

THRONE OF NIGHT

BOOK
(2)

THE EARTH'S WOUND



THE SUBTERRANEAN SANDBOX ADVENTURE PATH

D&D
ROLEPLAYING GAME COMPATIBLE

GARY MCBRIDE
& MICHAEL CLARKE



BENEATH THE GREAT JUMPING OFF POINT

(EXPLORER VERSION)



THE
GREAT JUMPING OFF
POINT

THRONE OF NIGHT

BOOK (2)

THE EARTH'S WOUND

BY

GARY MCBRIDE, WORDS

AND

MICHAEL CLARKE, ART

Special Thanks:

Carl and Shirley McBride, Mike and Teresa Hall, Jim Hall, Michelle McBride-Hall, Kimberly Knight, Jesse Emerson and Douglas Muir.

Fire Mountain Games LLC
www.firemountaingames.com
18795 SW Marko Ln
Beaverton, OR 97007

Compatibility with the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game requires the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game from Paizo Publishing, LLC. See <http://paizo.com/pathfinderRPG> for more information on the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game. Paizo Publishing, LLC does not guarantee compatibility, and does not endorse this product.

Pathfinder is a registered trademark of Paizo Publishing, LLC, and the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game and the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Compatibility Logo are trademarks of Paizo Publishing, LLC, and are used under the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Compatibility License. See <http://paizo.com/pathfinderRPG/compatibility> for more information on the compatibility license.

Throne of Night: The Earth's Wound © 2014 Fire Mountain Games LLC, Open Gaming License © 2007 Wizards of the Coast. All rights reserved.

Product Identity: The following items are hereby identified as Product Identity as defined in the Open Game License version 1.0a, Section 1(e), and are not Open Content: All trademarks, registered trademarks, proper names (characters, locations, etc.), dialogue, plots, story lines, locations, characters, artwork and trade dress. (Elements previously designated as Open Game Content or are in the public domain are not included in this declaration.)

Open Content: Except for material designated as Product Identity (see above), the game mechanics of this Fire Mountain Games game product are Open Game Content, as defined in the Open Game License version 1.0a, Section 1(d). No portion of this work other than the material designated as Open Game Content may be reproduced in any form without written permission.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>INTRODUCTION</u>	3
<u>THE EARTH'S WOUND</u>	
<u>ADVENTURE BACKGROUND: EXPLORER</u>	4
<u>ADVENTURE BACKGROUND: OVERLORD</u>	5
<u>ACT ONE: A SUNLESS DOMAIN</u>	6
<u>ACT TWO: THE WOUND</u>	22
<u>ACT THREE: LOTHELLAIN</u>	56
<u>ACT FOUR: THE MINE</u>	70
<u>APPENDIX ONE: LORDS BELOW</u>	88
<u>APPENDIX TWO: PATRONS PART TWO</u>	94

Opinion has caused more trouble on this little earth than plagues or earthquakes.

– Voltaire

ADVANCEMENT

This campaign uses the medium advancement track.

ACT ONE: A SUNLESS DOMAIN

The adventure continues with the PCs having dominion over a small fledgling empire that spans from Fasturvalt to Vothys. Here are some challenges that they may face. They should be 6th level before the first of these challenges begin, but these seven events could potentially span this entire adventure.

ACT TWO: THE WOUND

This act details the Earth's Wound with its many dangers, wonders and secrets. The PCs should be 6th level by the time they enter the Wound and 8th level before they truly start to discover its greater mysteries.

ACT THREE: LOTHELLAIN

By 8th level the PCs have discovered an exit to the surface world and have the potential either to make a new ally in the elves of Lothellain or to conduct a raid upon this elven colony, taking gold and slaves for their wicked empire.

ACT FOUR: THE MINE

The PCs discover an old dwarven mine. Though the mine is long abandoned, it is not uninhabited. The PCs must explore its secret. By the time they're 10th level, the PCs should have well explore the Earth's Wound and know at last the hidden road to Dammerhall.

WHAT NEXT?

It is time at last to try and find Dammerhall and reclaim the lost dwarven capital. Death or Dammerhall!

INTRODUCTION: LORDS ALREADY

Welcome to the second part of the “Throne of Night” adventure path!

In this adventure, the PCs get to be in charge. They are not sort of in charge, constrained by some set of arcane laws. They are not provisionally in charge, answering to some distant authority or sponsor nation. No, they are unquestionably in charge of their own destiny. They are the sole authority, answerable to no one.

By the end of Book One, the PCs should have conquered a small fledgling empire that stretches from the gnome stronghold of Fasturvalt to the drow watch tower of Vothys. Now, they get to govern that underground kingdom and hopefully will even expand it to include a wild and untamed region of the realms below called the Earth’s Wound and even potentially gain a prized trade route with the surface (or in the case of Overlords a prized source of surface slaves).

This is certainly not the first adventure ever published that allows for the PCs have a kingdom to rule. But what hopefully separates it from those that have gone before is the range of options presented here and the emphasis on complete player freedom. This adventure continues to try and fulfill the promise of creating a sandbox adventure path in the underworld. Search this book high and low, and you will find no hint of any NPC sitting down to brief the PCs on what they must do. The truth is that the PCs need do very little.

Yes, to keep their nation running smoothly they will need to answer some threats that arise (you’ll find those in Act One). But there is nothing stopping the PCs from taking shelter in their newly made dominion and never leaving it. In short, there is no compulsory plot element forcing the PCs to take the leap down the Great Jumping Off Point (described in Book One). If the player characters stay in their newly-made empire and consolidate their power, nothing happens.

I suppose that is the point.

What hopefully will drive them forward to greater adventure and greater glories and what you as the Game Master need to emphasize is motivation. The PCs are not here to forge an obscure little nation of deep gnomes and mushroom men in a largely forgotten corner of the Azathyr. They are on a mission of discovery or revenge. Explorers are saving the last vestiges of dwarven civilization. Overlords are bent on becoming masters of the entire Azathyr. What must take the place of that guiding NPC is the player character’s own drives and desires.

There is some danger in so heavily relying solely on player initiative. The instinct to “bunker up” and do nothing until the PCs are absolutely certain they have secured what they already have can lead to long stretches of dull nothingness in your campaign. And that is to be avoided at all costs.

So you must make sure the PCs are clear on those motivations. This can easily be accomplished by brief roleplaying scenes that must be tailored to your individual characters. Have a dwarven cleric become haunted by dreams of Dammerhall (the lost dwarven capital). The gods whisper to him in cryptic visions of the urgency of their mission. Have a captured drow enemy, recently banished, remind the PCs that Vothys is but a minor way station and forgotten outpost of the glorious drow city-state of Taaryssia (pro. TAH-rissia). The ruling queen yet sits on the Merciless Throne. How long will it be before she takes back Vothys and claims all they have won?

Ultimately, this sense of urgency is smoke and mirrors. There is no ticking clock. You are not counting the days until the drow queen’s invasion or the fall of dwarven civilization. But keeping this sense of urgency can keep the game on track and give the PCs cause to continually move forward.

The PCs may already be lords of the realms below, but in a way they are still servants. But instead of bowing to a king or conqueror, instead what they serve is their own wishes, their own wants and their own desires for fortune and glory.

— Gary

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

DWARVEN EXPLORERS

The wealth of the lost dwarven city of Dammerhall was not in mere gold or jewels. Instead, the dwarves had mastered an ancient metallurgic secret. Scattered throughout the Azathyr were veins of a strange otherworldly ore sometimes called true-silver or gods' iron. The nuggets amongst that ore were lighter and stronger than any other metal, but would not yield to normal smithing techniques. Heat it like steel and it became weak and worthless. Hammer it like gold or silver and it would not bend until it finally it became brittle and shattered. But treat it correctly and true-silver ore would purify and become a metal like no other. The drow have a word for it. They named it mithral (lit. the earth's gift).

The drow jealously guard sources of this metal and use it in everything. But for all the dark elves skill in working this strange metal, it was in the forges of Dammerhall that the dwarves learned the secret of elevating mithral to its full potential. They could create an alloy that was lighter than aluminum, stronger than adamantine, as perfect a metal as this world has ever known. This was *gunzarak* (in dwarvish lit. the true gift of the earth) or "true mithral". Even the drow had never seen its equal and it was Dammerhall's gift to the world. Even today, centuries after the last sword of true mithral was forged, many a dynasty counts among its greatest heirlooms these dwarven blades and armors.

The secret of making true mithral was lost with the fall of Dammerhall. The dwarves too jealously guarded their secret and when calamity fell, the secret was lost. Perhaps there will never again come forth a smith capable of making *gunzarak*. Perhaps this jewel of dwarven lore is forever beyond the kin of mortals.

But perhaps not.

Not far from the Great Jumping Off Point, there is a region of the Azathyr of great volatility and geothermal activity. It was in this place, that one of the greatest dwarven mines of raw mithral ore was located. This was the Zaraketh (lit. the River of Silver). The mine is now empty and untended, little more than a tomb. But within that mine there are yet secrets.

When Dammerhall fell the Zaraketh was already all but mined out. A small skeleton crew of dwarven workman remained there, finishing off the last lode of that once great deposit. When news reached them of the calamity, they fled the Azathyr giving little thought to their post. Cut off and few in number, most never reached another dwarven hold.

In their haste, they left behind an item that though it had no value to them, has become a true treasure. They left behind a map that shows the road to Dammerhall. Within Zaraketh is the key to reclaiming the lost dwarven city.

The lost road is no safe path. Instead, it is a road grown wild and dangerous. It is the mythic seventh road into the lost dwarven city. It is the unsealed gate into the lost city where in lies the lost hope for dwarven glory and the secret of forging true mithral. Without this map, you could search for a thousand years and not find the hidden door.

Vothys is fallen and the Upper Azathyr likely sees a new colony of deep gnomes led by dwarven heroes. But as the Explorers descend the Great Jumping Off Point, they enter a new realm more mysterious and more dangerous than anything they've encountered before. This is the region of the Azathyr known as the Earth's Wound.

The Earth's Wound is a region of great geologic instability. It is a place where hot springs flourish and where small tremors are commonplace. It is almost as if they earth is alive here and in truth that is not a bad summation.

One of the great secrets of the Earth's Wound is that all this geologic activity does not have a natural source. There is hidden away within a small cave the Elementalist's Redoubt. There an ancient wizard died leaving a portal open to the border region of the elemental planes of earth and fire. It is because of that open portal that the constant volatility finds its origin. If the Redoubt could be rediscovered, the Earth's Wound could be at last healed and the dangerous quakes could be quelled. It will not be easy. The Elementalist's Redoubt is the epicenter of the elemental activity and it is here that the creatures of earth and fire grow the largest and fiercest.

But more than that, the Earth's Wound is a lost world. It is a great canyon; open to the sky in part that has trapped a region of primordial flora and fauna unlike any other. It is a world of ancient twilight, inestimably old and inestimably dangerous. When the dwarves ruled, they kept the strange beasts there at bay. They even built a passage that connected to the surface and used that passage as a method for trade.

Now two centuries later, uncontrolled the Earth's Wound is once more wild. It is a place of bubbling hot springs, hungry dinosaurs, beautiful orchids and shimmering half-light. But more than any of that, the Earth's Wound is a place of secrets. How many will these dwarven explorers uncover?

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

DROW OVERLORDS

For drow, the region of the Azathyr known as the Earth's Wound is not primarily about rediscovering the road to Dammerhall. Yes, finding a way into a lost dwarven city ripe with the potential for vast plunder is a tempting prize and one these would-be overlords will doubtless exploit (in Book Three). But more than that, the Earth's Wound is a step towards vengeance and conquest.

The portal to the surface opens not far from an elvish settlement – the tree-fortress of Lothellain. Within is a population of the drow's most hated enemy, the wood elves. A raid against the wood elven colony could not only provide a chance for glorious slaughter and bloody sacrifice to their dark patron; the drow could seize a supply of an incredibly precious commodity – surface elven slaves.

A collection of these slaves would not only be a valuable commodity on the auction blocks of Taarysia, it could also be the PC's way into the city and a useful bargaining chip in gaining allies. The drow lust for vengeance against their surface brethren can be blinding and these slaves could be the perfect tool for getting a knife in the backs of those who would oppose them.

Indeed, the entire region of the Earth's Wound is an opportunity to expand their empire and claim additional power. The orchid jungle of this lost world is rich with rare poisons and precious rarities that the drow could well exploit. The primordial beasts here could be captured and made into war-beasts. But even more tempting than any of those is the hidden cavern known as the Elementalist's Redoubt.

The Elementalist's Redoubt is a nexus of great and primal magical energy. The very lifeblood of the world flows within that place. A daring spellcaster could transform it into a place capable of forging powerful magical items. Such a visionary could contain within these magical items the very heart of the unquiet earth, the full might of an earthquake, the violence of an erupting volcano, the fury of elemental magic rarely seen since the world was young.

However drawing forth the full magical energies of that place could unleash further calamity on this fragile lost world. Eventually, the Overlords will face a choice – destroy this place for short-term benefit or exercise restraint and add it to their ever-growing empire. The very fate of the Earth's Wound itself will be theirs to decide.

EVERYONE ELSE

If you have decided to run “Throne of Night” with a party that consists of more typical surface PCs, the Earth's Wound still presents great opportunities for adventure. Anything that a dwarven explorer or drow overlord can accomplish can also be accomplished by adventurers. Discovering the road to Dammerhall or the secret of the Elementalist's redoubt can be just as meaningful for adventurers as it is for anyone else.

But more than dwarves or drow, contact with the elves of Lothellain represents a chance to reestablish contact with their home. The elves have contact with human traders and so the adventurers, long cut off from the surface, can send messengers to love ones and contact old friends. How long has it been since the PCs have had a steak or a favorite vintage of surface wine. Trading with the elves can make all of that reality.

For their part, the elves of Lothellain will be stunned to discover surface-dwellers emerging from the Earth's Wound. It is rare even for those who dwell beneath the earth to survive the gauntlet of strange creatures that live there. For a surface dweller to have made the journey is nothing short of unique and the elves will be interested in the tale of how this came to be (if the PCs can get on friendly terms with them).

For more exotic races, the Earth's Wound remains an opportunity. How they respond to the surface entrance is something that will vary, of course, depending on their particular circumstances. It is possible that some more exotic parties may choose to ignore the elven colony of Lothellain altogether. This is fine. Just be sure to make sure that the PCs have other encounters to keep them at the appropriate level. You might also consider changing Lothellain into a colony of another race. If for example, you are running an all-goblin campaign, it might be amusing to change Lothellain into a surface goblin tribe. This forest tribe will be suspicious of outsiders, but can be befriended and even made into a source of new followers.

ACT ONE: A SUNLESS DOMAIN

After the events of Book One, it is likely the PCs now rule a realm that stretches from Fasturvalt to Vothys. They may have even claimed large stretches of the Fungal Jungle from the Xan or the Skis'raal and are thinking about establishing a third settlement there. In a realm as ever-changing and dynamic as the Azathyr, ruling such a realm is never a trivial enterprise.

Here then are presented seven challenges that will arise, testing their claim to rulership and present new opportunities. You'll note that this section has no new maps. This is because these events happen in the Upper Azathyr, where Book One was set.

Note that these events have no set time frame. They can happen before the PCs set out to venture down the Great Jumping Off Point. They can happen when the PCs periodically return to check on their domain. They can even happen while the PCs are ruling Fasturvalt, but have not yet managed to conquer Vothys (so actually during the events of Book One; beware though all these events are CR 6 or higher).

One issue the PCs will have as rulers is just how spread out their dominion is. The underworld is not easy to traverse. It takes weeks to cross their dominion and that means if the PCs want to explore, they must leave their realm in the hand of stewards while they set off in search of adventure.

For Explorers, this is not a great problem. The Deep Gnomes are a trustworthy and loyal lot. They can leave Fasturvalt in the hands of Miatha Always-a-Song-Follows (see page 26 of Book One) or Harvald Held-the-Wall (the most veteran of the gnome soldiers they rescued) or perhaps old Tammar Even-the-Stone-Listens (see pg. 25 of Book One). Whoever survived the Battle of Fasturvalt and most earned the PC's trust is a natural choice for serving as steward while they are away.

For Overlords, the situation is more precarious. Who do they trust amongst their slaves? The answer is almost certainly no one. Fortunately, they will likely soon have access to spells like *lesser geas* and that means they can use magic to force obedience while they're away. In the meantime, fear will have to suffice. Hopefully, they've done enough horrific things to those that dared oppose them that their lesser servants and slaves will do their best to please them until they return. Still, don't shy away from emphasizing the treacherous nature of drow society. One of the times they return to Vothys they should have to fight their way in and depose a foolish soldier who has declared himself the new baron.

CHALLENGE ONE: SURFACE REFUGEES EXPLORER VERSION

Word gets out quickly that dwarves from the surface have taken over Fasturvalt and defeated the Baroness of Vothys. Merchants spread the news all up and down the King's Highway along the Upper Azathyr. It is quickly the talk of deep gnomish society from Kladdenvalt to Vondehammer. And eventually this news reaches desperate ears.

The dwarves are not the only surface dwellers trapped in the realms below. Years ago a human village was raided by duergar. The duergar captured a large number of slaves and held them in their own settlement outside of the Azathyr. Most of the slaves they worked to death, but a small handful managed to escape during one of the duergar's drunken revelries.

Led by the former captain of the watch named Thomas Handelman, this desperate band of a dozen humans made their way to Kladdenvalt, the gnome-king's capital, and there lived amongst the deep gnomes for a time. They did not possess darkvision. They spoke neither gnomish or undercommon. What could they be but beggars?

Some of the deep gnomes were too kind-hearted to let them starve in the streets of Kladdenvalt, but even at the best of times these humans situation was always desperate. They long more than anything to find a way back to the surface.

Captain Thomas Handelman (the other refugees usually just call him Captain Tom), has adapted better than anyone else in this band. He now speaks undercommon well and smatterings of gnome. He even managed briefly to get a job as bodyguard to a gnomish merchant earned some real coin. When he heard about dwarves in the Upper Azathyr, he prayed that this meant that somewhere there was a way out of this nightmare world of eternal darkness.

And so, the twelve survivors gathered what scant resources they could buy, beg or steal and headed to Fasturvalt. They travelled along the King's Highway and miraculously avoided both bandits and monsters. They traded news of the capital to merchants for small amounts of food. They hunted cave lizards and ate anything they could capture including crickets and centipedes. Ragged and starving at last they've made it to Fasturvalt. They beg an audience with the lord dwarves from the first gnomes they meet. The guard captain of the gnomes is so moved by their tale of survival and desperation that he actually goes before the lords and asks if they will see this so-called "Captain" Tom and his band of beggars.

Of course the dwarves need do nothing. They can refuse to hear the refugees' plea. Dishearted, the refugees will linger for a few days. Miatha in particular will take pity on them and feed them and even clothe in the Blue Bat for a while and eventually provide them with passage with a trade caravan ... back to Kladdenvalt.

But if they do grant them an audience, Captain Tom appears before them. He is a tall, proud man who is now pale, lean and bedraggled. The underworld is not a kind place and Captain Tom has earned many scars here. He speaks in earnest:

"Great lords, thank you for seeing us. My name is Captain Thomas Handelman. Once, me and my friends dwelt peaceably in a town not much different from this one, but in the world above. One horrible night our town was raided by the foul duergar and every one of us was dragged away in chains."

"Those monsters beat us and worked many of us to death. They fed us filth when they fed us at all. We were so close to death that when at last a chance came to escape, we barely had the strength. But we found that strength, great lords."

"We made our way to the gnomish city of Kladdenvalt and there, we lived like beggars. We didn't speak the language, but we learned it. We couldn't see in the dark, but we scabbled together anything we could find to make torches. We had no money for food and so we did what we could to survive."

"We were all alone in the darkness, great lords, with no hope nor word of a way to back to the surface. But then at last a moment of light. We heard word that somewhere not far from Kladdenvalt, noble dwarves from the surface ruled."

"We have come, great lords, to give you a chance to prove your greatness to all. We have come to beg for aid. We don't belong in this place. When the duergar captured us, we were two hundred. These twelve you see before you are all that remain."

"You are the end of our hope, great lords. Please, if you know of a way to see the sun once more... Please, show us a way back into the light."

And then he bows. What do the dwarves do now? Captain Tom's band consists of eleven other humans (including Elenor, a pretty young woman who has become Tom's "wife" even though they have not been actually married). They are all human level 2 commoners. Captain Tom himself is a middle-aged level 4 warrior with elite ability scores. And any help the PCs give them is greatly appreciated.

Likely, Explorers will answer Tom's plea with some variation of "we don't know any way out either." In fact, this is true. The PCs only exit to the surface was sealed off at the beginning of Book One. Captain Tom actually has an answer for that:

"Great Lords, we've heard many tales of your exploits and we know that you are born explorers. We have heard rumors of an entrance to the surface below the Great Jumping Off Point. It's said that beyond a great rift where the earth itself burns and where ancient monsters yet thrive there is way to the sunlit realms. If you are going there, may we accompany you? We will be your servants, making your camp, cleaning your clothes. Elenor is a magnificent cook. Any service you require will be our pleasure if you will just take us with you..."

This rumor is actually not far from true and refers to location W (see Act Two below) at the far end of the Earth's Wound. What Captain Tom will not do is split up his band. They are closer than family after all they've been through and they will not leave their friends behind if given any choice.

OVERLORD VERSION

One of their patrols captures a group of refugees trying to sneak through their realm. In this case, the refugees led by Captain Tom were trying to get to the Great Jumping Off Point because of the rumor mentioned above. They were certainly not seeking the aid of the drow. They are brought before the conquerors of Fasturvalt in chains.

Captain Tom does not willing tell the drow this rumor. Still, threatening Elenor's life (it takes a DC 15 Sense Motive to realize that Tom loves Elenor) will cause him to reveal everything he knows.

Captain Tom has experience with creatures as evil as the drow and he realizes that if his band is to have any chance at survival, he needs to appeal to their baser instincts. And so he lies. But as fate would have it, his lie is mostly correct:

"Terrible Lords, if you will but spare us. I think I know the way to this entrance. Beyond the entrance there are other villages you could raid for slaves. If you will but spare us, we will deliver you to more slaves and plunder than you can count."

The truth is that there are no human villages near the rumored exit. But there is an elven colony known as Lothellain. And Captain Tom does not actually know the exact way to the exit. He only knows what he reveals in the Explorer version above. But he will pretend to be a guide if it will spare his people becoming slaves once more to monsters below.

CHALLENGE TWO: STRANGE TRAVELERS

Without warning or announcement, a group of three cloaker explorers fly up the Great Jumping Off Point. They try to avoid any defenses (such as Vothys) using their stealth. This trio is actually a bonded family unit of cloak-ers. They have heard tales of the Fungal Jungle and believe it would be a perfect place to establish a colony of their often misunderstood kind. They have no understanding about the politics of this newly founded domain, nor do they particularly care. Their purpose here is to found a new community of their bizarre kind.

It is likely that the cloak-ers may first encounter guards in the service of the PCs. Be it a patrol of deep gnomes, drow or some other creature, it is likely the cloak-ers were mistaken for mere unintelligent monsters. The patrol attacked the cloak-ers and the cloak-ers responded in kind. A single moan of fear panicked most of the patrolmen and those that did stand their ground were quickly ripped apart by the flying monsters.

This is what gets reported to the PCs: flying monsters are stalking the tunnels near Vothys. They look like large bats or manta rays, the panicked survivors report, and their moans send fear into any who hear them. There were dozens of them (this is actually a guard misinterpreting seeing a *mirror image* spell in action). “Surely,” the guard reports, “they are horrors straight from the pit.”

The PCs could handle this like a straight monster hunt. The Cloakers are tough foes, but not insurmountable to a party prepared for the hunt. From the description a DC 20 Knowledge (dungeoneering) check will identify what they actually are. A DC 25 Knowledge (dungeoneering) check will further identify that they are intelligent, speak undercommon, and not unreasonable (if quite alien).

If the PCs do decide to simply hunt them down and attack on sight, this encounter becomes a simple matter of running the battle. Use a random stretch of cave (maps are provided in Book One). The Cloakers will try to flee from overwhelming force, but are very loyal to one another. If one is wounded too badly to flee or somehow incapacitated, they will die trying to defend each other. They are, after all, family.

Once defeated, the cloak-ers carry 2500 gp in gemstone quality amethyst gathered deep from below and another 1200 gp in carefully folded drow-made spider silk they traded with a caravan some weeks ago. They intended to use these valuables as trade goods to secure food and provisions if necessary.

However, if the PCs do decide to talk to the cloak-ers, they discover that they are very sorry about the run in with the patrol. They tried to avoid them first and then to speak them, but they would not listen. They hoped they would all flee from their moan, but when that did not work on a few they were forced to defend themselves.

Their names are H’zarra (pro. Heh-ZAR-ah), Ia’zora (pro. EYE-ah-ZORE-ah) and Kithet Z’eel (pro. KITH-et ZAH-eel). Cloakers have three genders and thus they are all “married” in a sense. They are a young and adventurous, newly bonded family unit that saw little prospects for success in their old hunting grounds and has heard tales of the bounty of the Fungal Jungle. They hope to settle their and establish a family.

H’zarra is clearly the leader. It is slightly larger than the other two and they both seem to defer to this creature. This cloaker does much of the talking and is any outsider’s primary point of contact.

Ia’zora is quiet and rarely says anything to outsiders. In fact, this cloaker is constantly talking to the other two via their infrasonic mode of speaking to one another. She is the most cautious and most reserved of the three.

Kithet Z’eel thinks of itself as a warrior. This cloaker has painted its grey form in pale white stripes. It rarely bothers to speak to outsiders but when it does, it is quite hostile. If H’zarra is ever killed then Kithet takes over the survivors and immediately proceeds to seek vengeance for the murder of its beloved elder. At that point, the cloak-ers can only be stopped by slaying them.

If approached in a friendly way and spoke to in undercommon, H’zarra will step forward and offer greetings. It says the following:

“We are greeting you. We are H’zarra. We are meaning you no harm. We are sorry what happened in the past with the others like you. We were meaning them no harm, but they were not believing us. We were being attacked. We were only defending ourselves. We are offering you a gift. We are knowing a gift does not answer that they are not living, but we are hoping it will show that we are trying to be your friends.”

H’zarra then very formally presents the folded spider silk to the nearest member of whoever he is talking to and then waits hoping this gift will make further bloodshed unnecessary. Note that as the gift is presented, the cloak-ers are on edge. They are ready for a fight to break out at any moment and will not be surprised if one does.

If the PCs accept their gift and are civil to the cloak-ers, then the cloak-ers will want to know who rules these lands and in particular the Great Bounteous Cavern (which is what they call the Fungal Jungle). Whoever is the ruler, they hope will allow them to settle there.

If the PCs will agree to let them settle in the Fungal Jungle (and truthfully, why wouldn't they? The place is massive), then H'zarra can help in another way. They have come up from the Great Jumping Off Point. They have just traveled through it. Though their knowledge is not comprehensive, they can make a crude map of where they have been.

This map will provide the first concrete intelligence the PCs have received (other than perhaps the refugee's rumors, see Event One above) about what is down the Great Jumping Off Point. In addition to their map, the cloak-ers will relate tales of what creatures they have seen down there or heard rumors from the drow caravan they encountered and trade with for the spider silk. H'zarra relates these tales thusly:

Cloaker Explorers (3) CR 5

XP 1,600 each; 4,800 XP total

CN Large aberration

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +14

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 16 (+3 Dex, +7 natural, -1 size)

hp 51 (6d8+24)

Fort +6, **Ref** +5, **Will** +7

Defensive Abilities shadow shift

OFFENSE

Speed 10 ft., fly 40 ft. (average)

Melee bite +8 (1d6+5), tail slap +3 (1d8+2)

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

Special Attacks engulf, moan

TACTICS

During Combat Unless one of their number is captured or killed, the cloak-ers prefer to avoid combat with other sentients. They are quick to flee, using their fly speed and stealth to try and put distance between themselves and danger.

However, they will defend themselves. The first round, they cast *mirror image*. The second round, they all moan. One will use stupor on whoever appears to be the leader. One will use fear in hopes of panicking the troops. And another will use unnerve in hopes of weakening any enemies who stand their ground. After that, they attack engulfing, biting and lashing with their tails.

Morale The cloak-ers are very loyal to each other. If all three can escape, they flee at 25 hp. If one of their number is in danger they fight to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 21, **Dex** 16, **Con** 19, **Int** 14, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 23 (can't be tripped)

Feats Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Perception)

Skills Disguise +8 (+16 as cloak), Fly +10, Knowledge (religion) +11, Perception +14, Sense Motive +8, Stealth +8; Racial Modifiers +8 Disguise to appear as a cloak, sheet, manta ray, or similarly shaped object or creature

Languages Undercommon

Gear crude leather packs, a weeks rations (carefully dried whole animals, mostly bats and rats), trade goods (see description)

"We were meeting with drow merchants. The drow caravans were travelling from the city of Taaryssia. The merchants were speaking that once there was a trade route that went through this region, but it has recently collapsed. They are seeking another way through."

"We are knowing that the entire area is wracked by earthquake and cave-ins. We are knowing it is very dangerous and were eager to escape it."

"The drow merchants were speaking also of an invisible killer who stalks a great rift. They were calling the killer the blue ghost."

"We were discovering an opening into a great cave. We were seeing beyond that opening there was a land of burning earth and bubbling mud. We were also seeing a land of green beyond that."

"We were hearing that within the green lies great serpents and lizards, the sort that have not dwelt upon the world for countless ages."

"We were hearing also tales of living fire within the rift. We were told that the fire consumes all who enters into its domain. We were told that the fire utterly hates all the living and spares no one. We were certain that this place was not to be our home."

Once this exchange of information is done, the cloak-ers are eager to be on their way. Soon, they will be hard at work establishing a new cloaker village.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Engulf (Ex) A cloaker can try to wrap a Medium or smaller creature in its body as a standard action. The cloaker attempts a grapple that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and bites the engulfed victim with a +4 bonus on its attack roll. It can still use its whip-like tail to strike at other targets. Attacks that hit an engulfing cloaker deal half their damage to the monster and half to the trapped victim.

Moan (Ex) A cloaker can emit an infrasonic moan as a standard action, with one of four effects.

Fear: All creatures in a 30-foot spread must save (Will negates) or become panicked for 2 rounds.

Nausea: All creatures in a 30-foot cone must save (Fortitude negates) or fall prone and be nauseated for 1d4+1 rounds.

Stupor: A single creature within 30 feet is affected by hold monster for 5 rounds (Will negates).

Unnerve: Anyone within a 60-foot spread automatically takes a -2 penalty on attack and damage rolls. Those in the area for more than 6 consecutive rounds must save (Will negates) or enter a trance, helpless until the moaning stops.

Cloakers are immune to these sonic, mind-affecting attacks. A creature that successfully saves against the cloaker's fear, nausea, or unnerve moans cannot be affected by that same moan effect from that cloaker for 24 hours. All of the save DCs against a cloaker's moan are DC 15. Save DCs are Charisma-based.

Shadow Shift (Su) When in dim illumination, a cloaker can manipulate shadows as a free action to create one of three effects: *blur* (lasts 1d4 rounds, self only), *mirror image* (CL 6th, 1d4+2 images), or *silent image* (DC 15, CL 6th, save DC is Charisma-based).



PLAYER'S HANDOUT: H'ZARRA'S MAP



CHALLENGE THREE A SERPENT IN OUR MIDST

Raakesh the Dark Naga fortunes have fared poorly up till late. Forced to flee from a group of powerful adventurers, he had barely escaped with his life and taken refuge in the underworld. As fate would have it, recently he found himself traveling upon the Gnome King's Highway, disguised as a deep gnome. He encountered a group of traders who were surprised to see one of their brethren traveling alone. Always a capable liar, Raakesh spun them a tale about his caravan being attacked and soon lured the travelers into trusting him.

He used that new found confidence to insinuate himself into their ranks. It was then that he discovered the recent events that transpired in Fasturvalt (see Book One for details). He was fascinated to discover that a group of dwarves (or drow) adventurers now ruled the place and saw an opportunity. He left the gnome caravan behind and ventured to Fasturvalt, sneaking in easily thanks to his guile, mind-reading, shape-changing and invisibility abilities. He quietly murdered a gnome miner (or perhaps a drow guard) and began his vicious climb up through the ranks of Fasturvalt society.

Now, he only waits for the PCs to leave Fasturvalt and he plans to make his play for the throne. He will become one of the PCs (using his precious *greater hat of disguise*) and take control of the PC's empire while they are away on one of their adventures. By the time these rivals return, he will have invented a story talking about the demise of his other companions and will assume control of the empire.

The exact details of the naga's lies depend upon the specific group of adventurers, but they will always be something similar to this:

My people, our last expedition alas ended in disaster. My friends and I were ambushed by shape-changing doppelgangers. These fiends assumed our appearance, ambushing us from within. Though we dealt these fiends a savage blow, we were ultimately outmatched. The doppelgangers slew all my friends and I was forced to escape. Worse, I fear they may follow me back. Thus, be extra vigilant. If anyone emerges appearing like my companions, they may be that same band of doppelgangers. Now, I have returned. I have decided to make Fasturvalt my permanent home and I will rule this realm from this day forward. Let us mourn the dead and look to the future. There is much work to do...

And so Raakesh will take over. Anyone who doubts his story is quickly ensorcelled by *charm person* and then quietly disappears. Raakesh is ruthless in his methods and gladly kills anyone who stands in his way.

If allowed to hold power, Raakesh's reign is ultimate disastrous. Every month he causes a -1 to Loyalty and a +1 to Unrest due to his bizarre edicts. If defeated and exposed, Raakesh begs for his life. He will pledge to serve whoever defeated him. And Raakesh can be a useful servant for Overlords, particularly if he is never given cause to believe he can seize control again. A skilled infiltrator, there are few places that Raakesh cannot enter and make a place for himself given time.

Raakesh Lord-of-Night

CR 8

XP 4,800

Male dark naga

LE Large aberration

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., detect thoughts; Perception +19

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 15, flat-footed 16 (+5 Dex, +1 dodge, +7 natural, -1 size)

hp 85 (10d8+40)

Fort +7, **Ref** +10, **Will** +9 (+11 vs. charm effects)

Defensive Abilities guarded thoughts; **Immune** poison

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee bite +8 (1d4+2), sting +8 (2d4+2 plus poison)

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

Spells Known (CL 7th)

3rd (5/day)—*displacement*, *lightning bolt* (DC 16)

2nd (7/day)—*cat's grace*, *invisibility*, *scorching ray*

1st (7/day)—*charm person*, *expedient retreat*, *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 14), *shield*

0 (at will)—*arcane mark*, *daze*, *detect magic*, *mage hand*, *open/close*, *ray of frost*, *read magic*

TACTICS

Before Combat If given the chance, then Raakesh will cast *cat's grace*, *invisibility*, *displacement*, *shield* and *expedient retreat* on itself.

During Combat Raakesh would rather trick others into doing its fighting for it, but if forced into combat, then it relies upon its spells. In particular, it will shoot a lightning bolt every round until its supply is exhausted. It then turns to *scorching rays*, *magic missiles* and *rays of enfeeblement* depending upon its foes' strengths and weaknesses.

Morale Raakesh is a coward. If reduced to half his hit points against an obviously superior foe, then Raakesh will surrender and beg for its life. Of course, Raakesh will try its best to regain the upper hand at all times if forced to become slave to others.

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 21, **Con** 18, **Int** 16, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 17

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 26 (can't be tripped)

Feats Alertness, Combat Casting, Dodge, Eschew MaterialsB, Lightning Reflexes, Stealthy

Skills Bluff +13, Diplomacy +9, Disguise +9, Escape Artist +13, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (arcana) +13, Perception +19, Sense Motive +10, Spellcraft +12, Stealth +18

Languages Common, Elvish, Gnome, Infernal, Undercommon

Gear *greater hat of disguise*

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Detect Thoughts (Su) A dark naga can continuously use detect thoughts as per the spell (caster level 9th; Will DC 18 negates). The save DC is Charisma-based.

Guarded Thoughts (Ex) Dark nagas are immune to any form of mind reading, such as that granted by detect thoughts. This ability also grants a +2 racial bonus on all saves against charm effects.

Poison (Ex) Sting—injury; **save** Fort DC 19; **frequency** 1 round; **effect** sleep for 2d4 minutes; **cure** 1 save.

Spells Dark nagas cast spells as 7th-level sorcerers.

CHALLENGE FOUR: EVEN SHADOWS LISTEN

You cannot slay someone of the Baroness Satha Sevastia's stature and expect no one to notice. It takes months for word to reach the noble houses of Taarysia. There, no one sheds a tear. In fact, the death of Lady Satha at the hands of outsiders works perfectly for the factions who got her banished in the first place.

But still, even though Satha is unmourned, the drow nobility cannot allow slayers of their ilk to get away with their crime. And so, the shadow demon Umbrael the Neverborn is summoned from the Abyss and tasked to discover exactly who is responsible for the Baroness' death and what are their intentions.

Cloaked in shadow, Umbrael emerges from the Great Jumping Off Point and flies straight for Vothys. Depending on what he finds there, the demon either remains or perhaps even heads to Fasturvalt. Umbrael's mission is not to kill anyone. This creature of shadow is simply a scout. The mission is simply to gather information. The assassins ... they come later.

With the ability to teleport and blend into shadow, there is no reason to suspect that the PCs would ever even encounter this most elusive of demons. In fact, the PCs have only one chance. The shadow demon may be a capable scout and a master of stealth, but it is also a demon. It has been specifically ordered to avoid conflict. But its orders said nothing about not desecrating a temple and slaughtering the helpless.

The shadow demon first seeks out wherever the PCs hold their councils and begins seeking a way into their most personal chambers. It likely possesses a lesser servant or slave with its *magic jar* ability. A deep gnomish house servant named Jerrod Clears-Away-Sorrows is taken over. Using the possessed body, the demon tries to learn first who slew Lady Satha and anything it can glean about their future plans.

But it does one more thing, something its masters did not intend. It cannot resist desecrating a vulnerable temple it discovers by chance and strangling a young novice who was attending the place. Whether the temple is a deep gnomish shrine dedicated to their deity, The Great Burrower, or an altar to the demonic patron of the PCs matters little.

What matters is that the demon slaughters a young attendant named Gimbal Prays-For-All-Of-Us. The demon reveals its presence with that one grisly deviation from its mission of stealth and surveillance. Can the PCs use one slip up to catch the monster and deny their enemies the information they seek? If Umbrael does escape, make a note. This will have repercussions in Book Four.

Gimbal is found mysteriously murdered and the temple desecrated with abyssal curses written in his blood, praising the demon prince of shadows. Talking to witnesses (this requires a DC 20 Diplomacy or Intimidation check) reveals that Jerrod was seen nearby the temple just before the temple was attacked. Talking to Jerrod's co-workers reveals that Jerrod has been acting strange recently. And a successful Sense Motive vs. the demon's bluff (+14) exposes the creature. It abandons Jerrod's body and tries to flee. Can the PCs catch the elusive demon before it flees into shadow?

Umbrael the Neverborn

CR 7

XP 3,200

Shadow demon

CE Medium outsider; (chaotic, demon, evil, extraplanar, incorporeal)

Init +8; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +20

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 18, flat-footed 14 (+4 deflection, +4 Dex)

hp 59 (7d10+21)

Fort +5, Ref +11, Will +7

Defensive Abilities incorporeal; **DR** 10/cold iron or good; **Immune** cold, electricity, poison; **Resist** acid 10, fire 10; **SR** 17

Weaknesses sunlight powerlessness

OFFENSE

Speed fly 40 ft. (perfect)

Melee 2 claws +11 touch (1d6 plus 1d6 cold), bite +11 touch (1d8 plus 1d6 cold)

Special Attacks pounce, sprint, shadow blend

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th)

At will—*deeper darkness*, *fear* (DC 18), *greater teleport* (self only) *telekinesis* (DC 19)

3/day—*shadow conjuration* (DC 18), *shadow evocation* (DC 19)

1/day—*magic jar* (DC 19), *summon* (level 3, 1 shadow demon 50%)

TACTICS

During Combat If forced into battle and unable to simply teleport away, Umbrael uses *shadow evocation* to conjure up shadowy fireballs of black flame. If that fails, then it pounces into melee. No matter what it tries, its ultimate goal is always escape.

Morale Umbrael is not here to fight. He is here to listen and report back. If exposed and attacked, Umbrael tries to flee.

STATISTICS

Str —, **Dex** 18, **Con** 17, **Int** 14, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 19

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 25

Feats Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes

Skills Acrobatics +14, Bluff +14, Fly +22, Knowledge (local) +12, Knowledge (planes) +12, Perception +20, Sense Motive +12, Stealth +14; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Perception

Languages Abyssal, Elven, Undercommon; telepathy 100 ft.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Sprint (Ex) Once per minute, a shadow demon increase its fly speed to 240 feet for 1 round.

Shadow Blend (Su) During any conditions other than bright light, a shadow demon can disappear into the shadows as a move-equivalent action, effectively becoming invisible. Artificial illumination or light spells of 2nd level or lower do not negate this ability.

Sunlight Powerlessness (Ex) A shadow demon is utterly powerless in bright light or natural sunlight and flees from it. A shadow demon caught in such light cannot attack and can take only a single move or standard action. A shadow demon that is possessing a creature using magic jar is not harmed by sunlight, but if it is struck by a sunbeam or sunburst spell while possessing a creature, the shadow demon is driven out of its host automatically.

CHALLENGE FIVE: ANCIENT BLOOD

In Fasturvalt, while digging through the marble, the stone cutters unearth a long hidden cubical chamber, ten feet on a side. Inside, they discover a stone sarcophagus lined with silver. There once was an entrance, but it has long ago been sealed up. They broke in and an eager miner cracked open the sarcophagus almost immediately. It was empty, everyone there swears, but a successful Sense Motive (DC 15) will reveal that there was something else. If pressed the stone cutters also reveal that several of them heard a low hissing noise and heard something moving that sounded like a large insect skittering away.

The silver-lined sarcophagus (worth 2000 gp) has ancient writing that a successful DC 20 Linguistics will recognize as a particularly ancient form of the Celestial tongue. Anyone trained in the Linguistics skill with the Celestial tongue can read the inscriptions. Otherwise, magical methods like *comprehend languages* will have to be employed.

The inscription reads: *"Sealed within is Kasta the Bleeding Wound. Cursed by the gods, this creature is forever condemned to an eternity in silver. Let no one break this seal, lest blood once more flow."*

Kasta is a sangudaemon imprisoned long ago by an ancient order of good-aligned aasimar who tried to rid the planes of evil creatures by caging them in such vaults deep underground. Fasturvalt was a site for such a repository and the stone-cutters, in their ignorance, have unleashed the creature.

Physically, the daemon resembles a man-sized spider but its very form is made up of what appears to be coagulated blood. Black and scabious, it is a horror to behold. And Kasta for countless centuries has dreamed of only one thing – feasting once more on living blood. For years as the stone cutters approached closer and closer to its vault, it has been able to smell their blood and hear their beating hearts.

When Kasta heard the stone-cutters getting near, it took all of the creature's willpower not to immediately strike and feast on their blood. Instead, the crafty daemon turned invisible. When the sarcophagus was opened and the seals were violated, then Kasta teleported a short distance away and invisibly fled the scene.

It could no longer control its hunger and immediately took a victim. It killed either a young deep gnome stone cutter (in Explorer campaigns) or a drow guard (in Overlord campaigns). When the exsanguinated body is found, this is likely when all of this comes to the attention of the PCs.

Now Kasta hunts the streets of Fasturvalt, eager for living blood. If it is not dealt with quickly it will claim at least one victim a night. It does not discriminate. Guards, laborers, children – anyone is fair game to this monster. Such gruesome and capricious murder breeds fear in the populace. Rampant fear adds +1 to Unrest every night the creature is uncaught. Eventually the desperate people will rise up and lynch mobs will roam the street trying to defend their own.

For good-aligned Explorers, the mission is clear. The PCs must hunt down the daemon and destroy it. Kasta is a dangerous foe but not particularly stealthy. It can fly and become invisible three times a day which means that conventional guards and soldiery will be of almost no use against it. But the PCs should have little trouble finding and confronting the beast.

Of course, finding the daemon and defeating it are very different things. Kasta is a bloodletting nightmare in a fight and takes delight in ripping helpless foes paralyzed by its *hold monster* spell-like ability apart with its fangs and claws. One advantage the PCs will have in seeking the monster is that Kasta is contemptuous of mortals (or "blood sacks" as it prefers to call them in its low hissing whisper of a voice). Kasta sees little reason to hide and is only too eager for a fight against fools who believe themselves greater than it.

