

MONTE COOK PRESENTS: IRON HEROES

# TO DUEL WITH DRAGONS



A LEVEL 4 ADVENTURE BY MATT SPRENGELER





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# INTRODUCTION

*To Duel with Dragons* is an *Iron Heroes* adventure for 4th-level characters. It pits your PCs against an ambitious young dragon, a scheming ancient dragon, three wily hags, a mercenary grave robber sheathed in bones, foul bog creatures, weird draconic hybrids, and a no-holds-barred fight against 100 angry warriors. Where does all this action happen? Rotten, stinking swamps. Hills that dragonfire has long since burned bare. A massive fortress. And not one but two ancient draconic graveyards. If the PCs make it to the end, they'll discover a treasure that beggars the imagination. And if they fail? Well, plenty of NPCs here are collecting bones....

The action in *To Duel with Dragons* centers around two scheming dragons. One is an ancient red dragon called Ulagor the Undying. Over his long life he mastered many arcane secrets, including immortality. Unfortunately for him, his ritual was flawed, and his body died while his head lived on. Now he seeks a way to become whole again. This crosses paths with the plotting of young Sriivash, a juvenile black dragon and the ambitious heir to a clan that maintains draconic graveyards. She murdered her father to gain power. Now Sriivash wants the secret of immortality, and her agents will take any risk to get it for her. As their wicked schemes cross and re-cross, their collisions should draw the attention of the PCs. Fearsome monsters and flashing blades follow.

Over the course of this module, the PCs should advance from 4th to 8th level. They will also explore locations in the fetid Viper Swamp, the barren Scorched Hills, a hardscrabble trading village called Parch, and the massive, obsidian spire outside the city of Goldrock.

## USING OTHER *IRON HEROES* PRODUCTS

This module was designed so it can be played with just the *Iron Heroes* core book and basic d20 reference material. It does incorporate zone information from *Mastering Iron Heroes*, which can easily be incorporated into your game. Zones are special circumstances that can affect combat. They come in three varieties:

- *Condition zones, which affect all characters and creatures in the area, usually every round;*
- *Event zones, which are either triggered by circumstances or by the passage of time;*
- *Action zones, which involve using the environment to generate a powerful stunt effect.*

The relevant game statistics are included with each zone, and should be enough to allow all groups to use zones in play. Groups with access to other *Iron Heroes* material are encouraged to include it in this adventure. In particular, the following changes are appropriate:

- *The captains and sergeants of the Hundred can be remade as CR 3 or CR 4 warleaders, allowing them to use their large numbers of minions more effectively against the PCs. The Grant Cover and Grant Shield special abilities are most appropriate in this case, although Captain Tolliv would instead have Lead From The Rear.*
- *The "swarm of flies" condition zone listed with the entry for marsh terrain is appropriate throughout the Viper Swamp.*
- *Substitute one dire gloom (and its corpse host) for the two wights in area 8 of the Scorched Hills graveyard.*
- *Although a trondar wouldn't be welcome inside the walls of Goldrock, one might be drawn to the area to investigate the magic that supports the Hill.*
- *Add a moss troll to the Viper Swamp random encounter list, replacing either of the other CR 6 encounters.*
- *Include the skeletal structures of a few gossamer wyrms in the draconic graveyards.*

## USING THE SWORDLANDS

*To Duel with Dragons* is purposely generic in its setting, allowing it to be used in a variety of settings, including the Swordlands described in the *Iron Heroes* core book. To give it a Swordlands-specific feel, connect the Masters' War to the dragons as well as the area's geography. For instance, the Scorched Hills were once rich and fruitful, until one of the Masters blighted them with a necromantic fog that drained the life out of the earth. Goldrock was a major military stronghold that changed hands several times during the war, and now the highways that once moved armies are the backbone of a simple trade network. In such a case, Commander Vhoorl (leader of the Hundred) might be one of the First.

Powerful dragons like Ulagor could have been enemies, allies, or even experiments of the Masters. Perhaps the immortal dragon was created against his will to serve as an adviser to the Master who created the Hill. The Bitterbreath clan and their graveyards might have been serving strange arcane purposes for one or more Masters, or alternately they formed the backbone of an independent draconic resistance, guardians of half-forgotten traditions from before the war.

CHAPTER ONE:

# HARVEST OF BONES

The hamlet of Parch is a trading post with a sour attitude. Nestled in the side of the Scorched Hills and not far from the Viper Swamp, its residents are a rough lot. They've become especially prickly since the stream that provides their fresh water was tainted a few days ago. Most of Parch's people are sick and getting worse. They've pooled their resources to hire someone to venture into the dangerous hills and remove the source of the problem. Whether for goodness or greed, the party ventures into the hills.

What they find there complicates things. The stream comes from a lake that is now creating dangerous creatures. Once those are dispatched, the real source of the problem becomes apparent — a dragon skull covered in ancient runes. The skull's presence is fouling the water, and once it's removed, the lake and its streams are again pure.

Unfortunately, the folk of Parch see the skull as a terrible omen. Rumor says that a dragons' graveyard is hidden somewhere in the Scorched Hills, but until now nobody had found evidence of it. Just as Parch fears, strange and terrible creatures come looking for the skull.

That leads the PCs into the hills. There they learn that the rumors are true; an ancient draconic graveyard lies hidden near the border of hills and swamp. Agents of Sriivash guard this place, looking for threats like the PCs. The immortal Ulagor also has a representative here — Gowan the Bone Harvester, grave robber and bounty hunter, a man happy to kill anyone he sees as competition. When the dust settles, the PCs will have clues pointing them to Ulagor's lair.



## PARCH

This shabby hamlet of 200 people is the largest human habitation in several days' travel. Parch also sits on the bank of the Parchwater, one of the clearest and freshest streams to be found near the Viper Swamp. As a result, it's the closest thing the region has to a trade center. Merchants, peddlers, and crafters of all kinds can be found here. So can most goods valued at 300 gp or less. This is more than most hamlets its size can offer, but this is offset by local taxes that increase the price on everything by an average of 10%.

The hamlet of Parch owes no loyalty to any other power. It's ruled by an official known as the Governor. The Governor is elected annually from among all able-bodied adults living within Parch — and somehow always ends up being one of the city's richest traders. Aside from levying

taxes and providing for the militia's upkeep, the Governor has no duties worth noting. Parch has no interest in rules beyond those needed in the marketplace.

Normally this town is full of people who mind their own business and encourage others to do the same. But something bad is happening to the Parchwater. Plants watered by it are withering, animals drinking from it are dying, and now the town's children and old people are getting sick. The water itself has a faint, oily sheen now, and a strange, dusty taste. Whether PCs are lifelong residents or are just passing through, the foul water is all the natives talk about. Anyone staying in town long enough to do business will learn the following:

- *The water was fine until just a few days ago. Some people say one thing caused it and some another, but whatever is happening started within the last week.*
- *Parch has no other clean water sources, as wells here end up contaminated by the underground spread of the Viper Swamp. The Parchwater comes from a lake in the nearby Scorched Hills.*
- *Nobody in town has died from the water yet, but several people are sick with a strange malady that hasn't been explained otherwise.*
- *Governor Wivith has offered a reward if anyone can clear the Parchwater and provide evidence thereof.*

Any resident or regular visitor can point the way to Governor Wivith. She runs the town's only smithy, and her husband Dester is one of the hamlet's two full-time guards (the other is a man called Bull). Wivith can be found in the large, wooden building that serves her family as workshop, home, and storehouse. A muscular woman who ties her brown hair back to keep it away from flame, Wivith wastes no time on pleasantries. Parch needs its stream cleansed before people start dying. Anyone who does this will have the gratitude of the town, in the form of a 20% discount on all goods and services here for the year following the Parchwater's rebirth.

When dealing with strangers, Wivith's attitude is indifferent; for locals she's friendly. If the Diplomacy skill is used to raise her attitude to helpful she will also offer a cash reward of 250 gp upon completion of the task. No amount of persuasion or threatening can convince this flinty businesswoman to part with the town's gold in advance, nor will she give the gold to PCs who fix the problem without talking to her first.

If the PCs spend some time in Parch before investigating the water, they might learn additional useful facts. With a Gather Information check (DC 15) and enough time they can learn any one of the following, gaining an additional fact for every 5 points beyond 15 gained on the check:

- *The water becomes fouler as one travels closer to its source.*
- *Some crazy trapper said he was in the Hills and saw a man wearing armor made of living bones. The bone-man chased him away with an axe.*
- *Yesterday (i.e. the day before PCs started asking questions) an old woman and her son arrived in town and asked questions about the Parchwater. They left that afternoon but said they'd return soon. The woman's name was Marva, and her son was Skond (these characters will appear after PCs resolve the Parchwater problem).*
- *Where the Scorched Hills meet the Viper Swamp, an ancient ruin waits to be found. Nobody has been there in living memory, of course, but old-timers claim that it's a place of power that predates Parch by centuries.*

Of course, anyone spending time in Parch also runs the risk of getting sick. Unless they take steps to avoid drinking water from the Parchwater, which is the only water in town, every 12 hours each character must make a Fortitude save (DC 8, +1 for every previous save attempted). Failure means the character is sickened for 12 hours (–2 to attack rolls, weapon damage rolls, skill checks, ability checks, and saving throws including the next save against the tainted Parchwater).

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## FOUL WATER

The Parchwater is usually a brisk, cold stream. In the days since the taint began, it has turned slow and sludgy. Local folk correctly suspect that the problem lies at the nameless lake from which the Parchwater flows. The easiest way there is to follow the Parchwater upstream.

The stream winds north through the rough hills. Stories say this land was once green and fertile, a gardener's paradise where all manner of crops bloomed. The people who dwelt here grew rich and powerful. They attracted the attention of a powerful dragon kingdom, the legend says, and the mighty wyrms arrived to demand tribute. Instead, they were heaped with scorn by the proud natives. So the dragons took to the air, turning fire and poison against the lush countryside. Within a week they had reduced the land to lifeless rock, cursed to never again bear fruit.

So the legend goes, anyway. Whatever the truth of it, the Scorched Hills are indeed a cluster of jagged, rocky mounds with little vegetation. The only greenery here is found around a half-dozen ponds and lakes that well up from underground springs. Two days' hike north and east leads to the lake that feeds the Parchwater.

As one travels north, the water becomes more foul. Its color takes on nasty green and black undertones, and it smells faintly of sulfur. Dead fish and frogs occasionally float by in its current — untouched by scavengers. It remains drinkable, but with each passing day it becomes less wholesome.

The lake itself is an irregular shape, half a mile across at its widest point. Fingers of it reach out into the valleys nearby, creating three small streams that all drift south and form the Parchwater. Normally, the only visitors here are herbivores like deer and rabbits, as well as the predators that hunt them. For the last few days, however, a human has also been here. Gowan the Bone Harvester lost something in this lake and he intends to find it.

The grave robber pitched his camp on the north shore. Not expecting company, he has made no effort to hide it, and any moderately alert PCs will note signs of his presence (smoke from his campfire, his sturdy, blue tent, etc.). Gowan only returns here at night, for his days are spent combing the shore and shallows for a precious treasure. He recently penetrated the dragon graveyard in these hills, taking an engraved skull as proof of his find, only to drop the skull in the lake one night while admiring it by the light of his campfire.

His interest in the skull is more than artistic appreciation. Gowan is in the pay of a man named Tolliv (performing secret work for Ulagor) who seeks information about the region's draconic graveyards. He expects a handsome reward for the skull, and he would rather recover it from the cold water than dare the graveyard's perils a second time. Naturally, he'll be less than pleased to discover that other people are snooping around the area.

The skull itself was caught by the lake's current and pulled south, where it lodged in the weeds near the trickle that eventually becomes the Parchwater. Gowan, having dropped the skull on the north shore, barely investigated this area.

If he had spent more time here, he probably would have found it without trouble. With each passing day the skull's taint has spread farther. Anyone spending time on the south shore (including anyone traveling here from Parch) will notice a large, oily shimmer on the water's surface. Fish corpses float around the perimeter of this area, which forms a rough semi-circle 120 ft.

in diameter. It seems centered near the shore, 40 feet from the surprisingly narrow mouth of the stream that will become the Parchwater.

The oily sheen prevents anyone from seeing what lies below the surface of the water. The skull, resting on the lake bottom 15 feet out and 20 feet under, can only be seen by someone underwater. Alas, the same is true of the two monstrous creatures who currently lair in the foul water. Combined with the fact that the water here is quite poisonous, this makes recovering the skull a complicated business.

### UNDERWATER HAZARDS (EL 3)



#### Poison Water (Triggered Event Zone):

Triggered when a character swallows water tainted by the dragon skull; Constitution save DC 13; on a failed save, the victim takes 1d2 Con damage.



A pair of large, skeletal snapping turtles immediately attack anyone in this water. The turtles once ruled the southern lake, but the skull's dangerous reptilian magic has transformed them into creatures of death. Each skeleton is 4 feet long and still has the leathery shell it wore in life. Once provoked, they will leave the water in pursuit of their foes.

Fighting in or near the poison water is dangerous for living creatures. Anyone suffering a substantial injury while underwater (anything causing 6 or more points of damage) is at risk of accidentally gasping, yelping, or otherwise opening their mouth and swallowing the water. To avoid this fate, a character so injured must make a Will save (DC 10 + damage taken). Characters with the Endurance feat get a +4 bonus on this Will save.

Standing near the waterline can also be dangerous. If a creature emerges from the poison water using any movement other than a 5-foot step, the water gushes forth to spray all other living things within 10 feet. Characters must make a Reflex save (DC 10) or accidentally swallow a mouthful of this unnatural wave. The skeletal turtles always emerge from this water at the maximum effective speed, spraying everything around them.

### Skeletal Snapping Turtles (2):

CR 1; Medium Undead; HD 2d12; hp 13 each; Init +6; Spd 20 ft., swim 30 ft.; Defense 17 (+2 Dex, +5 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 15; DR 5/bludgeoning; Base Atk +1; Grp +4; Atk Bite +4 melee (1d6+4); Full Atk Bite +4 melee (1d6+4); SA —; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., immunity to cold, undead traits; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 16, Dex 14, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1.

**Feats:** Improved Initiative.

## THE SKULL AND GOWAN (EL variable, see below)

The skull is large enough that it immediately draws the eye, even if a pair of skeletal turtles are bearing down on the observer. It's nearly 6 feet long, intact except for the lower jaw, and has three lines of blocky, rune-like carvings in its surface. Even in death, its eye sockets seem to stare at the world with gloating menace. It has unusual clusters of horn-like spikes over its eyes and on its chin; a successful Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 10) reveals that this is the skull of a green dragon well into its adulthood.

The skull itself poses no direct danger to the party. You don't have to tell them that, of course, but its intrinsic magic requires several days of contact before it begins poisoning things. Hauling the massive thing up through the poison water should be an interesting challenge whether or not the party is afraid to touch it directly. If the PCs come up with a particularly creative way to remove it, award them XP as if succeeding at a CR 2 encounter. The

instant the skull is removed from the water, the oily taint vanishes and the lake and its streams are once again pure.

If the party instead decides to destroy the skull, it won't be easy. The bones of this ancient wyrm are as hard as iron (hardness 10, hp 30). Destroying the skull while it's underwater will also clear the taint, and causes the shattered pieces to float to the surface.

The carvings on the skull are an ancient dialect of the Draconic language; for reference, it will be called Ancient Draconic. Anyone familiar with modern Draconic can translate this with an Intelligence check (DC 15), as can anyone familiar with Ancient Speech (DC 20); Decipher Script works as normal. The carvings say that this is the skull of a mighty dragon lord called Kyrritnrru the Defiler, a poisoner of waters and devourer of beasts. This is a hint to the PCs that more carved dragon bones are somewhere in the hills; if they don't translate the runes, Skond and Marva (described below) will do so in Parch.

The commotion caused by fighting the skeletal turtles will attract Gowan's attention. Unless the PCs have staked out his campsite and waited for him, this is the first time they will cross his path. It shouldn't be the last.

Gowan is intended to be a recurring character, someone competing and cooperating with the party over the course of *To Duel with Dragons*. He's a ruthless and cunning man who doesn't enter a fight unless he thinks he can win it. It's fair to assume that he will notice the PCs if they spend more than a few minutes exploring the lake, and this prompts him to drop his own search so he can monitor them. By the time they locate the skull he will be watching them from a hidden spot along the rocky shore. Assume he takes 10 on his Hide and Move Silently checks, so the PCs will have a DC 22 on any Spot or Listen checks to notice him before he announces his presence.

Gowan wants the skull. Tolliv is paying him quite well for his work. But he isn't willing to launch a frontal assault against the PCs in order to get it, especially since they were (presumably) capable of defeating the weird undead turtles. He will try to intimidate them, calling down from his position in the rocks overhead and saying something like the following:

*Hold there, you sorry pack of fools. I am Gowan the Bone Harvester and that skull is mine. If you value your lives, lay down your weapons and flee to your mother's arms. Otherwise I shall kill you where you stand and use your teeth as my jewelry!*

At this point he begins firing at the PCs with his long-bow, aiming at the ones with the most imposing ranged weapons. His hope is that a quick rain of arrows will frighten the PCs into leaving. He is currently 70 feet away from wherever the party is, perched on a ledge behind some



boulders that give him partial cover. The ledge itself is 40 feet off the ground. Gowan will fire on the party for 4 rounds or until he feels threatened (either from taking more than 15 points of damage or because angry PCs have started climbing the cliff below him). When this happens, he pushes down some boulders, then scrambles back into the rocks and makes his escape, leaving behind a few of his unusual bone-hafted arrows. Gowan will try to return to his camp and recover his supplies before taking off in pursuit of the PCs.

### Rockslide (Triggered Event Zone):

Triggered when Gowan flees; Reflex save DC 17 for all characters climbing the hillside; on a failed save, characters take 3d6 damage and must make a DC 20 Climb check or fall off the hillside.

To enhance Gowan's use as a returning rival, make sure he identifies himself and is visible long enough for the PCs to see his unusual armor. This gives him a unique identity.

It is possible that the PCs will actually leave the skull for Gowan. In that case, he will clamber down and take it, along with any interesting weapons dropped by the party. He then hurries back to his campsite, breaks camp, and heads for the Viper Swamp with his prize. This indicates that you have a timid party of PCs on your hands, and perhaps they need a couple of easy encounters to get them in the proper *Iron Heroes* spirit.

Note that Gowan watched the PCs fight the skeletal turtles and has some idea what their armament is. He won't descend into an ambush. The only way he'll come down from the ledge is if he believes the PCs have dropped all their weapons where he can see them.

If the PCs manage to drive Gowan off by wounding him, grant them experience for a CR 4 encounter. If they chase him away by reaching the cliff, grant them experience for a CR 2 encounter. If Gowan retreats on his own, grant experience for a CR 1 encounter. If Gowan is killed, they receive the full experience for a CR 6 encounter, but you should consider replacing him with someone similarly colorful who serves Ulagor.

## GOWAN, THE BONE HARVESTER

A dangerous renegade, Gowan makes his living any way he can. He's been a mercenary, a grave robber, an assassin, and a burglar. At the moment he's in the pay of an unknown figure who seeks dragon bones. Gowan doesn't know why and he doesn't care. The enigmatic Tolliv pays him well, the work is challenging, and nothing has come between him and success. Nothing until now — the PCs are coming between Gowan and his goal, and that's not a safe place to be.

Gowan is built as a standard 6th-level *Iron Heroes* PC. He's intended to be their equal, and in the first half of this adventure Gowan is probably more than one or two of them can handle in a fight. Not that he'd jump into a straight fight with them. Gowan is very much the executioner in combat, making maximum use of stealth and taking advantage of cover. He would rather pick off his targets one by one than charge headlong into a group. And if the odds turn against him, Gowan will turn tail and run for safety. He's never yet met a cause worth dying for.

The Bone Harvester cuts a distinctive figure. Short and stocky, he moves with deceptive grace. Gowan has a short, black beard and cold, brown eyes. His

battleaxe is a unique piece of work with a dead-white haft and grim, black blade that has the relief of a human skull on either side. But his studded leather armor is what draws the most attention. Every joint, buckle, and stud on it has a corresponding piece of bone attached. The armor itself is perfectly normal, but it's covered in bones from a dozen creatures, each securely anchored with black cord to stop it from rattling.





If you wish, Gowan can belong to a grave robbers' guild or death cult. This explains his appearance and mission, but it also requires you to add such an organization to your world; *To Duel with Dragons* plays well either way.

Gowan adapts his combat tactics to the situation, always trying to benefit from sneak attacks and his executioner abilities. He often wields his battleaxe with two hands for extra damage, but at need he can fight one-handed and also hold a torch, swing from a rope, or otherwise make use of his environment.

PCs might try using Gather Information or Knowledge (local) to get information about Gowan. In either case, a successful DC 20 check will reveal that he's a notorious grave robber and dangerous axe-wielding warrior. He hires himself out to unsavory clients and does jobs that would turn a normal person's stomach. But his money's as good as the next man's, so the folk of both Parch and Goldrock do business with him when he passes through.

### **Gowan the Bone Harvester, male human Executioner 6:**

CR 6; Medium Humanoid (human); HD 6d4+36; hp 54; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 19 (+3 Dex, +5 class bonus, +1 natural), touch 18, flat-footed 11; DR 1d3/magic; Base Atk +6; Grp +8; Atk Masterwork battleaxe (wielded two-handed) +8 melee (1d8+7/x3; includes 2-point Power Attack) or composite longbow +9 ranged (1d8+2/x3, range 110 ft.); Full Atk Masterwork battleaxe (wielded two-handed) +8/+3 melee (1d8+7/x3; includes 2-point Power Attack) or composite longbow +9/+4 ranged (1d8+2/x3, range 110 ft.); SA Armor-piercing strike, hindering cut, sneak attack +3d6; SQ Create distraction, execution pool, executioner's eye; SV Fort +8, Ref +9, Will +9; Str 15, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 10.

**Skills and Feats:** Climb +10, Decipher Script +10, Diplomacy +2, Disable Device +10, Escape Artist +11, Hide +11, Jump +10, Listen +12, Move Silently +11, Open Lock +12, Search +10, Sense Motive +14, Spot +14, Survival +3 (+5 to follow tracks), Swim +9, Use Rope +3 (+5 with bindings); Beast Lore 1, Improved Sunder 2, Power Attack 1, Skill Affinity (Sense Motive, Spot), Weapon Focus 1 (battleaxe).

**Possessions:** Masterwork battleaxe, dagger, composite longbow (+2), 20 arrows, studded leather with bone decoration (DR 1d3/magic), bullseye lantern, crowbar, grappling hook, 4 oil flasks, 50-ft. silk rope, thieves' tools.

**Languages:** Common, Ancient Speech.

**Traits:** Brave (immune to fear effects), Stout (+1 natural armor, figured above).

## DRAGONS IN THE VILLAGE

Chances are that the PCs will return to Parch bearing the skull of old Kyrritnrru. If so, they are greeted as heroes. Even if they don't have the skull, the Parchwater is already running clean and the hamlet gives them the credit. Either way, the PCs get the reward Wivith offered. Unless the PCs tarry, they will have fixed the problem before anyone died. The Parchwater claims its first human victim seven days after the PCs first hear of the problem, which should be enough time to travel north and resolve things. That night, Parch throws an impromptu party that lasts well past midnight.

Whatever the PCs do with the skull, their actions have associated them with it. Skond and Marva return to Parch the day after the PCs do, asking questions about it. Gowan is trailing them back to Parch in hopes of stealing it back. Violent draconic minions are drawn to the skull's ancient aura, leading them right to the unprepared hamlet. This latter group is in the service of a society of dragons who guard the graveyards of their race. At least two such sites are found in this region, although none of Parch's citizens realize it.

## THE FAMILY

Marva and Skond are an odd pair. She's a small old woman with a sharp tongue. He's her big, loyal son with a sharp axe. Both know a great deal of draconic lore — and both believe they're the descendants of dragons.

Are they? That's for the individual GM to decide. Some *Iron Heroes* groups enjoy having that level of background magic, while others hew to a more mundane line. Either one can accommodate a pair of eccentric scholars who happen to be experts on the problem at hand. The pair's questionable draconic heritage is intended to be an unusual character detail, not a comment on the prevalence of magic in the setting. Skond and Marva are a handy resource for the party no matter what their bloodline.

Kyrritnrru's skull is of great interest to them, as are the PCs who discovered it. They're in the region tracking down legends of hidden graveyards full of dragon bones. A skull engraved with a half-forgotten Draconic dialect is just the sort of thing they seek. In exchange for access to it they'll share a great deal of information with the PCs.

They try to meet the PCs in private. The pair want to examine the skull, and they tell the group that they can help figure out what it is and where it belongs. At first they try simple persuasion. If the PCs refuse to meet, they appeal to the group's better nature, saying they want to help prevent future tragedies. Hard-hearted PCs will then be offered a bribe (200 gp in small sapphires). If all these



measures fail, the pair will follow the party at a distance and observe their actions. Their goal is to learn how this skull left its resting place; they aren't yet inclined to steal it or otherwise risk harming it.

For simplicity's sake, this adventure assumes the PCs will meet with Marva and Skond in reasonable privacy — the pair have important things to say, and they won't say them in front of all of Parch. Marva speaks quickly, interrupting whenever she feels an important point is being missed. Skond has a much calmer demeanor, and while he doesn't explain things as clearly as Marva, he is more patient about providing background and answering questions. Roleplaying out a conversation with the two is encouraged. Whether or not you do, these are the important points to get across:

- *The skull is that of a green dragon of great age.*
- *It seems to be centuries old. Despite that, it's in good condition, as if it were somehow being cared for.*
- *Marva will explain that the strange runes are an ancient form of Draconic, and she impatiently reads it to the party if they haven't translated it. Skond will discuss the evolution of Ancient Draconic into its modern form for several minutes if anyone shows even the vaguest glimmer of interest; eventually Marva stops him.*
- *Kyrritrru's residual arcane aura makes her skull a danger to "lesser" forms of life. She was steeped in venom and acid, and any remnant of her will destroy any living creature over time. It's fair to guess, Marva says, that the skull has been kept somewhere away from other creatures.*

Thus far, mother and son are unwilling to share more of what they know. They plan to spend a few weeks or even months assessing this area and furthering their own plans. That timetable will be hastened by events in the next 24 hours.

### **Marva, scholar of dragonlore, female human Expert 6:**

CR 2; Medium Humanoid (Human); HD 2d6; hp 7; Init -1; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 12 (-1 Dex, +3 class bonus), touch 12, flat-footed 9; DR —; Base Atk +3; Grp +1; Atk Dagger +1 melee (1d4-2/19-20); Full Atk Dagger +1 melee (1d4-2/19-20); SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +9; Str 6, Dex 8, Con 10, Int 17, Wis 15, Cha 10.

**Skills and Feats:** Appraise +15, Bluff +9, Concentration +9, Decipher Script +15, Diplomacy +2, Disguise +0 (+2 acting), Forgery +12, Gather Information +11, Heal +11, Intimidate +14, Knowledge (arcana, architecture and engineering, dungeoneering, geography, history, local, nature, nobility and royalty, religion) +15, Listen +11, Search +12 (+14 with hidden compartments and secret doors), Sense Motive +11, Survival

+2 (+4 when aboveground, underground, following tracks, or to avoid getting lost and natural hazards), Use Magic Device +9 (+11 with written items); Iron Will, Skill Focus (Appraise), Skill Focus (Decipher Script), Skill Focus (Intimidate), Skill Focus (Knowledge).

**Possessions:** Dagger, several books of history and dragonlore, 30 gp, bag of small sapphires (200 gp value).

**Languages:** Common, Abyssal, Ancient Draconic, Ancient Speech, Draconic, First Speech, Forgotten Draconic, Kolorean, Infernal, Sea Speech.

### **Skond, son of Marva, male human Expert 2/Warrior 2:**

CR 1 1/2; Medium Humanoid (human); HD 2d8+1d6+6; hp 18; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 13 (+1 Dex, +2 class bonus), touch 13, flat-footed 10; DR —; Base Atk +3; Grp +6; Atk Greataxe +6 melee (1d12+4/x3) or sling +4 ranged (1d4+3, range 50 ft.); Full Atk Greataxe +6 melee (1d12+4/x3) or sling +4 ranged (1d4+3, range 50 ft.); SV Fort +6, Ref +1, Will +3; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 11.

**Skills and Feats:** Appraise +5, Climb +10, Concentration +5, Decipher Script +5, Diplomacy +2, Heal +4, Jump +10, Knowledge (arcana, geography, history, local) +8, Listen +4, Search +5, Sense Motive +4, Spot +4, Swim +10; Great Fortitude, Skill Focus (Knowledge), Toughness.

**Possessions:** Greataxe, sling, 20 sling bullets, 7 gp.

**Languages:** Common, Ancient Draconic, Ancient Speech, Draconic, First Speech, Kolorean.

## SKULL TROUBLE

So the PCs don't have the skull, or they smashed it to shards, or for some reason they're keeping it a secret. Is the adventure over? Not at all. Skond and Marva are handy tools for getting things back on track.

The skull's in pieces. It comes back shattered, or only a few pieces of it come back. You can assume that whatever fragments the PCs carry include the ones with the Ancient Draconic inscription. Unless, of course, the characters deliberately left those behind. In that case just have Marva do a little mystic mumbo-jumbo over the fragments and then proceed as if she had the whole thing handy.

If the party won't talk to Skond and Marva, have Gowan (or a commoner in his pay) attempt to steal the skull from the party only to be foiled when Skond 'accidentally' gets in the way. If the skull isn't with them, have that commoner try to interrogate the PCs in a public place where Skond and Marva happen to be, asking leading questions that leave no doubt what's being discussed. This gives the pair an opening to address the PCs themselves.

## THE BONE HARVESTER

Gowan knows that he'll never get the skull while all of Parch is paying attention to the PCs, and he thinks he's being followed now. So he keeps watch on the hamlet from the nearby hills, hoping to follow the PCs when they next leave. Assuming that Parch celebrates the PCs with a late-night party, he will steal into town under cover of darkness to pick up what information he can without being seen. He will learn the location of the skull, and also that Marva and Skond have been asking nosy questions here. If he doesn't learn about the pair's presence when the PCs return, he will notice them the next day.

Either way, the bone harvester's plans change. He gives up his pursuit of the skull for now and instead continues following the PCs as they unravel events. If he showed his face in Parch during the impromptu party, the PCs might hear tales of a bone-clad stranger who was asking questions about the skull and about their new friends Skond and Marva.

Although keeping a low profile, Gowan will emerge in some fashion when the dragonbone warriors attack Parch (described below). He dislikes the PCs, but he also realizes that they will be useful stalking horses — if they're on the same track he is, they will certainly stumble into obstacles that he would otherwise be forced to deal with. At some point, Gowan wants his revenge, but for now the PCs are more use to him alive than dead.

## THE DRAGONBONE WARRIORS (EL 5)

As Marva and Skond suggest, the skull of Kyrritnrru did come from a secure place that was being tended. Now the caretaker wants it back. The young black dragon Sriivash, last heir of a clan that maintains draconic graveyards, has dispatched several of her minions to return the skull to its resting place. Being young and arrogant, she sees no need to negotiate for it, or even to ask nicely. Instead she sends a squad of slaves wielding draconic power to smash through Parch and seize it.

These slaves are a special kind of creature created with the dragonbone template (found at the back of this module). They are normal humans who have been mystically bonded with a wyrm's bones to grant them draconic power. This band of warriors has been searching for Gowan since his raid on the Scorched Hills graveyard. His trail led to that of the PCs, and now they have followed it to Parch. Their last instructions were to kill whoever had the skull and return it to its resting place. If that means slaughtering the entire hamlet, that's just what the dragonbone warriors will do.

