired-old-men or honorific-titleholder types completely unsuitable for a mission of this complexity and potential danger. I'm afraid Sir Nimulus gathered up most of the available knights who were at all suitable for this endeavor. A great many of the more military-oriented knights disappeared along with King Ovar's army chasing the Huun north into the Irkainian Desert in 3515 I.R[LL8-22]. So unfortunately, 'the cupboard is bare' as they say."

Why doesn't the government send an army or its own rescue mission? "As you are likely aware, the Knights of Macobert have fallen upon some disfavor over the recent centuries. While they enjoy something of a resurgence of their reputation among the populace in the current day, old prejudices and suspicions die hard. Not every element within the capital is friendly to the Order, and some are outright hostile. As such, the knighthood has had to remain at some distance from the official government in the Court of Courghais. In this instance the Royal Court has not formally authorized this mission, nor were its particulars routed through official channels for fear that there might be politicians or hangers-on there that could undermine the endeavor or even prove to ultimately be a part of the divined pending threat. Because of this no formal military action can be taken — if such is even necessary — and no authorized action will be taken by the Royal Court at all in this matter. The Knights of Macobert will advise Courghais of the nature of the threat when it is discovered but not before."

Why don't you go look for them?/Will you be joining us in Curgantium? "While I am allied with the Order, I am not a member. And though I command considerable magical skill, it is a talent I have acquired through diligent study and contemplation. I am not what you'd call an "adventuring" wizard and would be ill-suited in the field. So I will not be making the trip myself."

What kind of aid can we expect? "I am very familiar with the expedition's checkpoint outside the ruins and will be able to transport you all there magically. I can provide you with directions to the location of the base camp in the ruins and give you some information about what dangers lie within the ruins themselves. Likewise, as with the missing knights, I will maintain magical contact with you to provide whatever aid or information I can. This can only occur while you are outside the base camp because of the magical shielding it bears, but as far as I know I will be able to reach you anywhere else within the city. When you have completed your mission, I can meet you back at the checkpoint and arrange for your transportation back home."

Who were the knights on the original expedition? "There are nine in total. The team was organized, as I mentioned, by Sir Nimulus Cantarthy of Courghais a half-elven wizard and loremaster of great renown. Sharing duties in leading the team with him is Lady Elgierbid Palitroix of Cantelburgh, a master of the arts of both magical and martial combat. Perhaps most famous of the team members is Sir Aix de Flomme of Troye, a celestial-blooded paladin of Mitra,

along with his capable squire Barionor. The knights Eregor Dantalus of Apothasalos and Ernst Braanak of Vermis are also both warriors of considerable reputation. Perhaps of less reputation abroad but nonetheless capable knights in their own rights are Sir Urvitus Voren of Tourne — whom you know well, I believe — and Sir Frankus Delerron of Sion. And to complement the abundance of sword arms among the team is Sir Frankus's sister, Lady Margaret Delerron of Sion, a high-ranking follower of the deity Quell. I will provide you with a list including descriptions to assist you."

How do we find the base camp? "The base camp is within the intact basement level of an imperial treasury building at the very edge of the major destruction near the city's center. I will provide you with directions as they were given to me by the members of the team. Because of the nature of its original purpose it still bore ancient magical protections which the knights were able to exploit in order to protect their own position. This is the reason scrying and such can't be used to penetrate its defenses. The knights also established their own magical defenses for which I will provide you the passwords so they can be safely bypassed."

What can you tell us about the ruins of Old Curgantium? "The knights identified six rough districts for the ruins of the city: The outskirts which are haunted by gigantic vermin and the undead remains of some of the city's original survivors who later fell to the famine and pestilence that followed the destruction, the general city ruins themselves which seem to be prowled by some forms of undead, especially after dark, an area they called the 'tribal territory' where strange and twisted giants have carved out their own domains among the ruins, the swamp district which was the city's reservoir and is now a flooded and marshy area infested with verminous creatures suited for such terrain, the riverfront which is apparently the most intact portion of the ruins but which they did not get a chance to explore much, and the blast zone at the city's center where the Tower of Oerson once stood and is now little more than a crater of rubble. They said that after dark, this area comes alive with spirits of fire and pain. Unfortunately, they did not provide me with any kind of map or more specific information, so I'm afraid you'll have to rely on your own exploration to learn more."

What kind of reward are you offering? "If you will travel to Old Curgantium to discover the fate of the missing knights and provide what aid you can, I have been authorized to open the vaults of the some of the Order's treasures. Many items of great power or value as well as sums of wealth in gold, gems, and platinum are available to the knighthood. When the veracity of your report has been verified and your actions deemed suitable by the Order's treasurer, you will each be given your pick of treasures valued at up to 60,000 sovereigns* apiece. Likewise, if your actions merit such recognition, for those of you of Foerdewaith birth, there could be the opportunity for the granting of title by the Order. For those of non-native blood, additional considerations of an equal value could likewise be considered. Plus, making connections among the wealthy and powerful of Foere is not an altogether bad thing in and of itself."

Navellis answers other questions to the best of his ability but has little additional information to give. He will not bargain for a greater reward, since he does not have the authorization to, and will show great distaste towards PCs that attempt to do so.

THE MISSING KNIGHTS OF MACOBERT

Navellis Antriliev provides the party with a general description of the missing knights, however, greater information on these individuals is provided here for your ease of reference. Additional information on some of these knights can be found within the adventure itself at the appropriate areas.

Sir Nimulus Cantarthy of Courghais[LL4a] (N male half-elf champion)

Sir Aix de Flomme[ST] of Troye[LL5a] (LG male aasimar knight of Mitra[LL5b])

Barionor[ST] of Troye[LL5a], squire of Sir Aix (LN male human [Erskaelosi[LL4b]] gladiator)

Sir Eregor Dantalus of Apothasalos[LL3] (LN male human knight)

Sir Elgierbid Palitroix of Cantelburgh (NG male human eldritch knight)

Sir Ernst Braanak of Vermis[LL5c] (LN male human veteran)

Sir Urvitus Voren of Tourne (NG male human fighters; see page 521)

Sir Frankus Delerron of Sion (LG male knight)

Sir Gareth Delerron of Sion (LG male human cleric of Quell[FBRC])

* The unit of currency for gold pieces in Foere.

ADVENTURE TIMELINE

Following is the time frame and order of events that occur leading up to the PCs' involvement in the adventure.

Time	Occurrences
17 days ago	Knights of Macobert arrive by river at Curgantium (area **A**), begin magical communication with Navellis Antriliev
16 days ago	Knights enter city and establish base camp at area **B**, begin to be assailed by nightmare assaults
14 days ago	Knights survey city for possible locations of the Lost Library
11 days ago	Knights locate and explore Lost Library (area **C**), recover *Codex Ibnathi*
8 days ago	Knights make night foray to theater (area **F**), Lady Elgierbid lost, Sir Eregor's soul captured by Abruxes
7 days ago	Knights determine source of dream haunting is beneath Tower of Oerson and plan expedition, Sir Nimulus hides *Codex Ibnathi*
6 days ago	Knights leave Malcolm behind to watch Sir Eregor and infiltrate giant camp (area **D**) to enter sewers (area **E**), Sir Ernst lost
5 days ago	Knights enter sublevel of Tower of Oerson (area G) and defeated by the Mindwyrm, Sir Nimulus and Sir Aix eaten, Navellis Antriliev loses contact with knights
2 days ago	Sir Ernst returns to base camp, imprisons Malcolm, and murders Sir Eregor, takes recovered books but can't find *Codex Ibnathi*
1 day ago	Caulborn searches abandoned camp
Day 1	Navellis Antriliev attempts to contact PCs to find missing knights

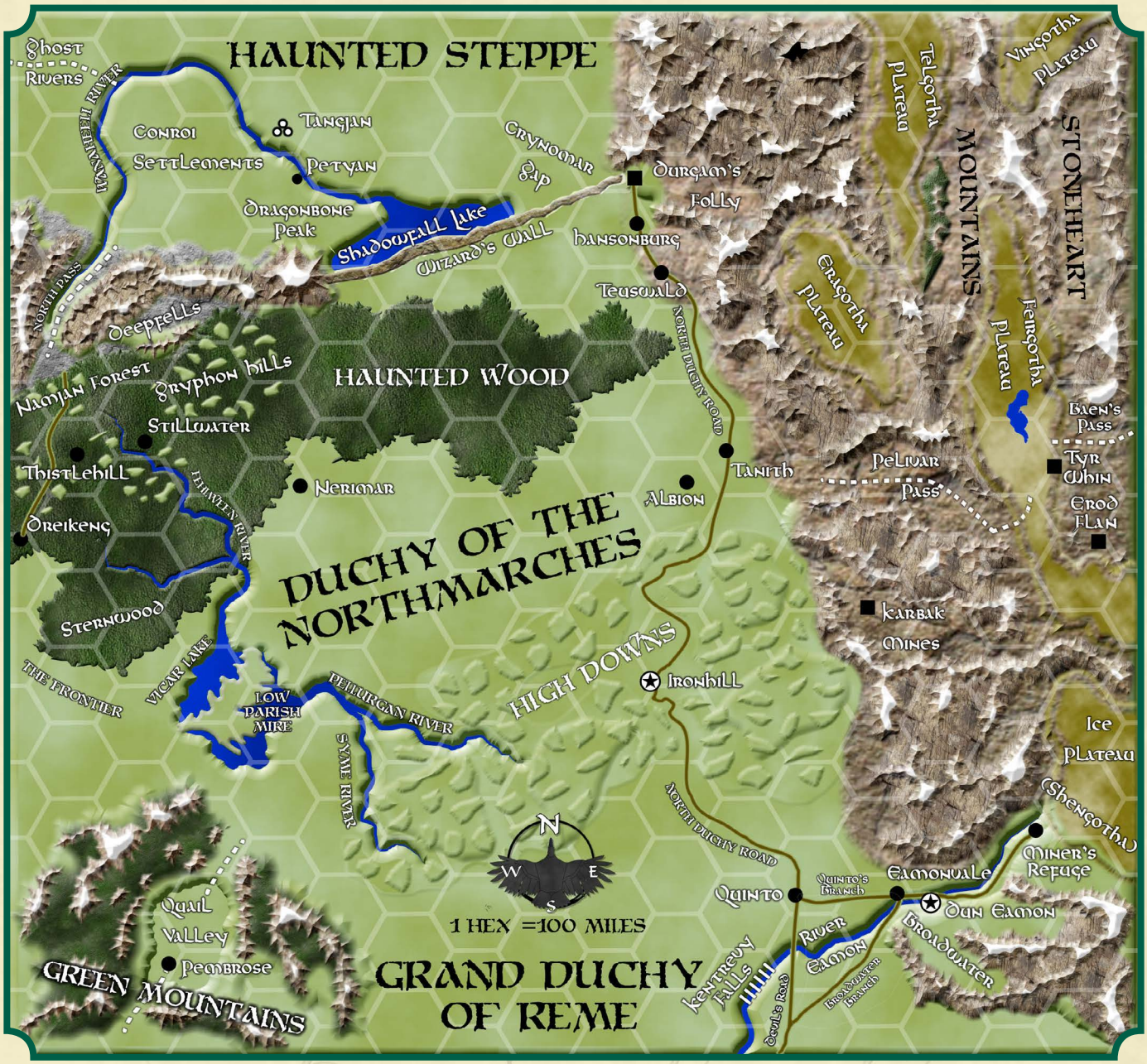
CHAPTER ONE: THE RUINS OF CURGANTIUM

Assuming the party has agreed to undertake the mission for Navellis, he will provide them the means to reach Curgantium by creating a *teleportation circle*. He sets the destination of the *teleportation circle* to the knights' final checkpoint outside the ruins along the banks of the Great Amrin (area **A**). He will maintain contact with the PCs by means of a sending spell each day. The PCs can designate the time of day they want him to use the *sending* and which PC he should target. His initial message will be simply to ask for a status update, and the PC may use the 25-word response to fill him in or ask for some assistance. He will have three *sending* spells prepared each day if the conversation needs to be extended. If the targeted PC is in the base camp or is otherwise blocked from scrying or magical contact, Navellis will be unable to reach them. If this occurs two days in a row, the wizard will attempt to target a different PC with his *sending* to find out what is going on.

Before they go, Navellis gives the PCs directions on how to locate the knights' base camp (area **B**) near the city's center as well as a list of defenses and the passwords to bypass them. The list of passwords also includes a list of the nine missing knights and their descriptions (see **Handout 6A**, see page 133).

During the course of the adventure, Navellis will not have any particular news to deliver to the PCs, but he can be used as a resource when in contact with the PCs. He has a +12 bonus in Intelligence (Arcana), Intelligence (History), and Intelligence (Nature) and will make use of these for the PCs if asked. He is also capable of providing any minor items or equipment that the PCs might need that they don't have on hand within 1d4 hours as he procures it. To do this, he uses *teleport* to arrive at their location to deliver it before teleporting out again immediately. Again, he can't do this while they are in the base camp and won't do it during battle. It is up to your discretion as to what kinds of items he can bring, but assume he has access to any mundane equipment and minor magic items and will readily deliver it as long as the PCs aren't abusing this resource. Ultimately, by 15th level the PCs should already have most of the resources they need for an adventure of this sort. He will not participate in battle under any circumstances.

Additionally, if the PCs suffer casualties and would like to have the body removed back to civilization, they can arrange for him to meet them at the checkpoint where he creates a new *teleportation circle* to bring it back to Courghais. He can even do this if they wish to have a slain comrade resurrected, though the costs associated with the *resurrection* must be borne by the party. Once this occurs, he returns with the resurrected party member in 1d2+1 days.



Finally, when the PCs have completed their mission, they can once again meet him at the checkpoint where he creates a *teleportation circle* to take the PCs back to Courghais or whatever other location they choose after concluding their agreement with him and the Knights of Macobert.

A. THE CHECKPOINT

This checkpoint is where Navellis directs his original teleportation circle to transport the party to the vicinity of Curgantium. It is the location where the knights' expedition made landfall just upriver from the ruined city.

The gentle susurrus of the nearby river and the chanting dirge of the cicadas and tree frogs are the only sounds that break the silence in this peaceful glade. To the east a sandy slope descends to the edge of the wide brown waters of the Great Amrin, near a great snarl of driftwood piled 15 feet high upon the bank from some past flood. The far shore of the river is almost lost in the river mists nearly a mile away. The far side of the river is a rolling plain, but on this side the trunks and undergrowth of a moderately sized forest reach nearly down to the water. You know that the ruins of the city you seek lie not far to the north, but their presence is completely masked by the verdant greenery. Faintly visible over the treetops to the north are the purpled summits of the Imperial Peaks, the southernmost arm of the Mons Terminus mountain

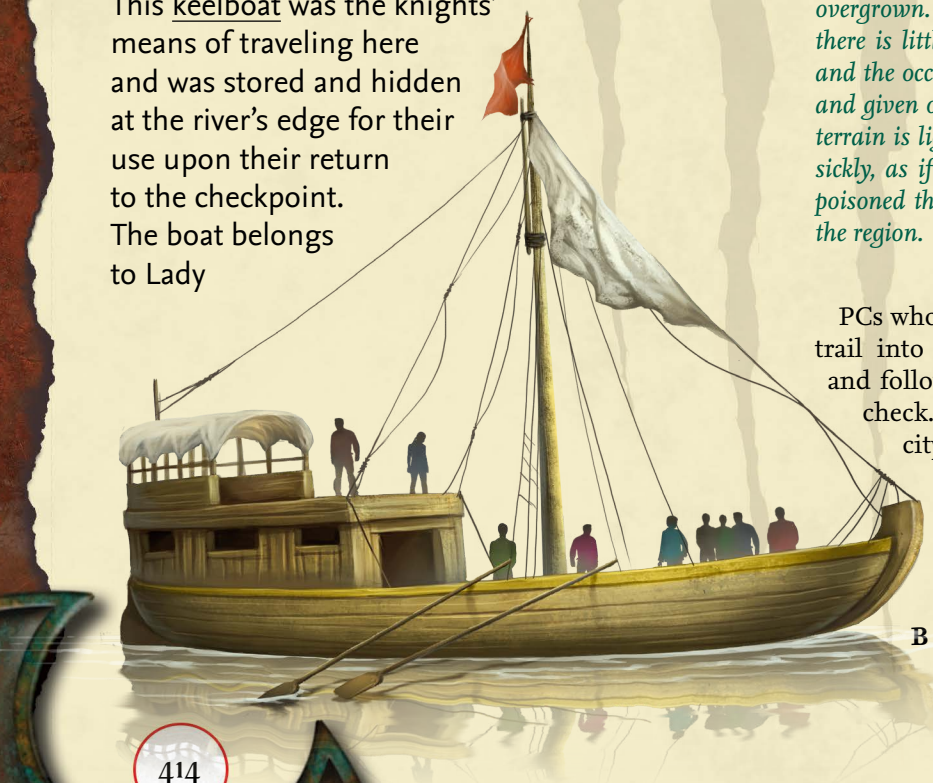
range upon whose lower slopes the ancient imperial capital was constructed thousands of years ago. There is a watchfulness in this place that stands in stark contrast to your peaceful surroundings.

This is the location where the riverboat carrying the knights made landfall over 2 weeks ago. Anyone making a DC 24 Wisdom (Survival) check can barely make out the signs of a river vessel being beached near the driftwood snarl and of a large party camping here for a short time before heading north into the woods. Anyone making a DC 29 on the check notices the presence of the strange tracks of a Large creature whose footprints appear to be a cross between that of a great cat and a giant lizard. Anyone making a DC 22 Intelligence (Arcana) check can identify them as the tracks of a dragonne, while a DC 20 Intelligence (History) check recalls that Sir Eregor is known to keep as dragonne as a cohort. Navellis can likewise provide this information if asked (and it is available on **Handout 6A**, page 133).

Anyone who interacts with the pile of driftwood and makes a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw discovers that it is actually an illusion that hides a small keelboat that has been pulled ashore. This 30-foot-long vessel has its mast unstepped and stored on the deck. Its bow bears the name *River Wraith*. Driven into the sand next to the boat's keel is an *iron spike of safe passage* (see **Appendix A**, page 123).

THE *RIVER WRAITH*

This keelboat was the knights' means of traveling here and was stored and hidden at the river's edge for their use upon their return to the checkpoint. The boat belongs to Lady Margaret Delleron who will expect its return if she survives the adventure. She will not mind, however, if the potion cache inside it is used during the course of the adventure. The *iron spike of safe passage* belongs to Sir Frankus Delleron who will likewise want it returned if he survives.



DESCRIPTION

This long, flat-bottomed ship has a few oars to supplement its single mast with a square sail. It can make both sea and river voyages. The draft is shallow enough that the boat can be dragged ashore, and the mast can be unstepped for storage. The keelboat can carry 33 tons of cargo or 65 soldiers.

SPECIAL

A *wind fan*[SRD] can be found in a desk inside the single cabin with a DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check. A hidden compartment (Perception DC 24) beneath one of the cabin's two bunks holds 2 *potions of superior healing*, 2 *potions of resistance (poison)*, and 2 *potions of water breathing*.

TRAVELING TO THE RUINED CITY

The lands surrounding the ruins of Curgantium are wild and overgrown. Of the mighty civilization that once flourished here there is little sign, save for a few worn and weed-choked roads and the occasional remains of stone houses, now fallen into ruin and given over to the vines and grasses of a thousand years. The terrain is light forest and grasslands but even these are thin and sickly, as if the disaster that struck here a millennium ago has poisoned the ground and still casts a long and evil shadow over the region.

PCs who search for tracks can find traces of the knights' trail into the thinly forested terrain from 16 days ago and follow it to the city with a DC 23 Wisdom (Survival) check. The trail leads through the outskirts and into city ruins (see below), but once it reaches the city ruins it becomes impossible to follow among the rubble and overgrowth. However, Navellis provides the PCs with directions to find the base camp located in the city ruins as well as instructions on how to safely enter it. See area **B** for further details. Traveling to the city requires

crossing through 3 miles of the forested outskirts, which takes 2–3 hours (twice that if moving half speed while tracking). The knights' trail enters the city ruins from the southwest corner, approximately 2-3/4 miles from the base camp. Following Navellis's directions from there requires an additional 2–3 hours.

It is important to keep track of the time of day as the PCs travel to and through the ruins of Old Curgantium, as nightfall and the position of the moons are important in determining what sorts of encounters occur as explained below. Though the party members may feel a growing sense of unease as the day fades into afternoon and finally evening, they will not know for sure what is going to happen. If they have not reached the base camp by nightfall, they will have to face the horrors of the nights in Curgantium.

Random encounters within Curgantium are determined by district during the day and by whether they occur before or after moonset at night. The GM should roll d% to check for encounters twice per day and consult the individual encounter tables provided for each district for the results of the checks. At night, different encounter tables are used; see **When Darkness Falls** below for these results.

THE DISTRICTS OF OLD CURGANTIUM

Once the capital of a proud empire, Curgantium now lies shunned and broken beneath a pitiless sky. Though the Hyperboreans who once lived here perished long ago, Curgantium is not abandoned — far from it. By day, monstrous creatures stalk the ruins; by night, horrors from the Plane of Shadows emerge, and even the boldest or most foolhardy of adventurers is well advised to seek shelter.

The city is roughly divided into six districts. Most were initially shattered by the explosion of the Tower of Oerson, then reduced to rubble by the weather and the passage of centuries. Some signs of the city's old grandeur remain in the form of partly sheltered walls and semi-collapsed structures that still bear elaborate ancient carvings of kings and queens, warriors and priests, dragons, griffons, and other exotic creatures. Some still retain remnants of colorful decorations and a few battered frescoes portraying the people of the city. More disturbing remains can be seen as well — sharp eyes can discern the scorched outlines of human figures on walls that faced the center of the city — all that is left of the unfortunates who were incinerated on that last, terrible night.

OUTSKIRTS

This area covers a roughly 3-mile-wide band running around the ruined city on the west shore of the river. Once home to the farms and villages that supported the great city and crisscrossed with well-maintained roads, the outskirts are now overgrown and wild. The roads are barely visible after a millennium of neglect, and the woods are haunted by huge predatory spiders and scorpions. In several places are the remains of mass graves where those who were fortunate enough to survive the initial blast and fires slowly starved to death on the seared and barren landscape. There is no good reason to linger in the outskirts, though PCs may have to traverse on multiple occasions if they travel back and forth between the check point at **A**. Little description is needed for the outskirts save to emphasize the desolate nature of the region and show the antiquity of the few ruins here. This wooded area and its undergrowth grants a +1 bonus on Dexterity (Stealth) checks for creatures in it.

Encounters marked with an asterisk (*) can be met only once; if rolled again, treat as no encounter. Those marked with an A indicate a new monster described more fully in **Appendix A**.

Table 1-1: Outskirts Random Encounters: Day

D12	Encounter
1	2d6 spider swarms
2	1d8 giant spiders
3	4d6 stirges
4	2d6 harpies
5	2d6 giant scorpions
6	1d3 ropers
7-12	No encounter

CITY RUINS

The bulk of the old city is occupied by seemingly endless acres of fallen buildings, rubble-choked streets, overgrown parks, dry canals, once-luxurious homes, and the skeletal remains of stately imperial buildings. Broken statuary is sprinkled liberally throughout the ruins, providing ample camouflage for the many gargoyles who call the city home. Most of the ruins consist of crumbled walls and piles of rubble, with only a small portion of the buildings bearing any semblance of being intact. However, in a city that once housed over a million souls, even a small portion leaves hundreds of partially intact ruins. These are not identified or mapped out specifically except at encounter areas designated on the map, but you can assume that many serve as lairs or at least temporary shelters for the various creatures that stalk the ruins.


Old Curgantium
Tribal Territory
D
Blast Zone
C
G-H
F
Swamp District
Riverfront
Great Amrin River
B
City Ruins
I
1 mile
A

Throughout the city this area is considered difficult terrain due to the shifting rubble and weed- and vine-choked thoroughfares. In addition, any specific area also has a 2 in 6 chance of being choked with light rubble causing a -1 penalty on all Dexterity checks and saving throws (40%), dense rubble that acts as light rubble and as difficult terrain (20%), occupied by a pit 1d3 x 10 feet deep (DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check to notice, DC 15 Dexterity saving throw to avoid falling in if not noticed) from the collapse of a basement or sewer channel (20%) in addition to the effects of the difficult terrain, or are relatively clear of debris and obstacles (20%) and not considered difficult terrain. During the day, the cries and calls or birds and various other creatures echo through the ruined streets, but at night these all cease to be replaced with a sense of impending dread.

Table 1-2: City Ruins Random Encounters: Day

d%	Encounter
1	3d8 ogre zombies
2	3d6 venomous snake swarms
3	1d6 behirs
4	3d8 gargoyles
5	3d8 four-armed gargoyles[A]
6	3d8 green guardian gargoyles[A]
7	3d8 margoyles[C]
8	4d6 will-o'-wisps
9	*2d8 hounds of Tindalos[A]
10	2d4 spirit nagas
11–20	No encounter

RIVERFRONT

Along the eastern edge of the city, the crumbling remains of the old imperial docks and quays still reach out into the waters of the Great Amrin River, the life-giving artery connecting the heart of the Kingdoms of Foere at the Star Sea to the Sinnar Ocean through the Amrin Estuary[LL5-33] far to the east. The Great Amrin River makes a wide, languorous eastward turn in its course here, away from the Imperial Peaks to the north and towards Vermis and Aachen Province, and as a result this is its widest point west of Great Bridge[LL5-26] where it is joined by the Stoneheart and Graywash Rivers. At nearly a mile wide, the far shore is frequently lost to sight from the mists that rise of the waters in the morning and evenings.

The boatmen of the Amrin are thankful for the widening of the stream here, as they all steer to the eastern courses of the current when passing the ruins of the city, muttering prayers and making signs against bad luck as they pass by. In fact, the river men of the Great Amrin will make landfall on the western banks anywhere close to the city only under the direst of circumstances and will be anxious to leave as quickly as possible, even though the stone quays remain in remarkably good repair. And under no circumstances will they pass by the city after dark, always laying over on the eastern shore well before reaching the city's farthest extent if the timing of trip makes a day passage questionable. Rumors speak of the waters of the river near the city's wharves running red as blood or black as ink at times with all sorts of wild tales as to the source. So far no one has dared to venture near to make such a determination.

The city's riverfront lies along a low granite rise that follows the curve of the river and creates a mound that largely blocks the view of the city from the river and vice versa. In Curgantium's heyday, the great Tower of Oerson peered above this ridgeline as did some of the larger structures and fortifications, but today none of the city's ruins rise above this green-choked barrier to sight. The rise is gradual, never topping more than 100 feet above the surrounding land and was covered in the winding streets and teeming close quarters of the riverfront district, so it poses no real navigation hazard, but it did spare the riverfront the worst of the blast and resulting fire that so devastated the rest of the city. As such, there are more intact buildings in the district than in any other, though they are typically overgrown with the vines and undergrowth of the hillside, and more than one four-walled structure has a mighty tree or trees growing through where the roof would have been.

The riverfront's considered light undergrowth with any given area also being difficult terrain due to the crumbling structures and is a gradual slope, so creatures moving along it take a -1 penalty on Dexterity checks and saving throws. The encounters on the Riverfront Random Encounters table below are considered to occur primarily while within a short distance of the water itself. For encounters farther from the water's edge where the rolled encounter wouldn't make sense, use the City Ruins Random Encounters table above.

Table 1-3: Riverfront Random Encounters: Day

D12	Encounter
1	2d8 quipper swarms
2	1d6 giant gars[A]
3	3d8 giant water beetles[A]
4	4d6 giant crayfish[C]
5	3d6 river drakes (see below)
6	2d6 greater scrags
7-12	No encounter

RIVER DRAKE

Statistics as a **wyvern** except as noted below.
Speed 20 ft., fly 40 ft., swim 40 ft.
Skills Perception +4, Stealth +5

Amphibious. The river drake can breathe air and water.

SWAMP DISTRICT

Once the city reservoir tucked against the base of the eastern rise of the riverfront, this region became choked with rubble, ash, and toxic silt following the city's devastation until it is now little more than a fetid, unwholesome swamp. Avoided by most of the city's denizens, the swamp district is full of hostile vermin and beasts and is rumored to be home to some more intelligent and cunning creatures as well. Most of the district is marshy terrain with heavy undergrowth, making it difficult terrain, though any given area has a chance of being a shallow bog that imposes a -1 penalty on Dexterity checks and saving throws (20%) or a deep bog that imposes disadvantage on Dexterity checks and saving throws (15%) instead. The water here is not potable, and anyone drinking it or immersed in it must make a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or contract naegleriasis, infection by a microorganism that travels through the cribriform plate of the nasal cavity and invades the brain (see sidebar).

Table 1-4: Swamp District Random Encounters: Day

D20	Encounter
1	3d6 giant leeches
2	1d6 chuuls
3	1d4 shambling mounds
4	1d6+6 swamp mummies
5	3d4 araneas[A]
6	2d6 giant crocodiles
7	3d8 giant frogs
8	1d4 hydras



9	1d3 giant flytraps[A]
10	1d3 viper vines[A]
11	1d3 catoblepas[A]
12	*Adult black dragon
13	1d6 black puddings
14	*Aranea outing (see below)
15-20	No encounter

SWAMP MUMMY

Statistics as a **mummy** except as noted below.
Speed 20 ft., swim 20 ft.
Skills Stealth +3
Damage Resistances fire

Swamp Stalker. A swamp mummy has advantage on Stealth checks in marsh terrain.

Aranea Outing: This group of araneas is scouting the area looking for food sources or other interesting prey. It consists of 2d4 araneas (see **Appendix C**, page 136) accompanied by an equal number of charmed **wereboars**[SRD]. Upon sighting the party, the araneas send in the wereboars to try and subdue the PCs while they clamber among the trees using *sleep*, *charm person*, and their webs to assist. They try to avoid combat with invisibility, but if targeted with spells or attacks will make use of *mirror image* and *mage armor* while defending themselves. If the wereboars are all killed, any surviving araneas flee.

TRIBAL TERRITORY

This section of the city is mechanically identical to the city ruins above as far as movement and terrain goes. However, it is distinct in that what in ruined Curgantium passes for civilization is limited to this region. Here a tribe of deformed aberrant giants scrounge among the ruins for treasure and food. Ogres and hags of various descriptions also call this dismal wreckage home, scraping out a bare living while doing the bidding of the giants. Leadership is in the hands of a group of ash giants who have lived among the scorched ruins for generations.

Table 1-5: Tribal Territory Random Encounters: Day

D12	Encounter
1	3d8 wererats
2	3d8 giant flies[C]
3	1d4 green hags
4	3d8 aberrant hill giants
5	1d3+1 ash giants[C]
6	1d6 black puddings
7	*Escaped slaves
8	Foraging party
9-12	No encounter

NEW DISEASE: NAEGLERIASIS[MAM-31]

This ingested disease requires a DC 20 Constitution Saving throw to resist infection. It takes 1d6 days for the disease to fully affect the target. Once this incubation period passes, the target gains one level of exhaustion and its maximum hit points are reduced by 14 (4d6). This exhaustion and these hit points cannot be cured until the disease ends or is cured. The character can attempt a new saving throw each time they complete a long rest. On a successful saving throw, the creature's maximum hit points are reduced by 7 (2d6) but they do not gain an additional level of exhaustion, and then the disease ends.

Lesser restoration does not cure the disease but does grant the target advantage on its next saving throw to recover. *Heal* or *greater restoration* ends the disease immediately.

Note: Though this organism enters the brain through the cribriform plate of the nose, it is not inhaled. It is in water and swims through the victims' membrane when they are submerged.

Escaped Slaves: A group of 2d4 wayang slaves is encountered fleeing from their aberrant giant masters. These cousins of the deep gnomes have been enslaved by the ash giants and their kin. While unarmed, they are suspicious of strangers and unfriendly, fleeing if threatened. If befriended with magic, Charisma (Persuasion) checks, or simple roleplaying, they can provide the party general information about the city, including about the shadow creatures and the Nightscream (see below). If their attitude is improved to helpful, they can provide specific information about the giant encampment (area **D**) and some information about the missing knights (see area **D5**).

ABERRANT GIANT DEFORMITIES

The hill giants of Old Curgantium are tainted by the efflux of entropic magical energies and alien materials in and around the devastated city. The mutations grant them a variety of unusual abilities.

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Deformities. Aberrant giants possess an assortment of hideous deformities unique to each individual creature. When determining the deformities of a typical aberrant giant, roll randomly or choose 1d4–1 deformities from the Aberrant Giant Deformities table. If two deformities are contradictory, reroll or select another. Bonuses gained from different deformities are cumulative. In addition to other effects of their deformities, aberrant giants have advantage on Charisma (Intimidation) checks and disadvantage on all other Charisma checks.

If a deformity grants a bonus attack. Unless otherwise noted, these attacks can be made as a bonus action, +8 to hit, reach 10 feet, one target, dealing damage as noted below.

Oversized Weapons. The twisted bodies of aberrant giants allow them to wield larger weapons than normal. Increase the damage dice for melee weapon attacks by one size; a typical aberrant hill giant's greatclub per the SRD thus deals 21 (3d10 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

Slow and Steady. Aberrant giants typically walk with a halting but implacable gait. Their speed is reduced to 20 feet, but it is not reduced by difficult terrain or exhaustion.

d20	Deformity	Effect
1	Toughened hide	+1 bonus to AC
2	Extra arm	Gain a fist bonus attack dealing 15 (3d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage.
3	Additional eyes	Advantage on vision-based Wisdom (Perception) checks.
4	Unusually located eyes	As a reaction when a melee attack against the giant would have advantage, the giant can negate that advantage.
5	Hunched back	Advantage on Strength (Athletics) checks to avoid being shoved.
6	Strangely deformed head	Once per day when an attack against the giant would be a critical hit, as a reaction it can reduce the effect to a normal hit.
7	Oversized ears	Advantage on hearing-based Wisdom (Perception) checks.
8	Oversized nose	Advantage on scent-based Wisdom (Perception) checks.
9	Huge feet or short legs	The giant can move up to its speed and make up to three Strength (Athletics) checks to Shove creatures in its path or adjacent to it, dealing 9 (1d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage to each creature it successfully Shoves.

WAYANG SLAVES

Statistics as a **deep gnome** except as noted below.

Innate Spellcasting. The wayang's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 11). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components.

1/Day each: *minor illusion* (sounds only), *pass without trace*

REACTION

Light and Dark (1/Day). When a wayang would take necrotic damage, it can use this reaction to instead be healed a number of hit points equal to the necrotic damage it would have taken (up to its maximum hit points). Once triggered, this effect lasts for 1 minute or until the wayang uses a bonus action to end it. While active, the wayang gains damage vulnerability to radiant damage.

ABERRANT GIANT DEFORMITIES

d20	Deformity	Effect
10	Elongated nails or claws	When using Multiattack, can make two claw attacks, dealing 15 (3d6 + 5) slashing damage. If both claws hit, the target takes an additional 15 (3d6) slashing damage.
11	Fangs or large mouth	Gain a bite bonus attack dealing 12 (3d4 + 5) piercing damage.
12	Tail	Gain a tail slap bonus attack dealing 19 (4d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage; however, it has disadvantage on attack rolls with its tail.
13	One or more pointed horns	Gain a gore bonus attack dealing 16 (2d10 + 5) piercing damage.
14	Large curled horns	If the giant moves at least 10 feet in a straight line, it can make an attack with its horns dealing 19 (4d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage. In addition, it can make a Strength (Athletics) check as a bonus action to Shove a Large or smaller creature it hits.
15	Long, gangly arms	Reach with melee weapon attacks increases by 5 feet.
16	Long, muscular legs	Increase speed by 10 feet.
17	Gills	Can breathe in both air and water. The giant also gains a swim speed equal to its base land speed.
18	Exudes foul odor	Any creature other than an aberrant giant or ash giant that starts its turn within 5 feet must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until the start of the creature's next turn. On a successful saving throw, the creature I immune to the stench of all aberrant giants for 1 hour.
19	Venomous	A creature damaged by the giant's bite, claw, tail, or gore attack also takes must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or take 14 (4d6) poison damage. If the giant lacks such an attack, reroll.
20	Advanced deformity	One of the aberrant giant's other deformities is especially pronounced, gaining one of the following: an increase damage dice by one die size, increase save DC by 1, or double the numerical effect of the deformity (such as an increase to speed or reach).

Foraging Party: The aberrant giants who live in the tribal territory must constantly search the area for food and other supplies. A foraging party typically consists of 3d6 wayang slaves (as above), 2d4 **ogres**[SRD], 1d4 ogre brutes (see below), and an ogre wereboar (see below), led by an ogre boss (see below). Occasionally (25% chance) an aberrant giant or ash giant (50% chance of either, see **Appendix C** page 136 for statistics) may accompany the foragers. Any PCs encountered are immediately seen as prey and potential loot for the tribe and are attacked immediately and pursued mercilessly. The foraging party knows about its own tribal area but nothing else of interest to the PCs.

OGRE BOSS

Large giant, chaotic evil
Armor Class 18 (plate)
Hit Points 162 (13d12 + 78)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
25 (+7)	9 (-1)	23 (+6)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	6 (-2)

Saving Throws Dex +3, Con +10, Cha +5
Skills Athletics +11, Perception +6
Senses passive Perception 16
Languages Giant
Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)



ACTIONS

Multiattack. The giant makes two spiked greatclub attacks.

Spiked Greatclub. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 24 (5d6 + 7) piercing damage

OGRE BRUTE

Large giant, chaotic evil

Armor Class 13 (ring mail)
Hit Points 85 (10d10 + 30)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	8 (-1)	16 (+3)	5 (-3)	7 (-2)	7 (-2)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8
Languages Common, Giant
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Brute. A melee weapon deals one extra die of its damage when the ogre brute hits with it (included in the attack).

ACTIONS

Greatclub. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 18 (3d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit*: 12 (2d6 + 5) piercing damage.

OGRE WEREBOAR

Large giant (shapechanger), chaotic evil

Armor Class 18 (plate)
Hit Points 115 (10d12 + 50)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	8 (-1)	21 (+5)	8 (-1)	14 (+2)	6 (-2)

Skills Athletics +11, Perception +6, Survival +6
Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks not made with silvered weapons
Senses passive Perception 16
Languages Giant
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Charge (Boar or Hybrid Form Only). If the wereboar moves at least 15 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with its tusks on the same turn, the target takes an extra 10 (3d6) slashing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 17 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Relentless (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). If the wereboar takes 28 damage or less that would reduce it to 0 hit points, it is reduced to 1 hit point instead.

Shapechanger. The ogre wereboar can use its action to polymorph into a boar-ogre hybrid or into a boar, or back into its true ogre form. Its statistics, other than its AC, are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

ACTIONS

Multiattack (Ogre or Hybrid Form Only). The wereboar makes three attacks, only one of which can be with its tusks.

Spear (Ogre or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack*: +8 to hit, range 20 ft./60 ft., reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 18 (3d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

Tusks (Boar or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack*: +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 15 (3d6 + 5) slashing damage. If the target is a humanoid or giant, it must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with wereboar lycanthropy.

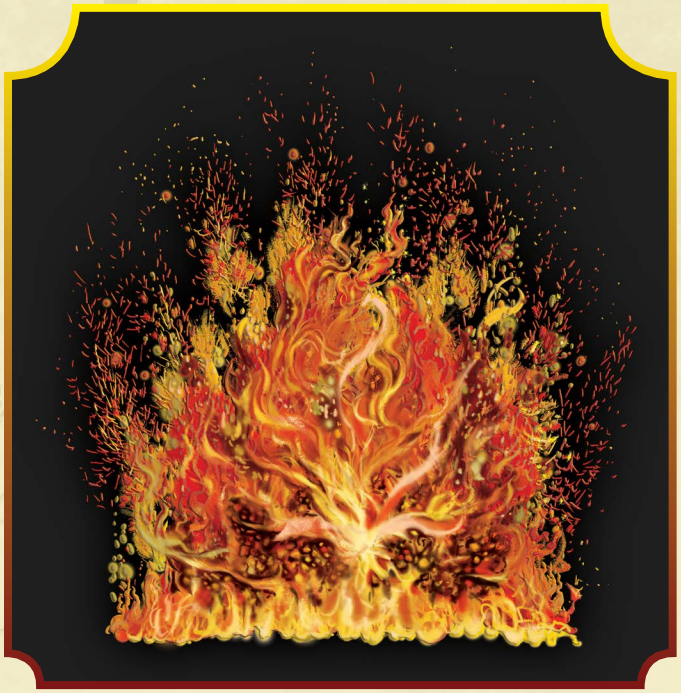
Rock (Ogre or Hybrid Form Only). *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +8 to hit, range 60/240 ft., one target. *Hit*: 21 (3d10 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

BLAST ZONE

The city's central region is a large vaguely egg-shaped area of scorched rubble centered upon what little remains of the legendary Tower of Oerson and the surrounding buildings that were flattened in the long-ago blast. The once-great imperial court, palace, and fortress is little more than a charred lump of melted stone and is where the destructive blast originated. This area is mostly desolate, inhabited by fantastical creatures of fire and smoke, as well as the vengeful remains of the city's mortal inhabitants blasted out of existence on that fateful day, and it is here where the shadows of those past inhabitants can be found scorched into the stone of the ground or crumbling walls. The entire area is a combination of dense rubble and light rubble (50% chance of either) at any given location.

Table 1-6: Blast Zone Random Encounters: Day

D12	Encounter
1	3d4 magma mephits
2	1d6 shard slags[A]
3	2d6 heat swarms[A]
4	3d4 magmin
5	3d6 fire elementals
6	3d6 obsidian elementals[A]
7-12	No encounter



WHEN DARKNESS FALLS

Worse than all the city's daylight dangers are the nights when the ruins take on an entirely new complexion. The approach of nightfall is always signaled by the millions of bats that call home the ruins of the city and the sewer tunnels beneath. They fly forth and swarm in the skies above the city in numbers seldom seen elsewhere (in no small part because of the presence of the Underguild), and when disturbed can form into a bat plague swarm before dispersing into the darkness to hunt in the surrounding woods and mountain slopes.

Then, as nightfall arrives and more and more will-o'-wisps begin to wink into existence under the light of the moons, the true horrors of the ruins come forth. Stalking the benighted ruins is a massive collective of hungry fogs and brumes that work together as they seek victims. Only with deals made long ago between the mihstus and the giant tribe do those aerial creatures patrol the borders of the tribal territory and use their wind gusts to drive the fog back. Even so, an ogre or wayang inevitably disappears every few nights. But even these foul hunters withdraw before the even greater horrors that arise after moonset. As soon as the great Pale Sister[LL1] disappears beyond the horizon (or much earlier on cloudy nights or nights of the new moon) the many scorched shadows of the city begin to swirl with an inky, unnatural darkness. Darkened streets become rivers of blackness and individual scorch marks turn into pools of emptiness, from which rise the night masters of the city as gateways to the Plane of Shadow called *shadowgates* spontaneously form.

During this time hunting shadow mastiffs howl and greater shadows, dread wraiths, and tenebrous blast shadows emerge from the scorched images left by their demise. Banshees arise from their daily slumber and apparitions appear to vex any they find that dare to continue living. Not only the dead stalk the night-dark streets, but inhabitants of the Shadow Plane come through too to cavort or hunt or simply breathe the air of the Material Plane for a few hours. These include various types of nightshades, gloomwings, tenebrous worms, and howling packs of cantor kytons emerging to join the hunting hellcats and shadow giants who stalk the night and shout their rage against these ruins while shadow demons cavort in the darkness alongside nightmare cloakers. Finally come kytons astride nightmare steeds to treat with their nocturnal allies of the city's vast sewer complex — the vampires of the Underguild.

Perhaps most unnerving of all the phenomena and creatures to found in the ruins of the city after dark, however, is the horrifying Nighscream that occurs each night after moonrise. See the Nightscream sidebar for more details. For PCs who have journeyed to the Pit of the Burning Star in the adventure ***Race for Shaatakh-Uulm***, the Nightscream will be familiar for it is a very similar manifestation to that hideous outpouring of fear and despair and is inextricably connected through its link to the foul will of Hastur.

NIGHT (BEFORE MOONSET) RANDOM ENCOUNTERS IN CURGANTIUM

The following are random encounter tables for Curgantium and its surrounding environs after sunset (and before moonset). Unlike the daytime encounters, all areas of the ruins and surroundings use a single encounter table at this time of night. The GM should check for encounters three times per night and can determine the number that occur before moonset and after moonset as he sees fit. On particularly cloudy nights where no moon is visible, encounters may all be considered to occur after moonset. For night encounters before moonset, consult the table below. Encounters with living creatures will not occur during the Nightscream and should be considered as no encounter if rolled for during that time.

Table 1-7: Encounters, All Districts: Night (before moonset)

d20	Encounter
1	2d6 bat swarms
2	4d6 ogre zombies
3	2d8 wights
4	3d8 gargoyles
5	2d6 minotaur skeletons
6	2d6 night hags
7	2d6 will-o'-wisps
8	2d6 spirit nagas
9	Night fog (see below)
10	*Underguild vampires
11–20	No encounter

Night Fog: Fogs are common among the ruins at night, but they are never merely a benign manifestation of moisture and the cool night air. This is because of the

* The Pale Sister is also known as Luna or Narrah, the primary moon of Lloegyr. See page 4 of ***LL1: Stoneheart Valley*** by **Frog God Games**.

many types of foul creatures that lurk within the cracks and crevices of the city and emerge with the fogs to hunt for prey. A patch of fog covers an area 1d10 x 10 ft. by 1d10 x 10 ft. and remains stationary and obscures all sight beyond 5 feet, including darkvision. Creatures within 5 feet are lightly obscured, and anything beyond that is heavily obscured. An area of fog can be dispersed by a sustained wind (such as a *gust of wind*) lasting 5 rounds or more. Hunting within the fog are 3d6 **specters**[SRD]. These undead are attuned to the mists and their vision is not obscured by the mist. In addition, as long as the fog persists they gain advantage on all attack rolls and saving throws and living creatures have disadvantage on saving throws against their life drain. If the fog is dispersed, the specters quickly disappear back into the surrounding ruins.

Underguild Vampires: The Underguild exercises considerable influence in the ruins of Curgantium but do not by any means rule — at least on the surface. While they have carved out a stronghold in the tunnels beneath the city, they still venture aboveground cautiously, usually in groups led by experienced scouts. A typical group will contain a vampire rogue leader, 2d4 vampire warriors, and 2d6 vampire spawn. This number can of course be adjusted up or down depending on how much of a challenge the GM wishes to present the party.

VAMPIRE ROGUE

Statistics as vampire, except as noted below. The vampire rogue does not gain legendary actions.

Evasion. If the vampire rogue is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, the vampire rogue instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

Sneak Attack. Once per turn, the vampire rogue deals an extra 14 (4d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the vampire rogue that isn't incapacitated and the vampire rogue doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

VAMPIRE WARRIOR

Statistics as vampire spawn except as noted below.

Hit Points 111 (15d8 + 45)

STR 18 (+4)

THE NIGHTSCREAM

The Nightscream is a phenomenon that occurs in the city each night when the light of the moon Luna hits the fused glass base of the Tower of Oerson, causing it to glow with a moonlike luminosity. It is caused by the wailing despair of the souls who were destroyed in the opera house on the night of the city's destruction and magnified by the hundreds of thousands of others who died shortly thereafter in the explosion and subsequent fire.

The precise time of the Nightscream varies depending on the time of year, anywhere from an hour before to an hour after midnight. It does not occur on the three nights of Luna's new moon each month, but occurs at full strength on all other nights, affecting every living thing in the city regardless of location. Only those underground are unaffected by its effects.

In the minutes leading up to the Nightscream the PCs will find themselves feeling nervous and uneasy. Then they will hear a faint moaning sound, so quiet that it might even be their imaginations. After a few seconds however the moaning rises to a near-deafening scream, as of hundreds of loud voices screaming in fear and agony. The scream lasts a full hour, then fades away to nothing, leaving only a fading echo over the benighted ruins. The power of the Nightscream fractures the divine connection of clerics and paladins with their deities; they cannot use Channel Divinity anywhere in the city during the Nightscream. It likewise fortifies the power of death, causing all living creatures to gain damage vulnerability to necrotic while the Nightscream howls.

Any living creature in the city when the Nightscream begins must make a DC 22 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. Anyone who saves successfully has advantage on the next Wisdom saving throw against the Nightscream. After the first minute, any who saved are immune to any further fear effects from the Nightscream for that night, while those who failed their saving throw take a -1 penalty on attack rolls and on Wisdom checks and saving throws as long as the Nightscream continues.

The Nightscream interrupts any long rest, which must be begun again, unless creatures are in an area of magical *silence*. In addition, creatures that failed their saving throw against the Nightscream do not regain lost hit points after a long rest, though they regain Hit Dice as usual. Spellcasters that fail their saving throw regain one fewer spell slot of each level they can cast after a long rest.

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Multiattack. The vampire warrior makes three attacks, only one of which can be a bite attack.

Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack.* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage.

Longbow. *Melee Weapon Attack.* +7 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage.

VAMPIRE SPAWN

hp 82 (vampire spawn[SRD])

NIGHT (AFTER MOONSET) RANDOM ENCOUNTERS IN CURGANTIUM

The following are random encounter tables for Curgantium and its surrounding environs after moonset. Unlike the daytime encounters, all areas of the ruins and surroundings use a single encounter table at this time of night. The GM should check for encounters three times per night and can determine the number that occur before moonset and after moonset as he sees fit. On particularly cloudy nights where no moon is visible, they may all be considered to occur after moonset. For night encounters after moonset, consult the table below.

Table 1-8: Encounters, All Districts: Night (after moonset)

d12	Encounter
1	1d6 nightmare cloakers (see below)
2	1d3 chain devils
3	2d8 shadows
4	2d6 wraiths
5	1d6 shadow demons
6	1d3 banshees
7	Tenebrous purple worm (see below)
8	Nightwalker[C]
9	*Nightmare riders
10-12	No encounter



NIGHTMARE CLOAKER

Statistics as a **cloaker**[SRD] except as noted below.

Hit Points 117 (18d10 + 18)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks not made with silvered weapons

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The nightmare cloaker's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 16). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

Constant: *protection from evil and good*

3/Day: *detect thoughts*, *dream*, *suggestion*

1/Day: *dimension door*

True Dreamer. The nightmare cloaker can see invisible creatures and has advantage on ability checks or saving throws to resist or see through illusions.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The nightmare cloaker uses its Nightmare Aura and makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its tail.

Nightmare Aura. Each creature of the cloaker's choice that is within 60 feet and aware of it must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the cloaker's Nightmare Aura for the next 24 hours. If a creature rolls a natural 1 on any saving throw against the cloaker's Nightmare Aura, its sleep or reverie the next time it takes a long rest is wracked with terrifying dreams, causing them to take 10 (3d6) psychic damage and gain one level of exhaustion upon awakening. They can attempt a new saving throw at the end of each long rest thereafter; on a successful saving throw, the creature takes 7 (2d6) psychic damage and then ends the effect with no additional exhaustion.

TENEBROUS PURPLE WORM

Statistics as a **purple worm**[SRD] except as noted below.
Damage Immunities necrotic
Challenge 16 (15,000 XP)

Bristles. A tenebrous purple worm's head is covered in thousands of needle-sharp black spines. Any creature striking it in melee (unless using a weapon with the reach property) must succeed on a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw or be pricked by these spines, taking 7 (2d6) piercing damage. They also take 14 (4d6) poison damage, or half as much if they succeed on a DC 19 Constitution saving throw. A creature succeeding on this saving throw gains advantage on Constitution saving throws against the worm's bristle poison for 1 hour.

If a creature fails its Constitution saving throw twice in the same round, it becomes poisoned and paralyzed for 1d4 rounds. The creature can attempt a new saving throw at the end of each of its turns to end the paralysis, but the creature gains one level of exhaustion and the poisoned condition persists until the creature completes a long rest.

Nightmare Riders: A group of 2d4 **chain devils**[SRD], each riding a **nightmare**[SRD], gallops through the ruins on a nighttime joy ride. If they see potential prey — such as the PCs — they immediately begin to give chase, making great sport of the entire encounter.

ARRIVAL IN OLD CURGANTIUM

After the PCs have made their way through the outskirts, they will emerge from the woods and approach the fallen ruins.

Ancient Curgantium, home of vanished glories, resembles nothing more than a spilled collection of children's blocks, tumbled and weathered by the passing of centuries. The Great Amrin River flows lazily along past crumbling quays and fallen warehouses. Palaces and towers lie in various states of ruin, and the remains of thousands of vine-choked dwellings and buildings stand like cobweb-shrouded skeletons in a forgotten tomb. Most remarkably, the entire central portion of the city is a blasted wasteland of crumbled stone and scorched earth, as if some great hammer of the gods flattened and toppled everything there. In the center of the blast zone you glimpse what looks like a mass of blackened, fused glass, gleaming in the sunlight like a dark and evil jewel.

Upon reaching the city proper, the PCs should begin searching the knights' base camp. This is described in **Chapter 2**.

CHAPTER TWO: OLD CURGANTIUM

The knights' trail through the outskirts leads to the edge of the city ruins approximately 3 miles from their base camp. The directions provided by Navellis bring the PCs to it in 2–3 hours if they make directly for it. The party should have plenty of time to make it to the base camp before dark, but if they loiter be sure and allow them to experience the horrors of the ruins after dark.

B. THE BASE CAMP

The directions provided by Navellis lead the party to the crumbling ruins of the central treasury of Curgantium. Here, the currency of an empire was stored and distributed — taxes from across two continents, newly-minted coins, and even the plunder of distant lands. The treasure within was looted long ago, but the Knights of Macobert discovered that one of the vaults beneath the building was

still intact. Its guard post contained a well whose water was still good, making it a perfect base for their explorations. Stashing their supplies and setting up magical wards, the knights began their work and sent back word to the Order before disappearing.

The entirety of the building's interior corridors and rooms are under the effects of a permanent private sanctum spell that also blocks magical contact such as sending or message spells. Those inside can use such spells on others inside, but the spells will not penetrate the magical barrier between the interior and those on the exterior.

B1. UPPER RUINS (CR VARIES)

The remains of what truly must have once been a grand building stand here, now little more than heaps of scorched rubble overgrown with brush and vines piled around a few retained central walls and a partially intact colonnade. The crumbling remains of a tympanum above still bearing barely discernable images of imperial eagles and griffons. The way to the colonnade is largely blocked by the piles of loose rubble and scree.

Like many other prominent structures in Curgantium, the treasury was largely flattened by the force of the explosion making the whole area virtually impassable without requiring a DC 5 Strength (Athletics) check each round. Anyone searching among the piled rubble can spot a bit of broken green glass with a DC 24 Wisdom (Perception) check. Once the first one is found, subsequent searches reveal a trail of these glass shards with a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. This is the trail left by the knights as described in **Handout 6A**. Following this trail will bring the party to the marble steps of the colonnade (**B2**) in 10 rounds.

These ruins are infested with the local vipers that lair among this rubble, but they do not attack unless disturbed. The path designated by the knights avoids their nesting areas. However, if someone leaves the indicated path and begins picking among the surrounding rubble, there is a cumulative 20% chance each round of stirring up **1d4+1 swarm of poisonous snakes**[SRD] which immediately attack. The knights actually incorporated the snakes into their defenses, for they helped keep unwelcome visitors away.



B2. COLONNADE ENTRANCE

The building remains partially intact atop these marble steps, and the broken tympanum still balances atop the fractured columns. Two old columns have fallen against each other at the back of the colonnade and now form a crude arch that frames a dark opening into the rubble.

As mentioned, the opening beneath the columns is impenetrable to sight due to the effects of a *private sanctum* spell, but as soon as someone passes beneath them the crumbling corridor beyond can be seen provided a suitable light source is available. Beyond the opening the knights carefully excavated and reinforced a narrow tunnel through the rubble, varying from 1d4+4 feet wide and about 6 feet high. A permanent *alarm* spell is set on the tunnel at the points marked as **A1** and **A2** on the map. If triggered, these sound an audible alarm in area **B9**. They can be bypassed without triggering them with the passwords "Bannor" and "Flail" respectively, two of Sir Aix de Flomme's favorite heroes of legend[LL1-119].

B3. TRAPPED STAIRS (CR 6, 10, AND 12)

The roughly dug out tunnel breaks through into an intact corridor from the original structure. Its once-fine tiled floor is cracked, and its masonry walls buckle beneath the weight of the collapsed building overhead. This corridor likewise opens onto a wider corridor, partially collapsed, but which still bears an intact stairway descending into the subfloor below.

The stairs descend into the intact portion of the treasury's sub-cellar and bears **3 traps** at the locations indicated as **T1**, **T2**, and **T3** on the map. **Handout 6A** supplied the passwords to bypass these traps as well. However, since the events of the knights' disappearance, the treacherous Sir Ernst has reset the passwords so that the ones known by the PCs are no longer useful. This will require the PCs to locate and disable these traps or face the effects of triggering them.

Trap 1: Located at the top of the stairs (marked **T1**), when anyone passes through this area it triggers a *flame strike* trap. It maybe dispelled as normal, but it can also be disabled by making DC 25 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check. It can also be detected by making a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) skill check.

Trap 2: Midway down the stairs is a trap located at **T2**. The first person to reach this point is attacked with a *harm* spell that emanates from the floor beneath them. It maybe dispelled as normal, but it can also be disabled by making DC 25 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check. It can also be detected by making a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) skill check.

Trap 3: A *chain lighting* trap has been rigged at the base of the stairs (**T3**) that strikes the first person to cross that point and then sends up to 12 secondary bolts at additional targets up the stairs. . It maybe dispelled as normal, but it can also be disabled by making DC 20 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check. It can also be detected by making a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) skill check. This trap resets 24 hours later if not permanently disabled.

B4. OUTER VAULT DOOR

The short subterranean corridor ends here at a massive circular portal of layers of steel and bronze sandwiched between heavy iron bands. A large wheel and handle are set into the center of this mighty seal, yet the door hangs open allowing easy ingress into the room beyond.

The outer vault door is an extremely secure portal and was further protected by magical traps and locks as indicated in **Handout 6A**. However, none of these provided passwords prove necessary at this moment, as the vault door stands open.

Outer Vault Door: 8 in. thick; damage threshold 15; hp 300; DC 35 Strength (Athletics) check to break, DC 35 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) to pick the lock.

B5. OUTER VAULT

This is a long, low-ceilinged chamber, its walls set with empty iron sconces. To the left a series of three vault doors extend down a short hallway, the first two hanging open. To the right a door of iron bars blocks access to a room beyond from which can be seen the flicker of firelight. Across from the entrance stand a pair of statues, each depicting a tall man armored in the panoply of the ancient Hyperborean Phalanx, but both have been decapitated and hold their and stern-faced heads in one hand.

These two statues are **cephalophores**, ancient guardian constructs repurposed and left behind by the knights to guard their base camp. They immediately move to attack anyone who is not accompanied by one of the Knights of Macobert but return to their original locations if the password "Ereg Tal"* is uttered. Anyone who says the

* Ereg Tal was a legendary titan slain in the Gods' War and buried in caverns that would later become a part of Rappan Athuk, the Dungeon of Graves. See pages 247–248 of ***Rappan Athuk*** by **Frog God Games** for further details.

password can discover that the statues will obey their commands to the best of their ability, though they will not leave the lower level of the treasury.

CEPHALOPHORES

Large construct, unaligned
Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 133 (14d10 + 56)
Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	9 (-1)	18 (+4)	3 (-4)	8 (-1)	1 (-5)

Damage Immunities acid, poison, psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't adamantine
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9
Languages Understands the languages of its creator but can't speak
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Immutable Form. The cephalophore is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.
Magic Resistance. The cephalophore has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.
Magic Weapons. The cephalophore's weapon attacks are magical.
Shatter Weapons. Whenever a character strikes a cephalophore with a weapon (magical or non-magical), after dealing damage, the weapon takes a permanent and cumulative –1 penalty to damage rolls. If its penalty drops to –5, the weapon is destroyed.
Statue. If a cephalophore stands perfectly still, it is indistinguishable from a normal statue.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The cephalophore makes two slam attacks.
Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 16 (2d10 + 5) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of its next turn. If the target fails, the save by 5 or more the target is stunned for 1 minute instead. It can repeat the saving throw at the end of its round to end the stunned condition.
Dazing Gaze (Recharge 5–6). A cephalophore can hold up its severed head to make a gaze attack that affects all seeing creatures within a 60-foot radius of its choice. When a creature that can see the cephalophore's severed must make a DC 11 Wisdom saving throw or are stunned until the end of the targets next round. If the target fails, the save by 5 or more the target is stunned for 1 minute instead. It can repeat the saving throw at the end of its round to end the stunned condition. This attack automatically recharges if all target creatures make their saving throw.

B6. EMPTY VAULTS

These chambers once held the currency of the Hyperborean Empire minted in Curgantium but were cleared out by looters long ago. The doors are currently open and the chambers within are empty of all save dust and a few bits of rubble fallen from the slowly eroding stone of the walls and ceiling.

Iron Vault Door: 4 in. thick; damage threshold 10; hp 120; DC 25 Strength (Athletics) check to break through, DC 30 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check to pick the lock.

B7. LOCKED VAULT

This vault is identical to those at **B6**, but its heavy iron door is currently closed and locked with no indication as to why. Anyone making a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check can hear a faint scratching coming from within the sealed vault. If the vault door is open, read the following description.

Inside the vault crouches a large creature that resembles a brass-scaled lion with great draconic wings. It makes no attempt to attack you, instead only staring with wide, hungry eyes.

The creature is a **dragonne** named Malcolm who was a cohort of the knight Sir Eregor. Assuming the PCs don't attack him, he attempts to speak to them in a dry, weary voice. He has been locked inside the vault for some time and is both hungry and quite dehydrated, as is apparent with a DC 12 Heal check. If the PCs are able to understand



Draconic he introduces himself and asks where Sir Eregor is. He is of fairly low intelligence and can only relate how the knights came to the ruined city and found this nice cave to lair in. He explains that after a little exploring of the city one of the knights — Sir Ernst, he thinks — told him to sleep in the inner vault, but someone slammed and locked the door, trapping him inside. The inside of the door bears scoring from his claws to lend credence to his tale. He does not know how long he has been locked up but believes it has been several days and is very concerned about the whereabouts of Sir Eregor and his friends. If Malcolm is attacked, he defends himself to the best of his abilities while trying to escape so he can search for Sir Eregor. If this occurs, the PCs should find the dragonne's corpse elsewhere in the city as evidence of the futility of his efforts.

MALCOLM

Large dragon, chaotic good
Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 119 (14d10 + 42)
Speed 50 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +4, Con +6, Wis +4, Cha +5
Skills Deception +5, Perception +7, Stealth +4
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 17
Languages Common, Draconic
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Keen Smell. The dragonne has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.
Pack Tactics. The dragonne has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the lion's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.
Pounce. If the dragonne moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a claw attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the lion can make one bite attack against it as a bonus action.
Running Leap. With a 10-foot running start, the dragonne can long jump up to 25 feet.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The dragonne makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.
Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 15 (2d10 + 4) piercing damage.
Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage.
Roar (Recharge 5–6). The dragonne emits a magical roar. Each creature within 120 feet of the dragonne and able to hear the roar must make a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure the target is deafened for 1 minute. If the target is within 30 feet and fails it is instead paralyzed and can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Development: If the PCs establish peaceful contact with Malcolm (whether they are able to communicate with him or not), he attempts to bypass them and head to the well in **B8** to slake his gnawing thirst. He then heads into **B9** to rummage through the expedition's baggage for the dried beef that was brought for his feed. Assuming the PCs allow him to do this, while he is eating in **B9** he suddenly sniffs the air. After a few rounds, he heads to the walled-off section marked on the map as a



concealed door (see area **B9** for details) and begin clawing and scratching at the masonry saying that he can smell Sir Eregor beyond, again and again. If the PCs communicate with him, he confirms that he smells Sir Eregor beyond the wall but that now he smells "bad". He is anxious to reach his comrade and will attempt to break through the wall unless the PCs somehow restrain him.

B8. GUARD POST

The entrances to this chamber are blocked by doors made of iron bars with heavy locks. However, neither of these doors is locked, and the keys were lost long ago. The locks have since become rusted and unusable.

The cage-like door opens into a small, wedge-shaped room with a well sunk in its northeast corner, its wooden cover propped against the nearby wall. The smell of fresh water is readily discernable amid the dusty atmosphere of the rest of these chambers. A copper decanter with a rope tied around its neck sits at the lip of the well to serve as a makeshift bucket. In the center of the chamber rests a small ornate table with a cracked and broken marble surface and legs of corroded bronze, obviously something scrounged from the ruins above. Two small casks have been drawn up on either side of it to serve as chairs. Upon the table sits a game board with small ivory pieces in mid-play. A few assorted coins lie upon the tabletop beside the game. Iron sconces on the wall hold burning torches.

Once a guard room for the vaults, the knights used it for the same purpose. The well is 16 feet deep and filled with 3 feet of cool, fresh water untainted by the city's destruction. It can easily be dipped using the copper decanter, which is slightly green with corrosion but otherwise in good shape. The board on the table is the Heldring game *halatafl*[QoD4-5], a favorite of Barionor, squire of Sir Aixe (though the PCs might suspect it belongs to Sir Ernst, who is of Heldring descent). The casks held ale from the knights' supplies but have been emptied.

Treasure: Though badly damaged from lying buried in the rubble for many centuries, the marble and bronze table is still a valuable antiquity (worth 1,200 gp), as is the copper decanter incised with images of storms at sea being used as a bucket for the well (500 gp). The *halatafl* is Barionor's personal game board made of ebony with ivory game pieces (380 gp), and the assorted coins are worth a total of 63 gp, all of current Foerdewaith mintage. The sconces hold everburning torches brought by the knights.

B9. CAMP SITE

This large storeroom was clearly taken over as a camp site recently. Gear, supplies, and equipment are stacked here, though boxes, bags, and crates have been opened and are in disarray as if having been rifled through. In the center of the chamber a campfire burns cheerily, though it gives off no smoke. Two heavy vault doors stand open along the north wall, and another cage door stands in the east wall.

This chamber served as the main camp for the knights. The campfire is composed of four everburning torches (torches that give off permanent light as a *light* spell but are destroyed if dispelled) that have been laid together like the logs of a fire. Among the many casks, sacks, and boxes of supplies are five bedrolls. The cache of supplies stored here has been searched, though nothing appears to have been damaged, and the supplies are still good. There is food, water, and ale here sufficient to feed a group of 10 for at least two weeks, as well as several sacks of dried beef (for Malcolm in area **B7**). In addition, there is equipment and clothing of a mundane sort, heavy blankets, torches, lanterns, flasks of oil, rope, tents, waterskins, latrine buckets, and various tools. The precise number and types of gear is up to the GM, but any reasonable piece of equipment is likely to be present. Searching among the bedrolls reveals personal items that can be identified with a DC 15 Intelligence (History) as belonging to Sir Aixe de Flomme, Barionor of Troye, Sir Eregor Dantalus, Sir Ernst Braanak,

and Sir Urvitus Voren. Stacked among some blankets and bundles against one wall is an exotic military saddle fitted for a dragonne.

Anyone examining the scene and making a DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check can determine that the camp hasn't been used for several days, though someone did come through more recently and search through the items stored here. If the check exceeds the DC by 5 or more, a partial footprint of some vaguely humanoid — though clearly not human — creature is found in some spilled flour. This was left by the caulborn, who rifled through the camp a day or so ago but left without finding much of interest (see area **C7**).

Though not immediately obvious, a portion of the far eastern wall has recently been bricked over with masonry scavenged from among the ruins above and blocks a former doorway to area **B13** (marked as a concealed door on the map). This work can be detected with either a DC 25 Wisdom (Perception) or a DC 20 Intelligence check. The DC of these checks are reduced by 10 if Malcolm scratches at the wall (see area **B7**). Anyone listening at this wall and making a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check can hear the sound of fervent whispering from beyond but cannot make out what is being said. These whispers are from the gallowdead's aura of whispers in area **B13**, but too faint to trigger a Wisdom saving throw by listeners. Breaking through the freshly mortared wall is relatively easy, and doing so reveals the chamber beyond.

New Masonry Wall: 1 ft. thick; damage threshold 8; hp 60; DC 25 Strength (Athletics) check to break through.

Treasure: The personal items and treasures of the five knights is worth a total of 4,200 gp, though if they still live they will likely want them returned. Hidden within one leather satchel and discovered with a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check or the use of a *detect magic* is an unused healer's kit, three water purification sponges (wonderous items that act as the *purify drink* spell when submerged), and a bundle of six divine scrolls with the following spells: *cure wounds* (x4, 5th level), *greater restoration* (x2).

One of the sacks of dried beef for Malcolm is actually a *bag of holding* and has had *nondetection* and *arcanist's agic aura* spells placed over it to mask its magical nature. It looks exactly like the other 35-lb. feed sacks and is filled with dried beef (1,000 pounds of it, though this isn't apparent unless the bag is purposefully emptied). Hidden beneath all the beef in the bag of holding is the *Codex Ibnathi*[AK:M]. The PCs should not discover the nature of this sack or its hidden contents at this time, as it will be discovered later as the adventure's plot unfolds (see **Event 3: Freeing the Knights** for details). Until that time, it should remain unobtrusively among the piles of supplies gathered here awaiting its later discovery.

B10. ARMORY

The door to this room is identical to those in area **B8**.

The walls of this caged-off chamber are lined with small boxes with metal doors, but all of these now hang open and empty. Instead, wooden poles have been fixed in place between some of the open boxes, and from these makeshift racks hang an assortment of weapons and armor. Near the far wall lies a wooden shield serving as an impromptu mortar box next to a pair of trowels and a few bricks apparently recovered from the ruins above.

This vault served as security boxes, long ago emptied, and is now an armory for the knights' secondary weapons, armor, and ammunition. Again, these items show signs of having been disturbed, though nothing appears to have been damaged. The wooden shield holds mortar that is now dried and solid but was clearly used within the last few days (see area **B9**). A search of the room finds four longswords (one is a *+1 longsword*), four daggers (one is a *+1 dagger*), two light crossbows, a *+1 heavy crossbow*, a *+1 longbow*, 200 arrows, 100 crossbow bolts, two wooden shields (not including the one used as a mortar box, which is now ruined), two steel shields (one is a *+2 shield*), a suit of *+2 studded leather*, and two chain shirts. Searching also reveals a portable forge and anvil (a smaller forge and anvil that can be moved and setup as needed), four master tools* (Smith's Tools, Leatherworker's Tools, Tinkerer's Tools, Mason's Tools), seven tindertwigs*, a jar with two applications of armor ointment*, two tubes of mending paste*, four folding shovels*, two sledges, a dungeoneer's pack, two vials of silver weapon blanch*, and a single vial of adamantine weapon blanch*.

* These items are described in **Appendix B** (see page 566)

B11. FIRST PRIVATE CAMP

This inner vault has a doors like those at area **B6**.

This inner vault has been taken over by members of the knights' expedition as a private camp sites and is outfitted

* See The Book of Aeons on page 30 of ***Ancient Kingdoms: Mesopotamia*** by **Necromancer Games** and ***The Book in the Old House*** by **Legendary Games** for further information.

similar to area **B9** but with more personal items and fewer large pieces of gear. It holds two bedrolls, a brazier full of dead coals, a latrine bucket, assorted foodstuffs, mess kits, and even a few bottles of cheap wine. A search of the bedrolls reveals personal items that can be identified with a DC 15 Intelligence (History) as belonging to the siblings Sir Frankus Delerron and Lady Margaret Delerron.

Treasure: Assorted personal effects in here are worth a total of 580 gp in addition to a statuette of a sea king seated upon a clam shell throne crafted in pewter worth 35 gp (holy symbol of Quell[FBRC-42]), a sunrod*, 12 candlerods*, a spyglass, two waterproof bags, two explorer's packs, a dungeoneer's pack, and a total of 500 gp worth of assorted nonmagical gear.

B12. SECOND PRIVATE CAMP

This chamber is virtually identical to **B11** but with cots rather than bedrolls, and a Intelligence (History) identifies personal belongings as those of Sir Nimulus Cantarthy and Lady Elgierbid Palitroix. However, this vault also holds a pair of folding chairs[UE], and a small folding camp table upon which lie various parchments, candles, a scholar's pack, lists of supplies, and a short journal holding a fairly dry account of the knights' uneventful journey down the Great Amrin River to Curgantium.

Of most interest, however, is a partially completed map of the city scribed by Sir Nimulus (see **Handout 6B**, page 524). Three locations are marked on it in red ink, but with no explanation as to their meaning. A careful examination of the map (Perception DC 18) also reveals a telltale smudge of the ink near one edge of the map as if from a finger, but a DC 15 Intelligence (History) or Intelligence (Nature) check reveals it to be a fingerprint unlike any known type of humanoid. It is unnaturally long and strangely jointed. It was actually caused by the caulborn from area **C7** who searched the camp after the knights' disappearance, but nothing less than a DC 30 Intelligence (Arcana) check can identify it as such due to so little evidence to work from.

Treasure: There are assorted personal effects and coins worth a total of 3,080 gp as well as a spell component pouch with a *ring of mind shielding* tucked into it (DC 26 Wisdom (Perception) check to notice), a traveling spellbook (with a spell selection suitable for a 13th-level wizard), an herbalism kit, a magnifying glass, a *potion of gaseous form*, and spell scrolls with the following spells: *delayed blast fireball*, *dimension door*, *faerie fire*, *phantom steed*. A small locked chest (DC 25 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools check) holds calligrapher's supplies, a cartographer's kit, kit, a sextant, two vials of perfume, a chrysalis wood flute[DM1-79] (worth 300 gp), and a signet ring of House Palitroix of Cantelburgh (worth 100 gp if returned to its owners).

SECRETS OF THE MAP

The map (**Handout 6B**, page xx) is related to the very reason the knights came to Curgantium to begin with as revealed in area **H9**. Initially they came searching for a lost library (area **C**) and came up with the marked points as its possible locations of interest requiring further investigation. Ultimately they all became points of significance to the knights, but attempts to use magic to divine their purpose will only reveal the original intention when they were drawn: Each is identified as the possible location of a lost library that holds a source of potential calamity for the entire Kingdom of Foere. What that calamity might be is not revealed through divination spells, nor do any of the notes found within the camp provide any further illumination.

One of the locations on the map is the Lost Library (area **C**) that was located beneath a former garrison tower in the blast zone, another is the location of an ancient catacomb beneath the ruins of the Cathedral of the Blessed Tesseract in the tribal territory (area **D**), and the last is the mostly-destroyed ruin of an elegant theater located at the edge of the blast zone (area **F**). Though they don't know it yet, all three sites will prove to be of importance to the PCs in Curgantium, but they may make their initial explorations of them while searching for the library that the knights sought.

B13. SIR EREGOR'S GIBBET

Read the following after the PCs gain entry into this sealed chamber.

The stench of death is strong beyond the bricked-over doorway. A small room contains only a single occupant, but it is a horrific one. A heavy iron chain descends from the 10-foot ceiling and ends in a large bailing hook, and the corpse of a human man, his armor rent and his blood-soaked tabard torn, hangs impaled through the chest upon the hook. Blood still drips from its wound, staining the floor beneath. Worse still, the corpse still bears some semblance of life. A faint, incomprehensible whisper echoes from its feebly moving lips.

When the Underguild discovered and looted these vaults long ago, they used this room for torture and interrogation

and installed the large hook from which to hang their victims. Hanging in here are the mortal remains of the unfortunate Sir Eregor Dantalus of Apothasaolos, now transformed into a horrific gallowdead. Unbeknownst to the PCs or Malcolm, when Sir Eregor was incapacitated by Abruxes as described in **Event 3**, he was left here comatose with Malcolm to guard him. The treacherous Sir Ernst Braanak returned alone and tricked Malcolm into the vault at **B7** and locked the dragonne within. He then murdered the helpless Sir Eregor, impaling him upon the cursed hook used murderously for centuries by the Underguild before sealing the chamber with a newly mortared wall to hide the deed from any other survivors of his expedition. The nature of Sir Eregor's ignoble death and the long history of malice and pain associated with the bailing hook caused Sir Eregor to arise as an undead horror that the PCs have now unwittingly unleashed.

SIR EREGOR DANTALUS — THE GALLOWDEAD

Medium undead, chaotic evil
Armor Class 20 (plate and shield)
Hit Points 180 (19d8 + 95)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	11 (+0)	20 (+5)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Wis +9, Cha +10
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison
Condition Immunities exhaustion, frightened, poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages Abyssal, Common
Challenge 17 (18,000 XP)

Blasphemous Whispers. A gallowdead constantly whispers vile secrets and blasphemous chants while it can see any creature and isn't incapacitated. Each creature that starts its turn within 20 feet of the gallowdead and can hear it must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, the creature can't take reactions until the start of its next turn and rolls a d8 to determine what it does during its turn. On a 1 to 4, the creature does nothing. On a 5 or 6, the creature takes no action or bonus action and uses all its movement to move in a randomly determined direction. On a 7 or 8, the creature makes a melee attack against a randomly determined creature within its reach or does nothing if it can't make such an attack.

Magic Resistance. The gallowdead has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The gallowdead makes three chains of the dead attacks.

Chains of the Dead (Recharge 6). *Melee Weapon Attack*: +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 14 (2d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage, plus 18 (4d8) necrotic damage and the target must succeed on a DC 19 Constitution saving throw or be knocked unconscious for 1 minute. The unconscious target repeats the saving throw if it takes damage and at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Destructive Wave (1/Day). The gallowdead's whispers coalesce into a physical attack. All non-undead creatures within 30 feet of the gallowdead must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw. The attack spreads around corners. A creature takes 35 (10d6) thunder damage and 35 (10d6) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

REACTIONS

Parry. The gallowdead adds 6 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the gallowdead must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

Tactics: Any PCs who hear the creature's horrible whispers must make Wisdom saving throws or be immediately affected by his blasphemous whispers ability. Eregor then opens his glaring, dead eyes and spends his first action to pull the chain from its anchoring in the ceiling. He then uses the chain as his weapon and for his chains of the dead ability. He fights until destroyed.

Development: Shocked at the state of his friend, Malcolm will not assist in the fight. However, once the battle is over and Eregor finally laid to rest, Malcolm will gather himself and thank the PCs for helping his friend. He intends

to leave his former friend and depart on his own, but if asked to stay and assist the party he does so as long as they have treated him well to this point. He could prove to be a valuable source of information later if the PCs think to keep him around. If any PC has the Leadership feat and has treated him kindly, Malcolm would be willing to become a cohort to that character.

