

RUSS MORRISSEY'S

PATHFINDER
ROLEPLAYING GAME COMPATIBLE

TO STAKE A VAMPIRE



BY MIKE MYLER & RUSS MORRISSEY



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TO STAKE A VAMPIRE



AN ADVENTURE FOR 7TH-6TH LEVEL CHARACTERS

WRITTEN AND DESIGNED BY:
MIKE MYLER, RUSS MORRISSEY

ADDITIONAL TEXT BY: **BRIAN CASEY** EDITORS: **RUSS MORRISSEY, RYAN NOCK**

LAYOUT & GRAPHIC DESIGN: **HAL MANGOLD** ART DIRECTOR: **MICHAEL MCCARTHY**

CARTOGRAPHY: **SEAN MACDONALD AND JUSTIN ANDREW MASON**

ART: **CLAUDIO POZAS, ALEXANDRE XAVIER,
RICK HERSHEY, JACOB BLACKMON**



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INTRODUCTION



To *Stake a Vampire* is a traditional horror module. Using the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game*, we hearken back to the 1980s and embark on an adventure guaranteed to remind your group of RPG modules and boxed sets from long past!

These quests begin and end in the same region as *To Slay a Dragon*, continuing the story of Holdenshire. The PCs find that the peoples of Hengistbury and Thornbury have suddenly turned dour and agitated. Once the meddlings of one vampire are revealed, the adventurers find that the region is littered with tombs of warriors from long past, defenders against undead, eventually uncovering an ancient evil beneath the land that's subverted the noble Pemberton family to its evil whims!

While EN Publishing is known for producing complex, advanced adventure paths for the experienced GM (like the *ZEITGEIST: The Gears of Revolution* and *War of the Burning Sky* adventure paths), this module is far more straight-forward and direct. *TO SLAY A VAMPIRE* is designed to be old-school, traditional, and nostalgic. You won't find any complex plots, statblocks that make up a novel of their own, or intricate politics*—you're getting a spooky sandbox village, several dungeon crawls, and a dangerous finale filled with intrigue! It'll take a group from 7th level to 9th or 10th level.

*If you want these things, jump onto wotbsadventurepath.com and zeitgeistadventurepath.com—just make sure you're on your game. They're designed for experienced GMs!

ADVENTURE TIMELINE

1. Recently knighted, the adventurers organize their new estates and see to the many troubles of the realm. With the first snows of winter come mysterious curses that envelop Holdenshire as Lord Pemberton falls ill and Lady Sybil Pemberton becomes obsessed with saving her husband, leaving the PCs as the authority of the day.
2. Tracking down the sources of the ailments in Hengistbury and Thornbury, the party gathers together the *Relics of the Order of Light*. Once wielded by legendary hunters of the undead, the PCs recover them from tombs hidden across Holdenshire (each protected by an undead servant), gradually abating the curses plaguing the population.
3. With the aid of the spirits of the Order of Light some of the mystery is literally unveiled—Lord Pemberton is revealed to be an undead! After a brief confrontation he flees, leading the adventurers beneath Brockendale Castle and to the true danger

that threatens Holdenshire: an ancient, powerful vampire lord that aims to make the realm as dreadful, macabre, and steeped in malevolence as he is!

CHARACTER ADVANCEMENT

This adventure is the sequel to *To Slay a Dragon* and assumes that the party (preferably composed of four PCs!) has played through that module and are 7th level, or close to it. By the time the group nears the end of this adventure and face off against the vampire lord Nemirtvi, they should be 9th or even 10th level.

The path to Nemirtvi's stronghold might be found earlier, but hopefully not—the vampire lord has no qualms with destroying enemies before they can become stronger or prepare defenses against his undead menace. The PCs should be at least 8th level before ending Act II: Uncovering the Order of Light, and hopefully 9th level before descending into Nemirtvi's Abattoir.

The total XP award budget for each quest in **ACT I: A Dismal Winter in Holdenshire** is listed below. This adventure assumes a Medium character advancement progression (35,000 / 51,000 / 75,000). You can use this list to help should you want to swap missions out for ideas of your own creation, or to assist generally in your planning. The XP value also gives you an idea of how tough each quest is.

QUEST	TOTAL XP	XP Each*
ACT I: A Dismal Winter in Holdenshire		
I: Deadly Indigestion		
Pent-Up Pigs	12,000	3,000
Unsound Ingredients	10,000	2,500
Roses of the Gypsies	12,400	3,100
II: The Packman's Final Rest		
Penner's Demise	9,200	2,300
Weightman's Burden	13,200	3,300
TOTALS	56,800	14,200

*Based on a party of 4 PCs. A party which completes these quests and engages in at least two random encounters will make 8th level.

The next table shows the story award and the total XP value of all the quests in **ACT II: Uncovering the Order of Light**. It does not include random encounters. Note that this is the total XP value—the PCs don't necessarily defeat every single creature in this adventure (there are far too many dangers that wander the night!), and so will be unlikely to earn every experience point possible. The total XP value (not including random encounters) is 144,400, (or 36,100 each for a party of four PCs), which means if they slay absolutely everything troubling the realm and perform all the optional quests, the party could wander into Nemirtvi's abattoir as 10th level characters! It's far more likely that the party enters the final dungeon as 9th level characters, however, and no matter how many monsters they kill, the path to the final boss of the module isn't revealed until every tomb belonging to the Order of Light has been explored.

QUEST	TOTAL XP*	XP Each
ACT II: Uncovering the Order of Light		
III: The Silver Archer's Tomb	17,600	4,400
IV: Sepulcher of the Fleet Warrior	49,600	12,400
V: Crypt of the Inevitable Sunset	23,800	5,950
VI: Mausoleum of the Sunbeam	38,400	9,600
VII: Ritual of the Sunlord	—	—
^The Rumour Battle	15,000	3,750
TOTALS		

*Based on a party of 4 PCs. Note that this does not include random encounters. PCs are not expected to defeat every individual creature.

^The Rumour Battle is an ongoing quest that spans all of Act II; it is also entirely optional.

GM'S NOTE

This first act begins with the characters in the lands of Holdenshire. There the PCs are new arrivals or celebrated knights, renowned as dragonslayers in taverns across the realm (this is by far the preferred option). Soon however, they'll find the populace that once embraced them has quickly turned cold and distant—investigating why begins to unravel a dangerous mystery of what plagues the towns of Hengistbury and Thornbury, leading the adventurers into tombs scattered across the region.

ACT I



A DISMAL WINTER
IN HOLDENSHIRE

The first Act begins with the heroes back in Holdenshire having defeated the dragon, Cirothe. Now celebrated lords, they find themselves contending with dark and dire changes to the region as evil curses creep across the land. Soon, they'll uncover the vampiric presence and begin to track down the source of the ailments plaguing the once idyllic county.

ACT STRUCTURE

I: DEADLY INDIGESTION

Lord Pemberton has fallen ill, and his wife is consumed with caring for her sickly husband, leaving the populace of their county to fend for themselves as a harsh winter settles in.

PENT-UP PIGS

Some of the citizens in Holdenshire are suffering from a strange malady; the sick get rashes from sunlight, crave meat made rare and lose the pigment in their skin. The adventurers track the source in Hengistbury back to Penner's Pig Farm and while the residence appears to be lived in, the halfling is nowhere to be seen. When his sickly stock is investigated, the porcines transform into savage, feral boars with a bloodlust!

UN SOUND INGREDIENTS

In Thornbury, the citizens have become outright disgruntled; everyone looks at each other with contempt, fighting commonly breaks out and the adventurers find they are suddenly not very well-liked at all. Investigating the bakery reveals that someone has been mixing the ash remains of corpses into Reg Bakerman's bread, and now the entire hamlet of Thornbury is prepared to take arms against one another out of spite!

ROSES OF THE GYPSIES

Oddly, only the gypsies seem to be unaffected by these strange maladies. Their presence in both towns has become more frequent—what makes them immune?

II: THE PACKMAN'S FINAL REST

Following the clues left at either Penner's Farm or Thornbury's Bakery, the adventurers are led south of the quarry where they find a partially unearthed mausoleum.

PENNER'S DEMISE

Within is the pig farmer, Penner, now a vampire and accompanied by several villagers he's made into his spawn!

WEIGHTMAN'S BURDEN

After dispatching the nearly-feral undead, the party finds that they are in a tomb to Hugo Weightman. Hugo is the long-dead apprentice of an order of vampire slayers that came to Holdenshire to destroy an ancient evil; his journal has notes on the existence of tombs he made for his perished allies and how he felled the powerful vampire lord.

Once they return to the settlements, however, new and strange afflictions now plague both towns.

HOLDENSHIRE COUNTY

Holdenshire is an idyllic realm of woodlands and fields ruled over by Lord and Lady Pemberton—normally, that is. Lately the nights have grown darker, storms fiercer, days dimmer, and the typically friendly populace has become aggressive, offensive, and downright selfish.

Not a year ago the troubles began for the region in the larger of its two towns, Hengistbury, and quickly embroiled the hamlet of Thornbury thereafter. Kobolds appeared in the hills as strange creatures began to flit about the countryside, lizardmen stalked the Fogmoor, mischievous magicks were unleashed, and all kinds of trouble began to erupt throughout the normally tranquil county. Worst of all, the kobolds kidnapped a local maiden and carried her off to Skull Mountain far to the east!

HENGISTBURY (NG VILLAGE)

Corruption -3; Crime -3; Economy -1; Law +2; Lore +0; Society -3; Danger -1

Qualities: Cursed*, Insular, Rumormongering Citizens

Danger: +5*

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government: Overlord **Population:** 150
Notable NPCs: Lord Pemberton, Lady Sybill Pemberton

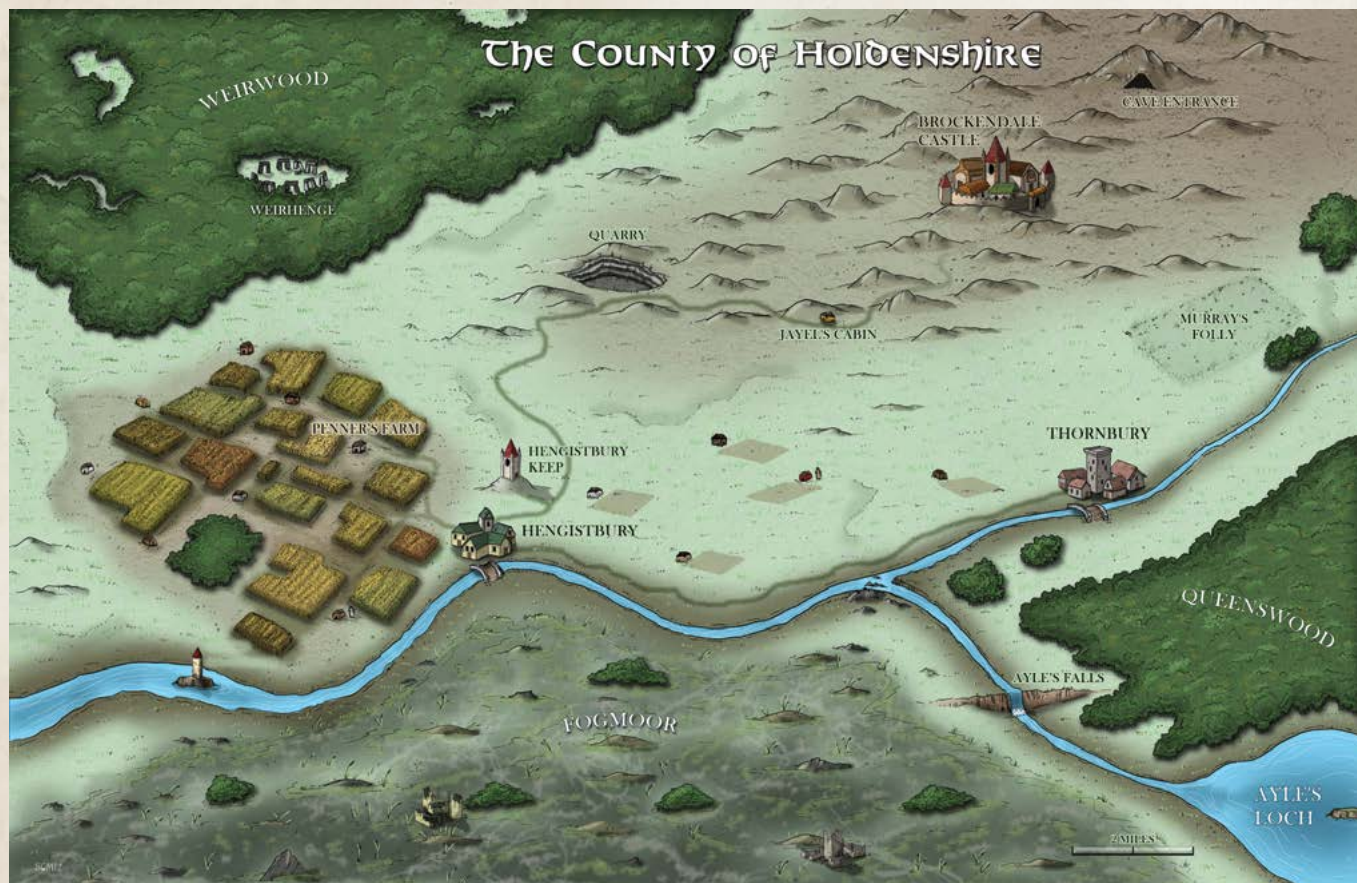
MARKETPLACE

Base Value 500gp; **Purchase Limit** 2,500gp;
Spellcasting 3rd;
Minor Items 2d4; **Medium Items** 1d4;
Major Items -3

*The current state of affairs in Holdenshire has set everyone on edge—beasts of the wilds, citizens and all. It is a more dangerous place than PCs that completed *To Slay A Dragon* will remember.

Lady Sybill Pemberton and **Lord Pemberton**, the local rulers, deputized a group of heroes that emerged [ideally, this would be the PCs, continuing the events from *To Slay A Dragon*!] to follow the kobolds and acquire artifacts to slay their master, the dragon Cirothe. The party trekked across the lands between Holdenshire and Skull Mountain, assisting and being helped by long time enemies of the dragon. With the archaic items of power in hand, they infiltrated Cirothe's lair and slayed her, returning as true heroes.

With the treasures of the lands returned to them, the ensuing harvest festival between Hengistbury and Thornbury was without doubt the finest in remembrance. Lady Sybill Pemberton and Lord Pemberton knighted the heroes, granting them



small fiefdoms in Holdenshire and it seemed for a while that the populace might know some peace in the coming winter. Unfortunately as the snows began to fall on the county, so did a dismal curse. The citizens of Hengistbury and Thornbury have never been so antagonistic or rude, and it seems as if the shadows of the encroaching season will swallow all of Holdenshire into a darkness filled with horror...

OTHER PEOPLE OF NOTE

The local bard and traveling rumormonger is **Three-Fingered Jake**. He's known to wander through Hengistbury and Thornbury every few weeks, performing in exchange for food and lodging (especially the latter during these colder months). As the adventure begins he's still a fast ally of the PCs and can help them catch on to what seems to be the source of troubles in Holdenshire, but during Act II his motives change (see **The Rumour Battle** on page \$).

One of the oddities of Hengistbury is **Ugg**, a small hill giant that befriended the village some time ago. He's normally quite friendly and helpful, but recently saw the uglier side of the villagers (both during the events last year and most recently). The Rosewynd Gypsies have treated him well however, and the giant has taken to traveling about the realm with them, entertained by their dances. Of course the gypsies have another motive—they know that some sort of curse afflicts the realm, and having such a strong ally so close is a good way to ensure their own safety.

Five miles downstream, the local wizard **Kalle Sirkesalo** keeps to himself in a island on the river. He plays a minor part in the events to pass but his servant Hunchback Roland (who is neither hunchbacked or named Roland) and his paramour Freya Aeval, the pixie, do not not. The mage has sent Roland away to ensure some peace and quiet as he goes about some exciting research, some of which sweeps another scholar in the realm (John-Francis Rainweaver) into the dangers that trouble the party in Act II. What exactly the wizard seeks is a secret that may be even greater than what troubles Holdenshire now, but throughout the adventure he remains completely isolated.

Lady Sybill Pemberton would normally be a powerful ally of the adventurers, but she has become obsessed with her husband's sickness. Shortly after the end of the fall festival, **Lord Pemberton** fell terribly ill and has become utterly bed ridden. She has become a recluse and the two of them have let lapse the duties of governance—it falls to the recently knighted heroes to restore order to Holdenshire in the meanwhile. Her assistants, **Prirkka** and **Ariel**, act in her stead—they offer little aid, instead contributing to the party's troubles throughout Act II (see **The Rumour Battle** on page \$).

A trio of young orphans, the **Mortimer Brothers**, fancy themselves to be proper adventurers after the troubles that have come and gone in Hengistbury the past year. They are known makers of mischief and the adventurers would do well to keep an eye on them—Gord, Beej, and Poke are just as likely to draw

the party towards the tombs of the Order of Light in Act II as anyone else is (albeit inadvertently).

GM'S NOTE

If the PCs completed *To Slay A Dragon* and acquired Gord as a henchman (or completed any one of the three quests required to gain his services) then the Mortimer Brothers are helpful to the party, fighting on behalf of the adventurers in the ongoing **Rumour Battle** during Act II; otherwise, they accidentally act against them, spreading unknowingly false rumors until one of them gets into trouble at a tomb of the Order of Light and is rescued by the PCs.

An enchanting dancer, **Stephanie Rosewynd**, is the leader of one of the traveling gypsy caravans in Holdenshire. She's been frequenting Hengistbury as of late, slowly tracking down the source of the curses as her peoples travel the countryside. The **Rosewynd Gypsies** are seemingly immune to the dangers besetting the county—in truth they are just well prepared and know what they face, even if they cannot discern where precisely the threat comes from.

THE VAMPIRE(S!)

The vampire lord Nemirtvi keeps to his abattoir far underneath Brockendale Castle. An ancient and primordial evil, when the mewling dragonling Citrothe meddled in what's now known as the Deepcrest Chasm, it unleashed another, more insidious power that slipped away unnoticed by anyone present at the event that spawned the demonic portal—a creature of true, insatiable bloodlust.

Among the dragon's treasure hoard, the adventurers found a memento of Lord Pemberton's ancestor and returned the trinket, completely unaware of the curse it carried. The night after he received the lost heirloom, fell draconic magics placed centuries ago began to assault the dreams of the ruler of Holdenshire, changing them to blood soaked nightmares which awakened something from far below the earth. After growing aloof and distant, he disappeared for days—traveling beneath Brockendale Castle and becoming the (unwilling) supplicant of Nemirt-

vi. The Lord Pemberton is now a vampire himself! He has since acted as the vampire lord's proxy, plunging Hengistbury and Thornbury into misery. If the curses he and his master have enacted are not lifted before the spring, the whole of Holdenshire county will turn to evil, sure to spread outward into the lands surrounding the once idyllic realm.

GM's Note: There are many NPCs in and around the county of Holdenshire. Several of them have roles to play in these adventures and some do not. The GM should feel free to use any and all of them if they so desire to set up scenes or provide colour or simply to encourage the PCs to take some particular course of action. Refer to the sidebars for where NPCs can be located most frequently and make use of the NPC booklet to fill in details of personality and occupations.

HENGISTBURY LOCATIONS

There are a host of locations throughout Hengistbury that play a part in the previous module or this adventure; these are some of the most important locales in *To Stake A Vampire*.

THE BLEEDING HEART TAVERN

The social hub of Hengistbury is normally a mutually respected business happily staffed by the villagers, in a rotating schedule that cycles weekly meaning that everyone worked at the bar on one night or another. As of late though, only **Meredith Jones** staffs the establishment and her prices have gone through the roof—all the other villagers enjoy the influx of wealth from Citrothe's lair quite freely, but eventually all of them stopped working their shifts. She's become bitter and sullen with the whole lot, and the expensive menu re-

flects her unfavorable disposition. Only the three most loyal patrons of the tavern—**Stefan the Baker**, **Rorus Klain**, and **Three-Fingered Jake**—are likely to be found there, embroiled in petty arguments about cheating at cards or imagined debts, but even they have become an irregular sight. What was once a pleasant, warm place to rest and drink the night away has become a cold, shadowy house of expensive utilitarian tastes.

PEOPLE LOCATED IN AND AROUND HENGISTBURY

LORD AND LADY PEMBERTON
UGG THE HILL GIANT
GORD, BEEJ AND POKE MORTIMER
MERIDETH JONES
GAVIN MORRIGAN
WILLEM VON NEDERBEEN
AUS
YARA BLOODCLAW
KITSTER "KIT" BARTLEBY
TEMERUS CLOTHBINDER
RORUS KLAIN
PRIRKKA STRONGFIST
HEINRICH KREBS
TAMAS AGRENS
MALLORY JACKDAW
STEDD GRIMWOLD
STEFAN THE BAKER

TRAVELLERS AND OUTLIERS:

BRAND TOREK
THREE-FINGERED JAKE
KALLE SIRKESALO
STEFAN OAKFELL
ANDREW NEMETH
LOGAN BROKENBARREL
KARATILANA "TILA" TORIN
MOSSAD
JUIDE "BLACK-HAND" AVERAUH

BRAND TOREK'S CABIN

The local Sheriff, **Brand Torek**, keeps office in his home, though he's rarely there. Brand takes his job seriously and as of late, it's been a particularly arduous task to patrol Holdenshire county. It's in need of some repair after the first heavy snows and there are people perpetually stopping by to complain about something or another. These are largely fielded by his daughter **Ariadne** (recently rescued from Skullmouth Mountain) and given out to **Jayel** or **Yara Bloodclaw** to deal with or carry on to her father (though the latter is quite busy accompanying Tillian Bricklebottom on his rounds). All three are constantly out tracking down one danger or another as the winter seems to have brought more than just shorter days along with it.

SAMUEL & SON'S TRADING COMPANY

This go-between for the town and the world at large is in a dishevelled state—with the sudden influx of gold from Cirothe's Lair, many of the normally cheap goods have suddenly raised in price. They were already hemorrhaging profits and with this sudden mess, the head office's liaison **Willem Von Nederveen** is just about ready to pull their business interests out of Hengistbury; a truly dangerous act in the long-term stability of the entire county, if not the region.

THE TEMPLE

A simple wooden structure that sits in the center of the town of Hengistbury, this house of worship is sometimes made into a town meeting hall when called for or an infirmary if there's a need for it. The stout oak walls and roof, harvested from the Queenswood, are festooned with carvings of wild animals on the hunt, marking it as a place devoted to Erastil, the god of farming and hunting.

Lady Sybill Pemberton usually tends to the sick or infirm here, but for several weeks she's been so obsessed with her husband's condition that only her servants, **Prirkka** and **Ariel**, are available to offer aid (though they do so reluctantly). While her Lady once allowed for other symbols of devotion to good-aligned deities in and around the temple, she's come to believe that it was an affront to her patron and has since had them all removed.

GOODS & SERVICES

There are more shops and stalls of trade in Hengistbury than what's listed below and GMs are encouraged to include whatever else seems appropriate for the adventure.

Penner's Pig Farm, west of Hengistbury, is the primary source of fresh meats in the town. Recently however the rambunctious and spirited halfling pig farmer has been avoiding his neighbors, and his live stock is getting extremely irritable (some might even say aggressive).

One of the last bastions of cheer in the town is **Clothbinder's Cheese Shop**, which has enjoyed continued success since the harvest festival. Still, **Temrus Clothbinder's** friendly disposition sours quickly when coins stop changing hands and his

BLEEDING HEART TAVERN MENU

FOOD MENU

- Groundworm flatbread (1 gp)
- Twitching lizard stew (4 gp)
- Saucy fungus and warthog pie (10 gp)
- Poached hawk (8 gp)
- Strung rabbit on a stick (4 gp)
- Rare equine steak (5 gp)
- Seared sahuagin cuts (2 gp)
- Chef's choice (changes daily) (15 gp)

DRINKS MENU

- Lonely Dragon Beer
[2 gp; ivory, opaque, smells like stale bacon]
- Elven Ininyë Wine
[3 gp; crimson, cloudy, smells like rotting pears]
- Dwarven Slatshield Stout
[3 gp; white, opaque, smells like acrid smoke]
- Lazy Prior Grog
[4 gp; orange, bubbly, smells like sour wine]
- Bachelor's Snake Grog
[10 gp; ivory, fizzing, smells like scorched spices]
- Black Rock Lager
[1 gp; turquoise, sticky, smells like sewage]
- Yellow Dog Cider
[3 gp; charcoal, fizzing, smells like sweat]
- Honest John Cognac
[10 gp; turquoise, translucent, smells like sulfur]

hours have been much shorter lately (leading to more general complaints around town).

Rorus Klain runs **The Forge** and has been even more gruff than usual—everyone seems to want a new sword, mace or breastplate, and all of them complain about his prices (which are beyond his control, as the cost of materials has raised along with everything else). He remains hard at work throughout the early morning and into the night, reticent to speak to anyone that troubles his nights in the Bleeding Heart Tavern.

The Krebs Apothecary is also enjoying a brisque upbeat in business as people seek all sorts of cures to the bevy of ailments that have suffused Hengistbury. A relatively new presence to the town, the family of **Heinrich Krebs** saw little of the gold from Cirothe's Lair and he's fallen to selling tinctures that have nothing to do with the sicknesses described to him. The substance of highest demand, holy water, nets his best returns (though it's become extremely scarce as of late).

Stedd Grimwald (a morose, beardless dwarf) runs a potion shop as well and has been conducting himself much in the

same way Heinrich has, but stubbornly refuses to sell many of his reagents and certainly not any holy water. He won't explain why and shuts his doors to anyone that asks, and as a result, become quite a recluse to the rest of Hengistbury.

The Bakery is the business of **Steffen the Baker** and one of the only institutions in Hengistbury that doesn't seem to have changed much. The quality of his product has gone downhill slightly, but people still line up in the mornings to pick up fresh bread. Steffen's become extremely irritable and terse with his assistants as of late, verbally berating them for mixing supplies or stealing his ingredients.

The Rosewynd Gypsy Caravan sometimes edges into the Queenswood or out towards Thornbury for a few days, but recently they are most often found southeast of Hengistbury (just across the river). **Stephanie Rosewynd** and **Ugg** the hill giant are the most recognizable faces among the nomads, who vividly engage anyone that enters their camp with song, dance, and a stern warning—beware the darkness in the night.

THORNBURY LOCATIONS

A small ingredients shop, **The Spice of Life**, is run by the foreigner **Nazid**. Keen to a good trade and well known already among the citizens of Holdenshire, he's found a tidy profit in mediating negotiations between citizens, appraisals, and as a pawn broker (all for a small fee, of course). With the lack of imported goods from Samuel & Sons, demand for his spices has never been higher and now that most of the townspeople can afford them, quite popular. His yearly visitor has come and left again before the snows began to fall (bearing news of some concern to the party) and after their heroic exploits, Nazid may seek *them* out to investigate his friend's claim.

The **Thornbury Bakery** is run by **Reg Bakerman**; the quality of the bread isn't as good as Steffen's in Hengistbury, but it's gotten even worse recently. Reg swears that his small building has become haunted and turned rather heavily to the drink, and now he's rarely found in a sober state. Some of the townspeople think the staleness of his bread is because the drunk has forgotten to acquire new ingredients, but Bakerman swears that the spirits haunting his home are to blame.

Horatio Denhew runs the local tavern and inn in Thornbury, **Denhew's Pub 'n' Grub**. The winter doesn't normally make for good business in his establishment though, and he's been gone since the harvest festival, seeking out a good, long-term performer for a second eatery in Hengistbury. The doors and windows to the Pub 'n' Grub have been closed for months, though rumor is that somebody's been seen inside the empty tavern late at night.

Thornbury has an alchemist of its own, **Emery Shier**, that runs a shop right out of his home kitchen. He's almost entirely out of reagents, and because of the way Stedd and Heinrich have behaved since the harvest festival—unwilling to share supplies, order materials in bulk, or otherwise be of any help to one another in any way—isn't in the mood to help anyone if he can

avoid it (and most of the time he can, with his lack of ingredients). Should someone get supplies for his craft, Emery is willing to concoct things for them, but otherwise he remains as aloof and distant as the rest of Holdenshire.

The **Veterinary Clinic** is run by **Albert Wright**, a precociously curious doctor just good enough to treat the animals of Holdenshire. After his obsession with a chimera finally waned, he noticed—perhaps too late—that the local indigenous population of predator and prey has shifted slightly. Bats, rats, and wolves have become far too common and are wiping out the birds and other benign animals he's used to studying out in the Queenswood, Ayle's Loch, and Brockendale Castle. He has a suspicion that the latter locale has something to do with the phenomena, but this mostly from nightmares and less from astute observation.

Donald Morrison runs **Morrison's Forge**, and he's just as busy as Rorus—even busier, perhaps, since many of the Hengistbury metalworker's customers have been coming to him after losing their patience. Their friendship is suffering but Donald's enjoying the boost in sales and won't back down. With only one tavern in town, many fear the two may come to blows if too much drink is had.

The local scribe, **Tillian Bricklebottom**, has been quite busy lately. The Lady and Lord Pemberton haven't required much in the way of official documentation recently, but now that most of the villagers have some coin they've taken to sending missives to distant relatives. Tillian is rarely in his ink and quill shop anymore, often busy delivering or accepting more messages to be sent afar. He's not pleased with becoming a glorified mail carrier and doesn't enjoy the travel, insisting that Yara Bloodclaw accompanies him whenever he leaves the safety of the villages—he's seen things he cannot rightly explain in the shadows of the changing seasons.

Liked least of all in Thornbury are the **Fierendzi Gypsies**. Always something of outcasts, they normally keep to the Queenswood but have stubbornly remained camped southeast of the smaller town in the **Fierendzi Gypsy Campsite** across the river. When approached they are standoffish and aggressive, only allowing entry into their circle of wagon-homes once **Saraz bint Farad bin Aquilah** has given someone explicit permission to do so. They continue to hide the half-elven female bard **Pixy Mistynote**, though even she isn't sure exactly why.

OTHER LOCATIONS OF NOTE

There are even more locations in Holdenshire than those described in either this adventure or the previous module, but those not described in the following quests are touched upon here. GMs are encouraged to use these locales for more adventures, to expand existing plot lines, or whatever else they see fit.

The Quarry is run by a common dwarf, **Logan Brokenbarrel**, and neither appears to be very special. The miner hides a

secret behind a sleeve tattoo he keeps covered as best he can, but the worksite north of Thornbury has a mystery all its own that portends a poor future for Holdenshire; that's for another adventure, however!

Jahmus "Jayel" Laekin lives in a cabin halfway between Brockendale Castle and the Quarry. While normally he prefers the solitude of his remote home, the tracker has been busy accompanying Sherrif Torek on patrols that grow more dangerous every day. When not with Brand, Jayel's been seen staying with the Rosewynd Gypsies of Hengistbury or the Fierendzi Gypsies of Thornbury.

South of Thornbury are **Ayel's Loch** and **Ayel's Falls**. Normally a place of beauty and repose, the scene has turned cold and dead in the winter months. Under the ice a mystery looms, one that the heroes have to uncover at a later time once the spring melt finally comes.

Whistling winds have become the constant symphony of the nearby **Queenswood**, where game has grown even more scarce than previous cold seasons. There's a 20% chance that a traveler encounters the Fierendzi Gypsies in these forests, but most of the time the fortune-telling nomads keep to their campsite outside Thornbury.

THE PEOPLE OF HOLDENSHIRE

This part of the book is for keeping tabs on the extensive cast of both Hengistbury and Thornbury—as a “sandbox” style setting, we've included a dearth of plot hooks and suggestions. Not all of these NPCs are critical to the plot, but should be used to truly bring the cursed lands of Holdenshire county to life.

LORD AND LADY PEMBERTON

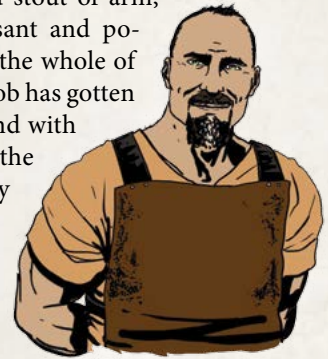
The good Lord Pemberton and Lady Sybill Pemberton have benevolently governed over the county of Holdenshire for some time. Not only do they collect taxes, enact laws, and generally keep things running, they also oversee the Bleeding Heart Tavern and organize the harvest festival—all told, they are quite beloved by the populace. Recently however, Lord Pemberton turned quite ill and won't take audiences; worse yet, his wife has become utterly obsessed with his health and as a consequence, both have lapsed in their duties to rule. They remain distant to the recent heroes of the realm, instead acting when required through Lady Sybill's attendants, Prirkka and Ariel. Anyone that's seen the Lord Pemberton attests to



his sickness—he's pale, sallow, and utterly bed-ridden, and the Lady Pemberton does not fair much better.

BRAND TORDEK

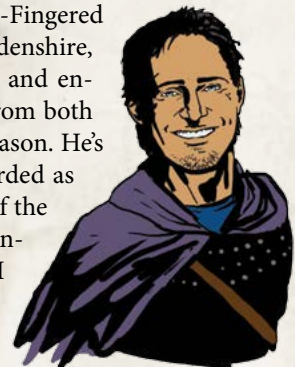
A tall fellow square of jaw and stout of arm, Brand Torek is normally pleasant and polite as he goes about patrolling the whole of Holdenshire county. Lately his job has gotten far more dangerous however, and with the Lord Pemberton infirm, the weight of responsibility is heavy on Brand's shoulders. Retired from adventuring himself, he's gotten a mind that something ominous is going on in Hengistbury and Thornbury, but can't pinpoint just what it is.



The local “Sheriff” has gotten extremely stern with his beloved (recently rescued) niece Ariadne, insisting that she stay confined to his home until whatever dangers that lurk about have been dealt with.

