

TOME OF BEASTS LAIRS



TOME OF BEASTS II LAIRS

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NEW MONSTERS AND NEW CHALLENGES

Tome of Beasts 2 Lairs contains fourteen short-form adventures that feature new creatures from the *Tome of Beasts 2*. Each adventure is intended to take one or two sessions to complete and includes a map, adventure hooks, and treasures for your adventurers.

To run each of these adventures, you'll need the core rulebooks of the 5th edition of the world's first roleplaying game or the *System Reference Document 5.1*. Creatures whose names appear in **bold** without a page or book reference can be found in the *System Reference Document 5.1* or in those rulebooks. Similarly, spell and magic item names which appear in *italics* without a page or book reference can be found in those rulebooks or in the *System Reference Document 5.1*. In addition, you will need the *Tome of Beasts 2* to run all of the encounters in these adventures.

Tome of Beasts 2 Lairs includes the following adventures, listed by character level:

TO TRACK A THIEF (1ST-LEVEL CHARACTERS)

A recent string of robberies has authorities in a city scrambling to find the thieves. The robberies were erratic at first and most of the stolen objects held little value. The robberies soon escalated to more and more valuable goods and, just this week, three people were killed during a robbery. Unable to track down the thieves, local authorities turn to outside assistance.

This adventure features the greed swarm, stone creeper, and valkruung from *Tome of Beasts 2*.

THE FORSAKEN FORT (3RD-LEVEL CHARACTERS)

Weeks ago, a fort in a grassland was wiped out by a virulent disease. Shortly after the last victim succumbed to the disease, a cackle of hyenas moved into the fort by digging under the walls. Their digging disturbed a swarm of insects, which flew to a nearby village and attacked the villagers. The villagers turn to the adventurers who just arrived in town for help with the insects. The local authorities noticed the insects came from the direction of the fort, which has been silent for weeks, and they ask the adventurers to investigate.

This adventure features the crocotta, pestilence swarm, and swam of compognathus from *Tome of Beasts 2*.

THE TWISTED WREATH (3RD-LEVEL CHARACTERS)

The Twisted Wreath, a tranquil maze of thorns and vines deep in a forest, is home to a magical obelisk. The obelisk draws druids and worshipers of nature deities each year to offer prayers and sacrifices. During one such pilgrimage, some worshipers conducted a ritual that went horribly awry, killing the maze's dryad tender and corrupting most of the fey, plants, and animals in the region. A young druid seeks adventurers to cleanse the maze of its corruption and ease the forest's pain.

This adventure features the carnivorous sod, corrupted pixie, tree skinner, and vine golem from *Tome of Beasts 2*.

SHRINE OF THE HUNGRY DEAD (4TH-LEVEL CHARACTERS)

A remote and abandoned shrine to an almost forgotten sea god lies off a sparsely populated coast. An evil, intelligent spider took up residence in the shrine and eventually gained ghoulish allies seeking a base on the surface. The spider demands tribute in the form of humanoid meals, leading the ghouls to reach ever-outward for victims. Now that several people have gone missing, the local authorities are offering a reward to anyone who can solve the mystery of their disappearances.

This adventure features the deathweaver, ghoulish bat, servant of the Unsated God, and web zombie from *Tome of Beasts 2*.

TRAGEDY AT THYRDUN OUTPOST (4TH-LEVEL CHARACTERS)

Thyrdun was once a dwarven mining outpost on the edges of the dwarves' domain. A few years after its construction, an accident ruptured the mine's tailings dam, flooding the mine and trapping most of the miners. After that tragedy, the mine lay silent and abandoned for over a decade. Recently, dwarven leaders sought to reopen the mine. An engineering crew drained and dug out the mine, but they haven't reported their progress in over a week. Concerned, the dwarven leaders seek adventurers who can investigate the silent outpost.

This adventure features the overshadow and rock roach from *Tome of Beasts 2*.

CAVERNS OF THE CRYSTALLINE MONOLITH (5TH-LEVEL CHARACTERS)

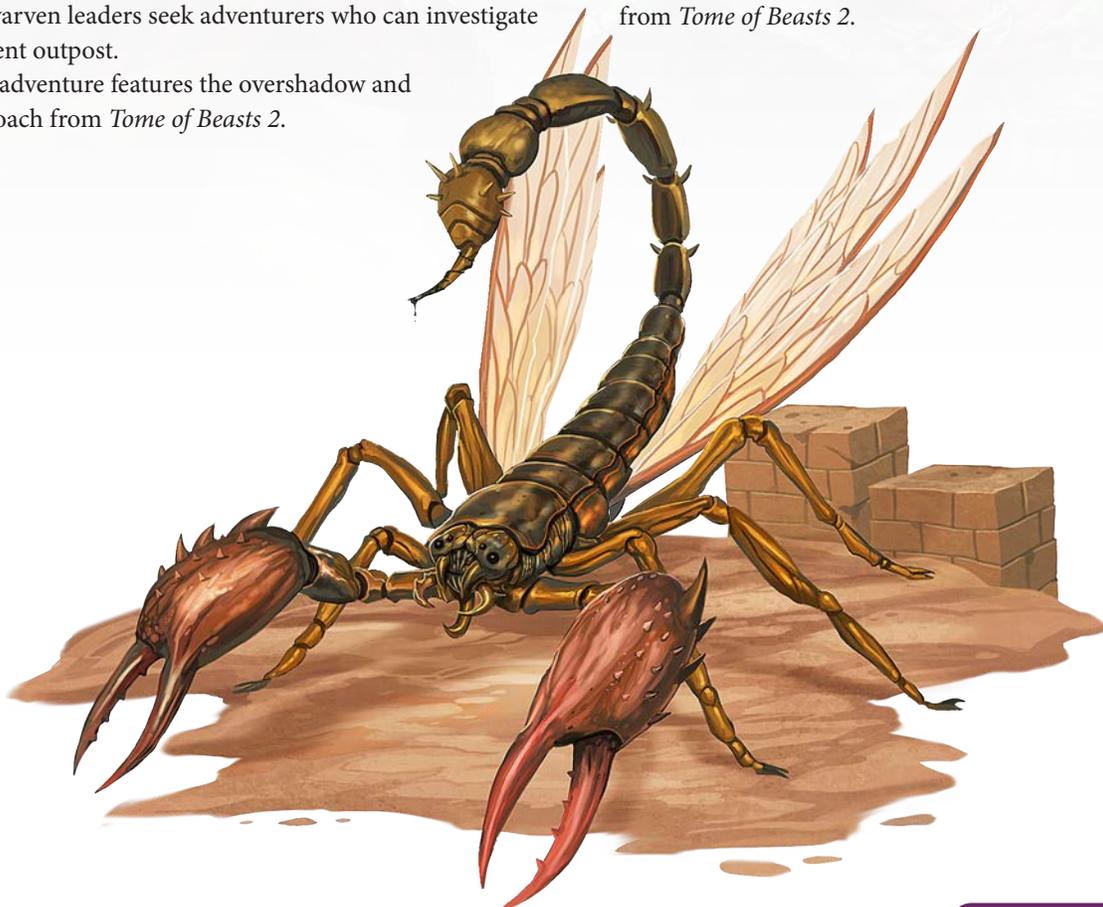
This series of caves is located in an area of high geothermal activity and is covered in crystals. Some of the crystals tower like trees while others line the floors and walls in easily broken spikes. While a place of beauty and wonder, it also contains a wide variety of crystals used as components for spells or magic items. Rumors abound that it holds great treasure and that it is inhabited by an alien being that tends the crystals like a precious garden.

This adventure features the crystalline monolith and fire-infused water elemental from *Tome of Beasts 2*.

FIGHT FOR HORSESHOE ROCK OASIS (5TH-LEVEL CHARACTERS)

Horseshoe Rock Oasis is a valuable oasis not far from a well-traveled trade route through the desert. Recent rumors speak of bandits or monsters now inhabiting the oasis as those who have visited it never return. Oases are great boons to merchants in the desert and losing an oasis means changing a trade route or leaving behind valuable cargo to hold extra water. Local merchant guilds can't afford to make such changes and seek adventurers to drive off whatever is now living in the oasis.

This adventure features the kezai and water scorpion from *Tome of Beasts 2*.



THE RIVER TOMB (6TH-LEVEL CHARACTERS)

The damming of a local river reveals the ancient tomb of a forgotten warlord. Two bands of explorers failed to plunder its depths, releasing ancient horrors in the process. The surviving member of the latest band of explorers seeks heroes to recover the bodies of her fallen companions to give them a proper burial.

This adventure features the befouled weird, hongaeak, overshadow, and swampgas bubble from *Tome of Beasts 2*.

HOUSE OF THE WORM GOD (7TH-LEVEL CHARACTERS)

A cult of Hriggala based in the slums of a large city captured, tortured, and consumed various people for months. Their murder spree was abruptly ended when one of their victims returned as a powerful undead creature. Hriggala, amused at the turn of events, raised the fallen cultists as undead. The undead cultists gather under new leadership and prepare to exit their dilapidated manor to devour the unsuspecting citizens of the city.

This adventure features the flayed wraith, fleshspurned, leech swarm, and servant of the Unsated God from *Tome of Beasts 2*.

TERROR AT THE MOUNTAIN LOTUS TEMPLE (8TH-LEVEL CHARACTERS)

Mountain Lotus Temple, built in a small vale off a remote mountain pass, was once a sacred spot for pilgrims and a peaceful shelter for passing travelers. Not long ago, a temple priestess at the end of her days turned to demonic power, seeking to prolong her life. She eventually grew to regret her decision and attempted to rebuke the demon. Her attempt failed and the demon transformed her into a monster. The former priestess then slew the other inhabitants in the temple, leaving it haunted, yet still one of the only shelters from the elements in the mountains.

This adventure features the hantu penanggal, husk, and walled horror from *Tome of Beasts 2*.

TUNNELS BELOW SKULLTOP TOR (9TH-LEVEL CHARACTERS)

Skulltop Tor, a towering hillside topped with a massive giant's skull, has remained silent in the generations since its dwarven creators were slain by a dragon. Recently, however, caravans carrying shipments of food and ale have gone missing and all signs point to the tor. After a caravan transporting sensitive documents goes missing,

the local authorities seek scrupulous individuals capable of retrieving the documents from the tor—and of maintaining discretion while doing so.

This adventure features the abbanith giant, befouled weird, graveyard dragon, strobing fungus, and thin giant from *Tome of Beasts 2*.

CRUCIBLE OF GOLEMS (10TH-LEVEL CHARACTERS)

Centuries ago, a magical crucible was used to create war golems for a now-forgotten magocracy. It has lain dormant and hidden ever since. Recently an ambitious and conniving wizard found and repurposed the crucible to create his own personal army of golems. A local construct historian believes the crucible should be studied, not used to create armies, and tasks the PCs with stopping the wizard.

This adventure features the bearing golem, clockwork tiger, and fabricator from *Tome of Beasts 2*.

FIRE AND FURY (13TH-LEVEL CHARACTERS)

Centuries ago, a volcanic creature settled in the caldera of the volcano Olov Yurak. Ever since, it has demanded regular sacrifices from the settlements at the base of the volcano, sending lava flows down to the settlements that don't comply. A recent traveler to the area was appalled at the sacrifices and insists there must be a better way of life for the settlements. The traveler seeks adventurers capable of defeating the great evil that lurks in the volcano.

This adventure features the cherufe, magma octopus, and salamander monarch from *Tome of Beasts 2*.

TOWERS OF THE THREE REGENTS (15TH-LEVEL CHARACTERS)

These three towers were once dedicated to different fey lords. The lords ruled from the towers as regents when the fey king and queen were absent. During a period of strife among the fey, an assault on the towers cast them into ruins. Whispered rumors speak of an ancient relic of the regents, which was lost when the towers were assaulted. Recently, the evil fey queen sent agents to the towers to find this relic. Her rivals want to keep the powerful item out of her hands and seek adventurers who aren't afraid of the queen's wrath and who have the strength to stand up to her agents.

This adventure features the far dorocha, fey revenant, knight ab-errant, and luck leech from *Tome of Beasts 2*.



TO TRACK A THIEF

AN ADVENTURE FOR FOUR TO FIVE CHARACTERS OF 1ST LEVEL

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Kolchak Counting House and Repository was a respected and venerable bank, a fixture among merchants and the wealthy in the city for many years. It was also the front for a cult of Mammon, which laundered its own ill-gotten gains through legal financial transactions made by the bank. The bank's director, Maxim Kolchak, was also the cult's high priest. A fire ten years ago damaged much of the building's upper story. It also covered an attack by an adventuring band that struck at the cult, killing Kolchak and many of the cultists.

The surviving cultists fled with what wealth they could, and the adventurers made off with the rest. Neither group managed to retrieve the master coin of the greed swarm (see Area 12), the guardian of the cult's secret vault, which has lain inert in the basement vault for a decade. Meanwhile, the damaged building sat unused, unowned, and boarded up—until recently.

Several weeks ago, a lone valkruung entered the city, seeking a new home after losing the rest of its group. While exploring its new home, it discovered the hidden shrine to Mammon in the basement. The basement's vault held the master coin of a greed swarm, forgotten by the cultists and overlooked by the adventurers who assaulted the shrine. The coin was powerless, long bereft of any valuables with which to form a swarm, at least until the valkruung began storing its stolen goods nearby. With a new supply of coins and valuables, the greed swarm reconstituted. The valkruung is delighted with its new companion, treating it as a shiny, jingly pet. The greed swarm and the valkruung

venture out at night, and the two steal what they can from the local populace before retreating to Kolchak's ahead of the coming dawn.

As typical for its kind, the valkruung lurks on the rooftops, descending to steal from the populace. It takes anything that catches its fancy. As the creature engages in mostly petty thefts, often stealing things of little to no value, its activities didn't garner much attention from the local watch. However, after the greed swarm reconstituted, the robberies increased in frequency and value, attracting more attention.

The valkruung's depredations, while constant, weren't as concerning given the creature's tendency to steal anything that piques its interests, valuable or not. The greed swarm is much more selective and has killed three people so far, catching them alone and making off with the valuables they carried. With no leads thus far, the town watch is willing to bring in outside assistance.

TO TRACK A THIEF IN MIDGARD

In the Midgard setting, virtually any urban setting from a large town to a small city would work as a place to drop in this adventure—as long as the locale has a thriving economy where a bank would reasonably exist. The most applicable locations are Zobeck, Droisha in the Mharoti Empire, Per-Kush in Nuria Natal, or Valera in the Seven Cities.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The following hooks can be used to lure the PCs into investigating the robberies:

- The PCs find a posting on a community board or outside a local watchhouse announcing that city officials are offering a 50 gp reward for information leading to the capture of the thief or thieves responsible for recent robberies.
- An officer of the watch, known to the PCs, approaches them and asks for help in tracking down the thieves.
- The local thieves' guild is not pleased with the civic disruption being caused by these unprofessional thefts. A rogue PC, or a PC with criminal connections, is contacted by agents of the guild. The agents ask the PCs for assistance in exchange for a favor from the guild in the future.
- A merchant or minor noble was the victim of a recent robbery. They wish the return of a family heirloom (signet ring, amulet, wedding ring, or other item of significance). They are willing to pay a 50 gp reward for the return of the item.

FINDING THE THIEVES

The PCs can use a number of tactics to try to locate the thieves. The most direct way would be to wander the city streets at night in areas where the robberies occurred, hoping to catch sight of their quarry. This can have varying degrees of success. Since the greed swarm isn't as concerned with stealth or with leaving its victims alive, the patrolling PCs could hear a victim's scream or stumble into the greed swarm overtaking a victim. The PCs' timely arrival could scare the greed swarm and valkruung into fleeing with the victim's valuables, giving the PCs a chance to follow the pair back to Kolchak's.

The PCs can investigate the sites where the robberies occurred or interview any victims and witnesses. They can also speak to members of the city watch (or thieves guild members, if they are working on behalf of that entity). A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) or Charisma (Persuasion) check provides information. Give out one piece of information for each successful check (alternately, provide an additional piece of information for every increment of 2 by which the PC's roll beats the DC).

- The robberies are erratic. The items the thief steals vary widely in type and value, from coins and jewelry to children's toys and kitchen utensils.
- The robberies always occur at night.
- After a few weeks, the robberies increased in frequency. Also, more valuable items were stolen, though cheap and useless items were still being taken. (If this information is garnered from a watch officer or member of the thieves' guild, they also mention this change likely means more than one culprit.)
- Three victims were killed and robbed of all their valuables, pouches and pockets torn open and any valueless items left scattered near the bodies. The bodies were covered in small bruises, as if beaten repeatedly or pelted with numerous small objects, though no such objects were found in the area.
- Some witnesses report seeing a monkey in the area where the robberies took place, running through the streets or on rooftops or awnings. Others report hearing loud rattling or metallic clinking, like metal items being dragged along or tossed into the street.

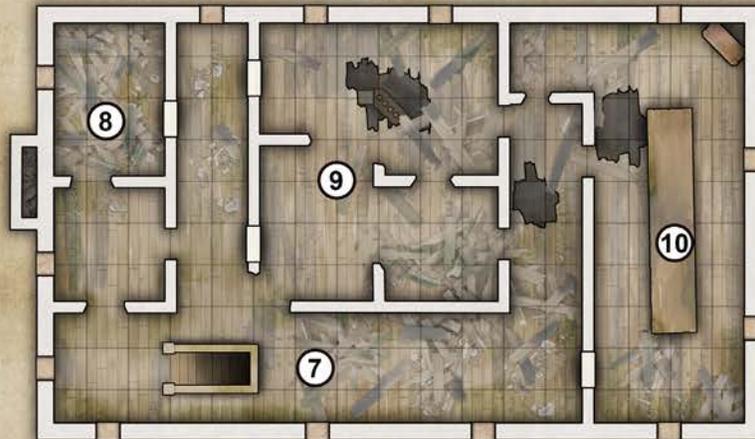
If the PCs acquire a map of the city and plot out the reported robberies, they find the marked areas form a rough circle about a half-mile across. The abandoned bank sits at the very center of the activity. A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Insight) check is enough for the PCs to locate the valkruung's lair in this manner.

KOLCHAK'S COUNTING HOUSE AND REPOSITORY

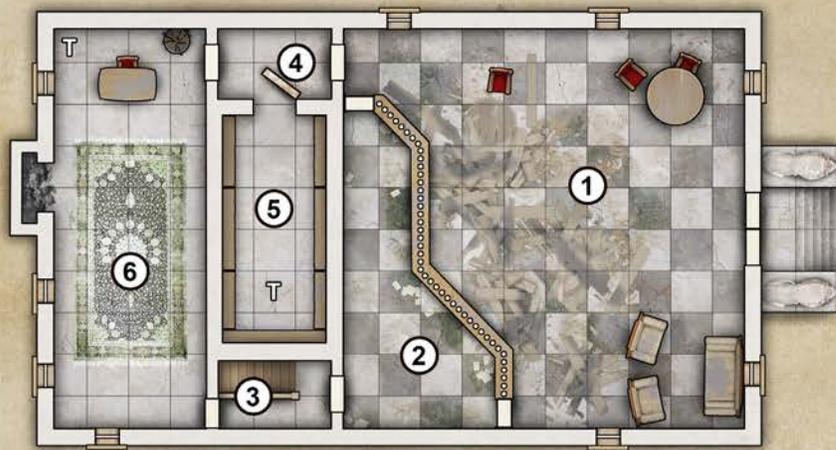
The two-story building of stone and timber is of rather staid and simple construction, save for the two stone lion statues that flank the front steps. The upper story has been damaged by fire, with portions of the roof showing signs of collapse. The front doors are chained shut. A successful DC 13 Dexterity check using thieves' tools picks the lock, while a successful DC 18 Strength check breaks the chain.

Alternatively, PCs working for the town watch can gain access if they have proof the thieves might be hiding in the building. The windows on the first floor are boarded. A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check notes loose boards on a window in the western wall that opens into Area 1. Otherwise, the boards on any of the windows can be pried loose with a successful DC 12 Strength check, though this makes a fair amount of noise. The second-story windows are broken and open should anyone seek to climb up and enter that way.

KOLCHAK'S COUNTING HOUSE AND REPOSITORY



2ND FLOOR



1ST FLOOR



BASEMENT

1 SQUARE EQUALS 5 FEET

1. LOBBY

Pieces of wood, plaster, soot, and stone litter the cracked, marble floor of this area. A few torn, padded chairs, an old divan, and a couple of tables once serviced customers as a waiting area. To the northeast, a carved wooden counter topped with an ironwork grill formed a work area for bankers. Two doors sit in the north wall. The room smells of smoke and damp.

The floor is littered with fallen debris from the floor above, and open holes in the ceiling lead to Areas 9 and 10. Hinged sections of countertop at either end of the tellers' counter allow access to Area 2. The door to the northeast opens into Area 4.

Hazard. The ceiling is unstable, and any loud noises or violent actions (combat, spells such as *thunderwave*, and similar actions) here can cause parts of the ceiling to come down. When a loud noise, such as the *thunderwave* spell, occurs, there is a 25 percent chance of large debris falling from the ceiling. Each creature within 5 feet of the source of the noise must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or take 5 (1d10) bludgeoning damage. Even if large debris doesn't fall, there is noticeable groaning of supports overhead and dust falling to warn those in the area that it may be best to be quiet here.

2. CLERKS' AREA

Behind the counter, rows of drawers with corroded brass fittings sit beside shelves holding stacks of moldering paper. Some of this paper lies in shredded mounds in the corners of the area. A framed portrait hangs on the wall behind the protective iron cage, its subject unidentifiable through the grime.

Mice used the paper to create nests here among and around the shelves, but they are harmless.

Portrait. The portrait is a likeness of Maxim Kolchak, founder of the bank, though identifying the subject is unlikely without careful cleaning of the painting. A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check notices a slip of paper tucked into the back of the portrait's frame. The hand-written note reads, "Tomorrow. Midnight. The vault." It is not signed, but there are three drops of yellow wax in a triangular pattern on the paper. A successful DC 13 Intelligence (Religion) check recalls that three gold coins in that configuration are a symbol of Mammon, devil prince and lord of greed.

3. ACCESS HALL

This short hall ends in a door. A staircase leads to the second story of the building.

The door to Area 6 is bolted from the other side, requiring a successful DC 15 Strength check to force open. A small hole has been broken in the bottom of the door. It is large enough for a Tiny creature to pass normally or for a Small creature to squeeze through it.

4. ACCESS HALL

This short hall has a wooden door at both ends. The western wall is dominated by a large iron door, which hangs slightly ajar. A skeletal hand clutches one of the spokes of the handwheel affixed to the door's center.

The door to Area 6 is locked. A successful DC 13 Dexterity check using thieves' tools unlocks it. The hand on the door leading to Area 5 is human, severed from a cultist attempting to flee from the adventurers who attacked the bank years ago.

5. BANK VAULT

The interior of this reinforced room is lined with shelves. Some of them still hold strongboxes, but most appear open and empty. Rusty stains spatter the floor in a trail leading to the back of the vault.

The stains are dried blood, left by the dismembered cultist who fled in here. The trail ends just before a secret trap door in the floor that leads to Area 11. The cultists of Mammon used this passage to reach their shrine in the basement and to secretly move wealth from the upper vault to the lower one. The door can only be opened from the other side, but it can be located with a successful DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check.

Treasure. The vault was looted long ago, but one of the strongboxes still holds valuables. A successful DC 13 Dexterity check using thieves' tools unlocks the box, which contains three silver trade bars worth 25 gp each and a gold cat's eye ring worth 25 gp.

6. DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

This large room was once luxurious. A thick, tasseled rug covers the floor, now moth-eaten and stained. A large hearth against the north wall is choked with ashes. To the east, a dead fern sits in a glazed pot next to a large wooden desk, its padded leather chair torn with wisps of stuffing spilling from the holes.

This room was looted long ago and contains nothing of value. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check discovers a hidden trapdoor in the floor near the desk. A secret switch on the wall behind the fern opens the trapdoor, revealing a ladder down to Area 11. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check finds the switch.

7. UPPER HALL

This area is thick with the smell of smoke, damp, and rot. There are visible holes in the ceiling, and the windows are broken, leaving empty frames in the walls. Several rooms line the hall, but some of the doors and even portions of the walls are gone, leaving the area a maze of partial walls and debris.

The main north-south hall is difficult terrain.

8. COLLAPSED OFFICE

The ceiling to this room has mostly collapsed, leaving a large pile of burnt wood, stone, and other debris piled in the room. The splintered remnants of what may have been a desk peeks out from beneath the debris from the collapse.

A **stone creeper** (*Tome of Beasts 2*, p. 339) has rooted here, feeding on the mortar holding the building together. The stone creeper's feeding, combined with the damage of the fire, caused the roof collapse in this area. The stone creeper attacks creatures that enter the area but doesn't pursue them if they flee.

9. RUINED OFFICES

This area seems to have suffered from the worst of the fire, as the walls are blackened and partially collapsed. The suite of offices here has become a large, joined area, broken by debris, partially collapsed walls, and gaping holes in the floor.

Unsafe Floor. The spaces within 10 feet of the holes in the floor are unsafe. A creature that moves onto those areas and that weighs more than 100 pounds falls through the floor and lands prone 10 feet below on the first floor, taking falling damage as normal.

10. MEETING ROOM

An oak table, once finely carved and polished, lies collapsed upon the floor of this room, filthy with ash and soot. Any chairs that once circled the table have long since disappeared. A cabinet stands in one corner of the room. One of the cabinet doors is missing; the other hangs from a single hinge. The shelves inside are bowed and littered with junk.

The cabinet is where the valkruung displays items it has stolen that it finds interesting. Among the clutter are things like a feather duster, a glass eye, a set of false teeth, a horse-grooming brush, a child's rag doll, and a pair of gardening shears.

Creature. There is a 50 percent chance the **valkruung** (*Tome of Beasts 2*, p. 355) is found here, rearranging its collection of items in the cabinet. Otherwise, it can be



found in Area 11. If here, the valkruung doesn't fight against superior numbers. It attempts to flee (after using a Sleight of Hand check to relieve an attacker of an interesting item), heading through the damaged floor and down one of the holes to the first floor then to Area 12 to alert the greed swarm. In its flight, it leaves the hidden door in Area 6 open behind it.

11. BASEMENT

The floor of this room is flooded with a few inches of cold, scummy water. A rusty iron ladder ascends in one corner, while a stone ramp rises to the ceiling near the center. A golden idol of a horned fiend holding a scepter sits in a corner. The pot-bellied image squats on cloven hooves, leering down at the polished stone altar that sits before it between a pair of rusty iron braziers. The thick, iron door to another vault stands open in the southeast corner of the room.

Creature. If not found in Area 10, the **valkruung** is here, admiring its trove on the altar. It calls for the greed swarm from Area 12 to assist it in defeating intruders. If the swarm is reduced to half its hit points or fewer, the valkruung flees, taking the ladder up and either hiding elsewhere in the building or elsewhere in the city via the rooftops.

Treasure. The valkruung's trove of stolen shiny items lies strewn over the altar. A few items of value hide among a number of metal fittings, buttons, glass beads, and costume jewelry: 10 cp, 29 sp, 7 gp, and a copper brooch worth 25 gp.

12. LOWER VAULT

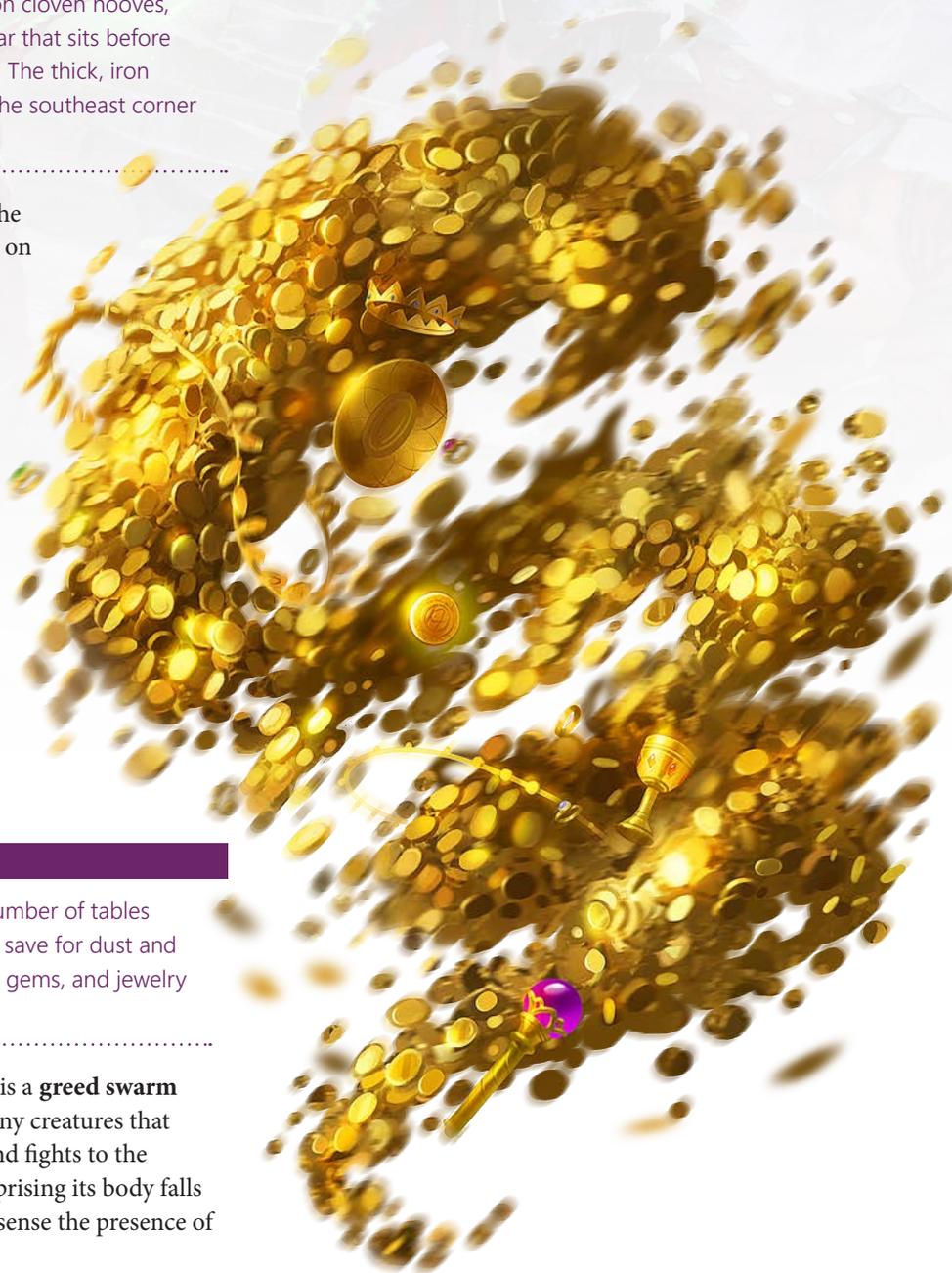
The interior of this chamber holds a number of tables and shelves, though they stand empty save for dust and cobwebs. A mound of gleaming coins, gems, and jewelry sits in a pile on the floor.

Creature. The treasure on the floor is a **greed swarm** (*Tome of Beasts 2*, p. 184). It attacks any creatures that enter its lair, except the valkruung, and fights to the death. If destroyed, the treasure comprising its body falls inert. A spell or other effect that can sense the presence of

magic, such as *detect magic*, reveals the master coin in the pile of inert coins. Destroying this coin prevents the greed swarm from reconstituting. The master coin gathered great wealth over the course of the last few weeks: 1,900 cp, 800 sp, 90 gp, and 7 assorted gems worth 10 gp each.

