

Quests of Doom 4



A Midnight Council of Quail

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FROG GOD
GAMES

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A Midnight Council of Quail

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A Midnight Council of Quail

An adventure for 4 to 6 characters of 3rd to 5th level, but is tuned for 4 characters of 4th level, where the characters explore a village to locate the lair of a monstrous murderer — but the villagers don't want the murderer to be discovered.

Like all *Quests of Doom* adventures, this one can be placed in any land you choose as fits the needs of your own campaign. However, in the *Lost Lands* campaign setting, *A Midnight Council of Quail* is set in the Helcynngae Peninsula that lies just to the south of Cereduin Province at the bottom edge of the Borderland Provinces. Located in the northernmost lands of the Kingdom of the Helcynn, the homeland of the people known as the Heldring, the village of Eorls Gedreas stands just south of Wortham Firth that separates the Helcynngae from the Scar-in-the-Sky Peaks and the Domain of Hawkmoon. To the south of Eorls Gedreas extends the rolling uplands known as Oescyreheit Downs where the armies of the Heldring were finally and utterly defeated by the Foerdewaith in 2802 I.R., ushering in a new era of peace between the two peoples that has endured for seven centuries. The folk of Eorls Gedreas are primarily typical Heldring ceorls (“common folk”) but with a light mixture of immigrants from Helcynngae’s northern neighbors to add bit more diversity than is found in Heldring settlements farther south.

Adventure Background

The Archdruid Cadrryn is so old and mystical that his very presence often affects the natural world around him. Over the years, his close association with the region’s quail population has bestowed upon the birds a sentience uncommon to normal avians. With slightly advanced intelligence, the quail now act as local sentinels, reporting back to Cadrryn on all matters that transpire in his domain. But the druid has been away for more than a fortnight on business of the Druidic Order of Oescyreheit, leaving the quail to decide on important events without his wise hand to guide them. When the birds learn that a sinister force has infiltrated the nearby village of Eorls Gedreas, where many of them roost upon the thatched rooftops, the quail convene to determine a way to fight back.

Eorls Gedreas has become the latest hunting ground for a wereboar who has assumed the duties of the village’s læce (pronounced “leech”, the Heldring word for a healer and apothecary) after killing and eating the former herbalist. The wereboar has struck up an alliance with a mad druid who has taken up residence in a lightless subterranean world below the village, where he slowly murders one kidnapped villager at a time as part of his twisted plan for revenge against an imagined crime.

Adventure Summary

The adventure most likely unfolds with the distraught quail contacting the characters and asking for help. At the quails’ request, the characters explore Eorls Gedreas but most of the residents stonewall them in their efforts. The investigation leads either to the wereboar’s secret lift into the Under Realms or to the wilderness entrance of the Blind Burrows, depending on the characters’ actions. The party can then journey into the Blind Burrows through one of these two access points and ultimately confront the mad druid Anwyl, putting an end to his machinations.

Beginning the Adventure

The quail conduct a council at midnight and resolve to find a suitable group of willing humanoids to take care of the problem that they themselves cannot. They spend the next several hours in flight, searching. Shortly before dawn, when the characters are traveling or camping in the wilderness, a covey of quail emerge from the bushes around them. Read or paraphrase the following when the birds arrive:

A sudden rustling from the bushes startles you. About two dozen small birds emerge and quickly settle around your party, some taking up posts on low branches and stones, but most remaining on the ground. The birds are brown, with white and gray speckles, and they stare at you with obvious intent in their black eyes. They are not aggressive but clearly curious, unafraid to move within arm’s reach. Before you can do anything, one of the birds marches forward, cocks its head to one side, and speaks.

Though all of Cadrryn’s quail are imbued with an unnatural intelligence, one of them is also capable of speaking Common thanks to the archdruid’s magic. This quail is known as Pwyll. It tells the characters that it is an agent of the archdruid, and it rather seriously seeks their assistance. Pwyll informs the characters that the nearby village of Eorls Gedreas, where the quail keep their nests, has likely fallen under the influence of dark forces. The quail noticed that one of their favorite humans, a woman named Kalotte who used to feed them every morning, went missing five days ago, yet none of the other villagers seems concerned by her sudden disappearance. Further, the local swineherd has loosed his hogs from their pen, and now they eat freely from people’s gardens — though no one seems to care. Normally, the quail would report these observations to their master the archdruid. But as Cadrryn is away, they have sought out the characters for help. The characters can quiz the bird for more details, but Pwyll knows nothing else. Characters making a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check will know that Pwyll is telling the truth.

At this point, the characters have at least two options. They can choose to follow the quail to the village, a distance of a little over 6 miles. Or they can ignore the birds and continue with their current obligations, whatever they might be. If they opt to allow Pwyll to lead them to Eorls Gedreas, they cross a pleasant field of heather to a road that is little more than a pair of wagon tracks, angling through the moors. Birds serenade them as they go, and the trip seems as if it will be uneventful.

Ambush

The wereboar tries to dissuade strangers from visiting Eorls Gedreas. The best way to prevent unwanted guests is to kill them before they arrive. A pack of trained wolves hunts the plains on the outskirts of the village. Unless the characters are intentionally quiet when traveling that last mile, the 6 **wolves** keep low and move through the tall grasses on their bellies, attempting to get as close as possible before launching their attack. If the characters are mounted, the wolves understand that chomping at a horse’s leg is the best way to topple a rider. To determine if the wolves surprise any of the characters, roll a Dexterity (Stealth) check for each of the six wolves with their skill and proficiency bonus they are +4 to Dexterity (Stealth) and compare the outcome to the passive Wisdom (Perception) score for each of the characters. Those that have a lower passive Wisdom (Perception) than any of the Dexterity (Stealth) checks are surprised at the start of the encounter and cannot move, take an action, or use a reaction until the end of the first turn.

Eorls Gedreas

Established shortly after these lands were rid of monstrous denizens, the quaint community of Eorls Gedreas offers little for visitors. Locals here depend on agriculture to survive, and they consume what they grow, with just enough left over after the harvest to pay the local caldorman, Cuthardt, his tax. The homes are made of mortared stones, covered in moss and green ivy, their rooftops constructed of thatch. The road that winds between them is dirt, well-traveled by carts and livestock. The village is overrun with swine, as the wereboar doesn't want them harmed, so the flowers that once bloomed in tidy boxes along the road have been eaten, their rich soil dug up in the search for tasty grubs. Using his *ring of suggestion*, the wereboar has instructed the villagers to let the destructive swine do as they please. See **Appendix C** for more information the *ring of suggestion*.

The Wereboar's Scheme

The village's l  ce was murdered and eaten by a wereboar who partnered with the mad druid of the Blind Burrows, an old cavern complex that lies below the village. Shortly after the l  ce disappeared, the wereboar arrived at the village and introduced himself in human form as Odinel, a seller of herbs and arcana. Soon, he was accepted as the new l  ce of Eorls Gedreas. So far, he has kept his secret from the rest of the villagers; no one knows that he is a wereboar, and they certainly have no idea that he's been systematically enslaving them with his *ring of suggestion*. His is an exceptional version of that ring that permits him to control up to 20 subjects at once, but the subjects can only be human.

Odinel has allied with a deranged Daanite druid named Anwyl who has become corrupted by close contact with a toxic element (see "The Blind Burrows" for details). One by one, Anwyl intends to eradicate everyone in Eorls Gedreas. To this end, he has partnered with Odinel the wereboar-turned-healer Using his *ring of suggestion*, the wereboar manipulates the village: He eats the most food, lives in the finest house, and generally behaves like a spoiled despot. Sadistic and cruel, he enjoys sending the occasional villager down into the Blind Burrows, where Anwyl tortures them to death. When the characters arrive, Odinel has extended his control over most of the village population, with a few notable exceptions. Each NPC description is followed with an "Infected" entry that notes whether that particular person is under the wereboar's sway.

The Wunderkind

One villager who has not yet fallen victim to Odinel's toxic influence is the orphan seamstress Elysant. Though only 14 years old, her skill with needle and thread borders on the legendary; she is far and away the most talented seamstress the characters have ever encountered. Though forced to work with the simple fabrics of a ceorl, Elysant creates dresses, bonnets, shawls, and cloaks that are multi-layered, complex, and wonderfully complementary to the body shape of her customers. The characters first learn of Elysant when they encounter villagers who wear clothing that is obviously not the usual attire of the Heldring common ceorls. Eventually, they meet the girl herself. Her skill with a needle is matched only by her thirst for justice.

The Investigation

The characters are likely to start asking about the strange events described by the quail. However, anyone noted as being "Infected" by the wereboar's *ring of suggestion* claims that nothing is wrong or that the characters received bad information. Each infected NPC uses a different tactic to discourage the characters from pursuing their inquiry. It should eventually become evident that a mass cover-up is in place. A character who succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check realizes that the "Infected" are being less than forthright with their answers to questions about the strange events.

A few citizens are more helpful, however, so patient players that succeed on a DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check will be rewarded with information.

The characters might ask about Kalotte, the woman who used to feed the quail before disappearing. Infected NPCs simply shrug and say that Kalotte liked to walk alone and was probably killed by wolves. Those not infected by the wereboar's enchanted ring say that Kalotte was last seen wearing a vibrant red dress made by Elysant. No one saw her leave the village. She seems to have vanished. The characters learn Kalotte's true fate only if they visit area **14** in the Blind Burrows below the village.

While poking around in search of clues, the characters with a passive Wisdom (Perception) of at least 10 make two observations.

- Hogs and pigs roam freely, making a mess of things, but are left unattended.
- Many of the villagers wear clothes of expert design, despite the simple fabrics.

For every numbered location the characters visit, there is a 10% cumulative chance that Odinel orders his 8 **wild boars** to attack the characters. Optionally, you may have the boars launch their surprise attack whenever it is most appropriate, given the characters' actions.

If you decide to use the cumulative method, use a d10 to determine if the boars attack at each location. At the first numbered location, a roll of 1 on a d10 indicates they do attack, at the second location a roll of 2 or lower on a d10 means an attack and so forth. The boars will only attack once, however, not at each location.

Arrival at the Village

Led by the quail, the characters enter Eorls Gedreas from the south.

The quail spread out across the village, some alighting on thatched rooftops while others casually begin searching for seeds and worms while they resume their careful observation of the surrounding homes, most of which are rather tumbledown and plain. These houses are made of fieldstones, stacked and held with gray mortar. Ivy covers many of them. In most ways, this seems to be a typical Heldring village, with quiet work going on in gardens and surrounding fields. In fact, the only two things that seem unusual are the fancy dresses worn by some of these peasant women and the unusual number of swine roaming freely between the houses.

The characters are free to explore Eorls Gedreas in any manner they choose.

A. Oilman

Infected: Yes.