THREE-FINGERED JAKE

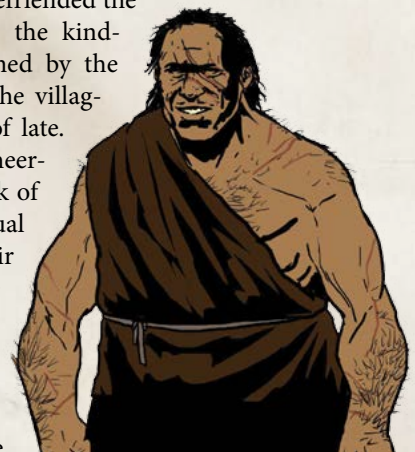
The wandering minstrel Three-Fingered Jake is the local bard of Holdenshire, traveling freely about the region and enjoying a measure of hospitality from both towns during the harsh winter season. He's a fine source of rumors but regarded as a valuable source of news by all of the citizens in Hengistbury and Thornbury—the party finds out in Act II just how dangerous his talkative tongue can be throughout the **Rumour Battle!**



UGG

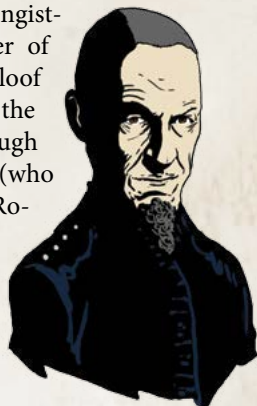
A small hill giant that befriended the village some time ago, the kind-hearted Ugg was spurned by the untoward behavior of the villagers towards a troll as of late. Normally ready to cheerfully assist the townsfolk of Hengistbury with manual labor, after watching their treatment of someone different than themselves, the giant has taken to spending time with the Rosewynd Gypsies (who adore the songs he sings in Giant).

Should the Mortimer Brothers—his best friends in all of Holdenshire—get into trouble however, he'll be quick to offer aid and help rescue the unfortunate orphans.



KALLE SIRKESALO

About 5 miles downstream from Hengistbury sits the isolated wizard tower of Kalle Sirkesalo. He is extremely aloof and normally only has contact with the people of Holdenshire by proxy, through his assistant Hunchbacked Roland (who is neither hunchbacked or named Roland). Kalle's research inadvertently stirs up some trouble in *To Stake A Vampire*, but for the most part both of these characters are not major players in this adventure (Roland and his paramour, the pixie Freya Aeval, are on holiday collecting exotic components for the wizard.)



PENNER

Local pirate aficionado and resident pig farmer, Penner's usually found in the Bleeding Heart Tavern but not recently. His farm is near the Weirwood and though his hogs are continually fed, nobody can account for the halfling's whereabouts. His pigs are supposedly getting awful aggressive, but that's the sort of hearse that's become common lately.



THE MORTIMER BROTHERS.

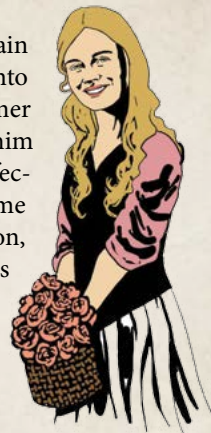
The local "thieves' guild" consists of three young orphans, Gord, Beej and Poke. Steeped in the gossip of Hengistbury, they are mischievous children that delight in partaking in adventure of all kinds and typically bite off more than they can chew. With the growing dangers of Holdenshire, it is only a matter of time before their lives are truly at risk. The oldest of them, Gord, is coming of age and keen on Ariadne (who quietly returns his affections), hanging out around Brand Torek's House under the pretense of couriering messages—if the other two are in trouble, chances are good he's here waiting for a real messenger to happen by.



ARIADNE

Brand Torek's niece led a very pleasant life until a few months ago—kobolds kidnapped her and she was held captive for months, to be sacrificed to the dragon Cirothe. Adventurers

rescued her from Skullmouth Mountain and since then, she's grown from a child into a woman. The attentions of Gord Mortimer aren't beneath her notice but she wants him to prove his valor before returning his affections in full. Her uncle Brand has become extremely protective after the abduction, and strongly insists that she stay inside his house while he patrols the realm—a task that appears to have no end.



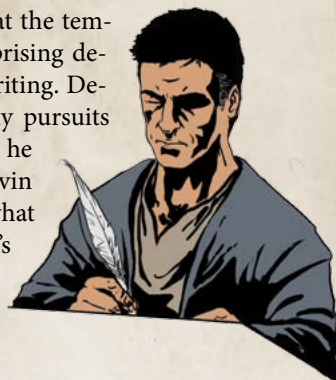
MEREDITH JONES

In her early 20s, young and serious, the stern looking barmaid has become even more curt with customers since the events preceding the autumn festival. The only permanent employee of the Bleeding Heart Tavern, Meredith has become very bitter with everyone's sudden reluctance to pick up shifts, raising the prices on everything in return. As a result fewer people happen across the drinking hall, though if anyone asks, she claims to miss no one (which is a lie; Meredith is still sweet on one individual in town, but isn't telling who.)



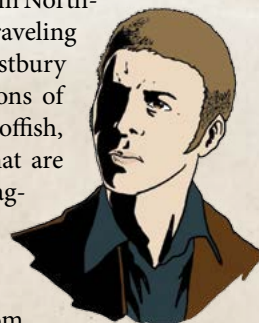
GAVIN MORRIGAN

A dark haired man going grey at the temples, Gavin is known for a surprising determination, dedicated to his writing. Despite his near-constant scholarly pursuits in the Bleeding Heart Tavern, he is a fine physical specimen. Gavin hasn't revealed to anyone what exactly he's writing, but there's clearly something (or more accurately, someone) keeping him in Hengistbury.



WILLEM VON NEDERVEEN

The Samuel & Sons trading company in Northminster employs this business-like traveling merchant, sending him to Hengistbury with an eye on the recent fluctuations of commerce there. While a bit standoffish, he's not unwilling to help people that are friendly to him and knows that engaging the populace will give him a real idea of whether or not to end Samuel & Sons interests in Holdenshire. With the influx of wealth from Cirothe's Lair, the troubling business dealings in the two villages have become truly precarious, and there may not be much of an import and export trade in the region's future.



AUS

Rambunctious as he is energized, the young Aus annoys everyone in Hengistbury with rumors, hearses, and claims of questionable accuracy. Still trying to impress the older children (the Mortimer Brothers) he's turned sour on adventurers of all kinds after the death of the dragon in Skullmouth Mountain. Since then Aus has changed his tune, spreading falsities about aspiring "heroes" whenever possible (making him a pivotal element in the **Rumour Battle**), spying on their activities with an unexpected astuteness.



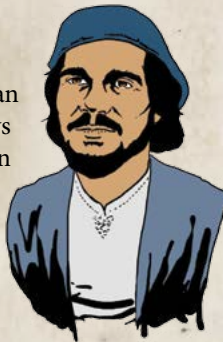
STEFAN OAKFELL

An older ranger, Stefan Oakfell mostly keeps to the Queenswoods and only sometimes travels into the two towns for supplies. His demeanor is cold and longing, speaking of a traumatic past that haunts him to this day. Oakfell's not sociable, but with the right approach, may be willing to share what he knows of the strange goings on in Holdenshire.



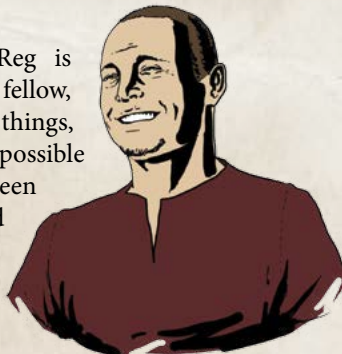
NAZID

Owner of The Spice of Life, Nazid is an immigrant to Hengistbury that enjoys several tidy, profitable ventures borne on the back of the wealth from Citrothe's Lair. A friend from afar visits him once a year (presumably an associate of the Ben-Yumo clan, friends of the Adashim family) to conduct business. This year, though, the traveler brings something more to Nazid's home—rumors of an ancient tomb that promises treasure abound to anyone that can get inside of it.



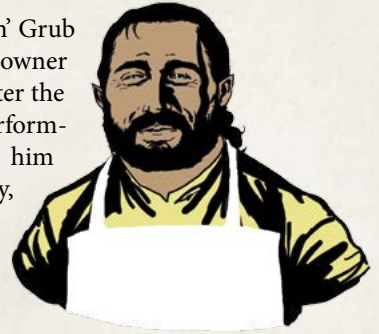
REG BAKERSON

The baker of Thornbury, Reg is normally a friendly enough fellow, even if he does say awkward things, seemingly always at the worst possible moment. Lately though, he's been hitting the drink awfully hard and is considered to be little more than a despondent alcoholic. Reg's tendency for outlandish outbursts hasn't ended either, though now he's claiming his bakery is haunted by something supernatural. While the quality of his craft *has* suffered, most of Thornbury thinks its due to excessive drinking, not malicious spirits.



HORATIO DENHEW

Normally running the Pub 'n' Grub in Thornbury, the tavern owner was last seen heading east after the autumn festival. Talented performers are encouraged to seek him out if they're going that way, but he's closed shop for the winter and left Holdenshire to look for a permanent act to highlight in a second eatery for Hengistbury.



YARA BLOODCLAW

On a glance, it isn't obvious that this tall, tattooed woman is nearing middle age. She's made her way in Hengistbury for the better half of a decade, tending to bees for the two towns. During the winter she uses her considerable martial talents to help out Brand Tordek, but recently the demand for the Sheriff's attention has been extremely high. Yara's penchant *not* to drink leaves her as the most reliable figure of authority in Hengistbury late in the night, but in the day she's often seen carrying messages alongside Tillian Bricklebottom or helping Sheriff Tordek patrol the county (always with her two warhammers at her side).



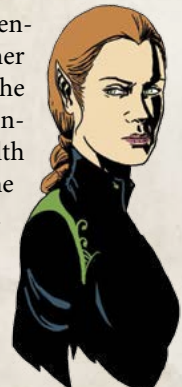
KITSTER "KIT" BARTLEBY

A charismatic criminal, Kitster "Kit" Bartleby was the original source of troubles with Samuel & Sons (convincing John Tulworth to steal items from the company). Dealing in stolen goods is his purvey, but the thefts of months ago didn't attract the item the fence desired. He and John Tulworth are still going about their nefarious doings, but aren't inciting any true danger—not currently, anyway.



MYLANI AZALATHELLON

The local, self-appointed courtmaster, the teenager half-elf carries two small books with her at all times: one to record transgressions of the law, and a book of common laws in Holdenshire County. With the recent influx of wealth and desire for communication from the townsfolk, Tillian Bricklebottom has hired her out to man his Ink and Quill shop when he has a mind to. Mylani relishes the task, but is excessively nosey and ferrets out all the recent rumors of town when anyone enters the store.





ANDREW NEMETH, BLUESTONE, MOSSAD, AND OLD JOVAN

These three adventurers spent the months before the autumn festival tracking down one of their associates, an untrustworthy mage known as Bluestone. They may have moved on to other locales, but the people of Holdenshire county know of them and often cite the trio as perfect examples of what adventurer's bring to the two towns. Whether or not they interact with the PCs at during the bulk of the adventure, they play a small part in the final act (though should they die beforehand, their involvement remains unchanged).

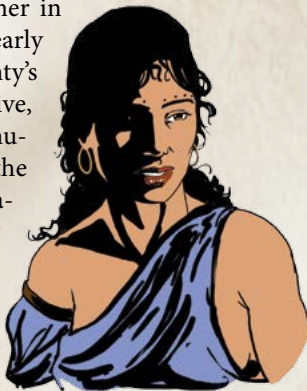
KARATILANA "TILA" TORIN

A "rogue economist" that believes deeply in the redistribution of wealth (often personally handling the matter herself) isn't a favorite among the villagers of Hengistbury or Thornbury. Tila escaped from Brand Torek's jail before the autumn festival and may still be found in Holdenshire county, keen to calm the unstable economic waters left by the gold from Cirothe's Lair.



SARAZ BINT FARAD BINT AOUILAH

Perhaps the most exotic foreigner in Holdenshire, the psion is clearly from a land far from the county's boundaries. Curious, inquisitive, and studious, Saraz has continually taken extensive notes on the countryside, but still remains naive about local customs. During the autumn festival she was re-united with her ancestral brethren, the Fierendzi Gypsies, and now governs their small side-community outside of Thornbury.



ROBERT MACBAIN

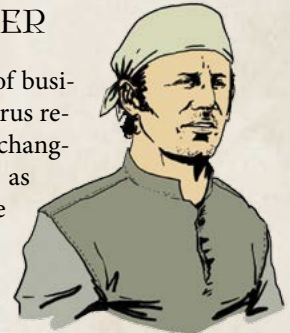
Rough hands and stout muscles mark Robert Macbain as a true laborer, traits honed by reworking stone drawn out of the quarry. Now that wealth is abundant in Holdenshire, he's been made to fortify the foundations of most of the buildings in Hengistbury and Thornbury. No great secrets have been found in the

old dirt underneath the structures, but some of the building materials coming out of the quarry have been odd as of late. The builder has been late to work habitually and the few folks that pry rather than complain learn that Robert's been having horrible nightmares every other night or so, depriving him of sleep.



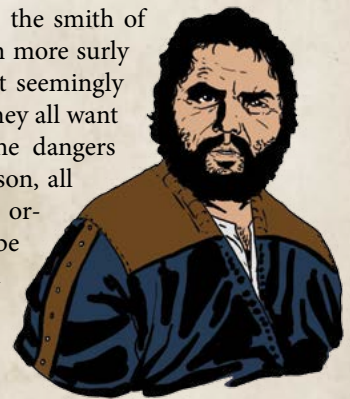
TEMRUS CLOTHBINDER

Pleased with the sustained boom of business since the harvest festival, Temrus remains cheery so long as coins are changing hands. Otherwise, he's grown as cold as the winds outside his cheese shop, quickly sending away anyone that isn't looking to buy some of his wares.



RORUS KLAIN

A large man in his early 40s, the smith of Hengistbury has become even more surly than he was before. Now that seemingly everyone has gold to spend, they all want armor and weapons; with the dangers brought by the change in season, all of the townsfolk want their orders fulfilled now. Rorus can be found working the forge from early in the morning (before sunrise), until an hour after the sun sets. Then he heads to the Bleeding Heart Tavern (often avoiding the angry demands of his wife Yulana, the one person in Hengistbury that the smith fears) where Klain is one of the only patrons with enough coin (and pull) to afford a regular table.



EMERY SHIER

Thornbury's alchemist is typically thought to be a boon to the community, but recently he's been drawn into paltry squabbles with Stedd and Heinrich that leave him largely bereft of supplies. Now that most of the townsfolk are wealthier and desire his services, Emery has grown extremely sullen because he can't meet the demand. If he does have anything, the prices are probably only slightly steeper than normal, but with a bit of shrewd negotiation the alchemist can be convinced to create plenty of concoctions (so long materials are made available and he's paid for his craft.)



ALBERT WRIGHT

The local veterinarian is the 12th of thirteen children that grew up near the hills around Brockendale Castle and has an insatiable desire to take care of exotic creatures. Albert's clinic is in Thornbury, close to Ayle's Loch, the Queenwood and the abandoned fortifications in Brockendale, where he goes to study animals when there's time for it. Recently he's been called out to Penner's Farm several times, but cannot account for the strange behavior of the hogs there. Anyone that managed to drag him over to the fields tells that he was clearly concentrating on something else and if asked, Albert explains that something odd is going on with the populations of predators and prey around Holdenshire—bats, rats and wolves are all too common, overrunning normal species at an alarming rate.



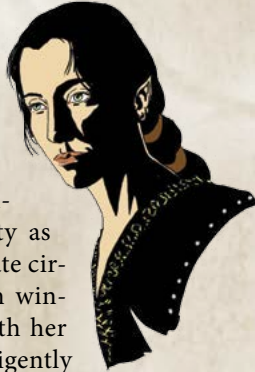
DONALD MORRISON

A giant of a man, Donald is always found wearing a kilt, normally hard at work in his forge in Thornbury. While he once enjoyed a brisk working relationship with Rorus Klaine from Hengistbury (sometimes helping with large orders), recently many impatient customers have brought their business to Donald instead. At first he was reluctant to take so many orders, but the draw of gold proved too strong and now he's at the forge as often as Rorus (if not a bit more). Rumor has it that the two may come to blows one night in the Bleeding Heart Tavern—the only open drinking hall between the two towns during this cold season—over Donald's resentment towards his more highly respected counterpart.



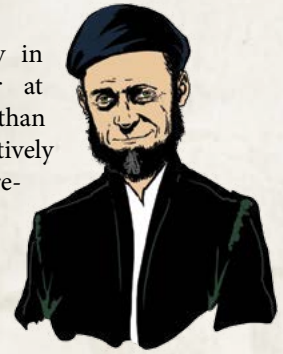
ARIEL

Midwife, herb supplier, and subordinate of Lady Sybill, Ariel has become the de facto voice of the rules of Holdenshire since Lord Pemberton fell ill. A mage of some talent, her attentions have been entirely on tending to the community as best as possible under the unfortunate circumstances brought with the harsh winter winds. Ariel is always found with her fellow clergy, Priikka Strongfist, dilligently carrying out the duties of administration in Hengistbury and Thornbury. Her sharp tongue has been honed into a razor's edge lately, and making some of the townsfolk believe she's downright scornful of them all for being overly careless.



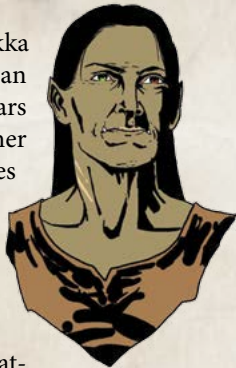
HEINRICH KREBS

The owner of Krebs Apothecary in Hengistbury, Heinrich is better at talking about being an apothecary than he is at actually being one. Relatively new to the towns, he saw no direct reward from Cirothe's hoard; as a result he's become less and less reliable as a genuine alchemist. Worse yet, Heinrich has grown stubborn and unwilling to work with his fellow medicinemen, making supplies scarce across the region. He greedily reaps what rewards he can from the stymying, inhibitive business practice and is as likely to sell a curative buyer's have no use for if it'll line his pockets.



PRIKKA STRONGFIST

Holdenshire's second midwife, Priikka Strongfist is an older half-orc woman showing the graying hairs of her 50 years of age. Were that not enough to make her appearance unsettling, one of her eyes is green and the other is brown (and she is allergic to cats). Mistrust of the half-orc seemed to wane during the autumn festival, but resurged when she became the heavier-handed proxy of Lady Sybill while Lord Pemberton battles his illness. Priikka is always found with her fellow administrator, often playing the part of "bad cop" whenever a scenario arises that requires her intimidating presence to be brought to the fore.



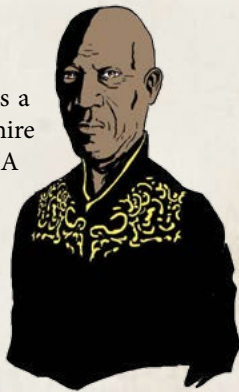
JUIDE "BLACK-HAND" AVERAUH

Rarely seen in the towns themselves, Juide is the woodsman most credited with keeping the villages of Holenshire's stock of meat well-supplied. It's assumed that he mostly hunts game in the Queenswood, though the truth is far darker than that—a secret he keeps to himself. Lately the change in wildlife hasn't escaped Juide's experienced eyes though, and he's been visiting Hengistbury and Thornbury less and less often as the snows settle in. Albert Wright thinks he's seen the ranger near Ayle's Loch, but can't say for sure—his eyes have been deceiving him lately.



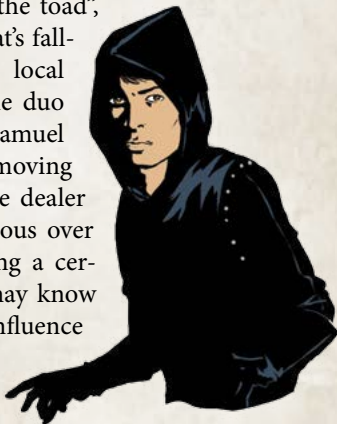
TAMAS AGRENS

Aloof and unfriendly, it didn't come as a huge surprise to the people of Holdenshire when Tamas seemingly disappeared. A debacle with the Mortimer Brothers went awry and shortly thereafter, the local sage seemed to simply vanish. In truth he still resides in Holdenshire, though it would be unfair to say that he still *lives* in the county...



JOHN TULWORTH

Known to the other kids as "the toad", John is a disreputable thief that's fallen under the influence of a local fence, Kitster "Kit" Bailey. The duo have gone up and down the Samuel & Sons warehouse and are moving on to other places to rob. The dealer of stolen goods has been furious over their lack of success in finding a certain trinket—one that John may know the location of. Perhaps the influence of Kit has steered the young Tulworth down the wrong path and he's truly a good son of Holdenshire; his distant demeanor implies he's gotten in over his head with something (of that there's no doubt) but whether it's guilt or something more, he won't say.



MALLORY JACKDAW

During the harvest festival, young Mallory turned 8 years of age. Since then he's taken to parting his brown hair in between rapid bursts of circumspect rumors (some of which he's heard from others in town and some of which he's making up). Mallory and Aus feed off of one another's energetic gossip, and play a considerable part in the **Rumour Battle** (though Mallory does so in favor of the party, rather than the malicious Aus).



STEDD GRIMWOLD

A dwarven sorcerer of some renown, Stedd discovered his powers in a traumatic accident that claimed the lives of many of his fellow miners. He learned to master his powers years ago, but hasn't grown his hair back or gotten over



accidentally killing his family members. The dwarf has grown extremely suspicious of everyone else after an argument with Heinrich Krebs (Hengistbury's other alchemist) and refuses to sell reagents or concoctions of any kind to those that ask, shutting his doors to potential customers, reluctantly indifferent to their plights.

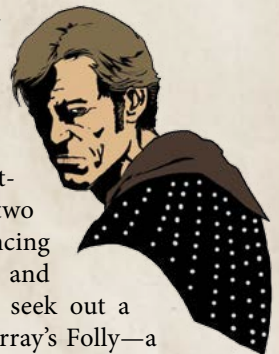
STEFFEN THE BAKER

The town baker of Hengistbury is a plump fellow with a beard as large as his hair is grey. With a greater mastery of his craft than Reg Bakerman over in Thornbury, the line of people ready to collect his warm confections in the morning is consistent. Lately he's become extremely upset about his employees and is suspicious of anyone that might be going about his shop, mixing his ingredients up. Most of Hengistbury hasn't noticed, but Steffen insists that someone has been tampering with his baking materials, leading to inferior bread.



JOHN-FRANCIS RAINWEAVER

Once a court scholar in Northminster, John-Francis was dismissed after some catastrophe involving the young prince there. Since then, Rainweaver has become a woodsman in Holdenshire, collecting wood, meat and skins for the two villages. Lately he's been experiencing dreams that are becoming more and more frequent, imploring him to seek out a strange phenomena outside of Murray's Folly—a task that promises John-Francis the redemption he so craves.



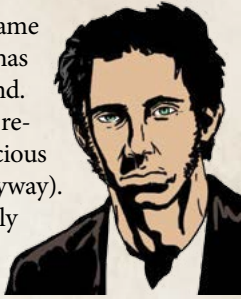
LOGAN BROKENBARREL

Like his brethren alchemist in Hengistbury, this dwarf carries a dark secret as well. Unlike Stedd, Logan Brokenbarrel hides his markings (old army regimental tattoos). He won't discuss the dark past connected to them, perhaps even taking dangerous actions to silence anyone that finds out what they're actually about. Some of the stone from the quarry has been strangely colored or patterned, difficult to work with if the builder Robert Macbain is to be believed, and he's keen to learn what may be wrong with his worksite and spooking the miners.



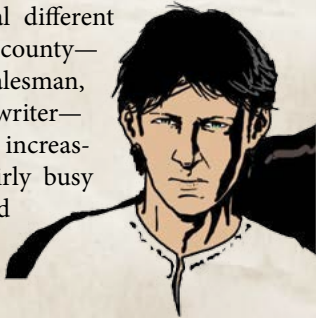
JAHMUS “JAYEL” LAEKIN

Commonly referred to by his nickname (Jayel), the retired scout Jahmus Laekin has become a tracker of fugitives for Brand. While generally peaceful, Jayel has little remorse for enacting vengeance on malicious folk (the ones he finds to be that sort, anyway). His compulsions for violence are normally tempered by the Sheriff, but when the two of them aren't on dangerous patrols, Laekin has taken to exploring his wild side with both the Rosewynd and Fierendzi gypsies.



TILLIAN BRICKLEBOTTOM

This halfling wears several different hats for all of Holdenshire county—courier, scribe, stationery salesman, translator, wine merchant, writer—and Tillian's list of tasks increases daily. Normally he's fairly busy working on behalf of Lord and Lady Pemberton, but lately their absence has been filled with countless communiques and esoteric requests on behalf of the recently affluent citizenry of Hengistbury and Thornbury. When not delivering missives with Yara Bloodclaw, he can be found in his Ink and Quill shop in Thornbury (operated by the nosey half-elf Mylani Azalathelon if he's busy).



STEPHANIE ROSEWYND

The Fierendzi Gypsies remain near the Queenswood by Thornbury, but a new caravan of nomads appeared in Holdenshire not long after the autumn festival. Their de facto leader, a beautiful dancer named Stephanie Rosewynd, has been troubled by prophetic dreams for several weeks, all leading her to Hengistbury. She knows that a dark curse has gripped the countryside in despair (and worse), and is working to protect the unkind citizens of both towns from whatever dark end the future may hold. Stephanie doesn't immediately trust everyone she meets, but after earning her friendship she becomes an inclusive ally that plays a pivotal role in the events to come!

GETTING STARTED

The earlier sections of this book have filled out the cast and locales for this macabre journey into the despairing winter—now let's get the PCs onto the stage! Preferably the adventurers have completed *To Slay A Dragon* and are enjoying the lot of heroes, but they may find their way into Holdenshire county through a variety of different means. If the party insists that they don't want to be the saviors of the town, then Hengistbury and Thornbury are the best locations to protect themselves

from a fierce snowstorm that lasts for days (until they near either of the two towns).

Really it's best to leave it in their hands but once the matter is settled, read or paraphrase the following:

The dead leaves of autumn's passing are nowhere to be seen in the blustery cold of the harsh winter that grips the countryside. Windows and doors are shuttered against the elements, and the few townsfolk walking the hills and paths in Holdenshire are bundled up tightly, moving at a brisk gait that warrants no interruption.

A dismal sense of despair permeates the very air in Hengistbury and Thornbury, turning the once friendly townsfolk into standoffish shut-ins. Bats, rats, and wolves are becoming more common in the once safe hills and valleys of Holdenshire. Perhaps worst of all, Lord Pemberton has fallen ill and governance of the land has waned during this harshest of seasons.

With the dearth of wealth from the slain dragon Cirothe's lair, none of the townsfolk are keen to work their jobs at the Bleeding Heart Tavern, making it far less welcoming than it normally is. Tonight marks the four month anniversary since the dragon's slaying, and with gold lined pockets much of Holdenshire has come out to the only open drinking establishment to have their fill of wine on this cold, dark winter night—though little true celebration can be heard from the somber patrons within.

With the paranoia and other ailments the townsfolk are suffering, this provides the best opportunity for PCs to meet important members of both Hengistbury and Thornbury. The wine has turned many of them to be a bit more friendly than they've recently been (though they still remain a tad aggressive, even late into the night) and unless the adventurers go out of their way to offend, the NPCs are generally talkative about what troubles each of them.

Throughout the evening there is talk of outright hearsay, other terrors, and numerous imagined horrors the townsfolk have conjured forth in their minds (many blaming villagers they dislike)—PCs may be keen to some of this information (see the **Rumors In The Tavern** sidebar). Now isn't the time to pursue quests—that comes a bit later, and this is just to provide some general information for the party—use the opportunity to let the PCs get to know everyone.

The adventurers are now able to attempt any of the five initial quests in Act I. Once the party is 7th level, proceed to **Weightman's Burden**. Not every one of these quests is hinted at in the list of tavern rumors, and a few specifically draw the PCs in of their own accord. GMs shouldn't feel locked into these suggested hooks, but use them as a way to start the quests if the need arises.

Most of the quests can be attempted in any order within their Act (and sometimes, outside of it) but ideally, the PCs undergo **Weightman's Burden** last before beginning Act II: Uncovering the Order of Light.

RUMORS IN THE TAVERN

- Penner the pigfarmer hasn't been seen lately, though his pigs are still well fed and some butchered hogs end up hung in his meat cellar whenever orders are supposed to be ready for the Bleeding Heart Tavern.
- On nights when the moon is full—an occurrence all too common as of late—the howling of unnatural hounds can be heard from both the Weirwood and Fogmoor. Logan Brokenbarrel claims to have seen a number of strange canines, but who can know for sure what lurks in the darkness during these troubled times?
- Hunchbacked Roland and Fraeya Aerval are said to be on holiday, but gossips claims that Kalle Sirkesalo sent them afar to retrieve reagents illegal in Holdenshire—the solitary wizard's ultimate purpose for such components remains unclear, however.
- The Rosewynd Gypsies are said to have charmed Ugg with mystic enchantments; whatever the reason, the hill giant has taken to traveling with their caravan instead of roaming about Hengistbury.
- Holy water is in low supply, and Lady Sybill is so obsessed with Lord Pemberton's condition that she doesn't have the time to make any more, despite the clamoring of the townsfolk for more of the divine solution.
- A strange malady has started to spread across the people of Hengistbury and Thornbury, making them as sick and stricken with illness as Lord Pemberton. They all crave meat of any kind, the bloodier the better.
- Nightmares have become extremely common to everyone in Holdenshire. Some dream of savage fangs glittering in the moonlight, others envision the gruesome murders of their families, but all share one trait—the presence of copious amount of blood in their reverie, and a clinging sense of despair afterward.
- Reg Bakerman rambles on about a spectre haunting his bakery, making every loaf of bread he bakes more inferior than the last. Disgruntled townsfolk from Thornbury mostly attribute that to the baker's sudden increase in alcohol consumption—he's known to run his mouth, and not to be believed.
- The few evening travelers that trek across the countryside claim to have seen shambling skeletons clad in armor, surrounded by blooded red mists that eat away anything alive. Whether rumor or no, the sudden demand for weapons and armor have heated the friendship between the two towns' smiths.
- Perhaps most terrifying of all, strange beasts lurk out of the darkness and prey on the people of Holdenshire county—gibbering monstrous aberrations, enormous disembodied hands, and various forms of aggressive worms that can easily kill a man are said to wander the countryside.
- Various nobles and lords from afar are taking a sudden interest in real estate in both of Holdenshire's towns. The prices of homes and plots of land have risen, certainly far more than the inflation can account for.
- Of all the problems plaguing Holdenshire, the Rosewynd Gypsies seem to be the only people unaffected by the various ailments in Hengistbury and Thornbury. No one is sure what makes them unique, but everyone resents them for it.

TERRORS ACROSS THE COUNTRYSIDE

In addition to the various quests set before the party, the PCs have to contend with aggressive wildlife corrupted by Nemirtvi's malefic doings. As the adventurers travel across the countryside, roll on the random encounters table and have a creature approach or stalk them across the hills and glades of Holdenshire. These monsters don't necessarily attack the party each time, however—whenever possible they isolate the PCs and work to turn the adventurers paranoid rather than engage in direct assaults. Use these random encounters to gradually raise the group to 7th level before Act II begins.

d%	Creatures	Challenge Rating
1-8	1d4+1 Werewolves	CR 2
9-20	1d6+1 Skeletal Champions	CR 2
21-30	with 2 Vampiric Mists	CR 3
31-44	1d3+1 Giant Crawling Hands	CR 5
45-60	3 Winter Wolves	CR 5
61-72	Death Worm	CR 6
73-84	Chaos Beast	CR 7
85-92	Greater Barghest	CR 7
93-100	Tenebrous Worm	CR 8

QUEST 1

DEADLY INDIGESTION

The curses that have befallen all of Holdenshire are the results of an intricate plan set into motion centuries ago by Cirothe. Among the dragon's hoard was a small trinket that struck Lord Pemberton with terrible dreams, subconscious cries to a primal evil the dragon unleashed in Deepcrest Chasm—the vampire lord Nemirtvi. Now a supplicant of the undead's will and a vampire himself, Lord Pemberton has carefully orchestrated the despair throughout the countryside (cunningly keeping Lady Sybill out of the way and unwilling to step in to fix matters). Eventually he aims to cast the entire county in a darkness that will spread out to other regions, creating a realm perfect for his patron, Nemirtvi.

Lord Pemberton's chief agent in the two towns is the pig farmer, Penner. The halfling's semi-remote home (generally near Hengistbury Keep) makes him accessible and Penner's natural talents for stealth made him ideal for sewing disorder among the townsfolk. Plying the halfling to his home with talk of a piece of pirate treasure Lord Pemberton bought from a traveling merchant—specifically for the pig farmer—he quickly turned him into a vampire spawn. Since then the halfling practically became a ghost among the villagers, flitting about to do his master's bidding in the dark of the night.

Specifically, Penner is poisoning the food.

First it began with contaminating his hog's feed with something the vampire lord Nemirtvi concocted himself—an ancient, powerful necromantic elixir that warps and mangles first the minds, and then the bodies, of normal animals. Anyone that's eaten these affected pigs find themselves afflicted with a strange sickness; they gain rashes from exposure to sunlight, crave meat made rare, and lose the pigment in their skin with alarming quickness.

PENT-UP PIGS

The only unaccounted for villager right now is Penner the pig farmer. A generally sociable fellow, the halfling hasn't been seen for weeks but his orders are always prepared on time. Several villagers bring up his absence during the night of revelry in the Bleeding Heart Tavern, but he's nowhere to be found on his estate.

Seemingly turning to anger and becoming undomesticated, the hogs make a terrible racket that can be heard all the way in Hengistbury by any PC that makes a **DC 18 Perception check**. When the adventurers approach the pigs, they don't seem to behave oddly unless an observer succeeds on a **DC 22 Knowledge (nature) check**.

The pens themselves are a sad affair; the various farm implements strewn near his home are rusty and in disrepair, as are

THE DESPONDENT CITIZENS OF HOLDENSHIRE COUNTY

Until the first quest in Act II is finished, the general populace of both Hengistbury and Thornbury remain paranoid, stubborn, and generally Unfriendly with the PCs. If Diplomacy and Intimidate fail the adventurers, villagers become surprisingly compliant if a few gold coins are thrown their way, but they are far too suspicious to be helpful otherwise.

the posts of the fences. The house itself seems unlivin in, the windows unshuttered and letting snow into the rooms. A **DC 25 Survival check** reveals that someone (or something) frequents the area once every few days, but any attempts to ambush the trespasser don't result in any useful reconnaissance.