CONCLUSION

If the PCs discover the source of the robberies, they are paid whatever reward is due for the information. If they dealt with the valkruung and the greed swarm, they receive an additional reward of 50 gp. If the PCs also return the stolen property, another 250 gp is added to the total reward.





THE FORSAKEN FORT

AN ADVENTURE FOR FOUR TO FIVE CHARACTERS OF 3RD LEVEL

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Weeks ago, a fort in a grassland was wiped out by a virulent disease. Shortly after the last inhabitant succumbed to the disease, a wandering cackle of hyenas, led by a crocotta (see Area 5), discovered the fort and decided to settle in it. The crocotta believed the fort would make an ideal home, but the gates were still barred shut. Determined, it started digging beneath the palisade, encouraging the hyenas to assist. The digging undermined a section of wall on one of the buildings, causing a partial collapse and disturbing a pestilence swarm, the original bearers of the disease that killed the fort's inhabitants. The swarm, its cozy shelter now exposed to daylight, flew off. The pestilence swarm eventually attacked a nearby village (see Pestilence Descends). Meanwhile, the crocotta and its hyena allies settled into their new home.

Without the ability to use the doors in the fort, the hyenas and the crocotta dug entrances into the various buildings. This allows them to move between areas with relative ease, while intruders must find a way through the often-locked doors or must put themselves at disadvantage using the hyenas' means of entry and exit. The crocotta has also devised a few other tricks to help it and its hyenas defend their new den.

STARTING THE ADVENTURE

The PCs should be in a small village, farm, or other populated agricultural area. Whether passing through, restocking supplies, or looking for a place to spend the night, they are in the right place at the right time, as the people here need their aid.

PESTILENCE DESCENDS

While the PCs are in the vicinity, sudden cries of alarm alert them to danger. A **pestilence swarm** (*Tome of Beasts* 2, p. 294) descends out of the skies to the east. The swarm alights on any nearby crops—whether in fields or market stalls—and proceeds to devour them. If the PCs expect any cooperation from the people here, they have to deal with the swarm first, as the first priority of everyone in the immediate area is to kill or drive off the swarm before it destroys the crops. Fortunately for the PCs and the locals, the pestilence swarm no longer carries the disease it brought to the fort, the swarm's long period of dormancy leaving the disease without hosts.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Once the swarm has been defeated, the area residents are quick to show their gratitude for any assistance the PCs provide, going so far as to offer free room and board and a round of drinks. From this point, any of the following can be used to prompt the PCs to investigate the fort.

- A local authority figure (mayor, sheriff, alderman), concerned that the swarm came from the direction of the fort, approaches the PCs. The figure explains no one has heard from the fort in weeks. Usually they see a patrol or a rider coming in for supplies. The PCs are asked to investigate the fort and report back.
- A local healer or cleric recognizes the swarm as a type of insect that spreads disease. Worried for the fort's safety, the healer asks the PCs to look in on the fort to see if any have fallen ill from insect bites.
- A villager or farmer has a message that needs to be delivered to a relative, a soldier at the fort. The fort is in the direction in which the PCs are already headed.
- The PCs plan to stop at the fort for reasons of their own. They may know one of the soldiers, might be looking for information on the area from the fort's patrol riders, or possibly have a delivery to make.

SCALY AMBUSH

At some point between the locale of the pestilence swarm attack and the fort, the PCs are stalked by predators. Compsognathus are tiny creatures but can be dangerous to much larger prey when encountered in superior numbers. The patrols from the fort usually kill the creatures on sight. With the fort out of commission, the numbers of these little dinosaurs in the area have grown.

The PCs are attacked by a **swarm of compsognathus** (*Tome of Beasts 2*, p. 108). The creatures are voraciously hungry and willing to attack a group of humanoids in the hopes of taking down one of them, or an accompanying creature, for a meal. The swarm attacks from stealth if possible, coming at the PCs from the tall plains grass.

THE FORSAKEN FORT

The fort is surrounded by a 12-foot-tall wooden palisade. The gate is barred from the inside. A successful DC 20 Strength check forces it open. The buildings themselves are wooden, with heavy shutters secured over the windows, pierced with cross-shaped apertures for soldiers to shoot at enemies from within.

Given the scarcity of resources, all the ground-floor buildings save one have earthen floors. A section of the palisade to the east of the gate has collapsed, along with a portion of the building that stands near it. A section of the northern palisade also has an entrance dug under it. A successful DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check squeezes through the fallen logs and past the debris into the stable (Area 2). On a failed check, the creature is unable to make progress through the tangle. If the creature fails the check by 5 or more, it causes further collapse. The creature is restrained until it or another creature succeeds on a DC 12 Strength check to shift some of the debris to release the trapped creature.

A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Survival) check notes signs of digging around the collapsed area, as well as tracks that can be identified as belonging to hyenas. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check notices one set of tracks has much longer claws than the others. These tracks are also at the dugout entrance on the north side of the fort, both coming and going from the fort.

A yellow cloth painted with a sigil hangs on the gate. A successful DC 10 Intelligence (History) or Wisdom (Medicine) check reveals this as a symbol for disease, a warning to those approaching the fort.

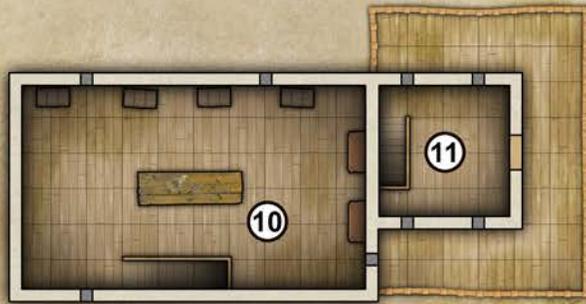
DISEASE

The disease that swept through the fort was fatal to all who contracted it. As there are no living infected to transfer it, the PCs may move through the area without fear of contagion. However, extended contact with any humanoid

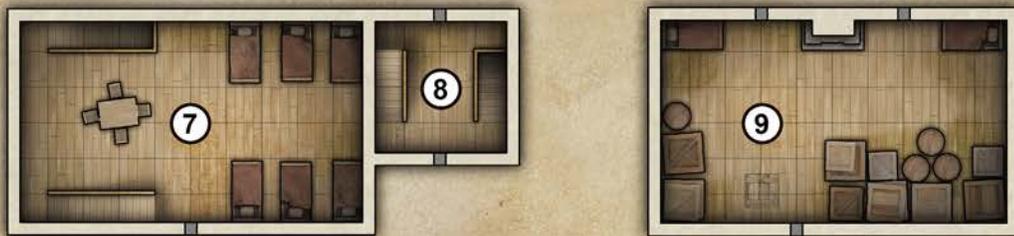
THE FORSAKEN FORT IN MIDGARD

A wooden fort in broad grasslands can be easily dropped into the Rothenian Plain or the borderlands of any of its neighboring nations, like Perunalia, Niemheim, or Vidim.

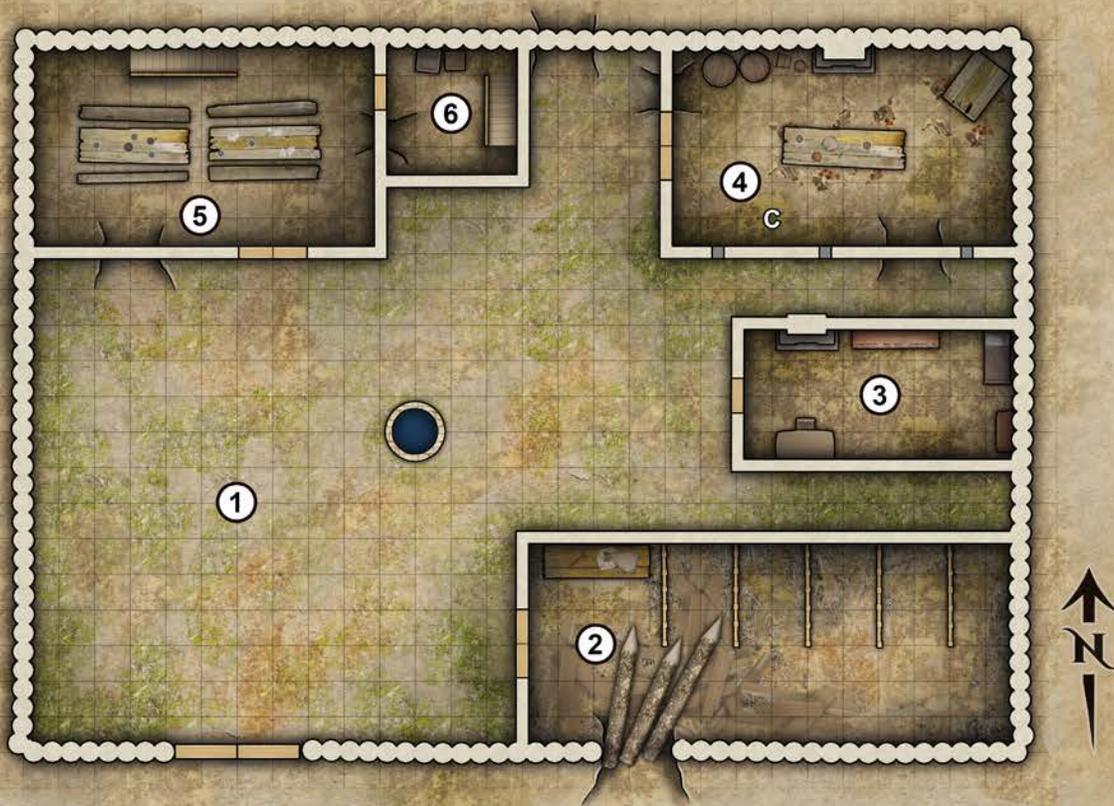
THE FORSAKEN FORT



3RD STORY



2ND STORY



1 SQUARE EQUALS 5 FEET

remains in the fort might expose the PCs to a disease, at your discretion. Cackle fever and sewer plague are appropriate choices for the disease.

1. COURTYARD

The interior of the palisade is mostly packed earth with occasional patches of grass. A covered stone well stands in the middle of the yard. To the north, a three-story building stands with an adjoined tower. Three separate buildings stand to the east, one having suffered damage, showing an open hole in the roof.

The water in the well is potable. All of the doors and windows of the buildings are secured and show no signs of life.

Creatures. If the PCs manage to enter the courtyard stealthily, there are five **hyenas** lounging about the courtyard. They attack the PCs, and their noises alert the other creatures in the surrounding buildings, which are on alert. If at least two of their number are slain, the others attempt to flee into the surrounding buildings. If the PCs are detected as they approach, these hyenas slink off to join the others; increase the number of hyenas in other encounters by one.

2. STABLE

The building stands despite damage to its southern wall where the palisade collapsed, taking out a support beam and part of the ceiling. A reek of carrion remains despite the breach. Five stalls line the north wall. A shelf and a table hold tack and riding gear.

The horses once stabled here succumbed to death, neglected after the soldiers fell too ill to care for them, and the hyenas scavenged the remains. The shelf and table hold saddles and tack for five horses.

Creatures. Three **hyenas** lurk here. If they detect creatures attempting to enter through the collapsed section, they ambush the intruders. If a creature is caught in a collapse, they attack that creature without mercy. The hyenas focus on a single opponent at a time if possible. If two of their number are killed, the remaining hyena flees and joins others elsewhere.

3. SERGEANT'S CABIN

This wooden cabin stands against the eastern wall of the fort. A crest of polished brass is affixed over the front door. There are signs of attempted digging near the southeastern corner. The foul smell inside the building belies its neat appearance. A small desk sits against the south wall, and a bookshelf stands against the north wall. The east wall holds a bed and an armoire. A decayed corpse lies in repose upon the bed.

The wooden floor built into the cabin has kept the hyenas and the crocotta from digging into it, and thus it remains untouched by their depredations. The sergeant in charge of the fort occupied this building in life; his corpse remains here in death. The desk holds various orders and reports as well as the sergeant's journal. The later entries mention the spread of the disease, the fort being closed off to outsiders, and the appearance of a few insects matching the description of the insects the PCs defeated before arriving here.

Treasure. The armoire holds a breastplate, a shield, and a longsword. A drawer at the bottom of the armoire holds a chest containing 810 gp; the money was monthly payroll for the soldiers stationed at the fort.

4. KITCHEN AND STORES

The interior of this building is in shambles. Torn pieces of cloth, dried beans, and flour litter the floor. The ash from the fireplace has been dug out and spread around the room. A hanging rack over the central table has fallen, sending pots and utensils everywhere. A few hooks at the back of the building still hold rotting scraps of meat and halves of sausages. A fallen shelf nearby sent jars hurling to the floor. Most are intact, but some are broken and their contents missing, the shards of glass remarkably clean.

The hyenas demolished the kitchen after digging their way in, gorging on the stored meats and whatever else they could find to eat. Now they occasionally come in to hunt any vermin that might sneak in for scraps.

Trapdoor. There is an obvious trapdoor in the ceiling, out of reach of the animals. Pulling it open unfolds a wooden ladder that allows access to the second floor (Area 9).

Creatures. Three **hyenas** rummage around here. If intruders come through the door, one stands its ground on the table while the others leave through the hole under the southern wall to circle around and come at the PCs through the open door or the hole under the western

wall. The crocotta taught the hyenas these tactics, and a successful DC 13 Intelligence (Nature) check recognizes it is not normal hyena behavior.

5. MESS HALL

Two rough tables sit here, flanked by benches. Playing cards and a scattering of coins lie on one table. A musky, animal smell hangs in the air alongside the scent of decay. A set of stairs on the north wall ascends to the second floor. A hole has been dug under the wall to the west of the main door. Another appears to the south of the other door in the east wall.



This is where the soldiers of the fort took their meals and lounged in their off time.

Creatures. The **crocotta** (*Tome of Beasts 2*, p. 75) resides here with five **hyenas**. If forewarned of the PCs' approach, the crocotta directs the hyenas to hide in Area 6 by using the dug entrance, while it retreats up the stairs in Area 5 to Area 7, joining the hyenas there. When the PCs enter Area 5, the crocotta uses its Mimicry trait to make faint cries for help to draw the PCs upstairs, where it lurks near the bunks. When the PCs arrive in Area 7, it signals the hyenas to attack and uses a prearranged signal noise to summon the hyenas that are hiding in Area 6 to come up and attack the PCs from the rear. It then flees up to Area 11, leaping onto the balcony through an open window. It makes its final stand against the PCs there.

If unprepared for the PCs, the crocotta stays near the stairs to the second floor. It relies on its Paralyzing Gaze trait while the hyenas press the attack. The hyenas focus on still-moving opponents, accustomed to leaving paralyzed targets for their leader. When at least three hyenas are killed, the crocotta retreats upstairs with the remaining hyenas.

Treasure. Loose coins sit on the table, leftovers from an unfinished card game the soldiers were never able to come back to finish. The coins are a total of 37 cp, 28 sp, and 6 gp.

6. WATCHTOWER, FIRST FLOOR

This small room holds a pair of crates and a set of stairs climbing to the next level of the tower.

Supply Chests. One of the crates holds four light crossbows and forty bolts. The other holds two bullseye lanterns, both fully fueled, and six flasks of oil.

7. BARRACKS

The room contains six bunkbeds, each with a pair of footlockers under the lower bunk. The bedding from the lower bunks lies in piles on the floor, along with splinters of gnawed and chewed bone. The scent of decay fills the room.

After the hyenas feasted upon the bodies of the soldiers who died here, they adopted it as their own den. A few pieces of bone remain, including a well-gnawed dog skull. This belongs to the crocotta and is all that is left of the fort's mascot.

Creatures. Four **hyenas** are currently in this room. They fight fiercely if cornered but flee up or downstairs, if possible, after at least two of them are killed.

Treasure. The footlockers hold a total of twelve shortswords, twelve daggers, 24 gp, 36 sp, and 48 cp.

8. WATCHTOWER, SECOND FLOOR

This small room is empty save for the stairs down to the first floor and a second set climbing to the next level. Small, shuttered windows are set into the northern and southern walls.

The windows are pierced with cross-shaped slits and allow a clear field of fire into most of the courtyard to the south and outside the fort to the north.

9. COOK AND QUARTERMASTER'S QUARTERS

This room contains a pair of beds flanking the chimney that rises from the floor below to the ceiling. Footlockers sit at the end of each bed. The room is otherwise occupied by stacks of crates and barrels.

This room remains untouched by the crocotta and its hyenas, who have no way to access it. The beds are empty, as the quartermaster died in the barracks and the cook in the kitchen below, leaving the room free of the stench of decay prevalent elsewhere.

The room serves double duty as quarters and storage. Several crates of nonperishable foodstuffs are here—enough food to constitute a week's rations for six people—along with barrels of beer and casks of salt and lard.

Equipment. Aside from clothing and minor personal items, the footlockers contain two shortswords, two daggers, a tinderbox, two whetstones, a vial of holy water, and a vial of antitoxin.

10. ARMORY

This room sits under the building's steep roof. Burlap sacks filled with straw and sporting several punctures and slashes hang from the rafters. Wooden chests line the north wall, and a pair of cabinets stand against the wall to the east. A table that holds knives, needles, leather, whetstones, and other materials stands in the center of the room. A broken window in the eastern wall leads to a wooden balcony.

The fort's soldiers used this room to train and upkeep their weapons. The fort's latest occupants rarely visit this room, as it contains nothing to interest them. The crocotta occasionally comes into this room to use its window to the balcony around Area 11.

Equipment. The room contains a total of six lances, twelve shields, twelve suits of studded leather armor, two chain shirts, and a heavy mace.

11. WATCHTOWER, THIRD FLOOR

The small room is empty. Shuttered windows are set into the walls to the north and south. The east wall holds a single wooden door.

The door here exits onto a fenced balcony that surrounds the top of the tower on three sides, providing those on it with half cover and an excellent view of the surrounding area. The crocotta comes up here on occasion to survey the land around the fort.

CONCLUSION

Once the crocotta and its cackle of hyenas are killed or driven off, the PCs are free to do as they wish. If they return to the scene of the pestilence swarm attack to inform residents of the fort's fate, the villagers are horrified and saddened but glad the PCs cleared the fort of the hyenas. They reward the PCs simply but with much gratitude: farmers provide food for the road; an innkeeper lets them room for free whenever they pass through; a healer or cleric treats wounds suffered at the fort or gifts supplies, such as a healer's kit, antitoxin, or a *potion of healing*; a mayor provides them with a letter of commendation which may allow them an easier time when trying to meet with other governmental officials (by granting them advantage on Charisma checks).

If the PCs report the fort's loss to another fort or at a city garrison farther along the way, the commanding officer there provides them with a 250 gp reward for their efforts.



THE TWISTED WREATH

AN ADVENTURE FOR FOUR TO FIVE CHARACTERS OF 3RD LEVEL

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The Twisted Wreath, a maze of knotted and thorny vines, lurks deep within a tangled forest far from any major city. A massive obelisk carved with forgotten druidic runes and brimming with magical energy dominates the center of the maze. Worshipers of various nature deities hold an annual pilgrimage to the obelisk to offer prayers and sacrifices.

For the last few years, a dryad named Ilkarayda made the Twisted Wreath her home and happily welcomed travelers to worship at the obelisk. A month ago, a group of clerics traveled to the obelisk and conducted a ritual that sought to bend the magic of the obelisk to their will in an effort to contact a powerful fey lord. To their dismay, the ritual backfired, forcing them to retreat and corrupting the natural world around them. Ilkarayda was killed in the backfire, enraging her bonded vine golem (see Area 6). The golem then attacked and drove off the remaining pilgrims. Since then, the Twisted Wreath has turned into a dangerous garden filled with monstrous creatures.

The rift created by the failed ritual corrupted the fey, plants, and animals in the Twisted Wreath, turning them aggressive, violent, and evil. A week ago, necrotic power surged out of the rift, transforming the fallen Ilkarayda into a tree skinner (see Area 7) and drawing the attention of a local circle of druids.

ADVENTURE HOOK

While traveling through the forest, the PCs are approached by Thalia Hornthym, a young druid who almost died after encountering Ilkarayda's golem. Thalia is concerned that other pilgrims to the Twisted Wreath may not know of its current dangers and has been seeking adventurers who are willing to enter the maze and cleanse the corruption she can sense coming from it. Thalia is unaware of the extent of the corruption wrought by the failed ritual and can't warn them of any dangers aside from Ilkarayda's vine golem. If the PCs request compensation, she admits she has no money to offer, but she is willing to part with her *amulet of health* if the PCs successfully cleanse the Twisted Wreath.

THE TWISTED WREATH

Situated in the depths of an ancient forest, the Twisted Wreath is an overgrown labyrinth of hawthorn trees, creeping junipers, firethorn bushes, and other spiny plants. This mass of interlocking branches, tree trunks, and vines forms several twisting passages through the forest in a roughly circular pattern, giving the region its name. The walls of the maze function as a *wall of thorns* spell for movement and damage purposes, though the effect can't be dispelled. The magic of the obelisk refills cut or burned sections of walls with new vines and branches within 1 round, making travel outside of the open paths difficult.

The paths through the maze are dimly lit during the day and dark at night. Open areas are brightly lit during the day and dimly lit at night, though weather conditions may impact this. Paths that exit the map lead out of the maze.

As the PCs move through the maze, they can encounter one of its denizens or being hindered by the warped vegetation. Use the following table to enliven the PCs' trip through the maze.

d6 Encounter	
1	No encounter
2	1d3 carnivorous sods (<i>Tome of Beasts 2</i> , p. 57) are hidden along the path. They attack any creatures walking over them.
3	1d2 awakened trees flank the path. They attack any creatures moving between them.
4	The leaves of the nearby trees rustle ominously. The sound is unsettling but otherwise harmless.
5	A branch crashes down in a line that is 10 feet long and 5 feet wide. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or take 4 (1d8) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone.
6	A 20-foot-long path ahead of the PCs is affected by a spike growth spell as thorns sprout up out of the ground. The path returns to normal after 10 minutes.

1. ENTRANCE

The forest trail transforms into a passage of thorny vines and hawthorn trees that marks the entrance to the Twisted Wreath. The path ahead is unusually quiet, the typical chirping of insects and bird calls replaced by a daunting silence.

Several pixies inhabited the Twisted Wreath, caring for it alongside Ilkarayda. When the failed ritual corrupted the maze, the pixies were among the first to succumb to its influence.

Creatures. Two **corrupted pixies** (*Tome of Beasts 2*, p. 72) fly invisibly around the entrance, unable to leave the rift's area of influence but bored and seeking to lure in passersby.

2. QUIET GLADE

The enclosed forest path opens out into a beautiful glade filled with wildflowers and lush grass.

While tranquil in appearance, this glade is actually the hunting ground for two **carnivorous sods** (*Tome of Beasts 2*, p. 57) that lie in wait for unsuspecting travelers. Once ordinary patches of grass, the sods were animated by the failed ritual and are highly aggressive.

Treasures. The bones of several animals and the partial skeleton of a human lie in the glade. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check while inspecting the human discovers it is wearing *boots of elvenkind*. The skeleton belonged to a human cleric that fell victim to a carnivorous sod shortly after the ritual's failure.

3. SICKLY TREE

The center of this clearing contains a huge, sickly oak tree. A figure is slumped against the base of the tree, surrounded by blackened leaves.

The figure slumped below the tree is a male elfmarked **scout** named Malethelil. Malethelil is unconscious and has 2 hit points. He was the first humanoid Ilkarayda had encountered since her transformation, and she instinctively lashed out from within the oak tree where she was resting. Not yet fully corrupted by the failed ritual, she couldn't bring herself to kill him and fled to Area 7.





1 SQUARE EQUALS 5 FEET

THE TWISTED WREATH

Fallen Scout. If his wounds are tended, Malethelil awakens and thanks the PCs for their assistance. He tells the PCs he was sent here by a local circle of druids who recently felt a surge of dark energy coming from the Twisted Wreath. He plans to continue his investigation into the source of the surge and asks to accompany the PCs, going it alone if they refuse. If the PCs ask about his attacker, he says the last thing he remembers is a terrified-looking, vine-covered woman standing over him as the vine strangling him released him.

Blackened Leaves. The sickly oak and the blackened leaves at its base give a clue to Ilkarayda's fate. A successful DC 13 Intelligence (Nature) check discovers the tree has been rotted from the inside and is slowly dying. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check recognizes the tree's plight as the side effect of being inhabited by a tree skinner.

4. ABANDONED HUTS

This large clearing is filled with several clay huts arranged in a circle around a large obelisk. The huts look to be in various states of disrepair, and most are overgrown with flowering vines and other creeping vegetation.

These huts were once used by the clerics and druids that came to pray at the obelisk. Each dwelling contains two beds, a table, a small fire pit, a set of wooden shelves, and various everyday utensils. Many of these items are now broken or dirty, and the huts contain nothing of real value.

Creatures. Two **bulbous violets** (*Tome of Beasts 2*, p. 53) inhabit the area, originally drawn by the mass death wrought by the failed ritual and the vine golem's rampage. They consumed all of the bodies over the course of the past month and are growing hungry again. If they sense the PCs, they attack.

5. OBELISK

A massive, rounded, stone obelisk sits on a grassy patch of ground. Weathered, druidic runes cover the obelisk's smooth, gray surface. A strange pressure radiates from the obelisk, and the air about it shimmers with sparkling dots of light.

The obelisk is a conduit of raw magical energy that suffuses the area around it. Unfortunately, the rift's leak of necrotic energy is being enhanced by the obelisk's influence over the Twisted Wreath, corrupting the fey, animals, and plants within it. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana or Nature) check while inspecting the obelisk discovers the obelisk's natural magical nature is spreading nearby necrotic energy like light through

a prism. Success on this check also reveals the necrotic energy is coming from the northwest.

Magical Conduit. As an action, a spellcaster touching the obelisk can make a DC 13 spellcasting ability check, using its spellcasting ability modifier. On a success, the spellcaster regains 1 random spent spell slot. On a failure, the spellcaster loses 1 random unexpended spell slot as if it had cast a spell using that spell slot. If the spellcaster fails this check and has no unexpended spell slots, it suffers one level of exhaustion instead. Once a spellcaster has made this check, it can't do so again until it finishes a long rest.

6. GOLEM'S GLADE

An ancient, withered hawthorn tree sits in the center of this small clearing. A bundle of vines sits among its bare branches.

Ilkarayda once dwelt in this clearing. Her bonded tree, the hawthorn in the center of the clearing, withered the moment she died to the ritual's backlash of necrotic power. Her death also severed the bond between herself and her **vine golem** (*Tome of Beasts 2*, p. 181). Maddened at the loss of the connection, the vine golem lashed out at the surviving druids and clerics, killing some of them and driving out the rest.

After rising in her new form, Ilkarayda attempted to soothe the golem, but it failed to recognize her and attacked. Unable to bear the sight of her deceased tree and a second rejection from the golem, Ilkarayda hasn't returned to this clearing.

Creature. Ilkarayda's **vine golem** rests in the branches of her withered hawthorn tree, finding solace in proximity to its former master's tree. It attacks any creature that enters the clearing.

Development. If Ilkarayda is with the PCs when they enter the clearing, a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check halts the golem's initial assault, though it remains hostile, gesturing for them to leave. If the golem is restrained or a PC succeeds on a DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check, Ilkarayda can take an action to touch the golem and reestablish the link between them, soothing the crazed golem.

Treasure. A small stash of possessions sits in a hollow at the base of the tree. The stash includes 300 cp, 132 sp, 3 tiger eyes worth 10 gp each, a greenstone mug in the shape of a hooting owl worth 50 gp, a bottle of perfume worth 5 gp, a *potion of growth*, and a *spell scroll of dispel magic* in a polished mahogany and steel case worth 25 gp.



7. ILKARAYDA'S CORRUPTED GLADE

The air in this glade reeks of decaying leaves and dead insects. Brown and wilted grass covers the ground, and the trees along its edges are sickly. A dark smudge of energy swirls in the center of the clearing, and several bodies lie in a loose circle around it.

This is the glade where the clerics performed their ritual. While attempting to open up a portal to the realm of the fey, they opened one into the Plane of Shadow instead. The rift sent out a pestilent wave of wild magic and necrotic energy. This wave killed several clerics and most of the plant life in the glade.

Creature. Ilkarayda, now a tree skinner (*Tome of Beasts*, p. 351), makes her home in this clearing. She understands her presence within trees rots them from the inside out,

but the ache of the loss of her tree drives her to rest within them. In an effort to minimize her impact, she alternates the trees she inhabits. Ilkarayda constantly struggles to control the evil inside her, even as she attacks the PCs. A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Insight) check notices the anguish on her face, and a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check convinces her to stop attacking. Ilkarayda is able to halt her attacks for only 1 minute before the darkness within her forces her to lash out again. During this time, she pleads with them to leave before she loses control. If the PCs destroy the rift, Ilkarayda gains full control of herself and retains her chaotic good alignment, but she remains a tree skinner.

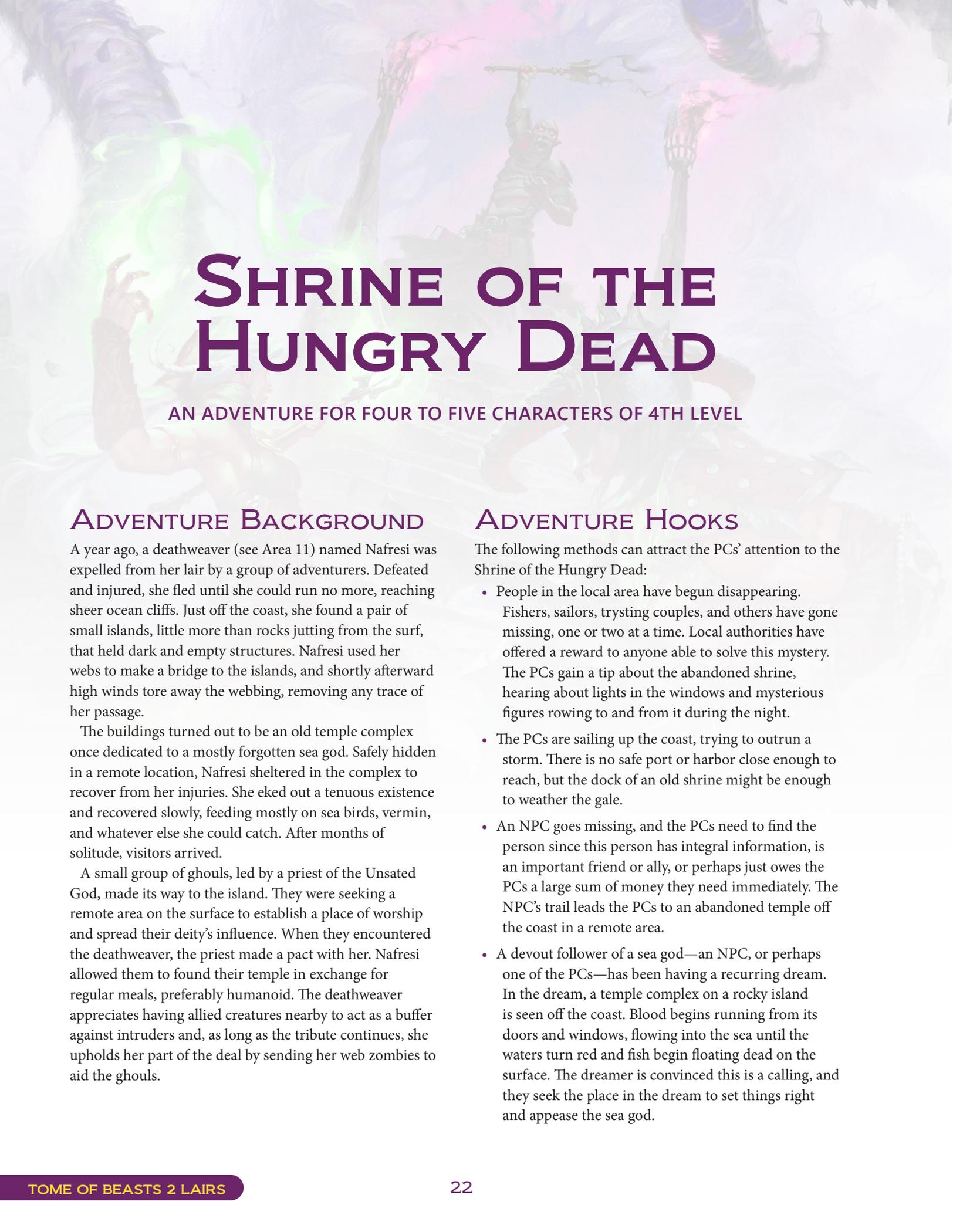
The Rift. The rift in the clearing constantly spews out small amounts of necrotic energy and wild magic. A creature that starts its turn within 10 feet of it takes 3 (1d6) necrotic damage and must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be incapacitated until the end of its next turn. A creature that touches the rift takes 14 (4d6) necrotic damage and must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or be incapacitated for 1 minute. The creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Destroying the Rift. The rift can be destroyed if it is suffused with enough holy or life magic or if it is dispelled. An effect that turns undead destroys the rift if used within 30 feet of the rift. Dealing 10 radiant damage to the rift destroys it. An *entangle*, *plant growth*, *spike growth* or similar plant growing-related spell cast on the rift destroys it. Alternatively, a successful *dispel magic* (DC 13) cast on the rift destroys it.