The old widower Folc (N male human **commoner**) lives here, providing oil to his fellow villagers in exchange for basic living supplies. As an oilman, Folc produces oil from flax, castor seeds, and from fish he catches in nearby Wortham Firth. This essential substance keeps the lanterns burning in Eorls Gedreas, so Folc is held in high regard. He welcomes the characters, and invites them to play a few rounds of a board game called *halataft*, as he is a lonely man and knows he shouldn't constantly pester the other villagers to play.

As he is under Odinel's influence, Folc can impart no helpful knowledge to the inquisitive characters, and in fact, he appears blissfully ignorant of any odd happenings in Eorls Gedreas. He seems concerned only with his oils and his card game. He grows irritated if faced with too many questions and suggests that the characters return to him when they are of the mind to play some serious *halataft* without all of these silly notions in their heads.

B. Farrier and Stable

Infected: No.

Linhorn Tosscombe (N male halfling **commoner**), a horseshoe maker, keeps a small paddock of horses and ponies here. Fancying himself something of a misunderstood romantic, Linhorn tends to over-pour the charm when he's in the presence of someone he finds physically attractive. Good-natured if a little self-centered, the halfling talks amicably with

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the characters and wonders aloud about all of the adventurous quests they've completed. If asked and the asking character succeeds on a DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check, Linhorn admits a "queer feeling" he's had lately when talking to his neighbors. They all seem unusually content, no longer complaining about the ealdorman's high taxes or the lack of recent rainfall for the crops. He suggests that the characters speak with Rowan the gong farmer (area E), who used to be Linhorn's drinking partner but now seems more concerned with sleeping — and that has Linhorn worried.

If the characters need fresh horses, tack, or shoes, Linhorn is happy to provide them at the usual rates, though he offers a discount to anyone he finds personally attractive.

C. Chandler and Apiary

Infected: Yes.

Every village needs a local candle-maker, and Gaillart and his family fill that vital role. They produce candles made of beeswax taken from the hives they maintain behind their home. They also trade in honey. Gaillart is happy to give the characters a free jar of his honey, and his wife insists on showing them her entire line of candles in different sizes and shapes. Though enchanted by the wereboar's magic ring, Gaillart remains good at heart, displaying a boyhood glee when talking about his beloved bees and explaining how they gather nectar, draw comb, and produce honey. If a character succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check, they will discern that something is off about Gaillart.

One of the wooden boxes that serves as a beehive performs double duty as Gaillart's secret stash. If the characters brave the thousands of bees building comb and storing honey in the box — getting stung dozens of times in the process and having to succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw to avoid being poisoned for 8 hours — they find a small metal tube. The tube is sealed shut with propolis, a sticky substance that bees use as caulking. Inside the tube are a dozen bowls of Silver Harp tobacco, favored for its mildly euphoric experience and occasional hallucinations (see *LL8: Bard's Gate* by *Frog God Games* for details of Silver Harp tobacco).

D. "Crystal Lake"

A pale green skin of plant life mostly covers this small pond. Tall weeds with bright yellow tips grow up around the water's edge, and dragonflies almost six inches long skim the surface in search of food. Long-legged birds strut around the marshy perimeter, snapping up tiny frogs. The birds seem unconcerned by your presence, even when you draw near. Jutting up from the center of the pond is what appears to be the tip of a rusty spear.

The locals do not use this as a water source, as the taste is much too bitter because of its thick growths of algae and silt-filled waters. The villagers have always jokingly referred to the pond as "Crystal Lake". The quail have assured the birds who forage here that the characters are allies, so they have no intention of interrupting their meal to fly away in unwarranted fear.

The village children sometimes cast toy boats across the pond's surface, but they aren't allowed to play in the water due to the fact that giant frogs routinely nest here to birth their tadpoles. The frogs harm no one on dry land. However, the spear blade sticking out of the water might be sufficient to tempt the characters to wade in and study the situation. If they wisely ask one of the people of Eorls Gedreas about the weapon before swimming out there, they're told that the item is actually a pike, and its butt end is stuck in the mud at the bottom of the pool. A year ago, a man named Sephan decided to impale a giant frog and cook it for dinner. Instead, he ended up dead, and his body never floated to the surface. The villagers assume his remains are down there still.

Anyone venturing into the water to fetch the pike or to look for Sephan's body — perhaps thinking it a clue in their current quest — must deal with the 8 **giant frogs** that occupy "Crystal Lake". Swimming to the pike is accomplished with a successful DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check. Characters with a passive Wisdom (Perception) of at least 15 will

be able to detect the frogs approaching and will not be surprised by them. If combat ensues, refer to the game manual for underwater combat rules.

If the characters somehow manage to see in the murky, muddy water, they discover a few human bones, but nothing else. The pike's wooden shaft is now almost spongelike from water absorption.

E. Gong Farmer

Infected: Yes.

Rowan (N male human **commoner**) tends the village latrine. A six-sided building near his small home is politely referred to as the "House of Easement," but is essentially a wooden shell over a cesspit. A channel in the bottom of the pit carries the liquid waste away from the village, but the solid waste (referred to as "gong") must be removed manually and carried away. This task falls to Rowan and his wife, Cedany. The couple usually conducts their work at night so as not to be seen trundling carts of human excrement through Eorls Gedreas en route to the gong mounds a quarter mile away. They euphemistically call their cargo "night soil."

Rowan usually sleeps during the day. He used to drink with the halfling Linhorn (area B), but gave that up ever since falling under the control of the wereboar. Within the House of Easement, on the far side of the gong pit, is a round, flat stone. Moving this stone reveals a tunnel to area 1 of the Blind Burrows. The stone weighs 50 lbs., and the villagers never bother it, as Rowan has told them that it covers the village's former cesspit before it was filled and a new one built on top of it. He does everything he can to prevent the characters from moving the stone aside and discovering the tunnel below. A character that succeeds on a DC 13 Wisdom (Insight) check realizes that Rowan seems very nervous when any of the characters approach the stone, and that he is clearly lying as to the purpose it serves.

F. Ropemaker

Infected: Yes.

Ropes of various thicknesses and tensile strengths are coiled neatly all around this small home. Lariats hang from hooks on either side of the door. The local ropemaker is a narrow-boned human male named Tybalt (N male human **commoner**). His long, quick fingers have spent years weaving rope from hemp plants, and he's something of a sage of his craft. If the characters are interested, Tybalt can explain the differences in his lines. The standard 50-foot rope costs 1 gp and is half-inch thick, with a breaking strain of 500 lbs. Tybalt offers many others:

Hemp Rope

| Diameter (in inches) | Cost per 50-foot | Load (in pounds) | Weight (in pounds) |
|-------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1/16 | 5 cp | 10 | 1/3 |
| 1/3 | 2 sp | 50 | 2 |
| 1/4 | 7 sp | 225 | 9 |
| 1/2 | 1 gp | 500 | 20 |
| 1 | 5 gp | 900 | 36 |
| 2 | 25 gp | 3,550 | 42 |
| 3 | 50 gp | 8,000 | 320 |

The thickest of Tybalt's ropes are designed for use by ships that sail upon the nearby firth, hence their extreme loads and overall weights; enterprising characters may likely find a use for such formidable hawsers.

Tybalt can't answer any questions the characters have about the recent occurrences in the village, simply because all he'll talk about are his ropes and why the characters should invest in a wide variety of different sizes, as they'll never know what a particular situation might require.

G. Elder

Infected: Yes.

Though known as Sigemikus the Sorcerer (N male human **commoner**) (a galdre, or "magician" in local terminology), this aging plowman earned

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the moniker not because of any magical prowess but rather due to his ability to amuse the village children with his sleight-of-hand. He is locally famous for making an acorn pass mystically from one overturned cup to another. If asked about the unusual events in Eorls Gedreas, Sigemikus deflects the question by offering to show the characters his parlor trick, of which he remains proud, even after all these years. Sigemikus has no vocation and does not work, as he is too infirm. He depends upon the largess of the other villagers for food and clothing.

H. Swine Pens

Infected: Yes.

Houdart (N male human **commoner**) the swineherd was the first put under the wereboar's magical influence. Odinel could not abide seeing the pigs held captive and put to slaughter, as he considers them something of his kin, and so now all four dozen of them are permitted to roam around Eorls Gedreas and feed on anything they like. No one is allowed to harm them. If questioned about these hogs-at-large, Houdart just shrugs and says he got tired of tending to them. "They're noisy, obnoxious beasts," he says. "Let someone else contend with them." If pressed, Houdart grows visibly uncomfortable, and it should become clear that he's not relating the entire story. But no matter how persistent the characters are in their interrogation, Houdart is unable to reveal everything, as the power of the wereboar's magic ring is too strong. Eventually, he says he needs to go see the læce for some medicine; only Odinel the læce can help. If any of the characters succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check, his might be enough to point the characters in the right direction - but not necessarily so. If you want them to further explore the town and its inhabitants, reveal only what you think is necessary to accomplish that.

They can also find the entrance to the Blind Burrows by visiting Rowan the gong farmer (area E).

I. Family Farm

Infected: Yes.

Carefully tended crops of all sorts grow in different patches around this home. Standing in the middle of a barley field out back is a black-headed scarecrow mounted on a crucifix of wood and rope. Its shirt is stuffed with moldy straw. Its mouth is painted the color of blood.

Theom, his wife, and their 4 children (all N male or female human **commoners**) work from dawn until sunset almost every day, raising the crops that they barter for other things they need to survive. All six family members have fallen prey to the wereboar's magic ring, so instead of replying to questions in a helpful way, they shrug and claim to be exactly what they are: simple farm-folk just trying to work hard every day and do right by the gods. Theom goes so far as to ask the characters if they wouldn't mind spending a few hours helping him remove weeds between the rows. The scarecrow, though somewhat threatening in appearance, is quite harmless.

If the characters are particularly friendly, Theom's children take a liking to them and follow them around the village, asking questions about their journeys and trying to touch their weapons.

J. Apothecary Shop

Infected: NA.

This is the finest home in Eorls Gedreas. The local healer has always been a vital part of the village's well-being, as the limited ministrations of the resident cleric aren't always sufficient for easing the daily discomforts of the villagers, from upset stomachs to broken hearts. Outside the læce's door are gift baskets: yellow squash, fresh bread, metal flatware, earthenware pots, and fresh flowers. The characters might assume these favors are in thanks for the aid that Odinel provides, but actually they are tributes he demands from those under his control. The wereboar is gluttonous by nature and consumes more than his share of food, so he



depends on the villagers to provide for him from their own dwindling supplies.

The characters might come here after speaking with Elysant (area K), or they might simply visit randomly as part of their investigation. Either way, Odinel receives them as a professional but not as someone overly fond of guests. In human form, he stands 5-1/2 feet tall, with a very wide torso and considerable belly. His hair is thick and black, with coarse stubble covering his double chin. He wears an apron while working with his herbs and tonics, hard-soled black boots, and the *ring of suggestion* on the little finger of his left hand — the only finger not too chubby to accommodate a ring.