Whatever the malady is remains unclear until the adventurers approach the pigs directly. As soon as they do, the normal looking hogs undergo a wild, rapid transformation, changing into enormous fiendish dire boars that attack the party relentlessly until slaughtered!

The colds winds of winter blast snow into the air and chill the bones as you approach the worn fenceposts of Penner's farm. Leaning up against the house are several rusted farming tools, disregarded by the unusually active hogs. Squealing and butting heads, the pigs sniff wildly when you enter the pen before they all begin to shriek and moan. Each drops to the ground, convulsing in fits as their eyes bulge and go bloodshot. A sick, slurping noise erupts from their porcine bodies as muscles explode from beneath muddled hides and tusks elongate from lengthening jaws. In an instant they spring back on their hooves, bellowing bloodthirsty screams as they charge toward you with murderous intent!

Once the corrupted pigs are done with, the adventurers can find some clues as to what caused the unnatural changes. When observed with a *detect magic* spell or subjected to a **DC 19 Knowledge (nature) check**, the food trough clearly emanates a moderate aura of necromancy. Researching the aura (a task that takes at least an hour), PCs that make a **DC 16 Spellcraft check** reason that the affected meat from the slaughtered hogs is likely the cause for the illnesses of townsfolk in Hengistbury.

A **DC 22 Perception check** identifies a small area of snow that's been dug recently; inside of it are the frozen corpses of dozens of rats, a few bats and one or two wolves. Any PC that examines them with a **DC 17 Heal check** realizes they are all completely drained of blood.

• 6 × FIENDISH DIRE BOAR

CONTINUING THE QUEST

Whatever is going on, Penner the halfling is involved in some way. Moreover, the tainted feed doesn't bode well for what else might be awry, though now that the corrupted foodstuffs have been re-

moved, the sickness in Hengistbury should come to an end. Once this part of the quest is completed, the starting attitude of townsfolk in Hengistbury improves from Unfriendly to Indifferent.

UN SOUND INGREDIENT'S

Normally the town of Thornbury is a place filled with nice, friendly folk. As the winter winds blow however, they've closed their doors to both newcomers and each other, shuttering windows and avoiding confrontations of any kind. The windows of the traditional homes are filled with furtive glances and the few townsfolk that pass one another on the street exchange insults, sometimes even pitching whatever's at hand towards their neighbor before ducking inside.

A successful **DC 19 Diplomacy** or **DC 16 Knowledge (local)** check reveals that the aggressive, angry behavior of the inhabitants developed sometime after the harvest festival. The adventurers can look into the matter more carefully by gathering information from one of the inhabitants (plying tongues with gold or a **DC 20 Diplomacy check**) or eavesdropping on the villagers' loud conversations (a series of **DC 15 Perception checks** throughout a day and into the evening). Success with either reveals that the squabbles between townsfolk seem to be random and free of true disputes, but that they always seem to happen in the early afternoon.

Complaints about Reg Bakerman were common at the Bleeding Heart Tavern's one night of quasi-companionship, but if the party isn't suspicious of Thornbury's bakery yet, the smell of his bread may get their attention. A **DC 19 Perception** or **DC 12 Profession (cook)** check in the early afternoon clues the PCs in to the odd smell wafting from Reg Bakerman's kitchen, an overwhelmingly stale scent.

Thornbury's bakery sits near the center of the village and normally a source of warmth, even during the cold winter, as townsfolk run into one another to pick up their daily loafs of bread. A chilling wind sweeps across the dusty paths and whips up light snow, battering your face as you stroll down toward the old wooden building. Something in the air smells oddly—it's impossible to say what exactly the odd scent is, only that it is unfamiliar.

If the adventurers are outside of the bakery when people finally leave with their loafs of bread, the animosity after villagers after stopping by the bakery is readily apparent with a **DC 10 Intelligence check**. Within 1d4+1 minutes after they begin heading back to their homes, however, the townsfolk have all had a few bites and their attitudes change to Hostile—any interaction with the PCs is sufficient to provoke them into combat. Other villagers don't engage the party unless one of their neighbors is killed (at which point any townsfolk on the combat map swarm the adventurers). Should the party only deal subdual damage or immediately stabilize any villagers they've injured, the onlookers simply watch the melee play out to its end.

If the adventurers investigate the bakery before Reg is done making bread for the day, nothing seems out of ordinary at

first—none of the standard wooden building's windows or doors seem to be damaged at all. A **DC 23 Knowledge (nature)** or **DC 17 Profession (cook)** check notices that something is wrong with the starch Bakerman is using. Under the gaze of *detect magic*, the substance radiates with a faint aura of necromancy.

What exactly is amiss remains unclear until a PC succeeds on a **DC 17 Heal** or **DC 22 Perception check** to realize what's wrong with these ingredients: someone has mixed in the finely ground remains of dead bodies—corpse starch—into the baking materials!

When questioned about the quality of his bread—which Reg willfully admits is inferior to his normal standards of confection—the baker claims that it's rough texture and poor taste are not his fault. Bakerman blames a spectre of some kind is the cause for his barely edible bread, and believes it. The rumors of his drunkenness are true, however, and only PCs that beat a **DC 18 Sense Motive check** are sure Reg saw something that grants authenticity to his claim.

How the adventurers deal with this dilemma is up to them; Reg might be convinced to work in the bakery of Hengistbury with Steffen, they could simply tell everyone in Thornbury that the bread here is made from dead people, or they could protect the starch and attempt to stop whatever is causing the phenomena.

Coercing Reg is a simple option, but ultimately these events repeat themselves in Hengistbury. A **DC 17 Diplomacy** or **Intimidate** check convinces Bakerman to temporarily work in the other town, and a result of DC 20 or higher is enough to get him to toss away the drink (at least until things are settled).

Informing the villagers of Thornbury is another relatively easy fix, but again the inclusion of corpse starch into baking ingredients continues in Hengistbury not long after it ends here. The villagers can be convinced with a **DC 16 Diplomacy check** by spreading the information about the town subtly across the span of a day, or by approaching them when everyone comes to collect daily bread and succeeding on a **DC 14 Charisma check**. Afterward, however, Reg Bakerman is forever ostracized by everyone in Holdenshire and driven to a life of slovenly drunkenness.

Catching the poisoner in the act is the only way to really bring an end to the morbid contamination of bread in Holdenshire. Both bakeries were built by the same family of pastry chefs and share the same layout; a broad 30 foot x 40 foot room with an oven on one side, tables to work dough, and a small counter near the front door for serving customers. The stone kiln's chimney peaks at around 20 feet, and is just large enough for a Small sized character to squeeze through with a **DC 13 Escape Artist check**. No matter which bakery it is, it is through this opening that the trespasser enters through each night—Penner the halfling. Once spotted, a **DC 15 Knowledge (religion)** check identifies him as a vampire spawn.

Penner doesn't engage the PCs in combat, instead fleeing for cover and the chance to hide again. The undead halfling moves so fast that he doesn't mind what he holds, and the jostled sack



of corpse starch makes him easy to follow. A **DC 14 Survival check** picks up Penner's trail, leading away to the northeast, eventually past Hengistbury Keep and to a partially unearthed mausoleum in the hills west of Jaye's Cabin.

- **3 × (15 IN TOTAL) TOWNSFOLK ("BARMAID")**
- **1 × PENNER THE PIGFARMER, ADVANCED HALFLING VAMPIRE SPAWN**

CONTINUING THE QUEST

Following Penner's trail leads to **Quest 2: The Packman's Final Rest**, but vampires are fell foes and the PCs would do well to prepare for the worst once they know what to expect (and at least wait for day to break). After saving the towns from unknowingly eating their dead, Stephanie Rosewynd sends one of her gypsies to contact the party and ask them to visit her as soon as possible. They reveal that she suspected a vampire was somewhere in these lands, and wishes to extend whatever protections she can to the adventurers.

ROSES OF THE GYPSIES

Once the party have distinguished themselves as keen to the undead threat in Holdenshire (either through completion of **Pent-Up Pigs** or **Unsound Ingredients**), one of the Rosewynd Gypsies approaches them with an offer of assistance from their leader, Stephanie Rosewynd. The nomads are always watchful for the dangers of vampirism, and some

time ago the gypsy queen began to have prophetic dreams of the scourge destined to come to Holdenshire. While they are difficult to interpret, she knows that four warriors are fated to fight the encroaching darkness—Stephanie believes (rightly) that the party are those individuals. However, because vampires are masters of deception, she requires a test of her own before granting her trust.

The Rosewynd Gypsies are southeast of Hengistbury, across the river. Music floats away from their encampment, along with the smell of finely cooked foods and campfires. Ugg the hill giant can be seen cavorting about with the children in the snowy fields nearby, and dozens of questionably dressed folk walk between the brightly colored caravans playing instruments, dancing, trading, carving ornaments of some kind, and generally going about their business despite the chilling winter weather.

After the party enter into the gypsy camp, a small flurry activity occurs as all the gypsies instinctively huddle closer to one another. While it isn't overly awkward and hidden in the general bustle of their camp (to anyone that fails a **DC 20 Perception check**), in a matter moments the PCs realize they are flanked on all sides by gypsies. Then Stephanie Rosewynd emerges from the crowd, a small vial of rose-colored water in her hands. She approaches the party and lightly splashes each in turn with holy water—so long as the adventurers don't violently react, she declares to everyone that, "these four are still pure—there is no need for worry, go about your business!"

Knowing that the PCs aren't undead, Stephanie invites them into her opulent wagon and tells them what she knows about the darkness in Holdenshire. The preponderance of vermin, both slight and in flight, along with the strange hounds and excess of wolves in the countryside, are a sure sign. What more she's had visions that portended the arrival of a primal evil in these lands—and four warriors that will rise to the fore and beat back the dark, ancient entity. In the months during their journey here, Stephanie has prepared ointments and other protectives to fight vampires to better aid them.

However, to be sure that she has the fated warriors before her, the gypsy leader requires a task be performed by the party. One of her first dreams showed Ugg, and the nomads were quick to befriend the hill giant when they arrived in Holdenshire. During the vision, she saw a large friendly woodland creature, befriended by Ugg, unwittingly leading him to the vampire's dangerous embrace. The PCs must track down the creature and bring it back to the Rosewynd Gypsy camp. Interpreting the dreams is a difficult task and Stephanie can't provide any more detail, but they know Ugg occasionally wanders up into the northern forests for a few days at a time.

Ugg's friend is a dire bear, and unfortunately for the PCs, Lord Pemberton has already afflicted it with vampirism. It stalks the forests northwest of Penner's Farm brazenly every evening, killing and sucking dry everything it encounters. The trail left by the vampiric dire bear isn't too hard to follow—it carelessly crashes through the trees without regard for stealth. Only when prey is in sight (or within distance of its scent ability) does the monster hide, and during the day it restlessly paces in a cave southwest of Weirhenge.

After the vampiric dire bear detects the adventurers, battle ensues and it fights to the death, retreating with a PC in its jaws only if it is quickly overwhelmed. Returning with any of the creature's remains is sufficient for earning Stephanie Rosewynd's trust, but if the party comes back empty handed she calls in a gypsy that casts *zone of truth* (Will DC 14) to ensure the adventurers' honesty. Now that they've proven themselves, she becomes far more cooperative and rewards them with a *wand of detect undead* (23 charges), 12 flasks of holy water, and a *minor circlet of blasting*.

• 1 × VAMPIRIC DIRE BEAR

CONTINUING THE QUEST

If the PCs haven't already completed **Pent-Up Pigs** or **Unsound Ingredients**, Stephanie Rosewynd informs them that she thinks a vampire spawn is behind both oddities. It hides somewhere north of Hengistbury Keep, but so far the gypsies haven't been able to find where exactly it lairs.

QUEST 2

THE PACKMAN'S FINAL REST

After being transformed into a vampire spawn, Lord Pemberton tasked Penner with several different duties—to poison the towns through his hogs, contaminate the bread ground corpses, and not to stay in his home. Finding a different place to hide from the sun, the halfling didn't have much time and remembering an old rumor that was *supposed* to lead him to pirate treasure, he made for an old mausoleum buried in the hills south of the Quarry.

During the night Penner travels around Holdenshire, sowing dissent among the townsfolk to exacerbate the darkness enshrouding the county, and in the day the halfling hides here—along with several other villagers that have gone missing recently, all turned into vampire spawn ready to attack the party! A thorough search of the countryside or a trail of corpse starch leads the adventurers to the tomb, where they find a passage that leads to the remains of a packman to the Order of Light, Hugo Weightman. The band of holy undead hunters met their doom at the hands of a powerful vampire lord, sealing him away with their dying breath. Hugo's journal tells of the other tombs across Holdenshire, each holding one of his dead companions—as well as the powerful holy relics they wielded in life.

Penner seeks to kill the adventurers and earn favor with Lord Pemberton, ensuring that the county of Holdenshire eventually falls prey to Nemirtvi's grand schemes. Uncovering the tombs of the Order of Light and recovering their holy relics will give the PCs what they need to overcome the vampire lord; destroying him without the relics is possible, but not likely (and if they do not sacrifice at least one of the holy relics, Nemirtvi persists indefinitely!).



PENNER'S DEMISE

A mostly buried mausoleum northeast of Hengistbury Keep hides Penner the Pigfarmer and several other vampire spawn.

If the party did not complete **Unsound Ingredients** and spook Penner, noticing the footprints of these undead requires a **DC 19 Survival check** while the PCs are going about the area, or a **DC 19 Knowledge (geography) check** to know of the tomb's location from old maps of Holdenshire county. Parties that seek out old cartography of the countryside can find them in Tillian Brickbottom's modest library with a **DC 8 Intelligence** or **DC 10 Profession (scribe) check**. This is the only Order of Light tomb known on any maps the adventurers can find.

If the party is chasing Penner after interrupting his poisoning of the bread, a **DC 14 Survival check** picks up the trail of corpse starch. It leads directly to the hill with the mausoleum, and a **DC 12 Perception check** picks out the worked stone from other jutting rocks on the snowy field.

The whipping winter winds have finally seemed to abate for a while, leaving a pervading sense of dismal sadness on the snowy, dead landscape. All of the countryside is covered in snow save for the dirty brown path you tread upon, the only accents otherwise being rocks that jut from under the white fields, scoured clean by the temporarily reprieved winter gales.

The mausoleum Penner and the other vampire spawn hide within is the entrance to a larger tomb, the resting place of Hugo Weightman. Aside from the blocked passage on the far end of the circular thirty foot chamber (high and across) and the steps leading down into it from the south, there's not much to the area. Still, the vampire spawn all cling to the ceiling in an effort to catch the PCs unaware; seeing them before the NPCs get a surprise round requires a **DC 22 Perception check**. Once the battle begins, the vampire spawn fight to their very destruction—all save Penner, who attempts to flee when reduced to 1/5th his total hit points.

Penner the Pigfarmer, advanced halfling vampire spawn

- 6 × VAMPIRE SPAWN

CONTINUING THE QUEST

On the far side of the initial chamber is a doorway; it only opens for non-evil living creatures that work the nearby lever on the wall (something Penner never quite figured out). Steps lead deeper down into more finished stonework, turning out of sight after a few dozen feet.

WEIGHTMAN'S BURDEN

The passageway continues down in a circular fashion for about a hundred and fifty feet, eventually ending in a doorway emblazoned with holy symbols that illuminate the pervading gloom in soft golden light. A **DC 13 Knowledge (religion) check** identifies many of the icons to be wards against the un-

dead. Gears hidden in the walls are powered by the turning of a key in the lock, but there are no clues to its location—a **DC 23 Disable Device check** is sufficient to open the door. It can also be smashed open (the stone lock has a hardness of 10 and 20 hit points) or forced up with a **DC 19 Strength check**.

All of the walls in the passageways and rooms beyond this blessed door are lined with a thin, fragile layer of gold that flakes off when touched. It gives the otherwise dour surroundings and fanatical iconography a sense of reverence and awe, clearly marking whomever is entombed within as a person of distinction. A chant in an old tongue reverberates from the room at the far end of the hallway, but nothing is visible within.

References in hieroglyphs to the Order of the Light are common throughout, and anyone that makes a **DC 15 Linguistics** or **Intelligence check** can piece together the name of the organization depicted so often along the walls.

In the 40-foot long, 5-foot wide, 10-foot tall passageway beyond the glowing door are a series of traps (every ten feet) before Hugo Weightman's tomb. They are set to go off in sequence; if one is activated, they are all activated—even those that have already been disarmed. Fully disengaging one of these sequenced traps requires a second **Disable Device** check after an initial disarmament check, made at the original DC + 5. Opening the glowing door requires a **DC 22 Disable Device**, **DC 18 Strength check**, or simply uttering the words, "Order of Light".

BLINDING DAYLIGHT TRAP

CR 3

Type magical; **Perception** DC 28; **Disable Device** DC 28

EFFECTS

Trigger proximity (*alarm*), sequenced; **Reset** automatic

Effect spell effect (*daylight* for 50 minutes and *pyrotechnics* against all creatures within 120 feet, **Will** DC 14 or blinded for 1d4+1 rounds); special (sequenced to searing light trap and holy smite trap)

SEARING LIGHT TRAP

CR 5

Type magical; **Perception** DC 28; **Disable Device** DC 28

EFFECTS

Trigger proximity (*alarm*), sequenced; **Reset** automatic

Effect spell effect (*searing light*, Atk +5 ranged touch, 2d8 damage); special (sequenced to blinding daylight trap and *holy smite* trap)

HOLY SMITE TRAP

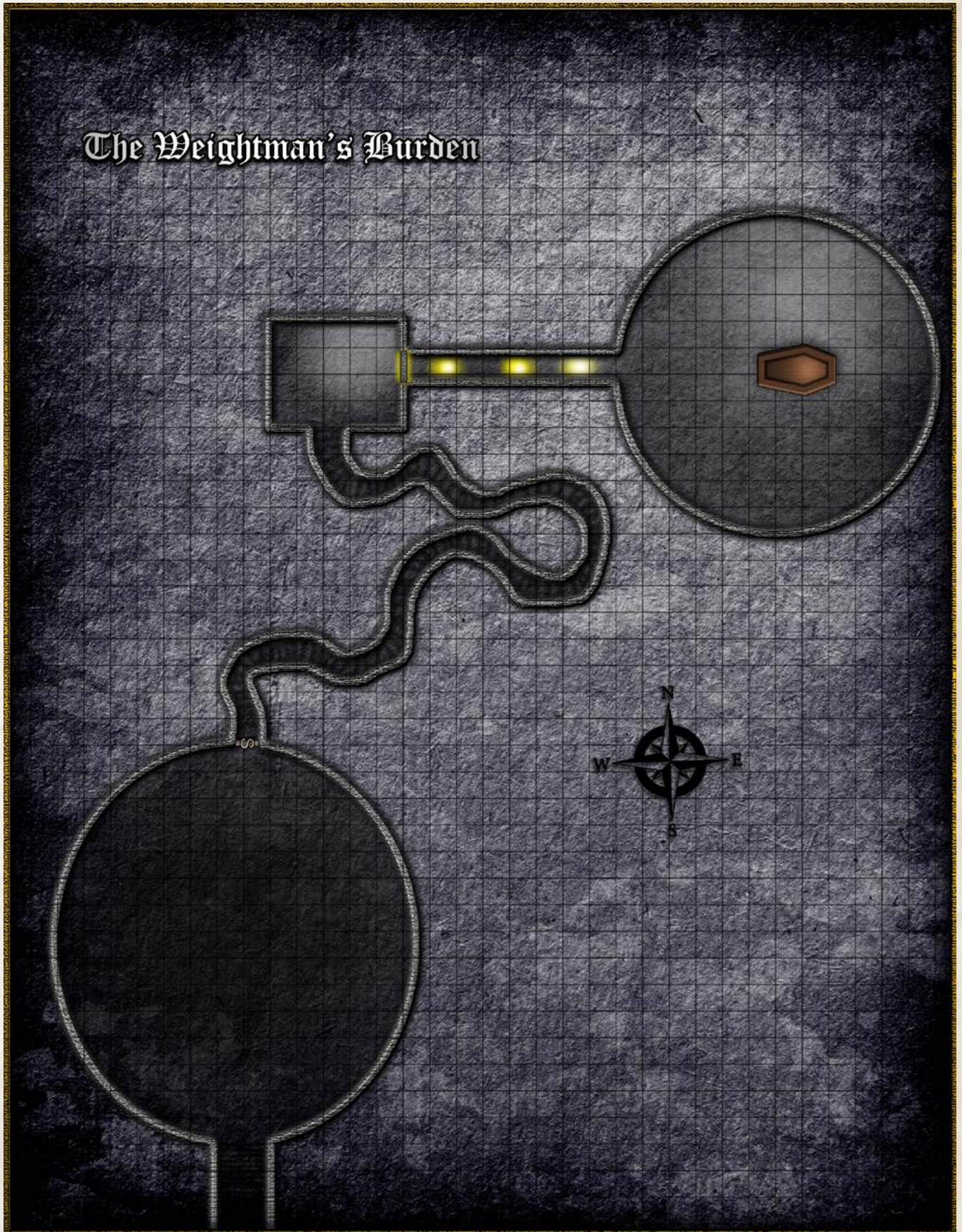
CR 5

Type magical; **Perception** DC 29; **Disable Device** DC 29

EFFECTS

Trigger proximity (*alarm*), sequenced; **Reset** automatic

The Weightman's Burden



Effect spell effect (*holy smite*, 2d8 damage and blindness for 1 round to evil creatures, 1d8 damage to neutral creatures; Will DC 16 for half and to negate blindness); multiple targets (all targets in a 20-ft.-radius burst); special (sequenced to blinding daylight trap and *holy smite* trap)

On the far side of the hallway is Hugo Weightman's actual sepulcher. Nemirtvi's influence has failed to pierce the many holy protections around the sanctum—until the party breached the crypt, that is. Read the following once one of the party members enters into the Packman's Final Rest.

As you pass through the doorway the chanting begins to slow and warp, becoming arrhythmic and discordant. Dark, smoke-like energy seeps from out of the seams of flaked gold, ebbing quickly toward a stone coffin in the center of the room. Enshrouding the coffin, the chant changes once more and slowly grows into an anguished scream.

Give the PCs a few rounds to react—search the room in a panic, cast spells, attempt to figure out what's going on—before continuing:

In a matter of moments the pained cry reaches a nearly deafening crescendo before the inky black ether explodes from the coffin, coating everything in the room before dissipating in the soft golden light of the chamber—before the light goes out and all of the gold on the walls crumbles onto the floor. A piercing shriek is all the warning you have as a spectral form erupts from the coffin. It is a haggard man laden with sacks and bags, almost like pack horse. He moans in pain and claws toward you with ragged, incorporeal hands!

The vampire lord has awoken and enraged the spirit of Hugo Weightman, and it attempts to kill every living thing it can, entirely consumed by madness. It can only be destroyed permanently by entombing Nemirtvi once more, but once it dissipates from hit point damage the party finds two extremely important items within—Hugo's withered old journal and an *amulet of the spectral grove*.

AMULET OF THE SPECTRAL GROVE

Aura strong evocation; **CL** 9th
Slot neck; **Price** 78,000 gp; **Weight** 5 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

This intricate piece of jewelry is carved from unblemished white stone. A polished opal sits at its center, held fastly in place by intricate, delicately thin strands of seamless rock.

A character wearing the *amulet of the spectral grove* receives the constant benefits of a *protection from evil* spell against vampires and vampire spawn.

Once per week the wearer of an *amulet of the spectral grove* can go limp and withdraw their spirit from their corporeal form (treat the body as under the effects of a *magic jar* spell) as a swift action. Their spectral form appears within 30 feet of the

wearer's body. The spectral form grants the incorporeal special quality, a fly speed of 60 feet (perfect), and a deflection bonus equal to the wearer's Charisma modifier.

Any damage suffered to the spectral form is immediately subjected to the wearer's corporeal form and should the spectral form take an amount of damage equal to or greater than the wearer's current hit points, it immediately dissipates. Otherwise the corporeal form remains for 18 rounds.

While using this ability, the wearer of the *amulet of the spectral grove* can emit a blast of *searing light* (4d8 damage) as a swift action. The first time in a round that they do so, the duration of the spectral form is reduced one round. The second time in a round and every time after that in the same round, this cost doubles (meaning that in total, a wearer could activate the item and the next turn fire a total of 9 rays of *searing light*).

Returning the wearer's spirit to the corporeal form safely requires a DC 10 Fortitude save. For every ray of *searing light* emitted past the first used in a round, the DC of this Fortitude save increases by +2 (to a maximum of DC 26). If the wearer's spectral form dissipates from damage, the DC of the Fortitude save increases by +10. Failure on this save immediately plummets the wearer to -10 hit points.

Evil and undead creatures take 2d6 fire damage when touching an *amulet of the spectral grove* and cannot activate its abilities.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, Quicken Spell, *blink*, *magic jar*, *searing light*; **Cost** 39,000 gp

Hugo's journal is centuries old, and much of the text near the beginning is illegible. The last pages are still clean enough to read, however, and tell a dangerous tale that portends an unfortunate future for Holdenshire County. Hugo was the packman for a collection of undead hunters known as the Order of Light, each dedicated to eradicating the world of vampires. When they learned of a primal evil in these lands, the holy warriors traveled to these lands and sought out the despicable source of malevolence. His companions all died wounding the monster, leaving the unsuspecting Hugo to strike the final blow—a strike he made, but at dire cost, receiving a viral rend from the vampire lord's claws that would prove to be the slow, agonizing death of him. The diary claims that he at least oversaw the construction of his own tomb, as well as those of his four allies, and that each holds the relics they used to enact justice in life.

• 1 × GHOST

CONTINUING THE QUEST

The journal's maps are all too old and poorly made to be of much use, but the properties of the *amulet of the spectral grove* lead the party to the nearest (still hidden) Order of Light crypt. When the adventurers emerge from the Packman's Final Rest, however, the dark pall over Holdenshire has been exacerbated into dangerous curses that actively threaten the lives of all its citizens!

MONSTERS & NPCs

Note: If a particular type of NPC can appear in more than one quest, its statistics are given in the first such appearance.

QUEST 1: DEADLY INDIGESTION VAMPIRE QUALITIES

As you may have brilliantly surmised by now, vampires play an extremely large part in this adventure. To save valuable space, their qualities are listed here; unless otherwise noted, every vampire in *To Stake A Vampire* has these qualities.

WEAKNESSES

Vampires cannot tolerate the strong odor of garlic and will not enter an area laced with it. Similarly, they recoil from mirrors or strongly presented holy symbols. These things don't harm the vampire—they merely keep it at bay. A recoiling vampire must stay at least 5 feet away from the mirror or holy symbol and cannot touch or make melee attacks against that creature. Holding a vampire at bay takes a standard action. After 1 round, a vampire can overcome its revulsion of the object and function normally each round it makes a DC 25 Will save.

Vampires cannot enter a private home or dwelling unless invited in by someone with the authority to do so.

Reducing a vampire's hit points to 0 or lower incapacitates it but doesn't always destroy it (see fast healing). However, certain attacks can slay vampires. Exposing any vampire to direct sunlight staggers it on the first round of exposure and destroys it utterly on the second consecutive round of exposure if it does not escape. Each round of immersion in running water inflicts damage on a vampire equal to one-third of its maximum hit points—a vampire reduced to 0 hit points in this manner is destroyed. Driving a wooden stake through a helpless vampire's heart instantly slays it (this is a full-round action). However, it returns to life if the stake is removed, unless the head is also severed and anointed with holy water.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Blood Drain (Su): A vampire can suck blood from a grappled opponent; if the vampire establishes or maintains a pin, it drains blood, dealing 1d4 points of Constitution damage. The vampire heals 5 hit points or gains 5 temporary hit points for 1 hour (up to a maximum number of temporary hit points equal to its full normal hit points) each round it drains blood.

Children of the Night (Su): Once per day, a vampire can call forth 1d6+1 rat swarms, 1d4+1 bat swarms, or 2d6 wolves as a standard action. (If the base creature is not terrestrial, this power might summon other creatures of similar power.) These creatures arrive in 2d6 rounds and serve the vampire for up to 1 hour.

Create Spawn (Su): A vampire can create spawn out of those it slays with blood drain or energy drain, provided that the

slain creature is of the same creature type as the vampire's base creature type. The victim rises from death as a vampire in 1d4 days. This vampire is under the command of the vampire that created it, and remains enslaved until its master's destruction. A vampire may have enslaved spawn totaling no more than twice its own Hit Dice; any spawn it creates that would exceed this limit become free-willed undead. A vampire may free an enslaved spawn in order to enslave a new spawn, but once freed, a vampire or vampire spawn cannot be enslaved again.

Dominate (Su): A vampire can crush a humanoid opponent's will as a standard action. Anyone the vampire targets must succeed on a Will save or fall instantly under the vampire's influence, as though by a *dominate person* spell (caster level 12th). The ability has a range of 30 feet. At the GM's discretion, some vampires might be able to affect different creature types with this power.

Energy Drain (Su): A creature hit by a vampire's slam (or other natural weapon) gains two negative levels. This ability only triggers once per round, regardless of the number of attacks a vampire makes.

SPECIAL QUALITIES

Change Shape (Su): A vampire can use change shape to assume the form of a dire bat or wolf, as *beast shape II*.

Gaseous Form (Su): As a standard action, a vampire can assume *gaseous form* at will (caster level 5th), but it can remain gaseous indefinitely and has a fly speed of 20 feet with perfect maneuverability.

Shadowless (Ex): A vampire casts no shadows and shows no reflection in a mirror.

Spider Climb (Ex): A vampire can climb sheer surfaces as though under the effects of a *spider climb* spell.

VAMPIRE SPAWN

A vampire can elect to create a vampire spawn instead of a full-fledged vampire when she uses her create spawn ability on a humanoid creature only. This decision must be made as a free action whenever a vampire slays an appropriate creature by using blood drain or energy drain. A vampire spawn's statistics are identical to those of a wight, save for some changes; a vampire spawn statistics block is located on the next page.

FIENDISH DIRE BOAR

CR 5 • XP 1,600

N Large animal

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; **Perception** +12

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 9, flat-footed 15 (+6 natural, -1 size)

hp 42 (5d8+20)

Fort +7, **Ref** +4, **Will** +2

Defensive Abilities ferocity; **Resist** cold 10, fire 10; **DR** 5/good; **SR** 10

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee gore +8 (2d6+9)

Special Attacks smite good 1/day (+5 damage against good foe; smite persist until target is dead)

STATISTICS

Str 23, **Dex** 10, **Con** 17, **Int** 2, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 20

Feats Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Perception), Toughness

Skills Perception +12

ECOLOGY

Environment temperate or tropical forests

Organization solitary, pair, or herd (3–8)

Treasure none

PENNER THE PIGFARMER

(ADVANCED HALFLING VAMPIRE SPAWN)

CR 5 • XP 1,600

NE Small undead

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +15

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 15, flat-footed 17 (+4 Dex, +6 natural, +1 size)

hp 38 (4d8+20) fast healing 2

Fort +7, **Ref** +6, **Will** +8

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +2; **DR** 5/silver; **Resist** cold 10, electricity 10; **Immune** undead traits

Weaknesses vampire weaknesses

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee slam +6 (1d3+2 plus energy drain)

Special Attacks blood drain (1d4 Constitution), dominate (DC 17), energy drain (1 level, DC 17)

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 18, **Con** —, **Int** 15, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 21

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 18

Feats Blind-Fight, Skill Focus (Perception)

Skills Acrobatics +6, Climb +4, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (religion) +9, Perception +15, Stealth +23; **Racial Modifier** +2 Acrobatics, +2 Climb, +2 Perception, +8 Stealth

Languages Common, Halfling

SQ gaseous form* (as an advanced vampire spawn, the first time Penner is destroyed he reverts to a gaseous form, and is only completely destroyed the second time), shadowless, spider climb

ECOLOGY

Environment Thornbury Bakery, Hengistbury Bakery, or Weightman's Mausoleum

Treasure double standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

See **Vampire Qualities** at the beginning of this section.

TOWNSPERSON

CR 1/2 • XP 200

Human commoner 2

CN Medium humanoid (human)

Init –1; **Senses** Perception +0

DEFENSE

AC 9, touch 9, flat-footed 9 (–1 Dex)

hp 9 (2d6+2)

Fort +1, **Ref** –1, **Will** +0

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee scythe –2 (2d4+1/×4) or club +2 (1d6+1)

Ranged club +0 (1d6+1)

TACTICS

During Combat The commoner threatens aggressors with farming tools, but switches to her club if she actually has to attack.

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 9, **Con** 12, **Int** 10, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 11

Feats Skill Focus (Handle Animal, Heal)

Skills Craft (carpentry) +6, Handle Animal +7, Heal +5, Knowledge (nature) +1, Profession (farmer) +5

Languages Common

Gear club, scythe, artisan's tools, pigs (8), bit and bridle, light horse, pack saddle, 251 gp

VAMPIRIC DIRE BEAR

CR 9 • XP 6,400

NE Large undead (augmented)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; **Perception** +12

DEFENSE

AC 27, touch 13, flat-footed 23 (+3 Dex, +1 dodge, +14 natural, –1 size)

hp 75 (10d8+30) fast healing 5

Fort +9, **Ref** +12, **Will** +5

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4; **DR** 10/magic and silver; **Resist** cold 10, electricity 10; **Immune** undead traits

Weaknesses vampire weaknesses

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee 2 claws +17 (1d6+10 plus grab and energy drain), bite +17 (1d8+10 plus energy drain) or slam +17 (1d6+10 plus energy drain)

Special Attacks blood drain (1d4 Constitution), children of the night, create spawn, dominate (DC 17), energy drain (2 levels, DC 17)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

STATISTICS

Str 31, **Dex** 17, **Con** —, **Int** 4, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +18 (+22 grapple); **CMD** 31 (35 vs. trip)

Feats Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Endurance, Improved Initiative, Iron Will,

Lightning Reflexes, Run, Skill Focus (Perception), Toughness

Skills Bluff +10, Perception +22, Sense Motive +12, Stealth +7, Swim +22; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Bluff, +8 Perception, +8 Sense Motive, +8 Stealth, +4 Swim

SQ Change shape (dire bat or wolf, *beast shape II*), gaseous form, shadowless, spider climb

ECOLOGY

Environment cold forests

Organization solitary or pair

Treasure incidental

SPECIAL ABILITIES

See the Vampire Qualities GM's Note. A vampiric dire bear can also dominate animals as if using the *dominate animal* spell (CL 12th).