Within a few hours of the PCs' meeting with Skond and Marva, the warriors arrive in town. They cause an immediate commotion. Not only are they a quartet of frightening human-lizard hybrids, they shout demands for the skull. When the common folk try to talk with them, the dragonbone warriors draw their greatswords and start hacking them down, all the while yelling for the skull's





return. It doesn't take long before someone points them toward the PCs' current location.

The warriors cut a path toward the PCs. Nothing will satisfy them except the return of the skull and the death of the party. A fight is inevitable. The PCs could be anywhere in Parch, but unless they have specific business, assume that they're at Governor Wivith's smithy when the dragonbone slaves arrive in Parch; she's the only local person willing to house the skull while the party is in town. The smithy is at the very edge of Parch, and it's the first large building the warriors will pass. It's also a good place for a fight.

Wherever the confrontation happens, the warriors use their best tactics. They aren't very intelligent, but they know enough to use their shortbows against distant targets and to take cover when facing archers.

Gowan decides to get involved when the fight starts. He knows the dragon-slaves are hunting him, even if he doesn't know exactly what they can do, and the bounty hunter would rather be competing with the PCs than with these scaly monstrosities. Once the warriors are drawing attention to themselves, Gowan slips into Parch from the other direction and takes cover. He starts firing arrows at the warriors when the battle starts, unless it happens in a location that he can't see into. The PCs should notice that someone is firing arrows at their antagonists, and once things calm down, someone will undoubtedly notice that these random arrows have unusual bone shafts. That will keep the party guessing about Gowan's motives, as well as suggest to the players that he could be a recurring character.

Unless your PCs have encountered more half-dragons than most *Iron Heroes* characters, the dragonbone warriors should be an unsettling surprise. They don't look like any "normal" monster (including half-dragons); instead, they're very clearly human beings who've undergone some kind of transformation. They snarl and snap their fangs like animals even though they fight like warriors. They've become something more than human, as well as something less.

**Dragonbone Warrior (4),  
servant of the dragon Sriivash,  
male human Warrior 1:**

CR 1; Medium Monstrous Humanoid (augmented human); HD 1d10+9; hp 14; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 14 (+4 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 14; DR 1d3/magic; Base Atk +1; Grp +5; Atk Greatsword +5 melee (2d6+6/19-20) or shortbow +1 ranged (1d6/x3; range 60 ft.); Full Atk Greatsword +5 melee (2d6+6/19-20) or shortbow +1 ranged (1d6/x3; range 60 ft.); SA See below; SQ Acid resistance 5, greed, immune to sleep and paralysis, plus see below; SV Fort +5, Ref +0, Will -1; Str 19, Dex 11, Con 16, Int 6, Wis 9, Cha 4.

**Skills and Feats:** Climb +7, Jump +7, Swim +6; Toughness (2 times).

**Possessions:** Greatsword, dagger, shortbow, 20 arrows, studded leather (DR 1d3/magic), 2d6 gp. One warrior also has a small key made of polished bone; this is used to disarm traps at the graveyard (described below).

**Languages:** Common.

**Notes:** Each warrior is grafted to black dragon bones from Sriivash's father, which grants them acid resistance 5. One warrior's feature is a breath weapon (1d6 acid, 60 ft. line, save DC 13, every 1d4 minutes), two have a bite (secondary attack +0, 1d8+4 damage), and the last has keen senses (blindsight 30 ft., low-light vision).



**Blacksmith's Furnace  
(Reusable Action Zone):**

Any creature or object that contacts the roaring flames here takes 2d10 fire damage.

**Anvil  
(Reusable Action Zone):**

If a character can pick up the anvil (DC 25 Strength check), it can be dropped or even thrown at enemies. Dropping an anvil on an enemy is a touch attack that causes 3d6 damage. Characters carrying anvils must make a DC 25 Strength check each round or drop it on themselves for 3d6 damage. Throwing an anvil requires a DC 35 Strength check, with failure meaning the anvil is dropped on the thrower. A thrown anvil has a range increment of 5 feet and takes double normal penalties for range.

**Tool Stand  
(Nonreusable Action Zone):**

Wivith's tall, wooden tool rack can be tipped over on a target. This requires a DC 15 Strength check, and the hail of hammers and knives causes 3d6 damage (DC 15 Reflex save for half).



The loud chaos of the attack draws Skond and Marva to the scene. Unless the PCs are on the verge of being killed, the pair don't intervene. Once the battle dies down they approach and ask to examine the warriors.

The pair have some idea what these creatures are, but Marva wants to make sure she knows what she's dealing with before she hands out dangerous information. She also wants them killed even if they're prisoners. Marva won't push the issue if the PCs refuse to consider it, but she considers the dragonbone warriors to be abominations to her heritage.

## TO THE GRAVEYARD

If any of the warriors are taken alive, they are defiant. Each one is a mercenary hired in the nearby city of Goldrock several months ago. They take orders from someone they call "the lady," and she wanted that skull. The warriors don't share any more information willingly. Consider them hostile for the purpose of Diplomacy, Intimidate, and the like.

With one exception — we want your PCs to reach the graveyard north of here. Marva and Skond can point the party in that direction, but if you have any live dragonbone warriors, one of them could blurt out something about "the boneyard in the hills" while being questioned. The unfortunate soul who shares that tidbit can be pressured into giving directions to the dragons' graveyard, warnings of the trapped entry hallway, and an explanation of the site's basic purpose (each piece of information requires a separate DC 15 Diplomacy or Intimidate check). If the bone key is present, he'll grudgingly explain how it disarms the trapped entryway. The warriors don't know the secret of bypassing the dragon-themed traps inside the complex.

Should this not come to pass, Skond and Marva will soon give the PCs the necessary information. The presence of dragonbone creatures unnerved Marva, and since the PCs fought against them, she decides to trust them a bit further. While discussing the matter, she'll say something like the following:

*First the skull, now these strangelings. Do you know what this means? Someone's found the dragons' graveyard in these hills. Bet you never heard of it, eh? I've read tales of such a place. Seems to me that these fellows probably came from there, looking to return the skull. Maybe it should go back before another mess like this happens.*

If the PCs seem willing to return the skull, Marva will give them general directions. The pair will offer to travel with the PCs in search of this place, but they go no closer than the northern shore of the lake where the skull was found. Marva is an old woman, and she feels unwell after the trip. She'll return to town with Skond at that point. They give the party good directions from there, and tell them to look for a line of four standing stones next to a hillside. Walk between the middle two, she says, and you'll find the graveyard's entrance.

Should this also not work, as a last resort have Gowan steal something from the PCs and flee back to the graveyard, leaving a trail behind him. He'd like to get the skull, but whether or not that's possible he tries to burgle something the characters are bound to want back, like a high-

quality weapon or a pile of treasure. In truth this is a ruse — he deliberately leaves a clear track, hoping to lead the PCs to the place and then use them to set off traps for his convenience. He'll keep the treasure, though. In this case you may have PCs dropping into the graveyard from above, or Gowan could maneuver them to the standing stones by accident.

## THE DRAGONS' GRAVEYARD

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This hall of repose was built directly into one of the Scorched Hills. The hill was hollowed out with powerful magic and its entrances shrouded with illusion. From outside it looks like a bleak and unremarkable place. Those who pass the hidden doorways will walk through chambers that even most dragons have forgotten, crowded with the bones of their forebears. This is an old and dusty place full of awe-inspiring memorials. Until recently it was kept clean and well-maintained by Kuulindh, the father of Sriivash (her mother long since left the region). With him dead, she's busy pursuing her own agenda, and the signs are starting to show.

The three main entrances to this graveyard are massive, windowlike openings high up this barren hill. They were designed to accommodate dragons on the wing, measuring roughly 60 feet across. Each of the three is ringed with mystic wards that cause non-dragons to shun them, although the ancient magic is no longer as potent as once it was. Gowan entered this way. Staggering blindly up the hillside, fighting his feelings of revulsion, he literally stumbled into one of these massive openings. Climbing the hill requires regular Climb skill checks (DC 15), and any non-dragon within 10 feet of these huge openings must make a Will save every round (DC 20) or become panicked for 2d6 minutes.

One other entrance exists, added by the dragons for their smaller slaves (and occasional humanoid visitor). A tunnel was carved through the opposite side of the hill as the major entrances described above. This winding passage ends with a series of sharp turns, each currently trapped to repel grave robbers, and then opens onto a chamber intended to dazzle lesser races.

Another illusion masks this entrance so it looks like an ordinary hillside. Four tall slabs of stone, cracked and weathered with age, stand 15 feet away in a line parallel to the hidden doorway. Anyone who walks toward the hillside between two of the stones sees the entrance fade into view; other characters don't. Anyone can pass through it whether they see it or not.


Until recent decades, the wards were powerful enough to keep any non-dragon at bay, so the wyrms created their

other defenses on the assumption that "lesser" creatures would follow the tunnel (area 1) to the Hall of Honors (area 2). This chamber has two exits in addition to the passage from which the characters entered. Taking the left-hand path is safe, while the one on the right is trapped. That rule holds true all the way through the graveyard. If the PCs turn left every time, they will bypass all the traps (and the smaller rooms) until they reach the concealed exit from this place.

Each trap can be disarmed by someone who understands the theme running through them. This graveyard is predominantly for the remains of metallic dragons: brass, bronze, copper, silver, and gold. Panels of these five metals are set into the walls near each trap. If the proper panel is touched, the trap is rendered inoperable for 3 rounds. Each trap's description indicates which panel deactivates it.

Several guardian beasts are present, all recently brought by Sriivash's humanoid servants. The servants are responsible for feeding them and cleaning up their messes. All the beasts are "assigned" to a specific room, but the GM should feel free to place them elsewhere if needed, as all of them roam freely to some extent.


As a reference, dragon bones are as strong as iron (hardness 10, hp 30).



### Falling Dragon Skeleton (Triggered Event Zone):

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Triggered when a character makes a DC 20 Strength check to collapse a skeleton in a chosen direction; creatures within 15 feet of the skeleton in the chosen direction must make a DC 15 Reflex save or suffer 2d6 points of damage and be knocked prone; success means half damage and the character stays upright.



## 1. THE TUNNEL (CR 4)

*This tunnel is an impressive piece of work. Every surface is made of well-crafted stone. It stretches 12 feet across, and the arched ceiling is supported every 50 feet by stone pillars carved with scaly surfaces. Each pillar glows from within, casting light like a torch.*

The glow is a magical property of the complex; pieces of a pillar, or even a pillar removed whole, shed no light. After continuing straight for 60 feet, the passage takes a sharp turn to the right and twists back and forth in a pattern appropriately called "dragon's teeth." Three such turns are present here, and at the center of each one lies a trap for the unwary.

The traps symbolize a dragon's prowess in combat. Each is activated when more than 40 pounds of pressure are put on the stone floor. First a pair of curved blades scythes out of the floor, representing the creature's claws. Then a stone block swings down from overhead just as a dragon's tail crushes its enemies. Finally, a barely visible pattern in the wall magically erupts in flame, the weapon of the mightiest dragons.

One of the dragonbone warriors carries a small bone key that bypasses each of these three traps in turn, provided each of the three hidden keyholes is found (Search DC 25 to find each one, Open Lock DC 30 to bypass). Note that the two mechanical traps each take one round to reset after they are triggered. The fiery glyph resets instantly, meaning it can be triggered every round. Parties that linger in this hallway will regret it.

**CURVED BLADES TRAP:** CR 2; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; Atk +12 melee (1d8/19-20); multiple targets (any two characters within 5 feet of trigger, or two attacks against one character if only one is present); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 20.

**CRUSHING BLOCK TRAP:** CR 2; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; Atk +15 melee (2d6/x3); Search DC 23; Disable Device DC 23.

**FIERY GLYPH TRAP:** CR 3; magic device; proximity trigger; automatic reset; damage 3d6 fire (DC 16 Reflex save half damage).

## 2. HALL OF HONORS

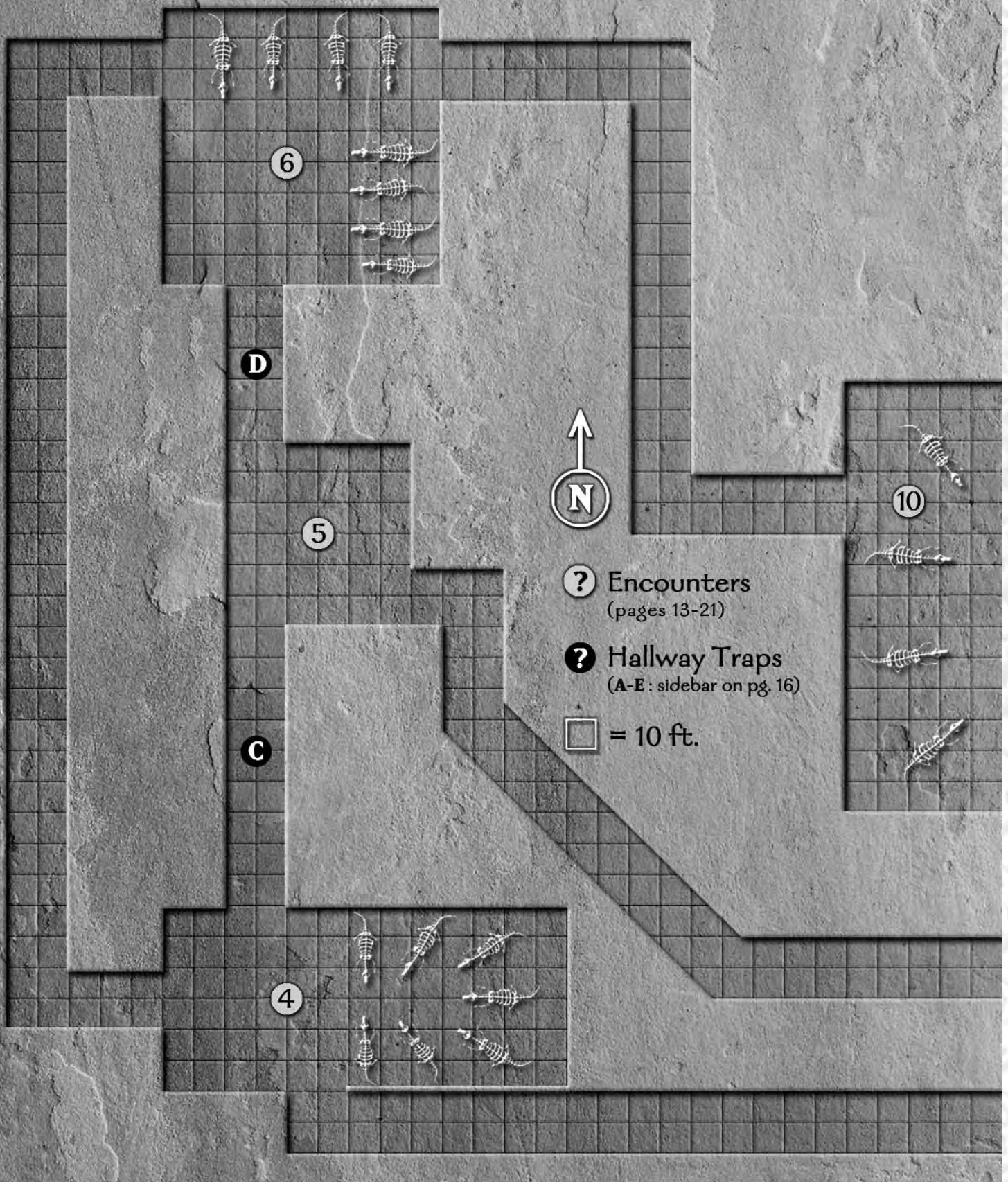
*This room's size is awe-inspiring, enhanced by the delicately twisting black pillars that support the roof high overhead. At the center of the room is a black cube of stone, 6 feet to a side, flanked by four massive dragon skeletons. Arched doorways the size of castle gates open to the north and south, dwarfing the ordinary-sized one leading to the west. The pillars cast a soft, even light with visible flame.*

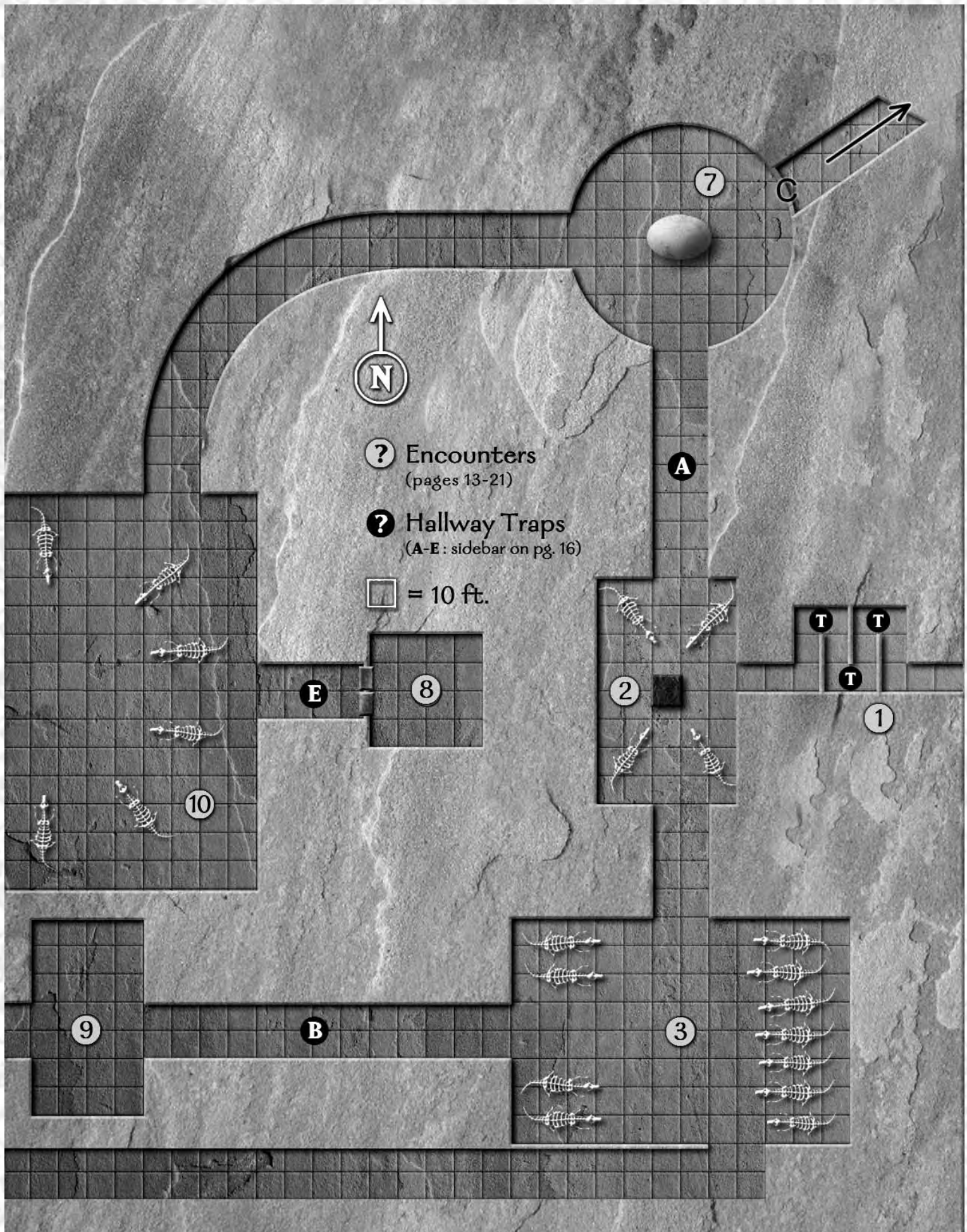
This room's purpose is to impress visitors, including cunning intruders who survived the trapped hallway. Like the hallway (and most of the graveyard's other areas), this place glows with the light of its supporting pillars, spirals of worked black stone that stretch to support the ceiling 40 feet overhead.

The cube's surfaces are covered in the blocky runes of Ancient Draconic. This is a monument listing the names and great deeds of the black dragon clan which maintains this place, a family whose clan name roughly translates to Bitterbreath. The most recent entries are of interest. The final one reads, "Sriivash, Child of None, Conqueror of Death." It looks to have been carved within the last few years. The one immediately before it has



# THE DRAGONS' GRAVEYARD







been destroyed, as if a large claw gouged it out of the rock.

Each skeleton here has its left front claw stretching out to rest on one of the cube's upper corners, and each hollow-eyed skull is positioned to stare at the entry hall. These are four of the earliest Bitterbreath guardians,

given places of honor. Scholars might notice their massive, forward-curving horns and deduce that these are the remains of powerful black dragons; this is a DC 10 Knowledge (arcana) check. Ancient magic holds these skeletons in place, although they instantly collapse if removed from the graveyard.

### HALLWAY TRAPS (EL variable)

Five hallways here are trapped, each in the same fashion. These are the hallways labeled A-E on the map. The 20-foot stretch at the midpoint of the hallway is enchanted to sense whenever a non-dragon crosses it. This area also has five bands of metal, each a foot wide and 20 feet long, worked into the wall on either side. From top to bottom the metals are gold, silver, copper, bronze, and brass. If a non-dragon steps into the enchanted area and leaves without touching the proper band of metal, or touches the wrong band, the trap is triggered. These traps cannot be disarmed, but a successful Search check will reveal the presence of the trap and its method of operation (gas, triggered spell, etc.). Once a trap is triggered, it is inactive for 2 rounds, at which point it is automatically reset. This can be a problem for PCs who linger in the hallway.

The purpose of these traps is to punish non-dragons who wander away from the path they are intended to take. Their presence is obvious — these are the only hallways with metal bands at the midpoint — even if their solution is not. Astute characters might deduce that the traps are themed to metallic dragons. Starting at the logical entry point (area 2), the first trapped hallway one encounters is modeled after the comparatively weak brass dragon, with each succeeding one based on a stronger beast until the gold dragon is reached between areas 8 and 10. The traps and their related metals are as follows:

#### Hallway A: Brass

**SLEEPING POISON GAS TRAP:** CR 2; magical; proximity trigger; automatic reset; fall unconscious for 3d10 minutes; DC 18 Fortitude save avoids; multiple targets (all non-dragons within a 20-foot portion of hallway); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC —.

#### Hallway B: Bronze

**LIGHTNING BOLT TRAP:** CR 2; magical; proximity trigger; automatic reset; 3d6 electricity; DC 16 Reflex save for half damage; multiple targets (all non-dragons within a 20-foot portion of hallway); Search DC 15; Disable Device DC —.

#### Hallway C: Copper

This is a two-part trap which impairs characters and then conjures creatures to vex them. Four Small earth elementals are conjured one round after the gas is activated; two appear 10 feet beyond each end of the trapped portion. Defeating the creatures is treated as overcoming a CR 3 encounter.

**SLOW GAS AND SUMMONING TRAP:** CR 3; magical; proximity trigger; automatic reset; —2 Dexterity and can only take partial actions for 5 rounds, followed by summoning of 4 Small earth elementals; DC 22 Fortitude save avoids the Dex and action penalties; multiple targets (all non-dragons within a 20-foot portion of hallway); Search DC 15; Disable Device DC —.

#### Hallway D: Silver

Gowan sprung this trap when he visited the graveyard, and the hallway is still sticky with his dried blood. The shuriken generated by this trap resemble giant metal snowflakes, and they melt into nothingness 1 round after launched.

**SNOWFLAKE SHURIKEN TRAP:** CR 3; magical; proximity trigger; automatic reset; Atk +15 ranged (2d6); multiple targets (all non-dragons within a 20-foot portion of hallway); Search DC 23; Disable Device DC —.

#### Hallway E: Gold

This is another two-part trap which impairs characters and then conjures creatures to vex them. Two Medium fire elementals are conjured one round after the gas is activated; one appears 10 feet beyond each end of the trapped portion. Defeating the creatures is treated as overcoming a CR 4 encounter (the elementals are CR 5 together, but the PCs deserve a penalty for not figuring the traps out by now).

**WEAKNESS GAS AND SUMMONING TRAP:** CR 4; magical; proximity trigger; automatic reset; —4 Strength, followed by summoning of 2 Medium fire elementals; DC 22 Fortitude save avoids Strength penalty; multiple targets (all non-dragons within a 20-foot portion of hallway); Search DC 15; Disable Device DC —.

Award the PCs experience if they figure out the method of bypassing these traps. Treat it as one CR 5 encounter, but reduce the CR by 1 for every one of these traps triggered before the PCs solve the problem.



## ELEMENTALS

These summoned creatures appear 10 feet beyond the edges of the trapped hallways; they will enter the hallways in pursuit of their targets. New elementals are not summoned until all the existing ones are slain, even if the trap is triggered again. Unlike many conjured spirits, these elementals do not disappear after a certain duration expires. They fight until slain.

**Small Earth Elemental:**

CR 1; Small Elemental (Earth, Extraplanar); HD 2d8+2; hp 11; Init -1; Spd 20 ft.; Defense 17 (+1 size, -1 Dex, +7 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 17; DR —; Base Atk +1; Grp +0; Atk Slam +5 melee (1d6+4); Full Atk Slam +5 melee (1d6+4); SA Earth mastery, push; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., earth glide, elemental traits; SV Fort +4, Ref -1, Will +0; Str 17, Dex 8, Con 13, Int 4, Wis 11, Cha 11.

**Skills and Feats:** Listen +3, Spot +2; Power Attack 1.

**Earth Mastery (Ex):** An earth elemental gains a +1 bonus on attack and damage rolls if both it and its foe are touching the ground. If an opponent is airborne or waterborne, the elemental takes a -4 penalty on attack and damage rolls. (These modifiers are not included in the statistics block.)

**Push (Ex):** An earth elemental can start a bull rush maneuver without provoking an attack of opportunity. The combat modifiers given in Earth Mastery, above, also apply to the elemental's opposed Strength checks.

**Earth Glide (Ex):** An earth elemental can glide through stone, dirt, or almost any other sort of earth except metal as easily as a fish swims through water. Its burrowing leaves behind no tunnel or hole, nor does it create any ripple or other signs of its presence.

**Medium Fire Elemental:**

CR 3; Medium Elemental (Fire, Extraplanar); HD 4d8+8; hp 26; Init +7; Spd 50 ft.; Defense 16 (+3 Dex, +3 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 13; DR —; Base Atk +3; Grp +4; Atk Slam +6 melee (1d6+1 plus 1d6 fire); Full Atk Slam +6 melee (1d6+1 plus 1d6 fire); SA Burn; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., elemental traits, immunity to fire, vulnerability to cold; SV Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +1; Str 12, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 4, Wis 11, Cha 11.

**Skills and Feats:** Listen +3, Spot +4; Dodge 1, Improved Initiative, Mobility 1, Weapon Finesse 1.

**Burn (Ex):** A fire elemental's slam attack deals bludgeoning damage plus fire damage from the elemental's flaming body. Those hit by a fire elemental's slam attack also must succeed on a Reflex save or catch on fire. The flame burns for 1d4 rounds. The save DC is 14. A burning creature can take a move action to put out the flame. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Creatures hitting a fire elemental with natural weapons or unarmed attacks take fire damage as though hit by the elemental's attack, and also catch on fire unless they succeed on a Reflex save.

## 3. HALL OF LEAST BONES (EL 3)

*Dragon skeletons stand in two orderly rows here, facing each other with an aisle running between their mighty forelegs. Each has some kind of carving on its skull. This is a simple chamber, albeit a huge one. Its smooth stone walls have regular panels of some mosaic composed of colored stones and metal lines.*

These were dragons whose long lives or general prowess brought them respect, but who were not great enough to have their stories immortalized. By and large they belong to dragons of mature adult age or younger. Each has its name carved in Ancient Draconic across its skull. Roughly two-thirds of the skeletons here belong to metallic dragons, a proportion that remains constant through this graveyard except where specifically noted otherwise. The room is 40 feet high to accommodate its large inhabitants. Its mosaic walls have stones in the colors of the five chromatic dragons (black, blue, green, red, white) and metal lines representing the five metallic types (brass, bronze, copper, gold, silver).

The aisle in this room runs north to south, with a narrower extension leading to the western doorway. This extension runs through a spot where a dragon skeleton would otherwise stand; it also leads to a trapped hallway. The skeleton facing it (a brass dragon who achieved recognition for his obscure puns) has two things carved on its skull: the name Chultinsh and the word "fool." This is a deliberately vague clue to the nature of the hallway that Chultinsh watches eternally.

Like all the rooms here devoted to the deceased dragons, this one is guarded. A hybrid creature called a dragonbone, half-dragon and half-animal, patrols this room just as the Bitterbreath clan trained it to do. Sriivash's servants bring the creature food from time to time, but the thing is happy to try making a meal of the PCs. The dragonbone template is presented at the end of the module.

**Dragonbone constrictor snake (brass dragon):**

CR 3; Medium Magical Beast (augmented animal); HD 3d10+12; hp 28; Init +3; Spd 20 ft., fly 20 ft. (clumsy), climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.; Defense 19 (+3 Dex, +6 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 16; DR —; Base Atk +2; Grp +8; Atk Bite +8 melee (1d3+9); Full Atk Bite +8 melee (1d3+9); SA Constrict 1d3+9, improved grab; SQ Fire resistance 5, greed, immune to sleep and paralysis, scent; SV Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +2; Str 23, Dex 17, Con 17, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2.

**Skills and Feats:** Balance +11, Climb +17, Hide +10, Listen +7, Spot +7, Swim +14; Skill Affinity (Listen, Spot), Toughness.

**Dragon Features:** Wings.

**Constrict (Ex):** On a successful grapple check, a dragonbone constrictor snake deals 1d3+9 points of damage.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, the dragonbone constrictor snake must hit with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can constrict, allowing it to use its bite attack against other foes in subsequent rounds. It cannot bite a character that it is constricting.

**Notes:** This snake was bonded to the wings of a brass dragon, and now its scales all gleam that color. At first glance it can be mistaken for a young dragon. In combat it flies for the nearest target, attempting to bite and constrict him. If its initial attack fails it uses its aerial maneuverability to take cover in and around the giant skeletons, flying above them or climbing inside them, until it has a clear shot at another target.

#### 4. HALL OF LESSER BONES (EL 4)

*The east wall of this large chamber has an enormous, windowlike opening whose lowest edge is 20 feet overhead. A semicircle of dragon skeletons face the window in postures of rigid attention, each with a lengthy carving on its skull. Mosaic panels of metal and colored stone take up half the wall space. A faint musk fills the air.*

This room is lit not only by the omnipresent soft light from its pillars, but by one of the dragon-sized windows. The opening measures 60 feet across and 30 feet tall; the hall itself has a ceiling 50 feet overhead. Although it looks like a stretch of barren hill when viewed from outside, in here the window is nearly transparent and allows sunlight and moonlight to enter the room.

These skeletons are larger, on average, than the ones in area 3, with the biggest ones coming from very old dragons. Each skull has its name and one sentence about its life. Every dragon here created or achieved exactly one thing that was deemed worthy of eternal memory; details are left to the GM to determine.

Some of these skeletons are so old that their inscriptions are in a language that predates even Ancient Draconic. GMs with a love for invention can allow this writing to be read by someone who knows Draconic or Ancient Speech and makes an Intelligence check (DC 25, with a +2 bonus for characters who know both languages). GMs who don't want to elaborate upon several dozen imaginary and irrelevant dragons are welcome to say that translating this dialect is beyond the characters' abilities. This language is referred to as Forgotten Draconic.

Another strange creature guards this room.