His house also serves as his herbalism shop. The main living area has a bed to one side and racks of shelves on the other, with a small round table in between. The shelves contain poultices, salves, and tiny jarred remedies, some more effective than others. This is the only room that guests are permitted to see. A thick blanket hangs like a curtain that conceals the other part of the house. Odinel does not bring attention to this room, and if asked what lies beyond the makeshift curtain, he says it's simply his overstock of such herbs as bloodroot, liverwort, and kingsfoil. In actuality, the floor of that room has been removed and a simple block-and-tackle system installed, enabling a platform to be lowered to area 18 of the Blind Burrows. There is an 80% chance that the lift is here in its upper position when the characters arrive. Odinel uses the lift to send victims down to the druid.

Odinel is a clever actor and does nothing to reveal his true nature. His goal is simply to get the characters to leave his shop. If pressed, he becomes gruff; his weakness is his short temper. If the characters force their way through the curtain or if you deem that Odinel has reached a breaking point, he transforms to a human-boar hybrid and attacks.

Odinel is a **wereboar** with the following additional features that increase his challenge rating to 5 (1,800 XP):

- Odinel has a wisdom of 14 (+2).
- He has the following saving throw bonuses: Con +5, Wis +5.

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- Odinel carries a *dagger +1*, and he wears a *ring of suggestion*.

The only way the characters will be able to conduct a complete search of the wereboar's home is to defeat him, at which point they're free to probe his collection of herbs and other items. After making a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check, they discover the following:

- wooden ladle inlaid with silver (15 gp)
- catoblepas-skin pouch containing 14 gp and a freshwater pearl (25 gp)
- herbal ingredients such as lyre-leaf sage, skullcap, snakeroot, deadly nightshade, and others
- deed to a small keep called Colthran Hold
- spool of fine silkworm thread with the tensile strength of steel

Finally, a loose floorboard — discovered on a successful DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check — reveals a delicate glass bottle with a narrow neck and a stone stopper. This is a *thought bottle* (see **Appendix C**).

K. Seamstress

Infected: No.

This is the home and shop of the most talented person in Eorls Gedreas, the sewing prodigy Elysant (N female *changeling** **commoner**). Though she appears human, Elysant isn't, and like Linhorn the halfling (area **B**), she is not subject to the effects of the wereboar's *ring of suggestion*. Though only 14 years old, Elysant lives alone, an orphan quite capable of taking care of herself. Her ability to sew beautiful clothing is unsurpassed. Indeed, if the rulers of the kingdom were to learn of Elysant's skill, they would whisk her away to the castle and give her anything she fancied in return for making gorgeous gowns.

Elysant knows that folks have been acting a little strange lately. At first, she thought that someone had found a pouch of fey powder and had accidentally afflicted everyone with a fairy bliss charm; she'd heard such stories when she was younger. The only villagers still acting normal, at least in her estimation, are the halfling stable-keeper and the læce. Because she is concerned for her friends, she is willing to accompany the characters if they invite her, so as to make introductions.

The characters might wish to commission a custom garment from Elysant; they will find no finer in all the kingdom. The young seamstress mainly deals in barter, and she's quite willing to accept all manner of household items in exchange for a new outfit. Of course, if the characters offer gold, Elysant gladly obliges, as gold shillings are rare here in these humble environs.

*A changeling is the offspring of a hag and its lover, which can be of most humanoid races.

L. Church

Infected: Yes.

The unmarried Deodatus serves as the pastor of Eorls Gedreas. Friar Deodatus (LG male human **priest**) is a missionary cleric of Ceres, the goddess of grain, or an agrarian deity of your pantheon from your own campaign world. The pastor is a skilled gardener and maintains a few rows of vegetables and wheat, which he dotes on like a proud father. He brews a somewhat weak ale in his spare time. Plainspoken and sincere, Friar Deodatus assures the characters that the village is quite safe and that their suspicions are baseless. He is willing to use his curative powers on anyone in need of aid, though he does so while raising his eyebrows in the direction of the poor box.

If the characters enter the cleric's home and search his belongings, they most likely are disappointed, as he possesses only the accoutrements of a country friar ... for the most part.

However, if a character makes a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check, they will find that tucked away under some carefully folded woolen blankets is a ceremonial holy symbol in the disc shape of a millstone. It is made of gold and worth 50 gp, resting in a deeply polished wooden box that is engraved with the friar's name and the date of his ordination. At the your option, anyone stealing this item is afflicted with a minor curse, as taking the sole treasure of a man of the cloth invokes the ire of the immortals.

M. Thatcher

Infected: Yes.

A young woman who dresses like a man maintains the roofs of the village homes. Her name is Yuald (N female human **commoner**), and she wears her dead father's tool belt and carries on his occupation now that he's gone. With close-cropped hair and a no-nonsense attitude, Yuald is efficient and hardworking, hauling straw and reeds up ladders all day to keep out the rain. She works nearly every day. She tends to be a loner, and an observant one, and before falling under the effects of Odinel's magic, she would have been quick to assist the characters in uncovering the trouble. Now, though, she shrugs off every meaningful question by saying she has work to do. However, if the characters are persistent and one of them makes a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check, Yuald does admit that things are different now, though she doesn't know why, and that she dearly misses her friend Kalotte (the woman in the red dress who can be found in area **14** in the Blind Burrows).

The characters can gain a bit of Yuald's trust by offering to help her mend the village rooftops. To thatch a roof, the characters gather water reed from Yuald's supply and haul it up a ladder. The thatch is held to the roof supports with a spar of split hazelwood. Yuald hands the characters a spade-like tool called a legget that they'll use to tap the thatch into a uniform shape. The ends of any errant reeds are cropped with Yuald's shearing hook, and the roof is complete 2d4 hours later. If the characters lend a hand to this labor, Yuald sits down with them for a simple meal of rye bread, cheese, and the friar's ale. She is unable to speak out against Odinel, as she is under his control, but she does admit that Rowan the gong farmer (area **E**) has been in a very bad mood recently whenever Yuald visited the House of Easement.

N. Baker

Infected: Yes.

Inhelm (N male human **commoner**), the baker, spends most of his days brooding about a son he lost in battle a decade ago, so his wife, Milnyd (N female human **commoner**), conducts almost all of the baking while her husband slips further into a mire of self-pity. Inhelm is soft-spoken and distant, though not impolite. Characters visiting the interior of the bakery and making a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check might become suspicious of a chained and locked metal trunk that rests in the corner. This contains the personal effects of Inhelm and Milnyd's deceased son and nothing else of value, but the couple changes the subject if the characters mention the box, perhaps stoking their curiosity to know what's inside.

O. The Puppet Show

Infected: No.

As you approach, you see a poorly built wooden merchant's stall converted into some kind of stage for a child's puppet show. Apparently, someone crouches down behind the stall, as two dolls re-enact a scene from a bedtime story. Though the dolls themselves are crudely made, their tiny costumes are beautiful and complex. One of the dolls is equipped with a miniature sword. Standing around and watching this puppet play are half-dozen children. When the sword-wielding doll takes a swing at his fellow mannequin, who ducks and retaliates with an equally small broom, the audience laughs.

Two young dwarves, Zedford (N male dwarf **sneakthief**) and Kasdri (N male dwarf **sneakthief**), the only two of their race in the village, perform the play (see **Appendix A** for details on the sneakthief). Itinerant storytellers, the dwarf cousins ride shaggy ponies from one community to the next, performing their poetry and puppet plays in exchange for a few silver groats and the promise of a hot meal or two. As nonhumans, they are immune to the powers of Odinel's magic ring. They're finding their audience here in Eorls Gedreas to be complacent and rather uninspired but

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nonetheless happy to have a diversion from the drudgery of their lives.

The dwarves were quite pleased to meet Elysant (area **K**), as the girl sewed the elaborate outfits worn by the puppets. This was a great bit of barter in the dwarves' eyes, and they're pleased to entertain the villagers for another day or so before packing up their show and moving on. The dwarves are chatty fellows and willing to speak at length to the characters, their favorite topics being theater arts, pastoral poetry, and pie. Zedford has a "strange feeling" about Eorls Gedreas, but Kasdri doesn't allow him to elaborate without getting something in return. While Zedford likes to ramble about his personal suspicions, moral questions, and life goals, Kasdri keeps him focused on their primary agenda: making money. If a character makes a successful DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion check) or if they grease the wheels by offering a sufficient sum (25 gp), Kasdri magnanimously gestures for Zedford to spill what he knows. The characters learn that Rowan the gong farmer (area **E**) harassed Zedford for taking too long to do his business in the latrine. In fact, Rowan appeared quite anxious to have Zedford finish up and be on his way. "It was rather uncomfortable, really," Zedford admits. "And more than a little embarrassing!"

The Blind Burrows

Years ago, the Under Realm race known as the derro accessed the sunlit land above by sailing flat-bottom rafts along an underground river until reaching a series of caves collectively known as the Doorway. By venturing through this "Doorway," the derro could sneak into the painfully sunlit world, conduct their fell business, and return before dawn, laden with stolen goods, livestock, and, sometimes, abductees. They depended on the river to make this journey, as no dry tunnel connected their deep settlements to the surface. When a natural earthquake caused a collapse that drained half the river and filled the tunnel with tons of fallen rock, the derro lost access to the Doorway and all the rooms they had excavated to store their supplies. In the absence of any activity, bats soon took up residence in the cavern complex in a massive colony that continues to occupy these caves.

This derro-built, guano-filled place is now also the hidden home of a troubled **druid** named Anwyl. Formerly a member in good standing of the Druidic Order of Oescreheit, Anwyl was emotionally and mentally transformed by prolonged contact with a dangerous substance called *earthmurk*. A stone tainted by negative energy, *earthmurk* radiates an invisible field of negative energy that attacks the nervous system of any living creature in close proximity to it. Due to *earthmurk* poisoning, Anwyl is quite insane, gripped by extreme paranoia and a thirst for revenge against the people of his home village, Eorls Gedreas. He now lives in the darkness of the caves he has fittingly renamed the Blind Burrows. For full details on *earthmurk*, refer to **Appendix C**.

Light

Home to an uncounted number of bats, the Blind Burrows are completely, utterly dark. The characters must bring alternate light sources. Darkvision is somewhat ineffective, as almost everything in the cave system is a uniform 55° F, providing little contrast for those attempting to make sense of shapes. You should keep careful track of the radius of light provided by the characters' torches, lanterns, and spells:

- Hooded lanterns casts bright light in a 30-foot radius and dim light for an additional 30 feet.
- Bullseye lanterns casts bright light in a 60-foot cone and dim light for an additional 60 feet.
- Torches shed bright light in a 20-foot radius and dim light for an additional 20 feet, but they are the easiest for swarms of bats to extinguish.
- The *light* casts bright light in a 20-foot radius and dim light for an additional 20 feet. Further complicating matters, Anwyl has created a persistent sphere of *darkness* at area **13** using charges from his *staff of the shoreline* (refer to **Appendix C** for more details). The magical darkness at area **13** counteracts darkvision.