CONCLUSION

The adventure ends when the PCs have successfully destroyed the rift. After the rift is destroyed, the corruption in the Twisted Wreath slowly fades. The power of the obelisk heals the damage the rift's opening caused to the trees and plants, and, if Ilkarayda survives the adventure, it continues to heal any trees she inhabits, allowing her to inhabit and tend the Twisted Wreath without destroying it. To thank the PCs for their help in saving her and the Twisted Wreath, Ilkarayda offers them the treasure in Area 6, if they haven't already taken it.

Thalia also thanks the PCs for their aid, giving them any promised rewards. Within a month, druids and clerics return to the Twisted Wreath for their pilgrimages. If Ilkarayda survived, she forbids rituals in the maze, sharing her story as a warning to those seeking anything other than to praise nature and nature deities in the Twisted Wreath.



SHRINE OF THE HUNGRY DEAD

AN ADVENTURE FOR FOUR TO FIVE CHARACTERS OF 4TH LEVEL

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

A year ago, a deathweaver (see Area 11) named Nafresi was expelled from her lair by a group of adventurers. Defeated and injured, she fled until she could run no more, reaching sheer ocean cliffs. Just off the coast, she found a pair of small islands, little more than rocks jutting from the surf, that held dark and empty structures. Nafresi used her webs to make a bridge to the islands, and shortly afterward high winds tore away the webbing, removing any trace of her passage.

The buildings turned out to be an old temple complex once dedicated to a mostly forgotten sea god. Safely hidden in a remote location, Nafresi sheltered in the complex to recover from her injuries. She eked out a tenuous existence and recovered slowly, feeding mostly on sea birds, vermin, and whatever else she could catch. After months of solitude, visitors arrived.

A small group of ghouls, led by a priest of the Unsated God, made its way to the island. They were seeking a remote area on the surface to establish a place of worship and spread their deity's influence. When they encountered the deathweaver, the priest made a pact with her. Nafresi allowed them to found their temple in exchange for regular meals, preferably humanoid. The deathweaver appreciates having allied creatures nearby to act as a buffer against intruders and, as long as the tribute continues, she upholds her part of the deal by sending her web zombies to aid the ghouls.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The following methods can attract the PCs' attention to the Shrine of the Hungry Dead:

- People in the local area have begun disappearing. Fishers, sailors, trysting couples, and others have gone missing, one or two at a time. Local authorities have offered a reward to anyone able to solve this mystery. The PCs gain a tip about the abandoned shrine, hearing about lights in the windows and mysterious figures rowing to and from it during the night.
- The PCs are sailing up the coast, trying to outrun a storm. There is no safe port or harbor close enough to reach, but the dock of an old shrine might be enough to weather the gale.
- An NPC goes missing, and the PCs need to find the person since this person has integral information, is an important friend or ally, or perhaps just owes the PCs a large sum of money they need immediately. The NPC's trail leads the PCs to an abandoned temple off the coast in a remote area.
- A devout follower of a sea god—an NPC, or perhaps one of the PCs—has been having a recurring dream. In the dream, a temple complex on a rocky island is seen off the coast. Blood begins running from its doors and windows, flowing into the sea until the waters turn red and fish begin floating dead on the surface. The dreamer is convinced this is a calling, and they seek the place in the dream to set things right and appease the sea god.

SHRINE EXTERIOR

The buildings that comprise the temple complex stand on two small islands. The southern shrine is a single building standing on an island that rises just above the water level. The building dominates most of the land; the rest is rocky and dotted with tufts of coarse grasses and reeds. The waves constantly crash and wear against its rocky shores. A small dock juts out into the water near the building's entrance. A rowboat is lashed securely beneath the dock.

The second island to the north rises higher from the sea than the other and is connected to the southern island by a series of rope-and-plank bridges that stretch between rocks rising from the strait between the two isles. The only clear access to the northern building is via the southern shrine and over the bridges, unless a creature can fly or scale its sheer cliffs.

1. FOYER

Four scarred, cracked columns support the ceiling here. A tattered prayer rug lies before a broad font in the center of the room. A layer of brownish-yellow algae covers the font and drips down its edges. Several large mushrooms, some three to four feet high, cluster around the font, growing from a pile of detritus surrounding its base.

The font once held holy water, but it is now befouled and grown over with a layer of algae. The doors to Area 2 are locked, requiring a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools to open.

Creatures. Three **boomers** (*Tome of Beasts 2*, p. 157) grow amid the cluster of fungi around the font. They begin shrieking as soon as they are exposed to light or creatures move within 30 feet of them. The noise alerts the occupants of Area 2, who react accordingly.

SHRINE OF THE HUNGRY DEAD IN MIDGARD

These two small islands and their shrine could be dropped along the coast anywhere in Midgard, though they are best placed somewhere away from large centers of civilization. The temple is a former holy site of a sea god, likely Seggotan, or one of his masks, servants, or rivals depending on its location—Aegir or Njord in the north, Tefnut in the Southlands, or Nethus near the Seven Cities.

2. LOWER SHRINE

Moth-eaten tapestries drape the walls, too filthy and tattered to display their images. Opposite the doors, an altar carved of sandstone sits before a raised dais. A bowl filled with blood sits on the altar, flanked by candlesticks. The statue atop the dais is unrecognizable, draped beneath bloodstained sheets of bleached linen.

This area once served as a lesser shrine for sailors and other petitioners of the sea god to whom it was dedicated. The statue to the god still stands, though it has been defaced and draped in bloody cloths to serve as a makeshift idol to the Unsated God.

Locked Doors. The door to Area 3 and the door to Area 6 are locked. A successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools opens a door, unless the ghoul with the key ring uses it to leave the room.



Creatures. Four **ghouls** tend this shrine for their master. If alerted to the presence of intruders, three of them attempt to hide and ambush trespassers, while the fourth makes its way to Area 8 to alert the master. Once across the bridges, it rigs the trap (see Area 7) before heading to the upper shrine.

Treasure. The bowl on the altar is made of black onyx and is worth 100 gp. The two silver candlesticks by it are worth 25 gp each. A ring of keys sits on the belt of one of the ghouls. These keys unlock all the doors in the complex. This is the ghoul that leaves to sound the alarm if the ghouls are aware of intruders.

3. WAITING ROOM

Decrepit furniture sits against the walls atop torn carpeting. A trio of skulls sit atop a low table in the center of the room.

This room once served to entertain petitioners wanting to visit the upper shrine. Now it serves as a makeshift prison to hold sacrifices for the Unsated God or victims for the deathweaver. Two **commoners** reside here. They are grateful for release and tell the PCs what little they know about the place. They know that some prisoners are meant as sacrifices for the ghouls' dark god. Others, according to their captors, are taken "to our friend's larder."

If the PCs are here looking for a specific NPC and describe the person to the prisoners, they are told a person of that description was held here but was taken away a short time ago to the "larder" (Area 11) mentioned by the ghouls.

4. VESTRY

This room is dusty and appears long abandoned. A pair of wardrobes flank a chest that sits against the western wall. All three pieces of furniture are old, their wooden surfaces scarred and chipped. Rusty iron hooks protrude from the wall to either side of the eastern door, one still holding a mildewed cloak.

This room has not seen much use since the shrine was abandoned. The wardrobes hold vestments appropriate to a cleric of the sea god, now dusty and moth-eaten. The chest was used to hold altar dressings and paraphernalia. Only old altar cloths and some crumbly candles remain; everything of value was looted and taken by the ghouls.

Treasure. A pocket in the lining of the old cloak on the hook holds two vials of holy water.

5. STORAGE

Two old, battered trunks flank the doors to either side of this small and otherwise empty room.

The door to Area 6 is locked, requiring a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools to open.

Trap. A trip wire is strung along the floor between the two trunks. When triggered, both trunks pop open, releasing a poisonous gas into the room and 5 feet out the doors, if they are open. Each creature in the area must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, a creature takes 11 (2d10) poison damage and is poisoned for 1 minute. On a success, a creature takes half the damage and isn't poisoned. Opening either trunk also releases the gas, but the DC is reduced to 11 if only one is opened at a time.

Prevention. A successful DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check notices the tripwire. A successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools disables the trip wire harmlessly. A PC without thieves' tools can attempt this check with disadvantage using any edged weapon or edged tool. On a failed check, the trap triggers. If at least 20 pounds is placed on each of the trunks' lids, the trip wire doesn't spring the trap.

6. VESTIBULE

This long, arched hallway appears to run the entirety of the northern face of the building. Narrow windows line the north wall, letting in the sea air.

The windows provide a view of Area 7 and the second island, light conditions and weather permitting. The door leading outside is unlocked.

7. BRIDGE NETWORK

A series of rope-and-plank bridges stretch from the back of the island, between two rocks that rise from the churning ocean, and to the cliff face of another small island. The final bridge connects to a ledge from which a narrow trail winds its way up the sheer rocks to the building above.

Though they creak and sway alarmingly, the bridges are sturdy, but they are slick from the constant sea spray. When a creature crosses each section of the winding bridge, it must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. On a failure, a creature slips and can move no farther in that round, as it must secure its grip on the ropes



1 SQUARE EQUALS 5 FEET

SHRINE OF THE HUNGRY DEAD

to avoid falling. If a creature fails the check by 5 or more, it doesn't secure a grip immediately and must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or fall off the bridge into the ocean below. The doors into Area 8 are locked, requiring a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools to open.

Creatures. The presence of the Unsated God's shrine has attracted an increasing number of predators in the surrounding waters. Four **swarms of quippers** swim in the waters nearby. Each round a creature is swimming in the water, it has a 25 percent chance of attracting the attention of one of the swarms. If a creature in the water doesn't have all of its hit points, it automatically attracts the attention of one swarm each round it is in the water.

Falling Bridge Trap. If the ghoul from Area 2 passed this way, it rigged the knots holding the third bridge to the second rocky outcropping, causing them to give way if any significant weight is on the bridge. When a Medium or larger creature moves more than halfway across, the bridge slips free and falls, sending any creatures on it plunging into the water. A creature that succeeds on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw secures a grip and hangs from the dangling bridge. Falling creatures take no damage from the fall but may attract the attention of the **swarms of quippers**.

Prevention. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check while on the second rocky outcropping notices something isn't quite right about the knots on the near end of the bridge. A creature on the bridge that hasn't triggered the trap has advantage on this check. Resecuring the knots on the rocky outcropping side of the bridge prevents the trap from triggering.

8. UPPER SHRINE

A platform runs down the middle of this pillared hall, over a shallow pool now partly filled with muck and mire. An altar sits at the top of the steps at the platform's end, and a great statue stands behind it. The statue depicts a bloated figure with clawed hands resting upon its belly and a broad mouth stretching open in a toothy roar, or perhaps a yawn.

The slimy water and muck in the pool is difficult terrain.

Creatures. This room is occupied by a **servant of the Unsated God** (*Tome of Beasts 2*, p. 321) named Danek and his **ghoul servant** (or two ghouls if the ghoul from Area 2 made it here). Danek is confident but not foolhardy. If he is reduced to half his hit points or fewer, or if his ghoul is destroyed, Danek attempts to flee to Area 11, via Area 9, locking the door behind him. Given time, he

opens the door out to Area 10 and calls for the occupants there to come to his aid and guard the hallway against the attackers. Danek makes a last stand in Area 11 with his ally there.

Treasure. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check discovers a hidden panel in the statue's base. A locked chest sits inside, and it contains 500 cp, 278 sp, 110 gp, two silver candlesticks worth 25 gp each, a silver bowl worth 10 gp, a silver ewer worth 20 gp, and a *spell scroll of blindness/deafness*. A successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools unlocks the chest. Danek carries the only key to the chest.

9. SERVICE CORRIDOR

This corridor has doors on both ends, with a third midway along its length on the south wall. Webs stretch the length of the arched ceiling, and several cocooned, desiccated humanoid forms lie on the floor along its length.

The door at the far end of the hall that leads to Area 11 has a small hole five feet from the bottom, inset with a decorative iron grill. The webs strung within 5 feet of the door connect to strands that run through the grill into the other room, linking the webs that run through both rooms. A successful DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check avoids coming into contact with the webs around the door to Area 11. Otherwise, contact with the webs alerts Nafresi in Area 11 to the presence of unannounced visitors in the hall.

Creatures. The four corpses here are **web zombies** (*Tome of Beasts 2*, p. 83). They attack any living creatures in the hall that aren't accompanied by ghouls.

10. PARISH RUINS

The ruins of a few buildings sit on a leveled area of the island here between the two buildings. An overgrown garden separates them from the hall that runs between the two larger, intact structures. No doors or windows remain, only open holes into the darkness that pools between crumbling walls and under sagging roofs.

Built of less formidable materials than the main buildings, these were once quarters and outbuildings for the priests that tended the shrine.

Creatures. Four **ghoul bats** (*Tome of Beasts 2*, p. 391), Danek's favored pets, lurk amid the ruins here. On occasion, he uses the bats to convey messages to and from other hidden branches of his church.

11. LAIR OF THE DEATHWEAVER

This large, vaulted hall has been cleared of whatever was once stored here. Great sheets of webbing now stretch between the arches on the ceiling and the pillars that support them. The eerie shrouds shift and drift in the drafts that blow through the cracks and holes of the old structure. Several wrapped, humanoid forms hang amid the webs. The wind coursing through the webs causes the bodies to bob and slowly twirl, like some macabre dance.

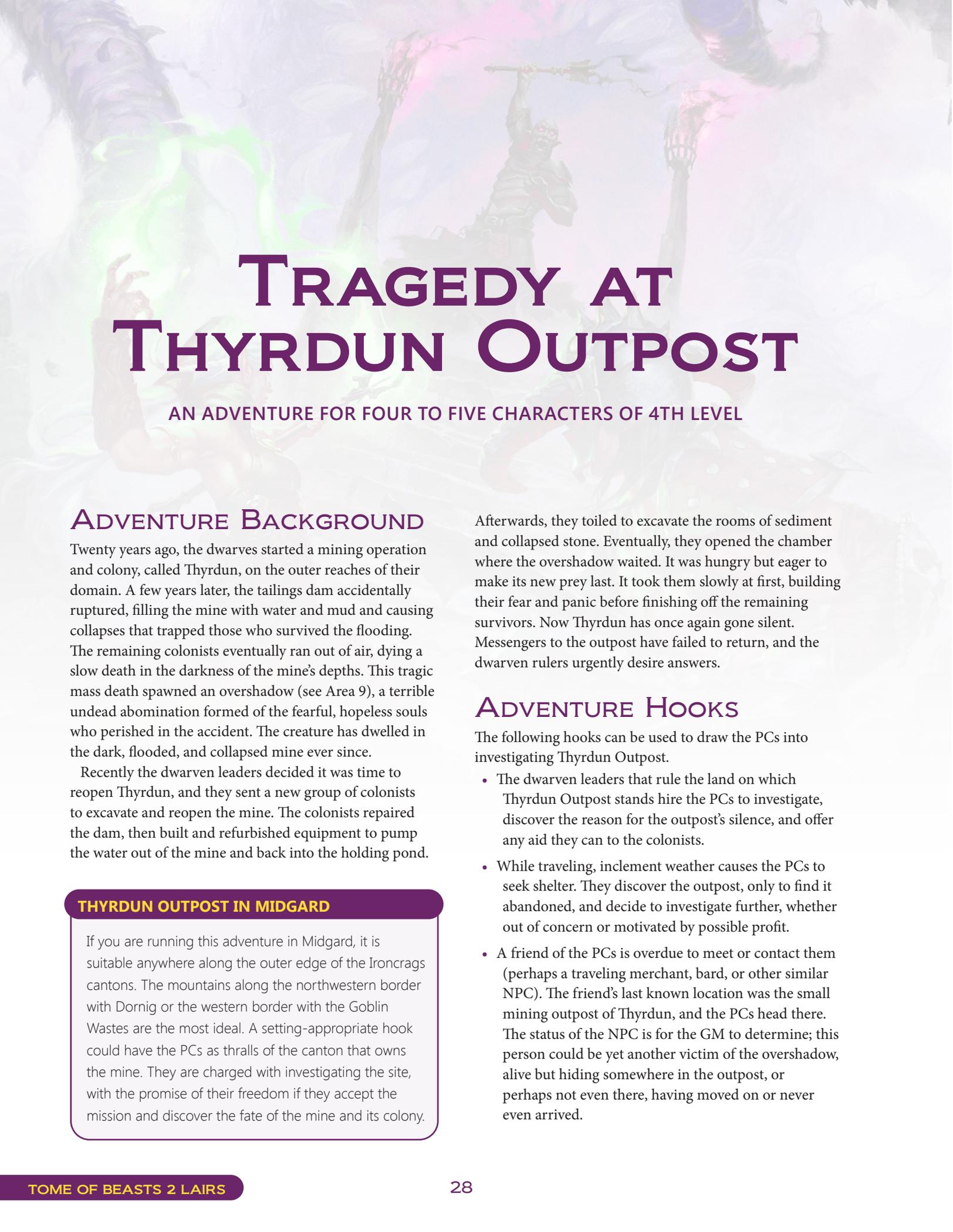
Creatures. The **deathweaver** (*Tome of Beasts 2*, p. 83) Nafresi dwells here in her web. She's intelligent and uses her senses, mobility, and spells to her advantage against the PCs.

Treasure. Nafresi's treasure sits in a sack of webbing up in the rafters: 1,000 cp, 325 sp, 180 gp, six pearls worth 50 gp each, a *potion of climbing*, and a *spell scroll of floating disk*.

CONCLUSION

With the evil occupants of the shrine defeated, the PCs are free to leave, taking any rescued prisoners with them. If they were hired to investigate missing persons, they are likely due a reward for their efforts. If they were seeking a particular NPC, that individual may have a personal reward for their help, perhaps even valuable information or a map that could lead to a new adventure.





TRAGEDY AT THYRDUN OUTPOST

AN ADVENTURE FOR FOUR TO FIVE CHARACTERS OF 4TH LEVEL

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Twenty years ago, the dwarves started a mining operation and colony, called Thyrdun, on the outer reaches of their domain. A few years later, the tailings dam accidentally ruptured, filling the mine with water and mud and causing collapses that trapped those who survived the flooding. The remaining colonists eventually ran out of air, dying a slow death in the darkness of the mine's depths. This tragic mass death spawned an overshadow (see Area 9), a terrible undead abomination formed of the fearful, hopeless souls who perished in the accident. The creature has dwelled in the dark, flooded, and collapsed mine ever since.

Recently the dwarven leaders decided it was time to reopen Thyrdun, and they sent a new group of colonists to excavate and reopen the mine. The colonists repaired the dam, then built and refurbished equipment to pump the water out of the mine and back into the holding pond.

THYRDUN OUTPOST IN MIDGARD

If you are running this adventure in Midgard, it is suitable anywhere along the outer edge of the Ironcrags cantons. The mountains along the northwestern border with Dornig or the western border with the Goblin Wastes are the most ideal. A setting-appropriate hook could have the PCs as thralls of the canton that owns the mine. They are charged with investigating the site, with the promise of their freedom if they accept the mission and discover the fate of the mine and its colony.

Afterwards, they toiled to excavate the rooms of sediment and collapsed stone. Eventually, they opened the chamber where the overshadow waited. It was hungry but eager to make its new prey last. It took them slowly at first, building their fear and panic before finishing off the remaining survivors. Now Thyrdun has once again gone silent. Messengers to the outpost have failed to return, and the dwarven rulers urgently desire answers.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The following hooks can be used to draw the PCs into investigating Thyrdun Outpost.

- The dwarven leaders that rule the land on which Thyrdun Outpost stands hire the PCs to investigate, discover the reason for the outpost's silence, and offer any aid they can to the colonists.
- While traveling, inclement weather causes the PCs to seek shelter. They discover the outpost, only to find it abandoned, and decide to investigate further, whether out of concern or motivated by possible profit.
- A friend of the PCs is overdue to meet or contact them (perhaps a traveling merchant, bard, or other similar NPC). The friend's last known location was the small mining outpost of Thyrdun, and the PCs head there. The status of the NPC is for the GM to determine; this person could be yet another victim of the overshadow, alive but hiding somewhere in the outpost, or perhaps not even there, having moved on or never even arrived.

ARRIVAL: THE SURFACE

A collection of buildings and equipment marks the site of Thyrdun on the surface. Most—storage sheds, smelters, ore breakers—are long unused, as the immediate task for the colony was to pump water out of the mine, excavate the collapsed areas, and assess stability. Nearby is a newly repaired earthen rampart of the tailings pond. Pipes lead from mine shafts to the pond.

A circle of tents and a few permanent wooden structures nearby mark the site of the current colony. However, a search of the camp reveals no one. The provisions and personal belongings that remain indicate that any survivors left in a hurry, taking no time to pack. A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception or Survival) check shows signs of disturbance in the camp. Some of the beds look as if someone was dragged from them. Success on such a check also notes the remains of numerous campfires—more than would be needed for the numbers present here—as well as a number of lanterns hanging on buildings or sitting near tents, all empty of oil, as if left burning, and mounds of dried wax and burned-out candle stubs. These are the result of the colonists' failed attempt at keeping the overshadow at bay using light.

The entrance to the mine contains an elevator that is raised and lowered via a series of pulleys. A turnstile nearby has a harness sized for a beast of burden, such as a draft horse or an ox, but there is no animal to be seen. The PCs must bring the elevator up by hand, a process that takes 5 rounds. A successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check halves this time. To descend, someone must be on the surface to operate the turnstile, or else there are hand cranks in the elevator itself to lower it. These work more slowly, taking 10 rounds to lower the elevator to Area 1.

1. ENTRY HALL

The elevator exits into a rough-hewn room. The floor is still covered in a few inches of drying, stinking mud. A few dirt-encrusted carts sit against the walls. Two tunnels lead away from the room to the north.

The entry hall is unoccupied and holds only ore carts that have been excavated from the collapse for use once the mine is opened. A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception or Survival) check reveals marks in the mud, as if one or more heavy objects were dragged down the western tunnel, though any tracks were obscured by the drag marks. These were made by the occupants of Area 2 as they gathered food.

2. SCAVENGER TUNNELS

The floor here is still thick with mud and tailings, though the center has been cleared to reveal the tracks for the mine carts. Tunnels branch off at this bend where the miners dug in, following veins of ore. Discarded, rusty tools are the only signs of those who once worked here.

Difficult Terrain. PCs can follow the track that runs down the center of the tunnel to move unhindered, but all other areas of these tunnels are considered difficult terrain due to the mud and slime.

Creatures. Four **giant wasps** have made their lair here. They collected the bodies of the dwarven colonists recently slain in the camp above and dragged the bodies down to these tunnels. They built a nest in the western tunnel and laid their eggs in the corpses they didn't eat. The wasps fight viciously against any intruders but do not pursue them beyond Area 1. A successful DC 13 Wisdom (Medicine or Survival) check finds and destroys the wasp eggs in the corpses.

Treasure. The dozen dwarven corpses found here still have valuables on them. They hold a total of 38 cp, 42 sp, and 18 gp, as well as a silver neck chain worth 10 gp and a gold ring worth 25 gp. One corpse has a belt pouch containing two *potions of healing*.

3. OPPORTUNISTIC LOOTERS

More tunnels branch off the main way here, chopped into the earth and stone. The main route ends in a stinking morass of mud and collapsed stone.

Difficult Terrain. PCs can follow the track that runs down the center of the tunnel to move unhindered, but all other areas of these tunnels are considered difficult terrain due to the mud and slime.

Creatures. A mated pair of **rock roaches** (*Tome of Beasts* 2, p. 308) were drawn here by the scent of the exposed rock. Having found a generous supply of food, they gorge on the rock in preparation for laying eggs. They attack any intruders, defending their claim on the tasty rock of the mine.

4. OFFICE

The doors that once hung at the entrance to this room lie on the floor, dirty and swollen with moisture. Several tables, desks, and chairs are scattered in the room. Some are overturned and knocked over, but others appear to have seen recent use. Moldering papers lie in a pile beneath a collapsed bookshelf in one corner.

Little of value can be found here, as long exposure to mud and moisture have despoiled the contents of the room, which consisted of records of daily operations. Now there is little left but rot and ruin.

5. MEDICAL ROOMS

These small rooms contain broken beds and crates of supplies, but everything lies under a coating of thick mud, making their original purpose hard to determine.

These rooms held the mine's medical station, where injured and sick miners could seek aid. The collapse of the tunnel and subsequent flooding destroyed most of the medical supplies, but some supplies remain. With 10 minutes of work, a creature can gather enough materials to form a healer's kit.

Creatures. Eight dwarven skeletons lie in the rooms to the south. Remains of colonists that died in the flood, these skeletons rise from the muck, draw weapons, and attack. The latest colonists were preoccupied with clearing the other rooms and the mine, leaving them unaware of the existence of these skeletons.

6. BARRICADE

The hallway here is blocked to the northeast by a makeshift barricade of mine carts, timbers, and other heavy objects. In the hall, two mounted crossbows are set facing the other side of the barricade. The bodies of four dwarves lie nearby. Three are around the crossbows, and the fourth looks to have fallen while trying to move down the passage to the west.

These weapons and the barricade were set up by the colonists as a last-ditch attempt to protect themselves from the overshadow. The dwarves here were manning the crossbows when the overshadow surprised them, slithering through the blockade from Area 9 and taking them from behind while they stood watch.

Mounted Crossbows. The two mounted crossbows are heavy crossbows still in working order. While mounted, a crossbow loses its Heavy property, is stationary, can be

used to attack only a single target each round within a line that is 100 feet long and 10 feet wide, and gives its user advantage on attack rolls with it.

Treasure. The corpses of the four dwarves still bear their possessions: 32 cp, 18 sp, 4 gp, two battleaxes, and two spears.

7. STORAGE ROOMS

This large room and smaller alcoves are full of boxes, crates, barrels, piles of lumber, coils of rope, and other mundane supplies. Everything stored here is clean, except where it sits in a thin layer of mud that still covers the floor.

Equipment. This room holds supplies for the colonists during their reclamation and cleaning effort. Three hundred feet of rope (in six 50-foot coils), four 1-gallon barrels of oil, a block and tackle, and two months of rations can be found among the other supplies.

Hidden Body. The corpse of another dwarf sits behind a stack of ration crates and a pair of water barrels. The huddled body is dressed in clerical vestments and sits with her hands clasped tightly together around an amulet. The amulet is a holy symbol dedicated to a god of the forge. This item has a blessing laid upon it, a small measure of protection bequeathed by the vehemence of her prayers in her final moments. Its power is noticeable from a faint glimmer of light that emits from the amulet. A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Religion) check reveals it has limited protective qualities, though not the specifics. The first time a creature holding the amulet is struck by the overshadow, the creature's Strength isn't reduced by the overshadow's Strength Drain.

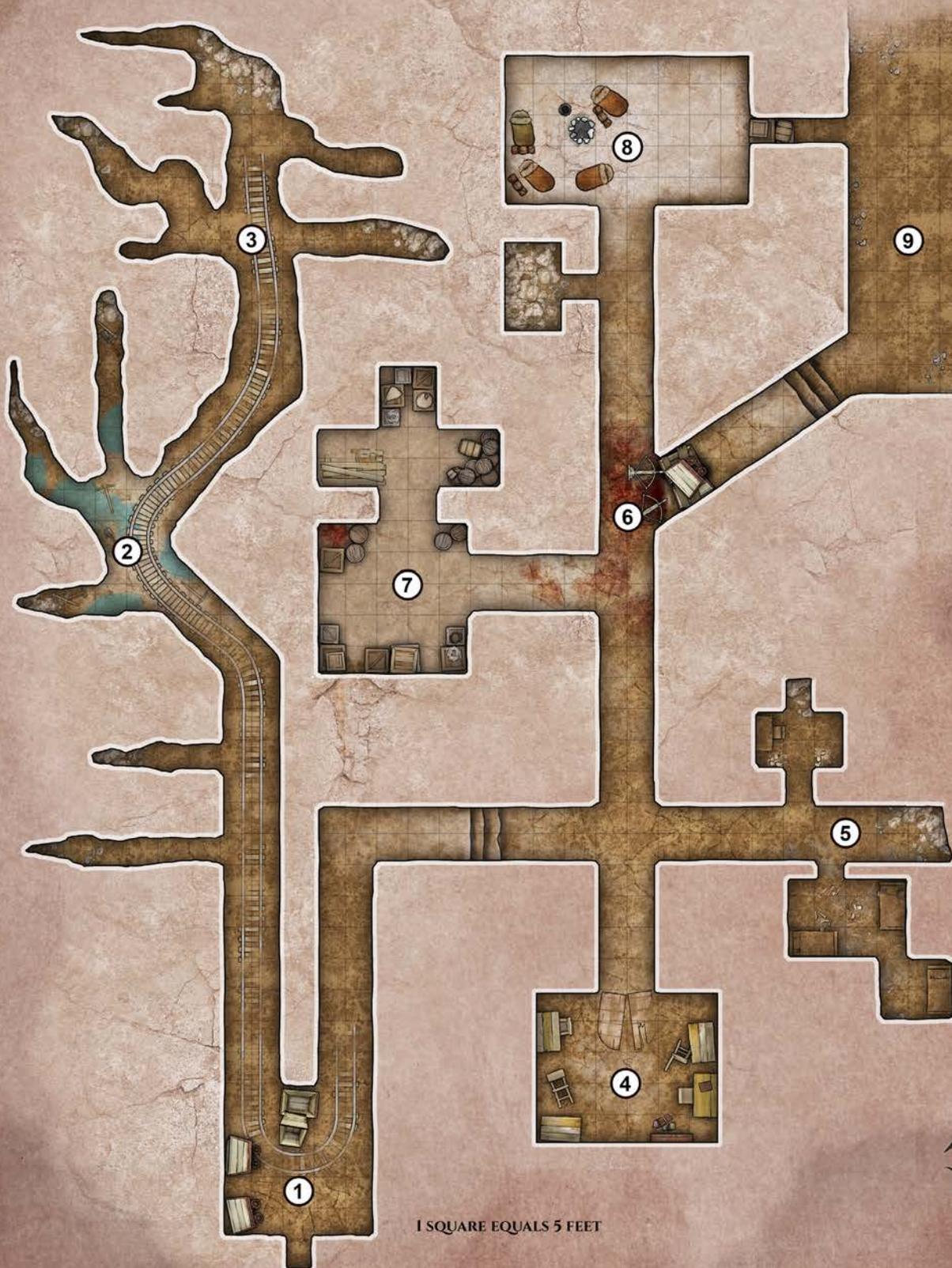
8. ABANDONED CHAMBER

Someone took the time to scrub this chamber clean, leaving the floor clear and the smell of mud much less prominent than elsewhere in the mine. Cold ashes from a fire lie on the floor near the center of the room. Bedrolls, packs, and other signs of habitation lie on the floor about the fire, abandoned by whoever once camped here. A doorway to the east is piled high with crates and barrels, blocking access.

