

The First Sentinel



AN ADVENTURE FOR CLASSIC FANTASY
ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

BY

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INTERACTIVE DIGITAL EDITION

FOR USE WITH CLASSIC FANTASY ROLE-PLAYING SYSTEMS
DESIGNED FOR CHARACTERS LEVEL 3-5

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- INTRODUCTION -

Welcome to the second installment of Lesser Gnome's *Thopas Shorts*. These are presented as single-session adventures or emergency drop-ins compatible with any classic fantasy role-playing system. Use them, for example, on those occasions when all the GM's designs are thwarted by player agency.

This short adventure is set in the world of Lesser Gnome's *Whisper Vale* and draws some of its characters and locations from there. The alien Nexid race in particular is introduced in *Whisper & Venom*. Although nominally placed in the Vale, this scenario has been designed to stand alone in any traditional fantasy world – and you are free to develop the alien horror of the Nexid in any way that fits your campaign. All creatures featured in this adventure as well as *regional encounter tables* are fully detailed in the appendix. Additional setting background and character descriptions can be found in *The Whisper Vale: Adventure Primer*. This free PDF is available at <http://www.lessergnome.com/download>. The wilderness encounter tables from *Whisper & Venom* are provided in the appendix as well.

In order to allow easy integration into your existing campaign, we have limited details of places, pantheons, and spells. The First Sentinel is your game. Nothing described in the text is sacrosanct.

PREAMBLE

Færgo Cromworth is a retired adventurer who has been living outside of Whisper for several years. A loner by nature with a penchant for living off the land, Færgo has traded pelts to Percy the Cobbler and occasionally helped Norah gather flora. Recently Percy noted that Færgo has been acting peculiar and even more secretive about his activities. About two months ago, Færgo purchased camping gear and metal hardware from Whisper's mercantile, using Percy as an intermediary.

The smoking remains of Færgo's cabin sit by the Meander River a half-day's ride north of Whisper. Leaving a charred body as a decoy, Færgo has headed east into the mountains to secure his recent discovery.

Near the southern tip of a high mountain chain, about 10 miles ENE of Whisper, is a long-lost but well-worn trail that leads up into the peaks. Færgo happened upon this trail about three months ago and his erstwhile adventuring instincts kicked in. Several miles and a few thousand feet up into the mountains, the trail comes to a barely visible tower. The tower shimmers like a heat mirage by day and becomes a hazy grey shape at night. It has been affected by the Corruption (see *Whisper & Venom*) and is slowly solidifying as its former tenants are preparing to return.

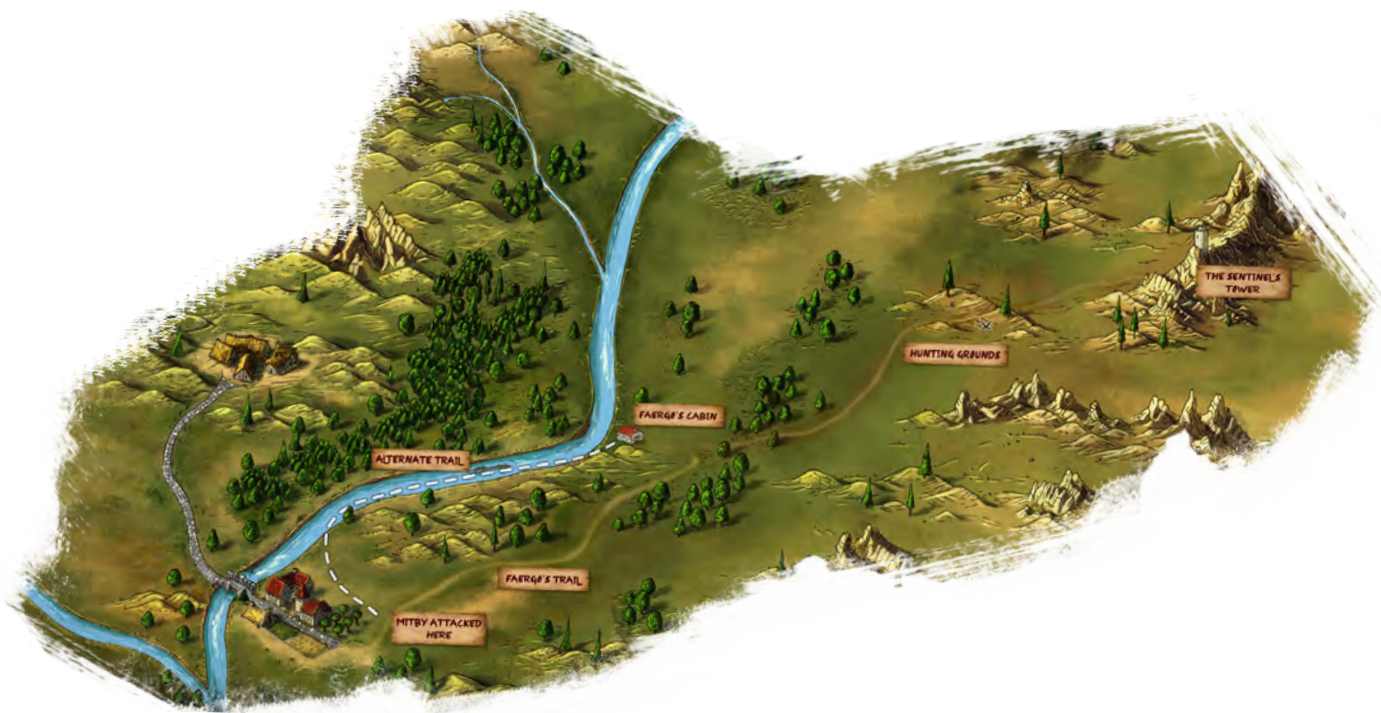
At the top of the tower is Færgo's newfound prize – a captivating spyglass. The glass has enslaved Færgo, forcing him to spy out over the land for its Nexid masters. Other similar

towers may well exist along the Wall (a chain of mountains that defines the northern edge of the Whisper Vale).

Færgo has been coming to the tower fairly regularly since he found it, but having donned the Sentinel's Helm, he now stays there awaiting the new masters. Under control of the Nexid, Færgo filled the summoning circle on the second level and brought forth a *Nexid Soldier* and two *Nexid Slaves*. Recognizing his temporary status as a Sentinel working for the Nexid, they have not killed him. When the Corruption reaches its full strength, the tower solidifies and the summoning circle becomes an easily opened portal between worlds. Destroying the Mouthgate (see *Whisper & Venom*) prevents (for now, anyway) further development of the tower's power.

In the ancient days, and perhaps one day again, Nexid Sentinels were stationed in the towers to watch the borders for months at a time. So far, energy has not been available to send a real Sentinel to the tower.





AREAS OF INTEREST

The trail from the farm whence Jarls Mitby was kidnapped is difficult to follow, but should at least point towards Færgo's cabin. The trail could lead to the river just upstream of Whisper, or be hoof prints leading north from the farm.

The remains of Faergo's cabin and his unwilling decoy - a game trails heads east towards Faergo's hunting grounds and thence continues to the mountains.

Færgo has set traps along the path up to the tower and has left an alternate trail leading through a Cave Imp lair.

The tower itself comprises: Level 1, living quarters and current home of the Nexid; Level 2, the summoning circle, strange chemicals, a bizarre gassy pool and a random-effects table; Level 3, a Nexid spiritual and physical exercise area and current sleeping quarters of Færgo Cromworth; and Level 4, the roof, where the spyglass and Færgo are to be found.

STORY ELEMENTS

- Jarls Mitby was once accused of having an affair with the daughter of wealthy Whisper landowners. Turned out to have been the miler's son, but Jarls did spend a week in the country until things blew over.
- The miller's son, Runem Milston, happens to be the town's best tracker, and has occasionally seen Færgo hunting in the hills east of his cabin.
- Færgo purchased new camping equipment for the first time ever from the local mercantile, and paid in coin instead of pelts.
- Norah the apothecary noticed that Færgo's herb garden has been untended for several months.

- POSSIBLE SCENARIOS -

1 The party discovers Færgo's burnt out cabin and in parallel discovers that Jarls Mitby is missing. This scenario would probably work best in a campaign setting where these events can happen with apparent independence and there is time and NPC support for hearing and tracking down rumors.