For Overlords, there are more options. Anyone who examines one of Kasta's victims who is trained in Knowledge (planes) with a DC 30 can identify the monster. An eyewitness account of the creature lowers this DC to 20 and should allow another roll.

Anyone who identifies what Kasta is will recognize that feeding the creature a sentient being and allowing it to bleed it to death will probably be able to talk to the daemon. If the Overlords provide Kasta with a victim every week to bleed to death, it can become an ally.

The daemon is an unreliable ally. Fighting for others, it will teleport away if reduced to 50% of its hp total (57 hp). After abandoning its "masters" there is a 50% chance it will ambush them later, no doubt avenging some slight it received while in their service (whether real or imagined). If the PCs treated it at all bad, it will definitely seek vengeance.

Still, if the PCs are careful to keep it from being seriously harmed and keep it well sated on living blood, Kasta could be a powerful cohort. But no matter how well they treat this otherworldly horror, if it ever finds itself alone with a dying PC, it is only too happy to feed and use its death knell ability on the hapless victim. Kasta the Bleeding Wound has no concept of loyalty. All it understands is blood and suffering.



Kasta the Bleeding Wound

CR 9

XP 6,400

Sangudaemon

NE Medium outsider (daemon, evil, extraplanar)

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent; Perception +18

Aura bleeding aura (30 ft.)

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 16, flat-footed 17 (+5 Dex, +1 dodge, +7 natural)

hp 114 (12d10+48)

Fort +12, Ref +13, Will +7

DR 10/good or silver; **Immune** acid, death effects, disease, poison;

Resist cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)

Melee bite +19 (1d8+7/18–20/x3 plus bleed), 2 claws +19 (1d6+7 plus grab)

Special Attacks bleed (2d4+1), blood drain (1d2 Constitution), drain soul

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th; concentration +14)

At will—*greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only)

3/day—*death knell* (DC 14), *invisibility*, *summon swarm*

1/day—*hold monster* (DC 17), *summon* (level 6, 1 sangudaemon 40%)

TACTICS

Before Combat If given the chance, Kasta will try before a fight against a dangerous enemy to summon another sangudaemon and become invisible.

During Combat Kasta prefers to stalk enemies invisibly and ambush them one at a time using its *hold monster* ability. Failing that, it relishes using its melee attacks to bleed its foes to death.

Morale Kasta teleports away if reduced to 28 hp or less.

STATISTICS

Str 24, Dex 21, Con 19, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 15

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +19 (+23 grapple); **CMD** 35 (47 vs. trip)

Feats Bleeding Critical, Combat Reflexes, Critical Focus, Dodge, Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative

Skills Escape Artist +20, Fly +24, Intimidate +17, Perception +18, Sense Motive +18, Spellcraft +15

Languages Abyssal, Draconic, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.

SQ augmented critical, contagious gore

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Augmented Critical (Ex) A sangudaemon's bite threatens a critical hit on a roll of 18–20 and deals x3 damage on a successful critical hit.

Bleeding Aura (Su) Within the daemon's aura, blood gushes from wounds at an increased rate. All bleed effects deal an additional +2 points of damage (included in the daemon's bleed damage). Heal checks made to stop bleeding or stabilize a dying creature, Constitution checks made to become stable, and saving throws against effects that deal bleed damage take a –4 penalty.

Blood Drain (Ex) The creature drains blood at the end of its turn if it grapples a foe, inflicting Constitution damage.

Contagious Gore (Su) A sangudaemon alters the very flow of blood when it attacks. Any creature that stops a bleed effect created by a sangudaemon must make a DC Fortitude save or gain the bleed effect the creature just stopped (this has no effect if the creature was stopping a bleed effect on itself). A creature that succeeds at this save is immune to this ability for 24 hours. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Drain Soul (Su) A sangudaemon can revitalize itself by draining the soul of a dead creature. The target must be a creature the daemon dealt bleed damage to or used its blood drain ability on, and must have been dead for no longer than 1 minute. As a full-round action, it can drink the creature's soul dry, condemning the soul (though the soul can be returned to life as normal). The daemon gains fast healing 2 for a number of rounds equal to its Hit Dice.

CHALLENGE SIX: FREE FASTURVALT!

The king of Kladdenvalt, the largest deep gnome city for many miles, has heard that Fasturvalt is no longer ruled by deep gnomes. Uncertain of exactly what has happened, he decided to send an army to make sure that his brother svirfneblin are not slaves. And so he dispatches his cousin the famed deep gnome general, Count Cornelius Steel-Never-Lies and three hundred soldiers. Their mission is to make sure that the populace of Fasturvalt is free and well taken care of. And if they are in need of aid, then Count Cornelius will see that they receive it.

This is not a purely altruistic move. Kladdenvalt is built with Fasturvalt stone. The finest marble in the region comes from there and the king wants to ensure that the supply of this critical building material is not threatened.

Word reaches Fasturvalt about two weeks before the army arrives. Count Cornelius' force has been seen by traders who move up the King's Highway. Though the initial information is sketchy, the facts are clear enough. A large army of deep gnomes is headed this way.

EXPLORER VERSION

For Explorers, this news should be cause for concern. The dwarves were lawfully given control of the town when Lord Geirni Geirison died at the Battle of Fasturvalt, true enough. Still, who knows what this new army wants? Are they here to conquer? Or can they be negotiated with peacefully? It should be a nervous week or two for the PCs.

The PCs have a choice. They can either wait for the army to arrive or they can move out to meet them. Where ever the PCs meet Lord Cornelius, he is suspicious of dwarves. Lord Cornelius puts his concerns bluntly.

"Fasturvalt is a svirfneblin holding. It should be ruled by the svirfneblin. I am unsure what claim you think you have to the place, but I do know this. I march with an army of elite deep gnomish warriors who are absolutely loyal to their king and kin. We have been sent to make sure our brothers are well treated."

"I march to ensure this. You can either allow me entrance into Fasturvalt and cooperate completely with me inspecting the condition of the town or you can face my army's full wrath. That choice is yours to make. But what you cannot do is dissuade me from the task given to me by my king. I have sworn a sacred oath to see this done and none shall stay my advance."

"Fasturvalt must be free!"

Likely, the dwarves have nothing to hide. If they are polite with Count Cornelius and allow him to visit the town and speak with people like Miatha and Tammar, then it is likely that the Count Cornelius will grudgingly accept that the situation and return back to Kladdenvalt to report his findings.

If allowed access, the Count's inspection of the town will consist of three actions:

1) He will walk through town and talk to three random gnomish citizens. His questions are brief. Are you happy and well treated? Do your new masters treat you well?

2) He will demand an audience with whoever the current lord is and insist upon a thorough account of what happened to Lord Gerni (who almost certainly died in the First Battle of Fasturvalt in Book One).

3) He wants to speak with the foreman of the quarry (that is likely Tammar Even-the-Stones-Listen). He wants assurances that stone will continue to flow to Kladdenvalt.

If all of this is done to his satisfaction, then the Count will leave and this is likely that the PCs will never hear of him again. The King's worries have been sated and Fasturvalt is actually only a minor concern of the crown in the end. The danger here is that Count Cornelius responds very poorly to rudeness and dwarves are not famous for their manners. If the dwarves are brusque or insulting or refuse him access to the town, then Count Cornelius will convince himself that Fasturvalt has been enslaved by outsiders. And he and his three hundred men will attack the town in force.

This second battle of Fasturvalt is destined to be a bloody tragedy. Deep gnomes will fight deep gnome over a simple misunderstanding and a lack of trust. Even if the PCs can persuade Count Cornelius to call off his troops after the battle begins and acquiesce to his demand to inspect the town, it is likely that his units will have already showered any walls with volleys of crossbow fire, inflicting horrendous casualties on any guards or militia manning it.

And if the dwarves will not acquiesce, Count Cornelius men will charge the town and fight their way against whatever foe they face. They will storm Fasturvalt and try their best to seize control of it.

If you need to stage this battle, consult Book One. It is full of advice and notes for having a battle in Fasturvalt. Ultimately having such a battle will mean that the PCs have failed badly. The goal of this encounter is to avoid such a conflict.

OVERLORD VERSION

For Overlords, the situation is far worse. This army marching against them is an existential threat. Their necks are on the block. Fighting three hundred gnomish soldiers led by a veteran general should fill them with dread. And even if they win, will the battle leave them so weakened that their slaves may rise up against them? Are these fledgling tyrants so secure in their rule that they believe they can handle an invasion and an almost inevitable slave uprising simultaneously?

As the Game Master, make this clear. A fair fight is a recipe for disaster. However, there are alternatives to battle. The *svirfneblin* may be surprisingly powerful and vengeful about the conquest of Fasturvalt, but they are not omniscient. Deception is definitely an option. If the gnomes could be brought to Fasturvalt and shown a town that is prospering and still under gnomish control, then Count Cornelius will report back that rumors of drow invasion were untrue. The problem will be solved without costly bloodshed.

But how can this be done?

By now, the PCs may have access to powerful enchantment spells such as *dominate person* and *suggestion*. These spells can make any deception plan much simpler. Of course, they must be used carefully. You are one failed save away from disaster. The PCs also can use spells like *alter self* to appear as gnomes.

The Count's inspection proceeds exactly as described in the Explorer section above. The PCs must hide their troops. Make sure that any gnomes the Count talks to are charmed or actually drow using magical disguises. The Count is a great general, but he is no master at detecting lies and confidence games.

When the Count has an audience with the rulers in whatever guise, the PCs must lie convincingly about the fate of Lord Gerni and present a fake foreman to further fill the Count's head full of lies. This adventure could easily be run as a "heist" adventure, with the goal being to bamboozle the Count and his small cadre of officers. The PCs have the job of planning the heist and patching up the inevitable problems.

In such an adventure, there should be problems and complications enough to keep the job interesting while still giving the PCs a reasonable chance at success. Maybe the Count doesn't go exactly where they expect him. Maybe one brave deep gnome freedom fighter risk his life to get the Count a message about how bad things really are. The gnome surreptitiously slides a letter into the Count's pocket. Can the PCs retrieve that letter before the Count notices it and has a chance to read it?



There is another possibility. The Count is not incorruptible. Count Cornelius personally cares little about the fate of Fasturvalt. What he cares about are doing his duty for the king (so as to keep his royal favor) and his own personal wealth and titles. He certainly has no love of the drow. Indeed quite the opposite, he believes them to be a wicked and untrustworthy lot. However, a secret assurance that the stone will still flow to Kladdenvalt and a 10,000 gp cash bribe will convince him to deliver a false report to the king. He will not be talked down from this amount and insults or threats will only cause him to raise the total.

And of course, there is always murder. The PCs could quietly assassinate the Count before he gets to town, leaving his army leaderless. An uncertain junior officer will be even easier to deceive. Or they could appear as the Count (once the real Count is dead) and command the gnomish army straight into an ambush. Such brutal tactics can be very effective.

Count Cornelius Steel-Neve-Lies CR 7

XP 3,200

Male svirneblin fighter 7

N small humanoid (gnome)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., low-light vision, Perception +3

DEFENSE

AC 29, touch 17, flat-footed 23 (+8 armor, +4 shield, +3 Dex, +3 dodge, +1 size)

hp 66 (7d10+28)

Fort +10, **Ref** +8, **Will** +8; +2 will vs. fear

SR 18

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft. (20 ft. in heavy armor)

Melee +1 *corrosive shortsword* +13/+8 (1d6+3+1d6 acid/19-20)

Ranged light crossbow +10 (1d6/19-20)

Special Attack +1 to attack vs. dwarven and reptilian humanoids

Spell-like Abilities (CL 7th)

Constant – *nondetection*

1/day – *blindness/deafness* (DC 12), *blur*, *disguise self*

TACTICS

Before Combat If given the chance, Cornelius activates *blur*.

During Combat Cornelius virtually never fights alone, so he sends in soldiers to flank his foes while he power attacks with his shortsword.

Morale Cornelius flees if reduced to 16 hp or lower.

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 16, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +7/+2; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 20

Feats Dodge, Iron Will, Power Attack, Shield Focus, Toughness, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (short sword), Weapon Specialization (short sword)

Skills Craft (Alchemy) +2, Intimidate +5, Perception +3, Profession (Soldier) +11, Sense Motive +8, Stealth +7 (+9 underground);

Racial Modifiers +2 Craft (Alchemy), +2 Perception, +2 Stealth (+4 underground)

Languages Gnome, Undercommon

SQ armor training, bravery +2, stonecunning, weapon training: light blades

Combat Gear 20 bolts, 2 potions of cure serious wounds

Other Gear +1 *corrosive shortsword*, +2 *breastplate*, +1 *steel shield* (bearing insignia of Kladdenvalt), light crossbow, golden medal worth 250 gp, 124 gp in coinage

If the King of Kladdenvalt learns that whatever force has taken over Fasturvalt is capable of defeating his best general, then the king will decide that Fasturvalt is not worth any more effort and ignore the problem unless it becomes more pressing. It is one thing to deliver bold public pronouncements that you want Fasturvalt to be free. It is quite another thing to invest the blood and treasure necessary to dislodge enemies as clever and tenacious as the drow.

Clever PCs should realize that the goal is not to win a battle. Instead the goal is not have a battle at all (or at least not a fair one). If your PCs do not appear to understand this, then you can always have an advisor discuss that fact (Knivy Ivy is a perfect choice). Ultimately though, it remains the PCs obligation to come up with a plan that is plausible enough to work and save themselves from this gnomish onslaught.

Story Award: Give the PCs a CR 9 (6,400 XP) award for successfully dealing with the svirfneblin army led by Count Cornelius. Defeating Count Cornelius is part of this award and so give nothing more for killing him later.

Gnome Soldiers of Kladdenvalt

CR 1

XP 400 each

Male Svirfneblin warrior 2

N small humanoid (gnome)

Init +1; **Senses** Darkvision 120 ft., low-light vision, Perception +4

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 16, flat-footed 19 (breastplate +6, shield +2, size +1, Dex +3, dodge +2)

hp 19 (2d10+4)

Fort +7, **Ref** +5, **Will** +3

SR 13

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft. (15 ft. in armor)

Melee shortsword +5 (1d6+1/19-20)

Ranged light crossbow +6 (1d6/19-20)

Special Attack +1 to attack vs. dwarven and reptilian humanoids

Spell-like Abilities (CL 2nd)

Constant – *nondetection*

1/day – *blindness/deafness* (DC 12), *blur*, *disguise self*

TACTICS

Before Combat If given the chance, the gnomes activates *blur*.

During Combat These soldiers follow Count Cornelius's lead and obey his orders without question.

Morale If Count Cornelius falls, these soldiers surrender at half hit points. But while their Lord stands, they fight to the last.

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 16, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 15

Feats Weapon Focus (short sword)

Skills Craft (Alchemy) +2, Craft (various) +4, Perception +4, Profession (Soldier) +6, Stealth +7 (+9 underground); **Racial Modifiers** +2 Craft (Alchemy), +2 Perception, +2 Stealth (+4 underground)

Languages Gnome, Undercommon

SQ stonecunning

Combat Gear 40 bolts

Other Gear shortsword, breastplate, steel shield (bearing insignia of Kladdenvalt), light crossbow, 1d10 gp, 2 weeks rations



CHALLENGE SEVEN: THE DRAGON

Near Mount Uranoth (location L in Book One) within the Fungal Jungle, a new passage erupts through the earth and stone. The underworld dragon Karthus Deepfire burrows up from deeper realms. If the Beast of Mount Uranoth still survives (an advanced thoqqua), then the dragon slaughters it and declares himself master of Lord Uranoth. He burrows out a shallow lair in the side of the mountain and, ravenous from his long journey up through the earth, begins to feast upon anything within the jungle he can catch.

Eventually, Karthus catches something sentient. Is it a patrol sent out by the PCs? Is it a Skis'raal hunter or a Xan ranger? Or is it a deep gnome relic collector seeking lost svirfneblin ruins within the Fungal Jungle? The answer depends heavily on what the PCs have done in Book One.

Whatever unfortunate he catches, he torments his catch demanding to know if there are any settlements nearby. Karthus has already sated his hunger. Now, his greed drives him. He was forced only recently to abandon his long-time lair and surrender his hoard and now he is eager to begin amassing treasure anew.

His pitiful victim does not resist the merciless Karthus for long and then the dragon learns about wherever the PCs have made their capital (be it Fasturvalt or Vothys or somewhere else). And Karthus gains a new purpose. He will claim the wealth of that capital and become master of the Upper Azathyr. He will sleep on seas of gold and grow old and powerful, served by deep gnome or drow servants. Karthus is nothing if not ambitious.

The PCs have a chance to get forewarning about the dragon. If they are sending patrols into the Fungal Jungle or have cultivated an alliance with the Xan (Faction Score 20+, see Book One), then the patrols have a chance to glimpse the dragon as it hunts around Mount Uranoth. Have the highest ranking member of the patrol make a Perception skill check. If they hit a DC 25 target, then the dragon has been spotted near the mountain and the patrol rushes back to report their finding.

More likely, the dragon attacks their capital with complete surprise. One day without warning, Karthus burrows into their town square and erupts breathing fire and rending anyone foolish enough to get in his way. It circles above the center of their town, sending normal troops scattering with its *frightful presence*.

Karthus speaks with a voice like burning gravel falling on the lid of a coffin. He makes this proclamation.

"Sub-creatures, know that I am Karthus Deepfire. Look upon me in fear and behold your new master. Are there any here foolish enough to challenge me?"

The answer to this challenge is almost certainly the PCs. The dragon roars at this affront and unleashes all his might upon the challengers.

If the PCs are defeated, Karthus rips into their throne room and claims their empire. It demands tribute and begins accumulating a new hoard of treasure extorted from its subjects. It demands to know if any of the old so-called lords of its dominion yet survive. It begins to hunt them, eager to ensure it has no rivals.

More likely, if the PCs reduce Karthus to a quarter hit points or less, the dragon tries to flee. Now afraid of the PCs, it will leave their capital alone from now on and will return to its lair atop Mount Uranoth. There Karthus will lick its wounds. If left alone, it becomes a solitary hunter of the Fungal Jungle. If the PCs hunt it down, the dragon's pride will get the better of it. The dragon has been chased from its first lair and run off from its chosen target. It will not be humiliated a third time. It attacks the PCs and fight to the death on the slopes of Mount Uranoth.

If the PCs defeat the dragon and use healing magic to restore the dying beast, its will is broken. The once proud boasts are replaced by wretched whimpering.

"Why did you spare the wretched beast that I have become? Are you so hungry for vengeance that you would torment me as well as humiliate me?"

If captured and given a second chance at life, the dragon will become the PC's servant. Explorers will probably find the beast too wicked and treacherous; however Overlords will doubtless have gained a powerful slave. Also the dragon will relate the story of how it came to be in the PCs dominion in the first place. It was once the owner of a underground fortress where it kept a great hoard of treasure. However, it was chased away by a cult that worshipped a strange entity known as the Half-God. The Half-God defeated the dragon as well and drove it out. The dragon is not sure exactly what the Half-God is, but it fears the entity.

If you own the Kickstarter exclusive adventure "Palace of the Half-God," that adventure details the directions that Karthus gives and how to find the Half-God. If you do not, then Karthus is merely spinning tales of a faraway place beyond the reach of the PCs. The adventure also details alternate ways to meet the Half-God and his fanatic followers.

Regardless, Karthus currently has no treasure.



Karthus Deepfire

CR 12

XP 19,200

Male mature adult underworld dragon

LE Large dragon (fire)

Init +4; **Senses** dragon senses, smoke vision; Perception +22

Aura frightful presence (210 ft., DC 21)

DEFENSE

AC 32, touch 9, flat-footed 32 (+23 natural, -1 size)

hp 184 (16d12+80)

Fort +15, Ref +10, Will +13

DR 10/magic; **Immune** fire, paralysis, sleep; **SR** 23

Weaknesses vulnerability to cold

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., burrow 40 ft., fly 200 ft. (poor)

Melee bite +25 (2d6+13/19-20), 2 claws +25 (1d8+9/19-20), gore +24 (1d8+13), tail slap +19 (1d8+13)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with bite and gore)

Special Attacks adamantine claws, breath weapon (80-ft. line, 14d6 fire damage, DC 23)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 16th; concentration +19)

At will—*soften earth and stone*, *spike stones* (DC 17), *stone shape*

Spells Known (CL 7th; concentration +10)

3rd (5/day)—*displacement*, *lightning bolt* (DC 16)

2nd (7/day)—*acid arrow*, *flaming sphere* (DC 15), *scorching ray*

1st (7/day)—*burning hands* (DC 14), *cause fear* (DC 14), *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 14), *true strike*

0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *bleed* (DC 13), *detect magic*, *flare* (DC 13), *mage hand*, *read magic*, *resistance*

TACTICS

Before Combat If given a chance, Karthus will cast *displacement* on himself.

During Combat Karthus primarily relies on his fearsome breath weapon, using it as often as he can, and terrifying melee prowess. Though he is a competent enough spellcaster, he sees his spells as useful in emergencies whenever he faces an enemy who is either immune to fire or unaffected by his melee attacks. In particular, he is quick to use *lightning bolt* and *acid arrow* against those who resist his fire attacks.

Morale Karthus is a proud combatant and never surrenders. However, he will try to retreat to lick his wounds if reduced to 46 hp or less.

STATISTICS

Str 29, Dex 10, Con 21, Int 16, Wis 17, Cha 16

Base Atk +16; **CMB** +26; **CMD** 36 (40 vs. trip)

Feats Improved Critical (bite, claw), Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Armor, Lunge, Skill Focus (Stealth), Weapon Focus (bite, claw)

Skills Appraise +22, Bluff +22, Climb +28, Fly +13, Intimidate +22, Knowledge (dungeoneering, geography) +22, Perception +22, Stealth +21

Languages Common, Draconic, Ignan, Terran

SQ change shape, underworld burrower

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Adamantine Claws (Ex) The claws of an underworld dragon are made of adamantine, and have the qualities of a weapon made from that material.

Change Shape (Su) A young or older underworld dragon can assume any humanoid form three times per day as if using *polymorph*.

Smoke Vision (Ex) A very young and older underworld dragon can see perfectly in smoky conditions (such as those created by pyrotechnics).

Underworld Burrower (Ex) An adult underworld dragon gains a 10-foot bonus to its burrow speed. When the underworld dragon becomes old and every two age categories thereafter, its burrow speed increases by an additional 10 feet.

BONUS CHALLENGE: THAT'S MY KNIFE!

If the sarcastic svirfneblin rogue, Iverna Already-Has-Your-Knife better known as 'Knivy Ivy' (see Act One of Book One) is still with the party by this point in the campaign, this encounter gives the PC's ally a moment of focus.

While the PCs are back in their capital, Knivy Ivy comes back one day after doing a little trading looking particularly pleased. "Hah! I found a merchant who didn't know what he had. I bought a dagger that I'm sure is magic for the price of a masterwork blade!" Examining the blade reveals she is quite right. It is a finely made adamantine blade with an empty pommel mount for a gemstone. In fact, if identified, the dagger is a +2 *adamantine aberration bane dagger*. Ivy is even more pleased and immediately names the blade Evariel Seeks-the-Heart. And that appears to be the end of the matter.

But a few days later, someone petitions to see the Lords. For an Explorer campaign it is a prominent deep gnome stone-cutter named Laren Born-to-the-Earth. For an Overlord campaign it is a drow slave overseer named Joraster Lash. This person reports that a family heirloom has been stolen. "It is a dagger made of adamantine with an empty jewel mount in the hilt."

It's fairly easy for the PCs to leap to the conclusion that Knivy Ivy stole the dagger. And in fact, Iverna did lie about where she got the blade. But the situation is more complicated than that. In fact, the person seeking the blade is lying as well.

So what actually did happen? Ivy met a childhood friend of hers, another deep gnome orphan named Kyler Three-Hands. Kyler and Iverna caught up and reminisced about old times. After a pleasant enough conversation, Kyler said "Well, it sounds like you're living quite the life of adventure. My life is far more boring. You know what, Ivy, I still owe you a debt. You saved my life when we were kids more times than I can count. I found this blade on the corpse of a traveler some months ago and I think you need it more than I." And so Kyler gave Ivy the knife as a gift. She did not steal it. However, Kyler lied about where he got it. He stole it from Laren/Joraster.

Knivy Ivy will quickly leap to the conclusion that Kyler stole it. She will be upset that Kyler passed her stolen merchandise without at least having the good manners to tell her it was stolen. But she is also hesitant to give up a good friend. If Laren/Joraster hears the story, he scoffs. "An obvious lie. If this story is true, where is this alleged thief? Otherwise, the truth is as plain as her name. She stole it!"



Ivy will eventually take the PCs to see Kyler if they promise not to hurt him. Kyler squats in a hovel at town's edge. He will at first stick to his story about the traveler's corpse. But, Kyler (a 2nd level *svirfneblin* rogue) is not that great of a liar (Bluff +5) and the PCs will almost certainly be able to sense the deception. In fact, Kyler stole it from Laren/Joraster but only after the stone-cutter/slaver stole it first.

Laren/Joraster has a side business as a loan shark, loaning cash at impossible interest rates to the desperate. When one of these bad loans came do from a friend of Kyler's (a deep gnome named Sameth), Laren/Joraster beat him and took the knife (not knowing its full value) as payment. Kyler stole it back. Afraid it would be found on him, he gave it to Iverna as a gift legitimately hoping she would put it to good use.

So, now the PCs must decide who gets the knife and who if anyone gets punished. For Explorers, the whole truth coming out reveals that the blade should belong to Sameth, the original victim. But Sameth has fled. He managed to find working passage with a trade cavern bound for Kladdenvallt weeks ago. Iverna does dearly want the knife and Kyler is fine with her keeping it, so she seems the logical choice to end up with it.

Kyler is guilty of thievery by his own admission, but Ivy pleads for mercy. Technically under dwarven law (DC 15 Knowledge [local]), by stealing such a valuable item (21,000 gp!) Kyler may either be branded as a thief and forever banished or even forced to work until he repays the value of the blade (effectively this amounts to a life of servitude). There is another potential angle here. Ivy is a potential love interest to one of the PCs. If Ivy has started a relationship with a PC, jealousy may be a factor. Iverna is clearly interested in the handsome young Kyler. Might that cause the PC to want to see Kyler out of the picture?

As for Laren/Joraster, if the PCs further investigate him they will discover that Kyler's allegations are true. He has been running a loan sharking business and preying upon the weak. Multiple acts of violence, extortion and usury can be proven against him. He can be made an example of and hanged (decrease the kingdom's unrest by 1) or mercy can be shown.

For Overlords, there is no law but their will. They may well congratulate Joraster for his money-making enterprise and demand a cut. They may give the dagger to anyone or seize for themselves. But if Ivy is still their servant, they may let her use it. For now.

If at the end, she ends up with the blade, Ivy examines it carefully, even lovingly. Once more she notices the empty pommel. *"I wonder what goes here?"*

FINISHING UP ACT ONE

The challenges in Act One are not designed to happen before the events in the other three acts of this adventure. Instead, they are best interspersed through the entire course of this book. In fact, Events Six and Seven are both large scale and climactic events that make for satisfactory ends of this book.

As befits the open-ended character of this campaign, feel free to use any event at any time that seems appropriate and if the PCs invalidate some of the challenges, well... that's okay too. Also, don't be afraid to adjust the Challenge Ratings of these encounters. For example, if Raakesh (the naga) alone would not cause the PCs to even break a sweat, maybe Raakesh has a twin sister named Gethra-Kaya who aids him?

That said, here is some advice on times when certain challenges may work best.

Challenge One is recommended to be the opening event of this campaign. Having the refugees with them will make certain events in Act Two more interesting and potentially thrill (in particular meeting the Walking Madness, location F. below).

Challenge Two can happen just before the PCs are ready to make their first real foray down the Great Jumping Off Point.

Challenge Three works best the first time that the PCs return from the Earth's Wound back to check on their empire.

Challenge Four is very open ended and can happen at any time the PCs are back in their empire.

Challenge Five is also very open ended. However, Kasta is a CR 9 monster, so it might be a little much for PCs at first. Instead, this challenge works best if the PCs have already made a successful incursion or two to the Earth's Wound.

Challenge Six is potentially a big climactic battle (particularly for Overlords). It should happen later in the adventure.

Challenge Seven makes a fitting capstone after the PCs have learned the route to Dammerhall and are returning to gather resources and prepare for the journey to the lost dwarven city.

In the end, the purpose of this entire act is to make returning home not just a matter of bookkeeping and number crunching. Running an empire should never be boring and hopefully these challenges help make that true.

ACT TWO: THE WOUND

A. THE GREAT JUMPING OFF POINT

This is the bottom of the Great Jumping Off Point that leads up to the Upper Azathyr. This is where Book One of Throne of Night ended. This location is fully described on page 90 of Book One: Dark Frontiers.

B. ON THE RIGHT TRACK

This natural passage ends suddenly and comes to an end. The end of this passage clear shows sign of excavation and digging. The natural cavern has been dug out and extends for another twenty feet in a perfectly square passage. However, that passage does not go anywhere.

What has happened here is that many years ago, a dwarven prospecting group based out of Dammerhall came to this area of the Azathyr and began to look for likely veins to find valuable metals and gems. They found exactly what they were looking for here. The sort of stone that is here is exactly the sort of stone where mithral is sometimes found.

They made camp and for a few weeks dug out the wall of this natural cavern. And they found nothing. But the samples were encouraging enough that they continued to prospect in this region for some time. They eventually struck pay dirt at the Zaraketh Mine (see location V below), but that would occur considerably after this prospecting occurred.

Being dwarves, they packed up completely and left a tidy camp leaving no significant debris behind. Still, one of the miners could not resist carving his name, the date and company sigil in the wall.

A DC 15 Perception finds this inscription written in dwarvish: "Horath Rocknose, 2715 KR, Zaraketh Mining Consortium. Praise the Gods of Stone that they have laid down for us such bounty in the depths of the world."

A DC 10 Knowledge (history) check will recognize the date as presented in KR or "dwarvish reckoning" (in the dwarvish tongue). A DC 15 on that same check will reveal that this date is about a century before Dammerhall fell. A DC 30 result will have actually heard of the Zaraketh Mining Consortium and recognize them as one of the most venerable and powerful companies based out of Dammerhall.

A DC 20 Profession (miner) or Knowledge (dungeoneering) will recognize this stone as the sort that sometimes bears mithral, though clearly there is none actually here.

C. THE BATTLE OF HORATH'S CROSSING

At first glance, this seems like little more than a great open cavern (more than two hundred feet across) where three passages conjoin. However, close examination reveals that something momentous happened here. In truth, a great tragedy of the dwarven people occurred in this very spot after the fall of Dammerhall long ago and until this moment no living dwarf has ever known of it (and in the case of Overlords, even the drow have forgotten it). After Dammerhall fell, a large number of miners and their families were caught outside the city. At first, they wanted to see what was going on in Dammerhall, but soon it became clear that the city was destroyed and they must flee. Led by the highest ranking member of the Zaraketh Mining Consortium, they made for the exit to the surface world (see W below) near the mine.

They were ambushed here as they foolishly camped out in the open of this great intersection. They were discovered by drow scouts and attacked as they slept. These are the same drow that would eventually establish the stronghold at Vothys and claim the entire Upper Azathyr as the farthest border of distant drow city state of Taaryssia. More than five hundred dwarves died here almost two centuries ago. No one buried them. Instead, the drow assailants picked the site over for loot and then left the bodies to rot. In the preceding centuries those dwarven bones have been picked clean by cavernous scavengers.

However, this is a living cavern that sometimes (mostly during the rainy season) receives soil and moisture from the nearby jungle. Soon many of the bones were covered in the loose dirt floor that covers the bottom of the intersection today. However, any one walking over it may make a DC 15 Perception. Anyone who succeeds notices a bone hidden in the dirt. A DC 15 Knowledge (nature) or Knowledge (dungeoneering) reveals it to be a dwarven bone (give dwarves a +4 to this roll and let them roll it even untrained). Whichever PC roles the highest on the Perception check finds more than that. There is a pendant hidden in the ground. It is a small dwarven pendant made of mithral, flat, round and covered in ornate knotwork worth perhaps 50 gp.

The spirits of the unburied dead have not entirely forsaken this cavern. A few lingering sparks remain and when a dwarf touches this pendant. It shall be as if they were there that day— that terrible terrible day when the fleeing dwarves were ambushed and slaughtered. What they experience is not a vision. Instead, they become one of the victims. They are as truly in this cavern on that day as they are here today. To observers, they fall unconscious for about five minutes.

THE EARTH'S WOUND AND NEARBY ENDIRONS



Read this passage to the first dwarf that touches the pendant:

So tired.

You've been walking for days with little rest. The sting of Dammerhall's loss makes every step heavy. But you must press on. You must. Not for yourself but for those hundreds who travel with you. They need every one of us now. They need every soldier, every miner, every matron and yes, even every shoemaker like yourself.

Master Horath speaks with great conviction that the entrance to the surface is not far and that there you will find allies there. And these allies ... perhaps they can provide shelter to the refugees who travel with you. Dare you hope that there is even still hope of retaking lost Dammerhall?

Such notions seem impossible even as you unfold your bedroll and make a place amongst five hundred other dwarves. Worry about such things tomorrow. Now, find some sleep...

Yes...sleep. Wait. What's that?

A cry of alarm is raised. You roll over and where you had been sleeping just moments before, three crossbow bolts imbed in your blanket. You recognize the black iron of the bolt heads. Drow!

You scramble on arms and knees, moving desperately amidst the shrieking terrified throng. Around you everywhere are such scenes of horror that they are hard even to acknowledge they are real. Drow raiders fire their cruel barbed crossbows into the mass of dwarves indiscriminately. You see dwarven children slaughtered next to their dying matrons. You see soldiers overwhelmed and murdered where they stand. You see ... no ... it's too much even to bear.

You run...run...as fast your legs will take you. There is only escape. There is only...

A sharp dull thud. Something is in your back. You can feel the poison course through your veins. A stinging blackness and then ... sleep overwhelms you. You struggle to stay awake but you are so tired, so very tired...

"This one's still alive. Take him as a slave?"

"The baron says no slaves."

"Too bad. Dwarves are valuable in Taaryssia."

The knife is drawn across your throat even as you are helpless to speak. The blood covers the pendant, thick and clotted. And then silence. And at last...rest...

The Shoemaker's Pendant is not a magic item itself, but for any dwarven cleric who understands its pedigree can function as a holy symbol. If enchanted, it counts as 1,000 gp worth of magical components towards the cost of making a magic item.

For Overlords, this place has a different significance. Any drow who digs up a dwarven bone impaled with a drow crossbow bolt may roll a DC 20 Knowledge (history) skill check. Success means that they recall the details of what the drow call the "Battle of Horath's Crossing". It was a significant drow battle a few centuries ago where they succeeded in purging the last of the dwarves who once infested this place. It was after the fall of their capital. However the exact location of their lost city remains uncertain.

But wherever that city is, no doubt the great wealth of the dwarven nation yet remains there. With that wealth, armies could be built, empires could be forged and vengeance could be purchased. But finding it will be no easy trick. Still, there might be some hint of its location ahead...

D. THE SLUG

This area is the hunting ground of a particularly large and loathesome giant slug. The beast actually can be found prowling through any of the hexes nearby this location, but this is its most permanent lair. It largely roams the caverns scavenging any refuse or carcasses it finds. However, it is a fairly capable hunter and is not above attacking live prey when it gets hungry enough. Unfortunately for the PCs, now it is most definitely hungry enough.

At this location, the slug (a hermaphrodite) has just given birth, laying thirty giant slug eggs (each about a fragile slimy sphere about eight inches in diameter). Each one of these eggs functions perfectly well as a double strength vial of acid (inflicting 2d6 acid damage if thrown).

The slugs could also be raised as guard animals. If tended and kept moist, in three months the eggs will hatch. The little sluglings start small (about a foot long with one hit dice). But if well-fed (they like dead flesh and mushrooms), they will reach full size in five years.

They are easily manipulated as they instinctively avoid salt and could become low-maintenance guardians. The eggs are also worth about 25 gp each (the Xan in the Fungal Jungle, see Book One would buy them).

No map is provided for the slug's lair. It is just a typical dead end. If you need a more detailed map use one of the miscellaneous cave maps found in Book One.



Giant Slug CR 8

XP 4,800

N Huge vermin

Init -4; Senses blindsight 60 ft.; Perception +0

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 4, flat-footed 20; (-4 Dex, +16 natural, -2 size)

hp 102 (12d8+48)

Fort +12, Ref +0, Will +4

DR 10/slashing or piercing Immune acid, mind-affecting effects

Weaknesses susceptible to salt

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee tongue +15 (2d10+12 plus 2d8 acid)

Ranged spit acid +3 (10d6 acid)

Space 15 ft.; Reach 15 ft.

TACTICS

During Combat The slug is not an intelligent combatant, nor is it at all stealthy. It attacks the nearest opponent it can reach with its tongue. If nothing is in reach, it spits acid at anything moving in range and then moves toward that target. If anyone throws salt on it, it will flee from that. Otherwise it charges brutally forward.

Morale The giant slug is not smart enough to flee (save from salt). It fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 27, Dex 2, Con 18, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1

Base Atk +9; CMB +19; CMD 25 (can't be tripped)

SQ malleable

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Spit Acid (Ex) A giant slug can spit acid at an opponent within 60 feet (no range increment). With a successful ranged touch attack, the target takes 10d6 points of acid damage (no save).

Malleable (Ex) A giant slug's body is very malleable, allowing it to fit into narrow areas with ease. A giant slug takes no penalty to its speed or checks when squeezing in an area that is one size category smaller than its actual size (10 feet wide for most giant slugs). A giant slug can squeeze normally through an area two size categories smaller than its actual size (5 feet wide for most giant slugs).

Susceptible to Salt (Ex) A handful of salt burns a giant slug as if it were a flask of acid, causing 1d6 points of damage per use.

E. A WARNING

Once, the Azathyr connected through this passage to neighboring areas of the realms below. This was a drow trade route to another drow city far away. However thanks to the many earthquakes that plague this region as of late, this passage is now collapsed and hundreds of feet of stone separate it from any other hollow space.

There is however one artifact still visible. Just before the collapse, there is drow graffiti upon the wall that may prove useful. It is written in a fungal ink that is almost invisible to normal sight, but glows rather obviously when viewed by darkvision. No perception check is necessary to notice the writing. Written in the drowish dialect of elvish is the following ominous but cryptic warning:

"Be warned. Allies here may not be who they appear. The walking madness stalks the road between Taaryssia and Lucin-Lerehei."

Less than a hundred yards ahead of that warning, this once well-travelled road is blocked by a cave in.

The cave-in and the warning are not old. They happened within the last six months. The walking madness is a reference to the intellect devourer that still afflicts these caverns (see F below for details).

F. THE WALKING MADNESS

This stretch of cavern is currently the hunting grounds of one of the Azathyr's strangest and most malevolent inhabitants. This is the domain of what the drow call the *Ithik Arthûn* (lit. the walking madness). Better known as an intellect devourer, this small horror lairs in this non-descript cavern waiting for someone to happen by.

This thing has been hunting these caverns for years. It has in its time managed to infiltrate and tear apart drow caravans, duergar mercenary bands and even a few gnomish traders who foolishly went this deep. It always operates in a similar fashion. It quietly enters the camp of its chosen prey whenever they must rest (it does not need sleep). It picks the weakest and most vulnerable member of that band and slays it quietly. The creature shrinks down to the size of their brain case and crawls into their head. It hollows out the brain case, eating out the meat, and resides there, controlling the husk like a puppet.

It then begins a campaign of sewing chaos, moving from victim to victim until the group tears itself apart and finally is weak enough that it can take its last victim. Only then does it finally abandon these unfortunates and begin to seek new targets. It doesn't want anything. It does not seek gold or any discernable goal. It kills at random, seemingly for the sheer pleasure of the act.

In truth this thing is a living weapon, bred to feed on the minds of victims and then, when glutted on information ripped from countless minds, it will return to its unfathomable masters far below (more details about them can be found in Book Six). This creature is not unique. Instead, it is one of countless such monstrosities unleashed upon the upper reaches of the Azathyr. Can this be anything but the first stage of some horrific invasion into the Azathyr from horrors deep beneath the earth? Of course, it will die before it reveals that this is its true purpose.

What it will do instead, once it identifies the PCs as interesting and powerful individuals, is stalk the party. At its first chance, it will make its way into camp whenever the PCs sleep. It will find a likely looking victim and slaughter them, occupying their corpse using its terrifying body thief ability.

This encounter works best if Event One of Act One (see page 6) has already happened and the PCs are travelling with a dozen individuals they need to keep safe but don't really know. The refugees make perfect suspects and victims for the intellect devourer to feed upon and use as hosts. In the case of Overlords instead of refugees, the travelers from the surface can be slaves kept alive to sell to traders. Whatever their role, these extras provide you a ready supply of potential victims for the devourer to prey upon.

Once a host has been acquired then for at most a week, the monster will travel with the party doing its level best to escape notice and detection. The intellect devourer may even, superficially, appear useful. After all, it has considerable local knowledge. It has traveled extensively around this portion of the Azathyr and thanks to consuming minds has access to a considerable trove of secrets. The host may claim to notice subtle features that the PCs would otherwise have missed.

In truth, none of this information is intended to help the party. The creature seeks way to subtly get the PCs into dangerous situations it can take advantage of. It doesn't want to simply kill the PCs. It wants to get alone with a victim so it can acquire new host bodies and keep up its murderous game of moving from host to host.

For example, the Intellect devourer has been to the Boiling Salt Lake (H). It realizes that the old stone boats can be quite dangerous and so it will try to use this information to divide the party, pointing out that the stone boats look quite precarious and could topple over. After all, the host helpfully points, the party will not want to endanger the refugees. That will provide a perfect opportunity to obtain a new host body while the PCs are away crossing the lake.

It must carry out such swaps every week. After a week passes, the occupied corpse begins to noticeably decompose. The creature will abandon the old host and seek a new victim. If it cannot find a good opportunity to claim a new victim, then it will abandon the corpse all together and return to being a free-roaming brain monster stalking the party waiting for a new opportunity to acquire a body.

In this way, the party may face the terrifying situation of having someone killed every six or seven days leaving behind a rotting corpse that looks like it's been dead for days. Further, the victims have a hollowed out skull. These grotesque mutilations will soon takes a horrific toll on the PCs and those who travel with them. Terror will grip the band and soon accusations will fly. Who is responsible for these terrible deeds?

Worse, when searching for the killer, the monster will do its best to sabotage investigations. It will plant false evidence if it can (and with its at-will *invisibility* it can likely move freely about camp) trying to turn one PC against another. It is a capable liar and, while protecting its own identity, will try to confuse the situation.

If the PCs get engage in battle against some outside threat with the infiltrator in their ranks, it will try to aid them just as its host normally would. But if the PCs ever find themselves greatly weakened, then the creature betrays them at that critical moment. It will strike hoping to wipe them out and gaining a powerful new host in the bargain, after choosing the strongest of the slain.

In short, if not discovered quickly the Walking Madness can tear a band of companions apart. It is a dangerous and brutal opponent with neither empathy nor remorse. It hungers for only one thing – a fresh brain to consume and new body to inhabit in its unending mission to devour minds and spread misery.

Running this encounter can be a challenge to stage. Strive to maintain a tone of fear and uncertainty. Try to make this more than simply another battle. This creature isn't simply another beast to be fought. It is a nightmare. Fundamentally what you are trying to achieve is a combination of a murder mystery and a survival horror tale.

Who dies next? What is the cause of these horrific mutilations? Is this threat coming from outside the party? Is there some unseen threat shadowing our every step? Or worse, does this threat come from within? Can one of these seemingly helpful innocent refugees truly harbor a monster that burrows into the skull, feeding on brains?

The exact details of the devourer's plan depend upon the party itself. Are the PCs travelling with a caravan of followers? If so, this makes it more likely that the Walking Madness can be a prolonged encounter. If they are a small band, then the intellect devourer will have to make its move quickly because it will have fewer opportunities to jump from body to body. Instead, it will have to stalk them quietly from afar.

What you should always keep in mind is that intellect devourer is an intelligent foe far smarter than an average human (Int 16). It is an expert liar and a master of stealth who will try to sow uncertainty even as it works to protect its own identity. It is also patient. It would rather wait several days for the right opportunity to present itself than move prematurely and reveal itself.



Even If the PCs finally reveal this aberration, the encounter may not be over. The Walking Madness is not easily slain with its myriad of resistances and immunities, high spell resistance and considerable damage reduction. Even if overwhelmed the intellect devourer is well able to escape from many groups, turning invisible and fleeing at great speed. This is not a beast which favors standing fights. It is intelligent enough to realize that its best chance at victory is to deal with its foes one at a time.