SCALING THE RENEGADE KNIGHTS OF MACOBERT FOR 5+ PCs

The adventure is balanced for four 15th-level characters. If you have 5 or more players, make the following changes to any of the named monsters in this adventure, but particularly the renegade Knights of Macobert that have been turned to evil:

- Maximize the hit points of each monster.
- If it doesn't already have a reaction give one appropriate to the type of creature. For example, knights would have the following:
  - ***Parry.*** The knight adds 6 to his AC against one melee attack that would hit him. To do so, the knight must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.
- Make it a Legendary creature and give it 3 Legendary Actions. These should be generic allowing the monster to use its attacks or spells as legendary actions, such as the following for Sir Eregor.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The gallowdead can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The gallowdead regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

- ***Weapon Attack.*** The knight makes a weapon attack.
- ***Cast a Spell (1 to 3 Actions).*** The knight casts a spell of level 0 to 3 using 1 action per level (1 minimum).
- ***Frighten Foe (Costs 2 Actions).*** The knight targets one enemy he can see within 30 feet of him. If the target can see and hear him, the target must succeed on a DC 19 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened until the end of knight's next turn

TAKING STOCK

Once the PCs have finished their exploration of the missing knights' camp site, they have some decisions to make. Of the nine knights, one has been found dead, though his dragonne companion remains alive. Unfortunately, the dragonne is none too intelligent and does not know where the other knights have gone. He knows he was left to guard Sir Eregor after he got "sick" while they went to take care of some other business. He knows that Sir Ernst came back and may be the one who locked him in the vault, but he has no idea what happened after that. And he was never very clear on exactly what the knights were doing in the ruins, only that they explored a few places while he always remained on watch outside. He doesn't know where in the ruins they explored but is sure he would recognize them if he saw them again. He also doesn't remember if all of the knights were still alive when he last saw them, but he thinks most of them were. He does admit that there were several battles with horrible creatures in the ruins and that something — he doesn't know what — caused Sir Eregor to become "very sick and go to sleep", which is why he had been left behind at the camp to keep watch over him. That Sir Eregor was killed and became an undead creature, that Sir Ernst may or may not have been involved in that with his current whereabouts unknown, and that someone seems to have reset the trap passwords in area **B3** are the only other real clues the PCs have uncovered. Other than these, the PCs have little to go on as far as the fate of the knights and must obviously continue their search.

The PCs have likely found the map in area **B12**, and it remains their best clue of where to go next. It shows three different locations in the city that were obviously of interest to the knights but doesn't tell what they were or which one (or ones) the knight went to. It's their best option, however, in order to locate the missing knights as opposed to just randomly searching the massive ruined city. Despite not being shielded by the protective magic of the campsite, the knights are still not able to be located through scrying or divination, so some other powerful agency must still be at work in their obscurement.

The PCs can choose to make use of the knights' base camp, as there are unlikely to be any better or more secure accommodations in the city, and begin their explorations the next day. Or they can choose to set out for one of the locations on the map. If so, it is important to determine what time of day it is when they set out, as they may get caught moving about in the city as night falls and the Nightscream comes as well as the denizens that haunt the ruins before and after moonset.

If the PCs elect to spend the night before searching farther, the haunting Nightscream is faintly heard even within the base camp, though its detrimental effects don't extend within. However, as soon as the PCs bed down for the night in the ruins — whether within the base camp or not — they will experience their first encounter with the nightmares the city inspires as described in **Event 1**.

EVENT 1: DREAMS AND NIGHTMARES

Sleeping at night within the confines of the haunted city is not without its dangers. Even if the PCs elect to stay the night in the base camp, they make another uncomfortable discovery. While it is sealed and fairly heavily warded from within, there are some denizens of the night in Curgantium that it is not impervious to. Each time a PC falls asleep within the city during the hours of darkness (including going unconscious), even if within the vault base camp, he is assaulted in his dreams.

The PC arrives in this dreamscape within the Dimension of Dreams as a lucid body formed of dream-stuff. This attack is made directly on the unconscious psyche of the sleeping PC by way of their unguarded dreams, and only the effects of a *mind blank* or similar spell will prevent this. The dreamer must make a DC 15 Charisma saving throw or arrive in a dream body that mirrors the hit points, spells, and abilities remaining that the PC had before losing consciousness. If the PC lost consciousness by going under 0 hit points, then he automatically starts with at least 1d10 + 1 hp/level in the dreamscape. If the Charisma check is successful, the PC manifests in perfect health with all his regular equipment and a full complement of spells and abilities.

The PC's dream self is alone in nondescript dreamscape surroundings and is immediately beset by his opponent. Because this is the PC's dreamscape, his lucid body is capable of fantastic feats. As a standard action for a number of times equal to his Charisma modifier (minimum of 1), the PC can attempt one impossible action Such actions can include things like casting a normally uncastable spell, gaining the effects of a spell as if it had been cast, or conjuring a magic item into being. Doing this requires a successful Charisma check (DC = 10 + spell level cast, spell level replicated). Alternatively, a character can use one of these impossible actions to reroll any die roll; this does not require an action.

Unlike the normal effects of strange dreams, in these encounters the results of the battle remain true upon waking. Damage taken in the dream and not healed within the dream carries over to the character's body in the real world (though without visible wounds), conditions gained remain present, spells or abilities used remain used, etc. Only physical items used (ammunition, potions etc.) are not actually consumed. This supersedes the normal rules for completing a long rest, as daily uses of spell slots or other limited-use abilities expended in the dream are not regained (though other abilities and spell slots are). Characters completing a long rest do not automatically regain all hit points, though they do regain Hit Dice as usual and can expend them to regain hit points as if they had completed a short rest.

Because a character that succeeds on their Charisma saving throw on entering the dreamscape may dream themselves at full health even if their real body began their long rest with damage, a PC can be victorious in his dream but lose enough hit points to surpass his actual waking total and die in his sleep as a result. A character for whom this is the case must begin making death saving throws before awakening, continuing until they achieve three successes (allowing them to awaken at 1 hit point) or dying after three failures.

Because the creatures encountered in these dreams are under the same dreamscape parameters, they will always leave the dreamscape and allow the dreamer to pass the rest of the night unmolested if reduced below half their hit points. However, these attacks continue nightly as long as the PCs sleep or lose consciousness in the city at night until The Mindwyrm, the nightmare dragon at the Tower of Oerson (see **Chapter 3**), is slain. One simple solution the PCs may think of to largely avoid this is to sleep during the day and conduct their adventuring at night, and this is effective in forestalling these dream hauntings, though it comes with its own risks for venturing into the ruins after nightfall.

Roll d% to determine what sort of visitation the PC receives. Each PC will receive only one visitation per night whether from a period of sleep or unconsciousness. Each PC has their own encounter separately and their dreamscapes are not connected. However, if PCs use a *telepathic bond* spell to link their minds before going to sleep, roll 1d20 for each PC. All PCs that roll 10 or higher have their dream visitation while telepathically bonded and share a common dreamscape and can fight together against the creatures in their shared dreamscape. PCs that roll 9 or lower receive a separate monstrous visitation as usual.

This is a variant version of the Mindwyrm's dream terror ability (see area **H9**).

D12	Encounter	Special
1	Banshee	
2	Spirit Naga	
3	Dream Assassin	As assassin[SRD]
4	Night Hag	
5	Nightmare Angel	As deva angel but the creature's alignment is lawful evil.
6	Erinyes Devil (with *rope of entanglement*)	
7	Dreamfire Dragon	As an adult brass dragon, but it lacks legendary actions or legendary resistance and its alignment is chaotic evil. In addition, half of the damage dealt by its breath weapon is psychic damage rather than fire damage.
8-9	Night Terrors	The dreamer is affected as *phantasmal killer* (DC 20)
10-12	Disturbing Dreams	The dreamer is affected as a monstrous *dream* (DC 20)

Development: If the PC defeats his attacker in the dreamscape, he can make a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check to catch a glimpse of an immensely fat bald man standing at the very edge of the misty dreamscape the dreamer inhabits. The massive man wears a loose robe and faces away from the PC into the ether, but the PC can hear the fat man say, "Tell me, have you found it?" This dream appearance will repeat any number of times, but the dreamer always wakes before being able to approach or do anything to affect the fat man.

EXPLORING THE CITY

At some point, the PCs will need to brave the dangers of the city in search of the missing knights. The fact that the knights are not within the shielded campsite and yet still cannot be scried seems to strongly imply that they are dead, but the adventurers' job is to find them — or their corpses if necessary. Should the PCs wish to explore any other ruins or buildings in the city, the GM should determine their contents by making a standard encounter roll for the appropriate district. The party can also travel through some parts of the city through the old sewer system (see area **E**).

Beyond the blast zone, the city is a labyrinthine jumble of collapsed buildings, toppled statues, shattered roads, and scorched debris, much of which is overgrown with vines or choked with weeds. The ruins are infested with vermin such as rats, snakes, and scorpions, and sick-looking crows circle constantly overhead.

Initially the PCs will have three main avenues of investigation, based on the maps found at the knights' base camp: the Lost Library (area **C**), the Ancient Catacomb (area **D**), and the Ruined Theater (area **F**). They can choose to explore any of these in any order. Though the locations have been placed on a map for the PCs (see **Handout 6B**), they would still be extremely difficult to find amongst all the ruins. However, the knights created way markers along the routes so they could more easily find their way through the ruined city if they needed to revisit one of these locations. The way markers consist of stones — parts of walls, lying atop piles of rubble, etc. — along the route that bear a common Foerdewaith trail rune used throughout Akados to indicate the desired path of travel. These runes have been recently etched into the stone and can be spotted from up to 30 feet away with a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check.

If the PCs wish to find the locations marked on the map among the ruins, it requires a DC 20 Wisdom (Survival) check per hour of travel (or fraction thereof) and movement speeds are further halved during this time as they seek signs to indicate a path. If the PCs are able to spot the way markers (roll once for each hour of travel) then the Wisdom (Survival) DC is reduced to 15, and the party can move at the normal speed for the ruins.

EVENT 2: THAT FEELING OF BEING WATCHED

As long as the PCs are exploring the city during daylight hours, allow one PC (determined randomly) each hour to make a DC 21 Wisdom (Perception) check. If the check is successful the PC simply has the feeling of being watched: Perhaps he saw a movement out of the corner of his eye, or a drifting shadow that seemed to move against the prevailing breeze, or some other telltale clue. However, nothing further can be found among the surrounding ruins even with careful investigation. If the check exceeds the DC by 5 or more, the PC notices a small floating spherical shape some distance away that is quickly lost from sight. Again, no searching will yield further clues, but the PCs will definitely know they are being watched.

This is in fact the **arbiter inevitable**, Arbitrator/1151.x, who is observing the PCs' activities. He will not be encountered at this time but will turn up again in **Event 5: The Inevitable Arbiter** later.

ARBITER INEVITABLE

Small construct (inevitable), lawful neutral
Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 22 (5d6 + 5)
Speed 20 ft., fly 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)

Skills Perception +4
Damage Resistances thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned, unconscious
Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages all but rarely speaks
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The arbiter's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 11). The arbiter can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:
At Will: detect chaos (as *detect evil and good* but only detects creatures of chaotic alignment)
3/Day each: *command*, *mending*, *protection from chaos* (as *protection from evil and good* but only affects chaotic-aligned creatures),
1/Week: commune

Axiomatic Mind. The arbiter can't be compelled to act in a manner contrary to its nature or its instructions.
Disintegration. If the arbiter dies, its body disintegrates into dust, leaving behind its weapons and anything else it was carrying.
Immutable Form. The arbiter is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

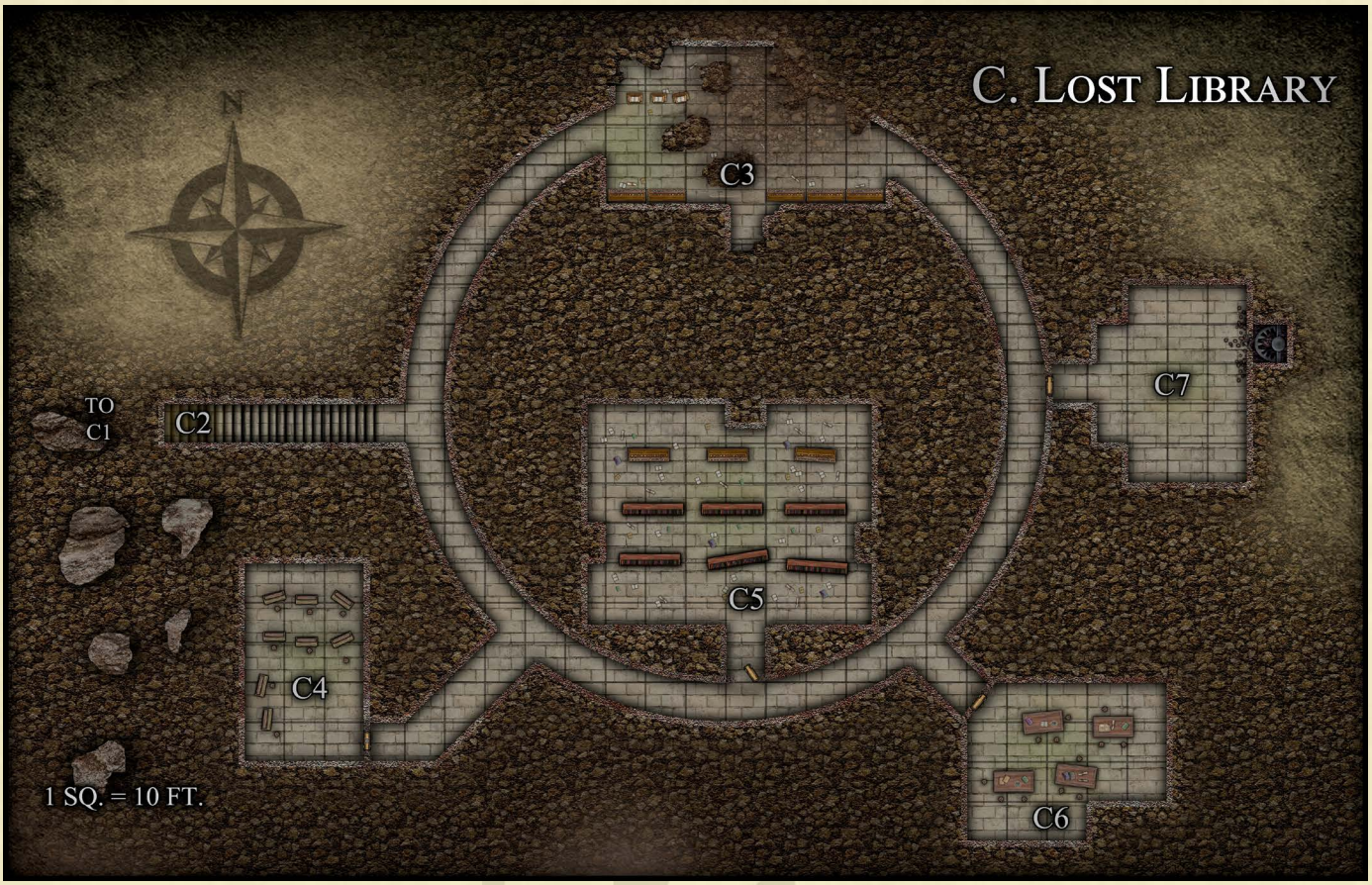
ACTIONS
Multiattack. The arbiter makes four sword arm attacks.
Sword Arm. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 5 (1d6 + 2) slashing damage.
Electrical Burst (1/Day). The arbiter releases electrical energy in a 10-foot sphere centred on itself. Each creature in that area takes 10 (3d6) lightning damage and must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. Immediately following such a burst, the arbiter becomes stunned for 24 hours.

THE UNDERGUILD IN CURGANTIUM

The vampire criminal organization known as the Underguild is behind many of the events in this adventure, working in cooperation with its mysterious Hastur-worshipping allies. In the **Frog God Games** ***Quests of Doom*** adventure ***Sewers of the Underguild***, the Underguild is described as maintaining its headquarters in a network of tunnels under Curgantium. If the GM chooses to, this adventure can be combined with the ***Sewers of the Underguild*** to allow exploration of that lair (see **Chapter 4**). In any event, the Underguild is a constant, if hidden, presence throughout ***Knight Fall in Old Curgantium (5E)***. The party may encounter a few scouting parties in their exploration, but there will doubtless be other Underguild groups that they do not see. The Underguild's eventual goal is to locate the *Codex Ibnathi* for their own foul purposes. In this endeavor they have a number of allies, including the Cult of Hastur and its mysterious leaders, and the dread creature known as the Fat Man. Though the party may not encounter the Underguild directly until the very end of the adventure, this dangerous group will be an unseen presence throughout the adventure.

C. THE LOST LIBRARY

The Lost Library is located within the blast zone north of the base camp. It lies beneath the ruins of a garrison tower that was once a part of the original citadel that comprised the Tower of Oerson. Originally this library was a major cache of knowledge in the early empire, with an extensive collection of conventional works aboveground, and rare, valuable, or forbidden volumes stored in the subterranean levels. It was incidents involving these darker works that caused a series of arcane mishaps and curses that resulted in the lower levels of the library being sealed along with their books, and the repurposing of the aboveground structure into a garrison while the main library was relocated into the heart of the citadel itself (and subsequently destroyed



in the cataclysm). Over time, the library's lower levels were all but forgotten. The garrison tower was reduced to little more than rubble in the Tower of Oerson's explosion, but the lower levels were preserved largely intact — merely awaiting rediscovery.

After discovering this lost cache, the knights were able to clear out some of the lower level and vanquish its inhabitants, but some unsavory things remain. In addition, a party of Underguild vampires is currently within the library. Like the PCs, they are trying to figure out what the knights were up to but ended up getting trapped here by the dawn. The vampires are presently holed up in the scriptorium (**C4**), awaiting darkness for the trip back to the sewer tunnels and relative safety. If the PCs are exploring the library at night, then the vampires have only recently arrived and begun their exploration.

C1. SURFACE RUBBLE

The blasted rubble of flattened buildings is piled here as everywhere else in this area with only occasional remnants of walls or other structures remaining. However, at this point are signs of recent excavation in the rubble. Many pieces of broken stone debris have been dragged aside and large stones pried up to expose a passageway descending into the broken ground.

Like almost every other building in the blast zone, the library is now only a fallen pile of dusty, blackened rubble. Only the persistence and extensive research conducted by the knights prior to their arrival allowed them to locate it at all. Now, however, there are signs of activity. It's obvious that the knights have been here, for several sections of rubble have been cleared away to expose the building's foundations.

If he can communicate with the party, Malcolm will tell them that he remembers being here with the knights, but that he and Sir Eregor were left here on watch while the others went into the passage they had uncovered below. The knights emerged several hours later carrying a large book. Malcolm doesn't know what the book was or where it is now.

A search of the ground outside the entrance with a DC 20 Wisdom (Investigation) check reveals the signs of the knights' and Malcolm's presence 11 days before the start

of the adventure along with their labors to uncover the formerly buried entrance at **C2**. However, if the check exceeds the DC by 5 or more, the PCs discover the tracks of additional humanoids that more recently descended into the ruins but have not yet emerged. These tracks are muddled, so their numbers are not readily identifiable, but it appears to have been at least three individuals. These tracks were left by the vampires in **C4**.

C2. STAIRS DOWN

The opening reveals ancient stairs are covered in rock dust that descend into darkness. The passage is masonry and 10 feet wide with a 10-foot ceiling. There are no light sources within, so the PCs will have to bring their own. A simple DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals several sets of humanoid tracks in the dust on the stairs (from the knights and the vampires), but they are jumbled and cannot be followed past this point.

C3. STUDY CARRELS

The partially collapsed room still contains some very old and dust-covered study carrels, broken chairs, and the remains of a few books and scrolls. Much of the eastern portion of the ceiling has collapsed leaving that end choked in dust and rubble.

A search of the floor in this chamber with a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals no recent tracks. While almost all of the debris is of no particular interest, a DC 22 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals a sealed lead coffer about the size of a large book beneath a pile of broken masonry. A detect magic spell will reveal a lingering aura of abjuration but not the specific spell (this is the remains of the spell cast to bind the devil long ago).

If opened (damage threshold 6, hp 15, Strength (Athletics) DC 18 to break), the coffer is revealed to contain the magically compacted form of Mordesse, a **handmaiden devil** who was defeated and trapped here by a Hyperborean sorcerer 2,000 years ago. If the coffer is opened, Mordesse is immediately released and springs outward to attack, attempting to trap them with *black tentacles* or control them with *charm person*.



MORDESSE THE HANDMAIDEN

Large medium (devil), lawful evil
Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 161 (19d8 + 76)
Speed 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Con +9, Wis +7, Cha +9
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered
Damage Immunities cold, fire, poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages Celestial, Common, Draconic, Infernal, telepathy 100 ft.
Challenge 14 (11,500 XP)

Devil's Sight. Magical darkness doesn't impede the devil's darkvision.

Grappler. The devil has advantage on attack rolls against any creature grappled by it.

Magic Resistance. The devil has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Tentacle Cage. If the devil successfully grapples a creature, she transfers that creature into her lower body's nest of cage-like tentacles as a bonus action and the target is restrained. The devil's tentacles are AC 17 and have 18 hp for the purpose of

an entrapped creature cutting itself out. A devil's tendrils heal quickly, allowing her to use this ability 1 round after a creature cuts itself free.

Innate Spellcasting. The handmaiden devil's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 20). The handmaiden devil can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *black tentacles*, *charm person*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The devil makes four attacks: two with its claws, and two with its tentacles.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 10 (2d4 + 5) slashing damage plus 10 (3d6) poison damage and the target is grappled (Escape DC 18).

Entrapping Tentacles. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 12 (2d6 + 5) piercing damage plus 10 (3d6) poison damage and the target is grappled (Escape DC 18).

Development: If reduced to 20 hit points or fewer, Mordesse will surrender and offer to serve the member of the party whose alignment is closest to her own. She tells the chosen PC that she will return upon command along with her retinue of 3 erinyes devils and serve for one full day, performing any act that does not require her to break any other oath. This service will begin in 30 days, so the party can't take advantage of Mordesse's offer while they are in Curgantium. If the party accepts Mordesse's offer, she vanishes and return to Hell immediately, but will be good to her word. When Mordesse and her servitors are summoned, they will seek to do the most damage and inflict the most pain possible, killing innocents or destroying holy objects if they are available so that the very act of summoning them will shift the summoner's alignment one step toward evil.

Treasure: Inset and hidden within the interior lining of the lead coffer (Perception DC 26) is a single large blood-red ruby (5,000 gp) which was involved in the original binding ritual.

C4. SCRIPTORIUM

The door to this room is closed and locked.

Wooden Door: 2 in. thick; damage threshold 8; hp 25; Strength (Athletics) DC 20; Thieves' Tools DC 21.

This room is a jumble of ancient writing desks and stools, all draped in centuries of dusty cobwebs. Signs of disturbance among the dust shows where more recent activity has occurred here.

After receiving word of the knights' presence, the Underguild dispatched a scouting party of **5 vampire spawn** led by the vampire sorceress **Dhaderra**, which arrived here late last night. With little time before dawn, the party holed up in this room and are currently sleeping. They will awaken and be prepared if the lock is picked, but if the door is smashed the party will receive a surprise round on the still-sleepy fiends. If it is already after nightfall, then they have just arrived and are awake and searching the chamber and cannot be surprised.

UNDERGUILD SCOUTS (5)

Hp 112 (as vampire spawn[SRD])

DHADERRA, VAMPIRE SORCERESS

Medium undead (shapechanger), lawful evil
Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 144 (17d8 + 68)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	18 (+4)	18 (+4)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +9, Wis +7, Cha +9
Skills Perception +7, Stealth +9
Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 17
Languages Common
Challenge 15 (13,000 XP)

Spellcasting. Dhaderra is an 18th-level spellcaster. her spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). Dhaderra can cast *disguise self* and invisibility at will and has the following wizard spells prepared:

- Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt*, *light*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *shocking grasp*
- 1st level (4 slots): *detect magic*, *identify*, *mage armor**, *magic missile*
- 2nd level (3 slots): *detect thoughts*, *mirror image*, *misty step*

- 3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell*, *fly*, *lightning bolt*
- 4th level (3 slots): *banishment*, *fire shield*, *stoneskin**
- 5th level (3 slots): *cone of cold*, *scrying*, *wall of force*
- 6th level (1 slot): *globe of invulnerability*
- 7th level (1 slot): *teleport*
- 8th level (1 slot): *mind blank**
- 9th level (1 slot): *time stop*

**Dhaderra casts these spells on itself before combat.*

Shapechanger. If Dhaderra isn't in sunlight or running water, she can use her action to polymorph into a Tiny bat or a Medium cloud of mist, or back into her true form.

While in bat form, Dhaderra can't speak, her walking speed is 5 feet, and she has a flying speed of 30 feet. her statistics, other than her size and speed, are unchanged. Anything she is wearing transforms with it, but nothing she is carrying does. she reverts to her true form if she dies.

While in mist form, Dhaderra can't take any actions, speak, or manipulate objects. she is weightless, has a flying speed of 20 feet, can hover, and can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there. In addition, if air can pass through a space, the mist can do so without squeezing, and she can't pass through water. she has advantage on Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution saving throws, and she is immune to all nonmagical damage, except the damage she takes from sunlight.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Dhaderra fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

Misty Escape. When she drops to 0 hit points outside her resting place, Dhaderra transforms into a cloud of mist (as in the Shapechanger trait) instead of falling unconscious, provided that she isn't in sunlight or running water. If she can't transform, she is destroyed.

While Dhaderra has 0 hit points in mist form, she can't revert to her vampire form, and she must reach her resting place within 2 hours or be destroyed. Once in her resting place, she reverts to her vampire form. She is then paralyzed until she regains at least 1 hit point. After spending 1 hour in her resting place with 0 hit points, Dhaderra regains 1 hit point.

Regeneration. Dhaderra regains 20 hit points at the start of her turn if she has at least 1 hit point and isn't in sunlight or running water. If Dhaderra takes radiant damage or damage from holy water, this trait doesn't function at the start of Dhaderra's next turn.

Spider Climb. Dhaderra can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Vampire Weaknesses. Dhaderra has the following flaws:

Forbiddance. Dhaderra can't enter a residence without an invitation from one of the occupants.

Harmed by Running Water. Dhaderra takes 20 acid damage if she ends her turn in running water.

Stake to the Heart. If a piercing weapon made of wood is driven into Dhaderra's heart while Dhaderra is incapacitated in her resting place, Dhaderra is paralyzed until the stake is removed.

Sunlight Hypersensitivity. Dhaderra takes 20 radiant damage when she starts her turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, she has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. (Vampire Form Only). Dhaderra makes two attacks, only one of which can be a bite attack.

Unarmed Strike (Vampire Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack*: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 8 (1d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage. Instead of dealing damage, Dhaderra can grapple the target (escape DC 18).

Bite. (Bat or Vampire Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack*:+9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one willing creature, or a creature that is grappled by Dhaderra, incapacitated, or restrained. *Hit*: 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage plus 10 (3d6) necrotic damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and Dhaderra regains hit points equal to that amount. The reduction lasts

until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces her hit point maximum to 0. A humanoid slain in this way and then buried in the ground rises the following night as a vampire spawn under Dhaderra's control.

Charm. Dhaderra targets one humanoid she can see within 30 feet of it. If the target can see Dhaderra, the target must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw against this magic or be charmed by Dhaderra. The charmed target regards Dhaderra as a trusted friend to be heeded and protected. Although the target isn't under Dhaderra's control, she takes Dhaderra's requests or actions in the most favorable way she can, and she is a willing target for Dhaderra's bite attack.

Each time Dhaderra or Dhaderra's companions do anything harmful to the target, she can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success. Otherwise, the effect lasts 24 hours or until Dhaderra is destroyed, is on a different plane of existence than the target, or she takes a bonus action to end the effect.

Children of the Night (1/Day). Dhaderra magically calls 2d4 swarms of bats or rats (swarm of bats, swarm of rats), provided that the sun isn't up. While outdoors, Dhaderra can call 3d6 wolves (wolf) instead. The called creatures arrive in 1d4 rounds, acting as allies of Dhaderra and obeying her spoken commands. The beasts remain for 1 hour, until Dhaderra dies, or until Dhaderra dismisses them as a bonus action.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Dhaderra can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Dhaderra regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

Move. Dhaderra moves up to her speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

Unarmed Strike. Dhaderra makes one unarmed strike.

Bite. (Costs 2 Actions). Dhaderra makes one bite attack.

Cast a Spell. (Costs 0-3 Actions). Dhaderra casts a spell. she costs 1 legendary action per spell level (cantrips are free)

C5. BOOK DEPOSITORY

The door to this room stands open and inside are several collapsed hardwood shelves with the moldering or desiccated remains of very old volumes. Many footprints on the dusty floor and disturbances in the scattered piles of books and scrolls show that this room has been recently searched and very thoroughly by the look of it.

The knights spent a great deal of time searching among the books here. These books were among the library's most valued and restricted collections, including ancient spellbooks, volumes on forbidden lore, histories of the distant past, and even some books in alien languages that were never actually translated. Today most of the titles are indecipherable and their contents long ruined by the alternately moist and dry air of this sealed level through the passing centuries. Some volumes do remain on the intact shelves, however. Of these intact books some are stacked, and others lie in disorder on the shelves, showing the thoroughness of the knights' search here.

Each PC can make a single DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check to search through the books. A failure indicates that the PC found nothing of interest or that the books inspected crumbled to dust at the touch. A success indicates that something of interest was found. The knights themselves were so focused on their quest that any books that did not directly relate to their research were left here, possibly for later study. If the check determines that a PC finds something interesting, roll d% on the following table to determine what is found. Each book can only be found once. Unless otherwise noted, books that grant bonuses to skill checks are effective only when the book is in the user's possession from continued reference and study. All bonuses are circumstance bonuses.

d%	Result
01–05	A Biological Treatise on Humanoid Medicine (+1 bonus to Heal checks)
06–15	A Naturalist's Sketchbook (druids gain familiarity with 1d4 new random wild shapes)
16–25	The Nobles of Hyperborea (+1 bonus to Knowledge [nobility] checks regarding Hyperborea)

26–35	Exotic Weapons of Foreign Lands (user gains proficiency in one exotic weapon of his choice after 2d4 weeks of study and a successful DC Int check [only 1 attempt per reader])
36–45	A Guide to Planar Travel (+1 bonus to Knowledge [planes] checks)
46–50	Readings in Modern Biology (+1 bonus to Knowledge [nature] checks)
51–55	The Nature of the Undead (+1 bonus to the DC of saves by undead against channel energy damage as long as this book is in the user's possession)
56–60	Sorcerous Cults of the Hyperborean Empire (+1 bonus to Knowledge [arcana] checks)
61–65	A Dwarven-Common Dictionary (user learns Dwarven without requiring a rank in Linguistics after 2d4 weeks of study and a successful DC 15 Int check [only 1 attempt per reader])
66–75	A History of the Heroes of the Empire (+1 bonus to Knowledge [history] checks)
76–80	The Art of Conversation and Argument (+1 bonus to Diplomacy checks)
81–84	The Faiths of the World (+1 bonus to Knowledge [religion] checks)
85–87	The Infamous History of Strategos Verin* (+1 bonus to Intimidate checks)
88–90	Hyperborean Geography (+1 bonus to Knowledge [geography] checks)
91–93	Flesh golem manual
94–95	Iron golem manual
96	Tome of clear thought +1
97	Manual of bodily health +1
98	Manual of quickness of action +1
99	Tome of leadership and influence +1
00	Roll twice, ignoring a duplicate result

C6. READING ROOM

This chamber contains several dusty and mold-crusted reading tables around which are gathered a number of rickety chairs that have clearly been recently reinforced for use. The tables also bear several dust-free, half-burnt candles and two lanterns, all recently placed here, and several stacks where the crumbling books and scrolls of this place have been neatly gathered. The dusty floor is a chaos of scuffs and footprints from recent heavy use by several individuals.

Books or scrolls found to have direct application to the knights' research were brought here for closer inspection, and the knights brought their own reading lights and reinforced the ancient chairs with nails and additional wood for use as they studied the texts. As in **C5**, the texts here are very fragile. Though handling them with proper care allows them to be studied. The books are history texts, biographies, journals, and similar works. One particular tome lies open at the center of one table and clearly received some considerable attention. The book is written in High Boros[LL8-30], the dead language of ancient Hyperborea, and is part of a larger set chronicling the first millennium of the Hyperborean Empire. The page it is opened to is revealed in **Handout 6C** (see page 135).

A DC 15 Intelligence (History) check reveals that while this is clearly a chronicle of fairly well-documented Hyperborean history, of note is the line that states the Great Khan Ogedane ordered the start of what became the civil war that destroyed the Hundaei — an unusual revelation that is not generally recalled in the Hyperborean histories — but also that it was done "for the good of all lest the darkness return," a phrase that has no meaning that the PCs can recall from history. It is known that hordes of humanoid monster tribes led by fiendish creatures called shadow walkers emerged as a threat from the Haunted Steppe in the centuries that followed, but no reference to those events connecting them to the time of Great Khan Ogedane has ever been found. A smudged dirty fingerprint under that particular phrase shows where one of the knights evidently pointed it out to his fellows as well, though the significance of it is unclear.

C7. IRON CHAMBER

This chamber is empty save for some crumbled debris, but someone apparently found something interesting here recently, as the brickwork along the far wall has been removed to reveal a small opening beyond — a smooth-walled iron cavity of a roughly circular shape.

The knights detected a subtle difference in the masonry when they searched this chamber and partially disassembled the wall to discover the cavity beyond, apparently an old

* Destroyed along with his entire Legion battling against the Heldring in the Peninsular Campaign of 288 I.R. See page 14 of ***LL4: Cults of the Sundered Kingdoms*** by **Frog God Games**

furnace from the early days of the citadel. Within are the scorched remains of an ancient human skeleton frozen in a position as if huddled in a ball and clutching something to its chest in its arms — something roughly the size and shape of a book. When the knights found this, they saw that the book was completely intact and undamaged and realized it was the prize they had sought and claimed it without ever really discovering the truth of the situation.



The iron furnace within the wall is actually the hollow interior of an ancient construct called a **tophet**. The tophet was placed here more than a thousand years ago when a mad sorcerer was thrown into its belly to burn along with his copy of the infamous *Codex Ibnathi*. The sorcerer was slain but the book was unharmed, though the construct holding it was bricked up in the wall to further hide the blasphemous remains. The knights discovered the embedded tophet without realizing what it was and took the undamaged book while the construct was largely quiescent. Now with the PCs examining the burned skeleton the disturbance has roused the ancient construct to wakefulness once again.

TOPHET

Large construct, neutral

Armor Class 17 (natural)

Hit Points 189 (18d10 + 90)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	14 (+2)	20 (+5)	5 (-3)	11 (+0)	8 (-1)

Damage Immunities fire; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't adamantine

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

Senses darkvision 60 ft, passive Perception 10

Languages understands all languages but can't speak

Challenge 14 (11,500 XP)

Conductive. Anytime a tophet is affected by an effect that deals fire damage, creatures currently swallowed by the construct take fire damage equal to half of this amount.

Magic Resistance. The tophet collector has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Trampling Charge. If the tophet moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a slam attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 18 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the tophet can make one stomp attack against it as a bonus action.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The tophet makes two slam attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 18 (3d8 + 5) piercing damage plus 16 (3d10) fire damage. If the target is a Large or smaller creature, it must succeed on a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw or be swallowed by the tophet. A swallowed creature is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the tophet. Once swallowed by a tophet, an opponent takes no damage, but is trapped inside the creature's hollow interior. The construct's maw locks down, preventing creatures from climbing back out. If the tophet takes 30 damage or more on a single turn from a creature inside it, the creature has broken through the tophet's cage and falls prone in a space within 10 feet of the tophet. If the tophet dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse by

using 20 feet of movement, exiting prone. A target may also use Thieves' Tools to escape (DC 20). It may only have one creature swallowed at a time but does not lose its bite attack while it has a swallowed creature, but it cannot swallow another creature.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 18 (3d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage plus 16 (3d10) fire damage.

Stomp. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one prone creature. *Hit*: 21 (3d10 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

Tactics: The tophet smashes free from the wall as a move action and attempts to swallow a PC (since its former prisoner has been reduced to little more than charred bone, the tophet is no longer considered to be occupied and is ready for a new victim). If a PC was unfortunate enough to be inside the tophet examining the skeleton when the Tophet begins its attack, the PC is automatically swallowed, with the tophet's maw locking closed. If it succeeds in swallowing a victim, the tophet steps back into its wall recess which sits just above the ancient furnace that is still stocked with coal and has an open oil reservoir at the top. The tophet attempts to set the oil alight by grinding its metal arms against the masonry walls surrounding it as a bonus action, with a 20% cumulative chance of igniting it each round. If the tophet is successful, the furnace will blaze to life and the tophet will stand in its heat and fight off the other PCs while letting the victim inside it slowly cook.

A trapped victim takes increasing damage each round as the furnace grows hotter. On the first round, the victim takes 7 (2d6) fire damage, with damage increasing by 7 (2d6) each round thereafter, to a maximum of 28 (8d6) fire damage per round. This does not affect damage sustained from fire attacks as detailed under the tophet's conductive special ability. The victim continues to take fire damage after the tophet is slain, until the furnace flames are extinguished, requiring one round of work and a DC 20 Thieves' Tools or DC 15 Smith's Tools check. Once the flames are extinguished, the tophet's interior cools at the same rate that it heated.

Development: After the PCs have dealt with the tophet, they discover that they are no longer alone in the library.

You suddenly become aware that standing in the room's doorway is a horrific-looking creature. While its frame is roughly humanoid, it is covered in odd growths, and its head is a distended, fleshy sack with a pulsating brain-like organ covered by a hooded growth of flesh. Its lower jaw is split into two fanged halves. Its limbs are elongated and its hands are thick and gnarled, each with two grotesquely-overgrown fingers. It has no visible eyes but seems aware of you, standing calmly and making no move to attack.

A voice echoes in your mind, and you can somehow tell that it originates with the strange creature. Pardon the interruption, it says. I mean you no harm and wish to speak with you.

The creature is a **caulborn** that has been exploring and observing the goings-on in the ruins for some time. It communicates with the PCs telepathically seeking to parley and has no interest in a fight. If the PCs attack, it *plane shifts* away and will make one more attempt to contact them in the future. If attacked a second time it again *plane shifts* away never to return and leaving the PCs to their own fumbling devices. Anyone intentionally observing the creature's fingers and making a DC 10 Intelligence check realizes it, or something like it, is likely the source of the fingerprint found on the map in area **B12**.

CAULBORN

Medium aberration, neutral
Armor Class 15 (breastplate)
Hit Points 71 (13d8 + 13)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	13 (+1)	13 (+1)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Int +7, Wis +6, Cha +6
Skills Arcana +7, Deception +6, Insight +6, Perception+6, Persuasion +6, Stealth +4
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages Abyssal, Aklo, Aquan, Celestial, Common, Draconic, Giant, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Innate Spellcasting (Psionics). The caulborn's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:
At will: *detect thoughts*, *detect magic*
1/day: *consume thoughts* (as a 9th level *modify memory* spell except if the target makes the

saving throw it takes 15 (2d10 + 4) psychic damage and the caulborn heals for the same amount of hit points)

3/day each: *charm monster*, *hold monster*, *hypnotic pattern*, *psychic crush* (as *vampiric touch* but does psychic damage)

1/week: *plane shift* (willing creatures only)

Cooperative Scrying. Three or more caulborn joining hands can scry on a place or creature as if using the *scrying* spell (DC 20), but with no limit to the spell's duration so long as at least three of the caulborn involved continue to join hands and concentrate.

Creature Sense. The caulborn is aware of the presence of creatures within 60 feet of it that have an Intelligence score of 4 or higher. It knows the distance and direction to each creature, as well as each creature's Intelligence score, but can't sense anything else about it. A creature protected by a *mind blank* spell, a *nondetection* spell, or similar magic can't be perceived in this manner.

Hive Mind. As long as there are at least two caulborn within 300 feet of each other, if one caulborn in the group is aware of a particular danger, they all are. No caulborn in a group grants advantage due to flanking, surprise or other position-based combat bonus.

Id Insinuation. Anytime a creature takes psychic damage from the caulborn it must make a DC 15 Intelligence saving throw or be stunned for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Intellect Fortress So long as the caulborn is wearing no armour it may add its Intelligence modifier to its AC.

Magic Resistance. The caulborn has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

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

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 3 (1d6) piercing damage and 15 (2d10 + 4) psychic damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 3 (1d6) slashing damage 9 (1d10 + 4) psychic damage.

Development: If the party is willing to hear it out, the caulborn explains that it has been observing this library for some time, gleaning ancient knowledge from it about the fate of Curgantium and the Hyperborean Empire. If asked, the caulborn says it has no name that the PCs would understand. The caulborn is happy to exchange information with the PCs and will answer questions for them on a one-for-one basis.

For the questions that the caulborn asks the PCs, it wants to know personal things about the PCs' lives, details of their adventures in the Haunted Steppe (assuming they participated in the adventure **Race for Shataakh-Uulm**), specifics about what they found at the Pit of the Burning Star (as before), what they know about Ellerby Wallix (assuming they participated in the adventure ***The Book in the Old House***), etc. It will not reveal its interest in these matters beyond just stating it has such an interest. If asked how it knows these things, it states that it is a long-time observer in the doings of mortal-born.

In return the caulborn has a quite a bit of information of value that it can reveal to the PCs. The most important items are summarized below so you can work it organically into the answers it gives for the party's questions. If they ask for information outside these topics, judge if the caulborn would know the answer and provide as you see fit to your players.

The caulborn will reveal that the knights did discover and take a book from the executed sorcerer's corpse and that they did not realize it was within an animated construct. It can confirm that the claimed book was the *Codex Ibnathi*, and if they think to ask, that it was the same one from which a single page had been torn that ultimately found its way to the house in Eber (see ***The Book in the Old House***).

The caulborn can tell the PCs that the knights' party consisted of eight knights and one squire (which matches the information they received at the beginning of the adventure), though only five remain alive now. It does not know the names of any of the knights nor their current whereabouts as it has been watching the library lately in

anticipation of other visitors (the PCs). It does not know exactly why the knights were seeking the book but that it has to do with the original destruction of the city 1,021 years ago and the potential of a new cataclysm of equal or greater proportions.

In regards to the city's original destruction and its significance in the present age, it will reveal that in the weeks prior to the cataclysm one of the strange portentous creatures known as a mothman had been frequently sighted and that the mothman knew much of what was to come. Being a soul now trapped within the devastation, the mothman might be able to shed light on what actually occurred with its eyewitness account. The caulborn goes on to reveal that the mothman can still be found "at the correct hour for the show" if the PCs wished to plumb its millennium-old secret. The caulborn won't explain this cryptic statement any further, telling the PCs that solving mysteries is good for the psyche.

Once the caulborn has revealed all of the above information, it departs the city via *plane shift*, its curiosity on the matter sated for the time being.

Ad Hoc XP Award: If the PCs successfully treat with the caulborn and learn of the significance of the mothman, award XP as if they had defeated it in battle.

D. ANCIENT CATACOMBS

The PCs must enter the tribal territory of the giants to reach the ruined Cathedral of the Blessed Tesseract, since its ruin comprises a part of their encampment. The aberrant giants are constantly patrolling the area for food and supplies. They've also heard rumors about the knights and are searching for them, hoping to loot their treasures or possibly hold them for ransom. The GM should make the normal encounter checks for the tribal territory and also run the following encounter before the party can reach the ruined cathedral.

WAR PARTY

The knights made a surprise raid on a giant encampment at the ruined cathedral and then disappeared into the catacombs beneath before the giants had a chance to regroup and counter-attack. The giants did not realize that the knights had gone underground and have been attempting to track them down in the tribal territory to gain their vengeance ever



since. To this end the giants have have dispatched several war parties to look for them, one of which will be encountered as the PCs make their way to the cathedral.

The giants' war party is led by an **ash giant** and includes **6 aberrant hill giants**, an **ogre boss**, **2 ogre wereboars**, and **4 ogre stalkers** (with their **wolf companions**). An observant party may first catch sight of the ogre stalkers who are scouting ahead (50% chance of either) if they succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. If this occurs, the scout will attempt to engage the PCs from a distance while shouting an alarm that brings the rest of the war party in 1d4 rounds. If the party fails to notice these scouts, then they will encounter the war party as they walk into an ambush it has laid where the scouts and hunters begin peppering them with ranged attacks from behind cover with aberrant giants waiting in hiding beside them for the PCs to charge. The ash giants, ogre boss, and ogre mancatchers hide on the flanks to come in from behind the party and attack with surprise once they are engaged in combat. They attempt to kill stronger characters and capture weaker ones, intending to subject them to torture to reveal the location of the knights.

ASH GIANT

hp 205 (see **Appendix A**, page 540)

ABERRANT HILL GIANTS (6)

hp 105 (See **Tribal Territory Random Encounters: Day**, page 420)

OGRE BOSS

hp 162 (See **Tribal Territory Random Encounters: Day**, page 421)

OGRE WEREBOARS (2)

hp 115 (See **Tribal Territory Random Encounters: Day**, page 422)

OGRE STALKERS (4)

Hp 59 (statistics as ogre[SRD], except as below)
Skills Stealth +5
Pack Attack (1/Turn). If the ogre stalker surprises a creature and hits it with an attack during the first round of combat, the target takes an extra 7 (2d6) damage from the attack. It also can gain this bonus damage if another ogre stalker or wolf is within 5 feet of the target.

DIRE WOLVES (4)

hp 37 (as dire wolves[SRD])

D1. CATHEDRAL FORECOURT

Anyone openly approaching the camp here will be spotted by the lookouts at **D4**, who will raise the alarm as described below.

A massive structure of graceful spires, towers, and flying buttresses once stood here, but the destruction of the city has reduced it to little more than a shell of itself. It is a testament to its timeless construction that any of it stands at all, as the main portion of it has collapsed, but part of the grand colonnade entrance remains intact as does a portion of one wing and its attached tower. The rest has been reduced to vast mounds of rubble and debris overgrown with the omnipresent vines, grasses, and saplings that have slowly overtaken the once-mighty city. The grounds surrounding the ruins have been converted into a crude encampment, with rough hide tents fit for giants pitched among the ruins here and there and great piles of broken rubble stacked into defensive walls or fighting platforms. A smudge of smoke rises from a great pit near the edge of the central encampment.

The giant tribes of the tribal territory have encampments scattered throughout that section of the ruins, but the lair of the giant chief is here among the ruins of the cathedral. Most of the local tribesman lair among the surrounding ruins, but a few of the chief's personal guard reside here in the immediate vicinity of his abode. Currently residing here in the ruined cathedral's forecourt are a total of **5 aberrant hill giants** and **7 ogre brutes**. The ogres are divided among the three great hide tents, while the aberrant giants tend to just bed down among the surrounding ruins wherever is convenient. There are usually many more ogres and giants present, but the rest have been sent out as war parties to locate the knights who raided the camp by surprise a week ago.

The mounds of rubble within this area are 30 feet high and are considered loose scree, requiring a DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check for anyone attempting to climb them unless otherwise noted.

ABERRANT HILL GIANTS (6)

hp 105 (see **Tribal Territory Random Encounters: Day**, page 420)

OGRE BRUTES (7)

hp 85 (see **Tribal Territory Random Encounters: Day**, page 422)

Tactics: Unless the giants here have been alerted by the watchers at **D4** or the glutton at **D2**, they will be surprised by the PCs, with their weapons laid aside as they go about their daily camp tasks. If an alarm is raised, the giants will grab weapons and gather at the base of **D3**, between it and **D2** to form a defensive front against intruders, while one of the aberrant giants climbs **D3** to beat upon the alarm drum. The ogres and giants are not tacticians and will only hold their defensive position for 1d2 rounds to hurl ranged weapons before they fling themselves into the fray against any opponents they can see. In this way, clever PCs may be able to lure the defenders away from the cathedral entrance and allow an easier infiltration within.

Development: If a fight occurs here and they are not already aware, the inhabitants of **D2** and **D4** become aware after 1 round and will immediately move to join in. If the giants manage to beat the alarm drum at **D3**, it alerts the occupants of the rest of the encampment as follows. These occupants' reactions are detailed in their own areas. After 1 round of the alarm drum, the occupants of **D5** and **D6** are alerted. After 3 rounds the occupant of **D7** is alerted. After 5 rounds the occupants of **D8** are alerted. The giant beating the drum will continue to do so until physically stopped, until the cyclops from **D7** emerges to join the fight, or until 10 rounds have passed, whichever comes first.

Treasure: Scattered among the encampment are the following treasures, though it requires four DC 27 Wisdom (Perception) checks and a full hour of searching to discover them all. For every 15 minutes less than 1 hour that is spent in the search remove one of the four treasures.

- 1,700 gp
- A *potion of countless eyes* (see **Appendix B**)
- A *spell scroll of polymorph*
- A *wand of night* (see **Appendix B**)

D2. BURN PIT

A great smoking pit has been dug in the earth here, its broken sides descending 10 feet or more to a bottom covered in charred rubble, ash, and the scorched remains of creatures — or perhaps meals. A number of metal rods, the broken pieces of a portcullis it appears, are leaning against the sides of the pit or lie in the ash itself.

This burn pit is used by the giant tribe to light great bonfires for entertainment, executions, trash, and cooking. Its sides are crumbly but not overly steep, so only a DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check is required to climb in or out. Some smoldering coals remain in the center of the pit from the last blaze so that the entire pit is considered to be in concealment, though it is not thick enough to impair breathing. Likewise, the ash layer is thick enough that the coals do not cause any damage. The portcullis rods are used as spits for cooking, and an **ogre glutton** who serves as the encampment's primary cook is currently in the pit collecting them for later use. He is hungry and not yet aware of what he will have for dinner, so if he sees the PCs he immediately rages and climbs out of the pit to attack. His screams of rage alert the camp as described in **D1**.

OGRE GLUTTON

Huge giant, chaotic evil
Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 200 (16d12 + 96)
Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
27 (+8)	10 (+0)	22 (+6)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Con +10, Wis +7, Cha +7
Skills Insight +7, Perception +7
Senses passive Perception 17
Languages Common, Giant
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

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

Gluttonous Rage (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). As a bonus action, the ogre can enter a rage at the start of its turn. The rage lasts for 1 minute or until the ogre is incapacitated. While raging, the ogre gains the following benefits:

- The ogre has advantage on Strength checks and Strength saving throws
- When it makes a melee weapon attack, the ogre gains a +4 bonus to the damage roll.
- The ogre has resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The ogre makes two morningstar attacks.

Morningstar. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +12 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 21 (3d8 + 8) piercing damage.

Rock. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +12 to hit, range 60/240 ft., one target. *Hit*: 30 (4d10 + 8) bludgeoning damage.

D3. ALARM DRUM

This rubble pile is 30 feet tall and is composed of scree as described in area **D1**, except a rough stairway (difficult terrain to creatures size Medium or smaller) has been constructed into its eastern slope and a flattened platform area exists at its peak which provides cover against anyone attacking from below. Atop this platform is a massive drum made from a yak-beast[LL5-233] hide stretched tight over large wooden tun. A heavy wooden mallet (sized for a Large creature) rests next to this drum. When the drum is beaten, its reverberation echoes over the entire northern portion of the ruined city. It alerts the inhabitants of the camp as described in **D1** above, but it also recalls the patrols currently out scouting among the ruins. If the drum is beaten for at least 5 rounds, a war party identical to that encountered in **War Party** above will arrive at the cathedral camp 1 hour later, with a second identical war party arrived 1d4 hours after that.

D4. WATCH TOWER

This tower situated at the end of the one of the cathedral's collapsed wings is still standing to a height of 50 feet. Its interior is hollow with a still-sturdy stone stair that wraps around along the wall where a crude wooden platform has been constructed at a height of 45 feet. This gives the ogre occupants improved cover from attackers below due to the 5-foot lip of the platform and cover against anything at their height or above. There are **5 ogre bosses** in total residing in the base of this tower, with two of them always on watch on the platform above. If these watchers spot anyone they shout the alarm as described in **D1**. If an alarm is sounded, the 2 in the tower top hurl javelins at intruders they spot while the 3 below emerge from the tower to attack in melee.

OGRE BOSSES (5)

hp 162 (See **Tribal Territory Random Encounters: Day**, page 421)

Treasure: Stored among the ogre bosses' belongings can be found 120 gp, 46 pp, two pieces of polished coral (100 gp each), a *holy handaxe*, a pair of *apprentice's cheating gloves*, a *potion of burrowing*, a *potion of shielding*, and a *cavalry rod* (see **Appendix A** for descriptions of all items).

D5. SLAVE PIT

Here at the crumbling base of one of the structure's wings, a sheer-sided pit has been dug 10 feet down to its very foundations. It appears that the pit is used to hold prisoners or slaves as a number of small dusky humanoids huddle in squalor within. Next to the edge of the pit is crudely constructed wooden ladder.

The giant tribe has managed to capture a number of wayangs over the years and keep the Small shadowy creatures as slaves. There are a total **23 wayangs** currently in the pit, and all are malnourished and mistreated. Normally they would be out and about the camp serving the giants, but ever since the knights' raid the giants have kept them largely confined to the pit without being fed, unsure if they were somehow complicit in the attack. Three of the creatures have already died of starvation and the rest all have 1d6 points of nonlethal damage and the fatigued condition from their deprivation. In addition, guarding the pit is an **athach** that has been adopted as an honorary member of the tribe and put in charge of the prisoners. She is none-too-bright and will not notice intruders unless attacked or unless the alarm drum is sounded. If either of these occurs, she leaps into the pit to take cover and fight off anything that gets too close. If that occurs, the wayangs will avoid her but will use their *ghost sound* and *ventriloquism* abilities to distract her during any battle with the PCs causing her to incur a –2 penalty to attack and damage rolls.

ATHACH

Huge giant, chaotic evil
Armor Class 16 (scale mail)
Hit Points 230 (20d12 + 100)
Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
29 (+9)	14 (+2)	20 (+5)	7 (-2)	12 (+1)	6 (-3)

Saving Throws Str +14, Con +10
Skills Athletics+ 14, Perception +5
Senses passive Perception 15
Languages Common, Giant, Orc
Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The athach makes two heavy mace attacks or (when available) tricky!

Heavy Mace. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +14 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 30 (6d6 + 9) bludgeoning damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +14 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 14 (1d10 + 9) piercing damage plus 6 (2d6) poison damage.

Rock. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +14 to hit, range 60/240 ft., one target. *Hit*: 35 (4d12 + 9) bludgeoning damage.

Tricky! (1/Day). The athach pulls three fuzzy objects from her *bag of tricks* and flings them into combat.

REACTIONS

Swift Claw. When the athach is hit by a melee attack, she can make a claw attack against the creature that struck her.

GEAR

The athach's favorite toy is a tan *bag of tricks*[SRD] that lies among the tangle of her sleeping furs. If she hears PCs approaching, she uses the bag in combat, but if she's surprised, she doesn't take the time to dig it out.



WAYANG SLAVES (23)

hp 16 (See **Tribal Territory Random Encounters: Day**, page 420)

Development: If the wayangs are freed and not treated poorly, they will have a friendly attitude towards the party. They can provide information about the camp and relate that the knights attacked a week ago and disappeared inside the "big temple" but never emerged. They must have escaped, though, because the giants have been looking for them ever since. They are unaware of the existence of the secret door at **D9**. They can provide general information about the city as described under **Tribal Territory Random Encounters: Day** but will not accompany the party under any circumstances. They intend to wait until the next moonset and then use one of the shadowgates to return to their home plane.

D6. NARTHEX

This building looks like it as a temple or church of some sort, though on a massive scale, and its upper structure remains partially intact. Tall and graceful columns still flank a partial trefoil arch leading to the interior. If it had doors, these have long since fallen in ruin. The archway surrounding this entrance is engraved with ancient inscriptions as well as bands of stylized geometric shapes, weathered by the centuries and unrecognizable.

A DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check is required to even make out the carved letters on the archway walls. They are written in High Boros[LL8-30] and can be translated with a DC 15 Intelligence (History) check by anyone who speaks Common. They name this structure as the Cathedral of the Blessed Tesseract[LL1-4] (see sidebar) and consist of many prayers and blessings upon its priests and worshipers.

Sheltered in a side alcove at the entrance is a powerful guardian creature of the giant tribe. An **adult crypt dragon** that was originally drawn to the ruins of Old Curgantium from the Inner Planes due to the high concentration of wayward souls that wandered here. After arriving, it ran afoul of a group of giants and in the course of battle was buried beneath a collapsing wall. When the giants dug it out it was still alive but had sustained a terrible head injury. The giants took the stunned creature to their chief who nursed it back to health, though the damage it sustained

to its brain drastically reduced its Intelligence. The nature of the dragon's injury is immediately apparent, as the left side of its skull and face are caved in with a great deal of scarring. Anyone making a DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check while observing the dragon can tell that it is operating at a much-reduced mental capacity.

ADULT CRYPT DRAGON

Huge dragon, neutral

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)

Hit Points 212 (17d12 + 102)

Speed 40 ft., fly 80 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
25 (+7)	10 (+0)	23 (+6)	5 (-3)	15 (+2)	19 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Con +11, Wis +7, Cha +9

Skills Insight +7, Perception +7, Stealth +10

Damage Resistances necrotic

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poison, paralysis

Senses blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 22

Languages Giant (cannot speak)

Challenge 15 (13,000 XP)

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the dragon fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Traumatic Brain Injury. The dragon's Intelligence has been reduced to 5 as a result of brain damage, and it has lost its languages and spells.

Grave Endurance. The dragon has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put the dragon to sleep. It is also immune any type of disease.

Inexorable Attacks. The dragon's attacks are considered magical and can hit creatures on the Ethereal Plane.

Ethereal Sight. The dragon can see 60 feet into the Ethereal Plane when it is on the Material Plane, and vice versa.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The dragon can use its Frightful Presence. It then makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +12 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 18 (2d10 + 7) piercing damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 14 (2d6 + 7) slashing damage.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +12 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit*: 16 (2d8 + 7) bludgeoning damage.

Frightful Presence. Each creature of the dragon's choice that is within 120 feet of the dragon and aware of it must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the dragon's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours.

Decaying Breath (Recharge 5–6). The dragon exhales shadow in a 90- foot line that is 5 feet wide. Each creature in that line must make a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw, taking 66 (12d10) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. A humanoid reduced to 0 hit points by this damage dies. This attack is considered radiant damage when used against undead creatures.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The dragon can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The dragon regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Detect. The dragon makes a Wisdom (Perception) check.

Tail Attack. The dragon makes a tail attack.

Sepulchral Crush (Costs 2 Actions). The dragon uses its body to entomb a foe. Each creature within 10 feet of the dragon must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or take 14 (2d6 + 7) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone. If the save failed by 5 or more the target is paralysed. A parlayed target may repeat the saving throw at the end of its turn but if it fails by 5 or more again it is petrified.

Tactics: The dragon is now little more than a favored pet who serves as a watchdog to the entrance of the chief's lair. It does not respond to alarms other than to be ready for any intruders. Its brain-damaged mind has little concept of friend or foe, so it attacks anyone smaller than size Large who is not a wayang. Anything that is Large or larger is assumes to be a giant, and it is accustomed to the wayangs being underfoot. The dragon fights to the death for its "masters".

Development: If a *heal*, *miracle*, *wish*, or similar spell is used on the dragon to repair the brain injury it sustained, it instantly regains full awareness of its situation as well as all its languages, skills, and spells. It is humiliated by the treatment it has received as the giants' pet and quickly enters the cathedral to attack the chief and his wife in area **D8** where it fights to the death to erase its shame. If it survives this, it thanks the PCs for their aid and quickly leaves the ruins to seek a way back to the Ethereal Plane in order to put its shameful past behind it.

Ad Hoc XP Award: If the PCs restore the dragon to its full intellect, award them XP as if they had defeated it in battle.

D7. COLLAPSED NAVE

The main floor of the central nave here is a jumble of fallen masonry. Rows of ornate columns once extended to the east, but those still standing are now cracked and defaced, their decorative carvings and gilt long since erased. Walls that once defined this great chamber have collapsed, leaving it a cavernous, broken hollow beneath a mostly destroyed roof.

This vast chamber serves as the lair of the tribe's favored guardian, a **blinded great cyclops** that was defeated by Chief Rathagog in battle. The ash giant chief spared the beast after blinding it, and it has since become a loyal bodyguard of the chief and his wife. The cyclops remains in this chamber, attacking anyone who attempts to pass through the chamber without the permission of the chief or his wife, unless the alarm drum at **D3** is sounded. If that occurs, the cyclops will emerge in the next round and assist the tribe against invaders. The giants scream instructions to the cyclops in Giant as to whom to attack and where to find them, so a PC that speaks Giant can attempt to mislead the cyclops in the same way by making a successful DC 20 Charisma (Deception) check each round.

If the rubble is cleared and the floor is swept, it reveals a complex mosaic pattern portraying geometric shapes like those on the door jamb at **D6**. However, most prominent among them is a square with four rays extending outward to represent the four lines that extend from each vertex to other vertices in a hypercube, an advanced geometric concept that is likely to be well beyond the understanding of the PCs. Anyone making a DC 25 Intelligence (Arcana) check recognizes the two-dimensional representation of the four-dimensional analog of a cube. Anyone making a DC 25 Intelligence (Religion) check identifies it as the symbol of the Blessed Tesseract, that ancient religion of Hyperborea that lingers on even to the present day in iconography and antique rituals. If the symbol is identified as either a hypercube or the image of the Blessed Tesseract, the individual will also recognize the two-dimensional renderings of crosses and inverted crosses in the mosaic as being the net polygon derived from unfolding the three-dimensional image of the cubic Tesseract into two-dimensional cross shapes. A DC 10 Intelligence (Religion) recognizes these as representations of the ancient-but-still-extant faiths of Thyr and Muir, whose symbols are a cross and an upraised sword (i.e. inverted cross), respectively[LL1-168,169]. This provides some insight into the primeval connection between the mysterious Blessed Tesseract and two of the most prominent religions of the last four millennia.

THE BLESSED TESSERACT

Ancient even before the founding of the Hyperborean Empire, the religion of the Blessed Tesseract held a high place in society and served as a sort of benefactor role for the rest of the Hyperborean pantheon. Associated with spiritual guidance and the search for the Truth of reality, the faith of the Blessed Tesseract was seen as an agent of protection over the humanity of the world, though even then it was little understood. Though enjoying little formal worship in the present age, reverence for the ancient belief is still seen in such forms as the current Cathedral of the Blessed Tesseract in the imperial-capital city of Courghais, where it serves as the seat of the High Church of Foere and a sponsor of worship for the entire Foerdewaith pantheon and is coincidentally the namesake of the very ruin that the PCs are exploring in Curgantium.

BLINDED GREAT CYCLOPS

Huge giant, chaotic evil
Armor Class 16 (scale mail)
Hit Points 230 (20d12 + 100)
Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
29 (+9)	14 (+2)	20 (+5)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Str +14, Con +10, Wis +9, Cha +9
Skills Arcana +8, Athletics +14, History +8, Perception +9
Damage Resistances cold
Damage Immunities lightning, thunder
Senses passive Perception 19
Languages Common, Giant
Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

Blind. The great cyclops has the blinded condition.

Flash of Brutality (1/Day, recharges when the cyclops is reduced to half its starting hit points). As a bonus action, a great cyclops can gain a burst of savage inspiration. When it does, it automatically scores critical hits with its melee and ranged attacks until the start of its next turn.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The great cyclops makes two greatsword attacks.

Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +14 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 30 (6d6 + 9) slashing damage.

Rock. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +14 to hit, range 60/240 ft., one target. *Hit*: 35 (4d12 + 9) bludgeoning damage.

Bring Down the Heavens (1/Day). The great cyclops calls down a thunderous cascade of boulders in a 10-foot-radius cylinder, 40 feet high. At least one edge of the cylinder must be within 10 feet of the cyclops. Each creature within the cylinder must make a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw, taking 54 (12d8) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

D8. CHIEF'S LAIR

Crumbling passages formed by collapsed chambers braced with huge blocks of stone lead to a chamber separated by a great curtain of crudely sewn hides more than 10 feet wide and 20 feet tall. Visible beyond this ill-made barrier can be seen another large chamber with a great bed made of furs and hide cushions stacked against the far wall as well as a giant-sized table and stone chest and a collection of barrels that appear to bear the trade stamps of the Kingdom of Foere and Aachen Province.

This chamber is occupied by the leader of the entire tribal territory of ruined Curgantium **Chief Rathagog**, a powerful ash giant, and his hideous bride **Turgantella**, a brutal ogress. They reside in this chamber where members of their tribe bring the best pickings of treasures and captives to devour. They have not emerged in several days as they fear that the knights who disappeared somewhere in the cathedral ruins will return to steal their treasures. If the alarm drum at **D3** sounded for at least 5 rounds, they are ready and waiting for intruders to enter. Likewise, a loud battle with the cyclops in **D7** will alert them. Otherwise, they are in here playing a game of marbles with a number of humanoid skulls they have collected.

CHIEF RATHAGOG

Huge giant, chaotic evil
Armor Class 18 (plate)
Hit Points 250 (20d12 + 120)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
25 (+7)	9 (-1)	23 (+6)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +3, Con +10, Wis +6
Skills Athletics +11, Perception +6
Damage Immunities poison
Senses passive Perception 16
Languages Giant
Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

Indomitable (3/Day). The giant can reroll a saving throw it fails. It must use the new roll.

Survivor. The giant regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point but fewer hit points than half its hit point maximum.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The giant makes two greatsword attacks.

Pox. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 28 (6d6 + 7) slashing damage and the target is affected by a *contagion* spell (DC 15).

Rock. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +11 to hit, range 60/240 ft., one target. *Hit*: 29 (4d10 + 7) bludgeoning damage.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The giant can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The giant regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Weapon Attack. The giant makes a weapon attack.

Command Ally. The giant targets one ally it can see within 30 feet of it. If the target can see and hear the warlord, the target can make one weapon attack as a reaction and gains advantage on the attack roll.

Frighten Foe (Costs 2 Actions). The giant targets one enemy it can see within 30 feet of it. If the target can see and hear it, the target must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened until the end of giant's next turn.

TURGANTELLA, CHIEF'S WIFE

Large giant, chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 152 (16d10 + 64)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	8 (-1)	19 (+4)	5 (-3)	17 (+3)	6 (-2)

Skills Perception +2

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Common, Giant

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Spellcasting. Turgantella is a 10th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). Turgantella has the following cleric spells prepared:

- Cantrips (at will): *guidance*, *poison spray*, *resistance*, *spare the dying*, *thaumaturgy*
- 1st level (4 slots): *animal friendship*, *cure wounds*, *detect poison and disease*, *ray of sickness*
- 2nd level (3 slots): *lesser restoration*, *protection from poison*, *web*
- 3rd level (3 slots): *conjure animals* (2 giant spiders), *dispel magic*
- 4th level (3 slots): *divination*, *freedom of movement*
- 5th level (2 slots): *insect plague*, *mass cure wounds*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Turgantella makes two greatclub attacks.

Greatclub. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 18 (3d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

Rock. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +8 to hit, range 60/240 ft., one target. *Hit*: 21 (3d10 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

Treasure: The barrels contain only foodstuffs and drink looted from river barges that have had the misfortune to fall into the hands of giants hunting along the Great Amrin River. The stone chest is not locked but requires a DC 20 Strength check to lift the lid. Within it are stored a number of mangy furs and extra bedding as well as treasures taken from those barges including 2,386 sp, 480 gp, 17 pp, a *ring of heroic grit*, a pair of *challenger's gloves*, a *phylactery of faithfulness*, a vial of *oil of curse-breaking*, a jar of *mortician's cream*, a *spell scroll* (*dispel magic* (5th level)), a *potion of plant shape*, and a *rod of the whispering wind* (see **Appendix B** for item descriptions).

D9. CATACOMBS ENTRANCE

The smell of rot and filth from area **D10** is noticeable here.

Along the north wall of the corridor here is a well-hidden secret door requiring a DC 25 Wisdom (Perception) check to find that has never been discovered by the giants. If Malcolm is with the party, his scent ability can lead the PCs to its vicinity as he follows the faint smell of the knights, giving them advantage on checks to locate the secret door. Beyond the door is a set of recently cleared stone stairs leading to the catacombs beneath the cathedral.

By the clearing of the stairs, it's obvious that the knights have been here recently, though the party will have to do some searching to learn more about what happened to them. Malcolm is unfamiliar with this particular location but will say that he can still smell some of the knights, indicating that they were here only a few days ago. He also smells what he describes as the scent of death as coming from below, though it is not apparent to the PCs beyond the odor wafting from **D10**.

D10. MIDDEN PIT

The corridor ends abruptly here at a drop off where the base of collapsed tower forms a rough pit at least 20 feet deep, though it is difficult to tell because its bottom is full of debris, garbage, and the rotten remains of past meals. The smell is horrendous. In the center of the pit stands an 8-foot pitcher plant that appears to be thriving rooted in the filth as it is.

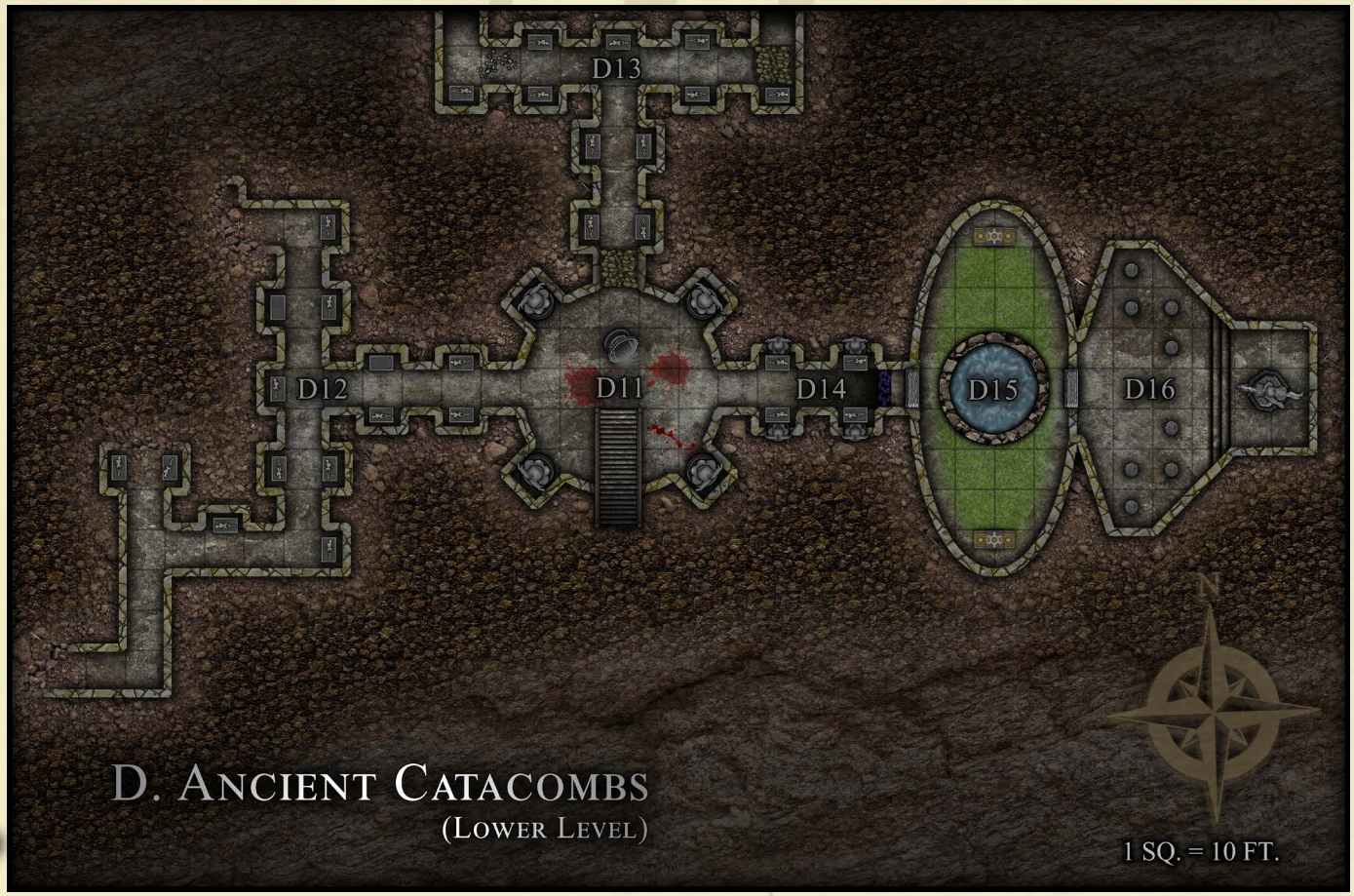
Chief Rathagog and his mate use this pit as a personal midden and privy. Growing in the midst of it is a **crypt flower**. The plant is normally content to exist on the ordure of the giants, however, the approach of any creatures smaller than size Large attracts its attention and causes it to use its toxin splash to try and disable new prey. The walls of the pit are crumbling and rough and can be climbed with a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check, so the crypt flower will try to climb out to pursue suitable prey but will not wander more than 20 feet down the corridor before returning to its familiar habitat in the pit.

CRYPT FLOWER

Large plant, unaligned
Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 136 (16d10 + 48)
Speed 10 ft., burrow 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	8 (-1)	16 (+3)	5 (-3)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)

Skills Stealth +2
Damage Resistances acid
Damage Vulnerabilities fire
Condition Immunities blinded, deafened, exhaustion
Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 10
Languages --
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)



ACTIONS

Multiattack. The crypt flower makes two vine attacks. If both attacks hit a Medium or smaller target, the target is grappled (escape DC 14), and the crypt flower uses its Engulf on it if it is within 5 feet of it. Otherwise it attempts to drag the target to its position.

Vine. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 20 ft., one target. *Hit*: 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage and 13 (2d8 + 4) poison damage.

Engulf. The crypt flower engulfs a Medium or smaller creature grappled by it. The engulfed target is blinded, restrained, and unable to breathe, and it must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw at the start of each of the flower's turns or take 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage and 13 (2d8 + 4) poison damage. If the flower moves, the engulfed target moves with it. The flower can have only one creature engulfed at a time.

Toxin Splash. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, range 20/40 ft., one target and all adjacent targets. *Hit*: 13 (3d8) poison damage and the target must make a DC 15 Constituion saving throw or become poisoned. While poisoned the target takes 13 (3d8) poison damage at the start of its turn. The poisoned target may repeat the saving throw at the end of its turn to end the poisoned condition.

REACTION

Gushing Wound. As a reaction to being hit by a critical hit the crypt flower uses toxin splash against the target if it is within 5 feet of it.

D11. ANTECHAMBER

Stairs descend into the center of a circular room where an overturned brazier spills cold ashes on the floor. Passageways lead out to the east and west, and a statue stands in an alcove at each of the ordinal directions. The statues depict angelic beings in poses of peaceful contemplation or rest. The floor of the chamber tells another tale, however, as it is smeared with bloodstains and scattered with the broken bodies of several formerly undead creatures.

This chamber was once guarded by a pack of ghasts who attacked the knights upon their arrival. The battle was bloody but successful. In addition, a living wall occupied the hidden northern passage. Its destruction led to the additional clutter of dismembered corpse parts, though they cannot be differentiated from the remains of the other creatures in the room. Currently another advanced living wall called a **zoetic wall** covers the northern passage where it is disguised by *permanent image* to appear as the surrounding walls (DC 19 Wisdom saving throw to disbelieve if interacted with). This living wall will not attack anyone that approaches unless discovered and attacked first.

ZOETIC WALL

Large construct, unaligned

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 178 (17d10 + 85)

Speed 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	9 (-1)	20 (+5)	3 (-4)	11 (+0)	1 (-5)

Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire

Damage Immunities poison, psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't adamantine

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

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages understands the languages of its creator but can't speak

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

False Appearance. Normally a zoetic wall is easily identifiable as it is made up of bones mortared together with flesh. This particle golem has a permanent glamour cast on it which it is indistinguishable from the surrounding wall it is attached to while the golem remains motionless.

Fleshy Link. A zoetic wall that is adjacent to another living wall automatically links with it, forming an impassable solid barrier. Linked living walls coordinate their attacks and move as one creature. Any linked wall can unlink itself as a free action. Any damage to one linked living wall is divided evenly among all linked zoetic walls (for example, if three walls are linked and one takes 15 points of damage, each wall instead takes 5

points of damage). Two or three linked living walls count as a Huge creature for the purpose of effects affected or limited by size, four or five count as Gargantuan, and six or more count as Gargantuan (titanic).

Immutable Form. The golem is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Magic Resistance. The golem has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Magic Weapons. The golem's weapon attacks are magical.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The golem makes two slam attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 19 (3d8 + 6) bludgeoning damage and if the target Large or smaller it is grappled (Escape DC 18).

Wall Crush (Recharge 5–6). The golem targets one or more creatures it can see within 10 feet of it or a creature it has grappled it then attempts to crush them against a wall. Each target must make a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw against this attack. On a failed save, a target takes 56 (16d6) bludgeoning damage and is stunned for 1 minute or half damage and not stunned on a success.

REACTIONS

Crushing Push. As a reaction to grappling a target the golem may use wall crush if available.

Development: An examination of the floor with a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception or Survival) check clearly shows the footprints of the knights among the jumble of the obvious combat, and it appears that some of the blood spatters are theirs though there are no signs that any of the knights fell in the battle. Likewise, there is no trail to show where they exited by either the east or west corridors — the prints are simply too jumbled up and don't extend beyond the room in either of those directions. In fact, the knights traveled north after defeating the living wall that was there, but their trail is covered by the placement of the new living wall. If this second living wall is destroyed, then the knights' trail can be found heading beyond (see **D13**).

D12. WESTERN CATACOMBS

The corridor to the west leads through several mausolea with niches that hold the remains of ancient Hyperboreans. Each of the niches on the map contains three individual slabs arranged atop each other like a bookshelf, with a corpse laid on each. Most of these contain only dust and bone fragments, though a few are mysteriously empty. Copper nameplates that once graced these niches have now corroded to illegibility. Each of the branching corridors ends at a collapse from the ancient catastrophe that struck the city.