##### **Dragonbone lion (silver dragon):**

CR 4; Large Magical Beast (augmented animal); HD 5d10+20; hp 47; Init +3; Spd 40 ft.; Defense 22 (–1 size, +3 Dex, +10 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 19; DR —; Base Atk +3; Grp +15; Atk Claw +10 melee (1d4+8); Full Atk 2 claws +10 melee

(1d4+8) and bite +5 melee (1d8+4); SA Improved grab, pounce, rake 1d4+4; SQ Cold resistance 5, greed, immune to sleep and paralysis, low-light vision, scent; SV Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +2; Str 27, Dex 17, Con 19, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

**Skills and Feats:** Balance +7, Hide +3, Listen +5, Move Silently +11, Spot +5; Run, Skill Affinity (Listen, Spot).

**Dragon Features:** Roar every 1d4 minutes (targets are fatigued, Will save DC 10, duration 1d8 rounds), Scales.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, a dragonbone lion must hit with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can rake.

**Pounce (Ex):** If a dragonbone lion charges a foe, it can make a full attack, including two rake attacks.

**Rake (Ex):** Attack bonus +10 melee, damage 1d4+4.

**Notes:** The guardian here is a lion bonded to a silver dragon's bones, and except for its golden mane its body is covered in dull, silver scales. It hides in this room's deep shadows until several targets present themselves. Then it roars to fatigue them and charges at the nearest one, making full use of its pounce ability. The lion will retreat if reduced to less than 20 hp, only to stalk the party and try to pick off any stragglers. Note that the lion is not aware of the trapped hallways and is just as vulnerable to them as the PCs are.

#### 5. THE CHAMBER OF SERVANTS

*This plain stone room's west wall has several rows of shelves carved out of the rock. Along the opposite side of the chamber a dozen stone slabs rest on the ground, each one roughly the size of an ordinary human's bed, and three larger slabs stand in the chamber's center. This room is cluttered with the debris of humans.*

Note that this room is not lit with the pervasive glow.

At times, the Bitterbreath clan uses other races as servants and guards for their massive tombs (although not for the one found later in this adventure). This chamber is designed to serve their basic needs, if not provide them with any particular comfort. It remained unused for centuries. Recently, young Sriivash installed several of her servants here. These are warriors and spies, not tomb attendants, and their presence has left the area dirtier than before. The bedlike slabs were in fact designed as beds (dragons have no real concept of how humans sleep), and the large blocks were intended to serve as workbenches.

A handful of Sriivash's attendants and hirelings dwell here. Their presence is obvious — blankets and cushions on the slabs, lanterns in the corners, random personal possessions on the shelves, the remains of a campfire on the central workbench, even a few chamberpots. None of it has value.

At the moment, nobody is present. Of the seven people using this space, four were the dragonbone warriors who already confronted the PCs, and the other three are ordinary thugs and rogues who are off carrying out their missions for Sriivash. GMs who want to throw another encounter at the PCs can bring these three into play if needed; assume each is a 1st-level expert/1st-level warrior who prefers an ambush to a fair fight. The default assumption is that the trio hears of their comrades' fates and decide to flee.

## 6. HALL OF GREATER BONES (EL 4)

*The east wall of this large chamber has an enormous, windowlike opening whose lowest edge is 20 feet overhead. A rope on a grappling hook dangles from it, looking out of place. Dragon skeletons are arrayed along the north and east walls; each one's skull is covered in carvings. One dragon is missing a skull. The walls are covered in mosaics of metal and colored stone, creating large and beautiful geometric designs.*

Skeletons here are arrayed in an L-shaped row along the north and east walls. These are large bones indeed; every dragon here was at least a mature adult and several were ancient. Mightier still than the ones in area 4, each dragon here was worthy of having a biography engraved on its skull. Many of these are in Forgotten Draconic. Another enormous window opens onto the outside world from this room. This window has an unusual accessory — a grappling hook is anchored to its bottom edge, with a length of knotted silk rope dangling from it to the floor below.

Gowan fell into the graveyard here, and after his attempts at exploration were thwarted, this rope is how he left. Unfortunately for him, once he reached the edge of the window the ancient wards took hold of his mind and he panicked. After his flight down the hill he was too unnerved to return for his rope.

He did escape with a treasure strapped to his back — the skull of Kyrritnrru. The PCs will notice that the dragon in the corner has its neck bent lower to the floor than most, and its skull is gone. A shattered handaxe and a bent pry-bar lie on the floor next to the dragon, surrounded by chips of bone. Three spent torches are evenly spaced between the base of the rope and the headless skeleton.

The guardians of this room are a pair of dragonbone wolves. They retained a great deal of personality after their ritual (or perhaps the dragon they bonded with has overwhelmed their minds). The wolves are curious — they occasionally go exploring through the rest of the graveyard, and were away when Gowan first dropped into this chamber. On their return they attacked him, but their odd fear of fire kept them from getting too near his torches, allowing the bone harvester to finish his work and escape. The wolves were both bonded to bones from the same copper dragon and both ended up with poisonous bites.

### Dragonbone wolf (copper dragon) (2):

CR 2; Medium Magical Beast (augmented animal); HD 2d10+8; hp 19; Init +2; Spd 50 ft.; Defense 18 (+2 Dex, +6 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 16; DR —; Base Atk +1; Grp +5; Atk Bite +6 melee (1d6+6 plus poison); Full Atk Bite +6 melee (1d6+6 plus poison); SA Poison, trip; SQ Acid resistance 5, greed, immune to sleep and paralysis, low-light vision, scent; SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 19, Dex 15, Con 19, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

**Skills and Feats:** Hide +2, Listen +3 Move Silently +3, Spot +3, Survival +1 (+5 tracking by scent); Track, Weapon Focus (bite).

**Dragon Features:** Venom bite (injury, Fortitude DC 15, initial and secondary damage 1d3 Con).

**Trip (Ex):** A dragonbone wolf that hits with a bite attack can attempt to trip the opponent (+4 check modifier) as a free action without making a touch attack or provoking an attack of opportunity. If the attempt fails, the opponent cannot react to trip the wolf.

**Notes:** These wolves both have copper-colored fur with metallic scales visible beneath. Their fangs are unusually long, and occasionally green liquid drips from them. If one of their enemies is prone, from a trip attack or another cause, they will concentrate their attacks on her. Both wolves fear open flame, and when confronted with it, each must make a Will save (DC 15) or stay 20 feet away from it. This fear lasts until the flame is extinguished. If the wolves are being attacked at range while being held at bay with flame, they will retreat to another room. Like the lion, they are unaware of the traps and may trigger them by accident.

## 7. SHRINE

*The high walls of this circular room are simply the rocky interior of the hill, neither smoothed nor decorated. The only ornament is an enormous, upright oval made of some white stone, which glows with a light that illuminates the whole chamber. Three large notches have been carved near the top of the 10-foot-tall oval.*

No hall of the dead is complete without a space devoted to honoring their memories. This circular space is dominated by an enormous oval sculpture of a dragon egg. The dragons thought it fitting to end one's graveyard tour with a reminder that life is always born anew.

With typical draconic symbolism, the egg also opens a door that leads to the world outside. The sculpture can be used to open a concealed door in the room's northeast wall. If a dragon rests its talons on top of the egg with its claws in the notches, the door opens. This effect can also be triggered by two or three characters reaching up to put their hands in the notches all at once. The door can also be found with a Search check (DC 20), although it isn't easy to open (Open Lock DC 35 or Strength check DC 30).



## 8. THE DUNGEON (EL 5)

*The odor of this room is almost a physical being, equal parts corruption and dust. Mounds of trash and broken things stand taller than a human head, with narrow paths snaking between. It looks like the garbage pit for an entire long-dead civilization.*

Just as one chamber here is dedicated to worship, another is devoted to suffering and death. This room is full of relics and trophies taken from fallen enemies of the dragons. Unlike the rest of this graveyard, the dungeon is a cramped and filthy room, crowded with what looks like trash. Everything was damaged in some way before being shut up in here; it would take a dedicated scavenger to find anything here worth saving. That scavenger would also find himself faced with the dungeon's strange guardians.

A handful of the things left here were corpses of the dragons' slain foes. Over the years these have become infused with stray magic from the shattered swords, orbs, crowns, tomes, and whatnot found here. Animated by this power, the bodies have been twisted and corrupted by the force of the dragons' hatred for everything contained in this room. Two of them have risen to unlife as wights.

The wights lie silently in the western corners of the room. They look like strangely preserved corpses, but given the sheer number of strange things here, they might not draw attention. When a character disturbs a wight, or when the entire party's attention is elsewhere, the creatures rise and attack as stealthily as possible, trying to push victims into the sharp-edged debris all around.



### Jagged Debris (Action Zone):

With a successful bull rush action or opposed Strength check, a character can impale a target on the sharp edges of the ancient junk piled here. Victims take 1d8 damage and, if the damage exceeds DR, must make a DC 14 Fortitude save or suffer 1d4 Strength damage.



Although they hate the living and hunger for victims, the wights are also a potential source of information. As they attack they will hiss curses and threats in Ancient Speech. A character who addresses them in that language can start a conversation with the wights, learning about their environment even as they fight for their lives. The wights know of the graveyard's history and can explain what each room's purpose is, making them a useful source for background material. They are also aware of the trapped hallway and they know that the traps can be bypassed, although they don't know how. As far as events occurring outside this room, they know nothing that has happened in the last 500 years (including any events with Sriivash and Ulagor).



The wights never left this room because they can't. The door is designed so it can't easily be opened from inside. If it somehow shuts, it can only be opened with a DC 25 Strength check. The wights long ago gave up on trying to open it; the inside of the door is pitted and scarred from their early attempts.

Few of the things in this room have any value. They were deliberately damaged and they've been ignored for centuries; those with any magical power lost it when the wights arose. A character who spends an hour exploring this room and makes a successful Search check (DC 15) will find one of the following: a chipped star sapphire worth 200 gp; a gold-covered scepter shaped like a serpent, worth 350 gp; a chainmail pouch holding several carved ivory game pieces worth 50 gp overall; a masterwork shortsword with the name "Lord Liavaris" engraved in Draconic along its blade; a battered and singed book written in the Kolorean language, containing hundreds of pages of engineering and architectural diagrams that could be sold for 500 gp in a large city — and it provides a +2 bonus to Knowledge (architecture and engineering) checks if the bearer has time to consult it.

## 9. RITUAL ROOM

*Cold air moves through this room, stirring up dust of every color, murmuring as it blows. The walls are textured to look like hand-sized scales, and painted dozens of different shades. They bulge in and hollow out at strange angles, making it difficult to look at any one spot for long.*

This strange-looking place was once used to harness the spirits of dead dragons for arcane purposes. It retains some of its old power. The aura of this room is deeply disturbing to non-dragons, leaving them shaken (fear effect; –2 penalty on attack rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks). Each character must make a Will save (DC 17) whenever entering this room or become shaken for 1d4 minutes. This effect does not stack on itself, so a character who repeatedly leaves and enters this room will not become frightened or panicked by this effect.

Not surprisingly, Sriivash's servants avoid this room. They will not come here, even if pursuing or being pursued.

## 10. CHAMBER OF THE SUN (EL 5)

*A circle of dragon skeletons stands in the center of this room, all looking upward. If they had eyes they could see the sun and moon pass by, for this room's ceiling is actually a large opening to the sky. Each skeleton's skull is covered in carving, and each has a large cube of black stone between its forelimbs. Another stone cube sits in the middle of the circle. The walls are covered in beautiful, complex mosaic patterns of metal and colored stone. A heavy earthen smell hangs in the air.*

The skeletons here are from the graveyard's greatest inhabitants. One from each of the 10 major dragon types is here, representing the cleverest, bravest, most dangerous individuals. Each one was at least very old when he or she died, so these skeletons dwarf even those seen elsewhere in the graveyard. During the day this room is flooded with sun, allowing these ancestors to bask even in death. Minor enchantments keep rain, snow, and trespassing birds away.

The skull of each dragon is covered in Ancient Draconic writing, summarizing the great one's life and accomplishments. Each also has a 6-foot cube of black stone resting between its forelegs with its name engraved and chased in gold leaf. Another 6-foot cube is at the center of the room, similar to the one in area 2. It has the same list of names, including a gouge obliterating the names that came before Sriivash.

This room is guarded by one of the Bitterbreath clan's largest servants, a dragonbone dire boar. The monstrous thing's nasty disposition was worsened by the ritual that bonded it to a deceased Bitterbreath matriarch, and she takes her anger out on anything smaller that wanders into her territory. Humanoid servants of the clan have learned to leave her food and clean up her messes while she sleeps.

### Dragonbone dire boar (black dragon):

CR 6; Large Magical Beast (augmented animal); HD 7d10+35; hp 73; Init +0; Spd 40 ft.; Defense 22 (−1 size, +13 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 22; DR —; Base Atk +5; Grp +20; Atk Gore +15 melee (1d8+16); Full Atk Gore +15 melee (1d8+16) and 2 claws +10 (1d8+5); SA Ferocity; SQ Acid resistance 5, greed, immune to sleep and paralysis, low-light vision, scent, spell resistance 12; SV Fort +10, Ref +5, Will +8; Str 33, Dex 10, Con 21, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 8.

**Skills and Feats:** Listen +8, Spot +8; Endurance, Iron Will, Skill Affinity (Listen, Spot).

**Dragon Features:** Claws, Scales, Spell Resistance.

**Ferocity (Ex):** A dragonbone dire boar is such a tenacious combatant that it continues to fight without penalty even while disabled or dying.

**Notes:** This dire boar is a huge, black monster, 12 feet long and weighing more than 2,000 pounds. Its body is covered in scales as black as midnight. All four of its legs are muscular and end in wicked, dragon-like talons; it slashes at nearby foes with its forelimbs. If it encounters unfamiliar people, like the PCs, it growls and immediately charges them, goring and slashing until nothing is left alive in its sight. Alert players might detect its presence because of its heavy, snuffling breathing (+2 to Listen checks to hear it).

## EPILOGUE

Skond and Marva are waiting nervously for the PCs' return. For one thing, they're worried that these impulsive adventurers will have desecrated the graveyard. The dragons hope they returned the skull to the proper room and left everything else alone. That's a small concern, however, for Marva has discovered something sinister.

The dragonbone warriors were created recently, based on their visible age, but the ritual for creating them is quite old. Many dragons have experimented with infusing their power into other creatures. Only one ever achieved this kind of success, and the dragonbone creatures are one of his hallmarks. His name is Ulagor the Undying. He's a legendary creature, an ancient red dragon who lives near the city of Goldrock, and it was thought that he long ago swore off mortal affairs.

Marva and Skond believe that Ulagor will continue sending agents after the skull — or more likely after the PCs, given that they interfered with whatever the old red wrym's plans are. The pair strongly urge the PCs to travel to Goldrock with them and try to resolve the matter before the people of Parch or any other innocents are hurt along the way.

The pair are also desperately curious about the reason for Gowan's visit to the graveyard and they want the PCs' help in discovering it. They know much of the information presented in Chapter 2, including data about Goldrock and the Hundred, but they are not aware of Ulagor's current condition. One thing troubling them is the fact that the dragonbone warriors came from a black dragon, which means either the reclusive Ulagor has an unusual ally or some other dragon has learned his secrets.

While the eccentric scholars try to persuade the PCs to follow events east to Goldrock, Gowan is a step ahead. Ulagor, through his agent Tolliv, informed him that he is to leave for that city at once. If any PCs try to track him down after returning from the graveyard they quickly learn (DC 10 Gather Information check) that a man matching his description left for Goldrock earlier in the day. He bought two horses from a visiting trader, saying he wanted a spare mount so he could make better time.



## CHAPTER TWO:

# AGAINST THE HUNDRED



Like humble Parch, the city of Goldrock is built on trade. It sprawls along a major crossroads that connects cities as diverse as the silk capital of Liamien and the lumbering center of Axenbough. Money and power pass through Goldrock in great quantities.

Many would-be conquerors have wanted to control the city and its vital crossroads. None have dared try in living memory. Three hundred years ago, the infamous dragon Ulagor the Undying came to the city with a proposal. He offered to establish his lair near the crossroads and his tremendous power toward keeping Goldrock safe from warlords. In return, the city agreed to give him privacy — in the form of a hundred warriors dedicated to guarding his cavern from all interlopers. Ulagor used his power to raise a strange hill from the ground and made his lair at the top, while Goldrock built a series of fortifications to protect the only path leading to the dragon's rest.

Over the years dozens of heroes, sages, thieves, and others have tried to ascend Ulagor's hill. Every one of them has been stopped by the Hundred. Now the PCs will have no choice but to try it themselves. When and if they succeed, they'll learn that the dreaded Ulagor is perhaps not quite what the legends make of him....

By the time they leave the fortress of the Second Company on the Hill, the PCs should have enough XP to advance another level. It is suggested that you allow them to do so as soon as possible. Fighting the rest of the way to Ulagor's lair will require all their skill and prowess (and will probably advance them yet another level — battling 100 warriors is a lot of work!).

## GOLDROCK

This city of 8,500 people is a major power in the area, thanks to the Ulagor-protected trade that flows through its streets. It sits at the crossing of two important roads, and it also has access to unusual goods from the Viper Swamp, which lies a day's march northwest. Some small mining operations are found in the hilly country to the west and south, but not enough to justify the city's name — that was a creation of the town's optimistic founders.

Against this profit-driven backdrop rises what locals simply call the Hill. It stands out against the rolling terrain, an impossibly steep obsidian spike thrusting 600 feet skyward. At its top lies the cave of the legendary dragon Ulagor the Undying. Only one path leads from the base to this cave, and three fortresses guard its length. These keeps are occupied by the Hundred Warriors of Ulagor, a mixture of zealots and mercenaries who share the goal of keeping anything from bothering their scaly lord.

They also govern the city, and the well-being of its residents is not their first concern. Commander Vhoorl of the

Hundred treats Goldrock with none of the respect he gives his own soldiers. Its citizens are like draft animals to the Hundred — as long as they do their chores and provide their masters with material comforts, the beatings will only come infrequently. Even lowly members of the Hundred are obeyed in town. People here are resigned to this harsh rule, reasoning that the dragon's protection makes the lack of freedom worthwhile.

Anything you care to allow can be found in Goldrock. Haggling is the norm here, and characters with good Bluff or Diplomacy skills can end up paying 10-20% less than list price for items. On the other hand, those who lack these knacks will hand over 10-20% more than normal. Members of the Hundred pay cost, if that, and every three days the city sends a "gift" of supplies and interesting objects to the Hill. When they don't, bad things happen in the night.

Theft and burglary are as serious as murder in the marketplaces of Goldrock. The city has no military forces, thanks to Ulagor's reputation, but its Gold Guards (the city watch, selected by the Hundred) have the power to dispense justice on the spot, so caution is recommended.

## THE DRAGON AND THE HILL

More information about Ulagor and his home is provided below, but this is what PCs can learn with a few minutes' investigation. Ulagor created the hill with his magic when he settled here, pulling it forth from the earth in a matter of minutes. As the years have passed he spends more time in his lair. Now that the area is peaceful and few challengers to the Hundred emerge, Ulagor only comes out once or twice a year, usually for a late-night flyover.

Locals have a variety of theories about what he does with his time, but none can say for certain. The city gives him a weekly "friendship gift" of meat. This is taken as a

tax from the herds of visiting caravans; better that they lose a few cattle than that Goldrock be asked to send its children to feed the dragon's appetite.

The Hill is a strange feature. Although this is a temperate climate, Ulagor summoned forth a massive spire of the volcanic rock obsidian for his home. It's smooth, it's sharp, and it's impossible to climb without following the one path winding up the hillside. The Hundred have built three strongholds at the base, midpoint, and top of the path. Each one is manned by a company of 30 warriors and their 2 sergeants. The Hundred's commander and his three top aides live in the mouth of Ulagor's cave, and it is said that they are occasionally permitted to commune with the great beast, learning from his centuries of tactical and historical experience. Some reports say the dragon has slaves of his own, but this too is not known for certain.

Anyone coming to the gate at the base of the Hill will be turned away by the Hundred. Anyone trying to get over the gate, or to otherwise bypass the fortifications, will immediately be attacked. Few people try climbing the Hill's slick, jagged surface. None have made it more than 50 feet before plummeting to the ground, often bouncing off the sharp hillside several times first.

The Hundred Warriors of Ulagor have a distinctive uniform. Each man (all of them are male) wears ornate scale mail armor; its helm and trim have the features of a red dragon. A gold-colored tabard is worn over the armor, with the silhouette of a dragon's head in red on the front. Every one of the Hundred uses a masterwork heavy mace as his main weapon. The heads of these maces are cunningly wrought so that each one looks like Ulagor himself. Anyone caught wrongly bearing the arms or armor of the Hundred is turned over to them at the first gate. Offenders are never seen again.

## ARRIVING IN TOWN

Several things could have brought the PCs to Goldrock. It doesn't necessarily matter why they came, as you're (literally) about to stab them in the back. But you probably want to know how to tie up any loose ends thus far.

Marva and Skond are nervous about being on Ulagor's territory. He's a red dragon, the traditional rival of the silver dragons they believe themselves descended from. They're also determined to know why dragonbone slaves were interested in Bitterbreath skulls, so they come here whether or not the PCs travel with them. Either way they try to find the PCs and then stay near them.

Gowan is also in Goldrock. His contact, Captain Tolliv of the Hundred Warriors of Ulagor, told him that his next assignment would take place here. Shortly, Ulagor will





send him a sealed message instructing him to climb the Hill and enter the dragon's lair. Ulagor doesn't believe Gowan can actually succeed, but with the mercenary past the gate, the dragon thinks he'll find a way to use him. Tolliv knows nothing of this latter plan.

And, of course, Goldrock is a large mercantile town. The PCs could just be here to shop. They might even live here. If desired, this portion of the module also works as a stand-alone adventure. Change the ending so that Ulagor has been dead for a long time and the Hundred are hiding that fact (otherwise they'd lose their privileged position).

The appearance of well-armed newcomers asking pointed questions is hardly unusual in Goldrock. Lots of people pass through here, and many are interested in the tales about Ulagor and his Hill. Odd, exotic, and cryptic strangers mingle freely with the dour merchants of this city. Unless the PCs are breaking the law, they're not likely to draw any unusual attention here at first.

Let them enjoy that for a bit. Give them the sense that Goldrock is a cosmopolitan place where they don't particularly stand out. They can meet with Skond and Marva, they can look for Gowan (a DC 15 Gather Information check will reveal that all 3 are in town, if needed). They'll certainly hear about Ulagor and they can't miss the Hill as it looms over everything.

Most importantly, they ought to see one or two of the Hundred walking around town with their bright gold tabards and their unique maces. This gives the GM an excuse to talk a little about the Hundred, the Hill, and any other background information you want the party to have. In a little while they're going to be storming that self-same Hill. This is your chance to prepare them (and maybe scare them a little).

## A KNIFE IN THE BACK (EL 5)

This encounter is short but important. If it plays out as intended, the PCs will end up with three important beliefs: the Hundred are their enemy, the Hundred are not as dangerous as they seem, and a visit to Ulagor is worth the risk.

It's also essential for the GM to understand that Ulagor sees himself as a prisoner of the Hundred. His body has rotted away, and while he still has a great deal of power, he depends on others to move him from place to place. The leaders of the Hundred help maintain the illusion that Ulagor is whole, but they also refuse to let him leave the cave. He can only further his agenda by traveling to Sriivash's lair. Now the PCs have come to his attention, thanks to their exploits in Chapter 1, and he sees them as his best hope of leaving his longtime home.

Ulagor's opening gambit involves Tolliv, an ambitious captain of the Hundred. As a captain, Tolliv is one of the few people who has ever spoken with the bodiless dragon, and Ulagor has used those conversations to fuel the man's desire to command the Hundred himself. Tolliv believes he has a special rapport with Ulagor; the wyrm has simply persuaded Tolliv to obey his secret commands by offering promises he has no intention of keeping. The captain has done a handful of secret things for Ulagor already, like hiring Gowan. His next assignment is to attack the PCs.

To that end, Ulagor has provided him with four enchanted daggers from the forgotten depths of his hoard. Each dragon-claw blade is imbued with a strange and powerful curse. Ulagor knows that the PCs can only lift the curse with his help, and he believes they're clever enough to figure that fact out; if not, they're not the people he needs anyway. He therefore instructed Tolliv to gather henchmen and attack the PCs with the daggers.

Tolliv, however, is not an idiot. Even a captain of the Hundred could be punished for stabbing someone without provocation. He decides to provoke the PCs into attacking first. And like his draconic mentor, he uses catspaws for his dirty work.

Each of the Hundred serves for nine days and gets the tenth one off; this is called the tenday leave. On any given day, 10 of the Hundred are free to pursue their own pleasures, and they usually spend their time and coin in Goldrock. Thanks to Ulagor's arcane powers, he knows what the PCs look like and roughly where they are. He enlisted four of the Hundred on their tenday to help him "bring down some dangerous enemies of Ulagor." They grumbled about being put to work on their tenday, but the exotic daggers he handed them and the thought of battling some dangerous outsiders placated them.

This encounter works best in a public location. Unless the party is pathologically secretive, they'll end up in a tavern or marketplace before too long, even if they're just passing through. As Ulagor has been planning for a while, you can spring this on the party as soon as you like, even during their first hour in town. The encounter assumes that the PCs are in an open-air market, surrounded by tents and tables and the occasional draft animal.



### Tents & Awnings (Action Zone):

Characters can entangle each other in the plentiful loose cloth of Goldrock's open-air market. A character next to a tent wall or awning can take a standard action to grab the cloth and use it in this fashion. Treat this as a net for purposes of effect, with no non-proficiency penalty. Making such an attack provokes attacks of opportunity.



Tolliv's four subordinates are a mixed lot. Three of them are ordinary members of the Hundred — recruits with enough brawn and discipline to seem imposing, but no real challenge for an *Iron Heroes* PC. That's not how they see themselves, of course, but as the number of challengers to the Hundred has declined over the years they have become a weaker force than their reputation makes them. Most of the 90 rank and file members are little more than town guards with impressive equipment.

The sergeants and captains are another story. These positions are filled by either battle-tested veterans or by mercenaries hired specifically for the task. Sergeant Woastan is the latter, and while he resents losing his day off, he approaches this assignment like a professional. He directs his fellow conspirators to hang back and study the PCs, learning what they can about their tactics and habits, before the four make a concerted attack. They strike the party from all directions, each man striking at a different target with his dagger until he sees blood, at which point he switches to his mace. Passersby and Gold Guards don't intervene in the fight unless the Hundred fall, in which case they converge to kick their erstwhile overlord senseless.

It's quite possible that any members of the Hundred the PCs casually notice turn out to be from these four. Woastan is a large man with long, black hair and a bland expression; Zek is missing one of his front teeth; Dunleff is lean and wiry; Morgel is nearly bald even though he's not yet 30.

### **Zek, Dunleff, and Morgel, soldiers of the Hundred, Male Human Warrior 2:**

CR 1; Medium Humanoid (human); HD 2d8+5; hp 14; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; Defense 14 (+1 class bonus, +3 heavy wooden shield), touch 11, flat-footed 13; DR 1d4/magic; Base Atk +2; Grp +3; Atk Masterwork heavy mace +5 melee (1d8+1) or blade of the basking wyrm +4 melee (1d4+2 plus curse) or light crossbow +2 ranged (1d8/19-20; 80 ft.); Full Atk Masterwork heavy mace +5 melee (1d8+1) or blade of the basking wyrm +4 melee (1d4+2 plus curse) or light crossbow +2 ranged (1d8/19-20; 80 ft.); SV Fort +4, Ref +0, Will -1; Str 13, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8.

**Skills and Feats:** Climb +1, Intimidate +4; Toughness, Weapon Focus 1 (heavy mace).

**Possessions:** Dragon mace (masterwork heavy mace), blade of the basking wyrm, light crossbow, 20 bolts, masterwork scale mail, heavy wooden shield, 3d6 silver pieces.

**Languages:** Common.

### **Sergeant Woastan, a leader of the Hundred, Male Human Man-At-Arms 3:**

CR 3; Medium Humanoid (human); HD 3d4+27; hp 36; Init +6; Spd 20 ft.; Defense 18 (+2 Dex, +3 class levels, +3 heavy wooden shield), touch 15, flat-footed 13; DR 1d4/magic; Base Atk +3; Grp +6; Atk Masterwork heavy mace +8 melee (1d8+3) or blade of the basking wyrm +7 melee (1d4+4 plus curse) or light crossbow +5 ranged (1d8/19-20; 80 ft.); Full Atk Masterwork heavy mace +8 melee (1d8+3) or blade of the

basking wyrm +7 melee (1d4+4 plus curse) or light crossbow +5 ranged (1d8/19-20; 80 ft.); SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +5; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 10.

**Skills and Feats:** Appraise +7, Bluff +6, Climb +4, Craft (metal trinkets/tools) +4, Diplomacy +8, Disguise +0 (+2 in character), Gather Information +8, Intimidate +8, Jump +4, Knowledge (arcana, architecture, dungeoneering, geography, history, local) +7, Listen +8, Move Silently +0, Ride +8, Search +7 (+9 with secret doors and compartments), Sense Motive +8, Spot +8, Survival +2 (+4 with tracks, while underground, or to avoid getting lost or natural hazards), Swim -1; Foe Hammer 1, Foe Hammer 2, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus 1 (heavy mace).

**Traits:** Inspiring Presence, Resilient Toughness.

**Possessions:** Dragon mace (masterwork heavy mace), blade of the basking wyrm, dagger, light crossbow, 20 bolts, masterwork scale mail, heavy steel shield, 3d10 gold pieces.

**Languages:** Common, Draconic.

## DAGGERS & MACES

The Hundred carry an unusual weapon known as a dragon mace. It's their signature item, and all of them train in its use. Woastan and his squad also carry enchanted daggers. This is extremely unusual, given the rarity of magic weapons in the world. Alert observers will also realize that low-ranking members of the Hundred are not normally permitted to carry daggers or other secondary weapons; that privilege is reserved for sergeants, captains, and the commander.

**DRAGON MACE:** A masterwork heavy mace of excellent craftsmanship and considerable age, the head of this mace is an accurate replica of a red dragon's horned head. Each one of these looks nearly identical, as all of them were made in the image of Ulagor. If a man leaves the Hundred for any reason, he must return his mace so his replacement can use it. Those who do not are hunted down by agents paid from Ulagor's hoard.

**BLADE OF THE BASKING WYRM:** Ulagor crafted several of these in his youth, each from one of his own claws. Each is a +1 *dagger* that curses anyone its blade touches (meaning that any successful hit counts, whether or not it overcomes the target's DR from armor). The victim must make a Will save (DC 20) or be struck with a strange enchantment. Until the curse is removed, that person will fall asleep the moment the sun disappears below the horizon, and will not wake up for any reason until the next day's sunrise. This usually comes as a surprise the first night. Upon awaking each morning, the victim must make a Fortitude save (DC 20) or be mildly fatigued until the next sunset, suffering a -2 penalty to Strength and Dexterity.

Over time the enchantment on these daggers has faded. Once a *blade of the basking wyrm* successfully curses a victim, its blade shatters, leaving just a dragonbone hilt behind. Like most *Iron Heroes* magic weapons, these also have a baneful effect on the wielder. Anyone who uses one to make an attack will sleep poorly the next night. His dreams will be full of devouring dragons and magical fire, and he will be fatigued for the next 24 hours after he wakes. If the blade succeeded in cursing someone, the wielder will instead be exhausted for 24 hours when next he wakes, and then fatigued for the 24 hours beyond that.

Woastan will call out orders to the others, probably referring to the PCs as "Ulagor's enemies" and the like. The fighting style of the Hundred is cooperative. They make frequent use of the aid another action, and whenever possible they flank their enemies. Once each one has scored a hit with his dagger, he tries to team up with a comrade to bring down a foe faster. They neither surrender nor retreat.