If the intellect devourer does escape, it will not abandon its chosen hosts. It will return to stalking the PCs once more, waiting for a chance to attack again after its heals itself. It is almost as if the beast senses that the PCs are fated to oppose its masters and works tirelessly to thwart them now. Clever PCs may try to lure it out by feigning weakness or pretending to be asleep. Carefully consider whether these plans have a chance of working. On one hand, you should reward clever planning. On the other, you do not want this monster to be too easily defeated.

The Walking Madness will not relent until it is either destroyed or it has consumed every mind in the party. And then, only briefly gluttoned on death and murder, it will seek new prey in the darkness forever ravenous for new minds upon which to feed.

Too Deadly?

The intellect devourer is a monster that must be used carefully. There is every possibility that the creature could sneak quietly into camp while the PCs sleep devouring the brain of a sleeping Player Character and use its body thief ability to seize control of the corpse. That sort of insta-death is not likely to be well received by the players and frankly is not a very heroic fate.

Instead, the PCs almost certainly travel with a cohort, ally or a familiar who would make a better target. Having such an ally be friendly one day and the next awaken having been transformed in to an alien enemy who is plotting their destruction is both a terrifying and memorable encounter. Read the Body Thief ability carefully and understand its powers and limitations. The intellect devourer is a highly intelligent infiltrator that has been leaping from host to host for years. It will not be easily caught.

The Walking Madness

CR 8

XP 4,800

Intellect Devourer

CE Small aberration

Init +10; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft., detect magic; **Perception** +19

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 17, flat-footed 16 (+6 Dex, +5 natural, +1 size)

hp 84 (8d8+48)

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

DR 10/adamantine and magic; **Immune** fire, mind-affecting effects;

Resist cold 20, electricity 20, sonic 20; **SR** 23

Weaknesses vulnerability to *protection from evil*

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee 4 claws +13 (1d4+1)

Special Attacks body thief, sneak attack +3d6

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th)

Constant—*detect magic*

At will—*confusion* (DC 17, single target only), *daze monster* (DC 15, no HD limit), *inflict serious wounds* (DC 16), *invisibility*, reduce size (as *reduce person* but self only)

3/day—*cure moderate wounds*, *globe of invulnerability*

TACTICS

Before Combat The intellect devourer always prefers combat on its terms. It uses its *invisibility* and stealth to track its chosen prey, carefully assessing them before it attacks. When it is ready to strike, it raises its *globe of invulnerability* before the strike.

During Combat The intellect devourer first and foremost will use any ability its host has, but will supplement them with its own powerful abilities. In particular it uses *confusion* to sow chaos amongst its enemies.

Morale If forced from its host and facing dangerous foes, the intellect devourer immediately goes invisible and tries to flee.

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 23, **Con** 21, **Int** 16, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 17

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 22 (26 vs. trip)

Feats Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Toughness, Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +19, Disguise +11, Knowledge (local) +14, Perception

+19, Sense Motive +8, Stealth +29, Use Magic Device +11; **Racial**

Modifiers +8 Bluff, +8 Perception, +8 Stealth

Languages Undercommon (cannot speak); telepathy 100 ft.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Body Thief (Su) As a full-round action that provokes an attack of opportunity, an intellect devourer can reduce its size, crawl into the mouth of a helpless or dead creature, and burrow into the victim's skull to devour its brain. This is a coup de grace attempt that inflicts 8d4+3d6+8 points of damage. If the victim is slain (or already dead), the intellect devourer usurps control of the body and may use it as its own, as if it controlled the target via a dominate monster spell. The intellect devourer has full access to all of the host's defensive and offensive abilities save for spell-casting and spell-like abilities (although the intellect devourer can still use its own spell-like abilities). A host body may not have been dead for longer than 1 day for this ability to function, and even successfully inhabited bodies decay to uselessness in 7 days (unless this time is extended via gentle repose). As long as the intellect devourer occupies the body, it knows (and can speak) the languages known by the victim and basic information about the victim's identity and personality, yet has none of the victim's specific memories or knowledge. Damage done to a host body does not harm the intellect devourer, and if the host body is slain, the intellect devourer emerges and is dazed for 1 round. Raise dead cannot restore a victim of body theft, but resurrection or more powerful magic can.

Vulnerable to *Protection from Evil* (Ex) An intellect devourer is treated as a summoned creature for the purpose of determining how it is affected by a *protection from evil* spell.

G. THE PRANKSTER

This hex of passageways is the domain of Tassius Fooled-the-Fire, a rare sort of fey who inhabits neither forests nor the First World, but has instead made the caverns his dominion. Tassius immediately takes notice of the PCs entering this area. He has seen their ilk before and becomes greatly curious what their kind is doing in this region of the realms below. And once Tassius becomes curious there is no keeping him away from a chance at meeting new friends (or making new enemies).

Tassius after all is immortal. If he is not slain, he will live forever. Tassius is just about to turn five hundred years old (a fact he is very proud of). And so Tassius has seen many folk come and go during the half millennia he has dwelt in these caves. Whatever races make up the PC's party, Tassius has seen it before.

Tassius Fooled-the-Fire CR 2

XP 600

Male unique pooka

CN Tiny fey

Init +7; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 15, flat-footed 13 (+3 Dex, +1 natural, +2 size)

hp 18 (4d6+4); fast healing 2

Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +5

DR 5/cold iron or silver; SR 13

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)

Melee dagger +7 (1d2/19–20)

Ranged javelin +7 (1d2 plus poison)

Space 2-1/2 ft.; Reach 0 ft.

Special Attacks poison

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th; concentration +7)

At will—*detect magic*, *invisibility* (self only)

3/day—*minor image* (DC 13), *sleep* (DC 12)

1/day—*suggestion* (DC 13)

TACTICS

During Combat Tassius is not much of a fighter, but when forced to fight uses his poison javelins or poison special attack to hopefully distract enemies and allow him to escape.

Morale Tassius is not interested in fighting those who are larger and more powerful than himself. He flees immediately if threatened or wounded. Only if captured does he surrender.

STATISTICS

Str 10, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 13

Base Atk +2; CMB +3; CMD 16

Feats Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +8, Diplomacy +8, Fly +18, Perception +8, Sense Motive +6, Stealth +18, Use Magic Device +6

Languages Elven, Undercommon; telepathy (by touch only)

SQ change shape (bat or compsognathus; polymorph).

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Poison (Su) As a standard action, the sprite can blow across his palm and create a 5-foot-diameter cloud of intoxicating dust. He can also use this dust to create poisoned javelins coated with fey dust. The sprite decides when she uses this ability whether the dust acts as an inhaled poison or a mild intoxicant (equivalent to 1–2 glasses of beer).

Fey Dust (Su) Inhaled; save Fort DC 13; frequency 1/round for 6 rounds; effect 1d2 Wis and 1d2 Cha (or intoxication); cure 2 consecutive saves.

If the PCs are playing a party of dwarves, he is curious why they have returned. If the PCs are playing drow, he is curious if they going to raid the surface. And if the PCs are surface folk, he's curious how they came to be so far from home.

Tassius introduces himself by choosing the member of the party with the lowest will save (the fey has a knack for picking out such an individual) and casting *suggestion* on them. He suggests this: "*You've been working too hard. Why not relax, take your pants off and dance a little jig. That'll be fun!*"

If the victim does not succeed on his DC 13 Will save, he will spend the next six hours with an uncontrollable urge to both dance and de-pants himself. Tassius takes great pleasure from watching such antics, especially amongst dour dwarves. He will follow the party for the entire duration of his spell doing his best not to giggle too loudly (though he sometimes fails at this).

Even if the save is successful, Tassius does not give up. He will use *minor image* to turn mud puddles into pots of gold (hoping the PCs will stumble into them) and to hide trip wires designed to knock them into shallow cave pools (DC 15 Reflex save to avoid these harmless but annoying traps).

Tassius does not mean any harm. It is so rare that he gets visitors anymore, these pranks are his way of saying hello. For Tassius, the pranks reveal if his visitors have a sense of humor. If they laugh at these antics and take them in good spirits, Tassius' reaction to them becomes friendly. If they curse at him and try to catch him and especially if they threaten violence, he will be unfriendly and be eager to see them gone from his realm.

Tassius can be drawn out from the shadows via several methods. One way is simply asking. If Tassius is asked very politely to show himself, he will say this:

"I reveal myself only to clever folk. And if you are clever, you'll know this..."

*An orchid's heart
A copper's name
A letter departs
It's all the same!"*

The answer is scent/cent/sent. If the PCs figure out his riddle, he speaks again, "*So you have more sense than most. Perhaps we can be friends!*"

Tassius is also an earth sprite and has a weakness for shiny jewels. Offering to give him a 100 gp or more in such treasure will lure him out despite his best efforts.

Even more affordable, Tassius has a weakness for dried meats and sweets (both of which he only rarely gets). Either will likely cause him to get in arms reach, allowing for an exchange of words or an attempt to grapple the poor little sprite.

Regardless, it is likely after a few pranks that the PCs will meet Tassius (either by convincing him to show himself or capturing him). Tassius has been living in the Earth's Wound and its environs for five hundred years. He is actually the best possible guide the PCs could hope to find. If you can just get past his capricious nature and his love of pranks and riddles, he actually has much information to impart. That information is summarized below.

Explorers may try to hire Tassius. Tassius is not interested in gold (which is too bulky for him to easily carry). However for 10 gp in jewels per day, Tassius will accompany a group of even the dourest of dwarves and aid them as best he can. Tassius however will also work for surface candy. One piece of candy every day will serve just as well as jewels. If the PCs have managed to somehow gain possession of Lord Gerni's candy stash (see Book One), this is a perfect time to use it as a trade good. Five pounds of candy will earn Tassius' loyalty more or less forever (though he will need help carrying that much).

Overlords may prefer instead to enslave Tassius. This is not easily done. Tassius is a free spirit and breaking him is not easily done. He will constantly try to escape and give out false information at dangerous moments hoping to find a moment to slip away. Only if his masters demonstrate powerful magic that makes his escape impossible will Tassius serve grudgingly but well. Servitude is hard on the fey and three months of slavery will cause him to wither and eventually die.

Tassius can offer one other service to a party he travels with. Tassius is well familiar with the presence and methods of the Walking Madness (see F above for details), the intellect devourer that haunts this area. He has seen the sort of horrors it can inflict on travelers and he hates the beast intensely. If he is travelling with the party and someone is possessed by the creature, he has a decent chance to notice.

Every time the intellect devourer performs any sort of significant action or tries to pass the party false information, give Tassius an automatic Sense Motive roll with a +4 familiarity bonus versus the Walking Madness' bluff check (+19). If Tassius succeeds, he immediately recognizes the Walking Madness for what it is. He uses his telepathy (which requires touch) to silently pass along that information.



WHAT TASSIUS KNOWS

Tassius has a great deal of information about the Earth's Wound and its environs. The sprite has been lurking around these parts for countless years and there is little he does not know. But just because the sprite knows something does not mean he will sit down and recount this information point for point. In fact, Tassius is capricious and absent-minded. He is much more likely to impart this information only as something reminds Tassius of a given tidbit.

Even then, Tassius is given to presenting information cryptically or even in sing-song rhyme. To help you with this, there is a line beneath each facts that conveys how Tassius might tell this information to the PCs.

Tassius knows the location of the boiling salt lake and the salt gallery beyond it (see locations H and I below). He knows about the lack of drinkable water on the way to the gallery (though he doesn't know about the problem with conjuring water).

*"In the land of the scalding lake,
It's much the same as the sea.
Water, water everywhere
But nothing needed by thee."*

Tassius knows about the salt mephits (I.) and hates those little monsters. He would be glad to see them gone and may even, if the PCs treat him well and befriend him, help get rid of them.

*"Diamonds are guarded by imps of salt
Having troubles? It's likely their fault!
The wise man believes not a word they've said.
And Tassius thinks they'd look much better dead."*

Tassius knows that a giant slug hunts this area (D). He also knows it stays away from the salt lake (for perhaps obvious reasons).

*Ugly sluggily searching for meat!
Ugly sluggily eager for treats!
But given him a splash of the boiling sea,
And sluggily runs and sluggily flees.*

Tassius knows where the western entrance to the Earth's Wound is located (J). He knows there are other entrances, some small and some large, but is less familiar with their location. He also understands the general character of the Earth's Wound itself.

*Big man wants where the Earth's never rests?
Big man wants ghosts and orchids, fire and death?
Then follow me close for we'll be there soon.
Tassius knows the way to the Wound!*

Tassius has been into the Earth's Wound but not terribly far. He knows it is a dangerous place full of boiling mud pits and exploding geysers (L).

*Boil and burn, toil and trouble
In the land of fire, watch out for the bubble!*

The sprite also knows that a very grumpy basilisk dwells in the Wound that burns you if you touch it and turns you to stone if it looks at you. Probably best to avoid this nasty beast (at location M).

*There's a grumpy old beast
Who lives all alone
Where it grasps, there is fire.
Where it looks, there is stone.*

As noted above, Tassius knows about the Walking Madness (i.e. the intellect devourer) that prowls these parts.

*Here madness walks and wears friendly faces
It stalks these halls, it haunts these spaces
When friend is foe and death's always near
You'll know it's amongst you
You'll know it's near...*

Tassius also knows the rough location of the Elementalists' Redoubt (location N).

*I've seen the place where fire is alive
I've seen the cave where a wizard died.*

Tassius has even heard the name Abrisarius (detailed below at location N).

*Abrisarius was a man who sought to master
Flame and stone, waves and winds
But his plans went awry, they led to disaster
Now the wizard's gone, but not his sins.*

What Tassius definitely does not know is the location of Dammerhall or the Zaraketh Mine (and the relevance of the secrets inside).

And Tassius might know nothing else or a great deal more. These rhymes need not be all of what the sprite knows. Who knows what secrets this child of the cavern has heard through its long years?

Tassius' role in this campaign is to keep the plot moving while providing a hopefully entertaining (if sometimes infuriating) way of disclosing information to the party. Tassius doesn't solve problems for the PCs. Instead, he helps them know what the problems are and leads them straight to the most interesting part of the adventures.



H. THE BOILING SALT LAKE

This lake is a natural wonder. It is permanently boiling lake of water hypersaturated with salt. It seethes and spits like a roiling witch's cauldron. Dense saline steam that stings the eyes rises off of it. This is not an entirely natural phenomenon. The nearby elemental energy of Abrisarius' Rift (see Location N) is the only way such a place could be sustained.

Needless to say, this lake is completely sterile. Nothing natural could live in such a place (though there are a few unnatural inhabitants; see Location I below). But surprisingly, there is a stone dock about fifty long made of stone that juts out into the lake. The dock is so encrusted with salt crystals that at first glance it looks almost like a natural formation. But if the salt is chipped away, the dock is revealed as a stone edifice.

The dock was actually built by duergar long ago who used to harvest salt from this place. The lake was still salty, but it did not boil. Tied to the dock by three short heavily corroded iron chains are three remaining examples of duergar engineering. There are three stone boats tied to the dock, each about the size of a dinghy and capable of holding seven medium sized individuals. The duergar themselves are long gone but these cunningly made craft remain.

The fact that boat of stone actually floats may take the PCs back, but they do and quite well. The intense salinity of the lake increases its density and here even relatively light rock will float. This was helpful to the duergar as wood, as always in the underworld, was in short supply.

Bold PCs may want to take one of the boats and strike out and explore this seething lake. In truth, the lake is better explored and exploited after it has stopped boiling. How can the boiling be stopped? This is explained in some detail on page 42-43 below. Suffice it so say that if a magical rift that is leaking elemental energy is closed, then the lake will slowly cool. Once the lake has completely cooled, this lake is no more dangerous than any lake. In fact, it is safer. Because it is so easy to float in this very salty lake, it is almost impossible to drown.

Darkvision cannot see across the lake to its other side (the lake is miles across). Curiosity may be enough to get PCs on the lake, but if the PCs shine a bright light across the surface (perhaps a magical spell like *daylight* or a focused lantern), allow them a DC 30 Perception. If someone succeeds, then even through the mist and distant darkness, they can see hints of a glinting distant shore. They can make out no details, but it is out there across this scalding lightless sea.

So, what if the PCs take one of the stone boats and row out into the boiling sea? There are three dangers that confront them. First, great bubbles sporadically erupt from the bottom of the lake. These bubbles can knock a boat about or even capsize it. Second, if the PCs do get knocked into the lake, the boiling brine is deadly. Third, the saline mist can be blinding even if the ship can be kept aright.

The boats have a rudder and two stone oars. One person must man the rudder. The two people must be oarsmen (one can do in a pinch) and the rest are passengers. Anyone with any training in Profession (sailor) or a similar skill will know that it is best if oarsmen be strong and best if the rudderman be dexterous and perhaps even have some sailing experience.

It is an eight mile journey across the lake. Every mile, roll a d6 on this encounter chart:

1. Furious Bubbles: The boat sails through a patch of particularly rough boiling water. The rudderman must make a DC 20 Reflex save to steer the boat and avoid the furious boiling spray. Add +2 to this save if the oarsman is trained in Profession (sailor) or a similar profession skill. Success means the boat is kept aright.

Failure means everyone in the boat is drenched in boiling salt water and takes 4d6 fire damage. A natural 1 on the Reflex save means the boat has been capsized. Everyone is dumped in the lake and takes 6d6 fire damage. A DC 24 Reflex save means they manage to scramble back on the boat, which is designed to right itself in a few moments. Everyone in the boat keeps making that save until they succeed (and get back in the boat) or until they die. Someone in the boat can help a friend giving a +4 bonus to the save, but if the save is still failed, the friend must make a DC 10 Strength check or get pulled back into the lake.

The rowers must then make DC 10 Strength checks or DC 15 if there is only one. Success by both means they row out of the bubbles and the danger is over. Failure means the rudderman must make another save (with the potential to again spray water or capsize the boat).

2-3. Bubbles: As 1 but the Reflex DC for the rudderman is 15 and a natural 1 does not capsize the boat.

4. Stinging Mist: The Rudderman must make a DC 20 Perception check or add 1d4 miles to the journey as the boat is lost in the mist.

5-6. Nothing Happens: This patch is not dangerous.

Award a CR 8 (4,800 XP) the first time the PCs successfully cross this dangerous lake.

I. SALT DIAMONDS

After crossing the boiling lake, there is only one likely looking place to stow the stone boats. The harbor here has piers of old worked stone. The piers are so encrusted with salt crystals, that the stone itself is no longer visible. Instead the piers have become strange art works of soft white crystal arranged in delicate geometric shapes like snowflakes. Of course, if the PCs want to use these docks they will end up damaging some of these salt formations, but there is little choice, if you want to disembark from the boats without being scalded.

Beyond the dock is a single stone passage. Sporadically impure salt crystals erupt from the passage. You must travel almost one and a half days down this stone passage to find where it ends. This passage is absolutely dry with no sources of natural water. Worse, the impure salt that surrounds the PCs seems almost to leeching the moisture out of them. The PCs must consume double the normal water of begin to suffer the effects of dehydration. Even magic is of little use here, as any water conjured is intensely salty thanks to a minor magical effect of the salt crystals.

A character can go without water for 1 day plus a number of hours equal to his Constitution score. After that, the character must make a Constitution check each hour (DC 10, +1 for each previous check) or take 1d6 points of nonlethal damage. Characters that take an amount of nonlethal damage equal to their total hit points begin to take lethal damage instead.

There the passage opens up into a large gallery more than a hundred yards across. That large gallery is nothing but a great dome of pure (and edible) salt. Salt is a valuable commodity. A pound of pure salt can sell for 5 gp. That makes it equal in value to silver. Thus this location counts as a resource (See Appendix One: Lords Below for what this means). In particular if a trade route can be established with the surface where pure salt such as this is a rarity, there is great money to be made. Of course setting up a salt mine requires laborers and source of fresh water must be secured.

Further, if the PCs search this gallery and make a DC 20 Perception check, they also discover a single wall of the gallery that is covered in what can only be described as salt diamonds. Beautiful, perfect, flawless cubes of translucent salt grow from the wall. In truth, these are not diamonds but instead are cubic crystals of halite (salt in its mineral form). Still, with a little gentle prying a dozen cubes each weighing roughly a pound can be collected. These cubes are rarities of rarities and will each fetch 500 gp in any large city where such oddities can be appreciated.

They have another use. They can be enchanted. They count as a 1000 gp worth of magical components if made into ioun stones, cubes of force or crystal balls. Any making a DC 25 Knowledge (arcana) will be able to appreciate this potential use for them.

Alas, these “diamonds of salt” have their guardians. In fact, a small pack of salt mephits makes this salt gallery their home. For them, the gallery is a welcoming wonderland, an oasis upon the prime material plane. And they intend to defend it. These nasty little monsters hide amongst the crystals and ambush visitors eager to keep this palace of salt their exclusive domain.

This salt dome counts as an arid environment for the purpose of the mephits' fast healing.

Salt Mephits (4) CR 3

XP 800 each (3,200 XP total)

N Small outsider (earth)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+2 Dex, +1 dodge, +3 natural, +1 size)

hp 19 (3d10+3); fast healing 2 (works only in arid environments)

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

DR 5/magic

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 40 ft. (average)

Melee 2 claws +5 (1d3+1)

Special Attacks breath weapon (15-foot cone, 1d4 slashing dmg plus sickened for 3 rounds, Reflex DC 13 for half), dehydrate

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th)

1/day—*summon* (level 2, 1 mephit of the same type 25%),

1/hour—*glitterdust*

TACTICS

Before Combat If the mephits sense intruders in their domain, they spend a round trying to summon more of their kind to aid them in dispatching the intruders.

During Combat The mephits prefer to fly above foes using their breath weapons, dehydrate and *glitterdust* abilities against their foes. They enter melee only if given no other alternative.

Morale These horrid little beasts fight to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 15, **Con** 12, **Int** 6, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 14

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

Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative

Skills Bluff +8, Fly +10, Perception +6, Stealth +12

Languages Undercommon, Terran

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Breath Weapon (Su) Each mephit can unleash its breath weapon every 4 rounds as a standard action. The DC is Constitution-based and includes a +1 racial bonus.

The breath weapon of a salt mephit is a cone of salt crystals that deals 1d4 slashing damage. The salt also causes living creatures to be sickened for 3 rounds. A DC 13 Reflex save halves the damage and negates the sickened effect.

Dehydrate (Su) Once per day a salt mephit can draw the moisture from an area in a 20-foot radius centered on itself. Living creatures within range take 2d8 points of damage (Fortitude DC 14 half; caster level 6th). This effect is especially devastating to plant and aquatic creatures, which take a –2 penalty on their saving throws. This ability is the equivalent of a 2nd-level spell.



J. WESTERN ENTRANCE

The western entrance to the Earth's Wound is the largest opening into this natural rift and easily the most spectacular. Read this to your players as they arrive:

You round yet another winding grey stone passage, expecting nothing but more of the same ahead, but are surprised instead to see something entirely different. Ahead there is light. Not a bright light, but a faint misty twilight spreading through rising steam and fog.

And further ahead than that you see what can only be the Earth's Wound. As far as you can see a great rift stretches out before you. If you had not seen the fungal jungle in the Upper Azathyr, then this would easily be the largest cavern you had ever seen. Its ceiling rises more than three hundred feet. The farthest walls of this massive rift are too far away to see.

Nearby are great lakes of hot boiling mud. The mud is not uniform in color, but instead is mixed with some unknown contaminants that have caused it to be stained with every color of the rainbow. It is a scalding mad riot of color and vapor and it stretches out for miles. Every few minutes somewhere, the mud erupts. Great geysers of steaming water push into the air. It seems a dangerous place but here and there are gaps, stone walkways that seem to avoid the worst of nature's fury. Perhaps this place is traversable after all.

And beyond the hot mud pools to the north is what can only be described as an underground jungle. This is populated not by fungus but by greenery and trees. Faint light filters through the great opening in the top of the rift and casts the whole place in partial daylight. No doubt it is this light that allows the greenery to flourish and thrive.

And yet, though the trees seem familiar, there is also something profoundly unfamiliar about this forest. For every splash of green you can see, there are also sparks of bright cerulean, vivid vermillion and electric yellow. From this distance it is hard to make out anything too specific about the distant jungle, but even from here you can discern it is an alien place no doubt full of strange wonders and unimaginable dangers.

Still, you'll never discover the truth sitting on this ledge. There is a natural stairway that winds down the cliff face to the floor of the rift. The stairway itself is broad and not all steep, slowing descending twenty feet to the plain beyond. It seems a new phase of your underground expedition has begun.

Besides the view, there is nothing here of any danger or value.

K. THE EARTH SPEAKS

This is another large entrance into the rift. Unfortunately as the PCs arrive an earthquake hits and this entrance collapses. After so many small tremors and rumblings, at last a big one hits. Read this to the PCs.

You emerge from the long and large featureless tunnel to see a great rift before you. Beyond a sheer thirty foot drop is a vision like nothing you have seen before. You can see great pools of boiling mud and a wonderland of seething geysers. And beyond them, many miles away, is a great forest and what looks like faint traces of sunlight. But you are scarcely able to take in this sprawling vista before the ground begins rumble. Small rocks begin to dance and vibrate. The earth itself begins to hum, like the voice of some massive primeval giant trapped far below, straining to be free.

At this point, ask the PCs what they do. Any who say they immediately run back into the cave will avoid the effects. Anyone who does not run or says they are looking for a way into the cavern, hesitate for a critical moment and are caught in the collapse.

Second later, an earthquake strong enough to knock everyone to their feet hits. The quake itself brings down both this entrance and the cavern roof high above for several hundred yards out.

Anyone still in the bury zone of this cave-in take 8d6 points of damage, or half that amount if they make a DC 15 Reflex save. They are subsequently buried. Characters who fled back or who never approached the entrance are instead in the slide zone. They instead take 3d6 points of damage, or no damage at all if they make a DC 15 Reflex save. Characters in the slide zone who fail their saves are buried.

Characters take 1d6 points of nonlethal damage per minute while buried. If such a character falls unconscious, he must make a DC 15 Constitution check each minute. If it fails, he takes 1d6 points of lethal damage each minute until freed or dead.

Characters who aren't buried can dig out their friends. In 1 minute, using only her hands, a character can clear rocks and debris equal to five times her heavy load limit. The amount of loose stone that fills a 5-foot-by-5-foot area weighs 1 ton (2,000 pounds). Armed with an appropriate tool, such as a pick, crowbar, or shovel, a digger can clear loose stone twice as quickly as by hand. A buried character can attempt to free himself with a DC 25 Strength check.

After the dust settles and hopefully all the PCs are freed, this entrance is irrevocably sealed. Award a CR 8 award (4,800 XP) for surviving this deadly collapse.

L. THE GEYSER FIELDS

This region is less a single hex and more a band of brutal geothermal and volcanic activity. Though the letter is only in hex 0515, there is no easy way around this hex. In other words, hex 0415 and 0616 are just as dangerous and active. Within this region, water seeps down and pools here, leaking down from the ceiling. The hot mud and steam venting from deep within the earth heats this water to far beyond boiling. It sputters, roils and occasionally explodes in pressurized blasts of scalding steam. There are “safe” stone paths through the environments, but bubbling mud pits are always close and could explode at any moment.

It would seem in such an environment, nothing could survive and yet a few visitors from the elemental planes not only survive, they thrive. They prowl these geyser fields, waiting for creatures from the underworld to try to cross them. And when they arrive, they emerge from their pools of scalding hot mud and strike. The locals simply call them ‘living pools’ and they are menaces to be feared.

The entire region counts as difficult terrain. So, it takes almost exactly 24 hours of marching to cross for anyone traveling at 20 ft. per round. If the party can manage 30 ft., it takes only eighteen hours. Faster speeds without flying are not possible due to the slick stone and puddles of ooze that must be traversed. Every hour the PCs spend crossing this region, they have a 10% chance of meeting an ooze.

There is no stopping during the journey. There is no safe place to camp or rest. The only way to cross the geyser fields is through a single forced march. The heat is stifling and intense. Again, anyone without *endure elements* must make a Fortitude save every three hours they are marching. The DC for this save is DC 5 at first, and increases by 3 for every save that must be made. Having the endurance feat adds +4 to these saves. With the first failure, the victim is fatigued. With the second failure the victim is exhausted (and, most dangerously, may slow the march). After that, each failure does 2d6 of nonlethal damage.

The journey would be hazardous enough without the oozes. For every hour spent here, there is a 1 in 6 chance that a geyser explodes close by. Even pack animals, animal companions and familiars must save against these exploding geysers.

Exploding Geyser CR 5

Type natural; Perception DC 28; Disable Device DC -

EFFECTS

Trigger no trigger, these are random geothermal explosions; **Reset** none

Effect spell effect (*fireball*, 6d6 fire damage, DC 14 Reflex save for half damage); multiple targets (all PCs and anyone who travels with them)

Needless to say, fire resistance would be of tremendous use. However, because much of the damage is from scalding water and high temperatures rather than naked flame, even *endure elements* would be useful. Anyone with *endure elements* cast upon them takes no damage from the geysers with a successful save. After a successful crossing have the PCs make a DC 25 Survival check. Success means they have learned the “safe” way through the fields. The safe way’s Fortitude DC never gets above DC 11 and geysers never explode.

NOTE: Keep track of the geysers and oozes the PCs meet. They earn XP for each as long as they are crossing the fields. Camping here is not a way to “farm” XP.

The Living Pool CR 7

XP 3,200

Variant magma ooze

N Large ooze (fire)

Init -5; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft.; Perception -5

DEFENSE

AC 4, touch 4, flat-footed 4 (-5 Dex, -1 size)

hp 85 (9d8+45)

Fort +8, **Ref** -2, **Will** -2

Defensive Abilities split (cold and slashing, 8 hp); **Immune** fire, ooze traits

Weaknesses vulnerability to cold, vulnerability to water

OFFENSE

Speed 10 ft., climb 10 ft.

Melee slam +14 (2d6+13 plus grab, and burn)

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

Special Attacks burn (2d6, DC 19), constrict (2d6+13 plus burn)

TACTICS

During Combat The ooze has no mind to speak of and simply moves towards the nearest enemy, slamming and consuming as it goes.

Morale The living pool fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 28, **Dex** 1, **Con** 21, **Int** —, **Wis** 1, **Cha** 1

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +16 (+20 grapple); **CMD** 21 (can’t be tripped)

Skills Climb +17; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Climb

SQ boiling mud body

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Boiling Mud Body (Ex) The ooze is formed of intensely heated mud.

Whenever a creature strikes the ooze with a weapon, that weapon takes 4d6 points of fire damage unless the attacker makes a DC 19 Fortitude save. Damage caused to weapons in this manner is not halved, but hardness does help prevent some of the damage dealt. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Ooze Traits (Ex) Oozes are immune to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects). Oozes are blind (but have the blindsight special quality), with immunity to gaze attacks, visual effects, illusions, and other attack forms that rely on sight. Oozes are Immune to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, polymorph, and stunning. Oozes are not subject to critical hits or flanking. Does not take additional damage from precision-based attacks, such as sneak attack. Oozes eat and breathe, but do not sleep.

Vulnerability to Water (Ex) A significant amount of water, such as that created by a create water spell, the contents of a large bucket, or a blow from a water elemental, that strikes a magma ooze forces the creature to make a DC 20 Fortitude save to avoid being staggered for 2d4 rounds. A magma ooze that is immersed in water must make a DC 20 Fortitude save each round (this DC increases by +1 each subsequent round) or become petrified, reverting once the water is gone. The scalding hot mud of the Earth’s Wound does not count as water for this vulnerability, only cold water.



M. THE BURNING BASILISK

This hex is filled with dangerous boiling mud pools that stretch out as far as they eye can see. It is also the home of a particularly cantankerous predator. It emerged from the elemental rift in the Redoubt one day (see Location N. below) and found this place enough to its liking that it has stayed.

The creature behaves something like a crocodile, swimming through burning mud pits waiting for anything to come along. It takes sustenance from once-living stone and so any victim of its gaze will eventually be dragged into a mud pit, broken apart by its powerful jaws and consumed. Hence, there is no great collection of statuary around the mud pits to warn new arrivals. Anyone who falls into a mud pit takes 4d6 fire damage each round they remain in the scalding hot mud.

The Burning Basilisk CR 7

XP 3,200

Female flame-spawned advanced unique basilisk

N Medium outsider (elemental, fire)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +12

Aura fire (5 ft, 1d6 fire, DC 17 Fort.)

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 12, flat-footed 22 (+2 Dex, +12 natural)

hp 66 (7d10+28)

Fort +11, **Ref** +7, **Will** +7

DR 5/magic; **Immune** fire; **Vulnerable** cold

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., swim 30 ft.

Melee bite +12 (1d8+7 +burn)

Special Attacks burn, gaze

TACTICS

During Combat The basilisk is an ambush predator. It lies in wait and then leaps out to gaze at enemies. Any who resist its gaze get bitten instead.

Morale The creature only flees if reduces to 16 hp or less. Then it tries to escape into the nearest hot mud pool.

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 14, **Con** 19, **Int** 2, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 21 (33 vs. trip)

Feats Blind-Fight, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Skill Focus (Perception)

Skills Perception +12, Stealth +12 (+16 in mud pools); Racial Modifiers +4 Stealth (+8 in mud pools)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Burn (Ex) The basilisk deals 1d6 fire damage with any natural attack. Those hit by the creature's natural attack must succeed on a DC 17 Reflex save or catch on fire. The flame burns for 1d4 rounds. Anyone on fire can take a move action to put out the flame. Creatures hitting the burning basilisk with natural weapons or unarmed attacks take 1d6 fire damage and also catch on fire unless they succeed on a DC 17 Reflex save. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Fiery Aura (Ex) Anyone within 5 feet of the basilisk must succeed on a DC 17 Fortitude save or take 1d6 fire damage each round from the intense heat. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Gaze (Ex) Turn to stone permanently (as *flesh to stone*), range 30 feet, Fortitude DC 17 negates. A creature petrified in this manner that is then coated (not just splashed) with fresh basilisk blood (taken from a basilisk no more than 1 hour dead) is instantly restored to flesh. A single basilisk contains enough blood to coat 1d3 Medium creatures in this manner. The save DC is Constitution-based.

N. THE ELEMENTALIST'S REDOUBT

Long ago a powerful wizard named Abrisarius came in to the Earth's Wound through the entrance to the surface (see W. below). He led a small expedition and hoped to find items of interest. What he discovered far surpassed his expectations and caused him to become obsessed with the place. Even long after all his companions were either dead or had fled this place, Abrisarius remained studying this place and cataloguing its many wonders.

Eventually the wizard built a redoubt hidden amidst the bubbling mud pools. He began working on his masterpiece – a powerful artifact that would meld the four elements together into one stave. Abrisarius was an elemental mage and he understood what this place truly was. The Earth's Wound (and this small niche in particular) was a perfect blending of the four elements. The hot vapors were almost pure elemental air. The scalding pools were almost pure elemental water. And the molten rock meshed elemental fire and earth in perfect proportion. He would use this perfect proportion of elements to open a portal to the four elemental planes and draw in immense magics that would make his artifact a wonder of the ages. Long would the name Abrisarius be spoken of in fear and awe.

He failed. He opened the rift certainly. It remains open to this very day. The raw unchecked magical elemental magical energy is what causes the constant violent seismic activity in this portion of the underworld. But the forces that rushed out of that rift were too much for him. Abrisarius fell into the rift. His body was ripped apart, part of him being teleported to each of the four elemental planes. And the dreams of Abrisarius' Stave becoming a major magical artifact faded.

That was more than a century ago. Abrisarius' unfinished experiment is destroying this place. The Earth's Wound was always a volatile nexus of seismic activity. But the open elemental rift is building up magical energy deep within the earth at a fantastic rate. Someday, this energy will release itself and when it does the rift will completely collapse and be utterly destroyed.

The PCs discover the redoubt at a critical moment. If they can survive its elemental guardians and discover the wizard's notes and understand their significance they will have a chance to profoundly affect the destiny of this place. To them will fall a difficult decision. Will they destroy the Earth's Wound forever, harvesting the magical energy for their own purposes? Or will they close the rift and still the ever rising seismic activity that threatens to tear this place apart. It is within the Elementalist's Redoubt that this will be decided.

THE EARTH'S WOUND

THE ELEMENTALIST'S REPOUBT



□ = 5"

1

2

3

4

6

30' rise

5

12

7

8

9

11

10



N1. SEVEN STEPS

The entrance to the Redoubt is blocked is blocked by a large pool of intensely hot mud. The mud boils and fumes and is hot enough to cook flesh from bone. But there is a way to cross. Seven stones, each about five feet apart, form a natural series of “steps” through the hot mud.

The mud pools formed here naturally, but there is a magical defense placed upon this pool by Abrisarius. If anyone tries to fly over the pool (save for Abrisarius himself) a magical trap activates and dispels their flight midway over the mud pool. This will hopefully dump them into the middle of the burning mud and spell their doom.

The trap actually takes the form of a few magic runes written on the ceiling (exactly where the number 1 is on the map). They are difficult to see (DC 30 Perception check) but not difficult to destroy once reached.

Abrisarius' Anti-Flight Ward CR 8

Type magical; Perception DC 30; Disable Device DC 20

EFFECTS

Trigger Anyone who tries to fly or levitate over the middle of the mud pit (*alarm*) **Reset** automatic (it affects a given target only once every 24 hours)

Effect spell effect (*greater dispel magic* as if cast by a 10th level caster; a targeted dispel that affects only flight or levitation magic; multiple targets (everyone who tries to cross the mud pit)

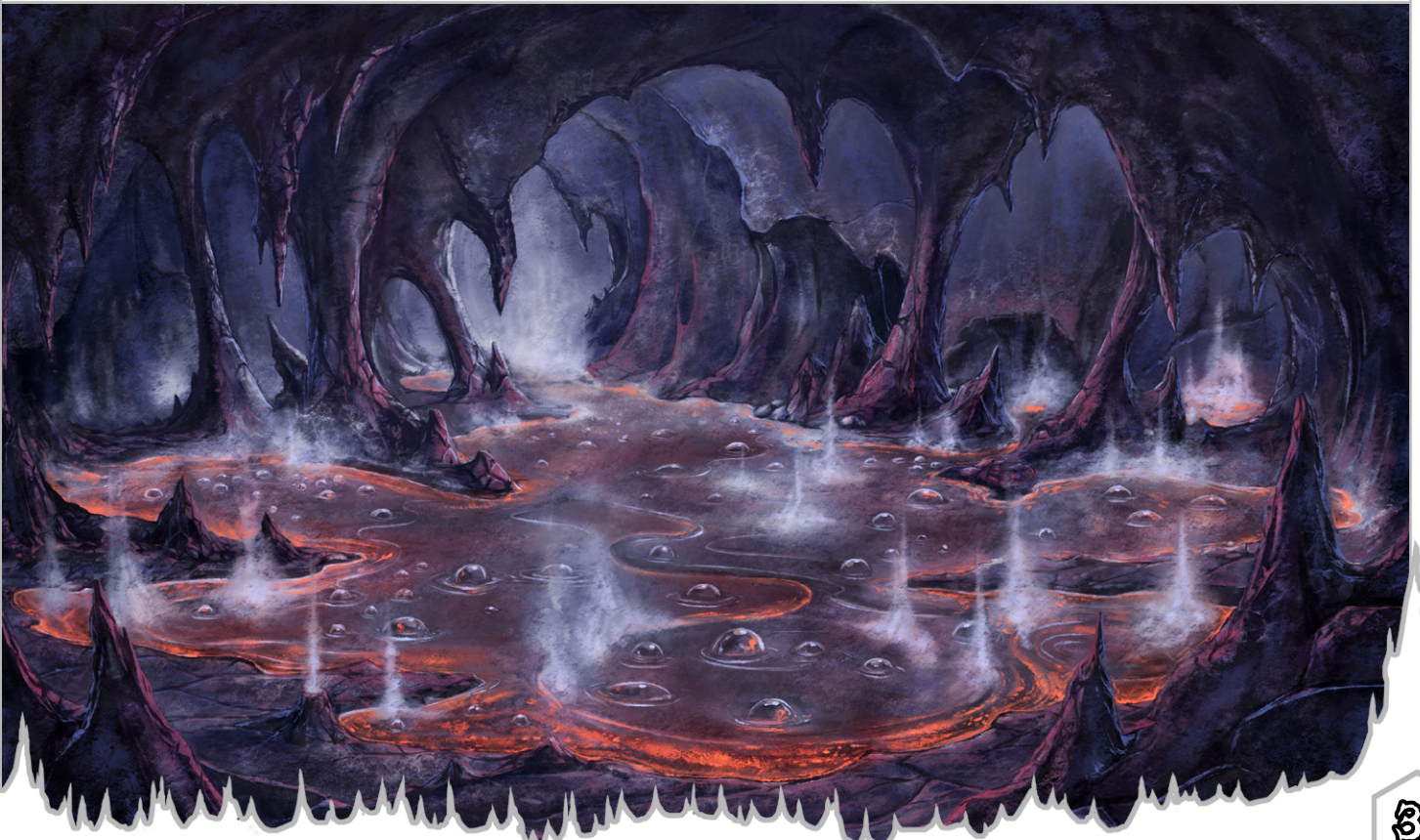
This difficulty is reaching them. The best way is to use magic like spider climb. The dispel effect does not effect that sort of magic and so the runes can be approached safely.

If the PCs decide to cross the mud pit more conventionally by hopping across the stones, this is also quite dangerous. The stones are slick and so a DC 15 Acrobatics must be made three times to cross (only three because there are three slick spots to avoid; one at first, one almost precisely in the middle; and one right before you reach the edge).

A better way to cross the mud pit is to ignore the seven steps. The northern wall of the redoubt of this entrance is full of hand holds and ledges (mention this only if the PCs investigate it). It requires one easy climb check DC 15 to cross, but the stone is scalding hot in a few places. Those who cross must also make a single DC 12 Fortitude save or take 2d6 fire damage.

However someone end ups in the boiling mud, it is a horrible fate. The mud inflicts 4d6 fire damage every round and is intensely painful. The mud is so thick, the victim can only move 5 ft. a round unless they have an ability such as *earth glide* to move freely.

Story award: Award the PCs a CR 8 (4,800 XP) award for whatever method they use to enter the Redoubt.



N2. ABRISARIUS' MEDITATION CHAMBER

This circular ledge rises out over a pit of boiling mud. In the center, the wizard Abrisarius used *stone shape* to craft a pedestal where he would sit and meditate on the elemental truths of the Wound. Once there was a cushion here but it has long ago burned away.

Inside the mud pool are two elementals of molten rock and scalding mud. They lurk beneath the surface, whispering litanies in Ignan of the supremacy of earth and fire conjoined and allied. Anyone who listens to these whispers for at least five minutes and speaks Ignan will gain a +4 bonus on the Knowledge (arcana) checks to understand Abrisarius' notes (see N4 below).

Lesser Guardians of the Rift (2)

CR 7

XP 3,200

Huge magma elemental

N Huge outsider (earth, elemental, extraplanar, fire)

Init +3; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 7, flat-footed 17 (–1 Dex, +10 natural, –2 size)

hp 85 (10d10+30)

Fort +10, Ref +6, Will +3

DR 5/—; Immune fire, elemental traits

Weaknesses vulnerable to cold

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., burrow 20 ft.; earth glide

Melee 2 slams +14 (2d6+6 plus burn)

Space 15 ft.; Reach 15 ft.

Special Attacks burn (1d8, DC 16), lava puddle

TACTICS

During Combat The guardians glide through hot mud and earth to emerge next to intruders and slam them with their burning fists.

Morale The guardians fight to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 22, Dex 8, Con 17, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 11

Base Atk +10; CMB +18; CMD 27

Feats Cleave, Greater Bull Rush, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Power Attack

Skills Climb +19, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +11, Perception +13, Stealth +4

Languages Ignan

SQ earth glide

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Burn (Ex) A magma elemental's burn DC includes a –2 racial penalty, as their fires don't burn quite as hot as true elemental flames.

Earth Glide (Ex) A burrowing magma elemental can pass through stone, dirt, lava, or almost any other sort of earth except metal as easily as a fish swims through water. Its burrowing leaves behind no tunnel or hole, nor does it create any ripple, though the area it passes through feels warm for 1 round afterward and often retains a strangely smooth texture, as if the stone had been polished. A *move earth* spell cast on an area containing a burrowing magma elemental flings the elemental back 30 feet, stunning the creature for 1 round unless it succeeds on a DC 15 Fortitude save.