Workers used this site to rest and eat between shifts while excavating the mine. It was abandoned once the overshadow was discovered.

Equipment. Two flasks of alchemist's fire lie in a sack near one of the bedrolls.

TRAGEDY AT THYRDUN OUTPOST



9. UNEARTHED DARKNESS

The passage descends into the outer edges of a large room. The floor is still thick with mud. Several skeletons lie in the muck. Much of the room is still piled with mud and debris, and the far reaches are thick with shadow.

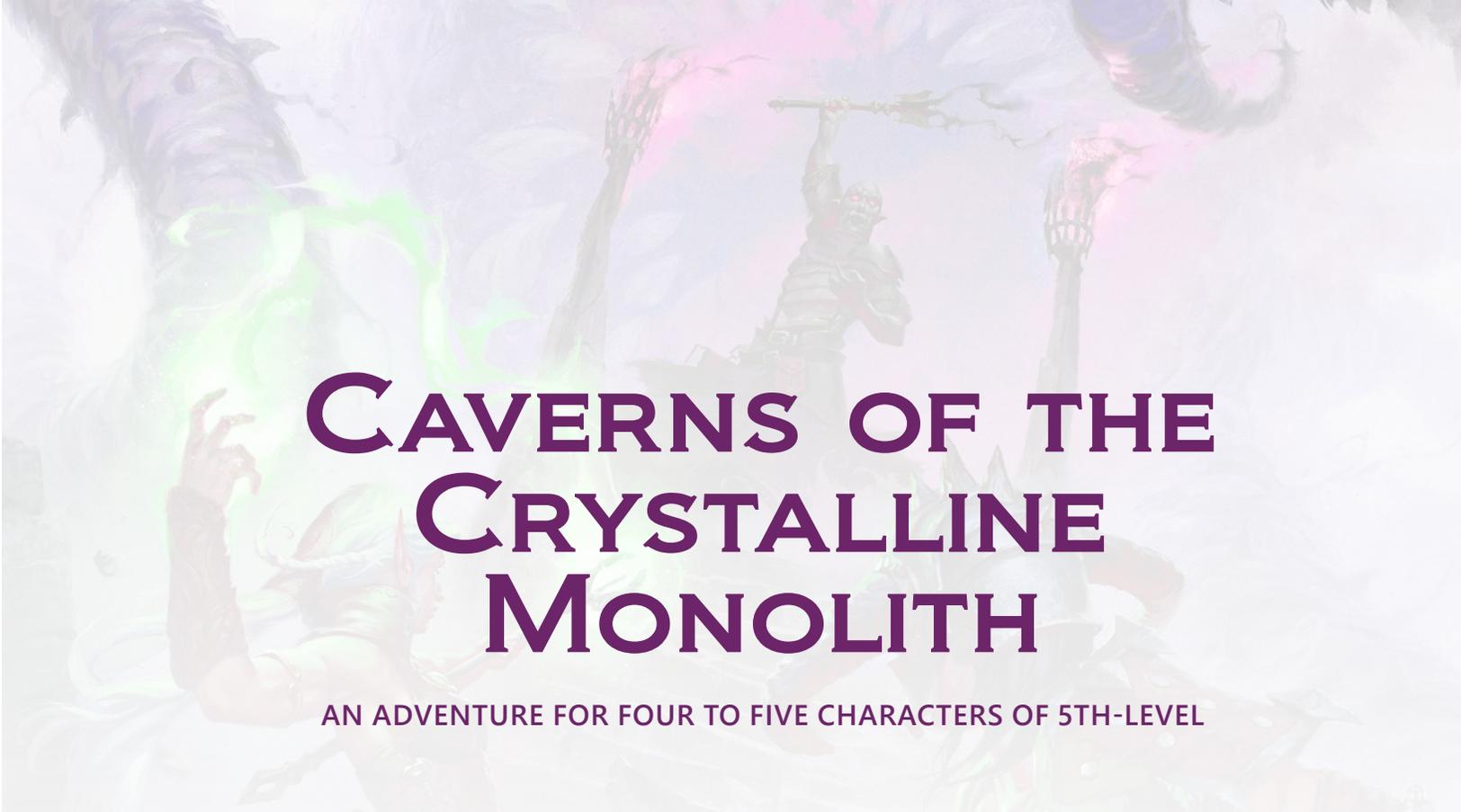
Mud and Bones. The floor of the room counts as difficult terrain due to the mud and debris. Further, a creature that relies on legs for mobility that moves more than 10 feet on its turn in the room must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity check or become stuck in the mud, losing any further movement for the turn. If a creature fails the check by 5 or more, it trips on some of the bones in the mud and falls prone.

Creatures. The **overshadow** (*Tome of Beasts 2*, p. 289) lurks here where it was spawned from the terrible deaths of the original colonists. It comes forth eagerly to devour anyone who lingers in the area. It is prone to playing with its victims and may stalk the PCs over a period of time, making a single attack then melting away into the darkness, only to follow them and attack by surprise later. The overshadow pursues creatures anywhere in the mines, and even to the surface during the night. During daylight it does not exit the mine.

CONCLUSION

Once the overshadow has been defeated, the mine is finally safe. The dead can be laid to rest and the mine restored. If the PCs were working for the dwarves, upon their return they are presented their agreed-upon reward for completing the mission.





CAVERNS OF THE CRYSTALLINE MONOLITH

AN ADVENTURE FOR FOUR TO FIVE CHARACTERS OF 5TH-LEVEL

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The caverns of the crystalline monolith are a series of caves located in an area of high geothermic activity. Once flooded with mineral-rich water, the surfaces of the caves have grown crystals. Some of these crystals are massive in size, towering like trees. Others are smaller and cover vast surfaces of the cave walls, ceilings, and floors. These caverns are places of wonder and beauty, but they also contain many unique components for spells and magic items. Rumors abound of an alien entity at the heart of the caverns that tends the crystals like a precious garden.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The following methods can draw the PCs to the Caverns of the Crystalline Monolith:

- A wizard, sage, or powerful creature seeks crystals from the cave to use for experiments, spell components, magic item creation, or possibly even food. The employer promises handsome compensation for the PCs' efforts.
- The PCs come into possession of a map, whether found in a treasure hoard or given as a reward for a past adventure. It shows the path through an underground series of caves to something marked as the "crystal caves." Notes made on the map can provide additional information as the GM wishes, but they should hint at the caves being the lair of a rare powerful, magical being without giving away too much.

- The PCs or their employer seek esoteric knowledge from a rare being known as a crystalline monolith. The PCs are given the location of such a creature and must find a way, through coercion, persuasion, or other means, to retrieve the monolith's knowledge.

CAVERN FEATURES

The caverns host an environment dangerous to most humanoid life. The temperature here is extremely hot. The crystals take up much of the space within the caves, hindering movement and making traversing the area difficult and sometimes dangerous. Finally, water still flows through the area, adding additional obstacles to those attempting to make it through the caves.

Geothermal Activity. The entire cave system is extremely hot, reaching temperatures of 130 degrees Fahrenheit. Short-term activity is not unduly affected, but spending extended periods of time in the caverns requires a constant supply of drinkable water. Creatures with resistance or immunity to fire are unaffected.

Monolith's Lair. This entire cavern complex is considered the lair of the crystalline monolith. It can use its lair actions in any of the rooms on the map, not just Area 6.

1. ENTRY CHAMBER

The sinkhole empties into an irregular cave. Its dimensions are difficult to discern due to the immense crystals that fill the area, many growing from floor to ceiling and at odd angles. Geothermal heat radiates throughout the cavern.

Choked with Crystals. The entire chamber is considered difficult terrain. The crystals to the north give way to a narrow passage. Most of the crystals here, while beautiful, are easily damaged and therefore of no great value. However, a successful DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check with 30 minutes of careful searching identifies up to 30 pounds of semiprecious crystals that are readily portable and worth 300 gp.

2. STAR CHAMBER

Unlike the prior chamber, the crystals here are clustered into specific areas, some growing in spiral patterns from the floor, walls, and ceiling, as if intentionally cultivated. Moreover, they vary in colors, shades, and translucency, a palette of color made more wondrous by the soft pulsations of glowing light emanating from them. The floor seems to shudder with a constant vibration, and a persistent, echoing roar comes from somewhere beyond.

Enchanting Crystals. The colors and patterns of the crystals here have a profound effect on humanoid minds. A humanoid that spends more than 1 minute in the room must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw or be charmed. A charmed creature is overwhelmed by the beauty of the crystals and wishes to stay here to enjoy the spectacle. The creature is loath to see the crystals harmed and actively defends the crystals against any creature that attempts to harvest, damage, or otherwise disturb the crystals in the chamber, taking violent action if necessary. A creature that succeeds on its saving throw is unaffected but must repeat the saving throw after each hour spent in the room. The DC of the saving throw increases by 1 for every hour a creature spends in the chamber. A charmed creature that is blinded for 1 minute overcomes the charm, but it must repeat the saving throw if it spends more than 1 hour in the room, as if it succeeded on the original saving throw.

Creatures. Four **azers** inhabit this cave. They were sent by their king to seek out new sources of gemstones. While unaffected by the crystals' enchantments, the azers are still covetous of the mineral wealth they have found. They gruffly suggest the PCs leave their staked claim and go elsewhere, using gestures and posturing if the PCs don't understand Ignan. If communication is possible, a

successful DC 18 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) check convinces the azers that the PCs aren't a threat to the azers' claim, at which point the azers allow the PCs to pass through the cave. The PCs have advantage on the check if the PCs bribe the azers with at least 500 gp worth of gems. Should diplomacy fail, the azers fight for their claim, though they surrender their claim if half their number are killed or disabled.

Treasure. The light coming from the crystals is an effect of magic in the room and not a property of the crystals themselves. However, a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check and an hour of searching and harvesting yields 50 pounds of transportable crystals worth 1,000 gp. If the PCs have negotiated safe passage with the azers, this harvesting angers them and they attack. Similarly, any humanoid charmed by the crystals reacts violently to this harvesting.

3. CATARACT CAVERN

A deafening roar echoes in this cave. A foaming cataract of water rushes through a sinkhole in the ceiling, filling the east end of the cavern with spray and steam. The water exits the cavern to the southeast beyond the raging torrent.

A raging torrent of scalding water dominates this cave. A creature that attempts to move from Area 3 into Area 4 must step through the scalding water (see Scalding Torrent). After it does so, it must succeed on a DC 18 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone by the torrent and flushed into the rapids through Area 4.

Difficult Terrain. The crystal growth in the room makes all surfaces difficult terrain, save for a single path that winds through the room to the torrent of water.

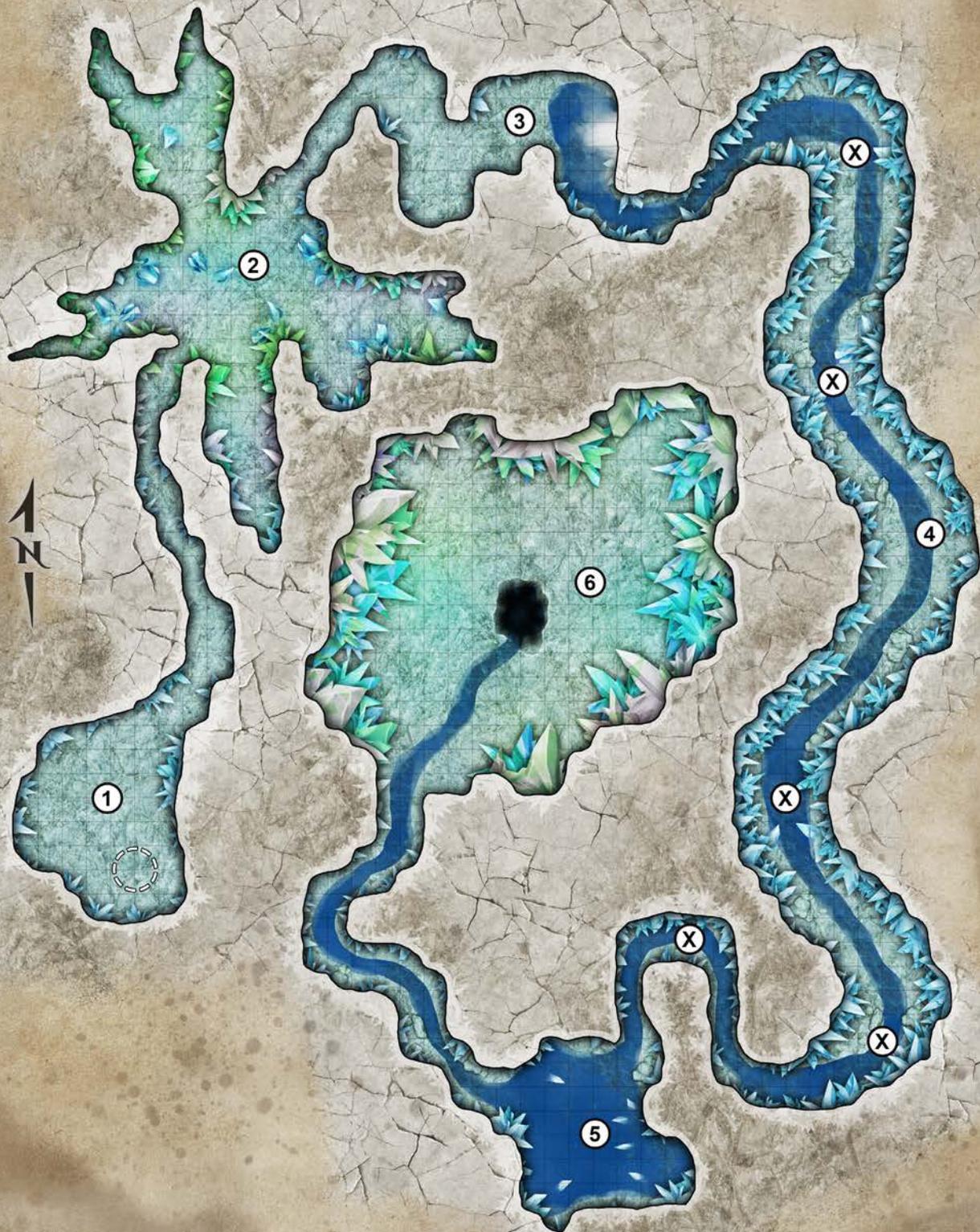
Scalding Torrent. The water not only flows with great force but is also heated to near boiling from nearby volcanic activity. A creature that touches the torrent of water or that starts its turn in the torrent takes 5 (1d10) fire damage.

4. CRYSTAL RAPIDS

The water roars down the center of this winding, sharply descending cavern. The water wears a smooth path through the middle of the cavern, but the walls, floor, and ceiling are blanketed in a forest of small crystals, most about a foot or two long.

Without special means to traverse this winding, downward-sloping cavern, the only clear path is that followed by the rushing water. A creature entering the

CAVERNS OF THE CRYSTALLINE MONOLITH



1 SQUARE EQUALS 5 FEET

rapids is quickly swept away downstream at a rate of 60 feet per round.

Sharp Turns. Difficult twists and turns lie at the marked points on the map. When a creature reaches one of these points, it must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or be swept up against the sharp crystals in the cavern and take 5 (1d10) slashing damage.

Warm Water. Though the water in this area is fed by the torrent in Area 3, the crystals in Area 4 absorb some of the heat of the water, leaving it uncomfortably warm but not dangerously so.

5. FLOODED CAVE

The swift flow of water from the rapids above ends in this chamber. Large crystals jut out of the water that covers the majority of this cave. The water continues lazily down a passage to the northwest.

The water pools here then continues in a slow-moving channel down the passage to the northwest. The water in the northwest passage is shallow enough to allow Medium or larger creatures to walk, treating the water as difficult terrain.

Steaming Pool. The water in this area is 20 feet deep and uncomfortably warm, but it is calm enough for creatures to swim through it. A creature without fire resistance or other adaptation to extreme heat takes 11 (2d10) fire damage for each hour it spends in the water. Steam rises from the pool, lightly obscuring the area.

Creatures. Some time ago, a **fire-infused water elemental** (*Tome of Beasts 2*, p. 132) fell into these caverns from the torrent in Area 3 and has resided here ever since. Though aware of the elemental's presence, the crystalline monolith rarely interacts with it as it doesn't interfere with the crystals or their growth. The elemental views the monolith as just another, albeit strange, crystal in its territory.

6. LAIR OF THE MONOLITH

The water from above flows down a channel to the center of this large cave. The cave's full dimensions are obscured by massive crystal growths, some wider than a human is tall, stretching from the floor, walls, and ceiling. The crystals are multi-hued and give off a soft glow that transforms the cave into a wondrous arena of light and color. A deep, soft hum echoes in the chamber from the crystals like an otherworldly song.



Crystal Forest. The room is difficult terrain for any creature that isn't flying.

Creature. The **crystalline monolith** (*Tome of Beasts 2*, p. 77) that claims the caverns as its home and personal garden resides here. It is not initially hostile unless attacked and is intrigued at having visitors, as this is a rare occurrence. Should the PCs wish to interact with the monolith rather than engage in combat, it is willing to do so. How such conversation progresses depends largely on what the PCs wish to discuss and why they are in the caverns. Should they come seeking knowledge from the crystalline monolith, it quickly realizes it has the superior position in any negotiations and likely barter for the services of the PCs. A likely scenario is the monolith requesting the PCs leave its lair to complete a task on its behalf. Possible services include:

- Finding and defeating another creature or creatures that pose a threat to the monolith or its lair, such as the home base of the azers from Area 2, or a marauding xorn with a taste for the monolith's crystal garden.
- Retrieving rare minerals or gemstones that the monolith wishes to "plant" in its garden.

- Convincing (or coercing) a particular creature or NPC to visit the crystal monolith, converse with it, and share knowledge.

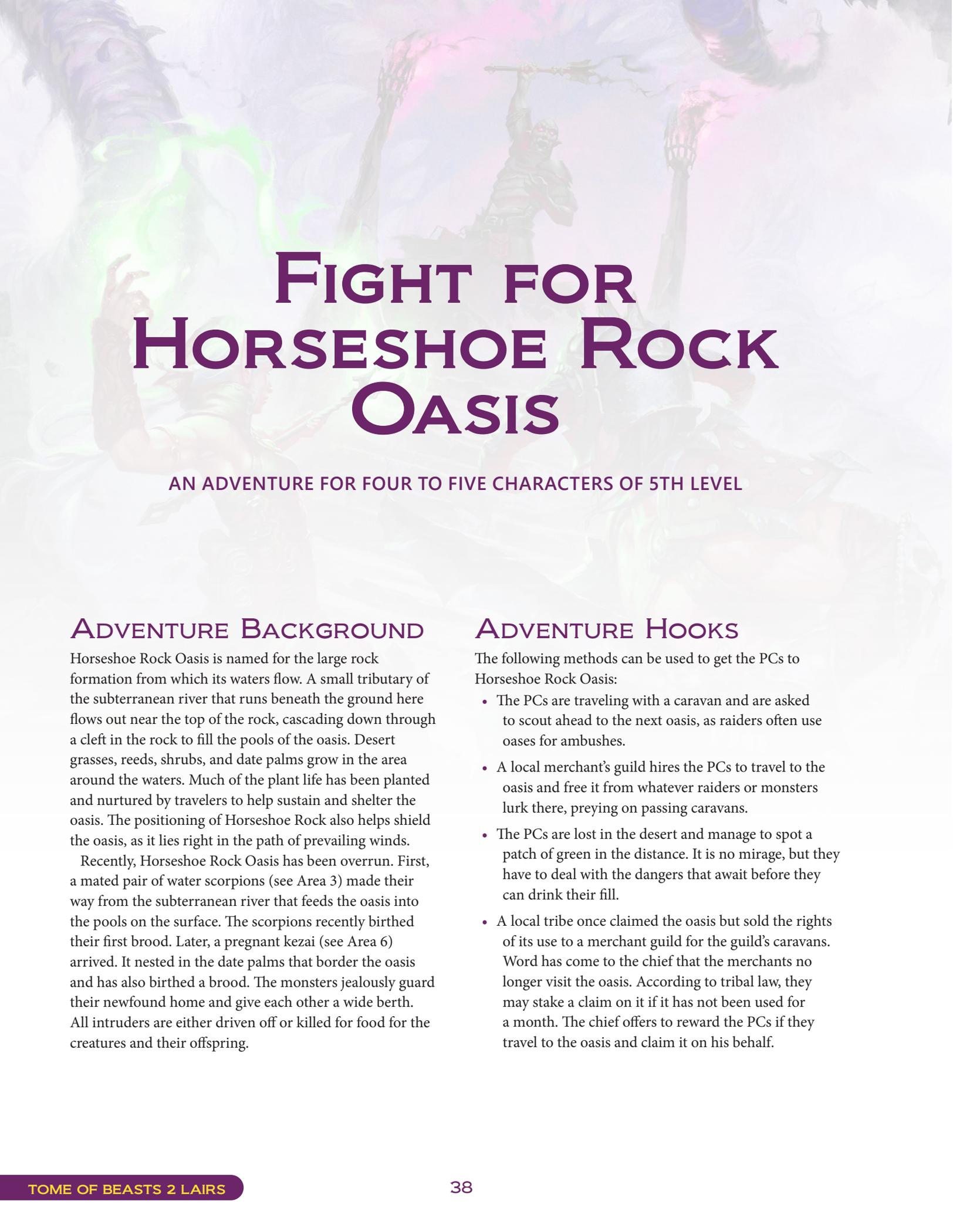
If the encounter is violent, the crystal monolith keeps its distance, using its movement advantage to keep away from the PCs and attack at range.

Treasure. With 2 hours of time, the PCs can find and harvest 2,000 gp worth of rare and valuable crystals. A dozen amethysts worth 100 gp each and a rose quartz geode worth 250 gp are nestled amid the central cluster of giant crystals. An *ioun stone of protection* rests inside the geode. The *ioun stone* performs normally, but it cracks, chips, and flakes while it is in use. Over time it comes to look badly damaged and ready to fall apart at a touch, but it never does.

CONCLUSION

The main part of the adventure concludes after the PCs interact with the crystalline monolith. Why the PCs are here and how they interacted with the monolith changes how the adventure ends...or doesn't end. PCs seeking spell components find what they need in the crystalline monolith's chamber and are rewarded upon returning with the components. PCs seeking treasure or knowledge may or may not receive it or might have to complete a task for the crystalline monolith to obtain it.





FIGHT FOR HORSESHOE ROCK OASIS

AN ADVENTURE FOR FOUR TO FIVE CHARACTERS OF 5TH LEVEL

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

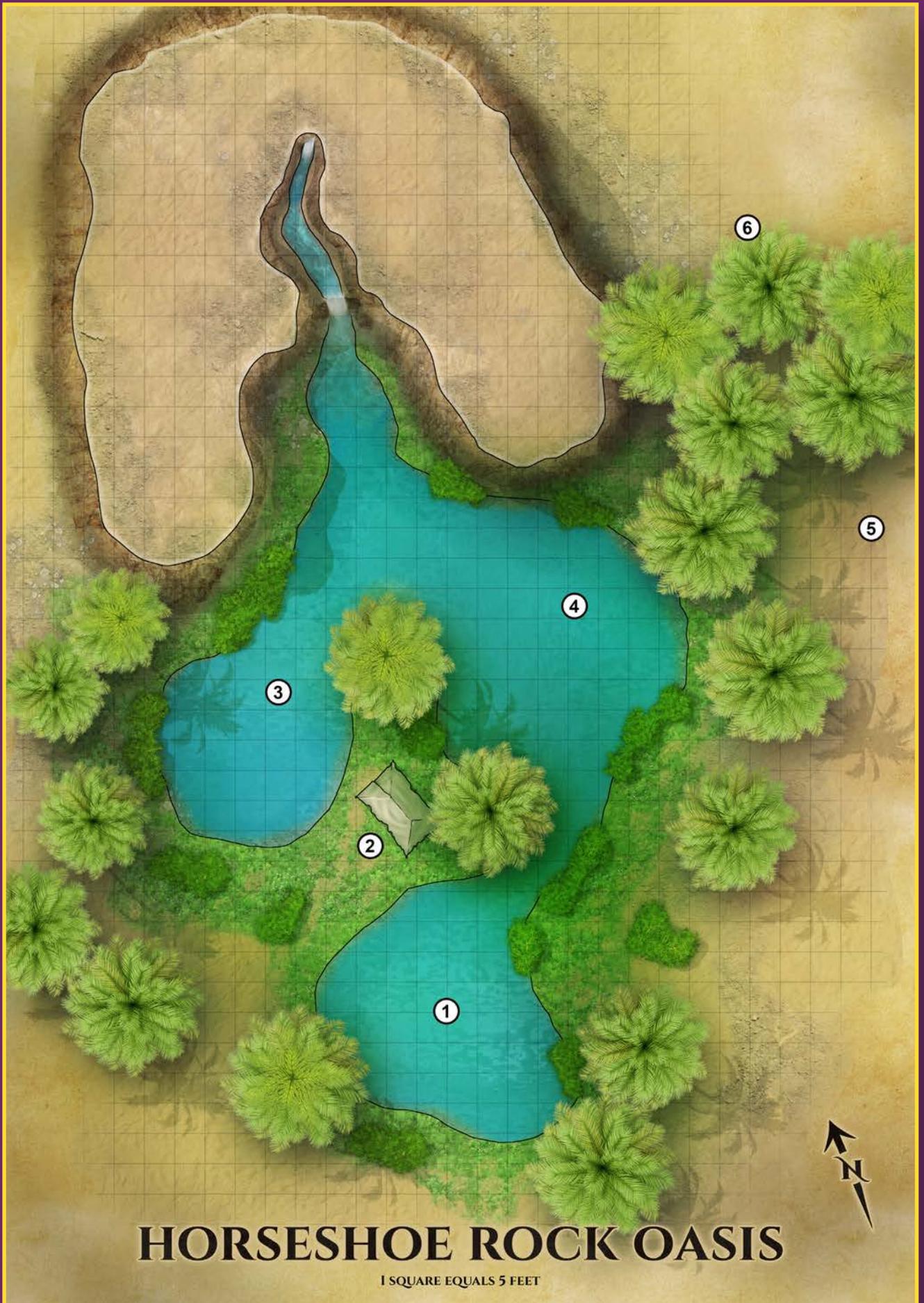
Horseshoe Rock Oasis is named for the large rock formation from which its waters flow. A small tributary of the subterranean river that runs beneath the ground here flows out near the top of the rock, cascading down through a cleft in the rock to fill the pools of the oasis. Desert grasses, reeds, shrubs, and date palms grow in the area around the waters. Much of the plant life has been planted and nurtured by travelers to help sustain and shelter the oasis. The positioning of Horseshoe Rock also helps shield the oasis, as it lies right in the path of prevailing winds.

Recently, Horseshoe Rock Oasis has been overrun. First, a mated pair of water scorpions (see Area 3) made their way from the subterranean river that feeds the oasis into the pools on the surface. The scorpions recently birthed their first brood. Later, a pregnant kezai (see Area 6) arrived. It nested in the date palms that border the oasis and has also birthed a brood. The monsters jealously guard their newfound home and give each other a wide berth. All intruders are either driven off or killed for food for the creatures and their offspring.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The following methods can be used to get the PCs to Horseshoe Rock Oasis:

- The PCs are traveling with a caravan and are asked to scout ahead to the next oasis, as raiders often use oases for ambushes.
- A local merchant's guild hires the PCs to travel to the oasis and free it from whatever raiders or monsters lurk there, preying on passing caravans.
- The PCs are lost in the desert and manage to spot a patch of green in the distance. It is no mirage, but they have to deal with the dangers that await before they can drink their fill.
- A local tribe once claimed the oasis but sold the rights of its use to a merchant guild for the guild's caravans. Word has come to the chief that the merchants no longer visit the oasis. According to tribal law, they may stake a claim on it if it has not been used for a month. The chief offers to reward the PCs if they travel to the oasis and claim it on his behalf.



HORSESHOE ROCK OASIS

1 SQUARE EQUALS 5 FEET

1. LOWER POOL

Clear, calm water fills this pool. The banks are grassy and bordered with shrubs and reeds. A few date palms provide shade at points near the water's edge.

Creatures. Though this pool seems calm and uneventful, it holds the water scorpions' latest brood of offspring. The brood uses the statistics of two **swarms of insects**, except the swarm has a swimming speed of 20 feet and can hold its breath for 30 minutes. The hungry swarms pursue prey throughout the water but don't venture onto land.

2. ABANDONED TENT

A finger of land extends out between the pools. The grass is thickest here, and the peninsula sports a pair of date palms and several flowering shrubs. A tent stands in the shade of the trees. Its canvas is weather-stained and worn but otherwise intact.

Creatures. The tent holds the kezai's current brood and the bodies of a pair of hapless travelers upon whom they feed. The brood uses the statistics of two **swarms of insects**, except the swarm has a flying speed of 20 feet and immunity to fire damage. Hungry, the swarms pursue opponents anywhere, except into the water.

Treasure. Two packs lie beside the bodies of the deceased travelers. Along with mundane traveling equipment, the packs contain a box of powdered indigo dye worth 50 gp, a pouch containing 36 gp and 40 sp, and a *rope of climbing*.

3. WESTERN POOL

This portion of the oasis is heavily lined with reeds and shrubs. A large, rocky outcropping breaks up the uniformness of the sandy bottom of the pool.

Creatures. The male **water scorpion** (*Tome of Beasts 2*, p. 393) is currently relaxing at the bottom of this pool. Should he notice any creatures enter the water or come near the edge of the pool, he rises to attack, looking for a

quick meal. If the water scorpion is reduced to half his hit points or fewer, he retreats to Area 4 and his mate.

4. EASTERN POOL

This large pool of calm water is lined with vegetation. Dark stones of various sizes sit in the sand at the pool's bottom.

Creatures. The female **water scorpion** lies at the bottom of the pool. She is hungry and rushes to attack any creature that enters the water or lingers by the shore. If the water scorpion is reduced to half her hit points or fewer, she flees to Area 3 and her mate.

5. DESICCATED BODY

A robed body lies facedown in the sand a short distance away from a cluster of palms to the northeast.

The body belonged to a lone nomad that wandered too close to the kezai's nest. She made it this far before succumbing to the venom of its sting. An examination of the body shows the robe is scorched and burned, as is the exposed skin. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check notes the stinger wound and subsequent poisoning.

Treasure. A silver moonstone ring worth 50 gp rests on one of the corpse's fingers. A pouch contains 16 gp and 20 sp. A dagger with an ornate silver and black onyx handle worth 25 gp sits tucked into the sash around the body's waist.

6. PALM GROVE

A number of date palms grow closely together near the southeastern tip of the rock. Numerous dead fronds form a nest amid the living fronds of the trees.