Tolliv stays away from the fight until it's over; he doesn't want to risk being hurt just yet. He only appears on the scene if the PCs take any of his agents alive. He will demand that such people be turned over to his custody immediately, a demand that will be supported by the crowd and any Gold Guards within earshot. To calm any vengeful PCs, he will promise that the justice of the Hundred will be leveled against the survivors; this isn't the time for a massive brawl. Tolliv will hurry his charges away without thinking to recover the daggers. If it comes to blows, Tolliv's statistics are identical to Woastan's, except without the blade of the basking wyrm.

As is often the case, this commotion will draw Skond and Marva if they aren't already with the PCs. They also think the PCs should leave any survivors of the attack to Captain Tolliv's judgment. They're much more interested in the daggers, at least one of which should have ended up in PC hands.

Skond recognizes the hilt as a dragon's claw, probably from a red dragon in its early adult years, and crafted many years ago. Marva quickly realizes that the blade is cursed in some fashion, and that the curse is tied to the life force of the dragon who created it. Unless that dragon agrees to lift the curse, she says, nothing else can break it. The magics of a powerful dragon are beyond the ken of the younger races. Still, the curse is clearly not lethal and Ulagor himself has not emerged to make a direct attack against the PCs, and Marva wonders aloud if perhaps the ancient wyrm's intentions are something other than harmful.

## A VISIT WITH ULAGOR

The action in this chapter so far has built toward the idea of the PCs doing the impossible — meeting with Ulagor in his lair. As events move forward, the GM should keep this goal in mind. Your players may balk at the prospect of fighting 100 foes just so they can confront a dragon far beyond their power. The first question is, of course, "Are you too scared to play *Iron Heroes*?" If shame isn't a practical option, several other things might motivate the PCs to go where they need to.

**THE CURSE:** A powerful reason, and the one Ulagor himself is relying on. Although this curse doesn't exactly harm the victim, it makes a normal life difficult and a mighty adventurer's life impossible. Skond or Marva might also speculate about the reason that a powerful dragon

like Ulagor would use such a nonlethal curse, rather than any of the powerful magics he undoubtedly commands.

**REVENGE:** The Hundred attacked the PCs for no discernable reason. Perhaps the party wants to pay them back. This at least gets them inside the first gate of the Hill, and once they're there, the only way out is to go up.

**GOWAN:** He's here inquiring about the Hill. PCs who spend any time researching things will undoubtedly hear about the bone-clad stranger who came in asking those same questions just yesterday. His presence might convince the party to act quickly, before he does whatever he's undoubtedly doing. Finding Gowan is difficult, as he has taken rooms at four different inns, none of which he actually sleeps in. If time permits, he'll have made his own failed attempt at climbing the Hill and be found by the PCs, as described below.

**CURIOSITY:** Lots of weird things have happened lately. Perhaps the party just decides to knock at the gate and ask politely if they can have some answers, maybe with a little urging from Marva and Skond. The two are too nervous to go within sight of the gate, but up to that point they do their best to persuade the PCs that this is a challenge worth undertaking.

**NOBILITY:** The Hundred are despots. Noble PCs might want to overthrow them for the sake of Goldrock's people. Although the common folk aren't likely to aid such an enterprise, they will be grateful if it's done. That gratitude will be tempered by concern over how they will protect themselves without Ulagor, of course.

## AGAINST THE HUNDRED

However they get here, the PCs will pass the gate and start climbing Ulagor's Hill. It's not an easy task. However, once the first gate closes behind them, they'll discover they have little choice but to go forward. The odds are steep, but the PCs have two important (if untrustworthy) allies. Gowan is also trying to ascend the Hill. He's willing to make common cause with the PCs, at least until they reach the top. It would be helpful to the GM if he survives that long.

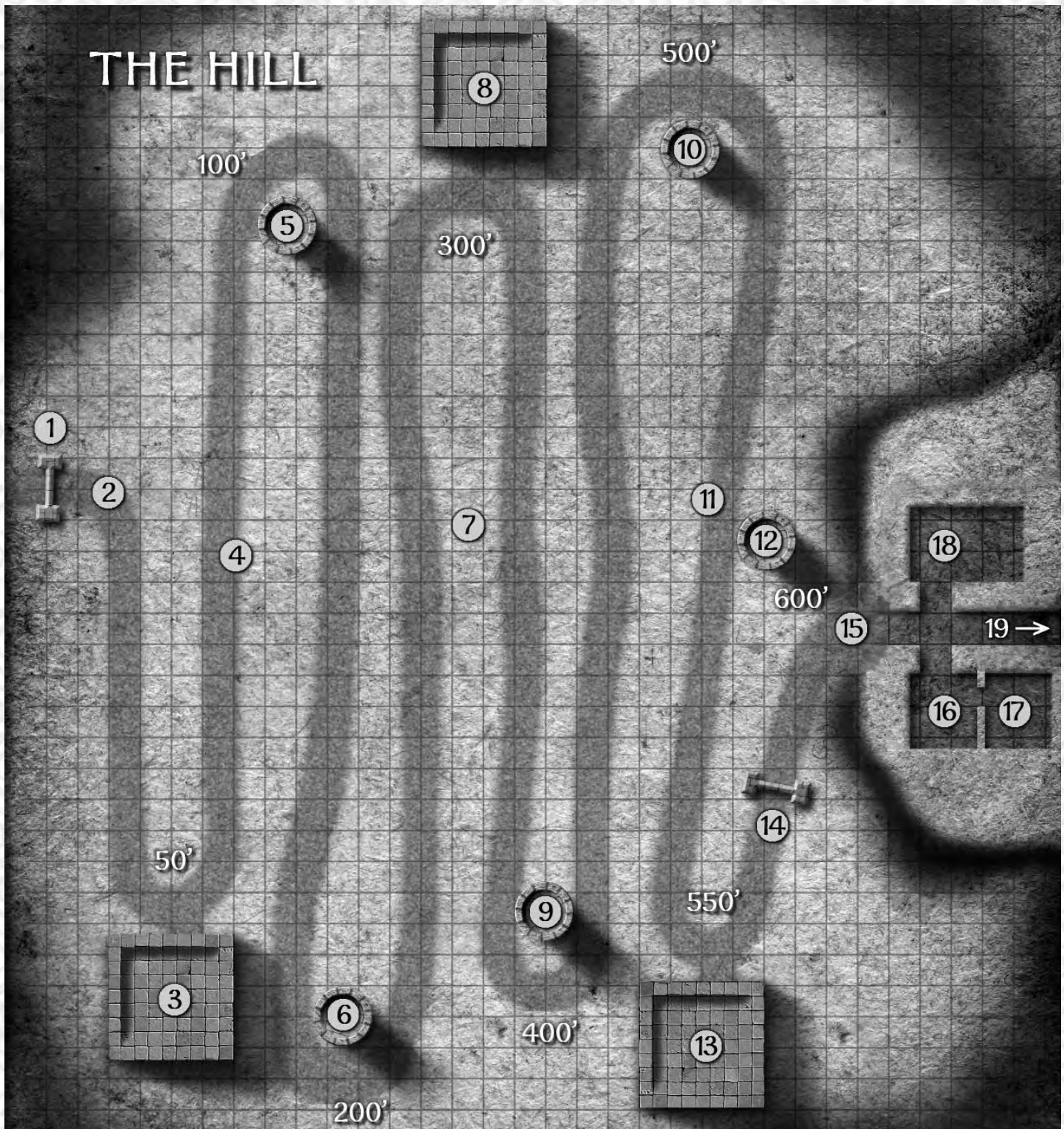
The other ally is Ulagor himself. Tired of his bodiless condition, the ancient wyrm is contriving to bring the PCs to him so he can escape his self-made prison. He will offer aid in small ways, but not enough to overwhelm the Hundred. Ulagor wants the PCs to prove themselves so he can take their measure.

The Hill is a quarter-mile east of Goldrock. It rises sheer, black, and impossibly steep from the sleepy earth. Most of its faces are nearly vertical in slope. Only the western face has a gentler rise, and this is where the Hundred have made their home. Their three great fortresses are visible from the city, as is the massive gate at the foot of the Hill.

A shadow at the top of the hill indicates where Ulagor's lair is found. Occasionally a jet of sulfur-colored air escapes it, and the sound of mighty lungs breathing blows down the Hill when the wind is right.

Passing the gate is the only practical way to ascend the Hill (see the Climbing the Hill sidebar for reasons why). The Hundred don't normally admit strangers to their

territory. Clever players can find ways around this problem — pretending to deliver the weekly gift of food for Ulagor, disguising themselves as members of the Hundred, and so on. More straightforward types will simply climb the gate and face whatever they find beyond it. In a pinch, you can have the Hundred grudgingly admit the PCs; all that matters is that they get inside.





## CLIMBING THE HILL

So why not just climb the Hill and avoid the Hundred? Because the Hill is far more deadly. It's a small mountain of enchanted obsidian, and those who try scaling it would be better off facing a platoon of axe-wielding ogres.

It requires a difficult Climb check (DC 25) to climb any portion of the Hill. Its slick, smooth surface foils most people. Those who do manage to ascend soon learn that the Hill defends itself against interlopers. What looks like a sheet of black glass turns out to be riddled with jagged edges that slice at climbers without providing any support. As soon as a climber successfully scales the Hill, and every minute thereafter, she must make a Reflex save (DC 25) or take 2d4 points of damage from these wicked protrusions. Note that every time a climber takes damage, she must make another Climb check at the original DC or fall, taking falling damage as appropriate. In essence, the entire Hill is a large condition zone.

Most people who try climbing the Hill barely leave the ground before falling back to earth, clutching their bloody hands and feet. Some intrepid souls think equipment will spare them this fate. The Hill thinks otherwise. Any weight-bearing rope touching the Hill automatically takes 2d4 points of damage per round, enough to sever it within moments. Pitons aren't much more useful.

The Climb DC to drive pitons into the Hill (or to carve handholds from it) is 20 each time. Every piton slips free of the Hill within 1d4 minutes of being placed. An empty piton hole can be used like a handhold, but any handholds in the Hill cause 1d4 damage to the user.

It's possible to use padding, gauntlets, and the like to protect yourself against the Hill. However, anyone this swaddled also loses a great deal of maneuverability. A climber with sufficient protection to ward off the Hill's assault has a +10 DC on all Climb checks.

These conditions apply to anyone who leaves the path that connects the fortresses of the Hundred. A short scramble across the Hill's face is possible if someone wishes to improve their tactical position. The Hundred themselves do not climb the Hill except in dire circumstances, and clever players who don't mind cuts and scrapes can use this to their advantage.

The path itself is uniformly 20 feet wide. It's also 15 feet deep — when he raised the Hill, Ulagor decided to sink the path low enough that humans would have trouble climbing out. The floor of the path is the only obsidian surface here that doesn't scrape away at anything touching it.



Before going on to the obstacles of the Hill, it helps to understand the basic layout and organization of the Hundred. They are separated into three distinct companies who patrol different sections of the path leading up to Ulagor's cave. Each company consists of 30 soldiers, two sergeants, and one captain. The group is overseen by a

commander who dwells in Ulagor's cave, as do the captains in recent years. Three fortresses house the remainder of the respective companies.

Although the Hundred are all decent fighters, they rely on their numbers in combat. As soon as combat starts, they charge at their foes and try to surround them. They routinely use the aid another action to help a comrade strike a target. When possible, they flank enemies. All of them use the *Foe Hammer* feats to maximum effect. On the Hill, if the Hundred don't have at least a 2-to-1 numbers advantage over their enemies, they make a fighting withdrawal while calling for reinforcements.

One weakness of their style is its heavy reliance on melee. The Hundred only use their crossbows when they cannot find skulls to crack with their maces. They are not trained in close-combat marksmanship (i.e. they lack the *Precise Shot* 2 feat, giving them a -4 penalty to fire into melee). This can be a disadvantage to them in the tight confines of the path.



## THE HUNDRED

For your convenience, the statistics for ordinary members of the Hundred are reprinted here. These are adequate to describe everyone except for the commander, who is presented along with Ulagor later in this chapter.

### Soldier of the Hundred (90), Male Human Warrior 2:

CR 1; Medium Humanoid (human); HD 2d8+5; hp 14; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; Defense 14 (+1 class bonus, +3 heavy wooden shield), touch 11, flat-footed 13; DR 1d4/magic; Base Atk +2; Grp +3; Atk Masterwork heavy mace +5 melee (1d8+1) or light crossbow +2 ranged (1d8/19-20; 80 ft.); Full Atk Masterwork heavy mace +5 melee (1d8+1) or light crossbow +2 ranged (1d8/19-20; 80 ft.); SV Fort +4, Ref +0, Will -1; Str 13, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8.

**Skills and Feats:** Climb +1, Intimidate +4; Toughness, Weapon Focus 1 (heavy mace).

**Possessions:** Dragon mace (masterwork heavy mace), light crossbow, 20 bolts, masterwork scale mail (DR 1d4/magic), heavy wooden shield, 3d6 silver pieces.

**Languages:** Common.

### Sergeants and Captains of the Hundred (9), Male Human Man-At-Arms 3:

CR 3; Medium Humanoid (human); HD 3d4+27; hp 36; Init +6; Spd 20 ft.; Defense 18 (+2 Dex, +3 class levels, +3 heavy wooden shield), touch 15, flat-footed 13; DR 1d4/magic; Base Atk +3; Grp +6; Atk Masterwork heavy mace +8 melee (1d8+3) or light crossbow +5 ranged (1d8/19-20; 80 ft.); Full Atk Masterwork heavy mace +8 melee (1d8+3) or light crossbow +5 ranged (1d8/19-20; 80 ft.); SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +5; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 10.



**Skills and Feats:** Appraise +7, Bluff +6, Climb +4, Craft (metal trinkets/tools) +4, Diplomacy +8, Disguise +0 (+2 in character), Gather Information +8, Intimidate +8, Jump +4, Knowledge (arcana, architecture, dungeoneering, geography, history, local) +7, Listen +8, Move Silently +0, Ride +8, Search +7 (+9 with secret doors and compartments), Sense Motive +8, Spot +8, Survival +2 (+4 with tracks, while underground, or to avoid getting lost or natural hazards), Swim -1; Foe Hammer 1, Foe Hammer 2, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus 1 (heavy mace).

**Traits:** Inspiring Presence, Resilient Toughness.

**Possessions:** Dragon mace (masterwork heavy mace), dagger, light crossbow, 20 bolts, masterwork scale mail, heavy steel shield, 3d10 gold pieces.

**Languages:** Common, Draconic.



## 1. THE GATE (EL 5)

To ascend the Hill, one must first pass this gate. It's a huge slab of solid granite, 20 feet square and several feet thick, with the face of Ulagor carved in relief on the outside. It doubles as a guard station. The inside of the gate has a recessed ledge four feet below the top edge. A wooden ladder lets the guards climb to and from this post. Two heavy chains are attached to the center of the slab's inside surface, and they usually lie coiled at its base.

Four guards from the First Company (which patrols the lowest third of the Hill) man the gate at all times. Two of them are supposed to keep a constant vigil from the ledge while the other two watch up the path to make sure they don't miss an intruder. It rarely works this way. The ledge is uncomfortable and few people come by to bother the gate guards, so it is often unmanned. At any time, 1d4–2 guards are keeping watch on the ledge (a result of less than 1 means no guards are up there). Those below the gate are seated on folding stools or blankets, sharing stories or gambling for silver pieces.

A brass bell the size of a large helm hangs from a tripod near the seated guards. Bells like this are used to communicate with the various keeps and towers scattered across the Hill. When the gate must be opened, the guards ring the bell "twice-two," a pattern of two fast rings followed by an equal period of silence, then two more fast rings. This is repeated until the bell at the First Company's fortress rings the same pattern. Shortly afterward, several men from this fortress appear to help open the gate.

This granite slab is heavy, and it's engineered so that the strength of many men is needed to open it. Opening the slab from either side is a DC 36 Strength check. The Hundred manage this by setting 5 men to pull each of the two thick chains; one man essentially takes 20 on his check, while the other nine use the aid another action to help him. This unpopular

but necessary duty is performed at least twice daily. The gate is opened an hour after sunrise for the day's deliveries, and again at sunset for any late goods, as well as for those men going to or from their tenday leave. Whenever the gate is opened, two additional warriors stand at the ready with their weapons drawn in case someone tries to charge through.

How the PCs deal with the gate is their decision. It can be climbed from the outside without much difficulty, thanks to the relief of Ulagor (DC 15 Climb check). Daring souls can instead scale the Hill itself and drop down on the surprised warriors below. Cunning PCs can come up with numerous plans for disguising or concealing themselves and getting the warriors to open the gate. In this instance, if the players have an idea that's at least remotely plausible, let it work. This is where they need to be.

That said, unless they have a clever ruse and some good Charisma skill checks, they will probably end up in a fight with the guards here. The Hundred are being paid quite well to take their tasks seriously. Any strangers who can't justify their presence will be attacked. If the guards here feel out-matched by intruders, they try to reach the bell and "ring a three," the pattern of three sharp rings that signals an invader. To illustrate the danger these bells pose to the PCs, consider having the frightened warrior knock over the bell at first and then hurry to right it, mumbling about ringing a warning to the towers.



## BELLS OF THE HILL

The Hundred use heavy brass bells to communicate across the Hill. Every gate, tower, and fortress has one of these bells in a prominent location. Warriors are instructed to "ring a three" and warn the rest of the Hundred if they encounter any kind of threat. If warriors hear another station ring a three, they are to do the same and then prepare to defend the path from invaders.

This poses a serious threat to the PCs. Once the bells start ringing, stealth is almost useless in the cramped quarters of the Hill's only path. Fortunately, most of the Hundred are bored by their long stretches of inactivity. When they encounter the PCs, they are inclined to attack immediately, only resorting to the bell if they're being slain or driven back. Securing and silencing the bells is an interesting secondary challenge for the PCs to face.

All the sections below are written as if the PCs have not triggered such an alarm. If they have, assume that all fortress gates are guarded by three warriors and a sergeant, that the other sergeant has assembled the rest of the soldiers in the courtyard behind them, and that all sleepers have awakened and joined the rest of their companies. If you want to bleed a little strength from the fortresses, have them each send out an extra patrol of four warriors to walk the path and dispatch an extra soldier or two to each tower.





Beating the four warriors here is a CR 5 encounter. If the PCs manage to talk or otherwise trick their way past the gate, award them XP for a CR 5 encounter. It's possible that the PCs will pick a fight with the 12 warriors needed to open the gate; if they manage to win this wild battle, it's the equivalent of a CR 8 encounter. In this last case, they also make enough noise that the First Company's fortress hears the commotion and goes on alert. Although they don't ring a three immediately, one of the sergeants posts himself at the bell to do just that at the first sign of danger.

## 2. THE PATH

As stated, the path is 20 feet broad and 15 feet deep. Its floor is smooth and safe but its walls are as dangerous as any other surface on the Hill. Unless the sun is directly overhead, these high walls provide extra shadows and grant a +2 bonus to any Hide check made within 5 feet of them. A hooded lantern has been bolted to the walls every 50 feet. At night these lanterns are kept lit by the patrols that walk this path, meaning that it's actually easier to sneak along the path during the day than in the dead of night.

Patrols do not walk the path between the gate and the First Company's fortress.

## 3. THE FIRST COMPANY'S FORTRESS


Each of the three square keeps on the side of the Hill is built along similar lines, although they all serve slightly different purposes. The First Company is most likely to face a determined attack, so its fortress is designed to support a heavy assault company. The layout given here is generally applicable to all three fortresses; changes specific to each one will be noted as needed.

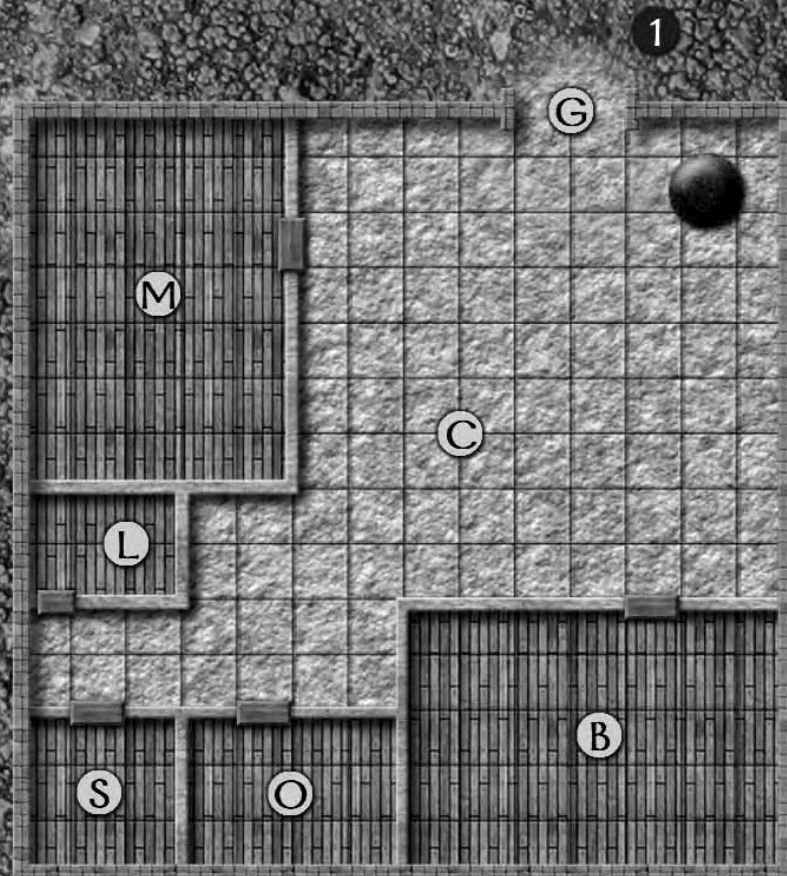
With great difficulty and several casualties, the first Hundred long ago hacked out broad pits next to the path so they could build their fortifications. A large stone structure squats within this jagged crater, its blocky, gray surface providing a strange contrast with the smooth obsidian all around. This is a normal sort of keep, the kind used as a border fortress by kings and nations everywhere, and the Hundred find its normality comforting.

The crater for each fortress is about 10 feet deep, while the keep's walls are 20 feet high, so from outside it looks like a half-grown building poking its head out of the ground. A stone ramp leads from the gate down to the level of the path. Inside the wall, the floor beneath is made of rectangular granite blocks to

# FORTRESSES OF THE HUNDRED

- 1** Ballista  
(3a only)
- G** Fortress Gate  
(3b, 8a, 13a)
- C** Courtyard  
(3c, 8b, 13b)
- B** Barracks  
(3d, 8c, 13c)
- M** Mess Hall  
(3e, 8d, 13d)
- O** Officer's Quarters  
(3f, 8e, 13e)
- S** Shed  
(3g, 8f, 13f)
- L** Latrine  
(3h, 8g, 13g)

 = 5 ft.



## WATCHTOWERS



hide / canvas  
covering on poles

3-foot wooden walls

keep the sharp obsidian at bay. A wide courtyard is used for training and sparring.

Several buildings face onto it. Chief among them is the barracks shared by the 30 common soldiers of this company. A long mess hall and kitchen is nearby. A small building that serves as combination barracks and office for the company's leaders is next to the barracks; with the captains living in Ulagor's cavern now, the two sergeants have a great deal of space for themselves. Another small building is used for any number of things, including storing equipment or jailing prisoners. Finally, a two-hole latrine is near the mess hall; Ulagor somehow arranged for the waste matter to disappear rather than fester, but nobody wants to know the details.

### 3a. THE BALLISTA (EL 0 or 3)

As befits the main line of defense, the First Company has a piece of siege equipment to use against the really tough invaders. They installed a ballista outside their fortress and keep it aimed down the path toward the front gate. It's only manned if someone rings a three or otherwise sounds the alarm; its main purpose is intimidation. It does attract a certain kind of soldier, though, and there's a 1 in 6 chance that two warriors of the First Company are out here admiring it when the PCs come up this stretch of path. If they're present and see the PCs, they will try to use their nifty toy against the intruders.

The ballista is a crossbow of Huge size, fixed to fire down the path. Its user has a -4 penalty to hit due to its size. It does 3d8 points of piercing damage, threatens a critical on a 19 or 20, and has a range increment of 120 feet. A dozen spare bolts are stacked next to the ballista; loading one of the massive things requires two full-round actions from one person, or one full-round action from two people.

The ballista is 5 feet across. It can be turned around only if it's lifted up and manually moved to its new facing. This requires a DC 28 Strength check.

If the PCs end up fighting the warriors here, treat it as a CR 3 encounter because of the danger posed by the ballista.

### 3b. THE FORTRESS GATE (possible EL 2 and possible EL 4)

The fortress has a gate which is rarely closed. A pair of guards is supposed to stand watch here, under orders to hurry for the nearby bell if they see anything suspicious, but when the PCs first come this way they're not at their post. If it's daytime, the two guards have drifted into the courtyard to watch some of their comrades spar. After dark they have gotten involved in a loud, low-stakes dice game by a roaring fire. Either way, the PCs have the option of trying to sneak past unnoticed.

But that wouldn't be in keeping with a real *Iron Heroes* game. If the PCs try to sneak past, have one of the derelict guards glance back and just notice them as they move past. "Hey! Who's there?" he will shout, and the two assigned guards will

hurry out the fortress gate to see what's happening. They will demand to know the PCs' business here, attacking unless given an amazing excuse. This commotion will draw at least 3 more warriors led by a sergeant, and then the rest of the First Company, which will probably lead to someone ringing a three 10 rounds after the PCs first sneak past.

On the other hand, if the PCs decide to investigate the fortress, they will see a large crowd in the courtyard. This is the default assumption.

### 3c. THE COURTYARD (EL 5)

Whether these members of the Hundred are training or gambling depends on the time of day. Either way, the crowd numbers 6 warriors and one sergeant. They are distracted by their activities and effectively take a 10 on any Spot or Listen checks to notice the PCs enter. They will only challenge the PCs if they attempt to enter one of the buildings. When and if they notice the PCs, the entire group charges to the attack. After 1 round, the sergeant will order one of the warriors to go ring a three. Unless the bell is rung, nobody in the fortress will realize they're under attack, as both sparring and the dice game made a great deal of noise anyway.

### 3d. THE BARRACKS (EL 2 or 4)

Six warriors are sleeping here at all times. Another three are reading, chatting softly, or otherwise keeping quiet to not wake their comrades. None of the warriors here are wearing armor, but all can seize shields with little effort. The conscious ones will attack the PCs and yell to wake up their comrades; it takes a sleeping warrior 3 rounds to wake up, get oriented, and arm himself with mace and shield.

If the warrior Zek was killed or otherwise incapacitated during the attack in the market, only five sleepers are present here.

Thirty bunks are found here, stacked in pairs. A small chest sits at the foot of each. Most of the chests are locked (DC 20 Open Lock check) and each contains coins, small gems, and personal effects worth 3d6 gp each. Weapons, shields, and armor are kept here on sturdy wooden racks. Anyone from the First Company described as not being armed or armored has left his gear here.

### 3e. THE MESS HALL (EL 3)

A quartet of rowdy warriors, having been kicked out of the barracks for disturbing the sleepers, is in here making merry. They have a mandolin and a liberated keg of ale, and they're singing bawdy songs whenever the PCs stop by, at which point they give a whoop of delight and scramble for their maces.

These warriors have maces and shields handy, and each is wearing pieces of his armor rather than the whole suit. Treat this as identical to wearing hastily-donned armor (an additional -1 armor check penalty and a -1 to the armor's DR, resulting in a possible 0). Also, as they've been hitting the ale, each one of these warriors must make a Fortitude save (DC 15) when first injured. If he fails, he's considered flat-footed for the next 2 rounds while he tries to get his bearings.



### 3f. OFFICERS' QUARTERS (EL 3)

Two beds, a large table, and six chairs stand in this room along with a pair of footlockers and two armor racks. One sergeant is in here, studying a map with one of his warriors. Both are fully armed and armored, and will attack the PCs on sight, yelling for help. If the PCs outnumber them, the sergeant will order his companion to ring a three, attempting to hold the PCs at bay while the soldier escapes.

A handful of interesting items are also here: bone-studded leather armor, a masterwork battleaxe, and a longbow with arrows made of bone. This is Gowan's gear. The man himself is in the shed nearby, having been captured while trying to sneak past the gate earlier today. See area 3g for more details.

The map is irrelevant to the adventure, but it can serve as a seed for future adventures of your own. As a default make it a map of the mysterious and remote country of Liamien. Each sergeant's footlocker has coins, gems, and personal effects worth 3d10 gp.

### 3g. THE SHED

Normally this building is empty. It currently serves as a prison cell for the notorious Gowan, its wooden door secured by a stout lock (Open Lock DC 25). His ambition got the better of him earlier in the day, and he tried to climb past the gate without being noticed. His whimpers of pain from his bloody hands gave him away, and the guards brought him in without much fuss. The sergeants have decided to keep him locked up for a couple days without food before questioning him, on the grounds that he'll be in a mood to talk by then.

Gowan will pound on the door and yell for release when the PCs come by, having heard their footsteps. He'll be taken aback if they open the door. Although he'd planned to lure them in here somehow, this isn't how he saw things playing out. But he's not too proud to take advantage of the opportunity.

The mercenary will offer to join forces with the PCs, pointing out that they need all the help they can get as they climb the Hill. He's a little ragged from his obsidian misadventure (having lost 12 hp) but otherwise in good spirits. Gowan will share some information if the PCs wish, although he says "professional ethics" prevent him from revealing his mission or the identity of his employer. "A group of nice ladies in the Viper Swamp are curious about dragons, and that's all I can tell you," is his answer. Assuming the PCs take him up on his offer, he'll be a cooperative member of the group as they fight their way up to Ulagor's lair. Once inside, things may change, as outlined there.

If the PCs kill Gowan, award them XP for a CR 1 encounter. Unarmed and unarmored, Gowan isn't a significant challenge.

### 3h. THE LATRINE

There isn't much to say about this building, although generations of the Hundred have left a variety of graffiti and carvings on the walls.

### 4. FIRST PATROL (EL 5)

Several squads of soldiers patrol the path at all hours. It has been many years since anything managed to sneak past the gate and the First Company's fortress, but the practice has continued. Today it will be tested.

A patrol of the Hundred is composed of four warriors — sergeants and captains never assign themselves this dull duty — who walk a designated section of the path over and over for eight hours. This particular quartet keeps the path between the First Company's fortress and the first watchtower of the Second Company.

Each patrol's duty is to make sure no intruders are hiding here and that nothing is climbing the Hill. To the latter end, they have a 20-foot wooden ladder, taking turns carrying it between two of them. Every fifty paces they stop, lean the ladder against a wall, and send one of their number up to look over the sides of the path and see what's on the Hill. At night they are also responsible for keeping the lanterns lit, and every man carries flint and steel as well as several flasks of oil.

As a rule, these patrols welcome a fight. This is a tedious duty and careless climbers often end up with wounded hands, so a little action is just what they crave.

Hiding from a patrol is difficult. The path has no natural alcoves or other cover. They could be ambushed at a corner, but as the map shows, every corner is protected by either a fortress or a watchtower. It's up to the PCs' ingenuity to either bypass or destroy these patrols without alerting anyone else. While the patrols have no signaling devices, one of them is designated as a runner. If a superior enemy force is overcoming a patrol, the runner's job is to run to the nearest fortification and tell them to ring a three.

### 5. WATCHTOWER (EL 3)

As with the fortress, this wooden structure stands in a crater with an outlet that slopes to meet the path. Towers are little more than four legs supporting a platform 25 feet up. A rope ladder dangles from a trapdoor in the center of the platform, a low wooden wall surrounds its edge to provide partial cover, and a canvas canopy 10 feet over the platform protects the two guards here from sun and rain.