Lava Puddle (Su) Once per day as a full-round action, a magma elemental can vomit forth a puddle of lava that fills its space to a depth of 2–3 inches and counts as difficult terrain. Any creature that moves through this puddle of lava takes 2d6 points of fire damage. This damage continues for 1d3 rounds after the creature leaves the lava pool, although then it only inflicts 1d6 points of fire damage per round. The lava puddle solidifies and is safe to touch after a number of rounds equal to the elemental's Hit Dice. At the GM's discretion, this puddle of lava could start secondary fires.

After a few minutes of whispering, the guardians pose the riddle of fire to who sits on the meditation pedestal. They speak in Ignan:

*"You struggle and fight, seeking to chain me,
When I am lost, you fight to regain me.
I am you master, never yielding to your will.
I am your slave, yours to waste and kill."*

If the listener answers in Ignan "time", then the guardians return to their whispering. Otherwise, they emerge from the hot mud chanting "intruder" over and over again in the tongue of fire and attack.

Story award: Award full XP for sating the guardians with the riddle's answer as if they had been defeated. However, after doing this, the PCs gain no XP for defeating the guardians in battle.

N3. THE VERSICOLOR POOLS

These seething pools of steaming water have been boiled clean of any sort of life. They are sterile, bright blue at their deep centers and because of the various minerals they have boiled out of the rock, their edges are rainbows of brilliantly colored salts and crystals. Rarely, a geyser erupts but compared to the massive geyser fields the PCs have already passed (see L above) these are small and rarely encompass a radius greater than five feet. Still there is a danger here.

A minor elemental spirit has become bound to these pools. It is not strong enough to manifest on its own like the guardians above or the Heart of the Rift (see N12 below). Instead, it lives within the pool and uses what little consciousness it possesses to try to lure anything living to its beautiful but dangerous waters. Anyone who gets too close is gripped by a powerful form of *insanity* (DC 20 Will save to resist). Instead of just being confused (as normal for the spell) the victim comes to belief that the scalding pools will make them immune to fire and perhaps other elemental damage.

If a victim fails the save, they willingly wade into the scalding pool feeling no pain. For every round they spend in the boiling water, they take 3d6 fire damage. Every round, they get another saving throw to resist (also a DC 20), but while they remain under the influence they will resist any attempt to remove them from the pools, gleefully bathing in and pouring boiling water over themselves. Once the magic has been resisted, it does not affect someone ever again.

The Madness of the Versicolor Pools

CR 9

Type magical; Perception DC —; Disable Device DC —

EFFECTS

Trigger approaching within five feet of a pool; **Reset** automatic
Effect spell effect (*insanity* [see above for details], DC 20 Will save); multiple targets (anyone who approaches the pools)

N4. THE WIZARD'S HUT

This man-made structure stands out and seems not to belong here in this primal place of natural power and beauty. This is a small stone hut, buttressed and reinforced to withstand the stresses of this place. There is single entirely metal door that leads into the hut. Surprisingly, that door is neither locked nor trapped.

Inside the hut, almost all of the furniture is made of stone (several tables, a shelf, a desk and even a chair). Anyone making a Knowledge (arcana) DC 20 will recognize this as formed with *stone shape*. The one piece of furniture that was not made of stone was the bed, which was an old cot that has collapsed and rotted away to worthless junk. Amongst that litter there is a human skeleton, with a severe blow to his head.

The skeleton wears tattered silken robes, a *ring of protection* +3, an *amulet of natural armor* +2, a rotten pouch which still holds 250 gp in diamond dust and 300 gp in sapphire. This is the skeleton of Abrisarius. He crawled here after a disastrous mishap at the rift (see N12 below) and bled to death in his own bed. His skeletal hands still clutches the *Stave of Abrisarius*.

Scattered around the room are tattered pages of what was once Abrisarius' spellbook. The book is now ripped part, partially burned and almost worthless as a spellbook (the spells *magic missile*, *fire shield*, *chain lightning* and *volcanic storm* are still intact). However, if the fragments are assembled and studied (a laborious process that takes a day of work), then four interesting things can be learned: the ritual of closing the rift, the ritual of widening the rift, how to destroy the stave and how to empower the stave.

The ritual of closing requires wielding the stave, sacrificing four jewels each worth at least 100 gp (halite for water, amethyst for earth, sapphire for air and fire opal of course for fire) and speaking a prayer in Aquan, Auran, Ignan and Terran (automatically successful if the caster speaks the language, requiring a DC 15 Linguistics check for each unknown tongue otherwise; failure wastes the jewels). To learn this ritual requires a Knowledge (arcana) DC 24 check. The ritual of widening requires the exact same components (but different prayers) and is harder to learn. It requires a Knowledge (arcana) DC 30 check.

Learning how to destroy and empower the stave each requires a DC 24 Knowledge (arcana) check. Destroying the stave is detailed in the artifact description. Empowering the stave requires first widening the rift and holding the stave in the unleashed stream of elemental energy that rushes out afterwards. The repercussions of these rituals and actions are discussed in detail below.

The Stave of Abrisarius

Aura strong necromancy; **CL** 20th
Slot none; **Weight** 5 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

This stave is a shard of obsidian six feet long that seems to glow with an entire caged fire. This obviously magical item is a damaged artifact, very powerful but very dangerous to wield. Activating it is a standard action. Whenever anyone activates the stave, rolls a 1d20. Once an effect is used, cross it off this table and move everything above the result down one space. So for example, if the wielder rolls a 8, then *fire shield* now happens on an 8 and so forth.

- 1: The stave shoots a *fireball* (10d6) targeted by the wielder.
- 2: The stave begins to heat up as if a *heat metal* spell had been cast on it. It can still be activated while it is hot.
- 3: The stave erupts with a *chain lightning* (12d6) at a primary target designated by the wielder. However, the chain lightning then leaps to the nearest twelve secondary targets regardless of the wielders wishes. The targets must be within 30 ft. of the primary.
- 4: The wielder becomes invisible for 12 rounds as *greater invisibility*.
- 5: The stave dispels all magical effects on the wielder (beneficial and harmful).
- 6: The wielder designates a target without knowing what will happen. The target and the wielder switch places via teleportation. The target is now holding the stave if it can hold such an item. Otherwise it is at the target's feet.
- 7: The wielder casts *wall of fire*. It cannot be dispelled until the duration is complete.
- 8: The wielder can *see invisible* as the spell.
- 9: The wielder casts *fire shield* on himself.
- 10: The wielder gains immunity to fire for 20 minutes.
- 11: Everyone (foe and friend) within 60 ft. of the wielder gains resist fire 10 for 20 min.
- 12: Everyone (foe and friend) within 60 ft. of the wielder is vulnerable to fire for 20 min.
- 13: The wielder casts *fly* on himself.
- 14: The wielder casts *fly* on a random target within 60 ft.
- 15: A *fireball* (10d6) erupts centered upon the wielder. The wielder is affected by the fireball as is everyone within the radius.
- 16: The stave casts *lightning bolt* (10d6) targeted by the wielder.
- 17: The wielder casts *ice storm*.
- 18: The wielder shoots a single *magic missile* (1d4+1 force damage) at a target within range of the spell.
- 19: The wielder casts *wall of stone*.
- 20: The wielder summons an elder magma elemental (as Summon Monster VIII). The elemental is under the control of the wielder but to give it commands, the wielder must speak ignan.
- 21: As 20, but the elemental is under the control of a random person within 60 ft. of the caster (include the caster in this roll).
- 22: The stave becomes a +4 *flaming two-handed sword* for 20 rounds.
- 23: The stave shorts forth a *cone of cold* (12d6) in a random direction (roll 1d8 with 1 being straight ahead of the caster).
- 24: The stave does 5d6 electricity damage to its wielder.
- 25: The stave teleports the wielder 100 ft. in a random direction every round for the next 12 rounds. If that puts it in a solid material, the wielder will go to the nearest open space. Dropping the stave does not stop this effect.
- 26: The wielder casts *move earth*.
- 27: All fires are extinguished within 60 ft. of the wielder. Any fire creatures or elementals take 6d6 damage that bypasses any damage reduction they may possess.
- 28: The wielder casts *volcanic storm*. It cannot be stopped for 20 rounds.
- 29: The wielder casts *elemental assessor*.
- 30: The wielder casts *elemental body III* on themselves. The elemental type is determined randomly and the caster cannot change back for 20 minutes. The elemental can still wield the stave.
- 31: Reset the list. Feel free to swap out 1d10 random results with brand new spell effects. Half should be clearly beneficial. 25% should be clearly negative. 25% should be capriciously random.

DESTRUCTION

The stave can only be destroyed in the nearby rift (N12). It must be set aflame by one of the blasts of flame that erupt from the rift and then shattered against the rift's side.

N5. THE LEDGE

A thirty foot high sheer rock wall rises up to a landing. Scaling this ledge without using stealth will inevitably draw the interest of a curious crysmal (see N11 below) which comes to investigate visitors.

N6-N11 THE AMETHYST CAVERNS

These caverns have actually come into being because strange elemental beings from deep within the earth known as crysmals have burrowed through solid stone, drawn by the raw magic and abundance of crystalline amethyst here. They consume the magically charged crystal and draw sustenance from it. After years of consuming the crystal, what was once a small break in the stone has become a series of sizeable caverns. The crysmal are strange creatures without identifiable faces, appearing much like small crystalline spiders, about three feet tall. Presently six crysmals still dwell here, well-fed and ready to defend this bounty.

It is possible to speak with them if a PC speaks Terran. However, it is likely not very productive. All that the crysmals have to say is *"Our crystal! Away intruders or die!"* Only if given crystal (they regard the salt diamonds from location I. as a delicacy) will soften their stance and chat for a moment. While they know nothing about how the Rift was formed, Abrisarius, the ritual or the Stave, they do possess an instinctive understanding of the magic here.

If friendly and asked about the nearby Rift they will say this: *"A powerful elemental dwells within. It keeps the Rift open and it is the Rift. Slaying it will not close the Rift, but until the guardian is gone, none may staunch the glorious flow of living energy into the crystal."*

If attacked, immediately all six of the crysmals rush to defend their crystals. If anyone threatens the Rift or tries to take the amethyst, they will also attack. They wish only to have this area left alone.

N6. HOLLOWED OUT CAVERN

The crysmals have already finished eating the crystal out of here. Currently this chamber is uninhabited.

N7. THE SINGING EARTH

Gas escaping through cracks causes a high-pitched whistling along with low bass reverberations. A single crysmal sways to the very music of the earth.

N8. FEEDING CRYSMAL

A single crysmal feeds on lesser grade crystals after having been run off from the richer amethyst extrusion nearby. While the pretty rocks that litter the floor might make fine souvenirs, the amethyst is so impure and mingled with stone, that it has no value.

N9 THE WALL OF AMETHYST

The area features a large extrusion of pure amethyst. Three crysmals eagerly feed on it. They attack anything that tries to get between them and their crystalline trough. If the crysmals are slain or driven off and the wall examined, there are gem quality amethysts of stunning purity and beauty here. If the PCs take three hours to carefully chisel away at the extrusions, they can harvest 7,000 gp worth of resplendent amethyst.

N10. THE ARRIVAL POINT

This is where the crysmals first arrived by phasing up through the earth. Now it is a largely empty cavern with nothing here of any great interest of value.

N11. HOLLOWED OUT CAVERN

A single crysmal is busy finishing the work of hollowing out this chamber. This crysmal is the most attentive to anyone climbing up the ledge and it is likely this individual that PCs first meet. It is curious at first, watching these intruders. It attacks only if attacked and follows the PCs like a curious puppy.

Crysmals (6)

CR 3

XP 800 each (4,800 XP total)

N Small outsider (earth, elemental)

Init +2; Senses darkvision 60 ft., crystal sense; Perception +11

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 15 (+2 Dex, +4 natural, +1 size)

hp 26 (4d10+4)

Fort +7, Ref +8, Will +2

DR 5/bludgeoning; Immune cold, fire, elemental traits; Resist electricity 10

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., burrow 20 ft.

Melee sting +7 (2d6+3)

Special Attacks shard spike +7 (3d6, range increment 60 ft.)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 4th; concentration +6)

At will--detect magic, ghost sound (DC 12), mage hand, silent image (DC 13)

3/day--dimension door, sanctuary (DC 13), touch of idiocy (DC 14)

TACTICS

During Combat The crysmal often begin combat by firing their shard spikes. They then use dimension door to close and attack. They use their touch of idiocy against tough foes.

Morale The crysmals fight to the death to defend their crystals.

STATISTICS

Str 15, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 6, Wis 13, Cha 14

Base Atk +4; CMB +5; CMD 17 (29 vs. trip)

Feats Great FortitudeB, Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (Perception)

Skills Acrobatics +9, Climb +9, Perception +11, Stealth +13 (+15 in rocky areas); Racial Modifiers +2 Stealth in rocky areas

Languages Terran

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Crystal Sense (Sp) Crysmals can sense the presence of any crystals or gems within 30 feet as if using the scent ability.

Shard Spike (Ex) Once per day, a crysmal can launch its tail spike as a ranged attack that shatters when it hits, dealing 3d6 points of piercing damage to the target and 1d4 points of piercing damage to all creatures in adjacent squares. The spike regrows in 24 hours, but until it does, its impaired sting does only 1d6+3 damage.

N12. ABRISARIUS' RIFT

This is the main elemental rift made by the elemental Abrisarius all those years ago. It is a pulsating combination of the four elements in balance. Fire bursts sporadically from this great chasm in the earth. Steam and wind rises in great hissing waves.

Perhaps the PCs have discovered the Stave and the ritual (see N4) and intend to either close or widen the rift. The repercussions of this are discussed in more detail below. But before any such thing can be done there is one last guardian left who defends the Rift. This is the living heart of the Earth's Wound. This powerful elder elemental will emerge as anything living approaches the Rift. It wastes no words of warning, attacking intent on keeping this magical chasm open.

The Living Heart of the Earth's Wound

CR 11

XP 12,800

Elder magma elemental

N Huge outsider (earth, elemental, extraplanar, fire)

Init +3; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +19

DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 7, flat-footed 25 (–1 Dex, +18 natural, –2 size)

hp 152 (16d10+64)

Fort +14, Ref +9, Will +5

DR 10/—; Immune fire, elemental traits

Weaknesses vulnerable to cold

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., burrow 20 ft.; earth glide

Melee 2 slams +22 (3d6+8 plus burn)

Space 15 ft.; Reach 15 ft.

Special Attacks burn (3d6, DC 20), lava puddle

TACTICS

During Combat The Heart emerges from the rift, spews forth lava and then slams any intruders to death.

Morale The Heart fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 26, Dex 8, Con 19, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 11

Base Atk +16; CMB +26; CMD 35

Feats Cleave, Greater Bull Rush, Greater Overrun, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Improved Overrun, Power Attack, Vital Strike

Skills Climb +27, Intimidate +19, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +19, Knowledge (planes) +19, Perception +19, Stealth +10

Languages Ignan

SQ earth glide

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Burn (Ex) A magma elemental's burn DC includes a –2 racial penalty, as their fires don't burn quite as hot as true elemental flames.

Earth Glide (Ex) A burrowing magma elemental can pass through stone, dirt, lava, or almost any other sort of earth except metal as easily as a fish swims through water. Its burrowing leaves behind no tunnel or hole, nor does it create any ripple, though the area it passes through feels warm for 1 round afterward and often retains a strangely smooth texture, as if the stone had been polished. A move earth spell cast on an area containing a burrowing magma elemental flings the elemental back 30 feet, stunning the creature for 1 round unless it succeeds on a DC 15 Fortitude save.

Lava Puddle (Su) Once per day as a full-round action, a magma elemental can vomit forth a puddle of lava that fills its space to a depth of 2–3 inches and counts as difficult terrain. Any creature that moves through this puddle of lava takes 2d6 points of fire damage. This damage continues for 1d3 rounds after the creature leaves the lava pool, although then it only inflicts 1d6 points of fire damage per round. The lava puddle solidifies and is safe to touch after a number of rounds equal to the elemental's Hit Dice. At the GM's discretion, this puddle of lava could start secondary fires.



THE FATE OF THE EARTH'S WOUND

The PCs have, in the Elementalists' Redoubt, the ability to permanently affect the fate of the Earth's Wound and to change forever this region of the underworld. The keys are Abrisarius' Rift (location N12 detailed above) and Abrisarius' Stave.

The ritual in The Wizard's Hut (location N4) details how to either close or widen the rift and of course, the PCs can always do nothing. And the Stave can either be empowered, destroyed or left alone. That gives nine possible combinations. Let's consider each in turn.

1. DO NOTHING WITH THE RIFT OR THE STAVE

The PCs gain a powerful (if unpredictable) magic item with the stave, but the earthquakes continue. Random cave-ins only get worse and elemental creatures arrive from time to time, though only infrequently. And in 1d100 years, the big one finally hits and the great cavern collapses. The lost world known as the Earth's Wound disappears forever and the entrance to the surface here is lost.

However, the Rift (N12) is also destroyed in the "big one" and so after that cataclysmic earthquake, the rest of the Azathyr remains relatively intact and unharmed. A passageway still connects the rest of the Azathyr to the Great Jumping Off Point. Though a wonder has been destroyed and likely many lives lost, the whole region is now much more stable.

Of course, because the Stave still exists, the PCs have a chance to change their mind before the powerful quake hits. The Stave could still be used to close the Rift once and for all and avoid the great earthquake that destroys the Earth's Wound.

2. DO NOTHING TO THE RIFT, DESTROY THE STAVE

The Rift remains open, but can no longer be widened. The PCs gain no magical items. Destroying the Stave does weaken the Rift but not enough to permanently save the Wound. The great earthquake that happens will occur in 50+2d100 years. But there is nothing that can be done to save the Earth's Wound short of invoking divine intervention. The days of this wondrous lost world are numbered.

Destroying the Stave is also not without peril. The Stave is a powerful magical artifact. It can only be destroyed at the Rift by setting it aflame in one of the bursts of flame that periodically erupt. Then it can shattered against the side of the Rift. At that moment a tremendous rush of magical energy explodes. Everyone within a sixty foot radius of the Stave takes 6d6 fire damage, 6d6 bludgeoning and 6d6 lightning damage (each of these is halved with a DC 21 Reflex save).

3. DO NOTHING TO THE RIFT, EMPOWER THE STAVE

Unless the Rift is widened, the Stave cannot be properly empowered. The flow of energy is simply too slow. However by even trying, the PCs draw the attention of more elemental beings. Three lesser beings emerge from the still open rift and attack, trying to claim the stave. If the PCs defeat them and then do nothing else, this "solution" becomes identical to Option 1 above.

The danger here is that the elementals might win. If elementals can claim the Stave, they immediately widen the Rift and then destroy the Stave. This option then effectively becomes Option 7 below. The Earth's Wound is now doomed thanks to the PCs.

Lesser Elemental Creatures (3)

CR 7

XP 3,200 each (9,600 XP total)

hp 85 (stats are identical to lesser elemental guardians, pg. 38.)

4. CLOSE THE RIFT, KEEP THE STAVE

Performing the ritual of closing is a dramatic undertaking. The earth begins to tremble. Fire begins to shoot from the Rift. Steam and vapor come into a great vortex. And then just as it seems that this energy will explode into an unimaginable torrent of elemental fury that will doubtless kill everyone in the chamber, the final word of the ritual is spoken. The rift seals and the raw elemental power is drawn away from the prime material plane forever. There is a moment of uncertain silence. And then it becomes clear to everyone assembled that the ritual has succeeded.

Closing the Rift immediately ends the earthquakes and the PCs gain a powerful and capricious magic item. However, the Rift and the Stave are closely linked. While the Stave exists, the Rift can never be absolutely destroyed. So, elemental energy still seeps through, though at a much diminished rate. From time to time an elemental creature appears in the Elementalists' Redoubt. Finally, in a century or so, one makes it through powerful enough to reopen the Rift. It becomes the new Heart of the Earth's Wound. And then, the cycle of earthquakes begins again. But now, who knows where Abrisarius' Stave has been taken?

5. CLOSE THE RIFT, DESTROY THE STAVE

This option alone permanently saves the Earth's Wound. The ritual happens as in Option 4 above. Earthquakes immediately cease, the mud pits cool and the boiling salt lake (H.) ceases over the next two weeks to boil. There is still low-level geothermal activity, but the deadly geysers and elemental incursions are a thing of the past. The PCs are free to claim this lost world as a permanent addition to their empire.

Of course, destroying the Stave remains just as dangerous as ever (see Option 2. for details).

6. CLOSE THE RIFT, EMPOWER THE STAVE

This simply fails. The Stave cannot be empowered without widening the Rift and destroying the Rift definitely makes this impossible to accomplish. At this point, this option effectively becomes Option 4.

Sometime in the distant future the Rift will reopen (again see Option 4). At that time, the Stave can be destroyed or used to widen the Rift. Either way, the Earth's Wound has a temporary reprieve.

7. WIDEN THE RIFT, DESTROY THE STAVE

The PCs perform the ritual of widening and at its culmination shatter the Stave. This has all the repercussions of breaking the Stave (see Option 2) and immediately the Redoubt goes mad. The meditation chamber (N2.) is covered in rising hot mud. The versicolor geysers (N3.) explode all at once. The seven steps at the entrance (N1.) begin to disappear and the ward is disrupted (if still there). If the PCs do not flee immediately and cannot fly, they are likely trapped here.

In short, this is the maximum chaos option. By opening the Rift, elemental creatures will begin to flood through unchecked within 1d3 hours of the ritual being completed. Earthquakes will begin to wrack the Earth's Wound. The PCs will have to flee immediately to not be caught in the devastation, as burning mud monsters burn the orchid forest and the dinosaur herds out of existence. Within 2d10 days, the entire great cavern will collapse and everyone in the Earth's Wound will be slain beneath countless tons of rock. The entrance to the surface will seal up and a great earthquake will hit the elven woods, all but destroying Lothellain. The great tree will splinter and fall.

And with the Stave broken, there will be no way to turn off the devastation. The entire region, even the Upper Azathyr, will be threatened as the earthquakes continue to get worse and worse. A few random parts of the Fungal Jungle will collapse as earthquakes (once very rare) become commonplace. Within 2d100 years, most of the Upper Azathyr will collapse. Dammerhall and Taaryssia are too far away to be destroyed, but the PCs fledgling empire definitely now comes with an expiration date.

8. WIDEN THE RIFT, EMPOWER THE STAVE

This is the path to personal power, consequences be damned. By empowering the staff with a widened Rift, Abrisarius' great masterpiece will at last be complete. The goal of the Stave was to make a universal magic item that could be whatever its wielder wanted. Unfortunately, Abrisarius never meant for it to be empowered with multiple souls present. He meant to do it alone and claim all the power for himself.

Each of the PCs receives a broken portion of the Stave that coalesces into a magical shard of the GM's choice, appropriate to each individual PC's nature. The choices are a *stone of good luck*, *orb of golden heaven*, *orb of foul abbadon*, *emerald ellipsoid ioun stone*, *pale lavender ellipsoid ioun stone*, *pearly white spindle ioun stone*, *pearl of power* (5th level), *amulet of magecraft*, or *dragonfoe amulet*.

9. WIDEN THE RIFT, DO NOTHING WITH THE STAVE

This is an odd and unlikely combination. After all, if you're going to tear a hole in reality, you might as well get personal power out of the deal or at least the satisfaction of watching the world burn. Initially, this is much the same as Option 7. The world is thrown into chaos. However, because the Stave still exists, there is a chance to stop the destruction.

The PCs have three days to fight their way through whatever elemental horrors have crept out of the widened rift (fire, earth and magma elementals of all sorts are particularly appropriate here). And then they can use the Stave to close the rift and end these atrocities. Fail to do it in three days and the Rift will be too wide and too well established. The Stave will effectively be worthless to affect it any further. And then the Earth's Wound is doomed (see Option 7).

BLOWING UP THE PLOT

If the PCs destroy the Elementalists' Redoubt too early, then they can destroy the Zaraketh Mine (see Act Four) and thus make it impossible to find Dammerhall. This completely invalidates Book Three of Throne of Night and is thus to be avoided. But how?

If you read the ritual carefully, it requires four jewels each representing the four elements (halite for water, amethyst for earth, sapphire for air and fire opal of course for fire). Halite they can get from near the Boiling Lake (I.). Amethyst is nearby in the crystals' caves. Sapphire can be found in Abrisarius' Hut (N4) or traded for. But fire opal can only be found in one place in the entire Earth's Wound and that is in the Mines of Zaraketh right next to the route to Dammerhall. This is intentional. Drow or svirfneblin traders don't have any. The elves of Lothellain don't have any. And you won't find any anywhere but there. Be sure not to change this.

O. LAIR OF THE BLUE GHOST

The creature known as the Blue Ghost is perhaps the most fearsome super-predator within this underground jungle. Many years ago, an already large and fearsome megaraptor pounced on an unsuspecting drow wizard and ripped the hapless dark elf to shreds. Upon the wizard it discovered a small mithral ring which quite by accident it hooked on one of its claws. The magic ring resized to fit the raptors claw and the amazingly intelligent Blue Ghost managed to figure out that with a thought, the megaraptor could now become invisible. Though the beast has no command of language, the ring responds to mental will and so the megaraptor's instinctual desire to be unseen was enough to trigger the magical item.

Now the Blue Ghost has learned to use this invisibility power to fearsome effect. It roams the jungle perfectly quiet, invisible and lethal to its quarry. The perfect ambush predator, the Blue Ghost is a patient stalker. It observes its prey, learning its strengths and weakness. And when at last, the moment is perfect, the Blue Ghost strikes fast and unseen. Few survive to report on this brutal killer. And those who miraculously do escape usually have nothing to report but a blue-skinned ghost-like figure ripping their companions to pieces. Thus has the legend of the Blue Ghost grown.

DEN OF THE BLUE GHOST

1. The Bone Pit: This chamber is strewn with bones of every type of dinosaur, beast and bird imaginable. Freely mixed in are also the bones of men, elves and gnomes. There is smashed gear and crushed armor mixed with the bones as well, however these are broken and worthless.

The Blue Ghost

CR 10

XP 9,600

Male variant advanced invisible megaraptor

N Large animal

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., low-light vision, scent; **Perception** +22

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 14, flat-footed 19 (+5 Dex, -1 size, +10 natural)

hp 130 (9d8+90)

Fort +16, **Ref** +11, **Will** +10

OFFENSE

Speed 60 ft.

Melee 2 talons +15 (2d6+8), bite +15 (1d8+8), foreclaws +12 (1d6+5)

Special Attacks pounce

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd; from *ring of invisibility*)

At will – *invisibility*

TACTICS

During Combat The Blue Ghost uses its stealth and invisibility to attack from surprise, pouncing on a foe. It slaughters that foe ignoring its allies as much as it can. Once the foe is dead, it goes invisible once more, disengages and tries to set up another ambush. Only when its enemies are scattered or slaughtered does it get about the important business of eating its prey.

Morale The Blue Ghost turns invisible and flees if reduce to 32 hp or less.

STATISTICS

Str 27, **Dex** 21, **Con** 31, **Int** 10, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 22

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +15; **CMD** 30

Feats Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Run, Weapon Focus (talons, bite)

Skills Acrobatics +21 (+34 jump), **Perception** +22, **Stealth** +25 (+45 when invisible and moving, +65 when invisible and stationary);

Racial Modifiers +8 Acrobatics, +8 Perception, +8 Stealth

Gear *ring of invisibility*

There are also a collection of triceratops horns here. This great assemblage of ivory that lies scattered about the den is worth 7,500 gp though it weighs almost half a ton.

2. Stalking Passages: These empty stone passages are where the Blue Ghost likes to play hide and seek (hide and slaughter would perhaps be more accurate) with anything foolish enough to enter its lair.

3. A Hiding Spot: This is a small cavern within the lair too small for the Blue Ghost (a large creature) to enter. It is a fine space for a medium sized creature to hide while Blue Ghost tries to dig you out.

4. Throne of the Ghost: This chamber is the actual den of the Blue Ghost. Buried here is the corpse of the Blue Ghost's recently deceased mate covered with upturned earth (A – an earthen mound). The northern wall of the den is a small rise where the raptor sleeps. It has made a bed of fur and leaves and other soft debris. However, one of the furs is actually a *hunter's cloak*.





P. THE OLD BULL

In this hex dwells a single large male triceratops that has been grown mad eating loco weed. It is so intoxicated on the stuff that it even sometimes imagines that trees are its enemies and charges at them furiously. It is no longer part of any herd as it is too violent to even associate with others of its kind.

For the PCs, this is purely a combat encounter. A successful DC 20 Knowledge (nature) check combined with a DC 20 Perception check will notice that some large animal has been stampeding through this area attacking everything and anything.

But knowing that will not change the fact that to cross this hex means encountering the mad old bull and surviving its vicious and unprovoked attacks. The only way to stop its rampage is to put the berserk creature down. It's large horns are worth 1,200 gp.

The Old Bull CR 8

XP 4,800

Male variant triceratops

N Huge animal

Init -1; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., low-light vision, scent; **Perception** +21

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 7, flat-footed 21 (-1 Dex, +14 natural, -2 size)

hp 119 (14d8+56)

Fort +15, **Ref** +8, **Will** +5

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee gore +17 (2d10+12)

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

Special Attacks powerful charge (gore, 4d10+16), trample (1d8+12, DC 25)

TACTICS

During Combat The Old Bull is not a complicated creature. It charges madly at its foes (i.e. everyone it meets) and tries to gore and trample them.

Morale The mad old bull fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 26, **Dex** 9, **Con** 19, **Int** 2, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 7

Base Atk +10; **CMB** +20; **CMD** 29 (33 vs. trip)

Feats Great Fortitude, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical, Power Attack, Run, Skill Focus (Perception), Weapon Focus (gore)

Skills Perception +24

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Powerful Charge (Ex) When this creature makes a charge, its attack deals extra damage in addition to the normal benefits and hazards of a charge. The attack and amount of damage from the attack is given in the creature's description.

Trample (Ex) As a full-round action, a creature with the trample ability can attempt to overrun any creature that is at least one size category Smaller than itself. This works just like the overrun combat maneuver, but the trampling creature does not need to make a check, it merely has to move over opponents in its path. Targets of a trample take 1d8+12 damage. Targets of a trample can make an attack of opportunity, but at a -4 penalty. If targets forgo an attack of opportunity, they can attempt to avoid the trampling creature and receive a Reflex save to take half damage. The save DC against a three-horn bull's trample attack is DC 25. A trampling creature can only deal trampling damage to each target once per round, no matter how many times its movement takes it over a target creature.

Q. STRANGE ORCHIDS

The Earth's Wound is thick with orchids. The parasitic flowers grow off of almost every tree in dizzying varieties. Most of these flowers are little more than what they appear to be – delicate flowers thriving in the warm mists and scattered sunlight of the rift.

But a few, in this magical place, have become something more. This hex is the heart of that magical diversity. This hex is the home of two amazing varieties of orchids. The first is uniquely dangerous. The second is rare and wondrous.

The first variety is the so-called strangle orchids. Its seemingly delicate vines are actually strong as steel. They loop around its chosen tree like thick cords and whenever a living victim comes near, they strike eager to strangle the victim and slowly feed off their decomposing corpse. There is a cluster of six hunting here.

Strangle Orchids (6) CR 3

XP 800 each (4,800 XP total)

Variant strangle weed

N Large plant

Init +0; **Senses** blindsight 30 ft., low-light vision; **Perception** +7

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 9, flat-footed 14 (+5 natural, -1 size)

hp 30 (4d8+12)

Fort +7, **Ref** +1, **Will** +2

Defensive Abilities camouflage; **Immune** plant traits; **Resist** fire 10

OFFENSE

Speed 5 ft.

Melee slam +7 (1d6+6 plus grab)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft.

Special Attacks constrict (1d6+6), fronds

TACTICS

During Combat The orchids lie in wait using their camouflage until they surround a victim and then attack from surprise. They slam, grab and constrict their foes.

Morale The orchids fight to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 10, **Con** 16, **Int** 2, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +8 (+12 grapple); **CMD** 18 (can't be tripped)

Feats Power Attack, Weapon Focus (slam)

Skills Perception +7, **Stealth** +1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Camouflage (Ex) Since a strangle orchid looks like a normal (if exotically flowered) orchid when at rest, it takes a DC 20 Perception check to notice it before it attacks. Anyone with ranks in Survival or Knowledge (nature) can use one of those skills instead of Perception to notice the plant.

Fronds (Ex) Strangle orchids attack with fronds that can extend up to 20 feet from its central mass. Each strangle orchid has 3-12 fronds. A strangle weed attacks with these fronds as a slam attack; although it can make only one attack per round, if it grapples a foe it is not denied its Dexterity bonus against non-grappled foes and can still make attacks of opportunity if it has any free fronds. Once a foe is grappled, the strangle orchid can attempt to latch on 1-4 additional fronds each round as a standard action by means of a separate grapple check. Additional fronds attached to a foe do not do increased damage, but they do add a cumulative +2 bonus to the strangle weed's CMB on subsequent grapple checks against that foe. To free itself, the foe must succeed on a grapple check against every frond grappling it.



The second variety of orchid is found in only one place. If the PCs succeed at a DC 25 Perception check, they find a grove of trees more pristine and more beautiful than any they have seen before. This grove is absolutely thick with orchids unlike any they have seen before. Their petals are pure black and their center looks almost like a gaping maw of some strange otherworldly creature.

These are the rare Stygian orchids and they are found, on this plane of existence, only here. A successful Knowledge (planes) or Knowledge (nature) will recognize them for what they are. These orchids are slowly drawing out and concentrating the magic of the Earth's Wound. If carefully harvested and maintained, this grove counts as a resource and can be perpetually maintained as a source of magical components.

However, if instead hastily harvested, there is 10,000 gp worth of stygian orchid blooms ready to be harvested. These blooms are powerful magical material and this 10,000 gp can be converted either into ink for magical scrolls, a base for potions or their pollen for any sort of magical dust. In short, this grove has a rich treasure trove of magical components that can either be traded or used (by those with the appropriate creation feats) to create a rich assortment of magical items.



R. THE WATERING HOLE

Rain falls through the rift in the ceiling and from time to time forms fresh drinking pools. Needless to say these places are in high demand. This pool is roughly forty feet in diameter and ten feet deep in its center. However, it has become infested with swarms of leeches. They normally wait for animals to lean over to drink, attaching to their mouths or faces. They lurk in the soft clay or on the bottom of the pool, covered in a thin layer of mud waiting for motion.

However, when the PCs approach this pool, they may roll a Perception check. On a DC 20, they notice that there is something shiny at the center of the pool in its deepest part. The water is slightly murky (and counts as a swamp for the purpose of the leech's stealth) so it is impossible to make out any details behind a glint of perhaps gold.

The water falling off the edge of the opening has washed away the soil and revealed a small chunk of wire gold imbedded in quartz. The gold is only modestly valuable in and of itself (25 gp). But anyone who makes a Profession (miner) DC 20 check will recognize what this means. Checking around will find more quartz with flecks of gold. In fact, this hex counts as a resource and a gold mine could be established here.

Leech Swarms (4)

CR 4

XP 1,200 each (4,800 XP total)

N Diminutive vermin (aquatic, swarm)

Init +4; **Senses** blindsight 30 ft.; **Perception** +0

DEFENSE

AC 18, **touch** 18, **flat-footed** 14 (+4 Dex, +4 size)

hp 39 (6d8+12)

Fort +7, **Ref** +6, **Will** +2

Immune mind-affecting effects, swarm traits, weapon damage

Weaknesses susceptible to salt

OFFENSE

Speed 5 ft., **swim** 30 ft.

Melee swarm (2d6 plus poison)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Special Attacks blood drain, distraction (DC 15)

TACTICS

During Combat The leeches swarm the nearest living thing in their pool.

Morale The leech swarms fight to the death or until there are no targets in their pool. They also flee from concentrated salt.

STATISTICS

Str 1, **Dex** 18, **Con** 15, **Int** —, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 2

Base Atk +4; **CMB** —; **CMD** —

Skills **Stealth** +16 (+24 in swamps), **Swim** +12; **Racial Modifiers** +8

Stealth in swamps, uses Dexterity to modify Swim checks

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Blood Drain (Ex) Any living creature that begins its turn with a leech swarm in its space is drained of its blood and takes 1d3 points of Str and Con damage.

Poison (Ex) Swarm—injury; **save** Fort DC 15; **frequency** 1/round for 2 rounds; **effect** 1d4 Dexterity drain; **cure** 1 save.

Susceptible to Salt (Ex) A handful of salt burns a leech swarm as if it were a flask of acid, causing 1d6 points of damage per use.



S. DON'T MESS WITH MAMA

In this hex, a baby ankylosaurus is at play as its mother grazes quietly in a nearby thicket. As soon as the baby ankylosaurus spies the PCs, it scampers towards them.

The creature is about the size of a pony and roughly the weight of a man. It is very friendly acting almost like a puppy, yipping and running through the tangle of tree limbs, orchids and vines. It swings its tail awkwardly about and occasionally accidentally crashes into things. Every other round that it is allowed to play with the PCs it "attacks" one random playmate (i.e. engages in unintentionally rough play).

If the ankylosaurus hits someone (doing a whopping 1d6 points of damage), it is possible the "victim" of this damage may take it poorly and attack the baby. This is of course a big mistake. The baby immediately lets out a distressed call. 1d3 rounds later, its mother storms onto the scene bellowing and charging.

And worse, 1d4 rounds after mama arrives two more ankylosaurus charge into the fray. What was once a playful romp with the baby has turned into a CR 9 encounter as the three ankylosauruses attack.

The two adults all have the same stats as "mama". The only difference is that while "mama" fights to the death to defend her cub, the two adults will flee if reduced to 25 hp or less.

"Mama" Ankylosaurus CR 6

XP 2,400

Female variant ankylosaurus

N Huge animal

Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +14

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 8, flat-footed 22 (+14 natural, -2 size)

hp 75 (10d8+30)

Fort +12, **Ref** +7, **Will** +4

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee tail +14 (3d6+12 plus stun)

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

TACTICS

During Combat "Mama" charges at anyone near or harassing her cub and smashes them with her powerful tail.

Morale "Mama" fights to the death to defend her cub.

STATISTICS

Str 27, **Dex** 10, **Con** 17, **Int** 2, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +17; **CMD** 27 (31 vs. trip)

Feats Great Fortitude, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Overrun, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (tail)

Skills Perception +14

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Stun (Ex) The ankylosaurus's tail can deliver a powerful, stunning blow. A creature struck by this attack must make a DC 23 Fortitude save or be dazed for 1 round. If the strike is a critical hit and the target fails its save, it is instead stunned for 1d4 rounds. The save DC is Strength-based.

There are reasons to bother the young ankylosaurus besides sheer malice. The cub is not without value. On the surface, any trader who dealt in exotic animals would pay 2,500 gp for such an oddity. People would flock from miles about to gawk at this strange beast.

Even here in the underworld, dinosaurs while not totally unknown are quite rare. The dinosaurs of the Earth's Wound are more remarkable than most because thanks to life in their strange twilight realm they have developed darkvision. This trait would make them particularly valuable to the merchants of the realms below.

This large reptilian beast could be domesticated and trained as an unusually strong pack animal or even a living battering ram. It would fetch 2000 gp in the animal markets of Taaryssia (detailed in Book Four). Even a passing drow caravan would buy the beast (see random encounters below) though they would pay only 1000 gp.

The baby could also become a pack animal for the PCs or even a very unusual sort of animal companion. At this age, such beasts are very pliable. In even a few more years, there will be no training the youngster and it will become a fiercely independent wild beast.

Besides the baby, there is nothing here of any value.

Story award: If the PCs manage to escape from the mother and safely reunite the baby and mama, then award XP as if they had defeated a CR 9 foe (6,400 XP).

"Baby" Ankylosaurus CR 1

XP 0 (normally 400, but this beast is no threat)

N Medium animal

Init +2 **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 12, flat-footed 19 (+2 Dex, +9 natural)

hp 10 (3d8-3)

Fort +3, **Ref** +4, **Will** +2

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee tail +2 (1d6)

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

TACTICS

During Combat The pup doesn't initiate combat. In fact, all it wants to do is romp through the greenery and play. Any attack that does not damage the creature is interpreted as play. Unfortunately, its reciprocal play can be a little rough and it attacks any playmates with its tail every other round. It doesn't mean to hurt them, it just isn't smart enough to realize how fragile its playmates are.

Morale The pup runs screaming if it takes any damage.

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 14, **Con** 9, **Int** 2, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 3 (7 vs. trip)

Feats Great Fortitude, Weapon Focus (tail)

Skills Perception +7



T. THE LAST HERD

Within this hex dwells perhaps the last herd of iguanodons on the planet. The peoples of the underworld do not call them iguanodons of course, instead they are called greentails. The name is not entirely accurate, the greentails come in many colors from pale russet to mottled yellow and white. Still, the most common coloration is green. Standing over a ridge, looking down on a valley strewn with orchids, stunted ferns and feasting greentails is an impressive view. It is like a window straight in the depths of deep time.

The greentails are easily the most common dinosaur to be found in the Earth's Wound. A great herd of them, long trapped here, has adapted to this barely lit twilight world. They graze upon the strange flora that flourishes here. This exotic diet makes their meat taste a little strange (it has an unusual herbal taste that puts some people off). This does not change the fact that the meat is both nutritious and delicious if you can get used to its eccentricities. In the underworld, that makes this herd a potential resource (see Appendix One for more information about resources and how they can be exploited).

The greentails are simple enough to hunt. That means as long as the PCs are in this hex and have a plausible method of slaying the beasts, they need make no survival rolls to gather food. A single beast produces many hundreds of pounds of meat, more than providing for even the largest of adventuring parties.

The greentails are largely docile and for the most part, as long as they are left alone, they quietly move through the valley feeding and going about their business. Still, in such numbers they can be dangerous. The main herd consists of several hundred huge animals. And if they start stampeding all in the same direction, the result can be murderously destructive to any who get in their way.

Anyone who approaches within a hundred feet of the herd has a chance of triggering a stampede. It could be a strange smell or a flash of color that sets them off. It might even be nothing that the PCs do. The herd could be set to flight by the smell of a predator that may be miles away.

Trampled by Greentails CR 10

XP 9,600

Anyone caught in a stampeding herd of greentails takes 12d6 bludgeoning damage (DC 25 Reflex save for half). If the victim has any sort of damage reduction applicable to this damage, double its efficacy to represent that this damage comes from not one source but from many. Anyone who can fly or levitate above the herd adds +5 to their reflex save as they can escape by floating upward. Still, flight is no guarantee of safety. Fliers can be caught and dragged down into this living sea of pressing flesh and panicked dinosaurs.

The result of this is that any time the PCs pass through this hex, they have a 20% chance of being stampeded. This potentially makes this one of the more dangerous hexes to traverse in the Earth's Wound thanks to the easily panicked hundreds of greentails.

There is a way to reduce this chance but it isn't very pleasant. Greentail dung and urine are not rare in this hex. Finding someone and applying the stink to yourself causes the greentails to worry less about your presence. It also gives a +4 to any stealth checks related to the greentails the PCs might want to make. However, counterbalancing this benefit is that fact that they will stink for 1d3 days after they stop using the stink unless they can find somewhere to take a proper bath. Anyone who makes a DC 25 survival check will come up with this tactic. Whether they'll be willing to personally use this technique is another matter entirely.

The herd is mobile and does move from time to time. If the PCs get too adept at avoiding the herd, having it shift to an adjacent hex. The herd will however always stay on green hexes (see pg. 23).

Note: Award the PCs full experience every time they survive a stampeding herd of greentails. However, award them nothing for going to a herd and purposefully provoking a stampede. They still receive the effects of the hazard, but they can no XP. After all, if they are willing to voluntarily get in the way of a herd such massive creatures, it is clear they've learned nothing.

Greentails CR 6

XP 2,400

Variant Azathyan iguanodon

N Huge animal

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., low-light vision, scent; **Perception** +12

DEFENSE

AC 19, **touch** 10, **flat-footed** 17 (+2 Dex, +9 natural, -2 size)

hp 76 (9d8+36)

Fort +10, **Ref** +8, **Will** +4

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 2 claws +13 (1d8+8/x3)

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

Special Attacks thumb spikes

TACTICS

During Combat The greentails slash with their claws at any enemy who gets too close.

Morale The greentails are quick to panic if reduced to less than half hit points (38 hp or less).

STATISTICS

Str 27, **Dex** 14, **Con** 19, **Int** 2, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 7

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +16; **CMD** 28 (32 vs. trip)

Feats Power Attack, Run, Skill Focus (Perception), Skill Focus (Stealth), Weapon Focus (claw)

Skills Perception +12, Stealth +4

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Thumb Spikes (Ex) An iguanodon's thumb spikes can inflict grievous wounds—they deal triple damage on a successful critical hit.