D13. NORTHERN CATACOMBS

This passage is similar to **D12**, except the trail of the knights can be spotted with a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) or Wisdom (Survival) check and followed with a DC 20 Wisdom (Survival) check. Exploration of the catacombs is made more difficult by a series of living walls that were placed here by the Underguild to protect access to the sewers. These walls have successfully crushed a number of wanderers over the years, and their bodies were added to the walls themselves. After rounding the first corner to the west the knights destroyed a second living wall they encountered. Since then another **zoetic wall** has taken up position to the east and will follow and attack the PCs if they pass by. Successfully following the knights' trail will guide the PCs to the sewers at area **E**.

ZOETIC WALL

hp 178 (see page 459)

D14. EASTERN CATACOMBS

A catacomb hall extends eastward here, lined by burial niches stacked three high along the walls. The ceiling is higher here, fully 20 feet, and above each of these stacks of niches is an alcove with an angelic statue matching those in the antechamber. The hallway ends abruptly 45 feet away at a wall of pure blackness. Whether it is supernatural darkness or merely a wall of some impossibly black material is unclear from your vantage point.

This hallway's burial niches are identical to those in **D12**. The "black wall" at the far end is a permanent magical *darkness* effect (cast as a 4th-level spell) that is only a few inches thick but completely obscures the doorway at the end of the hall. The angel statues are **4 greater graven guardians** dedicated to the faith of The Blessed Tesseract. They remain inanimate unless they are attacked or someone attempts to pass beyond the dark barrier. If that occurs, they immediately leap down to destroy the intruders. They do not pursue beyond this hallway and will return to their

alcoves if their quarry escapes. From their alcoves they have total cover and total concealment from anyone in area **D12**.

Beyond the wall of darkness, a locked round stone door emblazoned with the sign of the Blessed Tesseract protects the chamber beyond. Should the PCs successfully open the door, it will silently roll aside, revealing the room beyond.

Locked Stone Door: 6 in. thick; damage threshold 8; hp 90; Strength (Athletics) DC 25; Thieves' Tools DC 30.

GREATER GRAVEN GUARDIANS (4)

Large construct, unaligned
Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 178 (17d10 + 85)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	9 (-1)	20 (+5)	3 (-4)	11 (+0)	1 (-5)

Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire
Damage Immunities poison, psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't adamantine
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Understands the languages of its creator but can't speak
Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Faith Bound. The golem cannot attack any creature that openly wears or displays the holy or unholy symbol of the deity to which the golem is dedicated unless that creature first attacks the golem. These particle golems are dedicated to The Blessed Tesseract.

Favoured Weapons. The golem's weapon attacks are magical. In addition, if it is wielding the favoured weapon of the deity, it is dedicated to the weapon is +2 and scores critical hits on a 19 or 20 (included in the spear attack).

Immutable Form. The golem is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Magic Resistance. The golem has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The golem makes two keen spear attacks.

Keen Spear. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +12 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 21 (3d8 + 8) piercing. This weapon scores a critical hit on a 19 or 20.

Haste (3/Day). The golem hastes itself (as the haste spell) or another golem of the same faith.

Rest Eternal. The golem may place a curse upon a dead creature that bars its spirit from returning. Anyone casting a spell that would communicate with the dead creature, return it to life, or turn it into an undead creature must succeed on a DC 15 Charisma ability check. Rest eternal cannot be dispelled, but it can be negated with *remove curse* or an 8th-level *dispel magic*.

D15. ETERNAL GUARDIAN

Beyond the great door lies a large oval-shapped room. Its central portion is dominated by a pool of water that perfectly reflects the room in its still surface. An ancient votive altar stands at either end of the chamber, and directly across from the entrance is an elaborately carved door showing images of an honor guard of Hyperborean knights standing in solemn ranks. Before this doorway stands a man. He is human and extremely old, with a short white beard and weary gray eyes. He is clad in richly embroidered robes of white and holds a gnarled staff in one hand.

The altars at either end of this chamber show images of the Blessed Tesseract and have no special properties. The pool is 3 feet deep with still water and likewise hides nothing of interest, though its floor is covered in slime and requires a DC 15 Acrobatics check to avoid slipping. The chamber's primary feature is the old man standing before the opposite door. He initially speaks in High Boros[LL8-30] upon their entry. If no one speaks the language, he repeats himself several times. If he is addressed in Common, Infernal, or Celestial, he smiles and speak in that language.

"I am the guardian of this honored tomb, and I have sworn an oath to allow no one who is not worthy to pass. To prove your worth, you must answer my riddles. Or, if you choose the way of dishonor, I will face you in battle, but I warn you that I have survived to become so old for a reason."

The man does not tell the PCs his name and says nothing other than to repeat his request that they answer his riddles. If

the party chooses to do so, he asks as follows. If the PCs don't seem interested, he asks his first riddle anyway in hopes of piquing their interest that there is more here than it seems.

Q: Why would a people reviled in life receive honor in death?

A: This can be a pretty freeform answer, but something along the lines of there was more to the story than had been known or they had done something worthy of honor in life that was not known until after their death, etc.

Q: When is a tomb in use but empty?

A: When it is a cenotaph/memorial.

Q: Who knows the true reason for a death when there are no survivors?

A: The dead (or possibly the gods for the more religious PCs).

If the PCs can answer 2 of the 3 riddles, they will be allowed to pass into **D16**, and will receive XP as if they had defeated the old man in combat. Should they wish to fight, the old man will transform into his true form, that of a **royal naga**, one of a long line of nagas tasked with guarding the tomb since its construction over 2,000 years ago. His predecessors survived the fall of the city by being here in the catacombs, and their descendants have continued to serve faithfully, a new one arriving every few hundred years to take up the watch of the prior one.

In addition to the naga, there are 2 traps in this chamber, as indicated on the map, that are held in abeyance as long as the encounter remains peaceful. However, if the naga is attacked or determines that combat will be necessary, he reactivates the trap with a mental command as a free action in hopes that the PCs will spring them in their aggression. He is aware of the traps' locations and will not enter their areas of effect.

ROYAL NAGA

Large monstrosity, lawful neutral
Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 195 (15d10 + 45)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	19 (+4)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +8, Con +7, Int +7, Wis +8, Cha +8
Damage Resistance bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages Celestial, Common
Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Spellcasting. The naga is an 11th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks), and it needs only verbal components to cast its spells. It has the following cleric spells prepared:

- Cantrips (at will): *mending*, *sacred flame*, *thaumaturgy*
- 1st level (4 slots): *command*, *cure wounds*, *shield of faith*
- 2nd level (3 slots): *calm emotions*, *hold person*
- 3rd level (3 slots): *bestow curse*, *clairvoyance*
- 4th level (3 slots): *banishment*, *freedom of movement*
- 5th level (2 slots): *flame strike*, *geas*
- 6th level (1 slot): *true seeing*

Regeneration. The naga regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn. If the naga takes acid or fire damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of the naga's next turn. The naga dies only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

Rejuvenation. If it dies, the naga returns to life in 1d6 days and regains all its hit points. Only a wish spell can prevent this trait from functioning.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 45 (10d8) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Spit Poison. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +8 to hit, range 15/30 ft., one creature. *Hit*: The target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 45 (10d8) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Traps: Sections of the ceiling suspended by heavy chains are rigged to smash down and crush anyone unfortunate enough to walk underneath each 10-foot square beneath them. A cunning counterweight mechanism allows this trap to automatically reset themselves 5 minutes after being triggered.

CRUSHING CEILING TRAPS

Creatures underneath either of these traps must make a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw or take 42 (12d6) bludgeoning damage, or half as much on a successful saving throw. In addition, creatures failing their saving throw are restrained by the fallen ceiling until they can succeed on a DC 20 Dexterity check or Strength (Athletics) check to get themselves free. If they cannot free themselves, they must make a DC 20 Strength saving throw at the end of each of their turns or take an additional 21 (6d6) bludgeoning damage, or half as much on a successful saving throw.

Creatures that succeed on a DC 22 Wisdom (Perception) check notice the ceilings about to descend just in time and gain advantage on their Dexterity saving throw. A creature proficient with Thieves' Tools that notices the trap in time can instead make a DC 22 Thieves' Tools check to disarm one of the traps.

D16. OGEDAN'S "TOMB"

Beyond the pool chamber is a trapezohedral room with a double row of columns framing the entrance to a wide alcove dais on the far side. Within the alcove stands a life-size statue of a horse and rider. The rider wears the antique garb of a Hun warrior of thousands of years ago, and sits astride his galloping horse in a position of shouting to someone ahead of him, with one hand to mouth, while pointing at something behind him with the other arm. Such a life-like and clearly expensively rendered statue seems odd in this place and with a subject matter of the people who were the mortal enemies of Hyperborea for so many centuries.



Beyond the naga's chamber it is apparent that this is truly a cenotaph rather than a tomb. The monument in the back alcove clearly depicts an equestrian Hundaei warrior. An inscription at the statue's base in High Boros says:

Their noble sacrifice did what warning give?

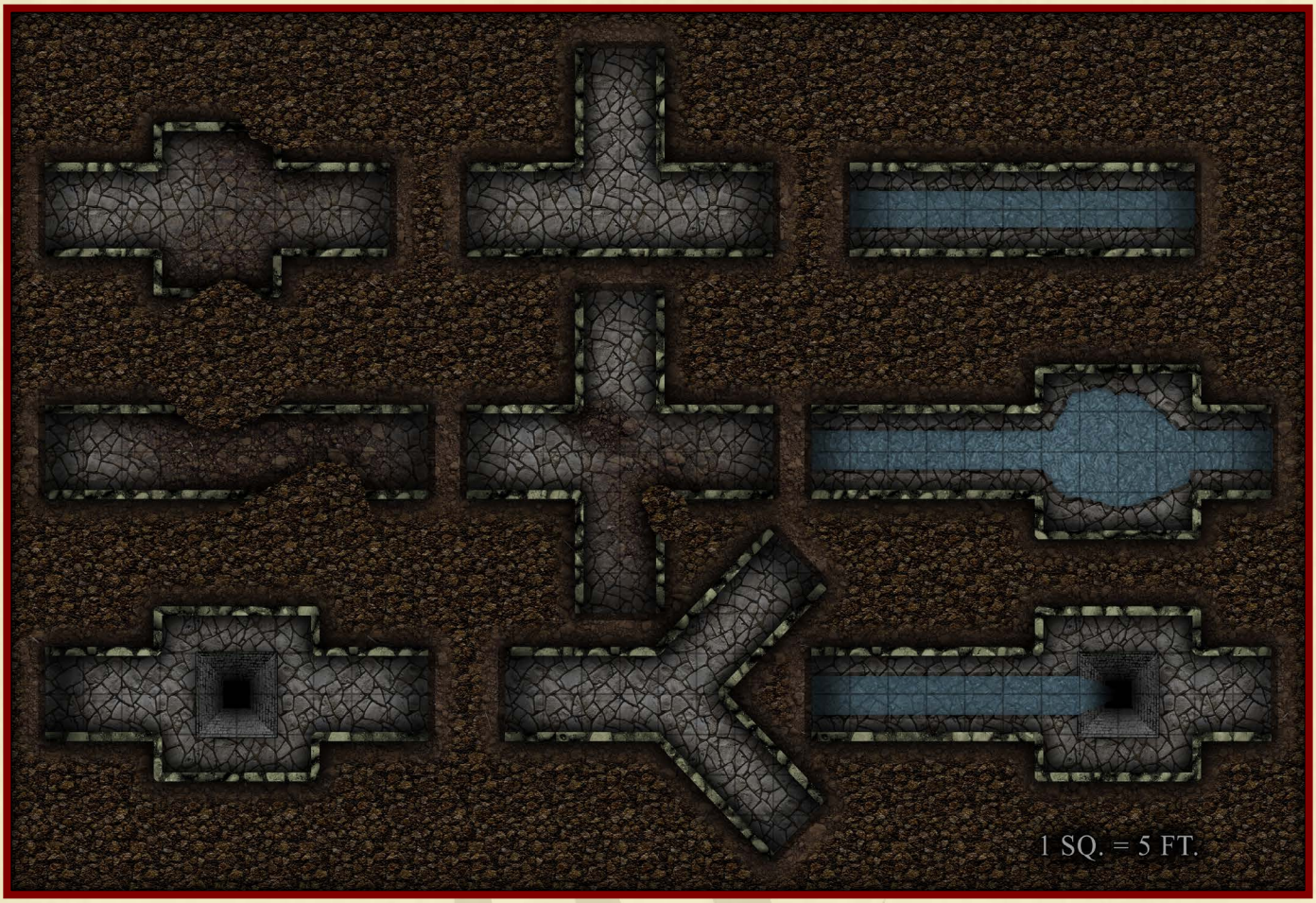
In Memoriam: Great Khan Ogedan and the Hundaei Civil War.

681 I.R.–683 I.R.

Though the public was never informed of its existence, this memorial is indicative of the fact that certain high-ranking priests, wizards, and other advisors looking into the causes and effects of the great Hun civil war were unable to discover anything for certain but had a strong suspicion and cryptic divinatory hints that the war of annihilation that the Hundaei perpetrated on themselves actually served to prevent some far worse fate from befalling the world. The Hyperborean Imperator was informed of this, but rather than sacrifice the flush of victory sweeping the empire, he authorized this secret memorial to be built and the matter to be largely hushed up since no more definitive information could be found. This is, no doubt, an interesting historical revelation for the PCs but bears no seeming pertinence to their current mission… though they will likely discover differently by the end of the adventure.

E. THE SEWERS

Anyone traveling through the sewers will find these finely constructed brick tunnels are still mostly intact, except for areas under the blast zone where many have collapsed. Some of the tunnels are dry, but some still carry water that has drained from the swamp district out to the river. There are also sporadically areas showing signs of habitation by creatures, both bestial and civilized. Unless otherwise noted, the night creatures of the city do not enter these tunnels. Those tunnels that lead to areas used by the Underguild have traps as well as gaurdian deathtrap oozes, a favorite of the Underguild. Tracking the knights through these tunnels from the catacombs (see area **D13**) will eventually lead the PCs to the dungeon levels below the destroyed Tower of Oerson (area **G**).



The sewers are treated in a somewhat abstract manner; given their vast and sprawling nature a full map isn't provided, and GMs should simply roll for encounters and use the accompanying sectional maps to play out any combats or other interactions.

Water: Pools and streams of water in the sewers range from 1–3 feet deep. Characters wading in this water have disadvantage on Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks and take a -1 penalty on Dexterity saving throws (except against fire effects, on which they gain a +1 bonus instead).

Pit: Pits range from 10–60 feet deep. Streams sometimes empty into these pits, and in such cases there is 1–6 feet of water at the bottom of the pits.

Rubble: Areas of rubble are difficult terrain and provide **half cover**.

The trip takes 2d4 hours, with a 2 in 6 chance of an encounter every hour, or the GM may roll as many encounters as seems appropriate for the journey. When an encounter occurs, use one of the sewer section maps provided to stage it.

Table 2-1: Curgantium Sewers Random Encounters

D12	Encounter
1	1d3 gelatinous cubes[SRD]
2	1d3 hivemind rat swarms (see **Area G4**)
3	1d4+1 gricks[SRD]
4	3d4 giant amoebas (see **Appendix C**)
5	1d4+1 amoeba swarms (see **Appendix C**)
6	1d3 black puddings[SRD]
7	1d3 voracious gibbering mouthers (see **Area F6**)
8	Zoetic wall (see **Area D11**)
9	1d6 flesh golems[SRD]
10	1d3 otyughs[SRD]
11	Underguild Patrol
12	Crushing Ceiling Trap (see **Area D15**)

Underguild Patrol: These groups of vampires patrol the sewer tunnels for the Underguild to ensure their lairs are secure from intruders. When they become aware of intruders, they prefer to attack from ambush relying on their undead nature to hide beneath water, near traps, and other obstacles to leap out when unexpected. These patrols consist of a vampire sorcerer (statistics identical to Dhaderra at area C4) leading 1d4+1 vampire spawn scouts.

UNDERGUILD SCOUTS

Hp 112 (as vampire spawn[SRD])

VAMPIRE SORCERER

Hp 144 (see page 442)

F. RUINED THEATER

Built at the very edge of the initial blast zone, most of this ancient structure was flattened and the rest left in scorched ruin (treat rubbles piles as scree). All that remains are the stage area and one partial wall that still holds a few viewing boxes. There is not much left of the place since all of the wooden adornments (seats, props, stage floor, etc.) were burned in the fire and disintegrated by a thousand years of exposure.

F1. EXTERIOR WALL

This single standing wall is all that remains of a theater's once-grand structure. Its outer portion faced the center of the city, eerily you can see the scorched silhouettes of men and women long dead seared into its base where they fell in their throes of agony.

Anyone making a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check notices another silhouette on the exterior wall, this one located about 20 feet above the ground. It appears to be a humanoid figure, at least a head taller than a normal human, with the suggestion of moth-like wings extending from its shoulders. These are the remains of the mothman that came to herald Curgantium's doom but was itself caught up in the destruction. Now a dread wraith, the mothman manifests each night at the time of the opera's last performance as cryptically described by the caulborn at area **C7**. See **Event 4** for details of this manifestation.

F2. INTERIOR WALL

The inner portion of the wall still contains some of the old viewing boxes, but these look unstable and there is no obvious means of reaching them from the ground. Some of the wall's old decorations can still be seen — carved flourishes and the masks of comedy and tragedy giving confirmation to the building's original purpose.

The stairs up to the boxes fell along with the rest of the theater, but a DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check allows PCs to clamber up the wall and inspect the boxes. As noted, they are unstable and anyone putting their full weight on one of them will have to make a DC 22 Dexterity saving throw. On a failure, the box collapses and the character falls, taking 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage. A DC 20 Dexterity saving throw halves this damage, but on a 1 the falling PC takes an additional 21 (6d6) bludgeoning damage from falling boxes in addition to the falling damage.

Anyone on the ground making a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check sees some indistinct, sinuous movement among the viewing boxes above. This is **Cellichos** (see below), lurking in the shadows and observing the party. If observed he immediately vanishes, disincorporating and disappearing into the cracks and crevices of the wall. A search of the wall and boxes will reveal nothing.

THE WORM THAT WALKS (CR 13)

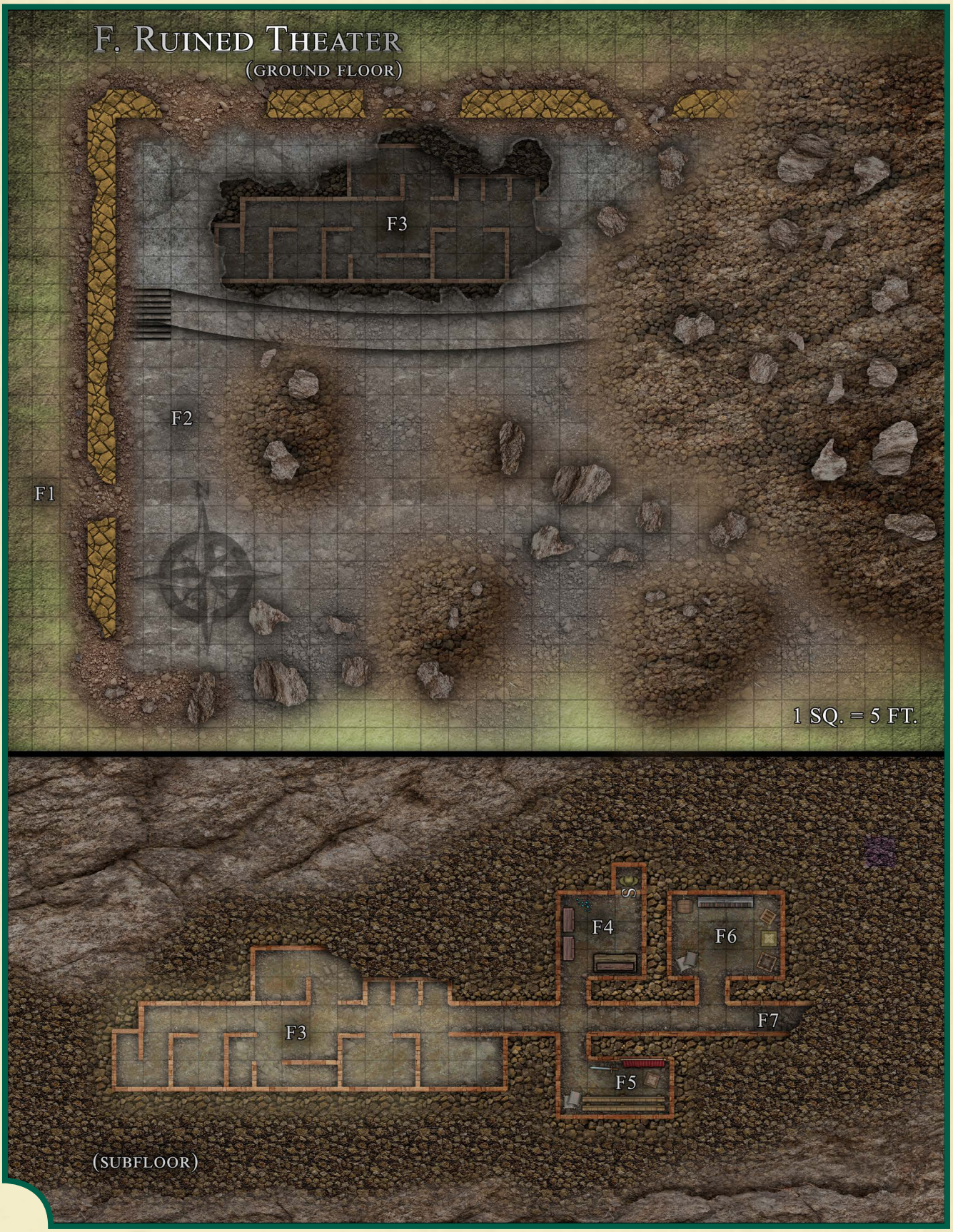
Unknown to the PCs, some elements of the theater's old inhabitants linger on. Lord Cellichos was a Hyperborean nobleman with a fondness for the theater and was the director of the opera's final performance. Obsessed with the bizarre opera The King in Yellow, Cellichos bankrupted himself and several partners in his quest to see it performed. Broke but triumphant, Cellichos watched the performance from his private box, and went mad along with the rest of the audience at the arrival of an avatar of Hastur. Moments later, before the horrific avatar could spread its madness to the rest of the city and from there the entire world, the Tower of Oerson exploded, shattering the theater and trapping Cellichos in the rubble, where he lingered in agony for hours until the raging fires reached him. Cellichos did not fully die that night, and his tormented psyche was reborn as the **worm that walks** which still haunts the old opera house.

LORD CELLICHOS THE WORM THAT WALKS

Medium undead, chaotic evil
Armor Class 12 (15 with mage armor)
Hit Points 153 (18d8 + 18)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Int +9, Wis +6
Skills Arcana +13, History +13
Damage Resistances damage from spells;


F. Ruined Theater
(ground floor)
F3
F2
F1
N
1 SQ. = 5 FT.
S
F4
F6
F7
F3
F5
(subfloor)

nonmagical bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing (from stoneskin)
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages Abyssal, Common, Elven, High Boros, Protean
Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Spellcasting. Lord Cellichos is an 12th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). Lord Cellichos can cast *disguise self* and *invisibility* at will and has the following sorcerer spells prepared:

- Cantrips (at will): *acid splash*, *fire bolt*, *light*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *shocking grasp*
- 1st level (4 slots): *burning hands*, *color spray*, *mage armor**
- 2nd level (3 slots): *blur*, *see invisibility*
- 3rd level (3 slots): *tongues*, *lightning bolt*
- 4th level (3 slots): *black tentacles*, stoneskin*
- 5th level (3 slots): *cone of cold*, *cloudkill*
- 6th level (1 slot): *globe of invulnerability*

* *Lord Cellichos casts these spells on itself before combat.*

Discorporate. A worm that walks can collapse into a shapeless swarm of worms (treat as a polymorph spell that allows Lord Cellichos to turn into a swarm of insects) as a bonus action. All held, worn, and carried items fall to the ground. Lord Cellichos can reform into his true form (including equipping all gear in reach) as an action as long as he has at least 1 hit point.

Regeneration. Lord Cellichos regains 10 hit points at the start of his turn if it has at least 1 hit point and isn't in sunlight or a body of running water. If Lord Cellichos takes acid, fire, or radiant damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of the his's next turn. Lord Cellichos is destroyed only if he starts his turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

Magic Resistance. Lord Cellichos has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Sorcery. Lord Cellichos has 12 sorcery points. He may use a bonus action to recover spent spell slots at 1 per spell level being recovered or he can use them to enhance his spell by spending 2 points to turn a spells casting time into a bonus action or 1 point to reroll the damage die of damaging spells (he must accept the reroll).

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Lord Cellichos makes two attacks with his claws and uses Burrowing Worm.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage plus 7 (2d6) necrotic damage and the target is exposed to the burrowing worm trait.



Burrowing Worm. A 1d4+1 worm launches from Lord Cellichos at one humanoid that the he can see within 10 feet of him. The worm latches onto the target's skin unless the target succeeds on a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw. The worm is a Tiny undead with AC 6, 1 hit point, a 2 (–4) in every ability score, and a speed of 1 foot. While on the target's skin, the worm can be killed by normal means or scraped off using an action (Lord Cellichos can use this action to launch a scraped-off worm at a humanoid he can see within 10 feet of the worm). Otherwise, the worm burrows under the target's skin at the end of the target's next turn, dealing 1 piercing damage to it. At the end of each of its turns thereafter, the target takes 7 (2d6) necrotic damage per worm infesting it (maximum of 10d6). A worm-infested target dies if it drops to 0 hit points, then rises 10 minutes later as a spawn of Kyuss. If a worm-infested creature is targeted by an effect that cures disease or removes a curse, all the worms infesting it wither away.

Tactics: Enraged and hopelessly mad, the remains of Lord Cellichos will attack the adventurers while they are exploring the basement, hoping to catch them as they deal with the gibbering mouthers at F5 and F6. Though mad, Cellichos is also cunning, allowing the mouthers to distract the party while casting spells, discorporating to inflict damage, then reforming to cast more spells. All the while he babbles in a warbling mixture of languages, including Common and High Boros, shouting theatrical sounding comments such as "Show me more emotion!", "You are flat! Flaaat!", "You fool! Put your heart into your aria, or you'll be back playing summer stock!" and "You are all idiots! I'm the genius here! ME!"

Development: Once Lord Cellichos is defeated, he collapses into a mass of corruption and wriggling worms. If the characters watch the worms, they will see that they are all crawling in a single mass away toward area F7.

F3. STAGE AREA

Most of the old stage has collapsed, giving way benath the heavy weights of time and the elements, but some floor space remains around the edges. Visible beneath the gaping pit of the stage is a network of understage rooms below, exposed by the stage's destruction.

The floor of the rooms under the stage is about 8 feet down and can easily be jumped to without requiring a skill check. Climbing out requires a DC 7 Strength (Athletics) check. The remains of these rooms are empty save for the city's ubiquitous dust and rubble, but a single clear hallway leads farther east, into some basement rooms that still survive.

F4. DRESSING ROOM

This surviving dressing room is thick with dust, but a few fragments of its old furnishings have defied the ravages of time — some broken chairs, the glittering pieces of a long-broken mirror, the remains of some costumes. These last include a moldering harlequin's outfit complete with mask, a few tatters of a black scholar's robe, and an exaggerated military uniform.

Bards and others with knowledge of theatrical history (such as those proficient in History or Performance) can make DC 15 skill checks to recognize these as the costumes of stock characters, similar to those of the *commedia dell'arte*. If the room is searched, a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals a stone door in one corner of the room concealed by rubble and dirt. It opens easily. If the PCs open the door, read the following.

A figure stands in the small storage space revealed. It is tall and commanding, clad in tattered yellow robes. It wears a tall crown on its head and its face is concealed behind a featureless mask. In the shadows, it seems to be reaching for you, but an instant later the entire figure crumbles, revealing a rotting wood mannequin beneath. Like the other objects in the room, it was just a costume, but its image still flickers and writhes in your mind.

This was a spare costume of the titular *King in Yellow*, painstakingly crafted from patterns that Cellichos claimed were delivered to him in a dream. At the time of the performance, rumors abounded that simply creating the costume had driven several seamstresses mad. It remained untouched here since the fall of Curgantium, until the party disturbed it and the corruption of centuries did its work. If the GM wishes, PCs who viewed the costume may have disturbing dreams and visions of the King in Yellow for some time to come.

F5. PROP ROOM

The room is dark and crowded with junk, including scraps of costumes, stage weapons and armor, wooden false walls, canvas doors, and other similar props.

Most of this junk crumbles to dust at a touch, and some of it is piled high in one corner — or so it seems. While there is nothing of value here, if the party brings in a light source, the supposed pile of debris in the corner will open a dozen or so eyes, unfurl its tentacles, and open its numerous mouths, filling the air with a horrific babble of voices. This is a **voracious gibbering mouther**. If it is disturbed by a light, roll for initiative normally, but if the PCs disturb it in the dark, it will receive a surprise round before they can react. In addition, its gibbering summons the mouther from **F6**, which arrives one round after combat begins.

VORACIOUS GIBBERING MOUTHER

Large aberration, neutral

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 127 (15d10 + 45)

Speed 10 ft., swim 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	3 (-4)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

Skills Perception +3

Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning

Condition Immunities prone

Senses blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages --

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Aberrant Ground. The ground in a 10-foot radius around the mouther is doughlike difficult terrain. Each creature that starts its turn in that area must succeed on a DC 10 Strength saving throw or have its speed reduced to 0 until the start of its next turn.

Gibbering. The mouther babbles incoherently while it can see any creature and isn't incapacitated. Each creature that starts its turn within 20 feet of the mouther and can hear the gibbering must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, the creature can't take reactions until the start of its next turn and rolls a d8 to determine what it does during its turn. On a 1 to 4, the creature does nothing. On a 5 or 6, the creature takes no action or bonus action and uses all its movement to move in a randomly determined direction. On a 7 or 8, the creature makes a melee attack against a randomly determined creature within its reach or does nothing if it can't make such an attack.

Magic Resistance. The mouther has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The gibbering mouther makes three bite attacks and, if it can, uses its Blinding Spittle.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 21 (5d6 + 4) necrotic damage. If the target is Medium or smaller, it must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is killed by this damage, it is absorbed into the mouther.

Blinding Spittle (Recharge 5–6). The mouther spits a chemical glob at a point it can see within 25 feet of it. The glob explodes in a blinding flash of light on impact. Each creature within 5 feet of the flash must succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or be blinded until the end of the mouther's next turn.

Engulf. The mouther moves up to its speed. While doing so, it can enter Large or smaller creatures' spaces. Whenever the mouther enters a creature's space, the creature must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw. On a successful save, the creature can choose to be pushed 5 feet back or to the side of the mouther. A creature that chooses not to be pushed suffers the consequences of a failed saving throw. On a failed save, the mouther enters the creature's space, and the creature takes 10 (3d6) necrotic damage and is engulfed. The engulfed creature can't breathe, is restrained, and takes 21 (6d6) necrotic damage at the start of each of the mouther's turns. When the mouther moves, the engulfed creature moves with it.

F6. STORAGE

This room is full of junk. In addition to the rotted remains of sacks, barrels, crates, and their various unidentifiable contents, there is a tottering stone bookshelf that appears to still have a number of intact volumes still on it.

Anyone discovering these shelves who can read High Boros discovers that they include several plays, musicals, operas, and historical volumes that might be of interest to collectors if they are carefully preserved. Handling these fragile volumes requires a successful DC 15 Dexterity check, and yields 2d6 x 100 gp worth of scrolls, books, pamphlets, folios and other items. A failure indicates that the materials have crumbled to dust.

One of the books is a slim, leather-bound volume that seems to be fully intact in defiance of the ravages of time. Unfortunately, this is the libretto for the opera's last performance, the dread *King in Yellow*. Upon removing the volume, the PC will glimpse a strange yellow sigil (that will look familiar to them if they have previously played through the adventure ***Race for Shataakh-Uulm***), then the book disintegrates into a cloud of yellowish dust. Any character witnessing this must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1d4 minutes. The PCs will not be able to determine the exact nature or title of the play, though given the description, some will undoubtedly be suspicious.

The storage room also contains another voracious gibbering mouther identical to the one in **Area F5**, which attacks and summons its fellow from area **F5** if disturbed.

F7. RUBBLE-FILLED CORRIDOR

A DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check at this dead end allows the PCs to locate a skeletal hand partially buried in the debris, and if excavated, Cellichos' remains will be discovered. However, as long as the worm that walks lives, he will not allow these remains to be excavated. Read the italicized portion of the description for all PCs who experienced the ***Race for Shataakh-Uulm*** and witnessed the Yellow Sign there.

The scorched skeleton is ancient, almost reduced to powder, and covered in writhing worms that disintegrate even as you watch. A few tatters of fine clothing still cling to the remains, and in its bony hands it holds a stage prop — a bronze triskelion, the shape of the sigil that you saw in the mines beneath the Pit of the Burning Star.

Of course, it is the Yellow Sign, clutched tightly in his hands as he died. If they haven't guessed already, the sigil will provide a vital clue to what opera was being performed on Curgantium's last fateful night.

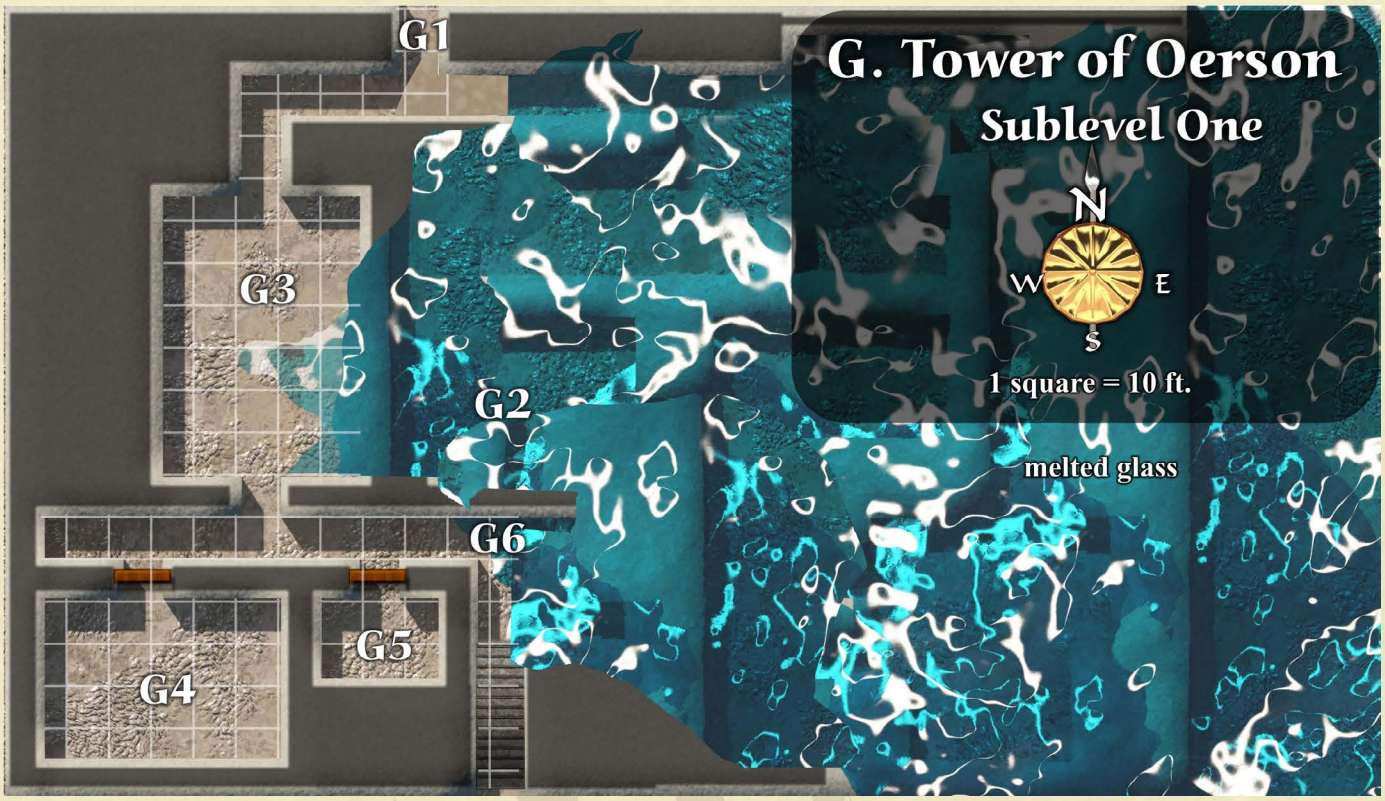
CHAPTER THREE: THE TOWER OF OERSON

The Tower of Oerson was the imperial citadel of the Hyperborean Empire. Its foundations were laid in –11 I.R. and it was completed in –2 I.R., though most people believe its completion coincided with the coronation of Polemarch Oerson as Imperator of the Hyperborean Empire — which in itself is a fictional event as Polemarch Oerson was never crowned as imperator. After the the death of Oerson in –28 I.R., Oerson's grandsons, Oesson and Oeric, ruled as co-regents throughout the Hyperborean Rebellion and construction of the Tower of Oerson. It was not until Oeric abdicated his claim on the throne and established the holy city of Tircople in the East that Oesson combined the two co-regent crowns and became the first Imperator of the Hyperborean Empire in 28 I.R.

Until its destruction in 2496 I.R. (along with the rest of the city and a good portion of the continent), the Tower of Oerson was quite literally the center of the empire. It was within the archives, laboratories, and scrying chambers of the massive citadel that the greatest minds and spellcasters of the empire worked to reverse by feats of great magic the polar shift that had encompassed Boros in 2491 I.R. And it was the undoing of this audacious attempt that destroyed the tower and brought an end to the Hyperborean Empire in the West.

Today the tower is little more than the footprint of its stone foundations fused into a great field of opaque, nearly indestructible glass. To the minds of most the tower was melted down to this stump and is no more. But while the influx of molten glass flowed into and destroyed much of the tower's substructures, some of its deeper dungeons did survive the destruction, and can be reached through still-extant sewer tunnels that run beneath the city. The knights discovered this fact as they endured their mission in Curgantium, beset by the nightly dream invasions. Through esoteric means and great deductive reasoning, the brilliant Sir Nimulus was able to reason that the source of these invasive dreams resided in the dungeons beneath the tower, so the knights launched an expedition to infiltrate these dungeons and put a stop to them.

Unfortunately, what the knights didn't know was that the source of the dreams wasn't some cursed foundation stone of the tower, but rather the living embodiment of nightmare that had taken up residence in those dungeons in the form of the ancient nightmare dragon calling itself



the Mindwyrm. Expecting undead guardians or cursed artifacts, the knights were shocked to encounter a powerful dragon and were quickly defeated and trapped. Sir Nimulus and Sir Aix were eaten by the Mindwyrm, and the others were imprisoned. Because of the lingering energies that filled the old Tower of Oerson, its foundation and sub-levels bear the same powerful enchantments against scrying and divination that are found at the knights' base camp, so it is impossible to determine the location or fates of the surviving knights by these means.

G. TOWER OF OERSON SUBLEVEL ONE

The original sublevels of the Tower of Oerson were intended for storage, study, and living quarters for workers and acolytes. The lowest levels were for the storage of valuable objects and treasure, as well as summoning and communication with especially powerful entities such as demons, demigods, and extradimensional beings. Much of the upper sublevels was filled with a flood of molten glass caused by the tower's explosion. The remainder of the sublevels, though, were carved from bedrock, and remain relatively intact even ten centuries after the catastrophe. The floors of these halls and chambers are not overly dusty due to the frequent movement of its occupants, so the PCs will be unable to track the knight's progress once they are past area **G1**. Ceilings are 20 feet high unless otherwise noted.

The entire tower and its environs are under the influence of the Mindwyrm and his allies, including the dreamthief hag Abruxes. Even in conditions of bright light within the tower sublevels, shadows shift and move alarmingly, and the PCs will constantly see darting shapes out of the corners of their eyes. The mind-energies of those who perished in the blast still swirl and circulate especially strongly here, creating an oppressive, ominous atmosphere. Every hour that the party is in the tower's sublevels, each member must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or suffer the fatigue condition from the incessant psychic pressure. These effects cease once the Mindwyrm has been defeated.

G1. ENTRANCE FROM THE SEWERS

This short corridor connects the sublevels to the city's sewer complex, through which the PCs likely have been traveling. This is the only practical entrance to the tower complex — the molten glass above is yards thick and blocks all other means of access. The glass is also resistant to magic and mundane damage, so removing it from above would be time-consuming and impractical (if even possible).

G2. GLASS INFLOW

These sections of the first sublevel were completely inundated by molten glass, superheated to such a temperature that it flowed like water, filling the corridors it

encountered before solidifying as it cooled. These barriers are smooth, completely solid and all but impervious to both physical blows and magic (concerted effort may chip away a few square inches of the material, but it will quickly become obvious that trying to remove large sections is useless).

Glass: damage threshold 8; hp 300*; Strength (Athletics) DC 35*; Climb DC 30.

* Per foot of thickness

G3. MESS HALL

The room is long and lined with stone tables, some of which have been broken and lie in a heap. A mass of solidified glass fills a third of the room. A fearful stench assails your nostrils.

Residents of the sublevel dined in this chamber, which has been partially filled with hardened glass. The knights have been here, as evidenced by signs of a struggle — marks in the dust, scratches on the walls, and blood stains (a DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals them to be relatively recent, certainly less than a week old).

The stench emanates from the decaying corpse of a night hag, partially concealed behind the pile of broken refuse, requiring a DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check to notice. Inspection shows that the hag was nearly decapitated by sword blows — more evidence that the missing knights passed this way.

G4. SERVANTS QUARTERS

The musty reek of a millennium wafts from the room. Inside are the remains of wooden furniture, clothing, and a scatter of ancient bones. The furniture is reduced to rotted outlines, but it appears that this chamber once contained several beds, chests, and possibly tables.

The various cooks, maids, launderers, attendants, and other servants lived in quarters on the sublevel, of which this chamber is one surviving example. Frightened by the tumult of battle when the knights fought some of the Mindwyrm's hag allies in the nearby mess hall, 2 hivemind rat swarms — mutates evolved from their long exposure to the psychic aura of death and magic over the tower ruins — sought refuge here and have been hiding ever since. Still scared, they will attack the PCs if they get too close.

HIVEMIND RAT SWARMS (2)

Huge swarm of Tiny beasts, unaligned
Armor Class 10
Hit Points 136 (13d12 + 52)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	19 (+4)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	3 (-4)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned
Senses darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages telepathy 30 ft.
Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Innate Spellcasting (Psionics). The swarm's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 13). As long as it has more than half of its hit points remaining, the swarm can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

- At will: *command*, *comprehend languages*, *detect thoughts*
- 1/day each: *confusion*, *dominate monster*

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

Swarming. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny beast. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points. A swarm takes half damage from attacks that use an attack roll and double damage from effects that require it to make a saving roll. Creatures that are not swarms are impaired while they remain in the swarm's space or within 5 feet of it and have disadvantage on attack rolls and Constitution saving throws to maintain concentration. The area of the swarm is considered difficult terrain.

ACTIONS

Swarming Bite. Each creature that shares a space with the swarm automatically takes 17 (5d6) piercing damage or 10 (3d6) piercing damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer.

Development: If one of the swarms is destroyed, the other will use its telepathy to communicate and ask for quarter. If the party agrees, the swarm can provide them with some information about the sublevels, telling them of the fight between the knights and the hags that took place a week ago. They will also tell the party that the sublevels are controlled by a fearsome creature called the Mindwyrm, and that the hags and other nightmare creatures serve it. They can provide little information about the Mindwyrm's exact nature, save that it has the power to send nightmares and give them form. If given quarter, the swarm will scurry away into the rubble and trouble the party no further.

G5. VESTMENTS

A cloud of dust bursts from the room when the door is opened. It is musty, ancient, and pungent, wafting from a pile of disintegrated cloth, fragments of parchment, rusted metal, and other unidentifiable debris. Something in the cloud of dust stirs, and dark, wizened figures lurch forward from it with outstretched arms.

This room once held sacred vestments and ritual garments and objects, as well as facilities for ablution and purification before dressing for sacred events. It is currently occupied by **4 bodaks**, which were drawn here by the planar disruptions from the tower's fall. They have lingered in this chamber in semi-awareness, only to be disturbed by the knights' nearby fight with the hags, and now fully awakened by the party's arrival.

BODAKS (4)

Medium undead, chaotic evil
Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 90 (12d8 + 36)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	18 (+4)	17 (+3)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	19 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Con +6, Wis +4
Skills Intimidation +7, Perception +4, Stealth +7
Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages Abyssal, the languages it knew in life
Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Death Gaze. When a creature that can see the bodak's eyes starts its turn within 30 feet of the bodak, the bodak can force it to make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw if the bodak isn't incapacitated and can see the creature. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the creature is reduced to 0 hit points, unless it is immune to the frightened condition. Otherwise, a creature takes 22 (4d10) necrotic damage on a failed save. Unless surprised, a creature can avert its eyes to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If the creature does so, it has disadvantage on attack rolls against the bodak until the start of its next turn. If the creature looks at the bodak in the meantime, it must immediately make the saving throw.

Sunlight Hypersensitivity. The bodak takes 2d6 radiant damage when it starts its turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, it has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The bodak makes three unarmed strikes.

Unarmed Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage plus 9 (2d8) necrotic damage.

Treasure: There is little left here, and the knights only gave the room a cursory glance before proceeding downstairs for their confrontation with the Mindwyrm. In doing so, they missed several items, preserved from the initial disaster and from the ravages of time by their inherent magic. Among the rotting remains of gowns and tunics lie a *monk's robe* and a *cord of stubborn resolve* (see **Appendix A**, page 123). Each of these items requires a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check to locate.

G6. STAIRS DOWN

Choked with rubble and a few trickles of glass inflow, the stairs can be negotiated but are reduced to only two or three feet wide in places. The stairs feel even more oppressive than elsewhere in the sublevel, and the darkness seems heavier, almost solid — this is a fear effect as described below. As the PCs descend, they are assailed by 2 feargaunts under the Mindwyrm's control. Their fear aura encompasses the entire staircase and explains the strange sensations and

deep darkness. One of the **feargaunts** will immediately use its never far behind ability to teleport adjacent to any character who failed a save against the fear aura while the second feargaunt will cast *phantasmal killer* on the most powerful of the remaining characters.

These creatures are not expected to defeat or slay the party but instead are trying to get their measure and hopefully damage the PCs before they reach the second sublevel. If one is slain, or if both are reduced to half hit points or less, the feargaunts will retreat back down the stairs and will join their fellows in the ambush at area **H1** below.

FEARGAUNTS (2)

Medium fiend, chaotic evil
Armor Class 16
Hit Points 78 (12d8 + 24)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	19 (+4)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +8, Wis +5
Skills Perception +9, Stealth +12
Damage Vulnerabilities radiant
Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison
Condition Immunities exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 19
Languages Common but can't speak
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The feargaunt's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (+6, DC 14). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

- At will: *fear*, *ghost sound* (as *prestidigitation* but sound only)
- 3/day each: *confusion*, *dream*, *phantasmal killer*

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

Never Far Behind (Recharge 4 – 6). As a bonus action, the feargaunt can teleport to an unoccupied space adjacent to a target that has taken Charisma damage or is frightened by its nightmare aura.

Nightmare Aura. A feargaunt is cloaked in a 60-foot-radius aura of fear, which manifests as darkened shadows, subtle rot, and skewed perspective. The first time a creature ends its turn within the aura, it must succeed at a DC 20 Wisdom save or be frightened for as long as it stays within the aura and until the end of its next round thereafter.

Prideful Defense. The feargaunt's AC includes its Charisma modifier.

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

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The feargaunt makes two tormenting touch attacks.

Tormenting Touch. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 14 (4d6) psychic damage. Unless the target is immune to psychic damage, the target's Charisma score is reduced by 1d4 each time it is hit by this attack. At Charisma 0, the victim falls into a nightmare-filled coma until at least 1 point of Charisma is restored. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a short or long rest.

H. TOWER OF OERSON SUBLEVEL TWO

The second sublevel was intended for the storage of treasures, artifacts, rare books and similar sensitive items, as well as for the ritualistic summoning and communication with powerful extraplanar beings. Much of the old magic remains here, preserving the level against outside forces and the ravages of time. The knights ventured here in hopes of finding the source of the nightmare creatures that had been plaguing them and had left one of their number (the unfortunate Sir Eregor, see **B13**) comatose. The knights succeeded in locating the source of the nightmares, but the creature proved too powerful, and now it and its wicked allies hold the surviving knights prisoner.



The second sublevel is the domain of the nightmare dragon called the Mindwyrm and its minions, including nightmare creatures, hags, and the dreamthief hag Abruxes. Having captured the knights, they are expecting more unwanted visitors and are prepared to meet the party directly.

H1. AMBUSH

The Mindwyrm and Abruxes are delighted to have taken the knights' stolen minds and hope to gather more from their would-be rescuers. To this end, they do not want to kill the adventurers unless absolutely necessary but do want to reduce their strength, and if needed, pare away characters that represent too much of a threat. To accomplish this they have set up an ambush at this point in the corridor, intended for a surprise attack to weaken the party.

There is a niche on either side of the staircase here, each containing a stone font that was originally intended for holy water. The fonts are now dry and otherwise nondescript but hiding incorporeally in the walls behind them are **2 dream spectres**, vaguely humanoid, shadowy creature of living nightmare incarnate. If the feargaunts survived battle in **G6**, they also wait incorporeally in the walls with the dream spectres.

DREAM SPECTRES (2)

Medium fiend, neutral evil
Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 105 (14d8 + 42)
Speed 0 ft., fly 60 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	19 (+4)	16 (+3)	6 (-2)	17 (+3)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Dex +8, Wis +7

Skills Insight +7, Perception +7, Stealth +8
Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 17
Languages Common, Dreamspeak
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The dream spectre's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (+7, DC 15). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

- At will: *dream*, *sleep* (5th level)

Dreamsense. A dream spectre can automatically pinpoint the presence of dreams within 100 feet. This ability only works against sleeping creatures.

Heart-Stopping Fear. When a creature that can see the dream spectre's true form's starts its turn within 30 feet of the dream spectre, the dream spectre can force it to make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw if the dream spectre isn't incapacitated and can see the creature. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the creature is reduced to 0 hit points, unless it is immune to the frightened condition. Otherwise, a creature takes 16 (3d10) psychic damage on a failed save. Unless surprised, a creature can avert its eyes to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If the creature does so, it has disadvantage on attack rolls against the dream spectre until the start of its next turn. If the creature looks at the dream spectre in the meantime, it must immediately make the saving throw.

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

Sunlight Powerlessness. While in sunlight, the dream spectre is stunned.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The dream spectre makes two incorporeal attacks.

Nightmare Touch. *Melee Spell Attack*: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 22 (5d8) psychic damage. Unless the target is immune to psychic damage, the target's Charisma score is reduced by 1d4 each time it is hit by this attack. At Charisma 0, the victim falls into a nightmare-filled coma until at least 1 point of Charisma is restored. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a short or long rest.

Tactics: If the dream spectres are not detected they will wait until the first two characters pass by, then step out and use their sleep ability on the PCs. If necessary, they then use their heart-stopping fear ability to disable or kill the PCs who remain conscious, then use their nightmare ability on any characters that are asleep. After the spectres' initial assault, the night hags and nagas at **H2** emerge and likewise attack PCs hopefully trapped on the stairs. As before, they attempt to injure or weaken any surviving PCs; their primary goal is to inflict damage before retreating down the corridor. If the PCs pursue, they'll be drawn into another ambush outside **H7**.

H2. GUARD ROOM

Inside this chamber are a wooden table, chairs, two empty armor racks, and a weapons rack with several longswords still on display. Two plain ceramic mugs and an empty oil lamp sit on the table. While there is some deterioration on all of these items, they give no signs of being over a millennium old.

When the tower was intact, two guards were normally stationed here. Now 2 night hags and their 2 nightmare dark naga henchmen hide here and listen, waiting for the dream spectres to spring their trap at H1. The dark nagas suppress their fear auras until they join the battle. See that area for details of their tactics.

NIGHT HAGS (2)

Hp 112 (night hags[SRD])

NIGHTMARE DARK NAGAS (2)

Large monstrosity, lawful evil
Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 195 (15d10 + 45)
Speed 40 ft., fly 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	19 (+4)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +8, Con +7, Int +7, Wis +8, Cha +8
Damage Resistance bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages Common, Dreamspeak
Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Spellcasting. The naga is a 9th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). The mage has the following wizard spells prepared:
Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt*, *light*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*
1st level (4 slots): *detect magic*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *shield*
2nd level (3 slots): *misty step*, *suggestion*
3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell*, *fireball*, *fly*
4th level (3 slots): *greater invisibility*, *ice storm*
5th level (1 slot): *cone of cold*

Guarded Thoughts. The naga is under a constant *mind blank* spell effect.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 45 (10d8) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Sting. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +8 to hit, reach 15 ft., one creature. *Hit*: The target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 45 (10d8) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Read Thoughts. The naga magically reads the surface thoughts of one creature within 60 feet of it. The effect can penetrate barriers, but 3 feet of wood or dirt, 2 feet of stone, 2 inches of metal, or a thin sheet of lead blocks it. While the target is in range, the naga can continue reading its thoughts, as long as the naga's concentration isn't broken (as if concentrating on a spell). While reading the target's mind, the naga has advantage on Wisdom (Insight) and Charisma (Deception, Intimidation, and Persuasion) checks against the target.



Treasure: From scrounging through the ruins, these creatures have collected the following treasure between them: 3,100 gp, a *spell scroll* (*commune*), and a *wand of visibility* (see **Appendix B**, page 576).

H3. RELICS

A heavy iron door with an elaborate lock protects this room. It was once magically trapped as well, but its effects were removed by the Mindwyrm long ago.

Locked Iron Door: 2 in. thick; damage threshold 10; hp 60; Strength (Athletics) DC 27; Thieves' Tools DC 25.

This appears to be a treasure vault of some sort. Against one wall is a metal table holding three iron coffers. Another wall bears a large weapons rack, mostly empty, but still holding a small assortment of weaponry. A pile of rubble near the door reveals where a small section of the ceiling collapsed long ago.

A vault where relics of a moderately valuable nature were stored, the knights passed by this door, intending to investigate it later. The chamber's current occupant is a **yurei**, the undead remains of a scholar who was killed when the tower's explosion caused a small cave-in in which he was crushed. He now wears his soiled and dusty scholar's robes over a skeletal frame bent and broken by the crushing rocks. The Mindwyrm and his minions have managed to keep this creature trapped in here, and it attacks in a rage whenever the door is opened.

YUREI

Medium undead, neutral evil
Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 110 (17d8 + 34)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	9 (-1)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Con +6, Wis +6
Skills Perception +6, Insight +8, Stealth +7
Damage Resistances cold, necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft, passive Perception 16
Languages Common
Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Face of Death. When a creature that can see the yurei's face starts its turn within 30 feet of the yurei, the yurei can force it to make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw if the yurei isn't incapacitated and can see the creature. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the creature instantly dies of fright. Otherwise, a creature that fails the save is stunned. The stunned creature must repeat the saving throw at the end of its next turn, dieing on a failure or ending the effect on a success. Unless surprised, a creature can avert its eyes to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If the creature does so, it can't see the yurei until the start of its next turn, when it can avert its eyes again. If the creature looks at the yurei in the meantime, it must immediately make the save. A creature immune to the frightened condition is immune to this face of deat.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The yurei uses painful gaze and then makes two painful grasp attacks.

Painful Grasp. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +8 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit*: 20 (3d10 + 4) force damage. If the target is a creature, it must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 1 minute.

Painful Gaze (Recharge 6). The yurei targets one creature it can see within 30 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw against this magic or take 42 (12d6) necrotic damage.

Weird Insight. The yurei targets one creature it can see within 30 feet of it. The target must contest its Charisma (Deception) check against the yurei's Wisdom (Insight) check. If the yurei wins, it magically learns one fact or secret about the target. The target automatically wins if it is immune to being charmed.

Choking Suffocation. A yurei targets a creature it can see causing something disgusting (such as a tangled clump of wet hair or a foul-tasting clot of rancid swamp mud) to manifest in the target's throat. The target must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or begin suffocating for the next 1 minute. The creature may repeat this saving throw at the end of each round to end suffocation. As soon as the victim succeeds at its saving throw against choking suffocation, the victim coughs up the disgusting foreign matter in a horrific display and must succeed at a DC 23 Constitution save or become poisoned for 1 minute.

Treasure: Many of the items stored in this chamber were drained of their magic by the disaster or were spirited away by nightmare creatures or through arcane means over the centuries, but substantial riches remain. There are 2d4 weapons on the rack, all of masterwork quality but now without enchantment (determine weapon types randomly or choose as desired). There is a notable exception to this, however: a massive maul inscribed with the name "*Daybreaker*" in High Boros. This is a *holy avenger* (though it is a maul rather than a sword). A successful DC 20 Intelligence (History) check reveals that Daybreaker was once wielded by the Hyperborean champion Eladrus the Avenger, a ruthless paladin of Thyr, and was reclaimed by the church after his death in battle.

In addition to the weapons rack are the three locked coffers (hardness 8, hp 50, Strength (Athletics) DC 28, Disable Device 25). The first contains Hyperborean coinage totaling 12,000 sp and 13,500 gp. The second coffer contains various pieces of jewelry including 10 gold and silver rings (100 gp each) with a *ring of spell storing* mixed in among them, 5 gold brooches (500 gp each), and 2 extremely elaborate necklaces crafted from gold, onyx, and rubies recognizable as being heirlooms of the ancient wild elven kingdom of Akados that was displaced by the Hyperborean expansion thousands of years ago (20,000 gp each). The third coffer holds 2 small diamonds (1,000 gp each), 3 sapphires (1,200 gp each), and a brilliant green emerald (5,500 gp)

H4. THE IRON SHELVES

This room bears a locked iron door identical to the one at **H3**. The knights were able to bypass it with a knock spell on their foray, but it has since been closed and relocked.

The air is slightly musty and redolent of old paper, but inside the chamber looks largely intact, as if only a few years have passed, rather than centuries. The room contains several desks with chairs and empty glass spheres that might once have been some sort of lamp. The room has only one other prominent feature, but it is quite striking; it is a bookshelf crafted of black iron, fronted by leaded glass doors and secured with chains and a lock of exotic design. A number of volumes line the shelves, ranging from ordinary leather-bound books to iron-shod volumes secured with chains.

Especially sensitive volumes, tomes of dangerous or forbidden knowledge, were stored here under lock and key. In the case of the Hyperborean Empire, "dangerous" knowledge included histories that contradicted official doctrine, radical philosophies, and certain types of science, so not all of the books here are truly perilous.

The bookshelf retains the powerful magic used to seal it shut, so that the leaded glass is as strong as the iron framework itself. Once, the shelves could be accessed with the proper passwords, but these have been long forgotten, and the magic must be overcome to open the shelf. First, the doors are set with a **trap**. Once the trap has been dealt with there is a special *arcane lock* spell on the elaborate lock that is immune to *knock* and has been heightened to require a DC 28 *dispel magic* check to remove.

Locked Black Iron Bookcase: Hardness 10; hp 60; Strength (Athletics) DC 28; Thieves' Tools DC 40 (30 if arcane lock is removed).

Trap: The doors bear explosive runes, though the shelves within has been magically treated so their contents remain unharmed by the trap.

EXPLOSIVE RUNES TRAP

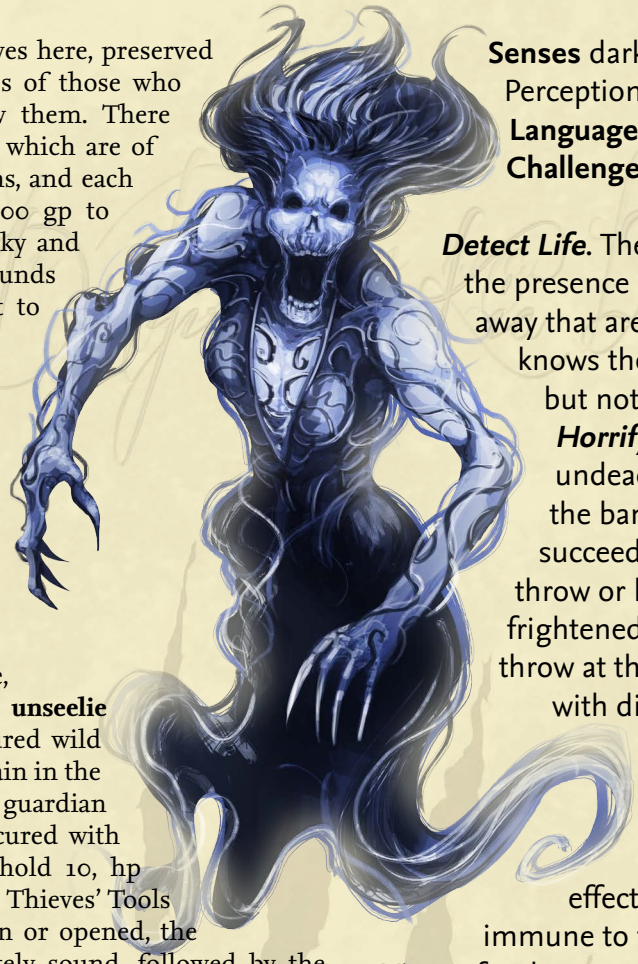
This magical trap can be discovered with a DC 25 Wisdom (Perception) check and disarmed with a DC 25 Thieves' Tools check or with a successful dispel magic against a 5th-level spell. If not disarmed, the runes explode, dealing 35 (10d6) force damage to all creatures within 10 feet. Creatures more than 5 feet away can attempt a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw, taking half as much damage on a success.

The contents of the shelf include several books containing spells that were considered threats to the empire and kept out of the hands of spellcasters who were not state-sanctioned, such as *dominate monster*, *gate*, *greater prying eyes*, *power word kill*, *soul bind*, *symbol of death*, and *wish*. Feel free to include any new spells of the enchantment, necromancy, and divination schools that you wish to introduce to your campaign. Other books include rituals for the summoning of demons and other evil extraplanar entities as well as the truenames of several powerful demons and devils (at the GM's discretion).

Several other books contains histories with inconvenient facts or rumors about prominent Hyperborean nobles, rulers, or families, such as *The True and Unexpurgated Amorous Adventures of Lord and Lady Ottiswold* and *Intimate Advisors to His Imperial Majesty Herminitus II*, which a DC 20 Intelligence (History) check reveals resulted in its author's imprisonment and eventual execution. Many

similar books crowd the shelves here, preserved but safe from the prying eyes of those who were not authorized to view them. There are 15 such volumes, most of which are of interest primarily to historians, and each of which is worth 1d4 x 1,000 gp to the right buyer. They are bulky and heavy, however (averaging 5 pounds each), and might be difficult to transport.

The most interesting and dangerous volume on the shelf is *The Fiendish Codex*, a collection of lore and magic associated with the summoning and binding of fiends (see **Appendix B**, page 579). Given its significance, this book is protected by an **unseelie banshee**, the spirit of a captured wild elf woman who was ritually slain in the tower specifically to serve as a guardian for the book. The book is secured with a metal clasp (damage threshold 10, hp 30, Strength (Athletics) DC 22, Thieves' Tools DC 25). If this clasp is broken or opened, the banshee's wail will immediately sound, followed by the banshee herself appearing and attempting a surprise touch attack on the individual who opened the book.



UNSEELIE BANSHEE

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 16

Hit Points 117 (26d8)

Speed 0 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (-5)	22 (+6)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Wis +5, Cha +8

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

Damage Immunities cold, necrotic, poison

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

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Elvish

Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

Detect Life. The banshee can magically sense the presence of creatures up to 5 miles away that aren't undead or constructs. She knows the general direction they're in but not their exact locations.

Horrifying Visage. Each non-undead creature within 60 feet of the banshee that can see her must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. A frightened target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, with disadvantage if the banshee is within line of sight, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a target's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the target is immune to the banshee's Horrifying Visage for the next 24 hours.

Incorporeal Movement. The banshee can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. She takes 5 (1d10) force damage if she ends her turn inside an object.

Magic Resistance. The banshee has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Corrupting Touch. *Melee Spell Attack*: +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 16 (3d6 + 6) necrotic damage.

Energy Drain (1/Day). The banshee targets one creature it can see within 120 feet of her. The target must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw, taking 36 (8d8) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The banshee regains a number of hit points equal to half the amount of damage dealt.

Wail (Recharge 6). The banshee releases a mournful wail, provided that she isn't in sunlight. This wail has no effect on constructs and undead. All other creatures within 30 feet of her that can hear her must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, a creature drops to 0 hit points. On a success, a creature takes 10 (3d6) psychic damage.

The library also conceals the secret entrance to the summoning chambers, where the priests and arcanists of the tower called upon and communed with extradimensional creatures from across the multiverse. The entrance is concealed behind a bookshelf on the east wall (DC 22 Perception). Once found its mechanism can easily be opened with a DC 10 Disable Device check.

H5. MONITOR'S OFFICE

This room contains a small bed, desk, table, and shelf with some alchemical glassware, empty vials, and a leatherbound book.

This small chamber was where a high priest or archmagi on duty would oversee activities on this level. The book holds a log in High Boros listing all the users of the iron shelf in **H4** and the ritual chamber (**H9**), including the dates and times of their visit. In a desk drawer is a *wand of truth* (see **Appendix A**, page 123) that was used to screen users to detect any potential deception on the part of individuals who visited this sublevel.

H6. OBSERVATION CHAMBER

There are six niches in the wall of this circular chamber. Within each niche is stone pedestal and upon each pedestal rests a crystal sphere on a wrought-iron stand. In the center of the room is a stone pedestal and wrought-iron stand with a much larger crystal sphere, this one about a foot across.

When particularly dangerous summonings or rituals were taking place in **H9**, a powerful wizard or priest occupied this room along with several dedicated spellcasters or warriors, observing activities in the summoning chamber and ready to intervene if things went badly. The spheres in the niches were once *crystal balls* used for observation not only of **H9** but for all of the sublevels and several locations in the tower above, but they have since been drained of all magical energy by the cataclysm that occurred. The sphere in the center of the chamber is a *crystal ball of true seeing*, and while it is not currently working, it contains enough residual magic to be made to function again. Getting this sphere working again will require 2d6 weeks of work by a spellcaster of 12th level or higher, as well as 3d6 x 1,000 gp for supplies and research costs. The *crystal ball* is big and weighs about 60 lb., so getting it out and carrying it around might be a challenge. Each of the nonmagical lesser spheres is still worth 200 gp.

H7. AMBUSH

This nondescript room was originally used by summoners for initial preparations and protective castings before proceeding into the actual ritual area. The PCs are likely to be cautious at this point, but Abruxes and the Mindwyrm still want to reduce their strength prior to the final confrontation, so they've set another ambush consisting of **2 Leng hounds** as well as a **night hag** and her pack of **6 nightmare shadow mastiffs**. In addition, any of the ambushers that survived their confrontation with the party in areas **G6**, **H1**, and **H2** will have retreated here to join in the ambush.

LENG HOUNDS (2)

Medium aberration, chaotic evil
Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 76 (17d8 + 85)
Speed 40 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	10 (+0)	21 (+5)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	19 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +4, Con +9, Wis +4, Cha +8
Skills Deception +8, Perception +8, Stealth +4, Survival +8
Damage Immunities cold
Senses blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 18
Languages Common, Deep Speech
Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The Leng hound's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 17). The Leng hound can innately cast the following spells, requiring only verbal components:

- At will: *locate creature*, *locate object*
- 3/day each: *dimension door*, *conjure animals* (bats only)
- 1/day each: *word of recall* (see grave link)

Charnel Deception. A Leng hound can retract its bestial features into its body as a full-round action — its fur and wings retract, the skin covering them slithers into hidden cavities, and its jaws pull back into a humanlike face. This grants it advantage Charisma (Deception) checks to appear as the decayed corpse of a slightly deformed human or similarly sized humanoid.

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

Grave Link. A Leng hound can designate a grave containing the corpse of a creature that was evil in life as its grave link. When the Leng hound uses *word of recall*, it returns to this grave (a Leng hound with no active grave link cannot use *word of recall*). If a creature disturbs this grave or loots it, the Leng hound's *locate creature* and *locate object* innate spells have no range limit when searching for the creature that disturbed the grave or any objects looted from the grave.

Haunting Howl. Three times per day, a Leng hound can emit a deep, sardonic howl. Only creatures within 300 feet that the Leng hound has tracked or attempted to find with divination spell-like abilities can hear this haunting howl. Such creatures must succeed at a DC 20 Will save or take 1d4 points of Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma damage and become shaken for 1 hour. This is a mind-affecting fear effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Marked for Madness. The Leng hound can unswervingly track a creature that it has designated as its tracking target so long as it has something from the target or has used locate creature or locate object to find its initial location. The Leng hound cannot change its target until it or the target is killed or sent insane.

Mutilate. A Leng hound savages its victims, shredding flesh and crushing bones. Whenever a Leng hound hits a creature with all three melee attacks in a single round, the target must succeed at a DC 21 Constitution saving throw or take 2 points of Constitution drain. A creature reduced to 0 Constitution dies. These maybe recovered through magic or after a long rest.

ACTIONS

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

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 17 (2d10 + 6) piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) necrotic damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 13 (2d6 + 6) slashing damage.

Haunting Howl (Recharge 5–6). The Leng hound can emit a deep, sardonic howl. Each creature within 300 feet that the Leng hound has designated as its marked for madness target can hear this haunting howl. Such creatures must succeed at a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or take 1d4 points of Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma damage and become shaken for 1 hour. A creature reduced to 0 Wisdom or Intelligence gains a random short and long term madness. A creature reduced to 0 Charisma falls into a nightmare filled coma. Only magic can restore these lost ability points.



NIGHT HAG

hp 112 (night hag[SRD])

NIGHTMARE MASTIFFS (6)

hp 45 (as hell hound[SRD] but replace fire resistance and damage with necrotic)

Tactics: As the party approaches, the door to **H7** will fly open and the mastiffs

will attack, using their bay ability to disrupt the party and their shadow blend to avoid damage and shadow walk to get in position behind the PCs. The hag and Leng hounds will attack anyone engaged in combat with the mastiffs, with the Leng hounds making flying attacks overhead and spellcasters they can't reach.

H8. ANTEROOM

This hemispherical chamber is constructed of white marble masonry with a single light source located in its 40-foot, vaulted ceiling — a glowing crystal the size of a man's head that somehow, despite its radiance seems to still leave the room bathed in shadows. Set around the room are a number of chairs, couches, recamiers, and end tables arranged like a waiting area or anteroom. In the west wall is an impressive iron door engraved with many glyphs and sigils.

Spellcasters waiting to use the summoning chamber would wait in here until their turn came or while rituals were completed for the summoning of outsiders they wished to question. The light source is a single piece of quartz set into the ceiling that gives off a constant dim illumination that fills the entire chamber (provides concealment). Even lights brought into this chamber are reduced to a dim luminosity while they are within it unless from magical light spell cast at 5th level or higher (in which case they function normally). If the crystal is destroyed (damage threshold 8, hp 60, Strength (Athletics) DC 27), this ends its effects end and light sources function normally in the room. In addition to serving as a light source, the crystal also serves as the sensor for a permanent *scrying* spell that anyone in area **H9** can make use of with a DC 25 Use Magic Device check. The Mindwyrm uses this to keep track of its minions and the progress of intruders, so it cannot be surprised in its lair.

Lurking in this chamber are **3 zohanil sakhils**. These living embodiments of fear are unimpeded by the dim light because of their darkvision. They use *invisibility* to hide themselves and cast *protection from good* as soon as they see the door open. They clamber along the half-dome of the room's ceiling and use their spells to plague the PCs and break down their defenses. They use their look of fear against any PC that pierces their invisibility and bite and talon attacks only as a last resort. They will do whatever they can to prevent the PCs from exiting through the west door, however, even fighting until destroyed if necessary.

ZOHANIL SAHKILS (3)

Medium fiend (sahkil), neutral evil
Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 110 (13d8 + 52)
Speed 50 ft., climb 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	11 (+0)	19 (+4)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)

Skills Intimidation +6, Perception +4, Stealth +4
Damage Resistances cold, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Infernal, Telepathy 100 ft.
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The zohanil's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma. The zohanil can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

- At will: *darkness*, *detect magic*, *dispel magic*, *invisibility* (self only), *mirror image*
- 3/day each: *protection from good*, *suggestion*
- 1/day: *dream*

Fear Gaze. When a creature that can see the zohanil's eyes starts its turn within 30 feet of the zohanil, the zohanil can force it to make a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw if the zhohanil isn't incapacitated and can see the creature. If the saving throw fails the target is frightened while in the presence of the zohanil. The target may repeat the saving throw at the end of its turn, and on a success, is immune to this particular zohanil's fear gaze for the next 24 hours.

Magic Resistance. The zohanil has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Magic Weapons. The zohanil's weapon attacks are magical.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The zohanil makes one bite and two talon attacks, or it makes one melee attack and teleports before or after the attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 12 (2d6 + 5) slashing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 1 minute. While poisoned it takes 5 (2d4) poison damage at the start of each of its turns due to the fiendish poison. Each time the zohanil hits the wounded target with this attack, the damage dealt by the wound increases by 5 (2d4). The fiendish poison is cured if the target receives magical healing. A creature that fails this saving throw by more than 5 has its reflexes deadened and has disadvantage on Dexterity and Wisdom saving throws and ability checks while poisoned.

Talon. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 15 (3d6 + 5) piercing damage.

Teleport. The zohanil magically teleports, along with any equipment it is wearing or carrying, up to 60 feet to an unoccupied space it can see.

H9. SUMMONING CHAMBER

The door to the summoning chamber is an impressive iron portal, inscribed with indecipherable runes as well as the High Boros characters spelling the names of some of the major gods revered in Hyperborea — Muir, Thyr, Jamboor, Yenomesh, and Mithras. While it is locked and bears a strong aura of abjuration, it requires a mere DC 15 Disable Device check to open and the aura is the result of a permanent magic aura spell (CL 10th) — a deception designed to waste the magical resources of those suspecting a trap or other nefarious trick built into the door.

The circular chamber is over 100 feet across with a vaulting domed ceiling painted with depictions of the sky — a blue cloudless sky of day on one half and a star-covered night sky on the other, complete with the two moons Luna and Sybil, the Blue Star Cyril the Chariot, the Red Star Mulvais, and even the Black Star Xharos, as well as the constellations of the 13 Houses of the Zodiac: Calade the Hawk of Fate, Draconis the Dragon, Irminsul the Pillar of the Gods, Nodens, Skiðblaðnir the Ship of the Gods, the White Wolf, the Ninefold Lamp, the Sickle, the Sphinx, the Springald, the Tesseract, Yales, and the cloudy expanse of the Host. Interestingly the star Solaris is shown as the Pole Star, rather than Oliarus, but this would be expected from a time before the world's polar shift a thousand years ago.

The ceiling is not the only feature of note, though, for the floor is inscribed with a thaumaturgic triangle set within a great square and surrounding hexagon. Statues of several Hyperborean gods line the wall, inscribed with their names — Muir, Thyr, Jamboor, Yenomesh, Hecate, and Mithras. Finally, on the floor near the opposite side of the chamber you spy several motionless armor-clad figures. They appear battered and bloodied even from here.

This was a powerful summoning chamber in the days of Hyperborea's might. Its thaumaturgic triangle and warding sigils are inset into grooves in the floor and are made from an alloy of cold iron and silver. Creatures that are summoned in this chamber cannot touch or harm these symbols, but they are not in and of themselves particularly durable (damage threshold 5, hp 15, Strength (Athletics) DC 20). Any creature summoned into this chamber is bound within these protective symbols and cannot leave the confines of their innermost intact boundaries.

Since the fall of Curgantium, this chamber has become the home of a powerful **great wyrm nightmare dragon** calling itself the Mindwyrm who haunts the inhabitants of the ruined city with its nightmare-inducing abilities (see the **Dreams and Nightmares** sidebar). The dragon has used his change self to appear as the knight Barionor and lies on the ground with his fellows. The **dreamthief hag** Abruxes is also present, though she is invisible and currently hiding behind the statue of Muir. One other creature lurks invisibly in the room, a called **Leng spider** that is entrapped within the summoning circle and stands 40 feet above the ground with its *air walk* ability.

The four fallen armored figures are the knights, Barionor of Troye, Sir Urvitus Voren, and the twins Sir Frankus and Lady Margeret Delerron, and all appear to be wounded and unconscious where they sprawl, though appearances can be deceiving. One of the knights, Barionor, has actually been stuffed behind the statue of Yenomesh and can be glimpsed only with a DC 40 Wisdom (Perception) check or if that location is specifically searched. The Mindwyrm currenty takes his place on the floor. Venturing here to investigate the nightmare assaults that had made Sir Eregor comatose, these knights were attacked and overwhelmed by the Mindwyrm and its allies. The survivors now lie insensible, while their minds are locked away in the dreamstone of Abruxes.

When the PCs enter, the Mindwyrm attempts to trick the party into walking into an ambush. The apparent Barionor stirs, pulling himself up onto his knees. When he sees the PCs, a spark of hope kindles in his sunken, weary eyes, and he cries, "Help us! In Thyr's name, help us!" The



Mindwyrm's shapechanged appearance is flawless, and his Charisma (Deception) check (+35) is a convincing ruse, though a simple *detect invisibility* will spot the invisibile Leng spider. If the PCs approach the fallen knights, the ambush is sprung as described under "Tactics" below. Once the ambush is sprung or the ruse is discovered, read the following description.

The wounded knight's outline shifts and shimmers and he seems to grow larger, elongating and transforming into a serpentine shape, a strangely contorted dragon with bright red frills and night-black scales that seem to spawn whisps of shadow. As you watch, another dragon appears beside it, and another, and another…

THE MINDWYRM

Gargantuan dragon, neutral evil
Armor Class 19 (natural armor)
Hit Points 332 (19d20 + 133)
Speed 60 ft., fly 80 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
27 (+8)	14 (+2)	25 (+7)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	21 (+5)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Con +13, Wis +7, Cha +11
Skills Deception +17, Perception +13, Stealth +6
Damage Immunities acid
Condition Immunities charmed, paralyzed
Senses blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 23
Languages Abyssal, Aklo, Common, Draconic, Dreamspeak, Giant
Challenge 18 (20,000 XP)

Innate Spellcasting (Psionic). The dragon's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save 19, +11 to hit with spell attacks). The dragon can innately manifest the following spells, requiring no material components:

- At will: *charm person*, *command*, *prestidigitation*, *sleep*, *true strike*, *vicious mockery*
- 3/day each: *dominate person*, *fireball*, *dimension door*, *sleep* (4th level)
- 1/day each: *dream*, *dominate monster*, *feeblemind*, *mirror image*, *stoneskin*, *weird*, sleep (9th level)

Dreamsight. The dragon can see the dreams of sleeping creatures.