A tower guard's duty is to watch the sky and monitor for climbers. While this duty is as uneventful as patrolling the path, it's much preferred by the troops because it requires less walking. Sergeants sometimes take this duty, although none are on tower detail when the PCs come here. Each tower has a brass bell and they are instructed to ring a three if they see signs of a threat.

Tower guards are not particularly vigilant about events on the path. They trust the patrols to take care of events

on the ground. Occasionally a patrolman will fall off his ladder with a great deal of clanging and shouting, so the tower guards aren't necessarily going to notice if a fight breaks out beyond their line of sight. Their height gives them a +2 bonus to Spot checks against anything on the path or the side of the Hill, and a -2 penalty to Listen checks against the same.

If threatened, one guard pulls up the rope ladder as quickly as possible while the other grabs his crossbow and opens fire on those below. Once the ladder is up, they ring the bell to alert their comrades.

## 6. WATCHTOWER (EL 3)

The same as encounter 5, except manned by soldiers of the Second Company. This marks the boundary between First Company and Second Company foot patrols.

## 7. SECOND PATROL (EL 5)

This patrol is identical to the one described in encounter 4. Soldiers of the Second Company walk the route between its two watchtowers, carrying their ladder and grumbling about their boring duty. The PCs will likely live their day up considerably.

## 8. THE SECOND COMPANY'S FORTRESS

This is identical in most respects to the First Company's fortress. The Second Company is home to such craftsmen as the Hundred have, so more tools and raw materials are found here. As desired, the warriors here can have 5 ranks in a Craft skill in place of either their Climb or Intimidate ranks. The work done here is primarily maintenance and basic repairs. More complicated jobs are sent out to Goldrock; on occasion tradesmen must be brought to the Hill itself, an occurrence which makes everyone involved nervous.

### 8a. THE FORTRESS GATE (EL 2)

The two guards here are keeping a better watch than those below. Both of them are standing at the base of the stone ramp leading up to the keep itself. If attacked, both try to withdraw inside the gate, at which point one will keep the attackers at bay while the other runs for the bell and alerts the people in the courtyard.

### 8b. THE COURTYARD (EL 7)

Eight people are present here, all warriors. Each man is rolling a large barrel across the courtyard. The warriors have their maces at their belts, but their shields are in a large pile by the barracks and they wear no armor (giving them Defense 10 to start). Every man's scale mail is inside one of these barrels, along with a large quantity of sand. Rolling armor around in a sand-filled barrel is an excellent way of scouring it clean — and it also creates a dynamic battle environment.

The warriors will leap to attack any strangers. Most will draw maces and rush the foe, although two have the presence of mind to hurry for their shields first. They will use the barrels as weapons if the occasion arises.



### Heavy Barrels (Triggered Event Zone):

Triggered when a character makes a DC 10 Strength check to roll or push a barrel; anyone in its path must make a DC 15 Reflex save or be battered for 1d8 points of damage.



### 8c. THE BARRACKS (EL 2 or 4)

Seven warriors sleep here (six if Dunleff is slain or otherwise gone). Their rest is fitful thanks to the noise made by their comrades in the courtyard, and they only have a -4 penalty to Listen checks, instead of the standard -10 for sleeping characters. As with the other barracks, each man has a footlocker with 3d6 gp worth of personal effects; all of these are locked (Open Lock DC 20). The Second Company is a little more concerned about its property than the First Company.

### 8d. THE MESS HALL (EL 5)

The two sergeants are here. They were making a hearty pot of stew for their hard-working soldiers, and while it bubbles over the cookfire, they're trading war stories. Both men are currently wearing partial armor, a compromise between the need to appear professional and the heat of the kitchen (extra -1 to armor penalty checks and -1 to armor DR). Their shields are leaning on the benches next to them. The most interesting thing about them is that one man's tabard is absolutely spotless while the other's looks as if an entire pot of stew has already been emptied over it.

If confronted by strangers, the sergeants will draw their maces and demand immediate surrender. Anything other than obedience will result in a fight, quite possibly involving the cauldron of boiling stew.

### 8e. OFFICERS' QUARTERS

The most remarkable thing about this room is that one sergeant is clearly a slob while the other is just as obviously a neat freak. One can clearly see a line down the middle of the room where one man's territory stops and the other starts. It extends to their unworn pieces of armor — one set is neatly arrayed at the foot of the bed, while the other is strewn across the sergeant's territory. Each sergeant's footlocker has coins, gems, and personal effects worth 3d10 gp.

### 8f. THE SHOP (EL 1)

The door to this small building is open, letting the warrior inside get some fresh air while he works. This warrior has some training in woodworking, and he's currently building a new ladder to replace one damaged when a patrolman fell off it and snapped it in half. His mace is near at hand, but if confronted he'll do his best to get to the bell and ring a three.

## 8g. THE LATRINE (EL 1/2)

The last warrior of this company is here, coping with a bout of dysentery. His armor and weapons are back at the barracks and the man himself is sickened, so he poses no challenge. At this point, he might prefer death to his intestinal problems.

## 9. WATCHTOWER (EL 3)

The same as encounter 5, except manned by soldiers of the Second Company. This marks the boundary between Second Company and Third Company foot patrols.

## 10. WATCHTOWER (EL 3)

The same as encounter 5, except manned by soldiers of the Third Company.

## 11. THIRD PATROL (EL 5)

This patrol is identical to the one described in encounter 4. Soldiers of the Third Company walk the route between the watchtower in encounter 10 and their company's fortress. While the PCs are dealing with this patrol, a loud hissing sound from the hilltop is heard, and a jet of yellow sulfurous air comes from the lair.

## 12. WATCHTOWER (EL 3)

The same as encounter 5, except manned by soldiers of the Third Company. By now Ulagor's lair is not far, and the sound of heavy breathing can be heard every few minutes.

## 13. THE THIRD COMPANY'S FORTRESS

This is identical in most respects to the First Company's fortress. The Third Company has a few members who are familiar with the arcane arts — not to the degree of being arcanists, but enough that the place has a slightly eldritch feeling. People with an interest in dragons, or in ancient magic, seem to end up in the Third Company. The assembled lore of the Hundred is found here, which might be of interest to some.

## 13a. THE FORTRESS GATE (EL 1 or 2)

One of the two guards here is convinced that he heard something, and he's wandered away from his post. The guard is 100 feet down the path. As soon as he sees the party he yelps and then bolts for the gate. Unless he's stopped, the PCs will have a hard time dealing with this fortress.

His comrade is a sour and cynical person who doesn't believe there are invaders here unless either someone rings a three or he sees them bearing down on him.

## 13b. THE COURTYARD

The Third Company's courtyard is empty. All the soldiers are elsewhere. However, every round there's a 1 in 4 chance that someone glances out a window or door and notices any intruders.

## 13c. THE BARRACKS (EL 10)

Nobody is sleeping here. One of their sergeants, a bull-like man named Gorrin, has decided that the company needs to be disciplined for some reason or another. He has a full 12 warriors here standing at attention in full battle gear. The sound of his yelling can be heard all across the fortress. Apparently he feels that certain "maggots" and "dung-eaters" are a "disgrace to the uniform." Everyone here will welcome a chance to break the tension by busting some heads — and in the confusion, two or three of them will turn on Gorrin.

This is a dangerous encounter if the PCs just waltz in and stand firm. Parties that don't employ some sort of tactics here are going to be looking for new members soon.

As with the other barracks, each man has a footlocker with 3d6 gp worth of personal effects; all of these are locked (Open Lock DC 20).

## 13d. THE MESS HALL (EL 1)

One of the Hundred who particularly annoyed Gorrin has been set to work peeling potatoes here. He has no armor, his only weapon is a paring knife (−4 to hit, 1d2 damage), and at this point he doesn't care if the PCs burn the place to the ground.

## 13e. OFFICERS' QUARTERS (EL 1, 3, or 5)

What the PCs find here depends on the outcome of the ambush in Goldrock. At least one warrior is here, and if Woastan or Morgel survived, they are as well. Whatever happens, the people here will attack the PCs and attempt to summon reinforcements.

A lone warrior is here to get revenge on Gorrin. He's supposed to be peeling potatoes, but instead he used his mace to smash open the sergeant's footlocker, and he's currently rifling through Gorrin's belongings. He has no equipment other than his mace, but can quickly grab Woastan's battered steel shield (unless the PCs kept it for themselves). Each sergeant's footlocker has the usual coins, gems, and personal effects worth 3d10 gp each.

If Woastan and/or Morgel are present, they and the other warrior will instead be sitting here talking. Specifically, talking about the failed ambush of the PCs. All the men here are fully armed in this case, and they quickly move to attack when the PCs appear.

## 13f. THE LIBRARY (EL 3)

The door to this room is locked with a huge and heavy padlock; only Captain Tolliv has the key. Not only is it a hard lock to open (Open Lock DC 30), the lock is trapped. A failed attempt to open it causes a hail of darts to launch themselves at whoever's in front of the lock.

Inside, this room is clean and neat. Several bookshelves stand along the walls, each half-full of tomes and scrolls. A reading table, two chairs, and several candles complete the furnishing. The books cover a broad array of topics with a particular emphasis on arcana, particularly dragons. Taken as a whole, the library grants a +2 bonus to any Knowledge (arcana) or Knowledge (history) check, and an additional +2 if the topic in question concerns dragons.

**RAIN OF DARTS TRAP:** CR 3; mechanical; touch trigger; no reset; Atk +15 ranged (3d6); Search DC 16; Disable Device DC 24.

### 13g. THE LATRINE

Again, there is nothing of interest here.

## 14. THE HIGH GATE (EL 5)

This is the last defense before Ulagor's lair. At this point the occasional rumbles of Ulagor's breath are deafening. The gate is more properly called a barricade. It consists of a row of upright metal bars, like a portcullis or a cell door, with a section in the middle that swings open to permit passage.

Four warriors guard this gate. They stand on the near side of it — only the captains are permitted to pass through the gate itself. The four will fight like rabid dogs to protect their post from outsiders. They assume that anyone who's made it this far is dangerous indeed, and they concentrate their efforts on offense. These warriors would rather kill one enemy than wound two.

## 15. THE CAVE MOUTH

Sulfur hangs heavy in the air here, but the sound of breathing has faded away. The cave mouth is a perfect semicircle with a 40-foot radius. The smooth, obsidian walls seem to suck light away, making it hard to determine distance, but the faint glow of fire comes from somewhere inside. A straight tunnel heads into the darkness.

Twenty feet inside the tunnel, something strange is found. A giant bellows, the kind used in huge black-smithing operations, stands with its nozzle facing the cave mouth. Ropes are tied to the top handle as if to make pumping it easier. Several pails of sulfur stand nearby. The bellows, if pulled, make a sound much like a giant creature breathing. This helps make it seem that Ulagor is still mobile and active.

## 16. THE COMMANDER'S CHAMBERS (EL 7)

Commander Vhoorl, leader of the Hundred, makes his headquarters here. The three company captains also live in Ulagor's cave. Vhoorl and Sethnin, captain of the First Company, are in the front room preparing for a surprise inspection of their forces. They are fully armed and armored, and they will automatically see any PCs who

pass by the entrance. Vhoorl and Sethnin attack immediately, shouting for the other two captains to come to their aid.

One captain does — Lurra of the Second Company, who was working on the gliders in area 18 with Tolliv. He runs to aid his commander at top speed, possibly taking the PCs from behind while they crowd through Vhoorl's doorway. Tolliv is consumed by greed and cowardice. Instead of helping his fellows, he prepares a retreat as described below, hoping to return and claim command once his fellows are weakened or slain.

## 17. ULAGOR (possible EL 5)

The rooms here were once used by Ulagor's slaves. They have been much improved with treasures "donated" by Goldrock and its visitors. The greatest find of all, however, is Ulagor himself.

In days of old, the mighty wyrm slept and schemed on his hoard below. His body still rests there — his head is on a cushion in Vhoorl's back room. The notorious Ulagor was a master of arcane forces, and he performed a ritual that granted him immortality in exchange for his fiery breath and certain other draconic powers. Unfortunately for him, he held back more of his energy than he should have, and as a result he didn't achieve complete immortality. His head is deathless, ageless, and nearly impossible to kill. His body wasn't so lucky. It lies below, while he sits under the commander's watchful eye and plots to win his freedom.

The ancient dragon has fallen into a prison of his own creation. He wants the PCs to free him. To that end, he will promise anything and everything they wish. His advice is ready, his hoard is theirs, and his gratitude is freely offered. Ulagor is entirely sincere — for as long as it takes to reach his next destination.

He has an ulterior motive, of course. Ulagor knows of the power hidden in the largest Bitterbreath graveyard. With the PCs' help he thinks he can get there and be rejuvenated. The Hundred would never consent to let him leave, but now he has the means. After letting the PCs explore for a few minutes more, he'll give them the motivation (as described below).

If any of the PCs are cursed by the blade of the basking wyrm, Ulagor tells them (truthfully) that he can lift the curse, but he'll only do it if he is taken away from the Hill. He'll keep his word once he's safely away and on solid ground.

Talking with Ulagor and agreeing to take him away from the Hill is the equivalent of a CR 5 encounter.

## ULAGOR THE UNDYING

Ulagor is an unusual creature. Roughly 200 years ago, he performed an arcane ritual that granted him an endless lifespan and the ability to heal almost any wound. In return, he was supposed to give up his fiery breath, terrifying presence, and arcane powers. At the last second he kept a portion of his arcane power instead, with the result that only his head gained full immortality. Ulagor no longer needs to eat, breathe, or sleep. His body died 120 years ago and since then he has been a "guest" of various Hundred commanders.

As he is today, Ulagor is a 6-foot-long head surmounted by a pair of huge, rear-sweeping horns. He's usually found resting on an ornate cushion. Ulagor can see and speak normally, and still possesses a frightening degree of arcane power, but he has little effective strength and less mobility. In his current state he can only move by dragging himself along the ground with his lower jaw, and to bite someone he practically has to convince them to put their limbs between his fangs.

His mind is still sharp as a fistful of adamantite razors, though, and he's willing to sacrifice everything he has in order to further his current plans. Begging, threatening, bargaining, lying — Ulagor will do whatever it takes to convince the PCs to bring him out of the Hill and away from Goldrock. He knows a fair amount about the Bitterbreath graveyards, and the ancient dragon will tell the PCs that an ambitious young dragon has murdered her kin in a quest for power. This, he hopes, will prime them to slay Sriivash later and thereby remove a potential rival.

Ulagor's statistics are presented below for reference; he is not likely to enter combat. Note that many of his skills and feats were acquired when he had a body and are not currently useful; some skills have parenthetical notes showing his base modifier in case you need it.



### Ulagor, immortal and ambitious head, ancient red dragon:

CR 23; Medium Dragon [Fire]; HD 34d12+442; hp 663; Init -1; Spd 5 ft.; Defense 38 (-5 Dex, +33 natural), touch 5, flat-footed 38; DR 15/magic; Base Atk +34; Grp +29; Atk Bite +29 melee (4d6-5); Full Atk Bite +29 melee (4d6-5); SA Arcane power; SQ Blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., dragon traits, keen senses, fast healing 15, manipulation token pool, SR 28; SV Fort +32, Ref +0, Will +26; Str 1, Dex 1, Con 36, Int 30, Wis 25, Cha 24.

**Skills and Feats:** Appraise +47, Bluff +44, Concentration +50, Decipher Script +47 (+49 with written items), Diplomacy +46, Escape Artist n/a (31+Dex otherwise), Gather Information +9, Heal +44, Intimidate +46, Jump n/a (37+Str otherwise), Knowledge (all categories) +47, Listen +46, Search +47 (+49 for secret doors and compartments), Sense Motive +44, Speak Language 6, Spellcraft +49, Spot +46, Survival +7 (+9 for aboveground, lost, hazards, other planes, underground, or tracking), Use Magic Device +44, Use Rope n/a (2+Dex with bonds); Blind-Fight 1, Cleave 1, Flyby Attack, Hover, Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder 1, Political Mastermind 1, Political Mastermind 4, Political Mastermind 7, Power Attack 1, Skill Affinity (Listen and Spot), Snatch.

**Languages:** Ancient Draconic, Ancient Speech, Common, Draconic, First Speech, Kolorean, Sea Speech.

**Arcane Power:** Ulagor once wielded tremendous arcane power, but he sacrificed much of it along with his breath weapon to gain immortality. In his current state, Ulagor can perform divination magic as a 15th-

level arcanist, and he can also use this power to see murky glimpses of the future. This requires no mana, causes no strain, and has no risk of failure. A handful of other strange effects are also powered by his residual arcane power; this is what holds the Hill up in defiance of normal physics and geography.



## 18. THE GLIDER ROOM (possible EL 3)

Depending on when the PCs get here, one or two strange bulky contraptions lurk in the gloom of this unlit chamber. Canvas panels are stretched over a wooden frame that resembles nothing so much as a stupendously large flying creature. Ulagor and an earlier group of the Hundred created these things many years ago when his body first began to die. To maintain the illusion of Ulagor's mobility, captains of the Hundred occasionally take these strange things out on late-night glides when the wind is strong. Those who see them circling the Hill assume that Ulagor must be active.

This has become riskier over the years. The Hundred aren't engineers, and aside from the occasional Second Company captain, none of them have much interest in these outlandish things. Few people even realize what they are; A DC 25 Intelligence or Knowledge (architecture and engineering) check will reveal that these devices can glide through the air.

Tolliv stays in this room when the fight breaks out in Vhoorl's quarters, waiting for a chance to drag the smaller glider out and escape. He waits until the noise dies down and the PCs either find Ulagor or go to visit the hoard below. Then he hauls the glider out, takes to the air (surprising the people of Goldrock), and waits for the PCs to emerge.

If the PCs visit this room before Tolliv has a chance to escape with a glider, assume that he's just hiding somewhere else. In a short time he and the party will have a pitched glider-borne battle hundreds of feet in the air. It would be a shame if he were discovered and slain before then.

## 19. ULAGOR'S TREASURE CAVERN

An enormous chamber is at the heart of the Hill. The light of a thousand gems and a thousand times as many coins once reflected light back at the obsidian vault overhead. But he hid much of his treasure when he felt his body dying, and ambitious Hundred commanders have helped themselves to what he left in place. Enough of that wealth remains to be a dazzling sight, but it's not what one would expect from a dragon of Ulagor's age.

The heap of loot in the center of the floor consists of: 47,000 sp; 5,400 gp; 900 pp; 12 gems (average value 150 gp each); 7 art objects (average value 1,250 gp each). Mixed in with the treasure are Ulagor's bones. His body collapsed over the hoard and rotted there more than a century ago. Few of the Hundred dared take the treasure from directly underneath his remains.

Ulagor will seem quite annoyed if he discovers the state of his hoard. He says he never gave the Hundred permission to share it, and this is less than a quarter of what it was. In fact, the cavern is honeycombed with secret alcoves (Search DC 40), many of which contain Ulagor's more exotic possessions, like the blades of the basking wyrm that Tolliv used. This treasure is not detailed, as the PCs almost certainly can't find the alcoves and Ulagor has no intention of sharing their location. Once a few years have passed, he plans to come back here and reconstruct his hoard at his leisure.

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## LEAVING THE HILL

Ulagor has no desire to stay here. His power is the only thing that keeps the Hill balanced against the forces of gravity and pressure, and once released, the whole thing will come tumbling down in a jagged heap. He sees this as a fitting revenge against the Hundred, whom he now sees as jailers rather than bodyguards. The default assumption is that the PCs will take Ulagor with them when they leave his lair.

Once the PCs discover him and his escape seems near, Ulagor releases the arcane power that supports the Hill. As it withdraws back into the dragon, the Hill becomes weaker. The sound of stone grinding and popping becomes audible after the PCs finish talking to the ancient dragon head. The longer they take to explore, the louder and more frequent it becomes. If that doesn't scare the PCs into leaving soon, chunks of the ceiling and walls start to crash down near them. Dawdlers will eventually have to dodge razor-sharp obsidian (3d4 points of damage, Reflex save DC 18 negates).

It's time to leave. The only way out is through the mouth of the lair and down the path. Unfortunately, that isn't possible. When the first retreating PC gets within 30 feet of the cave mouth, a massive rumbling roar is heard from outside, followed by a thick cloud of gritty, black dust. The entire hillside between the high gate and the Third Company's fortress has collapsed into a chasm. Climbing it is impossible. Staying here is suicide.

Miraculously (or because of Ulagor's intervention), the huge glider in area 18 is intact. The obsidian chunks have ripped some small holes in the canvas panels, but its frame is holding together. Ulagor cheerfully explains the device's use. Not only is it a good escape route, it's a design of his creation and he's proud of it.

The glider is 30 feet long and has saddle-like seats for two riders. Other passengers must cling to the wooden supports. Its wings unfold to a span of 60 feet across. Its clever design (and residual arcane power from Ulagor)

allows it to fly (speed 100 ft., maneuverability clumsy) provided it's not overloaded and the pilot, seated in the front saddle, pays attention to the wind. A Wisdom check (DC 10) is required for every minute of sustained flight, reflecting the pilot's ability to follow the headwinds and updrafts necessary to fly. Failure means the glider plummets 50 feet. If it hits the ground, everyone aboard takes falling damage from the appropriate height.

Of course, "overloaded" is a term that can include a party of adventurers carrying a person-sized dragon head and perhaps some of its hoard. The glider is designed to carry no more than 400 pounds of equipment. For every 100 pounds or fraction thereof that it carries beyond 400, it becomes harder to fly. Each weight increment causes it to lose 10 feet of speed per round and gives a +2 to the DC of the pilot's Wisdom check. If your players haven't calculated their character's total weight, assume that a normal male adventurer weighs 200 pounds when fully equipped, and a female adventurer 160 pounds. Ulagor's head is a relatively svelte 100 pounds.

## DEATH FROM ABOVE (EL 5 if Tolliv escaped earlier)

The PCs' creaky, belabored glider would still probably make it to the ground without problems if not for Captain Tolliv. He most likely escaped with the Hundred's other glider. Now he sees the PCs "stealing" Ulagor from him and leaving the Hill in ruins, and he's circling around for revenge.

Tolliv's glider was built as a prototype, so it's smaller and more maneuverable than the PCs' model. He also has some experience flying these things, and can take 10 on his Wisdom check, giving him an edge in aerial combat. He's some distance overhead when the PCs emerge from Ulagor's lair. When he sees them leave, he readies his crossbow and dives to attack. The gliders are nearly silent in flight, so unless the PCs are paying particular attention to the sky above, Tolliv will surprise them when he glides in 60 feet behind them and opens fire.

The captain starts by attacking the rearmost PC. Once he has their attention, he drifts closer and tries to kill their pilot. Tolliv's glider is a better flyer (120 feet, maneuverability poor) and it has extra canvas paneling that provides the pilot with cover (+4 passive defense). It can only hold 200 pounds before taking penalties to speed and piloting, but Tolliv doesn't weigh more than that by himself.

If he can't hit anything, or if the PCs return fire and injure him for more than 10 points of damage, an enraged Tolliv tries to ram them. Treat this as a charge attack using Tolliv's base attack bonus against a target with a Defense

10. If Tolliv succeeds, the gliders smash together with a bone-jarring thud, damaging the wings of both. As he tries to smash the nearest PC with his mace, the splintered mess begins to fall. It descends 20 feet per round for the first 3 rounds, then 30 feet per round for another three, increasing 10 feet per round every 3 rounds.

Because this is a difficult environment to fight in, and one in which Tolliv has several advantages, treat it as a CR 5 encounter.

### Captain Tolliv, frustrated schemer, Male Human Man-At-Arms 3:

CR 3; Medium Humanoid (human); HD 3d4+27; hp 36; Init +6; Spd 20 ft.; Defense 18 (+2 Dex, +3 class levels, +3 heavy wooden shield), touch 15, flat-footed 13; DR 1d4/magic; Base Atk +3; Grp +6; Atk Masterwork heavy mace +8 melee (1d8+3) or light crossbow +5 ranged (1d8/19-20; 80 ft.); Full Atk Masterwork heavy mace +8 melee (1d8+3) or light crossbow +5 ranged (1d8/19-20; 80 ft.); SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +5; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 10.

**Skills and Feats:** Appraise +7, Bluff +6, Climb +4, Craft (metal trinkets/tools) +4, Diplomacy +8, Disguise +0 (+2 in character), Gather Information +8, Intimidate +8, Jump +4, Knowledge (arcana, architecture, dungeoneering, geography, history, local) +7, Listen +8, Move Silently +0, Ride +8, Search +7 (+9 with secret doors and compartments), Sense Motive +8, Spot +8, Survival +2 (+4 with tracks, while underground, and to avoid getting lost and natural hazards), Swim -1; Foe Hammer 1, Foe Hammer 2, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus 1 (heavy mace).

**Traits:** Inspiring Presence, Resilient Toughness.

**Possessions:** Dragon mace (masterwork heavy mace), dagger, light crossbow, 20 bolts, masterwork scale mail, heavy steel shield, 3d10 gold pieces.

**Languages:** Common, Draconic.

## AFTER THE HILL FALLS

Shortly after the last PCs take to the air, the Hill gives a mighty shudder and crashes to the ground in an enormous pile of obsidian shards, killing anyone still on or inside of it (except the unkillable Ulagor, if he's there). This provides an exciting undercurrent to an aerial battle with Tolliv.

It also terrifies the people of Goldrock. At first their fear is that the world is ending. Once they realize otherwise, they see the strange gliders hovering near the desolated Hill, and their fear is realized — Ulagor and his reputation will no longer be able to protect them. However, the Hundred have been crippled, which compensates in some ways.

The people here who are happiest to see the PCs are Skond and Marva. They'll track the party down to find out what happened on the Hill. Ulagor's presence will shock them into speechlessness. He'll greet the pair as if

they are old acquaintances (he has heard rumors of their odd beliefs and nosy habits). Ulagor is amused to find them here.

Now the PCs need to be pointed toward the Viper Swamp. Marva and Skond can do this, as they know of both the Bitterbreath clan's involvement in things and the main graveyard's approximate location. Ulagor can do this, as he wants to go to the Bitterbreath clan's main graveyard for his own reasons. Gowan can't do this, although he'll want to be around anyway in case he misses anything interesting. But where's the fun in just talking to some dragons about what happens next?

## VOICES FROM THE SWAMP (EL 6)

This encounter happens shortly after the PCs rendezvous with Skond and Marva. Once everyone has exchanged a few sentences, Ulagor and Marva suddenly stop and scan the area, as if they heard a noise nobody else did. The next round, a massive hole tears itself open from the empty air nearby. If Ulagor is present, it will be next to him. Stench rolls out in a sickening wave (all PCs must make DC 25 Fortitude saves or be nauseated until this portal closes). Beyond the hole's wavering outline stands a thick swamp populated by gloomy trees and several shadowy figures. One of them speaks in an old woman's voice:

*There you are, you rascals. The lady is tired of your interference. So here are some of our pets to play with. Now stop meddling in the affairs of your betters.*

With that, several of the figures rush through the hole. Some move to attack the PCs. Others will seize Ulagor and Gowan, if either is present, and carry them back through the hole. PCs attempting to defend Ulagor or Gowan will draw all the attacks from these creatures. The forces coming from this swampy scene are a mixture of dragonbone warriors and new creatures called bog shamblers.

Two bog shamblers and four warriors will attack the PCs; add enough others to the scene to kidnap Ulagor and Gowan as needed. Once Ulagor and Gowan are through the hole (or after the attacking force comes through, if neither is present), it seals up with a wet noise. PCs who try to enter it won't be able to. Skond and Marva will withdraw from the scene as they would any other fight, although if it goes on more than 4 rounds Skond will wade in with his axe, potentially requiring the PCs to rescue him.

A more detailed entry for the bog shambler is given in the appendix.

## Dragonbone Warrior (4), servant of the dragon Sriivash, male human Warrior 1:

CR 1; Medium Monstrous Humanoid (augmented human); HD 1d10+9; hp 14; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 14 (+4 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 14; DR 1d3/magic; Base Atk +1; Grp +5; Atk Greatsword +5 melee (2d6+6/19-20) or shortbow +1 ranged (1d6/x3; range 60 ft.); Full Atk Greatsword +5 melee (2d6+6/19-20) or shortbow +1 ranged (1d6/x3; range 60 ft.); SA See below; SQ Greed, immunity to sleep and paralysis, and see below; SV Fort +5, Ref +0, Will -1; Str 19, Dex 11, Con 16, Int 6, Wis 9, Cha 4.

**Skills and Feats:** Climb +7, Jump +7, Swim +6; Toughness (2 times).

**Possessions:** Greatsword, dagger, shortbow, 20 arrows, studded leather (DR 1d3/magic), 2d6 gp.

**Languages:** Common.

**Notes:** Each warrior is grafted to bones from a different chromatic dragon, which grants them varying immunities. The blue warrior's feature is a breath weapon (1d6 lightning, 60 ft. line, save DC 13, every 1d4 minutes), the white and red each have wings (fly 30 ft., clumsy maneuverability), and the green has a bite (secondary attack +0, 1d8+4 damage). Their different lineages are obvious from their coloration.

## Bog Shambler (2), hunter of swamps:

CR 2; Medium Aberration; HD 3d8+9; hp 22; Init +4; Spd 20 ft., swim 20 ft.; Defense 16 (+6 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 16; DR —; Base Atk +2; Grp +6; Atk Slam +6 (1d4+6); Full Atk Slam +6 (1d4+6); SA Improved grab, Strength leech; SQ Amphibious, darkvision 60 ft.; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +5; Str 18, Dex 11, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 10.

**Skills and Feats:** Hide +8, Move Silently +8, Swim +18; Improved Initiative, Skill Affinity (Hide and Move Silently).

**Languages:** Bogspeak, Common.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, a bog shambler must hit with a slam attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity.

**Strength Leech (Su):** As a standard action, a bog shambler can drain the might from a creature it grapples. The victim must make a Fortitude save (DC 14) or suffer 1d4 Strength damage. The save DC is Constitution-based.

It's not hard to figure that whatever came through that portal originated in the Viper Swamp. Captured warriors will admit that much, although they aren't talkative unless Diplomacy or Intimidate come into play. In that case, they will tell PCs that: "the lady" is a black dragon named Sriivash; the portal was opened by a trio of hags in the lady's service; Sriivash has a headquarters in the center of the Viper Swamp; she's doing some kind of magic in order to live forever. If the warriors admit to these facts, they can also be persuaded to draw a basic map showing how to reach Sriivash's territory, although this map will be remarkably free of hazards and guardians.

CHAPTER THREE:

# BLACK HEARTS, WHITE BONES

The dragon Sriivash has attacked the PCs directly now. She sees them as a threat, and like overconfident juveniles of every species, she'll use brute force to remove that threat. And unless she's stopped, she'll achieve the immortality she seeks.

Sriivash's headquarters is the massive, draconic graveyard her clan maintains in the heart of the Viper Swamp. The swamp lives up to its name — it's a foul and poisonous mire that claims the lives of the unwary (and often the wary). Many dangers dwell here. If that isn't enough, Sriivash has allied herself with a covey of hags who mislead, waylay, and devour intruders with the help of their bog shambler cohorts.

Once the hags are overcome, Sriivash remains to be conquered. The defenses of her graveyard here are stronger than those in the Scorched Hills. So are the guardian creatures. At the heart of this place the PCs will confront Sriivash herself, and perhaps see some legendary dragon magic firsthand.

## WHERE IS EVERYBODY?

Several NPCs have come into the PCs' lives since they first visited Parch. Gowan has trailed them, Skond and Marva have advised them, Ulagor subtly attempted to recruit them. None of them go into the Viper Swamp with the PCs, though. For your reference, here's what happened to them all.