U. A VISITOR FROM ABOVE

Stellimartha, the great owl, has made a high niche not far from the entrance to the Earth's Wound. She was easily able to avoid the Living Fossil that guards the entrance (see W below). Since then, the great owl has been hunting both here and the Elven Woods making her one of the few creatures beside bats that routinely leave the Earth's Wound.

Stellimartha is ancient beyond all counting and has birthed so many chicks that even she sometimes has trouble remembering them all. She came to the Earth's Wound not just because of the dinosaurs and earthquakes. She was drawn here because she senses a great and primal danger building beneath the earth. She does not yet understand the nature of the danger. It is for now only a primal feeling deep within her breast that screams that something stirs deep beneath the earth.

Stellimartha is just shy of twenty feet tall and possesses a wing span almost forty feet across. She is physically magnificent to behold, the splendor of the wild coalesced into physical form. Her feathers encompass almost every shade of brown from dark mahogany to just a shade away from white. Her head has two feather "horns". Her eyes are piercing yellow.

For Explorers, Stellimartha will be curious and wary. She will reveal herself as the dwarves approach the entrance, circling high above them. She will swoop down close enough that communication is possible. Stellimartha does not speak the tongues of men, but several magical spells can overcome this barrier. Regardless, she understands Sylvan and if spoken to in that language will answer questions with a nod for yes and a turning of her head for no.

Stellimartha does not wish to fight. Instead, she wishes to know where the dwarves have come from and what they are doing in the underworld. She will listen attentively to any tales, though unless they are translated to sylvan she will not understand them. Stellimartha does know some useful. She knows the location of Lothellain (Location X, see Act Three below for details). She is on good terms with the elves. If she is attacked, she will flee to them and warn them of enemies emerging from the Earth's Wound. This greatly sours relations with and causes the PCs to receive a -4 penalty to all diplomacy and bluff skill checks involving the elves.

For Overlords, Stellimartha must seem very much like a spy. Stellimartha knows of the drow and knows their capacity for wickedness. She will swoop in close once to count their number and then try to leave.

Stellimartha

CR 10

XP 9,600

Female mighty giant owl

LN Huge magical beast

Init +10; Senses low-light vision; Perception +22

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 15, flat-footed 16 (+2 Dex, +8 natural, +5 dodge, -2 size)

hp 117 (6d10+84)

Fort +14, Ref +12, Will +10

DR 2/—; Immune mind-affecting abilities, sleep and paralysis; SR 17

OFFENSE

Speed 10 ft., fly 90 ft. (perfect)

Melee 2 claws +19 (2d6+10)

Space 15 ft.; Reach 10 ft.

TACTICS

During Combat Stellimartha prefers not to fight, but if forced uses her two powerful claws to great effect.

Morale Stellimartha is wise enough to know when she is fighting a losing battle. At 40 hp or below, she flees.

STATISTICS

Str 20, Dex 15, Con 18, Int 14, Wis 17, Cha 9

Base Atk +6; CMB +23; CMD 40

Feats Alertness, Combat Expertise, Improved Disarm

Skills Fly +16, Knowledge (geography) +15, Knowledge (history)

+15, Knowledge (nature) +15, Perception +22, Sense Motive

+19, Stealth +14; Racial Modifiers +4 Fly, +4 on all Knowledge

skills, +4 Perception, +8 Stealth

Languages Sylvan (cannot speak); animal telepathy (30 ft.)

SQ insightful senses, piercing stare

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Animal Telepathy (Su) A giant owl can telepathically communicate with other animals as if under the effects of speak with animals.

Insightful Senses (Su) A giant owl's senses are particularly well honed to sensing danger or locating prey. It adds its Wisdom modifier as an insight bonus (+3 for most giant owls) on its initiative checks.

Mighty (Ex): In addition to the effects of the template (which are already applied to the statistics above, Stellimartha receives a +5 bonus to any ability checks she rolls.

Piercing Stare (Su) Up to three times per day as a swift action, a giant owl can gain the effects of *true seeing* (as the spell) for 1 round.

If she is not brought down, she will fly to Lothellain and warn the elves that drow are emerging from the mines. From that point on, the elves will count as "on alert" (See Act Three for what this means). If the drow can capture Stellimartha, they will find her impossible to interrogate. She merely tries again and again to break free and with her great strength and powerful wings, success seems only a matter of time.

But even Overlords can find a use for Stellimartha. The blood of giant owls is magically potent and would make a fine ink for writing scrolls. Stellimartha's blood can produce 4,000 gp worth of magic scrolls if used by someone with parchment and the Scribe Scroll feat.

V. THE MINES OF ZARAKETH

This marks the location of the Mines of Zaraketh, the old dwarven mithral mine established here by a company based out of Dammerhall. This mine is fully detailed in Act Four.

W. THE STEPS INTO LIGHT

At last the PCs have discovered a way to the surface. A series of terraces leads up to the light. It is not an easy climb, but neither is it a dangerous climb. Along the way through this hex, the PCs encounter various signs of surface animals: bird skeletons, bat guano and even the occasional dinosaur skeleton from creatures down in the rift that have tried over the years to escape their lost world.

At the entrance there is the largest of these skeletons. It is the skeleton of a long-dead spinosaurus and it has embedded in its bones a handful of elven arrows. These arrows are here because this stone skeleton has been animated. Years ago, a necromancer found this entrance to the underworld and animated this skeleton to guard his discovery. He left to gather his servants, hoping to build a hidden fortress within the rift. He never returned, leaving this skeleton animate and attacking anyone who approaches from either side.

It simply lies in a heap, looking very much like a pile of fossilized dinosaur bones until someone gets near. And then the spinosaur assembles itself and with the same fury it possessed in life, attacks. It has been commanded to attack anything living that tries to cross this area and it faithfully fulfills its murderous charge.

DOWN TO GET OUT?

It may seem odd to some that the PCs had to go down the Great Jumping Off Point, descending almost 2200 feet, to find a way out of the underworld. Aren't they deeper underground than ever? In fact, this entrance to the surface is actually slightly higher in elevation than the so-called "Upper Azathyr". The entire rift of the Earth's Wound is actually on a gradual upward incline. In many places this incline is so subtle it is impossible to detect.

Regardless over the more than hundred mile length of the rift, this incline takes the PCs up and up, until they emerge from the surface to the sunlit world of the elven woods. If the PCs are dwarves with the stone-cunning trait feel free to mention this slight grade. There is no need to make them roll a skill check to detect it. Ultimately, this detail affects little. It is merely a point made to increase the verisimilitude of this subterranean fantasy world.

The Living Fossil

CR 8

XP 4,800

Spinosaurus skeleton

NE Gargantuan undead

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft.; Perception +0

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 8, flat-footed 12 (+3 Dex, +6 natural, -4 size)

hp 90 (20d8)

Fort +7, **Ref** +10, **Will** +12

DR 5/bludgeoning; **immune** cold, undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., swim 30 ft.

Melee bite +23 (2d8+12 plus grab), 2 claws +23 (2d6+12)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft.

TACTICS

During Combat The creature attacks using its powerful melee attacks, charging the nearest living foe.

Morale The living fossil fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 34, **Dex** 17, **Con** -, **Int** -, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +15; **CMB** +31 (+35 grapple); **CMD** 45

Feats Improved Initiative

Once the skeleton is destroyed, there is nothing preventing the PCs from stepping into the light. The arrows shot into the skeleton are a hint that elves are about. It will not be long before the elves have noticed that they have visitors in their woods (see Act Three).

Once the spinosaurus is cleared, these terraces are a natural area for the PCs to create a colony. A watchtower here would control all access to the rift beyond from the surface world. Further, there are several perfect large galleries just below the terrace where a settlement could be built. Starting a settlement is not easy of course. The PCs must find settlers to inhabit this new addition to their ever-expanding little empire. How to do this is discussed in more detail in Appendix One: Lords Below on page 88. Currently this place has no name. However, elvish for 'stairway to light' is *Althus Ilen*. In dwarven that would be *Nuralash*.

Story Award: If the PCs have successfully escorted the refugees to the surface (see Act One, Event One) they receive a CR 8 (4,800 XP) award for the deed.

X. LOTHELLAIN

This is the surface elves' colony, not twenty miles from the entrance into the underworld (location W above). It and its inhabitants are more fully detailed in Act Three below.

Y. THE ROAD TO DAMMERHALL

This passage leads out of this vicinity of the Earth's Wound and towards the heart of the drow holding in the Azathyr and the city of Taaryssia, City Without Mercy (which is detailed in Book Four). It also leads to the secret door which conceals the hidden road to Dammerhall. All of this is described in detail in Book Three of Throne of Night.

TEN RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

The location of these encounters is not fixed and can be encountered anywhere. Any time the PCs move through an empty hex, they have a 10% per day of having a random encounter. Each of these encounters is unique and can only be met once. However, once you've introduced an NPC or creature, feel free to keep track of them and, assuming they survive meeting the PCs, feel free to have them turn up again.

1. DROW TRADERS

A drow caravan consisting of a merchant named Bazzur Athius, eight guards, four pack lizards and a dozen noncombatant drow drovers (commoner 2) moves through the underworld. The caravan carries 2d6 tons of common trade goods (worth about 500 gp a ton on average) but also carries, hidden in one of the boxes 6,000 gp in rare drow silk. Bazzur is utterly non-political and will trade with anyone. He is also a lying backstabbing bastard who would sell his mother for a silver piece. But he has travelled extensively through this region and is a rich source of rumor.

Bazzur Athius, drow merchant CR 4

XP 1,200

Male drow expert 6

CE Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +2 **Senses** darkvision 120 ft.; Perception +14

DEFENSE

AC 14 touch 12, flat-footed 12 (+2 armor, +2 Dex)

hp 39 (6d8+12)

Fort +3, **Ref** +4, **Will** +6; +2 vs. enchantment

Immune sleep; **SR** 12

Weaknesses light blindness

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk rapier +7 (1d6+2/18-20)

Ranged hand crossbow +6 (1d4/19-20 plus poison)

Spell Like Abilities (CL 6th)

1/day—*dancing lights*, *darkness*, *faerie fire*

TACTICS

During Combat Bazzur is not against violence, particularly if it can get him new slaves. However, he abhors fair fights and would much rather engage only when he is certain of his advantage.

Morale Bazzur surrenders if reduced to 19 hp or less. He will say or do anything to preserve his miserable life.

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 14, **Con** 12, **Int** 13, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +4 **CMB** +6 **CMD** 18

Feats Alertness, Skill Focus (Profession [Merchant]), Toughness

Skills Bluff +12, Diplomacy +12, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (local)

+10, Perception +14, Profession (Merchant) +13, Sense Motive

+12; **Racial Modifiers** +2 Perception

Languages Elven, Gnome, Undercommon

SQ poison use

Combat Gear potion of cure light wounds (2), drow poison (2), 20 bolts

Gear mwk leather armor, mwk rapier, hand crossbow, pouch containing 250 gp in mixed coinage, flask full of fine fungal brandy

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Drow Poison—injury; *save* Fort DC 13; *frequency* 1/minute for 2 minutes; *initial effect* unconsciousness for 1 minute; *secondary effect* unconsciousness for 2d4 hours; *cure* 1 save.

Drow Caravan Guards (8)

CR 3

XP 800 each (6,400 XP total)

Male or female drow warrior 5

CE Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft.; Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 13, flat-footed 16 (+6 armor, +3 Dex)

hp 39 (5d10+5)

Fort +5, **Ref** +4, **Will** +2; +2 vs. enchantment

Immune sleep; **SR** 11

Weaknesses light blindness

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee rapier +6 (1d6+2/18-20) or

mwk glaive-guisarme +7 (1d10+2/x3)

Ranged hvy crossbow +6 (1d10/19-20 plus poison)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 5th)

1/day—*dancing lights*, *darkness*, *faerie fire*

TACTICS

During Combat They follow their employers orders in combat. They prefer ranged combat behind cover, but in melee they use their glaive-guisarmes, resorting to the rapier only for duelling.

Morale These guards are not fanatics but they also know that if they flee the caravan they are almost certainly doomed. If three-quarters of their numbers fall or they are reduced to 9 hp or less, they flee.

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 16, **Con** 12, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 20

Feats Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (glaive-guisarme)

Skills Intimidate +7, Perception +6, Stealth +5; **Racial Modifiers** +2 Perception

Languages Elven, Undercommon

SQ poison use

Gear breastplate, light steel shield, masterwork glaive-guisarme, rapier, hvy crossbow with 20 bolts, drow poison [3 doses], 4d10 gp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Poison Use (Ex) Drow are skilled in the use of poison and never risk accidentally poisoning themselves. Drow favor an insidious toxin that causes its victims to lapse into unconsciousness—this poison allows drow to capture slaves with great ease.

Pack Lizard

CR 2

XP 600 each

N Large Animal

Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low light vision, scent, Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 9, flat-footed 14 (+5 natural, -1 size)

hp 22 (2d8+13)

Fort +8, **Ref** +3, **Will** +3

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee bite +4 (1d8+5 plus grab)

TACTICS

During Combat The pack lizard does not usually fight in combat and is not combat trained. However, if anyone unfamiliar gets directly in front of the lizard and is wounded or carrying food, the pack lizard will try to bite them. Once a pack lizard gets a hold of something it is famously difficult to get it to let go.

Morale If wounded, the pack lizard panics and tries to flee.

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 10, **Con** 21, **Int** 1, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 17 (21 vs trip)

Feats Endurance, Toughness

Skills Perception +8

SQ Docile



2. THE WILD SHAOKYRI PACK

A pack of wild drow hunting leopards have escaped from their masters and formed a pack. This pack is always hungry and always on the prowl for new prey. Their leader is the fearsome and cunning Dezra Mordûn (pro. DEHZ-ra-MORE-dune; which in drow dialect of elvish literally meaning the Quick Death or the Pouncing Killer). Dezra is an alchemically altered Shaokyri, unusually large and intelligent. In fact, in his growls can sometimes be made out sounds that resemble crude elvish words. He dominates this pack completely and his authority is unquestioned.

Dezra Mordûn, Pack Leader CR 8

XP 4,800

Variant male dire tiger

NE Large animal

Init +6; Senses darkvision 120 ft., scent; Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 15 (+2 Dex, +6 natural, -1 size)

hp 105 (14d8+42)

Fort +12, **Ref** +11, **Will** +5

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee 2 claws +18 (2d4+8 plus grab), bite +18 (2d6+8/19-20 plus grab)

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

Special Attacks pounce, rake (2 claws +18, 2d4+8)

TACTICS

During Combat The pack leader is a brutal ambush predator. It prefers to sneak up, pounce and rip its prey to shreds before dragging the carcass back to its pride.

Morale If reduced to 26 hit points or lower, the Quick Death flees. But this animal is smart enough to hold a grudge. If it escapes, it will be back. If captured, it will try to escape.

STATISTICS

Str 27, **Dex** 15, **Con** 17, **Int** 4, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +10; **CMB** +19 (+23 grapple); **CMD** 31 (35 vs. trip)

Feats Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Run, Skill Focus (Perception), Skill Focus (Stealth), Weapon Focus (bite, claw)

Skills Acrobatics +6, Perception +12, Stealth +15 (+23 in caves), Swim +13; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Acrobatics, +4 Stealth (+8 in caves)

Gear drow-made jeweled collar worth 1,500 gp

Shaokyri (drow hunting leopards) (8) CR 2

XP 600 each (4,800 XP total)

N Medium animal

Init +4; Senses darkvision 120 ft., scent; Perception +5

DEFENSE

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

hp 19 (3d8+6)

Fort +5, **Ref** +7, **Will** +2

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee bite +6 (1d6+3 plus grab), 2 claws +6 (1d3+3)

Special Attacks pounce, rake (2 claws +6, 1d3+3)

TACTICS

During Combat These leopards pounce any foe, biting and clawing and raking when they can.

Morale The leopards flee if reduced to 6 or less hit points or if the pack leader is slain..

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 19, **Con** 15, **Int** 2, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +5 (+9 grapple); **CMD** 19 (23 vs. trip)

Feats Skill Focus (Stealth), Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +8, Climb +11, Perception +5, Stealth +11 (+15 in caves); **Racial Modifiers** +4 on Stealth in caves

Dezra hates drow with a white hot passion, but that does not mean he shows mercy to others. He is an equal opportunity eater of anyone he happens across, whether sentient or not. Dezra even hunts other Shaokyri. The members of his pack, besides him, are all female. Male leopards he slays and eats like anything else he encounters.

This pack can be encountered anywhere in the rift or outside of it, but they mostly avoid getting too close to location O (see above). If there is one thing that the Quick Death fears, it is the Blue Ghost.

3. HEZZARIAN HUNTERS

The same giant bats that inhabit the Great Jumping Off Point (see A. above) also sometimes roam the Earth's Wound looking for prey. This random encounter is a small pack of three that have gone their own way and hunt through the caves and even into the Rift. They are vicious animals, and eagerly attack any prey they find.

That said, they prefer to swarm a single target rather than attack a large group where they are outnumbered. Their usual hunting strategy is to pick a straggler or lost individual. Kill it and drag pieces of its carcass back to a nearby cavern or high ledge to consume. However, if starvation sets in, these flying predators will attack anything they can find.

If defeated and captured, a giant bat can be trained by a skilled animal handler into becoming a flying mount. Four weeks of effort (including food for the bat) and a successful DC 25 Handle Animal check will allow the beast to be domesticated. After that, it can be taught up to six tricks as per the skill.

Hezzarian Hunters (3) CR 3

XP 800 each (2,400 XP total)

Variant advanced dire bat

N Large animal

Init +2; Senses blindsense 120 ft.; Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 12 (+2 Dex, +3 natural, -1 size)

hp 27 (5d8+5)

Fort +5, **Ref** +6, **Will** +3

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., fly 40 ft. (good)

Melee bite +5 (1d8+4)

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

TACTICS

During Combat The hunters use flyby attack to swoop past their foes taking a bite as they pass. They each repeat this until they have slain one medium sized victim they can take back to a nearby lair to consume.

Morale The hunters flee when reduced to half points (13 hp or less).

STATISTICS

Str 17, **Dex** 15, **Con** 13, **Int** 2, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 19

Feats Alertness, Flyby Attack, Stealthy

Skills Fly +9, Perception +12, Stealth +5; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Perception when using blindsense

4. THE KNOCKERBEASTS

The PCs encounter a mated pair of pachycephalosaurus, the blunt-skulled living battering rams of the Earth's Wound. They are herbivores, but are very protective of each other. If anyone disturbs one, they both lower their skulls and charge.

Knockerbeasts (2) CR 4

XP 1,200 each (2,400 XP total)

Variant pachycephalosaurus

N Large animal

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., low-light vision, scent; **Perception** +8

DEFENSE

AC 17, **touch** 11, **flat-footed** 15 (+2 Dex, +6 natural, -1 size)

hp 37 (5d8+15)

Fort +7, **Ref** +6, **Will** +2

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee slam +8 (2d6+9)

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

Special Attacks clobbering charge

TACTICS

During Combat This dinosaur is not a versatile combatant. It has one mode of attack and its does it as often as it can till it escapes predators and foes.

Morale The pachycephalosaurus tries to flee whenever wounded beyond half hit points (18 hp or less).

STATISTICS

Str 22, **Dex** 15, **Con** 17, **Int** 2, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 5

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 22

Feats Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack, Run

Skills Perception +8, Stealth +2

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Clobbering Charge (Ex) When a pachycephalosaurus hits a target with its slam attack at the end of a charge, it can initiate a bull rush as a free action to move the struck target back in the same direction as the dinosaur's charge. The pachycephalosaurus cannot move with the target of the bull rush. If a pachycephalosaurus scores a critical hit against a creature with its slam attack at the end of a charge, it also staggers the target for 1 round. If the victim succeeds at a DC 18 Fortitude save, the stagger effect is negated, but the victim still suffers the effects of the dinosaur's bull rush attempt. The save DC is Strength-based.

5. PATCH OF YELLOW MOLD

The PCs have discovered a small patch of yellow mold surrounding and covering a drow skeleton. The skeleton is badly deteriorated and covered in patches of this muck. However, visible upon the skeleton is an intact mithral shirt. Getting the shirt from the corpse without activating the mold is basically impossible. The best strategy is to coat the whole patch in something flammable like oil. This burns away the mold and the mithral shirt will easily survive such a low-temperature brief burn.

Patch of Yellow Mold CR 6

XP 2,400

If disturbed, a 5-foot square of this mold bursts forth with a cloud of poisonous spores. All within 10 feet of the mold must make a DC 15 Fortitude save or take 1d3 points of Constitution damage. Another DC 15 Fortitude save is required once per round for the next 5 rounds, to avoid taking 1d3 points of Constitution damage each round. A successful Fortitude save ends this effect. Fire destroys yellow mold, and sunlight renders it dormant.

6. HIDDEN DROW CACHE

This hex contains a hidden drow supply cache. The door is set into the wall and cunningly made to look exactly like natural stone. A Perception check (DC 25) finds the cache. Drow PCs may make a DC 25 Knowledge (local) check to know about this cache. This cache has been long neglected, but its contents survive thanks to a minor magical effect that keeps the contents unspoiled. It radiates a minor transmutation aura visible even through the stone. Inside the cache is a hundred man-days of iron rations, 12 *potions of cure light wounds* and 12 doses of drow sleep poison.

7. MOSQUITO SWARM

The orchid jungle of the Earth's Wound is a natural breeding ground for mosquitos. The warm, shady, wet interior full of giant creatures is a perfect place for mosquitos to thrive. And thrive they do. They form great swarms of blood-hungry buzzing insects. These aggressive insects can be dangerous to smaller prey (such as humans, elves, dwarves and the like).

Bloodhaze Mosquito Swarm CR 6

XP 2,400

N Fine vermin (swarm)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., scent; **Perception** +9

DEFENSE

AC 20, **touch** 20, **flat-footed** 18 (+2 Dex, +8 size)

hp 71 (13d8+13)

Fort +9, **Ref** +6, **Will** +5

Defensive Abilities swarm traits; **Immune** weapon damage

Weaknesses swarm traits

OFFENSE

Speed 5 ft., fly 30 ft. (average)

Melee swarm (1 Con damage and sleeping sickness)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Special Attacks cling, Con damage, distraction (DC 17), disease

TACTICS

During Combat The swarm charges the nearest living opponent, eager to feast on their warm blood.

Morale The swarm fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 1, **Dex** 15, **Con** 12, **Int** —, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 2

Base Atk +9; **CMB** —; **CMD** —

Skills Fly +10, **Perception** +9; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Perception

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Cling (Ex) If a creature leaves a bloodhaze mosquito swarm's square, the swarm takes 1d6 points of damage as dozens of insects tenaciously cling to the victim. A creature with bloodhaze mosquitoes clinging to it takes 1 point of Constitution damage at the end of its turn for the next 1d4 rounds. As a full-round action, the creature can remove the mosquitoes with a DC 18 Reflex save or by immersing itself in water. High winds or any amount of damage from an area-affecting effect destroys all clinging mosquitoes. The save DC is Dexterity-based. Once a group of clinging mosquitoes has dealt 4 points of Constitution damage, the mosquitoes detach and disperse to digest their meal.

Disease (Ex) Bloodhaze mosquitoes are bearers of a terrifying and deadly disease common to the jungle, known to most locals as sleeping sickness.

Swarm (sleeping sickness)—injury; **save** Fort DC 17; **onset** 1d2 days; **frequency** 1 day; **effect** 1d4 Wisdom damage and target is fatigued, **cure** 2 consecutive saves



8. VELOCIRAPTOR HUNTING PARTY

A hunting pack of velociraptors based out of the Mines of Zaraketh (see Act Four for details) has caught the PCs scent and has begun to hunt them.

Azathyrion Velociraptors (4) CR 2

XP 600 each (2,400 XP total)

hp 22 (see page 76)

9. SABOSAN PATROL

A pair of sabosan (bat-men) patrol the skies above and the tunnels near the Earth's Wound. They are on the lookout for easy prey, intruders or anything else of value to take back to their master in the Mines of Zaraketh (see Act Four for details).

Sabosans (2) CR 5

XP 1,600 each (3,200 XP total)

hp 52 (see page 85)

10. THE LOST PRIESTESS

Weeks ago, Zelinda "Zoe" Lang received a vision straight from her goddess. She saw a great tree and beyond that a chasm leading into darkness. And from the darkness, she saw emerging a dark horror that would consume the sun and all light. And she saw a great throne deep within the earth. The throne was black as pitch, and what sat upon it was no humanoid creature but something infinitely more ancient and infinitely fouler.

She told her high priestess about the vision and was rebuffed. "Worry not, child. It is only a nightmare." Zoe tried again and again to gain help from her order to investigate, but received nothing but scorn. And so one day, she took off alone without a word of warning.

She travelled to Lothellain (see Section 3 below) and there learned about the opening into the underworld. She used *hide from undead* to get past the spinosaurus skeleton that guards the steps (location W above) and made her way down into the depths of the earth. She killed an iguanodon and made a leather bedroll of its green scaly hide. And now she roams the Earth's Wound looking for another sign from her goddess for why she has been brought here.

Physically, Zoe could not look less like a person you would expect to meet in the realms below. She is a nordic goddess, tall and fair. Her hair is the color of spun gold. Her eyes are blue like a melt-water lake. Her magic and her faith center upon the sun and she openly wears its symbol proudly.

In truth, Zoe is a fanatic's fanatic. Whether her vision represents a real warning or whether strange molds have infested her bread is an open question. But whatever the truth, Zoe never doubts she is following the will of her goddess.

For Explorers, Zoe will almost certainly decide that they are her sign and join up with them as an ally if they will have her. Zoe is utterly convinced that the world (and the sun in particular) is in great danger. How this could be, she does not know. But she is certain she is on a mission of utmost need.

For Overlords, Zoe is a foe. She will sense their wickedness and try to destroy them (perhaps deciding they are the darkness in her vision). Of course, she is likely wildly overmatched. If captured, she would make a fine sacrifice to their demonic patron.

Zelinda "Zoe" Lang, Chosen of the Sun Goddess CR 7

XP 3,200

Female Human Cleric of the Sun Goddess 7

NG Medium humanoid (human)

Init +0; Senses Perception +4

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 21 (+8 armor, +3 deflection)

hp 56 (7d8+21)

Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +10

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee +1 longsword +8 (1d8+3/19–20)

Ranged sling +5 (1d4+2)

Special Attacks channel positive energy 7/day (DC 17, 6d6 [+7 vs. undead])

Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th; concentration +11)

7/day—*rebuke death* (1d4+3)

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 7th; concentration +11)

4th—*dismissal*, *fire shield*^P, *holy smite* (DC 18)

3rd—*dispel magic*, *invisibility purge*, *searing light*, *searing light*^P

2nd—*bull's strength*, *heat metal*^P (DC 16), *hold person* (DC 16) x2, *spiritual weapon*

1st—*command* (DC 15), *divine favor*, *endure elements*^P, *hide from undead*, *protection from evil*, *shield of faith*

0th (at will)—*detect magic*, *guidance*, *light*, *stabilize*

D Domain spell; Domains Healing, Sun

TACTICS

Before Combat If possible, the priestess will cast *bull's strength*, *shield of faith* and *fire shield* on herself.

During Combat The priestess off leads with *searing light* because it is so effective against so many foes here underground. She relies primarily on her spells, resorting to melee only if forced into battle.

Morale The priestess is a religious fanatic following a divine vision. She is willing to fight to the death for her cause.

STATISTICS

Str 14, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 18, Cha 14

Base Atk +5; CMB +7; CMD 18

Feats Combat Casting, Extra Channel, Improved Channel, Selective Channeling, Toughness

Skills Diplomacy +12, Heal +14, Knowledge (religion) +10

Languages Common, Celestial

SQ aura, healer's blessing

Combat Gear oil of align weapon, potion of eagle's splendor, scroll of comprehend languages, scroll of lesser restoration, scroll of magic circle against evil, wand of cure light wounds (50 charges)

Other Gear +2 breastplate, +1 longsword, sling with 10 bullets, cloak of resistance +1, phylactery of positive channeling, ring of protection +1, antitoxin, backpack, bedroll of iguanodon hide, silver holy symbol of the sun goddess, spell component pouch, trail rations (2 weeks), waterskin, 54 gp

ACT THREE: LOTHELLAIN

This chapter is the only part of the entire Throne of Night adventure path that happens outside of the underworld and is thus completely optional. A group of dwarves may rightly arrive at the surface and think “This isn’t getting me any closer to Dammerhall” and turn back. Likewise, a party of drow may take one glimpse of the burning sun and return to the darkness they are so familiar with.

In general, this act is not supposed to be a major foray into the outdoors. It is supposed to be a brief journey that provides a change of pace and an opportunity for roleplay. The central question is this: what are we going to do about the nearby elven village that borders our empire? Both dwarves and drow have their own reasons to dislike and distrust the elves.

For the drow, they are the ancient enemy. The chance to raid an elven village and take slaves and sacrifices may be too great a temptation to resist. The Overlords, once they learn the village’s location and can estimate its defensive strength may return to their capital (perhaps Vothys) and gather their army for a raid. You’ll find a full description of how such a raid may go in the section entitled “The Sack of Lothellain” below.

For dwarves this surface colony is perhaps seen as an opportunity. It has many months (years?) since they have been to a surface city. The chance to buy goods that are rare in the underworld is almost certain to be appreciated. However, remember that ancient grudges go back a long way. The elves and dwarves have only rarely been engaged in open warfare, one against the other. But almost as rare is the times they have been friends. The dwarves stick to their mountains and mines. The elves stay in their forests. And everyone is pleased by the distance between one another.

And there is always option number three between raid and trade. The PCs could simply collapse the entrance and seal themselves in. With fourth or fifth level spells at their disposal, there are any number ways this could be accomplished (*stone shape* and *transmute rock to mud* seem natural choices).

If the PCs decide to do this and present a plan that seems at all plausible, let them. There is nothing essential in this act. They may need to catch up a little on experience points, but you can always have them fight more dinosaurs or elementals if need be. They’ve made a choice, let it stand and let it be meaningful. Their empire is entirely underground. They have turned their back on the light.

THE ELVEN WOODS

The elven woods are as pristine and pure a wilderness as can be imagined. The trees grow tall and straight. Trees that would make sequoias envious are common place here. The animals are abundant and varied. The opportunities for hunting are beyond superb. The greenery is almost supernaturally vibrant and viridian. Moss and lichen covers stone and trunk alike, growing quickly in countless shades of green and gold. A million small streams gently babble through the undergrowth.

There are dangerous places in this ancient wood. Places guarded by treant and super-predator, but not here. Those places are not to be found within easy travel of the entrance, not so close to the elven colony. Here the patrols of elves keep the dangers to a minimum. Natural predators are gently relocated. Less natural threats ... well, the beautifully made longbows the patrols carry aren’t for show.

There is no sign of civilization. No tell-tale smoke can be seen from horizon to horizon (though of course to see from horizon to horizon, you need to climb one of the taller trees). Not even foot trails are evident, so adept are the elves at leaving no sign of their passing. It is as if the PCs have stepped out of the Earth’s Wound into a new world, completely devoid of sentient life.

Of course, the illusion does not last for long. Elven patrols crisscross this valley and every forest hex the PCs cross during the day there is a 50% chance that a patrol notices their presence unless they are somehow removing any trace of their passing including scent and tracks. Travel any distance at all, and being detected is all but inevitable. When the PCs do meet an elven patrol, you’ll find the details of that encounter fully explained on the next page.

The elves know about the entrance to the underworld (Location W). They know about the undead dinosaur that guards its mouth. They sometimes put arrows in the beast, but the undead is largely unaffected by their shot. They could overwhelm it of course. Attack it en masse, but they have never thought the battle would be worth the cost. And besides, the beast doesn’t just keep them from going in to the world below. It also keeps things from coming out.

And so, the entrance is largely ignored. Patrols check on it every few weeks and rigorously guard the woods nearest to it. But other than that, the elves prefer to ignore the cursed place and the Earth’s Wound beyond. Perhaps that was a mistake. Perhaps, the drow are about to teach them that ignoring the world below was a critical misstep. Or perhaps the dwarves will simply make ignoring it anymore impossible.

THE ELVEN PATROL

Elven patrols travel the woods around Lothellain both looking for intruders, hunting and taking care of the forest. Each patrol consists of eleven elves, ten of them rangers and one a patrol leader. The patrols are mixed-gender and any given elf has a 50% chance of being male or female. Hooded, cloaked and armored it is often difficult to tell them apart.

If a patrol comes upon a party of drow, they do not hesitate. They immediately setup an ambush and do their best to exterminate the hated dark elves. This would not be the first drow incursion to the surface and the animosity amongst the rangers against the drow is almost palpable.

Dwarves on the other hand will give them pause. Once they confirm they are not duergar, the rangers will again do their best to surround the dwarves. But instead of just attacking, they fire a warning arrow in front of everyone in the caravan (assuming there are less than eleven travelers). These arrows are not intended to hit the targets. Instead, the arrows are the elves way of saying "I missed on purpose. Freeze."

Elven Patrol Leader

CR 4

XP 1,200

Male or Female elf ranger 5

CG Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision; **Perception** +9

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 15 (+5 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 32 (5d10+5)

Fort +4, **Ref** +7, **Will** +1; +2 vs. enchantment

Immune sleep

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk elven curved blade +7 (1d10+3/18–20)

Ranged +1 composite longbow +10 (1d8+3/x3)

Special Attacks favored enemy (drow +4, animal +2)

TACTICS

Before Combat The elves prefer to attack from surprise, ambushing their foes with their longbows while under cover.

During Combat The elves try to keep at range, using their bows to full effect. They only use their curved blades if forced into melee.

Morale If the patrol leader realizes he is facing particularly formidable foes (such as drow), he will actually flee as it soon as it becomes obvious he is overmatched. He must get back to Lothellain and warn them and will sacrifice his patrol to accomplish this.

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 17, **Con** 10, **Int** 12, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 20

Feats Dodge, Endurance, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Weapon Focus (Longbow)

Skills Acrobatics +11, Climb +10, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (Nature) +9, Perception +10, Stealth +11, Survival +8, Swim +7

Languages Common, Elven, Sylvan

SQ elven magic, favored terrain (forest +2), hunter's bond (companions), track +2, weapon familiarity, wild empathy +6

Combat Gear tanglefoot bags (4)

Other Gear +1 chain shirt, masterwork elven curved blade, +1 composite longbow (+2 Str) with 40 arrows, 5d10 gp, mithral pendant worth 150 gp, signal horn

After this, the patrol leader will emerge from the undergrowth and speaks in common. "Who are you and what is your business in these woods?"

If the dwarves answer with anything other a polite introduction and a quick explanation, the patrol leader quickly grows impatient. "You will answer my questions or the next volley will be in your heart."

Honestly, exactly what the dwarves say (as long as its not a threat or an insult) matters very little. Even before he said a word, the patrol leader has already decided what should be done. He is going to collect any obvious weapons from these outsiders and take them back to Lothellain. There the Huntmistress can decide what to do with them.

If the PCs refuse to give up their weapons or are rude or threatening, the situation gets tense. Arrows are nocked and pointed at the dwarves. It will take a DC 20 Diplomacy check (award a +4 if the speaker knows elven) to defuse the situation now. A failure on that roll means that the elves misinterpret the speaker's intentions and loose a volley of arrows. Combat has begun. Once battle is joined and an elf is killed, there is no way to stop the bloodshed.

Elven Rangers (10)

CR 3

XP 800 each (8,000 XP total)

Male or Female elf ranger 4

CG Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision; **Perception** +9

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 26 (4d10+4)

Fort +4, **Ref** +7, **Will** +1; +2 vs. enchantment

Immune sleep

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee elven curved blade +6 (1d10+3/18–20)

Ranged mwk composite longbow +9 (1d8+2/x3)

Special Attacks favored enemy (drow +2)

TACTICS

Before Combat The elves prefer to attack from surprise, ambushing their foes with their longbows while under cover.

During Combat The elves try to keep at range, using their bows to full effect. They only use their curved blades if forced into melee..

Morale The elves flee if given the order, half their number are slain or they are reduced 7 hp or less. They use their tanglefoot bags to try and cover their escape.

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 17, **Con** 10, **Int** 11, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 19

Feats Dodge, Endurance, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Weapon Focus (Longbow)

Skills Acrobatics +8, Climb +9, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (Nature) +5, Perception +9, Stealth +10, Survival +7, Swim +7

Languages Common, Elven

SQ elven magic, favored terrain (forest +2), hunter's bond (companions), track +2, weapon familiarity, wild empathy +6

Combat Gear tanglefoot bags (4)

Other Gear mwk chain shirt, elven curved blade, masterwork composite longbow (+2 Str) with 40 arrows, 3d10 gp, signal horn

EXPLORERS IN THE ELVEN WOODS

After the dwarves have met with the patrol and hopefully are being brought back to Lothellain to meet the huntmistress without violence, read them this:

"At last you've found a way to the surface only to discover it in the hands of the damned elves. You're not sure who you dislike the most: the drow or the elves. At least with the drow you know they are out for your blood. With these folk, you never know what they'll want."

"The patrol leader escorts you through this vast forest with its giant trees and wildlife everywhere. You see old growths of elderwood trees, with trunks wider around than ten dwarves could encircle hand in hand and so high they nearly cage the clouds."

"But as great as those trees are, they are nothing compared to the size and majesty of Lothellain itself. The great tree has been given a living wall. A ring of trees, each a giant in its own right, has been carefully raised to fuse together creating a curtain of dense hardwood. The tops of the trees have been carefully formed to create a living rampart that overlooks this elven colony and fortress. It is quite an achievement and no doubt these pointy-eared tree buggerers are quite proud of it. To you, it seems like a lot of wasted effort when a simply stone wall would have sufficed and been much easier to build."

"You approach a dense thicket of thorns and creeper. With a whispered word, this living gate unfolds and the thorns part giving you an open path into this elvish colony. The wall surrounds a larger courtyard and at the center is easily the largest tree you've ever laid eyes on."

"It's so big, your eyes can't take it all in. It's so tall it's impossible to estimate its height. It's so vast that the elves have woven residences and even a fortress inside its knotty trunk. The tree seems not notice these hollows at all. It's so massive that massive seems too small a word."

"In the courtyard, an imposing female elf emerges from the tree. She wears shimmering mail, can't be an inch over five feet tall and has hair so black and lustrous it seems almost as if it was cut from obsidian. She bows and then speaks at the patrol leader in elvish. There exchange is brief and even if you don't understand their language, it's easy to follow the exchange."

"Who are these folk?"

"Dwarves, my lady, from below."

"The elf approaches and looks you over carefully, remaining silent for a long moment. Finally she speaks. 'Your request for an audience is granted. To the throne room.' It is especially a surprising thing to say because you've made no such request."





OVERLORDS IN THE ELVEN WOODS

After the drow have fought the elven patrol, read this to them:

“Elves! Your first venture on to the surface and you find elves. The ancient enemy, the ones who banished your people from the surface for all time ... they are here. Surely your patron smiles upon to give you this chance at vengeance.

“And their camp can’t be far. These soldiers are not carrying much in the way of rations. If only you can find it. If only you could raid it! Elven slaves are very valuable and very rare. If you could find a slave market to sell them, a village of elves could be worth a fortune. These thoughts stream through your mind.

“But even more than that, you feel an anger within you that is almost instinctive. It is a new sensation as these are the first surface elves you have ever laid your eyes on. The hatred between the drow and elves ... it’s not a personal thing. No elf ever wronged any of you.

“No, it’s more than that. It’s the very core of the drow’s being. It is the wound you can’t forget. It is a driving need for blood and vengeance. And now it washes over you. It fills you. This is a need you can’t deny. You must find that village!”

DROW DECEPTION

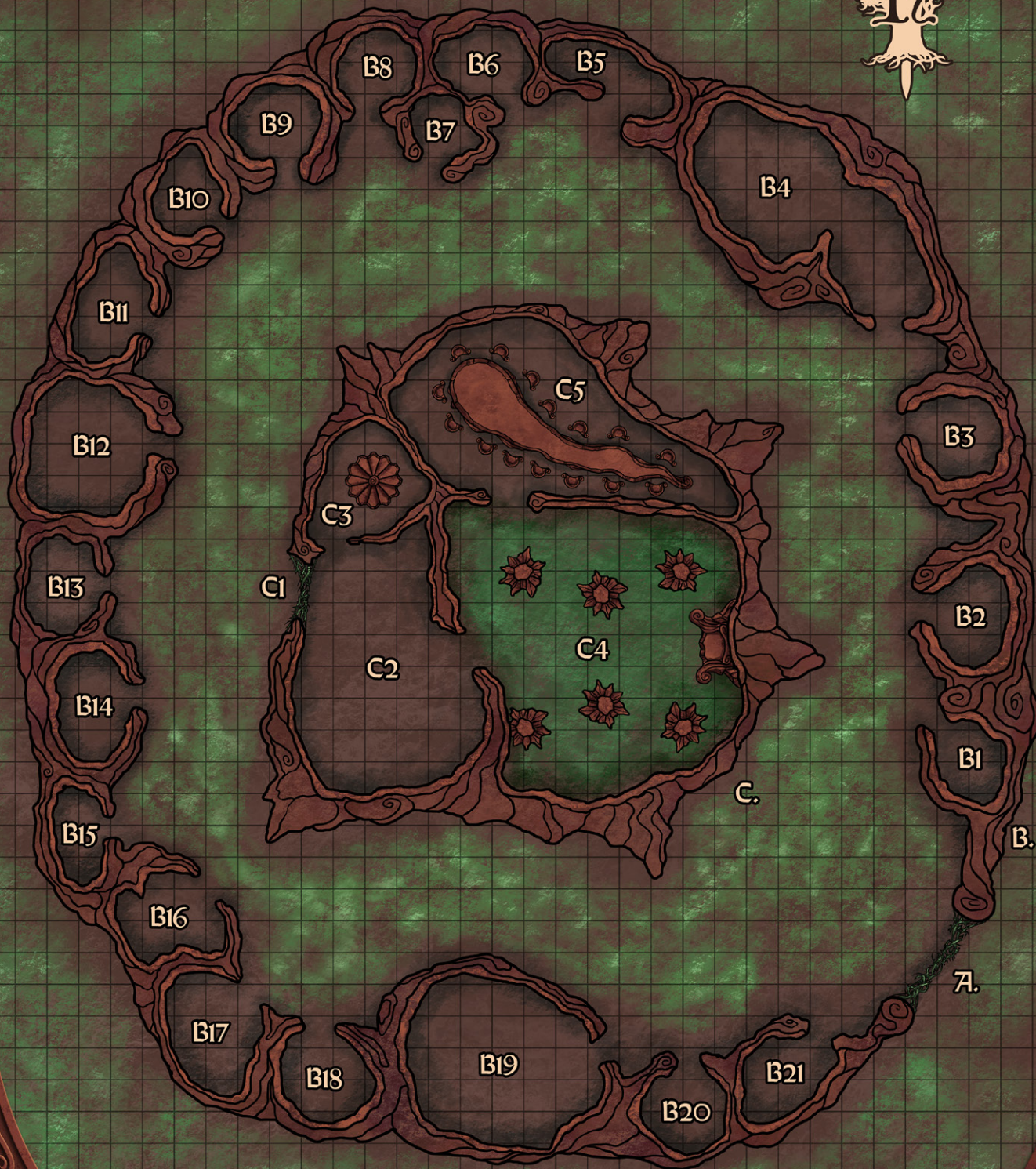
Another likely tactic that clever drow might employ is changing their appearance to look like elves. After all, they speak the same mother tongue and possess the same build. With spells as simple as disguise self, the drow could easily assume the form of elves.

The patrol will be wary of outsiders, even elven ones. Still a successful DC 20 Bluff check and a plausible story (perhaps the PCs are adventurers who’ve been hunting drow and got lost; that would actually be a plausible lie because it would explain away any strange equipment they’re carrying) will cause patrol leader to take them back to the huntmistress for introductions. That will be the real test. If the PCs can deceive her (Bluff vs. Sense Motive checks are appropriate, adjust the difficulty based on the coherence of their lies), then they will become guests in Lothellain and will be put up in the guest quarters (B6-B8).

Now the drow are inside. They can learn the secret of the Living Gate (see below) and learn the strength of the guards. They could assassinate the huntmistress and signal their army to attack as they inflict maximum chaos and carnage on their foes. The details of their schemes should of course be left up to the PCs. But be prepared to let your Overlords frolic. These are the only surface elves in this adventure path after all.

Lothellain

□ = 10 ft.