QUEST 2: THE PACKMAN'S FINAL REST

VAMPIRE SPAWN

CR 4 • XP 1,200

NE Medium undead

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +11

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14 (+1 Dex, +4 natural)

hp 26 (4d8+8) fast healing 2

Fort +3, **Ref** +2, **Will** +5

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +2; **DR** 5/silver; **Resist** cold 10, electricity 10; **Immune** undead traits

Weaknesses vampire weaknesses

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee slam +4 (1d4+1 plus energy drain)

Special Attacks blood drain, dominate (DC 14), energy drain (1 level, DC 14)

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 12, **Con** —, **Int** 11, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 15

Feats Blind-Fight, Skill Focus (Perception)

Skills Intimidate +9, Knowledge (religion) +7, Perception +11, Stealth +16; **Racial Modifier** +8 Stealth

Languages Common

SQ gaseous form, shadowless, spider climb

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary, pair, gang (3–6), or pack (7–12)

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

See **Vampire Qualities** at the beginning of this section.

GHOST

CR 7 • XP 3,200

Human ghost aristocrat 7

CE Medium undead (augmented humanoid, incorporeal)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +18

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 17, flat-footed 15 (+5 deflection, +1 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 73 (7d8+42)

Fort +7, **Ref** +5, **Will** +7

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, incorporeal, rejuvenation; Immune undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed fly 30 ft. (perfect)

Melee corrupting touch +6 (7d6, Fort. DC 18 half)

Special Attacks frightful moan (DC 18)

STATISTICS

Str —, **Dex** 12, **Con** —, **Int** 10, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 20

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 22

Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Toughness

Skills Fly +9, Knowledge (history) +10, Knowledge (nobility) +10, Perception +18, Sense Motive +10, Stealth +9; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Perception, +8 Stealth

Languages Common

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Corrupting Touch (Su) By passing part of its incorporeal body through a foe's body as a standard action, the ghost inflicts 7d6 damage. This damage is not negative energy—it manifests in the form of physical wounds and aches from supernatural aging. Creatures immune to magical aging are immune to this damage, but otherwise the damage bypasses all forms of damage reduction. A Fortitude save halves the damage inflicted.

Frightful Moan (Su) The ghost died in the throes of crippling terror. It can emit a frightful moan as a standard action. All living creatures within a 30-foot spread must succeed on a DC 18 Will save or become panicked for 2d4 rounds. This is a sonic mind-affecting fear effect. A creature that successfully saves against the moan cannot be affected by the same ghost's moan for 24 hours.

Rejuvenation (Su) In most cases, it's difficult to destroy a ghost through simple combat: the "destroyed" spirit restores itself in 2d4 days. Even the most powerful spells are usually only temporary solutions. The only way to permanently destroy a ghost is to determine the reason for its existence and set right whatever prevents it from resting in peace. The exact means varies with each spirit and may require a good deal of research, and should be created specifically for each different ghost by the GM.

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary

Treasure none

ACT II



UNCOVERING THE
CIRCLE OF LIGHT

With some of the mysterious, dismal doings in Holdenshire undone and the malicious guilty party accounted for, the party emerges from the Packman's Final Rest and finds an even more depressing scene in the two towns than those they left behind. Some injuries refuse to clot and stop bleeding, aggressive swarms of bats descend on travelers at night while vicious crows attacks are common in the day, unnatural clouds of darkness appear and disappear randomly throughout the countryside, and in one section of Thornbury, everyone uncontrollably bleeds tears.

Throughout this arch of the story, the adventurers will cleanse these unnatural, evil phenomenon during their searches for the relics of the Order of Light. With the ancient weapons in hand, the party will be well prepared for what awaits them in Act III, ensuring that the vampire lord Nemirtvi is once more cast from the realm of mortals.

Quests here can come from the various NPCs throughout Holdenshire. Finding the exact location of the crypts, how to get in, and how to best whatever guardians the vampires have sent to these holy sites, are tasks ultimately up to the PCs. With each breached dungeon, the adventurers end one of the afflictions on the countryside, eventually bringing a reprieve from the darkness that's rolled over Holdenshire this cold winter season.

Fortunately, the good deeds of the adventurers have not gone unnoticed by the citizens of Hengistbury and Thornbury, almost all of whom are keen to see the curses come to an end. Not all of them feel this way, however, and the cunning Lord Pemberton has arranged for the reputation of the party to suffer as they fight their way to freeing Holdenshire from the grip of undead masters.

THE AMULET'S NIGHTMARE

Unlike the other relics of the Holy Order of Light, the *amulet of the spectral grove* does not bestow a morbid dream upon the wearer until all of the other relics have been collected.

Panting heavily, you cower behind the corner, lamenting the bloody deaths of your heroic companions. Some of their blood seeps into your boots, filling the abattoir of this monster with sickly crimson. Light begins to shine from the corpses, raising into the air and rushing into the amulet around your neck. They illuminate an armored figure dashing toward you—Nemirtvi! His fangs draw wide as you see your body below you—apart from you! Panicking, blasts of light erupt from your ethereal form and pierce through the evil creature's armor. It screams and throws the wicked swords it wields into your stomach before disintegrating into a mist of energy. With a cry of pain you slam back into your body, unconsciousness overwhelming you.

All of the other relics bestow nightmares upon their new owners, revealing more through dreams as more relics are collected (see each individual weapon entry).

ASSEMBLING THE RELICS

The PCs are bound to find the relics of the Order of Light (of which there are four more) as they assail the curses that trouble Holdenshire County:

- Extremely detailed information is considered to be treasure; when the GM rolls for rewards to certain quests, the PCs receive accurate accounts about where the related curse originated from. Sometimes this comes in the form of a harrowed survivor, the torn page of a journal, or perhaps from the lips of a beaten enemy.
- Now that they've saved Hengistbury and Thornbury from poisoned food, the townsfolk have improved their general disposition toward the party to Indifferent or Friendly. For the most part this makes them talkative and useful—providing the PCs with information that leads them to key quests.
- As the adventure continues, the reputation of the party may suffer from the ongoing Rumour Battle. The worse it gets, the less reliable the information becomes; sometimes proving to be entirely false, and at others leading the adventurers into a deadly trap!

Throughout Act II, the primary threat to the PCs lay in the darkness, waiting to ambush them or divide their forces seemingly at every turn. Nemirtvi continues to enact his plans underneath Castle Brockendale, Lord Pemberton is safely isolated from the chaos he wreaks across the countryside, and their goal is a simple one—wear the party down through attrition, separate them when the opportunity presents itself, then corrupt their bodies and souls (or kill them, if it comes to that). The party (and quite possibly, one or two PCs) may “lose” this act—dying at the hands of one of the undead in Holdenshire or becoming compromised themselves—though the core group should be able to continue the adventure.

ACT STRUCTURE

The party's progress throughout this second act is measured in relics. These measure how close the PCs are to acquiring all the relics of the Order of Light, eventually revealing the true danger that sits beneath Castle Brockendale. In addition to the *amulet of the sacred grove*, the adventurers need to acquire the *silver quickbow*, the *Kylian starknives*, *Noltsledge*, and the *Leilan Artifice*. Once reunited with another relic, the magic items of the Order of Light lead to the nearest estranged weapon until all are collected, at which point the party is led to the final tomb and complete the Ritual of the Sunlord, ushering in Act III: Banishing the Vampire Lord (where their newly acquired treasures prove vital to victory).

DARKNESS AND THE SILVER ARCHER'S TOMB

During his journey to Hengistbury, Nazid's annual acquaintance came across something quite unique in the Weirwood, north of the quarry. Inky black clouds of darkness seemed to roam near one of the groves of trees; one of his men went to

investigate, returning with handfuls of gold he'd taken from a tomb beneath the trees. When the next two of his mercenary guard that went in never returned they hurried onward to the town, unwilling to venture further. Now the strange floating clouds of darkness have started to appear all throughout Holdenshire, and Nazid's decided the valuable information isn't quite the bargain he first thought it to be.

While the clouds of darkness are troublesome, they wouldn't truly be a danger if it weren't for their timely occurrence near the vampire spawn ogres that now roam Holdenshire, giving them an easy means to ambush and attack travelers. After killing the creatures, their essence floats back towards the Weirwood, eventually entering The Silver Archer's Tomb.

Within the dungeon a powerful trio of feral crypt things protect the remains of one of the Order of Light, attacking anyone that enters. Once defeated, the adventurers find *Silver Quickbow*, a powerful weapon to fight the undead scourge.

HEMORRHAGING AND THE CRYPT OF THE INEVITABLE SUNSET

Stephanie Rosewynd, ever keen to perceive any hint of the approaching darkness, had another premonition about the curses over Holdenshire just before the party breached Hugo Weightman's tomb. Her people have circled the wagons and become extremely protective, but seek out the PCs and happily welcome them into their group. The vision that struck Stephanie showed a knight falling beneath the waters of a foreboding bog—presumably the Fogmoor.

In Hengistbury, hemophilia has suddenly run rampant; simple cuts and bruises can suddenly and randomly refuse to heal, creating an overwhelming sense of paranoia in the town. Worse yet, when the blood of those who died to extreme blood loss pools, it ebbs ever so slightly southward—seemingly toward the camps of the Rosewynd Gypsies. Blood runs heavily and hotly in the town, but truly perceptive adventurers can tell that the real threat lay farther south.

The doings of so great and ancient an evil are a locus for holy warriors. One unfortunate paladin stumbled across the Crypt of the Sun Lord, destroying some of the traps within before falling prey to a swamp beast that stalked behind him. Warped by the nascent influence of Nemirtvi, he rose again as a morph and protects the tomb to this day. Once defeated, inside of the dungeon the party finds *Noltsledge*, a powerful weapon imbued with divine power wielded by the Order of Light's druid.

BLOODY TEARS AND THE SEPULCHER OF THE FLEET WARRIOR

Saraz bint Farad bint Aquilah has had a rough time adjusting to her role as leader of the Fierendzi Gypsies—especially mastering the herbal remedies known only to their venerated and elders. Her inexperience has failed to protect her kin; they were the first to begin bleeding tears in uncontrolled intervals, but

now some of the citizens in Thornbury suffer the same affliction. The condition causes insomnia, and several people have already taken their own lives rather than face the horrors of the darkness that surrounds them.

Saraz has already exhausted their key curative ingredient, a rare flower found only in the Queenswood, and none of the gypsies she's sent to acquire more have returned. Once the party has earned her trust, Saraz reveals that she had a vision as well, a disturbingly real nightmare of being chased by a crazed troll leaping through trees and washing the forest in its own blood.

A few of the trolls from Oldshade have been turned mad with Nemirtvi's influence, taking over a small territory of the Queenswood. Whenever the mood strikes them, one or two wanders off to do something in Holdenshire county—attacking travelers, digging random holes, creating illogical patterns of stone or weird structures. When they spot the PCs the crazed trolls attack immediately, drinking *potions of cure moderate wounds* to augment their healing. After the battle ends, however, the adventurers find that the curatives are cursed, and cause one to bleed! Some alchemical investigation (by either Stephanie Rosewynd, Saraz bint Farad bint Aquilah, or the party themselves) reveals that the vine of the rare flower that the Fierendzi gypsies require for their protectives is the corrupting ingredient!

Entering the grove where the rare plant persists, the adventurers find an old tomb and campsite of the crazed trolls. Within the crypt, statues come to life and attack the PCs, a dozen graven guardians that ambush the party and chase them out into the Queenswood. Inside of the dungeon the adventurers find *Kylian starknives*, potent holy armaments once belonging to the rogue in the Order of Light.

MURDER SWARMS AND THE MAUSOLEUM OF THE SUNBEAM

While Kalle Sirkesalo never directly enters into this adventure, his private efforts have a side effect that enraptures John-Francis Rainweaver and has an odd effect on divine symbols in the two towns. The failed scholar has dream after dream of a truly valuable tome, the kind of book that would propel him back into a position of respect among the academic community. He drawled on about it for several nights in the tavern before finding the courage to seek it out, saying that his "research" has led to a find north of Murray's Folly—he hasn't been heard from since. All unattended objects of faith have been bent or twisted out of shape, pointing toward the same anomaly.

The strange wildlife has become even more odd; swarms of bats randomly descend onto Hengistbury and Holdenshire, followed quickly by theft and even death, often under mysterious circumstances. Some say they've seen dark elves flitting into the shadows after these weird attacks, raiders subconsciously lured here from the Quickwood by Nemirtvi. When the PCs encounter the swarms, drow attack the party with murderous intent and fight nearly to the last—each time, one of the flying pests (a familiar) escapes, heading towards an abandoned mausoleum north of Murray's Folly.

THE RUMOUR BATTLE (OPTIONAL)

Throughout Act II, Nemirtvi and Lord Pemberton actively target the PCs and work to undermine their efforts. The methods the pair employs are numerous, from the various curses afflicting the townsfolk, to the beasts and monsters that wander the countryside, and finally to the most insipid means of all—destroying the adventurers' reputations. Several different agents work on behalf of and against the party, depending on who they've helped thus far, whom they've slighted, and who the vampires suspect are best suited to spread disinformation and hearsay.

Each day during Act II, the PCs accrue Rumour Points (or RP). The boy Mallory speaks highly of the adventurers, granting them one RP every day. For every relic the party acquires, however, villagers begin to undermine them with gossip, granting the GM one RP per day. First, Three-Fingered Jake begins to disparage the heroes, then Ariel, followed by Prirkka and finally Aus. Finding any of these notorious agents is a difficult task—GMs receive a free RP each day for every NPC, to be used exclusively for preventing them from being found out. If cornered, Intimidation convinces Three-Fingered Jake and Aus to stop, but Lady Sybill's assistants cannot be dissuaded and consistently deny ever speaking poorly of the party (even under threat of death).

A Rumour Point can be used by a PC to gain a +1d4 luck bonus to a social Skill check (Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate, or Sense Motive), and the GM may spend a RP to give the PCs a -1d4 luck penalty to a single Skill check. The number of RP that can be spent at once (by either a PC or GM) is limited by the number of relics recovered by the party (at the beginning of Act II, this is one; by the end, it is raised to five). Unused RP carry over from day to day, but become completely obsolete once the party completes the Ritual of the Sunlord.

If you are continuing the adventure from *To Slay A Dragon*, this element of the module is strongly recommended. If this is your group's first module in the series, they probably do not know the residents of Holdenshire well enough (and thus have enough of an investment in the well-being of the region) for this to work appropriately.

Kazyk the devil didn't leave Tamas Agrens alone after being let loose by the Mortimer Brothers, just before the harvest festival. Believing the infernal servant to have gotten the better of him (endangering his family), when Nemirtvi approached the sage in a dream and offered to protect his kin, Tamas saw no alternative and reluctantly agreed. The vampire lord transformed Agrens into a spectre, cursed to protect the remains of the Order of Light's peculiar wizard. After defeating his spirit, the PCs find the *Leilan Artifice*, a strange projectile weapon specialized to destroy the undead.

RITUAL OF THE SUNLORD

With all five of the relics in hand, the adventurers are led by the items to the final tomb of the Order of Light, submerged beneath the fields south of Jayel's Cabin. There the PCs encounter the lingering spirit of a prodigy to the vampire hunters, a cleric sired by the group's ranger. It grants them a final boon, lifting away the last vestiges of the curses enveloping Holdenshire with sunlight that lasts for an entire, uninterrupted week. Anyone that basks in it is immediately alleviated of any enchantments or magics worked upon them by the undead, bringing almost all of the citizens of both Hengistbury and Thornbury back to their senses. The only pall of darkness that remains throughout the unnatural daylight in Holdenshire hovers around Brockendale Castle, and the party enters Act III: Banishing the Vampire Lord.

While the quests in Act II are centered around the tombs of the Order of Light and dominate this section of the adventure, GMs should continually make use of the Terrors Across the Countryside table. These beasts have grown more dangerous,

becoming far stronger and now willing to aggressively engage the party. As the adventurers acquire more of the relics, these monsters gain the fiendish, giant, or advanced templates and their attacks become more frequent (the result of Nemirtvi's growing influence and interest in the party).

SHADES OF THE PAST

In addition to the Terrors Across the Countryside, Nemirtvi has employed otherworldly means to draw even more dangers to Hengistbury and Thornbury. Enemies slighted by the adventurers that slayed Cirothe are unknowingly compelled to exact revenge on Holdenshire county, and every day the adventurers will have to contend with one or another of these foes until all of them have been eliminated. Note that should the PCs use the *coward's map* from *To Slay A Dragon*, the creature they would have fought is twisted by dark magic to attack the nearest settlement instead.

d%	Creatures	Story Clue
1-20	Feyblind Goblins	—
21-40	Vampire Spawn Ogres	Trailing black essence to the Weirwood
41-60	Crazed Troll	Corrupted <i>potions of cure moderate wounds</i>
61-80	Feral Cave Giant	Armor matted by dead swamp bugs
81-100	Drow Raiders	Familiar always escapes, flying toward Murray's Folly



QUEST 1

THE SILVER ARCHER'S TOMB

The most ubiquitous of the vampiric curses enshrouding Holdenshire are the roving black clouds that originate in the Weirwood. At first they appear randomly but only at night, and not carrying any more terror than the unknown. While this horrifies the townsfolk, after the party has collected two or more relics, the pitch black apparitions start to swallow people whole, appearing both during the day and night.

Clouds of darkness act as the *darkness* spell, as cast by a 12th level sorcerer but without any finite duration. When a vampire spawn ogre is within the cloud, they may direct it to move at a rate of twenty feet per round. A cloud of darkness suppressed by *dispel magic* remains so for 2d4+4 rounds. If unoccupied, the cloud of darkness moves in a semi-random direction, but generally back toward the Weirwood. Spotting a cloud of darkness during the day is a simple, easy task—a **DC 10 Perception check** identifies one from as far as two miles away. At sunrise and sunset, it becomes more difficult to see and requires a **DC 17 Perception check** to notice within one mile. During the night, a cloud of darkness is virtually impossible to identify

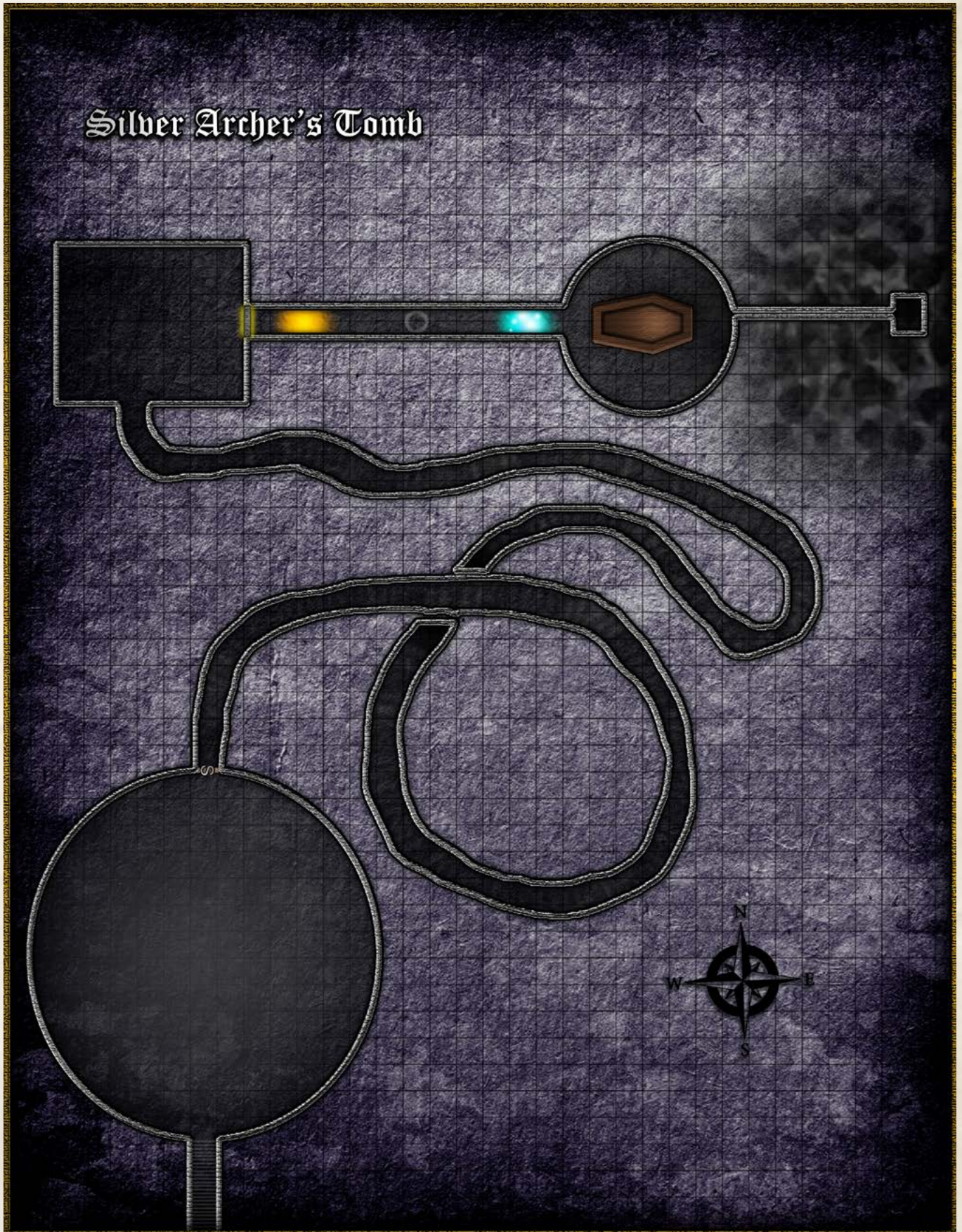
from afar, and PCs must succeed at a **DC 24 Perception check** to do so within 1,000 feet..

One of the first tasks Nemirtvi laid upon Lord Pemberton was to corrupt the surviving ogres of Deepcrest Chasm, turning them into vampire spawn. Under his control, they've taken up residence in The Silver Archer's Tomb, north of the Quarry in the Weirwood. Initially they used the clouds of darkness as cover to survey the land and search the realm to enact vengeance against the adventurers that slayed their tribe. When the darkness begins to appear during the day, the vampire spawn ogres use the clouds to terrorize Hengistbury and Thornbury, sometimes kidnapping victims to draw more villagers into a trap, and other times causing bloodbaths that cement the paranoia gripping the townsfolk.

When the PCs have acquired three of more relics, if they haven't yet breached the Silver Archer's Tomb, Lord Pemberton orders the vampire spawn ogres to subdue and capture the PCs if possible, bringing them back to Hengistbury Keep where they are turned into vampires! After being destroyed, the essence of the vampire spawn ogres float back to the Weirwood at a speed of 10 feet per round.

Someone in Holdenshire other than Lord Pemberton knows about these strange clouds, but kept the secret to themselves because it seemed profitable to do so. Nazid, local foreigner and owner of The Spice of Life, receives a yearly visit by a famil-

Silver Archer's Tomb



ial acquaintance from back home. During his friend's travels here this year, they came across strange clouds of inky darkness near the Weirwood. Investigating further, one of his men found a tomb filled with gold. Intrigued, he sent two more to plunder the crypt—a duo that never returned. His remaining mercenary guards insisted they push on quickly, and they left the strange phenomena behind them.

Nazid had intended to make good on the information of his own accord, hiring some adventurers to delve the dungeon and collect the treasure within. He was nervous when the clouds began to roam across the countryside, but too greedy to give up the secret freely. After the first abduction or bloodbath, however, Nazid actively seeks the party out to tell them what he knows. He is wracked by grief and desperate to make right his procrastination, offering the PCs a whopping five hundred gold pieces if they'll bring an end to the clouds of darkness. After accepting the quest, Nazid provides the party with a map that shows the location of the Silver Archer's Tomb, as well as 5 flasks of holy water he'd been hoarding for himself (just in case).

If the PCs have not yet destroyed the vampire spawn ogres then the creatures lair just outside of the crypt, hidden in the three clouds of darkness that languidly orbit the place.

The thick canopy of the Weirwood blots out the sun, but roaming around the entrance to an overgrown crypt you can see more of the strange clouds of darkness. Several float around the area near it, and under an overhanging platform that extends off the stone ruin are a few massive, pale giants—vampire spawn ogres. Something out of sight mewls in pain as they gleefully pick it apart, sending bits of blood splattering from out of the shade.

Otherwise, nothing troubles the adventurers until they've breached the entry hall of the Silver Archer's Tomb.

The interior of the tomb is a drab affair—the worked stone of the ruin is dark grey, worn from centuries of time. Twelve statues in various states of decay line the circular forty foot chamber, and are all that adorn this simple room aside from a conspicuous lever on the far side of the wall.

After the party has entered into the initial chamber, a flurry of dust erupts off of three of the nine warrior statues within! One slams a lever that seals off any escape before they attack the PCs. With the undead protecting this crypt defeated, the party can enter into the rest of the tomb (though a clever group of adventurers may know the limitations of the crypt things, dashing past them to enter into the dungeon rather than engaging in combat). As before, a doorway on the end has a lever that only activates for living, non-evil creatures, leading down steps to another glowing door covered in holy iconography.

Without much effort, the ancient lever shifts downward. A seamless doorway rises up into the ceiling beside it, revealing a darkened stone stairwell that leads down into the depths. Drafts of stale air waft into the chamber, carrying the smell of death and the unknown in equal parts.

Opening the glowing door (which is 1 ft. thick, hardness 8, 90 hit points, DC 28 break) requires a **DC 22 Disable Device**, **DC 18 Strength check**, or simply uttering the words, "Order of Light". Beyond it is another 40-foot long, 5-foot wide, 10-foot tall passage, again filled with a number of sequenced traps. Unlike the other crypt, however, this one is shrouded entirely in *deeper darkness* as cast by a 12th level sorcerer. This effect cannot be dispelled. Any Perception or Disable Device checks made within the *deeper darkness* suffer a -1d6 penalty (rolled after the initial skill check and known only to the GM).

The glowing door rises up, sliding into the ceiling to reveal—nothing at all, only an abyssal darkness as potent as an endless pit's.

LINKED FLAME STRIKE TRAP

CR 7

Type magic; **Perception** DC 30; **Disable Device** DC 30

EFFECTS

Trigger proximity (*alarm*); **Reset** automatic
Effect spell effect (*flame strike*, 8d6 fire damage, DC 17 Reflex save for half damage); multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft.-radius cylinder); special (sequenced to linked wyvern bolt trap and linked frost fangs trap)

LINKED WYVERN BOLT TRAP

CR 7

Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 20; **Disable Device** DC 20

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** automatic (limit; 4 bolts)
Effect Atk +15 ranged (1d6 plus wyvern poison/19-20/x2); special (sequenced to linked flame strike trap and linked frost fangs trap)

WYVERN POISON

Type poison, injury; **Save** Fortitude DC 17
Frequency 1/round for 6 rounds
Effect 1d4 Con damage; **Cure** 2 consecutive saves

LINKED FROST FANGS TRAP

CR 8

Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 25; **Disable Device** DC 20

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Duration** 1 round; **Reset** automatic (limit 3)
Effect jets of freezing water (3d6 cold damage, DC 20 Reflex save for half damage); multiple targets (all targets in the 40-ft. long by 10-ft. tall by 5-ft. wide passage); special (sequenced to linked flame strike trap and linked wyvern bolt trap)

After breaching the hallway, the effect ends and the PCs can easily see the enormous coffin of Borgoff the silver archer, leader of the Order of Light. Removing the lid seems impossible,

QUICKBOWS

Not very popular anymore, these miniature weapons fit onto the wearer's wrist and allow a proficient user to volley small missiles (predominantly crossbow bolts) at lethal speeds.

Any character with proficiency with hand crossbows is proficient with a quickbow. A character wielding a quickbow may make one additional attack during a full attack action, but all of their attacks that round suffer a -5 penalty. This additional shot stacks with the Rapid Shot feat. Quickbows have a range of 15 feet (to a maximum of 75 feet) and deal 1d3 points of piercing damage + ½ the wielder's Strength modifier (1d2 points of damage for a Small-sized quickbow). A quickbow uses crossbow bolts, not arrows, and has a critical modifier of 19-20/x2.

requiring a **DC 30 Strength** or **DC 40 Disable Device check**, but a **DC 15 Knowledge (engineering)** or **DC 19 Perception check** identifies strange mechanical workings that extend into the wall, where a two slits have been carved parallel to the ground. Peering through them, the PCs can see a spoked, many wheeled contraption oriented to face them from the short sides. The outermost portion of the spokes are flat and one has an arrow sticking out of it. Firing an arrow or crossbow bolt at the spoked wheel juts it forward one turn, inching the stone coffin's lid off. The wheels get progressively smaller, but the largest has an AC of 15, the next largest has an AC of 14, and so on down to an AC of 10 for the tiniest spoke. Each wheel must be hit 6 times to fully turn, and all the spokes need to be struck before the lid of the coffin opens large enough for someone to reach inside of it. Any magic acted against the spokes must beat spell resistance 16.

Within the coffin are the remains of Borgoff, along with only one magical item—the potent *Silver Quickbow*. Once the party takes the relic from the sepulcher, the clouds of darkness above them disappear and one of the curses that afflicts Holdenshire county is undone.

- 6 × **VAMPIRE SPAWN OGRES**
- 4 × **CRYPT THINGS**

SILVER QUICKBOW

Aura strong conjuration; **CL** 12th
Slot none; **Price** 55,000 gp; **Weight** 3 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

This gauntlet fits over the wrist, binding tightly with cords of leather. One side has winged silver branching perpendicular to the bracer, with a taut cord cord in between them.

The *silver quickbow* is a Medium sized good-aligned weapon with a +1 enhancement bonus that deals 1d4 + ½ the wielder's Strength modifier. Every bolt fired from the *silver quickbow* becomes coated in silver as it leaves the weapon (this silver dissipates after 1 minute). Once per day, the wielder of the *silver quickbow* can fire a rain of bolts into the air as a full-round action. Creatures in a 30-ft. diameter circle chosen by the wielder (within 75 feet) take 10d4+10 silver piercing damage (Reflex

DC 18 for half). The wielder also gains the use of *daybreak arrow* once per day as a spell-like ability.

Evil and undead creatures take 2d6 fire damage when touching the *silver quickbow* and cannot activate its abilities.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *arrow eruption*, *daybreak arrow*, *gravity bow*, *major creation*; **Cost** 27,500 gp

SILVER ARCHER'S NIGHTMARE

1ST (TWO RELICS)

The darkness of sleep falls away in shreds to reveal Hengistbury in its youth. The doors are shuttered and in the moonlight, undead walk the streets. You begin to fire rapidly as they charge towards you and the darkness of rest swallows you again.

2ND (THREE RELICS)

Drops of rain hitting worn wood beat a steady rhythm that draws you out of the darkness and under a storefront. The man behind the counter is haggard, yelling that the price for crossbow bolts is the price for crossbow bolts. He looks fearfully out the window as you check your quarrel, and the darkness of sleep consumes you once more.

3RD (FOUR RELICS)

Rushing water and a sensation of cold encompasses you, and from the darkness you can see pieces of stone whip past you on quick running currents. Struggling against them, you swim as hard as you can, but in the span of a moment one of the rocks slams into your forehead and the black of unconsciousness wraps around you once more.

4TH (FIVE RELICS)

Figures form in the darkness as a rush of blood washes across the floor. Shadows cling to the armor of each, and a rush of movement from the side is just barely shows a blade—then a painful, quick, definitive cut roils with a pain so intense that you wake up in a cold sweat, your throat sore.

QUEST 2

CRYPT OF THE
INEVITABLE SUNSET

Simple accidents and common mishaps have become deadly in Hengistbury. Tiny scrapes, diminutive bruises, and even miniscule cuts can suddenly become unrelenting blood flows that kill the injured. Paranoia has gripped the townsfolk, who have become reticent to perform even the most basic deeds in fear for their lives.

HEMOPHILIA

There is no apparent pattern to these instances of hemophilia—any time that a creature in the town of Hengistbury is injured, there is a 5% chance they suddenly contract the disease unless they succeed on a **DC 22 Fortitude save**. After contracting hemophilia, a creature continues to take 1 bleed damage from any wounds suffered, up to a maximum of their Constitution modifier or half their hit die (whichever value is greater; minimum 1). Sufficiently suturing and binding a wound to stop this bleed damage requires a Heal check (DC 15 + damage dealt) and any rigorous activity—moving more than base speed during a round or engaging in combat—undoes the bandages and re-opens the wound. A creature with hemophilia otherwise continues to take at least 1 bleed damage until their hit points are completely restored.

Removing hemophilia within the confines of Hengistbury is impossible, but casting *remove disease* or *regeneration* outside of the town's borders removes the effect.

To make matters worse, all of the blood from those suffering from the disease drains to the south, toward the Rosewynd Gypsy Camp. In their paranoia, the townsfolk believe this to be a sign—the gypsies across the river have cursed them. Several assaults on their circled wagons have already been rebuffed, but it's only a matter of time before the villagers make a truly concerted attack on the gypsies. Inspecting the hemorrhaged blood with a **DC 20 Perception** or **DC 17 Survival check** reveals that while it flows in an odd direction, it does not lead to the Rosewynd Gypsy Camp, but further south—to the Fogmoor. PCs may make a check for each instance of hemophilia they inspect in Holdenshire, and receive a cumulative +2 circumstance bonus to their skill checks to determine the source of the phenomenon each time after the first.