Dream Terror. The dragon can utterly control any dreamscape it enters, shaping it to its will. When a creature's lucid body dies in a dreamscape under the great wyrm's control, that creature's material body also dies. Also, magic can't put the dragon to sleep.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the dragon fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Special Equipment. The dragon has the following gear equipped:

- *minor metamagic rod (maximize).* While attuned to the rod, the dragon can use its bonus action to maximize a spell three times per day.
- *staff of understanding (10 charges).* The staff allows its user to cast comprehend languages, detect thoughts and tongues innately once per day.
- *ring of psychic mastery.* The ring grants advantage and disadvantage (as appropriate, dragon's choice) on saving throws against all psionic attacks.
- *belt of incredible dexterity +4.* The belt grants +4 to the wearer's Dexterity to a maximum of 20 (included, requires attunement).

Traumatic Spellcaster. Each time a target fails a saving throw or takes damage from the dragon's spells it is affected by a *dream* spell.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The dragon can use its Frightful Presence. It then makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +14 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 19 (2d10 + 8) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) fire damage.

Nightmare Talons. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +14 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 15 (2d6 + 8) slashing damage. This attack scores a critical hit on a 19 or 20.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +14 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. Hit: 17 (2d8 + 8) bludgeoning damage.

Change Shape. The dragon magically polymorphs into a humanoid, or back into its true form. Other than its size, its statistics are the same in

each form. The dragon's equipment transforms with him, which resizes appropriately. If the dragon dies, it reverts to its true form, and its equipment reverts to its normal size.

Terrifying Presence. Each creature of the dragon's choice that is within 120 feet of the dragon and aware of it must succeed on a DC 19 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the dragon's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours. A creature that is frightened and fewer Hit Dice than the dragon, while frightened, the target must take the Dash action and move away from the dragon by the safest available route on each of its turns, unless there is nowhere to move. If the creature ends its turn in a location where it doesn't have line of sight to the dragon, the creature can make a Wisdom saving throw. On a successful save, the frightened condition ends for that creature and it is immune to the dragon's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours

Murky Acid Breath (Recharge 5–6). The dragon exhales acid in a 90-foot line that is 10 feet wide. Each creature in that line must make a DC 22 Dexterity saving throw, taking 67 (15d8) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

REACTION

Rising Nightmare. As a reaction to killing a living creature the dragon casts *phantasmal killer* which rises from the body of the creature it just killed.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The dragon can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The dragon regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Detect. The dragon makes a Wisdom (Perception) check.

Tail Attack. The dragon makes a tail attack.

Wing Attack (Costs 2 Actions). The dragon beats its wings. Each creature within 10 feet of the dragon must succeed on a DC 22 Dexterity saving throw or take 15 (2d6 + 8) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone. The dragon can then fly up to half its flying speed.

MINDWYRM'S LAIR

A nightmare dragon sometimes lairs in the midst of great cities rife with the delicious dreams of the living, hiding itself within palaces of its servants and slaves, but more often they find comfort in ancient ruins where the lingering resonance of ancient thoughts and dreams lingers in their absence.

Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the dragon takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects:

- The dragon creates fog as though it had cast the *fog cloud* spell. The fog lasts until initiative count 20 on the next round.
- Dissonant whispers originate at a point the dragon can see within 120 feet of it. Each creature within a 20-foot radius centered on that point must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 5 (1d10) psychic damage and the target must immediately use its reaction, if available, to move as far as its speed allows away from the dragon.

Regional Effects

The region containing a legendary nightmare dragon's lair is warped by the dragon's magic. If the dragon dies, changed weather reverts to normal, as described in the spell, and the other effects fade in 1d10 days.

- Once per day, the dragon can alter the weather in a 6-mile radius centered on its lair. The dragon doesn't need to be outdoors; otherwise the effect is identical to the *control weather* spell.

- The environment within 6 miles of the dragon's lair takes on dreamlike quality – especially at night – with plants gaining strange brilliant and lumenscient hues.
- Within its lair, the dragon can set illusory effects that mimic dejavu, such as soft music a creature heard as a child and strange echoes of a forgotten friend, so that they can be heard in various parts of the lair.

ABRUXES DREAMTHIEF

Medium fiend, neutral evil
Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 161 (17d8 + 85)
Speed 30 ft., fly 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	17 (+3)	21 (+5)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Str +10, Dex +7, Wis +7, Cha +7
Skills Deception +7, Insight +6, Perception +6, Stealth +6
Damage Resistances cold, fire; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered
Condition Immunities charmed
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages Abyssal, Common, Infernal, Primordial
Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The hag's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). She can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:
- At will: *detect magic*, *magic missile*
- 2/day each: *plane shift* (self only), *ray of enfeeblement*, *sleep*

Dream Theft. While in the same space as a dreaming creature, or when touching the boundary of a dreamscape from the ethereal plan, the hag can force the dreaming creature into a lucid body and enter its dreamscape. If the hag deals enough damage to kill the lucid body, instead of the dreamer waking up harmlessly, the hag can trap the creature's dreaming mind in her dreamstone, causing its body to remain in a mindless coma indefinitely (even magic like a wish can at best transport the caster to the location of the trapped mind).

Dreamstone. Every dreamthief hag carries a dreamstone—a gemstone crafted from the petrified tears of a dream dragon and worth at least 2,200 gp. The stone is psychically attuned by the hag's spirit and proximity. If the hag dies or is no longer in possession of her stone, it remains attuned for only 24 hours. The dreamstone can hold up to 20 dreaming minds stolen by the hag. The hag can release a stored mind, sifting out its essence, to regain a use of one of her innate spells as a bonus action. The mind then returns to its body, but the hag's tampering usually inflicts deep mental scars, resulting in new phobias, nervous ticks, or sleep disorders. The hag can use her dream theft ability and etherealness only if she has her dreamstone.

Magic Resistance. The hag has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The hag makes three claw attacks. She can use Etherealness or Cast a Spell in place of any melee attack.

Mind Blocking Claws (Hag Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack*: +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 15 (2d8 + 6) piercing damage. A creature that takes damage from this attack cannot make any intelligence related activity – including casting Intelligence based spells (all non-cleric or druid spells), making an intelligence saving throw or skill check – until the end of the targets next round.

Change Shape. The hag magically polymorphs into a Small or Medium female humanoid, or back into her true form. Her statistics are the same in each form. Any equipment she is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. She reverts to her true form if she dies.

Etherealness. The hag magically enters the Ethereal Plane from the Material Plane, or vice versa. To do so, the hag must have a dreamstone in her possession.

Nightmare Haunting (1/Day). While on the Ethereal Plane, the hag magically touches a sleeping humanoid on the Material Plane. *A protection from evil and good* spell cast on the target prevents this contact, as does a *magic circle*. As long as the contact persists, the target has dreadful visions. If these visions last for at least 1 hour, the target gains no benefit from its rest, and its hit point maximum is reduced by 5 (1d10). If this effect reduces the target's hit point maximum to 0, the target dies, and if the target was evil, its soul is trapped in the hag's soul bag. The reduction to the target's hit point maximum lasts until removed by the *greater restoration* spell or similar magic.

LENG SPIDER

Huge fiend, chaotic evil

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)
Hit Points 230 (20d12 + 100)
Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	16 (+3)	20 (+5)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	4 (-3)

Saving Throws Dex +8, Con +10, Wis +5
Skills Perception +5, Stealth +8
Damage Immunities cold, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't adamantine
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages Aklo
Challenge 14 (11,500 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. A Leng spider's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13). The retriever can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components.

- At will: *dispel magic*, *freedom of movement*, *tongues*
- 3/day each: *fly*, *invisibility*, *plane shift* (only self), *web*
- 1/day each: *charm monster*, *insanity* (as *confusion* spell except duration is permanent), *mirage arcana*

Spider Climb. A Leng spider can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Web Walker. A Leng spider ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

Web Weaponry. A Leng spider is talented at using its webs to construct masterwork weapons. This technique of weapon creation allows the spider to effectively create a flail or bolas by attaching a heavy object such as a rock or chunk of metal to a cord of webbing. The spider attaches one end of this webbing to a leg and can then wield the weighted cord as a flail or a bolas. It can only wield one such weapon at a time—it must use its other legs to walk. If a Leng spider drops or loses a web weapon, it can create a new one as a full-round action, provided it has access to heavy-weight objects of the correct size (such as loose rocks or skulls).

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Leng spider makes two web flail attacks and uses its bite.

Web Flail. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 15 (2d8 + 6) bludgeoning and slashing damage.

Web Bolas. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +11 to hit, range 30/60 ft., one target. *Hit*: 15 (2d8 + 6) bludgeoning and the target is restrained by web bolas. As an action, the restrained target can make a DC 19 Strength check, bursting the web bolas on a success. The web bolas can also be attacked and destroyed (AC 10; hp 10; vulnerability to fire damage; immunity to bludgeoning, poison, and psychic damage).

Maddening Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 9 (1d8 + 6) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 18

Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 1 minute and taking 18 (4d8) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. While the target is poisoned it is confused (as the *confusion* spell). The target may repeat the saving throw at the end of its turn to end the poison condition.

Tactics: The Mindwyrm has already cast *stoneskin* on himself. If the party approaches the fallen knights, the Mindwyrm will wait until they are all inside the room, then transforms into his natural form as the Leng spider attacks from ambush. The Mindwyrm casts *mirror image*, and the invisible Leng spider attacks an apparent spellcaster with a web. Abruxes remains in cover behind the statue and casts *deep slumber* on fighter or rogue types. She then uses her dreamtheft ability on any sleeping party members in an attempt to add their minds to her dreamstone. The spider follows up with a *charm monster* on the most formidable looking fighter to get him out of the fight and then descends to engage PCs still in the thaumaturgic triangle in melee. The Mindwyrm is extremely confident in himself and prefers to try and capture the dreaming minds of the PCs initially rather than kill them outright. He makes liberal use of his Traumatic Spell feat to weaken his foes. If he takes more than 50% of his hit points in damage, he switches tactics and begins attempting to destroy the PCs rather than capture them. Neither the Mindwyrm nor Abruxes can fathom the possibility of defeat after centuries of dominance in Curgantium; both will fight to the death, certain in their eventual victory.

The Leng spider was called to the chamber by a ritual performed by the Mindwyrm and is unable to leave as long as the summoning sigil remains. It must remain within the smallest of the sigils that surround it (the circle of the thaumaturgic triangle, the square, and the hexagon, in that order), though it can attack opponents outside these confines with its webs and spells. However, if a portion each of these three sigils is destroyed (see above), the Leng spider can use its ability to return to its home plane and will immediately do so, abandoning the dragon and the hag. Likewise, if the dragon is slain, the Leng spider can immediately depart. Otherwise it is compelled to fight to the death.

Treasure: There is apparently little to find in the chamber beyond the comatose knights and the corpses of the inhabitants, but if the PCs search a DC 36 Wisdom (Perception) check discovers that the statue of Hecate is loose on its pedestal. Moving the statue by tipping it over (which destroys a virtually priceless piece of Hyperborean art) or with a DC 32 Strength check reveals a hollow that the Mindwyrm chipped into the stone below. This holds the creatures' treasure which consists of 62,607 cp, 6,656 sp, 4,345 gp, 58 pp, a large ruby (4,000 gp), a platinum statuette of Vioner[QD-68] (1,300 gp), a suit of *radiant plate* (see **Appendix B**, page 574), *bracers of blinking* (see **Appendix B**, page 568), and a *staff of healing*.

Development: Once the Mindwyrm is slain, the nightmare effects over the city end immediately. When Abruxes is slain her dreamstone shatters and the surviving knights begin to stir. See **Event 3: Freeing the Knights**.

EVENT 3: FREEING THE KNIGHTS

With the defeat of the Mindwyrm and Abruxes and the destruction of the hag's dreamstone, the PCs have rescued the knights who were held prisoner by the pair. Of the nine knights who first came to Old Curgantium, only four remain: Barionor of Troye, Sir Urvitus Voren, and the twins Sir Frankus and Lady Margeret Delerron. They are battered, bruised, dehydrated, exhausted, sorrowful for the loss of their companions, and suffering from various mental afflictions as a result of Abruxes' dream torture, but they are at least alive.

Assuming the PCs previously met him in ***The Book in the Old House***, Sir Urvitus seems pleased to be renewing acquaintances with the party. In any case he describes what has befallen him and his companions in Curgantium.

"It seems that once more I owe you my life, my friends. It's as if the gods themselves have named you my guardians. Again, I am grateful. We came to this forsaken city seeking the cause of the omens that Sir Nimulus and Lady Elgierbid had discovered and which they believed to be somehow connected with the destruction of Curgantium of old. At Lady Elgierbid's suggestion, we sought out an old library that she had learned of through her research and located it despite the city's ceaseless attempts to murder us. When we searched the library, we discovered the books that we sought and also discovered a great deal of information about the Hundaei Civil War that greatly excited Sir Nimulus. He believed that the destruction of Curgantium was perhaps just a subtext for some larger unknown event and that it was this event that heralded the current doom threatening the Kingdoms of Foere. We returned the books to our base camp for study."

At this point the PCs may express some concern and ask about the whereabouts of the books, as they likely have not found it in the base camp. Urvitus seems surprised by this but replies that he can show them where at least one of them is hidden, then continues.

"Nimulus spent several days with the books that we had recovered, finally locating a reference to strange events that took place in the days and weeks leading up to the city's destruction. It seems that a strange and terrifying creature — inhuman, winged, of utterly unfamiliar nature — had been haunting the city. Lady Elgierbid believed that this creature was a being commonly called a mothman, and that others of its kind are known to haunt regions immediately before terrible disasters. Whether they are the cause of these disasters, or merely desire to witness them has never been fully determined. It came as no surprise that this being was attracted to Curgantium, given the magnitude of the disaster that ultimately befell the city, but we all found it strange that its activities seem to have been focused around an opera theater rather than the Tower of Oerson as would have been expected.

"Believing this location might hold some clue to the city's destruction, we set about looking for it. We located the theater and traveled there at nightfall, suspecting that the mothman would be one of the nocturnal manifestations of that place, but we found ourselves assailed by waves of shadow creatures, and were forced back to our base camp. Lady Elgierbid was lost to us during that battle, carried off into the night by shadow creatures. Gods grant that she did not suffer and that she now dwells in grace, rest her precious soul! In the wake of our loss we regrouped and made plans to return to the theater during the day to see if any evidence of the mothman could be found. That night however the situation grew even more desperate — attempts to sleep to recuperate were stymied by the usual assaults of fearsome nightmare creatures, but this time they were worse. The next morning we were unable to awaken Sir Eregor — it was as if his soul had been stolen in his sleep leaving only a living husk behind with us.

"After some research and divination, Sir Nimulus was able to deduce the source of these dream attacks as originating beneath the ruined Tower of Oerson. With his detailed knowledge of Curgantium and its history, Nimulus believed that a route to the tower could be found in the catacombs of a ruined cathedral in the giant-held area of the city. We left our faithful Malcolm behind to guard Sir Eregor and made swiftly through the giants' territory in order to bypass their defenses and get down into the catacombs before they could react. On the way, Sir Ernst fell afoul of a deadfall trap and was lost to the giants before we could turn back and save him. Pressing on without him, we reached the tower dungeons where we encountered the nightmare dragon and that foul hag. The battle was terrible — both Sir Nimulus and Sir Aix fell and were consumed, and the rest of us were imprisoned in the hag's gemstone. We'd have been truly lost if you hadn't been there to save us. Again, you have my deepest thanks and my eternal loyalty, my friends."

Despite his sincerity, a DC 18 Wisdom (Insight) check can tell that there is something more in Urvitus's reasons for coming on the expedition, but he does not share it at this time.

If the PCs have managed to communicate with Malcolm (see area **B7**), then he has likely corroborated Sir Urvitus's account and can confirm that he was left behind to guard Sir Eregor when the others left. However, it is possible that he has also related that it was Sir Ernst who came back and locked him in the vault and apparently killed Eregor, sealing him in his makeshift crypt (**B13**) all of which would have to have occurred after Sir Ernst was supposedly lost in the giant camp (area **D**). The reappearance of Sir Ernst and his apparent betrayal of the expedition is all new information to the surviving knights who find it difficult to believe, though they do not doubt Malcolm's veracity or that of any evidence provided by the PCs. They are simply confused by their companion's duplicity. In any case, the current whereabouts of the supposedly dead Sir Ernst are unknown, and the PCs certainly didn't find his remains when they visited the giant territory themselves. Sir Urvitus and the surviving knights are deeply distressed and caution the party to be on their guard. Now, however, it's time to get back to the base camp and regroup in order to plan their next move.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE CODEX FOUND

The return to base camp can be as easy or hazardous as the GM wishes. If the attempt is made at night, the party will have to run the gauntlet of shadow creatures and the mysterious Nightscream, so the PCs may choose to hole up in the Tower of Oerson and try to return after sunrise.

Regardless, the party eventually makes it back to the base camp. Once there, the surviving knights will confirm that the many books taken from the library have been taken by parties unknown (though the treacherous Sir Eregor is strongly suspected). The group rests while Sir Urvitus shows the PCs where one of the books recovered from the library was hidden. It was initially placed in one of the smaller vaults with the others, but Urvitus kept a close eye on it for reasons of his own that he does not explain. Urvitus saw that Sir Numulus re-hid it among Malcolm's feed bags by placing it in a *bag of holding* which she then filled with Malcolm's feed, using *nondetection* to make it appear like just another nonmagical feed bag. Whoever searched the camp missed it, and the PCs find that it is still there (see area **B9**).

Examining the book the PCs discover it to be a copy of the *Codex Ibnathi*, in fact it appears to be the exact copy that Ellerby Wallix (see ***The Book in the Old House***) had found a

page from based on the one page missing from this book. Sir Urvitus looks rather sheepish at this revelation, and if pressed further will admit that he had suspected that the book might be in the city, and it is part of the reason he joined the expedition.

THE TALE OF SIR URVITUS

After the events of ***The Book in the Old House***, Urvitus had begun researching Eb Wallix extensively to ensure that any trace of evil left by his ancestor had been truly eradicated. What Urvitus discovered was that he was not the first of his family to take on such a quest. In his research into his family history he had discovered that his own great uncle, Sir Barivoren Wallix, a nephew of Eb Wallix, had discovered his uncle's disturbing practices and research and had instigated the purge to have Eb expelled from Courghais. However, he has unable to catch the fleeing wizard and bring him to justice. Eb disappeared into the now-independent Kingdom of the Vast. Barivoren knew of the true depths of depravity to which his uncle had sunk but could not get the other members of the knighthood to take his dire predictions seriously, discovering in the attempt that many of his respected peers had become corrupt or simply lazy. They were content to pad their lives with the luxuries of being successful merchants or wealthy nobles rather than uphold the ideals of the knighthood.

Whether it was from his brief exposure to his uncle's cursed book as a youth or simply some inborn instability, Sir Barivoren enacted a crazed plan to spur the knighthood into action by murdering several of their own. Over a period of weeks, Barivoren killed no less than three of his fellow knights. His plan partially worked in that it gained the knighthood's attention, but it also gained the attention of the authorities of Courghais and he was soon forced to flee into the wilds beyond the edge of the kingdom. His younger brother, Reliman Wallix, dropped the Wallix surname, adopting the name of his father Voren instead and moving the family out of Foere to Tourne in the Vast. With his brother's abdication of the title (by his obvious guilt and flight from justice), Reliman was able to quietly have the heritable title of Knight of Macobert legally transferred to himself and his heirs. Reliman spent the rest of his days drinking himself to death over the shame of his brother, unaware of the evil his uncle Eb Wallix had uncovered.

Thus, Urvitus's ancestor and de facto cause of the founding of House Voren of Tourne was a bloody killer and betrayer. Urvitus's research into papers belonging to Barivoren and Eb Wallix that he had found in his Eber house filled him in on this information. The papers also included a hypothesis by Eb Wallix that the rest of the *Codex Ibnathi* that he sought (he found only a page of the book in Tircople) could be found hidden in Curgantium. It had been taken back to the capital by two brother knights of Hyperborea arguing over how and by whom it should be destroyed (ironically, neither of them did). Sir Urvitus joined the current Curgantium mission to try and locate this cursed book and perhaps find out more about his disowned great uncle in the process.

REGROUPING AT THE BASE CAMP

Whether this revelation is given to the knights as a whole or simply the PCs, Sir Urvitus becomes the de facto leader of the surviving knights and asks the PCs to establish communication with Navellis Antriliev so he can report on what has occurred and seek the wizard's advice. Once this occurs Navellis will agree to even teleport into the city outside the group's base camp in order to provide in-depth consultation and contribute his own magical expertise to defenses now that the knights' group is sorely depleted. Though the PCs are included in the discussion, he and Sir Urvitus agree that to completion of the original mission for which the other knights gave their lives is of utmost importance and to do that the spirit of the mothman who was sighted just before the city's destruction must be contacted.

At this point the PCs have the option to depart from the city, their portion of the mission completed, though both Sir Urvitus and Navellis hope they will stay. It will be some time before the remaining knights are fit to resume their forays into the city, but they will gladly lend their resources and efforts to help the PCs do so. If the PCs elect to depart, then Navellis prepares the *teleportation circle* for them as promised and sends them home with a letter of credit drawing upon the Royal Bank of Courghais in the amount of 60,000 gp per PC. This is the end of their adventure and they will only hear rumors of the disaster befalling the knights as they continued their ill-fated mission on their own. However, if the PCs agree to stay and see the knights' mission through to the end, Sir Urvitus promises additional rewards if necessary, including an extra 10,000 gp per person.

If the PCs agree to stay, then the knights recommend camping overnight at the base camp to rest and recuperate from the battles beneath the Tower of Oerson. Despite their exhaustion, the surviving knights and Navellis insist that they keep watch over the camp while the PCs rest and heal. As the PCs sleep, they no longer experience any further nightmare attacks but still experience dream visions of the fat man saying, "Tell me, have you found it?"

but now adding (if they have discovered the Yellow Sign in the theater), "Yes, I believe you have," and beginning to turn around as they wake.

Whenever the PCs are ready to head out the knights opt to remain behind and guard the base camp and the *Codex Ibnathi* that Sir Urvitus insists remains hidden within on the basis that if the dangerous book is removed from the wards of the vaults, then anyone magically searching for it will have the ability to locate it. Once the mission in the city is complete, the knights and PCs together can plan for the safe removal of the book to a similarly shielded location in Courghais to determine its final disposition and likely destruction.

If the PCs are reluctant to leave the book with the knights, Navellis reminds them that it is an official Knights of Macobert mission, and the book is in the knights' hands. As the ranking knight, it is Sir Urvitus's decision, not the PCs'. However, to assuage the PCs fears over any foul play involving the book, Urvitus swears to them that no examination will be made of the book until it is safely back in Courghais and can be done so under controlled conditions to prevent a repeat of what occurred previously in Eber. Likewise, the book had already successfully resisted discovery by whomever raided the base camp previously, so its current hiding place also seems to be its best hiding place. If this is not sufficient for the PCs, they are of course free to draw their pay and leave.

Assuming the PCs agree to remain and abide by the knights' conditions, continue with **Event 4: Enter the Mothman**.

EVENT 4: ENTER THE MOTHMAN

As stated, even with magical healing and restoration, the surviving knights are not yet mentally or physically ready to undertake forays into the ruins. Holding a defensive position at the base camp is one thing, but after the horrific things they've witnessed, the deaths of so many of their friends, and the dream tortures they've endured at the hands of the hag and the Mindwyrm, they are simply going to need a few days to recover to be ready to press on. However, the matter of finding and making contact with the mothman's spirit remains urgent and of high priority. Thus, it falls on the PCs to undertake this course while the knights hold the camp.

With the knights' and Navellis's assistance, the party can plan their mission to the theater. Speculating that the



mothman's spirit likely exists as an undead manifestation, they will need to find a way to make contact it without destroying it and somehow compel its cooperation. Spells like *control undead* may be helpful, and Navellis can make a teleportation run to obtain scrolls of the spell if necessary. Likewise, if the mothman's undead form is incorporeal like so many of the city's undead, force effects such as *wall of force* may be necessary to contain it without destroying it. Unfortunately, the option of simply resurrecting it is unlikely to be suitable because of the time limit of 10 years since death per level of the spellcaster. With the mothman's death occurring 1,021 years ago, the prerequisite of a 103rd-level caster is likely unobtainable.

After a plan for dealing with the mothman has been reached, the PCs can use the knights' knowledge of the city and their own experience to ensure their arrival at the theater around nightfall, thus avoiding the initial outbreak of shadow creatures. If the PCs are in the vicinity of area F1 at the moment that corresponds to the original opera's performance time just as the sun goes down, they will see the following.

Something stirs among the strange scorched shadows and silhouettes along the theater's outer wall. High up, you see the humanoid winged scorchmark shift and flicker as a tall, fearsome shape emerges, night-black with gleaming red eyes.

Caught by the catastrophe, the mothman has been transformed into a dread wraith, and in order to successfully question it, the party must find a way to defeat and contain the wraith without destroying it. If this proves overly difficult, the GM may simply rule that when reduced to near 0 hit points, the dread wraith, sensing something of its greater purpose, surrenders to the PCs. In a worst case scenario, if the PCs are unable to defeat it and contain it, they can simply leave without destroying it and return the next night to try again when it will be once again at full power. It has slain many creatures and turned them into specters but it cares little for them and rarely actively commands them. However, they trail along in his wake, and if the Mothman is attacked 1d4-1 specters will arrive at the end of each round of combat until 12 have appeared, directing their attacks at any creature attacking the Mothman.

THE MOTHMAN

Medium undead, lawful evil
Armor Class 18 (incorporeal)
Hit Points 54 (18d8 + 8)
Speed 0 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Wis +6
Skills Perception +6, Stealth +5
Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities exhaustion, frightened, poisoned, unconscious
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages Common, Infernal
Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

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

Turning Defiance. The Mothman and any other wraiths within 30 feet of him have advantage on saving throws against effects that turn undead.

Rejuvenation. If the Mothman dies, he returns to life at dusk the next day and regains all his hit points. Only a wish spell can prevent this trait from functioning. However, if the Mothman is somehow subdued he comes to his senses and becomes cooperative (see Development below).

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Mothman makes three attacks, either with his claws or long shadowy quills. He can use Life Drain in place of one claw attack.

Life Drain. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 20 (5d6 + 3) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0. A humanoid slain by this attack rises 24 hours later as a specter[SRD] under the Mothman's control, unless the humanoid is restored to life or its body is destroyed. The Mothman can have no more than twelve specters under his control at one time.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 9 (1d8 + 5) force damage, or 10 (1d10 + 5) slashing damage if used with two hands, plus 10 (3d6) necrotic damage.

Quills. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, range 50/200 ft., one target. *Hit*: 5 (1d8 + 1) force damage plus 10 (3d6) necrotic damage.

SPECTERS

Hp 22 (**specter**[SRD])

Development: If the PCs can subdue or control the mothman dread wraith, they can communicate with it. It attempts to bargain with the PCs, demanding that they slay it and end its tormented existence in exchange for its cooperation. If it is magically compelled, it will still beg for its destruction in return for its help.

Once the PCs have obtained the creature's cooperation or properly compelled it, it will relate the events leading up to

its demise. The mothman is an agent of fate, a harbinger of apocalypse, and the creature came to Curgantium in 2496 I.R. to foretell the doom of the city, though even it did not know the true extent of the doom to the entire Hyperborean Empire. Nevertheless, the mothman allowed itself to be seen sporadically about the city as harbinger of its coming fate. Then on the last fateful night it appeared outside the opera house itself, as that was the nature of the doom it was foretelling: The mad director Cellichos was debuting the complete The King in Yellow, an opera never before produced in its entirety upon the world of Boros (as it was then known). The full performance of this opera would have called forth the avatar of the Great Old One Hastur the Unspeakable and ended the world in a cataclysm of madness — that was the calamity the mothman had arrived to foretell.

At the conclusion of the opera the screams of madness rising from its audience were audible even from the streets and grew louder still as the opera hall's front doors opened and out strode a tall, yellow-robed figure that seemed to carry fear and insanity in its wake. The figure turned towards the Tower of Oerson in the distance and took its first step towards what would become its earthly throne, and the mothman knew that its foretold catastrophe had arrived, the disaster of disasters that would sweep away the current order and completely remake the world. But even the mothman was surprised when, at that instant, the Tower of Oerson exploded, enveloping much of central Curgantium including the opera house, the yellow-robed figure, and the mothman itself in the cataclysmic blast.

The mothman can recall no more, it was slain at that moment and began its existence as a dread wraith tied to a shadow scorched into a section of broken wall. The mad ravings of the opera's audience was silenced only to become the Nightscream that descends over the city each night as moonrise touches the melted glass of the tower, and of the yellow-robed avatar of Armageddon, nothing further is known. Not only was the mothman the only sane individual to spot the figure in the final moments of the city, no reports of such a figure ever emerged from the catastrophe, strongly hinting that it too was destroyed in the conflagration.

Any PC making a DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana, History, or Religion) check is suddenly struck by an uncomfortable thought: As brutal and destructive as the exploding Tower of Oerson was, killing tens of thousands, sentencing millions more to a slow death from the lawlessness and deprivation that followed, and destroying the greatest empire that the world had ever known, it was perhaps a mercy that had in fact saved the world from a far worse fate. As widespread as the devastation of the Tower of Oerson and subsequent fall of Hyperborea stretched, nevertheless ten centuries later a battered and bruised world had largely recovered and ushered in another, if not quite-so-grand, nonetheless formidable empire in the Foerdewaith that until recent centuries had managed to bring its own peace and prosperity. It was as if the world had been sentenced to death only to have it commuted at the last minute with a devastating but, perhaps, less permanent calamity.

Anyone whose check exceeds the DC by 5 or more also realizes that were it not for the devastating and unexplained sudden shift of the world's polar axis in 2491, then the need to draw together the greatest spellcasters of the world to Curgantium to weave their magic on the very night of *The King in Yellow's* performance would never have occurred. Thus, another great disaster presaged a second, both of which prevented an even greater. So great is the sudden cosmic lucidity that comes from grasping these truths that any PC who succeeded on this check (or any player who reached the same conclusion unaided by a check) is stunned for 1 round and receives a permanent +1 bonus to his Wisdom score as the import of the greater cosmological picture sinks home in his mind. Rarely is a mortal allowed a glimpse behind the curtains of destiny, and even more so to see secret destinies writ at the beginning of time that defy even the machinations of the gods.

EVENT 5: THE INEVITABLE ARBITER

Earlier in the adventure (**Event 2**), some PCs might have briefly glimpsed a mysterious watcher as it followed and observed them. Now as the PCs finally grant the dread wraith in **Event 4** its release from undeath, the watcher returns.

From out of the darkness emerges a metallic spherical object, 1 foot in diameter, held aloft on mechanical wings and equipped with two prehensile arms and a single, centralized eye. A flat, montone, artificial voice issues from the sphere. "Attend. No harm is intended. This arbiter unit requests information and assistance from native planar inhabitants."

The strange object/creature possibly glimpsed by the party in **Event 2** and now presenting itself before the PCs is an **arbiter inevitable**, Arbitrator/1151.x, an extraplanar scout and diplomat from that law-enforcing race. If the PCs attack the creature, it immediately flies away into the darkness above, in search of the nearest inevitable to which it will report. However, its intentions are peaceful and, if the PCs show a willingness to communicate, can offer them several pieces of information in addition to its own questions.

ARBITRATOR/1151.X

hp 22 (see page 439)

Development: If the PCs communicate with the arbiter, it greets them in truespeech, so that all can understand and be understood as if under the effects of a *tongues* spell, though it uses a clipped and technical style of speech highlighting that its existence is as much machine as living creature. It opens the dialog by identifying its function and model number (arbiter inevitable Arbitrator/1151.x) and informing the PCs that the inevitables have long been aware of unauthorized planar conjunctions between these ruins and the Plane of Shadows and have been investigating for some time. The arbiter advises that the PCs are the first to actually make meaningful contact with one of these "conjunctions" (i.e. undead and/or extraplanar creatures associated with the Plane of Shadows) and remain "intact" (i.e. alive) and asks them several bureaucratic-type questions about their technique and motives such as: "Please describe basic tactics and philosophical approach to shadow entities," "Please provide technical assessment of arcane and divine spell effectiveness against shadow entities," and "Please detail all contact with alternate non-material planes and their inhabitants. Please be specific."

After a number of these questions, hopefully before the PCs run out of patience, the arbiter thanks them for their cooperation and produces from an internal compartment an official-looking document with several seals and a header portraying a triangle within a square within a circle (not entirely dissimilar to the symbol in **H9**, though this is merely coincidence).

It closes with the following request, "Before departure, arbiter unit requests that native planar inhabitants complete this Statement of Material Testimony (Uncompelled). Please retain these forms on your person at all times, and also be assured that information on the form will remain confidential and not be used for unrelated legal proceedings or unauthorized mass-mailings. This unit now returns to report to its supervisor, Senior Deputy Vice-Director/672.b. We thank you for your cooperation in this matter."

With that the arbiter flies away, vanishing into the darkness to report to its superiors and leaving the party with the form. Examining the form reveals it to be a standardized printed form written in truespeech to be filled out in triplicate and with the sigil of Arbitrator/1151.x added at the bottom as witness. Several miscellaneous boxes can be checked when the form is filled out, and while most of them are not important (or worse, incomprehensible), one box noticed with a DC 22 Wisdom (Perception) check or DC 15 Intelligence (Invesigation) check provides the option to give the statement in person to a department director or vice director, though this must be endorsed separately and requires a "2-level fee, refundable at discretion of department review."

While this is somewhat obscure, a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check suggests that it means that it can be used to summon an inevitable of department director or vice director level (whatever that means). If a PC checks this box, he can at any subsequent point summon a **lhaksharut inevitable** designated Vice Director/811.1-A that will assist in any one battle involving outsiders or extraplanar-associated creatures. However, the PC will also immediately gain 2 levels of exhaustion. At the inevitable's discretion over whether the summons was appropriate or not, it can remove the PC's 2 levels of exhaustion as a bonus action (see encounter text for this adventure as to what the inevitable will deem as an appropriate summons). Otherwise these levels may be removed by the normal magical means.

VICE DIRECTOR/811.1-A

Large construct, lawful neutral
Armor Class 20 (law and order)
Hit Points 210 (20d10 + 100)
Speed 0 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	9 (-1)	20 (+5)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	1 (-5)

Damage Immunities acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't adamantine
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages all but rarely speaks
Challenge 20 (25,000 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The inevitable's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 16). The inevitable can innately cast the following spell, requiring no material components.

- At will: *plane shift* (self only)

Immutable Form. The inevitable is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Magic Resistance. The inevitable has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Magic Weapons. The inevitable's weapon attacks are magical.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the inevitable fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. The inevitable has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The inevitable uses Energy Bolt twice if available and makes two melee attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +13 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 20 (3d8 + 7) bludgeoning damage.

Spear. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +13 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 23 (3d10 + 7) piercing damage.

Energy Bolt (Recharge 5-6). The inevitable shoots an energy beam of acid, cold, fire, lighting or thunder – its choice – up to 100 feet away. The targeted creature must make a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw, taking 45 (10d8) energy damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. This attack may be used once per round and then can be used a second time if the recharge roll is equal to 5 or 6.



EVENT 6: DARK BETRAYAL

Having gained the information available from the undead mothman and the unlikely promise of aid from the inevitables, the party is free to return to the base camp — their mission to the city finally completed — and leave Old Curgantium behind once and for all. Alas, it is not quite so simple. After having lurked in the shadows for much of the adventure, watching and biding its time, the Underguild is finally ready to act against this incursion into what they see as their territory and interference into their own affairs. Needing both Urvitus and the *Codex Ibnathi* for plans they themselves have long been developing, the vampires have taken steps to obtain them and are not about to let a rag-tag band of adventurers stop them at the verge of success.

The Underguild, while not strictly allied with the shadow creatures of the city, has co-existed in the ruins with them somewhat peacefully. The Underguild was aware that Lady Elgeirbid was taken by a kyton attack force during one of the knights' previous foray into the ruins. They are also aware that the PCs are working with the knights and stand to disrupt years of carefully laid plans. With the PCs' incursion to talk to the mothman's wraith, the Underguild has reached out to their contacts with the creatures of the Shadow Plane and given them the party's location and disposition. With this information, the recently transformed Lady Elgierbid seeks dark vengeance against those who failed her in her mortal life and their allies — such as the PCs.

The unfortunate Lady Elgierbid, taken in battle by the shadow creatures, has been hideously tortured and transformed into a unique **evangelist kyton** by the kyton demagogues of the Plane of Shadows. Riding a **nightmare**, she retains her old knightly skills, and is accompanied by **4 cantor kytons**, intent on permanently eliminating the PCs from the ruins of the city. They ambush the PCs in the dark from the surrounding rubble, as they party makes its way back towards the base camp. If the PCs are flying over the ruins, Lady Elgierbid has cast *fly* on the cantor

kytons with her wand, and the group comes swooping upward to attack the PCs from below. In either case, any PC not succeeding on a DC 21 Wisdom (Perception) check is caught by surprise when the ambush it sprung. Read the following description when the kytons attack and modify as necessary if the combat occurs in the air.

The night is split by a soundless howl that seems to reverberate through your souls, and a massive horse the color of midnight with fire streaming from its nostrils and hooves comes bounding out of the darkness. Its rider is a dark form, blurry and difficult to see, but she seems to wear armor wrapped in chains, and from her head streams a thick mane of red hair marked with a streak of silver. With her come small feral humanoid shapes, indistinct in the darkness but with glowing red eyes and giving the impression of having had the skin stripped from their bodies to reveal the gray, striated muscle beneath.

LADY ELGIERBID PALITROIX

Medium fiend (devil), lawful evil
Armor Class 22 (breastplate shield)
Hit Points 180 (19d8 + 95)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Wis +9, Cha +10
Damage Resistances acid; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered
Damage Immunities cold, necrotic, poison
Condition Immunities exhaustion, frightened, poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages Common, High Boros, Infernal, Shadowtongue, telepathy 120 ft.
Challenge 17 (18,000 XP)
Gear +2 *adamantine breastplate* with swan sigil of Palitroix, +1 *dancing longsword*, +2 *shield*, +1 *longsword*

Spellcasting. Lady Elgierbid is a 19th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 18, +10 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following paladin spells prepared:

- 1st level (4 slots): *command*, *compelled duel*, *searing smite*
- 2nd level (3 slots): *hold person*, *magic weapon*
- 3rd level (3 slots): *dispel magic*, *elemental weapon*
- 4th level (3 slots): *banishment*, *staggering smite*
- 5th level (2 slots): *destructive wave* (necrotic)

Focus. Lady Elgierbid, as a bonus action, designate any one opponent he can see as a particularly dangerous foe. She gains a +2 bonus to her AC and saving throws against attacks made by that opponent until she designates a new enemy.
Infernal Concentration. Lady Elgierbid can maintain concentration on up to two spell effects at the same time.
Magic Resistance. Lady Elgierbid has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.
Regeneration. Lady Elgierbid regains 5 hit points at the start of her turn so long as he has 1 hit point remaining. If Lady Elgierbid takes radiant damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of her next turn.
Special Equipment – Wand of Fly. Lady Elgierbid has a *wand of fly* which lets her cast the *fly* spell up to 10 times per day.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Lady Elgierbid makes three longsword attacks.
Cutthroat's Apprentice (+1 Dancing Longsword). *Melee Weapon Attack*: +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 10 (1d8 + 6) slashing damage, or 11 (1d10 + 6) slashing damage if used with two hands, plus 18 (4d8) necrotic damage.
Infernal Fireball (Recharge 6). Lady Elgierbid hurls a magical ball of fire that explodes at a point she can see within 120 feet of it. Each creature in a 20-foot-radius sphere centered on that point must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw. The sphere spreads around corners. A creature takes 35 (10d6) fire damage and 35 (10d6) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.
Healing (1/Day). Lady Elgierbid, or one creature she touches, regains up to 100 hit points.

REACTIONS

Parry. Lady Elgierbid adds 6 to her AC against one melee attack that would hit her. To do so, Lady Elgierbid must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

NIGHTMARE

hp 147 (nightmare[SRD])

CANTOR KYTONS (4)

hp 105 (statistics as chain devil[SRD], except as noted below)

Shadow Body. In any light other than bright sunlight or a *daylight* spell, cantor kytons fade into the shadows as if using a *blur* spell.

Unchained Ego. Any creature that begins its turn restrained by a cantor kyton's chains must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw become confused (as the *confusion*[SRD] spell) until the beginning of their next turn, at which point they can attempt a new saving throw to end the *confusion*; a failed saving throw causes the *confusion* to continue to the beginning of their next turn.

Tactics: Prior to combat, Lady Elgierbid casts elemental weapon (thunder) on *Cutthroat's Apprentice*, her *dancing sword*, and on the first round of combat activates it as a bonus action, sending it to attack ranged combatants or spellcasters hanging back from melee. She targets a spellcaster or other PC less inclined to engage in melee with *compelled duel* to force them into melee. If this does not work, she uses *staggering smite* and *searing smite* as bonus actions to add damage to her strikes. She draws her backup sword and lays about with that in melee, interspersing it with spell attacks, sheathing that sword when *Cutthroat's Apprentice* must return to her hand. The kytons sow confusion with their chains and gang up on one or two targets to overwhelm them while Lady Elgierbid and her steed occupy the rest of the party.

Development: Lady Elgeirbid is not suicidal, though the cantor kytons will not retreat as long as she remains in the fight. If all of the cantors are slain and she is reduced below half hit points or her nightmare is killed, she attempts to retreat. She has her nightmare use Ethereal Stride to flee to the Plane of Shadows in order to escape.

If the PCs choose to summon the lhaksharut (see **Event 5**) to assist in this battle, the inevitable deems it to be an appropriate summons and will restore the summoner's 2 levels of exhaustion as a free action when it arrives.

EVENT 7: THE RETURN OF SIR ERNST

After the encounter with Lady Elgierbid and her minions, the PCs likely want to return to the base camp with some urgency. When they arrive, however, they are too late. All the traps at **B3** have been reset and do not respond to the prior passwords. The situation within the camp itself is no better. Read the following when the PCs first enter area **B5**.

It looks as though a slaughter occurred here. Two headless corpses lie in pools of congealing blood, and the floor is an incomprehensible jumble of footprints. Who or what the attackers were, however, is unclear.

The Underguild attacked the base camp with overwhelming force in the PCs' absence and laid waste to the knights' defenses. Additionally, if they were not previously destroyed by the PCs, the **2 cephalophores** at **B5** have been reprogrammed to attack when the PCs enter and fight until destroyed.

CEPHALOPHORES (2)

hp 147 (see page 430)

After finally dealing with the reset traps and the guardians, the PCs can examine the scene closer. The bodies on the floor are headless, but their gear and overall physique matches that of Sir Frankus and Lady Margeret. They appear to have engaged in a brutal combat before their demise, after which their heads were crudely hacked from their bodies and are nowhere to be found. Because of this mutilation, they cannot be questioned by *speak with dead* spells. Likewise, the lack of heads would prevent a *raise dead* spell from working; if the PCs wished to bring one or both of them back to life, they would need to use a *resurrection* to be successful. However, anyone using magic like *true seeing* or making a DC 20 Intelligence (Religion) check while closely examining these corpses discovers that they have both been animated as undead (they are now juju zombies, see "Development" below). If Malcolm was left in the base camp, then his corpse is discovered in **B6**, likewise decapitated (though not animated). Neither Sir Urvitus nor the *Codex Ibnathi* can be found anywhere within the base camp.

An examination of the bloody tracks on the floor with a DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check indicate that the battle raged in both areas **B5** and **B8** and involved multiple humanoid combatants, but they are too jumbled to make out individual tracks or much else. If the check exceeds the DC by 5 or more, it is apparent that one set of tracks seems to end at the edge of the well in **B8**. Likewise, anyone in area **B8** making a DC 22 Wisdom (Perception) check detects a faint sloshing sound coming from beneath the well's cover. If the well cover is removed and a light source shone down the shaft, the form of Barionor can be seen slumped in the 3 feet of water, only his head and bent knees visible above the surface. The water itself is murky red with blood, and only the faintest movement of Barionor's breathing causes the slight sloshing in the water that is barely audible.

The base camp was attacked by a large Underguild force shortly after the PCs departed for the theater. It was this group that defeated the knights and took Sir Urvitus prisoner. It saw to the resetting of the traps and guardians and removed the heads of the twins (and the dragonne if applicable) before discarding them in the ruins. One of the group, a powerful cleric, used *create undead* to animate the decapitated corpses as **2 juju zombies**. This larger group has departed with its prisoner, but a smaller force was left behind to keep watch and ambush the party upon its return.This group hides in the ruins outside the base camp and watched the approach of the party as they entered and went below. They follow the PCs in only seconds afterward so the party will have little opportunity to look around or examine the scene of the battle before this group arrives through the portal at **B4** and launches its attack. The attacking force is led by the treacherous Sir Ernst Braanak who in reality is a powerful undead **fext**. Ernst himself has been an agent of the Underguild from the beginning, using his *deceiver's ring*, considerable Disguise skills, and extensive battle scarring to infiltrate the Knights of Macobert for decades. He did not organize this expedition, but when he heard about it, he notified his superiors in the Underguild and made sure he joined the mission. He is responsible for much of the knights' woes as he used them to uncover the *Codex Ibnathi* and then lead them into a series of ambushes throughout the ruined city. He is accompanied by an **ice devil** called Rädsla and **4 feral vampire spawn smashers** as muscle. If the PCs have not left someone on guard at the camp's entrance, they are likely to be caught by surprise with this attack.



SIR ERNST BRAANAK

Medium undead, lawful evil
Armor Class 18 (plate)
Hit Points 207 (24d8 + 96)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)	11 (+0)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Con +8, Int +5, Wis +9, Cha +8
Skills Deception +13, History +5, Religion +5
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages Common, Infernal
Challenge 15 (13,000 XP)

Spellcasting. Sir Ernst's spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

- At will: *sacred flame*, *thaumaturgy*
- 3/day: *bestow curse*, *contagion*, *insect plague*
- 1/day: *harm*

Magic Resistance. Sir Ernst has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Unkillable. Sir Ernst can only be killed by glass or obsidian weapons, or it must be decapitated and blessed with holy water.

Otherwise, 5 minutes from the time that it is reduced to 0 hit points, it begins to regenerate at the rate of 5 hp per round until it is fully healed.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Sir Ernst can use his Dreadful Glare or Cast a Spell and makes one attack with its rotting longsword.

Rotting Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 14 (3d6 + 4) slashing damage plus 21 (6d6) necrotic damage.

Dreadful Glare. Sir Ernst targets one creature he can see within 60 feet of him. If the target can see the fext, it must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw against this magic or become frightened until the end of Sir Ernst's next turn. If the target fails the saving throw by 5 or more, it is also paralyzed for the same duration. A target that succeeds on the saving throw is immune to Sir Ernst's Dreadful Glare of all fext for the next 24 hours.

RÄDSLA

hp 180 (as ice devil[SRD])

FERAL VAMPIRE SPAWN SMASHERS, RAGING (4)

hp 100 (as vampire spawn[SRD], except as noted below)

Reckless. At the start of its turn, the feral spawn can gain advantage on all melee weapon attack rolls during that turn, but attack rolls against it have advantage until the start of its next turn.

SIR FRANKUS DELERRON

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 110 (13d8 + 52)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
25 (+7)	6 (-2)	19 (+4)	1 (-5)	3 (-4)	5 (-3)

Damage Resistances cold, necrotic

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened

Senses lifesense 60 ft., passive Perception 6

Languages Common (cannot speak)

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Aura of Protection of Good. Sir Frankus and any other undead creature within 10 feet of him gains the benefits of the protection from good spell.

Turn Resistance. Sir Frankus has advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead.

Undead Constitution. If damage reduces Sir Frankus to 0 hit points, he must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, Sir Frankus drops to 1 hit point instead.

Headless. Sir Frankus has been decapitated and therefore has the blinded and deafened conditions. However, he gains lifesense allowing him to notice and locate living creatures within 60 feet, just as if he possessed the blindsight ability. He cannot take verbal commands, but he senses the will of its creator or another creature designated by his creator allowing it to know when and whom to attack.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Sir Frankus makes two melee attacks.

Empowered Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 10 (1d6 + 7) bludgeoning damage and 7 (2d6) necrotic damage.

+2 Shocking Battleaxe. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 13 (1d8 + 9) slashing damage and 7 (2d6) lightning damage. This weapon scores a critical hit on a 19 or 20.

Sundering Strike. Instead of doing making an attack to deal damage, Sir Frankus attempt to break his target's weapon. He makes an attack roll contested by the target's Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check; the target chooses which check to use. If Sir Frankus wins the

contest, the weapon is broken, causing attacks made with it to have disadvantage on the attack roll and to deal half damage. A broken weapon can be repaired with a *mending* cantrip or a DC 20 skill check with Smithing Tools and 1 hour of work. If he wins the contest by 5 or more, the target weapon is destroyed and is useless until repaired. A destroyed weapon cannot be repaired with *mending* but a *fabricate* spell and a DC 20 skill check by a caster proficient with Smithing Tools can repair it, as can a DC 25 skill check with Smithing Tools and 8 hours of work.

LADY MARGARET DELERRON

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 Natural Armor

Hit Points 110 (13d8 + 52)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
25 (+7)	6 (-2)	19 (+4)	1 (-5)	3 (-4)	5 (-3)

Damage Resistances cold, necrotic

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened

Senses Lifesense 60 ft., passive Perception 6

Languages Aquan, Auran, Common (cannot speak)

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Turn Resistance. Lady Margaret has advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead.

Undead Constitution. If damage reduces the juju zombie to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the zombie drops to 1 hit point instead.

Headless. Lady Margaret has been decapitated and therefore has the blinded and deafened conditions. However, it gains lifesense allowing her to notice and locate living creatures within 60 feet, just as if she possessed the blindsight ability. She cannot take verbal commands, but she senses the will of her creator or another creature designated by her creator allowing her to know when and whom to attack.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Lady Margaret makes two melee attacks.

Empowered Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 10 (1d6 + 7) bludgeoning damage and 7 (2d6) necrotic damage.

+1 Shocking Trident. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 12 (1d8 + 8) slashing damage and 7 (2d6) lightning damage.



Sir Ernst casts *protection from good* on himself before the battle begins. The ambush is sprung before the PCs have much of a chance to examine the scene of the battle. As Sir Ernst's group comes through the door at **B4**, the juju zombies rise from the ground and begin their attack. The feral vampire spawn rage and rush to engage the PCs as well. Sir Ernst, meanwhile, roars a challenge to the party leader or most formidable combatant and attempts to engage him in a one-on-one duel, while the ice devil separates the party with its *wall of ice* with Sir Ernst on one side and itself on the other.

Ernst, the vampire spawn, and zombies are utterly fearless, fighting until destroyed — Sir Ernst is confident he will return from the dead once again thanks to his unkillable quality. Rädsla remains in the fight as long as Sir Ernst still stands before fleeing, though if the ice devil is reduced below 20 hit points it retreats. It does not

report in to its Underguild superiors for fear of reprisals but rather goes elsewhere in the ruins to lick its wounds and wait to see how the current power struggle plays out. If a feral vampire spawn is reduced to 0 hit points, it assumes gaseous form and drifts out of the camp. Canny PCs might think to follow it back to its coffin, but once among the ruins of the city the cloud seeps among the tiny crevices in the rubble for a direct route to its sewer home, and the PCs will be unable to maintain pursuit.

Development: Unless the PCs take the time and resources to resurrect one or more of the knights, Barionor is the only one who can be healed and questioned as to what happened.

He explains that shortly after the PCs departed and Navellis teleported back to Courghais to conduct further research, the base camp was attacked by surprise. He can confirm that it was Sir Ernst returned who penetrated their defenses in the surprise attack but that it was a skeletal fiend wearing the armor of a Knight of Macobert that led them (this was the graveknight Barivoren Wallix, though the PCs have no way of knowing yet). The force that attacked was overwhelming — much larger than the group that just battled the PCs — and during the fight Sir Ernst singled him out for melee and beat him badly. The last thing he remembers was teetering on the edge of the well, nearly spent and bleeding heavily, when Ernst brought his sword around for another swing, the blow knocked Barionor into the well. Ernst believed the squire slain or nearly so and that he would soon drown regardless — being unaware of the well water's shallowness — so he merely pulled the cover over it and forgot about the defeated foe. Barionor is enraged over Ernst's betrayal and heartsick over the loss of Sir Frankus and Lady Margaret deaths. He affirms that Sir Urvitus was present during the battle and fighting alongside his comrades; he doesn't know where the knight would be now and is suddenly fearful that he was taken by the attackers. If he receives adequate healing and rest, he will gladly join the party to find the missing knight, though he will not insist upon this if the PCs refuse. If he is allowed to accompany them, he assists in any way possible, including taking risks as necessary, though he will not be purposely suicidal.

Unless the PCs contact him sooner, Navellis returns by teleportation in 1d4 hours; if he is contacted sooner, he returns immediately. He had been conducting some further research at Sir Urvitus's request but had not yet found anything of use. If the PCs don't think to do so themselves, he casts *scrying* and succeeds in locating Sir Urvitus. The knight lies bound and unconscious in a dark, damp, brick-lined chamber. He is badly wounded but appears to be alive and stable. Attempts to teleport to the knight's locations fail, however, as the area he is in lies under the effects of a *hallow* (*extradimensional interference*) spell. Further divination reveals only that he is somewhere in the city's old sewer system and that he is in grave, though not immediate, danger. Unfortunately, a *locate creature* spell does not work because there is running water between the PCs and his location.

Navellis informs the PCs that he had arranged for the procurement of a *map of finding* during the party's expedition but once they located the knights had not yet followed up on it. He tells the party that he can obtain the scroll in the morning and return to the base camp with it if they can wait that long. After their encounters in the city and in the ambush, they are likely to welcome a chance to rest and recover. Besides, travel during the day tends to be slightly less dangerous and divinations show that Sir Urvitus is not in immediate peril, so holing up for the rest of the night at the base camp might not be a bad idea. He also volunteers to obtain healing scrolls for the party. If the PCs agree to this, Navellis teleports back to Courghais at first light and returns an hour later with a *map of finding*. He also carries a *spell scroll* (*heal*) for each PC as well as one for Barionor if the party would like for him to join them. If the PCs wish for Navellis to obtain other items, it is at the GM's discretion if he has the time and ability to do so.

BARIONOR OF TROYE

Medium humanoid (human-Erskaelosi[LL4-17,18]), lawful neutral

Armor Class 16 (unarmored defense)

Hit Points 105 (14d8 + 42); currently stable at 0 hit points

Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +9, Dex +7, Con +8, Int +5, Wis +8, Cha +5

Skills Acrobatics +7, Athletics +9, Perception +8

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities diseased, poisoned

Senses passive Perception 18

Languages Common

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Gear *grappler's mask* (see **Appendix B,** page 571),

jagged vest (see **Appendix B,** page 571), *+1 returning spear*, *potion of frost giant strength*, *potion of superior healing*, backpack, belt pouch, 50-ft. rope, 10 torches, flint and steel, waterskin, masterwork manacles, belt pouch with 17 pp, 193 gp, 36 sp, 41 cp, a jade (150 gp), and an aquamarine (375 gp)

Monk Abilities. Barionor has the following monk class features: ki points (14), deflect missiles (1d10+16), slow fall (70 feet), stunning strike (DC 16), ki-empowered strikes, evasion, stillness of mind, purity of body, tongue of the sun and moon, diamond soul.

Way of the Open Hand. Barionor follows this monastic tradition, gaining the open hand technique, wholeness of body (42 hit points), and tranquility (DC 16) abilities.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Barionor makes two melee attacks.

Unarmed Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 8 (1d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

+1 Returning Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack*: +10 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit*: 8 (1d6 + 5) piercing damage, or 9 (1d8 + 5) two-handed. As a bonus action when he throws his spear, Barionor can command it to return to his hand after resolving the attack.

EXPANDING THE UNDERGUILD

The Underguild was first introduced in the adventure "Sewers of the Underguild" in ***L2: Vampires and Liches*** by **Necromancer Games**. It was updated and revised and appeared again in ***Quests of Doom*** by **Frog God Games** where it was revealed that the powerful oganization's sewer lair existed below the streets of ruined Curgantium. If you have access to either of those sources, you can easily expand the Underguild sewer tunnels in this adventure. Simply have the entrance of **I** lead to area **1** of that adventure rather than **I1** in this adventure. Then one of the sewer tunnels from areas **20** or **24** can lead to area **I1** in this adventure. It should be noted that the original adventure is designed for 11th-level characters, so you will likely need to add 4 or 5 levels or Hit Dice to the creatures encountered there in order to make it challenging for a party of 15th- or 16th-level PCs.

Additional information on the subterranean tunnels of the Underguild and their secrets can be found in the short story "In for a Pound" by Kevin Wright in 2016's ***Tales of the Lost Lands: Tale Pack 5*** from **Frog God Games**.

I. TUNNELS OF THE UNDERGUILD

The party needs to return to the Curgantium sewers, where the Underguild is holding Urvitus and the book. However, the section of the sewers most heavily occupied by the Underguild lie along the Riverfront. By means of Navellis's *discern location* spell, he can guide to the party to its entrance at area **I**. As the challenges below are likely to be significant, the GM may wish to minimize encounters along the way, or possibly dispense with them altogether. At the entrance to the sewers located by the spell, the PCs will be left to their own devices; Navellis will not accompany them down into the tunnels. He states that the path to where Sir Urvitus is being held (and by extension probably the book as well) is fairly direct. Once the party enters the tunnels, Navellis will teleport back to Courghais to await news if Barionor is joining them or accompany Barionor back to area **B** if he is not.

I1. UNDERGUILD ENTRANCE

The entrance to the hidden complex is located in a ruined villa in the Riverfront district. In a bathhouse beneath the overshadowing branches of a eucalyptus tree can be found a dry pool lined with cracked ceramic tiles. In the center of the pool is a wide brass drain cover inscribed with the symbol of a skull with elongated canine teeth and pierced laterally by two knives. A DC 25 Intelligence (History) check identifies this as the symbol of the Underguild. The drain cover is locked in place and requires magic or a DC 20 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check to dislodge it to reveal a 20-foot ladder descending to a tunnel beneath. While the drain cover is not trapped, the ladder does bear a **trap**.

Trap: The ladder is trapped halfway down its length with an *incendiary cloud*[SRD] spell. If it is not detected and disabled, the party will likely set it off while climbing down. Each character who climbs down the ladder has a cumulative 1 in 4 chance of setting off the trap (so the fourth character sets it off automatically). When triggered, fire erupts into the pool above and corridor below, filling each in a 20-foot radius.


I3
I2
I2
I3
I4
I5
I6
I7
I8
I9
RAMP DOWN
I. Tunnels of the Underguild
1 SQ. = 5 FT.
TO I9
I10
I11

INCENDIARY CLOUD TRAP

Characters descending the ladder can notice the trap with a DC 24 Intelligence (Arcana, Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check, and if noticed it can be disarmed with a DC 24 Intelligence (Arcana) or Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check, or by *dispel magic* against an 8th-level spell. If not disarmed, the ladder is engulfed in an *incendiary cloud*[SRD] that persists for 1 minute, dealing 10d8 fire damage on a failed DC 17 Dexterity saving throw, or half as much on a successful save.

Typical tunnels of the Underguild's lair are constructed of old brick with the ceiling arching to 8 feet overhead. Niter and mold grow on the walls due to centuries of seepage from the surrounding earth, giving the whole an air of musty staleness. Rooms have 15-foot ceilings unless otherwise noted. There are no light sources. All of the tunnels are under the effects of a hallow spell (extradimensional interference) spell that bars celestials from entering the area.

I2. PIT TRAPS

The ladder descends into a brick-lined tunnel of obviously ancient construction. Roots push through the masonry in places and wide cracks extend through its mortar, but overall it seems stable. The floor is a thin layer of muck over the brickwork, a result of the endless years of seepage revealed by the stains covering the walls.

The Underguild anticipated that if the *incendiary cloud* trap at **I1** is set off, anyone in this lower corridor will run to get out of the spell's area of effect. With this in mind, the Underguild has set traps in the corridor at the edges of the cloud's reach.

Traps: At each of the locations marked on the map, a covered 50-foot-deep pit is hidden by the muck of the floor. It normally requires a DC 25 Wisdom (Perception) check to detect one of these well-concealed pits, but anyone rushing to get out of the effects of the incendiary cloud requires a DC 35 Wisdom (Perception) check to notice, and the Dexterity save to avoid it is increased by 5 (DC 30). A creature that falls into the pit takes 5d6 falling damage and 3d6+5 piercing damage from the spike lined floor.

I3. IRON PORTALS

The corridor ends here at a heavy iron portal. Though spotted with rust it is obviously a much newer addition to these ancient tunnels.

Past the pits in both directions are these iron portals, both bearing an *arcane lock*. In addition, the doors are both set with audible *alarm* spells that will alert the inhabitants throughout areas **I1–I6**.

Arcane-Locked Iron Portal: Damage threshold 10; hp 120; Strength (Athletics) DC 28; Thieves' Tools DC 28.

I4. SKIN-WEARER

The reek of death fills this room, and its interior is nothing less than a blood-soaked slaughterhouse. On the walls hang a dozen mutilated figures — humans, elves, halflings, even ogres, giants, and more monstrous forms — all stripped of their skin and many with their entrails, eyes and other organs removed. The floor is sticky with blood. To your growing horror, you realize that a faint moaning sound issues from one of the bodies.

This chamber contains the remains of some of the Underguild's victims. The moaning is however a *minor illusion* intended to distract the party, which is probably already disturbed by the horrifying scene. The room's real occupant is an **ecorche** that appears to hang from the wall along with all the other corpses on the opposite wall from the auditory illusion. As the party moves to investigate the possible survivor, the ecorche slips from its trick chains and attack. Further investigation of the bodies confirms that they are all dead, and probably have been for some time — extra blood has apparently been splashed on the walls and floor to make the scene even more gruesome, courtesy of the room's occupant.

ECORCHE

Large undead (shapechanger), lawful evil
Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 266 (28d10 + 112)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	18 (+4)	18 (+4)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +9, Wis +7, Cha +9
Skills Deception +9, Perception +7, Stealth +9
Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks not made with silvered weapons
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 17
Languages Common
Challenge 16 (15,000 XP)

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the ecorche fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Wear Skin. As an action, an ecorche can steal the skin of a dead Small, Medium, or Large humanoid and wear it as its own. When it does this, the ecorche takes on the creature's size and appearance and gains a +10 bonus on Charisma (Deception) checks made to impersonate the victim. While wearing a stolen skin, an ecorche cannot use its frightful presence. This stolen skin is preserved while the ecorche wears it but is destroyed if the ecorche takes more than 10 points of damage or if the ecorche chooses to destroy the skin as a bonus action. Those within 60 feet who see an ecorche's stolen skin destroyed are immediately subjected to its frightful presence and have disadvantage on the related Wisdom save. An ecorche reverts to its normal size if its stolen skin is destroyed.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The ecorche uses frightful presence if it is not in disguise. It then makes two razor claw attacks.

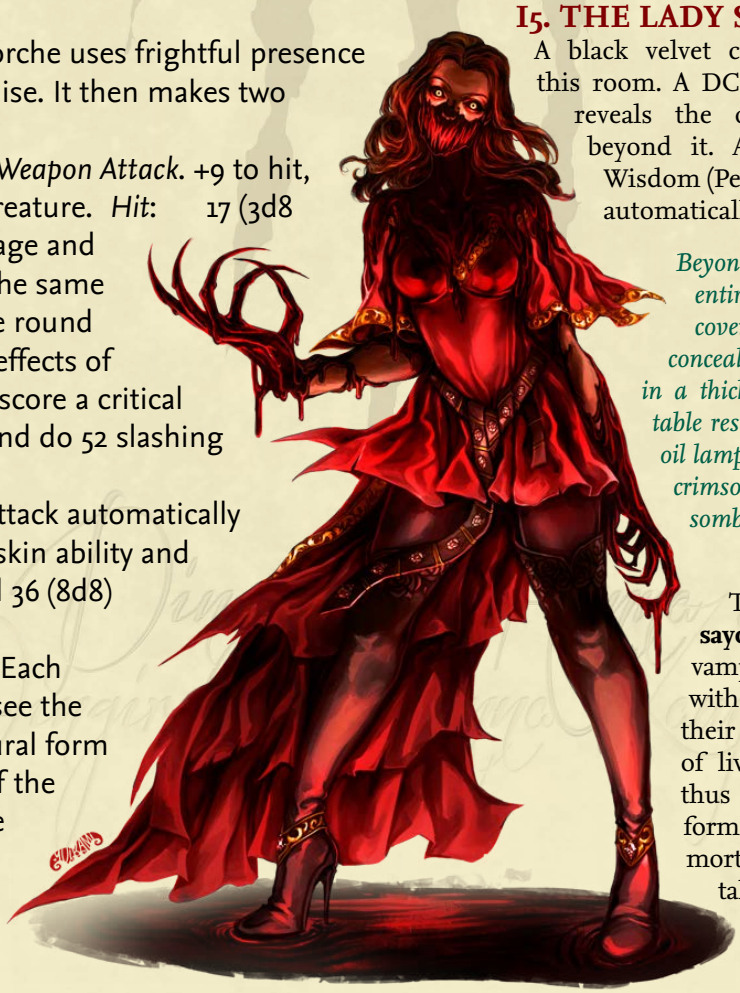
Razor Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack*. +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 17 (3d8 + 4) slashing damage and if this attack hits the same target twice in one round it also suffers the effects of rend. Razor claws score a critical hit on a 19 or 20 and do 52 slashing damage.

Rend. This vicious attack automatically triggers the seize skin ability and does an additional 36 (8d8) necrotic damage.

Frightful Presence. Each creature that can see the ecorche in its natural form is within 60 feet of the ecorche and aware of it must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the ecorche's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours.

REACTIONS

Seize Skin. Whenever an ecorche damages a target with its rend ability, the target must succeed at a DC 20 Constitution save to resist being skinned alive. Those who fail the save are stunned and gain 1 level of exhaustion per round. Both of these effects are permanent but can be removed with a regenerate or heal spell (or 1 round of natural regeneration). The ecorche can use its wear skin trait to don a skin stolen in this way as an action.



15. THE LADY SANCHESSA

A black velvet curtain blocks the entrance to this room. A DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals the odor of blood coming from beyond it. A creature with advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks related to smell automatically succeeds on this check.

Beyond the curtain is a chamber swathed entirely in black. Thick black curtains cover the walls, veils of black muslin conceal the ceiling, and the floor is covered in a thick, black carpet. A small mohagony table rests in the center upon which rests an oil lamp with a shade of red glass, throwing crimson shards of light across the room's somber interior.

This room is guarded by the **sayona**, Lady Sanchessa. Not a true vampire, she has thrown in her lot with the Underguild in exchange for their promise of a continuous stream of living sacrifices for her to drain, thus allowing her to use her living form ability to always retain a beautiful mortal body. Now, as critical rituals are taking place and the Underguild has to deal with the adventurers,

she has been dispatched to hold the line, and also enticed with the prospect of more mortal blood. The lady stands invisibily behind the curtain covering the exit from the room (this concealed passage is detectable with a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check) and watches through a small slit in the fabric. With her in the room are **12 ghasts**, the pathetic remains of past victims. They each lie in a hollow in the earthen floor that is covered over by the black carpet, marked on the map with an "x". The carpet has been cut so that they can rise unimpeded with a single move action. These concealed hollows can be discovered by stepping in one of the marked squares or with a DC 22 Wisdom (Perception) check. Marked squares are considered difficult terrain.

LADY SANCHESSA

Medium undead, neutral evil
Armor Class 19 (natural armor)
Hit Points 210 (20d8+120)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	20 (+5)	22 (+6)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	20 (+5)

Damage Resistance cold, necrotic
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages Abyssal, Common, Infernal
Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)
Gear *rod of withering*

Innate Spellcasting. The sayona's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). She can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

- At will: *fear*, *fog cloud*
- 3/day: *dominate person*, *gaseous form*, *invisibility*

Living Form. Upon draining blood, a sayona may transform into a young, beautiful maiden for 24 hours. In this form, she does not appear undead to mundane senses or to divination magic.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The sayona makes 3 claw attacks. She may replace a claw attack with a Rod of Withering attack.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack.* +9 to hit, 5 ft. reach. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) slashing damage, and 7 (2d6) necrotic damage. If the target is a creature other than an undead, it must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. A target killed by this attack rises as a ghast (for creatures that have a CR/level greater than 1) or a ghast (if the creature has a CR/Level equal to or less than 1) after the next sunset. The necrotic damage of this attack also heals the sayona.

Rod of Withering. *Melee Weapon Attack.* +10 to hit, 5 ft. reach. *Hit:* 9 (1d6 + 6) bludgeoning damage, and 14 (4d6) necrotic damage.

GHASTS (12)

hp 36 (ghast[SRD])

Tactics: The ghasts wait until the PCs enter the room before rising all around them. Anyone who has not noticed the concealed creatures is surprised as they rise to attack. Lady Sanchessa uses *dominate person* until she runs out of attempts or is discovered behind the curtain. She then emerges and attacks with her *rod of withering*. The ghasts fight to the death, but if Lady Sanchessa is reduced below 40 hit points, she uses *fog cloud* and *gaseous form* to cover her escape to the ruins above, leaving the Underguild to their fate. If she escapes, Sanchessa may return to bedevil the party later as vengeance for her defeat.

16. RUNNING WATER

The cramped corridor opens out into a much wider tunnel. It is one of the city's main sewers with a brick ceiling arching 20 feet overhead and strings of moss and roots dangling down from jagged cracks in the masonry. A 10-foot-wide channel of fast-flowing water cuts across your path. A slimed, brick bridge without rails arches over the murky waters below. Beyond the bridge a short corridor can be seen that leads to another rusty iron portal.

This tunnel is indeed one of the main sewer channels that carries drainage from the Riverfront to the Amrin River. The slope of the terrain causes the 10-foot-deep channel to flow with considerable current, moving 120 feet per round, requiring a DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check to wade through; failure causes a creature to be swept downstream 5 feet for every point by which the check was failed. The bridge itself is overgrown with slime-molds and moss from the dank surroundings but is otherwise stable. Dexterity (Acrobatics)

checks that occur on it have disadvantage due to its slick surface. In addition, the center section of the bridge bears an illusory trap. Creatures checking the bridge for traps will automatically find this "trap" but must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or be compelled to devote all of their attention to "disarming" it for 1 minute, as the suggestion spell. If the Wisdom saving throw succeeds, they realize the trap is entirely fake. While this illusory trap is meant to distract intruders, the true dangers of this tunnel lie in the water below and the ceiling above.

The Underguild has recruited two of the extraplanar creatures that inhabit the city to serve as guardians of this chamber. One is an **amphibious shadow roper** hidden beneath the water. The other is a **scarlet walker**, a great spider-like creature with a red, human-sized body with a skull-like face and six extremely long, tentacular legs. This creature uses its compression ability to reside in one of the masonry crevices above the bridge. Both have total cover and total concealment before they emerge from their respective hiding places. These creatures wait until the party is distracted by the phantom trap or attempts to cross the channel before attacking. The roper attempts to drag victims to drown beneath the water while the scarlet walker uses its blood-draining gaze after emerging and tentacles and Spring Attack to try and paralyze as many opponents as possible. It tries to straddle the channel or cling to the ceiling to make it as difficult as possible to engage in melee. The shadow roper maneuvers to avoid falling within the area of the scarlet walker's blood-draining gaze.

AMPHIBIOUS SHADOW ROPER

Large fey, chaotic evil
Armor Class 20 (natural armor)
Hit Points 172 (21d10 + 63)
Speed 10 ft., climb 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	8 (-1)	17 (+3)	7 (-2)	16 (+3)	6 (-2)

Skills Perception +7, Stealth +7
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages --
Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

Amphibious. The roper can breathe air and water.
Death Flash. When the roper is killed, nonmagical light flashes out from it in a 10-foot radius as its body, burn to ash. Any creature in that area and able to see the bright light must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or be blinded for 1 minute.
False Appearance. While the roper remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a normal cave formation, such as a stalagmite.
Grasping Tendrils. The roper can have up to six tendrils at a time. Each tendril can be attacked (AC 20; 10 hit points; immunity to poison and psychic damage). Destroying a tendril deals no damage to the roper, which can extrude a replacement tendril on its next turn. A tendril can also be broken if a creature takes an action and succeeds on a DC 18 Strength check against it.
Light Sensitivity. While in bright light, the roper has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.
Spider Climb. The roper can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The roper makes four attacks with its tendrils, uses Reel, and makes one attack with its bite.
Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 24 (4d8 + 6) piercing damage.
Tendril. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +11 to hit, reach 50 ft., one creature. *Hit*: The target is grappled (escape DC 18). Until the grapple ends, the target is restrained and has disadvantage on Strength checks and Strength saving throws, and the roper can't use the same tendril on another target.
Reel. The roper pulls each creature grappled by it up to 25 feet straight toward it.
Darkness (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). The roper casts *darkness* without any components. Wisdom is its spellcasting ability.

SCARLET WALKER

Huge fiend (devil), lawful evil
Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 136 (16d8 + 32)
Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	20 (+5)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Int +9, Wis +7, Cha +7
Skills Arcana +13, Deception +9, Insight +9, Perception+7
Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities acid, poison
Condition Immunities charmed, poisoned
Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 17
Languages Aklo, Infernal; telepathy 300 ft.
Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The scarlet walker's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15). The scarlet walker can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

- At will: *alter self*, *darkness*, *detect thoughts*, *heat metal*, *invisibility* (self only), *magic missile*, *sending*
- 3/day—*confusion*, *counterspell*
- 1/day—*feeblemind*, *finger of death*

Blood-Draining Gaze. All creatures within 20 feet of a scarlet walker are subject to the monster's eerie blood-draining gaze. Affected creatures must succeed at a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or thin streams of blood pour from their eyes, flowing through the air and into the eye socket-like pits in the scarlet walker's face. This does not impact the victim's vision but does deal 1 point of Constitution damage each round and sickens the victim imposing disadvantage on attack rolls until the end of the targets next round. A creature that took necrotic damage in the previous turn has disadvantage on this saving throw. A creature reduced to 0 Constitution is killed. A creature may regain its lost Constitution after a long rest.

Bloodsense. A scarlet walker can sense living creatures with blood in their veins, or undead creatures that feed on blood (such as vampires). This ability functions like blindsight to a range of 60 feet.

Evasion. If the scarlet walker is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, the scarlet walker instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

Magic Resistance. The scarlet walker has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Magic Weapons. The scarlet walker's weapon attacks are magical.

No Breath. The scarlet walker does not breath.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The scarlet walker makes two claw attacks and one tentacle attack.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 8 (2d4 + 3) slashing damage. The target must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Tentacles. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 30 ft., one target. *Hit*: 8 (2d4 + 3) slashing damage. The target must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. If the target is a creature other than an undead, it must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Teleport. The scarlet walker magically teleports, along with any equipment it is wearing or carrying, up to 60 feet to an unoccupied space it can see.

Treasure: Each of these creatures maintains its own treasure hoard, primarily composed of payments made to it by the Underguild. The roper's treasure it stuffed down the throat of a water-logged aberrant giant husk lying on the bottom of the channel. Anyone searching the channel can locate the corpse with a DC 5 Wisdom (Perception) check, but they must specifically search its stomach to find the hoard, which otherwise requires a DC 40 Wisdom (Perception) check to locate. This hoard consists of 207 gp,

246 sp, 20 pp, a large black pearl (350 gp), a +2 *shield* with the leopard and crown of Aachen Province[LL5-17] painted on it, a pair of *gloves of swimming and climbing*, a *stone of alarm* (see **Appendix B,** page 575), and a waterlogged scroll (now ruined). The scarlet walker's treasure is sealed in a bundle of old clothing with a thick coating of hardened, dried blood stuffed deep into the crevice where the creature hides. Only if the crevice is searched and a DC 27 Wisdom (Perception) check made will the bundle be noticed. It consists of a belt pouch holding 15 pp, a *potion of heroism*, a *spell scroll* (*shapechange*), and a +1 *wand of the war mage*.

I7. THE FAT MAN

The door to this room is identical to the doors at **I3**. Its alarm is audible throughout areas **I7–I10**.

This room resembles the interior of a three-sided pyramid, with the walls rising to a single point perhaps 40 feet overhead. Light seems to shine from everywhere, a soft and somehow sickening shade of yellow. A golden brazier stands in each corner of the room but is clearly not the source of this light. On the floor you can see the faint outlines of a familiar three-legged pattern that flickers softly gold and white. Crystalline buttresses support the interior walls, glowing with the same disturbing yellow color. A massively obese figure stands in the corner of the chamber opposite you, draped in saffron-colored robes, and you recognize the strange man from your dreams. You feel rooted to the spot as the figure turns slowly to reveal itself as a mass of dark, blubbery flesh covered in dozens and dozens of blinking, alien eyes. "You have found it," echoes the bodiless voice from your dreams. "Now come and be fulfilled!"

The Fat Man from the characters' dreams reveals itself to be a horrific **hyakume**, a servant of Hastur. He has been following the characters' progress through Curgantium since their arrival and is determined to drain their memories to glean any information that might be useful to his master. As the PCs enter, they experience a round of being dazed as a result of the Fat Man's constant intrusion into their dreams. During this round, read the following.

The creature raises its blubbery arms, and a coruscating swirl of colors, some entirely outside the normal spectrum, flickers and flashes at the other corners of the room. There, two black oozing shapes appear, slithering across the floor toward you. The yellow symbol in the center of the floor flashes yellow with life and power.