These trees provide shade as well as a wind break for the oasis. They also serve as the nest for another of the creatures lairing in the oasis.

Creatures. A **kezai** (*Tome of Beasts 2*, p. 228) lurks in the treetops. The kezai is highly territorial and attacks creatures that approach too closely to the trees.

HORSESHOE ROCK OASIS IN MIDGARD

The deserts of the Southlands are the perfect place to situate this oasis, whether in the Crescent Desert, the Sarklan Desert, or along one of the myriad trade routes through Siwal.

CONCLUSION

If the PCs were sent to clear the oasis, whoever sent them pays them 500 gp for the effort and might ask the PCs for help on other tasks. If the PCs happened upon the oasis, they now have a potentially long-term haven in the unforgiving desert.



THE RIVER TOMB

AN ADVENTURE FOR FOUR TO FIVE CHARACTERS OF 6TH LEVEL

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Sgavaldyr was the chieftain of a powerful barbarian tribe that flourished when the world was much younger. A great warrior who venerated an ancient goddess of poison and disease, Sgavaldyr died at the hands of assassins in retribution for his many campaigns against their people. After his death, his body was interred on a small island in the middle of a great river, and the tomb was subsequently swallowed up by the river when druids from the tribe used their magic to raise the water levels. For centuries, the tomb lay submerged and undisturbed by thieves, but recently the river has been dammed, exposing the tomb to the air.

A group of bandits broke into the tomb first, but they were soon killed off by the tomb's traps and guardians. The next group was a band of adventurers led by a famous mercenary named Kressel. This group was more successful, but they were ultimately destroyed when they accidentally unleashed a hongak (see Area 10) that had been sealed within a sarcophagus.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Brildwyn Sunstalker, a dwarven mercenary and sole survivor of Kressel's doomed expedition, sits alone in Rumfish Tavern mourning the loss of her companions. She seeks adventurers who can return the body of her expedition's leader from the tomb and is willing to pay. A successful DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion) check convinces Brildwyn to give the PCs basic information about Areas 1-7, including the existence of the trap in Area 3. She has no information on Areas 8-10 as her group fled before reaching those chambers, and she is unaware of any occurrences after her group left, such as her companions rising as zombies. Brildwyn offers them a sum of 500 gp if they can return Kressel's body to her for proper burial, telling them that he can be identified by the magical ring he wears. As her other companions were recent hires she barely knew, she is less concerned with the retrieval of their bodies.

THE ISLAND

The island that holds the tomb sits on a narrow piece of land in the center of the nearby river. Most of the island is covered in nothing but bare earth, with a few patches of cattail here and there. Little has grown on the island in the last few generations since more than half of it has been inundated with water. The damming of the river exposed more of the island to the sun, and plants are slowly popping up as the island dries.

1. TOMB ENTRANCE

The tomb is an unremarkable-looking mound of jutting stone blocks overgrown with sickly yellow moss. The entrance to the tomb is a simple vertical fissure that leads down into darkness, and the air that wafts out from it is cold and smells of stagnant water.

Until recently this entrance was almost completely underwater, something that canny PCs can detect with a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check while examining the watermarks on the stone blocks.

Stone Walls. The walls of the tomb are made from blocks of stone dredged up from the river and mortared together with primitive cement. Ceiling heights are 8 feet in most hallways and 12 feet in most chambers. Because of the shallow water that fills it, the tomb is difficult terrain for Small or smaller creatures.

Sturdy Doors. The doors in the tomb are constructed of 1-foot-thick dressed stone. Most of the doors are open, but those that are closed require a successful DC 15 Strength check to force open because of the water that now clogs the tomb's hallways. All of the chambers are unlit unless otherwise noted.

2. ANTECHAMBER

The passage heads down into a squat, stone chamber. The floor is covered in a film of murky water, and the walls are slick with slimy mold. An open stone door sits in the northern wall.

The bloated corpses of two bandits lie in the inches-deep water filling this chamber. A scimitar and club, the weapons of the bandits, lie near them. The bodies wear moldy hide armor and carry a total of 15 cp and 10 sp. These bandits were killed by an earth elemental that once guarded the chamber, and the surviving bandits defeated the elemental before moving deeper into the tomb.

3. TRAPPED CORRIDOR

The bodies of several humanoids lie in the murky water of this corridor as it stretches into the darkness.

The bodies belong to four bandits that were killed by the trap in this corridor. The bandits wear moldy hide armor and carry a total of 26 sp and 18 gp. Three clubs and one scimitar lie in the water near the bodies. A successful DC

12 Wisdom (Medicine) check while examining the bodies finds small puncture holes in them. If a creature succeeds on this check by 5 or more, the creature also realizes the bandits were poisoned. These bandits fell to the trap in this corridor, but Kressel and his band avoided it thanks to Brildwyn's keen eyes.

Magical Poison Trap. The corridor is protected by a magical trap. The trap activates when more than 20 pounds of weight is placed on a hidden pressure plate, releasing a rain of needle-shaped magical poison from the ceiling. Each creature on the pressure plate and within 10 feet of it must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 11 (2d10) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. A creature that fails its saving throw must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw at the start of its next turn or become poisoned for 1 minute.

Prevention. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check finds the hidden pressure plate. Wedging an iron spike or other object under the pressure plate prevents the trap from activating. A successful dispel magic (DC 13) cast on the ceiling destroys the trap.

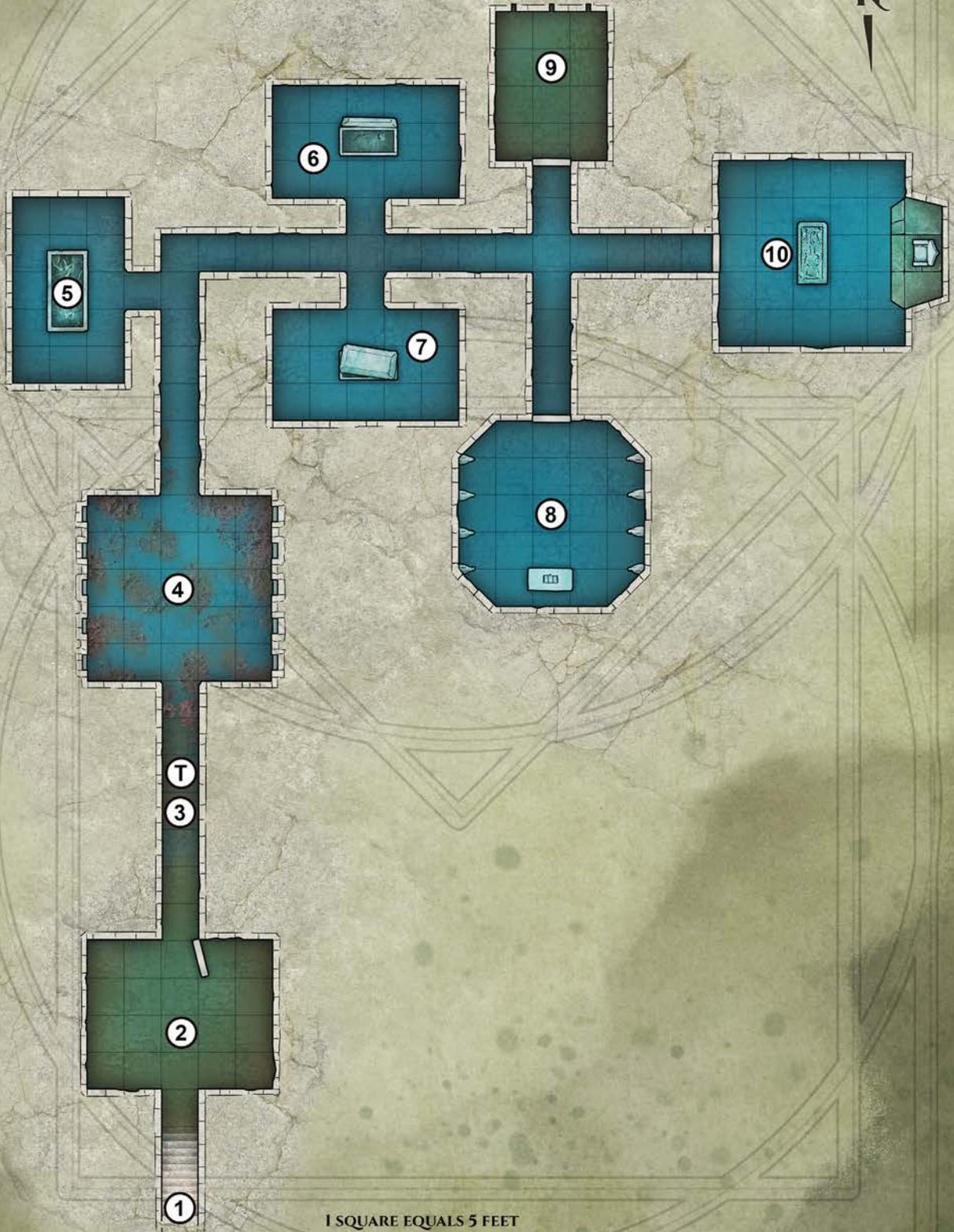
4. OFFERING CHAMBER

Streams of light filter through cracks in the ceiling of this square chamber. Sheets of red algae cover the water in the chamber, and a thick layer of river slime coats the walls. Ceremonial recesses dot the walls, and a corridor in the northern wall continues deeper into the tomb. Large bubbles of blue-tinged gas float erratically about the chamber.

This chamber once held offerings of exotic foods, rich spices, silks, and pottery that Sgvaldyr would take with him to the afterlife. The food and other objects have long since rotted away, and the recesses now contain only useless clay shards.

Creatures. The bandits and Kressel's band were not the only creatures to enter the tomb after the water levels dropped—three **swampgas bubbles** (*Tome of Beasts 2*, p. 343) now float about this chamber after drifting in from outside. The bubbles try to attach themselves to random PCs and attack until destroyed.

THE RIVER TOMB



5. HORSE TOMB

The floor of this dark chamber is covered in a layer of cold water. Most of the chamber is taken up by a massive, open sarcophagus, which holds the bones of a large animal.

When Sgavaldir was buried, his favorite warhorse was buried along with him in a large stone sarcophagus. A successful DC 13 Intelligence (Nature) check identifies the bones as those of a warhorse. This was the first chamber that Kressel and his band ransacked when they broke into the tomb, but they soon left when they realized the chamber didn't contain any treasure.

6. RANSACKED BURIAL CHAMBER

The floor of this chamber is coated with stagnant water. A broken sarcophagus lies in the center of the chamber, its lid carelessly tossed aside.

This burial chamber was ransacked by Kressel and his group. It belonged to Sgavaldir's favorite concubine, who was poisoned and placed in the tomb to serve the barbarian chieftain in the afterlife. Water leaked into her sarcophagus soon after she was buried and destroyed all of her possessions, leaving behind only a crumbling skeleton.

7. DISHONORED DEAD

The floor of this chamber is covered in water like in other parts of the tomb, though the water in here has an oily appearance and is particularly rank. A stone sarcophagus lies in the center of the chamber, its lid partially removed. The bodies of three humanoids lie in the water around the sarcophagus.

This tomb belongs to one of Sgavaldir's most trusted retainers who was buried alive to serve his king in the afterlife. The mummified corpse still rests in the sarcophagus, though it carries nothing of significance. Aside from the corpse, this sarcophagus once held a deadly hongae (see Area 10), but Kressel and his group released it from its confinement, leading to their demise.

Creature. The sudden mass deaths of Brildwyn's companions spawned an **overshadow** (*Tome of Beasts 2*, p. 289) that still resides here. It attacks any creature that enters the chamber.

Treasure. Two of the bodies wear moldy splint mail while the third wears moldy robes. Two longswords, an adamantite handaxe, and a ruined spellbook lie in the water near the bodies. One of the armored bodies wears a *ring of the ram*, identifying it as Kressel's.

8. SHRINE

The passage dips down into an octagonal chamber that contains an altar covered in serpentine reliefs. Stone snake-head sconces sit in the walls of the chamber. The chamber is partially flooded with water. A small stone coffer sits on the altar.

The door to this chamber is closed. This shrine belonged to the ancient goddess worshipped by Sgavaldir when he was alive. All traces of divine power have left this shrine, though the chamber still contains a trap tied to the snake heads.

Snake Head Trap. If the coffer is moved or removed from the altar, the trap protecting this chamber activates. When the trap activates, the snake heads fill the chamber with a sickly, green gas. A creature that starts its turn in the gas must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 11 (2d10) poison damage. The gas lingers for 10 minutes before dissipating.

Prevention. A successful DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check while inspecting the altar notices small, magical runes carved into the stone around the coffer. A spell or other effect that can sense the presence of magic, such as *detect magic*, reveals an aura of conjuration magic on the altar and the snake-head sconces. A successful *dispel magic* (DC 13) cast on the altar destroys the trap. Clogging all the snake mouths with mud or a similar substance blocks the gas from escaping into the chamber, but it doesn't remove the gas from the chamber once the trap has triggered. Alternatively, placing torches in each snake-head sconce prevents the trap from triggering.

Treasure. The stone coffer is locked and requires a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools to open. The coffer contains a copper peg etched with magical runes and 450 gp worth of ancient coins. The copper peg is part of the puzzle in Area 9.

9. TREASURY

A shaft of light streams into this empty chamber from a jagged hole in the ceiling, and much of the ground is covered in a layer of muddy water. Three holes sit in the northern wall.

The door to this chamber is closed. The far wall of the chamber contains three holes. Two of the holes are empty, but the third hole contains an iron peg. Like the copper peg in Area 8, the iron peg is etched with magical runes.

If the copper peg (Area 7) is placed in the left hole, iron peg is placed in the middle hole, and the silver peg (Area 10) is placed in the right hole, a cavity magically appears in the wall.

Creature. The first time each day that all three pegs are placed in the holes in the wall in the wrong order, a **befouled weird** (*Tome of Beasts 2*, p. 41) appears in the center of the chamber and attacks any creature in it. Placing the pegs in the correct holes while the befouled weird is active destroys the weird.

Treasure. The cavity contains a silver statuette of an eagle with blue tourmaline eyes worth 250 gp, 10 bloodstones worth 50 gp each, a *potion of heroism*, and a *folding boat*.

10. SGAVALDYR'S TOMB

This chamber is undisturbed, its floor covered in a thin film of water. A grand-looking sarcophagus sits in the center of the chamber, and beyond it a raised stone throne sits in a small alcove. The air in this chamber is particularly foul and humid.

The door to this chamber is closed. The **hongaeck** (*Tome of Beasts 2*, p. 201) that Kressel's group released from the sarcophagus in Area 7 squeezed itself through the gap above the door into this chamber and has taken up residence here. It is seething with hatred over its long imprisonment and attacks the PCs ruthlessly.

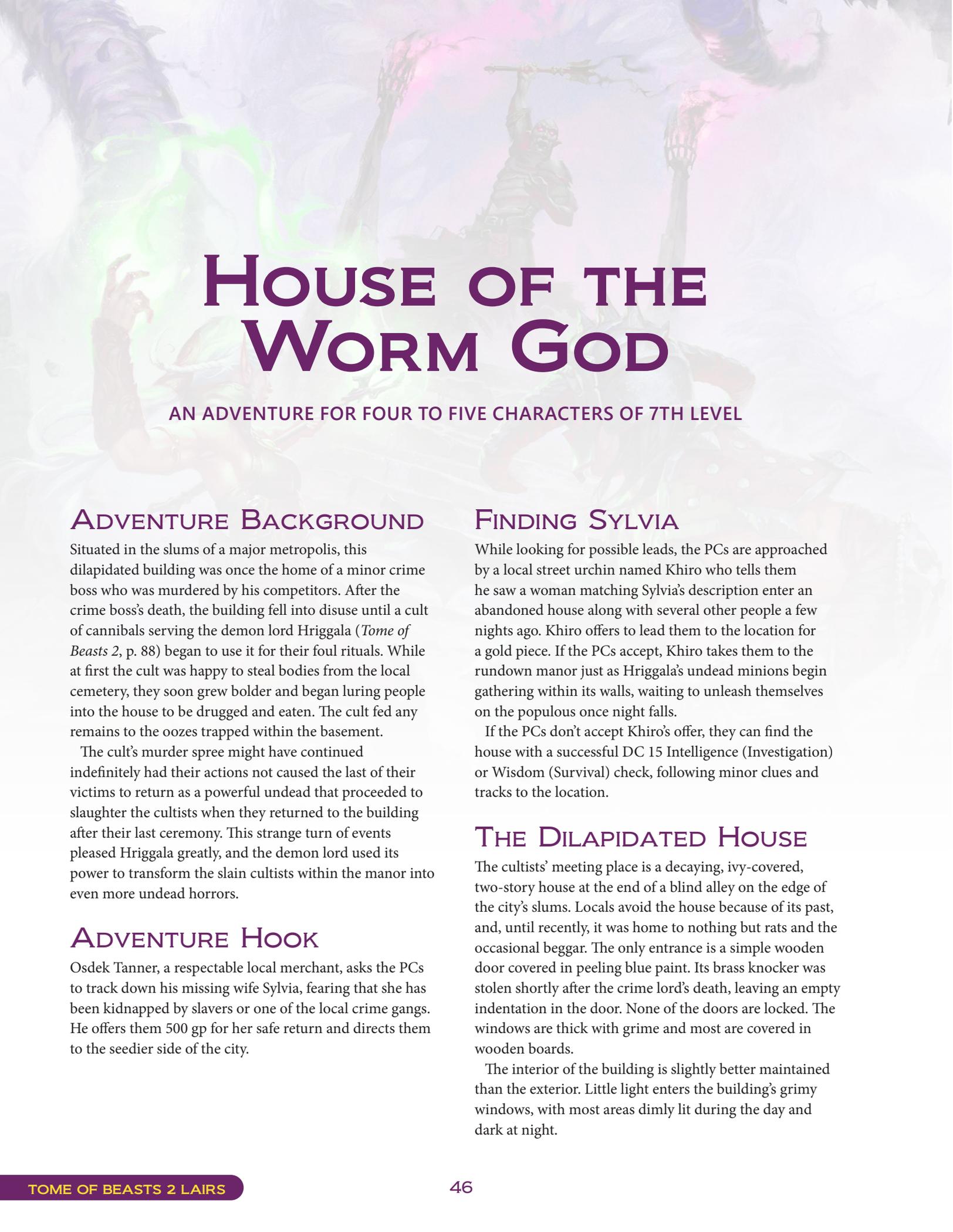
Sarcophagus. A successful DC 18 Strength check opens the sarcophagus. If the PCs do so, they find Sgavaldyr's mummified body draped in a decaying silk sheet. He wears a heavy gold necklace worth 500 gp and a crown of coiled serpents fashioned from jade and ivory worth 1,000 gp.

Throne. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check while inspecting the throne discovers the last of the pegs for the puzzle in Area 9 slotted neatly into the arm rest. Like the other pegs, this silver peg is etched with magical runes.



CONCLUSION

The adventure ends when the PCs have cleared out the tomb and returned Kressel's body to Brildwyn. With the tomb now free of threats, other creatures may begin using it as a lair, potentially putting nearby settlements in danger. Perhaps Sgavaldyr rises as an undead creature in response to his tomb being violated or the forgotten goddess of poison begins reasserting her power.



HOUSE OF THE WORM GOD

AN ADVENTURE FOR FOUR TO FIVE CHARACTERS OF 7TH LEVEL

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Situated in the slums of a major metropolis, this dilapidated building was once the home of a minor crime boss who was murdered by his competitors. After the crime boss's death, the building fell into disuse until a cult of cannibals serving the demon lord Hriggala (*Tome of Beasts 2*, p. 88) began to use it for their foul rituals. While at first the cult was happy to steal bodies from the local cemetery, they soon grew bolder and began luring people into the house to be drugged and eaten. The cult fed any remains to the oozes trapped within the basement.

The cult's murder spree might have continued indefinitely had their actions not caused the last of their victims to return as a powerful undead that proceeded to slaughter the cultists when they returned to the building after their last ceremony. This strange turn of events pleased Hriggala greatly, and the demon lord used its power to transform the slain cultists within the manor into even more undead horrors.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Osdek Tanner, a respectable local merchant, asks the PCs to track down his missing wife Sylvia, fearing that she has been kidnapped by slavers or one of the local crime gangs. He offers them 500 gp for her safe return and directs them to the seedier side of the city.

FINDING SYLVIA

While looking for possible leads, the PCs are approached by a local street urchin named Khiro who tells them he saw a woman matching Sylvia's description enter an abandoned house along with several other people a few nights ago. Khiro offers to lead them to the location for a gold piece. If the PCs accept, Khiro takes them to the rundown manor just as Hriggala's undead minions begin gathering within its walls, waiting to unleash themselves on the populous once night falls.

If the PCs don't accept Khiro's offer, they can find the house with a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Survival) check, following minor clues and tracks to the location.

THE DILAPIDATED HOUSE

The cultists' meeting place is a decaying, ivy-covered, two-story house at the end of a blind alley on the edge of the city's slums. Locals avoid the house because of its past, and, until recently, it was home to nothing but rats and the occasional beggar. The only entrance is a simple wooden door covered in peeling blue paint. Its brass knocker was stolen shortly after the crime lord's death, leaving an empty indentation in the door. None of the doors are locked. The windows are thick with grime and most are covered in wooden boards.

The interior of the building is slightly better maintained than the exterior. Little light enters the building's grimy windows, with most areas dimly lit during the day and dark at night.

1. ENTRANCE HALL

Faded tapestries adorn the walls of this chamber, and dust trails from the ceiling in long rivulets. A broad flight of stairs and numerous doors exit the room. A moth-eaten maroon runner covers the stairs, and decorative iron handles adorn the wooden doors. The house creaks eerily.

The entrance hall is empty, though if PCs stay here too long, they draw the attention of the flayed wraiths lurking in the cloakroom and the upper hallway. A successful DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check hears a faint scraping sound coming from Area 6. This is the sound of the flayed wraith moving along the hallway, its ruined feet brushing against the bare floor as it floats along.

2. CLOAKROOM

This lightless room contains an assortment of hats, cloaks, and robes hanging from simple metal hooks.

Most of the garments here are simple outerwear, but some of the robes appear ceremonial in nature and have spots of dried blood on them. A successful DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check notices the blood on the robes.

Creatures. Two of the cultists managed to flee as far as the entrance hall before they were cornered and killed by the creature they had inadvertently created (see Area 12). Their bodies were later animated as **flayed wraiths** (*Tome of Beasts 2*, p. 151) by Hriggala, and they now hide amid the greatcoats and cloaks in this chamber. The flayed wraiths attack anyone investigating the clothing. They chase fleeing characters throughout the manor, but they don't enter Areas 12 or 13. The wraiths don't leave the manor during daylight hours.

3. DRAWING ROOM

This chamber contains a wooden table, an empty bookcase, a broken cabinet, and an unlit, brick fireplace. Everything in the chamber is caked in a thick layer of grime and dust.

Once used to entertain guests, this room was rarely visited by the cultists. Almost everything of value that was once in this room has long since been stripped away by thieves and vagrants.

Treasure. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check while exploring the fireplace discovers a silver ring set with a large bloodstone worth 150 gp.



4. DINING ROOM

A long rectangular dining table dominates this chamber. The table has recently been set, with spoons, knives, and plates laid out as if for guests. A human body, its stomach cut open and its entrails splayed out over the dinnerware, lies in the center of the table. Flies buzz excitedly over every surface.

The figure lying on the table is a recent victim of the flayed wraiths, a city guard that was lured into the manor by Sylvia Tanner (see Area 12) and subsequently slain by her. The body has a longsword belted to its side instead of a spear, and its chain shirt is ruined.

5. KITCHEN

A large, red, brick oven and an iron hanging rack sit in this chamber. A few pots and pans dangle from the rack. A wooden table runs up the middle of the room, and a green cloth bag sits atop it. A trail of blood winds past the table and leads to another door in the corner of the room.

This chamber saw minimal use by the cultists and is mostly empty. The trail of blood is several days old and belongs to the cultists' last victim when he was dragged down to be fed to the ooze in the basement.

Treasure. The bag contains various possessions taken from the cultists' recent victims, including 57 sp, 26 gp, a copper necklace embedded with green jaspers worth 100 gp, a pair of gold bangles worth 50 gp each, and a *wand of web*. The cultists were preparing to divvy up this wealth but were attacked before they could do so.

6. UPPER HALLWAY

This musty upper hallway contains several doors to other chambers. Its once-grand windows, now covered in dirt and grime, sag in their decaying walls.

This hallway connects all of the rooms on the upper level of the manor. A **flayed wraith** roams the hallway, another victim of the fleshspurned in Area 12. The flayed wraith attacks anyone exploring the area.

7. GUEST BEDROOM

Silent and dreary, this room contains an uncomfortable-looking bed and an open wardrobe. Cobwebs cover almost every surface.

The cultists preferred to leave shortly after performing their rituals in the basement and never used this bedroom. While the webs here might put the PCs on edge, most are empty, and the few spiders in the room are harmless.

8. WATER CLOSET

This small room smells faintly of excrement. The only objects in the room are a dirty washing bowl, a cracked mirror mounted on the wall, and a covered privy.

This room is uninhabited. A PC investigating the privy discovers that it opens out over the exterior of the building.

9. BEDROOMS

These chambers are identical to Area 7 but are not covered in webbing. The rooms contain nothing of value.

10. WINE CELLAR

An unlit chamber with an earthen floor and wooden support columns sits at the bottom of the stairs. Several large wine barrels are stacked against one wall, and the scent of vinegar fills the air. A single corridor exits the chamber.

The wine barrels in this chamber have all been tapped, releasing most of the wine onto the ground and leaving the remaining wine in the barrels to turn to vinegar.

11. TORTURE CHAMBER

This nightmarish room contains various implements of torture, including saws, knives, whips, and thumbscrews laid out on a small wooden table. A set of empty manacles hangs from the back wall, and dried blood speckles almost every surface.

The cultists would sometimes torture their victims before killing them, and they found this room the perfect place to do so, as no one could hear the victims' screams from the outside. There are no bodies in this chamber and little of value, though the torture implements are in good working order and could be worth up to 25 gp to the right buyer.

Creatures. The cultists kept leeches for draining and torturing their victims. The leeches reside in glass containers beneath the wooden table and grow hungry when they sense a creature that isn't an undead or a construct. The leeches break out of their containers within 1d4 rounds of a creature entering the room and form into four **leech swarms** (*Tome of Beasts* 2, p. 396).

12. SHRINE TO HRIGGALA

Dozens of dripping candles placed in small niches carved into the walls illuminate this shrine with an orange glow. Most of the light is gathered about a small, crudely carved stone altar. The statue of a worm-like creature, its maw revealing multiple sets of teeth, looms menacingly above the altar. A hole has been carved into the southern wall of the chamber, and a smooth circular tunnel lies beyond it.

This is where the cultists would gather to pray to Hriggala before engaging in their heinous activities. The altar and statue aren't magical but count as desecrated objects for the *detect evil and good* spell.

Altar and Statue. The altar and statue can both be destroyed (each has AC 17; hp 20; vulnerability to radiant damage; immunity to piercing, slashing, poison, and

THE HOUSE OF THE WORM GOD



FIRST FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR



BASEMENT

1 SQUARE EQUALS 5 FEET



psychic damage), but doing so angers Hriggala. Each creature that participated in destroying the altar or statue must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or take 11 (2d10) psychic damage as the demon lord bombards its mind with horrific images of being eaten alive by ghouls and other undead.

Creatures. Osdek Tanner's wife, Sylvia, lurks in this chamber. Sylvia was once the high priestess of the cultists. When the fleshspurned rose from the dead and attacked the cultists, Sylvia fled but was attacked while running up the stairs out of the basement. She fell back down the stairs where she broke her neck. Shortly thereafter, Hriggala used its foul magic to reanimate her as a **servant of the Unsated God** (*Tome of Beasts 2*, p. 321). Sylvia appears much the same as she did in life, but with a broken neck, which causes her head to sag slightly forward and her patchy hair to obscure her face. Loyal to her dark deity and confident in its power to return her to unlife, Sylvia fights to the death to defend Hriggala's shrine.

The **fleshspurned** (*Tome of Beasts 2*, p. 153) that slew the cultists floats between Areas 12 and 13 and comes to Sylvia's aid if she is attacked. The fleshspurned was inadvertently created by the cultists when a mercenary was lured into the manor by Sylvia and drugged before being eaten alive. Now, the power of Hriggala compels the creature to serve Sylvia.

13. OOZE PIT

The tunnel slopes down into an open, circular cave. Most of the cave is taken up by a pit where two large black masses gurgle and shudder hideously. A wooden chest sits in an alcove on the northern side of the pit.

The cultists used this pit to dispose of the remains of their victims and to give further praise to Hriggala.

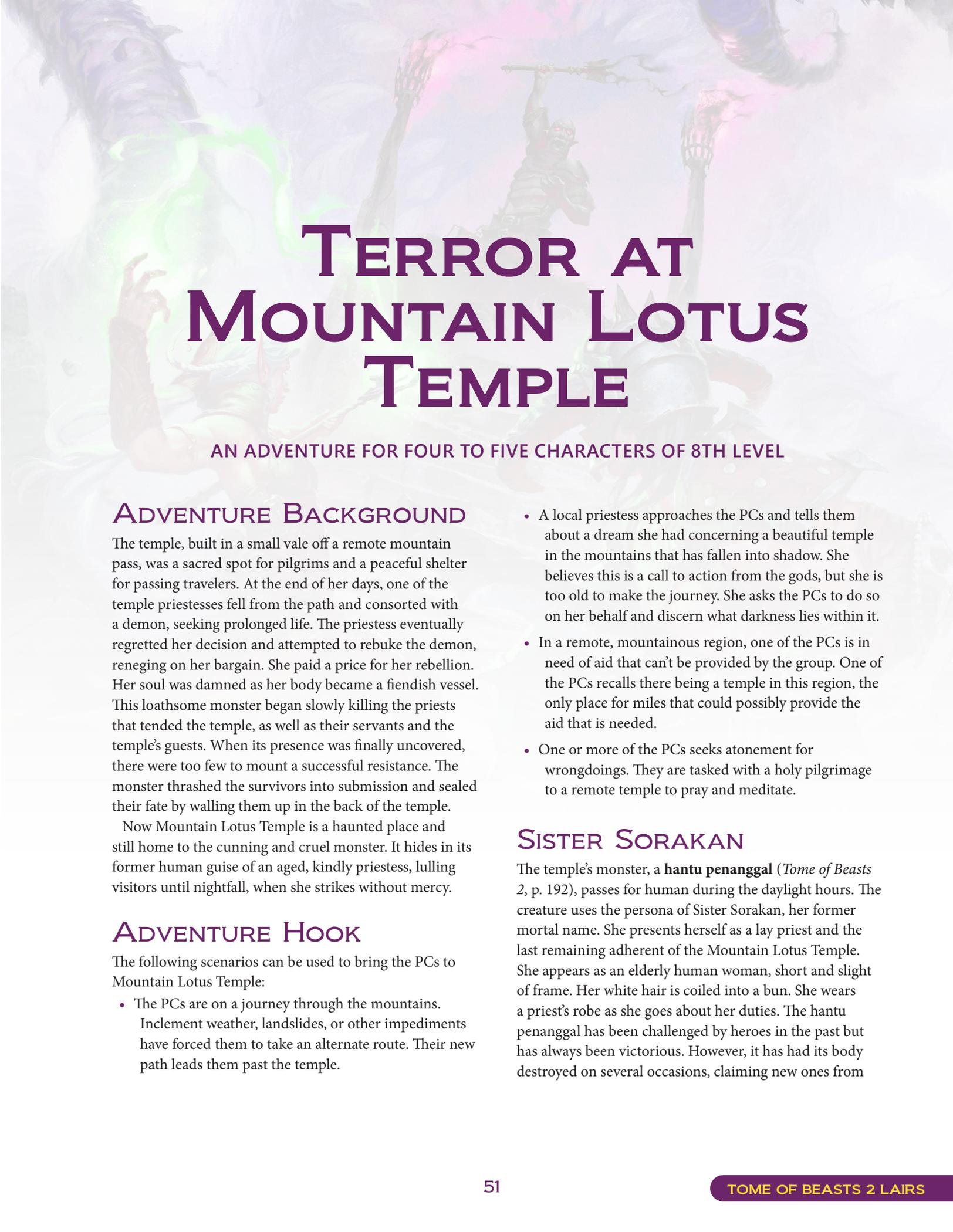
Creatures. The pit contains two **black puddings**. The oozes are sacred creatures of Hriggala, and the demon lord's power prevented the oozes from devouring the cultists—so long as the cultists continued to feed the oozes. With the cultists now gone, the oozes have become restless and hungry. They climb up the walls of the pit and attack any creatures in the cave that aren't undead or constructs.