2 Jarls Mitby is missing. Can the party find out what happened? This provides a fairly straightforward investigative scenario that can be played in one or two sessions.

3 Who cares about "Three-Fingers" Mitby? Rumors have been heard of a mysterious tower that is sometimes seen atop a distant mountain. Glints of light are occasionally seen reflecting from its top. What skullduggery is happening (perhaps the local wizards' guild has sensed some evil)? What treasure might be ensconced therein? Perhaps somebody is willing to pay for secrets discovered within the Laird's land. As a convention game or drop-in one-shot, start the party on a trail into the mountains and see what trouble they find.



FÆRGO CROMWORTH'S CABIN

This idyllic riverside cabin has succumbed to a massive conflagration. The chimney is still standing, but the walls and roof are destroyed. There is a charred body lying on the stone floor that appears to have been crawling towards the door of the building. Nearby trees are charred and barren. Although the fire appears recent, wandering the grounds makes it apparent that the garden has been ignored for at least a month. There is a small serviceable rowboat tied to a tree near the bank. The oars are in the boat, and if Færgo brought Jarls here by boat, some blood may be found splattered on the prow.

Buried in a lockbox under the hearthstone are two metal tins containing thick grey grease, a set of fine thieves' tools and a simple, well-wrought dagger.

The body is not, surprisingly, that of Færgo Cromworth. The scorched body belongs to Jarls "Three-Fingers" Mitby, a field hand kidnapped the previous morning from a farm at the northeast corner of Whisper. Close inspection of the body reveals that its right pinky and ring finger are a few knuckles shy of complete.

While the party is within the smoky scent of the house, they are safe from three large wolves prowling around the cabin. If they spend any significant time outside (for example, if they decide to bury Jarls), the wolves attack.

Dire Wolves (3): AC 6; MV 180' (90'); HD 3+3; HP 16, 20, 21; #AT 1 D 2d4.

TREASURE—

Two tins of powerful **healing salve** with three doses each. Each dose is similar to **cure light wounds**, but can also be used to **cure disease** or halt the effects of poison.

Dagger +1

Fine Thieves' Tools — non-magical, but give +5% to picking locks and removing traps.

THE TRAIL

Heading east from Færgo's cabin is a worn game trail that weaves through the neighboring trees. While heavily used and obviously maintained, it is cluttered with deadfall. The trail is easy to follow as it crosses the grassy lowlands and heads into the forested foothills of the mountains two days to the east. These secluded foothills, abundant with game, have become Færgo's preferred hunting grounds. He has set up feeding stations for the deer and fenced in a small fishing pond. He has several small campsites and hunting blinds spread throughout the hills. Runem Milston came up this way once in pursuit of game, but was sent packing by an irate Færgo Cromworth.

- GM NOTE -

Setting this adventure around the full moon may be a nice red herring. Alternatively, perhaps in his current state Færgo is sensitive to the moon and left the wolves to guard his tracks.

- GM NOTE -

The voyage from Færgo's cabin to the mountains could be filled with fun adventures through a hitherto unexplored part of the world, or simply passed through, at your discretion. It would be good in either case to give a sense of isolation – a sense of being removed from the known, civilized world.

The random encounter tables from the Whisper Setting Guide (General Wilderness followed by Foothills of the Vale) could be used to provide some excitement along the way. The hunting grounds host bears' dens and packs of prowling wolves, as well as the many animals they prey upon.

The mountains in question form a long high ridge with looming peaks at the northern and southern ends. The southern peak is the shorter of the two, but still rises a couple thousand feet above the prairie. The trail approaches the mountains from the southwest and quickly becomes steep, narrow and rocky. Sharp, flinty rocks make up this portion of the trail, and footing can be treacherous. About two strenuous hours up the mountain, Færgo's trail splits. His preferred path leads directly up the cliff face. If searched, evidence can be found on the cliff of piton holes in the one or two locations where Færgo was unable to free climb. Above the cliff, the trail continues to be quite steep. Hand-over-hand scrambling is necessary in many places.

In one such place, Færgo has set a trap.

A section of rocks has been carefully loosened and replaced. There is a 5 in 6 chance that a normal-sized creature sets the rocks free (4 in 6 for small and automatic for large). A failed dexterity check or saving throw indicates that the creature slides approximately thirty feet before becoming ensnared in a wiry scrub oak (2d6 damage). Characters below may be able to jump clear of the slide, or they may help cushion the lead character's fall (1d6 damage). Færgo will likely hear the falling rocks and train the spyglass to where the trail crests the rise. Beyond the rock fall, the trail continues another hour before finally breaking out onto a barren mountaintop, elongated in the east-west direction. Towards the west end of the ridge, a hazy tower is barely visible.

The more apparent trail, and the one that Færgo would rather the worthy adventurers follow, if follow they must, continues from the base of the cliff and wraps around the mountainside. It meanders into a rocky box canyon, at the end of which can be seen a small dark cave. Bones from small animals litter the ground outside the cave.

THE CAVE

At the end of an eighty-foot box canyon, a dark, smelly opening leads into a twenty-foot deep cave. The walls are covered in slime and crystalline deposits, as there is a constant seep of groundwater from the roof. At the back of the cave, around a bend in the wall, there is a three-foot diameter tunnel. No light can be seen from the tunnel and the air is stagnant. An odor of rotting flesh and animal waste completes the invitation. There are marks along the cave floor from something being dragged – or crawling – into the tunnel. They could be the trail of a certain human. The tunnel winds interminably both horizontally and vertically, at times almost doubling back on itself like an inchworm. At locations the walls pinch in so that all but the smallest of gnomes feel constrained. Backpacks, and possibly sheathes, must be removed. There are places where a ten-foot pole can barely pass. Tons of rock press down above the heads, backs, and legs of those willing to drag their bodies beneath it.

And the smell does not diminish. When the characters stop, it is deathly quiet.

If they pause long enough, they might hear an occasional drip echoing in the distance.



- GM NOTE -

If you are using individual initiative, one possible way to run the hit-and-run attacks of the imps is as follows. On his or her initiative, a PC can hold for an attack, or take an action that does not involve targeting a specific imp. On an imp's initiative, roll randomly to see which PC it attacks. If the PC's initiative for that round is higher than the imp's, and she has not already attacked that round, the PC was prepared and gets to counter-attack before being attacked (possibly killing the imp and avoiding the attack). Otherwise, the PC does not get an attack that round. This represents the imps' ability to move after their attack, disappearing into one of the many crevices. With group initiative, you might allow a 25% chance that any given imp is visible during the party's initiative.

If the party persists, the tunnel eventually opens into a large cavern. The walls of the cavern are pocked with holes and narrow crevices, and there are small, sharp rocks strewn about the floor. Once the party has completely entered the cavern, the Cave Imps set to. Their first action is to drop a large rock in front of the tunnel exit. This is followed by thrown rocks. Each imp pops up from its hidey-hole, tosses a rock, and scurries away. The imps can get from one hiding spot to another in the number of rounds shown on the map table. If their movement ends on a half round, they can attack (i.e., half a round represents a single combat movement). The imps can move randomly or based on the GM's decisions. Sudden light at any point in the encounter causes the Cave Imps to freeze motionless for 1d2 rounds (save to avoid). The imps have no need to engage in melee combat except possibly to grab at the legs of the last escaping creature. Their holes are at various heights, mostly out of standard melee range. All provide at least partial coverage. If necessary, they can escape through crevices in the cavern walls. Rotten remains of kids, squirrels and other small mammals are in various pits in the floor and 12 CP can be recovered from the charnel waste. Further digging within the cave may reveal some quartz seams from which several uncut amethyst can be removed. There is one human-sized exit from the cavern.

Cave Imp Adults (4): AC 6; MV 120' (60'); HD 1; HP 5, 4, 1, 8; #AT 1 (thrown rock) D 1d4, or 3 (claw/claw/bite) D 1d2/1d2/1d4; darkvision 120', leap 20', climb.

Cave Imp Whelps (5): AC 6; MV 90' (30'); HD 1/2; HP 3, 2, 2, 2, 1; #AT 1 (thrown rock) D 1d2, or 3 (claw/claw/bite) D 1/1/1d2; darkvision 120', leap 10', climb.