If at any point the characters are without a light source, they can see absolutely nothing — not even their fingers waving in front of their faces — and are considered to have the blinded condition, and would fail

any ability check requiring sight. If this occurs, 2 of Anwyl's **giant bats** attacks the sightless characters to exploit their weakness. All attack rolls made by the characters in total darkness would be at disadvantage. The bat, however, faces no such penalty and would attack the characters with advantage. Keep in mind that characters with darkvision are not affected by normal darkness, only magical darkness.

Bat Swam

Anwyl uses his magic to commune with the cave's normal bats. He has convinced them to defend their shared home. Though standard bats are small and pose no serious threat to the characters, when swarming *en masse*, thousands of bats can prove troublesome, indeed. Anwyl has trained the swarming bats to attack light sources in order to put intruders at a serious disadvantage. When a swarm of bats occupies the same space as one of the characters, there is a possibility that the massed bats can extinguish torches and other open flames. Whether or not this happens is completely up to you.

Keyed Encounters

The characters have discovered one or perhaps both of the entrances to the Blind Burrows. The natural cavern was expanded and somewhat refined by derro explorers, but they were forced to abandon the area, leaving many of their supplies behind when an earth tremor collapsed the tunnel that connected the Burrows to the derro dwellings far below the surface.

1. Into the Blind

The characters enter here if they discovered the hidden tunnel in the House of Easement at area **E** in Eorls Gedreas.

A tunnel extends deep into the ground, varying between 15 feet wide and 5 feet wide it as leads northeast into the unknown. The ceiling is barely 7 feet high in most places. It appears as if a natural cave opening was hastily enlarged at some point in the distant past, with the rough signs of pickaxes and shovel blades still scarring the walls. Clearly, visitors are not wanted, as a mound of sticks and damp leaves is piled up to a height of 4 feet, blocking your path. Toadstools with bright orange caps have sprouted up from this moist compost. They form a pattern that is almost beautiful here in the semi-dark.

The toadstools might give the characters pause, but a DC 13 Intelligence (Nature) check reveals they are normal and harmless. A skilled herbalist might be able to harvest them as ingredients in a poultice or salve. Clearing the debris from the tunnel cannot be done quietly without the aid of magic, which rouses the guardian at area **2**.

2. Sentry

Anwyl stationed 2 **giant badgers** here to dissuade unwanted arrivals. Nearly as tall as a grown human, the badgers spend a good portion of the day sleeping. It leaves its lair to hunt and forage when Rowan the gong farmer removes the stone from the tunnel entrance inside the House of Easement. Any noise at area **1**, such as the shifting of the deadfall, has a 75% chance of waking it. The badgers rest on a ledge at the 10-foot elevation and they leap down and charge if anyone draws near.

The badgers are entirely fearless and attack savagely. You should note the width of the corridor, as the relatively tight confines might make for an interesting battle, as not everyone may be able to crowd in close and attack the angry animal simultaneously. It wouldn't be out of the question if the fight causes enough noise to attract more creatures, such as another 2 additional **giant badgers** and 4 **swarms of bats**.

Rummaging through the badger's nest requires the characters get up the 10-foot rise to the next elevation level. This can be accomplished easily

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enough with a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check, but it should serve as foreshadowing for the many changes in elevation they'll face in the caverns to come. The nest is a surprisingly comfortable layer of leaves and grasses, though it smells strongly of animal fur. Lost among the bedding, and discovered on a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check, is a scratched and tarnished silver ring with an amethyst set in it. This is a *ring of poison resistance* that the badger spat out after chewing someone's finger.

3. Runic Steps

The elevation changes here, rising on four stone steps to a door, also made of stone. The steps are wide and flat, obviously placed here many years ago. The steps have been deeply inscribed with runes. Each step bears a different runic word.

The 1st-level spell *comprehend languages* can also make sense of the inscriptions. Of course, any speaker of Undercommon automatically understands the runes, which read, "*Do not step here,*" with one word appearing on each stair. A character that succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check will notice that the fourth and the topmost step, both which bears the word "*here,*" conceal pressure plates that are triggered when more than 10 lbs. of pressure is placed on either step. Given a least a full, uninterrupted minute, a character who succeeds on a DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools can disarm the rockfall trap that is triggered by these pressure plates. If the check succeeds, both plates are disarmed and the trap is rendered harmless.

If the check fails, the trap is triggered and 500 lbs. of rocks drop from the ceiling, causing 21 (6d6) points of damage to the character who failed

to disarm the trap. A successful DC 15 Dexterity saving throw means the character deftly dodged out of the way at the last minute and only takes half damage.

If the check fails by 5 or more, both plates are triggered dropping rocks the entire length of the stairs. All characters occupying the stairs can make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw to avoid taking 35 (10d6) points of damage from falling rocks. A successful saving throw results in half damage.

Those that are buried by the rockfall must be dug out by their companions. Doing so takes at least an hour and can result in a wandering creature coming up on those moving the rocks.

The derro once used these chambers to raid the surface world, and they took measures to ensure they weren't followed back to their lair. These stepping-stones are part of those defenses. The stone door was designed so anyone more than 5-1/2 feet tall needs to duck to enter. It is quite heavy and its hinges have worn out over time, requiring a DC 12 Strength check to open.

4. The Decapitated Drow

Remember that the characters must provide their own light source to see anything in these otherwise black cavern rooms.

This cave is roughly 20 feet across and 30 feet north-to-south. A natural pillar in the middle of the room supports the ceiling. Stacked around the pillar are old crates, boxes, and other containers, many of them having long ago rotted away. The room appears to have once served as a storage area for dry goods. One of the boxes is made of glass. It is about 18 inches on a side, with a delicately hinged glass lid. Resting inside the box is a dark-skinned humanoid head severed at its neck. It appears to be the head of a male elf, with inky black skin and perfectly white hair. It looks to be some kind of grotesque trophy.

The derro stored foodstuffs here, but these provisions have degraded, as have many of their containers. But the derro also kept items here they acquired during their raids. A character that makes a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check while sorting through the containers finds the following items that vary in value and quality:

- lantern with red glass panes
- leather pouch with 10 pitons
- scroll of tax entries from the office of the ealdorman's reeve
- ivory hair comb (5 gp)
- empty bottle labeled "Separation"
- *signal flag of clouds* (refer to **Appendix C** for more details)

If the characters approach the head in the glass box, the drow's eyelids flash open, revealing amethyst-colored eyes. This is what remains of Nymatar Maeafin, whose head was cut off by the skum slaves of an aboleth. The deranged but powerful aboleth commanded sufficient magical power to keep Nymatar's head alive even after it was separated from his body. This was done as a special form of torture, as the dark elf had been caught trying to double-deal the aboleth in an Under Realms business arrangement. Eventually, the aboleth grew tired of its toy and sold it to a passing dark folk trader. It finally ended up with the derro, who delighted in tormenting the helpless drow. The derro are no friends of the drow and when they came upon the dark folk selling this macabre *objet d'art*, they couldn't resist purchasing it.

Nymatar Maeafin's head can speak (Elvish and Undercommon) but takes no other actions. He requires no food and no air. The drow is chaotic and quite evil, but he has also come to understand that he is entirely powerless. His only desire is to be made whole again, and if that is impossible, then he chooses to die. He's lost track of how many years he's suffered in this state; dozens, surely. He does everything he can to convince the characters that helping him will result in a great reward. He lies and says that his family in the deep city of Dusendraith will pay them handsomely for delivering

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him to his home. He claims that House Maeafin is wealthy, which is true, and that the members of his house include several powerful wizards and priests capable of giving him a new body, which is also true. Of course, the dark elves would never honor any deal with surface-dwellers, and the characters would be hard pressed to escape Dusendraith alive. If they'd like to try, you will need to compose an adventure worthy of such a quest. Characters that successfully make a DC 14 Wisdom (Insight) check will pick up on Nymatar's deceptive words. If this happens and the characters' refuse Nymatar's deal, he implores them to run a blade through his eye and end his misery. Either way, this encounter should prove to be a moral challenge for characters of certain alignments.

5. Descent

The floor angles sharply down at this point to a lower elevation level. There are no steps, just a 45° decline covered in loose rocks and shards of limestone. Sliding down is safe, but a character attempting to trot down or otherwise remain on his feet must make a successful DC 10 Dexterity check or tumble to area 8, taking 1d6 points of damage.

6. Tracker

This cave has a particularly low ceiling, no more than 5-1/2 feet at its highest point, which forces taller characters to stoop uncomfortably. Hairline cracks look like veins on the cavern walls. Tiny spiders occasionally emerge from these fissures. The floor is uneven, as short stalagmites and natural knobs have formed over the centuries from the dripping, calcite-rich water. On the northeast side of the cave is a series of flat stone steps leading down to a lower elevation at area 7. The room is geologically interesting but not inherently perilous.

A **slithering tracker** (see **Appendix A**) hides in this cave. Anwyl rid the Blind Burrows of all monsters; only mammals remain, a group that he has always considered his allies. However, in his purging, the druid

understandably overlooked the almost invisible slithering tracker. When the characters arrive, the tracker is concealed in a crack where the floor meets one of the walls. After the characters depart the chamber, the tracker follows, flowing along on the floor. It is spotted only by a character with a passive Wisdom (Perception) of 18 or higher. The tracker waits until one of the characters is alone — preferably sleeping or resting. If the slithering tracker comes upon an unmoving victim, it attacks, grappling its target and beginning to smother it while slowly draining its life. The tracker does not attack anyone who is moving or fully alert, so the characters might end up exiting the Blind Burrows without ever knowing they were being stalked.

7. Roost

The appearance of any light source in this area draws the attention of the 6 **swarms of bats** that roost along the ceiling. Anwyl trained these bats to snuff out torches and lanterns.

8. The Waterfall Brawl

A large-scale battle takes place in this expansive, multi-leveled cavern. You should consider drawing or sharing a reproduction of the map with the players so that you can note each character's position and elevation. The use of miniature figures is helpful but not necessary, so long as everyone is clear as to where his character is positioned in relation to everyone else.

The ceiling of this natural cavern rises high above your heads. Many different cliffs and slopes permit access to different elevations of the cave, and several tunnels lead away in various directions. The cavern's most impressive feature is a stream that flows from the northeast, emerging from a flooded tunnel and dropping off in a short waterfall to a channel below. Though these falls once fed an impressive underground river, much of that flow has now dried up. A dry riverbed extends to the northwest. The water continues to run southeast, but it is only about 5 feet wide. Rope bridges that connect the two halves of this impressive cavern cross the dry end and the stream.