**GOWAN:** The bone harvester might have perished at the hands of the PCs. If not, he'll end up in the service of Sriivash at the end of the adventure. He can get there many ways — grabbed by bog shamblers, pulled from the



Hill by Sriivash's magic, just disappearing from the PCs' camp overnight in the Viper Swamp. Chances are that your players would enjoy defeating him once and for all. Why deny them the pleasure?

**MARVA AND SKOND:** Ulagor has thoroughly spooked the two would-be silver dragons. The two of them remain in Goldrock until they learn how the PCs' adventure resolves.

**ULAGOR:** Sriivash ardently wishes to have Ulagor in her possession. He wants access to her graveyard, so he will do what he can to make it happen. The only way he could be outside the graveyard at this point is if the PCs managed to stop the attack at the end of the previous chapter. In this case, the hags will spirit him away when the PCs aren't paying attention. For extra fun, if Gowan is around, the two will vanish at the same time.



## TO THE SWAMP

Travel northwest of Goldrock or northeast of Parch and you can't miss the Viper Swamp. It's the green-gray marsh oozing over the land in every direction. The swamp is cool and clammy all year long, no matter the weather beyond its borders. Thick stands of moss-shrouded trees blanket ground that gives way to quicksand with no warning. Only a fool would cross it.

A fool — or a hero. The PCs should be 7th level by the time they head into the swamp, powerful enough to handle the routine dangers it presents. It's assumed at this point that the PCs are heading into the swamp from its southern edge and that they are traveling alone.

Supplies can be acquired normally in Parch. The situation in Goldrock depends on how (and if) the PCs returned to the city after the Hill's collapse. Under most circumstances, the PCs trade there as normal. If they claimed responsibility for the collapse or otherwise connected themselves to it, local merchants will charge them triple normal price "to make up for the trade we'll lose without Ulagor," if they'll deal at all.

The PCs might take time to research the swamp and its inhabitants. A PC can use each of the skills below once per day to find information. A character learns all the information for all DCs below the one they achieve as well. Characters doing this research in a small place like Parch have a +5 penalty to the DCs below; the DC is +10 if doing research in a hostile Goldrock.

**GATHER INFORMATION:** (DC 10) The swamp is a dangerous place, all right. (DC 15) Not only do poisonous snakes and wild lizardfolk live there, some say a horrible witch-woman haunts the bogs. (DC 20) But sometimes people come out of the swamp with ancient-looking treasure.

**KNOWLEDGE (ARCANA):** (DC 10) Black dragons are native to swamps. (DC 15) A mated pair of them is known to lair in the heart of the marsh, although they haven't been seen in a few

years. (DC 20) Sinister floating lights are found in the swamp as well, and they have lured travelers to their doom before.

**KNOWLEDGE (GEOGRAPHY):** (DC 10) The Viper Swamp is wet and marshy, and travelers must be careful to stay on solid ground. (DC 15) No permanent villages are known to exist there. (DC 20) Experienced swamp travelers say that the paths sometimes shift of their own accord, as if the swamp was trying to lead intruders to their death.

**KNOWLEDGE (LOCAL):** (DC 10) Wandering tribes of lizardfolk are scattered across the swamp. They sometimes trade with outsiders who show them sufficient respect. (DC 15) The lizardfolk talk about a "white city" at the heart of the swamp; they have a taboo against going there.

**KNOWLEDGE (NATURE):** (DC 10) The secret to avoiding quicksand is to not run. Walking normally improves the chance of spotting it in time. (DC 15) Viper snakes, common to this kind of swamp, have an extremely toxic venom. However, only the largest snakes are likely to dispense enough of it to make their bites immediately dangerous. (DC 20) A trio of hags is believed to dwell in the swamp, combining their powers for evil.

The Viper Swamp is a day's journey across rolling plains from Goldrock, or three days through hills and plains from Parch. No encounters are designated for this time, as the swamp is a busy enough place, but this could be a chance for PCs to practice their skills and get enough XP to reach 7th level if they aren't there yet.

## HAG COUNTRY

Sriivash has tasked her hag allies with eliminating the PCs. The covey looks forward to this assignment. In the days since they sent their agents through the portal, the hags have been using divinations to watch the party's movements and learn what kind of people they are. They'll use their control of the Viper Swamp's pathways to direct the PCs into danger before luring them to their lair.

Assume that the hags are monitoring the party at all times. The covey is patient, and if one character resists their scrying they'll just focus on another one. Whether or not the PCs make their Will saves to resist scrying, they will constantly have the feeling of being watched from the moment they enter the swamp until they confront the hags.

This constant vigil gives the hags (and their master, Sriivash) a good idea of the party's abilities and tactics. The covey will steer the party into conflicts that blunt their strengths and capitalize on their weaknesses — which means the GM should alter Viper Swamp encounters to hit the party in ways their standard tactics can't handle. The hags enjoy playing with their prey.

The encounters below (beginning on Page 44) are presented in their suggested order of occurrence. Their exact positions relative to each other don't matter, as the hags' magic controls where the party can go.



## LIFE IN THE SWAMP

Many creatures make their home in the Viper Swamp. As the PCs travel, they run the risk of meeting the swamp's residents. Twice daily, the party has a 1 in 6 chance of a random encounter.

**RANDOM SWAMP ENCOUNTERS (d%)**

Creature statistics not given in this module are part of the SRD.

1-5%	Huge viper snake CR 3
6-10%	1d3 bog shamblers Avg. CR 4
11-20%	Lizardfolk scouting party (1d6+1 lizardfolk) Avg. CR 5
21-25%	Manticore CR 5
26-35%	1d6 bog shamblers Avg. CR 6
36-40%	1d3 witchlights Avg. CR 6
41-50%	Chuul CR 7
51-60%	Lizardfolk hunting party (2d6+1 lizardfolk) Avg. CR 7
61-70%	2 manticores CR 7
71-80%	1d4+1 witchlights Avg. CR 7
81-90%	2d6 bog shamblers Avg. CR 8
91-95%	1d3 will-o'-wisps Avg. CR 8
96-100%	1d3 chuuls Avg. CR 9

The swamp itself is a formidable foe. It's a chilly, damp, and utterly miserable place. Leeches and mosquitoes are everywhere. Several types of terrain are found here, each one making life hard for the PCs. The Viper Swamp is broken down into these terrains: shallow bog (40%), deep bog (20%), light undergrowth (20%), and heavy undergrowth (20%). Undergrowth areas have a 15% chance of containing quicksand.

Use this terrain! Not many adventures take place in the heart of a swamp, and the PCs will find it both frustrating and exhilarating to do battle in this landscape. Archers, harriers, and hunters will find it especially interesting.

**BOGS:** If a square is part of a shallow bog, it has deep mud or standing water of about 1 foot in depth. It costs 2 squares of movement to move into a square with a shallow bog, and the DC of Tumble checks in such a square increases by 2.

A square that is part of a deep bog has roughly 4 feet of standing water. It costs Medium or larger creatures 4 squares of movement to move into a square with a deep bog, or characters can swim if they wish. Small or smaller creatures must swim to move through a deep bog. Tumbling is impossible in a deep bog.

The water in a deep bog provides cover for Medium or larger creatures. Smaller creatures gain improved cover (+8 bonus to Defense, +4 bonus on Reflex saves). Medium or larger creatures can crouch as a move action to gain this improved cover. Creatures with this improved cover take a –10 penalty on attacks against creatures that aren't underwater.

Deep bog squares are usually clustered together and surrounded by an irregular ring of shallow bog squares.

Both shallow and deep bogs increase the DC of Move Silently checks by 2.

**UNDERGROWTH:** Vines, roots, and short bushes cover much of the ground here. A space covered with light undergrowth costs 2 squares of movement to move into, and it provides concealment. Undergrowth increases the DC of Tumble and Move Silently checks by 2 because the leaves and branches get in the way. Heavy undergrowth costs 4 squares of movement to move into, and it provides concealment with a 30% miss chance (instead of the usual 20%). It increases the DC of Tumble and Move Silently checks by 5. Heavy undergrowth is easy to hide in, granting a +5 circumstance bonus on Hide checks. Running and charging are impossible. Squares with undergrowth are often clustered together. Undergrowth and trees aren't mutually exclusive; it's common for a 5-foot square to have both a tree and undergrowth.

**QUICKSAND:** Patches of quicksand present a deceptively solid appearance (appearing as undergrowth or open land) that may trap careless characters. A character approaching a patch of quicksand at a normal pace is entitled to a DC 8 Survival check to spot the danger before stepping in, but charging or running characters don't have a chance to detect a hidden bog before blundering in. A typical patch of quicksand is 20 feet in diameter; the momentum of a charging or running character carries him or her 1d2x5 feet into the quicksand.

**EFFECTS OF QUICKSAND:** Characters in quicksand must make a DC 10 Swim check every round to simply tread water in place, or a DC 15 Swim check to move 5 feet in whatever direction is desired. If a trapped character fails this check by 5 or more, he sinks below the surface and begins to drown whenever he can no longer hold his breath (see the Swim skill description).

Characters below the surface of a bog may swim back to the surface with a successful Swim check (DC 15, +1 per consecutive round of being under the surface).

**RESCUE:** Pulling out a character trapped in quicksand can be difficult. A rescuer needs a branch, spear haft, rope, or similar tool that enables him to reach the victim with one end of it. Then he must make a DC 15 Strength check to successfully pull the victim, and the victim must make a DC 10 Strength check to hold onto the branch, pole, or rope. If the victim fails to hold on, he must make a DC 15 Swim check immediately to stay above the surface. If both checks succeed, the victim is pulled 5 feet closer to safety.

**OTHER MARSH TERRAIN ELEMENTS:** The Viper Swamp has plenty of trees, usually clustered in small stands. Paths lead across many areas of the marsh, winding to avoid bog areas, although they can't always be trusted to go the same way twice. Paths allow normal movement and don't provide the concealment that undergrowth does.

**STEALTH AND DETECTION IN A MARSH:** In the Viper Swamp, the maximum distance at which a Spot check for detecting the nearby presence of others can succeed is 2d810 feet. Undergrowth and deep bogs provide plentiful concealment, so it's easy to hide here.

## DEADLY LIGHTS (EL 7)

The first stop on the PCs' tour of the Viper Swamp will be a boggy patch haunted by a trio of hateful, floating creatures called witchlights. Relatives of the infamous will-o'-wisp, witchlights are slightly less powerful but definitely more violent than their cousins. They frequent the world's lonely places, luring travelers into danger and murdering them for amusement.

These three witchlights lurk in an area of deep bogs mixed with heavy undergrowth. Only one secure path is found here, and it stops abruptly in a stand of undergrowth that gives way to bog on every side, forming a peninsula amid the marsh. Quicksand is plentiful here. Many travelers have already been tricked to their deaths in this place, feeding the witchlights' appetites for fear and despair, and now the creatures will try their standard ploy on the PCs.

It begins as the PCs are picking their way through the swamp. It's still the party's first day of travel, and after a couple hours of rapid progress the land seemed to suddenly turn against them. As they push their way through the undergrowth and around nasty bogs, they hear faint cries for help. The light of two lanterns can be seen down a fork in the path. Every minute the cries get more desperate, mixing with the slow slurp of a body being pulled into quicksand.

Of course, it's the witchlights. They've taken their places around the edge of the peninsula. Two of them are just beyond the heavy undergrowth past the path's end. The thick vines and plentiful trees make it hard to see anything here, and the PCs could easily believe that the lights (one at ground level, one at waist height) are two small lanterns. These two witchlights are screaming for help — one pretends to be a woman named Darella, nearly drowned in quicksand, and the other is her frantic boyfriend Jondar. The real Darella and Jondar perished in a nearby bog thirty years ago, and the witchlights enjoy reliving the couple's last moments. The third witchlight waits invisibly, hovering over a nearby patch of quicksand.

The witchlights are content to let the PCs blunder around in the bogs for a short time, but they quickly grow bored of deception and retreat. The two visible ones will wheel and attack the party from one side; one round later the third one turns visible and attacks from behind. As they fight, the witchlights taunt the PCs with the death-cries of the many people who have perished here before. Each one is an accomplished mimic, and as the fight progresses they may switch to copying the PCs.

Witchlights rarely collect treasure on their own, but a handful of their victims had interesting items that can be found at the bottom of bogs and quicksand patches. A matched pair of masterwork blades (longsword and dagger) lies beneath the water just past the path's end. Both are slightly rusted but otherwise in good condition. A cop-

per armband studded with emeralds (worth 375 gp) can be found in a shallow patch of quicksand, although this requires one of the PCs to submerge herself in the stuff.

**Witchlight (2):**

CR 4; Small Aberration; HD 6d8; 27 hp; Init +11; Spd fly 50 ft. (perfect); Defense 24 (+1 size, +7 Dex, +6 deflection), touch 24, flat-footed 17; DR -; Base Atk +4; Grp -5; Atk Shock +12 melee touch (2d6 electricity); Full Atk Shock +12 melee touch (2d6 electricity); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., dodge pool, SR 16, translucent; SV Fort +2, Ref +9, Will +7; Str 1, Dex 25, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 15, Cha 12.

**Skills and Feats:** Bluff +10, Diplomacy +3, Disguise +1 (+3 in character), Intimidate +3, Listen +11, Spot +11; Blind-Fight 1, Dodge 1, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse (B).

## EIGHT HUNGRY HEADS (EL 7)

After the witchlights, the PCs can continue traversing the swamp. The hags continue to alter paths and manipulate bogs to steer them. This encounter comes late in the afternoon of the first day in the swamp. The PCs find firmer terrain underfoot, supporting a vast stretch of grim, black-barked trees. Some of them have Draconic words and phrases carved in their trunks. At first the words are notes on the trail, warning passerby of quicksand and pointing to solid ground. Then the warnings begin.

*Danger*, one reads. *It hungers*, says another. The trees around thin out a little, not because the marshy forest is failing but because something has smashed several of them. *Fire saves life* is carved lengthwise on one of the fallen trunks. Next to it is the fresh corpse of a lizardfolk warrior savaged by dozens of brutal injuries. In the distance, something large is moving through the undergrowth — moving straight toward the PCs. They've entered the territory of a hydra, and the hungry monster thinks they would make a good meal.

The terrain here is mostly light undergrowth, with the rest being a mixture of heavy undergrowth and shallow bog. Events start with the hydra 80 feet away and closing the distance at its top speed. It can run 80 feet per round as a full-round action, before terrain penalties are calculated, so it won't be long before the horrid beast reaches the party. If they retreat, it will scramble into the bogs and use its swimming to catch up. One way or another, the hydra is determined to have dinner NOW.

Fighting a hydra is difficult. It has many attacks, amazingly fast healing, and the ability to replace lost heads (see sidebar). Parties without slashing weapons will have an uphill struggle, as will those who don't figure out how to sear the beast's neck stumps with fire or acid. Fortunately for them, help is lurking nearby.

This area of the swamp is populated by several lizardfolk tribes. They're the ones who carved the Draconic phrases on the trees. A group of them was hunting in this hydra's territory earlier when the beast attacked and scattered them. They

hide nearby, waiting for a chance to rescue the corpse of their fallen comrade. The lizardfolk know the secret to killing a hydra. They don't have the skill or courage — but they'll emerge from hiding to help the PCs if the latter are struggling.

Two of the lizardfolk know enough Common to hiss instructions to the PCs. They all stand ready with torches, waiting to dart in and sear stumps that the PCs sever. They are equipped with crude bronze axes which they will share with parties that lack slashing weapons. If the PCs have trouble hitting it, or if they're being torn apart, the lizardfolk use the aid another action as best they can.

The hydra's tactics are simple. It charges at the nearest PCs, ideally ending up adjacent to two or more characters, and then splits its head attacks evenly between them. When it has a choice, it attacks PCs before it attacks lizardfolk. The hydra can eat lizardfolk anytime, while human flesh is a rare treat.

Once the hydra falls, the lizardfolk scatter into the swamp. They were happy to help the PCs kill the monster, but they don't want to lead such powerful warriors back to their camps. If asked, they will give PCs reasonably accurate directions to the "bone city" at the heart of the swamp. They can also explain what bog shamblers are. Dragons and dragonbone creatures are beyond them, and they're too superstitious to discuss the hags.

### Hydra (Eight-headed):

CR 7; Huge Magical Beast; HD 8dio+43; 87 hp; Init +1; Spd 20 ft., swim 20 ft.; Defense 18 (–2 size, +1 Dex, +9 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 17; DR —; Base Atk +8; Grp +20; Atk 8 bites +11 melee (1dio+4); Full Atk 8 bites +11 melee (1dio+4); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., fast healing 18, low-light vision, scent; SV Fort +11, Ref +7, Will +4; Str 19, Dex 12, Con 20, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 9.

**Skills and Feats:** Listen +7, Spot +8, Swim +12; Combat Reflexes 1 (B), Iron Will, Toughness, Weapon Focus (bite).

**Notes:** Hydras can attack with all their heads at no penalty, even if they move or charge during the round.

**Fast Healing (Ex):** Each round, a hydra heals damage equal to 10 + the number of its original heads.

**Skills:** Hydras have a +2 racial bonus on Listen and Spot checks, thanks to their multiple heads. A hydra has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

**Feats:** A hydra's Combat Reflexes feat allows it to use all its heads for attacks of opportunity.

### Lizardfolk (4):

CR 1; Medium Humanoid (Reptilian); HD 2d8+2; hp 11; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 18 (+5 natural armor, +3 heavy shield), touch 10, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk Bronze battleaxe +1 melee (1d8/x3) or torch –2 (1d3 plus 1 fire) or javelin +1 ranged (1d6+1); Full Atk Bronze battleaxe +1 melee

(1d8/x3) or torch –2 (1d3 plus 1 fire) or javelin +1 ranged (1d6+1); SQ Hold breath; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 10.

**Skills and Feats:** Balance +4, Jump +5, Swim +2; Martial Weapon Proficiency (battleaxe).

**Possessions:** Bronze battleaxe, heavy wooden shield, 2 javelins.

**Languages:** Draconic; two speak enough Common for trading.

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

**Skills:** Because of their tails, lizardfolk have a +4 racial bonus on Balance, Jump, and Swim checks. Penalties for their heavy shields are figured in.



## KILLING A HYDRA

A hydra can be killed either by severing all its heads or by slaying its body. To sever a head, an opponent must make a successful sunder attempt with a slashing weapon. (The player should declare where the attack is aimed before making the attack roll.) Making a sunder attempt provokes an attack of opportunity unless the foe has the Improved Sunder feat. An opponent can strike at a hydra's heads from any position in which he could strike at the hydra itself, because the hydra's head writhes and whip about in combat. An opponent can ready an action to attempt to sunder a hydra's head when the creature bites at him. Each of a hydra's heads has hit points equal to the creature's full normal hit point total, divided by its original number of heads. Losing a head deals damage to the body equal to half the head's full normal hit points. A natural reflex seals the neck shut to prevent further blood loss. A hydra can no longer attack with a severed head but takes no other penalties.

Each time a head is severed, two new heads spring from the stump in 1d4 rounds. A hydra can never have more than twice its original number of heads at any one time, and any extra heads it gains beyond its original number wither and die within a day. To prevent a severed head from growing back into two heads, at least 5 points of fire or acid damage must be dealt to the stump (a touch attack to hit) before the new heads appear. Fire or acid damage from an area effect may burn multiple stumps in addition to dealing damage to the hydra's body. A hydra does not die from losing its heads until all its heads have been cut off and the stumps seared by fire or acid.

A hydra's body can be slain just like any other creature's, but hydras possess fast healing and are difficult to defeat in this fashion. Any attack that is not (or cannot be) an attempt to sunder a head affects the body.

Targeted magical effects cannot sever a hydra's heads (and thus must be directed at the body) unless they deal slashing damage and could be used to make sunder attempts.



## THE PHANTOM ISLANDS (EL variable)

After the hydra is slain, the hags content themselves with leading the PCs around the swamp. It has become obvious to them that none of the creatures here can stop the party. Instead they decide to bring the PCs to their lair and kill them personally. When the party starts their second day in the Viper Swamp, all their paths lead north and west, and just as the sun reaches noon, they end up at the hags' home.

This covey dwells together in a large hut, while several of their bog shambler servants are found in the nearby marsh. The hags have tremendous control over the landscape of the Viper Swamp. They make the PCs spend the morning slogging across deep bogs and pushing through heavy undergrowth. Finally the trees give way to a broad clearing. The ground here is light undergrowth in an oval 200 feet long and 150 feet across at its widest point. Tall, black trees hem it in.

A tumbledown shack stands at the far end of the clearing. In front of it, a massive iron cauldron hangs from an equally large wooden tripod. Three women stand around the cauldron. One is tall and beautiful, dressed in a low-cut red gown. Another appears impossibly old; her green-skinned body is covered by filthy rags. The third is entirely wrapped in a heavy black cloak that shows nothing but her twisted hands, which are covered in oozing sores.

These are the hags, and the cauldron is the focus of their divination. When the PCs arrive, the trio are cackling to each other over the party's injuries and failures. The tall one turns to address them. Her voice is soft and yet the party hears it as if she were standing next to them:

*You have done well to make it this far, little ones. But our lady commands us to stop you here. She promises that we may feast on your guts and bathe in your blood when we are done. What can you offer us, hmmm?*

Whatever the party says or does, the hags chuckle to each other, and then the green-skinned one rasps:

*Not a good answer, my sweetmeats! Now our servants will play with you and our swamp will swallow you!*

And so the confrontation begins. The hags start chanting around their cauldron, causing the swamp to grow and change under the PCs' feet. At the same time, several bog shamblers erupt from the nearby undergrowth and attack the party.

The bog shamblers are dangerous and numerous; two are present for every PC, and an additional one is here for any NPCs traveling with the party. However, the real threat here is the terrain. The hags are using their magic to change the land all around the PCs. One second a character might be on solid ground, then suddenly it's quicksand. A clear path can suddenly be a wall of huge trees and dense undergrowth. Bogs boil out of the ground only to disappear again.

To represent this effect, have each PC roll a d10 at the start of their action every round and compare the results to the Swamp Terrain table. The square each PC and companion is in becomes the indicated type of terrain, as do all squares they travel into this round. If two PCs with different terrain types cross paths, they both find themselves in a deep bog that swallows up everything within 30 feet of them.

**SWAMP TERRAIN (d10)**

1	Light Undergrowth	5-6	Shallow Bog
2-3	Heavy Undergrowth	7-8	Quicksand
4	Trees	9-10	Deep Bog

If the terrain is bog or quicksand, the characters immediately begin sinking, potentially requiring Swim checks.

That suits the bog shamblers just fine. These creatures are clever, and they use the terrain to their advantage. Their tactic of choice here is to double-team a PC, grappling him and draining his Strength in the first round, then haul him into a bog and hold him underwater until he drowns.

**Bog Shambler (variable quantity):**

CR 2; Medium Aberration; HD 3d8+9; hp 22; Init +4; Spd 20 ft., swim 20 ft.; Defense 16 (+6 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 16; DR —; Base Atk +2; Grp +6; Atk Slam +6 (1d4+6); Full Atk Slam +6 (1d4+6); SA Improved grab, Strength leech; SQ Amphibious, darkvision 60 ft.; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +5; Str 18, Dex 11, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 12.

**Skills and Feats:** Hide +8, Move Silently +8, Swim +18; Improved Initiative, Skill Affinity (Hide and Move Silently).

**Languages:** Bogspeak, Common.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, a bog shambler must hit with a slam attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity.

**Strength Leech (Su):** As a standard action, a bog shambler can drain the might from a creature it grapples. The victim must make a Fortitude save (DC 14) or suffer 1d4 points of Strength damage. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Meanwhile, the hags are concentrating on altering the terrain. That includes keeping intruders away from their home. PCs who come within 50 feet of the hags discover that, no matter how close they come, the hags and their hut somehow remain 50 feet away. Ranged attacks don't work well either. No matter the attack roll, any projectiles targeting the hags seem to just recede into an impossible distance without ever hitting the covey, until finally one of them casually swats the missile from the air without being harmed.

The only way to get to the hags is to kill their bog shambler servants first. Every time a bog shambler falls, the hags cry out as if in pain. When the last one dies, the cauldron shatters into pieces, and the land reverts to its true form. The hags can no longer control it, nor can they keep the PCs at bay any longer.

## HOME OF THE HAGS (EL 7)

This sends them into a rage. They shriek abuse at the PCs and prepare to attack. The land here is mostly deep bogs with twisting paths threading from the hut to the heavy undergrowth nearby. Skraxul the sea hag will throw back her cloak, exposing the PCs to her horrific appearance, before diving into the bogs and swimming toward her targets. Alica the annis will revert to her natural, hideous blue form and race along the paths, shredding PCs with her claws. Jenai the green hag will move from bog to path as needed, weakening characters so her sisters can finish them off.

Hag coveys can have many strange and terrible powers. This covey's emphasis was on controlling the land and creatures of the Viper Swamp, and with their cauldron focus gone, they no longer have access to their combined abilities. GMs who want a more mystical resolution to events may of course do so, in which case treat the three hags together as one 9th-level arcanist with access to all spheres of magic. The covey has three times the usual amount of mana and they never suffer strain or create side effects.

The hags' hut is much sturdier than it appears. The large interior space is crammed with foulness of every kind: rotting flesh, dried corpses, macabre skulls, twisted and mewling animals that look as if they should be dead. It's unlikely that the PCs will see the interior, however, as the hut erupts in blue and purple flame as soon as the last hag dies. It burns quickly with the arcane fire. After 10 rounds, the hut is no more than a heap of smoking cinders.

Once the hut starts to burn, the swamp itself seems to writhe and groan in sympathy. Behind the flaming ruin the bogs drain away and the undergrowth seems to wither. The land clears to reveal a straight, wide path leading northeast of the clearing. With the hags' magic gone, the route to their master Sriivash is made plain.

### Skraxul the sea hag:

CR 4; Medium Monstrous Humanoid (Aquatic); HD 3d8+6; 23 hp; Init +1; Spd 30 ft., swim 40 ft.; Defense 14 (+1 Dex, +3 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 13; DR —; Base Atk +3; Grp +7; Atk Claw +7 melee (1d4+4); Full Atk 2 claws +7 melee (1d4+4); SA Evil eye, horrific appearance; SQ Amphibious, SR 14; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +4; Str 19, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 14.

**Skills and Feats:** Hide +4, Knowledge (nature) +3, Listen +6, Spot +6, Swim +12; Skill Affinity (Listen and Spot), Toughness.

**Languages:** Common.

**Evil Eye (Su):** Three times per day, a sea hag can cast its dire gaze upon any single creature within 30 feet. The target must succeed on a DC 13 Will save or be dazed for three days, although remove curse or dispel evil can restore sanity sooner. In addition, an affected creature must succeed on a DC 13 Fortitude save or die from fright. Creatures with immunity to fear effects are not affected by the sea hag's evil eye. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

**Horrific Appearance (Su):** The sight of a sea hag is so revolting that anyone (other than another hag) who sets eyes upon one must succeed on a DC 13 Fortitude save or instantly be weakened, taking 2d6 points of Strength damage. This damage cannot reduce a victim's Strength score below 0, but anyone reduced to Strength 0 is helpless. Creatures that are affected by this power or that successfully save against it cannot be affected again by the same hag's horrific appearance for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Skills:** A sea hag has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

### Alica the annis:

CR 6; Large Monstrous Humanoid; HD 7d8+14; hp 45; Init +1; Spd 40 ft.; Defense 20 (—1 size, +1 Dex, +10 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 19; DR 2/bludgeoning; Base Atk +7; Grp +18; Atk Claw +13 melee (1d6+7); Full Atk 2 claws +13 melee (1d6+7) and bite +8 melee (1d6+3); SA Improved grab, rake 1d6+7, rend 2d6+10; SQ darkvision 60 ft., shapeshifting, SR 19; SV Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +6; Str 25, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 13, Cha 10.

**Skills and Feats:** Bluff +8, Diplomacy +2, Disguise +0 (+2 in character), Hide +5, Intimidate +2, Listen +10, Spot +10; Blind-Fight 1, Great Fortitude, Skill Affinity (Listen and Spot).

**Languages:** Common, Draconic.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, an annis must hit a Large or smaller opponent with a claw attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity.

**Rake (Ex):** Attack bonus +13 melee, damage 1d6+7. An annis can attack a grappled foe with both claws at no penalty.

**Rend (Ex):** An annis that hits with both claw attacks latches onto the opponent's body and tears the flesh. This attack automatically deals an extra 2d6+10 points of damage.

**Shapeshifting (Su):** Once per round Alica can assume the appearance of any female humanoid or monstrous humanoid she wishes. This does not grant her that form's arcane, supernatural, or extraordinary abilities; her statistics are also not altered. All forms she assumes are Large in size.

### Jenai the green hag:

CR 5; Medium Monstrous Humanoid; HD 9d8+9; hp 49; Init +5; Spd 30 ft., swim 30 ft.; Defense 22 (+1 Dex, +11 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 21; DR —; Base Atk +9; Grp +13; Atk Claw +13 melee (1d4+4); Full Atk 2 claws +13 melee (1d4+4); SA Arcane power, mimicry, weakness; SQ Darkvision 90 ft., SR 18; SV Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +7; Str 19, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 13, Cha 14.

**Skills and Feats:** Concentration +7, Hide +9, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Listen +11, Spot +11, Swim +12; Blind-Fight 1, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Skill Affinity (Listen and Spot).

**Languages:** Bogspeak, Common.

**Arcane Power:** Jenai can turn invisible at will as a full-round action; attacking causes her to turn visible again.

**Mimicry (Ex):** A green hag can imitate the sounds of almost any animal found near its lair.



**Weakness (Su):** A green hag can weaken a foe by making a special touch attack. The opponent must succeed on a DC 16 Fortitude save or take 2d4 points of Strength damage. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Skills:** A green hag has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

## ALONG THE PATH

This 40-foot-wide earthen track was created by the Bitterbreath in years gone by to ease travel between their nearby tomb and their hag servants. Five miles separate the two locations; an average party can walk that distance in roughly 90 minutes. The swamp presses in closely on either side, but the shallow bogs and light undergrowth never cross the path's border.

A few signs of travelers can be found in the stiff mud: large footprints from Alica (the hag's main contact with the dragons), bootprints from several human-sized creatures who have passed this way in the last week (including Gowan), and several dragon tracks. Anyone succeeding at a DC 15 Survival check will note that the only fresh dragon tracks belong to a relatively small creature. A few prints from a much larger dragon can be found near the edges of the path, so worn and faint that they can't have been made within the last month. If not for their maker's ponderous size, they would have oozed flat by now.

Near the end of the track the PCs come in sight of the second graveyard. It's a square structure built from blocks of what looks like white marble, its roof curving to a gentle point 50 feet overhead. The building's exterior is ornamented with the bones of dead dragons — skulls peer down from the roof, legs and ribs cross the walls, and the lone entrance is bracketed with claws and fangs. The swamp's vegetation crawls no closer than 30 feet from the tomb's walls.

Another sight draws the eye. The head of an adult black dragon lies rotting on the path, 200 feet from the tomb; a DC 10 Knowledge (arcana) check reveals that this was a male dragon who was approximately 200 years old. Based on the decomposition, it has been dead for perhaps six weeks. The head was severed from its neck by a series of strong bites from a large, fanged mouth. This is all that remains of Kuulindh, the father of Sriivash. His greedy child bit out his throat as he slept and seized his place. The head was left here to sate Sriivash's vanity, and the body dumped in a nearby bog after several of its bones were taken for the ritual that creates dragonbone creatures.