The Fat Man has activated the permanent *Yellow Sign* (DC 19 Wisdom saving throw) scribed into the room's floor (see **Appendix B**, page 577) and in doing so has activated a contigent summoning spell that summons **2 dark matter entropic oozes**. The Fat Man directs the oozes to focus on the most dangerous party members, leaving the weaker ones for his own attentions. There is limited room for maneuvering against these Large and Huge opponents, and it's possible that one or more of the PCs might be dominated by the *Yellow Sign* (especially if Barionor is present). The party is not entirely without resources, as this qualifies as a fight that the lhaksharut will deem appropriate if summoned (see **Event 5**). If the lhaksharut is called in to assist the PCs it is, of course, immune to the effects of the *Yellow Sign* as an inevtiable. The summoned oozes return to the Negative Energy Plane after 16 rounds. Likewise, if the Fat Man is slain, the oozes disappear as described under "Development" below.



THE FAT MAN

Huge aberration, neutral evil
Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 228 (24d12 + 72)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)	19 (+4)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)

Skills Perception +12, Stealth +8
Damage Resistance fire, lightning
Damage Immunities cold
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 17
Languages Common, Undercommon; telepathy 60 ft.
Challenge 15 (13,000 XP)

Drain Memories. The fat man targets one creature it has touched. The target must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or take 44 (8d10) psychic damage and become memory drained until it finishes a short or long rest or until it benefits from the *greater restoration* or *heal* spell. Constructs, oozes, plants, and undead succeed on the save automatically. While memory drained, the target must roll a d4 and subtract the number rolled from any ability check or attack roll it makes. Each time the target is memory drained beyond the first, the die size increases by one: the d4 becomes a d6, the d6 becomes a d8, and so on until the die becomes a d20, at which point the target becomes charmed for 1 hour. The effect then ends. When a fat man causes a target to become memory drained, the fat man gains full access to these memories, learns all the languages the target knows and gains all its proficiencies, except any saving throw proficiencies. It may also transfer these memories to a willing creature it touches.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The fat man can use his Maddening Presence and then make three slam attacks.
Slams. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 24 (4d8 + 6) bludgeoning damage and the target is exposed to his drain memories trait. If the target is a creature, the fat man can choose one of the following additional effects:

- The target must succeed on a DC 19 Strength saving throw or drop one item it is holding (fat man's choice).
- The target must succeed on a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw or be knocked prone.
- The target must succeed on a DC 19 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of the fat man's next turn.
- The damage of the attack is converted to cold, force, psychic or thunder damage.

Eye Probe (1/Day). The fat man can detach up to six of its eyes and send them on missions. An eyeball has AC 22, hp 5, and a fly speed of 60 ft. (hover). The fat man can see through all of its eye probes and can make drain memory attacks with them. If a fat man's eyeball is destroyed, the fat man takes 5 points of damage. An eye probe can't stray farther than 1 mile from the fat man or the eye is destroyed (dealing 5 points of damage).
Maddening Presence. The fat man targets one creature it can see within 30 feet of it. If the target can see or hear the horror, the target must make a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the target becomes paralyzed until the end of its next turn. If a creature's saving throw is successful, the creature is immune to the fat man's Maddening Presence for the next 24 hours.

DARK MATTER ENTROPIC OOZES (2)

Huge ooze, neutral
Armor Class 13
Hit Points 389 (37d10 + 185)
Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	16 (+3)	21 (+5)	1 (-5)	13 (+1)	1 (-5)

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, prone
Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this distance), passive Perception 15
Languages --
Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Amorphous. An entropic ooze can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Devour Soul. A living creature slain by an entropic ooze has its soul devoured by the ooze. Such a creature cannot be returned to life until the entropic ooze that contains its soul is slain.

Soulsight. An entropic ooze can automatically detect the location of any living creature within 120 feet. It also senses the strength of their life force automatically.

Spider Climb. The entropic ooze can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. An entropic ooze makes two pseudopod attacks.

Pseudopod. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 17 (4d6 + 3) necrotic damage plus 7 (2d6) psychic damage.

Development: Once the Fat Man is reduced below 0 hit points, he instantly deflates and is absorbed into the Yellow Sign on the floor. The symbol itself then twists and inverts before imploding out of existence. If either of the entropic oozes is present when this occurs, they are pulled into the symbol and disappear as well. The disappearance of the Yellow Sign likewise ends the *hallow (extradimensional interference)* effect over the tunnels, though the PCs are unlikely to notice this immediately.

I8. HE COMMANDS IT

Light sources brought into this chamber have their illumination area halved while they remain in this room.

The walls, floor, and ceiling of this long hall has been painted entirely black, almost seeming to absorb any light brought into it. The far end rises on wide stairs to a dais filling a shallow alcove. Set within this alcove is a large bronze altar of unfamiliar design that is constructed around a tall glass cymlinder set with brass bands and fittings. The cylinder is filled with a purplish liquid that seems to swirl within its glassy casing. Throughout the rest of the room are numerous dark-cloaked, shadowy figures that seem to have been bowing before the dais and altar. They turn gaunt, pale faces towards you as they rise, chanting in unison, "He commands it!"

In more ways than one, this chamber is the beating heart of the Underguild. While the guild is led in its day-to-day activities by the legendary guildmaster, the Hand of Death, Sangre, and his infamous Hollow Blade[QoD-260], he is not the true will behind this millennia-old organization that has stretched its fingers across Akados from the blighted city of Castorhage[LL7-213] to the free city of Bard's Gate[LL8-29] and beyond. Nor is he a being capable of stitching together the goals of the disparate followers of Thanatos/Orcus[QoD-273], Hastur the Unspeakable, the Fetch of Castorhage[LL7-213], as well as liches, dragons, and other unspeakably powerful creatures. He is merely a figurehead and mouthpiece,



though a capable one, to be used and disposed of as needed to mislead foes as to the Underguild's true strength and purpose. In truth, the Underguild receives its mandate from this chamber, for here in its venerated glass cylinder lies the **immortal ichor** known only as "He". From this mysterious abomination, the will of the Underguild is passed down from unknown and unknowable masters that lie beyond the Shadowlands, beyond the Far North, under the eternal night at the heart of the continent of Boros known as the Ebon Shroud[RC-170]. The ichor lies dormant at the moment, with no commands to give from the guild's impossibly distant masters, but it is guarded by **2 vampire guildmembers** and **4 feral vampire spawn** smashers. Because of the presence of the immortal ichor, the lhaksharut will deem this a fight appropriate for its summons if the PCs call it in for assistance here.

IMMORTAL ICHOR

Medium ooze, neutral evil
Armor Class 16
Hit Points 168 (16d10 + 80)
Speed 20 ft., fly 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	16 (+3)	21 (+5)	22 (+6)	13 (+1)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Int +13, Cha +11
Skills Arcana +13, Deception +11, History +13, Intimidation +11, Perception +8, Religion +13
Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, prone
Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this distance), passive Perception 18
Languages Abyssal, Aklo, Infernal, Undercommon (can't speak any language); telepathy 100 ft.
Challenge 17 (18,000 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The immortal ichor's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 19). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

- At will: *charm person* (as 5th-level spell), *charm monster* (as *charm person* but targets any creature type, 6th level), *detect thoughts*, *hold person*
- 3/day each: *confusion*, *dimension door*, *dominate person*, *fear*, *hallucinatory terrain*, *hold monster*, *hypnotic pattern*, *telekinesis*
- 1/day each: *dream*, *insect plague* (as *conjure animals* but swarms only)

Amorphous. The immortal ichor can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Corrupt Ally. Any creature charmed by an immortal ichor takes 1d6 points of Wisdom damage per day. When a charmed creature's Wisdom damage equals its Wisdom score, it becomes completely subservient to the immortal ichor (as *dominate monster*, except it even obeys self-destructive orders) and loses the Wisdom damage it has taken from this ability. A subservient ally who is killed rises the next round as an undead of the appropriate CR under the immortal ichor's control. If the ichor is killed, these undead are immediately destroyed.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The immortal ichor makes two pseudopod attacks and Casts a Spell.

Pseudopod. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 17 (4d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage plus 7 (2d6) psychic damage.

VAMPIRE GUILDMEMBERS (2)

hp 144 (as vampire[SRD])

FERAL VAMPIRE SPAWN SMASHERS, RAGING (4)

hp 100 (as vampire spawn[SRD], except as noted below)

Reckless. At the start of its turn, the feral spawn can gain advantage on all melee weapon attack rolls during that turn, but attack rolls against it have advantage until the start of its next turn.

Tactics: The immortal ichor does not seek to enter the melee but remains within its hardened cylinder (damage threshold 15, hp 90, Strength (Athletics) break DC 27) where it has **total cover** from anything that's not above it and **three-quarters cover** against any attacks not directly above it. It uses *charm monster* and quickened *charm person* to remove PCs from the fight and its telepathy to try and demoralize the

party with its Intimidation skill. Only if its vampire minions are destroyed or it is physically threatened will it resort to using *insect plague*. Meanwhile the vampire guildmembers attempt to gain flanking positions with the raging feral vampire spawn to use their sneak attack and Stunning Fist as often as possible. The vampires and vampire spawn fight until reduced to 0 hit points at which point they will assume gaseous form and head into **I6**; their assorted coffins lie hidden somewhere along the length of the sewer tunnels and beyond the scope of this adventure.

If the immortal ichor is reduced below 50 hit points, it uses *telekinesis* to open a stone hatch directly beneath its cylinder. This causes the cylinder to drop into a seemingly bottomless pit descending somewhere into the depths of the earth. It cannot be attacked once it has dropped nor can it be followed as the pit has special extradimensional properties that take its contents beyond the Material Plane to points unknown. In any case, the immortal ichor, He, will not be encountered again in this adventure, and the party receives full XP for defeating it if it is forced to retreat.

I9. WELL OF ANGELS

The door to this room is identical to the doors at **I3**. Its *alarm* is audible throughout areas **I9–I10**.

You have stepped out into a vast, hollow, cynlindrical chamber, like the interior of a great well shaft. A spiraling ramp leads down around its outer wall here at a steep angle, as if it was intended to make intruders proceed warily, or — more alarmingly — wasn't designed for familiar humanoid physiologies at all. The ramp is constructed within a circular loggia that rises from the bottom of the well shaft far below to the ceiling of the cavern 40 feet above. The columned arches that make up this classical design does not provide a rail to protect against the precipitous plummet; rather inset on a low plinth between each of the columsn is a beautifully crafted alabaster statue of an angel. The statues are similar though in different poses, and all appear to exhibit the same expressionless cherub. Disconcertingly, this carven angel repeating over and over as the steep ramp descends has four arms in addition to its feathery wings.

The ramp descends steeply for 500 feet and is considered difficult terrain due to its steep angle of descent. Anyone who tries to move faster than a single move on the ramp must make a DC 18 Acrobatics check or fall prone and then a DC 15 Dexterity save or roll downwards 1d2 x 5 feet. If the individual rolls a 1 on the save, he has instead fallen over the edge of the loggia into the central well shaft. The ramp spirals a total of 5 times in its descent and has a four-armed angelic statue set every 12 feet along its length. Most of these statues are mundane though fine — and obviously ancient — construction and are very sturdy. A statue weighs 1,200 lb. and requires a DC 22 Strength check to dislodge from its base. However, 5 of the statues are actually **5 four-armed angel sentinels** — one randomly placed on each of the spiral's revolutions.

FOUR-ARMED ANGEL SENTINELS (5)

hp 136 (as deva[SRD] except change its type to construct and remove its innate spellcasting, healing touch, and change shape action)

Tactics: These sentinels remain frozen in place unless attacked or until someone moves halfway down the shaft. Once someone reaches the level of the third revolution (approximately 250 feet from the bottom), the angel sentinel at that level attacks with surprise and attacks. When this occurs the angles above and below move into attack as well, the two closest moving on the ramp to engage from above and below and the two farthest flying into the shaft to attack from the air. The flying angel sentinels attempt to snatch PCs off the ramp and hurl them to the floor below while the others just focus on pounding the PCs with their slam attacks. Anyone on the ramp can use an angel statue as cover against a flying angel sentinel, though doing so grants the flying angel cover as well. If this occurs in 2 consectutive rounds, the flying angel will attempt to pull the interfering statue from its plinth and hurl it out of the way (50% down the shaft/50% rolling down the ramp). A rolling statue requires a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw from anyone below it or deals 10d6 points of bludgeoning damage and requires a second DC 20 Dexterity saving throw to avoid being knocked over the edge of the ramp into the shaft.

I10. EMPTY CELL

A door stands open here into a cramped, brick-lined room. Anyone who managed to scry Sir Urvitus before heading to this location recognizes it as the room he was being held in, though the knight is no longer present, and there is no sign of his fate save for his baldric and belt holding his two sheathed gladiuses (each a +2 shortsword) and four daggers.

I11. PIT OF THE SLEEPER

The door to this room is identical to the doors at **I3**. Its alarm is audible only in area **I11**.

The air of this great cavern chamber is hot and thick with moisture. Before you the floor ends at a terrace overlooking a deep pit that occupies the rest of the cavern and from which the sickening humidity seems to issue. In the pit, you glimpse what looks like a

quivering mass of gray-brown flesh that gleams and oozes with slime and flickers with pulses of greenish energy. Before you can fully consider the nightmarish thing in the pit, however, your eyes are drawn to the edge of the pit where you see the motionless form of your friend Sir Urvitus lying on the stone, bloodied and still clad in his armor. Standing beside his still form is a bronze lectern, upon which rests a large volume that you recognize as the Codex Ibnathi. A tall figure, gaunt and pale, clad in robes of saffron, stands at the lectern, reading from the open book, intoning ritualistic-sounding syllables. Beside the pale figure is a skeletal humanoid figure clad in flame-scarred black plate armor. Both figures look up as you enter, and a flash of renewed green energy pulses through the quivering mass in the pit.

"Mortals!" intones the armored creature in a sepulchral voice, "you are too late for your friend! Leave now while you still can!" As the armored creature speaks, the gaunt yellow-robed man continues his incantation.

Urvitus is unconscious but stable and currently bound and held in stasis by the magic of the spell being cast. The **graveknight** Barivoren Wallix stands guard while the **nosferatu vampire** Omanales intones a ritual from the codex to implant the soul of Eb Wallix into their captive's body. Omanales and Barivoren power their ritual with energy drawn from the mass in the pit — a **ghaggurath**. Barivoren doesn't waste time negotiating or monologuing. After the PCs predictably refuse to leave, he waves a bony arm, and **6 aberrant fire giants** finish clambering out of the 20-foot-deep pit (they had begun climbing last round), throwing themselves at the party with the sole intention of delaying the characters while Omanales completes his fell ritual.

GRAVEKNIGHT BARIVOREN WALLIX

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 18 (graveknight armor)
Hit Points 187 (22d8 + 88)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	17 (+3)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Con +9, Int +8, Wis +8
Skills Insight +8, Intimidation +9, Perception +8
Damage Immunities fire, necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities exhaustion, frightened, poisoned
Senses passive Perception 18
Languages Aklo, Common
Challenge 14 (11,500 XP)

Power Attack. The graveknight can choose to have disadvantage on his attack rolls until the beginning of his next turn in order to make furious blows, adding 3d6 damage on each successful hit.

Ruinous Revivification. One day after a graveknight is destroyed, its armor begins to rebuild the undead horror's body. This process takes 1d10 days — if the body is destroyed before that time passes, the armor merely starts the process anew. After this time has elapsed, the graveknight wakens fully healed. The only way to permanently destroy a graveknight is to destroy its armor.

Sacrilegious Aura. A graveknight constantly exudes an aura of intense evil and negative energy in a 30-foot radius. Unless the graveknight is incapacitated, he and all undead creatures of his choice within this aura have advantage on saving throws against features that turn undead. It also hinders positive energy effects. Any creature casting a healing or radiant damage spell must make a DC 16 Charisma check or the spell automatically does the minimum amount of healing or damage possible.

Tactician. The graveknight may swap places with an ally that is within 10 feet of him as a bonus action or reaction.

Undead Mastery. As an action, a graveknight can attempt to bend any undead creature within 50 feet to its will. The targeted undead must succeed at a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or fall under the graveknight's control. This control is permanent for unintelligent undead; an undead with an Intelligence score above 1 is allowed an additional save every day to break free from the graveknight's control. A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by the same graveknight's undead mastery for 24 hours. A graveknight can control 70 Hit Dice of undead creatures. If the graveknight exceeds this number, the excess from earlier uses of the ability becomes uncontrolled.

Vital Strike. If the graveknight hits the same target twice in the same round with his greatsword attack, his second attack is treated as a critical hit.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The graveknight makes two greatsword attacks.

Dragon Slayer Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 14 (2d6 + 7) slashing damage plus 17 (5d6) necrotic damage. In Barivoren's hands, this weapon scores a critical hit on a 19 or 20, and his dragon slayer deals an extra 3d6 slashing damage to dragonborn as well as dragons.

Devasting Blast (1/Day). The graveknight hurls a magical ball of fire that explodes at a point he can see within 120 feet of him. Each creature in a 20-foot-radius sphere centered on that point must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw. The sphere spreads around corners. A creature takes 28 (8d6) fire damage and 28 (8d6) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Phantom Mount. Once per hour, a graveknight can summon a skeletal horse similar to a *phantom steed*.

REACTIONS

Parry. The graveknight adds 5 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit him. To do so, the graveknight must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

OMANALES

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 17 (+2 *chain shirt*)

Hit Points 144 (17d8 + 68)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	18 (+4)	18 (+4)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +9, Wis +7, Cha +9

Skills Perception +7, Stealth +9

Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 17

Languages Aklo, Common, High Boros, Thieves' Cant; telepathy 60 ft.

Challenge 16 (15,000 XP)

Gear +2 *chain shirt*, *mace of terror*

Spellcasting. Omanales is an 18th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following wizard spells prepared:

- Cantrips (at will): *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost*
- 1st level (4 slots): *detect magic*, *magic missile*, *shield*, *thunderwave*
- 2nd level (3 slots): *detect thoughts*, *disrupt silence* (see **Appendix B**), *invisibility*, *mirror image*
- 3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell*, *dispel magic*, *fly*, *fireball*, *nondetection*
- 4th level (3 slots): *blight*, *freedom of movement*
- 5th level (3 slots): *cloudkill*, *conjure elemental*, *telekinesis*
- 6th level (1 slot): disintegrate, *globe of invulnerability*
- 7th level (1 slot): *finger of death*, *plane shift*
- 8th level (1 slot): *dominate monster*, *power word stun*
- 9th level (1 slot): *power word kill*

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Omanales fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Legendary Spellcaster. Omanales may maintain 3 concentration spells at once.

Swarm Discharge. When Omanales drops to 0 hit points outside his resting place, he transforms into a Swarm of Bats (as in the Shapechanger trait) instead of falling unconscious, provided that he isn't in sunlight or running water. If he can't transform, he is destroyed. While he has 0 hit points in bat swarm form, he can't revert to his vampire form, and he must reach his resting place within 2 hours or be destroyed. Once in his resting place, he reverts to his vampire form. He is then paralyzed until he regains at least 1 hit

point. After spending 1 hour in his resting place with 0 hit points, he regains 1 hit point.

Regeneration. Omanales regains 20 hit points at the start of his turn if he has at least 1 hit point and isn't in sunlight or running water. If he takes radiant damage or damage from holy water, this trait doesn't function at the start of his next turn.

Shapechanger. If Omanales isn't in sunlight or running water, he can use his action to polymorph into a Tiny bat or a Medium swarm of bats[SRD], or back into its true form. While in bat form, he can't speak, his walking speed is 5 feet, and he has a flying speed of 30 feet. His statistics, other than his size and speed, are unchanged. Anything he is wearing transforms with him, but nothing he is carrying does. He reverts to his true form if he dies. While in Swarm of Bats form, the vampire can't take any actions, speak, or manipulate objects. He is immune to all nonmagical damage, except the damage he takes from sunlight, but otherwise has the statistics of a standard Swarm of Bats.



Spider Climb. Omanales can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Turn Resistance. Omanales has advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead.

Vampire Weaknesses. Omanales has the following flaws:

- *Garlic.* A nosferatu vampire can't tolerate the strong odor of garlic and won't enter an area laced with it.
- *Holy Symbol.* A nosferatu vampire recoils from mirrors or strongly presented holy symbols. These things don't harm the nosferatu—they merely keep it at bay.
- *Forbiddance.* The nosferatu vampire can't enter a residence without an invitation from one of the occupants.
- *Harmed by Running Water.* The nosferatu vampire takes 20 acid damage if it ends its turn in running water.
- *Stake to the Heart.* If a piercing weapon made of wood is driven into the vampire's heart while the vampire is incapacitated in its resting place, the nosferatu vampire is paralyzed until the stake is removed.
- *Sunlight Hypersensitivity.* The nosferatu vampire takes 20 radiant damage when it starts its turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, it has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. (Vampire Form Only). Omanales makes two attacks, only one of which can be a bite attack.

Claws (Vampire Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack*: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage. Instead of dealing damage, the vampire can grapple the target (escape DC 18).

Chaos Mace of Terror (Vampire Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack*: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 8 (1d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage. The weapon does an additional 7 (2d6) necrotic damage to creatures of lawful alignment. Each time a target is hit by the mace of terror it must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened

and spend its turn moving away from Omanales, taking the Dash action if possible.

Bite (Bat or Vampire Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack*: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one willing creature, or a creature that is grappled by the vampire, incapacitated, or restrained. *Hit*: 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage plus 10 (3d6) necrotic damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and the vampire regains hit points equal to that amount. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0. A humanoid slain in this way and then buried in the ground rises the following night as a vampire spawn under the vampire's control.

Charm. Omanales targets one humanoid he can see within 30 feet of him. If the target can see the vampire, the target must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw against this magic or be charmed by the vampire. The charmed target regards Omanales as a trusted friend to be heeded and protected. Although the target isn't under his control, he takes the vampire's requests or actions in the most favorable way it can, and it is a willing target for the vampire's bite attack. Each time Omanales or the vampire's companions do anything harmful to the target, it can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success. Otherwise, the effect lasts 24 hours or until Omanales is destroyed, is on a different plane of existence than the target or takes a bonus action to end the effect.

Children of the Night (1/Day). Omanales magically calls 2d4 swarms of bats or rats (swarm of bats, swarm of rats), provided that the sun isn't up. While outdoors, the vampire can call 3d6 wolves (wolf) instead. The called creatures arrive in 1d4 rounds, acting as allies of the vampire and obeying his spoken commands. The beasts remain for 1 hour, until Omanales dies, or until the vampire dismisses them as a bonus action.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Omanales can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. He regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Move. The vampire moves up to its speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

Claws. The vampire makes one unarmed strike.

Mace of Terror. The vampire issues a command and his mace releases a wave of terror in a 30-foot sphere. Each creature the vampire designates must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or suffer the effects of a fear spell.

Casts a Spell (Costs 1 to 3 Actions). The vampire casts a spell of level 1 to 3. The spell consumes 1 action per spell level. He may also use this legendary action to cast cantrips for free so long as he has 1 legendary action remaining.

Bite (Costs 2 Actions). The vampire makes one bite attack.

ABERRANT FIRE GIANTS (6)

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

hp 162 (See page 420, but these giants use the base statistics of fire giants[SRD], with damage immunity to necrotic as well as fire)

GHAGGURATH

Gargantuan aberration, neutral evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 252 (24d10 + 120)

Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	14 (+2)	20 (+5)	16 (+3)	30 (+10)	25 (+7)

Saving Throws Con +11, Wis +16, Cha +13

Skills Arcana +9, Insight +16, Nature +9, Perception +16, Persuasion +13

Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing and slashing damage from non-magical attacks

Condition Immunities charmed, grappled, prone
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 26
Languages Abyssal, Common, Giant, Goblin, Infernal, Terran, Undercommon; telepathy 100 ft.
Challenge 18 (20,000 XP)

Aberrant Ground. The ghaggurath in a 10-foot radius around the mouther is doughlike difficult terrain. Each creature that starts its turn in that area must succeed on a DC 19 Strength saving throw or have its speed reduced to 0 until the start of its next turn.

Create Thrall. A victim whose Wisdom score is reduced to 0 from the ghaggurath's poison is automatically dominated (as a *dominate monster* spell). This effect lasts until the thrall worm is removed and at least 1 point of Wisdom is restored. The ghaggurath does not have to concentrate each day to maintain this effect, and a dominated creature does not receive a save to break the effect. If the ghaggurath is slain, any thrall under its command falls unconscious and remains so until the thrall worm is removed and at least 1 point of Wisdom is restored.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the ghaggurath fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. The ghaggurath has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Magic Weapons. Ghaggurath's weapon attacks are magical.

Thrall Worm Poison. The target exposed to this poison must make a DC 19 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 1 hour. While poisoned the target loses 1d6 Wisdom points per round. The target may repeat the saving throw at the end of its turn. It takes two consecutive successful saving throws to end the poison effect.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The ghaggurath makes eight bite attacks – but no two attacks against the same target. It may replace up to 4 bite attacks with a Spit Thrall Worm attack instead.

Bite. *Melee Spell Attack*: +16 to hit, reach 20 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 23 (3d8 + 10) piercing damage. If the target is Huge or smaller, it must succeed on a DC 18 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is killed by this damage, it is absorbed into the ghaggurath. The target is also exposed to Thrall Worm Poison.

Spit Thrall Worm. The ghaggurath ejects a fleshy worm approximately 1 foot long, called a thrall worm, at a single target to a range of 50 feet. The worm hits and bites the target if it fails a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw. When a thrall worm strikes a target, it quickly burrows into the target's body. This worm can safely be removed with a successful DC 25 Wisdom (Medicine) or by the application of any healing or restoration spell; otherwise removing the worm deals an extra 1d6 points of damage to the target. After 1d4 rounds, the worm works its way so deep into the target's body that it can only be removed by cutting open the area (dealing 1d8 points of damage to the victim) before attempting a Wisdom (Medicine) or casting a healing spell. Once a worm is removed from its host, it dies. Any effect that removes disease destroys the worm. As long as a thrall worm remains inside a target, the target cannot heal the Wisdom damage dealt by the ghaggurath's poison. A creature can only ever have one thrall worm inside it at one time; it can however be attacked and bitten by multiple thrall worms.

Tactics: The ghaggurath is docile at the beginning of this fight unless attacked or inadvertently damaged by the PCs. Omanales will attempt to concentrate on completion of the ritual (a task that will take several more minutes) rather than directly confront the PCs, relying on Barivoren and the giants to guard him from the PCs. He has already cast *freedom of movement* and *fly* on himself and *nondetection* on the *Codex Ibnathi*. If a *silence* spell is used to interrupt the ritual, he suppresses it with *disrupt silence.*

Barivoren directs the giants to block the party's progress into the room and challenges whichever PC seems the most formidable, with a preference for slaying dragonborn. He uses his devastating blast on foes engaged with the giants,

which are immune to its effects. He uses Power Attack against enemies with poor AC and uses his Tactician ability to move himself and his allies around the battlefield.

If the PCs turn their attacks upon the nosferatu or the codex, he pauses in the ritual to grab the Codex and *fly* out over the pit, casting *globe of invulnerability* using a 7th-level spell slot. As a bonus action, he calls forth the power of the Codex to summon a **horned devil**[SRD] to assist and then make use of his most devastating spells, dominate, and *mace of terror's* fear ability against the PCs. He attempts to avoid harming Sir Urvitus and use telekinesis to deposit him in the pit if the PCs appear to be in danger of reaching him. None of the combatants herein hesitate to fight to the death.

If Omanales is reduced to 0 hit points, he assumes his swarm form (bats) and goes flying up the shaft at area **I9** and out into the tunnels at **I6**. If the PCs can manage to keep up with him, the swarm travels a quarter mile through the twisting sewer tunnels until arriving at his hidden coffin (see "Treasure" below). If his swarm is not followed, it is unlikely the PCs will be able to locate this without significant magical aid as deteremined by the GM.

Development: If the PCs have not summoned it already, this definitely qualifies as a fight that the lhaksharut will deem appropriate if called upon. The ritual can be stopped by killing the nosferatu or destroying the codex, which if done releases Sir Urvitus from his stasis. He is still armored since he had been unconscious previously (from a magical effect), and he can aid the party if untied and reunited with his weapons. But if this happens, then the ghaggurath begins to crawl up out of the pit to join the fray. Sir Urvitus will not leave until either he or Barivoren is dead (though unless Barivoren's armor is taken and destroyed, he will return). Once the book is destroyed, the PCs may not be able to face a full-strength CR 18 monster, and they can escape along with Urvitus if they so choose… the groggy ghaggurath will not pursue them, though any other survivors in the room will.

Codex Ibnathi: Damage threshold 5; **hp** 50; **Damage Immunities** cold, electricity, fire, sonic; **Damage Resistances** acid; Strength (Athletics) DC 25 to break.

If the ghaggurath is slain, its great body rapidly deflates and disintegrates leaving behind in its wake a ragged and tattered yellow robe that was apparently inside it (possibly incubating?) and serving as a hint of the disaster that may have been pending beneath the ruins of Old Curgantium.

SIR URVITUS VOREN

Medium humanoid (human), neutral good
Armor Class 18 (+2 studded leather)
Hit Points 143 (22d8 + 44)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	20 (+5)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +6, Con +6
Skills Athletics +9, Intimidation +5, Perception +6
Senses passive Perception 16
Languages Common, Elven
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)
Gear +2 *studded leather*, two +2 *shortswords*, *four-leaf clover*, *stanching shirt*

Brave. Sir Urvitus Voren has advantage on saving throws against being frightened.
Champion. Sir Urvitus has the following archetype abilities: improved critical, remarkable athlete, additional fighting style (Defense).
Fighter Abilities. Sir Urvitus has the following fighter class abilities: action surge, extra attack, fighting style (two-weapon fighting) indomitable (1/day), second wind (1d10+11).
Quick Runner (Recharges after a Short Rest). Sir Urvitus can take the Dash action as a bonus action.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Sir Urvitus Voren makes three attacks with his shortswords, plus an additional attack if he uses a bonus action for his two-weapon fighting.
Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 10 (1d6 + 7) slashing damage. Sir Urvitus scores a critical hit on a natural roll of 19 or 20.
Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack*: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d4 + 5) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Parry. Sir Urvitus Voren adds 2 to his AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, he must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

Treasure: The Underguild has hoarded certain treasures here as offerings to the ghaggurath, even though it has shown little interest in such things over the centuries it has made its lair here. To many of the guild's upper echelon, this chamber is regarded was little more secure storage vault for treasure before the Hasturian faction within the group began to show interest and cultivate a relationship with the abomination. Anyone searching the eastern portion of the cavern locates a group of 12 ceramic urns stored in this area as well as an unlocked chest, showing some calicification from long years of exposure to the dripping rock here. Six of these urns contain 2d6 x 1,000 gp each, and six contain 4d100 gems worth 10 gp each, 2d10 gems worth 100 gp each, and 1d10 gems worth 500 gp each. The chest contains a *+1 agile breastplate* (see **Appendix B,** page 568), a *+2 battleaxe*, a set of *prismatic plate* (see **Appendix B,** page 574), and a *staff of frost*, as well as several bags containing small semi-precious stones worth a total of 875 gp, and a velvet bag (worth 10 gp) containing a black pearl (350 gp), a fire opal (285 gp), a topaz (650 gp), a small ruby (800 gp), and a cut sapphire (1,100 gp). The chest also contains a scroll case with the following *spell scrolls*: *branding spite*, *enhance ability*, *lesser restoration*, *protection from evil and good*, and *guidance*. Within a wooden wand case is a *wand of fear*, while a small silk bag (worth 35 gp) contains 6 jeweled gold rings (1,000 gp each) and a *ring of the ram*.

All wands act as the spell of the same name, do not require attunement and do not regain charges.

In addition, if anyone is able to track Omanales to his coffin as described under "Tactics" above, this lead casket has hidden within its decaying lining (Wisdom (Perception) DC 17) a *potion of blur* (see **Appendix B,** page 573), a vial of *oil of stone shape* (see **Appendix B,** page 572), a *potion of speed*, a *potion of invisibility*, a pewter scrollcase (70 gp) with a spell *scroll of sunbeam*, a *wand of conjuration* (see **Appendix B,** page 576), and a rotting wash leather pouch holding 29 pp. However, the pouch is trapped with a 9th-level *glyph of warding*[SRD] – *spell glyph* (*weird*, DC 16), so that if it is removed from the coffin, it explodes with traumatic psychic power.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

It is possible that the PCs ended the adventure after initially saving the surviving knights from the Mindwyrm. If so, they receive the reward promised by Navellis, though they likey hear of the subsequent disappearance again of the knights and the failure of their mission. It is up to the GM whether or not the possession of Sir Urvitus by Eb Wallix is sufficient to bring about the Cult of Hastur's plan for a new age of madness spawned from the ruined city. It is likely, however, that the PCs stuck it out and rescued Sir Urvitus after the fact and prevented the coming of the King in Yellow. If so, they are indeed true heroes of Foere and receive their reward plus any others promised as well as the eternal gratitude of the Knights of Macobert and their allies.

The specific reward promised was for each PC to pick a single very rare magic item to be given from the Order's considerable resources. It is up to the GM to determine if a chosen item is available, though in general any item of that value or less should be. It is not intended that the PCs should combine their item values into a single item of greater value, though you can certainly let them do so if it serves the purposes of your campaign.

If the PCs completed the full mission of thwarting the Cult of Hastur and its Underguild allies and comported themselves in an honorable fashion, any surviving knights sponsor them for admission into the knighthood. Members of the Order of the Most Worthy Knights of Macobert can be of any race or class but must be of good or neutral alignment (though chaotic neutral is frowned upon) and must be from a place that was at least at one time a part of the Hyperborean Monarchy of the Foerdewaith. Fortunately, this includes almost every portion of Akados other than the Green Realm and a few outlier areas such as the Helcynngae Peninsula. It also includes folk of the free city of Bard's Gate. Being knighted confers no specific game benefit other than recognition and diplomatic connections and any other as determined by the GM. If one of the PCs does not originate in any of these areas, she can be dubbed as a Staunch Ally of Foere which provides essentially the same benefits.

Of the knights, only Urvitus and possibly Sir Barionor have survived the expedition, and although with the party's help they have gathered important information about the fall of Curgantium, the true source of the disaster remains a mystery which the Order of Macobert and their allies will continue to investigate. Despite the tragedy, the order acts as allies to the party and can provide material support, healing, and even allies to assist in the party's future endeavors. Award XP for rescuing Urvitus and Barionor as if they were defeated in battle. Likewise, if the ghaggurath was destroyed, you can award a bonus of up to 50,000 XP for the PCs' role in foiling the Cult of Hastur and likely staving an apocalyptic summoning of the King in Yellow to physically walk the realms of the Lost Lands. Once again, a great calamity has been averted and is likely to be largely unknown to the world at large.

PLAYER HANDOUTS

HANDOUT 6A

The rubble path is marked with broken glass. Don't stray – there are many snakes!

Two alarms in entry – Bannor & Flail to bypass (in that order)
Three traps on stair – Delf – Cordova – Crane to bypass (same)

Vault door is triple arcane locked and glyphed – to open recite, "Only Ernst could guess this password"

Two automatons in main vault – Ereg Tal to bypass

The Missing Nine

Sir Nimulus Cantarthy of Courghais – half-elf male, magic robe covered in living eyes, powerful staff
Sir Aix de Flomme of Troye – aasimar male, paladin of Mitra, left eye is a silver orb and left cheek badly scarred, long, silver-white hair
Barionor of Troye, squire of Sir Aix – Erskaelosi male, renowned street brawler, boisterous and crude but truly fearless, red hair, dark, freckled skin
Sir Eregor Dantalus of Apothasalos – Foerdewaith male; thick sideburns, short moustache, Order of the Lion tabard, dragonne companion–Malcolm
Lady Elgierbid Palitroix of Cantelburgh – Foerdewaith female; spellcaster and puissant warrior, distinctive red hair with silver streak, adamantine breastplate bearing the Swan of Palitroix, dancing sword
Sir Ernst Braanak of Vermis – Heldring male; heavily scarred, blond hair and beard
Sir Urvitus Voren of Tourne – Foerdewaith male; short dark hair, breastplate with red griffon sigil, two swords
Sir Frankus Delerron of Sion – Foerdewaith male; brown moustache, electricity axe, special armor vs. undead
Lady Margaret Delerron of Sion – Foerdewaith female; short-cropped brown hair, blue tabard with Throne of Quell, electricity sea-fork

HANDOUT 6B


RIVER
River Front
Swamp District
Tower Ruins
Tribal Territory
Base Camp
Blast Zone
City Ruins
Forested Outskirts

HANDOUT 6C

In the Year of the Imperator 681 did the Huns of the Great Steppes enter into civil war amongst their own numberless clans.

Seven Legions had made fortified holds at the Dwarf Passes of the Stoneheart, one hold to a Legion, and did push the Huns back by use of Equestria and Phalanx in concert with the secret dwarf iron learned from the Hill Folk of Irkaina against the horse warriors of the plains. The Legions did make successful raids deep into the homeland of the Khan's people for the first time and deliver back blood for blood the wounds of Apothasalos and Occibolos and a thousand thousand raids on villages and farms. The Legions did show no mercy and iron pike and sword hewed warrior and herdsman, soldier and farmer alike. And such was the outcry among the Hun that many clans did pack their belongings upon their Yurt Houses and relocate to the farthest corners of the plains at the Nam-i-Budhani that are called Lost Mountains in the civilized tongue.

The laws of the savage held that none could step foot on the Lost Mountains or the shores of the dark lake at their feet, yet now many clans did settle there and make as if to live far from the Legions among ruins older than Boros. Then the Great Khan Ogedane did order the knights of his court to make war upon the clans that did break the taboo and spill their blood for the good of all lest the darkness return. And war did engulf the whole of the Hun people for two years until when next the Legions of made foray into the plains they found only scattered peoples remained who fled their sight as fast as they could. Polemarch Corbillius did write then that the skulls of the Horse People did floor the plains so thick that his horse could walk from the mountains to the Great Sea and never touch earth.

Such was the fate of the Hun that forevermore should their empire of old be called the Haunted Steppe, fit for no man to live save the few Shattered Folk who still ride its cursed grasses.

Appendix A: New Monsters

ALLIP

Those who fall prey to madness and take their own lives sometimes find themselves lost on the path to the afterlife, trapped in a state between life and death. These unfortunates, known as allips, suffer from the violent and incurable insanity they faced in life and take out their terror, confusion, and rage upon the living. They reach out to those they encounter—possibly in wrath, but also perhaps oblivious to their own insane nature—spreading the psychoses that led to their own untimely deaths.



Spirit of Madness. Allips often seek to harm those who played a part in causing their mad, unholy condition. When faced with such foes, an allip ignores all other targets that confront it in favor of its hated enemies, attacking them until its tormentors have been forced into a vacant stupor. Alas, such vengeance does not put the allip to rest, but simply serves to further fuel its madness as it finds itself trapped in a world now no longer even holding the satisfaction of vengeance.

ALLIP

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 45 (7d8+14)

Speed fly 30 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
2 (-4)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)

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

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

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

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Deep Speech

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

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

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The allip attacks once with its touch of madness, and then uses babble.

Touch of Madness. *Melee Weapon Attack.* +5 to hit, 5 ft. reach, one target. *Hit:* 17 (4d6 + 3) psychic damage. The allip regains hit points equal to that amount of psychic damage taken by the target. If the psychic damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the target is stable but paralyzed for 1 hour, and suffers the effects of long-term madness.

Babble. The allip mutters to itself, creating a hypnotic effect. Creatures within 60 feet that can hear the allip, other than other allips, must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed saving throw, a creature is charmed for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the allip's babble for the next 24 hours.

REACTIONS

Madness. When a creature targets the allip with a thought detection, makes telepathic contact, or tries to make the allip charmed, the allip inflicts 5 (1d10) psychic damage on the creature.

AMOEBA

A giant amoeba is a shapeless mass of living, liquid protoplasm. Though naturally translucent with darker interior spots, its surface is slightly sticky and tends to collect dirt and other debris from its environment; therefore, a moving giant amoeba looks like muddy water. Although happy to prey on creatures smaller than it, the giant amoeba's constant hunger often drives it to attack larger prey, such as humanoids.

Amoeba Swarms. An amoeba swarm is a mobile group of amoebas, each about the size of a coin. Giant amoebas may cleave off tiny portions of their substance, which can then become amoeba swarms. At other times, a giant amoeba can spontaneously transform into a swarm, usually if the giant amoeba is starving or in an area with a high concentration of magic. Likewise, a well-fed amoeba swarm may fuse into a single giant amoeba.

When an amoeba swarm is found in the vicinity of a giant amoeba, the two oozes ignore each other. A giant amoeba in the space of an amoeba swarm takes no damage from the swarm's attacks and does not run the risk of becoming distracted as a result of being in the swarm.

GIANT AMOEBA

Small ooze, unaligned

Armor Class 8

Hit Points 39 (6d6+18)

Speed 10 ft., climb 10 ft., swim 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	6 (-2)	16 (+3)	1 (-5)	7 (-2)	2 (-4)

Skills Stealth +2

Damage Immunity acid

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, prone

Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 8

Languages —

Challenge 1/2 (200 XP)

Amorphous. The giant amoeba can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Amphibious. The giant amoeba can breathe both air and water.

ACTIONS

Pseudopod. *Melee Weapon Attack.* 5 ft., +3 to hit, 1d6+1 (4) bludgeoning damage and 2d6 (7) acid damage, and the target is grappled if it is Medium or smaller (escape DC 11). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained and the giant amoeba can't make pseudopod attacks on another creature.

AMOEBA SWARM

Medium swarm of Tiny oozes, unaligned

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 28 (8d8-8)

Speed 10 ft., climb 10 ft., swim 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3 (-4)	16 (+3)	9 (-1)	1 (-5)	7 (-2)	2 (-4)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing

Damage Immunity acid

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned

Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 8

Languages —

Challenge 1 (200 XP)



Amphibious. The swarm can breathe both air and water.

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening larger than 1 inch without squeezing. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

ACTIONS

Digest. *Melee Weapon Attack.* +5 to hit, reach 0 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 4d4 (10) acid damage, or 2d4 (5) acid damage if the swarm has half or fewer of its maximum hit points.

ARANEA

An aranea is an intelligent, shapechanging spider with sorcerous powers. In its natural form, an aranea resembles a typical giant spider, with a humpbacked body a little bigger than a human torso and venomous fangs. Although considered a Large creature, an aranea's mass is no more than a typical human's; its size comes from its long legs. An aranea can be distinguished from other giant spiders by the hump on its back that houses its brain and by the fact that, in addition to eight legs, it has a fifth pair of limbs, each about 2 feet long, located ahead of the first pair of legs. These limbs end in hands, each equipped with three clawed fingers and a double-jointed thumb.

Stealthy Shapeshifters. An aranea is an intelligent, shapechanging spider with sorcerous powers. In its natural form, an aranea resembles a humpbacked spider a little bigger than a human, and weighs about 150 pounds. The hump on its back houses the aranea's brain. All araneas have a single alternate form as well—this alternate form is that of a Small or Medium humanoid. Although an aranea can assume a spider-hybrid variant of this form, it cannot use its change shape ability to assume multiple humanoid forms—this additional shape is locked into one unique appearance. Araneas often use their shapechanging ability to lure unsuspecting victims into ambushes. Less often, they assume humanoid form to infiltrate human societies, where they conduct research and gather information for their inscrutable purposes.

Magical Adepts. Though araneas generally prefer to be left alone, they often prove quite knowledgeable about the ways of magic, and if approached peacefully may be willing to share their expertise for the right price (typically a magic item or some service). Skilled spellcasters, araneas try to avoid physical combat and use their webs and spells when they can. Rather than kill their enemies, araneas often subdue opponents and hold them for ransom.

When araneas are encountered in groups, some might be young: identical in all respects to adult areanea but without the spellcasting trait.

ARANEA

Large monstrosity, chaotic evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 39 (6d10 + 6)

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

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

Saving Throws Int +5

Skills Stealth +5

Senses blindsight 10 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Deep Speech

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Shapechange. An aranea can use its action to polymorph into a Medium beast or humanoid creature of CR 2 or lower, or from another form back into its own form. The aranea retains its Int, Wis, and Cha scores and its current hit points while polymorphed; otherwise, it takes on all the attributes of the adopted form. It can cast spells if the adopted form can provide the spell's verbal and somatic components, and it retains its paralytic poison trait if the adopted form has a bite attack. A shapechanged aranea reverts to its natural form when slain.

Spellcasting. All aranea are 3rd-level wizards. They use Intelligence as their casting ability (DC 13, attack +5) and require no material components for their spells. Typical known spells are listed below, but individual aranea can know different spells.

Cantrips (at will): *dancing lights*, *poison cloud*, *shocking grasp*

1st level (4 slots): *charm person*, *sleep*

2nd level (2 slots): *invisibility*, *mirror image*

Spider Climb. Aranea can climb any surface without making ability checks.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit*: 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must make a successful DC 11 Con saving throw or become poisoned (see Paralytic Poison, below).

Paralytic Poison. The poisoned creature has tactical disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks. At the end of each of its turns, the poisoned creature must attempt a Con saving throw. On a result of 16 or higher, the poisoned condition ends and the character becomes immune to this aranea's poison. On a result of 11–15, the poisoned condition continues. On a result of 10 or lower, the creature becomes paralyzed and no more saving throws are needed. Paralysis lasts for 1 hour or until the poison is neutralized.

Webs (Recharge 5-6). *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, range 30 ft./60 ft., one creature. *Hit*: The target is restrained by webs. A webbed creature can use its action to attempt a DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check to escape. The web can also be destroyed by 5 points of slashing or fire damage against AC 10.

BAYKOK

This howling corpse swoops through the air with hideously elongated legs and a bow made of bone. When hunters become utterly obsessed with the chase and indulge excessively in the savagery of the kill, their souls become progressively tainted. When such remorseless hunters perish before they can capture and kill their quarry, they sometimes rise from death as baykoks—flying undead horrors that kill purely for the ecstasy that only murder can bring them.

BAYKOK

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 20 (natural armor)

Hit Points 97 (15d8 + 30)

Speed 30 ft., fly 40 ft. (can hover)

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

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +7

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages the languages it knew in life

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Hunter's Reward. When a baykok reduces a hostile creature to 0 hit points, the baykok gains 12 temporary hit points.

Vile Arrow. Once per round, when the baykok hits with its bow of bone attack, the target must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the target is paralyzed for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The baykok makes three bow attacks.

Bow of Bone. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit*: 8 (1d8+4) piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) necrotic damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 11 (2d6+4) slashing damage.

Dread Howl (Recharge 6). Non-baykoks within 30 feet who can hear it must make a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed saving throw, a creature is frightened for 1 minute, and incapacitated as long as it is frightened. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to that baykok's Dread Howl for the next 24 hours.

BLAST SHADOW

Blast shadows usually spawn as the result of a magical catastrophe, as those in the Haunted Steppes were spawned by the cataclysmic impact of the Burning Star. They also can be artificially created, and pyromaniac magic users, worshipers of evil fire deities, and the servants of powers that crave burnt offerings favor these undead horrors. Blast shadows created in this way are loyal to their creator, but those created by a natural cataclysm or the death burst of another blast shadow are beholden to no one.

BLAST SHADOW

Medium undead, chaotic evil
Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 117 (18d8 + 36)
Speed 40 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)

Damage Immunities fire, poison
Damage Vulnerabilities cold
Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned
Skills Acrobatics +7, Intimidation +6, Perception +7, Sleight of Hand +7, Stealth +7
Senses darkvision, passive Perception 17
Languages Kirkut
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Burning Cloud. A blast shadow can use its bonus action to activate a fiery aura and can use another bonus action to shut it off. This aura has a 5-foot radius. A creature that enters this radius for the first time in a turn or that starts their turn in this radius takes 3 (1d6) poison damage. If the blast shadow takes cold damage, this aura becomes inactive, and cannot become active again until the after the end of the blast shadow's next turn.

Death Burst. When a blast shadow is reduced to 0 hit points, it explodes in a blast of radiated flame and smoke. Creatures within 40 feet must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 17 (5d6) poison damage, or half as much on a success.

Turn Resistance. The blast shadow has advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The blast shadow makes two attacks with its claws.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage and 7 (2d6) poison damage.

BLOODSUCKLE

Bloodsuckles are semi-intelligent and immobile plants that gain nourishment from the blood of living creatures. Unlike other carnivorous plants, the bloodsuckle maintains a group of living hosts that it gorges itself on. Bloodsuckles are found in forests, swamps, and rolling hills in climates where the temperate is mild. They are never found in cold climates, but a variety of this plant is thought to exist in warmer regions.

When a bloodsuckle detects movement within 30 feet, it sends out its long, vine-like tendrils towards the disturbance. If the tendril strikes a living target, it injects sap into the victim which brings it under the plant's control. A bloodsuckle can automatically detect the presence of one of its hosts within 30 feet and does not attack it. Rather, it lets the host draw close so it can embrace it with its tendrils and consume its blood.

Creatures that are not hosts of the bloodsuckle that come within 10 feet are attacked by its woody limbs.

BLOODSUCKLE

Large plant, unaligned
Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 90 (12d10+ 24)
Speed 0 ft. (immobile)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	10 (+0)	16 (+2)	6 (-2)	11 (+0)	11 (+0)

Condition Immunities blinded, deafened, exhaustion
Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 10
Languages telepathy 100 ft. (only with hosts)
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Blood Drain. The bloodsuckle drains blood from the creature it is grappling. The creature must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by 7 (2d6). This reduction lasts until the creature finishes a short or long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0. Bloodsuckles never kill those they have transformed into hosts unless they are extremely hungry.

Create Host. As a bonus action while grappling a target, the bloodsuckle injects poison sap into

its victim. The creature must succeed at a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or fall under the effects of a permanent dominate monster spell, at which point the victim is transformed into a host creature. A creature immune to poison is immune to this effect. Lesser restoration or similar magic cast on the host breaks the bloodsuckle's hold.

A victim that becomes a host returns to the plant whenever it calls. It is normally used by the bloodsuckle for feeding purposes, but if the plant comes under attack the host may be summoned for defense. A host with an Intelligence score of 3 or higher that is commanded to act in a manner inconsistent with its alignment (such as attacking allies) is allowed another Wisdom saving throw with advantage to break the bloodsuckle's control.

Generate Seed. Once per month, the bloodsuckle can generate a walnut-sized seed that it implants in a host's body. The host wanders off and 1d4 days later, the seed breaks open growing a new bloodsuckle inside the host. Each day a host remains implanted with this seed, its hit point maximum decreases by 1d8. When its hit points reach 0, the host dies and a new bloodsuckle erupts from the corpse and takes root. A *lesser restoration* spell destroys the seedling.

Host Sense. A bloodsuckle automatically senses the location of any hosts within 300 feet.

Summon Host. As a free action, the bloodsuckle generates a high-pitched whine that only its hosts can hear. A host with 2 miles hears this call and proceeds immediately at its highest rate of speed and in the most direct route toward the plant.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The bloodsuckle makes two tendrils attacks.

Tendril. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 12 (2d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage and the target is grappled (escape DC 14). Until the grapple ends, the target is restrained and has disadvantage on Strength checks and Strength saves. The bloodsuckle can't use the same tendril on another target while grappling.

CATOBLEPAS

The catoblepas is an aggressive beast at the best of times, willing to knock down trees, fences, even small houses to eat whatever it finds interesting, be that meal plant or animal or human being. Though it prefers swamps, the catoblepas has been known to forage in plains and forests for short periods before returning to the buoyant support of water and mud. Few creatures linger near a catoblepas's feeding ground because of the monster's bad temper and poisonous breath, and only rot-loving predators such as oozes or exceptionally large otyughs have any interest in hunting them

CATOBLEPAS

Large monstrosity, neutral

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 228 (24d10 + 96)

Speed 40 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	8 (-1)	18 (+4)	5 (-3)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Con +8, Wis +6

Skills Perception +6

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Sylvan

Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Stench. Any creature that starts its turn within 10 feet of the cateoblepas must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until the start of its next turn. On a successful saving throw, the creature is immune to the catoblepas's stench for 24 hours.

Trampling Charge. If the catoblepas moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a gore attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 17 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the catoblepas can make one attack with its hooves against it as a bonus action.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The catoblepas makes one Bite attack, one Gore attack, and one Hooves attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 15 (3d6 + 5) piercing damage.

Gore. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 14 (2d8+ 5) piercing damage.

Hooves. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 14 (2d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

Fetid Breath (Recharge 5–6). The catoblepas exhales poisonous gas in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw, taking 49 (9d10) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

CINDER GHOUL

Slain by the actual impact of the Burning Star long ago, these creatures burn in perpetual torment, their charred flesh and bone still wreathed in the fires that killed them. When encountered with radioactive combusted they take charge of the pack, but they employ little strategy, simply charging to burn their foes to cinders at any cost. They are unable to suppress their burning form, so they are much easier to spot as they approach across the low rises of the plains.

CINDER GHOUL

Large undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 15

Hit Points 75 (10d10+20)

Speed 0 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	20 (+5)	15 (+2)	4 (-3)	12 (+1)	19 (+4)

Saving Throws Wis +4

Skills Perception +7

Damage Vulnerabilities cold

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attakcs that aren't silvered.

Damage Immunities fire, poison, necrotic

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned, prone

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 17

Languages Kirkut (cannot speak)

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Limited Gaseous Form. The cinder ghoul cannot fit through narrow gaps, but it can fit through a space as if it were Small sized without squeezing. A cinder ghoul cannot enter water or other liquid. It is not ethereal or incorporeal and is affected by winds or other forms of moving air to the extent that the wind pushes them in the direction the wind is moving. However, even the strongest wind can't disperse or damage a cinder ghoul. Because it contains burning embers and small bits of perpetually smoldering flesh, a cinder ghoul has disadvantage when making a Dexterity (Stealth) check, even when attempting to hide in an area of mist, smoke, or other gas.

Magical Resistance. The cinder ghoul has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The cinder ghoul makes one slam attack and uses its smoke inhalation ability.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 14 (2d8+5) bludgeoning damage and 4 (1d8) fire damage. A creature damaged by this attack must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lsts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

Smoke Inhalation. The cinder ghoul attempts to force some of its smoky form into the lungs of a living creature within 5 feet. The target must then make a successful DC 16 Constitution saving throw or inhale part of the creature. On a failure, the target takes 9 (2d8) fire damage and 9 (2d8) necrotic damage and is poisoned until the end of its next turn. On a success, the target only takes half as much damage, and is not poisoned.

DRAGON, FOREST

Forest dragons are fickle and malevolent dragons that dwell in deep, rugged woodlands. Forest dragons stalk the earth to pursue objects of its wrath. This massive serpentine and wingless creature has jade scales and antlers, and sounds like grinding stones as it stalks forth.

ADULT FOREST DRAGON

Huge dragon, chaotic evil
Armor Class 19 (natural armor)
Hit Points 207 (18d12 + 90)
Speed 40 ft., burrow 20 ft., climb 30 ft., fly 80 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	12 (+1)	21 (+5)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	17 (+3)

Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Saving Throws Dex +6, Con +10, Wis +7, Cha +8
Skills Deception +8, Perception +12, Stealth +6
Senses blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 22
Languages Common, Draconic, Sylvan
Challenge 14 (11,500 XP)

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the dragon fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.
Mimicry. The dragon can mimic animal sounds and humanoid voices. A creature that hears the sounds can tell they are imitations with a successful DC 16 Wisdom (Insight) check.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The dragon can use its Frightful Presence. It then makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.
Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 17 (2d10 + 6) piercing damage.
Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 13 (2d6 + 6) slashing damage.
Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +11 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit*: 15 (2d8 + 6) bludgeoning damage.
Frightful Presence. Each creature of the dragon's choice that is within 120 feet of the dragon and aware of it must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the dragon's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours.
Crystalline Breath (Recharge 5–6). The dragon exhales crystal splinters in a 50-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw, taking 54 (12d8) piercing damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.



Change Shape. The dragon magically polymorphs into a humanoid or beast that has a Challenge rating no higher than its own, or back into its true form. It reverts to its true form if it dies. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying is absorbed or borne by the new form (the dragon's choice). In a new form, the dragon retains its alignment, hit points, Hit Dice, ability to speak, proficiencies, Legendary Resistance, lair actions, and Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores, as well as this action. Its statistics and capabilities are otherwise replaced by those of the new form, except any class features or legendary actions of that form.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The dragon can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The dragon regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Detect. The dragon makes a Wisdom (Perception) check.

Tail Attack. The dragon makes a tail attack.

Earthshake (Costs 2 Actions). The dragon writhes its serpentine body. Each creature within 10 feet of the dragon and in contact with the ground must succeed on a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw or take 13 (2d6 + 6) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone. The dragon can then move up to half its speed or burrows up to half its burrow speed.

ELEMENTAL

An obsidian elemental is merged of equal parts earth and fire, arising in the vast felsic fields that flow and melt in burning oceans along the verges where the two elemental planes intersect. They are hulking piles of faceted black stone, streaked with white striations, spiderwebbed cracks, razor-sharp shards, and a seething molten core within.

OBSIDIAN ELEMENTAL

Medium elemental, neutral

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 66 (7d8 + 35)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	8 (–1)	20 (+5)	4 (–3)	11 (+0)	11 (+0)

Damage Resistances cold, fire; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, unconscious

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Terran

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Brute. A melee weapon attack deals one extra die of its damage when the obsidian elemental hits with it (included in the attack).

Death Throes. When the obsidian elemental dies, it explodes, and each creature within 30 feet of it must make a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw, taking 17 (5d6) slashing damage and 17 (5d6) fire damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Molten Glass. A creature that hits the obsidian elemental with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 7 (2d6) fire damage.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The obsidian elemental makes two claw attacks.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 13 (2d8 + 4) slashing damage plus 4 (1d8) fire damage.

FIRE PHANTOM

This humanoid has raging fire for hair and flame-encased fists. Elemental fire plays across its body exposing patches of charred flesh. Its eyes and tongue look like tiny balls of molten fire. Blackened teeth fill its mouth and flames dance in the back of its throat.

Banished to the Flames. When a creature dies on the Elemental Planes of Fire, its soul often melds with part of the fiery plane and reforms as a fire phantom; a humanoid

creature composed of rotted and burned flesh and elemental fire. Fire phantoms desire nothing more than to return to the Material Plane and destroy as many living creatures as possible by consuming them in the same flames that now house their spirit.

Fire phantoms are encountered in areas where fires are already burning (campfires, pyres, vigils, etc). They step through a portal from the Plane of Fire into a fire on the Material Plane. This fire must be at least Small or larger; else any attempt by the fire phantom to enter the Material Plane through that fire automatically fails. Once it enters the plane, it often lies in wait in the fire for potential victims to come near it.

Burning Ambush. A fire phantom waits inside its fire until it spots a living creature. It then rushes out, shrieking and hurling globes of fire. If faced with overwhelming odds or facing certain destruction, the fire phantom either moves as close as possible to as many foes as possible or attempts to draw in as many of its opponents as possible and uses it immolation ability. In normal melee, the fire phantom alternates between hurling globes of fire and pummeling a foe with its burning fists. When a fire phantom is wounded, flames dance and play around the wound. Fire phantoms fight until destroyed or all opponents are dead or flee.

FIRE PHANTOM

Medium undead, chaotic evil
Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 104 (16d8 + 32)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	5 (-3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)

Skills Intimidate +8, Perception +7
Damage Immunities fire, poison
Damage Vulnerabilities cold
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft, passive Perception 17
Languages understands Aquan, but can't speak
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Turn Resistance. The fire phantom has advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead.
Final Blast. When the fire phantom dies, it combusts and leaves nothing behind but ashes. In doing so, it recharges its Fire Blast if expended, and uses it.

ACTIONS
Multiattack. The fire phantom makes two claw attacks.
Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage and 5 (2d4) fire damage.
Fire Blast (Recharge 5-6). The fire phantom explodes in a fiery burst that affects all creatures within 10 feet. Each creature in that area must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw, taking 20 (6d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

FISHER FROM OUTSIDE

An enormous shape, like a deformed fishing-bird with a single taloned leg, a serrated beak, and single blazing red eye swoops from the darkness. Its hide is scaled rather than feathered, and scaly, translucent wings hold it aloft in great sweeping gusts, and its cry is liked the grinding, ragged edges of Hell.

FISHER FROM OUTSIDE

Large monstrosity, chaotic evil
Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 76 (8d10 + 32)
Speed 10 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	8 (-1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Skills Athletics +9, Stealth +4
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages Aklo (cannot speak)
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Constrict. As a bonus action, the fisher from outside transfers a victim it has grappled with its talon into its mouth. This frees up its talon to attack other targets. The creature remains grappled (escape DC 14). When the fisher makes a bite attack against this grappled target, it automatically hits each. The fisher cannot use its raucous call ability or make bite attacks against other targets while it has a victim grappled in its mouth.
No Breath. The fisher does not need to breathe.



Fishers from outside are thought to be related to the elephantine shantaks, though they are, in fact, two distinct species. With only one leg and over-sized talon and one eye, fishers from outside are clumsy and ungainly on the ground, but they are graceful and swift fliers. They dwell primarily in caverns on the moon Luna where they serve the strange masters of that realm in exchange for blood sacrifices. They are capable of going long periods of time without feeding and can subsist on eating the rubble of their strange caverns if necessary, though they always prefer fresh prey when they can get it. Unlike their shantak cousins, fishers from outside are incapable of unaided starflight and must rely on external or magical means to travel between planets or across the voids space.

Fishers from Outside first appeared in the Lin Carter short story, "The Fishers from Outside."

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The fisher from outside makes one talon attack and one bite attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 16 (3d6 + 5) piercing damage.

Talon. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 16 (3d6 + 5) slashing damage, and the target must make a DC 14 Strength saving throw. On a failed save, the target is grappled (escape DC 14). Until the grapple ends, the target is restrained and suffers disadvantage on Strength checks and Strength saves. The fisher from outside cannot attack with its talon while grappling a creature with it.

Raucous Call. The fisher from outside emits a raucous, grating call. All living creatures, other than a fisher from outside or a shantak, within 30 feet of the fisher that can hear it must make a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw or become paralyzed. A paralyzed creature can attempt a new saving throw at the beginning of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself with a success. Once a creature saves against the raucous call, it becomes immune to this effect for 24 hours.

FLYTRAP

This towering plant is a mass of vines and barbs. Several stalks are horribly mobile, each ending in a set of green, toothy jaws. Whereas the smaller flytraps supplement their growth by catching insects, the giant flytrap does the same with animals, humanoids, and anything else foolish enough to draw too near. A giant flytrap's stalks are 20 feet long, but generally sprawl relatively close to the central mass—a set of full-grown flytrap jaws is 7 feet across. A giant flytrap weighs 9,000 pounds.

Killer Flytrap. Giant flytraps are more aggressive than their smaller brethren, able to lumber slowly along to relocate to better hunting grounds. Their prey is much smarter than insects, however, and some giant flytraps have evolved to be swifter, more intelligent hunters to compensate, cannily blending in with surrounding foliage. A killer flytrap's jaws and stalks are swift-moving—it reaches out and snaps at passersby with lightning speed. With a modicum of intelligence, a killer flytrap is capable of limited tactical choices, such as knowing when to break off an attack against a powerful foe.



GIANT FLYTRAP

Huge plant, unaligned
Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 160 (14d12+70)
Speed 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	18 (+4)	20 (+5)	1 (–5)	12 (+1)	6 (–2)

Damage Resistances acid
Condition Immunities blinded, deafened, exhaustion, frightened
Senses tremorsense 60 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages –
Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The giant flytrap makes four bite attacks (one for each mouth).

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +9 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit*: 16 (2d10+5) piercing damage. The target is grappled (escape DC 16) and the giant flytrap uses its Engulf on it. A giant flytrap that is grappling a foe cannot attack other targets with that bite but is not otherwise hindered.

Engulf. The giant flytrap engulfs a Medium or smaller creature grappled by it. The engulfed target is blinded, restrained, and unable to breathe, and it must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw at the start of each of the mound's turns or take 9 (1d8+5) bludgeoning damage and 7 (2d6) acid damage. If the giant flytrap moves, the engulfed target moves with it. The giant flytrap can have only one creature engulfed at a time per bite.

GARGOYLES

The ruins of Old Curgantium are infested with gargoyles, including the common variety as well as a number of rare types almost never seen elsewhere. Like all gargoyles, these variants resemble hideously ugly humanoids chiseled from stone. Two large horns protrude from their heads, just above their eyes. Four large, stony spikes jut from their shoulder blades and their hands and feet end in sharpened claws.

Four-Armed Gargoyle. Four-armed gargoyles, like their brethren, often stand perched indefinitely without moving in an attempt to surprise their opponents. They have a great fondness for inflicting pain on their foes. When a four-armed gargoyle has the upper hand in battle, it often draws out the conflict as long as it can in order to deal as much pain and suffering as it can on its foes.

Green Guardian. These winged humanoids are carved of a strange green stone with eyes rich black in color. They prefer to remain still and then suddenly attack or dive into their prey. Green guardians attempt to hold their victims and then fly off with them.

Margoyle. A margoyle is a slightly larger version of the standard gargoyle. It is meaner, eviler, and deadlier than the normal gargoyle. Margoyles are most often encountered in subterranean regions and often have a pack of gargoyles with them. In such cases, the margoyle is looked upon as the master or leader of the group.

FOUR-ARMED GARGOYLE

Medium monstrosity, chaotic evil
Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 55 (10d8 + 10)
Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	6 (–2)	11 (+0)	7 (–2)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons not made of adamantine
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities exhaustion, petrified, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Terran
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

False Appearance. While the gargoyle remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from an inanimate statue.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The gargoyle makes four attacks: one with its bite, two with its claws, and one gore.
Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.
Claws. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 9 (2d6 + 2) slashing damage.
Gore. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

GREEN GUARDIAN GARGOYLE

Medium elemental, chaotic evil
Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 85 (10d8 + 40)
Speed 40 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	6 (–2)	11 (+0)	7 (–2)

Skills Perception +6
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons that aren't adamantine
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities exhaustion, petrified, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages Common, Terran
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

False Appearance. While the gargoyle remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from an inanimate statue.
Magic Weapons. The gargoyle's attacks are magical.
Reanimation. The eyes of a green guardian gargoyle are made of two pieces of jet (500 gp each) that detect as both magic (faint conjuration) and evil. After being destroyed, a green guardian automatically reanimates in 1d8+2 days unless the eye gems are crushed and disenchanted with both dispel magic and remove curse.
Swoop. If the green guardian flies at least 20 feet straight towards a target and then hits it with its gore attack on the same turn, the target takes an additional 9 (2d8) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must make a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The green guardian makes four attacks: one with its bite, two with its claws, and one with its gore.
Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 11 (2d8 + 2) piercing damage.



Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 9 (2d6 + 2) slashing damage. If both claws attacks hit the same target, then it is grappled (escape DC 12) and restrained. At the start of the gargoyle's next turn, it will attempt to fly off with the target.

Gore. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 13 (2d10 + 2) piercing damage.

MARGOYLE

Medium monstrosity, chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 68 (8d8 + 32)

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	15 (+2)	19 (+4)	6 (–1)	10 (+0)	7 (–2)

Skills Stealth +4

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons that aren't adamantine

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhausted, petrified, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Terran

Challenge 4 (1,800 XP)

False Appearance. While a margoyle sits motionless, it is indistinguishable from natural stone and can't be detected as alive by any means.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The margoyle makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws; it can gore once with its horns instead of using its bite.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft.; one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

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

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

GHOLE

The hulking form has a long, vulturelike neck ending in a head with a disgusting, one-eyed visage. Gholes are foul denizens of the wilderness that feed upon rotten meat. Their ability to restore flesh to even the most ancient of skeletal remains allows them to harvest flesh from ruins long forgotten by the living.

Many gholes keep their favorite skeletons handy to repeat beloved meals, while others hoard ancient skeletons and savor the flavor of restored flesh in a grisly mockery of a gourmand's appreciation of well-aged wine or cheese. Many attempt to capture sick victims alive only to imprison them—sepulchers or crypts make for favorite prisons—so they perish of their sickness and thus provide the most delicious meal possible for the foul creature. A typical ghole is 6 feet tall and weighs 250 pounds.

GHOLE

Medium monstrosity, neutral evil

Armor Class 20 (natural armor)

Hit Points 165 (19d8 + 76)

Speed 40 ft., burrow 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	16 (+3)	19 (+4)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)

Skills Perception +6, Stealth +7

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Common

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Bolster Disease. Any creature that contracts Flesh Rot from a ghole is cursed. The creature has disadvantage on saving throws against Flesh Rot and any diseases the creature had when the curse was contracted.

Flesh Rot. A ghole's natural attacks transmit flesh rot. A creature afflicted with this disease has disadvantage on Charisma checks and vulnerability to all damage. At the end of each of the target's turns, it must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw. After failing three of these saving throws, the disease's effects last for 1 week, and the creature stops making these saves. After succeeding on three of these saving throws, the creature recovers from the disease, and the disease ends. Constructs and undead are immune to Flesh Rot.

Immunity to Disease. Gholes are immune to all forms of disease.

Inured to Undeath. Gholes have resistance to necrotic damage caused by undead and are immune to having their maximum hit points reduced by an undead.

Savage the Sick. A ghole has advantage on attacks against a creature that is diseased.

Scent Sickness. The ghole senses any diseased creature within 30 feet, with the benefits of blindsense.

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). The ghole deals an extra 7 (2d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the ghole that isn't incapacitated and the ghole doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Swift. A ghole can use a bonus action to Attack (one weapon attack only), Dash, Dodge, or Hide.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The ghole attacks twice: once with its bite, and once with its claws.

Bite (ghole form only). *Melee Weapon Attack*: +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 14 (3d6+4) piercing damage, plus the target must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature has contracted Flesh Rot.

Claws (ghole form only). *Melee Weapon Attack*: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 13 (2d8+4) slashing damage, plus the target must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature has contracted Flesh Rot.

Befouling Touch. *Melee Spell Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: The target must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the target is paralyzed for 1 minute. The target may make a new saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success. As long as the target is paralyzed, any creatures other than a ghole that starts its turn must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw; on a failure, that creaure is poisoned until the beginning of its next turn.

Hide from Undead (3/Day). Undead treat the ghole as heavily obscured for 1 hour. If a ghole attacks or interacts with an undead, the effect ends for that undead.

Prepare Corpse. The ghole can make halt decomposition, as the spell gentle repose, or the ghole can restore flesh to a skeleton. The restoration is sufficient to make a skeletal corpse eligible to be transformed into a zombie rather than a skeleton. The new flesh is rotten and not fit for eating for creatures other than by gholes.

Shapechanger. The ghole can use its action to polymorph into a Small or Medium humanoid, or back into its true form. Other than its size and speed, its statistics are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

GIANT, ASH

Whether because of disruptive magic, unearthed deep elements, or alien technology that fell calamitously from the sky, ash giants are victims of their barren terrains. Towering above a typical human, their misshapen bodies and pale flesh are covered in purulent sores and bulbous tumors. Yet they somehow survive and even thrive in these desperate lands. Ash giants have an uncanny ability to bond with the enormous and often mutated vermin they share the landscape with, and sometimes use the largest of these creatures as mounts. Ash giants are 10 feet tall and weigh 1,200 pounds.

Dark Thoughts. Ash giants are brash and violent, and their humor is incredibly dark. Killing someone through a prank is just as funny as tripping a friend while on a hunt. While not inherently evil, lifetimes of being antagonized by other tribes have practically bred violence into their minds. Some ash giants take their bleakness to extremes, seeing it as a nihilistic epiphany that opens up the entropic secrets of the universe and its ultimate annihilation, becoming deranged prophets of a coming apocalypse.

Ash Leprosy. Ash giants carry a contagious wasting disease that permeates their clothing, exposing creatures that search their gear or corpses to a sickness that affects most creatures like sewer blight[SRD], but each day the disease persists a creature must make an additional DC 13 Constitution saving throw or the sickness begins to rot the brain like cackle fever[SRD] that deals 5 (1d10) points of necrotic damage in addition to psychic damage with each failed saving throw.

Vermin Empathy. Ash giants can communicate freely with vermin in a manner identical to speak with animals, and they can train such creatures to serve them.

ASH GIANT

Large giant, chaotic neutral
Armor Class 15 (scale mail)
Hit Points 210 (20d10 + 100)
Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
29 (+9)	14 (+2)	20 (+5)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Str +14, Con +10, Wis +9, Cha +9
Skills Athletics +14
Damage Immunities fire, poison
Senses passive Perception 14
Languages Common, Giant
Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

Ashen Adaptation. An ash giant has no difficulty breathing in ashes, smoke, and similar noxious fumes, and an ash giant can see clearly within 30 feet even when ashes and smoke would normally impair vision.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The ash giant makes 2 greatsword attacks.
Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack.* +14 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 30 (6d6+9) damage.
Rock. *Ranged Weapon Attack.* +14 to hit, range 60/240 ft., one target. *Hit:* 35 (4d12 + 9) .

GOLEMS

In addition to the more familiar magical constructs of stone and iron, flesh and clay, the ancients of the Haunted Steppe manufactured several unusual golems of their own design.

Lead Golem. Resembling an unearthed vein of dull gray minerals, this crude, hunchbacked humanoid figure uses its arms to support itself. Lead golems move with a lurching, heavy tread and often crack floors as they walk due to their immense weight. A lead golem stands 11 feet tall when upright and weighs 10,000 pounds.

Ossuary Golem. When in watchful repose, an ossuary golem may easily be mistaken for a funerary monument or grave marker made of pale, rough stone with a cobbled surface. When it lurches to life, however, it resembles a horrific humanoid figure comprised of a mass of bones and skulls tied together with slick ropes of sinew. An ossuary golem stands 10 feet tall when active and weighs 2,000 pounds.

LEAD GOLEM

Large construct, unaligned
Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 178 (17d10 + 85)
Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	9 (-1)	20 (+5)	3 (-4)	11 (+0)	1 (-5)

Damage Immunities poison, psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't adamantine
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages understands the languages of its creator but can't speak
Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Acid Reaction. Whenever the lead golem would be subject to acid damage, it takes no damage and instead regains a number of hit points equal to one-half the acid damage dealt.
Immutable Form. The golem is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.
Interference Aura. A lead golem projects a 60-foot aura that blocks divination magic, as nondetection.
Intractable Density. Any Strength (Athletics) checks to Shove a lead golem has disadvantage, and the golem has advantage on its check to resist being Shoved.
Magic Resistance. The golem has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.
Magic Weapons. The golem's weapon attacks are magical.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The golem makes two slam attacks.
Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft.,

one target. *Hit*: 19 (3d8 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

REACTIONS

Particulate Cloud (Recharge 5-6). The lead golem can use its reaction to exude a fine coud of lead particles that persist until the start of its next turn. A creature that enters the cloud for the first time or that starts its turn in it must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for one minute and gains a level of exhaustion. This cloud can be dissipated by a strong wind such as that created by the *gust of wind* spell.

OSSUARY GOLEM

Large construct, unaligned

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 168 (16d10+80)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	10 (+0)	20 (+5)	3 (-4)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Wisdom +10

Skills Perception +8

Damage Immunities poison, psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks that aren't adamantine

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

Senses darkvision 120 ft, passive Perception 8

Languages —

Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

False Appearance. While the ossuary golem remains motionless, it is indisitinguishable from an ordinary pile of bones. While in this form, the ossuary golem is considered an object in regards to spells and effects that target objects.

Immutable Form. The golem is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Magic Resistance. The golem has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Magic Weapons. The golem's weapon attacks are magical.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The ossuary golem makes four slam attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 15 (2d8 + 6) bludgeoning damage, and the target must make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

REACTIONS

Disassemble (1/Day). The golem can use its reaction when receiving damage that would otherwise reduce it to 0 hit points to disassemble, resuming its False Appearance as a pile of bones. When the golem does this, it is instead reducet to 1 hit point. It can then reassemble itself at the start of its next turn.Gortheks

GORTHEK

Gortheks are a strange combination of primeval bison and ornery rhinoceros, with a leonine head crowned with ramlike horns, 7 feet high at the shoulder and weighing over four tons. They travel the steppe in small herds and charge anything they perceive as a threat. Orcs raise the beasts from infancy to serve as living weapons, with riders bonding with them at a young age as they train together. Orc riders use specially crafted saddles mounted behind the massive horns and guide their mounts using spiked reins.

GORTHEK

Large beast, neutral

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 85 (10d10 + 30)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	9 (-1)	17 (+3)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)

Skills Perception +2

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages -

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

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

Charge. If the gorthek moves at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a gore attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 7 (2d6) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

ACTIONS

Gore. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 13 (2d6 + 6) piercing damage.

HANGMAN TREE

The hangman tree prefers to lie in wait near remote forest tracks and game trails, waiting for victims to wander by. These carnivorous plants are incredibly patient and can wait for months in a single location for food to approach. When prey does draw near, the tree's vines lash like striking snakes. The tree often uses its pull ability to hoist grappled foes 10 to 15 feet in the air so that they are out of reach of allies while they slowly strangle. The tree generally only swallows one foe whole at a time, letting its other captured victims dangle and ripen until it is ready to feed on them.

HANGMAN TREE

Huge plant, chaotic evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 138 (12d12 + 60)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	8 (-1)	21 (+5)	8 (-1)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing

Damage Vulnerabilities fire

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Sylvan

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

False Appearance. While the hangman tree remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a normal tree.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The hangman tree makes two hanging vines attacks.

Hanging Vines. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +10 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit*: 16 (3d6 + 6) bludgeoning damage and the target is grappled (escape DC 16). While grappled, the target is lifted 10 feet off the ground and is restrained and unable to breathe or speak. It must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw at the start of each of the tree's turns or take 16 (3d6 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

Hallucinatory Spores (1/Day). The hangman tree releases a cloud of invisible spores that cause creatures to perceive the tree and its surroundings as perfectly pleasant and normal. All living creatures within 50 feet must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the creature becomes charmed for 1 minute. While charmed, the creature is incapacitated and has a speed of 0. A creature can attempt a new saving throw at the end of its turn each round if it sees the tree attack an ally; if the tree attacks a creature, this does not automatically break the effect but the attack creature has advantage on this saving throw.



HEAT SWARM

A heat swarm is a mass of flying, aggressive, foul-tempered elemental fire creatures. A single heat elemental that makes up a heat swarm resembles a thumb-sized ball of reddish flame with vaguely discernible facial features. When encountered on the Material Plane (which is a very rare occurrence indeed), a heat swarm is most often found in a highly unbearable (by human standards) climate such as an active volcano or on a solar surface.