TREASURE—

12 CP

3d4 uncut amethyst worth 1d10 GP ea.

THE CHIMNEY

In the northwest corner of the cave is a natural alcove. A tortuous chimney rises two hundred feet to daylight; the exit is a half-hour's hike below the mountain's peak on the north face. If any of the imps escaped the encounter below, or if the characters' first entrance into the lair is from above, the imps will throw rocks at the intruders from small crevices, and may even try to pull or push climbing characters to their death. A dexterity check or saving throw is required to avoid falling after a successful melee attack by a Cave Imp. Falling damage is halved (1d3 per 10 ft) as outcroppings slow any falls.

Halfway up, the chimney becomes horizontal and broadens into a small cavern. Water droplets come down at infrequent intervals, and there is a slight decrease in the overwhelming stench. Decomposing in the cavern are the chewed remains of a leather boot, a backpack and most of a well-gnawed human skeleton. Inside the pack are three archaic daggers in greased metal sheathes (15 GP ea.), the remnants of a bedroll, and some corroded iron spikes fused together in a rusted sculpture reminiscent of a large caltrop. Above this area, the party is safe from the imps during daylight hours.

THE TOWER

By day, the tower appears as a hazy mist with no apparent detail. It is solid, however, and the door and its latch can be felt and opened. The thick metal outer door opens outward without any noise. By night, the tower can be seen more clearly, but is still slightly ethereal. If the party observes the tower by night, they might catch a glint from the spyglass as it circles the roof. Once inside, the tower appears normal, but the world outside appears as though coated in a greasy fog.

The tower has three interior levels and an accessible rooftop. It is round and has an enclosed spiral staircase that wraps around it all the way up, giving the tower double walls. The outer diameter is about forty-five feet at the base and tapers to thirty feet at the top. The foot-thick walls form a crenellated parapet about waist-high above the roof. There are vacant archways into each level from the ramp.

RAMP

The ramp is about three feet wide and winds around the inner tower, rising one level with each revolution. It tops out with a ladder to a trapdoor from the landing at the third level. The ramp is made of smooth grey stone with horizontal lines crossing it every two paces. Every sixth of a rotation, there is a round fist-sized opening through the wall at about eye height. Outside, all is hazy and obscure. No wind or rain enters through the holes.

LEVEL 1

This is a large open room made up as living quarters. The sound of running water can be heard within. Ungainly furniture, constructed of an unknown metallic material, fills the center – bed, stool, table and desk. The furniture is cold and unpadded with awkward angles. These items were not built for people of this world. The perimeter walls alternate between closed metal cabinets and bare wall. Offset from the walls a few feet are regularly spaced open shelves. There is a spigot constantly running into a basin and down through its pedestal. The water is cold, with tiny shards of ice in it, but the basin is warm and instantly melts the crystals. The sealed cabinets are mostly empty, although the one to the northwest contains books. The books are inscrutable, written in the Sentinel's hand. These are the books of the last Sentinel to serve watch at the tower. Another cabinet contains the Sentinel's **blackmetal ring mail armor** with split sleeves that strap together. This cupboard also contains a tarnished copper bowl and a small, double-edged **knife**

(1d3 as a weapon, +1 vs. oysters and other small mollusks). All seem very alien. Sitting on one of the shelves is a large box made of a soft, white material. Inside is an assortment of meat in a strong, clear, flexible wrap. The meat is edible and keeps without refrigeration as long as it remains sealed. A Soldier and two Slaves guard this room. While the Nexid may leave the room to pursue or set up an ambush, they will not leave the tower.

Nexid Slaves (2): AC 4; MV 120' (60'); HD 2; HP 6, 13; #AT 2 (claws); D 1d4, 1d4+spells

Nexid Soldier AC 4; MV 90' (30'); HD 4; HP 25; #AT 1 (+1 long sword); D 1d8+1, 20% resist to sleep, hold, charm (Note: only 5% chance to pull in another soldier due to weak connection and distance to gate.)

TREASURE—

Blackmetal ring mail +1 (non-magical)

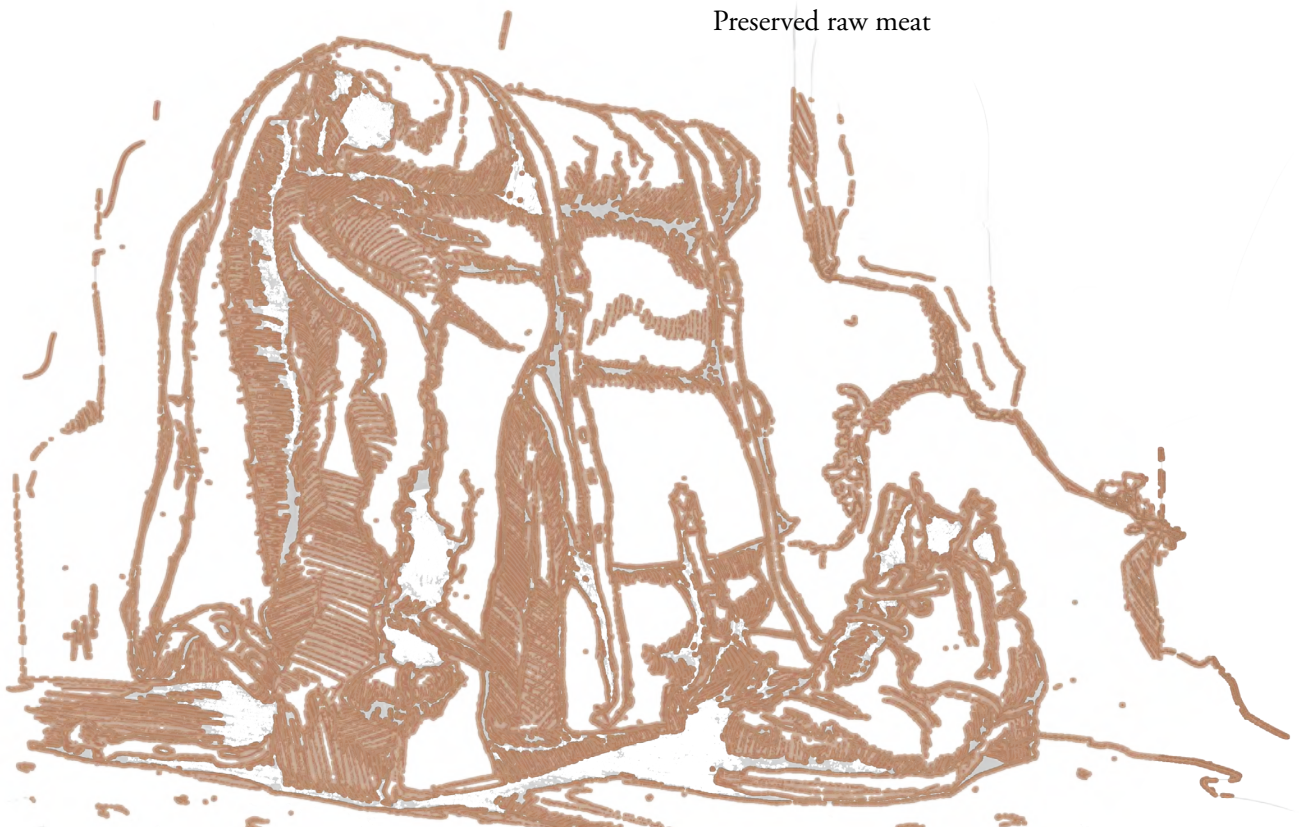
Long sword +1 (non-magical)

Oyster knife — 1d3 as a weapon, +1 vs. oysters and other small mollusks.