Near the entrance of the tomb, a makeshift shack squats on a relatively dry piece of land. Sriivash's humanoid ser-

vants eat and sleep here. It has none of the rotting menace of the hags' hut, as this is the handiwork of warriors with no particular carpentry skill. A firepit in the center of the dirt floor is full of warm embers. Four bedrolls lie along the southern wall. A dirty leather sack holds the group's treasured possessions — 55 gp, 62 sp, a matched pair of copper bracelets worth 20 gp each, a chipped bloodstone worth 40 gp, and a perfumed piece of linen paper tied with a red ribbon. The paper is a rather personal letter from a woman named Jezemyn to one Aldothus, the winged dragonbone warrior nearby. It was written before his transformation, and he keeps it as a memento of the time when he could romance a woman without sending her screaming into the night.

## THE WHITE TOMB

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Time and sorcery have hardened all the walls of this strange place (hardness 15, hp 120). The tomb's interior is much larger than its exterior. Its dimensions are built for the comfort of mature dragons, creatures of size Huge and larger. The air is heavy with reptilian musk and the scent of bonedust. Sriivash is here, using her powers to monitor the PCs' progress through the tomb's four halls. Gowan is with her. The mercenary changed sides, having decided that following Sriivash's commands was a small price to pay for draconic power (as well as continuing to live).

Just as the previous graveyard had more metallic dragons, this one favors their chromatic brethren. Two-thirds of the skeletons here come from black, blue, green, red, and white dragons. Unless otherwise noted, each one has its name carved on its skull, along with a biography of a length appropriate to its age.

This place is lit with a faint glow that emanates from the ceiling. It provides shadowy illumination, which grants concealment and permits Hide checks. The PCs would benefit from using a light source, as the guardians of this place have keen senses and ignore the penalties for shadowy illumination.

Sriivash is here, waiting in the Hall of Wisdom's Breath (area 6). She uses this place as her lair, and since capturing Ulagor has only left when she needs to feed. The rest of her time is spent questioning the older dragon for secrets pertaining to immortality, a subject that he's reluctant to discuss.

Several guardian creatures are waiting in the halls here. All are allies or servants of the Bitterbreath clan, called here by Sriivash when it became obvious that the PCs wouldn't be stopped without a fight. If Gowan is alive, he's among their number, preparing to test his new dragonbone powers against the PCs.



As a reminder, dragon bones are as strong as iron (hardness 10, hp 30). Anyone attempting to push or pull a skeleton down must succeed at a DC 20 Strength check. All Bitterbreath dragons get a +5 bonus to this check due to their clan's connection with these bones.



### Falling Dragon Skeleton (Triggered Event Zone):

Triggered when a character makes a DC 20 Strength check to collapse a skeleton in a chosen direction; creatures within 15 feet of the skeleton in the chosen direction must make a DC 15 Reflex save or suffer 2d6 points of damage and be knocked prone; success means half damage and the character stays upright.



## 1. THE HALL OF FIVE DOORS (EL 6)

*This wide room is impossibly large — much bigger than the walls outside would allow. Four huge stone doors are in the wall opposite the entrance, each with a different inscription above it. Where a fifth door might stand in the center of the wall, five stone dragon heads are carved instead, each with its mouth open in a silent roar. The carvings resemble the five chromatic species, each the length of a human arm. Black dust and bone fragments are piled in the corners.*

The central door can only be opened by a dragon, or by someone who possesses the four gemstone keys from beyond the other four doors. This was originally done so that non-dragon visitors would be required to pay their respects in each hall before journeying on to the Hall of Wisdom's Breath. Now Sriivash uses these halls as a last-ditch defense.

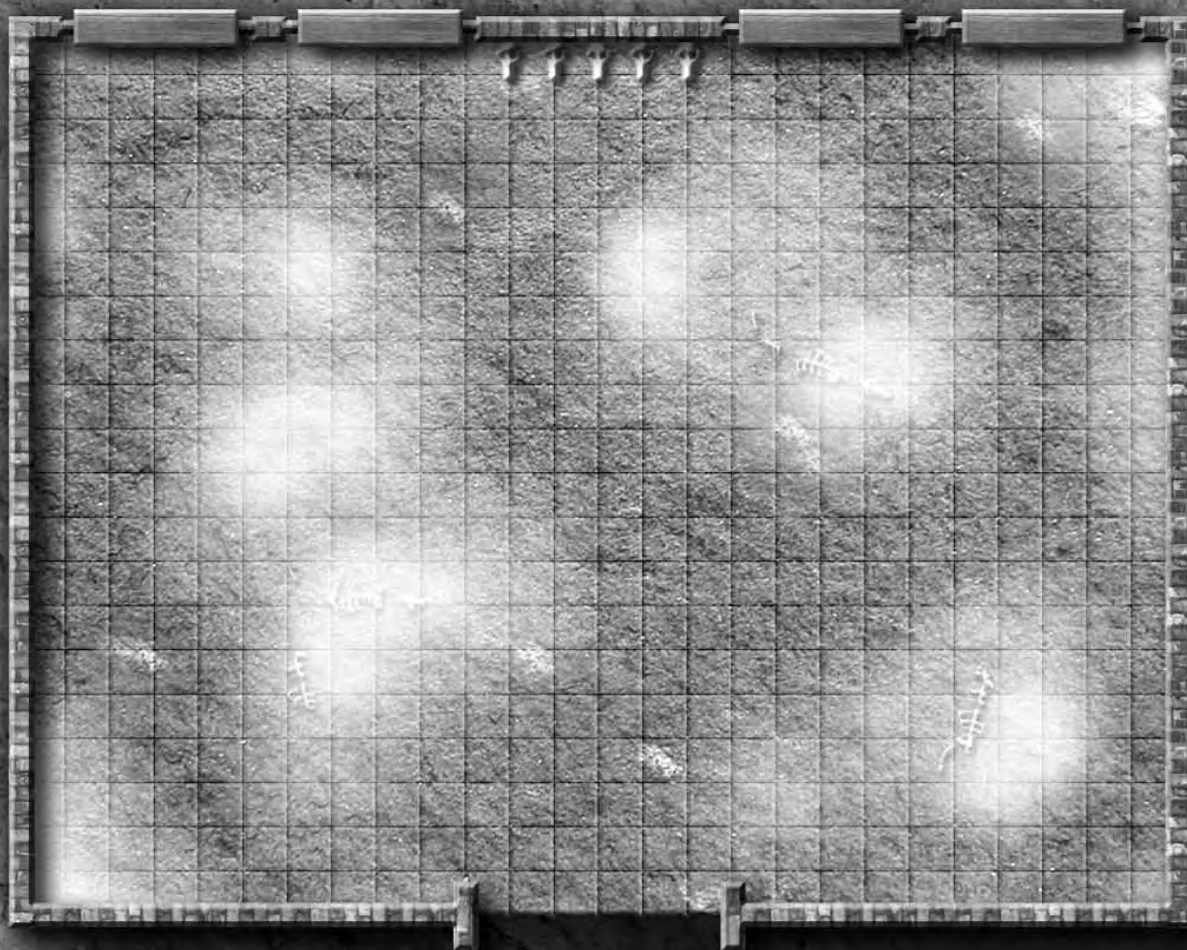
Each of the four ordinary-looking doors has a phrase engraved above it in Ancient Draconic. This graveyard divides its inhabitants by their type of breath weapon, and these phrases provide a clue to each hall's theme. As one faces them, from left to right they read as follows: The Breath That Devours; The Breath That Preserves; The Breath That Thunders; The Breath That Decays. Each hall is guarded by a draconic creature, and these guardians will pursue intruders.

Once the gemstone key is removed from each of these halls and placed in mouth of the corresponding carved dragon head, the black dragon's mouth will open supernaturally wide and permit entry to the Hall of Wisdom's Breath. It will automatically open for a dragon, and anyone on the far side of the door can open it at will.

A massive cube of black stone etched with Bitterbreath history once stood in the center of this room, along with the proud skeletons of a dozen dragons who spent their long lives maintaining the clan's holdings. Now only black fragments and jagged pieces of bone remain. Sriivash had her servants shatter the cube and dismantle the skeletons.

# HALL OF FIVE DOORS

□ = 10 ft.



Four of those servants are in this room, protecting the entrance to her lair. They watch the path at all times and automatically notice the PCs if the party makes no effort to be stealthy. The warriors take no action until the PCs encounter the severed head of Kuulindh. While the PCs are presumably distracted by it, the warriors emerge and attack. All of them begin combat by firing their longbows (with the  $-2$  attack penalty for range). If the PCs move within 100 feet, two warriors drop their bows and move into melee with their greatswords. Once melee begins, the other two warriors switch to swords and join their comrades. Note that these warriors are slightly more skilled than the ones PCs have met thus far.

**Dragonbone Warrior (4), servant of the dragon Sriivash, male human Warrior 2:**

CR 2; Medium Monstrous Humanoid (augmented human); HD  $2d10+12$ ; hp 23; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 15 (+1 class bonus, +4 natural) or 18 (+1 class bonus, +7 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 14 or 17; DR  $1d3/\text{magic}$ ; Base Atk +2; Grp +6; Atk Greatsword +6 melee ( $2d6+6/19-20$ ) or longbow +2 ranged ( $1d8/x3$ ; range 100 ft.); Full Atk Greatsword +6 melee ( $2d6+6/19-20$ ) or longbow +2 ranged ( $1d8/x3$ ; range 100 ft.); SA see below; SQ Greed, immunities, see below; SV Fort +6, Ref +0, Will  $-1$ ; Str 19, Dex 11, Con 16, Int 6, Wis 9, Cha 4.

**Skills and Feats:** Climb +8, Jump +8; Swim +7; Toughness (2 times).

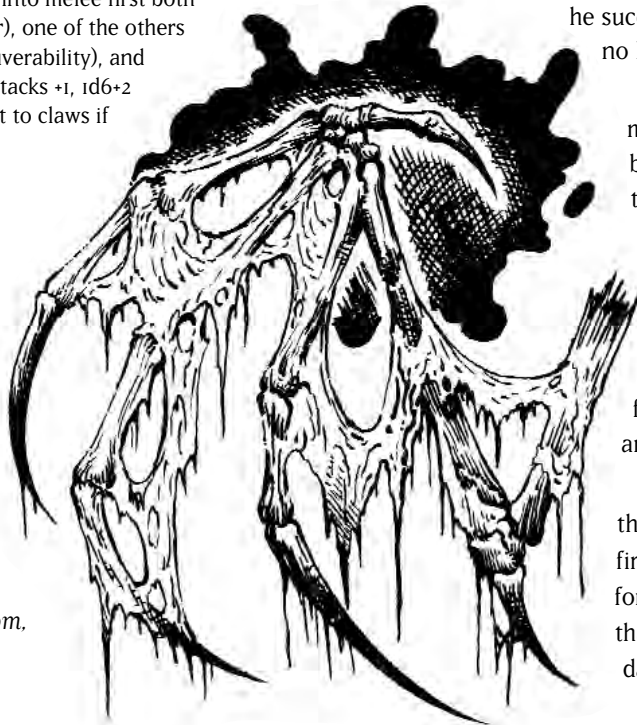
**Possessions:** Greatsword, dagger, longbow, 20 arrows, studded leather (DR  $1d3/\text{magic}$ ),  $2d6$  gp.

**Languages:** Common.

**Notes:** Each warrior is grafted to bones from a black dragon; this was the fate of the Bitterbreath skeletons in the entry hall. The two warriors who charge into melee first both have scales (extra +3 natural armor), one of the others has wings (fly 30 ft., clumsy maneuverability), and the fourth has claws (two melee attacks +1,  $1d6+2$  damage). The latter will only resort to claws if he somehow loses his greatsword.

## 2. THE BREATH THAT DEVOURS (EL 7)

*The air here is so hot it hurts to breathe. Each wall is painted in red and yellow patterns that twist and flicker in the heat. Dragon skeletons stand in rows along the walls, every one flanking a wide pit that holds a roaring bonfire of oil-soaked wood. An altar of red stone is at the far end of the room, and a smaller red object rests on it.*



This room holds skeletons of the dragons who breathe fire — brass, red, and gold. The ruby on the altar at the far wall is a magnificent gem, carved to look like a red dragon's head; this is one of the keys to area 6. If it were sold instead, the ruby would be worth 2,000 gp.

Getting the ruby won't be easy, however. This hall is protected by Rharn, a dragonne in the service of the Bitterbreath clan. Rharn is a proud descendant of brass dragonkind, and he is instantly hostile to strange intruders, crying his heritage in Draconic and then attacking. The dragonne begins combat with his powerful roar, then charges the nearest target and uses either his pounce ability or a bull rush maneuver. Rharn enjoys using his impressive strength to push foes into the bonfire pits. Note that he has no special protection against fire, a fact that can be determined with a DC 15 Knowledge (arcana) check.



### Bonfire Pit (Triggered Event Zone):

Triggered when a character comes into contact with a bonfire; DC 15 Reflex save or take  $1d6$  fire damage and potentially keep burning as described below.



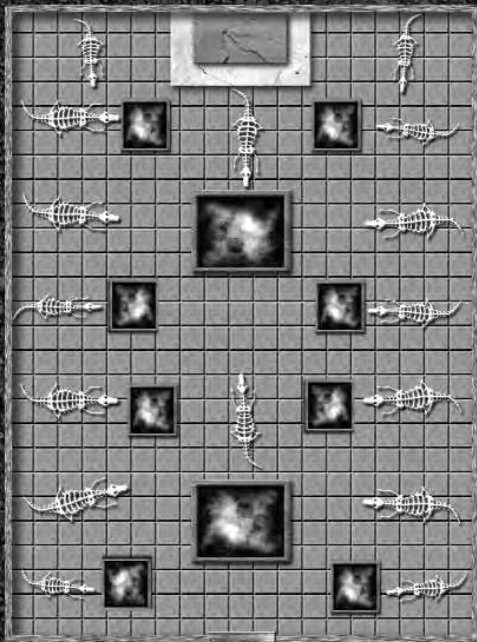
Characters who enter a bonfire pit are allowed a DC 15 Reflex save to avoid catching fire. If a character's clothes or hair catch fire, he takes  $1d6$  points of damage immediately. In each subsequent round, the burning character must make another Reflex saving throw. Failure means he takes another  $1d6$  points of damage that round. Success means that the fire has gone out. (That is, once he succeeds on his saving throw, he's no longer on fire.)

A character on fire may automatically extinguish the flames by jumping into enough water to douse himself. If no body of water is at hand, rolling on the ground or smothering the fire with cloaks or the like permits the character another save with a +4 bonus. This is a full-round action that provokes an attack of opportunity.

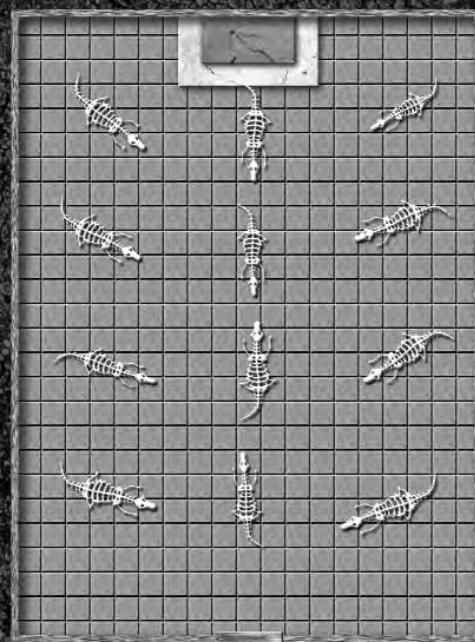
Those unlucky enough to have their clothes or equipment catch fire must make DC 15 Reflex saves for each item. Flammable items that fail take the same amount of damage as the character.



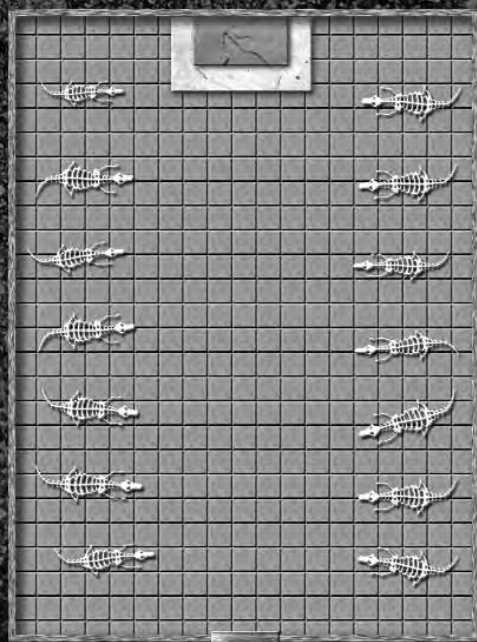
## THE BREATH THAT DEVOURS



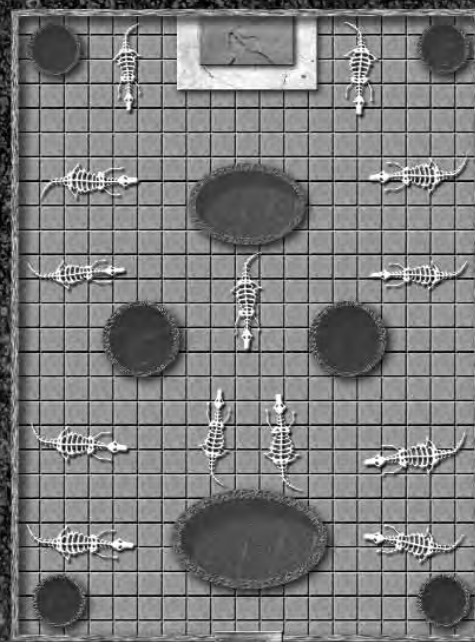
## THE BREATH THAT PRESERVES



## THE BREATH THAT THUNDERS



## THE BREATH THAT DECAYS





### Rharn, guardian of bones, male dragonne:

CR 7; Large Magical Beast; HD 9d10+27; hp 76; Init +6; Spd 40 ft., fly 30 ft. (poor); Defense 18 (−1 size, +2 Dex, +7 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 16; DR —; Base Atk +9; Grp +17; Atk Bite +12 melee (2d6+4); Full Atk Bite +12 melee (2d6+4) and 2 claws +7 melee (2d4+2); SA Pounce, roar; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; SV Fort +9, Ref +8, Will +4; Str 19, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 12.

**Skills and Feats:** Listen +11, Spot +11; Combat Reflexes 1, Improved Bull Rush 1, Improved Bull Rush 3, Improved Initiative.

**Languages:** Draconic.

**Pounce (Ex):** If a dragonne charges, it can make a full attack in the same round.

**Roar (Su):** A dragonne can loose a devastating roar every 1d4 rounds. All creatures except dragonnes within 120 feet must succeed on a DC 15 Will save or become fatigued. Those within 30 feet who fail their saves become exhausted. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Skills:** Dragonnes have a +4 racial bonus on Listen and Spot checks.

## 3. THE BREATH THAT PRESERVES (EL 6)

Grim, draconic skeletons stand in rows here, each encased in a skin of ice. Every surface here is slick and frozen. An altar of white stone is at the far end of the room, and a smaller, clear object rests on it. The only color comes from a few drops of frozen blood on the floor near the door.

The cold-breathing dragons — white and silver — are honored in this hall. The source of this unnatural cold is not apparent, but its results are. Every surface here, including the floor, is coated in ice.



### Ice-Covered Floor (Condition Zone):

Balance DC 15; Fall prone in current square/no effect. Characters walking on ice must spend 2 squares of movement to enter a square covered by ice, and the DC for Balance and Tumble checks increases by +5 (figured in above). The cryohydra is not affected by the icy coating.



Only two things here are free of the icy coating. The diamond on the altar at the far wall, carved to look like a white dragon's head, is one. This is one of the keys to area 6. If it were sold instead, the diamond would be worth 2,000 gp.

The other is this room's guardian, a purplish-blue, five-headed cryohydra. This distant cousin of dragons isn't a particularly fierce guardian. When the PCs enter the room,

only two of its heads are awake, and they are occupied with gnawing on a frozen slab of mutton. Careful PCs can slip past without drawing its attention (although the cryohydra gets its normal Listen and Spot checks). If it does notice the PCs, it will attack, concentrating its breath weapon attacks against anyone carrying open flame; fire is particularly effective against this creature.

If the PCs sneak past the creature and escape with the diamond, award the party experience for a CR 6 encounter.

### Cryohydra (Five-headed):

CR 6; Huge Magical Beast (Cold); HD 5d10+28; 55 hp; Init +1; Spd 20 ft., swim 20 ft.; Defense 15 (−2 size, +1 Dex, +6 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 14; DR —; Base Atk +5; Grp +16; Atk 5 bites +6 melee (1d10+3); Full Atk 5 bites +6 melee (1d10+3); SA Breath weapon (Reflex save DC 17); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., fast healing 15, immune to cold, low-light vision, scent, vulnerable to fire; SV Fort +9, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 17, Dex 12, Con 20, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 9.

**Skills and Feats:** Listen +6, Spot +6, Swim +11; Combat Reflexes 1 (B), Iron Will, Toughness.

**Notes:** Cryohydras can attack with all their heads at no penalty, even if they move or charge during the round.

**Cold Subtype:** A creature with the cold subtype has immunity to cold. It has vulnerability to fire, which means it takes half again as much (+50%) damage as normal from fire, regardless of whether a saving throw is allowed, or if the save is a success or failure.

**Breath Weapon (Su):** Cryohydras can breathe jets of frost 10 feet high, 10 feet wide, and 20 feet long. All heads breathe once every 1d4 rounds. Each jet deals 3d6 points of cold damage per head. A successful Reflex save halves the damage. The save DC is 10 + 1/2 hydra's original number of heads + hydra's Con modifier.

Cold attacks cannot prevent a cryohydra's stump from growing new heads (since a cryohydra has immunity to cold), but 5 points of fire damage does.

**Fast Healing (Ex):** Each round, a cryohydra heals damage equal to 10 + the number of its original heads.

**Skills:** Cryohydras have a +2 racial bonus on Listen and Spot checks, thanks to their multiple heads. A cryohydra has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

**Feats:** A cryohydra's Combat Reflexes feat allows it to use all its heads for attacks of opportunity.

## 4. THE BREATH THAT THUNDERS (EL 7)

*The walls of this room are veined with pulsing, yellow threads of some strange mineral, and the atmosphere crackles with power. Sparks flare from exposed surfaces in the ozone-heavy air. An altar at the far end of the room is painted blue, and a smaller, blue object rests on top of it.*

At the far end of the hall is an altar, upon which is a sapphire worked in the fashion of a blue dragon's head; the gemstone is worth 2,000 gp. Getting it will be difficult. Not only does the room have a monstrous guardian, the air itself is a weapon against intruders. The strange mineral in these walls has charged the air with electricity, and the energy seeks out metal to ground itself. It crackles among the bones of the blue and bronze dragon skeletons that stand here. This has unpleasant consequences, especially for characters with metal weapons or armor.



### Electric Air (Condition Zone):

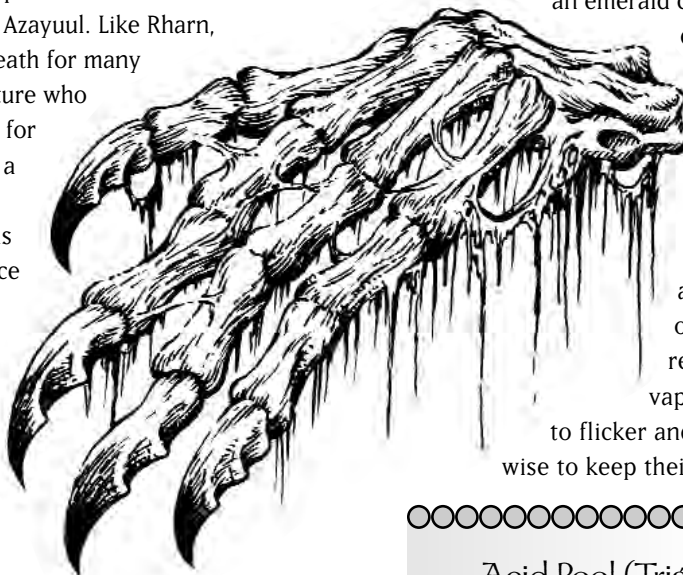
At the beginning of every round in this room, each creature must make a Fortitude save or suffer 1d6 points of nonlethal damage. The base DC for this save is 10, modified by the creature's equipment. Holding a metal weapon (all daggers, maces, kukris, swords) increases the character's DC by 2. Holding a metal shield of any size increases it by 3. Wearing studded leather armor increases it by 2, any medium armor increases it by 4, and any heavy armor increases it by 6. These modifiers are cumulative, so a character equipped with studded leather, longsword, and steel shield has a DC of 17.



The charged air poses no problem for the hall's guardian, a chimera named Azayuul. Like Rharn, she has served the Bitterbreath for many years, and is a wicked creature who respects Sriivash's methods for gaining power. Azayuul has a blue dragon head, allowing her to breathe lightning; this doesn't confer any resistance to electricity, but her base Fortitude save is enough to overcome the effects of this room. She charges into combat, spreading her attacks among as many characters as possible and using her breath weapon against those who keep their distance from her.

### Azayuul, evil-tempered guardian, female chimera:

CR 7; Large Magical Beast; HD 9d10+27; hp 76; Init +1; Spd 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (poor); Defense 19 (−1 size, +1 Dex, +9 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +9; Grp +17; Atk Bite +12 melee (2d6+4); Full Atk Bite +12 melee (2d6+4) and bite +12 melee (1d8+4) and gore +12 melee (1d8+4) and 2 claws +10 melee (1d6+2); SA Breath weapon (save DC 17); SQ



Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; SV Fort +9, Ref +7, Will +6; Str 19, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 4, Wis 13, Cha 10.

**Skills and Feats:** Hide +1 (+5 in scrub or brush), Listen +9, Spot +9; Hover, Iron Will, Multiattack 1, Skill Affinity (Listen and Spot).

**Languages:** Draconic.

**Breath Weapon (Su):** Azayuul breathes a 40-foot line of lightning. This breath weapon is usable once every 1d4 rounds, deals 3d8 points of electrical damage, and allows a DC 17 Reflex save for half damage. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Skills:** A chimera's three heads give it a +2 racial bonus on Spot and Listen checks.

## 5. THE BREATH THAT DECAYS (possible EL 8)

*The details of this room are obscured by a heavy fog of green and grey vapor. It stinks of corruption. Slow, bubbling noises echo from all sides, as if heavy liquids were stirring underfoot.*

Skeletons from black, copper, and green dragons rest in this foul-smelling place. Pools of corrosive liquid are spaced along the floor, bubbling up from an unseen source beneath the floor. Fumes rise from them in thick, green-grey sheets. On the black and green altar at the far end is an emerald crafted in the form of a green

dragon's head; it's worth 2,000 gp. And if he's still among the living, Gowan waits here for a chance to ambush the PCs.

This hall is a smelly, dangerous place. The odorous steam coming from the acid pools is as thick as fog, granting everyone here partial concealment regardless of light sources, as the vapors cause torches and lanterns to flicker and fade. Characters would be wise to keep their eyes on the pools.



### Acid Pool (Triggered Event Zone):

Triggered when a character enters the pool; 1d4 damage/round for 2 rounds; equipment touching the acid takes similar damage, and the acid is powerful enough to ignore the first 5 points of the object's hardness.



Gowan is presumed to be alive and present (if he's not, then this room is just a couple lungfuls of bad air and the emerald gemstone key). The bone harvester was in the

Hall of Five Doors when the PCs approached, and he retreated to this room as his fellow dragonbone warriors moved to attack. He hides in a darkened corner, taking 20 on his check if time permits, and listens for the PCs. When one comes 40 feet or more into the room, he addresses them:

*Well, aren't you clever, finding another lost dragons' graveyard? Almost as clever as your old friend Gowan. I'm not dead — in fact, thanks to the lady Sriivash, I'm in better health than I ever was. Now I'm working with the dragons instead of stealing from them. Stealing gets you killed. Let me demonstrate....*

With that, he moves to attack under cover of the acidic mist. His keen senses let him see targets before they spot him. Gowan will use Move Silently whenever possible, prowling through the murky light and trying to pick off characters who have no allies at hand. With his new strength and his tail, Gowan prefers to make two-handed battleaxe attacks, but he'll adapt to the situation. For example, given his resistance to acid he might scoop up a handful and throw it in an enemy's face or even grapple them and hold them down in one of the pools.

The mercenary knows much of what Sriivash is planning. In fact, the dragon has promised him immortality in return for loyal service. Gowan will gloat about this fact, not realizing that Sriivash may well double-cross him.

**Gowan the Bone Harvester,  
black dragonbone creature, male human  
Executioner 6:**

CR 7; Medium Monstrous Humanoid (augmented human); HD 6d4+48; hp 66; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 23 (+3 Dex, +5 class bonus, +5 natural), touch 18, flat-footed 15; DR 1d3/magic; Base Atk +6; Grp +11; Atk Masterwork battleaxe (wielded two-handed) +10 melee (1d8+13/x3; includes 3-point Power Attack) or composite longbow +9 ranged (1d8+2/x3, range 110 ft.); Full Atk Masterwork battleaxe (wielded two-handed) +10/+5 melee (1d8+13/x3; includes 3-point Power Attack) and tail +6 melee (1d6+5) or composite longbow +9/+4 ranged (1d8+2/x3, range 110 ft.); SA Armor-piercing strike, hindering cut, sneak attack +3d6; SQ Acid resistance 5, blindsense 30 ft, create distraction, execution pool, exe-

cutioner's eye, greed, immunity to sleep and paralysis, low-light vision.; SV Fort +10, Ref +9, Will +9; Str 21, Dex 16, Con 18, Int 8, Wis 16, Cha 6.

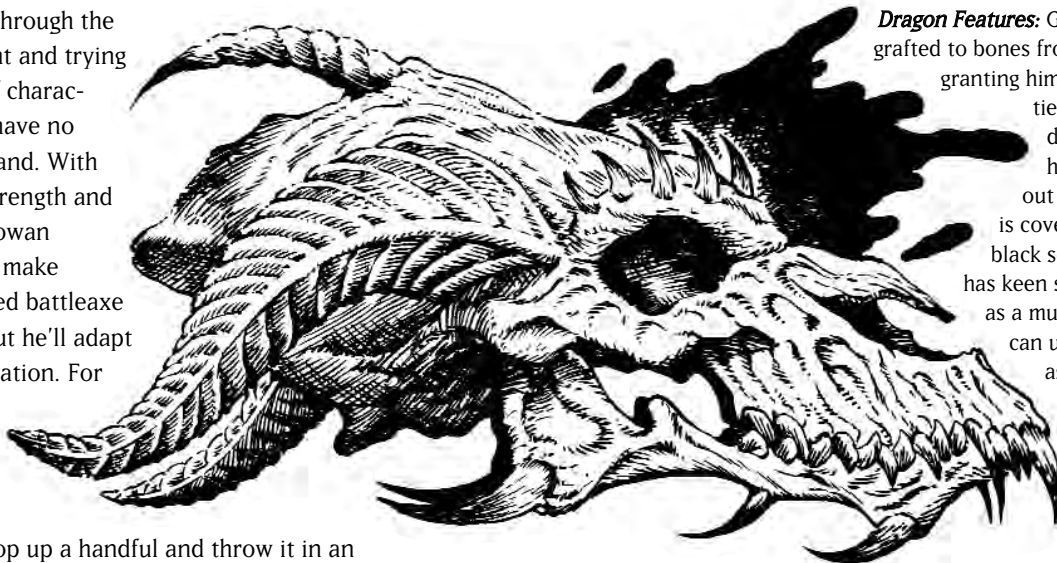
**Skills and Feats:** Climb +13, Decipher Script +8, Diplomacy +0, Disable Device +8, Escape Artist +11, Hide +11, Jump +13, Listen +12, Move Silently +11, Open Lock +12, Search +8, Sense Motive +14, Spot +14, Survival +3 (+5 to follow tracks), Swim +12, Use Rope +3 (+5 with bindings); Beast Lore 1, Improved Sunder 2, Power Attack 1, Skill Affinity (Sense Motive, Spot), Weapon Focus 1 (battleaxe).