Stephanie Rosewynd attempts to contact the PCs directly, and may even send messengers across the countryside to locate the party (though certainly not in Hengistbury). As the party breached Hugo Weightman's tomb, she had another vision. In it, a shining holy knight happened upon the sacred tomb and detected evil lingering about it. After girding himself for battle, he went within and felled a dangerous and wicked protector. During the combat he took a grievous, enchanted inju-

ry. Tending to his injuries outside of the dungeon in a bog, he was killed by a swamp creature lingering in the brackish waters and washing them in blood. Black tendrils of evil reached across the land, enshrouding his soul as the vision came to an end. Stephanie believes the swamp is the Fogmoor, and that her prophetic dream revealed some of the mystery behind the bloody curse that hangs over Hengistbury.

There is another means to learn of the Crypt of the Inevitable Sunset—Garthlann, the feral cave giant. A survivor from Camp Zesu, Garthlann killed some merchants a few weeks ago, taking from their packs anything that looked even remotely magical. As he slept, Nemirtvi's influence reached across the land to touch upon a mutagen the cave giant had acquired. The next morning Garthlann drank from the vial and was transformed, changed into a feral creature. Since then he has been haunted every night by grotesque nightmares that drove him to the Fogmoor, keeping a camp outside of the Crypt of the Inevitable Sunset. After the PCs have acquired a relic, the vampire lord incites the cave giant's madness and he begins to roam the countryside like a hungry beast. Inspecting Garthlann's corpse and belongings, the party finds the insides of his armor to be practically coated with dead bugs—a **DC 13 Knowledge (nature)** or **DC 15 Survival check** identifies these as swamp insects.

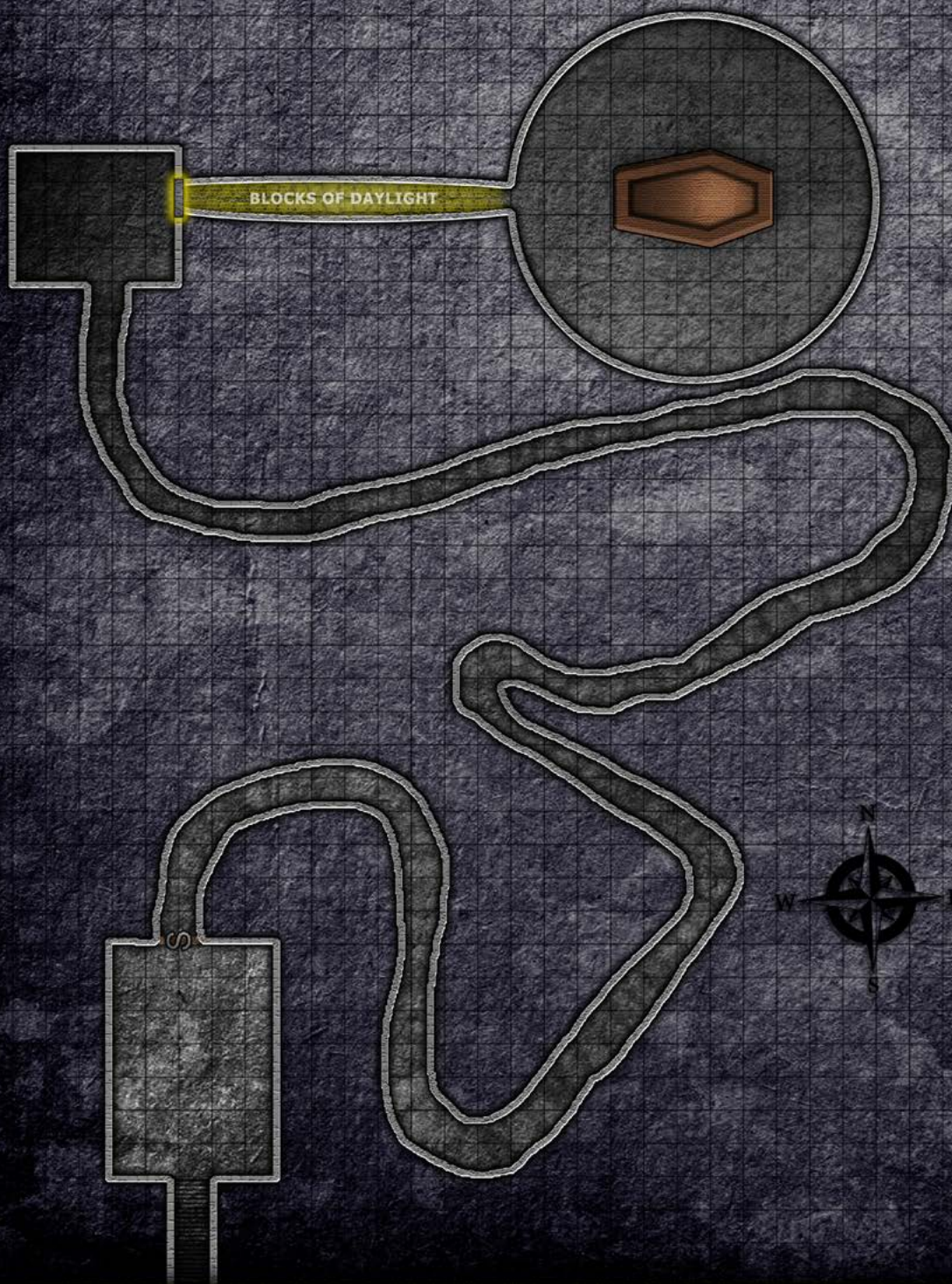
The Crypt of the Inevitable Sunset lay in the ruins directly south of Hengistbury, in the Fogmoor. If the PCs haven't defeated Garthlann already, they'll find the crazed cave giant outside of it. He's smashed most of the surfaces nearby—roots, tree trunks, stones—believing the buzzing of insects to be the source of his insanity.

As you near the western ruins in the Fogmoor, the nascent, seemingly ever present buzz of insects begins to quiet, casting an unnatural silence across the swamp. Nearing the ancient structure, you notice that nearly everything in sight has suffered some kind of impact. The wood of the trunks is splintered, littered with chunks of stone and rock that permeate the bog. Looking more carefully at the ruins, it seems to be only an entryway, leading into an interior beneath the fetid waters. None of the pale sunlight breaks through the canopy, granting a cold, silent pall over the Fogmoor.

Once the adventurers enter the dungeon (down the steps to a simple square chamber, 20 feet wide, 10 feet tall and 40 feet long), an unholy warrior rises on the far side of the room—the dead knight has been transformed into a morph that attacks the party! PCs that fail a **DC 17 Perception check** don't hear or see the shambling undead raise itself up and are subjected to a surprise round as combat begins.

Disgusting water has sloshed down the dark stone steps, creating a putrid film across the floor of the chamber at the bottom of the stairs. Roots and vines creep down the stairwell's wall, growing in and around several skeletons. Most are humanoids, but one particularly large one belonged to a large quadruped of some kind, clearly once the master

Crypt of the Inevitable Sunset



of this lair. A simple lever sits on the far side of the square chamber, but otherwise there seems to be nothing extraordinary in this dilapidated room.

After the corrupted paladin has been defeated, the PCs find another door like the one in the Packman's Final Rest; its lever only responds to living, non-evil creatures and reveals a stairwell that leads down to another glowing doorway covered in holy iconography. Opening the glowing door requires a **DC 22 Disable Device**, **DC 18 Strength check**, or simply uttering the words, "Order of Light". Beyond it is a 40-foot long, 5-foot wide and 10-foot tall passageway entirely filled with blocks of force seemingly made from daylight itself.

As the glowing door slides upward into the ceiling, its soft luminescence becomes completely and totally overwhelmed by stark sunlight that shines out of the passageway behind it. Bright light fills the doorway entirely, blinding to look at and as hard as stone to the touch.

These blocks of light have an AC of 5, hardness of 11, 20 hit points and fast healing 2. Materials, extraordinary abilities, supernatural abilities, and spell effects that ignore or negate hardness have no effect on the blocks of light. The blocks cannot be moved physically but they can be destroyed more easily; a **DC 20 Spellcraft check** reveals that a *dispel magic* (against CL 12th) or any use of the *smite evil* ability instantly vaporizes a block of light. There are a total of 6 blocks in this passageway, each 5-foot tall, 5-foot wide and 10-foot long.

On the other side of the hallway is a large circular room with a huge stone coffin at its center. Within are the remains of Nolt, a druid in the Order of Light that might very well have been the biggest human to have ever lived. The skeleton's enormous hands grip a worn, wooden 2-handed hammer—*Noltsledge*.

- 1 × GARTHLANN, FERAL CAVE GIANT
- 1 × ANTIPALADIN MORGH
- 8 × FAST ZOMBIES

NOLTSLEDGE

Aura strong transmutation; **CL** 12th
Slot none; **Price** 62,000 gp; **Weight** 16 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

Large by even a giant's standards, this enormous hammer's handle is as long as a quarterstaff. The maul is a simple log, sharpened to a sturdy point.

Noltsledge is a good-aligned +1 undead bane wooden earth breaker under the effects of the *ironwood* spell and requires a Strength score of 14 or higher to wield effectively; otherwise the weapon's weight incurs a -2 circumstance penalties to all attacks. With *Noltsledge* in hand, a sufficiently strong wielder (with a Strength score of 14 or greater) gains the use of the Power Attack, Cleave and Great Cleave feats.

When using any of these feats to attack undead, the wielder suffers no attack penalty from their use. Furthermore, *Noltsledge's* wielder ignores any bonuses from cover or concealment granted to undead targets (with the exception of full cover or full concealment) and is treated as under the effects of *see invisibility* against undead. Finally, the wielder of *Noltsledge* is able to smell undead, and is treated as having the scent ability, though it only works against undead.

Evil and undead creatures take 2d6 fire damage when touching *Noltsledge* and cannot activate its abilities.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Cleave, Great Cleave, Power Attack, *ironwood*, *see invisibility*, *summon monster I*; **Cost** 31,000 gp

NOLT'S NIGHTMARE

1ST (TWO RELICS)

The first and oldest houses of Thornbury look like new in the dark, overcast sun of a day filled with clouds. As you walk down toward the buildings, children in the street scream at the sight of you, running into a doorway that is quickly shut by a grim-faced villager.

2ND (THREE RELICS)

A bestial, savage roar fills the night as canine shadows prow from out of the darkness of sleep. Their wild cries turn into low growls, that sound almost like a language. "Nem-memm," comes from one, "vvvvvii," from another, and then "mirrrrAAAARGH" as they all leap down at once, savagely attacking!

3RD (FOUR RELICS)

Rhythmic thumping, a powerful heartbeat, draws you from your sleep and into a chamber covered in dried blood, much of it seeping from creatures trapped in torture devices. Mutated men, their faces and bodies a melange of different creatures' limbs, bring down blade and spell as you slam your enormous hammer into them again and again before darkness claims you once more.

4TH (FIVE RELICS)

Blood fills your vision as the darkness parts, revealing the corpses of your companions strewn across the floor at the foot of plinths. The head of your hammer raises off of one of the destroyed stone platforms as a horrific pain bites into your shoulder, and you feel your life force begin to ebb away—as you wake with a cold sweat, the dark blue of a bruise spreading across your shoulder.

QUEST 3

SEPULCHER OF THE FLEET WARRIOR

A strange sanguine curse has come over Thornbury as well; some of the citizens and animals have been gripped by insomnia and started to bleed tears. As the PCs acquire more holy relics, the affliction worsens and spreads. Once the party has three or more of the relics, townsfolk begin to take their own lives rather than face another sleepless night with the horrors lurking outside of their doors.

The first to succumb to this curse are the Fierendzi Gypsies, and their leader is ill-equipped for remedying the malady. Not long after the autumn festival, Saraz bint Farad bint Aquilah was accepted into their clan and recognized as a rightful authority among the nomads because of her true heritage (an estranged, long lost daughter of the Fierendzi). Unfortunately after her induction and shortly after the horrors began to creep across Holdenshire, their elder leader fell mortally ill and had little time to teach Saraz the many secrets kept only to the heads of the gypsies. The lack of knowledge has proved all to dire—when she recognized what was happening to her kin, Saraz attempted to create the right remedy but lacked the finesse to do it correctly. All of her tinctures have failed and now the Fierendzi have run out of the key ingredient for the curative! Only a rare flower found deep in the Queenswood can save her clan, and every gypsy sent to acquire more has failed to return to camp.

If the PCs have already earned Saraz trust from somewhere earlier in Act I, she has chilling vision to share with them. Otherwise the party must earn her trust first, locating some of her lost kin or recovering their remains. Across a four hour search of the Queenswood, a **DC 18 Survival check** finds the tracks and eventually remains of one of the gypsies, its body torn apart by savage claws. A **DC 19 Knowledge (nature) check** identifies the markings of a troll attack. During these searches, there's a 50% chance that the party is attacked by the Crazy Trolls if they have not yet encountered them. Returning to the gypsy camp, Saraz explains the foreboding dream she had after the PCs breached Hugo Weightman's tomb. Venturing into the Queenswood in search of her brethren, Saraz found herself stalked by something cackling in the darkness. After sprinting away it gave chase, a troll swinging through the trees as blood gushed from its eyes in torrents. The entire forest was covered with its blood as it pounced—which is where the vision ended and Saraz woke awash in sweat.

The crazy trolls are no apparition—they are a very real threat in the Queenswood after the party acquires the first relic of the Order of Light. Left without a leader after the adventurers that slayed Cirothe passed through Oldshade, they meandered about the realm with some abandon before Nemirtvi brought them into his fold. Inciting thoughts of vengeance that became stronger the more the greedy trolls imagined their revenge,

the vampire lord has utterly robbed them of their sanity, leaving them to stalk the Queenswood and terrorize Holdenshire county. The mad trolls are just that; they raid barns for livestock-throwing contests, dig enormous holes in the middle of the road, uproot random trees and do all manner of other bizarre things. Though they are predominantly focused on esoteric goals that no rational mind could understand, the trolls still attack travelers and are hostile to anyone they encounter. When engaged in combat, odd as it may seem, they drink healing potions in addition to their regeneration abilities.

After the battle ends and the PCs inspect the curatives, a **DC 15 Perception** or **Spellcraft check** identifies them as *potions of cure moderate wounds*, and only a result of **26 or higher** sees through the ruse and realizes their curse. While they do provide 2d8+3 healing, they also deal 1 bleed damage for 10 rounds! A **DC 17 Craft (alchemy)** or **DC 22 Spellcraft check** reveals that the ingredient that corrupts the potions is a vine indigenous to the area; a **DC 18 Knowledge (nature)** or **DC 14 Knowledge (geography) check** identifies the reagent as the vine of the rare flower that the Fierendzi gypsies require for their protection against the curse of bloody tears that grips Thornbury.

The Sepulcher of the Fleet Warrior lay southeast of Thornbury and north of Ayle's Loch, serving currently as the camp site of the crazy trolls. If the PCs have not already bested the creatures, they attack the party on sight.

The dirt ground of this secluded grove is stained brown in numerous spots, some still tinged with blood not yet dried. A limp arm leads your eyes upward to where the bodies of several gypsies and villagers have been jammed into tree branches, creating a macabre menagerie above you. Ancient stones jut up from the ground, revealing ruins that lead into the earth—beside this entrance are piles of discarded, random items, varying from children's toys to farming implements to junk from the tavern.

Within the dungeon's entrance, a circular 60-foot chamber, is a squad of twelve graven guardians distributed evenly along the walls. The constructs ambush the party as soon as they recognize the statues as a threat (a **DC 27 Perception check**) or all the adventurers have entered the room.

Down the stairwell, turned dry and dusty by countless seasons of dead leaves, is a large circular chamber made from old, worn gray stone. On the far wall is a simple lever, and sitting equidistant around the room are twelve solemn clay statues wearing weathered armor and wielding pitted old weapons.

The graven guardians are keen to protect the entrance and exit, created and ordered to do so by their fellow adherent to the god of undeath, Nemirtvi. If the party flees the tomb, the graven guardians don't pursue them more than twenty feet from the entrance, at which point they retreat and resume their positions until someone enters the crypt again. At the far end of the circular 40-foot across room is a door similar to the one found in Hugo Weightman's tomb; it only activates for living, non-evil creatures and reveals a stairway leading down to another

glowing door covered in holy iconography.

A soft golden glow emanates from a door at the bottom of the darkened stairwell. It is covered in holy icons and divine symbols, etchings of warriors overcoming demons and monsters from the darkness, each wielding weapons made out of light.

Opening the glowing door requires a **DC 22 Disable Device**, **DC 18 Strength check**, or simply uttering the words, "Order of Light".

Archaic, enchanted torches line this hallway. They flicker with a stark white light, casting especially dark shadows along the walls. Symbols are etched into the floor, climbing up to the roof and encompassing the entire passageway with ancient script in an unknown, long dead language.

This 40-foot long, 10-foot tall, 5-foot wide passageway is filled with traps designed to go off in sequence—if one goes off, they all go off. If the third trap is the first to begin the sequence, a fourth trap (with an actual trigger hidden above the doorway; **DC 32 Perception check** to notice) activates, filling the room with corrosive gas.

LINKED HAIL OF ARROWS TRAP CR 9

Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 25; **Disable Device** DC 25

EFFECTS

Trigger visual (*arcane eye*); **Reset** automatic (limited to 3)

Effect Atk +20 ranged (4d6); multiple targets (all targets in a 20-ft. line); special (sequenced to linked shocking floor trap and linked chamber of blades trap)

LINKED SHOCKING FLOOR TRAP CR 9

Type magic; **Perception** DC 26; **Disable Device** DC 26

EFFECTS

Trigger proximity (*alarm*); **Duration** 1d4 rounds; **Reset** automatic (limited to 3)

Effect spell effect (*shocking grasp*, Atk +9 melee touch [3d6 electricity damage]); multiple targets (all targets in a 40-ft. line); special (sequenced to linked hail of arrows trap and linked chamber of blades trap)

LINKED CHAMBER OF BLADES TRAP CR 10

Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 25; **Disable Device** DC 20

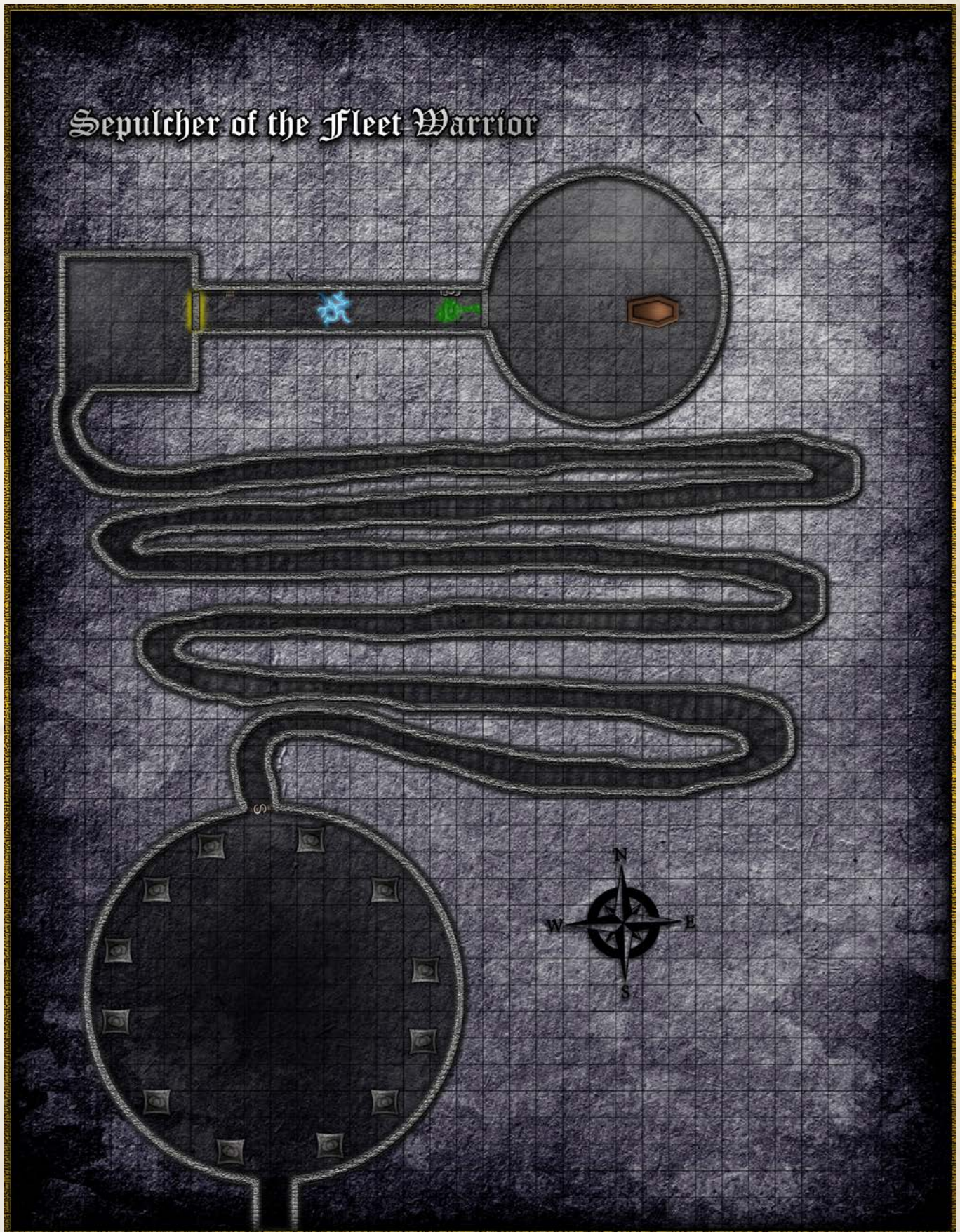
EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Duration** 1d4 rounds; **Reset** automatic

Effect Atk +10 melee (2d8+3); multiple targets (all targets in a 40-ft. line); special (sequenced to linked hail of arrows trap and linked shocking floor trap)



Sepulcher of the Fleet Warrior



CORROSIVE GAS TRAP

CR 9

Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 25; **Disable Device** DC 22

EFFECTS

Trigger special; **Reset** none

Effect corrosive gas (7d6+4 acid damage); never miss; multiple targets (all targets in the 40 ft. passageway); special (sequenced to linked chamber of blades trap; this trap only activates if that is the first trap to be triggered in the sequence)

This passageway has a 2-foot thick stone door at its end; it has a hardness of 9 and 50 hit points. A **DC 27 Disable Device** or **DC 21 Strength check** moves it, allowing entry into the tomb of the Order of the Light's rogue.

More of the bright white torches flicker in this circular room. The same faded, illegible texts cover the chamber and there doesn't appear to be anything of value aside a plain, thin coffin that sits in its center.

The simple, narrow coffin sits in the middle of the 20-foot circular chamber. It is, however, laden with various traps waiting to subdue the unwary.

SUMMON MONSTER VI TRAP

CR 8

Type magic; **Perception** DC 31; **Disable Device** DC 31

EFFECTS

Trigger proximity (*alarm*); **Reset** none

Effect spell effect (*summon monster VI*, summons 1 lillend azata); special (sequenced to summoner conduit trap)

SUMMONER CONDUIT TRAP

CR 8

Type magic; **Perception** DC 29; **Disable Device** DC 29

EFFECTS

Trigger proximity (*alarm*); **Reset** none

Effect spell effect (*summoner conduit*; the creature that activates the sequenced summon monster VI trap is considered its summoner; Will DC 16 negates); special (sequenced to summon monster VI trap)

Once the traps are removed, the coffin's lid can safely be removed to reveal the remains of the Fleet Warrior. The skeleton's arms are crossed over its chest and in each hand rests an enchanted throwing dagger of truly unique make—*Kylian starknives*.

- 5 × **CRAZED TROLLS**
- 12 × **GRAVEN GUARDIANS**

KYLIAN STARKNIVES

Aura strong transmutation; **CL** 12th
Slot none; **Price** 73,500 gp (pair); **Weight** 6 lbs. each

DESCRIPTION

These silver starknives are stylized to resemble four overlapping crosses with razor sharp blades on each end. Red rubies sit in the crossguard of each miniature hilt and they glow with a soft white light.

These good-aligned +1 *returning seeking undead bane silver starknives* have one additional ability; if the wielder holds both in hand and spins them (a DC 5 Dexterity check) as a free action, they can activate *haste* as a spell-like ability for 12 rounds a day. De-activating this ability is a free action. These rounds need not be consecutive.

Evil and undead creatures take 2d6 fire damage when touching the *Kylian Starknives* and cannot activate their abilities.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *summon monster I*, *telekinesis*, *true seeing*; **Cost** 36,750 gp (pair)

KYLIAN'S NIGHTMARE

1ST (TWO RELICS)

Wet slapping of flesh and bone comes out of one of the few buildings in this town as a man spills out of the doorway, his body writhing with pain and changing shape uncontrollably. Your arm releases a reflective silver weapon that cuts into the creature following the screaming victim, the darkness consuming you as a spray of its grayish blood splashes onto the dirt.

2ND (THREE RELICS)

One of your allies—a sister?—screams in a death throe as a black, many-legged worm sprays acid through her helmet, caving her skull in instantly. Two silver flashes whip out of your arms and into the beast, dragging shadows behind them that draw you back into the darkness of sleep.

3RD (FOUR RELICS)

You sprint out of the darkness and into a stone passageway, the foot of the cackling mad dwarf ahead of you disappearing around a passageway. The grotesque slur of a massive flesh wound reaches your ears before you see the tip of two swords flit behind the wall, the wizard's eviscerated body falling to the floor.

4TH (FIVE RELICS)

Splatters of blood fly from the dark, armored thing as it pulls its shortswords from your friend's corpse, slapping her weapon across the floor as it cackles. You let fly your knives and dance back in retreat but the shadow-wrapped thing closes the distance easily, its blades swarming from the darkness above you and into your skull—you wake with a start, your head pounding with a dull pain.

QUEST 4

MAUSOLEUM OF THE SUNBEAM

A few miles downriver from Hengistbury, a lone wizard's tower sits in the middle of the water. Kalle Sirkesalo has gone to great lengths to insure his research is uninterrupted, sending his henchman Hunchback Roland (who doesn't have a hunchback and isn't really named Roland) far away, ostensibly to acquire rare reagents for the mage's pursuits. In truth, Kalle has perceived the fundamental change wrought on Holdenshire by Nemirtvi's reappearance and is using the opportunity of mystical upheaval to further his own ends. The intense magical research the wizard is undergoing, however, is having side effects in Hengistbury and one particular individual—John-Francis Rainweaver.

Everywhere the failed scholar has been seen recently (mostly the alleyways of Hengistbury and occasionally near the Temple) he's been said to smell of drink, babbling on about his dreams. The disgraced academic is at odds with himself; while the life of a woodsman in Holdenshire county has been a fair one, John-Francis feels that he is destined for greater things—now it seems that fate is prepared to redeem him. Kalle Sirkalo's efforts to pierce the veil (something that will bear many repercussions upon Holdenshire in the future once Nemirtvi's menace is ended) have created a bond between Rainweaver and the spirit of the Order of Light's wizard, drawing him toward the artifice tome within the tomb by Murray's Folly.

The vampire lord's dark powers have spliced onto this energy, causing additional effects within Hengistbury. Chief among them is the warping of unattended holy symbols. At first this is slight—when the PCs possess only one relic, there's a 20% chance that an unattended holy symbol slowly in Hengistbury warps in the direction of Murray's Folly (a **DC 23 Perception check** notices the anomaly.) For every additional relic the party acquires, the chance for unattended holy symbols to be warped increases by 20% and the DC to notice the phenomena is reduced by 3.

As it happens, the very presence of Nemirtvi has caused the wildlife in Holdenshire to go entirely out of balance. Prey animals have become more scarce than even in the harshest of winters, but some pests persist—namely, entire swarms of crows and bats that fly across the countryside attacking travelers seemingly at random. These animals are naturally drawn to the vampire lord's growing domain, but their behavior is being controlled by another source—drow already prepared to enact vengeance on the town that sent heroes who upended their plans in Greendell Forest.

When the PCs have acquired one relic, the swarms begin to appear near Hengistbury. Once they have two of the relics, any

Diplomacy checks to gather information that exceed DC 25 tell of dark elves seen near the strangely aggressive swarms. After the third relic is in the party's possession, people start to disappear with the crow and bat swarms; checks to gather information with a result of 20 or above bring up more claims of drow in Holdenshire.

The swarms appear in pairs, both under the control of one specialized Drow Mage and three Drow Warriors within. Tokens carried by the drow (only usable by their race) make them immune to the damaging effects of the swarms, but the Drow Mages require a standard action each turn to direct the animals. Without the mage controlling them, the swarms act randomly, attacking the dark elves to no effect if they are the nearest target. As the battle draws to an end, one bat or crow flies away from the combat, making a beeline for Murray's Folly—a wizard's familiar. If unimpeded, it leads the PCs to the Mausoleum of the Sunbeam.

Before the harvest festival, the Mortimer Brothers got into some trouble when they acquired an enchanted box from the belongings of the local sage, Tamas Agrens. An aspiring mage and clever enough fellow, he'd managed to trap the devil Kazyk within—and the children let it loose. The sage feared retribution and Nemirtvi seized on that dread, convincing Tamas through his dreams that the devils had won the souls of his most beloved friends and family. Once the paranoia finally sunk in and it seemed to be a truth, the vampire lord offered a trade—service for the “protection” of his kin. Seeing no other choice, the sage willingly gave himself to the primal evil. Now he haunts the Mausoleum of the Sunbeam, a spectre cursed to roam the tomb north of Murray's Folly.

The drow made the secluded valley the Mausoleum of the Sunbeam sits in the base of their operations in Holdenshire, and any dark elves the PCs haven't yet killed are waiting outside of it. Unlike the other undead guardians that Nemirtvi has sent to protect the crypts, the spectre Tamas Agrens does not wait for the party to enter the dungeon if there is no daylight. Should the PCs attack at night, as soon as combat with the drow begins he roars out of the tomb and assaults the adventurers alongside the dark elves, giving chase as far as 1,000 feet from the Mausoleum of the Sunbeam.

Down a pair of snowy hills, in the bottom of a secluded valley, sits another entrance of ruins. Outside of a small cave behind it are the telltale signs of an encampment, with several drow skulking about. Flocks of crows cling to the decrepit trees near the small cavern's mouth, huddling together unnaturally into black masses of feathers and beady eyes.

On the far side of the entrance chamber is another door, opened by pulling a lever that can only be activated by a living, non-evil creature. It leads down a stairwell to a glowing door covered in holy iconography. Opening the glowing door requires a **DC 22 Disable Device**, **DC 18 Strength check**, or simply uttering the words, “Order of Light”.

At the bottom of the darkened stairwell you find a glowing door emblazoned with vivid etchings in archaic script that weaves around holy icons. It casts a soft, golden light that radiates with a sense of good will.

The 40-foot long, 10-foot high and 5-foot wide passageway beyond the door is filled with undulating waves of daylight as hard as stone. Every 5-foot wide and long by 10-foot high square has these waves of sonic daylight, rapidly expanding and receding without rhyme or reason.

Behind the glowing doorway is a sight unlike any you've seen before—light has been tamed to act like a rapid ocean tide. It ebbs and rises, flowing in patterns along the walls that extend to the center of the passageway, moving in an arrhythmic pattern impossible to predict. You would think it's little more than an impressive display, but the woosh and slicing of air makes the possibility of the light being something more a serious consideration in your mind.

Avoiding the dangerous energy fields requires a **DC 16 Reflex save**; failure on the save deals 2d8 sonic damage to the creature and any objects they carry. The difficulty of the save increases by +2 for every 5-foot square a creature has passed through without taking damage (after taking damage, the DC of the save resets). The waves cannot be dispelled, but they can be suppressed by positive energy or sonic energy. When an area of the passage is effected by a spell, the waves of day-

light recede for a number of rounds equal to twice the spell level expended (cantrips and orisons have no effect). Bardic performance negates the waves of daylight whenever it is active. Each 5 ft.-square is treated as an undead with 5 HD (25 hp) and a +1 Will save for the purposes of turning attempts or channeled energy.

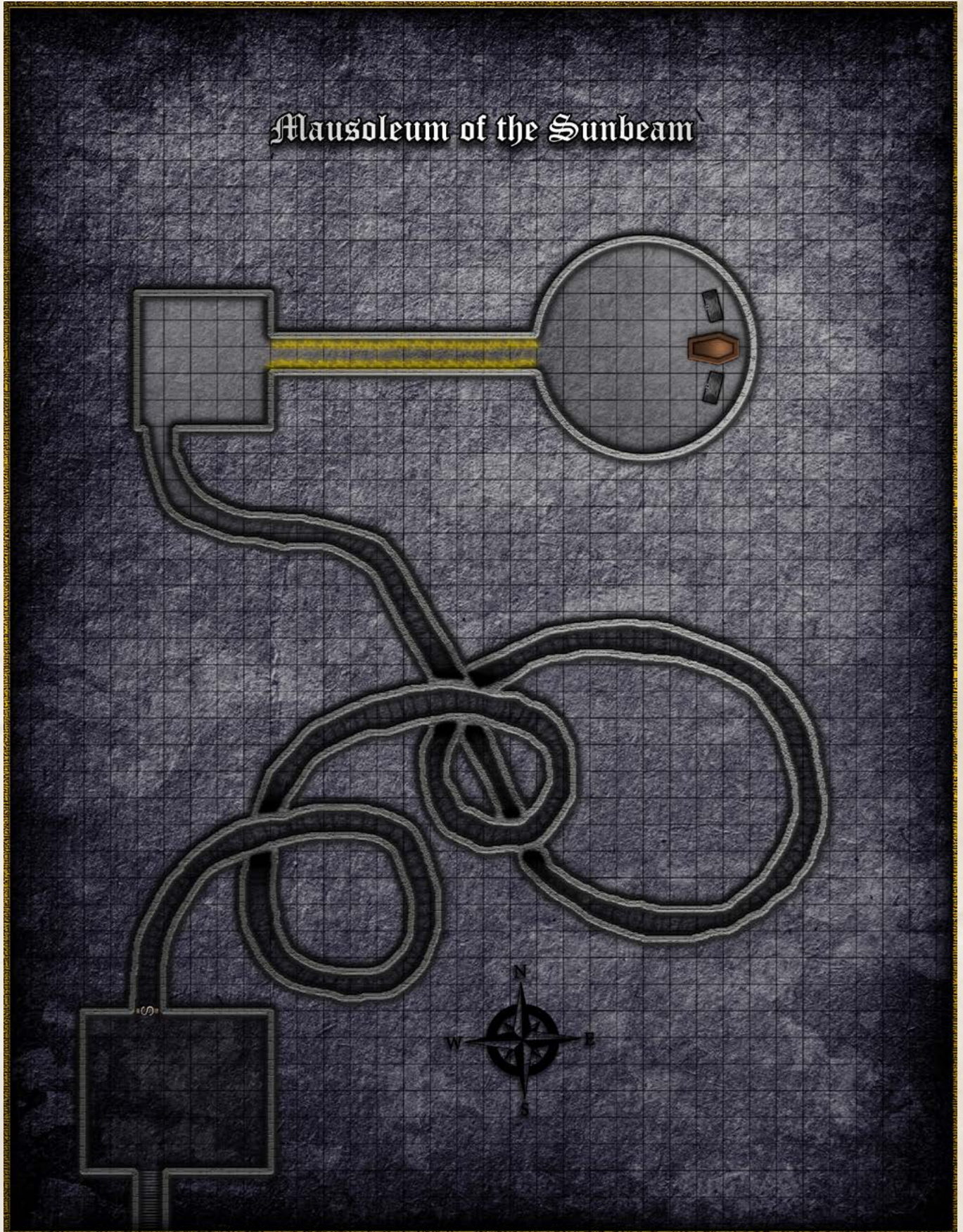
The bright light consuming the passage makes it impossible to see the room on the far end, but once past the waves of daylight the PCs find a standing coffin with two heavy steel chests sitting at its base.