HEAT SWARM

Large swarm of tiny elementals, unaligned
Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 152 (16d10 + 64)
Speed 30 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	20 (+5)	18 (+4)	4 (–3)	11 (+1)	11 (+1)

Skills Acrobatics +8, Stealth +7
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing from nonmagical weapons
Damage Immunities fire, poison
Damage Weaknesses cold
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned, unconscious
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages Ignan
Challenge 8 (2,900 XP)

Fiery Aura. Creatures beginning their turn adjacent to the swarm must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 7 (2d6) fire damage.
Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening at least 2 inches square. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

ACTIONS

Burning Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack.* +8 to hit, reach 0 ft., one creature in the swarm's space. *Hit*: 28 (8d6) bludgeoning damage, or 14 (4d6) bludgeoning damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer. The target must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 28 (8d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

HESTOVATO

These vicious killers are the bane of the plainsmen who inhabit the steppe. From the front, they look like ordinary plainsmen, but from the back they have jagged barbed elbows, hideously blotched skin, and a demonic face on the back of their head (which they usually disguise with a headdress and/or loose garments during the day). They roam the open plains under cover of darkness, avoiding large communities and preferring to stalk small parties as they travel across the prairie, targeting the weakest members of a group, including children and the aged or infirm. While carnivorous, they kill sentient humanoids for the sheer thrill of doing so, taking greater delight in mutilating corpses than in feasting on raw flesh.

HESTOVATO

Fields of Blood 56
Medium monstrosity, chaotic evil
Armor Class 19 (natural armor)
Hit Points 187 (22d8 + 88)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)

Skills Acrobatics +6, Athletics +7, Deception +6, Intimidate +6, Perception +8, Stealth +9, Survival +5
Senses blindsight 10 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 23
Languages Common, Kirkut
Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

All-Around Vision. A hestovato has two faces that allow it to see in all directions. Hestovatos has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The hestovato makes two elbow attacks and its paralyzing gaze, if able.
Elbow. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 22 (4d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage.
Paralyzing Gaze (Recharge 5-6). The hestovato forces a creature within 30 feet that can see the

hestevato ro make a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw. A creature that fails this saving throw is paralyzed for up to 1 minute. Creatures paralyzed in this way can make a saving throw at the end of each of their turns, ending the paralysis on a success. A creature that succeeds on this saving throw is immune to this hestovato's Paralyzing Gaze for 24 hours. Creatures that are immune to the charmed condition are immune to this effect.

HORSE, MUSTANG

While domesticated horses are a common sight in many cultures, in some great plains regions herds of feral wild horses roam free in search of water, grazing, and independence. Living in herds of up to 20 led by a dominant mare, these social animals bolt swiftly at the first sign of predators and are unafraid to lash out at carnivores and humanoids with equal ferocity when cornered. They can be tamed and ridden as beasts of exceptional quality but subduing these stubborn and free-willed animals is a challenge for even the most talented horse-breaker.

MUSTANG

Large beast, unaligned
Armor Class 12
Hit Points 22 (3d10 + 6)
Speed 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	2 (-4)	11 (+0)	7 (-2)

Senses passive Perception 10
Languages —
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Endurance. The mustang has advantage on saving throws to avoid exhaustion.

Jumper. The mustang has advantage on Strength (Athletics) checks made to jump and on Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks made to keep its balance or avoid falling.

Sprint. When the mustang uses the Dash action, it can move up to 5 times its normal speed in a straight line. When using this ability, every foot of movement in difficult terrain costs 4 extra feet (rather than 1 extra foot).

ACTIONS

Hooves. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 8 (2d4 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

HOUND OF TINDALOS

Hounds of Tindalos are otherworldly predators from beyond the bounds of known reality, usually appearing only when summoned by reckless spellcasters. Little is known about their nature outside of blood-spattered notes and deranged writings of the nearly insane survivors of their attacks. Although possessed of great cunning and cruel intellect, the hounds show no evidence of understanding or communicating with mortals. They enter the physical world on their own in pursuit of those who have trodden too much the netherways beyond time and reality—time travelers (be it physical travel or simply divinatory glimpses forward or backward in time) and creatures that teleport without regard to how this movement impacts subtle magical currents in the multiverse particularly draw their interest.

HOUND OF TINDALOS

Medium fiend, neutral evil
Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 98 (12d8 + 44)
Speed 40 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)

Skills Stealth +6
Damage Resistances psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing attacks from nonmagical weapons
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, poisoned
Senses blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages Deep Speech
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Otherworldly Mind. Any creature attempting to read the thoughts of a hound of Tindalos or communicate with it telepathically takes 22 (5d8) points of psychic damage and must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or become stunned for 1 minute.

Ripping Gaze. The sight of a hound of Tindalos

evokes torn realities of the void where the creature comes from and mirrors this effect in the viewer's flesh. When a creature that can see the hound of Tindalos' eyes starts its turn within 30 feet of the hound, the creature must succeed at a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. If the saving throw fails, the creature takes 22 (5d8) points of slashing damage as its skin twists and tears. Unless surprised, a creature can avert its eyes to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If the creature does so, it can't see the hound of Tindalos until the start of its next turn, when it can avert its eyes again. A hound of Tindalos is immune to its own gaze.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The hound of Tindalos makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack.* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target, *Hit*: 12 (3d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack.* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 11 (2d8 + 2) slashing damage.

Angled Entry. The hound of Tindalos may use *teleport* (self only) at will and *plane shift* (self only) 3/day. The hound of Tindalos' destination point must be adjacent to a fixed angle or corner in the physical environment, such as a wall, floor, or ceiling. It cannot use these abilities to enter curved architecture or open outdoor environments.



HUECUVA

Huecuvas are the risen corpses of heretical clerics who blasphemed and renounced their deities before meeting death. In unlife, they hate and seek to destroy those pious souls who keep their vows. Most huecuvas remember little of their former lives except for the blasphemies that led them to their cursed fates. They often find themselves drawn to the ruins of old temples, where they rage against or seek hopeless absolution from the deities who so afflicted them. Huecuvas sometimes work in concert with other undead creatures that share the same area.

Shroud of Life. Although easily mistaken for zombies or even skeletons, huecuvas have a spark of intelligence that makes them cunning and deceptive foes. During daylight hours, a huecuva becomes shrouded in an illusion that causes it to appear as it did in life—at these times, a huecuva might seek to infiltrate society to dwell among those it hates. When night falls, it emerges to seek out its prey. Fortunately for the living, the typical huecuva has only fragments of intellect remaining, so it is usually not long before the undead creature makes an error of judgment or simply reveals itself for the monster it is.

Rotting vestments hang across the withered flesh of this walking corpse, and its mouth hangs open in a silent scream.

HUECUVA

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	4 (-3)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Common

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Aura of Faithlessness. The huecuva radiates an unholy aura with a 30-ft. radius. The huecuva and any undead within the aura have advantage on saving throws against effect that turns undead.

False Humanity. During the day, a huecuva is wreathed in a false appearance that is identical to its living form. The effect is similar to a *disguise self* spell. Creatures that interact with a huecuva can make a DC 12 Wisdom (Insight) check to see through the deception. Whether the deception is accepted, huecuvas always exude a stench of decay and grave soil. Any creature with an augmented scent ability makes the Wisdom (Insight) check with advantage. When the sun sets, the illusion is peeled back, and the huecuva's true form is revealed.

ACTIONS

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 11 (2d8 + 2) slashing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw against disease or become poisoned until the disease is cured. Every 24 hours that elapse, the target must repeat the saving throw, reducing its hit point maximum by 5 (1d10) on a failure. The disease is cured on a success. The target dies if the disease reduces its hit point maximum to 0. This reduction to the target's hit point maximum lasts until the disease is cured.

MOON-BEAST

Moon-beasts have no voice or eyes, yet they "see" more than most and can project their thoughts into the very minds of those they wish to communicate with. These monstrosities hail not from any physical moon, but rather from the shared satellite of all slumbering minds in the Dimension of Dream beyond the wall of sleep. Here, the moon-beasts raise stone cities on the oily shores of night-black seas found upon the dark side of the dreaming moon, from which they launch long, dark galleys crewed by not-quite-human slaves that sail through the void of space down to the seas of the Dimension of Dream to seek new slaves and stranger, more sinister wares.

MOON-BEAST

Large aberration, chaotic evil

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)

Hit Points 119 (14d10+42)

Speed 50 ft., climb 20 ft., fly 20 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	15 (+2	17 (+3)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	19 (+4)

Skills Perception +7, Stealth +10

Damage Resistances lightning; bludgeoning that is nonmagical

Damage Immunities cold, poison

Condition Immunities poisoned, blinded

Senses blindsight 90 ft. (blind beyond this radius); passive Perception 17

Languages Deep Speech (cannot speak); telepathy 300 ft.

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Amorphous. A moon-beast can squeeze through a space that is large enough for a Small creature.

Innate Spellcasting. The moon-beast's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 16). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:



At will: detect thoughts
3/day each: *dominate monster*, *dominate person*
1/day each: *confusion*, *major image*, *mirage arcane*, *plane shift* (self only), *seeming*

Magic Resistance. The moon-beast has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The moon-beast makes two attacks: once with its claws and once with its tentacles.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 19 (4d6 + 5) slashing damage.

Tentacles. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 22 (5d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage, and the target must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the target takes 5 (1d10) psychic damage and its maximum hit point decreases by the same amount. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

MOONCALF

Mooncalves are unearthly monstrosities that originate from the dark side of the moon. They inhabit the barren lunar landscape and can subsist on most forms of matter, even digesting rocks and gravel which they grind down with their incredibly hard, razor-sharp teeth. Mooncalves gracefully float across the lunar wastes in small groups and while they find the heavier gravity of other planets more difficult, their alien biology still allows them to remain aloft. While a dangerous menace themselves, mooncalves often serve as scouts and foot soldiers for dominant overlords who rule the moon and the voids beyond space.

MOONCALF

Large aberration, chaotic evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 85 (10d10 + 30)
Speed 30 ft., fly 90 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)



Skills Perception +4, Stealth +6
Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 14
Languages Aklo (cannot speak), Telepathy 100 ft.
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Feeder Arms. As a bonus action, the mooncalf transfers a grappled victim from a tentacle into its feeder arms. The escape DC for the feeder arms is the same as that for the tentacles. The mooncalf can make a bite attack against a creature grappled with its feeder arms as a bonus action.

Life Sense. The mooncalf can detect the location of any living creature within 120 feet of it.

No Breath. The mooncalf does not need to breathe.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The mooncalf makes one bite attack and two tentacle attacks.

Severing Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 12 (2d6 + 5) piercing damage. In addition, if the mooncalf rolls a critical hit with its bite against a Medium or smaller creature, the target must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or have an arm or leg severed (50% chance of either).

A creature that loses a limb in this manner suffers 7 (2d6) damage each round until another

creature spends an action to staunch the bleeding with a DC 12 Wisdom (Medicine) check.

Tentacle. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 16). Until the grapple ends, the target is restrained and suffers disadvantage on Strength checks and Strength saves. The mooncalf can't use the same tentacle against a different target.

MOONFLOWER

A fully-grown moonflower easily stands 20 feet tall, its massive trunk frequently 4 feet or more in diameter. The roots extend away from the base and into the soil, making the plant seem well anchored, but the roots themselves possess an agility that belies the great size of the plant and allows the moonflower to uproot itself and move with surprising speed. The tendrils of the plant are independently prehensile and writhe around the large flytrap-like "head" that crowns the stem.

Moonflowers have never been known to communicate with other creatures, even with druids and others who regularly converse with plants. The plants do possess some manner of strange telepathy, though, and are in constant communication with their nearby brethren. Those who manage to intrude upon the creatures' alien thoughts face an assault of horrible visions of terrifying jungles filled with ancient, sentient, and malign plants.

MOONFLOWER

Huge plant, neutral

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 104 (11d12+ 33)
Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)	5 (-2)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +3
Damage Resistances cold; slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities lightning
Damage Vulnerabilities fire
Condition Immunities deafened, exhaustion
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages telepathy, 1 mile (other moonflowers only)
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Pod Spawn. When a Small or larger creature is killed and digested by a pod prison (see the bite attack, below), the pod transforms the remains into an adult moonflower with full hit points after 1d4 hours. The newly-formed moonflower has its own consciousness, but some aspect of its trunk or blossoms resembles the creature that died within. The dead creature's equipment remains inside the new moonflower and can be retrieved by killing it.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The moonflower makes one bite attack and two tentacle attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 18 (3d8 + 5) piercing damage. If the target is a Large or smaller creature, it must succeed on a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw or be wrapped in constricting digestive plant pod and deposited in an adjacent space. A creature trapped in this pod prison is blinded and restrained, has total cover against attacks and other effects from outside the pod, and suffers 7 (2d6) bludgeoning and 7 (2d6) acid damage at the start of each of the moonflower's turns.

The pod is AC 12 with 20 hit points and resistance to bludgeoning damage from nonmagical weapon attacks. The occupant suffers half of any damage done to the pod. If the pod sustains enough damage, it falls apart and disgorges its occupant prone in that space.

Tentacle. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 15 (3d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

Light Pulse. The moonflower releases a pulse of blinding light. A creature within 60 feet of the moonflower must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be blinded for 4 rounds. A blinded creature can attempt this save again at the end of each of its turns, ending the blindness on itself with a success. This ability does not affect other moonflowers.

NIGHTWALKER



These towering, night-black giants have demonic features, including a huge pair of ram-like horns. Their arms end in massive blades. These powerful foes lead armies of undead against the living, but unlike most mortal generals the nightwalker is not content to stand back and observe the battles from safety. The undead creature is ever eager to put its tactics and plans to the test itself and takes part in battles in every possible occurrence save for those that the creature has determined are self-destructive. This is not to say that the nightwalker never sacrifices its troops to gain a tactical advantage—just that these attacks are the only ones the monster feels no urge to participate in directly. Nightwalkers enjoy inflicting despair before death, particularly by destroying valued objects or murdering loved ones before delivering the final blow to a foe. A nightwalker is 20 feet tall and weighs 5,000 pounds.

NIGHTWALKER

Huge undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 239 (20d12 + 100)

Speed 40 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	9 (-1)	20 (+5)	9 (-1)	11 (+0)	1 (-5)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities cold, poison

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned, stunned, unconscious

Senses blacksight, darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Abyssal, Common, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.

Challenge 16 (15,000 XP)

Blacksight. Nightshades can see normally even through magical darkness. While in sunlight, the nightshade has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Innate Spellcasting. The nightshades's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 12). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At Will: *blight*, *contagion*, *darkness*, *dispel magic*

3/Day each: *confusion*, *haste*, *hold monster*, *invisibility*

1/Day each: *cone of cold*, *finger of death*, *plane shift*

Desecrating Aura. Undead within this radius (including the nightshade): gain a +2 bonus on attack and damage rolls and saving throws, as well as +2 hit points per hit die of temporary hit points, and the save DC of channeled negative energy is increased by +6 (these adjustments are included for the nightshades in their entries). This aura can be negated by *dispel evil*, but a nightshade can reactivate it on its turn as a free action. A desecrating aura the suppresses the effects of a *hallow* spell that is cast to exclude undead but its effects also are negated while within the area of the *hallow* spell.

Negative Energy. When a nightshade would take necrotic damage, he is healed by it instead.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The nightshade uses its Summon Shadow (if available) and then uses Fear Gaze. It then makes two Cold Claw attacks.

Cold Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +12 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit*: 19 (3d8 + 6) piercing damage, 7 (2d6) necrotic damage, and 7 (2d6) cold damage. The target must succeed on a DC 21 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage

taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest.

Fear Gaze. The nightshade targets one creature that it can see within 20 feet of it. The target must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the target cowers in fear until the end of its next round. While cowering it is incapacitated.

Summon Shadows (1/Day). The nightshade magically summons up to four greater shadows. These creatures are identical to shadow demons[SRD] but are undead rather than fiends. The summoned shadows appear in any unoccupied spaces desired within 60 feet of the nightshade, acting as an ally to all other shadow demons and nightshades. They cannot summon other creatures. Each shadow demon remains for 10 minutes, until it or its summoner dies, or until its summoner dismisses it as an action.

RADIOACTIVE COMBUSTED

Curious brown burns mar these abominations' undead flesh, the marks of intense radiation exposure from the Pit of the Burning Star. Their Combustion ability conveys the effects of the metallurgic amber radiation from the impact site. Many of these cursed walking dead are too old to identify their original race, but some are clearly Shattered Folk tribesmen, some are clearly orcs, and some appear to have the look and tattered clothing of the southlands — possibly members of the Conroi Expedition. Unfortunately by some quirk of fate, at a distance a radioactive combusted's howl of agony sounds eerily like the ever-blowing winds of the steppe, so they can rise from the dust where they lie among the grasses when the PCs come within 60 feet without giving their position away prior to that. When they sight intruders into their hunting lands they attack and pursue until destroyed seeking others to join them in their eternal searing inferno of death.

RADIOACTIVE COMBUSTED

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 84 (13d8+26)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	1 (-5)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)

Damage Immunities fire, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Kirkut (cannot speak)

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Howl of Agony. The combusted constantly wails, creating an aura out to 10 feet. Creatures that enter this area for the first time in a turn or start their turn in this area must make a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened until the end of their next round. A creature that saves against this effect is immune to this combusted's howl for 24 hours.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The combusted makes two attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d6+3) bludgeoning damage and 4 (1d8) fire damage. If the target is a creature or flammable object, it ignites. Until a creature takes an action to douse the fire, the target takes 4 (1d8) fire damage at the start of each of its turns. If a creature is reduced to 0 hit points in this way, it is immediately slain, and rises as a combusted within 1d4 hours.

Fire Blast. *Ranged Spell Attack*: +4 to hit, range 30 ft., one target. *Hit*: 10 (3d6) fire damage.

RHU-CHALIK

A rhu-chalik, also called a void wanderer, is an alien entity that scouts through space on behalf of its conquering masters. In addition, this aberration also collects the memories of interesting creatures in the universe into a vast repository of knowledge that their masters use to slowly unravel all the secrets of existence.

Rhu-chaliks serve their masters tirelessly and are as patient as they are long-lived. They rarely make an uncalculated move and seek only the most prized intellects to cast into the dark beyond for their masters' delectations. When exploring distant worlds, rhu-chaliks are not social beings, and they avoid other rhu-chaliks so their predations won't cause too much overlap in the mind collections of their masters. However, back in their native space, rhu-chaliks number in the billions, and the creatures feed off a countless number of disembodied minds.

A rhu-chalik is approximately 3 feet across and weighs only 30 pounds.

RHU-CHALIK

Small aberration, chaotic evil
Armor Class 16 (*mage armor*)
Hit Points 66 (12d6+ 24)
Speed 5 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)

Skills Perception +5, Stealth +5
Damage Immunities cold
Damage Resistances psychic
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages Aklo, telepathy, 100 ft.
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

All-Around Vision. The rhu-chalik sees in all directions at the same time.
Compression. The rhu-chalik can move through a space as narrow as 1 foot wide without squeezing.
Innate Spellcasting. The rhu-chalik's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:
At will: *detect thoughts*, *invisibility*, *mage armor*
1/day: *modify memory*
No Breath. The rhu-chalik does not need to breathe.
Void Transmission. If the rhu-chalik reduces a creature's Wisdom to 0 with its project terror ability, the rhu-chalik can take 10 minutes to copy and absorb the creature's entire consciousness and send that consciousness through the void of space to its waiting masters. If the creature's Wisdom damage is healed and the creature revived prior to the end of this process, this effect fails. If the creature's Wisdom damage is healed after its consciousness is successfully transmitted, the creature awakes disoriented and suffers a level of exhaustion until completing a long rest. This effect otherwise doesn't harm the target as the target's consciousness isn't eliminated, only duplicated and transmitted.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The rhu-chalik makes four tendril attacks.
Tendril. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d4 + 3) bludgeoning damage. In addition, the tendrils secrete an enzyme that inflicts excruciating pain. A creature hit by a tendril must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 1 minute. A creature can attempt another Constitution save at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself with a success. Creatures immune to the poisoned condition are immune to this ability.
Project Terror. The rhu-chalik harnesses the fears of any creature it has successfully used detect thoughts on within the last minute. This effect creates visions of that creature's most terrible nightmares in the target's mind; the target must make a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened and also have their Wisdom score reduced by 1d4. The target falls unconscious if this reduces them to Wisdom 0. Otherwise, the reduction lasts until the target finishes a short or long rest.

SHADOW WOLVES

Shadow wolves are similar to undead shadows but have the form of inky shadows in the shape of wolves with eyes that flash like hot coals when they attack. Shadow wolves are nocturnal hunters and hate all living creatures.

SHADOW WOLF

Medium undead, chaotic evil
Armor Class 12
Hit Points 22 (4d8 + 4)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	6 (-2)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4 (+6 in dim light or darkness)
Damage Vulnerabilities radiant
Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison
Condition Immunities exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages -
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Amorphous. The shadow wolf can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.
Keen Hearing and Smell. The shadow wolf has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.
Pack Tactics. The shadow wolf has advantage on attack rolls against a creature if at least one of the shadow wolf's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.
Shadow Stealth. While in dim light or darkness, the shadow wolf can take the Hide action as a bonus action.
Sunlight Weakness. While in sunlight, the shadow wolf has disadvantage on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 9 (2d6 + 2) necrotic damage, and the target's Strength score is reduced by 1d4. The target dies if this reduces its Strength to 0. Otherwise, the reduction lasts until the target finishes a short or long rest. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 12 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

SHARD SLAG

Shard slags are living mounds of magic-infused iron. They dwell within the iron-rich molten cores of worlds, the hearts of active volcanoes, or any location where the borders of the Material Plane and the Plane of Fire are thin. Though they're not sentient, shard slags are skilled hunters and have developed a bizarre method of hunting and defending themselves. When a creature is near, a shard slag spontaneously alters its molten body to produce a number of razor-sharp blades. The shard slag then mindlessly attacks until the other creature is stabbed, burned, and then consumed.

SHARD SLAG

Huge ooze, unaligned
Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 168 (16d12+64)
Speed 30 ft., 20 ft. burrow ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	7 (-2)	18 (+4)	1 (-5)	6 (-2)	1 (-5)

Damage Immunities acid, fire
Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, prone
Senses blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 8
Languages -
Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

Vulnerable to Water. If struck by at least 1 gallon of water, the shard must make a DC 16 Consitution saving throw or be stunned for 1 round.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Each round a shard slag creates 1d4+2 shard blades, which melt away at the end of the round and are replaced immediately. It makes a number of attacks equal to the number of slag blades it has.
Slag Blade. *Melee Weapon Attack.* +8 to hit, 15 ft. reach. *Hit*: 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage. Creatures struck also take 14 (4d6) fire damage.

TENEBROUS WORM

The caterpillar-like tenebrous worm is a voracious predator that hungers for mortal flesh. A native of the Shadowfell, a tenebrous worm hatches from the body of an unfortunate creature that has been implanted with an egg by the strange gloomwing moths of that shadow-realm. The tenebrous worm is fully grown upon hatching, and immediately begins to scour its environs for flesh to consume.

Although the tenebrous worm tends to be relatively pale-colored, its internal organs seethe and roil with shadowy energies and dark fluids. As the creature feeds, these shadowy innards begin to grow out of its body, forming strange bristle-like filaments of semisolid shadowstuff not only capable of piercing the flesh of those who would attack the worm, but also possessing a deadly paralytic poison. Additional shadowy fluids constantly seep from the worm's mandibles—when it bites prey, these fluids melt flesh into shadows that the creature can then consume.

TENEBROUS WORM

Medium monstrosity, neutral

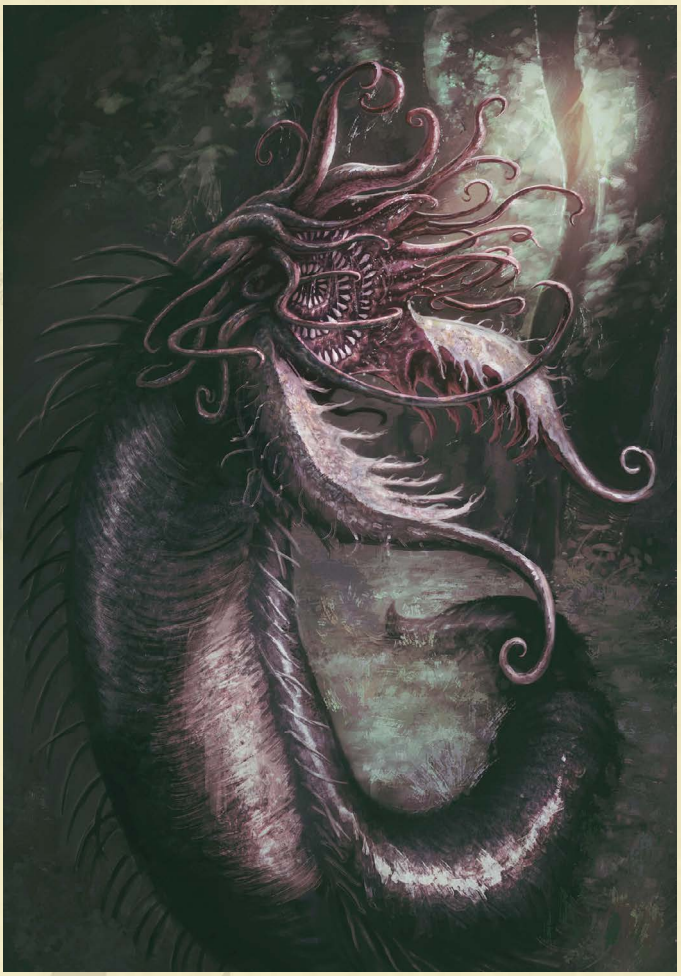
Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 105 (14d8 + 42)
Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	15 (+2)	17 (+3)	2 (-4)	13 (+1)	7 (-2)

Saving Throws Con +6, Wis +4
Skills Perception +4, Stealth +5
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages -
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Bristles. At the start of each of its turns, the tenebrous worm deals 2 (1d4) piercing damage plus 5 (1d10) poison damage to any creature grappling it.

Shadow Corruption. The acid of a tenebrous worm's bite affects only organic matter—as it dissolves creatures, it converts their flesh to shadow that swiftly fades away, leaving raw, jagged wounds behind. In dim light, acid damage dealt by a tenebrous worm's bite increases to 28 (8d6) points of damage, while in darkness or bright light, the acid damage is reduced to 14 (4d6).



ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 9 (2d6 + 2) piercing damage, plus 21 (6d6) acid damage.

REACTIONS

Bristle Stab. When a creature within 5 feet of the tenebrous worm attacks the tenebrous worm, that attacker must make a DC 13 Dexterity save. On a failed save, the attacker takes 2 (1d4) piercing damage plus 5 (1d10) poison damage.

VAMPIRE SYCOPHANTS

Sycophants are creatures that are thralls of vampires yet have not undergone a transformation to the undead. They are instead rewarded for their service to the vampire with a portion of the vampire's blood. This daily feeding allows the sycophant to retain its abilities as it ingests and gains dark powers from its master's ichor.

SYCOPHANT

Medium humanoid (any), any evil
Armor Class 15 (studded leather)
Hit Points 82 (11d8 + 33)
Speed 30 ft.

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

Saving Throws Dex +6, Wis +3
Skills Perception +3, Stealth +6
Condition Immunities A sycophant is immune to charm effects of any but their progenitor.
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages the languages it knew in life
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Blood Mask. A sycophant is able to conceal its alignment from all forms of divination. If the sycophant has fed from its progenitor within a 24-hour period and is within 1 mile, the progenitor gains this benefit as well.

Blood Regeneration. For 10 minutes after a sycophant drinks of its progenitor vampire's blood it regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit. If the sycophant takes radiant damage or damage from holy water, this trait doesn't function at the start of the sycophant's next turn.

Sense Progenitor. A sycophant knows the direction and distance to its progenitor vampire — this sense can be blocked by any effect that blocks *scrying*. A sycophant has detect thoughts on its progenitor in effect at all times; these abilities cannot be dispelled.

Sycophant Weaknesses. Sycophants cannot tolerate the sound of prayers or religious mantras recited by those truly faithful to a good deity. Any divine spellcaster with a good-aligned deity can force a sycophant to recoil by dramatically praying and presenting their holy symbol as an action. Praying doesn't harm a sycophant; it merely keeps the creature at bay. A recoiling sycophant must stay at least 5 feet away from a praying character and cannot touch or make melee attacks against it. At the end of its next round, a sycophant can fight past its revulsion and function normally each round it succeeds at a DC 25 Wisdom save. The prayers of those who worship non-good deities or worship no deity have no effect on a sycophant.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The sycophant makes two attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 8 (2d4 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage.



Reducing a sycophant's hit points to 0 or lower incapacitates it but doesn't always destroy it (see fast healing). However, consecrating the sycophant's remains and burying the body destroys it forever. A sycophant's body is considered consecrated if it is doused with a vial of holy water and buried, if it is buried in earth affected by the spell *consecrate*, or if *bless*, *prayer*, or a similar divine spell is cast upon it as it is being buried. Digging up a sycophant's corpse or profaning the area where it's buried does not restore a buried sycophant.

Withdrawal: If a sycophant misses feeding from its progenitor for more than 24 hours, it begins to suffer the effects of withdrawal as the hunger rules (see **page 86**). After 7 days of withdrawal, if the sycophant has not feed from its progenitor it reverts back to its original form.

VIPER VINE

A voracious, flesh-eating carnivore, the viper vine has a single enormous bloom arising from a thick, leafy tangle of snake-like vines. When the plant senses the approach of suitable prey through its sensitive, shallowly buried root system, it rises up like an agitated snake and unfurls its brightly colored bloom, an act that releases a cloud of mind-numbing pollen. While stories speaking of the plant's ability to lure prey into its clutches by virtue of its swaying motion persist, this effect is in fact created by this invisible, odorless pollen cloud.

Hunting Grounds. Since viper vines gain nourishment through the consumption of creatures rather than through moisture and soil, they have developed rudimentary locomotion and are able to drag themselves along the ground with their tentacle-like root system. They even possess a form of rudimentary sentience, allowing them to not only discern differences in prey and make limited tactical decisions but also to avoid creatures that are particularly large or dangerous looking. The area around the hunting grounds of these predators is often strewn with the remains of victims, and it is not unusual to find the rotting corpses of wild animals, ill-fated adventurers, and even giants in their immediate vicinity, along with a scattering of incidental treasure left behind by the plant's victims.

VIPER VINE

Huge plant, unaligned

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)
Hit Points 210 (20d12+100)
Speed 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
26 (+8)	19 (+4)	19 (+4)	1 (-5)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing; cold, lightning, necrotic, radiant, thunder
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages –
Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

Cold Lethargy. Exposure to any cold effect slows a viper vine as a slow spell.
False Appearance. While the vine remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a normal tree.



ACTIONS

Multiattack. The viper vine uses captivating cloud (if available) then makes four vine attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack.* +13 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 25 (5d6 + 8) piercing damage plus 17 (5d6) acid.

Vine. *Melee Weapon Attack.* +9 to hit, reach 25 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d6 + 8) bludgeoning and the target is grappled (escape DC 18).

Captivating Cloud (1/Day). A viper vine can emit a transparent cloud of pollen in a 60-foot spread that has the power to lull the minds of those that smell it. Once activated, the cloud persists for 1 minute unless dispersed by moderate or stronger wind. All creatures in the cloud must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw each round or become captivated. Once a creature becomes captivated, it takes no actions save to approach the viper vine via the most direct route possible. If this path leads it into a dangerous area, such as through fire or off a cliff, that creature receives a second saving throw to end the effect before moving into peril. A victim that is attacked by the viper vine gets a new saving throw as a reaction after each of the vine's attacks to overcome the effect.

REACTIONS

FEED ME! The viper vine may make a bite attack against a grappled foe when first grappled, the creature tries to escape, or the creature attacks the viper vine.

VOID-STIRGE

Void-stirges are a race of interstellar aberrations that hail from the distant and alien city of Carcosa, where they serve Hastur. Vaguely humanoid in shape, their bodies combine elements of the forms of carrion birds, insects, and mammals, giving an outward appearance that, while horrific, might at first glance seem possible in the natural world. Yet, those who have studied dead void-stirges know this to be a lie, for the creatures' bodies hold bizarre organs and masses of unknown tissue that seem to serve no purpose; the further into a void-stirge's body one explores, the stranger its entrails become. The fact that portions of its body appear to be decaying or rotting away even as it lives only adds to the mystery of the creature's peculiar anatomy.

VOID-STIRGE

Medium aberration, chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 67 (9d8 + 27)

Speed 40 ft., burrow 20 ft., climb 30 ft., fly 80 ft.

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

Damage Resistances cold

Condition Immunities charmed

Saving Throws Int +2

Skills Perception +6, Stealth +6

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Deep Speech

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Bloodlust. The void-stirge has advantage on melee attack rolls against any creature that doesn't have all its hit points.

Low Metabolism. While a void-stirge craves blood if it has not fed within the last 24 hours, it does not suffer any negative effects from starvation, and it can, in theory, survive forever without drinking or feeding. It is immune to effects that induce magical starvation or thirst, yet it still seeks to drink blood whenever it can to sate its desire.

No Breath. Void-stirges do not require air to breathe.

Starflight. A void-stirge can survive in the void of outer space, and it flies through space at incredible speeds. Although exact travel times vary, a trip within a single solar system normally takes it 3d20 months, while trip beyond normally takes it 3d20 years (or more, at the GM's discretion)—provided the void-stirge knows the way to its destination.

Strange Mind. A void-stirge is immune to the confusion and madness spells.

Yellow Sign Affinity. A void-stirge is immune to the effects of the Yellow Sign, and as an action, it can locate the nearest active Yellow Sign as per locate object with a range of 1 mile. When a void-stirge begins its turn with 1 or more hit points

and it can see an active Yellow Sign, it regains 2 hit points and it has advantage on any Dexterity saving throw against effects it can see until the beginning of its next turn. An active Yellow Sign is either one that was created by Hastur or permanently inscribed by one privy to Hastur's secret lore, like the Sagging Man. Inactive Yellow Signs, such as the unholy symbols carried by cultists of Hastur, do not bolster a void-stirge, but these creatures generally treat those who openly wear such symbols as allies. A character who displays a Yellow Sign in this manner has advantage on Charisma (Deception, Intimidation, and Persuasion) checks against a void-stirge.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The void-stirge attacks with its bite and claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 14). The void-stirge may use Blood Drain as a bonus action.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (2d4 + 2) slashing damage.

Blood Drain. A creature grappled by the void-stirge loses 10 (3d6) hit points due to blood loss.

TERRIBLE HYBRID THING

Large aberration, chaotic evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 216 (16d10 +128)

Speed 30 ft., fly 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	14 (+2)	26 (+8)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	19 (+4)

Skills Acrobatics +6, Perception +11, Religion +6, Stealth +10, Survival +7

Damage Immunities cold

Condition Immunities charmed

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 21

Languages Aklo, Common, Necronomus[LL7]

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

WHAT'S A VOID-STIRGE?

The void-stirge is based on the byakhee from the *Call of Cthulhu* game and the stories of H.P. Lovecraft, and that name is the property of Chaosium Inc., and is not Open Content. However, that creature does have *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game* statistics first presented in issue #110 of the official adventure path series, and those mechanics are Open Content. Also, like Chaosium before us, we are basing the description of the creature on the H.P. Lovecraft short story "The Festival", which is in the public domain. Therefore, we are using the existing stat block but have to change the name of the beast for use in this adventure.

So, why void-stirge? Hopefully the void portion is self-explanatory; these are creatures capable of unaided interstellar flight and, as such, can spend much of their virtually immortal lifespans soaring through the vastness between the stars. The stirge part goes a bit deeper. The stirge of the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game*, of course, gets its roots from the original *Dungeons & Dragons* game before it. Gary Gygax included the stirge as a small, blood-sucking critter in the original 1st Edition AD&D *Monster Manual*. For his part, Gary took his inspiration for the stirge from the ancient Greek and Roman folk tales of the *strix* (Greek) or *striga* (Latin), a birdlike creature known for its blood-drinking habits. It is very likely that the striga served as some form of inspiration for the later folk tales of vampires. With the blood drain and bloodlust special abilities of our void-stirge the use of the venerable name, honored as it is in a long history of gaming tradition, seemed a natural fit. Furthermore, **Frog God Games** (and **Necromancer Games** before it) had already shown a tendency for use of this naming convention with the creation of the ghoul-stirge in its ***Tome of Horrors*** and updated ***The Tome of Horrors Complete***, so the precedent exists. We're merely continuing in its time-honored footsteps.

Bloodlust. The hybrid thing has advantage on melee attack rolls against any creature that doesn't have all its hit points.th

Blood Pool. When a creature is reduced to 0 hit points within 30 feet of the hybrid thing, it gains 2 points in its blood pool. The hybrid thing can have up to 10 points in its blood pool. Spending a blood point is a bonus action. Spending a blood

point grants the creature any of the following benefits:

* 1 points: An additional action, as per a fighter's action surge.
* 1 points: The hybrid thing can cast blood to sap (see below).
* 2 points: The effects of the heal spell.

A hybrid thing starts combat with 1d4-1 blood points.

Low Metabolism. While a hybrid thing craves blood if it has not fed within the last 24 hours, it does not suffer any negative effects from starvation, and it can, in theory, survive forever without drinking or feeding. It is immune to effects that induce magical starvation or thirst, yet it still seeks to drink blood whenever it can to sate its desire.

No Breath. Hybrid things do not require air to breathe.

Starflight. A hybrid thing can survive in the void of outer space, and it flies through space at incredible speeds. Although exact travel times vary, a trip within a single solar system normally takes it 3d20 months, while trip beyond normally takes it 3d20 years (or more, at the GM's discretion)—provided the hybrid thing knows the way to its destination.

Strange Mind. A hybrid thing is immune to the spell confusion and madness.

Yellow Sign Affinity. A hybrid thing is immune to the effects of the Yellow Sign, and as an action, it can locate the nearest active Yellow Sign as per locate object with a range of 1 mile. When a hybrid thing begins its turn with 1 or more hit points and it can see an active Yellow Sign, it regains 2 hit points and it has advantage on any Dexterity saving throw against effects it can see until the beginning of its next turn. An active Yellow Sign is either one that was created by Hastur or by the Yellow Sign spell. Inactive Yellow Signs, such as the unholy symbols carried by cultists of Hastur, do not bolster a hybrid thing, but these creatures generally treat those who openly wear such symbols as allies. A character who displays a Yellow Sign in this manner has advantage on Charisma (Deception, Intimidation, and Persuasion) checks against a hybrid thing.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The hybrid thing makes three attacks: once with its bite and and twice with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 16 (3d6 + 6) piercing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 14). The hybrid thing may use Blood Drain as a bonus action.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 19 (3d8 + 6) slashing damage.

Blood Drain. A creature grappled by the hybrid thing loses 10 (3d6) hit points due to blood loss. This effect does not function against constructs or creatures without blood

REACTIONS

Caustic Blood. As a reaction to being damaged, the hybrid thing can bleed on the attacker, dealing 10 (3d6) acid damage.

WALLIXTABAY

Known for their potent—and ultimately deadly—scent, xtabays are a floral hazard to the unwary. As fast-spreading as ivy, a xtabay's vines are sturdy and adaptive, making the plant a potential threat nearly everywhere—from gardens to wells to forest groves. Attractive flowers blossom from the vines of xtabays, emitting the spores that mean a slow death for their victims. The strange, face-like patterns that grow on the petals are disturbing but seem to have no real function. Hermits or other reclusive types have been known to surround their territory with xtabays, warding off pesky creatures and adventurers alike. Instances of xtabays of larger-than-usual size have also been reported. These massive plants possess tendrils as thick as tree limbs and flowers that can fell even the hardiest of warriors with their overwhelming perfume. Underground, xtabays thrive in the wet, dark environment, covering the walls and floors of entire caverns and anesthetizing whole dens of subterranean creatures.

Predatory Plants. Nomadic plants, xtabays traverse large expanses of land until they sense nearby life, at which point they lie dormant and take on the guise of harmless flowers while releasing their deceptive aroma. Once a creature is subdued, the beast-like plant wastes no time in devouring it, disregarding creatures unaffected by its aroma. Because of their carnivorous nature, xtabays only rarely run short on nutrients, consuming the entirety of a victim's body over the course of several days following the initial process of draining its blood. Xtabays are able to devour creatures thanks to their lengthy roots, which produce a corrosive acid that breaks down and absorbs flesh and bone.

This patch of vines is ornamented with beautiful crimson and violet flowers, the petals of which seem to bear tiny faces.

WALLIXTABAY

Large plant, unaligned
Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 97 (15d8 + 30)
Speed 5 ft., climb 5 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	1 (-5)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Skills Athletics +4, Perception +5, Stealth +5
Damage Immunities acid
Condition Immunities blinded, deafened, exhaustion, prone
Senses darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 30 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages —
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Camouflage. Since the wallixtabay looks like a normal plant when at rest, a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check is required to notice it before it attacks for the first time. Anyone with ranks in Wisdom (Survival) or Intelligence (Nature) can use either of those skills to notice the plant with a DC 18, but a roll of 15 will also bring notice to the flowers that are closed in the daytime.



Soporific Pollen. A creature that moves into or ends their turn within a 10-ft.-radius of the wallixtabay must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or fall unconscious for 1d3 minutes during which time they experience revelatory nightmares (see Development). If a creature succeeds on the saving throw or the effect ends for it, it cannot be affected by the wallixtabay's soporific pollen for 24 hours. A creature affected by this pollen can be awakened by being vigorously shaken by an ally using their action or damaged.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The wallixtabay makes a sting attack, and, if it can, uses its Devour.

Sting. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 12 (2d8 + 3) piercing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC of 12). Until this grapple ends the target is restrained, and it takes 12 (5d4) acid damage at the start of each of its turns. The wallixtabay can grapple only one target at a time.

Devour. Any adjacent creatures under the effects of the wallixtabay's soporific pollen take 10 poison damage, and the wallixtabay regains hit points equal to the total damage dealt. This feeding is curiously painless, and normally isn't enough to waken a foe put to sleep by the plant. Each round this feeding continues, a sleeping victim can attempt a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw to awaken.

WIGHT, LUNAR

Lunar wights are humanoids who rise as undead after being brutally slain and their corpse abandoned under the light of a full moon. Lunar wights arise when a dark spirit from beyond this world possesses the corpse and permanently enters the dead body. While still somewhat recognizable to those who knew them in life, the wight's face bears a deathly grimace set with beastlike teeth and its eyes glow with madness. Lunar wights burn with hatred for the living and they seek to devour the flesh and steal the vital energy of any living creature they come across. Oddly, the undead creature's arms

hang by its sides, as if the bizarre spirit possessing the corpse were unfamiliar with the concept of such manipulative appendages or incapable of exerting more than rudimentary control over them.

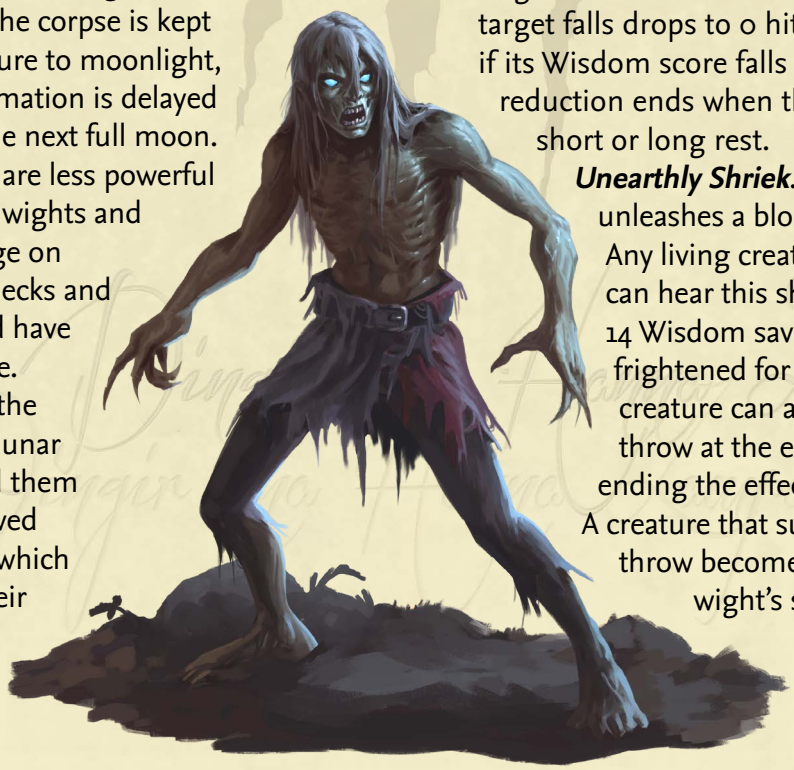
LUNAR WIGHT

Medium undead, chaotic evil
Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 97 (13d8 + 39)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)

Skills Perception +6, Stealth +6
Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages Common
Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Create Spawn. Any humanoid creature slain by a lunar wight under the light of the moon becomes a lunar wight itself in 1d4 rounds. If the corpse is kept from direct exposure to moonlight, then this transformation is delayed until the rise of the next full moon. Spawn so created are less powerful than typical lunar wights and suffer disadvantage on Wisdom ability checks and saving throws and have two fewer Hit Dice. Spawn are under the command of the lunar wight that created them and remain enslaved until its death, at which point they lose their spawn penalties and become full-fledged and free-willed lunar wights. They do not possess any of the abilities they had in life.



Gaze of Lunacy. If a creature begins its turn within 30 feet of the lunar wight and the two can see one another, the wight can force the target to make a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw if the wight isn't incapacitated. On a failed save, the creature becomes affected by the *confusion* spell for 1 minute. The creature can repeat this save at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself with a success.

A creature that isn't surprised can choose to avert its eyes and thus avoid making the saving throw at the start of its turn. If the creature does this, it cannot see the lunar wight until the start of its next turn, when it may choose to avert its eyes again.

Resurrection Vulnerability. A *raise dead* or similar spell cast on a lunar wight destroys it unless it succeeds on a Wisdom saving throw against the caster's spell save DC. Casting *raise dead* in this way does not require a material component.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 8 (1d6 + 5) necrotic damage, and the target's Wisdom score is reduced by 1d4. The target falls drops to 0 hit points and is dying if its Wisdom score falls to 0. Otherwise, this reduction ends when the target completes a short or long rest.

Unearthly Shriek. The lunar wight unleashes a blood-curdling shriek. Any living creature within 30 feet that can hear this shriek must make a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A frightened creature can attempt a new saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself with a success. A creature that succeeds on this saving throw becomes immune to the lunar wight's shriek for 24 hours.

YSAQQUA

The ysaqqua (iss-AHK-wah) is a revolting fusion of toad, squid, and human: a large anura with prehensile forepaws, a flattened face reminiscent of a horrible old man's, and flaccid tentacles emerging from its sides. Its wide humanoid mouth has blackened fangs and its skin weeps a milky poison. Ysaqqua are 1 foot long and weigh about 6 pounds.

Deranging Venom. The venom of an ysaqqua not only erodes its victim's sanity but is also an oneirogen that induces lucid dreaming. A creature that falls unconscious through the secondary effect of ysaqquan venom 'awakens' in a lucid body within the Dimension of Dream for an initial 2d4 minutes. When that duration has elapsed, the creature must succeed at a Wisdom saving throw at the same DC as the venom in order to wake; failure means that the creature remains unconscious and within the Dimension of Dream for a further 2d4 hours.

Immortal. Ysaqqua do not age, eat, sleep, or breathe and are effectively immortal, dying only through violence. They associate with common frogs and toads and can even breed with them, producing anything from large, aggressive poisonous batrachian specimens (often with vestigial humanlike features or other sickening deformities) to ysaqqan toads (see below).

Fiendish Familiar. An ysaqqua is likely to attach itself to a spellcaster in a manner similar to a familiar, but it does not share any benefits with its spellcasting partner. Rather, it uses its poison to lure the spellcaster into strange dreams. These dreams often lead to revelatory innovations in magic, at the cost of the dreamer's sanity.

YSAQQUA

Tiny aberration, chaotic evil

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)
Hit Points 85 (19d4 + 38)
Speed 15 ft., burrow 5 ft., climb 15 ft., swim 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
5 (-3)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)

Skills Acrobatics +3, Perception +5, Stealth +5
Damage Resistances acid, cold
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, exhaustion, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages Common, Aquan, Deep Speech, telepathy 120 ft.
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The yssaqqua's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13). The yssaqqua can cast the following spells requiring no components:

At will: *detect evil and good*, *speak with animals* (frogs and toads only)
3/day each: *fear*, *misty step*, *invisibility* (self only)
1/day: *phantasmal force*

Scent. The yssaqqua has advantage on its Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Standing Leap. The yssaqqua's long jump is 10 feet and its high jump is up to 5 feet, with or without a running start.

Unearthly Anatomy. The yssaqqua does not require air to breathe. Any creature that touches it is exposed to a poison, requiring a DC 14 Constitution saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one. If the damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the target is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and is unconscious while poisoned in this way.

It also does not die when it is reduced to 0 hit points, instead automatically stabilizing. This effect does not function if it takes radiant, fire, or force damage while it is at 0 hit points.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The yssaqqua makes two bite attacks, or a tongue and bite attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +3 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in its space. *Hit*: 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage, and the target is exposed to its poison (see Unearthly Anatomy above).

Tongue. The yssaqqua targets one Medium or smaller creature that it can see within 5 feet of it. The target must make a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the target uses its reaction to move into the yssaqqua's space and is considered restrained until the end of its next turn, and the yssaqqua can make a bite attack against it as a bonus action.

YSAQQUAN TOAD

Kyssogga can sire offspring with female frogs and toads. After well over a century of such breeding, the ysaqquan (iss-AHK-wahn) toad is the result. Weighing up to two pounds and around 6 inches in body length, it is on the larger size for a toad. Its face is flattened like a human's, its oversized mouth has several lines of short sharp fangs, and its bulging eyes glint with a cunning, malevolent intelligence, for not only is Kyssogga able to breed with anura, it can speak with — and thus educate — them.

Bred Minions. With over a century of breeding and education for his colony in the Old House, Kyssogga's efforts have grown in efficacy. The average lifespan of his progeny has doubled — in correlation with their improved intelligence and breeding — from around ten years to twenty or more. As a result, ysaqquan toads have now transcended rudimentary animal intelligence and are able to understand, and, with their more humanoid mouths and hands, speak and write the Common tongue.

Weakened Venom. The venom of an ysaqquan toad is similar to that of its ysaqqua parent but weaker. A creature that falls unconscious through the secondary effect of ysaqquan toad venom does not awaken in a lucid body within the Dimension of Dream unless a Wisdom saving throw (at the same DC as the venom) to awaken after the initial 2d4 rounds duration is failed. If the creature does enter the lucid dreaming state, another Wisdom saving throw after the initial duration of 2d4 minutes must succeed or the creature remains unconscious for a further 2d4 hours.

This warty gray-skinned toad has a curiously flattened face, and tiny human-like hands in place of its front toes. It seeps a milky substance from behind its large eyes and its oversized maw is crammed with jagged fangs.

YSAQQUAN TOAD

Tiny aberration, chaotic evil

Armor Class 11
Hit Points 14 (4d4 + 4)
Speed 10 ft., climb 10 ft., swim 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3 (-4)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)	5 (-3)	10 (+0)

Skills Acrobatics +3, Perception +1, Stealth +5
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages Common
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Scent. The yssaqqua has advantage on its Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Standing Leap. The yssaqquan toad's long jump is 10 feet and its high jump is up to 5 feet, with or without a running start.

Unearthly Anatomy. Any creature that touches the yssaqquan toad is exposed to a poison, requiring a DC 11 Constitution saving throw, taking 2 (1d4) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one. If the damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the target is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and is unconscious while poisoned in this way.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +3 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in its space. *Hit*: 3 (1d4+1) piercing damage, and the target is exposed to its poison (see Unearthly Anatomy above).



YSAQQUAN TOAD SWARM

An ysaqquan toad swarm consists of hundreds of ysaqquan toads. They swarm to defend their territory or when ordered to do so by their progenitor, Kyssogga.

YSAQQUAN TOAD SWARM

Large swarm of tiny aberrations, chaotic evil
Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 52 (6d10 + 12)
Speed 10 ft., climb 10 ft., swim 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3 (-4)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	7 (-2)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)

Skills Acrobatics +3, Perception +6, Stealth +5
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, stunned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages Common (all speak in unison)
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Scent. The yssaqqua swarm has advantage on its Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.
Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a tiny yssaqquan toad. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.
Unearthly Anatomy. Any creature that touches the yssaqquan toad swarm or ends its turn in the swarm is exposed to a poison, requiring a DC 13 Constitution saving throw, taking 7 (2d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one. If the damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the target is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and is unconscious while poisoned in this way.

ACTIONS
Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in the swarm's space. *Hit*: 8 (2d6 + 1) piercing damage, or 4 (1d6+1) piercing damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer. The target is exposed to its poison (see Unearthly Anatomy above).

NEW BEASTS

GIANT CRAYFISH

Large beast, unaligned
Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 45 (6d10 + 12)
Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

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

Skills Stealth +4
Senses blindsight 30 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages —
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Amphibious. The giant crayfish can breathe air and water.

ACTIONS
Multiattack. The giant crayfish makes two Pincers attacks.
Pincers. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 13). The crayfish has two claws, each of which can grapple only one target.

GIANT FLY

Medium beast, unaligned
Armor Class 13
Hit Points 22 (3d8 + 9)
Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	17 (+3)	16 (+3)	2 (–4)	7 (–2)	2 (–4)

Skills Perception +2
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages —
Challenge ½ (100 XP)

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

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage. If the target is a creature it must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be diseased until the condition is cured. While the creature is diseased it is poisoned. Every 24 hours that elapse, the target must repeat the saving throw, reducing its hit point maximum by 5 (1d10) on a failure. The disease is cured on a success. The target dies if the disease reduces its hit point maximum to 0. This reduction to the target's hit point maximum lasts until the disease is cured.

GIANT GAR

Huge beast, unaligned
Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 112 (9d12 + 54)
Speed swim 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
29 (+9)	10 (+0)	22 (+6)	2 (–4)	13 (+1)	2 (–4)

Skills Athletics +12, Perception +7
Senses passive Perception 17
Languages —
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Water Breathing. The giant gar can only breathe underwater.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 30 (6d6 + 9) piercing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 20). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the gar can't bite another target.

Swallow. The gar makes one bite attack against a Large or smaller target it is grappling. If the attack hits, the target is swallowed, and the grapple ends. The swallowed target is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the gar, and it takes 21 (6d6) acid damage at the start of each of the gar's turns. The gar can have only one target swallowed at a time. If the gar dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse using 5 feet of movement, exiting prone.

GIANT WATER BEETLE

Medium beast, unaligned
Armor Class 13 (natural armor)
Hit Points 37 (5d8 + 15)
Speed 20 ft., swim 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	2 (–4)	10 (+0)	9 (–1)

Senses blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages —
Challenge ½ (100 XP)

Water Breathing. Giant water beetles can only breathe water but can hold their breath for up to 8 hours out of water.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

Ink Cloud (Recharge 6). A 10-foot radius cloud of ink extends all around the water beetle if it is underwater. The area is heavily obscured for 1 minute although a significant current can disperse the ink.

APPENDIX B: MAGIC AND EQUIPMENT

EQUIPMENT

The following unusual tools and items can be discovered in this adventure.

Item	Cost	Weight
Armor ointment	30 gp	1 lb.
Candlerod	1 gp	1 lb.
Folding shovel	4 gp	3 lbs.
Master tool	50 gp	5 lbs.
Mending paste	25 gp	1/2 lb.
Sunrod	2 gp	1 lb.
Tindertwig	1 sp	-
Weapon Blanch, Adamantine	25 gp	1/2 lb.
Weapon Blanch, Silver	5 gp	1/2 lb.

Activated Charcoal

Cost 20 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

Ordinary charcoal, typically made from peat, wood and materials burned in the absence of oxygen is an outstanding fuel source with no medicinal properties. With the infusion of hot gases or certain chemicals, alchemists can transform common charcoal into activated charcoal. In this form, activated charcoal's surface area increases exponentially, allowing its molecules to bind with those found in many poisonous substances and thus prevent the digestive tract from absorbing the toxins. Alchemists frequently combine activated charcoal with a strong cathartic to accelerate its exit from the body. When administered within 10 minutes of first ingesting poison, activated charcoal grants the character advantage on Constitution saving throws against ingested poison for the next hour. However, activated charcoal does not grant any effect on Constitution saving throws against alcohol, arsenic, and acids.

Create: Alchemist Tool's check DC 20

Activated charcoal was first detailed on page 49 of ***Marshes of Malice*** by **Frog God Games**.

Antiplague

Cost 20 gp; **Weight** –

A creature that drinks this vial of liquid gains advantage on saving throws against diseases for 1 hour. If the target already has been exposed to a disease and must make a saving throw after completing its next long rest, this advantage also applies on that saving throw.

Armor Ointment

When applied to a suit of armor for 1 minute, that armor does not cause its wearer to have disadvantage on Stealth checks for 8 hours.

Candlerod

This alchemical item can be triggered as an action. Once triggered, it sheds bright light in a 5-foot radius and dim light 5 feet beyond that. The light lasts for 8 hours and then goes out. The color of the light is set when the candlerod is created and cannot be changed later.

Facial Bellows

Price 65 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

Facial bellows, also called crank masks, are a type of mask made of leather tubing and brass fittings. It is worn over the mouth and nose and includes a small hand-operated bellows. This is a crude breathing device that filters out harmful gases. When the hand pump is operated as a bonus action, air is drawn through the alchemical filters within the mask providing aadvantage on Constitution saving throws against gases that affect breathing for that round.

Folding Shovel

This tool functions like an ordinary shovel but is lighter and easier to pack, able to fit easily in a typical sack or backpack.

Illuminatus Geographica

This well-thumbed tome was penned by Master Scrivener Drembrar of Bard's Gate and gives a fairly complete description of the known terrestrial and celestial geography of the planet Boros (more commonly known as Lloegyr in the current age). This copy is from a low-quality printing by the Lyre Valley Press[LL8-296] in 3511 I.R., and the pages regarding the known geography of the Haunted Steppe are much dog-eared. The information they hold does not add

anything to the corpus of knowledge already accumulated by the PCs but provides a good primer to someone wishing to venture out on the steppes for the first time. This book is worth 25 gp.

This tome was first mentioned on page 4 of ***LL1: Stoneheart Valley*** by **Frog God Games**.

Introversions of Toxins

Originally compiled by a healing order known as the Brotherhood of Arn, this book provides descriptions and treatments for hundreds of different toxins and toxic substances. Use of this book as a reference at the time of a poisoning provides advantage to Wisdom (Medicine) checks to treat poison. The religious order is known to have largely disappeared after an ill-fated attempt to create a hermitage in the Dungeon of Graves, so very few copies of this book are known to exist. This particular copy has been bookmarked in the section entitled "*Unseen Vapours, Foumes, and Emissions*" that seems to principally deal with types of radiation poisoning. The book is worth 100 gp.

This tome first appeared on page 199 of ***Rappan Athuk*** by **Frog God Games**.

Master Tool

A master tool can take many forms, each one specialized for use with a specific tool proficiency, increasing the proficiency bonus by 1 for any character proficient in that tool. A master tool provides no benefit for characters not proficient in its use.

Mending Paste

Alchemical item, common

When applied to a broken object for 1 minute, this paste joins the broken pieces together, as if a mending cantrip had been cast.

Potion Testing Stick

Cost 50 gp; **Weight** —

These small wooden sticks are kept in small wooden containers lined in felt. The top third of their length is black in color, and the bottom two-thirds is coated in a rough gray substance. When the gray end of the stick is dipped into a liquid or exposed to a nongaseous substance for 1 round, it changes colors depending on the property of the substance it has been exposed to. If the substance is poison, the gray portion turns to a rusty red color. If the substance has a magical aura, the gray color turns to blue (mimicking a detect magic spell). If the substance is neither poison nor magic, the gray color turns white. If a substance is both magical and poison, the stick has a 50% chance to turn either color. Felt and similar soft cloth does not activate a potion testing stick. A stick can only be used once, after which it no longer functions.

Create: Alchemist's Supplies check DC 23

Potion testing sticks first appeared on page 35 of ***R1: Rappan Athuk—The Dungeon of Graves: The Upper Levels*** by **Necromancer Games** and appeared again on page 175 of ***Rappan Athuk*** by **Frog God Games**.

Sunrod

This alchemical item can be triggered as an action. Once triggered, it sheds bright light as a daylight spell. The radius of the sunrod's bright light and dim light are reduced by 10 feet for every 10 minutes that pass, fading away after 60 minutes. The color of the light is set when the sunrod is created and cannot be changed later. A sunrod's light is extinguished within an area of magical darkness.

Tindertwig

The user can strike a small flame as a bonus action, sufficient to ignite flammable material such as a torch or dry wood. Alternatively, the tindertwig can be left to burn, shedding light as a candle for 1 minute.

Weapon Blanch

When this substance is rubbed into a weapon (or up to 10 pieces of ammunition) for 1 minute, that weapon is treated as an adamantine (or silvered, as appropriate) weapon for the purpose of bypassing a creature's damage resistance or immunity. This effect lasts up to 8 hours or until after the first successful hit with the weapon, whichever comes first. Only one kind of weapon blanch can be put on a weapon at a time; however, adamantine weapon blanch can be placed on a silvered weapon and vice versa.

Magic Items

AGILE ARMOR

Armor (medium), rare (+1), very rare (+2), or legendary (+3)

You have a bonus to AC while wearing this armor. In addition, you can add your Dexterity modifier (maximum 3) to your AC. If the armor causes you to have disadvantage on Stealth checks, as a bonus action you can ignore that disadvantage on one Stealth check. After using this ability, you cannot use it again until you complete a long rest.

AMULET OF MIGHTY STRIKES +1, +2, OR +3

Wondrous item, uncommon (+1), rare (+2), or very rare (+3)

This amulet bears a single syllable of meditation as both simple and ornate. When wearing an amulet of mighty strikes, your unarmed attack damage is 1d4 + your Strength or Dexterity modifier (your choice), unless your unarmed attack damage is higher. Also, your unarmed attacks have a +1 bonus to attack and damage and are considered magical.

APPRENTICE'S CHEATING GLOVES

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

You gain advantage on Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) checks, and you can cast *mage hand* at will.

ASSASSIN'S DAGGER

Weapon (dagger), rare (requires attunement)

This +2 *dagger* is inlaid with a runnel permanently stained a deep violet. Once per day as a bonus action after striking with the *assassin's dagger*, the wielder can deal the target an additional 24 (7d6) poison damage on a failed DC 15 Constitution saving throw, or half as much on a successful one.

ATHEIST'S DAGGER

Weapon (dagger), rare

This +1 *adamantine dagger* has an undulating, flamberge-style blade and an alabaster hilt. It has the bane special ability against any foe with divine spellcasting abilities (for example a cleric and paladin), the ability to channel divinity, or other divinely granted special abilities.

In addition, on a critical hit against a foe of this type, the dagger disrupts the target's connection to its deity. The victim must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom save or lose all its class abilities until the end of its next round.

BANDIT'S CLOAK

Wondrous Item, rare (requires attunement)

This tough leather cloak has a deep cowl to help protect the wearer from the elements. It also has a scarf sewn into the neck-lining to cover the wearer's face. Upon command, the cloak can lower the light level in the area around its wearer. The cloak consumes light and heat in the area, dropping the light to dim and it becomes lightly obscured in a 20-foot radius centered on the wearer, and by one level in the surrounding, adjacent squares. These effects last for 1 round. Creatures adjacent to the wearer immediately take 4d6 points of cold damage when the darkness sets in. A creature that succeeds on a DC 17 Constitution save takes half damage.

BLAZING ROBE

Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement)

This red and orange silk robe gives viewers the impression of a flame roiling just below the fabric's slick surface. You have resistance to fire damage while wearing this robe and gain a +1 bonus to spell attack rolls and the saving throw DCs of spells that do fire damage. On command, the robe can create a 20-foot radius burst of magical flame centered on the wearer. All creatures in the burst, other than the wearer, must make a DC 16 Dexterity save, taking 2d6 fire damage on a failed saving throw, or half damage on a success. You cannot create a fiery burst again until you finish a long rest.

BRACERS OF BLINKING

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

These lightweight metallic bracers have 3 charges. While wearing them, you can use an action and expend 1 charge to cast the *blink* spell from them. The bracers regain 1d3 expended charges daily at dawn.

CAVALRY BATON

Rod, uncommon (requires attunement)

This polished wooden rod is surmounted with a carved ivory horse's head and has the following properties. It has 7 charges.

Horsemaster. While holding the *cavalry rod*, you have advantage on Wisdom (Animal Training) checks made to interact with not only horses but also camels, ponies, mastiffs, and similar mount animals (subject to GM discretion). In addition, such creatures avoid attacking you and any mount you ride, as if you had cast *sanctuary* (DC 14).

You also can expend 1 charge as a bonus action to gain the benefit of sanctuary (DC 14) against all living creatures that are riding a mount or are bearing a rider.

Safe Fall. If your mount is incapacitated while you are wielding the *cavalry baton*, you can expend 1 charge as a reaction to land safely on your feet without harm in any square adjacent to your fallen mount. If your mount is flying, you can drop up to 60 feet to the ground without harm, as if you had cast *feather fall*.

Summon Steed. You can expend 1 of its charges to cast the *find steed* spell from it, attuning the conjured steed to serve as the mount for a creature you designate within 60 feet. The steed serves that creature for up to 8 hours as if that creature had cast *find steed* themselves. After 8 hours, the conjured steed disappears unless you spend one additional charge to extend the duration by an additional 8 hours.

The rod regains 1d4+1 expended charges daily at dawn. If you expend the rod's last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the rod crumbles into ashes and is destroyed.

CHALLENGER'S GLOVES

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

These flexible mailed gauntlets change their appearance to match your personal crest, colors, sigil, or heraldic mark when you have attuned them. Thereafter, as a bonus action you can remove a glove and hurl it to the ground while issuing a verbal challenge to a creature within 90 feet that is aware of you. As long as you wear the other glove, you gain the benefits of *hunter's mark* against your challenged foe and do not need to maintain concentration. The benefits of this challenge end after 1 hour or if you pick up the *challenger's glove*.

CIRCLET OF BLASTING

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

This headband of twisted, multicolored wire aids spellcasters in unleashing their favorite destructive blasts. Three times per day when the wearer casts a spell that affects an area and deals hit point damage, they can enhance that spell in one of the following ways:

- Increase the save DC by 1.
- Increase the damage dealt by one die.
- Increase the radius of a sphere by 5 feet.
- Increase the length of a cone by 5 feet.
- Increase the length of a line by 10 feet.

CORD OF STUBBORN RESOLVE

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

This braided rope belt fastens tightly about the waist and helps focus the connection between body and mind to overcome fatigue. You can meditate for 1 minute to grant yourself a number of temporary hit points equal to your level. You cannot meditate in this way again until you complete a long rest.

In addition, as a bonus action or as a reaction you can choose to take 5 (1d10) psychic damage to channel your inner focus to gain advantage (or remove disadvantage) on a Strength check or saving throw, or to avoid gaining a level of exhaustion. Each time you use the *cord of stubborn resolve* in this way, the damage taken increases by an additional 1d10 until you complete a long rest, after which it resets to 1d10.

CORN COB PIPE OF DREAMING

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

Carved from a hollowed-out cob of corn, this simple 6-inch long pipe can and frequently is used to smoke ordinary tobacco or any other combustible material. The pipe's magical effects require no fuel and no ignition source. The pipe has 3 charges. Upon command, wispy strands of gray smoke suddenly billow out of the pipe's bowl that the smoker can manipulate to duplicate the effects of the *creation*, *major image*, *hallucinatory terrain*, or *phantasmal killer* spells without requiring material components, expending one charge. The pipe regains 1d3 expended charges at dawn.

CROWN OF RADIANCE, MINOR

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

Crafted of gleaming gold, this simple sacred circlet allows any wearer to cast *sacred flame* twice per day, with damage increasing based on the wearer's level regardless of their class. The wearer can choose to use both daily uses of sacred flame simultaneously, creating a single *sacred flame* that deals an additional 1d8 radiant damage.

Whenever the wearer casts sacred flame without the aid of the crown, such as a cleric casting it as a cantrip, the damage dealt by the sacred flame is increased by 1d8, and a fiend or undead creature you target takes 1d8 radiant damage even if they succeed on their saving throw.

CROWN OF RADIANCE, MAJOR

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

Elaborately crafted, this golden crown allows any wearer to cast *sacred flame* at will, with damage increasing based on the wearer's level regardless of their class.

Whenever the wearer casts *sacred flame* without the aid of the crown, such as a cleric casting it as a cantrip, the damage dealt by the *sacred flame* is increased by 2d8, and any fiend or undead you target takes 2d8 radiant damage even if they succeed on their saving throw.

DAREDEVIL BOOTS

Wondrous Item, uncommon (requires attunement)

When held to the light, these boots shimmer in bright red and orange hues. Once attuned, these boots give you advantage on Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks made while moving through difficult terrain or hazardous areas such as a narrow walkway, ground littered with caltrops, a cracking sheet of ice, and so forth.

As a bonus action, you can activate the boots to gain the ability to leave an enemy's threatened area without taking the Disengage action to avoid an opportunity attack. This feature also allows you to move through an enemy's space without provoking an opportunity attack. You can use this feature for up to 10 rounds per day, although they need not be consecutive. This power recharges at dawn the next day.

DECEIVER'S RING

Ring, rare (requires attunement)

A deceiver's ring is a gold ring of virtually any design but always appears to be quite valuable — at least 500 gp. Anyone wearing the ring is considered to be of any alignment the wearer chooses for any spells or effects that detect alignment or the presence of chaos, evil, law, or good. The wearer sets the alignment of the ring once per day as an action and cannot change it again for 24 hours. In addition to its alignment-masking properties, the ring itself does not detect as magic. The wearer of the ring is not protected from alignment-based spells, such as protection from evil, chaos hammer, etc., to which the wearer's natural alignment applies. In addition, the ring's masked dweomer is not resistant to spells such as *identify* that are cast upon it. Few outside the Cult of Fraz'Urb-luu are aware that these rings exist, as they are a closely guarded secret.



ELIXIR OF ANTIMORDETIS

Potion, rare

When imbibed, this reddish-green liquid changes the drinker's blood and skin into a hazard. Creatures that touch or hit the imbiber with a natural attack take 2d6 points of acid damage plus 1 point of acid damage each round for 5 rounds. A successful DC 14 Dexterity save halves the initial damage and negates the ongoing damage. The effects of the elixir last for 5 hours.

EVERBURNING CANDLE[TB2]

Wondrous item, common

This otherwise normal candle has a continual flame spell cast on its wick. Due to the small size of its wick, it sheds light only as an ordinary candle, but it does not emit heat or deal fire damage. If the candle is broken, its continual flame no longer functions.

FOUR-LEAF CLOVER

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

This curio is a four-leaf clover that was harvested from the wild and preserved. Typically encased in glass or crystal, *four-leaf clovers* are sometimes pressed, bronzed, or protected through other means. You can call upon an extra boost of luck before attempting a single ability check or saving throw, gaining advantage on the roll. After using the *four-leaf clover*, you cannot use it again until you complete a short rest. If you use its power a second time during the same day, you cannot use it again until you complete a long rest.

GORTHEK MASK

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

This set consists of two masks of hammered iron, one sized for a gorthek's face and the other sized for the face of its orc handler. To attune the masks, orcs permanently nail the gorthek masks to the respective wearers' faces. The magic functions only when the gorthek masks are affixed to one orc and one gorthek. It doesn't work with animals other than gortheks. There's only a 60% chance an orc's mask will function when affixed to a non-orc humanoid—and it's impossible to tell whether a mask will work until after it has been permanently attached.

The orc's mask is fashioned with horns on the side, resembling those of a gorthek. With its bonded gorthek, the wearer gains the benefits of *speak with animals* and advantage on Wisdom (Animal Handling) checks with the bonded gorthek.

The gorthek's mask depicts fearsome tusks, scales, or other features meant to make the creature look more terrifying. A gorthek wearing its mask gains the Seige Monster trait (double damage against objects and structures). Any creature other than its handler has Disadvantage on Wisdom (Animal Handling) checks against a bonded gorthek.

GRAPPLER'S MASK

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement by a character with the Martial Arts class ability)

This wildly decorated mask covers your face but leaves your mouth and eyes uncovered. Its dark leather decorated with geometrical patterns emphasizes your fearsomeness. You gain a +1 bonus on Strength (Athletics) checks made to Grapple or Shove a target, and on Strength (Athletics) checks made to resist being Grappled or Shoved.

In addition, when you successfully Grapple or Shove a creature, as a bonus action you can deal bludgeoning damage equal to your Martial Arts damage die plus your Strength bonus. After using this ability, you cannot use it again until after you have completed a short rest.

HOLY HANDAXE

Weapon (handaxe), very rare (requires attunement by a good-aligned character)

You gain a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls with this gleaming magical mithral handaxe. It is considered a silvered weapon, and when you hit a fiend or an undead with it, that creature takes an extra 1d10 radiant damage.

When you throw the *holy handaxe*, you can spend a bonus action to cause the axe to return to your hand after resolving the attack. If you are wielding the *holy handaxe*, you can change the handaxe into a battleaxe as a bonus action. The weapon returns to handaxe form if it is out of your grasp for more than 1 round or you spend another bonus action to return it to handaxe form.

IRON SPIKE OF SAFE PASSAGE

Wondrous item, rare

This item is a 9-inch spike of black iron. Once nailed into place, it functions identically to the spell *hallucinatory terrain* with a duration of "until the spike is removed."

JAGGED VEST

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement by a character with the Unarmored Defense class ability)

This rough leather vest is covered with spiked studs, burrs, and blades. You gain a +1 bonus to AC when wearing the jagged vest and a +1 bonus on Strength (Athletics) checks made to resist being grappled or to escape from a grapple. You gain advantage on Strength (Athletics) checks to escape from restraints such as ropes or leather cords that could be cut by the jagged vest (GM's discretion).

In addition, the spikes and serrations of the jagged vest saw and grind whenever you are grappled or restrained. Any creature that succeeds on a Strength (Athletics) check to grapple you takes 1d4 slashing damage at the end of each of their turns that they continue grappling you. If you have the Martial Arts class ability, the grappling creature instead takes damage equal to your Martial Arts damage die.

MAP OF FINDING

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

This furled parchment scroll allows you to inscribe the name of a creature you wish to locate onto the scroll in a ritual taking 10 minutes. Once inscribed, the *map of finding* allows you to find the shortest, most direct physical route to the creature you seek as long as they are on the same plane of existence. This functions like *find the path* (including requiring concentration) but allows you to find your way to a specific named creature rather than a location. The *map of finding* cannot locate creatures using a *mind blank* or *nondetection* spell.

If the creature you seek leaves your plane, the *map of finding* goes blank; if they remain on another plane for longer than 1 round, their link with the *map of finding* is broken and you no longer can find them. Once used, the *map of finding* can't be used again for 10 days.

MISER'S MASK

Wondrous Item, common (requires attunement)

This wooden mask depicts the sunken face of a miser with an upturned nose. The mask grants the wearer blindsight of 30 feet, but they can use it only to sense coins and gems. Each type and quality of gem has its own unique aura to the wearer, granting advantage on checks made to ascertain the value or determine the properties of gems.

MONK'S ROBE

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement by a monk)

These coarse brown robes are cut to flare and sweep easily, never restricting the graceful forms of unarmed combat. When attuned, it enhances a number of your monk class abilities.

Unarmored Defense. Your unarmed defense bonus is increased by 1.

Martial Arts. The damage die you use for martial arts is increased by one die size.

Stunning Strike. The save DC against your stunning strike is increased by 1. In addition, once per day when your opponent succeeds on their saving throw against your stunning strike, you regain the ki point you spent to use stunning strike.

MARTYR'S SALVATION

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

This multifaceted sapphire appears dull, with a soft glow in the center. When you are attuned, you can concentrate for 1 minute and give the stone power by gaining a level of exhaustion to power the stone. If you do, the stone gains 1d3 charges, to a maximum of 3 charges. You can only imbue it with charges once each day, and you cannot imbue the stone if you have 3 or more exhaustion levels. Once powered, the martyr's salvation looks like a brilliantly shimmering sapphire, and sheds bright light out to 30 feet, and dim light 30 feet beyond that. At any point while you are holding it, you can use your bonus action to expend one charge to cast a *cure wounds* spell. You can expend additional charges in the same bonus action to increase the level of the *cure wounds* spell.

MIND SENTINEL MEDALLION

Wondrous Item, uncommon (requires attunement)

This medallion provides you with advantage to Wisdom saving throws against being charmed. If you fail a saving throw and become charmed, you can reroll your save to resist the effect, but after using this ability the medallion loses its magic and become an ordinary piece of jewelry.

MOJO AMULET

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

Also known as a relic bag, this amulet consists of a flannel or linen bag attached to a leather cord that hangs around your neck. A small bone from a magical beast or a divine spellcaster must be placed inside of the bag. The mojo amulet grants the wearer one of the following abilities:

Charm Amulet: Once per day, the wearer can cast *charm person* as per the spell with a saving throw DC of 17.

Fortune Amulet: Once per day, the wearer can detect gold. This functions as the *locate object* spell, but it can only be used to locate gold.

Luck Amulet: Once per day, the wearer can increase any die roll theyjust made by rolling 1d6 and adding it to the result. Using this ability is a reaction taken after the original roll is made and the results are revealed.

Spirit Amulet: Melee attacks against the wearer by evil, incorporeal undead creatures are made with disadvantage.

The creator determines the amulet type at the time of its creation, and it can never be changed thereafter.

MORTICIAN'S CREAM

Potion, common

When you anoint a corpse with this foul-smelling chalky paste, the corpse is protected from decay as if you had cast *gentle repose.*

NAGA SCALE BINDI (WATER NAGA)

Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement)

This shining, jewel-like scale is usually worn on the forehead between the eyebrows, though a creature can affix the scale to any part of her body by pressing it to her skin and speaking its command word. Once affixed, you take on the attributes of a water naga. Your skin becomes scaly, your eyes slitted and reptilian, your tongue forked, and your neck lengthens and distends until it resembles a cobra's hood. You also gain a +2 bonus to your armor class, gain darkvision 60 feet, and a poisonous bite attack that deals 1d4 points of piercing damage, and 2d4 poison damage.Finally, you gain a swim speed equal to its base land speed, and can breathe water or air.