**Possessions:** Masterwork battleaxe, dagger, composite longbow (+2), 20 arrows, studded leather with bone decoration (DR 1d3/magic), bullseye lantern, crowbar, grappling hook, 4 oil flasks, 50-ft. silk rope, thieves' tools.

**Languages:** Common, Ancient Speech.

**Traits:** Brave (immune to fear effects), Stout (+1 natural armor, figured above).

**Dragon Features:** Gowan is grafted to bones from Kuulindh, granting him the immunities of a black dragon. His hair has fallen out and his skin is covered in thin, black scales. He now has keen senses as well as a muscular tail; he can use the latter as a secondary attack in combat with the statistics given above.



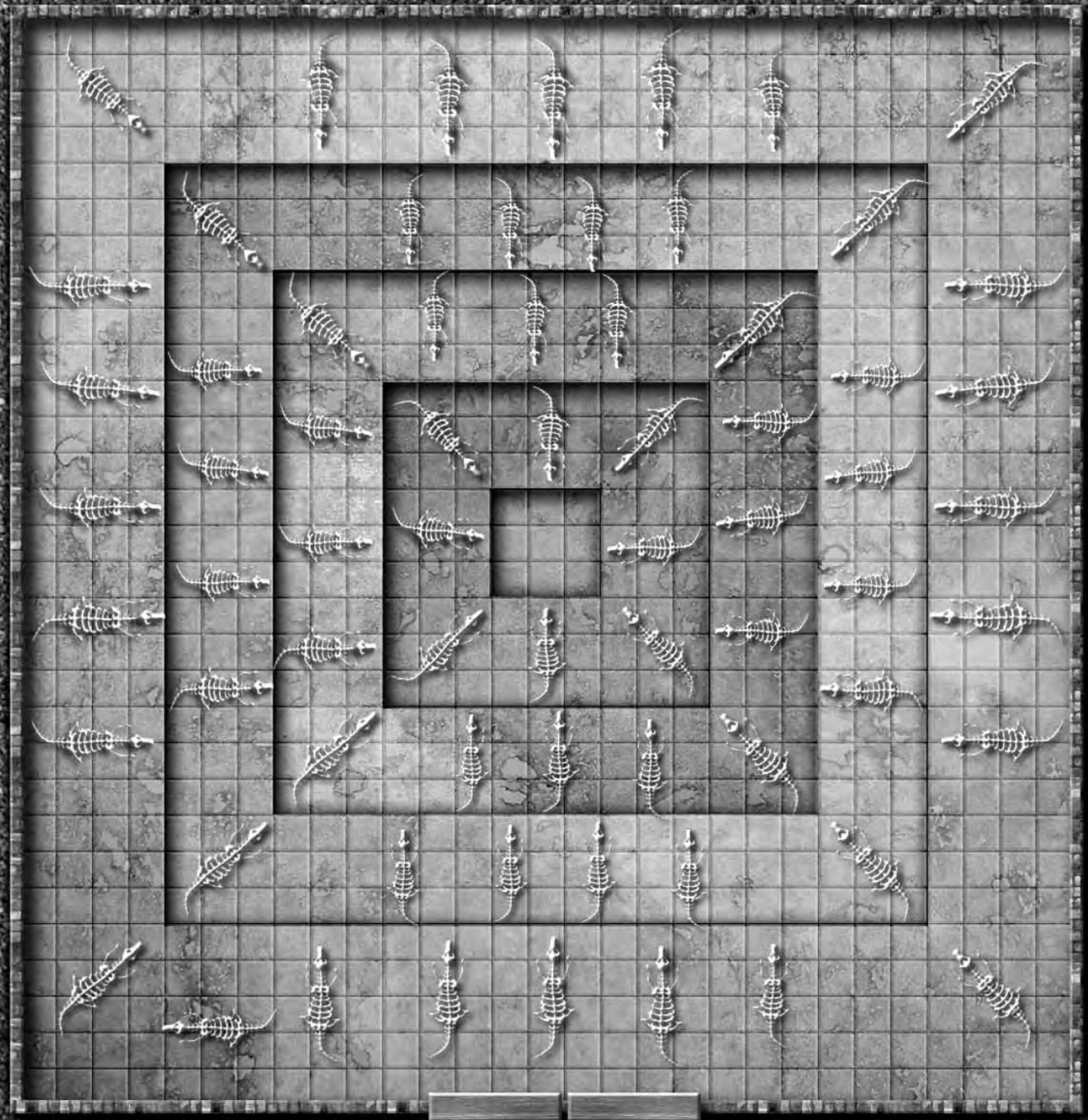
## 6. THE HALL OF WISDOM'S BREATH (EL 8)

*Some castle courtyards are smaller than this place. A massive, stepped dais rises like a ziggurat in the middle of the cavernous room. Each of its three steps is ringed with the skeletons of huge dragons. Carved characters cover each skeleton from skull to tail, often inlaid with gold or silver.*

This is the heart of the tomb, and the resting place for the most honored dead. Dozens of them are here, an equal mix of the ten common draconic species, their skeletons arrayed in ranks facing outward along the steps of the dais. Each skeleton is crawling with Ancient Draconic and Forgotten Draconic runes. These are the remains of extremely clever and accomplished dragons. Their greatest achievements and most subtle discoveries are etched forever into their bones, a tremendous wealth of knowledge just waiting for a skilled linguist to unlock it. Medicine, agriculture, arcana, history — the knowledge here could advance humanity by decades at the least.

# HALL OF WISDOM'S BREATH

□ = 10 ft.





But its current custodian doesn't like to share. Sriivash murdered her father and kidnapped the formidable Ulagor, and she doesn't plan to give up just because some human pests have found her lair. Her command of this place's knowledge and her possession of the yet-helpless Ulagor are the tools she needs to achieve immortality. It would please her to start that new life in a bath of the PCs' blood. She'll say as much when the PCs first enter the hall:

*You've blundered into my plans for the last time, mammals! I am Sriivash, queen of this place! Once I've disposed of you, nothing will stop me from becoming immortal!*

With that flurry of exclamations she'll take flight from her perch at the top of the dais. The scaly shape of Ulagor can be seen up there as well, his molten red eyes looking furious — Sriivash has his muzzle tied shut with strong rope, an insufferable humiliation. He rests on top of the young dragon's treasure. The Bitterbreath clan doesn't have a lot of wealth, as the respect of their peers and the knowledge of the ancients has been payment enough for previous generations, but Sriivash's greed caused her to start collecting whatever treasure her servants gleaned in their travels.

Indeed, she disdains the rune-covered skeletons her ancestors tended. She uses them as weapons against the PCs. Sriivash begins her attack by flying over the PCs and spitting acid at a likely target. Then she lands and attempts to

push skeletons down onto her enemies; with her clan bonus, she succeeds at her Strength check on a roll of 11 or higher. Sriivash snarls her disdain for the deceased, mocking them for having given in to death.

She's a clever fighter but not a thoughtful one, seizing tactical advantages without regard to her underlying strategy. Staying airborne and breathing acid would eventually wear down any party not composed exclusively of archers. However, the young dragon enjoys the savagery of melee. She'll waste time trading blows with a mob of enemies, or trying to bury them under a hail of bones, boasting all the while of her impending immortality. She does have enough sense to use her arcane powers to hinder ranged attackers, and she uses her breath weapon (often to the detriment of nearby skeletons), but her murder of Kuulindh has left her overconfident. Sriivash brags of how she slew her father as he slept, without realizing that live adventurers pose a greater threat.

This fight should be a wild event, a fitting climax to the PCs' labors. Sriivash is a powerful foe. Her physical attacks will bloody almost any foe. She should lay waste to the room as she fights. Her powers allow her to shroud areas in darkness, which she uses to cover her movements, and the Flyby Attack feat lets her hit and run (treat it as the flying equivalent of Mobility 3). Given her prowess with the Intimidate skill, Sriivash is also good at demoralizing others (as described in the *Iron Heroes* core book).





### Sriivash, traitorous young reptile, elite juvenile Black Dragon:

CR 8; Medium Dragon (Water); HD 13d12+39; hp 141; Init +4; Spd 60 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor), swim 60 ft.; Defense 22 (+12 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 22; Base Atk +13; Grp +18; Atk bite +18 melee (1d8+5); Full Atk bite +18 melee (1d8+5) and 2 claws +16 melee (1d6+2) and 2 wings +16 melee (1d4+2); SA Arcane power, breath weapon (save DC 19); SQ Blindsight 60 ft., breathe water, darkvision 120 ft., immunity to acid, sleep, and paralysis, keen senses; SV Fort +11, Ref +8, Will +7; Str 21, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 14, Wis 8, Cha 12.

**Skills and Feats:** Diplomacy +5, Gather Information +3, Hide +6, Intimidate +17, Knowledge (all categories) +18, Listen +17, Move Silently +10, Search +18 (+20 with secret doors and compartments), Sense Motive +15, Spot +17, Survival –1 (+1 to avoid getting lost and natural hazards, while aboveground, on other planes, underground, or while tracking), Swim +22; Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder 1, Multiattack 1, Skill Affinity (Listen and Spot).

**Languages:** Common, Ancient Draconic, Draconic.

**Arcane Power:** Sriivash has a limited ability to fill areas with mystical darkness. As a standard action, she can darken a spherical area up to 80 feet in diameter, blotting out all nonmagical light sources as well as the dim glow of the tomb. Anyone caught in this darkness is effectively blinded until they escape. These pools of darkness last for 5 rounds, and are the equivalent of a 3rd-level arcanist effect. Sriivash can use this power three times per day.

**Breath Weapon (Su):** Sriivash breathes a 60-foot line of acid. This breath weapon is usable once every 1d4 rounds, deals 8d4 points of acid damage, and allows a DC 19 Reflex save for half damage. The save DC is Constitution-based.

## AFTERMATH

Once the battle winds down, the PCs can deal with a few more pieces of unfinished business. Chief among these is Ulagor. He'll glare and grunt at the party, using whatever nonverbal cues he can muster to convince them to untie him. If they do, he says the following:

*Thank you. Not just for releasing me, but for all the help you've provided in recent days. I've waited a long time to reach this tomb. The life and death of my kind are strong here. Only in such a place can I truly die — or perhaps be reborn. I tire of immortality. With your assistance I can turn one of these skeletons into a new body, trading my dull, endless life for the joys of the flesh once again. Will you help me?*

Ulagor has been plotting toward this end for years; Gowan was the sixth hireling to unknowingly serve the immortal dragon's ends, and the first to track down a Bitterbreath graveyard. All this activity caught the attention of Kuulindh and Sriivash, prompting the ambitious younger dragon to kill her father in hopes of learning

Ulagor's secrets. The ensuing chaos attracted bold and dangerous adventurers, just as Ulagor had foreseen, and it was little trouble to maneuver them into freeing him from the Hill. With only one hitch, Ulagor's plan to gain a new body has gone perfectly.

The one hitch is that he can't move into the right position. All he needs is to touch the skull of an intact red dragon skeleton in the Hall of Wisdom's Breath, every one of which is at least 5 feet above the ground. Unless the PCs' battle with Sriivash lasted more than half an hour, at least one should have survived. The only thing Ulagor asks is that the PCs hold him up to the skeleton's skull.

In return, he offers them several things. Chief among them is a promise of safety. The ancient dragon assures the PCs that he won't attack them when he gains his new body. He offers to answer any questions within his understanding. Ulagor also points out the value of the skeletons in this room, something that might go unnoticed by parties without the Decipher Script skill. If these things aren't enough, he'll offer the PCs whatever they might want — power, wealth, rides on his back — anything that will motivate them to connect him to a skeleton.

## IF THEY AGREE

Once the PCs bring Ulagor up to an intact red dragon skeleton's skull, the change happens rapidly. In the space of 3 combat rounds new organs form, muscles and veins wrap around the bones, and thick, scaly skin grows over everything. This process is accompanied by a hollow, wailing noise that comes from all around; this is the keening of Ulagor's immortality as it is torn from him.

When the change is over, Ulagor takes a luxurious stretch, ignoring everything around him as he enjoys the feeling of having a body once more. Then he twists his neck around and peers down at the PCs. He says:

*Little ones, I have not eaten in centuries. Now I hunger. Be grateful that I swore to leave you here in safety; otherwise you would be my first meal. I will take the measure of the world and see how it has changed in my absence. Perhaps we shall meet again.*

With that, he strides out the door and beyond, taking flight as soon as he reaches the outdoors. Ulagor got what he wanted, and now the PCs are beneath his notice. They were useful tools, nothing more. Whether he honors any promises made here depends on many factors, but none of them will be fulfilled today — the old wyrm has other things on his mind at the moment. He won't even bother to respond if the PCs attack him; this body has a Defense of 39 and DR 15/magic, so he probably wouldn't be harmed by even their best efforts.

Releasing such a powerful dragon on the world is an act that will come back to the PCs at some point. It is suggested that they encounter Ulagor's handiwork from time to time as they grow in power. Although the dragon isn't evil, he's amazingly clever and similarly selfish. When next he feeds on a village's cattle, plunders the king's armory, or enslaves a mighty arcanist, perhaps he'll mention the PCs' role in freeing him. This can spiral into all manner of adventures.

## IF THEY DON'T AGREE

At first he redoubles his persuasive efforts, promising all sorts of draconic help and long-lost treasure. Perhaps the PCs still refuse. Ulagor doesn't like that at all. His temper flaring, he'll berate the PCs, threatening them with all sorts of dire revenge if they don't help him. The fact that he's in no position to carry out these threats doesn't stop him. Threats and promises pour out of his mouth until finally he commands the "lowly mammals" to obey him at *once*.

The PCs are free to ignore his ranting without suffering any consequences — for now. Ulagor is nearly impossible to kill, and if the PCs refuse him, he'll devote his considerable intelligence to somehow having his revenge. The simplest solution is to just drop him in a bog. It won't kill him, but it will shut him up. More enterprising PCs might try to keep him. If it's obvious that he's going to remain in their custody, Ulagor will sulk for a few days and then start making himself helpful. The dragon knows an astonishing number of things and is a handy resource. Once the PCs have come to rely on him, he'll attempt to manipulate them in to restoring him to bodily form again; this plan will take months or even years to unfold.

Another option is to sell him. A creature like Ulagor would fetch an astonishing sum of money or its equivalent in land, titles, and goods. Given a buyer of enough resources, like a monarch or one of the world's great merchants, Ulagor would be worth 100,000 gp or more. Of course, stealing him or taking him by force would be much less expensive. All manner of intrigues and perils can be spun off of this track, not least of which is Ulagor's own resentment at being treated like a piece of meat for sale.

## THE REST OF THE HALL

As stated above, the skeletons here are a fabulous source of knowledge. Translating and understanding them is a time-consuming process, but in time this knowledge could revolutionize medicine, architecture, astronomy, magic, and many other fields of inquiry. Kings, sages, and other adventurers would pay handsomely for access to these bones. In game terms, anyone who can read these bones can treat

them like a library, gaining a +2 bonus on any Knowledge check made while the character has access to them.

They have much greater value when used to support extended skill checks. The GM can allow characters to research any field of study of the Knowledge skill here, making two checks daily with a +10 bonus each, in pursuit of a GM-approved fact or answer. Exact details of these extended checks will vary by campaign, but it should be obvious to the PCs that scholars will benefit greatly from time spent here.

Other than the bones, Sriivash didn't amass much treasure. The gemstone keys are valuable, but without them the only way into the Hall of Wisdom's Breath is to smash down the wall. The wealth of the Bitterbreath clan wasn't in the piled hoards of a storyteller's imagination. Sriivash did, however, amass enough to make it worthwhile. The treasure atop the dais is a mixture of items from the Bitterbreath collections and things Sriivash's servants took by force from undefended travelers. All told, the treasure is: 3,500 sp; 1,200 gp; a pair of onyx earrings cut to look like black dragon heads (100 gp each); a thick, gold arm-band etched with the figures of dragons pursuing each other (400 gp); a silver chalice with a Forgotten Draconic inscription reading *To my fearsome master, the great wyrm Druhgarra! (750 gp); and ten semi-precious gemstones like jade, garnet, and citrine (100 gp each). Most of the coins are archaic, a product of lands that no longer exist, but they will still be taken by most merchants.*

In time, distant cousins of the Bitterbreath clan will come here, seeking to restore this graveyard to its intended purpose. Ulagor might also return in hopes of drawing on its arcane energy again. For a time, the swamp's denizens will steer clear of it as they always have, but eventually the bolder ones will treat this as their own territory.

For now, the PCs have more immediate concerns. The enemy is slain, a strange and useful treasure is theirs, and the path to civilization will take at least two days' travel through the Viper Swamp. By now they should be 8th level. It's time to rest up, train a little, and then find the next adventure.





## APPENDIX:

# NEW MONSTERS

## BOG SHAMBLER

### MEDIUM ABERRATION

**Hit Dice:** 3d8+9 (22 hp)

**Initiative:** +4

**Speed:** 20 ft., swim 20 ft.

**Defense:** 16 (+6 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 16

**DR:** —

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +2/+6

**Attack:** Slam +6 melee (1d4+6)

**Full Attack:** Slam +6 melee (1d4+6)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Improved grab, Strength leech

**Special Qualities:** Amphibious, darkvision 60 ft.

**Saves:** Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +5

**Abilities:** Str 18, Dex 11, Con 16, Int 13, Wis 15, Cha 12

**Skills:** Hide +8\*, Move Silently +8\*, Swim +18

**Feats:** Improved Initiative, Skill Affinity (Hide and Move Silently)

**Environment:** Temperate marshes

**Organization:** Solitary, pair, pack (4-7), or mob (5-20)

**Challenge Rating:** 2

**Advancement:** 4-6 HD (Medium)

**Level Adjustment:** —

Bog shamblers are humanoid creatures that look like a combination of giant leeches, swamp vines, and pure shadow. Their glistening black skin is covered by a layer of green, plantlike hair, and their eyes and mouth are hollow pits. They move with a slow, rolling gait. In the water they are far more mobile and dangerous. If a bog shambler grapples a target, its vinelike covering peels back and the creature's oily skin seems to ooze forward to suck the victim partly into itself. Bog shamblers are clever and hateful creatures that happily serve powerful masters. If left alone, they form large groups and terrorize all living things nearby.

Bog shamblers speak Common as well as Bogspeak.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, a bog shambler must hit with a slam attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity.

**Strength Leech (Su):** As a standard action, a bog shambler can drain the might from a creature it grapples. The victim must make a Fortitude save (DC 14) or suffer 1d4 points of Strength damage.

**Skills:** In marshes and aquatic environments, bog shamblers gain a +4 racial bonus to Hide and Move Silently.

A bog shambler has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.



## DRAGONBONE (Template)

The dragons have an ancient ritual that bonds their dead bones to living creatures, creating monstrous hybrids of exceptional power. These creatures are called dragonbones or wyrmtouched. They draw on the power of the bones to manifest draconic abilities and formidable strength, at the cost of some mental abilities. This template is not suitable for PC use in standard *Iron Heroes* campaigns, as it uses powerful magic that often grants supernatural abilities.

A dragonbone creature shows its strange nature in its appearance, although its exact characteristics depend on its specific features. One such creature might have huge wings and scaly skin, while another might look perfectly normal except that it shrugs off magic, and a third could also look normal except for the dragon's head sticking out from its shoulder. Some experts speculate that creatures like the chimera and dragonne came from dragonbone creatures that bred true with wild animals.

"Dragonbone" is an acquired template that can be added to any animal or humanoid creature (referred to hereafter as the base creature). It bonds the base creature to the bones of one particular dragon (referred to hereafter as the base dragon). A dragonbone creature has all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

**Size and Type:** The creature's type changes either to magical beast (for animals) or monstrous humanoid (for humanoids) with the augmented subtype. Size is unchanged. Do not recalculate base attack bonus, saves, or skill points.

**Hit Dice:** Increase the base creature's HD to d10s (for *Iron Heroes* character classes, increase HD to 1d4+6), unless the creature already has equal or better HD.

**Defense:** Natural armor improves by +4.

**Special Qualities:** All dragonbone creatures gain immunity to effects that cause sleep or paralysis. They also gain energy resistance 5 against the base dragon's breath weapon type. In addition, for every 3 HD the base creature gains one draconic feature from the list below. Round fractions up when calculating the number of draconic features; for example, a 5 HD creature gains two draconic features.

**Dragon Features:** A dragonbone creature can manifest a wide array of special abilities, and as it grows in power it may gain more. This makes it impossible to predict the results of any particular dragonbone ritual. Even if two identical creatures are bonded to identical bones from the same dead dragon, entirely different features may result. Unless otherwise noted, each ability from the list below can only be taken once. Keep in mind that a dragonbone creature is not a dragon, and therefore one dragonbone creature may be vulnerable to another's abilities.

- **Bite (Ex):** As appropriate for creature size. Tiny creatures do 1d4 piercing damage, Small do 1d6, Medium do 1d8, Large do 2d6, Huge do 2d8, Gargantuan do 4d6, and Colossal do 4d8. If the base creature already has a bite attack that does less damage, increase it to the amount listed. This feature has no effect on creatures which already possess equal or superior bite attacks. The creature can use this bite as a secondary attack, with a –5 penalty to hit and adding the creature's full Strength bonus to damage. Sometimes this feature manifests as a second head, but usually it's just a mouth full of wicked fangs.
- **Breath Weapon (Su):** This feature adds the breath weapon attack used by the dragon whose bones were bonded to this creature; if the dragon had multiple breath weapons, only the damage-causing one is present (but see below). The breath weapon does (half the creature's HD)d6 damage with the same range and shape as the base dragon. The saving throw DC is  $(10 + 1/2 \text{ its HD} + \text{creature's Con modifier})$ . After using its breath weapon, the creature must wait 1d4 minutes before it can be used again. If the base dragon had two breath weapons, this feature can be taken a second time to add the other one, mimicking the effect generated by a normal dragon of that type. Even in this case, the creature can still use a breath weapon attack only once every 1d4 minutes.
- **Claws (Ex):** Two claw attacks per round, doing slashing damage as appropriate for size. Tiny creatures do 1d3 damage with each claw, Small do 1d4, Medium do 1d6, Large do 1d8, Huge do 2d6, Gargantuan do 2d8, and Colossal do 4d6. If the base creature already has a claw attack that does less damage, increase it to the amount listed. This feature has no effect on creatures which already possess equal or superior claw attacks. The creature can use its claws as secondary attacks, each with a –5 penalty to hit and adding half the creature's Strength bonus (rounded down) to damage. This feature always reshapes the recipient's body, although occasionally it manifests in feet instead of hands (which has no game effect).
- **Damage Reduction (Su):** The creature inherits some of the base dragon's resistance to weapons. It gains DR equal to one-quarter its HD or character level, rounded down. Magic overcomes this DR, as do the natural attacks of any true dragon. Those with this feature have pronounced scales all over their bodies.
- **Frightful Presence (Su):** The dragonbone creature can unsettle foes by channeling the base dragon's presence. This ability can be used once per day for

every 3 character levels, rounding down. Creatures within a radius of 30 feet are subject to the effect if they have fewer HD than the dragonbone creature. A potentially affected target that succeeds on a Will save (DC  $10 + \frac{1}{2}$  creature's HD + creature's Cha modifier) remains immune to that creature's frightful presence for 24 hours. On a failure, creatures with 4 or less HD become panicked for 4d6 rounds and those with 5 or more HD become shaken for 4d6 rounds. Dragons ignore the frightful presence of dragonbone creatures. Anyone with this feature is intimidating whether they wish to be or not.

- **Keen Senses (Ex):** This feature grants the creature low-light vision, as well as blindsense with a range of 30 feet. If taken a second time, the creature gains darkvision with a range of 60 feet. Someone with keen senses has eyes like an elder dragon — their pupils nearly vanish and their eye color becomes much brighter, giving them strange eyes.
- **Roar (Su):** The creature can let loose a mighty roar once every 1d4 minutes. All non-dragon creatures within 60 feet must succeed at a Will save or suffer one of three negative effects. Victims of the roar are either dazed, fatigued, or shaken for 1d8 rounds; the effect of the roar is chosen when the feature is gained and cannot be changed. The Will save's DC is ( $10 + \frac{1}{2}$  creature's HD + creature's Cha modifier). Creatures with this feature tend to have loud, booming voices.
- **Scales (Ex):** The creature gains an additional +3 bonus to its natural armor. This feature may be taken up to three times. Creatures with extra scales are covered in thick plates of dragonlike hide.
- **Spell Resistance (Su):** The creature gains SR equal to its Con modifier plus its HD. This SR has one weakness, however: it doesn't work against any magic used by a true dragon. Creatures with this ability have an odd aura about them.
- **Tail (Ex):** This feature is always obvious. It does bludgeoning damage as appropriate for creature size. Tiny creatures do no damage with tail attacks, Small do 1d4, Medium do 1d6, Large do 1d8, Huge do 2d6, Gargantuan do 2d8, and Colossal do 4d6. If the base creature already has a tail attack that does less damage, increase it to the amount listed. This feature has no effect on creatures which already possess equal or superior tail attacks. The creature can use this tail attack as a secondary attack, with a –5 penalty to hit and adding the creature's full Strength bonus to damage. Creatures with a dragon's tail cannot wear ordinary armor or clothing, requiring it to be custom-made at double normal cost.

- **Venom (Ex):** One of the creature's natural attacks is poisonous. The poison's statistics are: injury, Fortitude DC ( $10 + \frac{1}{2}$  creature's HD + creature's Con modifier), initial and secondary damage 1d3 Con. This feature is usually combined with an existing natural attack or one of the other features from this list, but it is possible to have a character whose own teeth or fists are now venomous. By the same token, a character could have a narrow tail or specialized fangs that deliver the venom without doing any other damage. In these latter cases, the venom does not work against any creature with natural armor or DR, including those wearing armor, as it is then too difficult to break the creature's skin.
- **Wings (Su):** The creature has two large, dragonlike wings emerging from its back. The wings aren't naturally strong enough to hold the creature aloft, but residual magic from the bones provides the necessary power. The creature can fly at a speed equal to its base speed and with clumsy maneuverability. Normally these wings are too weak to use as natural weapons, but if this feature is taken a second time they become robust enough to make two slashing attacks against enemies. The wings of Tiny creatures do no damage, Small do 1d3 each, Medium do 1d4, Large do 1d6, Huge do 1d8, Gargantuan do 2d6, and Colossal do 2d8. If the base creature already has a wing attack that does less damage, increase it to the amount listed. This feature has no effect on creatures which already possess equal or superior wing attacks. The creature can use its wings as secondary attacks, with a –5 penalty to hit and adding half the creature's Strength bonus (rounded down) to damage. Creature's with a dragon's wings cannot wear ordinary armor or clothing, requiring it to be custom-made at quadruple normal cost. Creatures wearing medium or heavier armor, or carrying a medium or heavier load, cannot use these wings to fly.

**Abilities:** Increase from the base creature as follows: Str +6, Con +4. If the base creature was a humanoid, reduce Int by 4 (to a minimum of 3) and Cha by 4 (to a minimum of 1). The whispers of the dragon's mind leave humanoids distracted, confused, and irritable. Animals don't notice.

**Challenge Rating:** HD 6 or less, as base creature +1; HD 7 to 12, as base creature +2; HD 13 or more, as base creature +3.

**Level Adjustment:** As the dragonbone's adjusted CR +1.

**Other:** Dragonbone creatures take on some of the wyrm's negative characteristics. Chief among them is greed — whenever presented with an opportunity to acquire something the creature desires, it must make a Will save (DC 15).



Failure means the creature stops all other activities to concentrate on fulfilling this desire; this mania lasts for 24 hours or until the object is acquired.

Even worse, if something a dragonbone values is lost or stolen, it must make a Will save (DC 25) or turn all its energy to recovering the valued item and punishing anyone involved in its loss. This mental state also lasts 24 hours or until the item is returned. If the dragonbone creature doesn't get the desired item back after 24 hours, it must continue to make a daily Will save at the same DC until either it succeeds or the object is returned.

For most humanoids the valued object is some physical treasure, like a chest of gold coins or a favored weapon. Animals with this template often treat food sources the same way (woe to the person who takes honey from a dragonbone bear) but at times they become greedy for shiny objects, whether or not those things have value beyond looking pretty.

## SKELETAL SNAPPING TURTLE

### MEDIUM UNDEAD

**Hit Dice:** 2d12 (13 hp)

**Initiative:** +6

**Speed:** 20 ft. (4 squares), swim 30 ft.

**Defense:** 17 (+2 Dex, +5 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 15

**DR:** 5/bludgeoning

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +1/+4

**Attack:** Bite +4 melee (1d6+4)

**Full Attack:** Bite +4 melee (1d6+4)

**Space/ Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** —

**Special Qualities:** Darkvision 60 ft., immunity to cold, undead traits

**Saves:** Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +3

**Abilities:** Str 16, Dex 14, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1

**Feats:** Improved Initiative

**Environment:** Temperate aquatic

**Organization:** Any

**Challenge Rating:** 1

**Advancement:** 3 HD (Medium), 4-6 HD (Large)

**Level Adjustment:** —

This creature is an unusual specimen created by the residual magic of the dragon Kyrritnrru's skull, although it could reasonably exist anywhere that necromancy meets the waterline. It's large for its species, measuring an average of 4 feet long from bony beak to tail, and is as feisty in death as in life. The turtle's skeletal form is topped by its hard, brown shell. Undead turtles have no better tactics

than other skeletons, but they pose a unique threat in that they are capable of functioning underwater with no penalties. Note that creatures generally have a –2 to hit and do half damage underwater while using slashing or bludgeoning weapons; the skeletal turtle's bite is a piercing attack.

## WITCHLIGHT

### SMALL ABERRATION (AIR)

**Hit Dice:** 6d8 (27 hp)

**Initiative:** +11

**Speed:** Fly 50 ft. (10 squares) (perfect)

**Defense:** 24 (+1 size, +7 Dex, +6 deflection), touch 24, flat-footed 17

**DR:** —

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +4/–5

**Attack:** Shock +12 melee touch (2d6 electricity)

**Full Attack:** Shock +12 melee touch (2d6 electricity)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** —

**Special Qualities:** Darkvision 60 ft., dodge pool, SR 16, translucent

**Saves:** Fort +2, Ref +9, Will +7

**Abilities:** Str 1, Dex 25, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 15, Cha 12

**Skills:** Bluff +10, Diplomacy +3, Disguise +1 (+3 in character), Intimidate +3, Listen +11, Spot +11

**Feats:** Blind-Fight 1, Dodge 1, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse (B)

**Environment:** Cold marshes

**Organization:** Solitary, pair, or haunt (3-6)

**Challenge Rating:** 4

**Advancement:** 7-12 HD (Medium)

**Level Adjustment:** —

Witchlights, like will-o'-wisps, are malevolent, airborne creatures that get their nourishment from the fear, pain, and death of other creatures. Their natural bodies are spongy globes approximately 1 foot in diameter. This substance is nearly invisible, but they can glow with yellow, white, green, or blue light at will. Witchlights are aggressive and enjoy using their electrically-charged attacks to torment their victims.

**Translucent (Ex):** A witchlight's body is very hard to see unless the creature is glowing. If a witchlight extinguishes its glow, it is effectively invisible. However, perceptive creatures can make out the witchlight's faint outline if they watch carefully (taking a standard action and succeeding at a DC 20 Search or Spot check). A witchlight automatically begins glowing if it makes an attack while invisible.

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