At the end of the hallway you find a circular 30-ft. wide chamber covered intricate symbols that show warriors harnessing the power of the sun to destroy various monsters, as well as a standing coffin. Two large steel chests at its base.

Inside of the coffin are the remains of the Order of Light's wizard; its skeleton clutches an odd looking device, resembling a crossbow of sorts—the *Leilan Artifice*. The trunks are both locked and require a **DC 30 Disable Device check** to open, but the locks themselves are not trapped—the traps are set to go off when the chests are opened, and an initial Perception check on an unlocked trunk doesn't detect them. The box on the right contains a book titled "Workings of the Leilan Artifice", and the left contains 30 specialized glass vials containing holy water, all fitted to leather bandoliers (ammunition for the *Leilan Artifice*).



Mausoleum of the Sunbeam



SUMMON MONSTER VI TRAP

CR 9

Type magic; **Perception** DC 32; **Disable Device** DC 32

EFFECTS

Trigger proximity (*alarm*); **Reset** none

Effect spell effect (*summon monster VII*, summons 1 greater earth elemental); special (sequenced to summoner conduit trap)

SUMMONER CONDUIT TRAP

CR 8

Type magic; **Perception** DC 29; **Disable Device** DC 29

EFFECTS

Trigger proximity (*alarm*); **Reset** none

Effect spell effect (*summoner conduit*; the creature that activates the sequenced summon monster VI trap is considered its summoner; Will DC 16 negates); special (sequenced to summon monster VII trap)

- 4 × DROW MAGES
- 8 × DROW WARRIORS
- 1 × THE SPECTRE OF TAMAS AGRENS

LEILAN ARTIFICE

Aura strong conjuration; **CL** 12th
Slot none; **Price** 64,000 gp; **Weight** 11 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

This silver contraption bears a slight resemblance to a crossbow—it has a handle and trigger, but instead of a sliding stock there's a slot two inches across and one wide. A fat barrel covered in countless divine symbols protrudes from the top of the handle, with a hollow opening at the far end from the stock.

The *Leilan Artifice* is known by a few other names—sun buster, day slinger, sun gun—but is a singularly unique, nearly legendary weapon. When filled with holy water (the object has capacity enough to hold four “shots” at a time) and fired, the divine liquid is transformed into sound. The wielder makes a ranged touch attack against their target; if this is a single attack as a standard action, they deal 2d8+4 sonic damage on a successful hit. Any creatures in a straight line within the 80 foot range increment and behind a successfully hit target of this attack must succeed on a DC 17 Reflex save or take 1d8+2 sonic damage.

As a full-attack action, every attack the wielder makes that round is at an additional -3 penalty and on a successful hit, the *Leilan Artifice* deals 1d8+2 sonic damage. Reloading one vial of holy water is a swift action that can be reduced to a free action with the Rapid Reload feat.

The *Leilan Artifice* (which counts as good-aligned) has a maximum range of 80 feet (all one range increment); any attacks made to targets outside of that range deal no damage as the sound dissipates. Evil and undead creatures take 2d6 fire damage when touching the *Leilan Artifice* and cannot activate its abilities.

Creating new ammunition cases for the *Leilan Artifice* requires a **DC 14 Knowledge (religion) check** followed by a **DC 18 Craft (alchemy) check**, and ten minutes to create one specialized vial. Crafting a new *Leilan Artifice* is even more difficult, requiring a **DC 22 Knowledge (religion) check** and **DC 32 Craft (weapons) check**, in addition to the standard magic item construction requirements.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *light*, *major creation*, *sound burst*; **Cost** 32,000 gp

LEILAN'S NIGHTMARE

1ST (TWO RELICS)

Out of the corner of your eye, the town priest's scowl is punctuated by a, “harumph”. Looking at the few holy symbols about his little church, you notice a strangeness to each—they all seem bent ever so slightly out of shape. His face turns to anguish when you point it out, and his woeful cries carry you back off into the darkness of sleep.

2ND (THREE RELICS)

Children scream as disembodied hands the size of a large man crash through the glass of a dirtied window and slam against the door. You raise your invention up and fire, a cascading ball of light engulfing the invading creature and blasting it away from the house, the incandescence blinding you and ending in only darkness.

3RD (FOUR RELICS)

Groups of undead charge from out of the impossibly dark blob on the top of the hill. As you blast bursts of light through their ranks, the energy briefly illuminates the darkened stone of wall behind them. Darkness quickly fills in the gaps and extends outward, wrapping around you and dragging you back to sleep once more.

4TH (FIVE RELICS)

With your companions all dead or missing, you fire into the darkness at figures that lurk everywhere, only for each to reappear before long. The punctuated blasts of light are barely warning enough to catch the sight of a dashing armored humanoid behind you, but the tip of its blades are the last thing you see—forcing you awake with a start, your eyes aching with pain and your vision filled with stars.

QUEST 5

RITUAL OF THE SUNLORD

As soon as the PCs have collected all of the Order of Light's relics (the *amulet of the sacred grove*, *silver quickbow*, *Noltsledge*, *Kylian starknives* and *Leilan Artifice*), a shining gold light emanates from each, all pointing toward the meadows south of Jayel's Cabin.

When you pick up the final relic from the coffin, a blinding flash of light jumps from each of the enchanted armaments to the next. They all begin to glow with a bright golden light, forming a continuous stream of luminescence that creates a compass amongst you, pointing towards the center of Holdenshire county.

Shining daylight breaks upward from beneath the dirt where the last, truly final agent of the Order of Light rests—Torrence, son of Borgoff the ranger. Following in his father's footsteps led to both a life of the cloth and Holdenshire county. It was he that placed all of the traps and protections in the tombs, organizing their protection in the event that Nemirtvi was let loose upon the world once more. With all five of the relics collected, Torrence has been called back from the afterlife (a place he has only the *vaguest* memories of) to insure that the vampire lord is put to rest again. As soon as the party nears the daylight, he bursts from the ground with a gift from beyond.

The stream of light in the dirt erupts into a spray of rays that swirl and form into a spirit composed of sunlight, carrying the visage of a handsome man late in his years. His eyes twinkle with a particularly blinding radiance as he nods towards you and bows, speaking in a voice that resonates with your very soul. "I am Torrence, son of the Order of Light. It is good you have awoken me—an ancient danger threatens these lands. I bring with me a gift to fight it, for if you do not, an evil as old as time may consume this world."

The spirit reaches inside of itself and begins to dim considerably before pulling a small, incredibly bright ball of energy from its torso. Torrence flings it up into the air where it shoots into the sky, growing ever brighter until all of the countryside basks underneath an artificial sun.

The daylight from Torrence's artificial sun lasts for an entire, uninterrupted week. Any villagers (or PCs) still suffering from

A SCENE OF HEROISM

At this point the PCs have a number of powerful weapons and are much higher level than the lesser monsters that have been roaming Holdenshire—give them a moment to shine in this small victory before they brave Nemirtvi's true horrors. Consider cinematizing this event, especially if the party has all of their resources, and get the game focused on what's to come.

the effects of one of Nemirtvi's curses is immediately cured, and the disposition of all of the townsfolk improves to Friendly. Before departing with fond wishes for the party, Torrence gifts two coins to the adventurers: *tokens of revival*.

TOKEN OF REVIVAL

Aura moderate conjuration (healing); **CL** 9th
Slot none; **Price** 7,000 gp; **Weight** —

DESCRIPTION

This small coin is made of diamond and bears the symbol of the Order of Light in gold—a shining sun.

A creature may break the *token of revival* after one minute of Strength checks (causing fatigue should they fail a DC 15 Fortitude save) and press the remains against the corpse of a creature. So long as the dead creature has at least 3 hit dice and was slain less than 10 minutes before this process begins, it is brought back to life with 1 hit point and two permanent negative levels. There is a 20% chance that a target slain creature is *reincarnated* instead (as per the spell, but taking immediate effect).

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, diamond worth 5,000 gp, *raise dead*, *reincarnation*; **Cost** 6,000 gp (including diamond)

However, the vampire lord responds quickly, urging all of his agents (save Lord Pemberton) to rush to the source of the daylight and kill the adventurers as quickly as possible! Any remaining enemies from the Shades of the Past Encounters Table appear nearby and engage in combat; if their numbers are already heavily diminished, include creatures from the Terrors Across the Countryside Encounters Table.

As the dimming spirit fades, its eyes snap open with fear and it excitedly yells something, but his voice fades faster than his form and he quickly disappears. Then from over the hill you can hear the shuffling of grass and dragging of dirt, along with a low, baleful dirge. In the clear sunlight, from around the valleys and over their crests are undead from across Holdenshire, gathered into hordes that advance on your position at an unforgiving pace!

CONTINUING THE QUEST

With the mental persuasions of the vampires banished in Torrence's sunlight, the citizens of Hengistbury and Thornbury realize that they were being manipulated by something—or more accurately, someone—in Hengistbury Keep. The Lord Pemberton's control has slipped from Ariel and Prirkka, and only Lady Sybil Pemberton is under his sway. Everyone that spoke against the party throughout the **Rumour Battle** confesses their compelled sins to the PCs and the presence of a vampire within the towns emerges as an inevitable truth.

The PCs may be distracted, however, as one section of Holdenshire seems to resist the sunlight that emanates from the Order of Light's final gift—Brockendale Castle remains enshrouded by a cloying darkness.

MONSTERS & NPCs

FEYBLIND GOBLIN

CR 6 • XP 2,400

Cursed by nature for their meddling, Nemirtvi has stoked the diseases left by the fey that hexed these goblins. Now they are almost entirely blind and their once mighty band has been reduced to only the strongest among them.

Male mutated goblin fighter 4/barbarian (invulnerable rager) 2
CE Medium humanoid (goblinoid)
Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 30 ft. (special); Perception -1

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 13, flat-footed 19 (+2 Dex, +1 dodge, +9 natural)
hp 59 (4d10+2d12+24); fast healing 1
Fort +11, **Ref** +3, **Will** +0
Immune acid, mind-affecting effects, paralysis, poison; **DR** 1/-
Weakness feyblindness (as the *clouded vision* oracle curse)

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.
Melee +1 *longsword* +13/+8 (1d8+8, Crit 19-20/x2) or *mwk handaxe* +9/+4 (1d6+5, Crit x3) or *silver dagger* +11/+6 (1d4+5, Crit 19-20/x2)
Special Attacks breath weapon

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 15, **Con** 16, **Int** 3, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 10
Base Atk +6; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 24
Feats Dodge, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Toughness, Weapon Focus (*longsword*), Weapon Specialization (*longsword*)
Skills Intimidate +5, Survival +6 (+10 to track by scent when raging)
Languages Common, Goblin
SQ armor training, fast movement, invulnerability, rage 7 rounds/day, rage power (scent)
Gear +1 *longsword*, *mwk handaxe*, *silver dagger*

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Breath Weapon (Su) Once every 1d4 rounds as a standard action, the trooper can spew a 60-foot line of foul-smelling and acidic blood from his mouth, dealing 3d6 points of acid damage to all creatures struck (Reflex DC 16 halves). A creature that takes damage from the foul-smelling acid must also make a DC 16 Fortitude save or be nauseated for 1 round. The save DCs are Constitution-based.

VAMPIRE SPAWN OGRE (ADVANCED)

CR 5 • XP 1,600

CE Large humanoid (giant)
Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; **Perception** +6

DEFENSE

AC 26, touch 11, flat-footed 24 (+4 armor, +2 Dex, +11 natural, -1 size)

hp 30 (4d8+8); fast healing 2
Fort +6, **Ref** +3, **Will** +6
Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4; **DR** 10/magic and silver; **Resist** cold 10, electricity 10;
Immune undead traits
Weaknesses vampire weaknesses

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft. (40 ft. base)
Melee greatclub +10 (2d8+12)
Ranged javelin +4 (1d8+8)
Special Attacks blood drain, dominate (DC 14)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

STATISTICS

Str 27, **Dex** 14, **Con** -, **Int** 10, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 15
Base Atk +3; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 24
Feats Iron Will, Toughness
Skills Climb +12, Perception +10
Languages Giant
SQ gaseous form, shadowless, spider climb

CRYPT THING

CR 5 • XP 1,600

Shreds of leathery flesh cling to this skeletal figure's body, while twin motes of fiery light glow deep in its eye sockets.

NE Medium undead
Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +15
Aura fear (10 ft., frightened for 1d4 rounds, **Will** DC 16 negates)

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 13, flat-footed 16 (+2 Dex, +1 dodge, +6 natural)
hp 52 (8d8+16)
Fort +4, **Ref** +6, **Will** +8
Defensive Abilities channel resistance +2; DR 10/bludgeoning or magic; Immune undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.
Melee 2 claws +10 (1d8+4)
Special Attacks teleporting burst
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th; concentration +10) 3/day—quicken *dimension door*

STATISTICS

Str 19, **Dex** 14, **Con** —, **Int** 13, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 15
Base Atk +6; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 23
Feats Alertness, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes
Skills Bluff +6, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (arcana) +6, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +5, Knowledge (history) +3, Perception +15, Sense Motive +15, Stealth +9
Languages Common

ECOLOGY

Environment any underground
Organization solitary
Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Teleporting Burst (Su) Once per day, a crypt thing can teleport all creatures within 50 feet of it to randomly determined locations. The crypt thing can only affect creatures of which it is aware and to which it has line of sight. A successful DC 16 Will save negates this effect. An affected creature is teleported in a random direction (roll 1d8, with 1 indicating north and the other numbers indicating compass going clockwise) and a random distance (1d10 × 100 feet) away from the crypt thing; determine each creature's direction randomly. A teleported creature arrives in the closest open space to the determined destination, but must appear on a solid surface capable of supporting its weight. If there is no appropriate destination in that direction, the creature does not teleport at all. The save DC is Charisma-based.

GARTHLANN, FERAL GIANT CR 10 • XP 9,600

Male advanced cave giant barbarian 1/fighter 2
CE Large humanoid (giant)
Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., low-light vision;
Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 11, flat-footed 21 (+4 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +8 natural, -1 size)
hp 118 (9d8+45 plus 1d12+2d10+15)
Fort +16, **Ref** +5, **Will** +5; +1 vs fear
Defensive Abilities ferocity, rock catching
Weaknesses light sensitivity

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft. (40 ft. in armor)
Melee battleaxe +17/+12 (2d6+12/×3) or 2 slams +16 (1d8+8)
Ranged rock +9 (1d8+8)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Special Attacks rage 7 rounds/day, rock throwing (100 ft)

TACTICS

During Combat Garthlann roams at night, charging out of the darkness to deliver a Vital Strike with full Power Attack.

Morale Garthlann is utterly insane, fighting to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 27, **Dex** 14, **Con** 21, **Int** 10, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 11
Base Atk +9; **CMB** +18; **CMD** 30
Feats Cleave, Dodge, Furious Focus, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Toughness, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (battleaxe)
Skills Climb +9, Intimidate +9, Perception +10, Stealth +10, Survival +17
Special Qualities axe wielder, feral, rage

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Feral (Ex) Garthlann drank a vial recovered from some dead merchants and ingested a unique alchemist's mutagen; he has been transformed

into a bestial version of his former self. Stronger, faster, and smarter at first seemed to be a boon, but Garthlann quickly found that his grasp on the moment was slipping. Searching for a cure led him to the Fogmoor, where the last of his sanity finally left him. He hunts the swamps, becoming the alpha predator of the bog with ease.

MORGH (ANTIPALADIN 2) CR 10 • XP 9,600

CE Medium undead
Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +25

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 16, flat-footed 18 (+5 Dex, +1 dodge, +8 natural)
hp 136 (14d8+2d10+64)
Fort +12, **Ref** +15, **Will** +15
Immune undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.
Melee 2 slams +18 (2d8+5 plus grab), tongue +13 melee touch (paralysis)
Special Attacks create spawn, paralysis (1d4 minutes, DC 21), smite good 1/day (+4 to attack, +2 to damage), touch of corruption 5/day (touch attack, 1d6 negative energy)

STATISTICS

Str 23, **Dex** 21, **Con** —, **Int** 11, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 18
Base Atk +12; **CMB** +18 (+22 grapple); **CMD** 34
Feats Ability Focus (paralysis), Dodge, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Perception), Spring Attack
Skills Acrobatics +19, Bluff +21, Climb +23, Perception +25, Stealth +22, Swim +20
SQ aura of evil, create spawn, detect good, unholy resilience

ECOLOGY

Environment Crypt of the Inevitable Sunset
Organization solitary
Treasure standard

ZOMBIE, FAST CR 1/2 • XP 200

This walking corpse wears only a few soiled rags, its flesh rotting off its bones as it stumbles forward with unnatural quickness, arms outstretched.

NE Medium undead
Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +0

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 12 (+2 Dex, +2 natural)
hp 12 (2d8+3)
Fort +0, **Ref** +2, **Will** +3
Immune undead traits

OFFENSE

Spd 40 ft.
Melee 2 slams +4 (1d6+4)
Special Attacks quick strikes

STATISTICS

Str 17, **Dex** 14, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 10
Base Atk +1; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 16
Feats ToughnessB

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Quick Strikes (Ex) Whenever a fast zombie takes a full-attack action, it can make one additional slam attack at its highest base attack bonus.

CRAZED TROLL (ADVANCED) CR 7 XP • 3,200

CE Large humanoid (giant)
Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; **Perception** +13

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 13, flat-footed 16 (+4 Dex, +7 natural, –1 size)
hp 75 (6d8+48); regeneration 5 (acid or fire)
Fort +13, **Ref** +7, **Will** +5
Immune enchantments, mind-affecting effects; **SR** 17

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.
Melee bite +10 (1d8+7), 2 claws +8 (1d6+7)
Ranged large heavy crossbow +8 (2d8, Crit 19–20/x2)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Special Attacks rend (2 claws, 1d6+10)

STATISTICS

Str 25, **Dex** 20, **Con** 27, **Int** 10, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 10
Base Atk +4; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 27
Feats Improved Initiative, Intimidating Prowess, Iron Will, Skill Focus (Perception)
Skills Intimidate +16, Perception +13
Languages Giant
Gear large heavy crossbow with 20 bolts

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Babble (Su) The crazed trolls constantly mutters to themselves, creating a hypnotic effect. All sane creatures within 60 feet of a crazed troll must succeed at a DC 13 Will save or be fascinated for 2d4 rounds. While a target is fascinated, the crazed troll can approach it without breaking the effect, but an attack by the crazed troll does end the effect. Creatures that successfully save cannot be affected by the same crazed troll's babble for 24 hours. This is a sonic, mind-affecting compulsion effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Crazed (Su) Nemirtvi has driven any pretense of logical thought from the minds of these trolls, leaving only the alacrity of the moment in its place. These trolls now move faster, act more quickly, are immune to enchantments and mind-affecting effects, possess spell resistance (11 + hit die), and has the babble and madness supernatural abilities of an allip.

Madness (Su) Anyone targeting a crazed troll with a thought detection, mind control, or telepathic effect makes direct contact with its tortured mind and takes 1d4 points of Wisdom damage.

GRAVEN GUARDIAN

CR 5 • 1,600

This jackal-headed, brightly painted clay statue animates and lurches forward, hefting a wickedly hooked sword.

N Medium construct

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +1

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 18 (+2 Dex, +8 natural)
hp 53 (6d10+20); fast healing 2
Fort +2, **Ref** +4, **Will** +3
DR 5/adamantine; Immune construct traits; **SR** 16
Weaknesses faith bound

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.
Melee +1 keen scimitar +10/+5 (1d6+5/15–20 plus bleed) or slam +9 (1d6+4)
Special Attacks bleed 2, magic weapon, rest eternal
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th; concentration +0) 1/day—haste (self only)

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 15, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 1
Base Atk +6; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 21
SQ guardian domains (Death, Repose)

ECOLOGY

Environment any land
Organization solitary, band (2–4), or assembly (5–12)
Treasure incidental (masterwork scimitar, other treasure)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Faith Bound (Su) A graven guardian cannot attack any creature that openly wears or displays the holy or unholy symbol of the deity to which the graven guardian is dedicated unless that creature first attacks the graven guardian.

Magic Weapon (Su) A graven guardian that carries its deity's favored weapon treats that weapon as a +1 weapon as long as it is wielded by the guardian. If the weapon is a melee weapon, it gains the keen weapon special ability (even if the weapon is a bludgeoning weapon). If it is a thrown weapon, it gains the returning weapon special ability. If it is a ranged weapon, it gains the seeking weapon special ability, and generates new ammunition with each attack (this ammunition is destroyed whether or not it hits).

Darkness (Su) The graven guardian can cast darkness two times per day as a spell-like ability.

Bleed (Ex) The graven guardian's weapon deals 2 points of bleed damage on a hit.

DROW MAGE

CR 7 XP • 3,200

Male drow sorcerer 8
 NE Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft.; **Perception** +8

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 15 (+1 deflection, +3 Dex, +4 *mage armor*)
hp 44 (8d6+16)

Fort +2, **Ref** +5, **Will** +6; +2 vs enchantments
Defensive Abilities drow immunities; **SR** 14; **DR** 5/— (nonlethal only); **Resist** cold 5
Weaknesses light blindness

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.
Melee +1 *dagger* +4 (1d4, Crit 19-20/x2)
Ranged +1 *light crossbow* +8 (1d8, Crit 19-20/x2)
Bloodline Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th; concentration +12)
 7/day—grave touch (shaken 4 rounds or frightened 1 round if fewer hit die)
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th; concentration +12)
 1/day—*dancing lights*, *darkness*, *faerie fire*
Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 8th; concentration +12)
 0th—*acid splash*, *bleed*, *detect magic*, *disrupt undead*,
mage hand, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost*, *touch of fatigue*
 1st (7/day)—*burning hands* (DC 17), *mage armor*,
magic missile, *shield*, *vanish*; *chill touch*
 2nd (7/day)—*blindness/deafness*, *invisibility*,
scorching ray; *false life*
 3rd (6/day)—*fireball* (DC 19), *lightning bolt* (DC 19);
vampiric touch
 4th (4/day)—*enervation*
Bloodline undead

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 16, **Con** 10, **Int** 14, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 18
Base Atk +4; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 16
Feats Combat Casting, Eschew Materials, Greater Spell Focus (evocation), Improved Initiative, Spell Focus (evocation); Toughness
Skills Acrobatics +9, Bluff +13, Perception +8, Sense Motive +4, Spellcraft +11, Stealth +7;
Racial Modifiers +2 Perception
Languages Common, Dwarven, Elven, Undercommon
SQ Cantrips, death's gift, keen senses, poison use, weapon familiarity
Gear +1 *dagger*, +1 *light crossbow*, +1 *ring of protection*, *potion of fly*, *potion of cure serious wounds*, 189 gold pieces, masterwork manacles

DROW WARRIOR

CR 6 • XP 2,400

Male drow ranger 7
 NE Medium humanoid (elf)
Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft.; **Perception** +13

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge)
hp 45 (7d10+7)
Fort +5, **Ref** +8, **Will** +3; +2 vs enchantments
Defensive Abilities drow immunities; **SR** 13
Weaknesses light blindness

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.
Melee +1 *longsword* +11/+6 (1d8+4, Crit 19-20/x2) or +1 *longsword* +9/+4 (1d8+4, Crit 19-20/x2) and +1 *shortsword* +9/+4 (1d6+4, Crit 19-20/x2)
Ranged longbow +10/+5 (1d8, Crit x3, Range 100 ft.)
Special Attacks favored enemy (humans +4, elves +2)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th; concentration +7)
 1/day—*dancing lights*, *darkness*, *faerie fire*
Ranger Spells Prepared (CL 3rd; concentration +5)
 1st—*hunter's howl*, *lead blades*

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 16, **Con** 11, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10
Base Atk +7; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 23
Feats Dodge, Double Slice, Weapon Focus (shortsword), Weapon Focus (longsword); Endurance, Two-Weapon Fighting, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting
Skills Acrobatics +10, Bluff +7, Perception +13, Sense Motive +8, Stealth +13, Survival +11;
Racial Modifiers +2 Perception
Languages Common, Elven, Undercommon
SQ combat Style (two-weapon combat), favored terrain (mountain), hunter's bond (crows and bats in the swarms), keen senses, poison use, track, weapon familiarity, wild empathy, woodland stride
Gear +1 *longsword*, +1 *shortsword*, +1 *arrows* (7), longbow (20 arrows), masterwork chain shirt, *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *potion of invisibility*

SPECTRE OF TAMAS AGRENS

CR 9 • XP 6,400

(ADVANCED, FIENDISH)

LE Medium undead (incorporeal)
Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +19
Aura unnatural aura (30 ft.)

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 19, flat-footed 14 (+4 deflection, +5 Dex)
hp 52 (8d8+32)
Fort +6, **Ref** +7, **Will** +11
Defensive Abilities incorporeal, channel resistance +2; **DR** 5/good; **Resist** Cold 10, Fire 10; **SR** 14
Weaknesses resurrection vulnerability, sunlight powerlessness

OFFENSE

Speed fly 80 ft. (perfect)
Melee incorporeal touch +12 (1d8 plus energy drain)
Special Attacks create spawn, energy drain (2 levels, DC 18), smite good 1/day (+4 to attack, +8 damage)

TACTICS

During Combat Tamas' spectre floats beneath the ground under his opponents, rising up to attack them from below before moving back out of sight.

STATISTICS

Str —, **Dex** 20, **Con** —, **Int** 18, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 19
Base Atk +6; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 23
Feats Blind-Fight, Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Perception)
Skills Fly +13, Intimidate +15, Knowledge (history) +12, Knowledge (religion) +15, Perception +19, Stealth +16, Survival +13
Languages Common

ECOLOGY

Environment Mausoleum of the Sunbeam
Organization solitary (attacks with drow)

ACT III



BANISHING THE
VAMPIRE LORD

Welcome to the final act of our macabre tale! In this last part of *To Stake A Vampire*, the party unveils Lord Pemberton as a vampire himself! He escapes to Castle Brockendale, where the artificial sunlight granted by the spirit of Torrence from the Order of Light fails to pierce inky darkness that hangs to the fort. Within the party contents with adventurers already corrupted by the vampires, the ghosts of slain victims, an ancient dungeon, swift underground currents, and finally a labyrinth made by Nemirtvi's lackey, long ago.

Reaching Nemirtvi's Abattoir is only the first of their tasks.

To permanently destroy the vampire lord, the party first has to mend Nemirtvi's Vein to Deepcrest Chasm. Whether the adventurers already sealed the rift to slay Cirothe is irrelevant—if so, Nemirtvi's insidious power has created new cracks through which his essence can leak back into the Material Plane. The PCs are faced with a tough decision, however—one of the relics must be sacrificed to insure that the vein remains closed from the primal evil permanently, otherwise the seal the relics make may not be enough as time drags ever onward. The path is treacherous and filled with terrors the vampire lord has contracted to protect the area around his connection to the rift, and the adventurers must best them to put a permanent end to him.

After they've blocked off Nemirtvi's access to the other realms, he and Lord Pemberton await them in his crypt—along with scores of immaculate wax statues all made to look exactly like the vampire lord. The PCs are forced into a deadly guessing game as the undead mount their final assault, and the relics from the Order of Light prove decisive in the final battle! As before, the holy relics offer the adventurers an opportunity they may not have had otherwise, and by sacrificing one of the treasures, they may be able to restore Lord Pemberton back to his normal self.

Phew—with that over, you should take a second to relax: this is the easiest part of *To Stake a Vampire* to run! What comes next is the final act of the adventure, an old-fashioned dungeon crawl, some location-based encounters, and finally an epic battle in the vampire's tomb. There won't be any tracking of multiple NPCs, or juggling of quests—the tale is drawing to a (dramatic) close.

FINDING THE VAMPIRE LORDS

To permanently bring an end to the dark curse that threatens Holdenshire county, the PCs have to locate and destroy those responsible for it—Lord Pemberton and the vampire lord, Nemirtvi. When confronted, the ruler throws off his guise as a living man and flees to the northeast, toward Brockendale Castle. Penetrating the depths of the abandoned fort is nearly the last great task the party undertakes, and they'll have to overcome a number of challenges to reach the true lair of Nemirtvi.

- Find the last bit of corruption in Holdenshire
- Overcome the turned Troublemakers adventuring party
- Defeat ancient monsters in Brockendale Dungeon
- Forge the subterranean Dark River
- Navigate Gortag the Mad's Maze

CONGREGATION AT THE TEMPLE

Adventurers close to Brockendale Castle may make for that locale first, but before they arrive one of the villagers seeks them out to attend an imperative town meeting where their presence is required—the gypsies have taken the sunlight as a sign and revealed their fears to the common folk. Otherwise, the adventurers find that most of Thornbury has been abandoned, but countless tracks lead to Hengistbury. In the larger village everyone is crowded around the temple as the gypsies engage with the two adjutants, Prirkka and Ariel.

Outside of the Temple are several villagers pressing to get inside, but they part ways to allow your entry into the crowded building as you approach. Stephanie Rosewynd stands near the altar, pointing at Lady Sybil Pemberton's servant girls. "You swear on your life that you've not seen hide nor hair of the unholy? No dark presence has clouded your minds or guided your actions? How can you be sure? Two simple girls with no inkling of the true curse that blights Holdenshire?" Prirkka's response is drowned out by the crowd hollering for their blood, but they all come to a quiet when you enter into the large, packed room.

Saraz bint Farad bint Aquilah has been sitting in repose beside Stephanie, her eyes misty as she stares at the two servant girls. Her gaze turns toward you as she stands up and gestures towards Prirkka and Ariel, saying, "we have all spoken and come to an understanding. Many of us have been misled, cajoled, and fed falsities by these two—of that we have no doubts. They have slandered your names and turned us against you, and for that, we are truly sorry. Their motives are unclear however, and my mystical talents detect that they still bear innocence. Your actions as of late mark you as true heroes, a group of samaritans we all respect—tell us, what should be done with them?"

The two servant girls do have suspicions of what's been going on, but are reticent to reveal them. Lady Sybil has been a blessing to both and they are fiercely loyal to her—and they know how deeply she loves her husband. Neither can recall actually seeing Lord Pemberton within the past few months—at all—and they suspect he may be at fault, either intentionally or otherwise. Coercing them with gold won't work, but a sincere offer of amnesty (DC 13 Charisma check), a sufficiently frightening threat (DC 14 Intimidate check), or a genuine attempt at negotiation (DC 16 Diplomacy check) changes the girls' minds.

With the danger looming over them all made obvious by the party, the duo becomes forthcoming with what they know.

Lord Pemberton certainly seems to be bedridden—he and Lady Sybil haven't been seen leaving their chambers since the harvest festival. Both are having trouble remembering exactly what was going on in the past several weeks, and they have no memory of speaking ill of the adventures (whom they genuinely like). When pressed, Ariel reveals that the daily meals from the kitchen for the Lord and Lady have become smaller and less frequent, though she assumed that the cleric was fasting to appease her god. Prirrka, arguably the second closest person to Lady Sybil in all of Holdenshire (aside from her husband), has noticed something strange as well: Lady Sybil has taken an extremely strong liking to scarves, shawls, and stoles.

If the PCs haven't pieced together that Lord Pemberton is probably a vampire, the gypsies point out that the servant girls' inability to recall their actions is a clear indicator of a manipulator of some kind inside Hengistbury Keep. The villagers remain at the Temple for a few hours, fortifying it against attacks by the undead, but when they realize the sunlight is going to persist they return to their homes. Once a sunset finally does come at the end of the week, if the PCs haven't already lifted the scourge of Nemirtvi from Holdenshire, they find the Temple has been packed full of every one of the townsfolk, each ready to fight for their lives.

The general attitudes of the villagers have improved dramatically and they happily share what resources they can, making 3d6 bottles of holy water freely available to the PCs along with 6 *potions of cure moderate wounds*.

CONFRONTING LORD PEMBERTON

Hengistbury Keep is worked by a skeletal crew of servants, a bare minimum even fewer than the scant assistants the Lord and Lady Pemberton keep on their estate. A **DC 22 Knowledge (local) check** recognizes that many of the people normally found tending the grounds and doings of the castle are among those that first went missing. The butler is nowhere to be found, but one of the few menial workers cooking in the kitchen, tending the animals, or cleaning the halls tells the party that the Lord and Lady have changed bedrooms. With all the new threats roaming the countryside, Lady Sybil insisted that they be moved from their normal chambers to a more defensible room in the center of the castle.

The doors to their bedchambers are made of solid iron three inches thick (Break DC 30, Hardness 10, 90 hp) and secured with a superior lock (**DC 40 Disable Device check**). Lady Sybil is hysterical when the PCs arrive, insisting that her husband is terribly ill and that they cannot grant an audience under any circumstance. While unlikely, a talented adventurer might succeed in getting her to open the door with a **DC 36 Diplomacy check** but the party probably has to take the door off or enter through some other means.