Level 3



Level 2



SPEAKING WITH THE HUNTMISTRESS

Aya Gellain currently and for the last three hundred years has held the title of Huntmistress of Lothellain. She is the closest thing that the free-willed elves of this colony has to a leader and her word is greatly respected. That said, Aya is no diplomat. She is a creature of the woods as much as any deer or hunting cat. She is often quite gruff, especially to outsiders.

By most standards, she is quite beautiful. Her hair is long and lustrous like ebony. Her gaze is intense and full of memory. She bears an obviously magical bow that bears the name Rîn Gwaith (lit. Memory of Shadow). It may seem surprising that an elf would bear an elf-bane weapon, but the reason for it is simple. Lothellain has been attacked by drow before and the most sacred charge of any who bears the title Huntmistress is to see that is defended against these most hated of enemies.

As a result, the best way for dwarves to gain her friendship is to mention that they've slain drow. In fact, by this point of the campaign the dwarves have almost certainly destroyed an entire outpost of drow (Vothys). Mentioning this and providing some proof of this (the mithral and ruby pendant of House Sevastia worn by the baroness would do nicely) will immediately improve her relationship to friendly.

For drow, there is no way to openly approach the Huntmistress without combat. Every word they say is a lie. Every action they propose is a plot. Every deed they do is designed to bring misery to her people. The motto "the only good drow is a dead drow" is a sentiment Aya Gellain would readily agree to.

If Explorers are rude or threatening and manage to anger the Huntmistress, they could very well find themselves robbed. It may seem surprising, but for all of their noble pretensions, the elves of Lothellain during their history have not been above some banditry against those who dare to enter their woods unbidden. Their obvious valuables will be collected (not their food, water, clothing or survival gear) and they will be unceremoniously escorted back to the cave entrance and told to go back from whence they came.

If Explorers can manage to be at least somewhat diplomatic, the elves can be of great use. Caravans from human cities do come through here from time to time. The elves have barely cordial dealings with the humans and could become a critical connection from the PCs realm to the realms above. The implications of this are discussed in more detail below (in the section Trading with the Elves). But no trading is going to happen if the Huntmistress does not approve of it.

Aya Gellain, Huntmistress of Lothellain

CR 7

XP 3,200

Female Elf Ranger 8

CG Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +10; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +14

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 15, flat-footed 18 (+5 armor, +1 deflection, +4 Dex, +2 natural)

hp 62 (8d10+14)

Fort +8, **Ref** +13, **Will** +6; +2 vs. enchantments

Immune sleep; **Resist** fire 10

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk elven curve blade +15/+10 (1d10+1/18–20)

Ranged +1 *longbow* +15/+10 (1d8+1/x3)

Special Attacks favored enemy (animals +2, drow +4)

Ranger Spells Prepared (CL 5th; concentration +6)

2nd—*barkskin*, *cat's grace*

1st—*entangle*, *resist energy*

TACTICS

Before Combat She will cast *barkskin*, *cat's grace* and *resist energy* (fire). These spells are included in her statistics.

During Combat She prefers to fight from cover, leading with the entangle spell and then raining volleys of arrows on her opponents. She engages only if there is no other choice.

Morale The huntmistress will fight to the death to defend Lothellain.

Base Statistics

Without *barkskin*, *cat's grace*, and *resist energy*, the ranger's statistics are **Init** +8; **AC** 20, touch 15, flat-footed 16; **Ref** +11; **Melee** mwk elven curve blade +13/+8 (1d10+1/18–20); **Ranged** +1 *longbow* +13/+8 (1d8+1/x3); **Dex** 19; **CMD** +24; **Skills** Acrobatics +11, Ride +10, Stealth +14.

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 23, **Con** 12, **Int** 14, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +8/+3; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 26

Feats Combat Reflexes, Deadly Aim, Endurance, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +13, Climb +9, Heal +8, Knowledge (dungeoneering, geography) +6, Knowledge (nature) +8, Perception +14, Ride +12, Sense Motive +12, Stealth +16, Survival +12, Swim +7

Languages Common, Elven, Sylvan, Undercommon

SQ elven magic, favored terrain (forest +4, underground +2), hunter's bond (companions), swift tracker, track +4, weapon familiarity, wild empathy +7, woodland stride

Combat Gear potion of cure moderate wounds

Other Gear +1 *chain shirt*, +1 *elf bane longbow* (Memory of Shadow) with 20 arrows, masterwork elven curve blade, *cloak of resistance* +1, *ring of protection* +1, mithral pendant worth 150 gp, sapphire ring worth 500 gp, treasury key

Ultimately, the huntmistress judges everything by two standards: it is good for the forest and is it good for her people. If convinced that a proposition meets these two criteria, Aya is quite friendly. She has nothing against dwarves (though she finds them personally graceless). But she is suspicious of all outsiders.

Once her trust can be gained, Aya is a good friend. She sees any guest is well-treated and well-fed while they stay in Lothellain and she keeps any promise she makes with fierce devotion.

Story Award: If the PCs can make Aya an ally, award them XP as if they had defeated her (CR 7).

THE COLONY OF LOTHELLAIN

Lothellain is an elfen hunter's camp that has been here so long that it has become a permanent community with deep roots in the forest and a strong sense of identity. From a distance it appears to be nothing but a particularly dense copse of trees surrounding a giant tree. Only closer does its real nature become obvious. A great wall of wyitchwood trees have been purposely grown together to form a defensive battlement.

Beyond that is heart of the community - a great tree of unsurpassed size and unimaginable age. This is the sacred *Ghaladaer* (lit. the largest tree, pro. GAL-lad-dare) and the elves worship it and tend it as well as living with it. It is without a doubt one of the largest trees on this world, rising almost five hundred feet (almost twice as tall as the tallest sequoia in the real world).

A. THE LIVING GATE

On one side of the Wyitchwood Wall, there is a breach plugged by vines, briars and brambles. The elves get through this magical portal by holding one of the mithral pendants that all the officers and Aya Gellain wear and saying, in sylvan: "I came from the forest and to the forest I will return." This causes the portal to open only long enough to let the speaker and companions through.

The Living Gate

CR 10

Type magical; Perception n/a ; Disable Device DC 35

EFFECTS

Trigger Entering the 10 ft. by 30 ft. area of the gate; **Reset** none
Effect Anyone who tries to pass through the living gate is immediately effected by *black tentacles* (CL 12th; CMB=1d20+17; instead of black rubbery tentacles this spell uses grasping tree branches). The tentacles attempt to grapple the target and forbid them entry. Every round that the target spends in the gate, they are wrapped and strangled by animate thorn briars that do 6d6 (reflex DC 20 to half) piercing damage.

If forced, the gate is a deadly tangle that tries to suffocate and imprison intruders. It is green living branches, full of sap, so it is even hard to burn.

B. THE WYITCHWOOD WALL

A ring of wyitchwood trees surrounds the camp, manned by a dozen rangers who patrol its tops. At its thinnest point, the bark and hardwood is ten feet thick. In several places it is considerably thicker. The wall has a hardness of 10 and 1200 hit points to make a man-sized breach. So dense is the living wood that is very hard to burn, so the wall is not vulnerable to fire (i.e. it takes normal damage from fire attacks). The wall is not just a defensive structure. It is riddled with niches were the elves of Lothellain work and store their provisions. The wall is also where the elves quarter visitors.



Lothellain

CG small town

Corruption -4; **Crime** +0; **Economy** -2; **Law** +0; **Lore** +2; **Society** -2

Qualities Insular, Holy Site

Danger -5

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government a huntmaster or huntmistress chosen by community vote and a priest chosen by the tree loosely rule this colony

Population 286 (286 elves)

Notable NPCs

Huntmistress Aya Gellain (CG female elven ranger 8)

Arthyn Bryr, most veteran patrol leader (CG male elven ranger 5)

Master Bowyer Darius Dalvayn (CG male elven expert 6)

Priest Tavyn Gellain (CG male elven cleric 8)

Master Smith Tyra Mithrallia (CG female elven expert 6)

Master Trader Hestaria Jast (CN female elven expert 5)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 1,000 gp; **Purchase Limit** 5000 gp; **Spellcasting** 4th
Minor Items 3d4 items; **Medium Items** 1d6 items; **Major Items** –

There are no residences in the Wytchwood Wall. Instead, most of the elves live and sleep in the branches of the tree. These “residences” are little more than flat expanses of the tree limbs where the elves rest, relax and share their most intimate private time with one another. Life in Lothellain is a very spartan existence and yet the elves here seem very happy. Only a few elite elves have residences with the tree itself.

B1 MEATHOUSE

Game captured from the forest is slaughtered neatly just outside this chamber, its meat is prepared and stored here. The elves are incredibly proficient hunters and the meat storage here is huge. At any moment there are 1d6x1000 man days’ worth of meat.

B2 MEADERY

Elves gather honey from the forest and place it in finely made barrels to age and ferment. At any one time, there are 1d8x100 gallons of mead finishing here.

B3 BARREL ROOM

Once the mead is made, the barrels are moved over here and stored. 4d10 barrels containing ten gallons of mead are stored here.

B4 BOWYERS HALL

This is the workshop of the nearly legendary bowyers of Lothellain. A dozen craftsmen work within making longbows and arrows of the highest caliber.

B5 FLETCHER’S CHAMBER

This where the elves store their arrows. They are largely made in the Bowyer’s hall (B4) but here they are stored. There are thousands of arrows here.

B6 GUEST ROOM

This room is used to quarter guests to the colony.

B7 GUEST ROOM

As B6 above.

B8 GUEST ROOM

As B6 above.

B9 COOPERAGE

Here barrels are made to hold both mead and salted meat. These hold the trade goods that leave Lothellain.

B10 EMPTY CHAMBER

This chamber is currently unused.

B11 LUMBER STORAGE

Cut lumber is stored here.

B12 WOODWORKERS HALL

Woodworkers take fine hardwoods and make them into tools, musical instruments and art objects.

B13 HERBALIST STORAGE

Herbs gathered from the woods are stored here.

B14 CHILDREN’S HALL

Children play here watched by caretakers while parents work and patrol.

B15 METAL STORAGE

Metal is precious here and any unused scraps are stored here, waiting to be made useful in the smithy.

B16 ARMORER

Swords and armor are made here.

B17 SMITHY

The elves trade for iron and silver (and very rarely) mithral. And here, they fire a forge and shape the metal into whatever they may need.

B18 THE WELL

This chamber holds a well that supplies fresh water.

B19 WINTER FOOD STORAGE

This large chamber is filled with food both collected from the forest and traded with outsiders.

B20 TRADER’S REFUGE

Traders store their wares here while visiting.

B21 THE GUARD HOUSE

At any one time a dozen rangers and a patrol leader reside here, armed and alert, making sure that the colony is secure.

Elven Patrol Leader

CR 4

XP 1,200

hp 32 (see page 57)

Elven Rangers (12)

CR 3

XP 800 each (9,600 XP Total)

hp 26 (see page 57)

C. THE GREAT TREE

Inside the sacred *Ghaladaer* tree is the heart of life here in Lothellain. The chambers within are not cut from the tree. Instead, the tree has been slowly and patiently molded so that it has grown around this relatively hollow interior at its base.

LEVEL ONE

C1. THE HEARTWOOD PORTAL

This imposing door leading into the sacred tree itself is always guarded by two elven rangers. They grant entrance to no outsiders unless specifically commanded by Tavyn or Aya.

Elven Rangers (2) CR 3

XP 800 each (1,600 XP Total)

hp 26 (see page 57)

C2. GUARDROOM

This chamber is where off duty rangers congregate to discuss the state of the forest and report anything unusual they've discovered. As a result, a patrol leader and a dozen rangers are usually here in various states of preparedness.

Elven Patrol Leader CR 4

XP 1,200

hp 32 (see page 57)

Elven Rangers (12) CR 3

XP 800 each (9,600 XP Total)

hp 26 (see page 57)

C3. STAIRS UP

This set of spiral stairs leads up to higher within the tree. The stairs, like everything else, are not carved but seem to merely spring from the living tree itself. These stairs lead up to C6.

C4. THRONE ROOM OF THE GHALADAER

This great chamber is often confused by outsiders as being a throne room where no doubt the lord of the colony holds communion with her lessers. In fact, the elves have no lord as men or dwarves would understand such matters. The great chair that emerges from the living tree is their most sacred shrine. The priest-liaison (in this case Aya Gellain's brother Tavyn) sits upon the throne and listens to the primal, barely sentient thoughts of the great tree. He interprets these whispers and passes their wisdom to the community.

C5. THE HUNTMISTRESS' COUNCIL

This chamber is usually empty, holding only a great table and many chairs that seem to grow out of the living tree. This is where the Huntmistress and her officers meet to discuss the future of the colony. It is here that most important decisions are made. There is a finely made silver service (chalices and a decanter) here worth 650 gp.

Tavyn Gellain, Priest-Liaison to the sacred *Ghaladaer* CR 8

XP 6,400

Male Middle-aged Elf Druid (Treesinger) 8

NG Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +5; **Senses** low-light vision; **Perception** +19

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 12, flat-footed 22 (+6 armor, +1 deflection, +1 Dex, +5 natural)

hp 87 (8d8+48)

Fort +10, **Ref** +3, **Will** +14; +2 vs. enchantments, +4 vs. fey abilities

Immune sleep; **Resist** fire 10; **Weakness** vulnerable to fire

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk elven curve blade +7/+2 (1d10/18–20)

Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th; concentration +14)

7/day—*bramble armor*, *wooden fist*

Druid Spells Prepared (CL 8th; concentration +14)

4th—*arbooreal hammer*, *command plant*^P, *cure serious wounds* (2)

3rd—*burst of nettles* (2), *cure moderate wounds* (2), *plant growth*^P

2nd—*barkskin*^P, *bear's endurance*, *chill metal*, *owl's wisdom*, *resist energy*

1st—*cure light wounds* (2), *entangle*^P, *entangle*, *faerie fire*, *longstrider*

0th—*create water*, *detect magic*, *guidance*, *stabilize*

D Domain spell; Domain Plant

TACTICS

Before Combat Tavyn is connected to the *Ghaladaer* and knows immediately if there are enemies in Lothellain thanks to that connection. He goes to the throne (C4) and there casts *barkskin*, *bear's endurance*, *owl's wisdom*, *longstrider*, *resist energy* (fire) and summons two owlbeats using *summon nature's ally IV*. Finally, he uses *plant shape I* to assume to assume the form of a medium-sized sapling treant. Then he goes in search of Lothellain's enemies.

During Combat Tavyn is first and foremost a spellcaster and leaves melee to his owlbear and ranger allies. He casts *entangle* to ensnarl his foes and then *arbooreal hammer* causing the trees themselves attack his enemies. He then relies on *burst of nettles* and *chill metal* as backups.

Morale Tavyn fights to the death to defend his home and the sacred tree.

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 12, **Con** 18, **Int** 13, **Wis** 22, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +6/+1; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 18

Feats Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Natural Spell, Toughness

Skills Heal +15, Knowledge (nature) +12, Perception +17, Spellcraft +12, Survival +15

Languages Common, Elven, Sylvan

SQ bound to the *Ghaladaer*, elven magic, green empathy +9, plant bond, resist nature's lure, trackless step, weapon familiarity, wild shape (plants only 4/day), woodland stride

Combat Gear potion of cure moderate wounds

Other Gear +2 *hide armor*, masterwork elven curve blade, *cloak of resistance* +1, *ring of protection* +1, mithral pendant worth 150 gp, sapphire ring worth 500 gp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Bound to the *Ghaladaer* (Ex) Because of Tavyn's unique connection to this primal tree, he senses any obvious enemy with Lothellain. The *Ghaladaer* is neither omniscient nor psychic. It can only sense what is being done, not what an enemy will do. But if anyone is attacking elves in Lothellain, the *Ghaladaer* knows instantly and a round later, Tavyn knows. This ability also means that any summon nature's ally spell Tavyn cast in Lothellain last minutes per level instead of rounds per level.

Summoned Owlbeats (2) CR --

XP 0

hp 47 (see Pathfinder RPG Bestiary)

LEVEL TWO

C6. STAIRWELL

A spiral stairway continues here, leading down to C3 and up to C15.

C7. HALL OF THE REMEMBERED

This long interior hallway is adorned with countless elven names formed into the living wood. These are the names of every elf who has given their life in service to Lothellain.

C8. PATROL LEADER QUARTERS

Two of the patrol leaders live in this chamber. There is only one bed because they are a married couple. Beside typical bedroom furnishings, there are also 500 gp worth of fine silk elven clothing, silver finery and costly herbal cosmetics here.

C9. PATROL LEADER QUARTERS

As C8 above, but the patrol leaders here are unmarried.

C10. PATROL LEADER QUARTERS

As C8 above.

C11. GUARDPOST

A pair of rangers are stationed here, guarding the upper level and making sure all the needs of the Patrol Leaders who may be here off duty are attended to. Any outsiders who enter this level unattended are assumed to be up to no good and are arrested and immediately brought before the Huntmistress.

Elven Rangers (2) CR 3

XP 800 each (1,600 XP Total)

hp 26 (see page 57)

LEVEL THREE

C12. GUARDPOST AND HALL OF HONOR

Two guards are posted here preventing entrance into the Huntmistress' private quarters. Also arrayed here are trophies of previous victories of the rangers of Lothellain. Displayed here are:

A large-sized green dragon hide carefully preserved and mounted on the wall (worth 1200 gp) labelled "Virithian Spite, he would be king of the forest".

The helms and headgear from a dozen various bandit lords (mostly worthless though one boasts a large carnelian worth 200 gp) each labeled and pierced by arrowheads.

An obviously drow-made *mithral shirt +1*.

Elven Rangers (2) CR 3

XP 800 each (1,600 XP Total)

hp 26 (see page 57)

C13. QUARTERS OF THE PRIEST

These are the personal chambers of Tavyn Gellain, he is here resting usually in the evenings. Though well furnished, the chambers are spartan. What is here is a set of books that records the history of Lothellain. One is partially blank and still being written.

These books form an expansive history of the elves in these woods for the last thousand years and would be worth 250 gp to scholars concerned about such matters. No elf would buy them however, as they would be obviously stolen. Good-aligned elves would immediately become unfriendly if these books were in the hands of non-elves and seek to recover them.

There is also a small library of other lore and elvish poetry worth 100 gp.

C14. PRIVATE AUDIENCE CHAMBER

The Huntmistress of Lothellain holds small private meetings here and sometimes retreats here to merely contemplate the business of the colony. Besides the chair there is a beautiful mithral tea service here so masterfully crafted it is a wonder. It is worth 1000 gp and there is a selection of rare herbal teas worth 50 gp in their own right. Also formed into the wall here are the names of every Huntmaster and Huntmistress of Lothellain (Aya is the 27th to bear that title).

C15. STAIRWELL

Spiral stairs here lead down to C6.

C16. ARMORY OF LOTHELLAIN

This is where the elves of Lothellain store their weapons and armor they are not currently using. It is also the entryway to the personal quarters of the Huntmistress (C17). This is intentional. It was hoped that by seeing the gear of fallen friends every day, that the Huntmistress or Huntmaster of Lothellain would be daily reminded of the terrible cost of war.

C17. AYA GELLAIN'S PERSONAL QUARTERS

The chambers of the Huntmistress of Lothellain are elegantly decorated with fine hardwoods and beautiful silver fixtures. There is finery, silk clothing, perfumes other fixtures worth 1000 gp here. Aya herself is only rarely here (she rests but a few hours a day) and the business of the colony gives her little time for leisure.

Several pieces of art are on display here. There is a masterwork harp (worth 400 gp) and few small wooden carvings (worth 100 gp all together), but the center piece of the collection is a pair of statuettes of a nude female and male elf rendered in mithral that is a stunning work of art. The pieces individually are worth 2000 gp, but together they seem almost to embrace and are worth 5000 gp.

C18. TREASURY OF LOTHELLAIN

This is where the wealth of Lothellain is stored. In five great banded ironwood chests, the wealth of the elves lies secure. The chest are locked with superior locks (DC 40) but the huntmistress has the key which unlocks them.

Chest #1: Within are blocks of the rarest of rare woods – amberwood burl, sometimes known by wizards as wandwood. The elves never harvest these sacred trees (which sometimes awaken as treants). But some trees die of natural causes and the elves collect this wood from those, carefully treat it and store it. It is so hard, dense and resinous that it looks almost like amber. It is amazing hard and holds magical enchantments with remarkable ease. This large chest holds 8,000 gp worth of this wood. The wood can be used as a component for any magical item made predominantly out of wood (so it could make 16,000 gp worth of magic items if used properly).

Chest #2: This chest holds 10,850 sp.

Chest #3: This chest holds 7,3040 gp.

Chest #4: This chest holds various works of silver and mithral crafts – small statuettes, silverware, platters, goblets, candelabra, and so forth. All told this is worth 8,300 gp.

Chest #5: This chest contains 40 *potions of cure light wounds*, 20 *potions of cure moderate wounds* and 5 *potions of cure serious wounds*. The potions are all carefully wrapped and labelled in elvish. There is also a *lyre of building* in this chest. It is obviously of dwarven make.

The elves received it in trade from desperate refugees who fled the underworld centuries ago. They've never used it (stone buildings are not exactly their focus). If PC dwarves establish friendly relations with the elves of Lothellain and prove their trustworthiness, then the Huntmistress will give them this as a gift at some appropriate time.

TALKING AND TRADING WITH THE ELVES

For Explorers, relations with the elves of Lothellain are almost certain to be a problem. The elves do not trust outsiders under the best of circumstances and a pack of hard fighting dwarves who've just survived the Earth's Wound are unlikely to return the favor. Dwarves wandering the elven forest will probably not treat the woods with the respect the elves feel it deserves. The chaotic elves on the other hand have no appreciation for dwarven hierarchy and may treat nobility rudely. Cultural misunderstandings are likely almost to the point of being inevitable.

For example, logging the elven forest near the surface exit counts as a resource for an underground empire (see Appendix One for details about what this means). The hard woods fetch high prices with underground merchants and are much in demand. However, the elves consider these woods their territory. They are not going to appreciate such operations. For the dwarves, this anger is all but inexplicable. There are trees literally everywhere for hundreds of miles in every direction. How can the elves begrudge them one small grove?

Despite these differences, it is in the dwarves interest to make friends with the elves. The elves are a reliable source of surface goods. Merchants from human towns and cities come to them every few months to trade all manner of goods. Once these dwarves learn that there are dwarves near Lothellain they will begin bringing wagons full of goods to meet their needs. And Lothellain is a fine place to meet and trade, if the elves will allow it.

In the end, if the dwarves manage to reign in their worst behavior and treat the elves politely and their woods respectfully, there is no reason they can't be friends. Aya Gellain is no fool. Having a dwarven kingdom guarding the entrance to the underworld is a far superior option to leaving it wild and unguarded. Any drow raiders will have to go through the dwarves and the huntmistress considers that nothing but a good thing.

Aya can be convinced to acquiesce to several demands. For example, logging is unacceptable, but the gathering of dead wood is allowable. That dead wood will still produce enough lumber to count as a resource for the dwarven kingdom. The elves greatly value mithral and currently have no reliable source for the rare metal. The dwarves could change that if they recapture and repair the Zaraketh Mine (see Act Four for details).

But there is always the possibility things don't work out. Rudeness and mistrust could win the day. If this occurs and the huntmistress ever becomes unfriendly to the dwarves, Aya Gellain banishes the dwarves from the woods under pain of death. If the living fossil at the exit has been destroyed, it may be quickly replaced by elven guards ordered to keep the dwarves at away and out of the woods.

And if conflict does come to blows, the elves have allies. Lothellain is only one of the elven communities in these woods. They could call upon their neighbors to provide additional patrols. Soon these woods could be crawling with elven patrols, each eager to collect dwarven heads.

OVERLORDS: THE SACK OF LOTHELLAIN

For Overlords, Lothellain is an appealing target full of riches to seize and slaves to claim. Trying to negotiate with the elves is a fool's errand. There is far too much history and bad blood between drow and elf. Now there can only be war.

Lothellain's standing defense force is its rangers and there are about a hundred of them at any one time and six patrol captains. Two patrols are always out tending the forest, hunting for game and making sure its borders are not violated. That leaves about 80 fighting men (76 rangers and 4 patrol leaders) plus Aya and Tavyn to defend Lothellain.

If Lothellain is unalerted to the PCs, it is very possible that even a small group of PCs attackers could defeat the defenders of the colony. In a straight fight that is roughly a CR 16 encounter (plus with their wall and magic gate, maybe closer to CR 18). This is almost certainly too much for the PCs to handle by themselves. However, if the PCs have managed to build an army, this Lothellain is very vulnerable to a well-planned raid.

This battle should be run in five stages.

STAGE ONE: RECONNAISSANCE

First the PCs must locate Lothellain. Ideally this stage would also involve getting into town to scout its defenses and leaving undetected with the elves of Lothellain none the wiser about the drow threat. If the PCs defeat the elven patrol (see above), they can torture a captive for the location of Lothellain or use spells such as *charm person* or *speak with dead*. Either way, it should not be hard to locate the colony.

Then they can either use stealth, deception or magic to gather information about the interior of the colony. Of the three, magic might be the easiest. *Arcane eye* can easily scout the elven colony. There is a problem with this method. The great tree can sense when it is scryed and will alert its liaison, Tavyn. This puts the colony on alert for a week, even though they will have no specifics about the threat that faces them.

Deception is also not hard and less likely to raise the alarm. The elves trade with outsiders from time to time. Pretending to be a surface caravan (using spells like *disguise self*) can be easily enough done. The PCs can even ambush a real caravan if they are truly clever. The danger with deception is if it fails. The PCs may find themselves prisoners at the mercy of the elves and towards the drow, the elves have no mercy. The elves will assume the drow are scouts for a larger force, be on guard for three months, and at the first light of the next morning burn all the drow at the stake.

Stealth is trickier but with spells like *invisibility*, the PCs can follow a trading caravan through the Living Gate. Once inside, they can scout the place, discover its defenses and then leave, returning with an army.

Story Award: If the PCs scout Lothellain adequately using whatever method, award them a CR 6 (2,400 XP) reward.

STAGE TWO: THE APPROACH

Once the PCs have located and scouted the colony, they must gather their forces and plan their attack. This is easily enough done. It is twenty miles from Lothellain to the entrance to the underworld. That is too far to do in a single night. However, the hills in the forest are riddled with small caves and the PCs can find one merely an hour away. Now all they must do is hide their force for a night to maximize their surprise when the raid comes.

If the elves are not on alert, this is easily done. If they are, the PCs must make a Stealth check for whatever band they travel with as patrols are increased and much more vigilant. Illusion magic to cover cave entrances or *pass without trace* could be of great use here. The elves know the caves near Lothellain and know that the drow hate daylight. If the PCs are not careful, they may face a daylight attack by an elven patrol (see statistics above).

Story Award: If the PCs get an assault force to Lothellain undetected award them a CR 6 (2,400 XP) reward.

STAGE THREE: STORM THE GATE

At last the night of the raid! The PCs themselves must win the gate. Minions and lackeys sent to do the task merely fail. If the PCs have been clever, they may have a mithral pendant and know password. If the elves have been alerted to danger, they change the password to "Though the darkness is near, we are ever watchful" (in elvish). If not, they must overcome the trap while a dozen elven rangers fire arrows at them.

If the PCs are attacking with a force of at least a hundred drow soldiers, the soldiers succeed at keeping most of the rangers busy. Only three fire arrows at the PCs as they breach the wall. If the PCs are attacking with less than a hundred but more than fifty, six rangers defend the gate. And less than fifty (but they still have help from soldiers) means that eight rangers shower arrows down on them. Once through the gate, the PCs immediately fight a battle with a patrol leader and twelve rangers (a CR 10 battle). With that victory they have won the gate. But the battle is not over.

Story Award: If the PCs get past the gate with the password award them a CR 10 (9,600 XP) reward.

STAGE FOUR: THE HUNTMISTRESS' CHARGE

Immediately after the PCs win the gate, they are attacked by a second wave of elves led the Huntmistress, two patrol leaders and nine rangers (a CR 11 fight). This battle happens in the courtyard of Lothellain, but outside the sacred *Ghaladaer*.

If the PCs have brought a hundred soldiers or more with them, they receive aid from ten soldiers (use the stats for Vothys guards, Book One, pg. 77). More than fifty, five soldiers aid them. Less than fifty, they are on their own against the Huntmistress' vanguard.

STAGE FIVE: THE PRIEST'S LAST STAND.

After the Huntmistress is slain, the PCs must take the *Ghaladaer*. In the guardroom (C2) they meet Tavyn Gellain, two patrol leaders and thirteen rangers (a CR 12 fight). Tavyn has had time to cast his full complement of spells, so he has summoned two owlbeats as well. Any drow soldiers with the PCs who survived the Huntmistress' charge are still with them. This is the final battle. Whoever wins this fight, owns Lothellain.

If the PCs catch the elves off guard, then all the rangers and patrol leaders do not have time to don their chain shirts. Lower their AC by 5 (leaders) or 4 (rangers). The Huntmistress and Tavyn have already donned their armor. Their statistics are unchanged.

If the elves are alerted before the battle begins and are given at least three days warning, not only are the rangers armored, they call for reinforcements. Lothellain is not the only elven colony in the elven woods, but it is the only one easily accessible from the underworld exit. To represent these reinforcements, add two rangers to the huntmistress' charge and one patrol leader to the priest's last stand. These additional troops are worth no XP since they are only here because of the PCs folly.

VICTORY OVER THE LIGHT

If the PCs win, they likely cannot hold Lothellain for long. Elves will soon gather in great numbers and retake the walls with a daylight attack. The *Ghaladaer* is actually part of a network of elven trees and so word of this disastrous defeat soon gets out. But who cares about holding this big damn tree? The PCs are here to raid, not settle down.

The PCs can not only loot the whole place (their army will expect half of the treasure seized or they might get mutinous), Overlords gain 20 BP (for their kingdom from all the stores) and 100+1d100 elven slaves. These slaves are a real treasure. In the slave markets of Taaryssia, they would be worth a true fortune.

Perhaps even more importantly, if the PCs march these slaves to that drow stronghold, they are a guaranteed key into the city. The noble houses of the City Without Mercy would never refuse entry to a slave caravan bearing more than a hundred surface elves destined for the auction block. There are more details about Taaryssia and its vile slave markets in Book Four.

The PCs can also, while they hold Lothellain, slay the *Ghaladaer*. Doing this is a permanent blow to the elves. The *Ghaladaer* is their heritage and their hope. Still, it is a very *big* tree. How are the PCs going to destroy it? There is the brute force method: a hundred drow plus a hundred axes plus two hours equals one felled mountainous tree. There is the magic method. Spells like *defoliate* or *diminish plants* will weaken the tree. Spells like *fireball* or *chain lightning* will greatly damage the tree and set it ablaze. And then there is the evil method. Tavyn is bound to the *Ghaladaer*. Killing Tavyn will not slay the tree, but through Tavyn they can learn its secrets. The throne (see C4) is the heart and soul of the *Ghaladaer*. A powerful necromantic spell (4th level and above) cast directly upon the throne while Tavyn's heart is sacrificed to a demon will permanently slays the tree. It may survive fire. It may endure the axe. But this is the end of the *Ghaladaer*. Of course, Tavyn would die before he discloses this.

HANDLING SLAVERY

Slavery, the trafficking in human misery, is nothing to make light about. And so if you're going to introduce it as a plot element in your campaign, you should probably stop and think twice about it. No one knows your group better than you. Is this stepping over the line? Is this going too far?

If the answer is yes, then you can handle the situation by completely skipping details about what is going on in Lothellain. The captured elven colony is simply imparts a +2 bonus to the kingdom's economy. No more exposition is needed than that.

If even that is too much, then just have enemies fight to the death and make taking prisoners all but impossible. The drow are so feared and hated, that death is seen as preferable to the horrors of being their slave. And thus you have removed this potentially thorny topic from your game.

ACT FOUR: THE MINE

This is the where the second book reaches its climax. It here that the mission that Explorer's have been pursuing since Day One of this adventure path at last makes real progress. Hidden within this mine is nothing less than a map to Dammerhall.

For Overlords, there is great potential here as well. Up to this point, they have had no real chance at gaining revenge against those who banished them. Their fledgling empire continues to exist only because the city-state of Taaryssia does not know (or care) of their existence. But in the treasure halls of the High King of Dammerhall, there lies the legendary wealth of the dwarves. And with wealth like that they could raise an army.

So, success here is not optional. The PCs must explore these mines and gain their secrets or see their goals forever stand out of reach. Of course, the importance of this place may not be obvious at first. It may seem that this is just another happenstance place of interest the PCs discover as they explore the Earth's Wound.

There is no reason to dissuade the players of this belief, at least initially. Let them discover gradually the importance of this place. As they begin to realize what the Zaraketh Mine is, how it was founded and why it was abandoned they will come to understand that this place is key to their quest.

And there is more than merely a map in this mine. There are also the first hints of a dwarven prophecy about the return of the High King to Dammerhall (located in the mural chamber 1-22 below) and what it takes to truly reclaim that lost city. For now, this is only foreshadowing and hints. This will be expanded upon in Book Three of Throne of Night. But be aware, the discovery should be an important moment.

As the dwarves read the prophetic words, carved many years ago by a humble stonecutter, they should find parallel in their own adventures. The prophecy predicts that one day Dammerhall would wither and be destroyed not from without but from within and that sorrow and darkness would threaten to consume the dwarves. But then, when the darkest seemed triumphant, one would arise who could rightfully claim the title of High King once more. This dwarf would slay a dragon, rediscover the city of Dammerhall, break its seals and in time give birth to a new dwarven nation. It should be a powerful moment for the dwarves. It is the first ray of real hope that their quest is not in vain and that destiny shines upon them.

And what of the Overlords? What will they make of this prophecy? No doubt it is easy enough to imagine their mocking laughter at such naiveté. Empires are not won on the words of prophets, they might explain. Empires are won with power and gold. And lost Dammerhall is rich in both, even now.

THE EXTERIOR OF THE MINE

The mine is not in any way concealed. Its face is constructed of three massive blocks of stone cut with inestimable dwarven precision. The blocks themselves are covered in knotwork and even the occasional warn dwarven inscription (all now illegible). A causeway of piled stone rises up to meets its entrance and so it can be seen for miles away. Therefore no Perception test is required to discover the mine. If the PCs enter the hex, they discover the Mines of Zaraketh.

At first, they are likely to be underwhelmed. Save for the entrance itself, there is almost nothing left exterior to the mine. Various prehistoric beasts, the ever encroaching orchid jungle and even a natural wildfire several decades ago have destroyed the surface camp utterly.

Searching amongst the ashes will reveal minor dwarven artifacts (bits of pottery with dwarven script, busted iron tools with a crudely etched rune) that hint that once there was a sizeable dwarven settlement outside this mine. What the artifacts do not reveal is why it is no more.

What is a mercy is that there appears to be no substantial seismic or geothermal activity in the area. It must almost seem a luxury that here the earth is calm and cool. After fighting their way through geyser fields and possibly a redoubt full of fire and earth elementals, the PC can take some comfort in the fact that such beasts do not make the mines their lair.

Alas, that does not mean it is uninhabited. A DC 15 Survival skill check reveals tracks and plenty of them entering and leaving the mine. They are from small creatures that walk occasionally on four legs, sometimes on two and have large hooked feet. These from the tribe of velociraptors that make the upper halls their lair (see 1-7 and 1-8 below).

A DC 25 result on that same roll will be able to pick up that there is one amongst this hunting pack who is larger, more robust and much preened over by the rest of his disciples. This is the velociraptor alpha, "Blackfeathers" (also detailed below).

Other than these few traces, there is nothing else on the surface. Certainly there is nothing stopping the PCs from entering and beginning their explorations.



THE EARTH'S WOUND

THE MINES OF ZARAKETH LEVEL 1

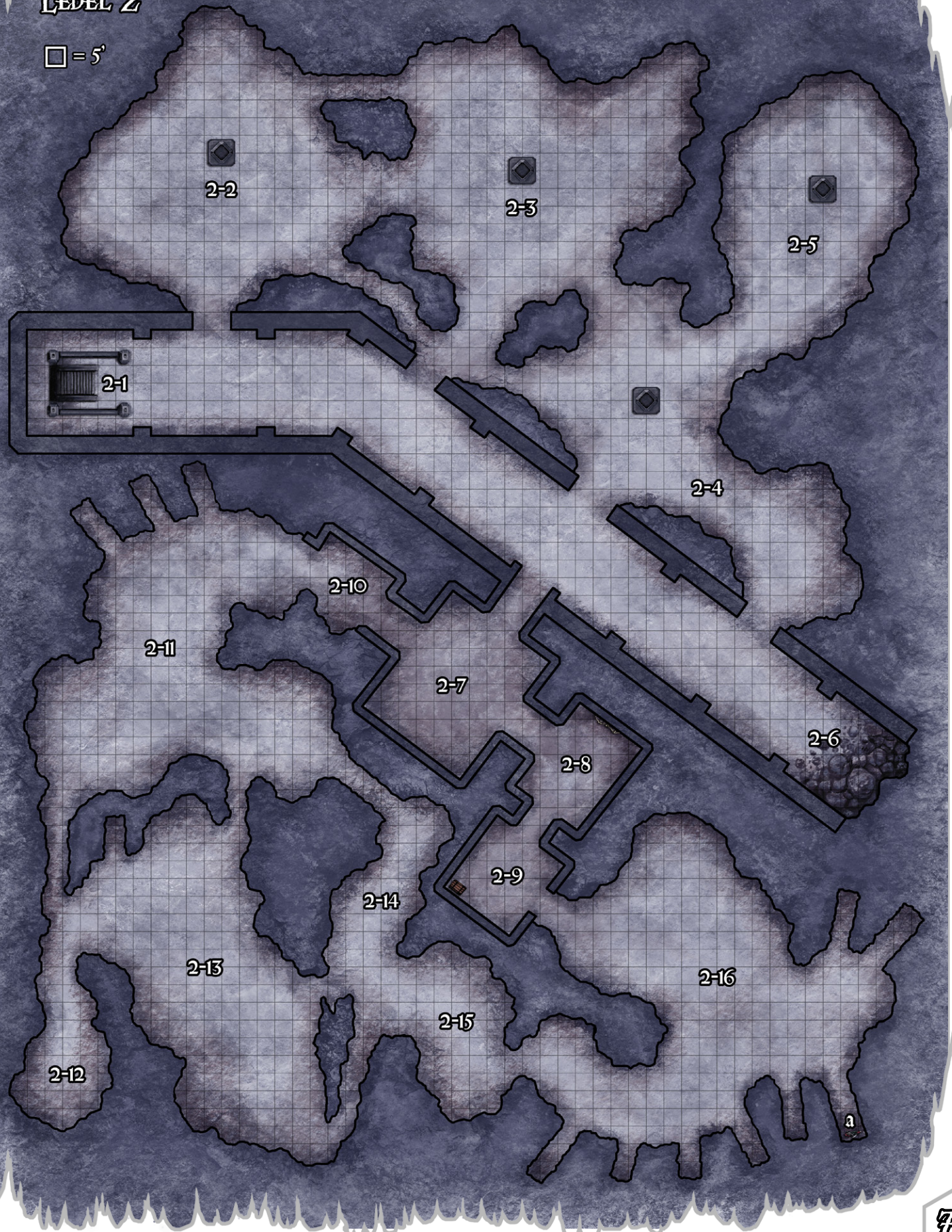
□ = 5'





LEVEL 2

□ = 5'



HISTORY OF THE ZARAKETH MINE

Three hundred years, a century before Dammerhall fell, Horath Rocknose found the Earth's Wound. The dwarves had known about the place from stories and legends, but had never truly investigated the place. Horath Rocknose was leading a dwarven mining expedition and his brilliant notion was to no longer prospect for mithral and gems in the mountains and hills near the capital (most of which were long played out) but to seek valuable strikes deep within the earth.

Many thought the prospector mad, but he was convincing enough that he managed to get funding from one of Dammerhall's most venerable and respected companies – the nearly legendary Zaraketh Mining Consortium (sometimes just the ZMC). For almost a year, his expedition trudged through the depths finding little except poor veins of silver and deadly monsters. Finally, just when the men were about to abandon Horath and return back to the ZMC to report their failure – pay dirt! There in the side of the Earth's Wound rift they found as rich a vein of mithral ore as anyone had seen in centuries.

A mine was established immediately and the dwarves sent back the good news to Dammerhall. For a century, the Zaraketh Mine dug deep into the side of this lost world and vast amounts of good quality mithral were extracted. The Mine became one of the ZMC's crown jewels. It made Horath Rocknose a legend and one of the richest common dwarves in Dammerhall. And with the profits, the ZMC became the largest most successful consortium in the capital. It was estimated that roughly 10% of the mithral that had ever been found in the entire history of the dwarven nation came from that one mine. The dwarves were so wealthy and prosperous that even the drow gave them a wide berth and the mine continued its work.

Over the century, the mine grew. It stopped being only a mine and became almost a small town. There weren't just miners anymore here. There were innkeepers and bartenders, tailors and shoemakers, bakers and cooks. The miners who worked here brought their families and built a shrine to praise Father Mountain's generosity.

A small palisade was built at the entrance complete with buildings made of jungle wood and mined stone. There was a caravanserai where traders and drovers could rest and resupply as their wagons were laden with ingots of precious mithral. The Zaraketh Mine was no longer an obscure outpost far from civilization. This mine was on its way to becoming a prosperous town of its own. At its height, more than two thousand dwarves lived in and around this mine.

Finally after a century of intensive excavation, the mine's output began to dwindle. The dwarves continued to dig exploratory veins and some promising side veins of mithral were discovered. But before they could be exploited, word reached the encampment of the catastrophic destruction of Dammerhall. The miners and their families were thrown into chaos.

It was quickly decided to abandon the mine and travel back to Dammerhall to see if survivors could be found. In a single day, the mine was packed up and every dwarf miner began the march back to the capital. It was a grim journey. No one knew what they would find back at the capital, but if rumors were true they were marching towards a city of the dead.

The entire enterprise was a disaster. The whole effort was a waste. Dammerhall was utterly destroyed. No survivors were located and when they came back, hoping to find refuge on the surface, they were ambushed by opportunistic drow raiders. No dwarf survived that doomed expedition. And so the dwarves were gone from the Mine of Zaraketh.

The mine did not stay empty for long. Many beasts and sentients have made their way into the mine over the years. Some were destructive enough that evidence of their visit yet remains. Some visited without leaving a trace. For two hundred years, the mine has been ill kept and a place of monsters and outcasts.

These days, the mine has become the home to two major groups of tenants. A large pack of velociraptors claims the upper levels as their den. They venture out to hunt in the orchid forests and then return here to breed and take shelter and to share kills. These beasts operate like a pack of wolves. Their alpha is a particularly large and brutal raptor called Blackfeathers, because of his dark corvine plumage.

The second group is more sinister still. A sabosan cult of demon-bat worshippers has transformed the lower halls into their temple. They practice their bloody rituals there and prowl the Earth's Wound eager for living sacrifices. Their cult is small but dangerous and they inadvertently guard a great secret.

You see when the dwarven miners fled the mine, much was left behind. There was no time for careful consideration. The dwarves were distracted by news of black fire and lost loved-ones. One thing that was left behind was the secret of how to get to Dammerhall from the Zaraketh Mine. It lies now in a sealed temple still consecrated to Father Mountain that neither beast nor bandit has been able to penetrate in two hundred years of ransacking. Now it is the PCs turn. Will they succeed where others have failed?



LEVEL 1

1-1 THE ENTRANCE WAY

This is the entrance into the mine. It is illustrated on page 71. There is nothing here of any interest or value.

1-2 THE MAIN SHAFT

This giant passage was once the main vein of the mine. It is buttressed at regular thirty foot intervals. It is twenty foot tall and two hundred and fifty feet long. In truth, it doesn't even end there. The vein of mithral simply began to slope downward so the main shaft was shifted down a level (see 2-1 below).

Today the front of the main shaft is choked with creepers and leaves, but is otherwise empty. There is nothing here of any value or danger.

1-3 STAIRS DOWN

This is where the main passage shifts downward (and connects to 2-1 below). These stairs are made of solid stone and hewn by dwarven craftsman. Even after a century, they are still intact and in fine shape.

1-4 THE OVERSEER'S CHAMBER

Heavy stone double doors are the entryway to this chamber. There is a sign in dwarven that reads "Overseer's Chamber" and below that "Official Business Only". Though made of stone, they are so finely balanced and well-hinged that these doors open easily; or rather they would if they weren't currently locked.

The silver key that opened this lock is long gone. It left the mine centuries ago, was captured by drow and melted down to make some trinket. As a result, there is no extant key that opens this lock. Unfortunately the lock is both finely made and trapped to keep out intruders (once the mine's payroll was stored here).