Seven Nexid books

Copper bowl (2 GP)

Preserved raw meat



LEVEL 2

Another large open area. The floor has a raised fifteen-foot diameter circular curb. Within the curb, an opaque brown fog awaits. This is the summoning circle. A Blackmetal credenza stands by one wall. Inside are numerous containers of odd powders and liquids and some measuring containers. Careful observers note that several of the containers are not quite full, and that there are trace amounts of some of the powders on the table. There is one empty grey stone container on the floor beneath the table. There is also an ornate Blackmetal bowl inscribed on the exterior with Nexid writing and geometric patterns. The base of the bowl is thick and the bowl itself is quite heavy. The interior of the bowl is covered with rough spikes. An alchemist can identify many of the chemicals, but the powdered Blackmetal is a mystery. When properly combined with the correct incantations, the chemicals form a glowing brown fog, establishing a link between worlds. This connection (and the glow) lasts for approximately one hour, but the fog persists for several days before depositing as a dark orange powder. When improperly combined, the chemicals may react per [Table 1](#).

CHEMICAL INVENTORY:

- A small ornate Blackmetal box engraved with Nexid writing contains a very fine matte black powder. The grains feel sharp and heavy. (4 lbs powdered Blackmetal – about 3”x3”x1.5”)
- Small black leather bag with a reddish crystalline powder (6 lbs powdered corundum – about 3”x3”x3”)
- Small black leather bag with a gravel composed of pink and red crystals (12 lbs promethium-nitrate gravel – about 4”x4”x4”)
- Quart-sized glass jar with a black stopper that is stiff, but soft, like pickled bone. Inside are silvery metallic chunks in a clear oily liquid. The metal is soft, malleable, and ductile. If any are removed from their oil bath, they instantly flare up and burn with a bright white flame. If immersed in water, they bubble as hydrogen is released. If the material is subject to both air and water simultaneously, well, that hardly bears thinking about. (6 lbs flaked cerium suspended in mineral oil – about 4”x4”x2”)

TABLE 1: CHEMICAL REACTIONS (D100)

ROLL EFFECT		ROLL EFFECT	
01-30	None apparent (other than those from individual components).	71-80	Explosion. 3d6 damage within 10 ft, save for half, combustibles ignite. Remaining ash is graphite powder.
31-35	Materials combine into thick warm paste that slowly cools to a kaolinic solid. Severe mechanical or electrical shock will cause material to explode.	81-90	Materials combust in ultra-hot blaze. Container melts or burns. Table or counter likewise. Only pure Blackmetal will remain of mixture.
36-45	Mixture is a grey putty that produces a noticeable heat. Creatures within 10 ft for more than ten minutes will lose all body hair over the subsequent 2-5 days.	91-96	Mixture flash crystallizes into a deep purple solid, expanding rapidly. Containers shatter. Crystal is brittle and can be worked into never-before-seen gemstones.
46-60	Light pink haze. Save or sleep 1-2 hours. Sleeping creatures will have dark dreams of Nexid society. Prematurely awakening creatures will cause disorientation for 4-6 hours (-2 on attack and skill rolls).	97-98	Brown fog. Link to Nexid world opens for 1 minute. 2% chance of random Nexid creature coming through. There is a 50% chance that anyone remaining within 5 ft of the reaction will suffer Nexid ensnarement in the floor of the summoning circle when link closes.
61-65	Oily smog coats equipment and skin. AC improved by 1 until cleaned or worn off.	99	Green smoke in 15 ft radius. Con permanently decreased by 1.
66-70	Room fills with caustic yellow smoke. 2d8 poison damage, save for half.	100	Orange smoke in 15 ft radius and pink light. Str permanently increased by 1

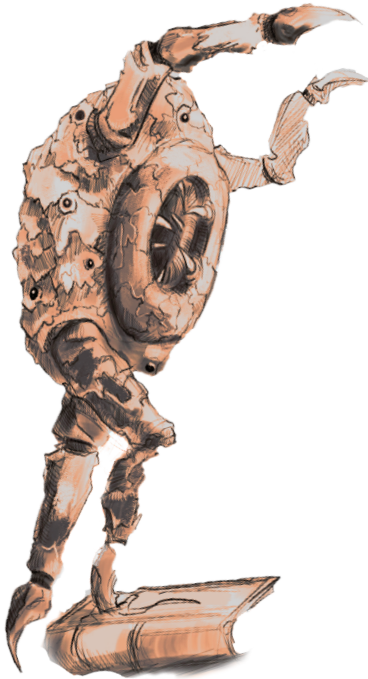


Four small grey stone containers with flat covers. The lids are sealed with a green waxy substance. A faint hiss is heard when a seal is broken. Inside each are slivers of a bright silver metal that start to turn green and brown in the air. The metal is quite malleable, and if ground is both toxic and explosive. (20 lbs thulium slivers, stored under nitrogen – each container 1"x4"x4")

One gallon thick, black, petroleum in a red glass jar with a glass stopper.

One gallon colorless, odorless, non-volatile, syrupy fluid in a clear glass jar with a black stopper. Mildly corrosive rust remover (phosphoric acid solution).

All the containers are a little off, a little alien. The leather material does not seem to be organic. Nexid glass is stronger, more transparent and has sharper edges. The grey stone is cold like marble and hard like granite, but lacks any visible grain.



LEVEL 3

Against one wall are a bedroll and a backpack. Færgo has been sleeping here. The floor has a series of complicated patterns inlaid with different colored stones. There are various metallic sculptures – simple shapes like saguaros, poles and one-legged tables. This is the exercise and meditation chamber for the Sentinel. The patterns and sculptures do not respond to characters' actions, but when a Nexid Sentinel walks the patterns, it relearns its spells and in using the 'sculptures' it is practicing combat moves of the ancient Nexid martial arts. The Slaves and Soldier dare not enter this room, let alone use any of its equipment. Færgo, apparently, feels no such compunction. Another creature that feels no compunction is a Nexid Spider that slipped in during the summoning, unbeknownst to Færgo or the other Nexid. This creature has a translucent body, allowing almost perfect camouflage, and four spider-like legs. Its head is under its body and sports a large open maw rimmed with vicious hinged and serrated teeth.

Nexid Spider AC 2; MV 120' (60') **Jump up to 30 ft**; HD 3; HP 13; #AT 2 (claw, claw); D 1d4, if both claws hit, creature attempts to bite (+2 to hit) for 2d4. Surprise 1-5 in 6.

TREASURE—

Færgo's backpack contains-

Two weeks of highly condensed rations, one flask of goblin rotgut (save v. poison or mild hallucinations and a pleasant sense of euphoria for 1d6 turns), a knife and some rope.

Hidden at the foot of his bedroll-

A pair of high quality boots (made by Percy of Whisper, not magical).

In the toe of the right boot are-

8 SP and a small turquoise crystal (5 GP).

-THE SENTINEL'S HELM AND SPYGLASS -

*The Blackmetal helm is imbued with Nexid powers. The helmet has three eyeholes equally spaced around it. One is just a hole, and allows for normal vision. The second allows the user to see invisible creatures and acts as a **gem of true seeing**. The third has a small ring around it that mates with the eyepiece of the spyglass. The spyglass can only be activated while wearing the Sentinel's Helm. The helmet also grants its wearer immunity from mind-affecting spells. Once donned, the helmet can only be removed from its living wearer through **remove curse**, **wish** or similar magic. Each week that the helm is worn, its owner must make a saving throw to avoid becoming the next Sentinel under Nexid control.*

Through the spyglass the outside world is clear and vibrant. Depending on how the controls are set, the glass can see in the infrared, ultraviolet, or visible bands and can even see into the very high-energy bands. This may well cause insanity for those unaccustomed to seeing the world in so many different "colors".