The inside of the Lord and Lady Pemberton's bedchambers are darkened, lit by only one everburning torch on each corner of the eighty foot square room. Lady Sybil is distraught, screaming at you to leave as you enter the room. She sits alongside the bed on the far wall, her hands holding her pale husband nervously. Lord Pemberton stares at you and his pallow, sunken face gazes at you dispassionately, weakly waving one hand for you to leave them be.

Lord Pemberton has been waiting for the PCs; all of the missing servants have been turned, made into vampire spawn that were all called back to his home when the artificial sun of the Order of Light appeared. When the adventurers arrive at the door, he calls them all back to aid in his defense. Lord Pemberton tries to draw the party into the room, playing them with guilt, lies, and whatever other non-invasive means he has at his disposal. When all of the PCs have entered into the chamber, he orders the vampire spawn to appear and attack the PCs before manifesting *gaseous form* and floating down a crack in the corner of the room nearest his bed.

As soon as the assault begins, Lady Sybil faints (as commanded via Lord Pemberton's dominate ability) and he disappears down the crack in the floor as 12 vampire spawn drop from the rafters, forming out of gas themselves to attack the party. Lord Pemberton has already prepared an escape route; the crack in the corner leads down through the castle into a 4-inch channel dug through the earth, heading in a vaguely serpentine manner towards the northeast until it expands into a man-size tunnel. After traveling a mile or so the vampire starts to collapse the tunnel in spots to hide his trail, but a **DC 12 Survival** or **DC 10 Knowledge (geography)** check recognizes that the nearest places to hide are the Quarry and the other keep, covered in a miasma of darkness—Brockendale Castle.

- **12 × VAMPIRE SPAWN** (see page @@ in the Monster Index for Act I).

TURNED TROUBLEMAKERS

Already a thorn in Lord Pemberton's side, when the troublemaking adventuring group—Old Jovan, Mossad, Andrew Nemeth and Bluestone—accidentally stumbled upon the undead subversions, the vampire took great satisfaction from subduing each. Nemirtvi, keen to get back to his morbid experimentations, took to the quartet with relish, morphing their flesh and minds to sharpen talents for flaying that the vampire lord honed over centuries of inflicting torture.

All four of them have been turned into the unquestioning undead devotees of the vampire lord, driven by his whim to patrol the base floors of Brockendale Castle. Just as in life, Bluestone is still hated by his companions—while the other three travel together in a group, the corrupted wizard remains alone in the ruins of the southwesternmost tower. He's expected to spot anyone approaching Brockendale Castle, alerting the others and drawing their prey toward his location with newfound undead abilities before engaging the PCs. 1d4 rounds later Jovan,

Mossad, and Andrew Nemeth arrive to join the fray. All of the surface within 100 feet of the estate is under the effects of a *darkness* spell (CL 12th).

- **1 × CORRUPTED BLUESTONE**
- **1 × CORRUPTED OLD JOVAN**
- **1 × CORRUPTED MOSSAD**
- **1 × CORRUPTED ANDREW NEMETH**

BROCKENDALE'S LOWER DUNGEONS

After the corrupted adventuring group is defeated, the party's way into Brockendale Castle is no longer guarded. Much of the place is as the PCs remember it—abandoned. Following the tracks left by the turned troublemakers is a simple task; a **DC 14 Survival** check shows that they emerged from the lower dungeons. Their trail leads to a door in the upper dungeon's floor, and though the undead that once protected it are no longer there, far more terrible creatures lurk below.

As you descend into the dungeons of Brockendale, you can see a splatter of blood leading toward a trap door in the floor. The worn, dirty stone blocks are marred with scratch marks of where something tried—unsuccessfully—to claw its way up and out.

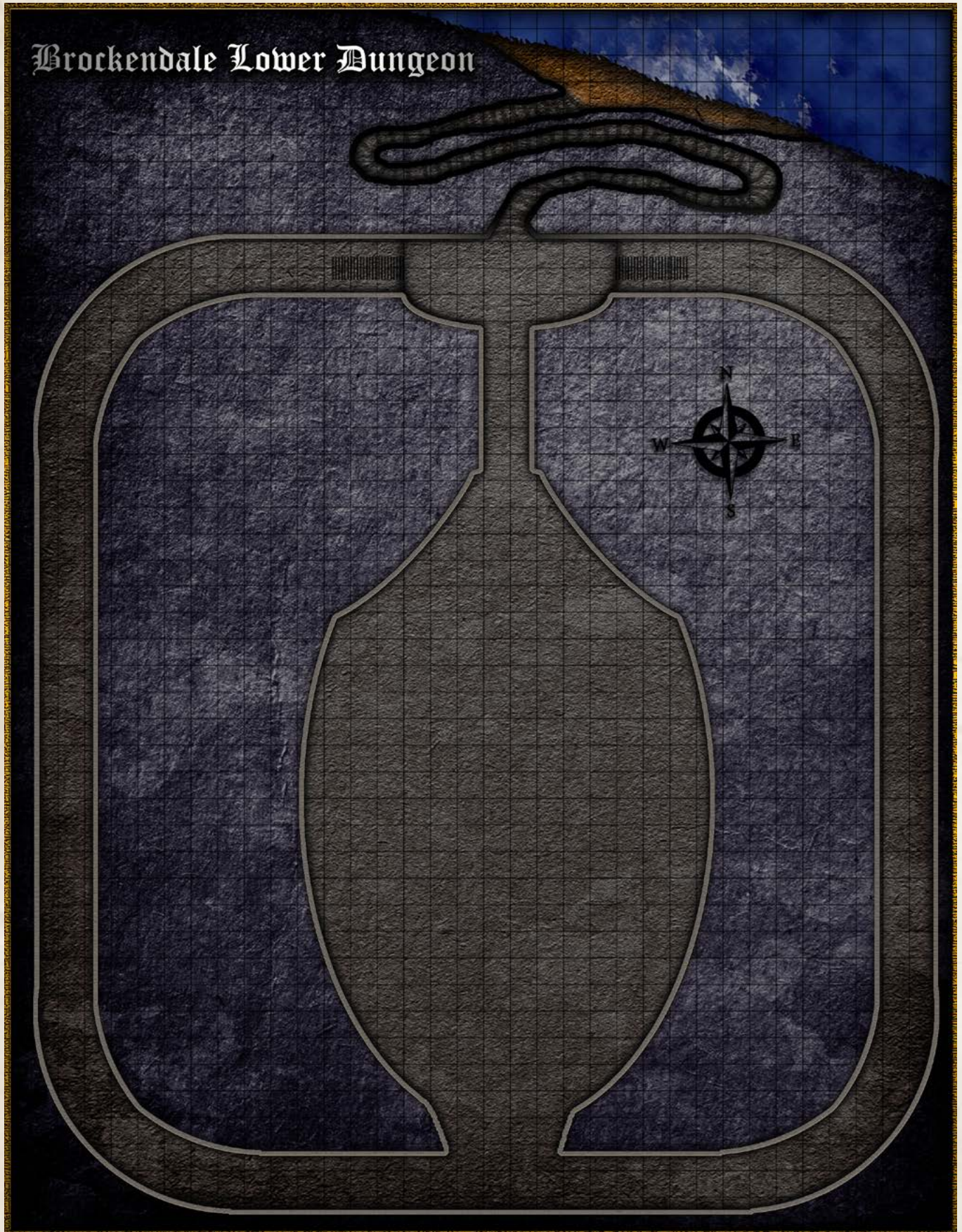
Nemirtvi is not a mage or mystic, but the nature of immortality has led him to take to experimentation in the unnatural regardless of his lack of talent for it. Before being sealed away by the Order of Light centuries ago, the vampire lord mastered the creation and summoning of many undead and several unique monsters. They stalk the hallways, large chambers, and otherwise abandoned cells.

Dropping through the trap door you enter into a wide tunnel heading east and west, facing a large entryway to a vast chamber. Along the walls inside of it you can see manacles hanging from the walls, many still shackled to the wrists of prisoners long dead. Large splotches of dried blood stain the old stone bricks that make up the place. A cold wind blows throughout this dungeon, bearing the scents of two disturbing odors—death and the unnatural.

With the waking of the vampire lord many of his slain victims have been drawn back to the Material Plane and now haunt the lower dungeons as will-o'-wisps. A grand central chamber, made to house several dozen of prisoners along the walls, is the lair of an advanced shantak lured and trapped here by Nemirtvi. In the western hall lurks a nue, and the eastern hall is the territory of a trio of giant manticores. A staircase in the northern annex leads farther below, into a large cavern with a swift river.

- **4 × WILL-O'-WISP**
- **3 × GIANT MANTICORES**
- **1 × ADVANCED SHANTAK**
- **1 × NUE**

Brockendale Lower Dungeon



FORGING THE DARK RIVER

After descending down into the subterranean cavern, PCs that succeed on a **DC 22 Perception check** can see an opening in the wall—Lord Pemberton's miniature escape tunnel. A second hole (located with a **DC 30 Perception check**) is on the sloping wall that hugs the roof of the cave, running down into the swift current of water that consumes most of the natural chamber (after 10 feet, the tiny inches-wide tunnel is collapsed).

Heading down deeper into the complex, the sound of rushing water becomes omnipresent as the worked stone stairs change to carved rock steps and the familiar constructed walls spread up and away into a vast natural cavern.

Down a small rocky slope is a wide river that runs up against the cave's sloping ceiling. As you approach the shore, you can hear an ominous cracking repeat itself underneath the noise of the rapidly rushing water.

The Dark River is an underground waterway that borders much of the vampire lord's abode. Standing along its shore, the PCs see only a small portion of it—the southernmost half, which has only 100 feet of visible surface. This part of the river comprises a mere 15% of its width; 50 feet of the northern side has surface water, and 620 feet of the channel is entirely submerged under unworked stone.

All of the natural features of the Dark River were enhanced by Nemirtvi's most powerful servant long ago, an integral part of a labyrinth that was meant to buy freedom. Gortag the Mad was an exceptional mage that simply delved too deeply into forbidden lore—the last time the vampire lord manifested, the mage was partly responsible and tethered to the vampire lord. Though he was a genius in his own right, unfortunately Gortag had no talent for sensing deceit and met an untimely, gruesome end at Nemirtvi's blades once his maze (and gradual loss of sanity) was complete.

Many of the brilliant innovations designed by Gortag the Mad are driven by the river, but the first defense of his labyrinth is the Dark River itself; the current moves 40 feet per round (taking any inanimate objects or flailing creatures with it). The current is extremely swift and PCs need to make a **DC 21 Swim check**

each round to traverse it. Further upstream is an unnatural deposit of magically regenerating sedimentary rock, which breaks apart in unnaturally large chunks that float swiftly through the waterway to pulverize anything within it. Spotting one of these rocks coming is difficult, requiring a **DC 21 Perception check**. PCs that can anticipate an incoming rock receive a +5 bonus to the **DC 17 Reflex save** to avoid it; failure on the save deals 1d8+4 bludgeoning damage. Every square after the initial ten feet of submerged water and before the last ten feet of submerged water has a 50% chance of having a rock float through it.

On the other side of the submerged part of the waterway, the party finds a shore after 50 feet of surface water. With the Dark River behind them, the PCs have but one more challenge before reaching Nemirtvi's lair—navigating the labyrinth of Gortag the Mad. This is also the last time the party has a chance to rest in peace; after entering the Mad Maze (and until the end of the adventure), anyone that sleeps for four hours or more is the target of a *nightmare* spell (CL 13th, DC 25 Will save), their dreams becoming even more vivid.

GORTAG THE MAD'S MAZE

Dwarven engineer and mage extraordinaire, the promising career of Gortag led to an unfortunate end after delving too deeply into forbidden lore that brought him to the attention of Nemirtvi. The ancient arcane rituals the dwarf engaged in bound his fate to the vampire lord's whim, and with such a powerful servant, the primordial evil entity made certain that his lair was well-protected. Beyond the Dark River and before his abattoir lay the legacy of Gortag, an impressive labyrinth.

Emerging out of the swift current of the Dark River, you wrestle yourself onto an unforgiving shore. The walls in front of you are covered in countless burned out runes of power above a ten foot tall doorway, all carved out of the stone in intricate dwarven script. Skeletons of the long dead litter the stone cavern's floor, gently rocking in the fierce, chilling wind coming off of the fast running water.

The labyrinth itself is a complex network of sloping corridors, decrepit steps, and countless dangers. All told it is 1,000 feet wide and across, its numerous corridors (all 15 feet tall and 10 feet wide) filled with creatures from the Terror Across The Countryside table and countless unholy traps—how often the PCs encounter either is entirely at the discretion of the GM (who is encouraged to add whatever other undead or monstrous horrors they see fit; beasts when PCs take a left turn, traps when they go right).

Magnetized Ore (CR 2) is wrought within the worked stone walls randomly throughout the dungeon (there's a 5% chance each hour the party happens by some), wreaking havoc on the use of compasses or natural sense of direction. Worse yet, every hour spent in Gortag the Mad's Maze there is a 5% chance that the party happens across Mnemonic Crystals (CR 3) (these hazards can be found in the **Hazards** section of the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game: Gamemastery Guide*).

PITONS

There are ample pits and divots to jam pitons in this part of the Dark River, and a PC can hammer one within just two rounds by making a Strength check (DC 17 - 1 per failed check). Unlike traditional climbing, a piton only needs to be anchored every 15 feet to be effective here. A DC 12 Climb check allows a creature to pull themselves along an anchored underwater line at half their base speed; failure on this check by less than 5 results in only moving 5 feet, and foregoing any Perception checks to see incoming hazards.



The tunnels have a sort of twisted capacity to them, and for every hour of travel, the PCs are more likely to realize some of its odder quirks. A **DC 20 Perception check** notices that their footprints sometimes meld into the very floor as soon as the tracks are out of sight, disappearing behind them, while a **DC 20 Survival check** spots footprints on the walls and ceiling. More abnormalities can be noticed with other skills, as the GM deems fit.

Below are two elements that are essential to Gortag the Mad's Maze: the forgotten route trap and the false path haunt, as well as a few unholy traps to spring on PCs (preferably once every 150 feet of travel). Without fail, every hour the adventurers cross the path of a forgotten route trap or encounter the false path haunt.

FALSE PATH HAUNT

CR 7 • XP 3,200

CN persistent haunt (within Gortag the Mad's Maze)
Caster Level 7th

Notice Perception DC 25 (to feel a sensation of déjà vu)
hp 31; **Trigger** proximity; **Reset** 1 hour

Effect When this haunt is triggered, the false memories of Gortag the Mad, the labyrinth's architect, assault anyone within the haunt's area. Those that fail a DC 15 Will save are shown a quick, flighty path that appears to lead out of the maze, on the side across from where they entered. This is entirely false, and only serves to further misdirect anyone that comes across it.

Destruction Bring an end to Nemirtvi the vampire lord's existence on the Material Plane.

FORGOTTEN ROUTE TRAP

CR 9

Type magical; **Perception** DC 29; **Disable Device** DC 29

EFFECTS

Trigger proximity (*alarm*); **Reset** automatic
Effect spell effect (*modify memory*, Will DC 16 or forget the path you've traveled for the last three hours or previous night, whichever is sooner); multiple targets (all creatures in a 30-ft.-radius circle centered on the creature that triggered the trap)

UNHOLY BLIGHT TRAP

CR 9

Type magical; **Perception** DC 29; **Disable Device** DC 29

EFFECTS

Trigger proximity (*alarm*); **Reset** automatic
Effect spell effect (*unholy blight*, 4d8 damage to good creatures, Will DC 16 halves or sickened 1d4 rounds; 2d8 damage to neutral creatures, Will DC 16 to halve); multiple targets (all creatures in a 20-ft.-radius circle centered on the creature that triggered the trap)

A MAPLESS DUNGEON

Gortag the Mad's Maze is designed to be a mapless dungeon; don't give the PCs a map other than their own. With the false path haunt and forgotten route traps, the PCs are likely to squabble and disagree quite often with one another about which way to go—play on that premise, just make sure that your larger map remains generally within the bounds of a 1,000 foot x 1,000 foot square. Remember that this can have as many levels up and down as you like: treat it is as an infinite tesseract, and if one of the party members actually manages to map out *your* mad designs, reward them a hefty amount of XP (5,000 or more) for their toil.

MADDENING FLASKS TRAP

CR 5

Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 25; **Disable Device** DC 25

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** none

Effect flasks of unholy water (Atk +10 ranged touch, 1 negative energy damage); on a hit, spell effect (*water of maddening*; **Fort** DC 14; on a success, sickened 1d4 rounds; on a failure, take 1d6 Intelligence and 1d6 Dexterity damage)

UNHOLY ICE JAVELINS TRAP

CR 9

Type magical; **Perception** DC 30; **Disable Device** DC 30

EFFECTS

Trigger proximity (*alarm*); **Reset** automatic

Effect 9 unholy ice javelins (Atk +8 ranged, 1d6 piercing + 1 cold + 1 negative energy damage); multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft.-radius circle)

Getting out of the labyrinth is actually rather simple; anyone that holds to the left five times in a row speedily crosses through it. Realizing this blaring flaw is a challenging task, however; a **DC 26 Knowledge (engineering) check** made every hour reveals the basic layout plan (every hour spent in Gortag the Mad's Maze reduces the DC of this check by 2.) Particularly insightful PCs may also realize the strange design with a **DC 24 Wisdom check** made every two hours (every two hours spent in Gortag the Mad's Maze reduces the DC of this check by 1.) When the party realizes that something is awry, allow them to make Sense Motive checks to have a hunch about what is wrong; a success grants a +5 circumstance bonus to the Wisdom check (but not any Knowledge checks).

As the PCs are making their exit from the labyrinth, the ghost of Gortag the Mad comes upon them.

As you finally reach the end of the labyrinth and emerge into a large natural cavern, you spot a languidly floating apparition wafting across the chilled subterranean breezes. The spirit appears to once have been a dwarf, though nearly half of the hair he had in life has fallen out to leave scabs that reveal ethereal bone beneath the incorporeal flesh. He was clearly in a sad state when death finally took him, and his behavior confirms it—he screams and jibbers a nearly incomprehensible rhyme as it approaches.

"Right light mend it right, mend the light alright right?

In the night we mend with light, right light mend it right.

Nemirtvi's night it needs a light to make it right, right right with the light right.

Nemirtvi's vain he sees in night, to end it now we forge the light, spend the light to break it right?"

Gortag the Mad (as you might expect) is indeed quite insane. His mind frayed before his masterpiece was completely finished, and his soul has wandered here ever since—because Nemirtvi persists on the Material Plane. The dwarf's spirit wants nothing more than to find rest and desperately attempts to convey an important message to the PCs: to permanently seal the vampire lord away from this world, they will have to sacrifice one of the artifacts from the Order of Light across the remains of Nemirtvi's Vein.

Getting much sense out of the ghost aside from his ramblings (which he repeats at length) is virtually impossible, but he seems like a nice enough entity for a ghost, even if he is completely off his rocker. If attacked, Gortag flees and returns after 1d6+4 rounds; if the adventurers don't assault him, he follows them up to the entrance of Nemirtvi's Abattoir, chanting the deranged rhyme over and over.

On the far side of the cavern lay the entrance to what can only be the lair of a truly evil entity. Outside of the foreboding entrance, all along the sides of the many wide steps that lead to a doorway barred by black iron, are grotesque figures. Dwarves, elves, humans—a great many races are collected among the disturbing sculptures. All share one common trait—each and every one is locked in a state of dismemberment, or worse. Some are stone, as if petrified at the most painful moment of their torture. The most troubling however are the ones that look life-like, almost as if they were simply frozen in the spot, but with no trace of ice or overwhelming cold.

A **DC 10 Heal check** reveals that the most life-like sculptures are actually wax carvings. Should any of the PCs cast *stone to flesh* or any other spells that might restore the victims that line the entrance to Nemirtvi's Abattoir, they curse their target to a brief, extremely painful existence that ends after three rounds of intense, agonizing screaming. Anyone that hears the death throes of these damned must make a **DC 15 Will save** against fear or become shaken for 1d4+1 hours. All of the statues are undead and in terrible pain; destroying them physically makes their death throes ring out, but the party only receives experience for cleansing them with positive energy.

- 1 × GORTAG THE MAD, GHOST

INSIDE OF NEMIRTVI'S ABATTOIR

After finding the lair of the true source of evil overcoming the realm, the adventurers have only two more tasks before them—but the vampire lord is bringing to bear all that he can to stop them. To seal Nemirtvi away forever, the PCs have to best a few more diabolical obstacles...

- Survive the vampire lord's most recent experimentations
- Mend Nemirtvi's Vein to Deepcrest Chasm
- See through a coterie of deception to defeat both Lord Pemberton and Nemirtvi

GROUND OF THE ABATTOIR

Entering the abattoir is a simple enough affair, but a large, heavy wrought-iron bar locks the front doors of his complex (from the outside). A DC 15 **Strength check** is sufficient to wrestle it up and off to allow entry.

Regardless of whether or not the adventurers closed the fissure in Deepcrest Chasm during *To Slay A Dragon*, the vampire lord has created and nurtured a leyline to the rift since his re-awakening. The phenomena isn't difficult to find—it sits in the annex of Nemirtvi's Abattoir and easily visible from the entrance to that chamber. Reaching it, however, is another matter entirely; all of his most recent and bizarre experiments (fiendish mongrelmen and giant manticores) roam the large central chamber and adjoining hallways. They are a ferocious and terrible lot compelled to patrol the grounds of the complex and react to any intrusion into Nemirtvi's lair. Each sortie is composed of a mage, two warriors, and a giant manticore.

CENTRAL CHAMBER

This area contains Nemirtvi's Vein and is always the last part of the upper complex to have a group of enemies (so the party should never find it to be empty until they've doled out some slaughter). It is an enormous chamber 60 feet wide, 100 feet long and 80 feet high. This is where the vampire lord performs most of his grotesque experiments and is filled with bloodied tables, rusty surgical implements, and exotic, noxious smelling reagents.

All across this huge room are massive stone pylons, around which are dozens of heavy wooden tables—all stained a deep crimson by blood. Shackles and manacles are fastened to the floor and walls near these slabs of timber, each covered in a smattering of rusted implements of malicious intent. Glass vials and experiments of all kinds sit in various states of progress throughout the room, sending the smell of numerous exotic and unfamiliar scents throughout this macabre laboratory. Sitting in the very center of chamber is an enormous black and red crystal of some kind, surrounded by a miasma of grey energies and spurting an ebony ichor of some sort onto the floor.

FIENDISH MONGRELMEN

These monsters play a large role in this section of the adventure and though there are two types (fighters and mages), this description is fitting for either:

A misshapen creature appears from the darkness, its mottled and chitinous skin the least disturbing aspect of its appearance. Though definitely humanoid, it is though the monster were made from pieces of different creatures—the arm of an orc, the ears of a dwarf, the lithe fingers of an elf, but with no symmetry or arrangement to the mishmash of limbs and appendages from different species. Worst of all is the smell of brimstone and sulfur it emanates, and the unsettling dark red scales and bloody horns that jut out from its body.

WESTERN SIDE HALL

All of the statues here are the carefully manicured, waxed or petrified remains of adventurers felled by Nemirtvi. His natural sense of sport (really, domination) compels him to keep this trophy room. There's a 5% chance on each of the 40 statues lining the hall for a PC to find a random lesser or medium wondrous item casually forgotten, left on the corpse.

More statues, identical to the ones outside of this damned place, line the wide hallway. As before, some are stone and some are more life-like, but they all bear expressions of shocking pain. Looking at them in turn, you realize that all of them are being tortured or slaughtered with hooks or spikes of some kind.

EASTERN SIDE HALL

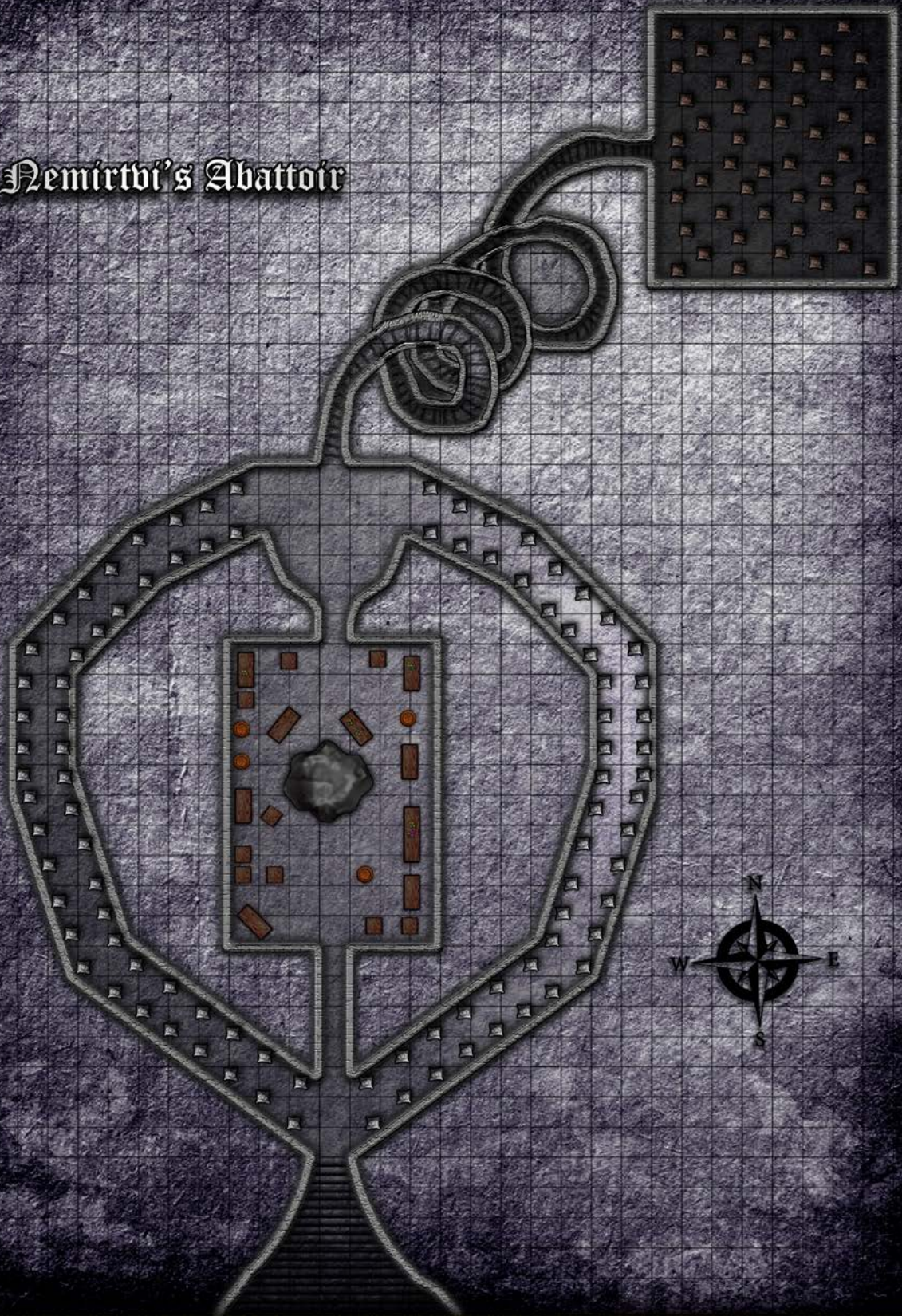
This side of Nemirtvi's Abattoir is much the same as its western counterpart, filled with 40 more morbidly posed statues. There are no wondrous items on this side, but there is a +1 silver longsword in the hands of one warrior, and a breastplate of command worn by another (this is actually a cursed item—armor of rage).

Along the sides of this expansive hall are two score more of the statues you saw outside the entrance. Half are of stone, and half appear shockingly life-like. All are carved to express an immense pain, but looking at them collectively you realize they are each being harmed by blades or bloodied maces and hammers.

THE FAR CHAMBER

Only the entrance leads to this chamber (it can be bypassed by taking the side tunnels), which has a staircase at the end that leads down into Nemirtvi's Lair. Once the squads of creatures start to move about Nemirtvi's Abattoir when the party arrives, this always the first room to be emptied of enemies. The roof and walls of the stairwell are steeped in deeper darkness (CL 12th).

Nemirtvi's Abattoir



The halls and central chamber of the complex all lead to this place—a simple, unassuming room with a staircase that seems to head down into the darkness, bereft of walls or a railing of any kind. Peering down the steps, they turn out of view and farther down into the unknown—it seems that oblivion swallows them whole.

There's always one group in the central chamber and one in each wing (two warriors, one mage, and one giant manticores, except for the central chamber, which has four warriors and two mages).

- 6 × FIENDISH MONGRELMAN MAGE
- 12 × FIENDISH MONGRELMAN WARRIOR
- 2 × GIANT MANTICOES

MENDING NEMIRTVI'S VEIN

Approaching the unnatural crystal in the center of the vast chamber, you can see that it's mostly black with disturbingly organic veins of red running through it. Furthermore, it extends into and beneath the worked stone of the floor. The thing pulses ever so lightly with power, seeming to beat to a rhythm you find all too familiar. Noxious grey fumes waft from the monstrosity, and the black ichor it spits out bleeds, sizzles, and scorches everything it touches.

Nemirtvi's Vein is a construct of sorts by and while it can be destroyed quite simply (it has a hardness of 8, 220 hit points and fast healing 2; the holy relics ignore the object's hardness) it is dangerous to be close to. Any creature within 10 feet of the 30-foot wide, 20-foot tall monstrosity must make a **DC 15 Reflex save** every time it strikes Nemirtvi's Vein or they take 4d6 acid damage as their attack sprouts a new jet of corrosive liquid. Any round that a creature ends its turn within a 15-foot radius of Nemirtvi's Vein it must make a **DC 15 Fortitude save** or take 3d6 negative energy damage from the gas that surrounds the anomaly (creatures that do not breathe are immune to this effect; holding your breath grants a +2 circumstance bonus to the save). Positive energy harms Nemirtvi's Vein and negative energy heals it.

Destroying Nemirtvi's Vein this way seems sufficient—for now. If the PCs didn't figure out the rhyme of Gortag the Mad, they might realize that this is only a temporary solution by casting *detect evil* or *detect magic* (it has an overwhelming aura of evil and conjuration) while the entire area is both, a route running away from the monstrosity's remains continues to emit strong auras of each. A **DC 21 Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (religion)** or **Spellcraft check** determines that Nemirtvi's Vein can only be completely sealed by destroying a powerful holy item (such as one of the gifts from the Order of Light), placing the relic onto the diminished central square the abomination occupied and sundering it with another relic. If left alone, it eventually grows back (after 2d4+2 years) and Nemirtvi returns to the realm of Holdenshire—hellbent on exacting revenge on the party!

THE REAL STAKE

Nemirtvi is no simple undead—he is a primordial entity of evil, a lord of vampires—and a simple wooden stake in the chest is definitely not going to kill him. If the displays of his far-reaching power and timeless nature have not yet sunk in, give the PCs a few Knowledge (religion) or Knowledge (planes) checks to put this together. The real stake killing Nemirtvi is the one going into his vein to Deepcrest Chasm, and some timber isn't going to make the cut—the party has to sacrifice a holy relic to destroy it.

TO STAKE A VAMPIRE

BRAVING THE DARK STAIRWELL

Nemirtvi takes no great precautions trapping the way down into his lair, but does have a habit of leaving the mangled bodies of his meals impaled on the vicious spikes (1d8+2 piercing damage) hidden in the *deeper darkness* (CL 12th) along the walls and ceiling of the stairwell. As the PCs walk down it, bodies come sliding down randomly to fall and slick the steps in fresh blood (Nemirtvi and Lord Pemberton just fed themselves).

The path in front of you is shrouded in darkness, and all you can see are steps going down farther into the unknown depths. A faint dripping noise precedes a disturbing wet slosh as a corpse falls from out of the darkness! It slams into the floor and sliding down the stairs on a slick of blood that paints the steps red.

While this isn't a true hazard, the party might slip on the blood. A corpse falls every 30 + (1d4 x 10 feet) or so as they move along (1d8 bludgeoning damage; Reflex DC 15) and slicks the square it fell into and the next 10 feet with blood (failure on the Reflex save covers the creature in blood, imposing a -5 penalty to Will saves against fear). If left uncleaned, moving past it requires a **DC 18 Acrobatics check**. Failure on this check sends the PC slipping down 10 feet of the curved stairs and into a spiked wall (dealing 1d8+2 piercing damage). The steps continue at a steep decline for 200 feet.

Any adventurers moving down the stairwell have to make a check against fear when a body falls (**Will DC 17** or shaken for 1d10+4 minutes or until they've exited the stairwell, whichever is first). This may require pushing past their allies, which can be quite painful if someone is shoved into the spikes hidden by the walls of impenetrable darkness. A **DC 20 Acrobatics check** is required to avoid jostling anyone into the hazard without dealing 1d8+2 piercing damage to every creature you rush past.



NEMIRTVI'S LAIR

The bottom of the stairwell opens up into a dark chamber balefully lit by flickering blood red flames that cast a crimson luminance across the vast expanse. All told the room is 100 feet across and wide, with a ceiling that gradually slopes to be 50 feet high. Most importantly, it is filled with fifty disturbingly life-like statues of Nemirtvi.

Finally the all pervading darkness comes to an end at the landing of the steps, opening into a huge chamber covered in stone pylons and archways that soar as high as fifty feet. Throughout the enormous room you can see scores of the life-like statues. Unlike the ones throughout the complex, these are all of one man. Some are posed differently, but all wear the same type of armor and wield two identical wicked blades covered in vicious serrations. He's an old fellow with a grizzled face and taut muscles, and the only truly odd things about him is an alabaster pallor, and in the place of one eye, a solid black gem.

Casting your gaze to the ceiling and along the walls, you can see frescoes of slaughter, mayhem, and huge, ritualized blood sacrifices. One figure is prominent in each of them—all in tribute to the man depicted by the statues. An insidious, primal thing from beyond beckons a name to the fore of your mind as you look upon the macabre artworks—Nemirtvi. It is then you realize that the statues are not still. Each seems to be breathing ever so slightly,

their armored shoulders and blades swaying up and down almost imperceptibly and all directing their monocular gazes at you.