OIL OF CURSE-BREAKING

Potion, rare

When you anoint a creature or object with this sweet-smelling golden oil, they are affected as if you had cast *remove curse.*

OIL OF STONE SHAPE

Potion, rare

When you apply this heavy, turbid gray oil to a stone object of Medium or smaller size, you can mold that object as if you had cast *stone shape.*

PIN OF SHARED PAIN

Wondrous Item, rare (requires attunement)

Small metal barbs surround the deep-red ruby set in the head of this rusty pin. If the wearer of the pin is struck by a critical hit from a melee attack, the attacker must succeed at a DC 17 Wisdom save or take half of the attack's damage (rounded down), while the wearer takes the remaining damage.

PORTRAIT MASK

Wondrous item, very rare

This is a painting of a mask detailed with the features and coloration of a person's face. You can speak a command word to remove the mask from the portrait and wear it; it collapses into wet paint for anyone else who tries to take it, only to reappear in the portrait. Wearing the mask, you become aware of the direction and distance to all artistically rendered images of the mask's current face (paintings, sculptures, etc.) within 1 mile and can enter those images as a magical effect for up to 1 hour per day, disappearing in the real world. While in the painting, you can perceive everything within 30 feet of the sculpture or painting, and can speak and interact with people nearby, using the likeness to do so. When doing so, you have advantage on Charisma checks made for the purposes of interacting through the sculpture or painting. This duration need not be consecutive but must be spent in 5-minute increments. If the sculpture or painting you inhabit is destroyed while you inhabit it, you must make a DC 19 Constitution saving throw, gaining a level of exhaustion on a failure. In either case, you return to the same space or the nearest safe space you occupied before activating the mask.

If you speak the command word again wearing the mask, you can change its face to your likeness. This change is permanent until it is changed again by someone else wearing the mask.

Using the portrait mask in The Book in the Old House

A person who dons the portrait mask while it is in the form of Old Eb's face becomes aware of the following images: in the Old House — A2 (3), A3 (2), A6 (1), A8 (3), A9 (1), A10 (1), A11 (1), A14 (2), A15 (1); and scattered elsewhere in Eber — the Royal Citadel, the Royal College library, the Law Courts, the Mercenary Guildhouse, the Temple of Vanitthu, and 10 in manor houses scattered around the city.

POTION OF BLUR

Potion, uncommon

When you drink this cloudy yellow potion, the appearance of your body becomes hazy and indistinct for 1 minute, as if you had cast *blur*.

POTION OF BURROWING

Potion, uncommon

When you drink this potion, you gain a burrow speed of 15 feet for 10 minutes. If you have claws, you gain a +1 bonus to damage rolls with your claws. The potion's murky liquid looks like a wet, muddy sludge.

POTION OF COUNTLESS EYES

Potion, uncommon

When you drink this potion, you sprout eyes all over your body for 1 hour. While these eyes persist, you gain advantage on vision-based Wisdom (Perception) checks and you cannot be surprised or flanked by any visible creature. The potion's effervescent liquid has tiny gelatinous beads suspended in it.

POTION OF HEROISM

Potion, uncommon

A creature that drinks a *potion of heroism* is immune to being frightened for 1 minute and gains 2 temporary hit points at the start of each of its turns for 1 minute. When this duration ends, the drinker loses any remaining temporary hit points from the potion.

POTION OF PLANT SHAPE

Potion, rare

When you drink this syrupy amber-green potion, you are infused with verdant power that you can use in one of three ways.

Plant Merge. You can meld your body and all equipment you carry into a living tree for up to 8 hours. The tree must be at least 1 foot thick. This otherwise functions like *meld into stone*.

Tree Shape. You can transform your body and all gear you carry into a small tree of up to twice your height for up to 1 hour. In this form you are indistinguishable from a normal tree, though *detect magic* reveals the magic. While in tree shape, you are aware of your surroundings and can use your senses normally. You can revert to your normal form as an action; this ends the potion's magic.

Verdant Polymorph. You can transform yourself into an animate plant creature for up to 10 minutes. This functions like *polymorph* but you can only assume the form of plant creatures.

POTION OF SHIELDING

Potion, uncommon

For 10 minutes after you drink this potion, you gain a +2 bonus to your AC, as if you had cast *shield of faith*. The potion's milky fluid has tiny flecks of silver floating in it.

PRISMATIC PLATE

Armor (plate), legendary (requires attunement)

You have a +3 bonus to AC while wearing this resplendent armor of transparent metallic crystal that shimmers constantly, shedding light as a *light* spell in one of the colors of the rainbow. As a bonus action, you can change the color of light shed by the *prismatic plate*, and that color remains dominant until you change it again. When you are affected by a *prismatic spray* or *prismatic wall*, you ignore the effect that matches the dominant armor color (other colors of those spells affect you normally). In addition, each color provides a unique type of protection.

Color	Effect
Red	resistance to fire damage
Orange	resistance to acid damage
Yellow	resistance to lightning damage
Green	resistance to poison damage
Blue	resistance to cold damage
Indigo	immunity to petrification and advantage on saving throws to avoid being paralyzed
Violet	advantage on saving throws against being blinded, deafened, charmed, or banished to another plane

RADIANT PLATE

Armor (plate), very rare (requires attunement)

You have a +2 bonus to AC while wearing this gleaming armor of burnished gold-tinted steel. As a bonus action, you can command the armor to shed light as a *light* spell. In addition, as an action you can cause the armor to shed light as *daylight*. Once the *daylight* ends, you cannot activate it again until the following dawn.

RING GATES

Wondrous item, very rare

These always come in pairs—two iron rings, each about 18 inches in diameter. The rings must be on the same plane of existence and within 100 miles of each other to function. Whatever is put through one ring comes out the other, and up to 100 pounds of material can be transferred each day. (Objects only partially pushed through and then retracted do not count.) This useful device allows for instantaneous transport of items or messages, and even attacks. A character can reach through to grab things near the other ring, or even stab a weapon through if so desired. Alternatively, a character could stick his head through to look around. A spellcaster could even cast a spell through a ring gate. A Small character can squeeze through. Creatures of Tiny size can pass through easily. Each ring has an "entry side" and an "exit side," both marked with appropriate symbols.

RING OF HEROIC GRIT

Ring, rare (requires attunement)

This battered ring of brass bears indelible scratches and wear yet also exudes a sense of sturdiness. Once attuned, you can store one daily use of any class feature that requires an action to trigger, or if you have a class feature that uses a point pool such as ki or sorcery points, you can store one extra point. That point or daily use of the ability is considered expended on the day you store it, but the *ring of heroic grit* stores it for future use and you regain points or uses normally. At any point in the future, you can expend the stored point or daily use of that class ability as a bonus action. The *ring of heroic grit* cannot store spells.

RING OF KI RESONANCE

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement by a monk)

A ki ring is a magically fused white and black metal that twine together in a harmonious pattern. When attuned to this ring, you can use an action to regain 3 ki points, provided that you have a ki pool. You can use this ability once per day and can do so again after the next dawn.

RING OF RESOLUTENESS

Ring, rare (requires attunement)

While wearing this ring, you have advantage on saving throws to resist becoming frightened. In addition, once per day when you fail a saving throw to resist being frightened, you can ignore the condition for a number of rounds equal to your proficiency bonus. Once this time elapses, you become frightened until the duration of the effect ends.

ROD OF SORCEROUS MIGHT

Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement by a sorcerer)

This ornate rod bears designs and jewelry in a runic motif. When you are attuned to this rod, you can use an action to regain 3 sorcery points, provided you have a pool of sorcery points. You can do so once, and can do so again after the next dawn.

ROD OF THE WHISPERING WIND

Rod, uncommon (requires attunement)

This hollow metal rod is pierced with many small holes and emits a musical tone when swung through the air. You can use the rod to cast *message* as often as desired. In addition, you can use the rod's power to summon a tiny air elemental to deliver a message for you. This functions like the *animal messenger*[SRD] spell, but the elemental is invisible save as a faint rustle in the air and moves twice as fast as a typical flying animal, able to carry a message up to 100 miles within 24 hours. Once it has sent such a message, the rod can't be used again until the next dawn.

SCABBARD OF KEEN EDGES

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

When you attune to this scabbard, you can draw a functioning sword from it. That sword is considered magical and gains a +1 bonus to attack and damage. You can use the property of this scabbard three times. It regains spent uses at dawn.

STAFF OF UNHOLY LIFE

Staff, very rare (requires attunement by a cleric, warlock, or wizard)

Prized by necromancers and other practitioners of dark magic associated with animating the dead, this grisly staff made from a fused spinal column topped by a humanoid skull allows use of the following spells. The casting time of *create undead* is reduced to 1 action.

The staff has 10 charges for the following properties. It regains 1d6+4 expended charges daily at midnight. If you expend the last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the staff loses its properties and becomes a nonmagical quarterstaff.

Spells. You can use an action to expend 1 or more of the staff's charges to cast one of the following spells from it, using your spell save DC: *animate dead* (1 charge), *create undead* (3 charges), *finger of death* (5 charges)

STANCHING SHIRT

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

This richly tailored crimson shirt helps stop the flow of blood from your wounds. You gain a +1 bonus on death saving throws. In addition, you gain resistance to necrotic damage caused by a vampire or vampire spawn's bite or any effect that is specifically described as causing you to bleed or draining your blood.

STONE OF ALARM

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

This thumb-sized flat stone is inscribed with runes of warning. You can attach the *stone of alarm* to another object by concentrating for 1 minute. Once attached, if any creature other than you moves the item more than 1 foot away from you, the *stone of alarm* triggers an alert identical to an *alarm* spell. You determine when you attach the *stone of alarm* whether the alarm will be mental or audible. Once the *stone of alarm* has been triggered, you cannot reset the alarm (either on the same object or a new object) until you complete a long rest.

VEST OF HEALING

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

When you attune to this vest, you can use your action to stabilize a creature that has 0 hit points without needing to make a Wisdom (Medicine) check. The vest also has three charges that renew at dawn. If you are proficient in the Medicine skill, you can use your action and expend a charge to instead restore 1d4+1 hit points to one creature within 5 feet.

WAND OF ASH STORM

Wand, rare (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

This wand has 7 charges. While holding it, you can use an action to expend 1 of its charges to create a a 20-foot-tall cylinder with a 40-foot radius centered on a point you choose within 150 feet. Driving ash blocks all sight (even darkvision) within the spell's area of effect, and falling cinders cause the ground in the area to become difficult terrain. The effect lasts as long as the user concentrates, up to 1 minute. The wand regains 1d6 + 1 expended charges daily at dawn. If you expend the wand's last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the wand crumbles into ashes and is destroyed.

WAND OF CONE OF COLD

Wand, rare (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

This wand has 4 charges. While holding it, you can use an action to expend 2 of its charges to cast the *cone of cold* spell

(save DC 17) from it. Unlike some other wands, you cannot spend additional charges to increase the level of the spell. The wand regains 1d3 + 1 expended charges daily at dawn. If you expend the wand's last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the wand crumbles into ashes and is destroyed.

WAND OF CONJURATION

Wand, very rare (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

This wand has 7 charges. While holding it, you can expend 1 or more of its charges to cast the *conjure animals*, *conjure celestial*, *conjure elemental*, *conjure fey*, or *conjure minor elementals* spell from it. You also may use the wand to *conjure fiend*, which functions identically to *conjure celestial* but summons a fiend to serve you instead. You must spend a number of charges equal to the level of the spell you cast; you can cast higher-level versions of these spells.

Alternatively, you expend charges from the wand to increase the spell level of any of the above spells that you cast yourself, increasing the level of the spell by a number of levels equal to the number of charges you expend but without requiring you to use a higher-level spell slot. You cannot increase the level of the spell to a level higher than you can cast.

The wand regains 1d6+1 expended charges daily at dawn. If you expend the wand's last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the wand crumbles into ashes and is destroyed.

WAND OF ILLUSION

Wand, rare (requires attunement by a bard, warlock, or wizard)

Prized by illusionists of all stripes, this thin crystalline wand glitters with a rainbow of colors when drawn through the air. It has 6 charges. While holding it, you can expend 1 of its charges to the the *minor illusion* cantrip or 2 charges to cast the *major image* spell.

The wand regains 1d3 expended charges daily at dawn. If you expend the wand's last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the wand crumbles into ashes and is destroyed.

WAND OF NIGHT

Wand, rare (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

This wand has 10 charges. While holding it, you can expend 1 of its charges to cast the darkness spell from it. If you expend 2 charges, you can increase the area of the *darkness* spell to a 60-foot radius, or you can increase the duration 1 hour (requiring no concentration).

Instead of creating *darkness*, you can expend 1 of the wand's charges to dispel a light-based magical effect such as *daylight*, as if you had cast *dispel magic*. You can increase the level of this *dispel magic* effect by expending additional charges, with each additional charge increasing the level of the *dispel magic* spell by 1.

The wand regains 1d6+1 expended charges daily at sunset. If you expend the wand's last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the wand crumbles into ashes and is destroyed.

WAND OF TRUTH

Wand, uncommon (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

This wand of plain silver is tipped with a carving of a balance scale. It has 5 charges. While holding it, you can expend 1 of its charges to cast the *zone of truth* spell from it.

The wand regains 1d3 expended charges daily at dawn. If you expend the wand's last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the wand crumbles into ashes and is destroyed.

WAND OF VISIBILITY

Wand, rare (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

This wand of transparent crystal has 7 charges. While holding it, you can expend 1 of its charges to cast the *see invisibility* spell from it.

In addition, you can expend 1 of the wand's charges to dispel a single *invisibility* spell, as if you had cast dispel magic. If you expend 2 charges, you can dispel all *invisibility* spells in a 10-foot radius and can increase the radius of this *dispel magic* effect by 10 feet for each additional charge you expend.

The wand regains 1d6+1 expended charges daily at sunset. If you expend the wand's last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the wand crumbles into ashes and is destroyed.

WEREWOLF SKIN

Wondrous Item, very rare (requires attunement)

This gray, furry cloak sports a wolf's head that fits snuggly over the wearer's head like a hood. Its wearer can use Charisma (Persuasion) to alter the attitude of wolves as if he shared a common language with them.

Three times per day as an action, the wearer can assume the form of a werewolf in its hybrid form for up to 1 minute, during which time the wearer gains the following traits:

- **Damage Resistances**: bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered
- Ability Increase of +2 bonus to Strength,
- An AC increase of +2 due to natural armor
- A bite attack (1d8 for Medium size) it can use as a bonus action. The wearer cannot transmit lycanthropy with his bite attack.

YELLOW SIGN

Wondrous item, legendary

The yellow sign acts as a perpetual symbol spell, using the death effect. Creatures reduced to 0 hit points by this spell is restored to half of their hit point total and dominated (as per *dominate monster*) by Hastur. This causes such creatures to seek to aid any obvious minions or worshipers of Hastur in sight, and any true worshiper of Hastur can command the affected creatures as if that worshiper had been the one to dominate them. In the case of conflicting commands issued from different true worshipers of Hastur, the commanders must attempt opposed Charisma checks, with the winner being able to command the targets for that round. If no worshipers or agents of Hastur are in sight, an affected creature can act normally. When affected by this spell's Yellow Sign in this way, the effects last for 1 round per level. Yellow Sign can be triggered by a true worshiper of Hastur if they spend an action and sacrifice a permanent point of their Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma score. The effect remains active for 1 hour.

There is a 1% chance when a creature fails its saving throw against this spell that Hastur takes note and, for reasons of his own, decides to control the target personally. In this case, the actions taken by the dominated creature are left to the GM to determine, but the effects of this spell's Yellow Sign persist for 12d12 days and the commands issued cannot be countermanded by any other creature, even if they are Hastur worshipers.

Regardless of how long the effects last or whether Hastur directly controls a victim, if a creature failed to resist this spell's effects, Hastur can target that victim for the rest of its life with a *dream* spell. Whether or not the Great Old One ever chooses to do so is left to the GM to determine.

Major Artifacts

CRIMSON SHROUD

Wondrous Item, artifact (requires attunement)

This loosely woven red shroud is made from a blood-soaked burial shroud. As a standard action, the wearer may command the shroud to become a vaporous, blood-red cloud of mist in a 10-foot radius centered on the user. The red mist can remain for up to 10 minutes per day. The duration need not be consecutive but must be used in 1-minute increments. The mist provides concealment away as an obscuring mist spell, and any living creature that enters it must make a DC 15 Wisdom save or be filled with sadness and despair (as the ***symbol of hopelessness*** spell), as long as they remain in the cloud. Furthermore, creatures affected by this spell effect always attempts to save against harmless spells and effects even if a save is normally not allowed (such as cure spells), with such spells having only one-half their normal effect (or duration, if there is no logical way for the beneficial spell's effect to be reduced by half) and refuse to leave the cloud willingly. An affected creature can attempt a new save each round at the end of its turn. A creature that successfully saves is immune to the effects of the crimson mist for 24 hours. The wearer of the Crimson Shroud is able to see through the mist normally and is immune to its other effects.

Random Properties

The *Crimson Shroud* has the following random properties:

- 1 minor beneficial property
- 1 major beneficial property
- 1 minor detrimental property

Properties of the Shroud

The true power of the *Crimson Shroud*, however, lies in its ability to heal the afflicted. When the shroud is placed over the body (or some portion of it) of the individual to be healed (whether living or dead) and the Ritual of the Crimson Shroud is intoned, the following abilities can be activated.

- *Remove disease* 5/day
- *Heal* 3/day
- *Raise dead* 3/day
- *Greater restoration* 1/day
- *Resurrection* 1/day
- *True resurrection* 1/week (requires at least some small portion of the body: a bone fragment, dust, etc.)

An additional use of the *Crimson Shroud* has been discovered as well. If the shroud is placed over a vampire and an altered ritual called the Ritual of the Corrupted Shroud is intoned, the typical weaknesses of a vampire can be removed over a 1-minute period leaving the creature an immortal undead creature but without a vampire's normal weaknesses and requirements for existence.

Destroying the Crimson Shroud

The *Crimson Shroud* is destroyed if a wearer commits suicide of his own free will while wearing it.

HOLOCAUST STONE OF GUN'TA

Wondrous item, legendary (artifact)

This is fist-sized piece of stone, jet black with a rough texture that, upon closer inspection of its surface, appears to actually swirl very slowly, as if containing a ceaselessly shifting smoke. It is an extraterrestrial artifact rumored to

have originated in some strange dimension or the distant void of space. The stone can't be controlled, but its power is activated whenever it is jarred in some collision (e.g. thrown to the ground, dropped, struck with another object, struck by an energy or otherwise damaging spell, or simply if the individual carrying suffers a fall). When the stone is activated, it releases a burst of chaotic energy that triggers a massive, cataclysmic event. These events are activated immediately and occur at random. They are not under the control of the activator and are centered on the stone itself. All applicable saves are DC 22. Roll on the table below to determine the type of cataclysm that is activated.

d%	Result
01–06	Contagion
07–12	Earthquake
13–18	Elemental swarm
19–24	Energy drain
25–30	Lightning sphere
31–36	Mass bedlam
37–42	Psychic Scream
43–48	Power word kill
49–54	Rain of fire
55–60	Reverse gravity
61–66	Storm of vengeance
67–72	Sunburst
73–78	Symbol
79–84	Whirlwind
85–90	Wilting blast
91–93	Reroll, but double the effect radius
94–96	Reroll, but double the effect duration
97–99	Reroll twice with both effects occurring simultaneously
00	Reroll, but add create undead horde

Contagion: As the spell. Targets all creatures within 1d6-mile radius. The disease created is randomly generated for each individual. Using the list under *contagion*, roll 1d10 and reroll any result of 10.

Earthquake: as the spell. Duration is 1d10+5 rounds and a radius of 10 miles. Damage occurs every round at the top of the initiative order.

Elemental Swarm: The effect summons 2d4 elementals of each of CR 5 and of the four types (air, earth, fire, and water). These elementals serve no master and attack the nearest targets (but not each other). All of the elementals appear immediately (rather than in 10-minute intervals) randomly within 100 feet of the stone and remain until destroyed or until 200 minutes pass.

Energy Drain: As the spell. Targets every living creature within a 1d6-mile radius.

Lightning Sphere: A sphere of lightning emanates from the stone, dealing 20d6 points of electricity damage to everything within a 1d6-mile radius. A successful save with evasion or improved evasion still causes one-quarter damage.

Mass Bedlam: Every creature within a 10-mile radius must make a Wisdom saving throw or suffer the effects of a *confusion* spell for 1d10 x 10 minutes.

Power Word Kill: As the spell. Targets every living creature within a 1-mile radius.

Psychic Sceam: As the spell. Affects all living creatures in a 1d4-mile radius.

Rain of Fire: Clouds gather and a rain of fire and embers showers down in a 1d6-mile radius for 1d10 minutes. This rain deals 2d6 points of fire damage per round (no save), and anything flammable catches fire.

Reverse Gravity: As the spell. The spell has a 1d6-mile radius and a duration of 1d20 rounds.

Storm of Vengeance: As the spell. The storm affects a 1d10-mile radius with a duration of 1d10 minutes. Once the normal 10 rounds of the spell have expired, the cycle repeats until the end of this duration.

Sunburst: As the spell: Rather than instantaneous, the sunburst has a duration of 1d10 minutes and a 1-mile radius. The damage caused by the spell occurs every round at the top of the initiative order.

Symbol: As the spell, using the insanity effect. Affects every creature in a 10-mile radius.

Whirlwind: The whirlwind moves in a random direction each round, as if uncontrolled, and lasts for 1d10 minutes. Any creature caught in its path must make a Dexterity saving throw, taking 10d6 bludgeoning damage and being away 3d6x5 feet in a random direction on a failure, or taking half that damage and not being flung on a success.

Wilting Blast: As *blight* spell but affecting all creatures within a 1d6-mile radius. All bodies of water within the radius evaporate and the land dries to a seared husk.

Create Undead Horde: this only occurs in conjunction with another effect. Anyone killed by the stone while this effect is active rises 1 round later as an undead creature as determined by their CR before death. These undead are not controlled and immediately attack any living creatures they can find. Most will be either a **ghoul**, a **skeleton**, or a **zombie**.



DESTRUCTION

The stone can be sundered or crushed and has hardness 20 and 100 hit points, though each attack on it triggers a cataclysm. Likewise, as an artifact of pure, coalesced chaos, if transported to a plane of Law such as Axis (LN), Heaven (LG), or Hell (LE) the stone immediately detonates in an incredible conflagration that triggers all of its different effects simultaneously (minus create undead horde), destroying the stone and likely a large swath of the plane upon which it detonated.

The *Holocaust Stone of Gun'Ta* first appeared in ***Tome of Artifacts*** by **Necromancer Games**. Its description is updated and included here for your convenience. For further details of its history see that work.

Mystic Tomes

THE FIENDISH CODEX

This dangerous tome has existed in numerous editions and translations, but this particular volume is one of the oldest and may well be the original. Scribed in High Boros, *The Fiendish Codex* can provide its owner with significant arcane knowledge and power, albeit at a steep cost to the user's mind and soul.

Bound in black leather and iron and secured with a heavy lock (Thieves' Tool check to disable DC 24 to open without damage), the book includes detailed histories of magic and diabolism in the Hyperborean Empire, sufficient to provide a +1 bonus on all Intelligence (Arcana), (History), or (Religion) checks as long as the book is in the user's

possession. If those checks relate directly to fiends or the lower planes, it grants advantage on such checks if the owner spends 1 hour consulting the book.

In addition, it contains the following spells: *bloodbath, boiling blood, boneshaker, corrosive touch, eldritch fever, eruptive pustules, fleshworm infestation, ghost wol, grasping corpse, horrific doubles, inflict pain, night terrors, ray of sickness, slough, symbol of exanguination*, and *vitriolic mist.*

Finally, the book provides the knowledge that allows an arcane or divine spellcaster to expend a spell slot of the appropriate level and spontaneously cast a variant of the *conjure celestial* spell even if not prepared. This knowledge does not take up a slot as a known spell for spontaneous casters. The creature summoned must be fiend or other evil aligned extraplanar creature, with the book containing information on virtually every known fiend in existence (GM's discretion). Each time this spell is cast, the caster must make a Wisdom save, with a DC equal to 10 plus the level of the spell slot expended to cast the spell. A failure causes the caster's alignment to move one step toward chaotic evil. A character who is already chaotic evil instead loses 2 points permanently from their Wisdom score. This lost Wisdom can be regained only with *greater restoration* or *wish.*

Given the madness and evil that results from the use of this book's powers, some may feel that it would be better that the cursed thing be destroyed (though most will probably happily copy its spells first).

RARE MATERIALS

Many strange and even otherworldly substances can be found in the distant reaches of the Haunted Steppe, too remote for easy exploitation yet tempting enough for their value to issue a siren call to those seeking profit despite the danger.

INSECTUM

Introduced in ***LL7: The Blight: Richard Pett's Crooked City*** by **Frog God Games**, insectum are large and unique insects and other types of vermin native to the City-State of Castorhage that the city's ruthless Insectum Guild has through a combination of alchemy, toxicology, and insect husbandry produced a range of alchemically enhanced drug-like insect venoms. There are dozens of varieties of these vermin with dozens of different effects, but only a few are encountered here. The effects (and market value in Castorhage) of these insectum have been reproduced here for your convenience.

Blake's sanguisuga: *price* 350 gp—When this mottled brown leech is first attached, the user must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute. The leech remains attached for 1d3 hours in which time the user's pain threshold is greatly elevated. The user 5 temporary hit points and has advantage on Wisdom saving throws against being frightened for the duration.

Festerfew: *price* 75 gp—A user who eats a handful of these live lice gains advantage against any disease effects and the poisoned condition for 1d4 hours but must also succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or gain a level of exhaustion. This exhaustion level lingers for 1 hour before being removed on its own.

Howling nightshade grub: *price* 40 gp—This sausage-sized grub tastes disgusting and howls when eaten. For the following day, the user has advantage on Constitution saving throws, but becomes sluggish and has disadvantage on initiative rolls for the duration.

Misery slug: *price* 30 gp—Eating this slimy, black finger-long slug cures 1d4 points of damage each round for the following 1d4 rounds. However, the user is poisoned for the duration. At the end of the duration, the user must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute.

METALLURGIC AMBER

Metallurgic amber is a radioactive heavy metal with a crystalline structure, Though the unusual ore shares many characteristics with more common radioactive materials such as uranium and radium, it differs in several important respects. Unlike other isotopes, metallurgic amber's atomic structure allows the metal to be grown from a seed crystal. It takes an entire week and a successful DC 21 Alchemist's Supplies check to crystallize metallurgic amber and yield 1d4 x 10% more metallurgic amber in the process.

Prolonged exposure to metallurgic amber causes telltale radiation burns like most other radioactive substances, but that is the general extent of its similarities to other unstable ores. Outside of superficial burns, metallurgic amber causes no other damage to humanoid tissue and structures except for one critical organ — the brain. Metallurgic amber would be generally safe if not for its debilitating effects on the humanoid brain and, to a lesser extent, those of animals. Every time a humanoid creature comes within 20 feet of metallurgic amber for 2d4 hours over the course of a 24-hour period, they must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw to avoid suffering radiation burns that deal 1d4 poison damage. These hours need not be consecutive, and the creature may be required to make multiple saves over the course of a 24-hour period. If the individual fails this save, he must then succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw to avoid developing a

short-term madness. (See **madness** in the *SRD*). Failing the Constitution saving throw by 5 or more forces the creature to make the Wisdom saving throw with disadvantage. Once a creature has developed a short-term madness, no further Wisdom saving throws need to be made for this effect. If the madness is later cured and a cured creature is exposed to metallurgic amber again, they must resume attempting Wisdom saving throws to avoid going mad once more. Strangely, most non-humanoid creatures suffer no ill effects whatsoever from long-term exposure to the odd substance with the exception of beasts; metallurgic amber makes them highly aggressive.

Lead absorbs metallurgic amber's radioactive emissions, a fact a PC can determine with a successful DC 20 Intelligence (Nature) or Wisdom (Survival) check. The lead contained in a pewter ring or pendant is sufficient to nullify metallurgic amber's debilitating effects within a 5-foot radius of the lead object. Larger quantities of lead provide no additional beneficial effects and do not extend the metal's shielding properties beyond 5 feet. Positioning a lead object within 5 feet of the metallurgic amber completely absorbs all of the radiation emitted by the object, thus completely nullifying its effects. This does not, however, protect from the radiation damage caused by creatures infused with metallurgic amber (e.g. the radioactive combusted (see **Appendix A**, page 551) or ash giants (see page 329)).

Metallurgic amber melts at a temperature of 1,050° F, roughly one-third that of iron, and half that of copper.

NOQUAL ORE

Noqual looks like a pale green crystal to the untrained eye but can be worked as iron despite its appearance. Noqual is light—half as heavy as iron, yet just as strong. More importantly, noqual is strangely resistant to magic. An object made of noqual gains advantage on any saving throw made against a magical source.

Weapons made of noqual weigh half as much as normal, gain a +1 bonus on attack and damage rolls, and deal an additional die of weapon damage against constructs and undead created by spells. Noqual armor weighs half as much as other armors of its type.

Armor created from noqual grants a +1 bonus to AC when worn, and it does not confer disadvantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks if it otherwise would. Spellcasters wearing noqual armor cannot cast spells, even if they are proficient with that armor. The wearer of a suit of noqual armor has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Noqual ore is worth 50 gp per pound. Noqual increases the cost of light armor by 4,000 gp, medium armor by 8,000 gp, heavy armor by 12,000 gp, a shield by 2,000 gp, and a weapon or other item by 500 gp. Creating a magic item that incorporates any amount of noqual into it increases the price of creation by 5,000 gp, as costly reagents and alchemical supplies must be used to treat the metal during the process.

Spells and Rituals

ACID FOG

6th-level conjuration

Classes: sorcerer, wizard

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 100 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

A swirling cloud of acrid green vapors in a 20-foot-radius sphere centered on a point within range. The cloud spreads around corners and is heavily obscured. It lasts for the duration or until a wind of strong or greater speed (at least 30 miles per hour) disperses it. The clinging vapors of the acid fog reduce the speed of creatures entering or moving through it by 10 feet, and non-magical ranged attacks into or through the *acid fog* have are dissolved by the *acid fog* and deal no damage.

When the *acid fog* appears, each creature in it must make a Constitution saving throw. A creature takes 6d8 acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. A creature must also make this saving throw when it enters the spell's area for the first time on a turn or ends its turn there.

BLOOD TO SAP

6th level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range close 60 feet

Components V, S, M (a piece of amber)

Duration Concentration, up to 1 minute

This spell causes one target creature's blood to thicken and slow in its veins. An affected creature suffers excruciating pain and must make a Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the target takes 28 (8d6) poison damage, is poisoned for the spell's duration. On a success, the target takes half as much damage and is not poisoned.

Creatures poisoned by this spell have their speed halved, are treated as having an AC of at least 18, and are immunt to critical hits as though they were wearing adamantine armor.

Blood to sap can target only living creatures with a discernible anatomy and a bloodstream.

BLOODBATH

2nd-level necromancy

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 30 feet

Components: V, S, M (a ceremonial dagger)

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

Class: cleric, sorcerer, warlock, wizard

You select up to two living creatures while cutting yourself with the ceremonial dagger, dealing yourself 1d6 necrotic damage which repeats at the start of your turn so long as you continue to concentrate on this spell (the damage from this spell does not force a Constitution saving throw to maintain concentration). So long as you keep taking this necrotic damage, any targets that have failed a Constitution saving throw also take the same amount of damage. The necrotic damage on any target ends if that target receives magical healing, or if your necrotic damage ends for any reason.

At Higher Levels: When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, you may add an additional target for each slot level above 2nd. Secondary targets must be within 30 feet of each other.

BOILING BLOOD

Transmutation cantrip

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 100 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

Class: cleric, sorcerer, warlock, wizard

The blood of the targeted creatures begins to boil. If a target fails a Constitution saving throw, it takes 1 point of fire damage per round. This spell has no effect on creatures that don't have blood. If a target has the orc subtype, it doesn't take fire damage and instead gains 1d4 bonus to attacks and all Strength related checks.

You may target two additional creatures when you reach 5th level (3 targets), 11th level (5 targets), and 17th level (7 targets).

BONESHAKER

1st-level necromancy

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 100 feet

Components V, S, F (human-shaped fetish made of bones)

Duration instantaneous

Class: cleric, sorcerer, warlock, wizard

By using a bone fetish like a marionette, you take control of a target creature's skeleton. This has a variety of effects depending on whether the target is living or undead.

A living creature has its skeleton rattle within its flesh, causing it grievous harm. The target takes 2d6 points of bludgeoning damage. In addition, you can move the target 5 feet. A successful Constitution saving throw halves the damage and negates the movement.

An undead creature takes no damage. Instead, you manipulate the undead, forcing it to use its reaction to either move up to its speed or make a single attack against a creature of your choice in its reach. Either of these is the most basic version of the action the creature can take (it doesn't activate any special abilities that it could apply to the movement or attack, such as grapple). A successful Constitution saving throw negates this effect. A mindless undead creature doesn't receive a save against this effect (GM's discretion).

At Higher Levels: When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the bludgeoning damage increases by 1d6 vs living creatures for each slot level above 1st.

CORROSIVE TOUCH

Conjuration cantrip

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components V, S

Duration instantaneous

Class: sorcerer, wizard

Acid drips from your hand to deliver burning corrosion to a creature you try to touch. Make a melee spell attack against the target. On a hit, the target takes 1d8 acid damage, and nonmagical armor worn by the target is partly dissolved and takes a permanent and cumulative –1 penalty to the AC it offers. The armor is destroyed if the penalty reduces its AC to 10.

The spell's damage increases by 1d8 when you reach 5th level (2d8), 11th level (3d8), and 17th level (4d8).

DISRUPT SILENCE

2nd-level abjuration

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 10 feet

Components: S, M (tiny silver bell, chime, or gong)

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

Classes: bard, cleric, wizard

You create a 10-foot-radius circle of shimmering sound around a point on the ground within 30 feet or surrounding a willing creature and moving with them. Audible speech and other sounds can be heard within circle. Alternatively, you can use *disrupt silence* to dispel a magical *silence* effect, as if you had cast *dispel magic*.

ELDRITCH FEVER

This spell provides and additional option to the *bestow curse* spell:

Eldritch Fever. This curse manifests itself as a sickness that is debilitating to spellcasters. A spellcaster with this spellblight is sickened until the curse is removed taking -1d4 penalty on all ability checks, skill checks and saving throws. When the subject of the curse casts a spell, it is overcome with shaking for 1 round, requiring any spellcasting during that time to succeed at a Constitution check as if they were concentrating on a spell. If it fails the save, the spell and the action to cast it is lost.

ERUPTIVE PUSTULES

3rd-level necromancy

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self

Components V, S

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

Class: sorcerer, warlock, wizard

Your skin erupts in swollen, pus-filled bumps that burst open if you are struck. Any creature that strikes you within 5 feet of you that deals damage also takes 1d6 points of acid damage and must make a Constitution saving throw save or be sickened until the end of their next turn taking -1d4 penalty on all ability checks, skill checks and saving throws. If the attack against you is a critical hit the acid damage is increased to 2d6, the penalty to checks and saving throws is increased to -1d6 and the target has disadvantage on the Constitution saving throw.

FLESHWORM INFESTATION

4th-level conjuration

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components V, S

Duration: 1 minute

Class cleric, sorcerer, wizard

With a touch, you cause an infestation of ravenous worms to manifest in the target's flesh. The target must make a Constitution saving throw at the start of every round. Failure means it takes 1d6 piercing damage and is staggered for 1 round. A staggered creature can only move or take a single attack action. *Fleshworm infestation* cannot be ended early by any restortive effect like *restoration* or *heal*, as the infestation starts anew if the current worms are slain. *Protection from good and evil* negates this spell's effects for as long as the two durations overlap. *Dispel good and evil* automatically ends a *fleshworm infestation.*

GHOST WOLF

4th-level conjuration (ritual)

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self

Components V, S, M (dire wolf tooth)

Duration: 1 hour

Class: sorcerer, warlock, wizard

This spell conjures a Large, quasi-real, wolflike creature made of roiling black smoke. The wolf is the size of a horse and maybe used as a mount or for combat (use a dire wolf as the base creature). The ghost wolf gains the following additional traits:

- **Damage Resistances** acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered
- **Damage Immunities** necrotic, poison
- **Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained
- **Fear Aura.** Any creature with fewer than 6 Hit Dice within 30 feet (except the ghost wolf's rider) must make a Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature that makes its saving throw is unaffected by the ghost wolf's *fear* aura for 24 hours.

GRASPING CORPSE

1st-level necromancy

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 30 feet

Components V, S, M (pinch of powdered onyx worth 1 gp)

Duration Instantaneous

Class: cleric, sorcerer, warlock, wizard

You can cause one nearby corpse to animate for a brief moment. Choose a creature within 30 feet of the corpse (even if the creature is outside the spell's range). The corpse shambles toward the creature and then grapples it (Escape DC 12). It otherwise has the statistics of a zombie.

At Higher Levels: When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the number of corpses you may animate doubles for each slot level above 1st.

HIDE FROM UNDEAD

1st-level necromancy

Classes: cleric, paladin, warlock, wizard

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: V, S

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour

A creature you touch becomes invisible and undetectable by sound or scent to undead creatures until the spell ends. Undead creatures that possess keen senses such as hearing or smell or unusual abilities to sense the presence of living creatures do not gain advantage on Perception checks to notice the target of this spell. Anything the target is wearing or carrying is likewise hidden from undead as long as it is on the target's person. The spell ends for a target that attacks or casts a spell, even if their target is not undead.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, you can target one additional creature for each slot level above 1st.

HORRIFIC DOUBLES

4th-level necromancy

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self

Components V, S

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

Class: bard, sorcerer, wizard

You create several illusory doubles of yourself, where you and each image all seem slightly off or wrong in appearance. Treat this spell as *mirror image*, except as noted.

Each creature that can see the doubles must succeed at a Wisdom save or become frightened for as long as it can see any of the doubles. A successful saving throw negates the frightened condition and renders the creature immune to the further effects of this spell (beyond the usual effects of *mirror image*). In addition, the first time a creature that failed its initial saving throw destroys one of the images, it must succeed at a Wisdom save or its perception of the double shifts at the last second. The double takes on the face of the attacker, the face of a loved one, or some other equally disturbing image, causing the attacker to become frightened and has disadvantage on attack rolls and saving throws until the end of its next round from the traumatic shock.

If your campaign uses the Sanity ability score, use this saving throw instead of Wisdom.

INFLICT PAIN

2nd-level enchantment

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 30 feet

Components V, S

Duration: 1 minute

Class: sorcerer, warlock, wizard

You telepathically wrack the target's mind and body with agonizing pain that imposes disadvantage on attack rolls, skill checks, and ability checks. A successful Wisdom saving throw reduces the duration to 1 round.

NIGHT TERRORS

6th-level illusion

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components V, S, M/DF (a drop of black ink)

Duration: 24 hours

Class: bard, sorcerer, warlock, wizard

The target of this spell gains no benefit from normal or magical *sleep*, writhing in a series of nightmares that torture its psyche and diminish its ability to perform strenuous tasks. A target that fails a Wisdom saving throw doesn't heal ability or hit point damage naturally and can't prepare spells or regain spell slots. After one night of poor sleep, the target gains an exhaustion level. A creature affected by this spell doesn't recover from exhaustion inflicted by this spell after resting, nor do spells such as *lesser restoration* or *greater restoration* provide any respite.

The images from previous nightmares continue to haunt the target's mind while awake. If the target has rested at least once while affected by night terrors it then becomes subjected to the frightened condition with the focus of its fear being all sentient creatures it meets except close friends or relatives (like the party).

The affected creature can attempt a new saving throw once per day to end night terrors, but multiple attempts to rest in a given day do not afford the target multiple saves. A creature that successfully saves against night terrors ends the spell and rests normally that night but gains the benefits of only that night's rest, not any benefits missed on previous nights.

If your campaign uses the Sanity ability score, use this saving throw instead of Wisdom.

At Higher Levels: When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 7th level or higher, the duration of the spell increases by 1 day.

SLOUGH

5th-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 100 feet

Components V, S, M/DF (a pinch of dried skin flakes)

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

Class cleric, sorcerer/wizard, warlock

You target one living creature within range and it takes 1 levels of exhaustion on a failed Constitution saving

throw each round as its skin loosens and splits. Once it has taken 5 levels of exhaustion in this way, its skin falls off to reveal its musculature. The creature ceases taking exhaustion levels but has disadvantage on physical based saving throws (Str, Con, Dex), pain effects (GM's discretion), or poison damage. The target automatically fails any Charisma based checks with the exception of Intimidate. The creature's skin regrows rapidly — once its exhaustion levels are fully healed, its skin becomes intact once again and the penalties end.

At Higher Levels: When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 6th level or higher, the number of targets increases by 1 per spell slot used. If cast as a 9th-level spell the concentration requirement is removed.

SYMBOL OF EXSANGUINATION

This spell adds a new symbol option to the *symbol* spell.

Exsanguination. Each target must make a Constitution saving throw, taking 5d10 necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful save. They also begin bleeding uncontrollably and violently from their eyes, ears, nose, and mouth, as well as any existing open wounds. Each creature that failed its saving throw takes an additional 1d10 necrotic damage at the start of its turn. For as long as they are affected by the spell the target has the poisoned condition.

While a DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check or magical healing can end the ongoing necrotic damage, the damage restarts again each round so long as the creature begins its turn still within 60 feet of the symbol, including if the creature leaves the area and returns. Creatures that succeed at their saving throw suffer no ill effects from the symbol, even if they leave its area and return.

VITRIOLIC MIST

4th-level necromancy

Casting Time: 1 action

Range personal

Components V, S, M (a piece of lemon rind)

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

Class sorcerer/wizard

This functions as *fire shield*, except it wreathes you in yellow or green acidic mist instead of hot or cold flames. The spell deals acid damage to attackers and protects you against acid damage. This spell does not shed light.

YELLOW SIGN

9th-level enchantment

Casting Time: 10 minutes

Range: 0 ft.; see text

Components: V, S, M (ochre and sulfur, plus powdered gold worth a total of 15,000 gp)

Duration: see text

Classes: bard, cleric, warlock, wizard

This spell functions as the *symbol* spell, save that creatures that fails its Wisdom saving throw become dominated (as per *dominate monster*) by Hastur. This causes such creatures to seek to aid any obvious minions or worshipers of Hastur in sight, and any true worshiper of Hastur can command the affected creatures as if that worshiper had been the one to dominate them. In the case of conflicting commands issued from different true worshipers of Hastur, the commanders must attempt opposed Charisma checks, with the winner being able to command the targets for that round. If no worshipers or agents of Hastur are in sight, an affected creature can act normally. When affected by this spell's Yellow Sign in this way, the effects last for 1 round per level. Once triggered, the Yellow Sign remains active for 10 minutes.

There is a 1% chance when a creature fails its saving throw against this spell that Hastur takes note and, for reasons of his own, decides to control the target personally. In this case, the actions taken by the dominated creature are left to the GM to determine, but the effects of this spell's Yellow Sign persist for 1 day and the commands issued cannot be countermanded by any other creature, even if they are Hastur worshipers.

Regardless of how long the effects last or whether Hastur directly controls a victim, if a creature failed to resist this spell's effects, Hastur can target that victim for the rest of its life with his fulvous dreams ability. Whether or not the Great Old One ever chooses to do so is left to the GM to determine.

RITUALS

Two new rituals are included in this adventure: the Ritual of the Crimson Shroud and the Ritual of the Corrupted Shroud. The casting times and/or skill checks for these rituals are lower than ordinarily needed because of the use of the *Crimson Shroud* as a required focus for them. Likewise, the use of the Shroud absorbs any backlash against the caster. Conversely, these rituals cannot be performed at all without the use of the Crimson Shroud as a focus.

RITUAL OF THE CRIMSON SHROUD

School conjuration (healing)

Casting Time 90 minutes

Components V, S, plus the ritual leader must have the Crimson Shroud

Skill Checks The ritual requires 3 successful skill checks before 6 failures – Wisdom (Medicine) DC 10; Intelligence (Religion) DC 10; Intelligence (Arcana) DC 10

Range touch

Target one creature's body (living or dead)

Duration instantaneous

Saving Throw none, see text

Backlash none

Failure The *Crimson Shroud's* use of the intended spell effect fails. This does not count as a use of that spell ability, and it can be attempted again after 1 hour.

The caster places the Crimson Shroud over the body of the individual who is to be affected by the rituals healing. He then chooses the spell effect that will be used and begins the ritual. Upon completion of the ritual that spell effects that target of the ritual just as if it had been cast by a cleric of the appropriate level. If the ritual used to bring a creature back from death, the subject's soul must be free and willing to return as described in the raise dead spell.

RITUAL OF THE CORRUPTED SHROUD

School necromancy

Casting Time 1 minute

Components V, M (a blood sacrifice, see text), plus the ritual leader must have the *Crimson Shroud*

Skill Checks The ritual requires 10 successful skill checks - Intelligence (Arcana) DC 10, 4 successes; Intelligence (Religion) DC 10, 3 successes; Intelligence (Arcana) DC 10, 2 successes.

Range touch

Target one vampire

Duration instantaneous

Saving Throw none

Backlash The target is forced into gaseous form and must return to its coffin for 2 rounds to reform.

Failure The target's weaknesses stop being removed at the point when the 5th skill check is failed and no further removal of weaknesses can be attempted for that target.

The caster places the *Crimson Shroud* over the target vampire's body and begins the ritual. If the vampire is conscious and willing, it can be the caster. Making the necessary skill check in each round of the ritual is a move or bonus action that allows the caster to otherwise act normally, but he cannot otherwise talk or cast spells with verbal components during the ritual. The ritual does not require concentration and cannot be interrupted short of the caster losing consciousness or otherwise being unable to continue the ritual. The ritual must be cast in the moments before dawn so that in the final round of the ritual the vampire is exposed to direct sunlight. If the vampire is not exposed to direct sunlight in the final round of the ritual, then it cannot ever remove its weakness to being destroyed by direct sunlight. While covered by the *Crimson Shroud*, the vampire is temporarily immune to the effects of sunlight.

The casting of this ritual requires a blood sacrifice each round that deals 3d6 points of necrotic damage (this damage bypasses resistances and immunities). The caster chooses the source of this blood sacrifice each round from any sentient creature (living or undead) that has blood in its body that is within 30 feet of the caster. A creature can resist this sacrificial blood loss with a DC 23 Constitution save, though the caster can target a different individual with the blood sacrifice as part of the ritual's action for that round. The caster can only redirect the blood sacrifice target once per round.

The ritual is unlike other rituals in that for each round in which a successful skill check (caster's choice) is made, one vampire weakness is removed in the following order. This weakness is removed even though the caster has not yet succeeded on at least half of the skill checks (see Failure above if 5 skill checks are failed).

It is possible that variations of this ritual exist that can remove the weaknesses of nosferatus and other types of vampires or even other types of undead altogether, but if so none have yet come to light.

Round	Vampire Weakness Removed
1	Aversion to odor of garlic
2	Shadowless and no reflection
3	Aversion to presentation of holy symbols
4	Inability to enter a private home or dwelling without invitation (forbiddance)
5	Damage from immersion in running water (harmed by running water)
6	Immobilization by wooden stake through heart (stake to the heart)
7	Blood hunger
8	Forced into gaseous form and regeneration in coffin at 0 hit points
9	Reduced damage from exposure to direct sunlight (sunlight hypersensitivity only does 10 radiant damage)
10	Damage from exposure to direct sunlight (sunlight hypersensitivity weakness removed)

Appendix C: Gods of the High Places

Information on three deities from **Frog God Games** is included below. The first is the deity Thyr, for whom the Asterian Order is dedicated, even if in the modern day the members have lost knowledge of their true mission. The second is Myrddin, the Ancient Ones deity whose druidic followers originally resisted the lunar invaders and entrapped the moon-beast Dykath in the standing stone. Unlike Thyr, Myrddin's followers are not encountered in this adventure, having long since abandoned the area, but his information is provided for your convenience. The third deity is the moon goddess Narrah. The moon Luna, of whom this goddess is patron, plays a prominent role in this adventure though the goddess herself does not. However, the events of the adventure are likely to be of interest to the faith of this goddess, so information is provided for her religion as well.

Myrddin, God of High Places, Lord of the Wild Air

Lesser God

Alignment: Neutral

Clerical Domains: Knowledge, Light, or Trickery

Symbol: The sun reflected in a still pool

Garb: Hooded woolen robes with a rope belt, bare feet

Favored Weapon: Sling

Form of Worship and Holidays: Worship services take place in mountain caves at noon when the sunlight shines through hidden openings onto sacred pools on the Ides (fifteenth day) of each month. The month of Daan (Sixthmonth) is most sacred to Myrddin because the days are longest and the light holds dominance over the sky to the greatest extent of any time during the year.

Typical Worshippers: Druids, bards, poets, seers, prophets, aerial servants, some cloud dragons

Myrddin is an ancient god, long revered on Akados but obscure to most folk today except among the Daanites of Ynys Cymragh and small enclaves of folk who still keep to the Old Ways of the Ancient Ones. He is not so much a god of the mountains, as the god of high places and the aerial spaces of the mortal realm. As such, he has been a mortal enemy to Pazuzu for time immemorial as they both claim dominion over the "Middle Air," as the skies of the mortal realms are known. Myrddin is also a god of light (both in the sense of the sun and of knowledge) and inspiration. Bards and poets therefore venerate him, as do prophets and seers, who seek the divine touch of the God of the Wild Air to give them insights, provide them muses, or reveal to them secrets. Myrddin's temples are usually mountain caves containing a pool and an oculus (natural or hewn) through which the sun can be seen reflected on the waters. Shrines are usually small mountain springs where an offering cup is left for those who drink of his waters to repay his blessing.

Myrddin is detailed on page 103 of ***Mountains of Madness*** by **Frog God Games**.

Narrah, The Lady of the Moon, The Pale Sister, Luna

Greater God

Alignment: Neutral

Clerical Domains: Knowledge, Trickery, or Tempest

Symbol: The Sickle (a crescent moon)

Garb: Dark robes, midnight blue cloaks

Favored Weapon: Sickle, short sword

Form of Worship and Holidays: Prayer services held weekly on the night of Sistersdag. Regular worship and fasting on nights of the full moon. Lunar eclipses and other astronomical events such as the new moon and the double moon (when Luna and Sybil are both full), are sacred to Narrah. Each month on Moonless Night, the followers of Narrah hold a short prayer vigil at sundown and then go forth in numbers, armed and armored, to battle the followers of Cybele and defend against raids by the Nocturnals.

Typical Worshippers: Druids, stargazers, lycanthropes, bards, lunar nagas, some fey

An ancient and oft-forgotten goddess, Narrah has looked down upon the face of the lands as the greater moon known as the Pale Sister since the beginning of the world. Worshipped by stargazers, lycanthropes, and lovers alike, the Lady of the Moon is neither good nor evil, light nor dark. She represents neutrality is its most natural form. She is the moonlight in the dark, the push and pull of the tides, and the navigation point when one is lost. Actively worshipped by druids who remember the ancient traditions of the Old Way, she imparts the secrets of the

universe under the cover of night. Most folk still refer to her only as the Pale Sister or, perhaps, Luna, and think of her only as the larger and brighter of the two moons rather than as an actual goddess.

Alongside her twin moon, Sybil the Dark Sister[LL1-4], Narrah — as Luna the Pale Sister — has hovered over the world since the beginning. Her earliest followers were the fey and primitive humanoids, and since that time she has warred with the smaller moon for dominance of the night. Narrah does not seek power, but Cybele[LL4-43], the deity associated with the other moon, has long sought the means to destroy Narrah and assume total dominion over the night sky. To this end, she has allied with her idiot twin Shupnikkurat[AK:M-38,39] to seek a way to devour Narrah whole and remove her from the sky forever.

Narrah is an ancient deity sometimes worshipped as the goddess Nanna-Sin[FGG1-4,5] and as the god Sin the Moon[AK:M-38,39] in the Anunnaki Pantheon of northern Libynos. Though unknown to any but the worshippers who revere her as Nanna-Sin, Narrah is the bitter and eternal enemy of the Succubus Queen, Lilith[FGG1-4,5].

Narrah is detailed on page 242 of ***LL5: Borderland Provinces*** by **Frog God Games**.

Thyr, God of Law and Justice

Greater God

Alignment: Lawful Good

Cleric Domains: Knowledge or Life

Symbol: Silver cross on a white field

Garb: White robes trimmed with silver, purple or gold — the colors of kingship

Favored Weapon: Mace

Form of Worship and Holidays: Last day of every month, on the last holy day of every year is set-aside for non-royalty to have their grievances heard.

Typical Worshippers: Humans, royalty

Thyr is the god of wise and just rule. He is normally depicted as a wizened king seated on a great throne holding a rod of kingship in one hand and a chalice of peace in the other. His principles are justice, order, and peace. He represents proper and traditional rule and as such was once worshiped (at least in name) by all human royalty. He is the embodiment of the enlightened human caste system where each person has a fairly determined role in a lawful society intended to create the greatest good for the greatest number.

His symbol is a silver cross on a white field, symbolizing the upturned cross-haft of his sister's sword, which he thrust into the earth to end the gods' war. Upon seeing the blood of so many gods shed, Thyr foreswore the use of swords and his priests may not use bladed weapons for this reason. Many favor reinforced rods, similar to light maces, modeled after Thyr's own rod of kingship. The noble eagle and lion are his sacred creatures.

Thyr is detailed on page 169 of ***LL1: Stoneheart Valley*** by **Frog God Games**.

The religion of The Shadow plays a significant role in the lives of the Shattered Folk tribes.

The Shadow

Areas of Concern unknown

Alignment Any evil

Associated Domains Death, War

Edicts any creature that doesn't serve The Shadow is the enemy, harvest souls for The Shadow

Anathema allow enemies to encroach on The Shadow's territory; destroy a body when it could be made into an undead, suffer an enemy to live

Symbol: Obsidian disk (representing an accretion disk)

Garb: Dark colors (no formal garb)

Form of Worship and Holidays: Killing sentient beings to claim their souls for The Shadow. Unknown if any holidays.

Typical Worshippers: Unknown (shadow walkers, some Shattered Folk)

The subject of The Shadow remains as much a mystery today as it was at its first appearance on the steppes millennia ago. It is a religious or quasi-religious cult that is believed to have brought about the destruction of the mighty Hundaei Empire more than two thousand years ago. Known simply as The Shadow — when it is mentioned at all — historians believe that it was a deity, entity, or powerful cult that was encountered when the Hundaei first dared to migrate to and begin to settle in The shadow of the Nam-i-Budhani — the Lost Mountains. Whatever it was, it introduced madness and violence to the peoples of the Great Steppe in unprecedented intensity and brought about the downfall and near extinction of the formerly indomitable empire after two years of civil war.

The Shattered Folk avoid the northern reaches of the plains and tell of how monstrous humanoids have swept down in great hordes of in the past, spurred on by The Shadow. When these hordes march, the Shattered Folk scatter and head to the far reaches of the plains to avoid them. In the past the elves of the Green Realm and the forces of the Foerdewaith have spent their strength to hold back these hordes, and only the creation of the legendary Wizard's Wall stymied the last incursion when strange shadow walkers drove the horde on. Always these hordes have dispersed, and their mysterious masters have disappeared back into the distant northern regions of the Haunted Steppe, but whispers of The Shadow are never far behind. In fact, the cursed lands east and north of the Lost Mountains are called the Shadowlands, and no plainsman in his right mind would over go within a thousand miles of there. The steppes are huge and hold many secrets; The Shadow is one that folk of the plains hope never comes to light.

The Shadow first appeared in ***Fields of Blood*** by **Frog God Games**.

Thyr, God of Law and Justice

Greater God

Alignment: Lawful Good

Cleric Domains: Knowledge or Life

Symbol: Silver cross on a white field

Garb: White robes trimmed with silver, purple or gold — the colors of kingship

Favored Weapon: Mace

Form of Worship and Holidays: Last day of every month, on the last holy day of every year is set-aside for non-royalty to have their grievances heard.

Typical Worshippers: Humans, royalty

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Thyr is detailed on page 169 of ***LL1: Stoneheart Valley*** by **Frog God Games**.



First Floor



1 square = 5 ft.



Second Floor



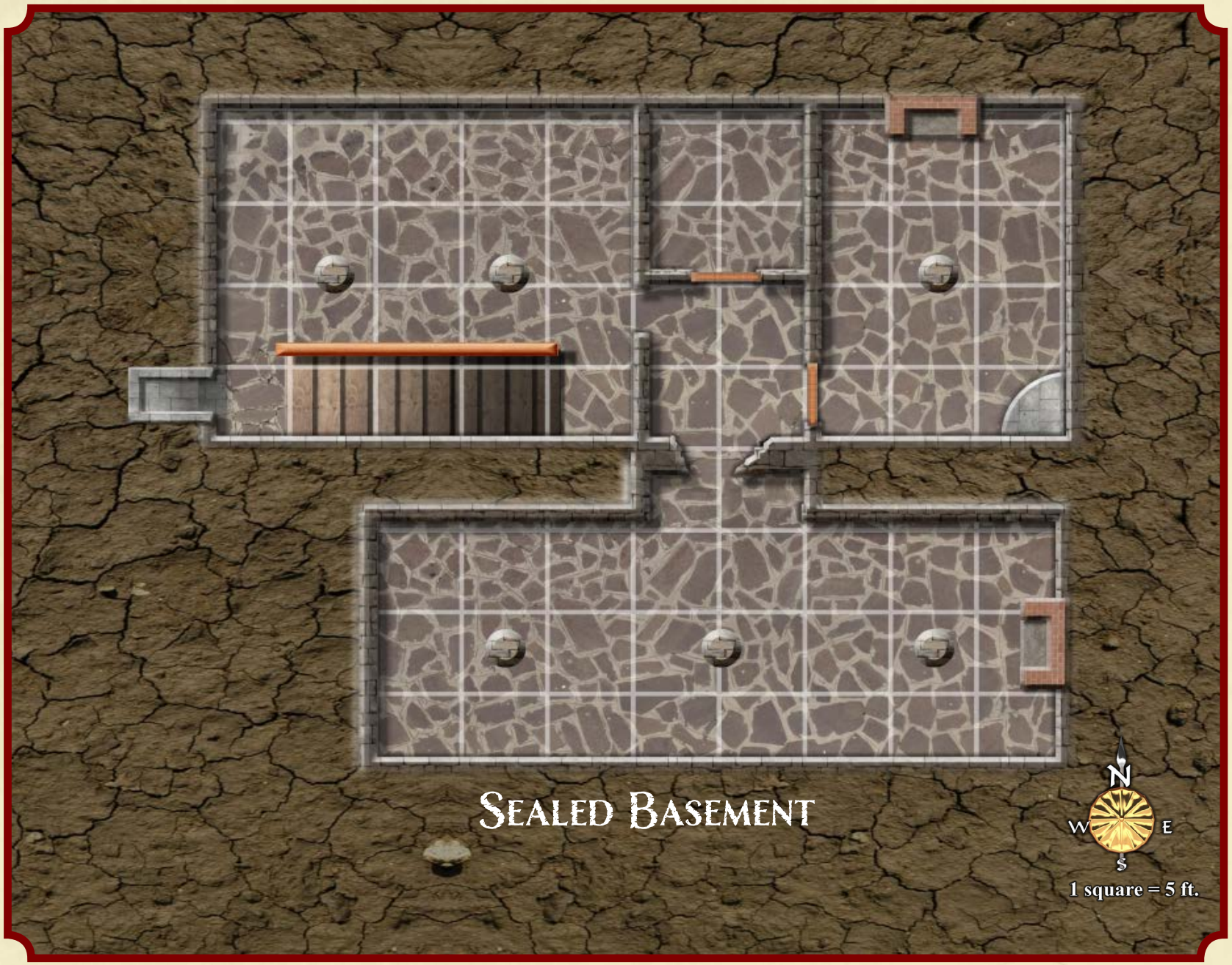
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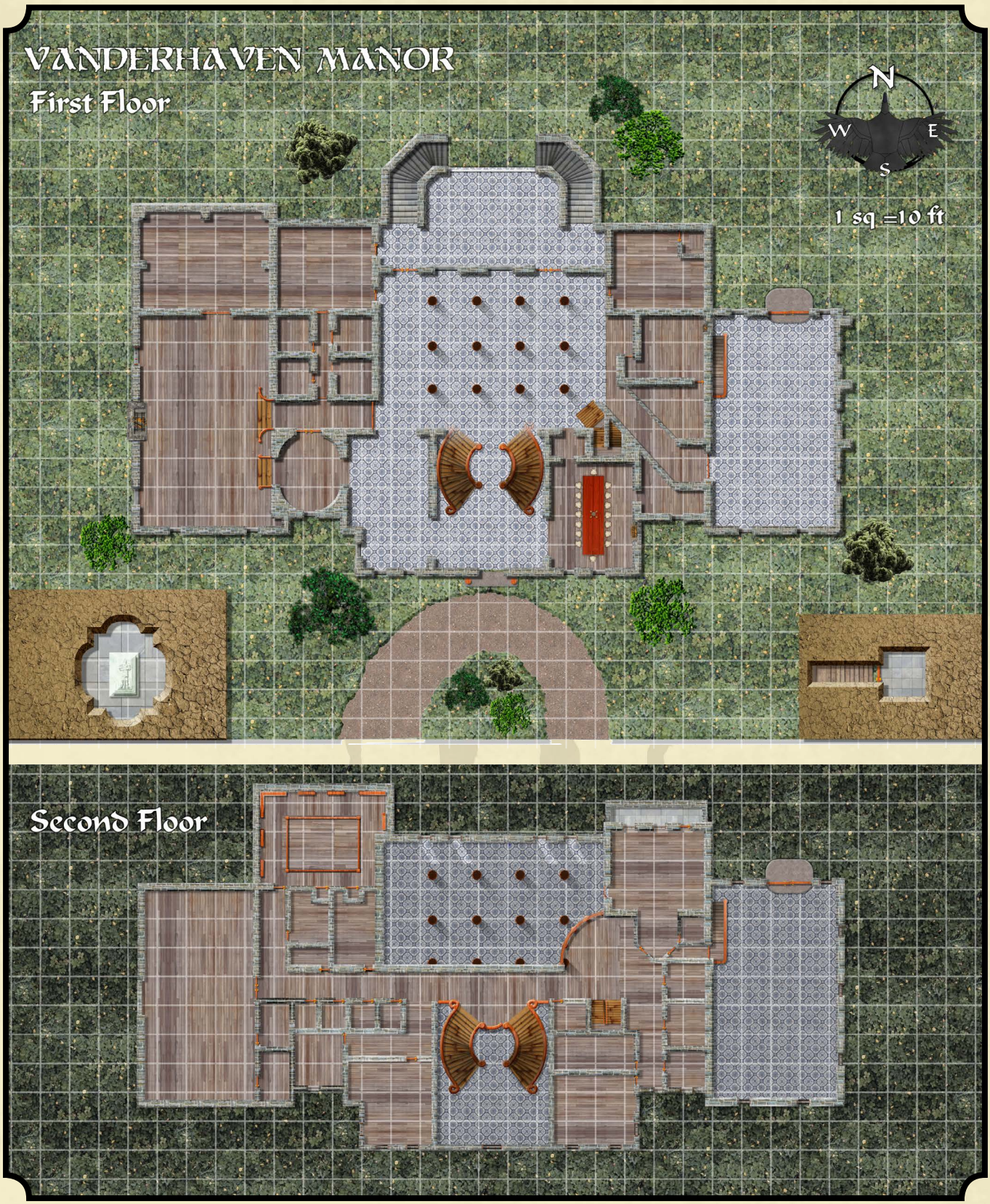
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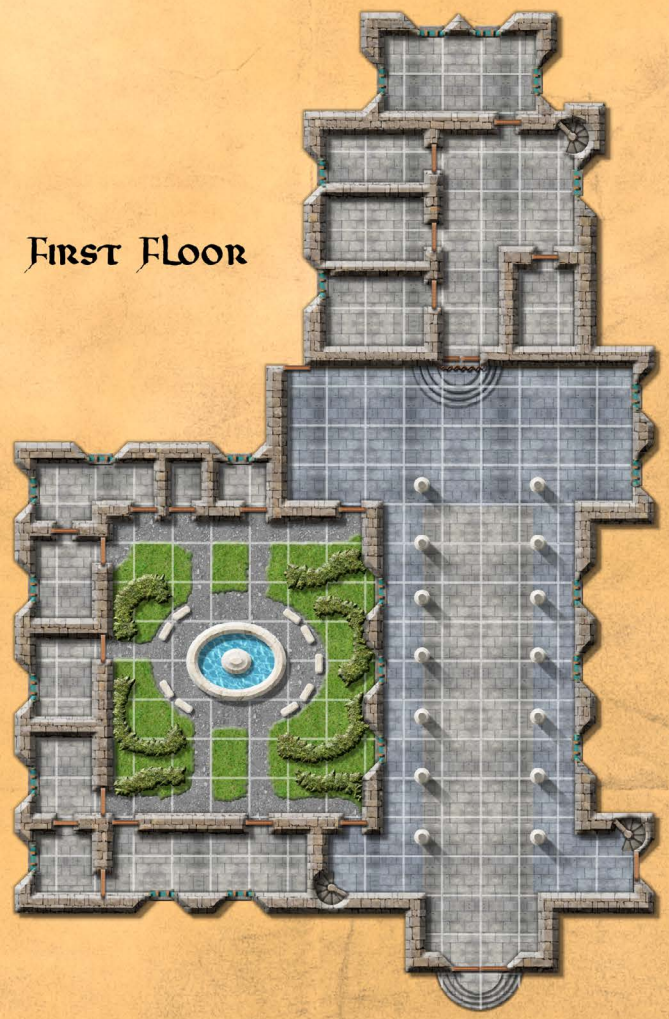
1 square = 5 ft.



Sealed Basement


VANDERHAVEN MANOR
First Floor
N
W
E
S
1 sq =10 ft
Second Floor

B. Bastion of Righteous Decree

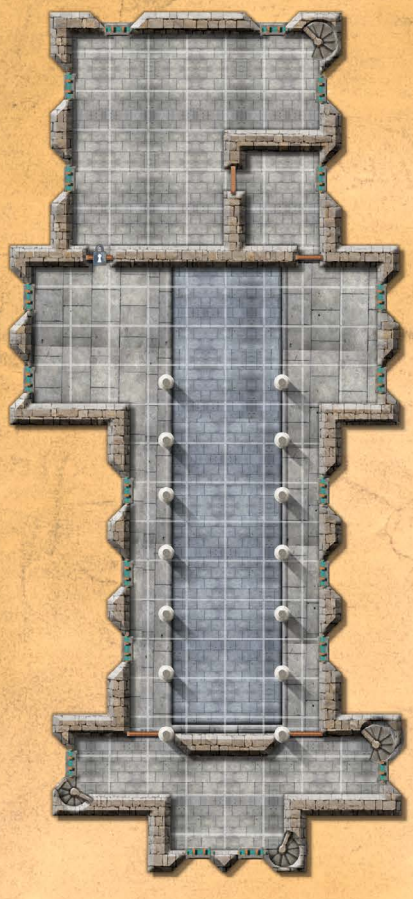


First Floor



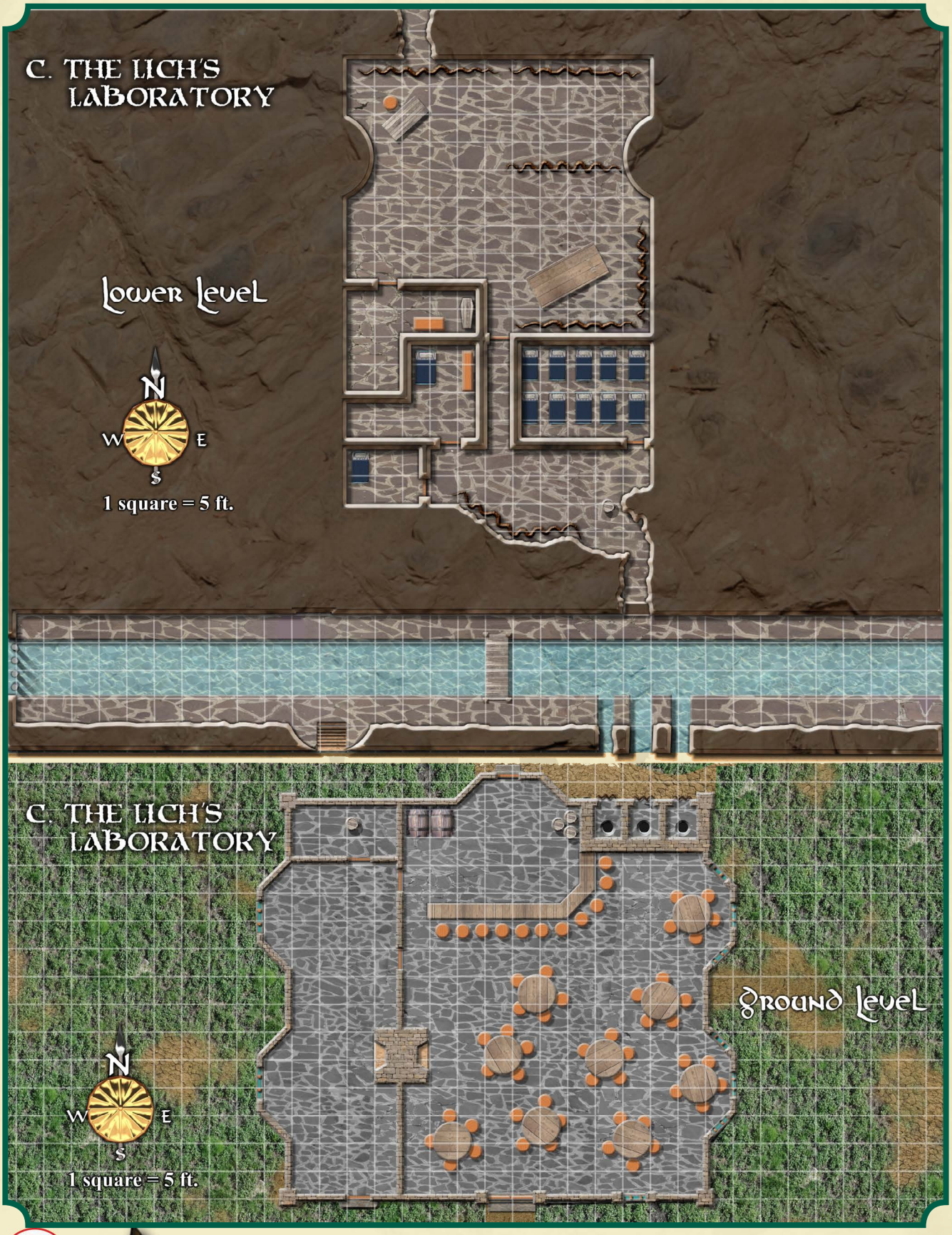
1 square = 10 ft.

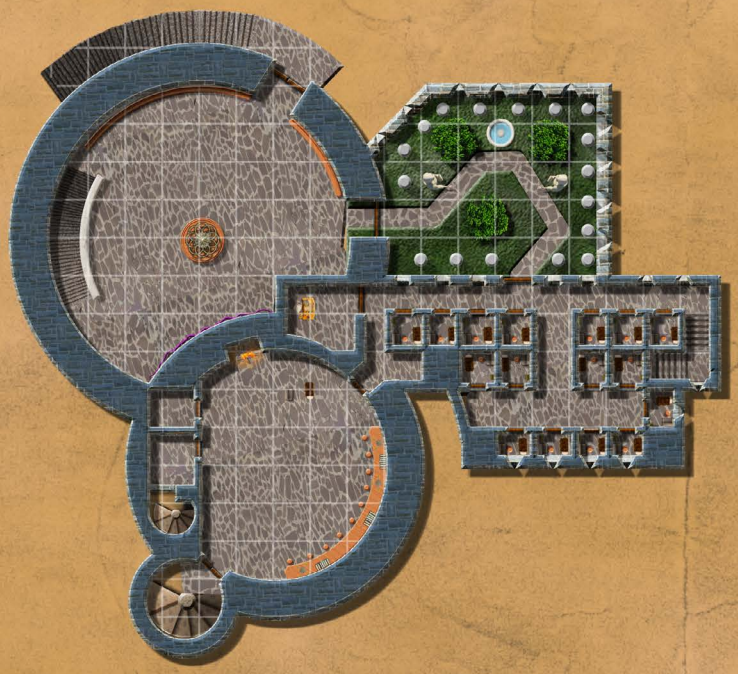
Second Floor

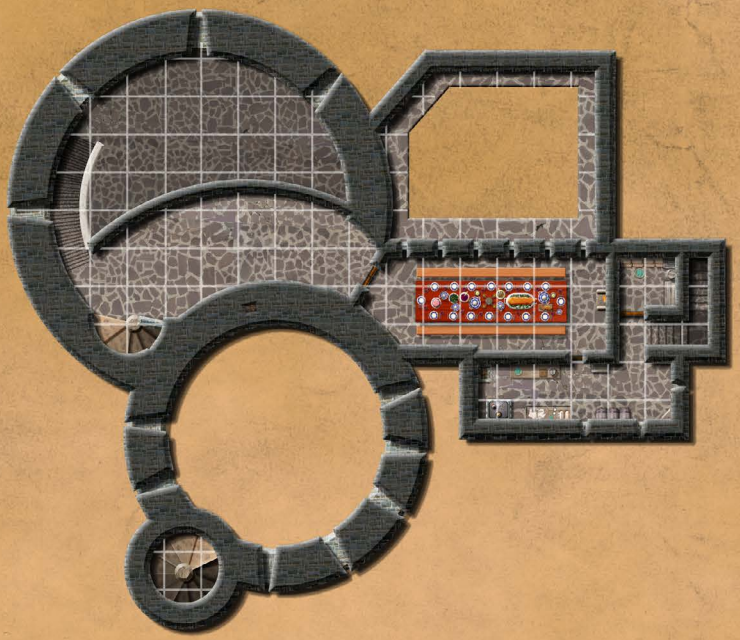


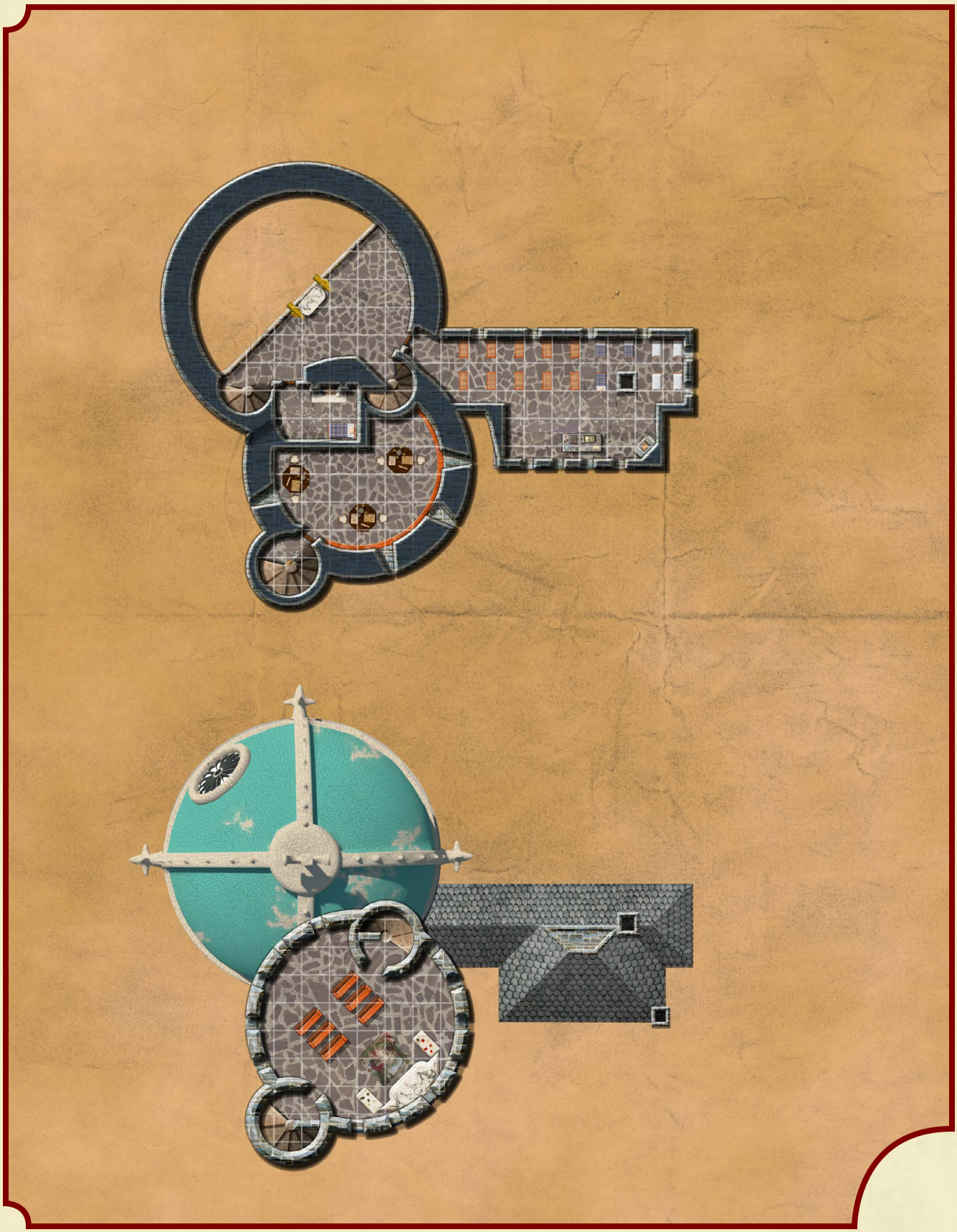
Tower




C. THE LICH'S LABORATORY
Lower Level
N
W
E
S
1 square = 5 ft.
C. THE LICH'S LABORATORY
Ground Level
N
W
E
S
1 square = 5 ft.