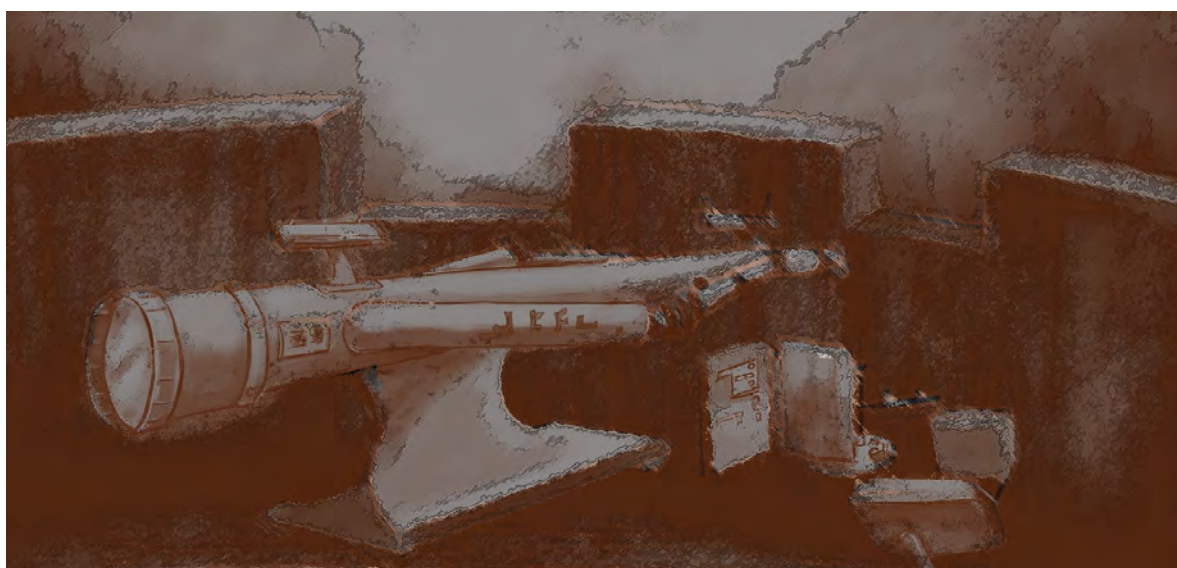
Some of the wavelengths allow seeing invisible creatures, and others reveal alignment auras. Several locations are programmed into the control panel – see [Table 2](#) and [Table 3](#). Note that these views are in real time and dynamic.

TABLE 2: SPYGLASS VIEWING LOCATIONS

ROLL LOCATION

01-06	The Nexid Gate cavern beneath Meanderbrook Monastery – looking out through the mouth (see <i>Whisper & Venom</i>).
07-21	A very cold treasure pile deep in the Gauntswept, surrounded by scintillating stalagmites and rainbow-colored running water.
22-45	A view through stone pillars, high up above a barren plane. There are a few bluffs hazy in the far distance.
46-55	A group of lizard men relaxing near a frozen marsh. Daytime – They are sipping drinks and obviously enjoying the sunshine. Nighttime – Most of them are asleep, while a few stand guard, weapons to hand.
56-70	This view is mostly blocked. Close examination may reveal that a giant's leg fills the eyepiece, hiding an ornately carved ice wall. (Note if rolled a second time, the leg may be gone, and the wall exposed to view.)
71-80	An ancient battlefield, covered in skeletons and half-buried items of stone and steel.
81-90	A courtyard with large statues of soldiers facing down the viewer. At the top of the view are four draconic necks and heads seen from below and behind. Amongst the statues is a desiccated tree.
91-95	An ornate but slovenly chamber complete with a fountain. 5% chance of catching a scurrilous gnome peeing in the fountain and a simultaneous 15% chance of a small fey creature sitting forlornly in one corner.
96-100	Deep space. Swirling galaxies and millions of stars. Or whatever your universe has out in the great beyond. One star appears to be the focus, however. One large lonely red star coming out from behind the darkness.

GM Note: Any additional areas may be added to or substituted into this table to entice players towards other parts of your land; although the distance will not be obvious, combining the direction with some locational clues should get them there.

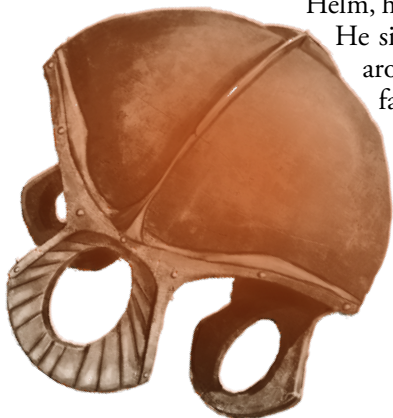


Færgo Cromworth Human Fighter/Thief 3/5 AC 3
 STR 17 (+2 To Hit / DAM) NEUTRAL HP 35
 DEX 15 (-1 AC / +1 To Hit Missile / +2 PARRY Bonus)
 CON 13 (+1 HP) SKILLS EQUIP
 INT 13 5 ATTACKS / RAD v. 1 HD LEATHER +2
 WIS 11 30% MOVE SILENTLY LONG SWORD +2
 CHA 7 87% CLIMB WALLS +1 DEFENSE FOR
 SAVE 10 80% READ NORMAL LANG FIGHTERS
 +4 v. ILLUSIONS 20% HIDE IN SHADOWS BEDROLL, BOOTS
 IMMUNE TO SLEEP BACKSTAB +4 TO HIT / 2x DAM ESP, SLP GEN
 & MIND ALTERING SPELLS

ROOFTOP

The ladder climbs through a stone and metal trapdoor to the roof. The door is counterbalanced so it moves with a light touch. From here also the outside world is shielded by a gauzy curtain of air. A monorail encircles the roof, running directly over the trapdoor. Mounted on it is the Sentinel's seat. The seat is hard and folded over; it is mounted on a pole attached to the rail. Floating above the stool is a complicated set of plates, knobs and switches. These are the controls for the location of the seat and spyglass. Hovering in midair, aimed out over the valley below, is a Blackmetal spyglass. It has multiple barrels and sighting scopes, and does not appear like anything normally seen in the Vale. Færgo is typically found seated on the stool, his neck uncomfortably bent to bring his eye to the spyglass, and his hands twisted to access the controls. He is wearing his leather armor and the Sentinel's Helm, his long sword strapped to his back.

He sits barefoot with his feet hooked around the stool to keep him from falling off.



FÆRGO CROMWORTH

AC 3, MV 120' (60'); HD 8; HP 35; #AT 1 (5 v. 1 HD); D 1d8+4 (+4 to-hit) (magic long sword); 20% hide in shadows (additional +4 to hit, double damage); while wearing the Sentinel's Helm, immune to mind-altering spells and effects (inc. sleep), +4 save v. illusions.

Færgo is not evil and does not move to attack the party. He defends the spyglass without fear and resists being removed from his watch.

Removing the helm from his head releases Færgo from Nexid control. He will have no memory of the most recent week (including the kidnapping). What he has seen through the spyglass will vanish from his mind. He will have only selected memories from the past few months. Færgo will be able to resume his prior life.

TREASURE—

Leather armor +2

Long sword +2 — provides +1 parrying bonus to AC for fighters only.

The Sentinel's Helm

TABLE 3: SPYGLASS SPECTRA

ROLL	SPECTRUM	EFFECTS
01-10	Visible	The view is sharp, and colors are over-saturated.
11-20	Infrared	This spectrum shows heat variation using false color. Cold objects appear dark blue or black, warm objects green, and hot objects may be red, yellow or even white. In general, creatures and objects tend to be hazy, and shadows and heat sources confuse the image even more.
21-30	Ultraviolet	Under the ultraviolet lens, objects are seen in monochrome, if at all. In order for this to be effective, there needs to be a source of ultraviolet light around (the sun being the brightest, but the moon can reflect enough to see by).
31-40	Invisible	Invisible objects and creatures are visible against a muted backdrop of the visible. Edges and points are limned with a peach light.
41-50	Alignment auras	Depending on the alignment system used, a three- or nine-point color wheel may be developed. Appropriately colored auras hover around creatures and objects with strong associations.
51-70	Roll twice, ignoring rolls over 50	With two or three spectra, the various images overlap, and possibly flicker. Most viewers develop a headache and slight confusion after only a few minutes. Some may become mesmerized. Lengthy viewing may cause dizziness and a saving throw to avoid passing out for 1d4 rounds.
71-90	Roll thrice, ignoring rolls over 50	See above.
91-100	All five spectra	Combining all five spectra causes a viewer to lose touch with reality. While some images may be recognizable, as in a surrealist dream, nothing is sure. A concerted effort to make sense of the scene results in a 50/50 chance of permanently gaining or losing a point of intelligence.