Treasure. The wooden chest on the northern side of the cave is locked and contains the combined wealth of the cult. A successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools unlocks the chest. It contains 710 cp, 103 sp, 89 gp, a *gem of brightness* with 27 charges, a suit of plate armor, and a *spell scroll of animate dead*.

CONCLUSION

The adventure ends once the PCs have cleared out the manor and either returned Sylvia's body to Osdek for burial or notified the merchant of his wife's death (if they burnt or otherwise destroyed the body). This is not necessarily the end of things, and the cult of Hriggala may arise in another part of the city to cause chaos and bloodshed anew.





TERROR AT MOUNTAIN LOTUS TEMPLE

AN ADVENTURE FOR FOUR TO FIVE CHARACTERS OF 8TH LEVEL

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The temple, built in a small vale off a remote mountain pass, was a sacred spot for pilgrims and a peaceful shelter for passing travelers. At the end of her days, one of the temple priestesses fell from the path and consorted with a demon, seeking prolonged life. The priestess eventually regretted her decision and attempted to rebuke the demon, reneging on her bargain. She paid a price for her rebellion. Her soul was damned as her body became a fiendish vessel. This loathsome monster began slowly killing the priests that tended the temple, as well as their servants and the temple's guests. When its presence was finally uncovered, there were too few to mount a successful resistance. The monster thrashed the survivors into submission and sealed their fate by walling them up in the back of the temple.

Now Mountain Lotus Temple is a haunted place and still home to the cunning and cruel monster. It hides in its former human guise of an aged, kindly priestess, lulling visitors until nightfall, when she strikes without mercy.

ADVENTURE HOOK

The following scenarios can be used to bring the PCs to Mountain Lotus Temple:

- The PCs are on a journey through the mountains. Inclement weather, landslides, or other impediments have forced them to take an alternate route. Their new path leads them past the temple.

- A local priestess approaches the PCs and tells them about a dream she had concerning a beautiful temple in the mountains that has fallen into shadow. She believes this is a call to action from the gods, but she is too old to make the journey. She asks the PCs to do so on her behalf and discern what darkness lies within it.
- In a remote, mountainous region, one of the PCs is in need of aid that can't be provided by the group. One of the PCs recalls there being a temple in this region, the only place for miles that could possibly provide the aid that is needed.
- One or more of the PCs seeks atonement for wrongdoings. They are tasked with a holy pilgrimage to a remote temple to pray and meditate.

SISTER SORAKAN

The temple's monster, a **hantu penanggal** (*Tome of Beasts* 2, p. 192), passes for human during the daylight hours. The creature uses the persona of Sister Sorakan, her former mortal name. She presents herself as a lay priest and the last remaining adherent of the Mountain Lotus Temple. She appears as an elderly human woman, short and slight of frame. Her white hair is coiled into a bun. She wears a priest's robe as she goes about her duties. The hantu penanggal has been challenged by heroes in the past but has always been victorious. However, it has had its body destroyed on several occasions, claiming new ones from

victims when it can. Currently, while its head appears as an old woman, the body the hantu penanggal wears once belonged to a young man, a merchant's apprentice who met his fate staying overnight at the temple. The robes hung over the skinny, slight frame help to hide this discrepancy from visitors.

Sister Sorakan is meek, respectful, and helpful to a fault. She sees to the needs of visitors as best she can, showing them to the guest quarters (Area 3) should they wish to stay. She serves tea and allows visitors entrance into the temple for prayer and meditation. She doesn't break her act if provoked; instead, she acts fearful and pitiful in the face of any hostility against her, fleeing to the safety of the temple if given the opportunity. If asked why she is here alone, she claims that the clergy who ran the temple passed away over a year ago. Being such a remote place, no other adherents to the faith have passed this way yet so that she can tell them of the need for new custodians. She says she has sent messages with other travelers but has yet to hear word. In the meantime, she does her best to continue her duties here and maintain the temple until help arrives.

Her typical ploy is to lull visitors into a false sense of security then prey on them at her leisure at night. Her usual tactics include luring a lone victim into the temple on the pretense of aiding her with some task or watching for someone to separate from their group and going after them. If her ruse is discovered, Sister Sorakan moves to Area 2 or 5, whichever is closer, and calls on her allies to assist her against the PCs.

TEMPLE EXTERIOR

The temple grounds were once tasteful gardens, now wild with neglect. An artificial pond filled with pink lotuses sits just off the mountain pass. Carved stone steps lead up the slope, past the pond, and to the temple, an intricate building with several tall spires carved from the same granite ridge protruding from the slope. The exterior is a breathtaking display of intricate carvings showing divine servants doing battle with fiends, aiding those in need, and acting as messengers of the gods. These were once painted

MOUNTAIN LOTUS TEMPLE IN MIDGARD

The eastern mountains of Kapolstan, north of the Kurtadam Forest, would make an excellent spot. Along or near the lower end of the Sky Stairs in Bedelstan is another suitable location. Finally, the mountains east of Shuruppak in Ishadia could hold this temple.

and highly detailed, but neglect has left the paint faded and peeled and, in some places, gone altogether.

1. LOTUS POND

This pond is edged with rounded river rocks. The water's surface is nearly covered in leaves and blossoms. A willow tree stands near the pond's edge, its branches long enough to dip into and trail in the waters of the pond.

This picturesque area appears calm and peaceful. Pink blossoms cover the water's surface, and the willow's boughs sway gently in the breeze. Creatures that linger long around this pool begin to feel a growing sense of desperation and despair. The feeling can't be shaken without leaving the area. This is a manifestation of the spirit bound to the pond.

Creature. A **ghost** resides here, the last remnant of Sister Sorakan as a mortal. She lurks beneath the boughs of the weeping willow tree at the pond's edge. The terrible fate that befell her has unhinged her mind, and the ghost can't communicate in any rational manner. If the PCs ask about her death or what brought her to this state, she attempts to pantomime the hantu penanggal by tearing her head from her shoulders, raising it high in the air, and pointing up the path to the temple. Unfortunately, this action acts as the ghost's Horrifying Visage and affects the PCs accordingly.

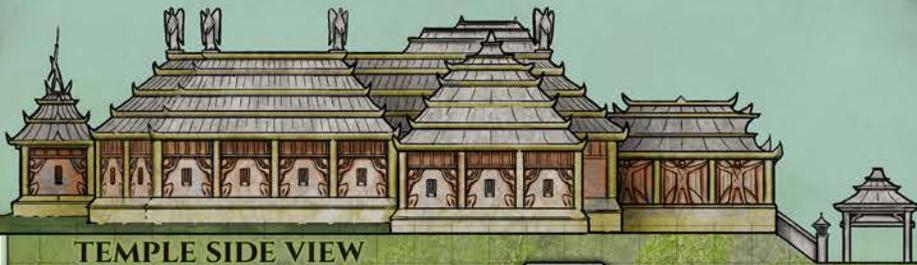
The only way to lay Sister Sorakan's spirit to rest is to destroy the hantu penanggal and the walled horror (see Area 9), thus freeing the temple from the evil her terrible decisions wrought.

2. STABLE

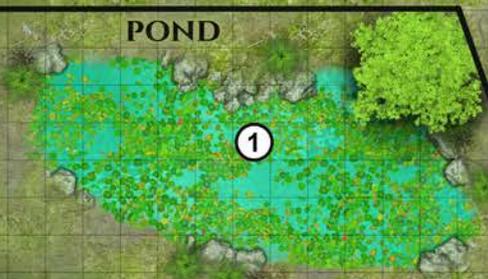
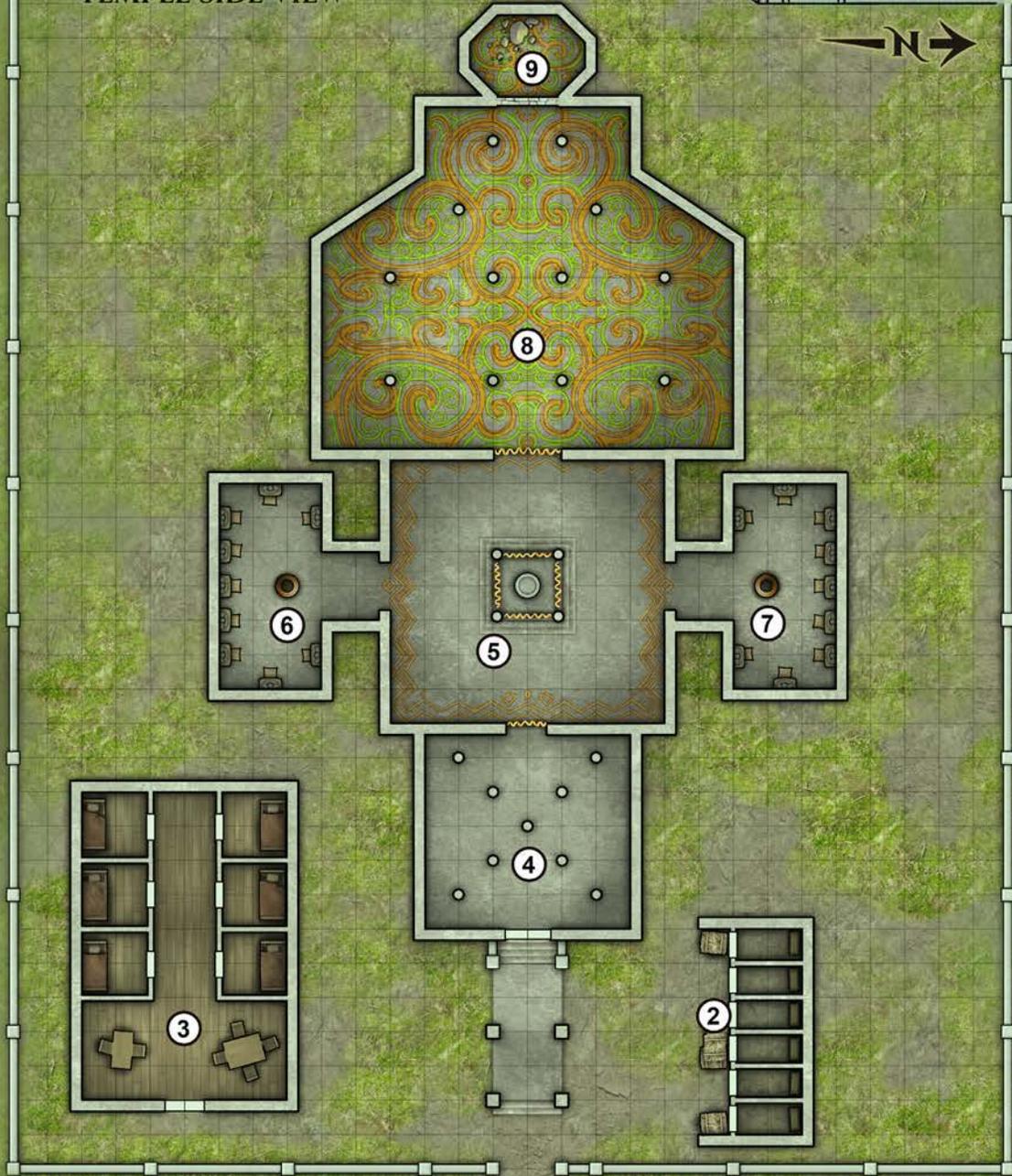
An overhang on this open-fronted building holds a small loft full of old hay. Inside, six horse stalls stand closed, their feed bins long empty. A few pieces of rusting and cobwebbed tack hang from the walls.

Mice scurry in the loft, rustling the hay ominously but harmlessly.

Creatures. The first two stalls are empty. The remaining four contain two **zombies** each, for a total of eight. These creatures obey the hantu penanggal's commands, and she sometimes calls on them for extra muscle in combat. Their primary purpose, however, is to provide new bodies for the hantu penanggal should its current one be destroyed. If commanded to do so by her, a zombie spends its action to tear off its own head, allowing the fiend's head to replace it.



TEMPLE SIDE VIEW



POND

1

MOUNTAIN LOTUS TEMPLE

TO POND

1 SQUARE EQUALS 5 FEET

3. GUEST QUARTERS

This building's walls are made of wood, ornately carved with mandalas and angelic figures. Once brightly painted, the images are now chipped and peeling. Small windows set in the walls are covered in ornate iron grillwork. A set of double doors provides entry.

A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notices that the hands of two carved figures to either side of the door extend out from the walls like brackets where a bar might be fitted.

There are six individual rooms here, each with a sleeping mat, table, wash basin, and ewer. The front room has a cooking area around a small fire pit and storage containing some simple dried foodstuffs and tea.

Secret Door. A successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check discovers a sliding door hidden at the back of the building. If the PCs spend the night in the guest house, one of the hantu penanggal's tactics is to bar the main door to keep them inside, then slip in through the secret door to assault someone while they sleep in one of the private rooms.

4. PILLARED HALL

Slender columns carved with nagas support a high-ceilinged hall. The serpentine forms of the carved nagas spiral up the pillars, and their solemn faces peer down from above. A saffron-and-gold-colored curtain fills an archway opposite the double doors, concealing the room beyond.

Creatures. The curtain is a **rug of smothering**. If a creature tries to pass through it into Area 5 without Sister Sorakan, the curtain attacks.

5. OUTER SANCTUM

Colorful paintings of mandala wheels and lotus blossoms cover the ceiling of this square room. A pavilion of carved stone stands in the center, steps on all sides rising to arches covered in curtains of saffron and gold. Uncovered arches pierce the walls to the north and south, while another covered arch offers egress to the west.

The central pavilion holds the idol of the temple's central deity. It is here that most standard worship services were performed for pilgrims and travelers when the temple was still in service. Now it holds uglier things, hidden by the curtains.

Creatures. Four **husks** (*Tome of Beasts 2*, p. 205) lie in wait here, piled in the corners of the pavilion. These terrible undead creatures are remnants of old bodies of the hantu penanggal and follow her commands. Should she, in her Sister Sorakan guise, be persuaded to unveil the pavilion, she asks for privacy while she does so, insisting the PCs wait in Area 4. This allows her to quietly herd the husks into another area, hiding them in the sand of the incense burners in Areas 6 and 7, for example, or sending them into the inner sanctum to hide. Intruders into this area when the hantu penanggal is not around are attacked mercilessly by the husks.

6. SOUTHERN TRANSEPT

A large ceramic pot filled with sand sits in the center of this chamber. Thin sticks with charred ends stick out of the sand. A small wooden box filled with sticks of incense rests at the base of the pot. A series of small shrines, each holding an idol representing a saint, angel, or god, lines the walls. A scarlet prayer cushion lies on the floor in front of each shrine.

This area of the temple provides access to prayer to a variety of godly agents, demigods, and gods. Despite the pall of unholiness that hangs over the temple, some small measure of good still resides in this collection of celestial foci.

Divine Auspice. If a creature takes the time to light an incense stick and spend a short rest praying before one of the shrines, that creature gains the effects of the *guidance* spell on its next ability check. Once a creature has received this benefit, it can't do so again until it finishes a long rest.

7. NORTHERN TRANSEPT

A large ceramic pot filled with sand sits in the center of this chamber. A crack in its side spilled sand into a pile on the floor at its base, partially covering a small wooden box with sticks of incense. A series of small shrines, each holding an idol representing a saint, angel, or god lines the walls. A royal blue prayer cushion lies on the floor in front of each shrine.

As with the other transept, the sheer number of good entities represented here allows for their influence to carry through, despite the presence of evil in the temple, and bestow a small blessing upon the worthy.

Divine Aegis. If a creature takes the time to light an incense stick and spend a short rest praying before one of the shrines, that creature gains the effects of the *resistance* spell on its next saving throw. Once a creature has received this benefit, it can't do so again until it finishes a long rest.

8. INNER SANCTUM

Pillars connecting the floor to the high ceiling dominate this large chamber. Ribbons of scarlet and gold wrap the pillars and hang between them, though some have torn free and lie upon the floor. Tile mosaics in the stone floor form whorls, waves, and other curving patterns of vibrant yellows, oranges, greens, and blues. At the far end of the room, brickwork fills a large arch, the stone dull and ugly compared to the bright designs and colors elsewhere in the room.

This room was used for important, formal ceremonies when the temple was still active. If asked about the wall at the back of the room, Sister Sorakan says that portion of the temple had become unstable and was walled off until masons could be brought in to repair it, long before she was the lone caretaker.

Creatures. The brick and mortar wall contains a **walled horror** (*Tome of Beasts 2*, p. 363). Spawned from the mass murder of the remaining priests and servants of the temple, this undead creature lashes out at any intruders in Area 8. Though it despises Sister Sorakan, the souls that comprise it are too terrified of her to attack her.

The walled horror can use its Wall Hop trait to move to any wall or pillar in Area 8, but it can't leave the chamber. If the walled horror is destroyed, the bricked-up wall crumbles, allowing access to Area 9.

9. SANCTUM SANCTORUM

This octagonal chamber reeks with the foul odor of waste and decay. A variety of geometric patterns and mandalas cover the walls, each overlaid with gold leaf and inlaid with tiles of colored stone. Chunks of a stone statue lie scattered across the floor. The skeletal remains of a half dozen humanoid figures clad in rotting robes rest among the debris.

Here lie the remains of the priests and acolytes of the temple, killed by the hantu penanggal by being walled up alive. To consecrate the temple again, the PCs must lay the bodies to rest. Doing so results in the PCs being rewarded by the gods (see Conclusion). To put Sister Sorakan's spirit to rest, the PCs must slay the hantu penanggal and the walled horror.

Treasure. The room holds some valuable items, once owned by the poor souls interred in the room: 60 sp, 25 gp, a gold bracelet worth 50 gp, a *spell scroll of lesser restoration*, a *periapt of health*, and a *staff of the python*.

CONCLUSION

Once the creatures have been killed, Sister Sorakan's spirit is laid to rest, and the bodies of the priests are removed from the sanctum sanctorum and laid to rest, the gods smile upon the PCs, bestowing them with a gift for their service. The religious order to which the temple belongs might provide them with additional rewards, either in the form of treasure or special favors the PCs can ask of the church at a later date.

Blessing of Protection. The gods grant each PC a permanent +1 bonus to AC and saving throws.



TUNNELS BELOW SKULLTOP TOR

AN ADVENTURE FOR FOUR TO FIVE CHARACTERS OF 9TH LEVEL

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Skulltop Tor is an infamous hill that towers over the surrounding landscape, drowning the land in shadow. The ancient skull of a massive giant lies half-buried at the top of the hill, and the entrance to a series of caverns dug deep into the bedrock sits beneath its yawning visage. A clan of dwarves once used the caverns as a place of worship, but, after the dwarves were wiped out by a powerful red dragon, others began to call the caverns home. A pair of vicious thin giants (see Area 6), named Thargoz and Valgor, currently inhabit Skulltop Tor, and they have taken to ambushing nearby caravans for a fresh supply of meat.

ADVENTURE HOOK

A caravan containing important, and potentially sensitive, legal documents has gone missing, and the local authorities worry that the documents may have fallen into the wrong hands. After a squad of soldiers sent to retrieve the documents failed to return, a shrewd and cunning diplomat named Halemyr seeks out individuals capable of retrieving the documents and of maintaining discretion. Halemyr offers the PCs 1,000 gp for the safe return of the coffer and its cargo.

THE TUNNELS BELOW SKULLTOP TOR

A series of caves linked by narrow tunnels sits below Skulltop Tor. While the caves and tunnels were originally of natural origin, the dwarves that came to worship here

expanded the tunnels for their own use. The area's current inhabitants utilize the cramped terrain to their advantage, making combat with them difficult. Unless otherwise noted, the tunnels are unlit.

1. ENTRANCE

The bleached skull of a massive giant sits half-buried in the dirt and stones atop this hill. The skull's mouth yawns open to reveal a tunnel that descends deep into the earth. The shattered remnants of several wagons lie scattered around the opening, their contents long stolen or spoiled. A foul odor wafts out of the tunnel.

The broken wagons belong to the missing caravans, although the wreckage no longer contains anything of value. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check discovers several sets of giant-sized footprints entering and leaving the tunnel. A PC that succeeds on this check by 5 or more can determine that the footprints belong to two different types of giants.

2. GUARD CAVE

The tunnel leads into a roughly circular cave with eastern and southern exits. Three giants stand watch in the cave, their bodies covered in numerous scratches and welts.

Three **abbanith giants** (*Tome of Beasts 2*, p. 170) guard the way forward. The giants live in almost constant fear of their larger thin giant cousins and attack ruthlessly, hoping the sounds of battle draw the remaining giants from Area 4.

3. REFUSE CAVE

This small cave emits a noxious stench. The floor is piled high with rotting corpses, bones, and excrement.

This cave holds the giants' refuse.

Unbearable Stench. A creature that ends its turn in this reeking cave must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 1 minute. The creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. Leaving the cave automatically ends the condition.

Treasure. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check while searching through the refuse finds a cloth sack containing four aquamarines worth 500 gp each, but the creature is poisoned for 1 hour. A creature poisoned in this way can repeat the saving throw at the end of each minute, ending the effect on itself on a success. If the creature leaves Skulltop Tor, it has advantage on this saving throw.

4. SLEEPING CAVE

Several large flat stones lie in this cavern, forming a variety of crude stools and beds. The stones and walls of the chamber are coated in a mixture of grease and various bodily secretions. A large pit sits in the floor near the cavern's eastern wall.

A total of six **abbanith giants** reside in this cavern when not on guard duty or ambushing passing caravans. The giants spend their time in here resting or eating and jump at the chance to destroy the PCs in the hope of gaining Thargoz's and Valgor's favor. If the PCs dealt with the three abbanith giants in Area 2 without making any noise, three abbanith giants are asleep in the cavern. If not, the three abbanith giants here join the fight in Area 2. Sleeping abbanith giants can't be surprised by PCs walking on the cavern floor and awaken when walking PCs enter the cavern.

Pit. At least one abbanith giant tries to grapple a PC and drop it into the pit in the room. The pit is 40 feet deep and leads to Area 6. A creature falling down the pit takes falling damage, as normal, and lands prone.

Treasure. While the thin giants take most of the treasure from their raids, the abbanith giants have scavenged a bit of treasure for themselves. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check while rummaging through the giants' meager belongings discovers a *potion of fire resistance*, 220 sp, 70 gp, and a gold cup inlaid with semi-precious gems worth 350 gp.

5. COLLAPSED TUNNEL

The tunnel here once led to a series of chambers hollowed out by the now-dead dwarves. The tunnel collapsed shortly after the clan was wiped out by the red dragon, and the thin giants have no interest in what lies beyond it. They check on the abbanith regularly, however, to make sure the smaller giants haven't dug themselves to any sort of freedom.

Clearing the cave-in would take three days of solid digging or the use of a spell such as *move earth*. What the PCs might discover within the chambers beyond the collapsed tunnel is outside the scope of this adventure but could include ancient dwarven relics, golem guardians, or cursed undead.



6. PIT CAVE

The pit descends into an unlit cave containing broken bits of rock and bone. Most of the cave's roof is taken up by the pit, giving it a strange, conical shape. Several tunnels head off from the cave into the darkness.

This area connects the upper and lower levels of the cave system. The thin giants move between the two areas regularly, but they generally stay in the lower caverns unless they are hunting or harassing the abbanith giants.

Creature. If a PC is dropped into this cavern by an abbanith giant above, the **thin giant** (*Tome of Beasts 2*, p. 175) Thargoz ruthlessly attacks the PC. Otherwise, Thargoz slinks through the connecting tunnels to ambush the PCs with Valgor as the PCs pass through Area 7.

7. CONNECTING TUNNELS

The tunnels that connect the chambers of the bottom level are sized for creatures no larger than a gnoll, but the thin giants' unique physiology allows them to easily move through them. The thin giants have memorized the layout of the tunnels and use this knowledge to sneak up on the PCs. They use their long reach to attack as the PCs move through intersections or around corners, but they avoid prolonged combat. If a giant is reduced to half its hit points or fewer, it retreats to Area 11 where the giants make their final stand against the PCs.

8. FUNGAL CAVE

The stench of decay permeates this long narrow cave, which is littered with bones and other remnants of various animals and humanoids. A pale-blue luminescence fills much of the cavern, given off by several patches of fungi that grow from mounds of decaying flesh.

Two **strobing fungi** (*Tome of Beasts 2*, p. 160) inhabit this section of the tunnels. The thin giants befriended this pair of fungi some time ago, treating them as exotic pets. When the giants moved into Skulltop Tor, they brought the fungi along and feed the fungi the choicest remains of their meals. The fungi are loyal to the giants and attack all others.

9. THE WARM POOL

A pool of water, shimmering in the light emitted by the fungi that grows along its edges, dominates this grotto. Heat from the water warms the chamber, staving off the chill from the nearby tunnels. A half-buried axe rests in the muck at the bottom of the pool.

The pool is a 20-foot deep warm spring fed by water bubbling up from several cracks in the ground.

Creatures. The pool is home to two **befouled weirds** (*Tome of Beasts 2*, p. 41). The weirds are protective of their pool, but they don't leave this chamber. The thin giants have established a sort of truce with the weirds and rarely enter the grotto, preferring to use the northeastern entrance to Area 11. The weirds attack all others who enter the area or the pool.

Warm Pool. The pool is comfortably warm, but it is infested with the same amoebas that inhabit the befouled weirds. A creature that starts its turn in the pool must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or become infected with parasitic amoebas, as described in the befouled weird's Parasitic Amoebas trait.

Treasure. The axe at the bottom of the pool is a *giant slayer greataxe* that was dropped in the pool by one of the caverns' former inhabitants. Neither thin giant has tried to claim the axe, more concerned with maintaining the truce with the weirds than with an unknown axe in a pool of water.

10. DWARVEN SHRINE

The tunnel ends in a chamber that appears to have been hewn from the surrounding stone with dozens of pickaxes. The statue of a dwarf clad in a toga and carrying a massive tome in its outstretched arms stands in the center of the chamber. Niches line the chamber's walls and draconic bones lie scattered at its feet.

This chamber was one of the first chambers added to the existing cave system by the dwarves and is not of natural origin. The thin giants never venture in here out of superstition. The statue in the center of the chamber is that of an almost-forgotten dwarven god of knowledge and magic. The statue is magnificently crafted and rises over 20 feet into the air, its head inches away from the chamber's ceiling.

Creatures. The dragon that slew the Skulltop Tor's previous inhabitants met its end in this chamber when a dwarven priest sacrificed itself in a blast of necrotic energy in an attempt to protect the rest of its clan. The



TUNNELS BELOW SKULLTOP TOR

1 SQUARE EQUALS 5 FEET

sacrifice allowed the few surviving dwarves to escape by slaying the dragon, but it also turned the dragon's remains into a red **graveyard dragon** (*Tome of Beasts 2*, p. 183) shortly thereafter. The dragon has since slumbered in this chamber, unaware it is capable of leaving. The thin giants' superstition kept them away from this chamber and, unknowingly, from being noticed by the dragon. The dragon lies as a pile of bones around the base of the statue but rises and attacks when intruders enter the chamber.

Treasure. Most of the niches in the walls are empty, but a few of them hold stone tablets written neatly in Dwarven that detail the region's dwarves. A successful DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana) check while examining the tablets discovers the spells *acid arrow* and *stoneskin* inscribed on two of them. These tablets function as spell scrolls but are crafted from stone and weigh 15 pounds each.

11. THIN GIANT CAVE

Four stone worktables stand around the chamber surrounded by large, clay urns holding patches of bioluminescent fungi. A massive pile of boxes, barrels, and other containers stands against the southern wall.

The dwarven clan once used this area as a work room where they carved and crafted the stonework used by the rest of the clan. Their tools have long since been destroyed or removed, and the thin giants, Thargoz and Valgor, now use this chamber as their personal lair.

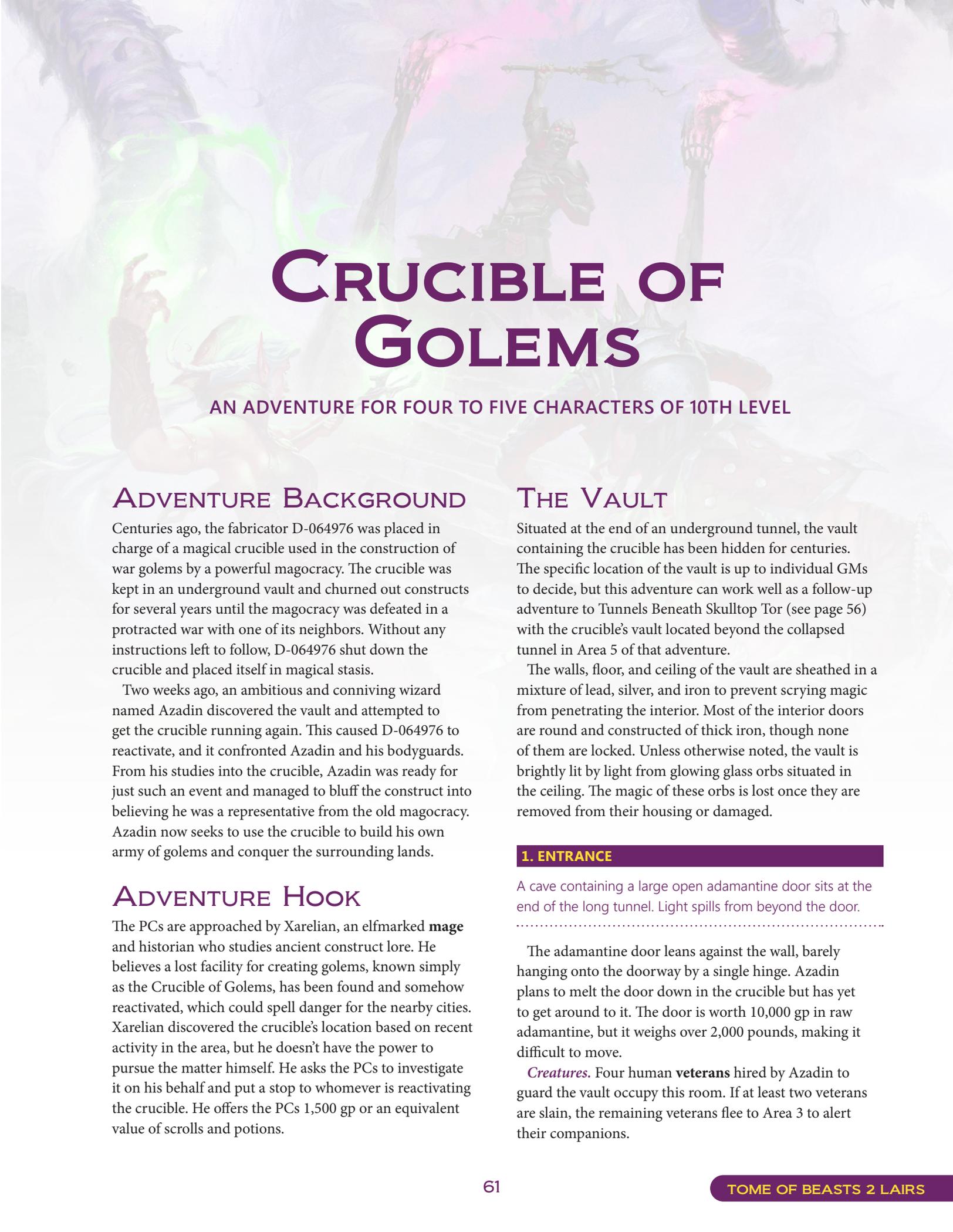
Creatures. By the time the PCs reach this chamber, they should have encountered the thin giants in the tunnels, who would have eventually fled back here after being reduced to half their hit point maximum or lower. However, if the PCs managed to get this far without being detected, they find the pair quietly talking among themselves. Whatever the case, the **thin giants** make their final stand here.