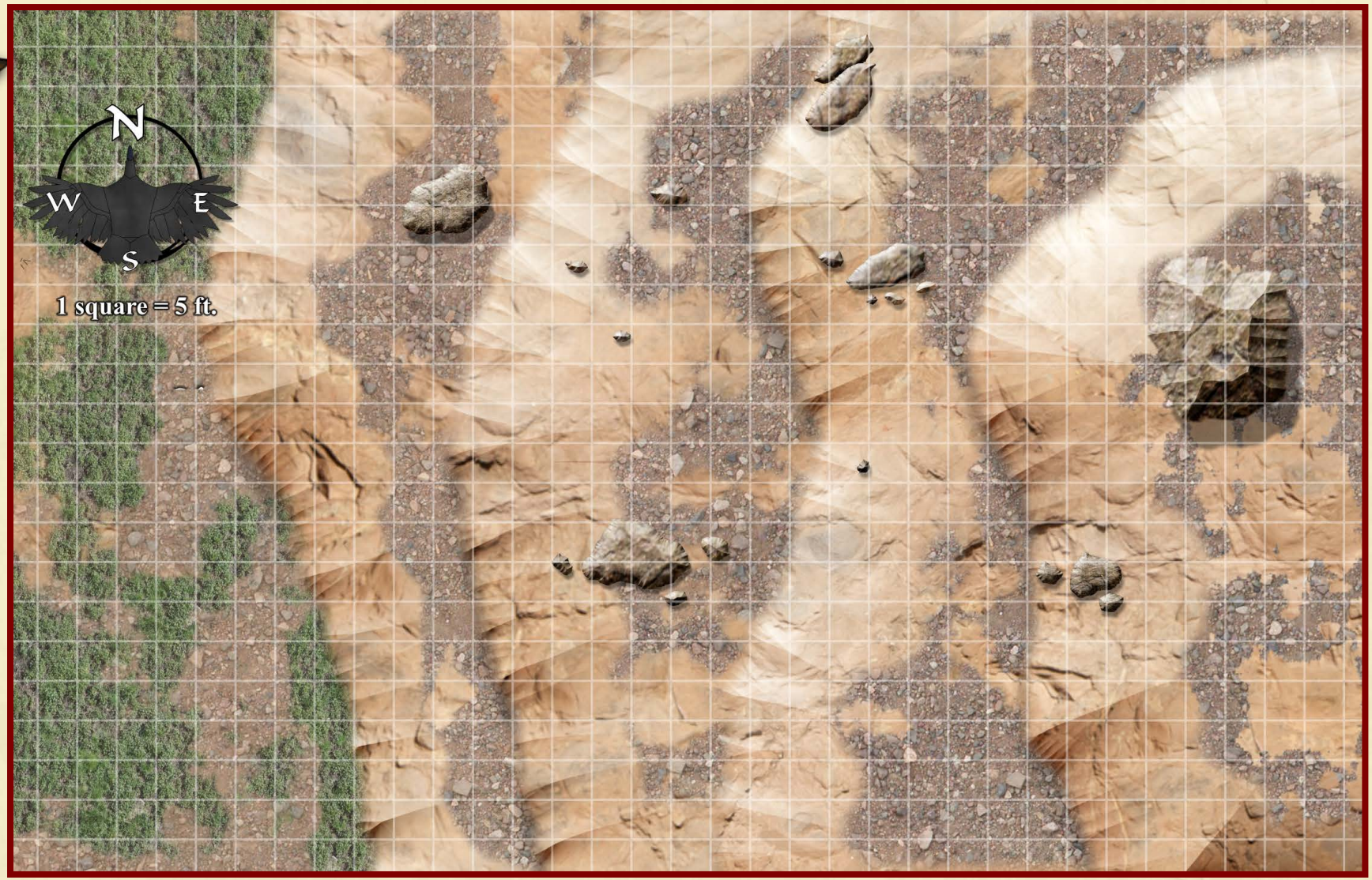


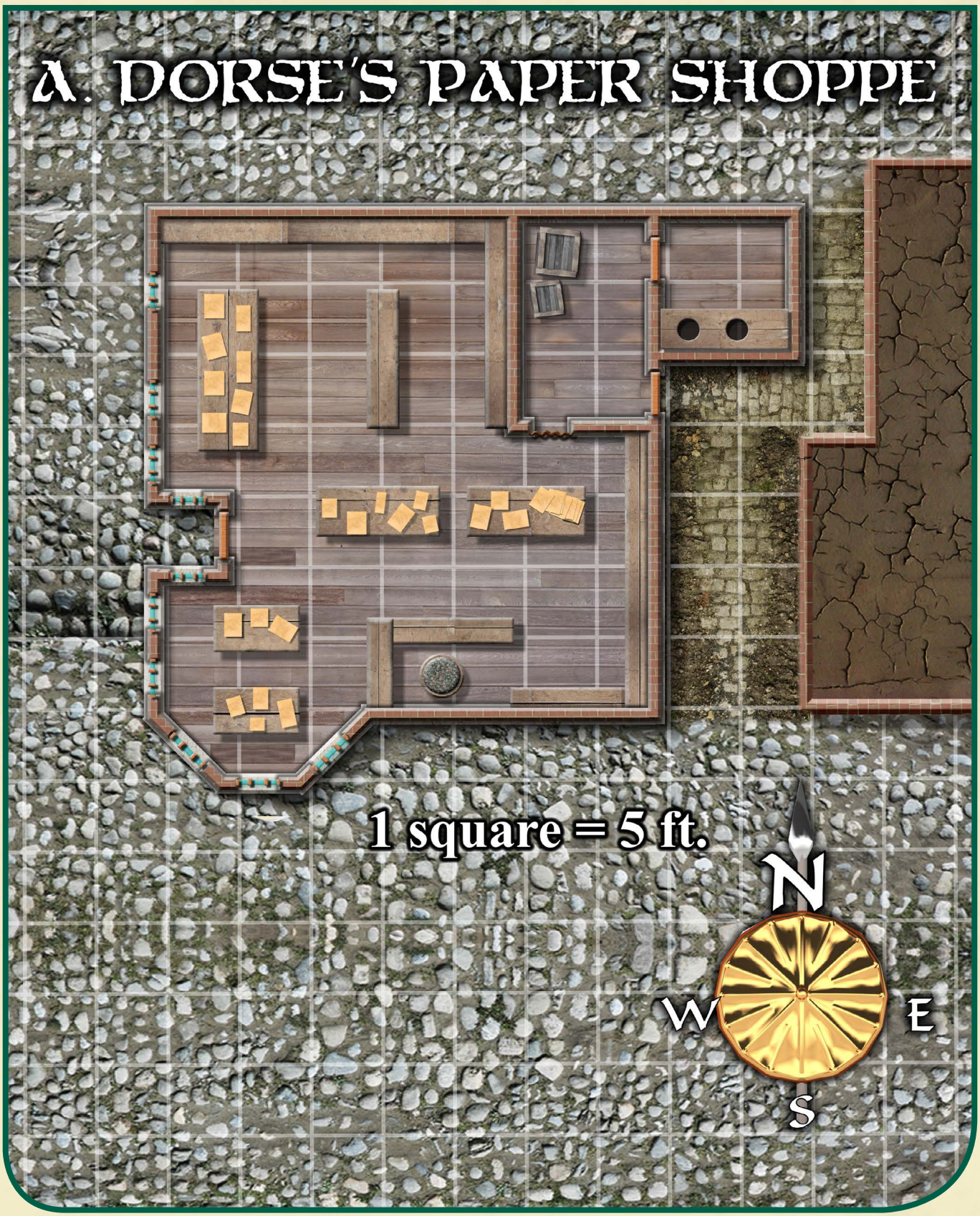


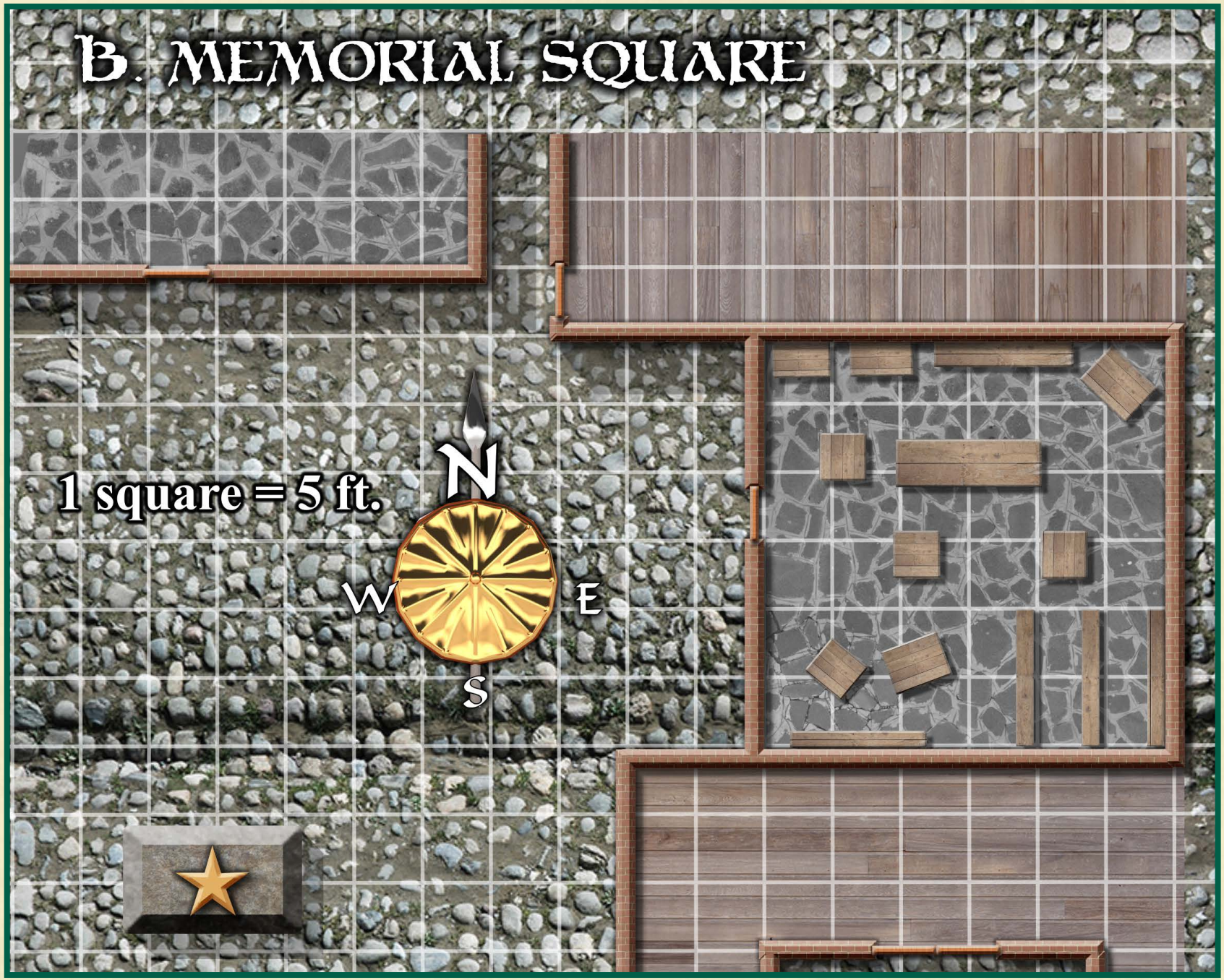


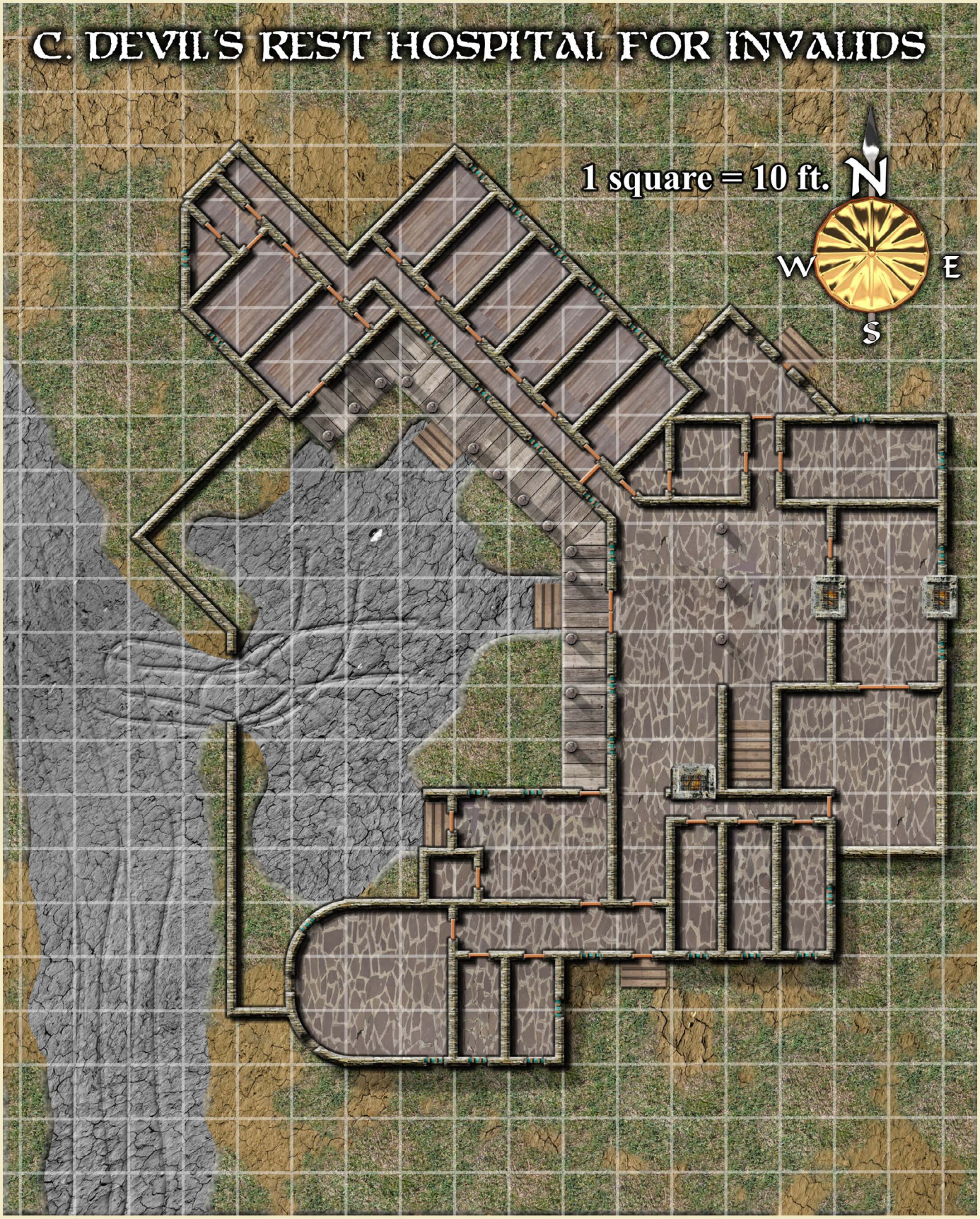

N
W
E
S
1 square = 5 ft.



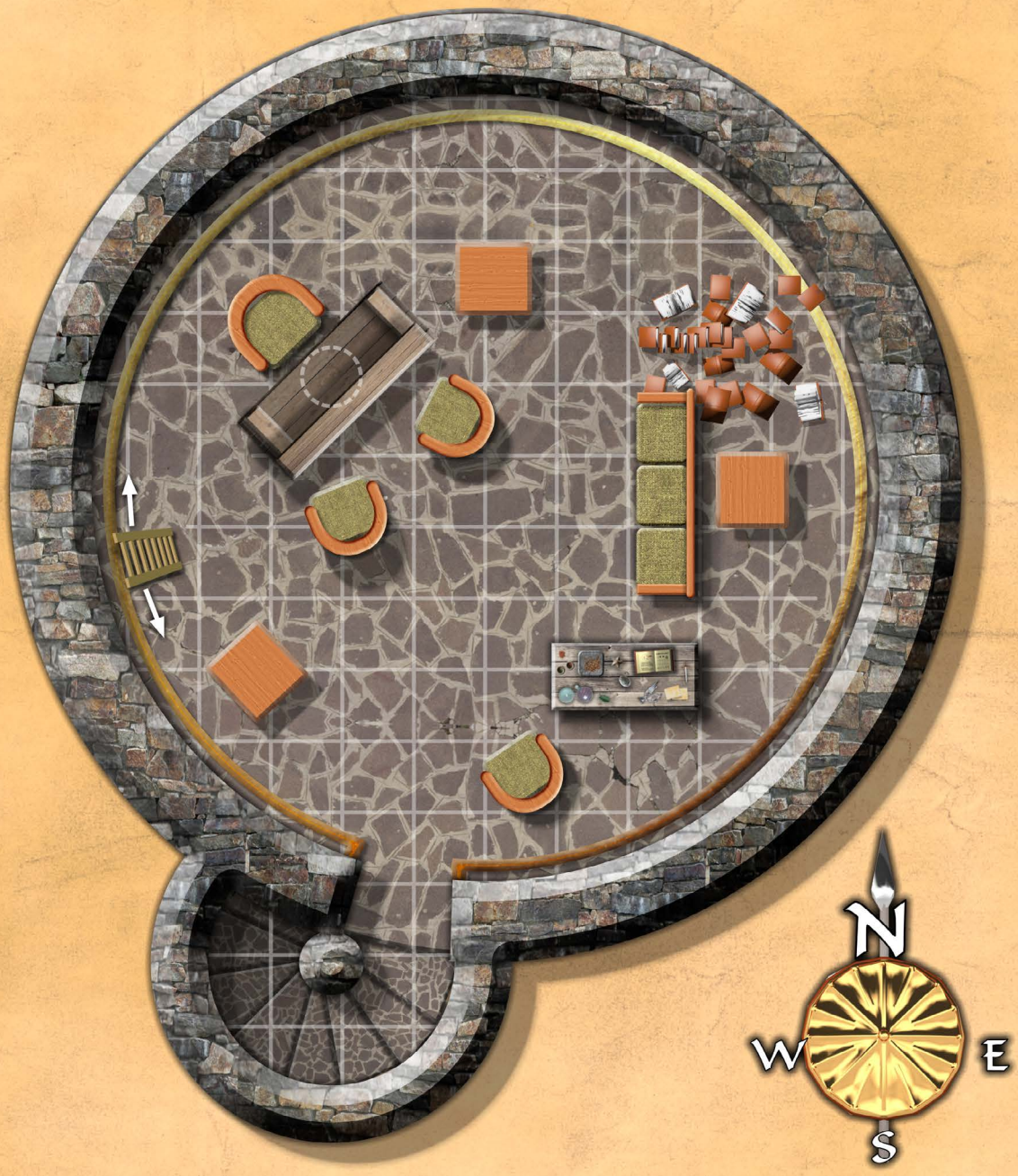

N
W
E
S
1 square = 5 ft.


A. DORSE'S PAPER SHOPPE
1 square = 5 ft.
N
W
E
S


B. MEMORIAL SQUARE
1 square = 5 ft.
N
W
E
S

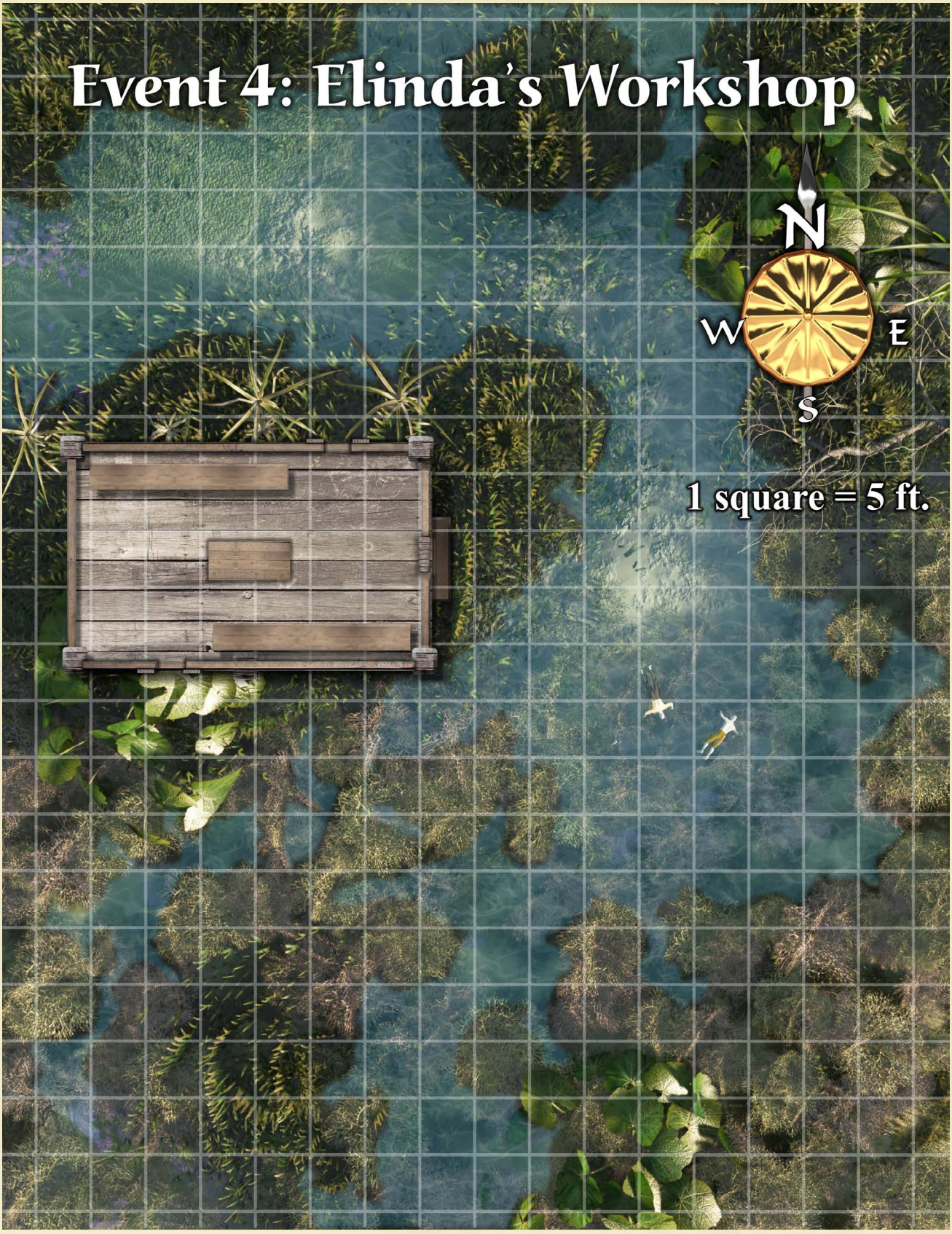

C. DEVIL'S REST HOSPITAL FOR INVALIDS
1 square = 10 ft.
N
W
E
S

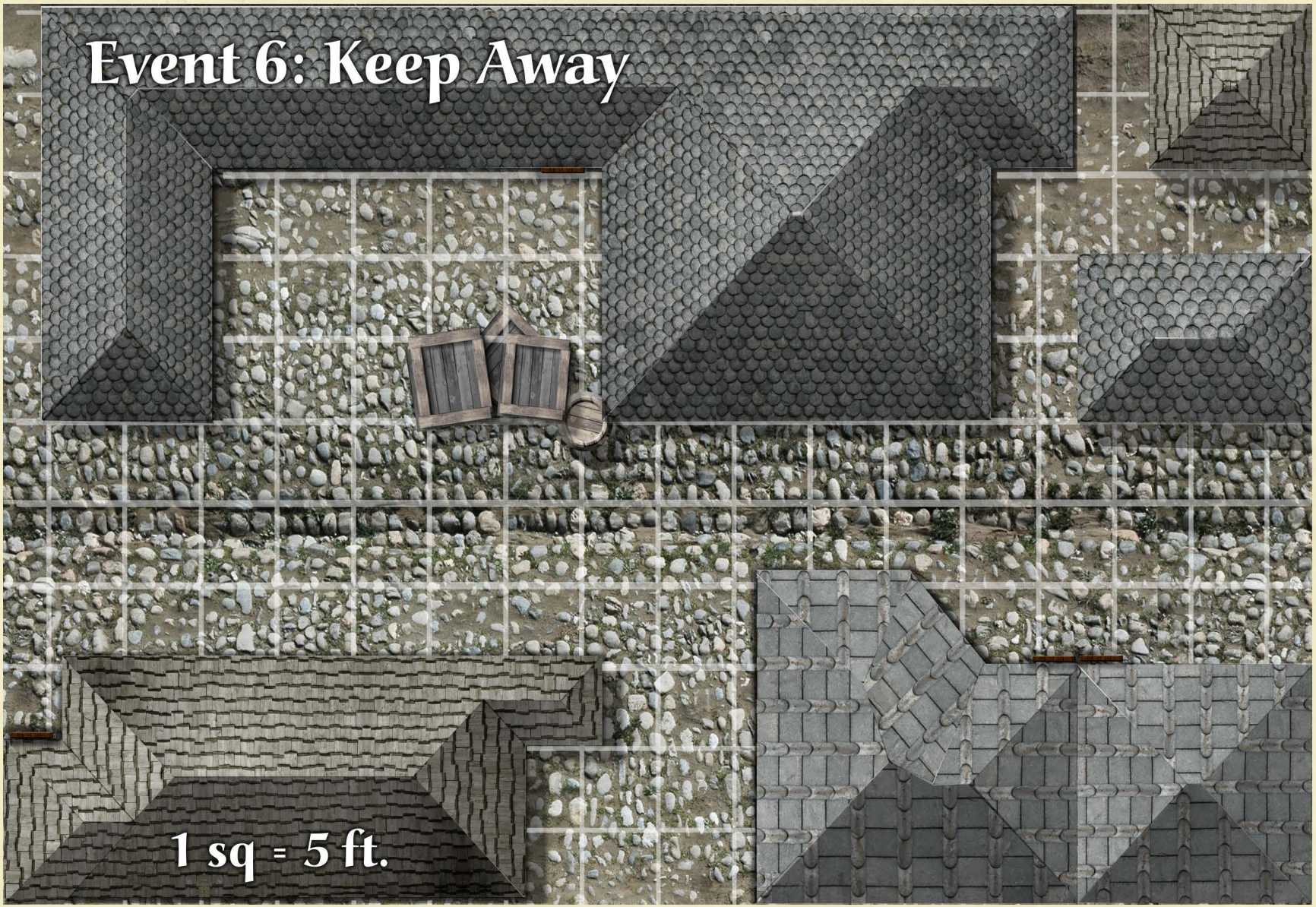

DUN EAMON
N
FORD
RIVER EAMON
RIVER EAMON
FORD
LOWER RIVER EAMON



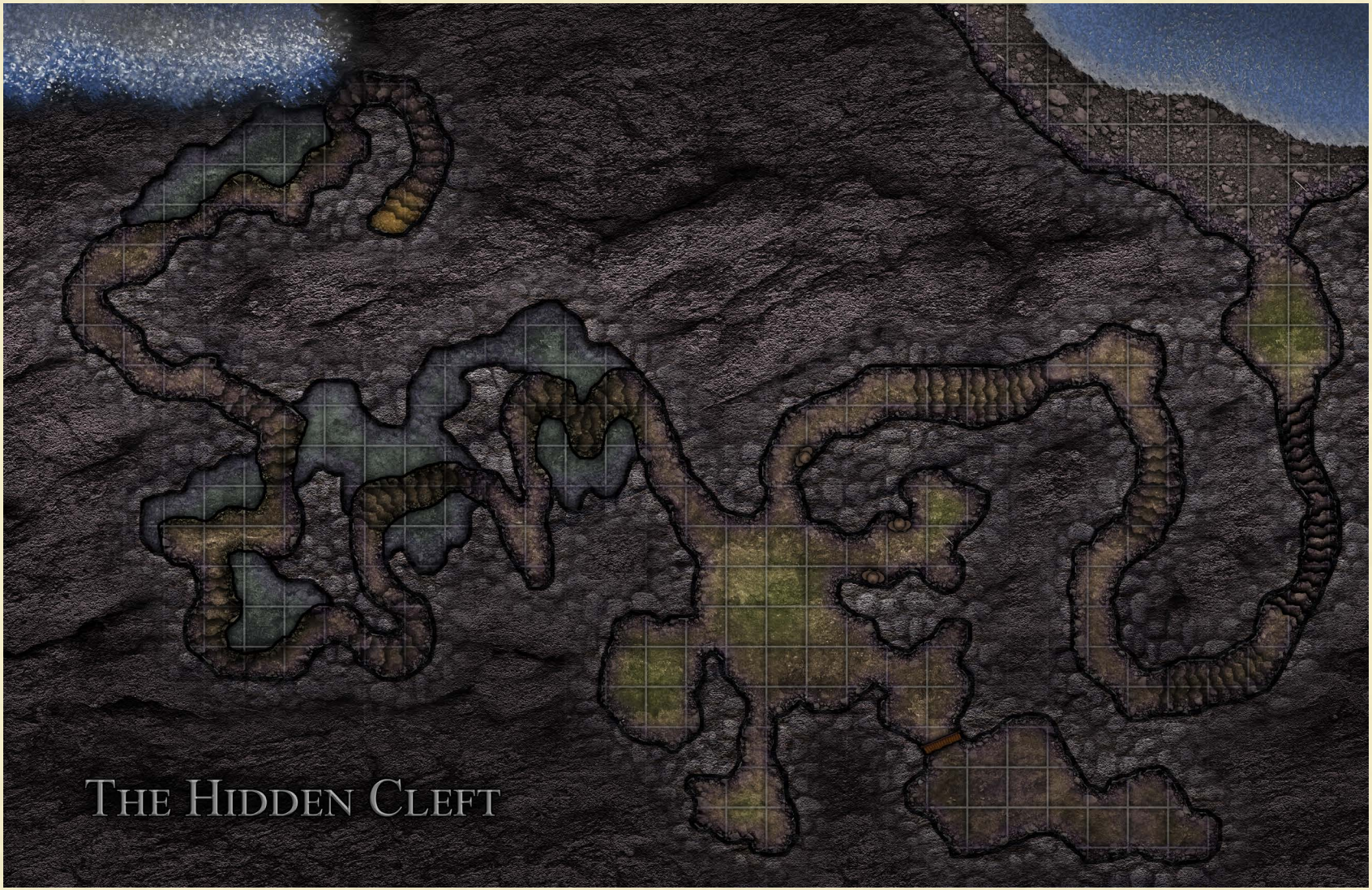
1 square = 5 ft.

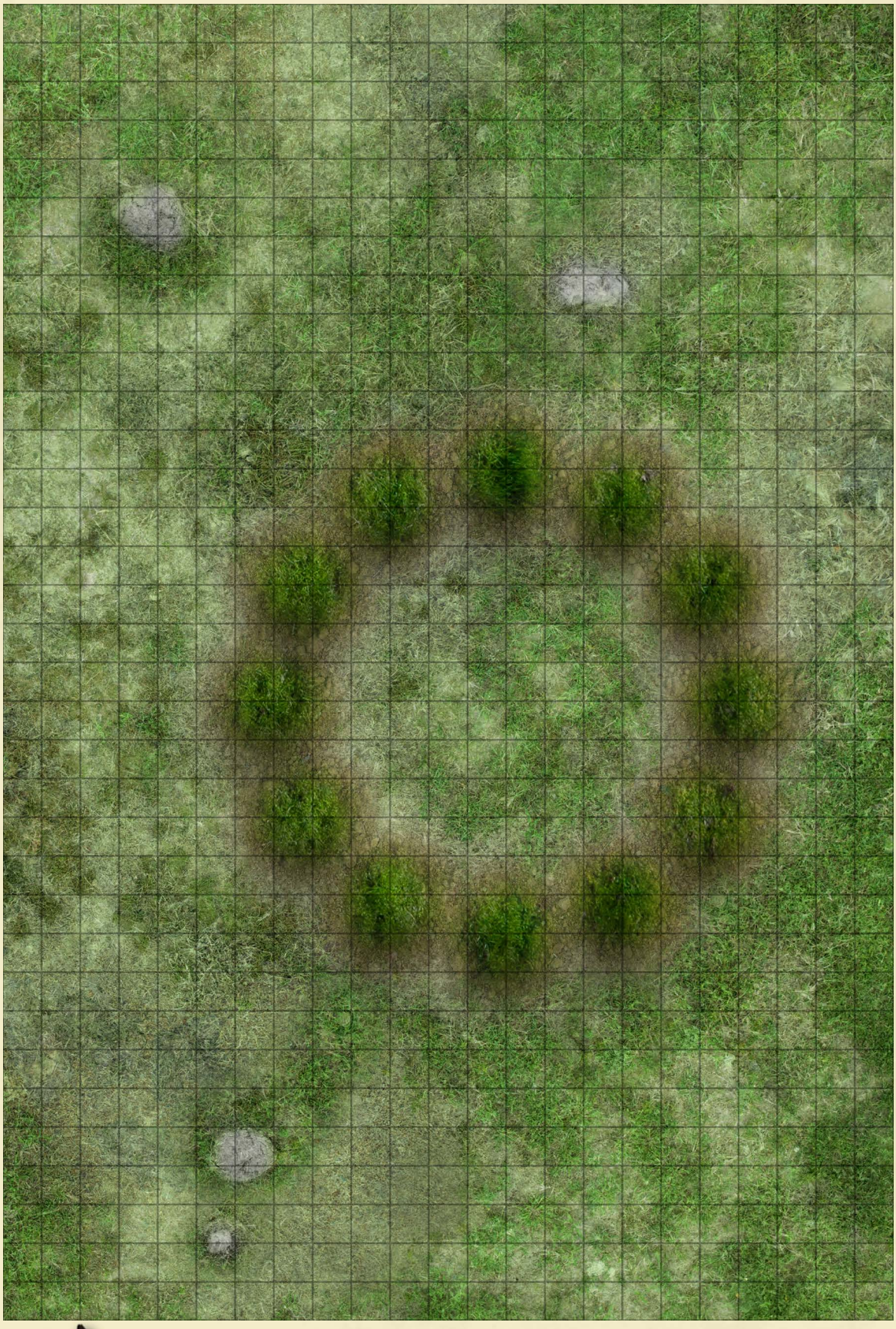
D: Bannon's Library


Event 4: Elinda's Workshop
N
W
E
S
1 square = 5 ft.


Event 6: Keep Away
1 sq = 5 ft.

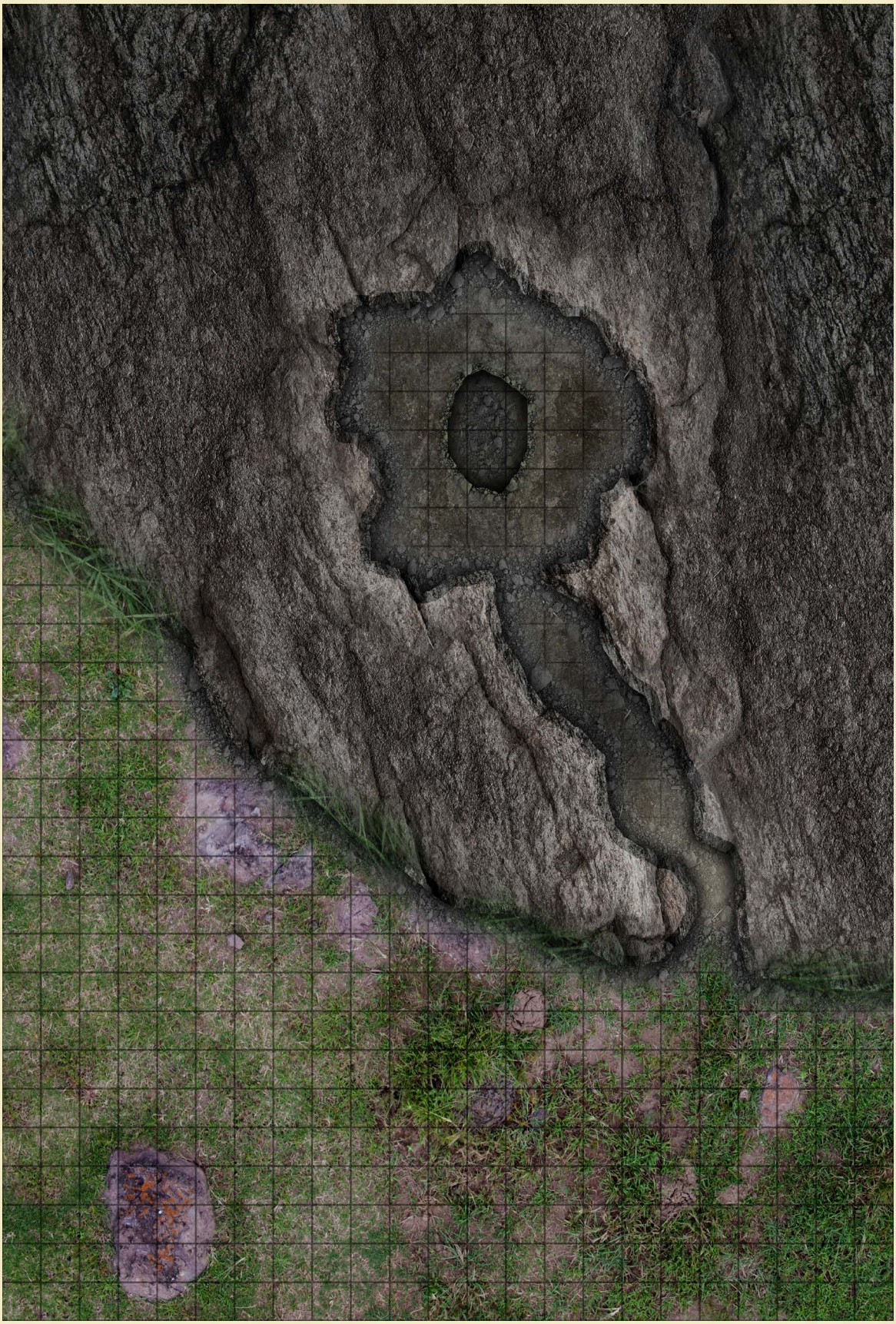

Ebon Union Safehouse
N
1 SQ. = 5 FT.

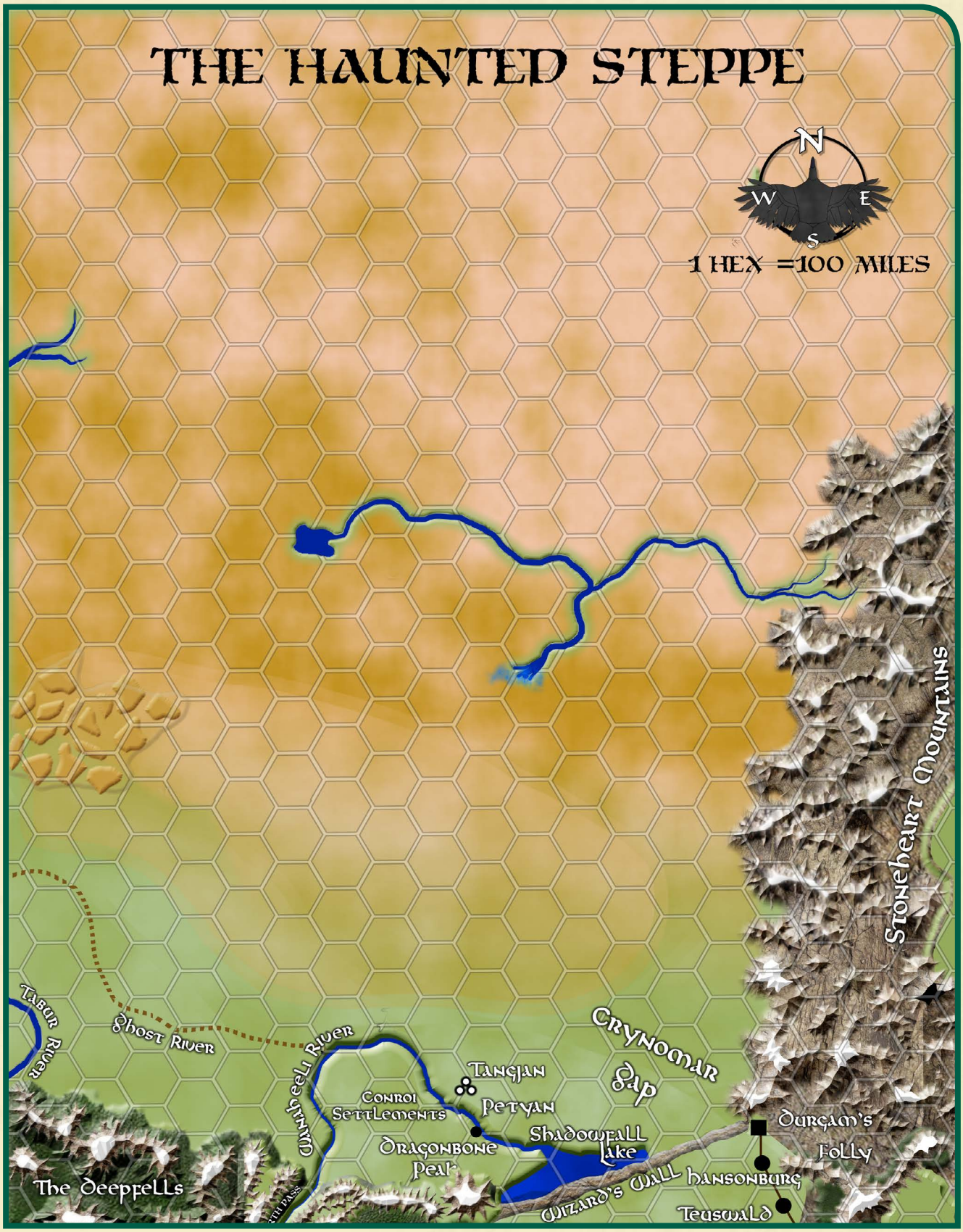

The Hidden Cleft





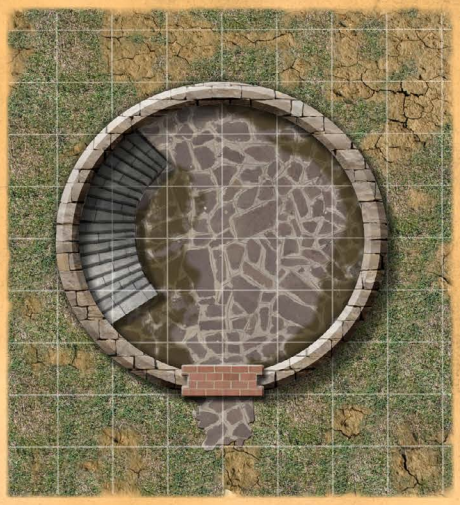




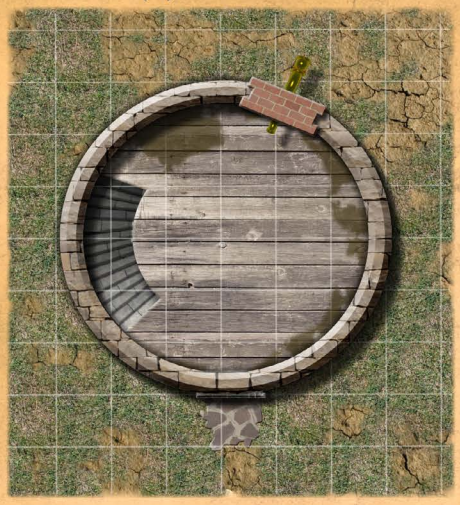

THE HAUNTED STEPPE
N
W
E
S
1 HEX =100 MILES
Stoneheart Mountains
Crynomar Gap
Tangjan
Petyan
Conroi Settlements
Dragonbone Peak
Shadowfall Lake
Durgam's Folly
Hansonburg
Teuswald
Wizard's Wall
Cwmbeeli River
Ghost River
Tabur River
The Deepfells
Ith Pass

E. Sixtun's Spyglass

Ground Floor



Upper Floor



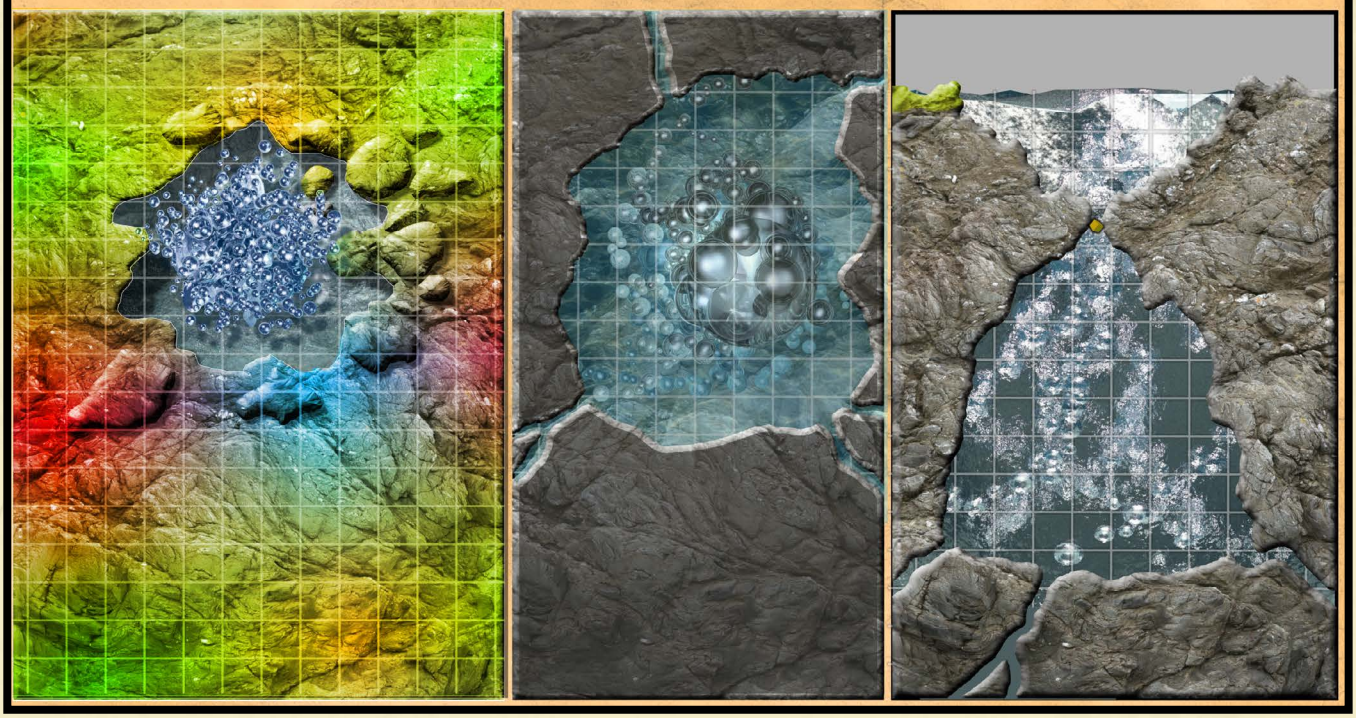


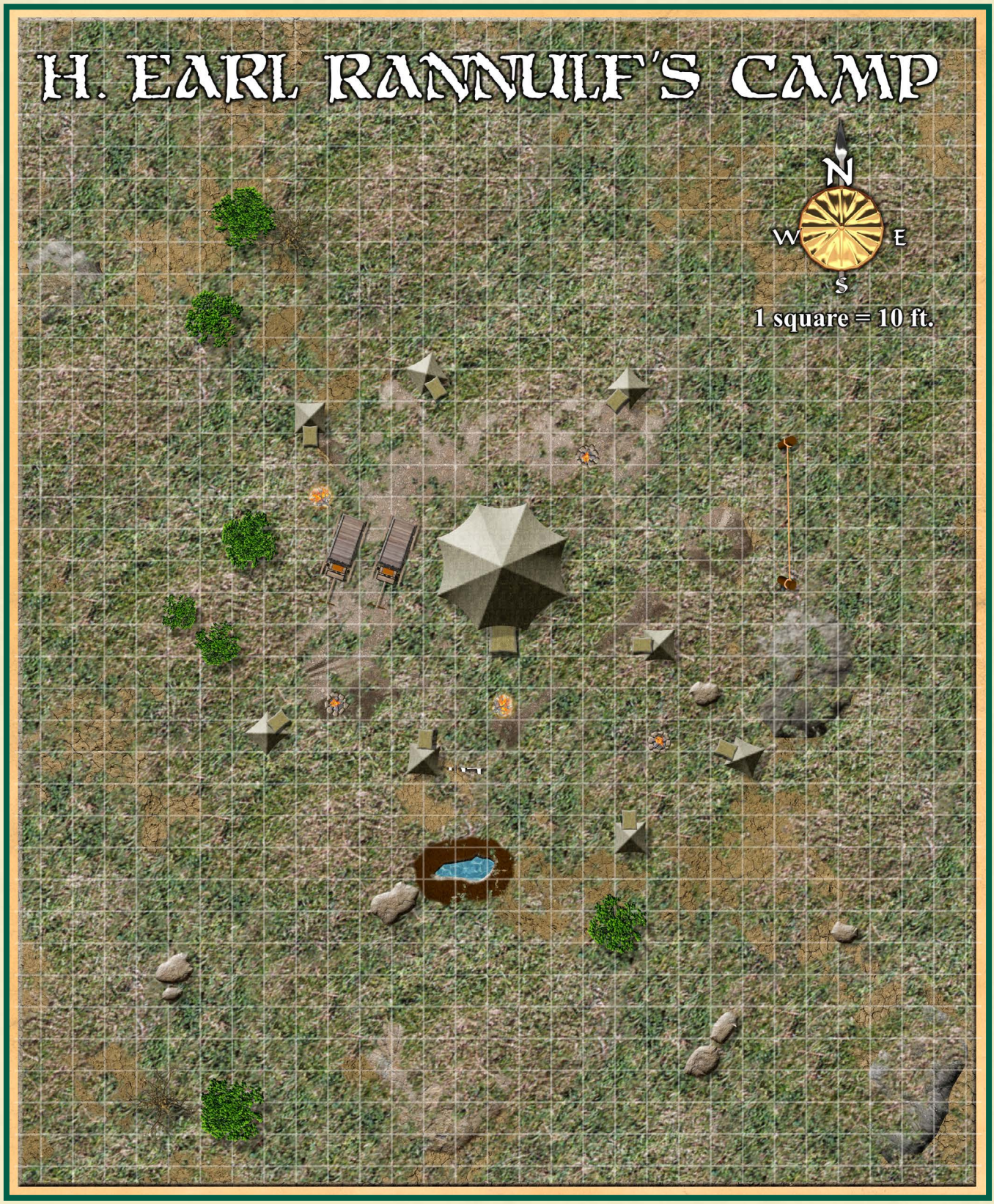
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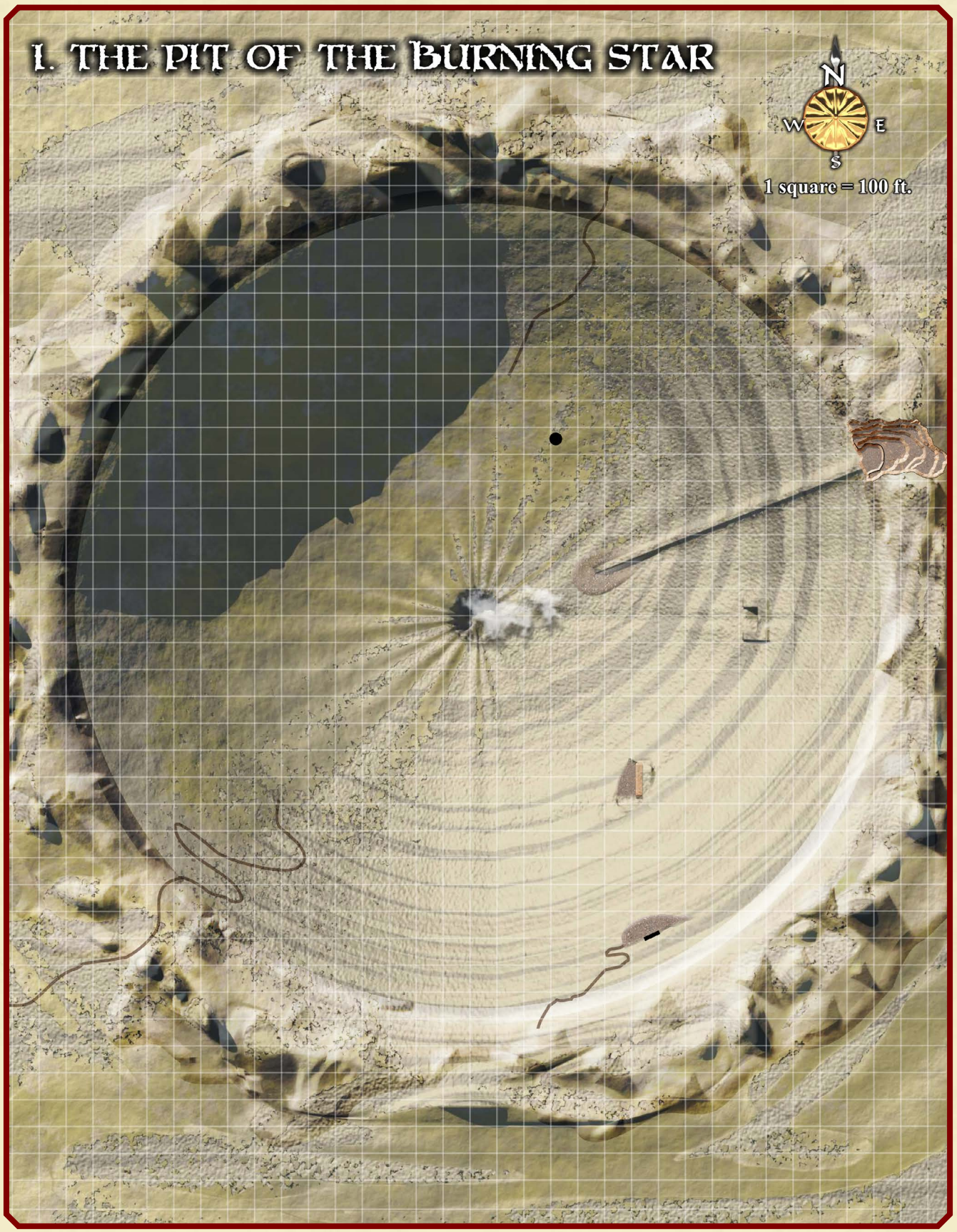
F. Hallelujah Springs



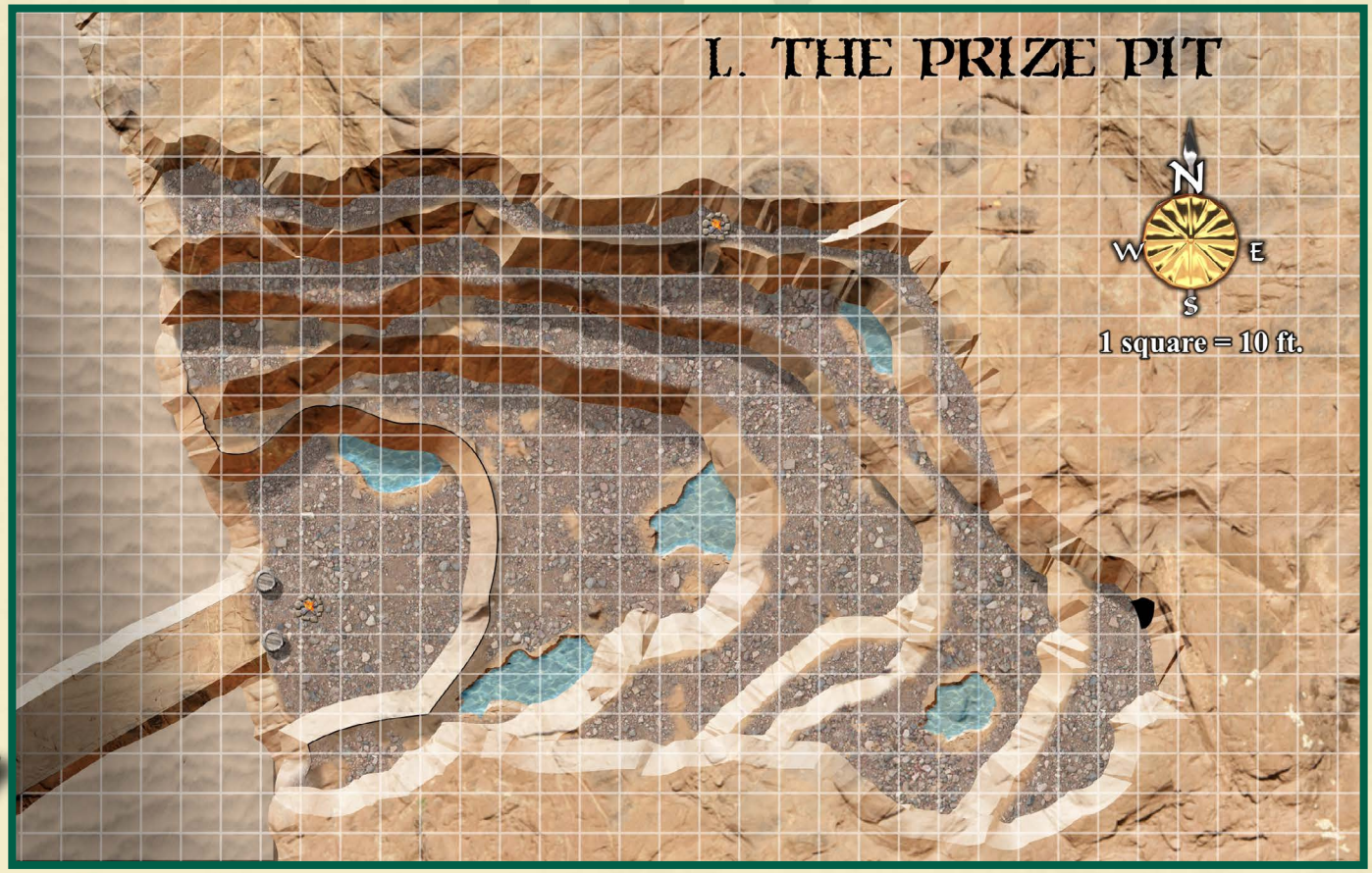
1 square = 10 ft.




H. EARL RANNULF'S CAMP
N
W
E
S
1 square = 10 ft.

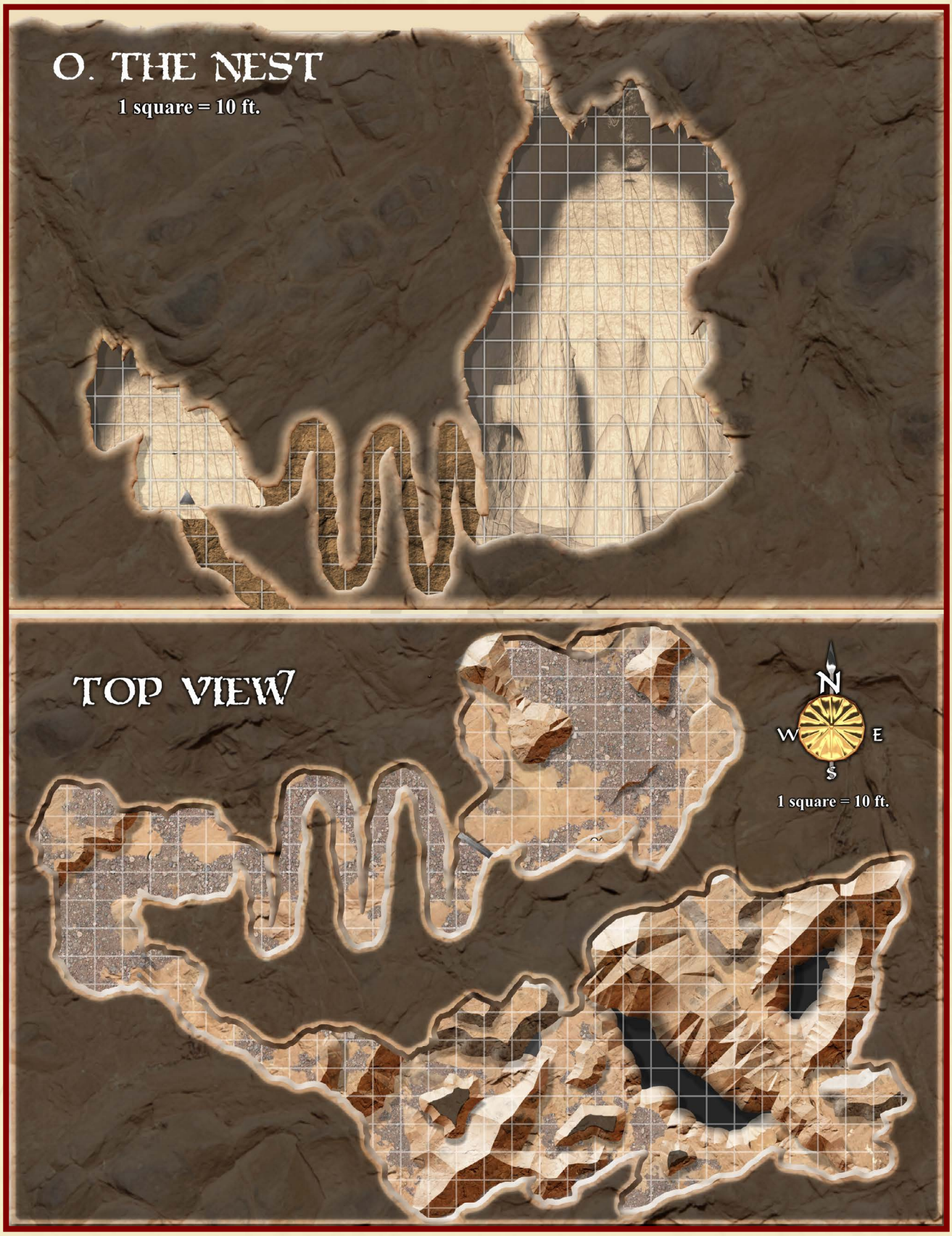

1. The Pit of the Burning Star
N
W
E
S
1 square = 100 ft.


k. Azmerius's Adit
N
W
E
S
1 square = 5 ft.


L. THE PRIZE PIT
N
W
E
S
1 square = 10 ft.


M. FUMING CHASM
N
W
E
S
1 square = 10 ft.
N
W
E
S
1 square = 10 ft.


N. Caleen Cache
N
W
E
S
1 square = 10 ft.

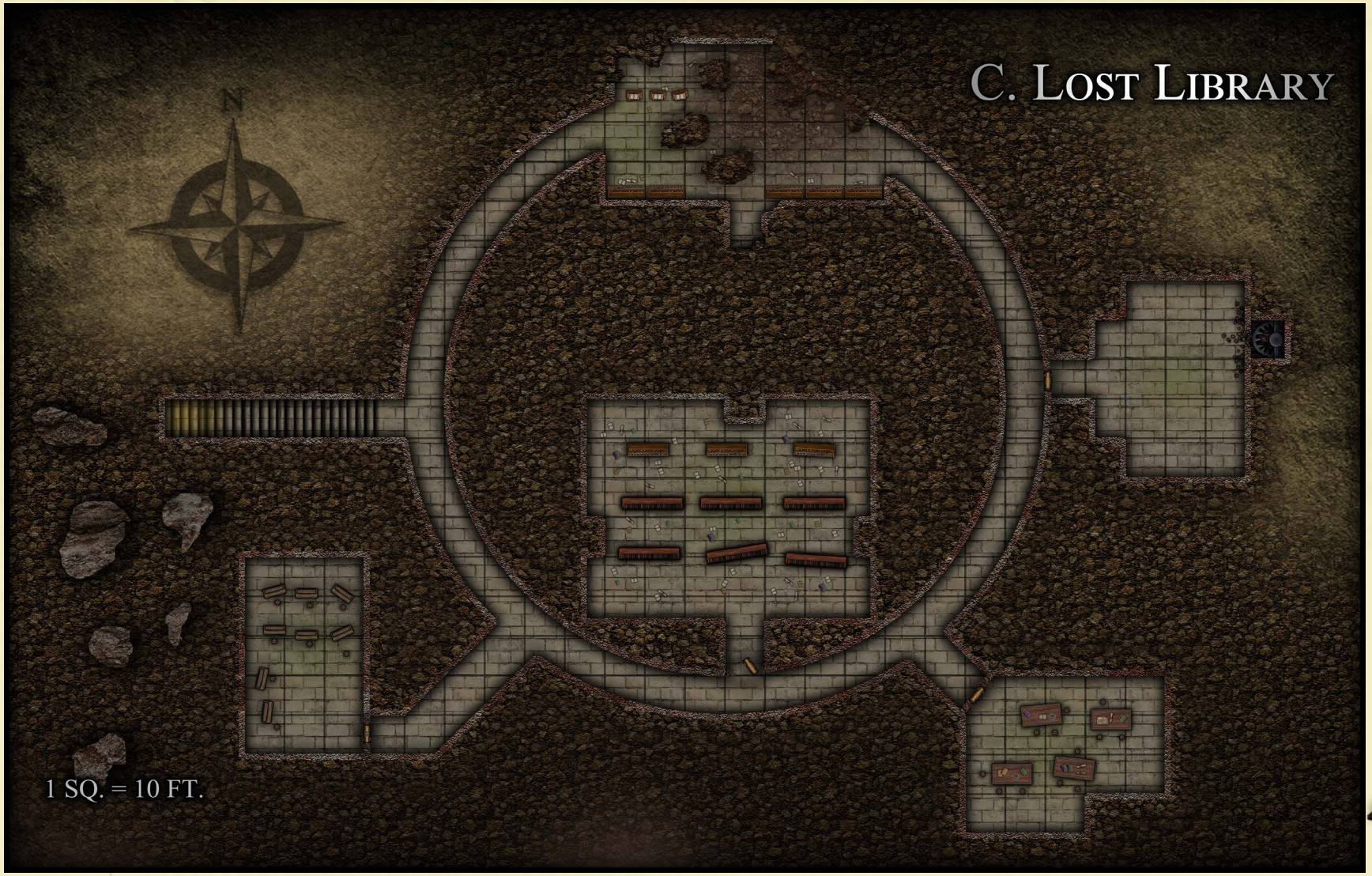

0. THE NEST
1 square = 10 ft.
TOP VIEW
N
W
E
S
1 square = 10 ft.


P. THE TRAVELERS TOMB
1 square = 30 ft.
Top View
1 square = 30 ft.
N
W
E
S
1 square = 10 ft.

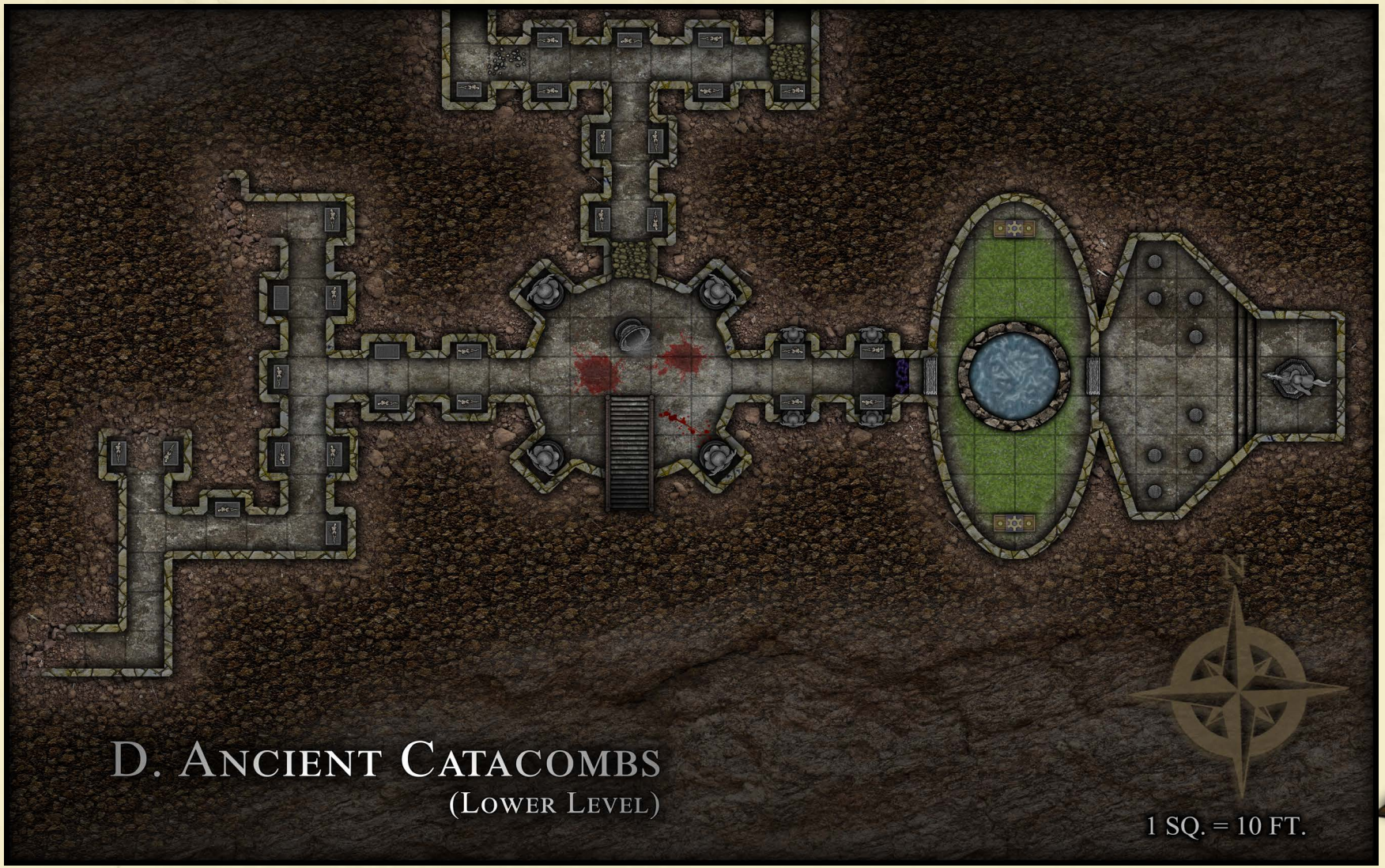

Q. THE MOTHER LODE
Upper Tunnels
N
E
S
W
1 square = 10 ft.
Lower Tunnels

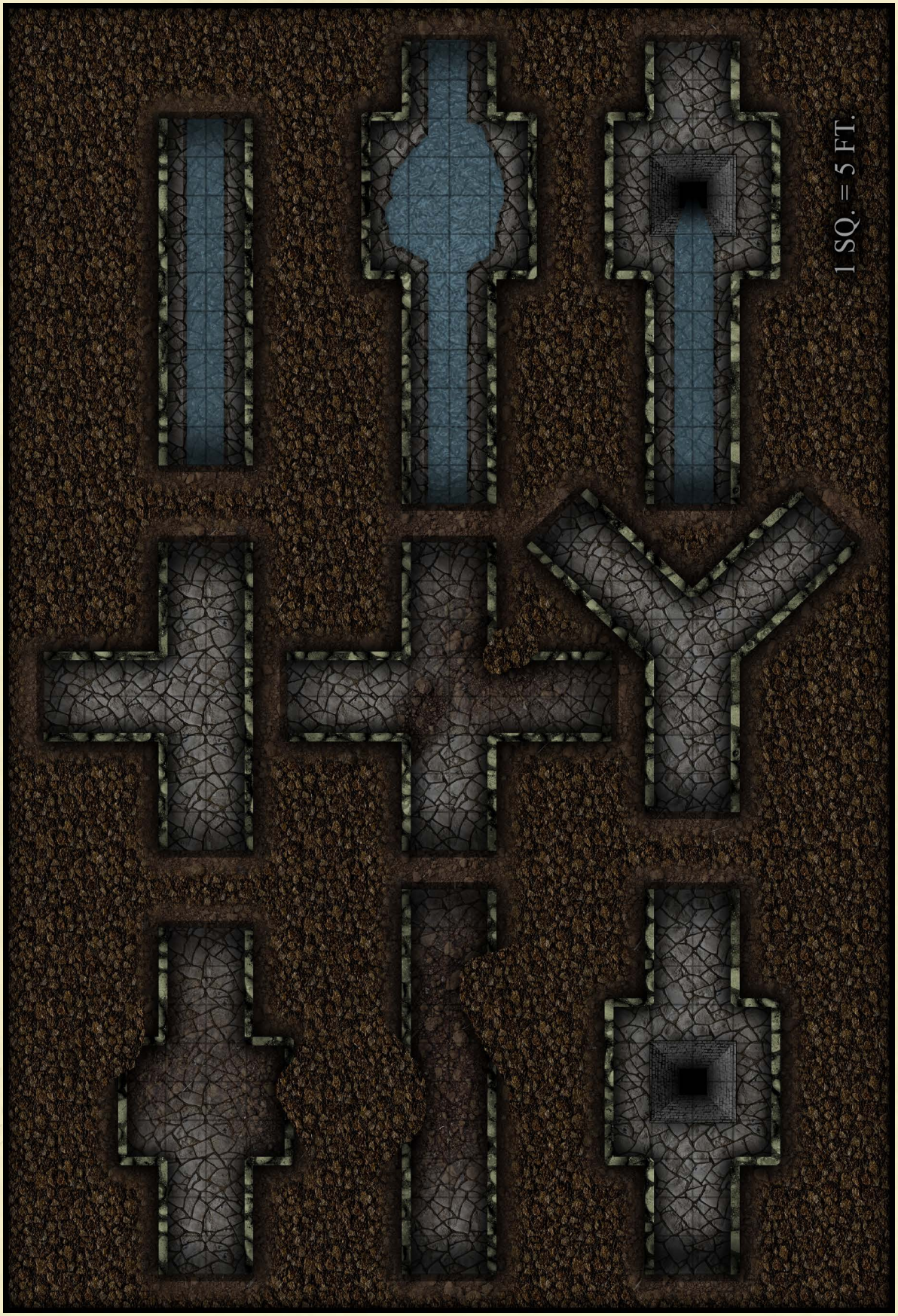

Old Curgantium
1 MILE


B. Base Camp
N
C
1 SQ. = 5 FT.

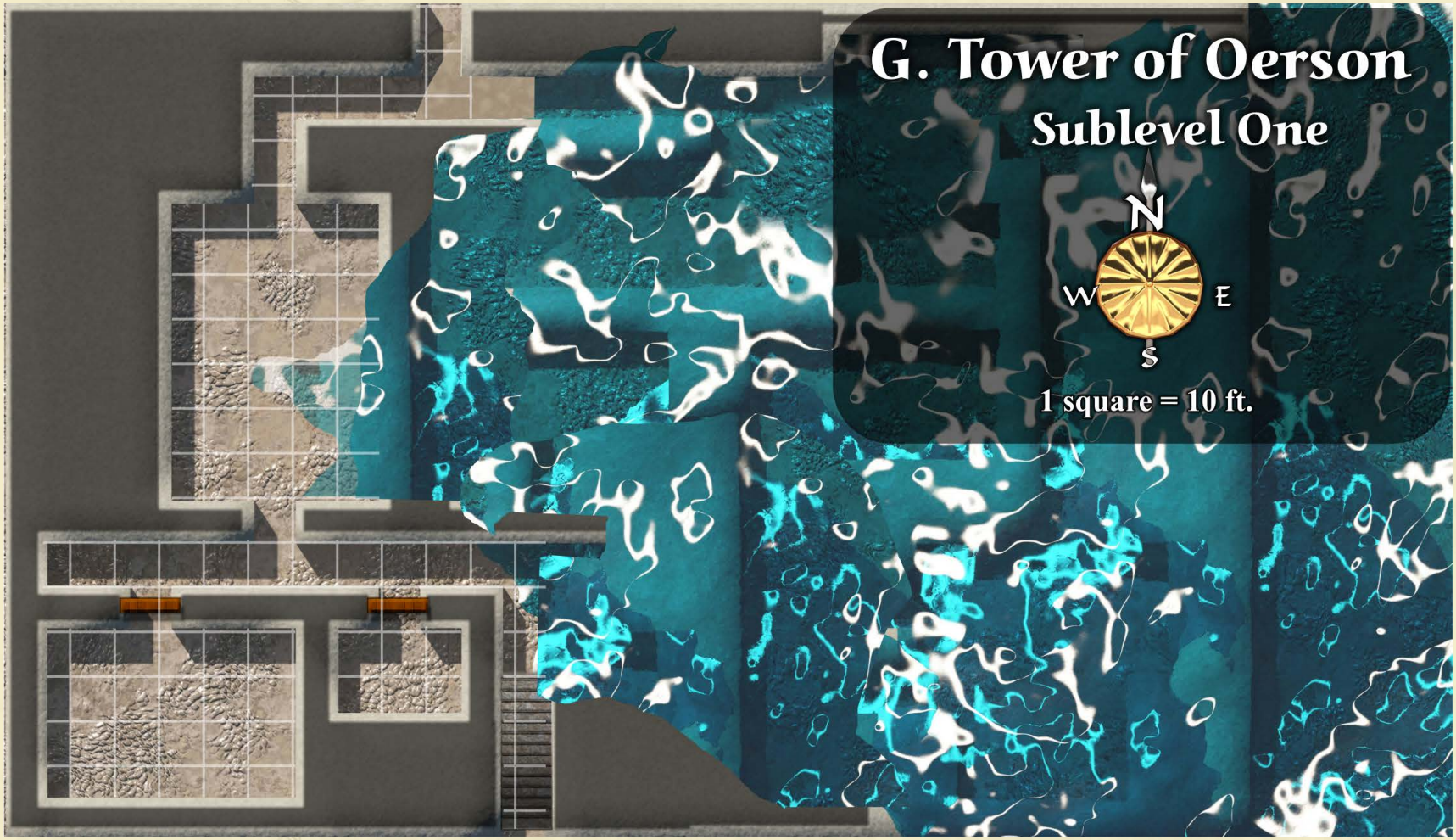

C. Lost Library
N
1 SQ. = 10 FT.


D. Ancient Catacombs
(Ground Level)
1 SQ. = 10 FT.


N
D. Ancient Catacombs
(Lower Level)
1 SQ. = 10 FT.


1 SQ. = 5 FT.


F. Ruined Theater
(ground floor)
N
1 sq. = 5 ft.
S
(subfloor)


G. Tower of Oerson
Sublevel One
N
W
E
S
1 square = 10 ft.


H. Tower of Oerson
Sublevel Two
N
W
E
S
1 square = 10 ft.


I. Tunnels of the Underguild
1 SQ. = 5 FT.

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