The trap on the door was supposed to be non-lethal. An iron grate would swing down and trap the thieves in the door's alcove until guards arrived. Unfortunately the counterweight is now unbalanced and the iron grate has become a sort of primitive guillotine swinging and smashing anyone who disturbs the lock. The trap had been sprung some time ago, by the way, but recently the sabosan newcomers reset it, hoping it would keep more intelligent intruders away. Disabling the trap does not open the lock which trapped or not remains DC 30 to open.

The Overseer's Door CR 6

XP 2,400

Type mechanical; **Perception** 20 ; **Disable Device** DC 22

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** manual

Effect rusty iron gate (Atk +20 melee, 6d6 damage); multiple targets (all creatures in entrance, plus all adjacent creatures in hallway beyond)

Almost worse, beyond the trap there is only an empty office bare of any treasure or hint of what became of this place.

1-5 EMPTY MINE

This area is now empty and unused. Open to the elements, it is dusty, dirty and full of detritus. A great column in the center of the chamber reinforces the ceiling and ensures the mine remains stable despite the years and seismic activity. A single long exploratory shaft heads off to the north-east. At the far end, it has become an accidental trap.

The miners dug the shaft and then discovered interesting rock formation headed straight down. They made a fifty foot descending shaft straight down at the end of this small passage. Once the dig shaft was no longer needed, they filled its bottom with trash and put a stone plate over it to make sure the shaft was not dangerous. Over the years, the stone plate has worn away thanks to rain and drip water and anyone walking on it is going to cause a collapse. The rusty iron mine trash makes fairly effective spikes. And so the ever diligent dwarven engineers accidentally created a spiked pit trap (location 5A).

The Accidental Pit Trap

CR 8

XP 4,800

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

EFFECTS

Trigger walking on the last ; **Reset** none

Effect 50-ft.-deep pit (5d6 falling damage); pit spikes (Atk +15 melee, 1d4 spikes per target for 1d6+5 damage each); DC 20 Reflex avoids; multiple targets (all targets in a 5-ft.-square area)

1-6 A SIDE-CHAMBER

This is another empty portion of the mine. There would appear to be nothing here of any interest or value, but if the room is searched anyways have the PCs roll a Perception check. Whoever rolls the highest during the search finds a torn bit of parchment written in dwarven (at Location 6A). The parchment is in terrible condition, partially faded and about half is missing. It is written in dwarven and contains the following inscription:

"...nothing we can do about that. Anyways, what good would it do?[text missing]...decided to leave. After a century of solid mithral production, the Zaraketh Mine will be closed. We're going to Dammerhall to see if the stories are true and, if they are, if there are sur...[text missing]...the right thing to do. Only the gods know....[text missing]...I hope you return in the next few days and this letter finds you. Maybe you can catch up with us. I wish you luck, my brother. I pray that the messenger lied. I pray that the black fire he described is only some mad fantasy. But if it is not, dear brother, I fear that we have brought this on ourselves."

1-7 THE RAPTOR'S KILLING FIELD

The occupants of this room can be heard long before they are seen, for they are making no attempt at silence. A half dozen velociraptors, small dinosaurs about three feet tall covered in vibrant feathers that run the gamut from dingy white to muted browns and vibrant reds, has managed to take down an adult triceratops. They have collectively ripped the animal to pieces and have dragged about a quarter ton haunch of the animal where it has been lying for about two days.

Now the raw bleeding meat is covered in flies and a half-dozen younger member of the raptor tribe fight over the best bits. The raptors cry and preen amidst the gore and most of them are fairly soaked in old clot- ted blood. All in all, it is a horrific scene likely to turn the stomachs of the squeamish. Still, it works to the advantage of anyone who wants to exterminate these beasts and clear the mines. While they are distracted with their grisly feast, they are paying little attention to the outside world and suffer a -4 penalty to any per- ception checks they may need to make.

The disadvantage of all this is that if anyone inter- rupts these predators, they already are excited by the smell of blood and viscera. In short, they are ready for a fight. And any intruders will be attacked immediate- ly. Anyone slain by these beasts will join the meat pile.

A TRIBE OF RAPTOR'S?

The velociraptors encountered here serve the same function as a tribe of humanoids (such as goblins) in a normal dungeon crawl. They are pack of not terribly bright but deter- mined foes who can trouble the PCs repeat- edly. But how can this be? Aren't velociraptor simply dumb beasts?

The velociraptors that inhabit the Earth's Wound are actually very intelligent pack hunters, adept at both ambush tactics and cooperation. They are at least as intelligent as wolves, communicating at each other with cries and yips. They cooperate, they try to flank in combat and if there den is taken from them in battle, the survivors will regroup and try to ambush their attackers once more. Most of the tribe is out hunting. The dozen here are merely those currently in the lair. In short, feel free to emphasize their intelli- gence. Their only limitation is that they don't use weapons or tools.

Worse, if they are attacked and not slain quickly, they are not alone. There are a half dozen more rap- tors in the nearby den (1-8) plus the tribal alpha. The cry of alarm of their tribal brethren quickly summons help that arrives in two rounds. If the PCs fail to de- feat them all in five rounds, the ruckus will attract an- other wave who are resting in the southern mines (see 1-9 through 1-15 below). In short, the PCs may think they are fighting only a half-dozen velociraptors, but if they're not careful, they may end up fighting twenty adults plus the alpha. That is a dangerous battle in- deed!

Reward tactical play. The raptors are cunning op- ponents with a keen sense of smell, but they can be fooled and they can be frightened. If reinforcing rap- tors discover a half-dozen corpses of their fellow tribe- members (in particular the dead alpha) they will panic and flee the mines. While it is a temporary victory, the raptors will be back. They will gather hunting parties out in the orchid jungle and return to reclaim their den in twenty four hours.

If the killing floor is emptied of raptors and care- fully examined there is a veritable treasure trove of ivory here. Amongst all the carcasses, bones and vis- cera there is 12,000 gp in dinosaur horn and ivory that weighs half a ton (1000 lbs).

Azathyrrian Velociraptors (6)

CR 2

XP 600 each (3,600 XP total)

N Small animal

Init +7; Senses darkvision 120 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 14, flat-footed 12 (+3 Dex, +1 natural, +1 size)

hp 22 (3d8+9)

Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +3

Defensive Abilities evasion

OFFENSE

Speed 60 ft.

Melee bite +6 (1d4+1), 2 talons +6 (1d6+1/19-20)

Special Attacks leaping charge

TACTICS

During Combat The velociraptors use their leaping charge, slashing and scything with their teeth and talons.

Morale The raptors flee if half their number are slain.

STATISTICS

Str 13, Dex 17, Con 17, Int 3, Wis 14, Cha 14

Base Atk +2; CMB +2; CMD 15

Feats Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +11 (+23 when jumping), Perception +10, Stealth +15; Racial Modifiers +4 Acrobatics (+16 when jumping), +4 Perception, +4 Stealth

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Evasion (Ex) If a velociraptor makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, the beast instead takes no damage. A helpless velociraptor does not gain the benefit of evasion.

Leaping Charge (Ex) A velociraptor can jump while charging, allowing it to ignore difficult terrain when it charges. When a velociraptor makes a charge in this way, it deals double damage with its talons.



1-8 TRIBAL DEN

If 1-7 is where the raptors fight and feast, this is where the raptors sleep and socialize. The raptors have made a gigantic bed here. The floor is scattered with fur and twigs. Six raptors and “Blackfeathers,” a large raptor named for its inky corvine plumage, recline amidst the litter, resting and recuperating between hunts. These are the older members of the tribe, more veteran and more sedate than the hot-blooded youngsters who are making such a ruckus in the killing field.

In the back of the cavern sleeps “Blackfeathers,” master of the tribe. Even when counted amongst these cunning and capable hunters, “Blackfeathers” is a genius amongst his followers. He is so clever that over the years he has amassed a small pile of gold and silver treasures. In these restful moments, he looks at the shining objects and their beautiful presence seems to soothe the vicious alpha. It is doubtful the beast understands their value and he would never think to use them for trade, but there is something about these man-made items that intrigues the alpha.

“Blackfeathers”, Velociraptor Tribal Alpha **CR 4**

XP 1,200

Male dire azathyrrian velociraptor

N Medium animal

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., low-light vision, scent; **Perception** +13

DEFENSE

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

hp 56 (6d8+30)

Fort +10, **Ref** +10, **Will** +6

Defensive Abilities evasion

OFFENSE

Speed 70 ft.

Melee bite +10 (1d6+5), 2 talons +10 (1d8+5/19–20)

Special Attacks leaping charge

TACTICS

During Combat “Blackfeathers” fights similarly to his fellow raptors, only he is more intelligent and more willing to risk his tribesmen to ensure both victory and his own survival.

Morale “Blackfeathers” will flee to fight another day if reduced to 28 hp or less.

STATISTICS

Str 21, **Dex** 19, **Con** 21, **Int** 4, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 22

Feats Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (bite, talons)

Skills Acrobatics +14 (+26 when jumping), **Perception** +13, **Stealth** +18; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Acrobatics (+16 when jumping), +4 **Perception**, +4 **Stealth**

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Evasion (Ex) If a velociraptor makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, the beast instead takes no damage. A helpless velociraptor does not gain the benefit of evasion.

Leaping Charge (Ex) A velociraptor can jump while charging, allowing it to ignore difficult terrain when it charges. When a velociraptor makes a charge in this way, it deals double damage with its talons.

Azathyrrian Velociraptors (6) **CR 2**

XP 600 each (3,600 XP total)

hp 22 (see page 76)

The treasures consist of a few coins, rings, amulets, holy symbols, torques and necklaces. Most show at least some sign of having been gnawed upon. Still, all told there is 950 gp worth of gold and jewels here as well as a filthy *feychild* necklace.

But the true treasure of the tribe is kept near the rear of the cave, carefully covered in the warmest and softest of the furs. There are eight velociraptor eggs here, always guarded and always tended. These eggs were laid by three different females, but all share the same father. The brood of “Blackfeathers” slowly grows within these eggs and in a few weeks will hatch and replenish the tribe for years to come.

These eggs are valuable, though they will take years of care before they become full raptors. Still merchants who understand animal handling (such as drow caravans and gnomish traders on the way to Kladdenvalt) will pay 500 gp per egg. In a campaign with a long enough time frame, one of the eggs is larger and darker than the others. This egg will eventually hatch into a dire velociraptor and grow up in five years to have the same statistics as its sire. This is the true heir of “Blackfeathers”.

These eggs are also delicious, rich and creamy, and make an amazing omelet.

1-9 EMPTY MINE

This old long-played out section of the mine is supported by a great stone column that braces the ceiling against seismic activity. There is nothing here of any value or danger.

1-10 LARGE CHAMBER

This great chamber is identical to 1-9 above save that three raptors are here. They’ve caught and killed a baby greentail (see location T. above) and two are currently fighting over the corpse while a third watches. The beasts here are focused on their kill and easily caught off guard. The danger here is that if attacked by superior numbers, the third tries to flee. If allowed to escape, it returns with all surviving tribe members left alive on Level One, eager to deal with intruders.

Azathyrrian Velociraptors (3) **CR 2**

XP 600 each (1,800 XP total)

hp 22 (see page 76)

1-11 ROUGH HEWN MINE

This chamber is an empty mine, long emptied of any valuable ore. Instead, two young raptors are here hunting rats that have tunneled in through the soft earth.

Azathyrrian Velociraptors (2) **CR 2**

XP 600 each (1,200 XP total)

hp 22 (see page 76)



1-12 EMPTY MINE

At first glance, this chamber appears to be empty. But actually a single stealthy raptor is hiding here. It was hiding to lay in wait for a tasty rat or mouse. But when it smells intruders it tries to remain hidden and when they've passed, dashes off to alert the tribe.

Azathyrian Velociraptor

CR 2

XP 600

hp 22 (see page 76)

1-13 EMPTY MINE

See 1-9 above.

1-14 DWARVEN DIG

The dwarves dug small straight passages here seeking new mithral veins. Now the chamber has become the scene of a deadly drama. Two raptors have cornered a wounded drow hunting leopard from the orchid jungle in the eastern-most passage. If the leopard is saved and healed, it could become a faithful companion and will grow in time into a beast as large and as powerful as a dire tiger.

Azathyrian Velociraptors (2)

CR 2

XP 600 each (1,200 XP total)

hp 22 (see page 76)

Cornered Shaokyrri

CR 2

XP 600 each

hp 19, currently 5 hp (see page 53)

1-15 EMPTY MINE

This is an empty unbraced chamber.

1-16 THE WARDED DOOR

The heavy imposing door sports an intricate decorated handle and a protective seal crafted of mithral and sapphire surrounded by the runes for 'lightning lock' and 'blessed key'. This door dates from the earliest days of the mine's existence. Created by the first high priest of Father Mountain to tend to the flock at this mine, it has served as both a defensive measure and symbol of the god's presence in the leaves of his followers. Today it remains, even as the rest of the mine is raided and overrun, as inviolate as the day it was first hinged.

When the mine was abandoned, the door was sealed for the last time. The dwarves trusted that it would weather any invaders. So far their trust has not been ill-placed.

In order for this door to be opened, a sapphire holy symbol dedicated to Father Mountain must touch the seal. Only this act deactivates the potent magical trap and opens the superior quality lock. If the door is forced in any other way, then the protective seal activates and the entire hallway within thirty feet of the door fills with sheets of deadly blue lightning emanating from the sapphire.

To bypass the gate without a holy symbol requires both defeating the seal (DC 31 disable device check) and picking a superior DC 40 lock. Even after opening this warded door, trying to deface the seal by stealing the sapphire (worth 2000 gp) again activates this merciless trap.

The Warded Door

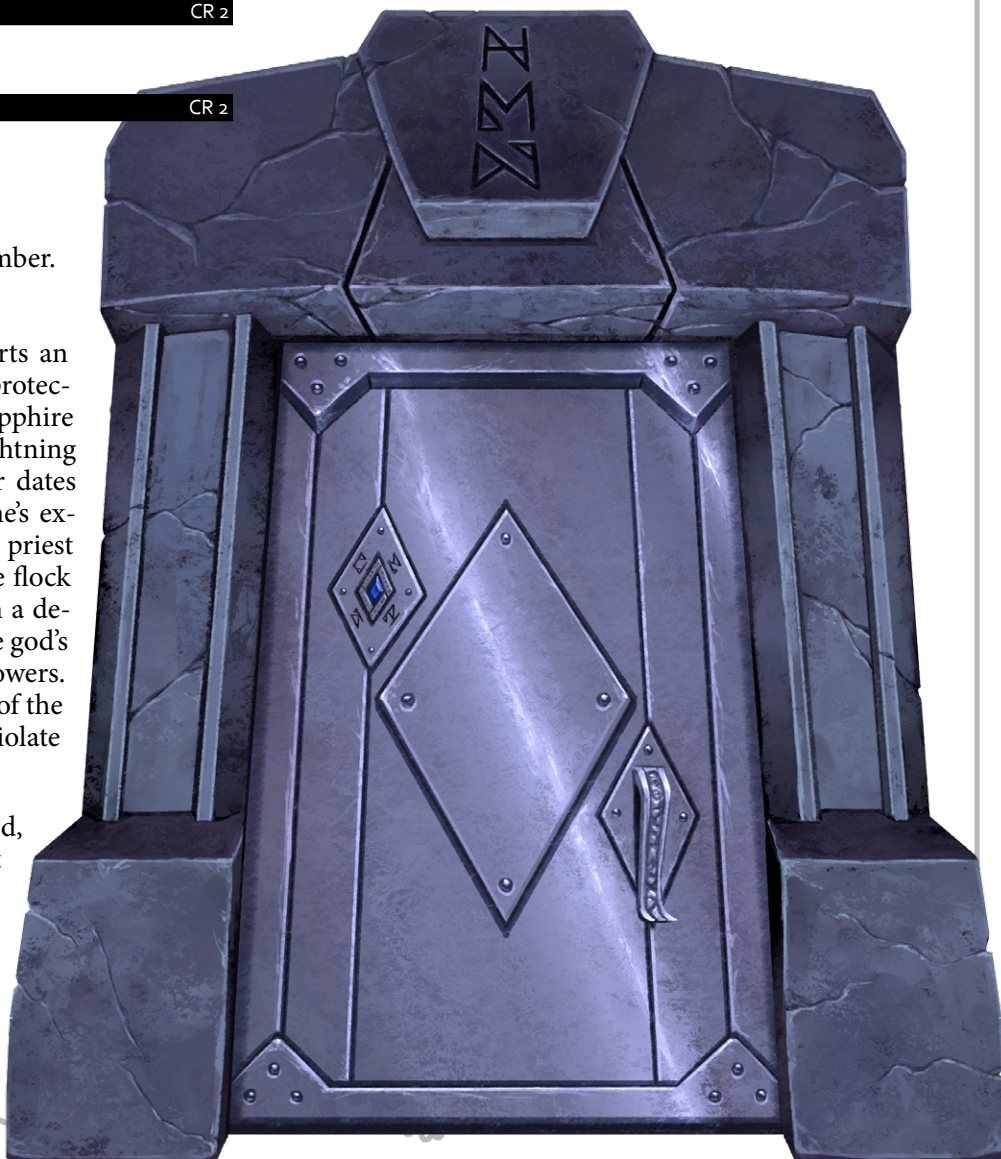
CR 9

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

EFFECTS

Trigger Trying to open the door without deactivating the seal; **Reset** automatic (1d6 rounds)

Effect spell effect (*chain lightning*, 18d6 to primary target, half damage to up to 18 secondary targets, DC 22 Reflex save for half); multiple targets (each must be within 30 ft. of the primary target)



1-17 THE SHRINE OF THE LOST

This chamber contains a small temple commemorating those who died working this mine. It has an imposing statue of the dwarven god of miners and the two side alcoves resemble a hammer and a pick's blade. There is a small altar that holds two items – a mithral bowl (worth 200 gp) holding 500 gp in fire opals and a dwarven helm of remarkable and obviously magical make that seems an odd thing to have left behind.

The helm is not a magic item per se. Instead it is a minor form of angel – a Cassisian Angel. It was left here behind the seal because it has also memorized the names and stories of every dwarf who died working Zaraketh as an eternal memorial to the lost. But it has also been to Dammerhall along the hidden underground road, making it a living map to the lost capital.

The helm is not a typical Cassisian. This is an angel in service to the dwarven gods. A Knowledge (planes) or Knowledge (religion) DC 20 will recognize the helm for what it is. The helm has a simple intelligence about it and will not knowingly aid evil. However, the helm is not omniscient and is easily deceived. An evil doer who conceals their alignment (with *undetectable alignment* for example), speaks dwarven and successfully bluffs this minor spirit will gain its aid. Even one found unworthy at first could use disguise magic to fool the helm later.



The helm speaks only when it has important information to impart. It does not bicker or chat. It speaks in dwarven in a deep resonating voice. It uses other languages only to curse those it has found unworthy. The first time it is worn by someone worthy, it spends approximately an hour reciting the litany of those who died within the mine and praying for their souls. After the litany is done if the wearer is neither evil nor was disrespectful it speaks: “Westward beyond the Wound”. This is the first step towards finding Dammerhall. More directions are detailed in Book Three.

Helm of Father Mountain CR 2

XP 600

NG Small outsider (angel, extraplanar, good)

Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., detect evil, low-light vision; Perception +5

Aura lesser protective aura

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 14 (+3 natural, +1 size) (+2 deflection vs. evil)

hp 13 (2d10+2)

Fort +4, **Ref** +3, **Will** +2; +4 vs. poison; +2 resistance vs. evil

DR 5/cold iron or evil; **Immune** acid, cold, petrification; **Resist** electricity 10, fire 10

OFFENSE

Speed fly 60 ft. (perfect)

Melee slam –1 (1d3–4)

Special Attacks breath weapon (15-ft. line, 1d6 cold or 1d6 fire, Reflex DC 12 half, usable every 1d4 rounds)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd; concentration +3)

Constant--detect evil, know direction

1/day--aid, daylight

1/week--commune (six questions, CL 12th)

TACTICS

During Combat The helm prefers to avoid combat, but if it must it uses its breath weapon and spell-like abilities to full effect.

Morale If forced to fight, the helm fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 3, **Dex** 11, **Con** 12, **Int** 6, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +2; **CMB** –3; **CMD** 7 (can't be tripped)

Feats Iron Will

Skills Diplomacy +2, Fly +10, Knowledge (planes) +2, Knowledge (religion) +2, Perception +5, Sense Motive +4, Stealth +8

Languages Celestial, Dwarven, Infernal; truespeech

SQ change shape (Small dwarf-like angel or dog, polymorph), perfect memory

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Perfect Memory (Ex) Though they are not particularly intelligent, cassisians have perfect memories and remember everything they see or hear. They can faultlessly recite conversations they heard hundreds of years before. They also have the power to erase portions of their own memories, which they do (usually under orders from superior angels) to protect sensitive information.

Lesser Protective Aura (Su) A cassisian has a lesser form of the protective aura possessed by more powerful angels. This protective aura grants the cassisian a +2 deflection bonus to its AC against evil foes, and a +2 resistance bonus on all saving throws made against evil effects or spells cast by evil creatures. This aura extends to a radius of 5 feet, but can only benefit one additional creature other than the cassisian at any one time. A cassisian's protective aura is fragile, and as soon as an evil creature successfully strikes the cassisian, or as soon as the cassisian fails a saving throw against an evil source, its protective aura fades away and is no longer applicable. The cassisian can reactivate its protective aura by spending 1 minute concentrating upon the task.

1-18 THE COMMONS

This worked area once served a communal meeting area for the common folk who tended the temple and worked the mine. It is now completely empty, having been abandoned with the doomed exodus to Dammerhall. However, there is a single inscription that has been hastily carved in the stone in dwarven: "Death or Dammerhall!"

Any dwarf and anyone who makes a Knowledge (local) DC 20 will recognize how unusual this inscription is. The dwarves worship stone, so such graffiti is rare. What it represents is a heart-felt sentiment expressed when there was no time for anything more formal.

1-19 OFFICER'S QUARTERS

Another area once densely populated, but now empty. There are still scuff marks upon the floor where once beds and chest must have once been. But it was long abandoned and emptied, packed into wagons.

There is one remaining artifact of those days. There is a fresco depicting Horath Rocknose, a grim looking dwarf wearing rugged armor holding a rune-covered greataxe. Inscription beneath the fresco reads (in dwarven): "The mine was his dream, his discovery and his key to immortality. He is forever a part of this place."

If the word "key" is pressed on the inscription, it reveals a small secret niche that contains a small mithral key (worth 100 gp). Noticing this niche requires a DC 35 Perception check to notice this small hidden feature. Simply pressing the word requires no check and is automatically successful.

1-20 WESTERN BARRACKS

A seemingly empty chamber, but with a successful DC 15 Perception roll, a silver coin is found. The silver piece is a Dammerhall hexagonal coin and bears a stylized image of the last high king holding his axe (as much a scepter as a weapon) and his crown and sash. A successful Knowledge (history) skill check (DC 20) will recognize these three items as the lost regalia of the High King of the dwarves.

One of the events that cast the dwarven people into such enduring chaos and uncertainty was the loss of these artifacts. They were not simply tokens of leadership. They were gifts given by the dwarven gods to mark the dwarves as their chosen people. They are part of what makes the dwarves special. All three were in Dammerhall when it was destroyed and this small silver piece is a reminder that they may be there yet.

1-21 EASTERN BARRACKS

An empty worked chamber.

1-22 THE MURAL CHAMBER

This empty chamber contains now only a single interesting feature – a great textured mural that dominates the entire southeastern wall. It is depicted on the next page and should be shown to the players. The mural is ringed with four inscriptions (in dwarven):

"Dragons are inevitable. Where there is greatness they are drawn to it, hungry to make it theirs."

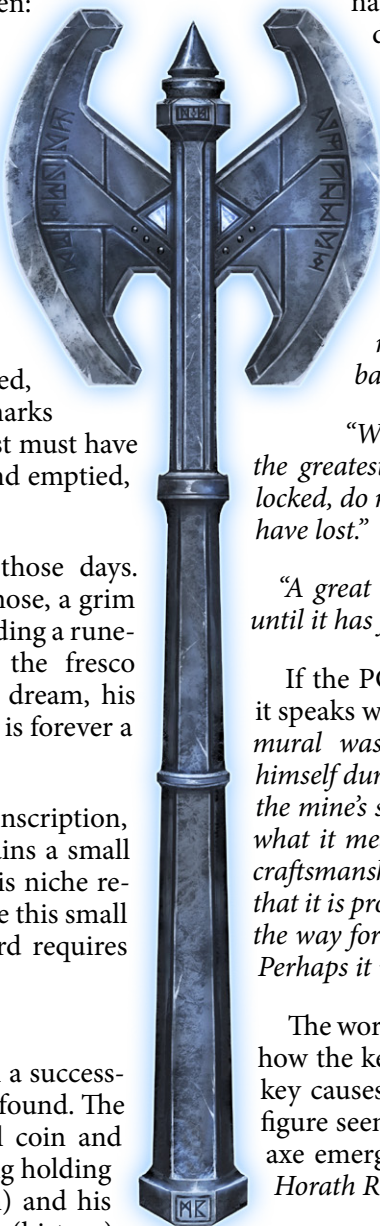
"We must not fear dragons, but we must also be ready. Arm yourself for the battle that is to come."

"When all we have is taken from us, when the greatest of us is laid low, when all gates are locked, do not despair. We can yet reclaim what we have lost."

"A great civilization does not fall from without until it has first fallen from within."

If the PCs possess the helm (see 1-17 above), it speaks when it is brought near the mural: *"This mural was commissioned by Horath Rocknose himself during the last days of his life, the height of the mine's success. The miners were always unsure what it meant even as much as they respected its craftsmanship. What they did not understand was that it is prophecy. That in these dark days, it shows the way forward. But perhaps it was not for them. Perhaps it was always for you."*

The word 'locked' conceals a keyhole similar to how the key was concealed in 1-19. The mithral key causes the mural to shift. The dragonslayer figure seems almost to open his grasp and a real axe emerges from the stone. This is the *Axe of Horath Rocknose*.



The Axe of Horath Rocknose

Aura moderate conjuration and transmutation; **CL** 10th
Slot --; Price 27,320 gp; Weight 6 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

This is a +1 *keen dragon-bane greataxe* made of *gunzarak* (true mithral). It counts as both being made of adamantine while possessing the weight reduction of mithral. For the purpose of damage reduction it is considered as both an adamantine, silver and magic weapon.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Arms and Armor, creator must know the secret of working true mithral, *keen edge summon monster I*; **Cost** 13,660 gp



LEVEL 2

2-1 STAIRWELL

These stairs link the main shaft on the first level (1-3) to the main shaft of the lower level. They are wide stone stairs in perfect condition looking as if they were built only yesterday. The stairs and the landing contain nothing of danger or value.

2-2 THE TROLLS' SLAUGHTERHOUSE

This empty mine has a single velociraptor corpse that has been slashed into pieces and almost entirely eaten. Now, it is mostly scattered bones and old blood. This slaughter was done by the cave trolls in 2-4 (see below).

The smell of this slain and rotting velociraptor has had the effect of keeping any more raptors from venturing down the stairs into the lower level.

2-3 SIDE CHAMBER

This old section of mine is dark and empty. The cave trolls in 2-4 do sometimes wander here, but mostly they only investigate this chamber if they hear noise. Anyone who enters without being stealthy (or fails to defeat the trolls +7 Perception check) will soon be joined by four cave trolls eager to rip them to pieces.

There is nothing of value or interest in this chamber.

2-4 SLAVES TO THE BAT GOD

This empty cavern is inhabited by four dull-witted, foul smelling shaggy black furred cave trolls. This cadre of cave trolls are dominated slaves in service to the sabosan shaman Balam Teycapan (see 2-9 below). Balam acquired them quite accidentally.

While fleeing from the drow (see below for more details about how the sabosan came to the mines), Balam came upon a small band of cave trolls who tried to ambush him and his fellow cultists. Instead of simply destroying them, Balam used his potent mind magics to enslave the creatures.

Since that time, Balam has thrown them a victim once in a while and the cave trolls serve his cult as guards. These days, the cave trolls rarely leave their post. They sometimes go to the upper level and kill a lone velociraptor for meat. The raptors know that there is something fast in the darkness, but have not yet worked up the courage to hunt these beasts.

The trolls when they attack make a fantastic racket, screaming and hollering as they charge their prey. This is not their natural habit. They have been ordered to do this and thus they serve as an alarm for the sabosan cult (in 2-7 through 2-9).

Cave Trolls (4)

CR 4

XP 1,200 each (4,800 XP total)

CE Medium humanoid (giant)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 90 ft., low-light vision, scent; **Perception** +7

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 17, flat-footed 15 (+6 Dex, +1 dodge, +5 natural)

hp 52 (5d8+30); **regeneration** 3 (fire or acid)

Fort +9, **Ref** +10, **Will** +0

OFFENSE

Speed 60 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee 2 claws +6 (1d4+2), claw (from *haste*) +6 (1d4+2), and bite +6 (1d6+2)

Special Attacks rend (2 claws, 1d4+3)

TACTICS

During Combat The trolls have only one plan when dealing with enemies – charge and claw and bite until it is dead. They will sometimes use *spider climb* to try and follow enemies who are difficult to get at.

Morale These dominated dullards fight to the death against the enemies of their beloved master.

STATISTICS

Str 15, **Dex** 22, **Con** 20, **Int** 6, **Wis** 9, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 22

Feats Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (Perception), Toughness

Skills Climb +10, Perception +7

Languages Giant

SQ *haste*, *spider climb*

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Haste (Su) A cave troll is affected by a permanent *haste* spell (caster level 8th). This grants the cave troll a +1 bonus on attack rolls, and a +1 dodge bonus to AC and Reflex saves (both already figured into the stat block above). Any condition that makes the cave troll lose its Dexterity bonus to AC also makes it lose its dodge bonus. This is an inherent bonus and cannot be dispelled or negated.

When making a full attack action, a cave troll can make one extra attack with any weapon it is holding or one extra claw attack (if using natural weapons). The extra attack is at the cave troll's full attack bonus.

Spider Climb (Su) A cave troll can climb sheer surfaces as though by a *spider climb* spell (caster level 4th). This ability is always active, but can be negated or dispelled. The cave troll can restart it again on its next turn as a free action.

2-5 SIDE CHAMBER

This stretch of caverns is where the cave trolls sometimes sleep (never all at once) and store what little of interest they have discovered on their various victims. With the velociraptor tribe on the upper level and the sabosans patrolling the skies (see random encounter 9 above on pg. 55) not much makes it this far into the mine anymore, so the pickings have been slim as of late.

Still, amidst the other litter upon the floor, they have ripped apart a bag that once contained 240 gp in miscellaneous coinage. Easy to miss (Perception DC 20) amongst the debris is a *pearl of power* (3rd).

2-6 DEAD END

The main shaft ends here. Once it continued deeper into the rock, but the seismic activity of the Earth's Wound sealed it decades ago. Now there is nothing here of any value or danger.

2-7 SABOSAN CULT GUARDHOUSE

This section of the mines once housed workshops where tools were maintained and ore was processed. Now instead it has become the lair of a small band of sabosans.

The sabosans are a loathsome race of bat-men who revere the demon-god Camazotz. Everywhere they go, their vile blood-rituals have earned them hatred and made them enemies. Now, they come here and made the mines their base of operation. Able to fly past the velociraptors on the lower level without issue, they patrol the jungle and caves looking for both their lost fellow and sacrifices to die upon their altars.

Usually in this chamber are three sabosan cultists who guard this stronghold. If the PCs have already fought the cave trolls in 2-4 then the guards have likely fled this room and joined up with their leader, the vampire shaman Balam (see 2-9 below) and are staying close by his side. If the PCs have managed to avoid such racket, they may catch the sabosans off guard. This is not easy. With their blindsense, darkvision, scent and +14 Perception, the sabosans are excellent sentries and rarely suprised by approaching enemies.

Sabosans (3)

CR 5

XP 1,600 each (4,800 XP total)

hp 52 (see page 85)

2-8 SHRINE OF THE BAT GOD

On the northeastern wall of this room, the sabosans have pinned the carefully arrayed skeleton of a dire bat and surrounded it with abyssal prayers written in blood to honor the almighty Camazotz, their demon patron. Anyone the sabosans manage to take prisoner is also likely to end up in this room and unwilling participant in their horrific rites of bloodletting and demonic devotion.

The sabosan cultists will hold their prisoner in place while the vampiric Balam feasts on its blood and then finally slits the prisoner's throat, all the while chanting in abyssal praises to Camazotz. What little blood that the ever ravenous Balam is willing to share with its master ends up sprayed on the wall here.

No doubt this chamber of horrors is more than enough to convince heroic Explorers to wipe out these vile beasts and cleanse the mine of their horrors. For Overlords, there is potential to learn a few things about these cultists that may be useful. A DC 25 Knowledge (religion) will recognize this shrine as venerating Camazotz and further know that gifts of sentient sacrifice will please these monsters and aid making an alliance with them. A Knowledge (local) DC 20 will relate that Camazotz and the Taaryssian drow have been bitter enemies as of late.



2-9 THE LAIR OF BALAM

The sabosan came to the Earth's Wound a few years ago driven here from their lair near the drow city. They had just lost a religious war between their bat demon-god Camazotz and the drow's own dark faiths. Their chieftain and champion had been slain, their numbers greatly reduced and their morale all but broken. The last shaman Balam Teyacapan led the survivors to the Earth's Wound intent upon abandoning the underworld all together and establishing a new dominion in the world above. However, they discovered this mine and managed to clear it of most of its former occupants. They established a new shrine, began to hunt the orchid jungle and nearby caverns and once more their numbers began to slowly increase.

Balam is still uncertain about the future of his tribe. Though their numbers remain relatively few, Balam is fiercely ambitious and dreams of restoring their ranks and once more creating a great and glorious temple to his demon-god. He sees the mine as only a temporary exile. Of course as a vampire he is patient. He desperately sends out patrols hoping that they will find more sabosan survivors of the cult of Camazotz, but so far such efforts have been in vain.

For Explorers, Balam is almost certainly a pure combat encounter. The vampire shaman wastes few words on the living that are not of his own kind. He wants them dead before they have any chance to report back to any other potential enemies.

For Overlords, there is opportunity here. Balam hates the drow in general, truly, but he doesn't yet hate the drow from Vothys. He most certainly does hate the drow from Taaryssia. Thus the PCs and this vile bat-shaman share the same enemy. Anyone who can convince Balam that they mean to destroy the existing regime can perhaps gain him as an ally. If they would gain his aid, he demands proof of their intentions. They must sacrifice a sentient to Camazotz upon his makeshift shrine, preferably an ally.

When Balam speaks, it is always in a low rattling hiss. He is an utterly ruthless monster. But for all of this, if Balam believes what he is doing is good for both his people and Camazotz, he will keep his promises. Further, he is very religious and will not make oaths lightly or violate an oath made to the demon-god Camazotz. Clever Overlords can exploit this.

Balam wears a tattered robe that covers his cadaverous form. Beneath the robe, Balam is adorned with 8,000 gp of gold and ruby jewelry plus a golden holy symbol of Camazotz with ruby eyes worth another 3,500 gp.

He keeps a small locked (DC 30) chest here that holds the sabosans' stash of remaining wealth: 1,200 gp in coins; a bag containing great chunks of uncut ruby worth 4,500 gp; a collection of bloody knives with golden blades worth 600 gp; a solid gold but crudely made statuette of Camazotz himself worth 3,200 gp.; *bag of holding type II* filled with 425 lbs. of iron rations (food for his minions).





Balam Teycapan, Sabosan Shaman

CR 10

XP 9,600

Male nosferatu sabosan cleric 6

NE Medium undead (augmented)

Init +10; **Senses** blindsense 60 ft., darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; **Perception** +27

DEFENSE

AC 28, touch 16, flat-footed 22 (+6 Dex, +12 natural)

hp 101 (13d8 +39); fast healing 5

Fort +12, **Ref** +14, **Will** +19

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, DR 5/wood and piercing

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 40 ft. (good)

Melee bite +15 (1d6+4 plus bleed), 2 claws +15 (1d6+4 plus grab)

Special Attacks bleed (1d4), blood drain (1d4 Constitution and Wisdom), channel negative energy 3/day (3d6, DC 12), destructive smite 7/day (+3 damage), *dominate person* (DC 18), dust cloud, fell shriek, powerful charge (claw, 2d6+8), touch of evil 7/day

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 6th; concentration +10)

3rd--blindness/deafness (DC 17), rage^B, cure serious wounds (2), dispel magic

2nd--cure moderate wounds (2), hold person (DC 16), resist energy, shatter^B (DC 16)

1st--command (DC 15), cure light wounds, divine favor, true strike^B, shield of faith

o(at will)--create water, guidance, mending, stabilize

B denotes domain spell; Domains Destruction, Evil

TACTICS

During Combat Balam is a capable opponent with many attack options. He will identify his opponents' strengths and weaknesses and try to counter them with his spells. He stays out of melee at first, letting his underlings handle such brute work. This is not because he isn't capable; Balam just prefers to rely on his spells.

Morale Balam fights until 0 hp to defend his shrine, then reverts into a bat swarm and retreats to his coffin.

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 22, **Con** 15, **Int** 12, **Wis** 19, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +11; **CMB** +15 (+17 with grapple); **CMD** 31 (+33 vs. grapple)

Feats Alertness, Flyby Attack, Hover^B, Improved Initiative, Improved Grapple, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Bluff, Perception, Sense Motive), Toughness

Skills Acrobatics +15, Diplomacy +11, Bluff +14, Fly +10, Knowledge (religion) +17, Perception +27, Sense Motive +27, Stealth +24;

Racial Bonus +8 Perception, +8 Sense Motive, +8 Stealth

Languages Abyssal, Giant, Undercommon

SQ aura, nosferatu weaknesses, spider climb, spontaneous casting (inflict spells), swarm form, telepathy 60 ft.

Gear wand of hold person (33 charges), cloak of resistance +3, bottle of shadow, key to the sabosan treasure chest (2-9)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Blood Drain (Ex) Balam can suck blood from a helpless, willing, or grappled living victim with its fangs by making a successful grapple check. If he pins the foe, he drains blood, draining 1d4 points of Constitution and Wisdom each round the pin is maintained. On each round he drains blood, Balam gains 5 temporary hit points that last for 1 hour (up to a maximum number of temporary hit points equal to his full normal hit points).

Dominate (Su) Balam can crush a humanoid opponent's will as a standard action. Anyone he targets must succeed at a Will save or fall instantly under Balam's influence, as though by a *dominate person* spell (caster level 12th). This ability has a range of 30 feet.

Dust Cloud (Ex) A sabosan gains Hover as a bonus feat, and can use this feat to create a dust cloud even though it is not Large. The resulting dust cloud has only a 30-foot radius.

Fell Shriek (Su) As a standard action, Balam emits a deafening cry in a 30-foot cone. Creatures in this area must make a successful DC 15 Fortitude save or be deafened for 1 minute. Sabosan are immune to this ability.

SPECIAL ABILITIES (cont.)

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

Swarm Form (Su) As a standard action, Balam can change into a bat swarm. He gains the natural weapons and extraordinary special attacks of the swarm he has transformed into. The swarm has the same number of hit points as Balam. While in swarm form, Balam can't use his claw attacks or any of his special attacks. He retains the defensive abilities, weaknesses, and special qualities he gains from being a nosferatu, counts as an undead creature, and can use any of the swarm's abilities and defenses. He can remain in swarm form until it assumes another form or until sunrise.

Telekinesis (Su) As a standard action, a nosferatu can use *telekinesis* (caster level 12th).

Telepathy (Su) A nosferatu can communicate telepathically with any creature within 60 feet that speaks the same language it does. In addition, a nosferatu can use this ability to communicate with any animal, magical beast, or vermin.

Sabosan (3)

CR 5

XP 1,600 each (4,800 XP total)

NE Medium monstrous humanoid

Init +8; **Senses** blindsense 60 ft., darkvision 60 ft., scent; **Perception** +14

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+4 Dex, +4 natural)

hp 52 (7d10+14)

Fort +4, **Ref** +9, **Will** +6

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 40 ft. (good)

Melee bite +10 (1d6+3 plus bleed), 2 claws +10 (1d6+3 plus grab)

Special Attacks bleed (1d4), blood drain (1 Constitution), dust cloud, fell shriek, powerful charge (claw, 2d6+6)

TACTICS

During Combat One of the sabosans first issues their fell shriek as the other two charge in to bite and claw. They will use dust cloud to stir up dust hoping to sow chaos and confusion. They are fanatic followers of Balam and support the shaman however they are able. They gladly sacrifice their lives to defend the undead emissary of the great Camazotz.

Morale Here within the shrine, these fanatics fight to the death. Only if their shaman falls, will they flee.

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 18, **Con** 15, **Int** 9, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 24

Feats Flyby Attack, Hover^B, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Perception)

Skills Acrobatics +14, Fly +8, Perception +14, Stealth +14

Languages Abyssal

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Dust Cloud (Ex) A sabosan gains Hover as a bonus feat, and can use this feat to create a dust cloud even though it is not Large. The resulting dust cloud has only a 30-foot radius.

If a sabosan hovers within 20 feet of the ground in an area with lots of loose debris, the draft from its wings creates a hemispherical cloud with a radius of 30 feet. The winds generated can snuff torches, small campfires, exposed lanterns, and other small, open flames of non-magical origin. Clear vision within the cloud is limited to 10 feet. Creatures have concealment at 15 to 20 feet (20% miss chance). At 25 feet or more, creatures have total concealment (50% miss chance, and opponents cannot use sight to locate the creature).

Fell Shriek (Su) As a standard action, a sabosan can emit a deafening cry in a 30-foot cone. Creatures in this area must make a successful DC 15 Fortitude save or be deafened for 1 minute. Sabosan are immune to this ability. The save DC is Constitution-based.

2-10 UNFINISHED CHAMBER

The dwarves were busy expanding the workshops and completing this section of wall when the mines were abandoned. Hence the work remains half done.

2-11 EMPTY MINE

This section of the mine is empty and devoid of anything dangerous or of value.

2-12 BALAM'S COFFIN

The sabosan shaman Balam keeps his coffin here in this non-descript corner of the mine. The earth here is loose because he has buried his coffin beneath about a foot of loose soil. If Balam has been defeated, his body is here, resting and waiting to rise again.

Noticing the coffin is not easy. A casual inspection only notes something is buried here on a DC 35 Perception check. However, if the PCs dig through the loose earth, finding the coffin is only a matter of time.

2-13 UNSECURED CAVERN

The portion of the mine was abandoned before this cavern could receive a support column (like so many of the others). Left alone near the epicenter of the Earth's Wound it is a miracle it has not collapsed already. The PCs may be the tipping point that finally causes its collapse. A character who makes both a DC 20 Perception check and a DC 20 Profession (miner) check will recognize the danger.

The problem here is that the PCs are not alone in these caves. Cave trolls from 2-15 will hear activity and attack in force. During this battle, any area attack spells or large-sized summoned creatures will bring down the roof. Even normal combat has a 10% chance per round of causing a collapse.

Use the cave-in rules presented at Location K above.

2-14 EMPTY MINE

As 2-11 above.

2-15 CAVE TROLL LAIR

This small cavern is the lair of a group of dominated cave trolls (see 2-4 above for more details) who serve the sabosan cult. They are here both to defend Balam's Coffin (in 2-12) and also hunting for grubs and rats amongst the caverns. Though this central cave is their main lair they roam freely about this area from 2-10 to 2-16 eager for prey. Like their brethren when they attack, they howl and holler making much noise.

Cave Trolls (5)

CR 4

XP 600 each (3,000 XP total)

hp 52 (see page 82)

2-16 THE LAST DIG

This is the last area of the mine that was being worked on the day the dwarves decided to travel to Dammerhall and abandoned the Mines of Zaraketh. In their haste, a tragedy occurred. A miner was trapped under a small landslide. Because of the chaos and confusion of that fateful day, this miner was never noticed (he had no family or even close friends) and so he was accidentally abandoned in one of the small dig tunnels. There he lies to this day (at location A).

But there is more to him than being a corpse. The miner bears a masterwork heavy pick made of mithral (worth 2500 gp) and on its head is a sapphire holy symbol dedicated to Father Mountain. This holy symbol, if held to the seal on the Warded Door (1-16 above), will open the door.

Here ends Book Two of *Throne of Night*.



CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

With the discovery of the route to Dammerhall and their exit from the Mine of Zaraketh, the PCs are done with Book Two. Given the open nature of this campaign, the PCs may still have a few encounters that are in this book (Event Seven in Act One in particular makes a good finale). But they are now free to move on to the events and locations detailed in Book Three.