Treasure. The various containers piled against the southern wall are filled with wine, foodstuffs, fine silks, and various art objects. The total value of the goods is 5,000 gp, but moving it all would be a monumental task without the use of magic or beasts of burden. The locked wooden coffer, scuffed and scratched but whole, that the PCs were tasked to retrieve sits among the clutter.

CONCLUSION

Once the PCs have retrieved the legal documents and returned to Halemyr, he pays them the 1,000 gp as promised. The local authorities see the PCs as capable and trustworthy and might have other tasks for them. The PCs' success might also gain the attention of the elfmarked historian, Xarelian, who has need of individuals with their talents. Xarelian and his plight are detailed further in the *Crucible of Golems* on page 61.





CRUCIBLE OF GOLEMS

AN ADVENTURE FOR FOUR TO FIVE CHARACTERS OF 10TH LEVEL

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Centuries ago, the fabricator D-064976 was placed in charge of a magical crucible used in the construction of war golems by a powerful magocracy. The crucible was kept in an underground vault and churned out constructs for several years until the magocracy was defeated in a protracted war with one of its neighbors. Without any instructions left to follow, D-064976 shut down the crucible and placed itself in magical stasis.

Two weeks ago, an ambitious and conniving wizard named Azadin discovered the vault and attempted to get the crucible running again. This caused D-064976 to reactivate, and it confronted Azadin and his bodyguards. From his studies into the crucible, Azadin was ready for just such an event and managed to bluff the construct into believing he was a representative from the old magocracy. Azadin now seeks to use the crucible to build his own army of golems and conquer the surrounding lands.

ADVENTURE HOOK

The PCs are approached by Xarelian, an elfmarked **mage** and historian who studies ancient construct lore. He believes a lost facility for creating golems, known simply as the Crucible of Golems, has been found and somehow reactivated, which could spell danger for the nearby cities. Xarelian discovered the crucible's location based on recent activity in the area, but he doesn't have the power to pursue the matter himself. He asks the PCs to investigate it on his behalf and put a stop to whomever is reactivating the crucible. He offers the PCs 1,500 gp or an equivalent value of scrolls and potions.

THE VAULT

Situated at the end of an underground tunnel, the vault containing the crucible has been hidden for centuries. The specific location of the vault is up to individual GMs to decide, but this adventure can work well as a follow-up adventure to *Tunnels Beneath Skulltop Tor* (see page 56) with the crucible's vault located beyond the collapsed tunnel in Area 5 of that adventure.

The walls, floor, and ceiling of the vault are sheathed in a mixture of lead, silver, and iron to prevent scrying magic from penetrating the interior. Most of the interior doors are round and constructed of thick iron, though none of them are locked. Unless otherwise noted, the vault is brightly lit by light from glowing glass orbs situated in the ceiling. The magic of these orbs is lost once they are removed from their housing or damaged.

1. ENTRANCE

A cave containing a large open adamantine door sits at the end of the long tunnel. Light spills from beyond the door.

The adamantine door leans against the wall, barely hanging onto the doorway by a single hinge. Azadin plans to melt the door down in the crucible but has yet to get around to it. The door is worth 10,000 gp in raw adamantine, but it weighs over 2,000 pounds, making it difficult to move.

Creatures. Four human **veterans** hired by Azadin to guard the vault occupy this room. If at least two veterans are slain, the remaining veterans flee to Area 3 to alert their companions.

2. FOYER

The walls, floor, and ceiling of this rectangular chamber are covered in dark, lustrous metal. Two crystal globes illuminate the chamber with a pale-white radiance. Two doors exit the chamber, one to the east and another to the north.

Two **clockwork tigers** (*Tome of Beasts* 2, p. 68) prowl this chamber. They have been ordered to attack anyone entering the foyer that isn't one of Azadin's guards, a construct, or Azadin himself.

3. BARRACKS

This square chamber contains several military-style bunks and a round wooden table. A single crystal globe illuminates the chamber.

The veterans hired by Azadin repurposed this room for use as a barracks, building the bunks and the table with the help of D-064976.

Creatures. Four **veterans** are currently here, though the room contains enough bunks for twelve individuals. The veterans here are relaxing and either playing games or sleeping. They grab their greatswords if alerted to combat, but they don't attempt to don their armor. If the PCs retreat from combat, any veterans encountered here later are fully armored and ready for battle.

Treasure. An unlocked wooden trunk in the corner of the room contains the veterans' funds, including 700 cp, 4,780 sp, 2,300 gp, and 96 pp.

4. GREAT FOUNDRY

This enormous chamber contains metal molds of various sizes, three fonts filled with glistening water, and a massive adamantine crucible. The crucible contains bubbling molten metal, and the runes upon its surface glow with a bright, silvery radiance. Dozens of metal balls litter the floor.

This chamber is where most of the work in the vault is being done by Azadin and D-064976. The chamber is illuminated by several glass globes set into the ceiling. The heat in the chamber is oppressive, and any creature that isn't an undead or a construct that spends more than 10 minutes in the foundry must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or suffer one level of exhaustion.

Crucible. The crucible is a magical object capable of melting just about anything placed inside it, including metals like adamantine and magical artifacts. Silver

runes line the outside of the crucible, and the runes flare whenever a metal object is placed inside it, melting the object immediately. The crucible is indestructible and can't be moved from this location. Only creatures magically tied to the crucible through a special ritual can operate it. Currently, D-064976 is the only creature tied to the crucible and the only creature with knowledge of the ritual. It has yet to share this knowledge with Azadin, who is unaware of the ritual's existence.

Molds and Fonts. The molds around the room are of various golems and other constructs. Each mold sits on large wheels for easy mobility. The fonts are stationary magic items and automatically refresh their water supplies each day at dawn. The water is safe to drink but has a unique metallic taste.

Creatures. Two dispersed **bearing golems** (*Tome of Beasts* 2, p. 178) guard this chamber. When not guarding, they help Azadin move the molds and lift heavier objects into the crucible.

5. STORAGE ROOM

Open wooden boxes line the walls of this chamber, each one stacked high with metal bars. A single glass globe illuminates the area.

This storage area contains 5,000 pounds of iron, 2,500 pounds of silver, 2,500 pounds of copper, 1,500 pounds of lead, and 1,000 pounds of other base metals (zinc, gold, nickel, etc.). While the raw metal here is worth well over 10,000 gp in value, moving it all would be an intensive process that is likely beyond the scope of this adventure.

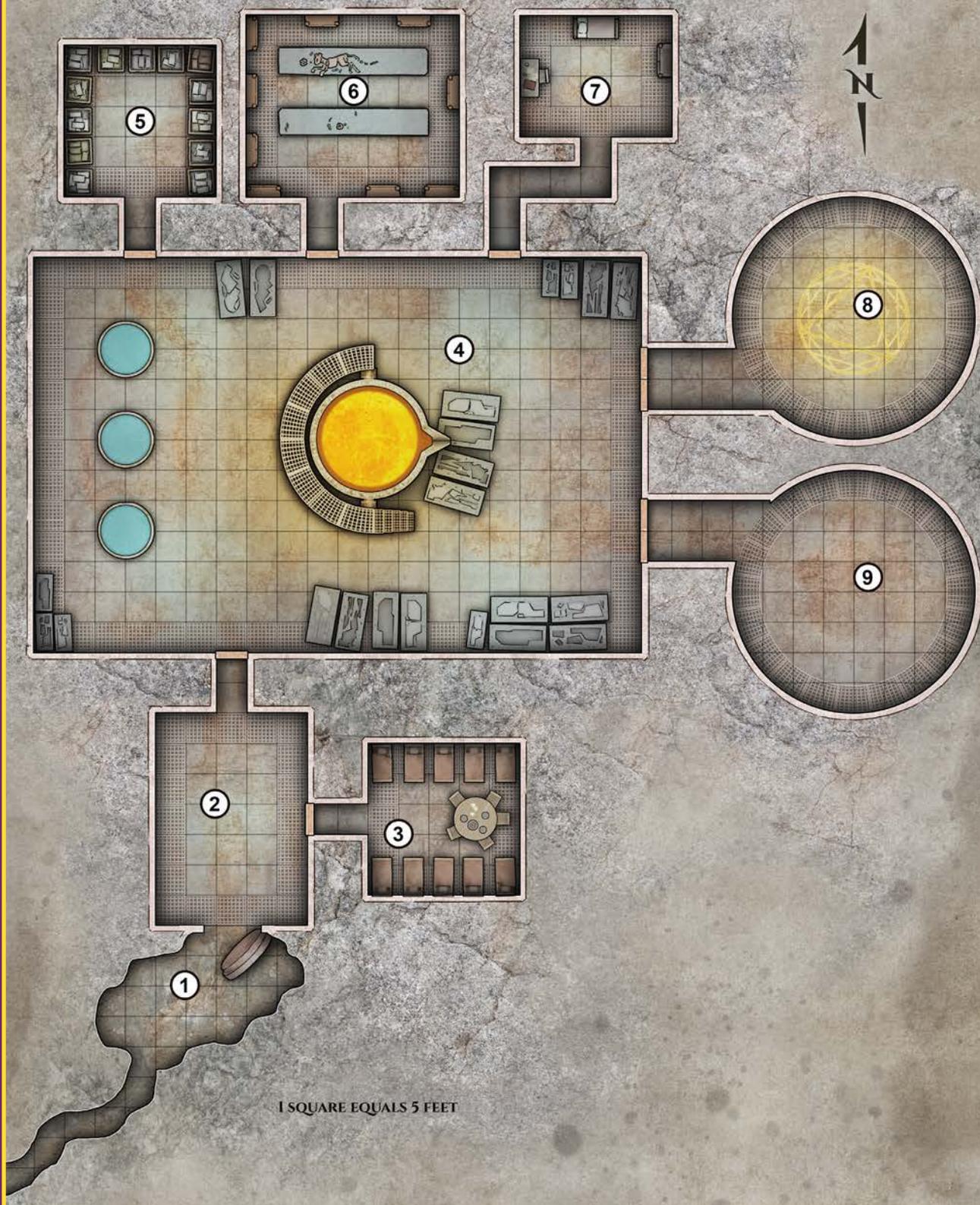
6. WORKSHOP

Large, flat, iron tables form two lines in this chamber, and several wooden and glass cabinets occupy the walls. Lying on the northernmost table is the body of a clockwork tiger, bronze gears and cogs scattered about its inanimate chassis. Several humanoids stand around the tiger, tools in hand.

This chamber is where the internal mechanisms for some of the constructs are fabricated and inserted, particularly for clockwork constructs. Azadin rarely supervises the work in this chamber, leaving it in the hands of his assistants.

Creatures. Azadin's six **cult fanatic** assistants assemble and modify Azadin's constructs in this chamber. If they are attacked, the lead cult fanatic, Azadin's apprentice Liliane, activates the **clockwork tiger** on her first round of combat. The incomplete tiger has half its hit point maximum and disadvantage on claw attacks, but it defends Liliane to the

THE CRUCIBLE OF GOLEMS



best of its ability. If Liliane is slain before the other cult fanatics, the remaining cult fanatics flee to Area 7, seeking Azadin's help.

Treasure. Aside from the two sets of tinker's tools the fanatics were using on the clockwork tiger, the cabinets contain two sets each of carpenter's tools and smith's tools. The tables hold odds and ends used in the construction of clockwork creatures, totaling to 750 gp worth of bronze, iron, and other metals.

7. MAKESHIFT BEDROOM

This chamber contains a single bed as well as a wardrobe and table forged out of cast iron. A hefty tome sits on the table. A sneering man in robes stands over the tome, a clockwork tiger by his side.

This storage room was recently transformed into a bedroom after Azadin instructed D-064976 to fashion a bed, table, and wardrobe for him. The tome on the table contains extensive information about the crucible of golems and the mage wars and is worth 1,000 gp to a collector of such things.

Azadin lounges at his table when not supervising the construction of golems. He can't tolerate the heat in Area 4 for long and is frustrated by his failed attempts to activate the iron golem in Area 8. Azadin is a **mage**, and he possesses a *wand of lightning bolts* and a *rod of construct command* (see the Rod of Construct Command sidebar).

If Azadin hears the sounds of battle or is alerted by one of his assistants or guards, he prepares for battle by casting *mage armor* on himself. During combat, he orders the **clockwork tiger** to attack anyone attempting to cast spells or attack him directly.

ROD OF CONSTRUCT COMMAND

Rod, rare (requires attunement)

This adamantine rod has a flanged head, and it functions as a magic mace that grants a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with it.

Command Construct. As an action, you can speak the rod's command word and seize control of a single construct you can see within 30 feet of you. The target must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be under your control as if under the effects of the *dominate monster* spell for 1 hour. This property can't be used again until the next dawn.

Treasure. Aside from the wand, rod, and the vault's ancient tome, Azadin's only other possession is his spellbook, the leather volume containing all of the spells on his spell list as well as the spells *alter self*, *fabricate*, *false life*, *feather fall*, *identify*, *knock*, *magic circle*, *polymorph*, *scrying*, and *unseen servant*.

8. ENCHANTING CHAMBER

A faint crackling sound and the crisp smell of lightning on a hot summer day fills this large circular chamber. In the center of the chamber, a magic circle has been inscribed on the floor in golden ink. An enormous golem made of solid iron stands in the center of the circle.

This chamber is where constructs are imbued with the final spells before their animation. The magic circle serves to harness the power of the spells used for this purpose and prevent elemental or other conjured creatures from escaping.

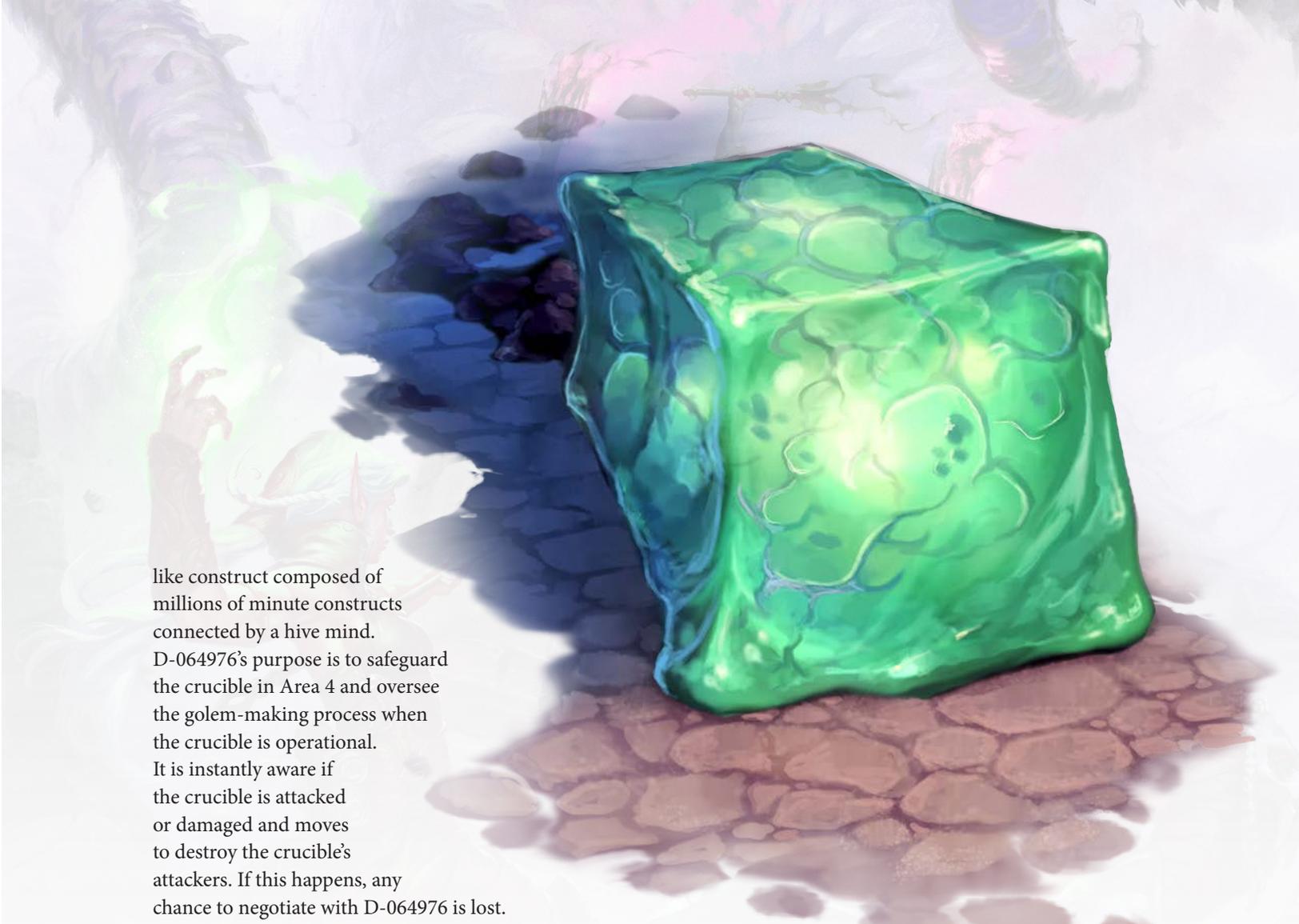
Crackling Statue. An inactive iron golem, a leftover from the ancient mage war, stands in the center of the circle. Freshly created for the war and never activated, the golem is little more than a massive iron statue that has stood in this chamber for centuries. Azadin hopes to animate the golem to act at the head of his army of mercenaries, but he doesn't currently possess the power to do so.

Unfortunately, while the golem is not active, Azadin's repeated attempts to activate it with *lightning bolts* from his wand have caused the golem to become charged with magical lightning. A PC can detect the magical lightning with a successful DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check or a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check. A creature that touches the golem must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw, taking 28 (8d6) lightning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. This removes the pent-up charge from the golem, leaving it safe to touch thereafter.

9. D-064976'S CHAMBER

This dimly lit circular chamber contains a large, rectangular, green ooze. The ooze is filled with strange flashings and metallic veins, and a stack of copper plates stands next to it. A green pseudopod reaches out from the creature to a copper plate, which it then holds in front of it. The words "who are you?" etch themselves onto the plate at the ooze's touch.

This area is where D-064976 rests when not working with Azadin to get the vault up and running again. D-064976 is a **fabricator** (*Tome of Beasts 2*, p. 138), an intelligent ooze-



like construct composed of millions of minute constructs connected by a hive mind. D-064976's purpose is to safeguard the crucible in Area 4 and oversee the golem-making process when the crucible is operational. It is instantly aware if the crucible is attacked or damaged and moves to destroy the crucible's attackers. If this happens, any chance to negotiate with D-064976 is lost.

When Azadin opened the adamantine door to the vault, D-064976 emerged from suspended animation and moved to stop him. Because of his diligent research, Azadin knew the vault had an intelligent guardian and came prepared with as much knowledge as he could find of the vault's former magocracy. He managed to convince the fabricator that he was an ally and that the vault was being reopened for use by the mages. Though this was a complete lie, the fabricator, unaware of the human propensity for falsehood, believed Azadin, and since then it has been at the wizard's beck and call.

D-064976 is a dangerous enemy, but it is open to conversation if the PCs don't attack it. A PC can convince the fabricator they aren't a threat or that they are somehow associated with Azadin with a successful DC 15 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) check. Alternatively, a PC can convince the fabricator it has been lied to by Azadin with a successful DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check. If the PC is in possession of Azadin's *rod of construct command*, the PC has advantage on Charisma checks when interacting with the fabricator.

Treasure. The chamber holds a total of twelve copper plates worth 5 gp each.

CONCLUSION

The adventure ends when the PCs stop Azadin from constructing more golems. Xarelion rewards them as promised. If the PCs bring Xarelion the tome about the crucible and mage wars they found in Azadin's chambers, Xarelion offers them double the tome's value in gold or an equivalent value of scrolls and potions.

If the PCs allied themselves with D-064976 and the fabricator survives to the end of the adventure, they now have a strange and powerful ally. If they bring Xarelion to the crucible and introduce him to the fabricator, the two become fast friends and soon found an academy together that is dedicated to the study of constructs. Both are indebted to the PCs and help the PCs in whatever ways they can in the future.

If the PCs decide to use the vault to churn out their own army of golems, they likely draw the ire of a powerful mage guild, lich, or militant kingdom who might come seeking the power of the crucible for themselves.



FIRE AND FURY

AN ADVENTURE FOR FOUR TO FIVE CHARACTERS OF 13TH LEVEL

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Life in the shadow of Olov Yurak is never certain. The volcano has been active for the last three centuries. Its eruptions send down rivers of lava that destroy homes and farmland, causing the locals to flee. However, the slopes and surrounding lands are rich, volcanic soil and yield bountiful harvests of crops. The rewards for working these lands is enough for determined settlers to remain despite the looming threat of the volcano.

The volcano is the home of a cherufe (see Area 6), a powerful and volatile elemental being. To placate the creature and stave off the more violent activity of the volcano, the local settlements regularly sacrifice their own people to the creature.

Recently, a traveler from a settlement hundreds of miles away visited people at the base of Olov Yurak. Appalled at the blood sacrifices made by the villagers, the traveler insisted there had to be another way. The villagers are eager

to be rid of the cherufe but fear its wrath if the sacrifices end. For the villagers to truly be free of the creature, heroes must arise to slay it. The cherufe is not a patient creature. The sacrifices must come soon or the volcano will again erupt and cover the land in fire and smoke, allowing the cherufe and its salamander minions to take what the cherufe feels is owed.

ADVENTURE HOOK

The following means can be used to persuade the PCs to delve into Olov Yurak:

- The PCs are locals of renown and power. They wish to remove the shackles placed on their people for centuries, which means confronting and destroying the cherufe so their people can live in peace.
- To effect true change, the cherufe must be defeated so it can't raze the countryside with the volcano. Local leaders put out a call to mighty adventurers, asking their aid.
- The PCs are allies of the traveler who seeks to aid the settlements at the base of Olov Yurak. The traveler calls upon them to assist in defeating the evil that lurks in the volcano.

OLOV YURAK IN MIDGARD

In the Midgard setting, the volcano of Hespuccho in the Theocracy of Kammae is a suitable location for this adventure. In this instance, the reason for the PCs entering the caldera could be simply exploration, as adventuring bands often delve into the place, never to return. The Pencoro or Dragoncoil Mountains in the Mharoti Empire could also easily accommodate this volcano.

OLOV YURAK FEATURES

The volcano's caldera, and the entrance to the cherufe's lair, rests at the summit of the mountain, Olov Yurak.

Caldera. This crater is approximately two thousand feet long and about one thousand feet wide. The curved sides of the caldera provide a rough but relatively nonhazardous

descent to the bottom, aside from the intense heat and occasional toxic gasses. A relatively stable crust rings the northern and western sides of the caldera, while the churning magma in the rest of the caldera holds “islands” of hardened magma that float on its unstable surface. Observers on the northern edge of the caldera, or atop the crust at the bottom, have a chance to spot the tunnel leading down into the rock on the southeastern side. A successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check notices the tunnel entrance. The DC for the check is reduced to 15 if the observer descends into the bottom of the caldera. The lava tunnel winds down to Area 1.

Extreme Heat. The lava in the caldera and the tunnels of the cherufe’s home creates extreme heat. A creature without resistance or immunity to fire damage must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw every 10 minutes it spends in the area or suffer one level of exhaustion.

Magma. The caldera and the cherufe’s tunnels are filled with areas of magma. If a creature enters or starts its turn in contact with magma, it takes 55 (10d10) fire damage. If a creature starts its turn completely immersed in magma, it takes 99 (18d10) fire damage instead.

Creature. A **magma octopus** (*Tome of Beasts 2*, p. 251) made its home in the caldera, attracted by the recent increase in volcanic activity. It likes its new home and is territorial, attacking creatures that stray too close to the magma.

1. GUARD CHAMBER

This vault-ceilinged chamber is formed of solidified magma. Another tunnel extends to the east at the other end of the cave.

Creatures. Four **salamanders** guard this entryway against intruders. They fight to the death.

2. MAGMA FALLS

The tunnel widens into a long, high-ceilinged chamber. Three roaring columns of magma rain down from openings in the ceiling, disappearing into a matching aperture in the stone floor.

Creatures. A pair of **salamanders** watch this chamber. During combat, if a salamander has a target grappled in its tail, it holds part of the target in the torrent of magma, hoping to melt the creature. A creature grappled in the magma automatically succeeds on the Dexterity saving throw to avoid falling prone.

Magma Falls. Streams of magma fall through the ceiling and into the floor. These torrents of liquid rock



are dangerous to those who get too close. A creature that touches the falling magma takes fire damage, as described in the Olov Yurak Features section, and must succeed on a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw or be knocked off balance, falling prone next to the flowing magma. If the creature fails the saving throw by 5 or more, it is pulled into the torrent of magma, immersed in magma, and swept away into the magma flowing away under the chamber. This flow eventually emerges into the caldera after three rounds.

3. SALAMANDER WADING POOL

A bubbling pool of magma dominates this cave, its hellish glow lighting the cave and showing another tunnel exiting to the southwest, past the pool.

Creatures. Four **salamanders** lounge here in the magma, which reaches a depth of about four feet. They fight any intruders to the death. A salamander that grapples an opponent with its tail holds the target in the magma pool, hoping to melt the creature.

Magma Pool. The magma is difficult terrain for all creatures, except the salamander and cherufe who lounge here regularly.

4. CAVERN OF POOLS

This cave holds a trio of magma pools. A path meanders between them to the tunnel exiting the cave to the north.

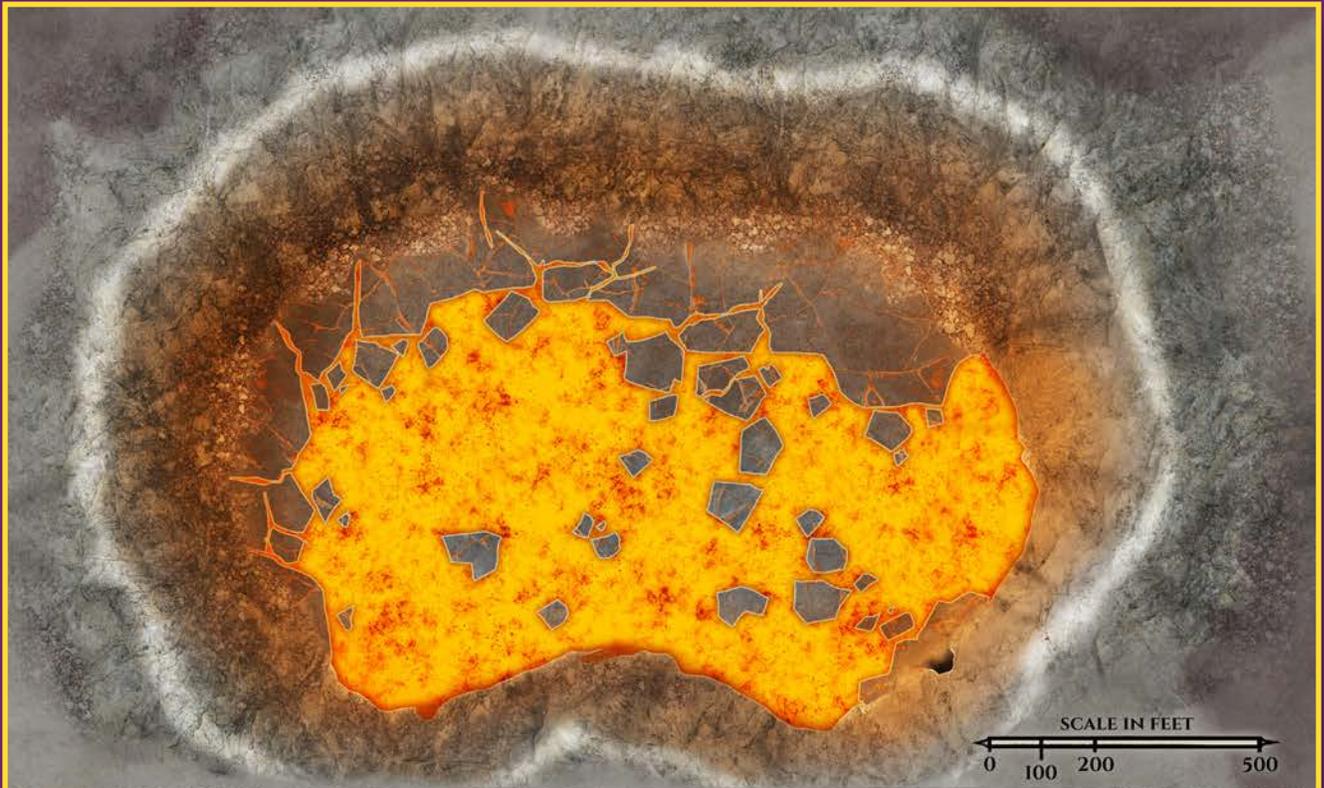
Spewing Lava. The churning pools here are agitated by the heightened volcanic activity. As the PCs move through the room past each pool, roll a d6. On a 5–6, there is a minor eruption, spattering lava through the room. Each creature within 10 feet of a spewing pool must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw, taking 22 (4d10) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

5. THE HERALD'S CAVE

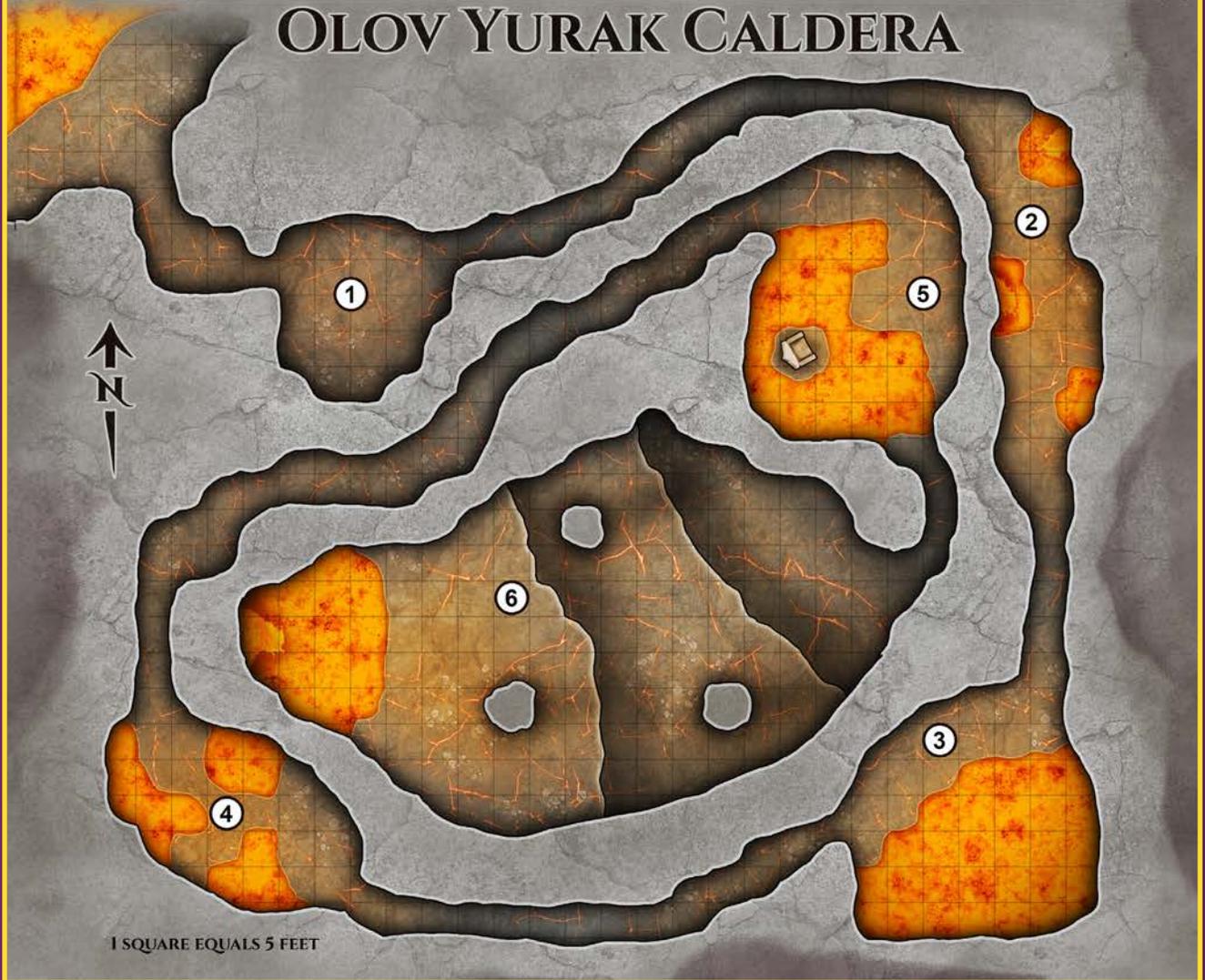
A pool of magma takes up much of this cave. An island of rock rises above its surface, holding a formation of volcanic rock that resembles a large throne.