A total of 10 **giant vampire bats** (see **Appendix A**) patrol this area. If intruders are seen, one bat flies to 20 to alert Anwyl, and the others attack.

The noise of battle has a 20% chance to draw the attention of the **kobolds** from area 11. Roll a d10 at the end of each combat round. A result of 1 or 2 indicates the kobolds join the fray in 2 rounds. If they do join the combat, they do not advance very far into the cavern, preferring to stay back, claim the high ground or cover, and assail the characters with stones using their slings.

Normally, kobolds pose little threat to a party of adventurers, but given the topography of the cavern, the limited range of the characters' light source, and the kobolds' tactics, their stones might prove troublesome.

Once the bat notifies Anwyl, he uses the hidden arrow slits on the south wall of 20 to observe the fight, cast spells to help his allies, and cast *conjure animal* spells to bring more combatants to engage the characters (assuming the characters haven't already visited Anwyl's chambers and dealt with him personally).

Tactics:

- **Round 1:** 9 of the 10 **giant bats** attack, using flight and darkness to their advantage.
- If the 6 **kobolds** from area 11 hear the sounds of battle, they can take up advantageous positions and pepper the characters with rocks from their slings.
- Anwyl casts *faerie fire* on the area the characters are in.
- Anwyl fires *magic missiles* using his magical staff.
- If the battle looks bleak, Anwyl uses *conjure animals* for 8 **wolf reinforcements**.

Keep in mind that the characters' light sources makes them a target for incoming missile fire, while the limits of their vision may prevent them from seeing their attackers.



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During the battle, Anwyl does not reveal his position behind the hidden arrow slits. Instead, he prepares for their arrival in area **20**. If the characters overcome the bats, kobolds, and wolves, they are free to explore the area, the most notable feature of which is certainly the waterfall and the half-dry stream.

The water plunges down from above in what is usually total darkness, with no one to witness the raw beauty of it tumbling down the black rocks and into a pool below. Reflected in your light, the water looks clear and cold. Once in the pool, the stream flows southeast and appears to be fairly deep. Obviously, it used to be much more robust, however, as a dry riverbed coming in from the northwest connects with the pool; no water has flowed from that direction in a long time, and a light lavender moss covers the smooth river stones.

Following the dry stream track to the northwest, the characters pass under the rope bridge and enter a narrow tunnel that soon begins to angle sharply downward. After about 75 feet, it terminates abruptly in a cave-in. Thousands of tons of rock block the path that once led to the derro settlement. The stones glow faintly with the natural orange bioluminescence of the moss. The real item of interest lies in the pool itself. If any of the characters intentionally study the pool and make a successful DC 12 Perception (Wisdom) check, they see an oblong shape that reflects a bit of their light. This mysterious item rests 15 feet below the surface at the bottom of the pool. Further details are impossible to discern due to the falls that churn the water. If they want to know more, the characters have to get wet.

Though the characters are wise to be cautious, getting the object out of the pool is not in itself dangerous and can be accomplished with a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check. Nothing accosts the diver during the item's retrieval. The object turns out to be an airtight, opaque glass capsule about 14 inches long and 6 inches wide. Its two halves screw together at their midpoint, and so the container is easily opened. As the characters are inspecting the capsule, a lovely, unclothed female figure gently emerges from the water, her long hair glistening around her shoulders. She is a **siren** named Aglaope (ag-luh-OH-pee).

Three items once owned by the siren's former paramour are inside the capsule: a silver dagger that floats, a *potion of healing*, and a *lung leaf* (see **Appendix C** for details). Aglaope desires a new lover. She chooses one of the characters and breaks the surface near them, revealing herself in all of her beauty. Sea-colored eyes gaze upon her chosen one with a kindness that is unfeigned. Aglaope really is a kind and caring being, but she is lonely and is not above using magic to win a new partner. She introduces herself and speaks what sound to be words of greeting in her own language; actually, she is casting a *charm person* spell. If one of the characters speaks Sylvan, they will know that she isn't simply greeting the party, and succeeding on a DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana) check will enable that character to identify the spell she is casting.

If her chosen lover fails their DC 13 Wisdom saving throw, Aglaope asks them to put the *lung leaf* in their mouth so they can breathe water. Once that's done, she invites the character to jump in and follow her. Anyone trying to physically restrain the *charmed* victim must make a Strength (Athletics) check versus the victim's Dexterity (Acrobatics) skill to grab them before they dive into the pool and swims away with Aglaope, perhaps never to be seen again. If the target succeeds on their saving throw, the siren is visibly disappointed and slips back into the water without another word.

The flooded tunnel that leads to the southeast runs for several miles to a subterranean lake. It is impossible to traverse the distance without the ability to breathe underwater.

9. Lookout Point

This ridge is at a higher elevation than other parts of area **8**, so anyone on this plateau has a good view of the lower area. A knotted rope hangs down on the north side of the ridge, enabling the kobolds from **11** to climb up and gain a firing platform for their ranged attacks. Ashes blacken this

rope, making it nearly invisible in the darkness of the cavern. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check or illuminating the area with bright light will reveal the bridge.

Atop the hill, the kobolds have placed a pile of 60 smooth stones and three extra slings. Also here are two large, spherical stones, each weighing about 50 lbs.

If the characters try to climb the hill, the kobolds move to the edge and focus their fire on the climbers. Climbing the hill can be accomplished with a successful DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check while not under fire from the kobolds — the DC increases by 3 if they the kobolds are attacking the climber. If the kobolds. Additional, the kobolds have stashed three large rocks (50 to 60 lbs. each) that they will also roll over the edge of the hill at the climbers. A failed DC 15 Dexterity saving throw means that the climber is driven down into the ground, the stone on his chest, taking 10 (3d6) points of damage from the stone and another 3 (1d6) points of damage for the fall.

10. Tripwire

The kobolds at area **11** use these stone steps cut by the derro to access the main cave of area **8** when waging battle against intruders. As a rudimentary warning against anyone sneaking up on them, they've rigged a simple twine trap: Anyone not searching the steps before ascending automatically snags the twine, which causes a small pile of rocks on the top step to topple down the stairs. The sound reveals the characters' presence. A character that makes a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check will spot the twine trap. A successful DC 10 Dexterity check with thieves' tools will be sufficient to disarm the trap.

11. Kobold Cave

Stone steps that lead up from a lower elevation access the cave. Formerly the meditation chamber of a derro savant, it now serves as home to 7 **kobolds**, most of which join the battle at **8**. Only their elder remains behind, tending the Sacred Pail.

This cave is nearly circular, about 15 feet in diameter. Obviously, several beings live here, as half a dozen messy bedrolls occupy most of the floor space. The stench is bad but not unbearable. At the opposite side of the cavern, an aging kobold wearing a headdress of colored stones and fish bones sits cross-legged behind an overturned metal bucket. The kobold has one hand on the bucket, and it lifts the other up at you in an obvious warning to stop.

A single **kobold** poses no threat to the characters. This one is just daring enough to attempt a crude bluff, hoping to send the intruders running in the other direction. Assuming the characters don't simply charge across the room, the elderly kobold solemnly lifts the pail, revealing a multi-colored centipede about 14 inches long. The kobold doesn't take his eyes from the characters, but tries to remain brave. The centipede — a nasty and venomous-looking thing — scurries straight ahead, free of the confines of the bucket and running on countless legs directly at the doorway where the characters happen to be standing. This insect can easily be crushed beneath a boot, but the kobold hopes the intruders assume it's far more deadly and react in such a way that permits him the chance to escape. If he sees an opportunity, the kobold flees the room. Failing that, he fires a sleep-inducing arrow from his bow.

Searching the room thoroughly means making a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check and overturning the bedrolls and poking around in the mess that is the kobold living space. The kobolds have collected numerous odd objects, knickknacks, and pretty stones that might cause the characters to waste time and magical resources in determining their properties and worth, but nothing of real value is here.

12. Death from Above

This elevated escarpment looks out across the impressive cavern that makes up area **8**. Small shattered rocks and stone splinters litter the ground. The remains of a skeleton lie next to a metal shield with a large

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dent in the center of it, as if a heavy, pointed object struck it. If examined closely, the shield bears the symbol of the Hawkmoon deity Bylkalla, or a war-related deity from your own campaign. A character making a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check will be able to identify the symbol and deity.

While the characters are examining this area, you should determine which characters are standing underneath up to four large stalactites that jut from the ceiling. These stalactites are actually piercers, which are very difficult to detect before they fall because they blend in perfectly with other rock formations overhead. Unfortunately for the characters, they have stumbled across a piercer colony. There is a total of 12 **piercers** (see **Appendix A**) hanging from the ceiling. The first group of piercers will drop as soon as they have creatures below them to drop on, surprising the characters. The remaining piercers will wait to drop from the ceiling, and after each character moves, they have a 50% chance of being underneath one of the remaining piercers.

13. Blind Run

A permanent sphere of *darkness* occupies this bulge in the tunnel. Resting on the floor within this blackened zone is a large iron bear trap, waiting to be sprung. A friend of animals, Anwyl rescued a black bear from this very trap and then placed the trap here as an intruder deterrent.

The sphere of darkness is magical darkness – darkvision cannot pierce it. While in the sphere of darkness, the characters are considered blinded and will automatically fail any ability check that requires sight.

Anyone exploring the magical *darkness* without probing the floor with a pole or similar item has a 50% chance of stepping directly on the trap, which causes the jaws to slam shut and inflict 7 (2d6) points of damage. In addition, the injured victim must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or have their movement rate halved for the next 24 hours. A DC 15 Strength check is required to pull the jaws apart and free the victim.

Lying on the floor here are five smooth blue stones. These are the *stones of the blue crystal path*, as described in **Appendix C**. Because of the permanent *darkness*, these rocks are very difficult to find accidentally, requiring a successful DC 25 Wisdom (Perception) check and searching on their hands and knees, as blind characters will have no idea that a few pebbles beneath their boots are in any way extraordinary. The only way to notice the *stones* is if the characters somehow manage to dispel the unnatural gloom.

14. Mass Grave

As you enter this cave, the stench causes your eyes to water. You're standing at the top of a ridge that angles down about 10 feet to a pit of bodies. You realize that you're observing a mass grave. Tiny white worms wiggle through corpses in varying states of decay. There must be two dozen people here, a mix of races, all thrown away like so much garbage. You see a dead dwarf with his eyeballs eaten out, and a dead woman wearing a bright red dress. Feasting upon them are three rats the size of dogs. Hearing you enter, the rats leave off their horrible meal and race up the ridge, hissing at you as they close the gap.

When Anwyl tortures a villager to death, he deposits their ravaged body here to be feasted upon by a group of 3 **giant rats**. Regardless of when the characters arrive at this room, they find these dog-sized rats gobbling up one of the recently discarded corpses.