GM NOTE: *Some areas may be uninteresting under various spectra. Feel free to describe these as black or void, or to select another spectrum that is more interesting.*

FÆRGO CROMWORTH'S FUTURE

If the Mouthgate remains open (See *Whisper & Venom*) and Færgo is not rescued, he will become corrupted through his close association with the Nexid. Especially when the moon is full and the connection to the Nexid world is at its strongest, Færgo will lose his humanity. Already, he has closer ties to many animals than is normal. Soon, he will cease to feel any kinship with the humans or demi-humans that he lived amongst. His body will develop a hunch as his spine curves over. His fingers will stretch and curl. His eyes will start to lose their color and ability to see in the normal spectrum. Eventually, he will lose his appetite for food, but will not quite be able to absorb nutrition as do the Nexid. He will wither and collapse in on himself. Finally, he will be absorbed into the Nexid and a new Sentinel will come to the tower. A real Sentinel.

If the Mouthgate is closed, Færgo will suffer much the same fate as above (barring rescue or death), but the tower will search out another victim after consuming him. And another. If the cycle is not broken, the tower and its surroundings will slowly fill with leathery, broken humanoid bodies. In time, either the connection with the Nexid will fade out, or a new gate will appear, and with it, another chance for a Nexid Sentinel.

In both cases, the Soldier and the Slaves will stand guard unaware of the passage of time. If the connection fades in a few centuries, they may learn what it is like to be separated from the minds and feelings of the rest of the Nexid. It will not be pretty.



- APPENDIX -

NEW CREATURES

CAVE IMP

	Adult	Whelp
Freq:	Rare	Rare
No. Encountered:	1d4	2d4
Size:	Small	Small
Move:	120' (60')	90' (30')
Armor Class:	6	6
HD:	1	1d4 HP
Attacks:	3 (claw/claw/bite)	3 (claw/claw/bite)
Damage:	1d2/1d2/1d4	1/1/1d2
Special Attacks:	Rock throw (1d4), 20' leap	Rock throw (1d2), 10' leap
Special Defenses:	Climb	Climb
Magic Resistance:	Standard	Standard
Lair Probability:	80%	100%
Intelligence:	Low	Semi
Alignment:	Neutral	Neutral

Cave Imps are scaled monkey-like creatures. They have long slender limbs, sharp claws, and vicious fangs. They have prehensile rat-like tails. Like many animals that live exclusively in the dark, this creature has developed excellent darkvision (120'), and can see heat signatures clearly. Equal parts carnivore and coward, these imps fight from behind cover throwing rocks to bash their victims. While not interested in treasure *per se*, they are attracted to shiny bits; their lairs often contain random pieces of jewelry and coins. If hungry and unable to trap a meal in their lair, they are forced to make nocturnal trips above ground to capture rodents or something they can kill while it sleeps. Cave Imps can climb on any rough surface at their full movement rate. In addition to their normal movement, they can leap either to attack or after an attack.

DIRE WOLF

Freq:	Uncommon
No. Encountered:	2-8
Size:	Medium
Move:	180' (90')
Armor Class:	6
HD:	3+3
Attacks:	1 (bite)
Damage:	2d4
Special Attacks:	None
Special Defenses:	None
Magic Resistance:	Standard
Lair Probability:	30%
Intelligence:	Animal
Alignment:	Neutral

Dire wolves are larger than their normal counterparts, and noticeably more aggressive. Otherwise, they generally look and behave like traditional wolves.



NEXID SLAVE (DEMON SERVANT)

Freq:	Very Rare (Common)
No.	Encountered: 1d6
Size:	Medium
Move:	120' (60')
Armor	Class: 4
HD:	2
Attacks:	2 (claw/claw) or 1 (weapon)
Damage:	1d4/1d4 or by weapon type
Special Attacks:	Magical Abilities
Special Defenses:	None
Magic Resistance:	Standard
Lair Probability:	Not Applicable
Intelligence:	Low
Alignment:	Lawful (Evil)

Nexid Slaves serve as scouts and messengers. Generally short (three to four feet tall), Slaves are nimble and swift. They have a natural predilection for dark, confined areas.

A Nexid Slave's appearance betrays its otherworldly origin, for the creature has —no skin. Rather, its torso and limbs are strung together in a complex weave of muscle. Sinewy strands tether slender arms and legs to a dense, tightly knit core. These creatures cannot fly, but they can leap great distances and glide with their delicate, bat-like wings.

Nexid Slaves wield Blackmetal daggers or small staves. They may also use their sharp claws on exposed flesh or light armor.

Slaves have the ability to cause **darkness 15' radius** and to **know alignment** at will. Once per day they can use a special chant that grants them the equivalent of a **cause light wounds** spell cast as a 3rd level cleric.

As they are the lowest Nexid caste, Slaves are subject to strict control and oversight. Any Slave that fails to fulfill its mission is subjected to a brutal form of sacrifice. During this process, the Slave's exposed musculature is slowly torn from the rigid cartilaginous structure beneath. Working from the Slave's extremities, Nexid energy rips at the Slave's sinews. Its limbs and wings removed, the sacrificial energy exposes the contents of the chest cavity. The Slave is torn apart in a final tortuous frenzy and its dark energy returned to the Nexid Core. When a Nexid Slave is summoned for sacrifice, its reddish hue turns ashen.

NEXID SOLDIER (LESSER DEMON)

Freq:	Very Rare (Common)
No. Encountered:	1 (2d4)
Size:	Medium
Move:	90' (30')
Armor Class:	4
HD:	4
Attacks:	1 (Bladed Weapon)
Damage:	1d8+1
Special Attacks:	None
Special Defenses:	Magical Abilities; 20% Chance to Gate another Nexid Soldier
Magic Resistance:	20% Resistant to Sleep, Hold and Charm Spells
Lair Probability:	Not Applicable
Intelligence:	Standard
Alignment:	Lawful (Evil)

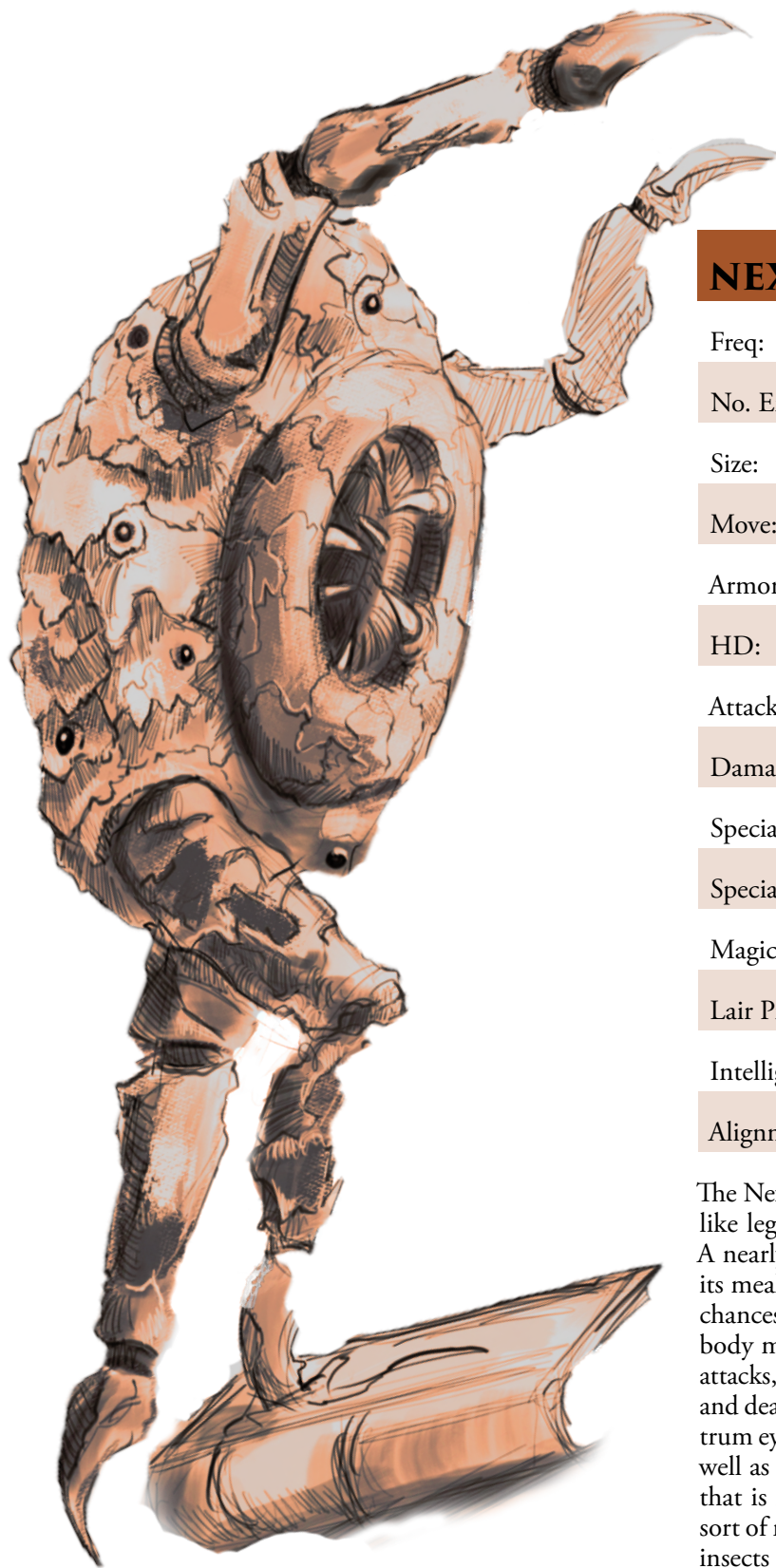
Nexid Soldiers are the overseers, taskmasters and warriors in their stratified, caste-based society. They are usually encountered in groups of two to eight soldiers, but may be tasked individually to complete missions requiring stealth. Substantial vessels of Nexid energy, Soldiers are powerful combatants. Their control of the lower castes is absolute.