STEALTH AND STATUES

Lord Pemberton and Nemirtvi have donned armor and weapons identical to the many, many vain statues the vampire lord had Gortag make for him so long ago. Each sits on a plinth that automatically registers when an undead walks upon it; when that happens, whatever statue may have been there is immediately destroyed. Otherwise, these plinths regenerate any destroyed statue that sat upon it over the course of four rounds. They are arrayed no less than 10 feet from one another, distributed evenly throughout the room or as the GM sees fit. The undead duo make great use of these magical plinths, hiding among them to distract, flank, and split the party throughout this final, pitched battle (they can hide in plain sight with a -5 penalty to Stealth). The wax statues (which qualify as undead for spells and abilities) have a hardness of 0 and 10 hit points; the plinths have a hardness of 14, 50 hit points, and operate at CL 12th.

As soon as a PC becomes visible in the entryway to the abattoir, read the following:

The proud voice of an aged man echoes from the darkness in front of you, every syllable uttered perfectly. "Wonderful—not only shall I feast properly this evening, but the holy relics are here as well. You have saved me so much trouble;

those dolts above would have taken years to finally reach the accursed things, but with those in my possession, my power shall become absolute. The world is at the tips of my fangs, and it is all thanks to you—it is almost enough for me to consider sparing your wretched lives.”

Anyone stupid enough to submit to Nemirtvi's bait and offer surrender is targeted first, the blood drained from their body. Nemirtvi's location is impossible to detect within the chamber by sound alone, but he will banter with his prey for 1d4 minutes before becoming impatient, pitching them in darkness before the assault begins.

The Order of Light relics should prove to be extremely useful in this encounter, which should be an enormously deadly game of cat and mouse that leaves the party utterly paranoid about who they should trust throughout the combat and where it is their enemies strike from!

- The *amulet of the spectral grove* could prove to be devastating here, though it may leave one of the PCs unable to defend themselves or knock them out of the fight.
- The *silver quickbow's* ability to rain down arrows can briefly clear a sizable number of the wax statues from the board, and its a fast-firing weapon on top of that.
- *Noltsledge* treats the statues as undead for the purposes of what enchantments effect the wielder throughout the combat, and smart warriors that wait until the vampires reveal themselves can deliver a punishing blow for the scant moments their attackers aren't hidden.
- The *Kylian starknives* are as troublesome for the vampires as the *silver quickbow*, and their *seeking* quality makes them truly destructive in the hands of a PC with the scent ability.
- Of all the weapons of the Order of Life, the *Leilan Artifice* easily has the greatest utility in the battle, easily able to destroy or damage multiple statues in a single shot every round.

Nemirtvi and Lord Pemberton work in tandem, attempting to ambush and drop any healer or divine spellcasters first. They flank and make use of sneak attack, then dip into the shadows and try to dominate the most capable melee combatant in the party, moving to the attack again once a PC has been compelled to wage an unexpected assault on the group. Both fight until reaching 0 hit points, at which point they dissipate; Nemirtvi drifts towards the Central Chamber on the upper level, and Lord Pemberton's does something else entirely (see below). Among the many wax statues, the adventurers can find 2d4 lesser magic items, 1d4 medium magic items, and one major magic item (all determined randomly).

- 1 × LORD PEMBERTON
- 1 × NEMIRTVI, VAMPIRE LORD

IF THE PCS COMPLETELY DESTROYED NEMIRTVI'S VEIN

Once the gaseous form of Nemirtvi reaches the Central Chamber on the upper level of Nemirtvi's Abattoir, he realizes his

evil connection to Deepcrest Chasm is no more and screams in rage as he dissipates into nothingness, forever banished from the Material Plane.

The adventurers have won!

IF THE PCS DID NOT COMPLETELY DESTROY NEMIRTVI'S VEIN

As the gaseous form of the vampire lord reaches the top of the stairwell, a harsh, raspy cackling fills the halls and chambers of Nemirtvi's Abattoir. The macabre laughter grows louder and louder as a seeping blackness spreads from the center of the grand central chamber, filling your soul with the dread of an inevitable enemy. While the day has been won, you fear that night will inevitably come again.

The party has won this battle, but it is a hollow victory in what is a war fought across the ages. The vampire lord Nemirtvi is inevitably going to return to the Material Plane, and the PCs will be made to answer for their transgressions against him when he does (2d4+2 years later).

SAVING LORD PEMBERTON

While Lord Pemberton's mental dominations of his wife certainly had something to do with her ignorance, the genuine devotion she has for her husband and her favor with the divine provide one final chance for him to be redeemed rather than destroyed. Upon reaching 0 hit points, Lord Pemberton turns into gas and attempts to inhabit the nearest relic of the Order of Light. Any PC can actively resist this last-ditch attempt at salvation with a **DC 12 Will save**, but should they fail (which they may choose to do) he does so, rendering the item into a regular +1 *weapon* or *amulet of protection +1* (as a *ring of protection +1*). If successfully resisted, Lord Pemberton's gaseous form makes for the Central Chamber on the upper level, attempting to inhabit any relics of the Order of Light along the way.

Any item inhabited by Lord Pemberton is an intelligent magic item, either without any abilities (aside from the +1 bonus) or designed as the GM sees fit. A **DC 16 Knowledge (arcana)** or **Knowledge (religion)** check reveals that with Lord Pemberton's soul and deep connection with his wife, a *resurrection* spell cast by Lady Sybil will return him to life! Once Lord Pemberton's soul is removed from the relic, it reverts to being a simple (if masterwork) mundane item.

EPILOGUE

With the threat of Nemirtvi ended (either for a while or forever), the entire county of Holdenshire has reason to celebrate. The vampire lord's death seems to have ushered in the changing of seasons as well, and trade has resumed now that the curses have been lifted from the realm. The titles of Duke and Duchess are granted to all of the PCs and their names resound across the countryside, far from humble Thornbury and Hengistbury. Ballads of their deeds will be sung for ages, books

are written to honor their accomplishments, maidens and suitors from across the lands seek their attentions, and the party earns a sizable reputation as genuine heroes.

WHAT NEXT?

There are bound to still be rumors and quests, roaming monsters, and other detritus from Nemirtvi's evil influence roaming the countryside. The incursion of creatures in the Shades of the Past table are bound to have left a trail for where they went, and several of them may have a mind to enact revenge on the famous PCs when their allies don't return. Let the PCs decide, exploring any plot threads that developed during the adventure, building them into whole stories of your own!

MONSTERS & NPCs

CORRUPTED BLUESTONE CR 8 • XP 4,800

Male zuvembie commoner 2/wizard 3
NE Medium undead

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +14

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 14, flat-footed 17 (+1 deflection, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +4 *mage armor*, +2 natural)

hp 75 (10d8+30)

Fort +5, **Ref** +5, **Will** +10

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4; **DR** 5/piercing; **Immune** cold, undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee battleaxe +6 (1d8+1, Crit x3), claw +1 (1d4) or 2 claws +6 (1d4+1)

Ranged dagger +7 (1d4+1, Crit 19-20/x2, Range 10 ft.)

Special Attack corpse call 1/day (Will DC 18)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th; concentration +11)
At will—*darkness*

3/day—*ghoul touch*, *scare* (DC 16)

1/day—*animate dead*, *ray of exhaustion*, *summon* (level 3, 1d3 bat or bird swarms [use the same stats], 1d2 constrictor snakes, 1d3 venomous snakes, or 1d4 wolves)

Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 3rd; concentration +7)

2nd—*blindness/deafness* x2 (DC 16)

1st—*mage armor* [worked into statistics], *ray of enfeeblement* x2 (DC 15)

0 (at will)—*arcane mark*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *prestidigitation*

TACTICS

Bluestone casts *mage armor* then draws the party towards him with *minor image* and his corpse call ability, alerting his undead companions. After that he uses *animate dead* to summon something to immediately engage the PCs before reinforcements arrive. Then Bluestone targets

spellcasters first, attempting to deafen them before blinding any ranged warriors, then moving on to the melee combatants.

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 14, **Con** —, **Int** 18, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 15
Base Atk +5; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 19

Feats Ability Focus (corpse call), Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Defensive Combat Training, Dodge, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (Craft [Alchemy]), Toughness

Skills Appraise +12, Bluff +7, Craft (alchemy) +15, Knowledge (arcana) +13, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +10, Knowledge (geography) +10, Knowledge (history) +10, Knowledge (local) +10, Perception +14, Profession (herbalist) +10, Spellcraft +12, Stealth +14; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Stealth

Languages Aquan, Common, Elven, Gnome, Sylvan (can't speak)

Gear *cloak of resistance* +1, *potions of (alter self, inflict serious wounds, expeditious retreat, invisibility, protection from arrows, resist energy)*, *ring of protection* +1, *scrolls of (blindness/deafness [x3], minor image [x2], ray of enfeeblement [x3])*, battleaxe, alchemy kit

ECOLOGY

Environment Brockendale Castle

Organization Turned Troublemakers

CORRUPTED JOVAN CR 9 • XP 6,400

Male ghul fighter 2/ranger 2

NE Medium undead (shapechanger)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +19

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 12, flat-footed 19 (+3 armor, +2 Dex, +6 natural)

hp 91 (6d8+4d10+42)

Fort +14, **Ref** +7, **Will** +7

DR 5/good; **Immune** undead traits; **Resist** fire 10

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee bite +14 (1d6+6), 2 claws +15 (1d4+6 plus bleed)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with guisarme)

Special Attacks bleed (1), cursed claws, favored enemy (humans +2), rend (1d6+6)

STATISTICS

Str 22, **Dex** 15, **Con** —, **Int** 14, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 18
Base Atk +8; **CMB** +14; **CMD** 26

Feats Combat Reflexes, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bolas), Great Fortitude, Power Attack, Precise Shot, Step Up, Weapon Focus (bolas), Weapon Focus (claw)

Skills Bluff +10, Climb +22, Diplomacy +7, Disguise +11, Handle Animal +8, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (geography) +4, Perception +19, Ride +7, Stealth +15, Survival +12 (+17

when following tracks), Swim +11; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Perception, +8 Survival when following tracks

Languages Common, Infernal, Terran

SQ Change shape (hyena; does not detect as undead in this form; beast shape I), genie-kin, track +1, wild empathy +1

Gear *feather token (whip)*, tanglefoot bags (2), masterwork studded leather, bolas (3), masterwork sap

ECOLOGY

Environment Brockendale Castle

Organization Turned Troublemakers

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Cursed Claws (Ex) Jovan's claws count as both cold iron and magic for the purpose of bypassing damage reduction.

Genie-kin (Ex) For all race-related effects (such as a ranger's favored enemy), Jovan is considered a genie even though his type is undead.

TACTICS

Old Jovan is a diehard and still uses his weapons from life in combat. He begins by charging in with his guisarme, then jumping back to throw bolas at enemies giving his undead companions a tough time.

CORRUPTED MOSSAD CR 8 • XP 4,800

Bloody burning skeletal champion fighter 4
NE Medium undead

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +3

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 11, flat-footed 21 (+9 armor, +1 Dex, +2 natural)

hp 75 (4d10+5d8+31); fast healing 4

Fort +6, **Ref** +6, **Will** +6

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, **DR** 5/bludgeoning; **Immune** fire, undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee +1 *greatsword* +13 (2d6+9 plus 1d6 fire, Crit 19-20/x2)

Ranged javelin +8 (1d6+4, Range 30 ft.)

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 17, **Con** —, **Int** 10, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 22

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dazzling Display, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (net), Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Intimidate), Weapon Focus (Greatsword), Weapon Specialization (Greatsword)

Skills Intimidate +12, Perception +3, Ride +2, Sense Motive +2

Languages Common

SQ Armor training 1

Gear +1 *greatsword*, full plate, javelins (6)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Deathless (Su) Mossad is destroyed when reduced to 0 hit points, but returns to unlife 1 hour later at 1 hit point, allowing his fast healing thereafter to resume healing him. Mossad can be permanently destroyed if he is destroyed by positive energy, reduced to 0 hit points in the area of a *bleed* or *hallow* spell, or if his remains are sprinkled with a vial of holy water.

Fiery Aura (Ex) Creatures adjacent to Mossad take 1d6 points of fire damage at the start of their turn. Anyone striking Mossad with an unarmed strike or natural attack takes 1d6 points of fire damage.

Fiery Death (Su) Mossad explodes into a burst of flame when he dies. Anyone adjacent to Mossad when he is destroyed takes 4d6 points of fire damage. A DC 16 Reflex save halves this damage.

TACTICS

Mossad is in a constant state of pain, both burning and reforming in a gruesome exchange that delighted Nemirtvi when he thought of it. The only thing that quiets his raging struggle is to dole some of it out to others, and he attacks ferociously until destroyed.

CORRUPTED ANDREW NEMETH CR 10 • XP 9,600

Male guecubu rogue 3

CE Medium undead (earth)

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; **Perception** +21

Aura broken ground (30 ft., DC 22)

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 15, flat-footed 16 (+4 Dex, +1 dodge, +6 natural)

hp 136 (14d8+73); fast healing 5

Fort +9, **Ref** +10, **Will** +12

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +2; **DR** 5/bludgeoning; **Immune** electricity, undead traits; **Resist** cold 10

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., burrow 15 ft.; earth glide

Melee bite +16 (1d8+6 plus misfortune), 2 slams +16 (1d6+6 plus misfortune) or mwk composite shortbow +15/+10 (1d6+1, Crit x3, Range 60 ft.)

Special Attacks sneak attack +2d6

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th; concentration +14)

At will—*stone shape*

3/day—*soften earth and stone*, *spike growth* (DC 20)

1/day—*spike stones* (DC 21), *transmute mud to rock* (DC 22), *transmute rock to mud* (DC 22)

STATISTICS

Str 22, **Dex** 18, **Con** —, **Int** 13, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 21

Base Atk +10; **CMB** +16; **CMD** 31

Feats Combat Expertise, Deft Hands, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Skill Focus (Perception), Spring Attack, Stealthy, Whirlwind Attack

Skills Acrobatics +18, Appraise +7, Bluff +11, Climb +14, Disable Device +14, Disguise +11, Escape

Artist +12, Knowledge (local) +7, Knowledge (nature) +12, Perception +21, Sense Motive +18, Sleight of Hand +12, Stealth +19, Swim +12

Languages Abyssal, Common, Elven, Halfling

SQ Evasion, rogue talent (fast stealth), trapfinding +1, trap sense +1

Gear *potion of expeditious retreat*, *potion of feather fall*, tanglefoot bag, leather armor, dagger, sap, masterwork composite shortbow (+1 Str) with 20 arrows, universal solvent, climber's kit, 50-ft. silk rope with grappling hook, masterwork thieves' tools

ECOLOGY

Environment Brockendale Castle

Organization With the rest of the Turned Troublemakers

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Broken Ground (Su) The ground in a 30-foot radius around Andrew ripples and shudders unnaturally. This transforms the area surrounding him into difficult terrain. Andrew can move through this area with no penalty. Consecrated ground cannot be affected by this ability, nor can any area warded by a *magic circle against chaos* or a *magic circle against evil*.

Misfortune (Su) A creature struck by Andrew's melee attacks must make a DC 22 Will save or become permanently cursed with misfortune. The victim of this curse takes a -4 penalty on all attack rolls, saving throws, and skill checks, and any critical threat against the victim automatically confirms. If Andrew hits a creature already suffering from this curse, the victim must make a DC 22 Will save or be staggered for 1 round. This is a curse effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

TACTICS

Andrew uses his newfound abilities to entrap and split party members, stealthily moving through the earth to ambush enemies with his sneak attack.

WILL-O'-WISP

CR6 • XP 2,400

This faintly glowing ball of light bobs gently in the air, the nebulous image of what might be a skull visible somewhere in its depths.

CE Small aberration (air)

Init +13; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +17

DEFENSE

AC 26, touch 26, flat-footed 16; (+5 deflection, +9 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 size)

hp 40 (9d8)

Fort +3, **Ref** +12, **Will** +9

Defensive Abilities natural invisibility; Immune magic

OFFENSE

Speed fly 50 ft. (perfect)

Melee shock +16 touch (2d8 electricity)

STATISTICS

Str 1, **Dex** 29, **Con** 10, **Int** 15, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +0; **CMD** 24

Feats Alertness, Blind-Fight, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +21, Bluff +11, Escape Artist +21, Fly +31, Perception +17, Stealth +25

Languages Aklo, Common

SQ feed on fear

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Feed on Fear (Su) Any time a will-o'-wisp is within 15 feet of a dying creature or creature subject to a fear effect, it gains fast healing 5.

Immunity to Magic (Ex) Will-o'-wisps are immune to all spells and spell-like abilities that allow spell resistance, except magic missile and maze.

Natural Invisibility (Ex) Will-o'-wisps have the ability to extinguish their natural glow as a move action, effectively becoming invisible, as per the spell.

GIANT MANTICORE

CR 6 • XP 2,400

LE Huge magical beast

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; **Perception** +9

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 9, flat-footed 17 (+1 Dex, +9 natural, -2 size)

hp 69 (6d10+36)

Fort +11, **Ref** +6, **Will** +3

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (clumsy)

Melee bite +11 (2d6+7), 2 claws +11 (2d6+7)

Ranged 4 spikes +6 (1d8+5)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

STATISTICS

Str 24, **Dex** 13, **Con** 22, **Int** 7, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 9

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +15; **CMD** 26 (30 vs. trip)

Feats Flyby Attack, Hover, Weapon Focus (spikes)

Skills Fly -6, Perception +9, Survival +4 (+8 tracking); **Racial Modifiers** +4 Perception, +4 Survival when tracking

Languages Common

ECOLOGY

Environment beneath Brockendale Castle

Organization solitary, pair, or with a squad (1 fiendish mongrelman mage, 2 fiendish mongrelman warriors)

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Spikes (Ex) With a snap of its tail, a giant manticore can loose a volley of four spikes as a standard action (make an attack roll for each spike). This attack has a range of 180 feet with no range increment. All targets must be within 30 feet of each other. The creature can launch only 24 spikes in any 24-hour period.

TACTICS

While not stupid, the manticores have been trained well. Those that prowl in the Lower Dungeon of Brockendale Castle attempt to ambush targets, overwhelming a single opponent at a time with their massive natural attacks. In Nemirtvi's Abattoir they serve a slightly more complicated role, drawing opponents out into the open before the well hidden Fiendish Mongrelmen burst from the shadows to ambush intruders.

ADVANCED SHANTAK

CR 9 • XP 6,400

CE Huge magical beast

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; **Perception** +13

DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 13, flat-footed 20 (+5 Dex, +12 natural, -2 size)

hp 126 (11d10+66)

Fort +13, **Ref** +12, **Will** +8

Defensive Abilities slippery; **Immune** cold, disease

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., fly 80 ft. (average)

Melee bite +19 (2d6+10) 2 talons +19 (1d8+10 plus grab)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

STATISTICS

Str 30, **Dex** 21, **Con** 23, **Int** 12, **Wis** 21, **Cha** 14
Base Atk +11; **CMB** +23 (+27 grapple); **CMD** 38 (46 vs. grapple)

Feats Awesome Blow, Flyby Attack, Hover, Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack, Wingover

Skills Escape Artist +13, Fly +15, Perception +13, Stealth +6; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Escape Artist

Languages Aklo

SQ no breath, share defenses, starflight

ECOLOGY

Environment trapped beneath Brockendale Castle

Organization solitary or pair

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Share Defenses (Su) As a free action, a shantak can extend its no breath ability and cold immunity to a single creature touching it. It can withdraw this protection as a free action.

Slippery (Ex) A shantak's scales seep slippery slime. This grants the creature a +8 bonus on all Escape Artist checks and to its **CMD** against grapples, and imparts a -5 penalty on all Ride checks made by creatures attempting to ride a shantak.

Starflight (Su) A shantak can survive in the void of outer space. It flies through space at an incredible speed. Although exact travel times vary, a trip within a single solar system should take 3d20 hours, while a trip beyond should take 3d20 days (or more, at the GM's discretion)—provided the shantak knows the way to its destination.

TACTICS

The advanced shantak has been driven quite mad since it was drawn here by Nemirtvi, ages ago. All of the recent activity in the dungeon has awoken it from an induced sleep, and it is hostile to anything that comes within the chamber it occupies. A truly talented negotiator may be able to calm the creature before blood is shed with a **DC 32 Diplomacy check** (must speak Aklo) but otherwise it fights to the death, like a caged animal.

NUE

CR 10 • XP 9,600

Materializing out of a noxious black cloud, this beast has the head of a fanged monkey and the body of a tiger with a viper as a tail.

NE Large magical beast

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; **Perception** +10

• Defense

AC 24, touch 15, flat-footed 18 (+5 Dex, +1 dodge, +9 natural, -1 size)

hp 126 (12d10+60)

Fort +13, **Ref** +13, **Will** +7

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee bite +17 (2d6+6 plus energy drain), bite +17 (1d4+6 plus poison), 2 claws +17 (1d6+6)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks energy drain (2 levels, DC 16), pounce

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th; concentration +12) 3/day—contagion (DC 14), hold person (DC 13) 1/day—nightmare (DC 15), shout (DC 14), waves of fatigue

STATISTICS

Str 22, **Dex** 21, **Con** 20, **Int** 7, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +19; **CMD** 35 (39 vs. trip)

Feats Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Skill Focus (Stealth)

Skills Climb +13, Perception +10, Stealth +11

Languages Common

SQ cloud form

ECOLOGY

Environment warm forests or mountains

Organization solitary, pair, or ambush (3–6)

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Cloud Form (Su) A nue can change into the form of a 10-foot black cloud or back to its normal form as a standard action. A nue in cloud form is otherwise treated as if under the effects of gaseous form, except that it obscures vision like fog cloud.

Poison (Ex) Bite—injury; save Fort DC 21; frequency 1/round for 6 rounds; effect 1d4 Strength damage; cure 2 consecutive saves. The save DC is Constitution-based.

FIENDISH MONGRELMAN WARRIOR CR 8 • XP 4,800

Mongrelman fighter 6
NE Medium monstrous humanoid
Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision;
Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 18 (+6 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural)
hp 90 (8d10+46)
Fort +10, **Ref** +7, **Will** +7; bravery +2
DR 5/good; **Resist** cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 13

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.
Melee mwk greatsword +15/+10 (2d6+8) or slam +12/+7 (1d4+3)
Special Attacks smite good 1/day (+8 damage)

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 15, **Con** 20, **Int** 10, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 5
Base Atk +8; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 24
Feats Cleave, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Stealth), Spring Attack; Dodge, Mobility, Weapon Focus (greatsword), Weapon Specialization (greatsword)
Skills Climb +8, Perception +13, Sense Motive +8, Sleight of Hand +8, Stealth +14, Survival +6;
Racial Modifiers +4 Sleight of Hand, +4 Stealth
Languages Common, Undercommon
SQ armor training 1, sound mimicry (voices), weapon training 1 (heavy blades)
Gear chainmail, masterwork greatsword, one 1st-level potion (randomly determined)

ECOLOGY

Environment Nemirtvi's Abattoir
Organization solitary, pair, or with a squad (fiendish mongrelman mage, 2 fiendish mongrelman warriors, giant mantichore)

TACTICS

These warriors aren't foolish, but they are taught a simple-minded tactic: pound the enemy into tiny bits. To that effect, they charge into combat and attack spellcasters first if they can, using their smite good to down initial targets quickly. When a hit-and-run is possible to move out of range of an enemy, these fighters do that before committing to a prolonged melee engagement.

FIENDISH MONGRELMAN MAGE CR 8 • XP 4,800

Mongrelman magus 6
NE Medium monstrous humanoid
Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision;
Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 15, flat-footed 15 (+3 armor, +4 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural)
hp 68 (2d10+6d8+30)

Fort +8, **Ref** +9, **Will** +9
DR 5/good; **Resist** cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 13

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.
Melee +1 *scimitar* +11/+6 (1d6+4, Crit 18-20/x2) or +1 *scimitar* +9/+4 (1d6+4, Crit 18-20/x2), spell combat +7 melee or +8 ranged (spell effect) or +1 *scimitar* +9/+4 (1d6+4, Crit 18-20/x2), +1 *scimitar* spellstrike +7 (1d6+4 plus spell effect, Crit 18-20/x2)
Special Attacks smite good 1/day (+8 damage), spell combat, spellstrike
Magus Spells Prepared (CL 6th; concentration +8, [+12 defensive])
2nd—*acid arrow*, *frigid touch*, *scorching ray*
1st—*corrosive touch*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *shocking grasp* x2
0th—*acid splash*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 18, **Con** 17, **Int** 14, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 5
Base Atk +6; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 22
Feats Combat Casting, Dodge, Eschew Materials, Skill Focus (Stealth); Weapon Focus (scimitar)
Skills Acrobatics +10, Climb +7, Perception +12, Sleight of Hand +9, Spellcraft +11, Stealth +21, Survival +5; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Sleight of Hand, +4 Stealth
Languages Common, Undercommon
SQ arcane pool (5 points), cantrips, spell recall, spellstrike, sound mimicry (voices)
Gear +1 *scimitar*, masterwork studded leather armor, magus spellbook (six 2nd-level spells, 8 1st-level spells, all cantrips)

ECOLOGY

Environment any ruins or underground
Organization solitary, pair, or with a squad (fiendish mongrelman mage, 2 fiendish mongrelman warriors, giant mantichore)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Arcane Pool (Su) The Fiendish Mongrelman Magus gains a reservoir of mystical arcane energy that he can draw upon to fuel his powers and enhance his weapon. This arcane pool has 5 points. The pool refreshes once per day when the magus prepares his spells.

A Fiendish Mongrelman Magus can expend 1 point from his arcane pool as a swift action to grant any weapon he is holding a +1 enhancement bonus for 1 minute. These bonuses can be added to the weapon, stacking with existing weapon enhancement to a maximum of +5. Multiple uses of this ability do not stack with themselves.

These bonuses can be used to add any of the following weapon properties: *flaming*, *frost*, *keen* or *shock*. Adding these properties consumes an amount of bonus equal to the property's base price modifier. These properties are added to any

the weapon already has, but duplicates do not stack. These bonuses and properties are decided when the arcane pool point is spent and cannot be changed until the next time the magus uses this ability. These bonuses do not function if the weapon is wielded by anyone other than the magus.

The Fiendish Mongrelman Mage can only enhance one weapon in this way at one time. If he uses this ability again, the first use immediately ends.

Magus Arcana - Close Range (Ex) The magus can deliver ray spells that feature a ranged touch attack as melee touch spells. He can use a ranged touch attack spell that targets more than one creature (such as *scorching ray*), but he makes only one melee touch attack to deliver one of these ranged touch effects; additional ranged touch attacks from that spell are wasted and have no effect. These spells can be used with the spellstrike class feature.

Magus Arcana - Concentrate (Ex) Once per day the Fiendish Mongrelman Magus can reroll any concentration check he has just made with a +4 bonus. He must use this ability after the roll is made, but before the roll's outcome is determined. The magus must take the second roll, even if it is worse.

TACTICS

These arcane-wielding swordsmen remain aloof throughout the beginning of combat; once they've identified the most powerful and dangerous opponent they move into the fray with their spells, trying to deal acid damage first and then moving on to *frigid touch* and *shocking grasp*.

LORD PEMBERTON

CR 11 • XP 12,800

This seven foot tall man is emaciated, his white, pallid neck ringing thin within a heavy black metal collar that extends into ornate armor wrought with gothic filigree, but he carries the weight of the black full-plate with ease. Two wicked swords, their edges grooved and slender, are held effortlessly in each of his hands and drip with rivulets of blood. The man's face is ancient and grizzled, taut with muscle and alabaster in pallor; were it not for the seamless, perfectly black gem in place of one of his eyes, he would be regal, if severe, in bearing.

Male vampire antipaladin 9

CE Medium undead (augmented)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +20

Aura cowardice (10 ft.), despair (10 ft.)

DEFENSE

AC 26, touch 15, flat-footed 21 (+5 armor, +4 Dex, +1 dodge, +6 natural)

hp 103 (9d10+54) fast healing 5

Fort +14, **Ref** +13, **Will** +11

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4; **DR** 10/magic and silver; **Resist** cold 10, electricity 10;

Immune undead traits

Weaknesses vampire weaknesses

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee slam +15/+10 (1d4+6 plus 2 negative levels) or

+1 *wounding longsword* +14/+9 (1d8+7 plus 1 bleed, Crit 19-20/x2), +1 *wounding shortsword* +14/+9 (1d6+4 plus 1 bleed, Crit 19-20/x2) or

+1 *wounding longsword* +14/+9 (1d8+7 plus 1 bleed, Crit 19-20/x2), slam +13/+8 (1d4+3 plus 2 negative levels)

Special Attacks blood drain (1d4 Constitution), channel negative energy (DC 18, 5d6), children of the night, create spawn, cruelties (sickened, staggered, cursed), dominate (DC 18), energy drain (2 levels, DC 18), smite good 3/day (+4 to atk, +9 to damage)

Antipaladin Spells Prepared (CL 6th; concentration +10)

2nd—*silence* (DC 16)

1st—*doom* (DC 15), *protection from good* x2

TACTICS

Before Combat Lord Pemberton hides as a statue 30 feet away from Nemirtvi.

During Combat Lord Pemberton uses the same tactics as Nemirtvi—exploding out to wreck havoc on the PCs before disappearing again amongst the lifelike wax carvings with Spring Attack. In combat he flanks with Nemirtvi (gaining a +1d6 precision damage), but otherwise attempts to feint tougher opponents with his first attack before striking them low with the rest of his volley (using the slam option to drive home negative levels).

Morale Lord Pemberton has been twisted and cajoled into being Nemirtvi's slave, fighting until destroyed at 0 hit points.

STATISTICS

Str 22, **Dex** 18, **Con** —, **Int** 16, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 18
Base Atk +9; **CMB** +15; **CMD** 29

Feats Improved Two-Weapon Feint, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Mobility, Precise Strike, Spring Attack, Two-Weapon Fighting; Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Toughness

Skills Acrobatics +13, Bluff +24, Disguise +16, Perception +20, Sense Motive +23, Stealth +24;
Racial Modifiers +8 Bluff, +8 Perception, +8 Sense Motive, +8 Stealth

Languages Common, Dwarven, Elven, Infernal
SQ change shape (*beast shape II*, dire bat or wolf), code of conduct, detect good, fiendish boon (weapon), gaseous form, plague bringer, shadowless, spiderclimb, touch of corruption (4d6, 8/day), unholy resilience

Gear +1 *glamered mithral shirt*, +1 *wounding longsword*, +1 *wounding shortsword*, boots of striding and springing

NEMIRTVI, VAMPIRE LORD

CR 14 • XP 38,400

NE Medium undead (augmented)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., lifesense, see in darkness; **Perception** +21

Aura fear (30 ft., DC 24)

DEFENSE

AC 29, touch 17, flat-footed 21 (+5 armor, +6 Dex, +1 dodge, +6 natural, +1 shield)

hp 170 (20d8+80) fast healing 5

Fort +10, **Ref** +12, **Will** +15

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4; **DR** 5/—; **Resist** acid 10, cold 20, electricity 20, fire 10; **Immune** undead traits

Weaknesses vampire weaknesses

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., fly 40 ft. (perfect)

Melee bite +19 (1d10+4 plus blood drain and 3 negative levels) or

bite +17 (1d10+4 plus blood drain and 3 negative levels), +1 *wounding longsword* +17/+12/+7 (1d8+5 plus 1 bleed, Crit 18-20/x2), +1 *wounding shortsword* +17/+12/+7 (1d6+5 plus 1 bleed, Crit 19-20/x2)

Special Attacks blood drain (1d6 Constitution), children of the night, create spawn, dominate (DC 24), energy drain (3 levels, DC 24), two-weapon rend 1/round (1d10+6)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 20th; concentration +24)

At will—*darkness*, *death knell*, *detect good*, *gaseous form*

5/day—*desecrate*, *protection from good*, *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 15)

3/day—*deeper darkness*, *enervation* (DC 19), *phantasmal killer* (DC 19)

1/day—*blood mist* (DC 22)

TACTICS

Before Combat Nemirtvi uses his *darkness* spell-like ability to prepare 2d6 pebbles, which he throws outward (four at a time) onto 1d4 contiguous squares. Otherwise he hides in plain sight as a statue.

During Combat Nemirtvi uses his devastating bite attack and Spring Attack on a target before flanking with Lord Pemberton, cutting the enemy

down in a flurry of sword strikes the next round. When possible he uses dominate to turn melee competent warriors against their allies, and if foes devise a means to foil his *darkness* pebbles, the primal vampire targets a far more durable and immovable statue plinth instead.

Morale After taking 60 hit points of damage Nemirtvi goes into hiding for several rounds as he heals, using spell-like abilities from total concealment until an opportune moment to strike again presents itself. Nemirtvi fights until he reaches 0 hp, at which point he is destroyed.

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 22, **Con** —, **Int** 18, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +15; **CMB** +21; **CMD** 27

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Double Slice, Greater Two-Weapon Fighting, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Mobility, Spring Attack, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Two-Weapon Rend

Skills Acrobatics +16, Bluff +17, Disguise +22, Fly +22, Intimidate +17, Knowledge (arcana) +17, Knowledge (nature) +17, Knowledge (planes) +17, Knowledge (religion) +17, Linguistics +9, Perception +21, Sense Motive +17, Spellcraft +17, Stealth +29

Languages Abyssal, Aklo, Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Halfling, Infernal, Orc, Undercommon; telepathy 100 ft.

SQ change shape (*beast shape II*, dire bat or wolf), shadowless, sound mimicry

Gear +1 *glamered mithral shirt*, +1 *wounding longsword*, +1 *wounding shortsword*

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Negative Destruction (Su) When Nemirtvi is reduced to 0 hit points, his body explodes in a massive roiling wave of negative energy. Anyone within 15 feet of Nemirtvi when he is destroyed takes 10d6 negative energy damage. A Reflex save (DC 24) halves this damage.

Rapid Blood Drain (Ex) When the vampire lord bites a foe, his fangs elongate and suck the blood of his victim if he makes contact. Any time that Nemirtvi hits with his bite attack, he does not need to initiate a grapple to use his blood drain ability.

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