Astute characters make the connection between the red dress in the mass grave and the woman named Kalotte from Eorls Gedreas. They now know the fate of the missing villager.

If the characters choose for whatever reason to dig through the heap of bodies, they find humanoid remains of multiple races in various states of decomposition. The excavation is so disgusting that a DC 18 Constitution saving throw is required to keep from vomiting and quickly giving up the search. Determined characters who have the stomach for this kind of work and make a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check are rewarded for their grisly determination; embedded in the maggot-infested mass and still loosely strapped to a pair of skeletal feet are the *fire spurs*. See **Appendix C** for details.

15. Master Roost

The ceiling of this area is the primary roost of the Blind Burrows' bats. Tens of thousands of standard-sized bats are nesting here when the characters arrive. The appearance of any light source in this area draws their attention. Anwyl trained these bats to snuff out torches and lanterns.

The floor is several inches thick with guano. Anyone traipsing around in this noxious mess must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or they contract **festering lung** (see **Appendix B**). Any character that actually wants to dig through the guano and makes a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check will find a tiny tin box containing three beautiful gold nuggets; however, the rocks are merely pyrite and virtually worthless.

16. Troubled Waters

A stone bridge crosses the stream. There are no railings, just a flat slab of slippery rock spanning the water. A small overturned silver bell lies on the middle of the bridge. A wire extends from an eyelet on the top of the bell.

The bell is completely mundane. It belonged to one of Anwyl's victims, and dropped when the body was taken to the mass grave at area 14. Wary characters might assume the bell is part of some kind of elaborate trap, and you should play upon those fears. There is no real danger here, other than the slippery bridge surface. Anyone moving at greater than walking speed must make a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or slide off the side and into the stream below, taking 1d6 points of damage.

17. Above and Below

A metal platform connected to a series of ropes and pulleys serves as a crude mechanical lift, able to raise and lower up to 500 lbs. from here to Odinel's apothecary shop at area **J** in Eorls Gedreas. A shaft in the ceiling rises more than 100 feet, connecting the wereboar's home with the Blind Burrows. A capstan must be cranked in order to operate the lift. Anwyl works the capstan when Odinel sends down another victim. There is an 80% chance that the lift is in its upper position; if the characters want to lower it, they'll need to spin the capstan. If they entered the Blind Burrows from the gong farmer's residence at area **E** in Eorls Gedreas, they might be surprised to find themselves in the læce's shop when they reach the top of this lift. If the wereboar is still alive, he attacks immediately, perhaps forcing the characters to make a surprise check.

18. Room of the Rock

A few stone steps lead down into the first of Anwyl's personal rooms.

The walls of this room are smoothly worked stone, having been cut and shaped by skilled craftsmen. This is obviously a sitting area or parlor of some kind, it features two comfortable-looking chairs that face a tapestry featuring abstract patterns that hangs on the south wall. The tapestry's needlework is expertly rendered, similar to that which you saw in the village. Between the two chairs is a simple maple-wood table, on which sit a burning candle, a bottle of wine, a crystal goblet, and a small book.

The book is a non-magical alchemical treatise titled "*The Tincture of Aqua Fortis*." Anwyl recently has become fascinated by the arcane art of alchemy. Though he possesses no skills in that field, he has begun a correspondence with a potential mentor and started to purchase equipment.

A successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals that behind the tapestry is a brownish, dully glowing rock embedded in the wall. This is *earthmurk*. It shines an unhealthy light and makes the skin feel slightly itchy if anyone draws close to it. This chunk of *earthmurk* has completely corroded Anwyl's mind. Even casual contact with it can cause dreadful side effects. Refer to **Appendix B** for details of what happens to the characters should they improperly handle the rock. It can be pulled out of the surrounding bedrock if the characters possess a pick or similar tool. The extraction requires 10 minutes to complete; the sound rings throughout the cavern complex.

The *earthmurk* exposure caused Anwyl to become mean-spirited, vindictive, and sociopathic. He believes that the residents of his former hometown of Eorls Gedreas are traitors to the cause — even if that cause has never been defined. The *earthmurk* has similar effects on the characters if they're not careful. Anwyl is now in Stage 6 of *earthmurk* poisoning.

19. The Druid's Repose

Anwyl has converted this former derro laboratory into his bedchamber.

Crates and baskets surround a narrow and uncomfortable-looking cot. At a glance, it seems as if several of these containers hold dry foodstuffs, but others remain sealed. Most of it is cluttered, and probably not easily inventoried. Light is provided by a fish-oil lantern that hangs by a chain over a writing desk. A greasy-smelling smoke winds up through natural cracks in the ceiling. A wooden mannequin draped in brown robes and wearing a hood stands in the corner.

The desk features two locked drawers that can be opened with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check with thieves' tools. One of these contains a stack of parchment paper with 29 blank sheets, two inkpots,

and four different quills. The other drawer holds a few scattered notes on alchemy and a personal letter from someone named Filkendikus, who is thanking Anwyl the druid for assisting in the acquisition of a substance called "blue vitriol."

Searching the entire room requires roughly an hour, and a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check uncovers the following items:

- Alchemy book titled *Collectanea Chemica* 60 lbs. of alchemical equipment, packed in straw-lined boxes
- an alien "book" containing plates stamped with raised bars of different lengths
- spear adorned with feathers
- spiked bandolier
- red silk cloak (10 gp)
- fur-insulated, elf-sized clothing
- steel horseman's boots
- crude, hand-drawn map to the tower home of the alchemist Filkendikus
- four rugs made from exotic animal pelts (8 gp each)
- horseman's lance
- keg of ale (nearly empty)
- 550-page tome titled *The Divergence of Belief: One Dwarf's Vision of Independent Reasoning as Told Through the Journeys of the Warrior-Poet Stavnyo Gildertrest; or The Unabridged Chronicles of Stavnyo and the Fifteen Golden Acolytes* soaked staff carved with the initials "AD"
- *rose of forgetfulness* (see **Appendix C** for more details)

The mannequin is made of wood, though its head is mostly concealed by the hood of the robe it wears. Moving this hood reveals a *magic mouth* that immediately begins screaming for help. It shouts for one full minute before finally quieting. The sound carries easily to all adjacent rooms. If Anwyl was not yet aware of the characters' presence, he is alerted now.

20. The Last Redoubt

Anwyl (see **Appendix A**) and his pet **brown bear** await the characters' arrival. The druid stands in the corner to one side of the door, so that when it's opened, he isn't immediately seen. The bear is trained to attack head-on as soon as an intruder appears. A single character standing in the doorway might end up facing the bear alone unless an ally can squeeze by him or unless the character retreats to **19**. Anwyl is very much aware of the advantage provided by the cramped confines of the doorway. If the characters simply open the door without any particular sense of caution (it is not locked), you should check for surprise (the passive Wisdom (Perception) of the character opening the door versus a Dexterity (Stealth) check for the bear) to see if they're caught off-guard by the sudden appearance of a rampaging bear.

Meanwhile, Anwyl chooses the most opportune moment to strike, either with spells or by expending charges from the *staff of the shoreline*. He can also use his wild shape ability to become a **giant boar** or a **saber-toothed tiger** and angrily attack, or a centipede or spider to attempt to scurry away. Anwyl is visibly ill, his skin discolored by *earthmurk* contact (detailed in **Appendix B**). He moves more slowly than he did before finding the rock. Aware of his own physical deterioration, he acts desperately and fights like a man with little left to lose. He assumes the characters are agents sent by his enemies in Eorls Gedreas.

There is a chance that events may unfold in such a way that Anwyl is captured alive, or that the characters come to understand his sickness and seek to contain him without killing him. Though unlikely, this turn of circumstances could lead to an interesting end to their quest, as they might be able to save the druid's life by applying *greater restoration*. They are more than justified in killing him, but you should be aware that things might conclude differently and be prepared to improvise such results.

If the characters are victorious in vanquishing Anwyl, they may examine the room more closely. Two arrow slits look out into area **8**. A large mound of straw and leaves serves as the bear's bed. The entire east wall is covered in a crudely painted map of Eorls Gedreas. Names of villagers are scrawled there, along with epithets and lurid promises of

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revenge. They will also be able to recover what equipment and items that Anwyl had on his person:

- studded leather armor
- filthy, soiled robes
- *staff of the shoreline*
- scimitar
- 12 gp

A chamber pot rests in the corner, partially filled with waste. Beside it is a small journal with sandalwood covers and a dried-up inkpot. Anwyl hasn't written in this book in several days, and most of its pages remain blank. But when he first discovered the *earthmurk*, he recorded his findings here. These are the writings of a sane man, a true advocate of nature and the balanced Wheel of Life — at least at first. As the narrative progresses, it becomes clear to the reader that Anwyl is being negatively affected by the very object of his fascination. His words become misspelled; his penmanship turns haphazard. A scientific study of *earthmurk* soon transforms into a manifesto against all of the ailments that Anwyl feels the world has inflicted on him. It should be obvious that he rapidly descended into madness, and that the characters face a similar destiny if they linger too long in the *earthmurk*'s fell company.

Conclusion

Even if the characters eliminate Anwyl, there is a chance that Odinel is still alive, having gone undetected during the characters' investigation of Eorls Gedreas. The wereboar has no intention of abandoning his easy life in the village, but neither is he inclined to face the characters in battle. Instead, he simply slips away while the characters are exploring the Blind

Burrows, hiding out in the wilderness while he waits for them to leave the area.

As for the quail, they continue to monitor the situation. If the wereboar returns to Eorls Gedreas and attempts to reassert his dominance, the birds report to the archdruid as soon as they can, hoping he can fix what the characters could not. On the other hand, they might have dealt with the wereboar and liberated the village. In this case, the quail inform the archdruid of the assistance rendered by these strangers, in which case they earn his eternal friendship. He becomes an important contact with whom the characters can have dealings in the future.

Continuing the Adventure

The characters might have discovered the names of two mysterious locations. Area 19 contains a map to the tower home of the alchemist Filkendikus. The wereboar's herbal shop contains a land deed to the small keep of Colthyrstan Hold. These places may become the characters' next chosen destination, so you can build upon those ideas and craft complete adventures around them.

Optionally, the Archdruid Cadryn is pleased with the characters if they've successfully defended his domain in his absence. He calls upon them in the future with similar missions, dispatching his faithful quail to summon the heroes once again.

Appendix A: New Creatures and NPCs

Anwyl, Corrupted Druid of the Blind Burrows

Eyes gleaming with madness, Anwyl knows his life is near its end and fights with the ferociousness and tenacity of someone that has nothing to lose.