The Nexid have imbued Soldiers with significant amounts of the Core's dark energy. When a Soldier faces defeat, it pre-emptively sacrifices itself, funneling its dark energy back into the Core. Vanishing from a conflict, its place can potentially be filled by another Nexid at full health.

Fearless and cruel, Nexid Soldiers fill the Nexid vanguard. They fight with long curved blades. Crafted of Blackmetal, these weapons give a +1 to hit and +1 damage, though they are non-magical. Soldiers are typically clad in scale-mail armor featuring the same Blackmetal as their blades.

Nexid Soldiers innately **detect invisibility 30' radius** and can cause **darkness 30' radius** at will. Once per day they can invoke **protection from good** as a 4th level cleric. Nexid Soldiers are capable of summoning other Nexid near any Nexid structure with a 20% chance of success.

The only wealth the Nexid Soldier accrues is displayed on its armor as a measure of service. A Nexid Soldier's rank is indicated by its weapon – typically a sword or whip. Higher ranking Soldiers wield a Blackmetal flail. Groups of six or more soldiers are led by a Seraskier (+2 HD). All Seraskiers wear thin Blackmetal chokers (equivalent to **ring of protection +2**).



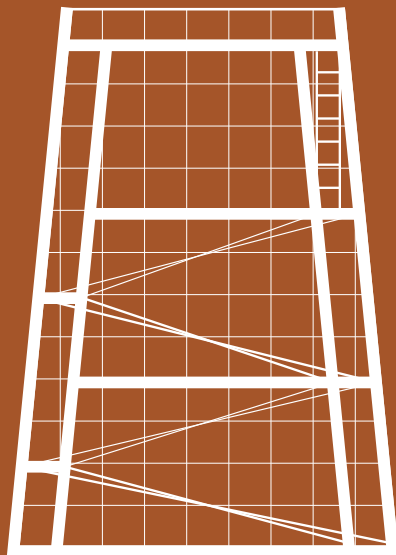
NEXID SPIDER

Freq:	Rare (Uncommon)
No. Encountered:	1
Size:	Medium
Move:	120' (60')
Armor Class:	2
HD:	3
Attacks:	2 (claw/claw)
Damage:	1d4
Special Attacks:	Bite, Surprise 1-5 in 6, 30 ft jump
Special Defenses:	See invisible creatures
Magic Resistance:	Immune to mental attacks
Lair Probability:	NA
Intelligence:	Animal
Alignment:	Neutral

The Nexid Spider is an otherworld predator. With its four crab-like legs and cavernous bottom-side maw, it is creepy indeed. A nearly transparent grey, at least until coated in the juices of its meal, the Spider is very difficult to spot. It surprises on five chances in six and has an armor class lower than its ungainly body might predict. If it strikes successfully with its two claw attacks, it will pull its prey for a bite attempt. The bite is +2 to hit and deals 2d4 damage. Its main body is covered with broad-spectrum eyespots that allow it to see otherwise invisible creatures as well as in the infrared and ultraviolet spectra. Lacking a mind that is in any way recognizable, the Spider is immune to any sort of mind-affecting spell including those aimed at animals or insects (e.g., charm, sleep, speak with animal, animal summoning). The creature does not make a web or otherwise build any sort of lair.

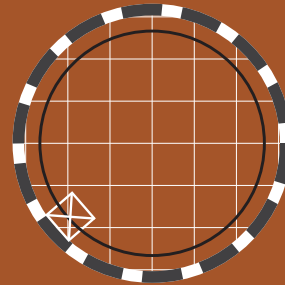
- ADVENTURE MAPS -

NEXID TOWER

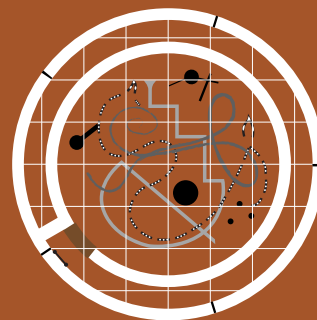


Tower

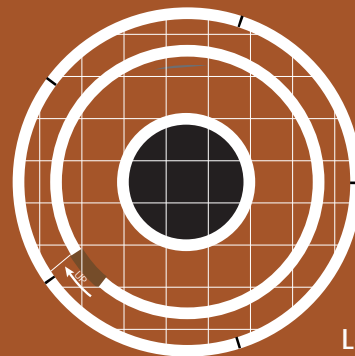
■ = 5 feet



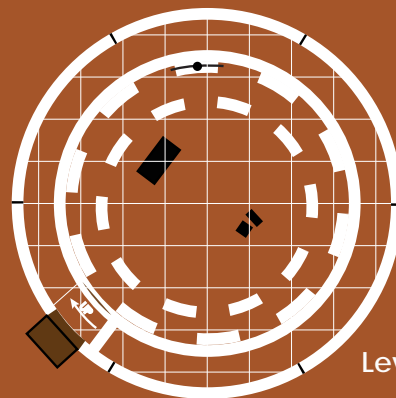
Rooftop



Level 3



Level 2



Level 1

- ADVENTURE MAPS -

IMP CAVE



	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	1	1	$\frac{1}{2}$	2	1	1	1
2		$\frac{1}{2}$	1	1	$\frac{3}{2}$	1	2	2	2
3			$\frac{1}{2}$	1	$\frac{3}{2}$	1	2	2	2
4				$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{3}{2}$	$\frac{3}{2}$	2	2
5					$\frac{1}{2}$	1	2	2	2
6						$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{3}{2}$	$\frac{3}{2}$	$\frac{3}{2}$
7							1	1	1
8								$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$
9									$\frac{1}{2}$

Rounds to Move



Imp Caverns

1 sq. = 5 ft

ADVENTURE AREA

This isometric map depicts a rugged landscape with a winding river, mountain ranges, and dense forests. Key locations are marked with labels:

- THE SENTINEL TOWER**: Located on a rocky outcrop in the upper right.
- HUNTING GROUNDS**: A designated area in the lower right.
- FADDER'S CABIN**: A small structure near the river in the lower center.
- FADDER'S TRAIL**: A path leading from the cabin towards the bottom center.
- METER ATTACKED HERE**: A point of interest on Fadder's Trail.
- ACTIVATED TRAIL**: A path branching off the river towards the bottom left.