Creatures. A **salamander monarch** (*Tome of Beasts* 2, p. 311) sits on the throne flanked by two **salamander** guards. This creature serves as the commander of the cherufe's minions, and it acts as the cherufe's herald when the cherufe needs to address the humanoids at the base of the mountain. As such, it understands and can speak Common. The salamander monarch and its guards fight to the death to protect their lord. The magma pool here is three feet deep. Similar to the salamanders in Area 3, the salamanders in this area try to grapple and hold the PCs in the magma.





OLOV YURAK CALDERA



6. CHAMBER OF THE CHERUFE

This massive cave has a tiered floor that rises toward the western end of the cave. Massive lava falls roar at the end of the chamber into a roiling pool of magma.

Creature. The **cherufe** (*Tome of Beasts 2*, p. 61) resides in this chamber. Having spent centuries interacting with the humanoids at the base of the mountain, the cherufe understands Common and can speak some of the language. It is angered by any intrusion but impressed enough by the tenacity of the intruders that it allows them one chance to escape. The cherufe demands that the PCs sacrifice one of their own for it to devour. If they do so, it allows them to leave. If the PCs refuse the offer, the cherufe attempts to destroy all intruders, allowing no survivors and even pursuing them out to the caldera if necessary.

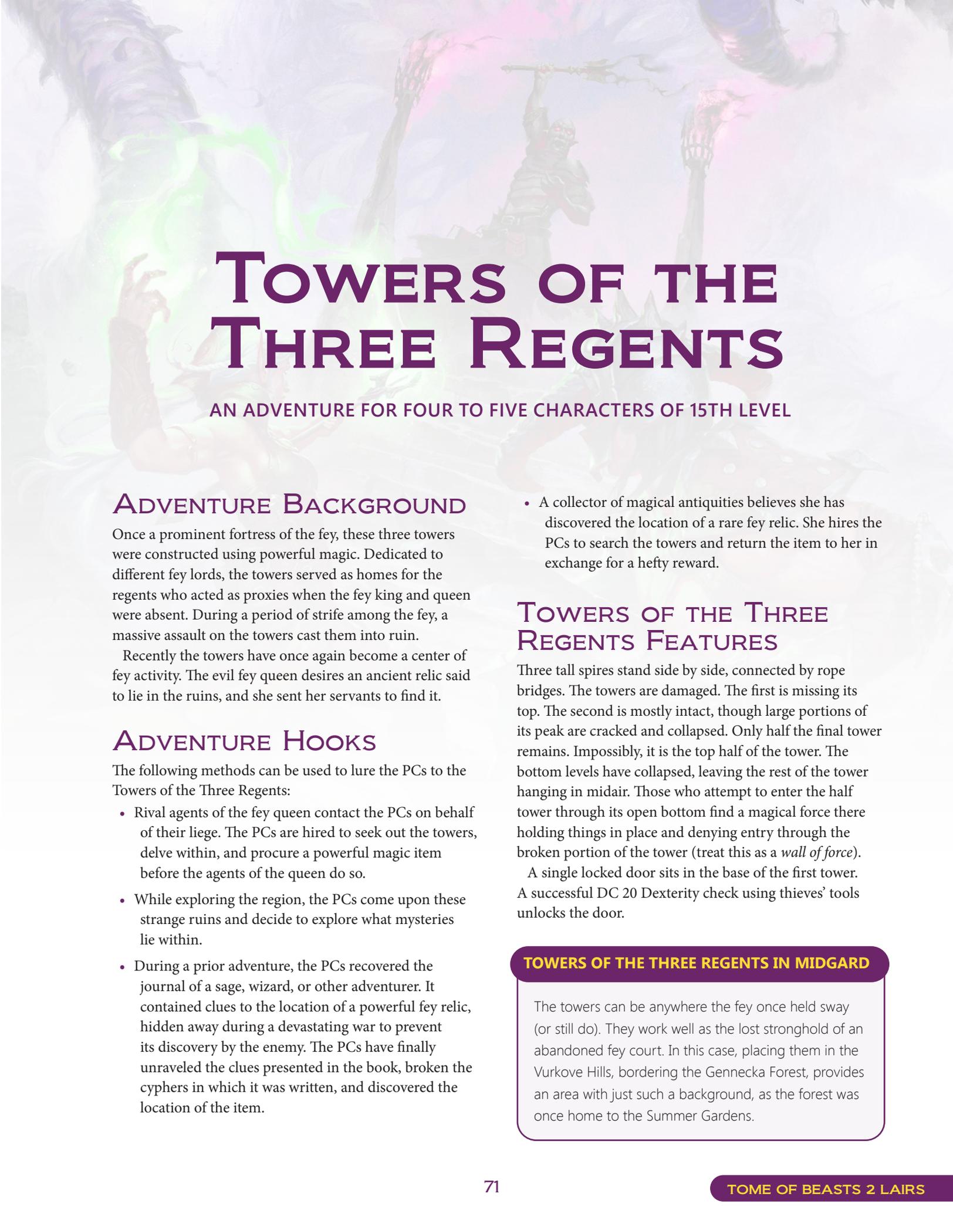
Treasure. The cherufe has accumulated a hoard taken from fallen enemies and accepted as sacrifices over the centuries. The hoard contains 13,500 gp, 1,800 pp, a dozen rubies worth 1,000 gp each, a suit of chain mail *armor of resistance* (fire), a *bowl of commanding water elementals*, a *flame tongue longsword*, and a *javelin of lightning*.

CONCLUSION

Once the cherufe has been defeated, Olov Yurak's volcanic activity greatly reduces. It is still an active volcano, but its eruptions are more predictable and much less violent. Grateful to be free of their centuries-long tormentor, the locals throw feasts in the PCs' honor, providing free boarding and drinks and otherwise lauding them as heroes.

If any of the PCs were slain in their efforts at Olov Yurak, the locals and the traveler (if a friend of the PCs) pool their resources to help the PCs resurrect the deceased PC free of charge. Any other favors or displays of gratitude from the locals can be left up to the request of the PCs or to your discretion.





TOWERS OF THE THREE REGENTS

AN ADVENTURE FOR FOUR TO FIVE CHARACTERS OF 15TH LEVEL

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Once a prominent fortress of the fey, these three towers were constructed using powerful magic. Dedicated to different fey lords, the towers served as homes for the regents who acted as proxies when the fey king and queen were absent. During a period of strife among the fey, a massive assault on the towers cast them into ruin.

Recently the towers have once again become a center of fey activity. The evil fey queen desires an ancient relic said to lie in the ruins, and she sent her servants to find it.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The following methods can be used to lure the PCs to the Towers of the Three Regents:

- Rival agents of the fey queen contact the PCs on behalf of their liege. The PCs are hired to seek out the towers, delve within, and procure a powerful magic item before the agents of the queen do so.
- While exploring the region, the PCs come upon these strange ruins and decide to explore what mysteries lie within.
- During a prior adventure, the PCs recovered the journal of a sage, wizard, or other adventurer. It contained clues to the location of a powerful fey relic, hidden away during a devastating war to prevent its discovery by the enemy. The PCs have finally unraveled the clues presented in the book, broken the cyphers in which it was written, and discovered the location of the item.

- A collector of magical antiquities believes she has discovered the location of a rare fey relic. She hires the PCs to search the towers and return the item to her in exchange for a hefty reward.

TOWERS OF THE THREE REGENTS FEATURES

Three tall spires stand side by side, connected by rope bridges. The towers are damaged. The first is missing its top. The second is mostly intact, though large portions of its peak are cracked and collapsed. Only half the final tower remains. Impossibly, it is the top half of the tower. The bottom levels have collapsed, leaving the rest of the tower hanging in midair. Those who attempt to enter the half tower through its open bottom find a magical force there holding things in place and denying entry through the broken portion of the tower (treat this as a *wall of force*).

A single locked door sits in the base of the first tower. A successful DC 20 Dexterity check using thieves' tools unlocks the door.

TOWERS OF THE THREE REGENTS IN MIDGARD

The towers can be anywhere the fey once held sway (or still do). They work well as the lost stronghold of an abandoned fey court. In this case, placing them in the Vurkove Hills, bordering the Gennecka Forest, provides an area with just such a background, as the forest was once home to the Summer Gardens.

1. THE ANGRY MATRON

A statue of black marble, depicting a tall, slender woman in a flowing gown stands in the center of the room. Her fey features are twisted into a scowl. Her right hand holds a sword whose bare blade is carved of clear prismatic crystal. The statue points the sword toward the door, as if accusing entrants of trespassing and daring them to enter. Stairs wrap along the far side of the tower to the next level.

Creatures. The room is guarded by a squad of four **far dorochas** (*Tome of Beasts 2*, p. 142). The eyes and ears of their queen, the far dorochas act as deterrents for the curious while the queen's fey revenants (see Area 2) explore the harder to reach sections of the crumbling towers. If the battle appears to be going against them, the far dorochas make a fighting retreat up to Area 2.

Statue of the Matron. When combat ensues in the room, the statue moves to defend fey and elves in the area. It can't leave its pedestal, but on initiative count 1 (losing initiative ties), it sweeps its sword in the direction of a random creature in the room that isn't a fey or elf. The target must succeed on a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw or take 11 (2d10) force damage. The statue can be attacked and destroyed (AC 15; hp 45; immunity to slashing, poison, and psychic damage).

2. SQUAD BIVOUAC

This room is devoid of furniture. The only exits are the stairs down to the first floor and another set that climbs higher into the tower. Strange organic structures sit affixed to the walls, looking like hives or nests.

Creatures. Four **fey revenants** (*Tome of Beasts 2*, p. 150) rest here, relief for the fey revenants further in the towers. These particular revenants have bodies that resemble beetles, with glossy, black carapaces that have an oily, iridescent sheen. They are confident and proud creatures and fight to the death.

Treasure. The fey revenants' personal treasure hides inside the hives, totaling 210 sp, 105 ep, 140 gp, and 10 pp.

3. DEADLY LURE

A pedestal stands in the center of this otherwise empty room. A jeweled coffer sits open on the pedestal, displaying the glitter of precious metals and the sparkle of jewels. Metal spikes adorn the ceiling, dangling like icicles of iron.

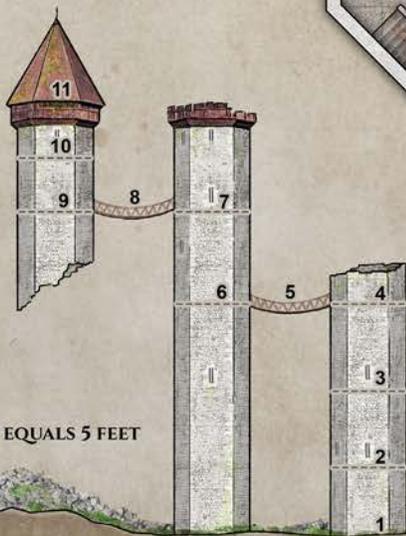
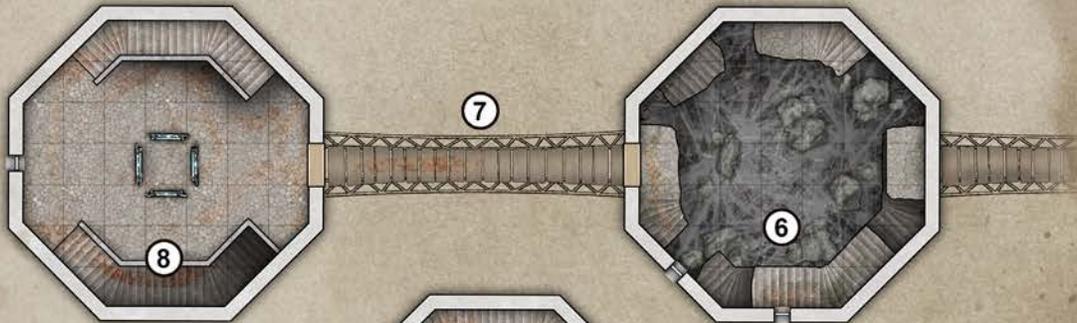
The pedestal and its prizes are the trigger for a magical trap. The coffer atop the pedestal radiates an enchantment that instills an urge in creatures to approach and take the treasure. Each creature in the room that can see the coffer must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or use its movement on each of its turns to approach the coffer and take the treasure. Elves and fey have advantage on the saving throw. The enchantment ends when the creature touches the coffer or its contents. A successful *dispel magic* (DC 18) cast on the enchanted creature removes the enchantment.

Gravity Shift Trap. If a creature touches the coffer or its contents, the trap triggers, reversing the gravity in this room. Each creature in the room that isn't anchored to the ground when the trap activates falls 20 feet upward, taking falling damage and 11 (2d10) piercing damage from the spikes. On initiative count 20 of the following round, the effect ends and the affected creatures fall back to the floor of the room, taking falling damage. The trap resets after 1 minute has passed. The pedestal, coffer, and the coffer's contents are unaffected by this trap.

Prevention. A spell or other effect that can sense the presence of magic, such as *detect magic*, reveals auras of enchantment and transmutation magic around the pedestal. A successful DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check notices scraps of cloth and bloodstains on the ceiling spikes, hinting at the danger. A successful *dispel magic* (DC 17) cast on the pedestal destroys the pedestal's compulsion enchantment and the gravity shift trap.

Falling Spikes Trap. If the coffer is removed from the pedestal, the absence of its weight on a pressure plate in the pedestal triggers this trap, dropping dozens of spikes from the ceiling. A spike falls in each 5-foot square area in the room, except for the pedestal. Each spike makes a ranged attack with a +8 against a random target in that space (vision is irrelevant to this attack roll). (If there are no targets in that space, the spike doesn't hit anything.) A target that is hit takes 11 (2d10) piercing damage.

Prevention. A successful DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check notices the depressed plate beneath the coffer. A creature within 5 feet of the pedestal has advantage on this check. A successful DC 20 Dexterity check using thieves' tools



1 SQUARE EQUALS 5 FEET

TOWERS OF THE THREE REGENTS

wedges the pressure plate down, preventing the trap from triggering. Alternatively, a successful DC 17 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check exchanges the coffer for an object of equal weight (10 pounds), preventing the trap from triggering. Failure on either check triggers the trap.

Treasure. The coffer contains 100 gp, 25 pp, six aquamarines worth 500 gp each, and a silver chain with a jade pendant worth 250 gp. The coffer itself is inlaid with jewels and worth 75 gp.

4. DOOR GUARD

The wind sweeps through this room, stirring dust and debris. The rest of the tower above is gone, leaving this place open to the sky. The stairs on the far side of the room rise to the first landing, then end at the edge of the crumbled wall. A single door stands to the north.

Creatures. A pair of **knights ab-errant** (*Tome of Beasts* 2, p. 231), humans “blessed” by the fey queen, stand watch here, charged by their fey masters to repel any intruders attempting to pass through the door to the first crossing and the second tower beyond. Their unique blessing also gives them darkvision out to range of 60 feet. These brutes defend their post to the death.

5. FIRST CROSSING

Outside the door, a rope-and-plank bridge extends across the gap, ending at another door in the wall of the second tower. The ropes creak and sway in the wind.

Though the ropes creak and sway, the bridge is sound. The door to Area 6 is locked and requires a successful DC 20 Dexterity check using thieves’ tools to open.

Creatures. A pair of **fey revenants** with dragonfly bodies stand watch on the broken remnants of the second tower’s cap. If they detect creatures crossing the bridge below, they fly to attack, staying airborne and using their ranged attacks against opponents. They don’t pursue opponents into either of the towers.

6. RUINED TOWER

Much of the tower’s interior has collapsed into a massive pile of rubble in its base. Crumbling ledges cling to the walls, all that remain of four floors. Portions of the staircases have also survived, but none span a full floor. High above, a door sits in the northern wall. Below, massive webs span the bottom of the tower above the rubble. Strangely, pieces of a broken statue float and drift in the empty space.

The interior of this 60-foot-tall tower has suffered multiple collapses, destroying the floors and leaving one large, open space, with portions of ruined stairways and ledges left from crumbled floors. There is no clear route up to the door high above, and only a massive pile of rubble below. Flight, climbing, or magic appear to be the only ways up.

Creatures. Three spider-bodied **fey revenants** lurk here on the ledges high above. In combat they use their movement to keep opponents at a distance, pelting the intruders with ranged attacks and counting on the magical



statue shards as an additional barrier against foes. The fey revenants fight to the death.

The Broken Statue. The magical statue that once occupied this tower was destroyed along with much of the interior. Residual magics keep the pieces of the statue floating in the air. If combat ensues in the room, the pieces of the statue pick up speed, streaking through the air and rebounding off the walls. On initiative count 1 (losing initiative ties), two pieces of the statue fly at two random creatures in Area 6 that aren't fey or elves. Each target must succeed on a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw or take 11 (2d10) bludgeoning damage. If a target fails the saving throw by 5 or more, it is knocked off the ledge, stairs, or wall on which it stands and falls to the bottom of the tower. A flying creature that fails the saving throw by 5 or more doesn't fall.

Web Nets. The fey revenants that inhabit this tower can produce webbing, though the production is too slow to use as an attack like other spiders. They constructed nets of web below the door to Area 5 to catch and restrain falling foes. A creature climbing up through the web net from below or walking across the web net must move at half its speed or be restrained by the webbing. As an action, the restrained target can make a DC 14 Strength check, bursting through the webbing on a success. Each 5-foot cube of webbing can also be attacked and destroyed (AC 5; hp 15; vulnerability to fire damage; immunity to bludgeoning, poison, and psychic damage).

When a creature falls into the web net from above, it subtracts up to 15 damage from the falling damage it takes as the web net takes part of the damage. If the web net takes less than 15 damage, the falling creature is restrained in the webbing. If the web net takes 15 damage or more, the falling creature breaks through the webbing and falls another 20 feet to the bottom of the tower, taking more falling damage.

7. SECOND CROSSING

Another rope bridge stretches out across the void, ending at a door on the south wall of the third tower. A massive pile of rubble sits where the bottom of the tower should be while its top half seems to float where it once stood, unphased by the loss of its lower half.

As with the bridge in Area 5, this bridge creaks and sways but is sound. The door to Area 8 is locked and requires a successful DC 20 Dexterity check using thieves' tools to open.

Creatures. If the fey revenants from Area 5 are still alive, they once again harass any intruders attempting to cross the bridge.



8. MIRROR MAGIC

Stairs in this room lead up to the next level. Another set leads downward, then ends, jutting out into the dizzying space under the floating remains of the tower. A quartet of mirrors set in elaborate ebony frames stand in the center of the room. The mirrors all face inward toward a spot in the middle of the room.

Mirror Prison. A creature that enters the space between the mirrors and that is reflected in all four mirrors must succeed on a DC 16 Charisma saving throw or be trapped within the mirrors, its being fragmented between them. While trapped, the creature is incapacitated and infinite reflections of it appear on the surface of the mirrors, receding into the distance. The mirrors can hold only one creature at a time and are immobile while they hold a creature.

The Hidden Key. The trapped creature can't be targeted by attacks and other effects outside the mirrors, but it is able to perceive the surroundings of the reflections in which its essence is trapped. A successful DC 15

Wisdom (Perception) check while perceiving these surroundings notes that all reflections are identical, except for one. That particular reflection shows an ornate key of black iron, chased in silver, lying on the floor between the mirrors. Though the trapped creature's reflections are visible to those outside the mirrors, the key isn't. A successful DC 15 Dexterity or Intelligence check discerns the correct way the trapped creature must move to make that particular reflection pick up the key. The key is trapped just as the creature is, but, if the creature is freed, it retains possession of the key.

Freeing the Trapped Creature. A successful *dispel magic* (DC 19) can free the trapped creature, but it only deactivates the magic of the mirrors for a single round. The mirrors can be attacked and destroyed (AC 13; hp 20; vulnerability to bludgeoning damage; immunity to slashing, poison, and psychic damage). When a mirror is destroyed, the trapped creature takes 11 (2d10) psychic damage but is partially restored. The trapped creature is freed if at least two mirrors are destroyed.

The Key. If retrieved from the mirror prison, the key unlocks the casket in Area 10, bypassing its magical trap.

9. STERN WARDEN

A statue of white marble, depicting a dour fey man in regal robes, stands on a raised dais in the center of the room. He holds a carved staff in his right hand, in a gesture that seems to be warning off any attempting to approach him. Stairs on the far side of the room rise up to the pinnacle of the tower.

Creatures. A **luck leech** (*Tome of Beasts 2*, p. 241) stands guard here. It recently found itself on the wrong side of the fey queen's temper and was sent to aid her agents in the tower as atonement. The luck leech tries to lead intruders into a false sense of security by lamenting to them of its plight as it maneuvers itself into an advantageous position for its Feast of Fortune. It takes advantage of every opportunity it can, including attacking those restrained by the statue's magic.



Terrified of the fey queen, the luck leech fights to the death as such a fate is preferable to facing her wrath.

Statue of the Warden. When combat ensues in the room, the statue moves to prevent access to Area 10. It can't leave its pedestal, but on initiative count 1 (losing initiative ties), it raises its staff toward the creature that is closest to the stairs leading up to Area 10. The statue doesn't target fey or elves. The target must succeed on a DC 17 Strength saving throw or be pushed up to 15 feet away from the stairs to Area 10 and restrained for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. The statue can restrain only one creature at a time, but it can push other targets at the end of each round. The statue can be attacked and destroyed (AC 15; hp 45; immunity to slashing, poison, and psychic damage).

Treasure. The luck leech carries two pouches with a total of 200 sp, 150 gp, and 60 pp.

10. NEST IN THE PINNACLE

The spire atop the tower still stands, the octagonal roof rising high above the floor. Twisted, waxy, organic structures form a rough crescent in the western half of the room. Dark holes dot the strange substance.

Creatures. Four fey revenants currently reside here, including Caliryl, their leader. The scorpion-bodied fey revenant has found the item his queen has tasked him with procuring, but he is frustrated by his inability to find a way to open it. Should any of the PCs be visibly carrying the key or make him aware they are in possession of it, he offers them an ultimatum: if they give him the key, they can leave the towers with their lives. The PCs only have one chance to accept Caliryl's offer. Beyond that, Caliryl is merciless. He and his fey revenants fight to the death to protect the queen's prize. One of the other three revenants has the body of a spider, while the other two are wasp-bodied and can fly.

Treasure. Caliryl and his troops collected various treasures while searching the tower and placed them inside the giant hive. This collected wealth includes 4,000 gp, 600 pp, a pair of gold griffon bookends worth 250 gp each, a carved vase of lapis lazuli inlaid with gold worth 750 gp, and an ornate black iron casket, chased with silver.

The Iron Casket. This box is 3 feet long, 1 foot wide, and 6 inches deep, and it is locked with an intricate lock.

A successful DC 25 Dexterity check using thieves' tools unlocks it. If anyone attempts to open the box by any method other than the key from Area 8, whether or not the attempt succeeds, the box unleashes a blast of shadowy energy. Each creature within 10 feet of the casket must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw, taking 27 (5d10) cold damage and 27 (5d10) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The casket contains the *rod of the regent* (see the Rod of the Regent sidebar) in its padded interior.

CONCLUSION

If the PCs handed the key to Caliryl, the fey reports their activities to his queen when he returns to her with the *rod of the regents*. The PCs earn great favor with the evil fey queen but at the cost of allowing a powerful magic item to fall into her hands.

Alternatively, if the PCs slay Caliryl and retrieve the *rod of the regents*, they earn the ire of the fey queen, and her agents may hound them. If the PCs retrieved the item for the queen's rivals, they have new allies in the form of her rivals, and these rivals might call on the PCs again for future missions against the queen.

Whatever the PCs' decision, they are now embroiled in fey politics and are within the direct gaze of the evil fey queen, for good or ill.

ROD OF THE REGENT

Rod, legendary (requires attunement)

This rod is crafted of polished ebony and capped in gold. It has a flanged head, and it functions as a magic mace that grants a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with it. An amber sphere sits on the opposite end, holding a trapped butterfly. The rod has the following properties:

Fey Resistance. While holding this rod, you have advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects from fey creatures.

Sending. While holding the rod, you can use an action to cast the *sending* spell. When cast, the butterfly in the amber on the end of the rod glows with a golden light, flies free of the orb, and streaks off to the recipient of the message. The butterfly alights on the head of the recipient, delivering the message. The butterfly waits up to 10 minutes for a response then carries it back to you. This property can't be used again until the next dawn.

Tree Stride. While holding this rod, you can use an action to travel between trees. This property works like the *tree stride* spell, except you also know the location of any tree within 500 miles that you have touched with this rod, and you can choose one of those trees as your destination tree instead. This property can't be used again until the next dawn.

ROD OF THE REGENT IN MIDGARD

If you are playing in the Midgard setting, the Tree Stride property of the rod can be exchanged for the following.

Know the Roads. While holding this rod, you can use an action to detect any fey roads or shadow roads within 300 feet of you for 10 minutes. While within 60 feet of a road you detect with this property, you can use an action to open a passage into that road, taking up to six other creatures with you. Once you open a passage, you can't do so again until the next dawn.

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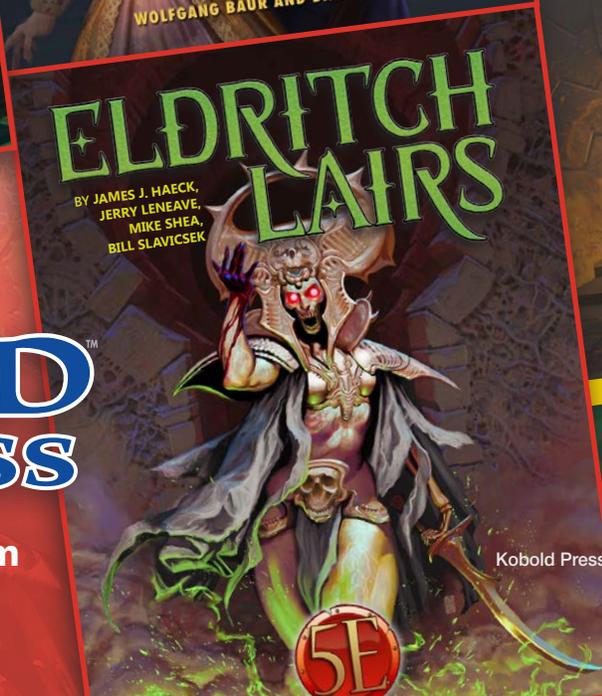
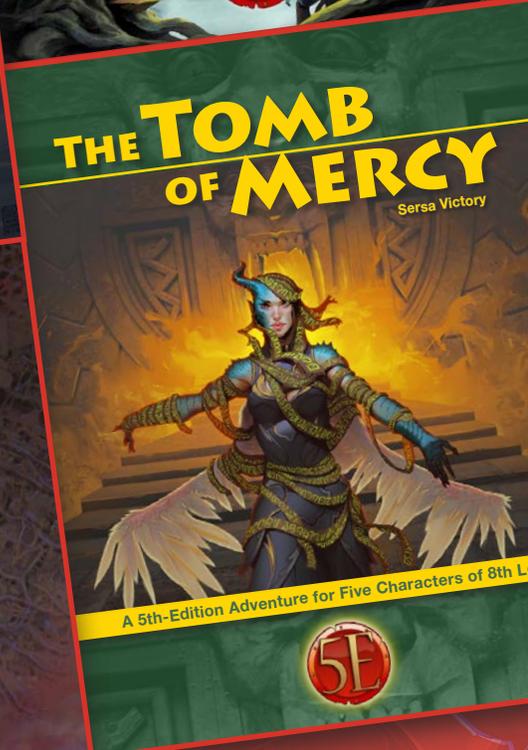
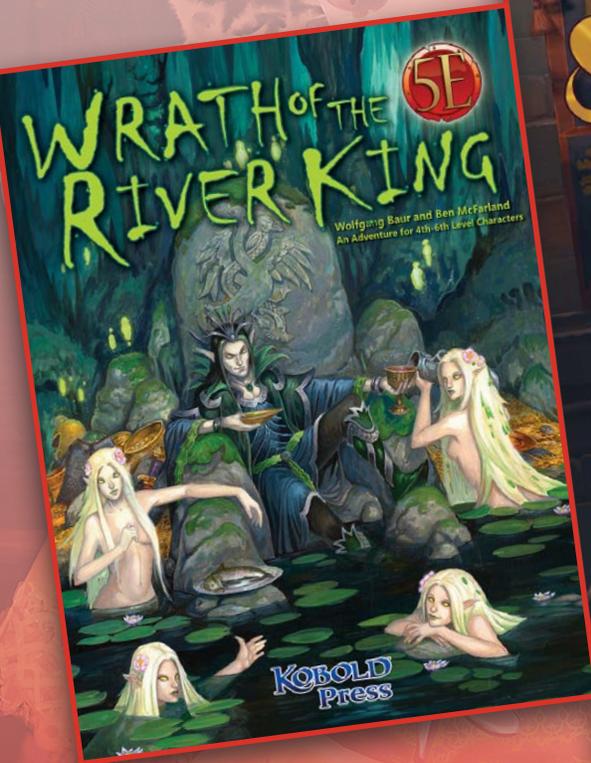
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