Anwyl, Corrupted Druid of the Blind Burrows

Medium human, chaotic evil
Armor Class 15 (studded leather)
Hit Points 52 (7d8 + 14)
Speed 30 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 9 (-1) | 16 (+3) | 14 (+2) | 11 (+0) | 16 (+3) | 14 (+2) |

Saving Throws Int +4, Wis +6

Skills History +3, Insight +6, Medicine +6, Nature +3

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Druidic, Undercommon

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Spellcasting. Anwyl is a 7th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following bard spells prepared: Cantrips (at will): *druidcraft*, *produce flame*, *bramble whip* (see **Appendix D** for more details)

1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds*, *faerie fire*, *fog cloud*, *healing ward*, *thunderwave*

2nd level (3 slots): *flame blade*, *gust of wind*, *moonbeam*

3rd level (3 slots): *call lightning*

4th level (1 slot): *wall of fire*

Primal Strike. While in beast form, Anwyl's attacks are considered magical.

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Actions

Scimitar. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) slashing damage.

Produce Flame. Ranged Spell Attack: +6 to hit, range 30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d8) fire damage.

Bramble Whip. Melee Spell Attack: +6 to hit, range 30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d8) fire damage.

Wild Shape (2/Day). Anwyl can take a bonus action to magically assume the shape of a beast that he has seen before, provided that the beast has a challenge rating of 2, or lower, and has no flying speed. He can use this feature twice per day.

While in a new form, Anwyl retains his ability to speak, and his Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores. He also retains all of his skill and saving throw proficiencies in addition to gaining those of the creature whose form he assumes. He assumes the Hit Dice, hit points, AC, movement modes, Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution scores, and the attack and damage statistics of the beast.

Giant Vampire Bat

Giant Vampire Bat

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 22 (4d10)

Speed 10 ft., fly 60 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| 15 (+2) | 16 (+3) | 11 (+0) | 2 (-4) | 12 (+1) | 6 (-2) |

Senses blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages —

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

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

Keen Hearing. The bat has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing.

Actions

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) necrotic damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and the giant vampire bat 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.

Piercer

Piercer

Medium Monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 22 (3d8 + 9)

Speed 5 ft., climb 5 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|--------|--------|--------|-------|-------|-------|
| 10(+0) | 13(+1) | 16(+3) | 1(-5) | 7(-2) | 3(-4) |

Skills Stealth +5

Senses blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

Languages —

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

False Appearance. While the piercer remains motionless on the ceiling, it is indistinguishable from a normal stalactite.

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

Actions

Drop. Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, one creature directly underneath the piercer. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) piercing damage per 10 feet fallen, up to 21 (6d6). *Miss:* The piercer takes half the normal falling damage for the distance fallen.

Slithering Tracker

No price is too high to pay, even being transformed into an insane, wretched creature such as a slithering tracker, for some.

Slithering Tracker

Medium ooze, chaotic evil

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 32 (5d8 + 10)

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 16 (+3) | 19 (+4) | 15 (+2) | 10 (+0) | 14 (+2) | 15 (+2) |

Skills Stealth +8

Damage Resistances cold, fire

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities blinded, deafened, exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, unconscious

Senses blindsight 120 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages understands languages it knew in its previous form

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Ambusher. In the first round of a combat, the slithering tracker has advantage on attack rolls against any creature it surprised.

Damage Transfer. While grappling a creature, the slithering tracker takes only half the damage dealt to it, and the creature it is grappling takes the other half.

False Appearance. While the slithering tracker remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a puddle, unless an observer succeeds on a DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

Keen Tracker. The slithering tracker has advantage on Wisdom checks to track prey.

Liquid Form. The slithering tracker can enter an enemy's space and stop there. It can also move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

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

Watery Stealth. While underwater, the slithering tracker has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide, and it can take the Hide action as a bonus action.

Actions

Slam. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one

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target. *Hit*: 8 (1d10 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

Life Leech. One Large or smaller creature that the slithering tracker can see within 5 feet of it must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or be grappled (escape DC 13). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained and unable to breathe unless it can breathe water. In addition, the grappled target takes 16 (3d10) necrotic damage at the start of each of its turns. The slithering tracker can grapple only one target at a time.

Sneakthief

Sneakthief

Medium humanoid (any), any alignment

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 8 (1d8)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Saving Throws Dex +5, Int +2

Skills Acrobatics +5, Athletics +3, Deception +2, Perception +6, Sleight of Hand +5, Stealth +7

Senses passive Perception 16

Languages Thieves' cant plus any one language

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Sneak Attack. Once per turn, the sneakthief can deal an extra 1d6 damage to one creature it hits with an attack if it has advantage on the attack roll. The attack must use a finesse or a ranged weapon. The sneakthief doesn't need advantage on the attack roll if another enemy of the target is within 5 feet of it, that enemy isn't Incapacitated, and the sneakthief doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Actions

Rapier. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

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

Appendix B: Hazards and Diseases

Hazards

Earthmurk. This highly dangerous ore pulses with a brownish or slightly yellow glow and poisons living creatures that come within close proximity to it. *Earthmurk* poisoning takes place in stages, whenever a humanoid comes within 5 feet of it. Each new exposure, or a single exposure longer than 1 minute, advances the poisoning to the next stage. In Stages 1 through 3, the victim notices nothing out of the ordinary and does not realize he is in trouble; the changes being wrought in his body at this stage are taking places at the cellular level. In Stage 4, the victim becomes visibly unwell, and his skin changes to an unhealthy yellow shade and his fingernails turn brown and gains a level of exhaustion. At Stage 5, the victim gains another level of exhaustion and can only move at half speed. After reaching Stage 6, the victim slips into indefinite madness. The exact form of this insanity is up to your discretion, but it often takes the form of paranoid delusions and uncontrollable anger. Most victims linger in Stage

6 for months before finally collapsing. Hard knobs form on their skin as the *earthmurk* causes all fluids in the body to accumulate in the superficial tissues and dry into hardened abscesses. The victim dies of dehydration and other complications in 1d4+1 days.

In Stages 1 through 3, a *lesser restoration* spell eradicates *earthmurk* poisoning, but at Stages 4 and 5, the poisoning can only be cured by a *greater restoration* or *heal* spell. Stage 6 can only be cured by a *wish* spell.

Rose of Forgetfulness. This enchanted flower causes those who inhale its scent to make a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or lose complete recollection of the past 24 hours. A successful save indicates either that there is no effect or, in the case of a spellcaster, the loss of 1d4 randomly determined spells. In order to inhale a sufficient amount of the scent, the victim must be less than 6 inches from the rose and be capable of smelling it.

Diseases

Festering Lung

Festering lung is a debilitating degenerative disease that is characterized by fever, chills, rapid weight loss, and chronic coughing with bloody phlegm. The bacteria that causes this affliction can be passed from creature to creature through coughing, sneezing, speaking, or spitting. It can also live for extended periods in the waste of any number of animal carriers, such as bats, rats, and other vermin or carrion eaters. When exposed to festering lung, the creature must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or become infected.

Symptoms manifest within 1d4 days after infection and quickly begins to break down the lungs and respiratory system of the victim, producing the symptoms listed above. It saps the strength from the victim due to poor oxygenation and renders them unable to speak or make any vocal noises two days after onset. Creatures that do not breathe are immune to festering lung. While under the effects of this disease, the victim cannot cast any spells requiring a vocal component. In addition, the creature has disadvantage on Strength checks, Strength saving throws, and attack rolls that use Strength. The disease can only be cured by a *greater restoration* or *heal* spell.

Appendix C: New Magic Items

Jewelry

Ring of Suggestion

Ring, very rare (requires attunement)

This ring has 3 charges, and it regains 1d3 expended charges daily at dawn. While wearing this ring, you can use an action to expend 1 of its charges to cast *suggestion* (save DC 13). The target must make their Wisdom saving throw or fall under your spell will follow your reasonable suggestion. The target remains under the effects of the spell for up to 30 days. Unlike the *suggestion* spell, using the spell effect of the ring does not have a concentration component.

If obtained by the characters, the *ring of suggestion* is a strange variant that only works on humans. The total number of humans that can be influenced is 20.

Miscellaneous Magic

Fire Spurs

Wondrous item, very rare

Fire spurs appear as a pair of ordinary horseman's spurs, albeit of exceptionally sturdy quality; they are thicker and heavier than mundane spurs, and their moving part — called the rowel — spins without sound

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or friction. *Fire spurs* are black in color, as if they had been lying for days among the coals of a smith's forge. The magic of the *fire spurs* functions only if both are worn. If this simple condition is met, the wearer may use any of the *spurs'* powers once per day.

When mounted, the wearer may spur his steed and call upon the enchantment of the *fire spurs* to send a surge of hot energy through the mount, enabling it to achieve an unnatural velocity. Blood pounding and inner fires burning, the mount increases its base movement by +25%. This enhanced speed lasts for a period of one hour, after which time the mount must rest for a time equal to the time it spent running at the increased rate or it gains a level of exhaustion.

When not mounted, the wearer may strike the rowel of one of the *fire spurs* against stone to produce a spark as per flint and steel. The wearer may "kick" the spark up to 5ft away. This may be used to light campfires or to set ablaze an oil-based trap.

The third and final power of the *spurs* is always active. As long as the wearer is outfitted with both *spurs*, he enjoys advantage on any saving throws against fire and fire-based attacks. Further, he may reduce any fire damage he sustains by 1 point for every Hit Die of the attack. In other words, he would subtract 6 points of damage from a 6-die *fireball*.

The *fire spurs* can never be damaged by flame, be it magical or otherwise. Legend holds that somewhere there exists a pair of obsidian rowels that — when they replace the rowels of the *fire spurs* — permit the wearer access to additional powers.

Lung Leaf

Wondrous item, very rare

Down in the depths of the Moonsilver Sea, its roots fixed to the silt-covered sea floor, lives a magical tree. For all intents and purposes, the tree appears as a normal tree — or so say the reclusive sea elves. According to maritime myth, the leaves of this tree grant *water breathing* to anyone who holds a *leaf* in his mouth.

The *lung leaves* are very rare. Since no one but the sea elves know the tree's exact location, most of the *leaves* come to the surface when fish swim through the branches and shake the *leaves* loose. The *leaves* then float to the surface, where they can be recognized easily. They are 1in long and a deep, rich blue in color; the veins in each *leaf* are bright silver. The sea elves claim that no two *lung leaves* have quite the same arrangement of veins.

Holding a *leaf* in the mouth grants the user *water breathing* for a period of 1d4+1 hours. The user never knows exactly how much time the *lung leaf* is providing him; you make the roll in secret. After the air expires, the lung leaf must be soaked in salt water for a period of 1d4 days. Only then may it be used again.

Signal Flag of Clouds

Wondrous item, very rare

This flag is useful as a means of communication, especially in times of war. If the *signal flag* is held aloft at least 50 feet off the ground, it causes clouds to form in the sky directly overhead. Within the next 3d6 rounds, these clouds begin to shift, forming a slow-moving but obvious spiral. During normal daylight conditions, this cyclonic cloud movement can be seen up to 12 miles away. The *signal flag of clouds* is often used with others of its kind to relay warnings across incredible distances.