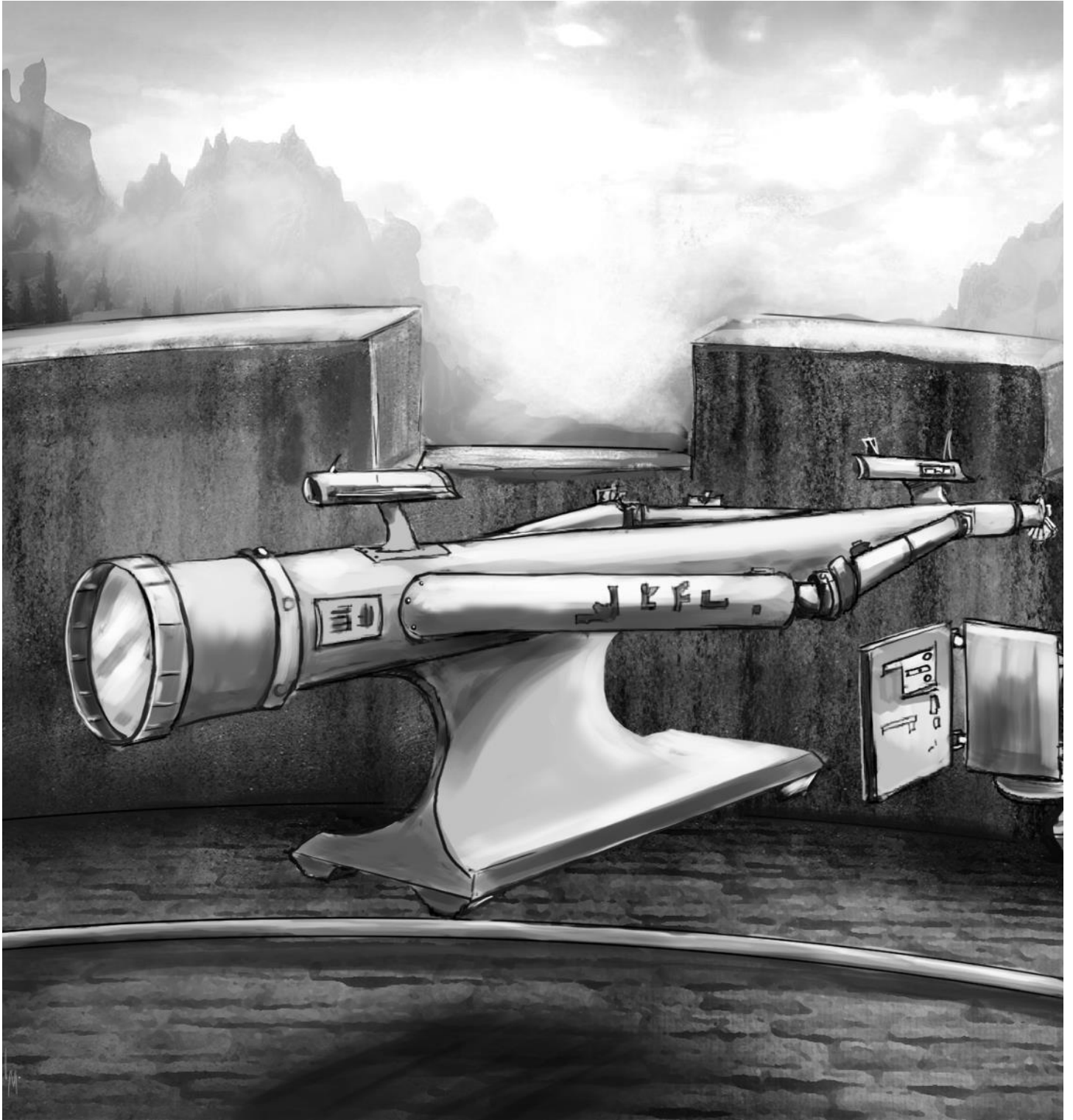
The map is framed by a torn paper border, and the title "ADVENTURE AREA" is prominently displayed at the top.











WHISPER VALE ENCOUNTER TABLES

GENERAL WILDERNESS

1d10	Name	AC	Hit Dice	# Attacks	Damage	Move	Special
1	Cave Bear	7	5	3 (claw/claw/bite)	1d4/1d4/1d6	90' (30')	None
2	Monster Beetle	3	3	1 (bite)	1d6+1	60' (30')	None
3	Giant Shrew	4	1	2 (bite/bite)	1d6/1d6	180' (60')	None
4	Giant Mole	6	4	1 (bite)	1d8	60' (30')	Mole Ambush*
5	Wolf	7	2+2	1 (bite)	1d6	180' (60')	None
6	Fey**	5	1	1 (weapon or spell)	1d4	60' (20')	Charm Effect
7	Insane Begger***	9	1-1	1 (fist)	1 hp	60' (30')	Novne
8	Rhacos	6	5	2 (kick/beak)	1d8, 1d10	90' (30')	Indignant Beak
9	L'uort Scouting Party	6	2+1	1 (sword or bow)	1d6+1	90' (30')	None
10	Aerial Attack****	5	7	3 (claw/claw/bite)	1d4/1d4/1d6	120' (30')	Fly
					Flight Move Rate	360' (120')	

*Blinding attack from underground ambush point, 1st attack only, +3 to hit, +2 damage

**Game Master Chooses - Possibilities include: Pixies, Sprites, Nixies, Dryads etc. Stats in table are for Wood Sprite

****Flying Beast - Game Master Chooses- Possibilities include eagles, bats, wyverns etc. Stats in table are for Gryphon

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WHISPER VALE ENCOUNTER TABLES

MEANDER RIVER

1d10	Name	AC	Hit Dice	# Attacks	Damage	Move	Special
1	Murkbeast	7	5	3 (claw/claw/bite)	1d4/1d4/1d6	90' (30)'	None
2	Monster Beetle	3	3	1 (bite)	1d6+1	60' (30')	None
3	Giant Beaver	6	4	1	2d6	90' (30')	None
4	Deer	7	1	1 (butt)	1d4	240' (80')	None
5	Giant Catfish	4	7	5 (bite, 4 feelers)	1d8, 1d4 x 4	90' (30')	None
6	Fey*	5	1	1 (weapon or spell)	1d4	60' (20')	Charm Effect
7	Raftsmen**	6	1+2	1 (weapon)	1d6	90' (30')	None
8	Rhacos	6	5	2 (kick/beak)	1d8, 1d10	90' (30')	Indignant Beak
9	L'uort Scouting Party	6	2+1	1 (sword or bow)	1d6+1	90' (30')	None
10	Aerial Attack***	5	7	3 (claw/claw/bite)	1d4/1d4/1d6	120' (30)	Fly

Flight Move
Rate 360' (120')

*Game Master Chooses - Possibilities include: Pixies, Sprites, Nixies, Dryads etc. Stats in table are for Wood Sprite

**A Solitary Huntsman - May Provide Food or Information

***Flying Beast - Game Master Chooses- Possibilities include eagles, bats, wyverns etc. Stats in table are for Gryphon

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WHISPER VALE ENCOUNTER TABLES

FOOTHILLS OF THE VALE

1d10	Name	AC	Hit Dice	# Attacks	Damage	Move	Special
1	Cave Bear	7	5	3 (claw/claw/bite)	1d4/1d4/1d6	90' (30)'	None
2	Giant Centipede	9	1d4 hp	1 (bite)	1d3+disease	120' (40)'	None
3	Giant Shrew	4	1	2 (bite/bite)	1d6/1d6	180' (60)'	None
4	Giant Mole	6	4	1 (bite)	1d8	60' (30)'	Mole Ambush*
5	Wolf	7	2+2	1 (bite)	1d6	180' (60)'	None
6	Fey*	5	1	1 (weapon or spell)	1d4	60' (20)'	Charm Effect
7	Giant Snake	6	2	1 (bite)	1d4, Poison	90' (30)'	Save vs poison or die
8	Ogre	5	4+1	1 (club)	1d10	90' (30)'	None
9	L'uort Scouting Party	6	2+1	1 (sword or bow)	1d6+1	90' (30)'	None
10	Aerial Attack***	5	7	3 (claw/claw/bite)	1d4/1d4/1d6	120' (30)	Fly

Flight Move
Rate 360' (120')

*Blinding attack from underground ambush point, 1st attack only, +3 to hit, +2 damage

**Game Master Chooses - Possibilities include: Pixies, Sprites, Nixies, Dryads etc. Stats in table are for Wood Sprite

***Flying Beast - Game Master Chooses- Possibilities include eagles, bats, wyverns etc. Stats in table are for Gryphon

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