Stones of the Blue Crystal Path

Wondrous item, legendary

Planting these five stones in soil, mud, or sand causes a magic blue bridge to appear in any direction the user chooses. The bridge actually "grows" from the stones as if they were seeds, extending up to 200 feet horizontally, with only a slight, 10-foot elevation at its midpoint. The dazzling blue span may not be made to angle up or down, but always grows horizontally in a direction indicated by the user. The *blue crystal path* is only 3 feet wide, so anyone fighting on the bridge must make an immediate dexterity check if he misses with any melee attack, or he falls off the edge. The *blue crystal path* persists for only 1d4+4 rounds before instantly vanishing, at which time the stones reappear in the user's hands. They may be used once per month.

Thought Bottle

Wondrous item, rare

This green glass bottle has a tiny winding key on its elongated stem that, if turned, causes a shadowy cork to slowly become substantial over a 1-round period. Anything the owner of the bottle speaks into the bottle during this time (up to 25 words) gets trapped inside it once the cork fully manifests. As soon as the cork is removed or the bottle is smashed, this message is released exactly as if the owner had spoken the words at that moment. Once the bottle releases its message, it shatters.

Rods, Staves, and Wands

Staff of the Shoreline

Staff, very rare (requires attunement by a bard, cleric, druid, sorcerer, warlock, or wizard)

This staff has 10 charges and regains 1d6 + 4 expended charges daily. If you expend the last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the staff turns into a normal, mundane piece of driftwood and no longer has magical function.

Spells. While holding the staff, you can use an action to expend some of its charges to cast one of the following spells from it, using your spell save DC: *faerie fire* (1 charge), *moonbeam* (2 charges), and *darkness* (3 charges).

When obtained by the characters, the *staff of the shoreline* has 4 of 10 charges remaining.

Appendix D: New Spells

Druid Spells

Bramble Whip

Transmutation cantrip

Casting Time: 1 action

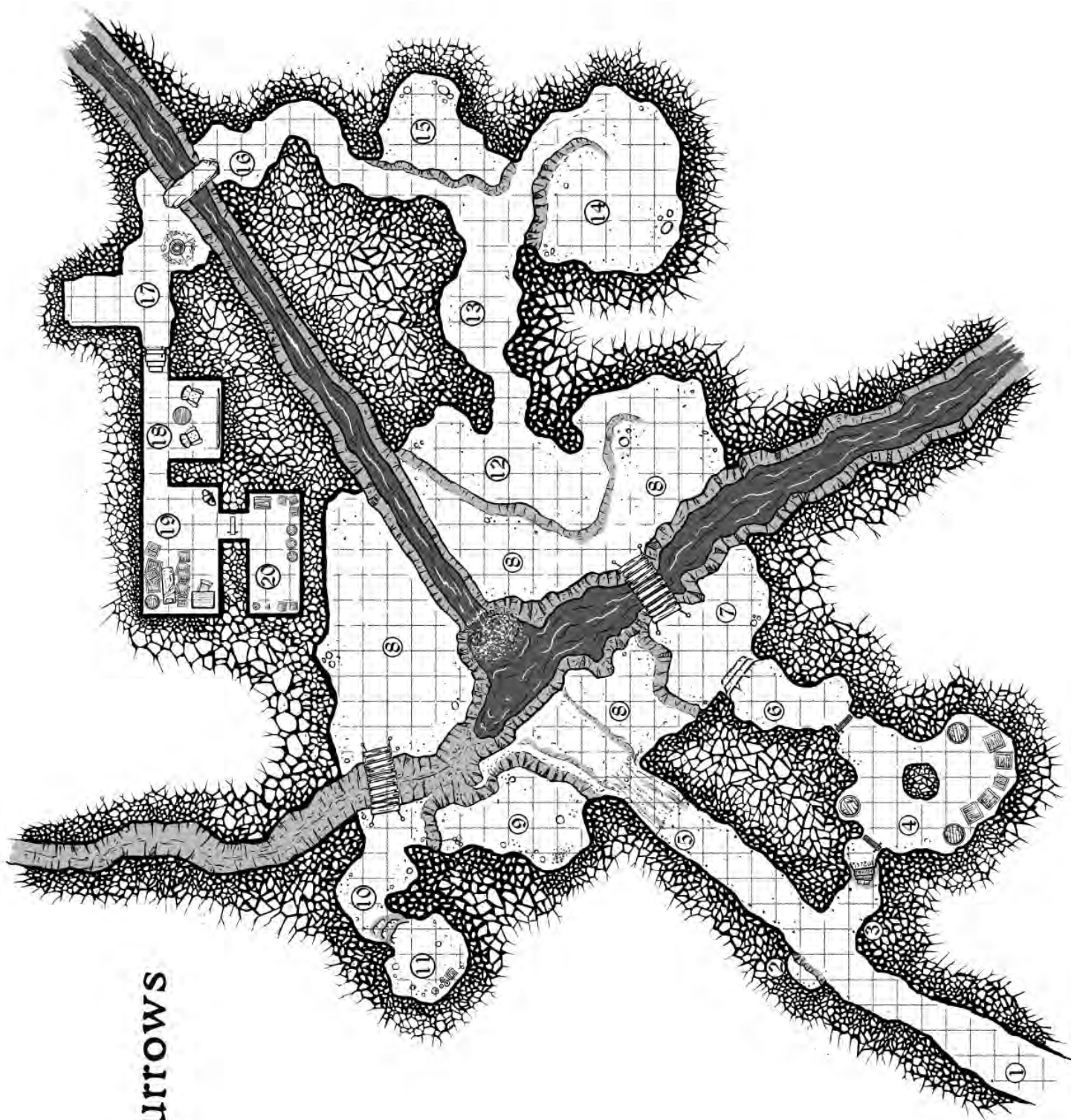
Range: 30 feet

Components: V, S, M (a small bunch of woven brambles)

Duration: Instantaneous

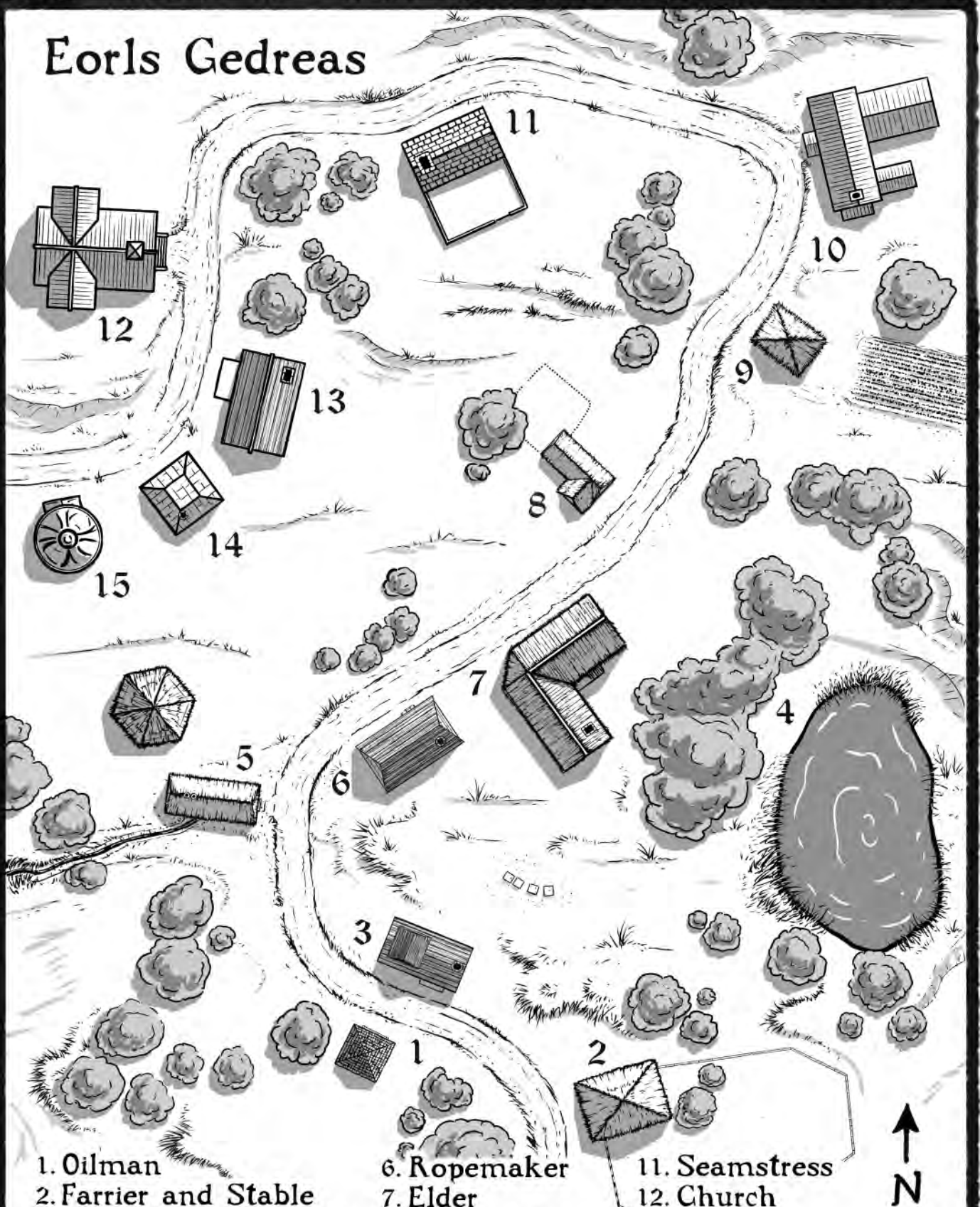
You create a long, flexible whip of woven brambles that is in long, vicious thorns that lashes out at your command toward a creature in range. Make a melee spell attack against the target. If the attack hits, the creature takes 1d6 piercing damage, and if the creature is Large or smaller, you pull the creature up to 10 feet closer to you.

This spell's damage increases by 1d6 when you reach 5th level (2d6), 11th level (3d6), and 17th level (4d6).



Blind Burrows

Eorls Gedreas



1. Oilman
2. Farrier and Stable
3. Chandler and Apiary
4. Crystal Lake
5. Gong Farmer

6. Ropemaker
7. Elder
8. Swine Pens
9. Family Farm
10. Apothecary

11. Seamstress
12. Church
13. Thatcher
14. Baker
15. The Puppet Show

A MIDNIGHT COUNCIL OF QUAIL

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Quests of Doom 4

A Midnight Council of Quail

A Midnight Council of Quail is an adventure for 4–6 characters of 3rd to 5th level where the characters explore a village to locate the lair of a monstrous murderer — but the villagers don't want the murderer to be discovered.



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