The PCs have traveled far into the realms below and seen many terrors and wonders. They are by now old hands at exploring the underworld. Perhaps they have even come to believe that they've seen it all. In Book Three: Death or Dammerhall, we'll prove them wrong.

TROUBLESHOOTING

Throne of Night is a sandbox. There are some hints of a greater plotline (the restoration of Dammerhall, the possibility of immortality by replacing the demigod Queen of Taaryssia, the menace of the neothelid) but overall, the PCs cannot go "off the rails". Anything is up for grabs. Still, some implications may not be obvious. So here at the end, as in Book One, we pause to give a little advice.

My players don't want to go down the Great Jumping Off Point. They want to continue exploring the Fungal Jungle!

Let them! As long as they are having fun, they are not doing it wrong. Of course, if they get enough experience points, the written encounters in Book One will start to become trivial to win. So, you have a choice. Either introduce tougher monsters to the Fungal Jungle or gently hint to your PCs that there are tougher monsters down that big yawning pit right over there.

My players ignored Captain Tom (in Event One), slew the cloaklers (in Event Two) and refuse to take drow captives. How are they going to learn anything about the Earth's Wound?

They aren't. They are going to go down the Great Jumping Off Point blind. That means they'll have to discover everything on their own. To me, that sounds like an exciting opportunity for adventure.

It's a long walk from Fasturvalt to the Earth's Wound and we have a 10% chance of having an encounter every day! Do you really want me to roll every day? Won't that become boring and repetitive?

If they're just going back the way they came through hexes they've already explored and cleared, personally I wouldn't roll. And if your PCs are getting complacent because of that, then surprise them with an encounter when they least expect it! Dice be damned!

My PCs are able to blow through the all the monsters they meet by expending all of their spells on every encounter and then making camp immediately after the fight and resting.

First, don't punish your players unduly for having good tactical sense. But if they're using the same tactic over and over again and it is becoming boring, then shake them up once or twice. In a single night after such a battle where they've blown through all their high-level spells, have them attacked by four different groups of monsters during one night of terror and bloodshed. But most of all, keep the game exciting and strive for ways to challenge your players.

That intellect devourer (location F.) is cleaning my PCs' clock. They have no clue what's killing them off and I fear that a total party kill is imminent. What should I do?

Fear of monsters is not a bad thing. It makes the game more exciting. But if the PCs are really truly stumped by the intellect devourer, then maybe have them meet Tassius (Location G.) a little sooner than normal. He might be able to help them find the murderous monster in their midst.

My PCs failed to figure out the ritual in the Elemental's Redoubt. How can I give them a hint?

Personally, I wouldn't. Nothing in the Redoubt is essential to moving the adventure along. It's all just optional fun if they're clever enough to figure it out.

But if you are feeling particularly generous, then when Abrisarius first came to the Earth's Wound, he stopped at Lothellain and traded with the elves. One of the books he traded is still in their possession: "Practical Elementalism" by Abrisarius. It contains a hint or two on how to conduct these rites granting a +2 to Knowledge (arcane) rolls to understand them.

My PCs have utterly failed to figure out the way to Dammerhall. They missed the miner's skeleton. They can't figure out the door to the shrine. They have completely missed that the strange helm is actually an angel. Should I give them a hint or just let them wander around in the dark forever?

If you are sure they are stumped, you should probably give them a hint. After all, they'll miss the whole third book if they never find Dammerhall. I very nearly put a dwarven ghost in the Mine, but took it out because I thought it was too cliché and made the puzzles too easy. Feel free to put him back. The spirit of the last foreman of the mine, Harthin Truehammer, yet lingers and will aid any dwarves who cleanse the mines of the blasphemous sabosan shrine.

APPENDIX ONE: LORDS BELOW

This campaign assumes that the PCs will be building a kingdom using the rules found in the Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Campaign book. You can also find the entirety of those rules online at The Pathfinder RPG SRD (d20pfsrd.com). It is recommended before you read this article that you read over those rules as they are discussed extensively here.

The existing rules for managing kingdoms cover the topic extensively. However, those rules assume that the PCs will be ruling an above ground kingdom. This is part one of a series of articles that will present modifications that are needed to make those rules compatible with the premise of Throne of Night. In these next few pages we'll begin that process, discussing what rules need to be changed and why and discuss how to make those rules fit this campaign.

DAMMERHALL REBORN: THE EXPLORERS' REALM

The dwarven version of this campaign assumes a largely benevolent (if perhaps xenophobic) realm founded on a dream of past glories. The dwarves hope that by rebuilding their lost capital city and making it once more viable, they can restore dwarven glory. As far as kingdom building goes, the arc of the campaign is likely to follow this sort of progression:

Phase One: Start amongst the Svirfneblin

The PCs rescue Fasturvalt from drow attack and make that their first true holding. They expand out from there until they conquer the source of the attack, the watchtower of Vothys.

Phase Two: Searching for Dammerhall

The PCs search for the lost city of Dammerhall. As they continue to expand their holdings. Eventually they find it, possibly also gaining a trading route to the surface and a new region to colonize.

Phase Three: Reclaiming Dammerhall

Once the PCs find Dammerhall, they must solve the riddle of how it was lost, recover the regalia of the High King and reclaim its throne. Once done, the PCs will have a large city as their new capital and can send out word to dwarven refugees across the world that Dammerhall is reborn. Their empire greatly expands.

Phase Four: The War with the Drow

The drow city of Taaryssia does not take the reestablishment of Dammerhall well. War begins and the dwarves find themselves facing the army of the immortal queen of the City Without Mercy. It will take cunning and bravery to survive this ruthless adversary.





Phase Five: The Menace from Below

The drow are defeated, Dammerhall is reestablished and Taaryssia is either conquered or utterly annihilated. And yet the PCs' greatest challenge still lies before them. From deep within the earth, unearthly horrors and aberrations vomit forth. An army that could crush the greatest human kingdoms in the world marches towards Dammerhall. The dwarves must do the impossible and defeat this menace in a war that will either be sung of for countless ages to come or will herald the end of all things. The PCs' realm and right to rule will be tested as never before.

A NEW TYRANNY: THE OVERLORD'S REALM

The drow kingdom is destined to be a place of slavery and horror. The cruelty of their own banishment has taught these dark elves nothing but that the world is merciless and so must they be. Within their realm, there is no law save for their will. The drow arc is likely to progress thusly:

Phase One: Vengeance on the Baroness

The PCs begin as outcasts made pawns by an ambitious noble drow who is an outcast herself, the Baroness Satha Sevastia. The PCs steal her little dominion, enslave the svirfneblin and anyone who gets in their way and begin to build their new empire.

Phase Two: Gathering Power in the Shadows

The PCs may have won a small empire, but it only continues to exist because Taaryssia does not know about them. They must move quickly, gather resources and power so that they can gain their revenge.

Phase Three: A King's Hoard at our Command

At last fortune favors them as the Overlord find a lost dwarven city. They explore its depths and find the great treasury of the fallen High King. Plundering it, they are able to raise a great mercenary army.

Phase Four: The Return to Taaryssia

At last the time has come for vengeance! The PCs march at the head of a great army and begin to expand their holdings by the sword. Those who cast them out now flee before their wrath. They infiltrate the city of Taaryssia and there fight a great battle. If all goes to plan, they claim the ancient City Without Mercy for their new capital.

Phase Five: The Menace from Below

This victory won, the war is not over. From below comes a grave threat. They may lose all just as they have at last found victory. Could it be that it falls to the wicked drow to save the world?

FOUNDING A KINGDOM

When exactly the PCs start running their kingdom is a decision that is in their hands. The natural moment to start is when the PCs conquer Vothys and thus actually have claim to a section of land without any immediate threats (PC level 6). However, perhaps the PCs want to leap in sooner than this. If the PCs take an active hand in ruling Fasturvalt, perhaps they should start from when they claim it (likely PC level 2). Ultimately the choice should be made by PCs and the GM together.

When the PCs do decide to found a kingdom, here are the steps they should take.

1. CHOOSE A NAME

The PCs should decide what they are going to call their realm.

2. CHOOSE THEIR KINGDOM'S ALIGNMENT

This is unchanged from the kingdom building rules.

3. CHOOSE LEADERSHIP ROLES

The dwarves and drow both have their own cultural takes on these roles. For dwarves, the king rules with a council of nine advisors. These nine are very traditional roles that have titles that would befit personal equipment and body parts of the king. For example, a dwarven king instead of saying "send a message to my general," would often say "send word to My Axe".

Position	Dwarf Equivalent (in dwarvish)
Ruler	King (Rik)†
Consort	Queen (Rikka)
Councilor	My Ear (Hyrûn)
General	My Axe (Barkûn)
Grand Diplomat	My Voice (Galabûn)
Heir	Heir (Rayad)
High Priest	My Heart (Kurdûn)
Magister	My Quill (Ikarthûn)
Marshal	My Eye (Izarûn)
Royal Enforcer	††
Spymaster	My Dagger (Garthûn)
Treasurer	My Purse (Vashûn)
Viceroy	My Ring (Ruthûn)
Warden	My Shield (Murkûn)

† Only when Dammerhall is reclaimed can the dwarven ruler take the title Az-rik (or High King)

†† Royal Enforcer is not a traditional dwarven position. If there were such a position, it would likely be the head of the King's personal guard, sometimes called My Sword (Zagarûn) since dwarves traditionally fight with the axe but use the sword for executions.

The drow may find themselves in a very unique rulership position. If you are using the Seven Sibilings framework (see pg. 100 of Book One), then the PCs may see each other as equals. In that case, whoever is the eldest or most charismatic probably assumes the title of "ruler", but in reality all important decisions must be voted upon by all members of the council. Still, for the commoners it is important to have a figurehead they can both idolize and fear.

All drow in a position of leadership are, by drow social standards, noble. They may add Lord or Lady to their names. In truth, these titles mean very little but are cherished regardless. The drow are far too evil to respect another's right to rule and far too vain to refuse such titles and flattery

Position	Drow Equivalent
Ruler	Queen/King
Consort	Consort
Councilor	Mistress/Master of the Lash
General	General
Grand Diplomat	Emissary
Heir	Princess/Prince
High Priest	High Priestess/Priest
Magister	Lady/Lord Magister
Marshal	Mistress/Master of Scouts
Royal Enforcer	Mistress/Master of Assassins
Spymaster	Mistress/Master of Secrets
Treasurer	Mistress/Master of Coins
Viceroy	Baroness/Baron
Warden	Mistress/Master of the Watch

4. START YOUR TREASURY

If the PCs begin ruling at 2nd level, they start with a treasury of Lord Geirni which consists of 5,600 gp (Book One, pg. 29). If you use the optional Starting from Scratch table that is 5 build points, 1/10th of the usual starting amount. Personally, as a GM, I don't mind starting the PCs off poor. It means that as their kingdom grows, they will feel like they've truly accomplished something. However, if you want to increase Lord Geirni's treasury (perhaps adding trade goods that are worth a flat 20 BP as opposed to money), that is permissible.

Capturing Vothys and in its well-stocked slave camp (see Book One, pg. 81) nets the PCs another 40 BP as they take control of the drow stores. Most of these captured goods is not in gold but in supplies, food and trade goods. This is in addition to any monetary treasure noted in the room by room description of the Baroness' tower.

5. DETERMINE ATTRIBUTES

This is unchanged from the kingdom building rules.

NPCs FOR LEADERSHIP ROLES

There are within this campaign, NPCs created for the express purpose of fulfilling the various leadership roles. Ruler, Consort, Heir and Viceroy have no NPCs built for those. Those roles will be filled by PCs under most circumstances (it is possible the PCs might name an NPC heir or viceroy, but there is no one explicitly designed to fill that role).

Of course, it is likely that some of these NPCs have perished and replacements may need to be created. There is nothing amiss about naming a random deep gnome, dwarven immigrant or drow outcast to fulfill a role. This is a fine way to customize the campaign and make it your own.

High Priest has also been left unfilled. With the Patron system in place, it is hard to write an NPC who could serve whatever diverse deity the PCs end up creating. So, a PC will have to fulfill that job or you'll have to create a custom NPC to fit the bill.

Position **NPC for Explorers**
Councilor Tammar Even-the-Stones-Listen (svirfneblin foreman, Book One, pg. 25)

General In a dwarven campaign, this almost certainly going to be a PC. But if it's not, Harvald recommends another one Geirni's former guards, Tyburn Born-To-Hold-A-Blade.

Grand Diplomat Lord Junius Rembers-What-Others-Forget (svirfneblin relic collector, Book One, pg. 74, he is from Kladdenvalt and could be persuaded to represent the PCs there if promised free access to Vaustenstad)

Magister Miatha Always-A-Song-Follows (svirfneblin adept, Book One, pg. 26)

Marshal Miku the Myceloid Hunter (Book One, pg. 43)

Royal Enforcer †††

Spymaster Iverna Already-Has-Your-Knife (aka Knivy Ivy, Book One, pg. 12)

Treasurer Sandor Born-the-Same-Day-As-the-Vault (svirfneblin mill owner, Book One, pg. 32, only mentioned)

Warden Harvald Held-the-Wall (the most senior of the soldiers the PCs rescued from the spiders, Book One, pg. 18; though perhaps using Gunther's stats makes more sense now.)

††† Royal Enforcer, once more, is not a position that dwarves often embrace. If the PCs want this position, it should probably be a PC who fills it. However, if no suitable PCs is not available, eventually a travelling half-drow sell sword named Dyara Dark-Eyes (CN half-elf fighter 3/rogue 2) drifts into town and offers her services. She is good at the job, even if perhaps she seems to enjoy it a little too much.

Position **NPC for Overlords**
Councilor Gorval Harak, drow torturer (Book One, pg. 86)

General Tethyr Quoll, drow captain of Vothys (Book One, pg. 87)

Grand Diplomat Any of the three drow consorts will do (Book One, pg. 87)

Magister Andaria Sevastia, drow alchemist (Book One, pg. 84) or Megaria Hate, the green lake witch (Book One, pg. 59) are both solid candidates

Marshal Vezz'raak or Mathyk, the skis'raal rangers (Book One, pg. 66)

Royal Enforcer Zethra Morgus, drow assassin (Book One, pg. 83; honestly I see almost zero chance this actually happens. Zethra was sent by the baroness to kill the PCs. The chance he's alive or they'd ever forgive him seem slim. Besides, this is a great job for a PC)

Spymaster Iverna Already-Has-Your-Knife (aka Knivy Ivy, Book One, pg. 12)

Treasurer Again, any of the three drow consorts will do (Book One, pg. 87)

Warden Tethyr Quoll, drow captain of Vothys (Book One, pg. 87) or any surviving drow guard.

The unique challenge for Overlord PCs is going to be the question: who do you trust? The answer may simply be no one. If that is the case, perhaps an alternative would be to let each of the PCs double up and have two roles. In the Seven Siblings campaign setup (see the Appendix of Book One), that is enough to fulfill all the roles with one PC being the dedicated ruler alone.

If you don't have seven players, you will need to make up a few NPC drow siblings who can fulfill the more mundane duties while the PCs go off adventuring into the dangerous unexplored underworld.

RULES CHANGES

Hexes are slightly smaller in Throne of Night than in typical kingdom building scenario (8 miles across as opposed to 12). This represents how the underworld is more compact, less spread out but more difficult to traverse. However, hexes still cost the same to explore and develop.

EXPLORATION

It is one thing to simply cross a hex (travel speeds were discussed in Throne of Night Book One, pg. 8). It is another to thoroughly explore a hex and make it part of your empire. For this there is exploration.

In the Throne of Night, the PCs will encounter seven different kinds of terrain: open caverns, cavernous passages (main, secondary and minor), subterranean jungles, mountains, underground seas, surface forest and special hexes.

Party	Exploration Time in Days			
Movement	Cavern	Jungle	Mount	Under. Sea
15 ft/round	4 days	5 days	7 days	3 days
20 ft/round	3 days	4 days	6 days	2 days
30 ft/round	2 days	3 days	5 days	1 day
40 ft/round	1 day	2 days	4 days	1 day
50 ft/round	1 day	1 day	3 days	1 day

NO KINGDOM RULES

Some groups may look at all the book-keeping of the kingdom building rules and balk. After all, it is a lot of detail that may or may not add any real enjoyment to the game. So, what if you decide to ignore them entire?

The short answer to this is “nothing changes”. The kingdom can be handwaved to the background with no problem whatsoever. The PCs appoint a viceroy to rule their dominion and then get about the more important work of being adventurers. The only possible concern is that there are XP awards for growing a kingdom. This adventure path was written assuming those awards would be given. So, you may have to run a few extra encounters to make up the difference. Or you could just hand out a few extra experience here and there to make up for lost ground. In other words, these rules are here to be enjoyed. If they are not compatible with your play style, then simply do not use them.

Open Caverns: Though often thought of as the default underground terrain, the PCs have not actually encountered this yet (though they will in Book Three and in abundance in Book Four). These are hexes that are dominated by large interconnected open galleries, both dry and living. By subterranean standards they are amongst the easiest hexes to explore.

Cavernous Passages: These are hexes that have cavernous passages and they sprawl all across the Azathyr. Cavernous passages need not be explored (or rather crossing and exploring them is the same thing). The three types of passages determine who can traverse them and the speed of moving through them.

Subterranean Jungles: The PCs will encounter three types of subterranean jungles in the course of this campaign: the fungal jungle of the Upper Azathyr, the orchid jungle of the Earth's Wound, and the Gardens of Flesh in the Deep Realms. Though they all have their own unique character and dangers, from an exploration point of view they are identical. It is not easy to explore these hexes. They combine the uneven surface of cavernous travel with the weird growth of unfamiliar flora (be it plant, fungus or living aberration spawned nightmares).

Mountains: Underground mountains such as Mount Uranoth in the Fungal Jungle (Book One, Location L.) are particularly difficult to explore. Combining all the dangers of cavern exploration with the risks of mountain climbing, they are a unique challenge of subterranean exploration..

Underground Sea: These are large open bodies of water such as the Violet Lake of the Fungal Jungle or the Sea of Ghosts in the Lower Azathyr. Without a boat or a swim speed these are simply obstacles. However, with the right equipment they are amongst the quickest places to explore. Their exploration is only hampered by the ever-present darkness of the underworld.

Surface Forest: The only place that surface forest is encountered is the elven woods here in Book Two. The rules for exploring these hexes is exactly the same as normal forest in the standard Pathfinder RPG kingdom building rules. Oh, and remember, the elves consider that entire surface forest theirs. They will get upset when your PCs start claiming swathes for their own dominion.

Special: This catch-all category applies to terrain types that have special rules outside of normal exploration. For example, the boiling salt lake (Location H.) and the geyser fields (Location L.) presented here in Book Two are good examples of this. Special terrain will always be noted and described within the text.

LONGER TIME FRAME

On the surface world, the default measure of time for rulership is a month. Things move slower underground. Every turn represents three months (or a season to use a surface dweller term). Turns happen exactly as noted and any event described as taking a month, instead takes three. Most of the major races are longer lived and are more patient concerning progress and the presence of their rulers.

There is another important reason for this change. In the standard kingdom building rules, it is assumed that the PCs will be close enough to their dominion that they can return every month to fulfill their duties. In the underworld, this may not be true. The PCs may be gone for months at a time. It can take 33 days travel to go from Fasturvalt to Vothys by the most direct route. So, a longer time scale is better for the underworld. It also gives the PCs a natural reason to eventually return home to manage their new empire (which is a perfect opportunity to use the events in Act One).

So, the PCs can set out from conquered Vothys, be gone for up to 90 days (plenty of time for a lengthy expedition) and then return back to make sure everything is in order with no mechanical penalty to their realm. Perhaps after such a long absence, it is wise to spend the next three months back, touring your realm and making sure all is well within it. So, a natural rhythm for the campaign could be three months out of solid adventuring, expanding their kingdom and then three months back seeing to the duties of rulership.

FASTURVALT AND VOTHYS

Unlike in most kingdom building campaigns, in Throne of Night, the PCs can actually begin with two settlements (depending on the events of Book One). These two settlements are described here.

Fasturvalt starts as a settlement with four houses, an inn, a town hall, a fishery and a quarry. If the PCs had Tammar build a city wall during the Battle of Fasturvalt, they also begin with a city wall.

Vothys starts with a watch tower, city wall, moat, two houses and a garrison.

Building settlements in the underworld is not a two dimensional enterprise. You can dig out a new section of cave and add buildings on top of or below an existing structure. However, in general, any structure that requires this sort of digging adds 1 BP to the cost for every lot the structure requires.

TO BE CONTINUED

This article will be continued in Book Three, with War Below, discussing mass combat underground.

LIST OF RESOURCES

This is a list of the possible resources that the PCs could discovered so far in this campaign (in Books One and Two):

1. The marble quarry at Fasturvalt (Location D, Book One)
2. The iron mine at Mount Uranoth (Location L, Book One)
3. Alchemical components from the myceloid city of Xan (Location O, Book One only possible if an alliance is made with the Xan)
4. Silk from the skis'raal (Location V, Book One, only possible if an alliance is made with the skis'raal)
5. The Cave Auroch Herd (Random Location, Book One)
6. The kobold slave pits at Vothys (Location Y, Book One)
7. A Salt Mine past the Salt Lake (Location I, Book Two; only viable if the mephits are slain)
8. The Stygian Orchid (Location Q, Book Two; only viable if the strangle orchids are slain)
9. The Iguanodon Herd (Location T, Book Two)
10. The Elven Forest (just outside Location W, Book Two)

It is unlikely any one group will find and exploit all these resources. Noble dwarves may balk at employing kobold slaves while drow might find the harvesting wood in the sunlight unpalatable. Equally, this list is not comprehensive. For example, this list does not include the gnome ruin of Vaustensstad (found on Location R, the Isle of Seven Horns, Book One), but if the PCs wanted to setup a salvage operation there, digging out gnomish stone and other artifacts, that sounds perfectly viable and interesting. If the PCs come up with a good idea, let it work!

APPENDIX TWO: PATRONS

This article continues from the Patrons article in Book One. That article discussed a roleplaying exercise whereby your PCs could create a custom divine patron for them to serve and to help unite and focus the campaign. Instead of falling back on a pre-established list of deities or demon lords, the Patron system allows your PCs to make something more uniquely their own.

Here, we are going to take two hypothetical results from that exercise and present an example of what the Game Master could do with that information. The custom magic items and spells make useful rewards for faithful servants of the patron. Hopefully this will inspire you to flesh out your own PCs patron and tailor this adventure path further to your own play style. Our two examples are Father Mountain (for Explorers) and the Mother of Serpents (for Overlords).

FATHER MOUNTAIN

Three descriptors:

Secrets Beneath the Mountain
The Rightful High King Shall Return
The Patron of Brewers

Three Virtues:

Honor
Prowess in Battle
Respect for Ancient Dwarven Tradition

Three Sins:

Betrayal of your Family or Faith
A Beardless Dwarf Shows Weakness to the World
Being Unable to Hold your Ale

REFINING THE CONCEPT

Father Mountain is meant to be the quintessential dwarven god. By using such an iconic and oft utilized diety (dare I say clichéd), I can fall back on all sorts of source material I already own. As a GM, I don't have to entirely reinvent the wheel. The Pathfinder RPG is already loaded with dwarven and earth themed magic items and spells ripe for stealing.

Still, I would like Father Mountain to not be just a riff on such a well-worn road. I want there to be a few things that make my masculine mountainous dwarf god unique. How can I accomplish this? With this in mind, I think I know where to begin. I can now flesh out Father Mountain and bring him to life. I'll write out a brief description of the patron suitable for giving to the PCs (so no campaign spoilers!).

FATHER MOUNTAIN: SECRETS OF THE STONE KING

Outsiders have it wrong. Father Mountain did not create the dwarves. The dwarves created him. Once the dwarves were just another sort of man who dwelt in the mountains and hills. But the ancient dwarves wanted to be something more. They wanted their own lands and lords.

So, the dwarves prayed to the primal spirits of the mountains for countless eons, thanking them for their generosity and bounty of jewels and precious metals. Every time a dwarven king or hero died, they were offered to these primal spirits, becoming part of them. In time, this vast sacrifice of souls changed the very nature of reality. The primal spirit of the mountain itself was changed by these sacrifices. The million souls of the greatest of dwarves combined within the spirit and thus was Father Mountain born.

Father Mountain is not one great dwarf who managed to ascend to godhood. Instead, Father Mountain is the amalgam of every dwarven hero who has ever died and been buried within the earth. He is king of all kings and the heart of every hero. And he is dying. For as the dwarves fades, so fades the Father. The dwarves made Father Mountain and as they lose hope and identity, as they turn away from the old ways, so are they unmaking him.

HOLY DAY

Khárûzel (lit. the day of all days): this commemorates the day that Father Mountain first spoke to the dwarves in the distant past. It is also the start of the dwarven new year. It occurs in the month of October on the last new moon of the month. Traditionally, the day is celebrated by gathering with family and the exchanging of gifts.

Outsiders are rarely allowed at these gatherings, but the few who have attended a Khárûzel almost always say the same thing. First, they were amazed but unsurprised by just how much dwarves drank on this day. Second, they were equally amazed and completely surprised by the amount of singing that was done. The dwarves would gather and sing merry tunes early in the day celebrating life and family. And later in the day, the dwarves sing solemn songs commemorating the dead and telling the great deeds and sacrifices of their kin. Sometimes these songs would go on for hours.

It is also a common belief that any masterwork item finished early on this day, will be an item without peer.

GAME MECHANICS

Alignment LG

Domains Artifice, Community, Earth, Good, Law

Favored Weapon Greataxe



NEW MAGIC ITEMS

The Lord's Stein

Aura faint conjuration and faint enchantment; **CL** 5th
Slot none; Price 8,670 gp; Weight 4 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

This large, sturdy but ornate beer stein is made entirely of mithral and ceramic. The vessel is covered in dwarven runes and carved scenes of dwarven lords doing various heroic deeds. From time to time the deeds seem to slowly shift if observed very closely.

Any time the bearer toasts Father Mountain, the beer stein is immediately refilled with the finest and most potent of dwarven ales. It can produce a pint of ale a round in perpetuity using this power. However, this magic ale cannot be removed from the stein. It must be drunk or it will quickly become flat and flavorless.

If the bearer toasts to a person's health (a standard action) and the person is within sight, that person immediately receives a *cure moderate wounds* and the stein fills with ale. This ability can only be used once per day. The bearer can toast himself, but most dwarves consider that rude.

If the bearer prays for prowess in battle and slams down a tankard of ale (also a standard action), the drinker receives the benefits of *rage* for 5 rounds. This ability can only be used once per day.

The stein is sturdy enough that it also counts as a +1 *heavy steel shield*, but only when wielded by a dwarf.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wondrous Item, *cure moderate wounds*, *rage*, creator must be a dwarf and a worshipper of Father Mountain; **Cost** 4,335 gp

Mithral Beard Rings

Aura faint transmutation; **CL** 3rd
Slot none (beard); Price 2,000 gp; Weight – lbs.

DESCRIPTION

When found this item appears to be a set of nine small mithral tubes adorned with dwarven runes. They are intended to be jewelry woven into a beard (a process that takes about 10 minutes). Once worn, the wearer's beard become hard as iron (as if affected by the spell *ironbeard*). However, these beads do not impair their wearer's ability to talk (though they still provide the chance of spell failure thanks to the disruptive properties of the magic).

This item cannot be worn with any other magical beard adornments.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *ironbeard*, creator must be dwarf with a full beard; **Cost** 1,000 gp

The Mountain Whispers

Aura moderate divination; **CL** 11th
Slot none; Price 2,000 gp; Weight 2 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

This is a consecrated natural stone stamped with the dwarvish name of Father Mountain. Only if the stone contacts other stone and a prayer to Father Mountain is offered, does the stone begin to hum with life. It taps into the primal energy of all earth and stone and calls all local spirits to attend to the bearer.

Once per day, the bearer of this stone may cast *stone tell*. The spell always answers in the Terran elemental tongue. The bearer must understand that language to receive any information. Also, when this ability is used all earth elementals within a one mile radius know the bearer's location. They are likely to come investigate.

The bearer of this stone also receives a +2 bonus to any Diplomacy rolls made against earth elementals.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *stone tell*, creator must be dwarf and a worshipper of Father Mountain; **Cost** 1,000 gp

The Wizard's Beard

Aura moderate universal; **CL** 9th
Slot none (beard); Price 12,000 gp; Weight – lbs.

DESCRIPTION

These ornate beads are made of strange and unearthly metal and weird gems that pulsate almost as if alive. When woven into the beard (a process that takes about ten minutes) of a crafter of magic items, only then does their purpose become clear. The wearer gains an intuitive understanding of crafting and hears the whispered secrets of countless ancient smiths and artificers.

As long as the beads are worn, the wearer creates magical items at twice the normal rate (2,000 gp per 8 hours instead of the usual 1,000 gp). However, increasing the production rate does sometimes cause errors so the DC of a skill check to craft magic items is increased by 5 (usually this is a Spellcraft check). Note that this item does not grant the ability to create magical items nor does it replace any prerequisites. It only makes the wearer work faster.

This item cannot be worn with any other magical beard adornments. However while wearing this item, the wearer can weave up to four ioun stones into their beard. This does not change their powers or costs of the stones, it only means those damn stones aren't orbiting your head all the time.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *permanency*, creator must be a dwarf and a worshipper of Father Mountain; **Cost** 6,000 gp

NEW SPELL

Band of Brothers

School conjuration (healing); **Level** cleric/oracle 5

CASTING

Casting Time 1 minute

Components V, S, M (a drop of blood from each target), DF

EFFECT

Range touch

Target one creature/level, all of whom must be touching

Duration 24 hours

Saving Throw Will half (harmless); **Spell Resistance** yes (harmless)

DESCRIPTION

This spell creates a profound bond between a small company of friends. Once this spell is cast, all of the targets may, once per day as a swift action, use this spell effect to benefit another recipient of the same spell besides themselves. However, giving this aid always requires a sacrifice.

The one who activates this spell may choose from the following list of benefits and sacrifices and who the beneficiary will be. The beneficiary must be within close range ((25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels of the original caster)

The beneficiary is *hasted* (as the spell) for one round. The one who activates this power must sacrifice all actions this round (except for activating this spell effect).

The beneficiary is healed as if *cure moderate wounds* had been cast on them (use the original caster's caster level to determine the bonus). The one who activates this power takes damage equal to what was healed. No damage reduction can reduce this damage.

The beneficiary receives a +2 sacred bonus to their AC for rounds equal to the original caster's level. The one who activates this power receives a -2 AC penalty for the same duration.

Only one benefit can be bestowed per day per recipient and any recipients who by days end have not used this ability, lose the power. The original caster may be one of the targets of this spell.

There is danger to casting this spell on those you do not trust. While this spell is in effect, all of the recipients count as having a body part of each other for the purpose of spells like *scrying*.

AZ'ZARTHA, MOTHER OF ALL SERPENTS

Three descriptors:

The Demon Queen of Snakes
Treachery and Betrayal
The Number Seven

Three Virtues:

Loyalty Only to the Demon Queen and Her Cult
Gain Alliances with Evil Dragons and Demons
Gain the Confidence of Outsiders and Betray Them

Three Sins:

Loyalty to Anyone Else Besides Queen and Cult
Allying with Good Dragons
Showing Weakness by Succumbing to the Judgment of Poison Ritual

REFINING THE CONCEPT

Making an evil demon queen for drow to worship is far from original, but the PCs have gone an interesting way with this. Instead of choosing spiders (the traditional choice), they have instead focused on serpents and dragons.

There is an evil dragon in this adventure path (see Karthus Deepfire in Book Two, pg. 18). You should definitely expand the role that he has to play in this sandbox and make him much more likely to ally with the Overlords because of these choices. The sins also mention the Judgment of Poison ritual. That definitely bears being fleshed out.

Again, I think this is enough to begin. Let's write out a short description of this patron. Remember, this information should all go to the PCs, so avoid any sort of spoilers about the campaign.

BOW BEFORE THE MOTHER OF SERPENTS

Drow are well known worshippers of demons and this is not less true of House Vytharia. You have long served the fearsome Az'Zartha, Mother of All Serpents, and your demonic patron has greatly rewarded you. But now you are persecuted. Your cult was no longer in ascendancy in Taaryssia. The Merciless Throne no longer looked upon your patron and your house with favor.

Now the temples are destroyed, your holdings are seized and your house is all but annihilated. All the others who bear your name are slaughtered. Only you and your siblings survive. If there is to be vengeance upon the Queen and the other noble houses of the City Without Mercy, then it must come from you. And you swear that it shall!

The cult of Az'Zartha will rise again. You will honor the Mother of All Serpents once more with sacrifices of flesh and blood. You will become the friend of dragons and demons. You will restore the temples and reclaim Taaryssia. And when your enemies lie in chains before you, you will show them the same measure of mercy that they showed your House. They will dance upon the Serpent's Tooth, a form of ritual impalement upon a poisoned spike that Az'Zartha favors.

But this is not an easy task. You are too few and too weak to see the Mother's work done. You must gain power, allies and wealth. You must prove yourself to Az'Zartha herself through the brutal Judgment of Poison. All of this you will do and when all the trials are finished, you will emerge from this crucible her most powerful servants and you will be rewarded.

Zya Az'Zartha! Hail the Viper Queen!

GAME MECHANICS

Alignment CE

Domains Chaos, Darkness, Evil, Scalykind, Trickery

Favored Weapons dagger, longspear

THE JUDGMENT OF POISON RITUAL

When the PCs reach 10th level in service to Az'Zartha they must, before they reach 11th level, endure the legendary Judgment of Poison. The ritual is exacting and costs each participant 1,000 gp in special incense and unique paraphernalia.

To perform the ritual, you must sacrifice a sentient victim to Az'Zartha who must come to the ritual not believing that they are the sacrifice. Knowing of this peril requires a successful DC 25 Knowledge (religion) check for non-devotees of Az'Zartha. Only one living sacrifice is required, regardless of the number of people will be performing the ritual.

From the blood of the victims, a summoning circle is painted and a serpentine demon known as a mallor arrives from the abyss. The demon delivers to the participants each a dose of Mallorian Milk refined from their own vicious poison. The participants must willingly drink this poison. The participants may use any magic or items they can muster to survive this virulent poison. There is no "cheating". Those that survive receive the favor of Az'Zartha in the form of a bonus feat Survivor of the Judgment of Poison (detailed below). Those who die were and unworthy of their Mother.

NEW POISON

Mallorian Milk

Type poison, injected; **Save** Fortitude DC 23

Onset 1 minute; **Frequency** 1/minute for 6 minutes

Effect 1d6 Con damage and paralyzed for 1 minute; **Cure** 2 consecutive saves

NEW FEATS

MARTIAL POISONER

You are practiced at poisoning weapons in the heat of combat.

Prerequisites: poison use racial ability

Benefit: You can apply poison to a weapon as a move action, instead of a standard action.

SURVIVOR OF THE JUDGMENT OF POISON

You have drunk deep of the Mallorian Milk and survived, emerging from the terrifying death spasm to become a loyal servant of Az'Zartha.

Prerequisite: A worshipper of Az'Zartha, having drank Mallorian Milk voluntarily and survived.

Benefit: You are immune to poison.

NEW MAGIC ITEM

The Az'Zarthian Mark

Aura faint transmutation and moderate enchantment; **CL** 9th
Slot none (beard); **Price** 36,000 gp; **Weight** — lbs.

DESCRIPTION

This black iron barbed amulet is given only to loyal followers of Az'Zartha by her demonic agents. The wearer's skin becomes like serpent's scales granting a +3 natural armor bonus. Once per day the wearer may cast *constricting coils* (DC 18).

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *barkskin*, *constricting coils*, creator must be a follower of Az'Zartha; **Cost** 18,000 gp

SCION OF THE MOTHER OF SERPENTS

If the PCs faithfully serve Az'Zartha and make regular sacrifices to their patron, they will eventually receive aid (after achieving 13th level). This aid comes in the form of a demonic cohort called Scatha'za'Zartha. Above the waist she is a nude drow female of stunning beauty. Below the waist she is a serpent, crimson colored and banded like a venomous asp. She is twelve feet tall from head to tail, powerfully muscled, with vicious clawed hands that weep poison.

When she speaks her voice is gentle, almost angelic. But you need merely listen to those words to learn the endless cruelty of this vile demoness. Her greatest joy is to impale the enemies of her mother still alive and watch them slowly writhe in agony while the poison coursing through their veins slowly claims them.

She has been sent to this plane with only one purpose. She is to see that the worship and service to the Mother of All Serpents spreads amongst the mortals (in particular the drow). As long as the Overlords support this goal, she will support them serving them as best she can. However, if they show one hint of turning away from Az'Zartha or weakness, she will gleefully do all she can to ensure that the each takes turn on the poisoned spike.

Scatha'za'Zartha, Scion of the Mother of all Serpents

CR 13

XP 25,600

Female mallor (serpent demon) in service to Az'Zartha
CE Large outsider (chaotic, demon, evil, extraplanar)
Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +28

DEFENSE

AC 29, touch 16, flat-footed 27 (+2 Dex, +13 natural, -1 size, +5 profane)

hp 217 (14d10+140)

Fort +21, **Ref** +11, **Will** +7

DR 10/good; **Immune** electricity, poison; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 24

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.,

Melee +1 *anarchic longspear* +22/+17/+12 (2d6+13/x3 plus poison) or 2 claws +21 (1d6+8 plus poison)

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

Special Attacks fear gaze, foul liquids

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th)

At will—*burning hands* (DC 16), *greater dispel magic*, *greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only), *unholy aura* (DC 23)

3/day—*touch of idiocy*

1/day—*scorching ray* (3 rays), *summon* (level 9, 1d4 hezrous or vocks, or 1 mallor 35%), *summon* (level 9, 1d6 Large fiendish vipers or 1d3 Huge fiendish vipers 50%)

TACTICS

During Combat Scatha prefers to attack with her spear, impaling opponents upon its poisoned spike. Her spell-like abilities and fear gaze are used against tougher foes.

Morale Scatha on the prime material plane is unafraid of death and fights to the end. On her home plane, she is more cowardly and flees if reduced to 54 hp or less.

STATISTICS

Str 27, **Dex** 15, **Con** 30, **Int** 16, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 20

Base Atk +14; **CMB** +23; **CMD** 40 (can't be tripped)

Feats Blind-Fight, Deceitful^B, Cleave, Great Cleave, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Power Attack

Skills Bluff +26, Climb +25, Diplomacy +22, Disguise +7, Intimidate +22, Knowledge (planes) +20, Perception +28, Sense Motive +20, Stealth +15, Survival +20; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Perception

Languages Abyssal, Elven, Undercommon; telepathy 100 ft.

SQ poison use

Gear +1 *anarchic longspear*

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Fear Gaze (Su) The infernal eyes of a mallor weaken the resolve of opponents peering into them. Creatures meeting its gaze must make a successful DC 22 Will save or flee in fear for 1d6 rounds. On a successful save, that opponent is immune to the fear gaze of that mallor for one day. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Foul Liquid (Su) All liquids within 100 feet of a mallor automatically foul and become unsuitable for consumption or inhabitation (no save). Magical liquids in the area receive a DC 27 Fortitude save to avoid the effects. Creatures drinking fouled water must make a successful DC 27 Fortitude save or become nauseated for 1 minute. Aquatic creatures (or those that can breathe water) swimming in fouled water must make a Constitution check (DC 10, +1 per previous check) each round they remain in the area or begin suffocating.

A mallor can foul up to 20 gallons of liquid a day using this ability. Sentient- or liquid-based creatures (such as water elementals) must make a successful DC 27 Fortitude save or take 1d8 points of Constitution damage each hour they remain in the area. At Constitution 0, the creature's liquid structure fouls and it dies. The save DCs are Constitution-based. A mallor can suppress or resume this ability at will as a free action.

Poison (Ex) Claw—injury; **save** Fort DC 27; **frequency** 1/round for 6 rounds; **effect** 1d6 Strength; **cure** 2 consecutive saves. The save DC is Constitution-based.

The following text is the property of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. and is Copyright 2000 Wizards of the Coast, Inc ("Wizards"). All Rights Reserved.

1. Definitions: (a) "Contributors" means the copyright and/or trademark owners who have contributed Open Game Content; (b) "Derivative Material" means copyrighted material including derivative works and translations (including into other computer languages), potation, modification, correction, addition, extension, upgrade, improvement, compilation, abridgment or other form in which an existing work may be recast, transformed or adapted; (c) "Distribute" means to reproduce, license, rent, lease, sell, broadcast, publicly display, transmit or otherwise distribute; (d) "Open Game Content" means the game mechanic and includes the methods, procedures, processes and routines to the extent such content does not embody the Product Identity and is an enhancement over the prior art and any additional content clearly identified as Open Game Content by the Contributor, and means any work covered by this License, including translations and derivative works under copyright law, but specifically excludes Product Identity. (e) "Product Identity" means product and product line names, logos and identifying marks including trade dress; artifacts; creatures characters; stories, storylines, plots, thematic elements, dialogue, incidents, language, artwork, symbols, designs, depictions, likenesses, formats, poses, concepts, themes and graphic, photographic and other visual or audio representations; names and descriptions of characters, spells, enchantments, personalities, teams, personas, likenesses and special abilities; places, locations, environments, creatures, equipment, magical or supernatural abilities or effects, logos, symbols, or graphic designs; and any other trademark or registered trademark clearly identified as Product identity by the owner of the Product Identity, and which specifically excludes the Open Game Content; (f) "Trademark" means the logos, names, mark, sign, motto, designs that are used by a Contributor to identify itself or its products or the associated products contributed to the Open Game License by the Contributor (g) "Use", "Used" or "Using" means to use, Distribute, copy, edit, format, modify, translate and otherwise create Derivative Material of Open Game Content. (h) "You" or "Your" means the licensee in terms of this agreement.

2. The License: This License applies to any Open Game Content that contains a notice indicating that the Open Game Content may only be Used under and in terms of this License. You must affix such a notice to any Open Game Content that you Use. No terms may be added to or subtracted from this License except as described by the License itself. No other terms or conditions may be applied to any Open Game Content distributed using this License.

3. Offer and Acceptance: By Using the Open Game Content You indicate Your acceptance of the terms of this License.

4. Grant and Consideration: In consideration for agreeing to use this License, the Contributors grant You a perpetual, worldwide, royalty-free, non-exclusive license with the exact terms of this License to Use, the Open Game Content.

5. Representation of Authority to Contribute: If You are contributing original material as Open Game Content, You represent that Your Contributions are Your original creation and/or You have sufficient rights to grant the rights conveyed by this License.

6. Notice of License Copyright: You must update the COPYRIGHT NOTICE portion of this License to include the exact text of the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any Open Game Content You are copying, modifying or distributing, and You must add the title, the copyright date, and the copyright holder's name to the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any original Open Game Content you Distribute.

7. Use of Product Identity: You agree not to Use any Product Identity, including as an indication as to compatibility, except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of each element of that Product Identity. You agree not to indicate compatibility or co-adaptability with any Trademark or Registered Trademark in conjunction with a work containing Open Game Content except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of such Trademark or Registered Trademark. The use of any Product Identity in Open Game Content does not constitute a challenge to the ownership of that Product Identity. The owner of any Product Identity used in Open Game Content shall retain all rights, title and interest in and to that Product Identity.

8. Identification: If you distribute Open Game Content You must clearly indicate which portions of the work that you are distributing are Open Game Content.

9. Updating the License: Wizards or its designated Agents may publish updated versions of this License. You may use any authorized version of this License to copy, modify and distribute any Open Game Content originally distributed under any version of this License.

10. Copy of this License: You MUST include a copy of this License with every copy of the Open Game Content You Distribute.

11. Use of Contributor Credits: You may not market or advertise the Open Game Content using the name of any Contributor unless You have written permission from the Contributor to do so.

12. Inability to Comply: If it is impossible for You to comply with any of the terms of this License with respect to some or all of the Open Game Content due to statute, judicial order, or governmental regulation then You may not Use any Open Game Material so affected.

13. Termination: This License will terminate automatically if You fail to comply with all terms herein and fail to cure such breach within 30 days of becoming aware of the breach. All sublicenses shall survive the termination of this License.

14. Reformation: If any provision of this License is held to be unenforceable, such provision shall be reformed only to the extent necessary to make it enforceable.

15. COPYRIGHT NOTICE

Open Game License v 1.0a Copyright 2000, Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

System Reference Document. Copyright 2000, Wizards of the Coast, Inc.; Authors Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, based on material by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson.

Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook. Copyright 2009, Paizo Publishing, LLC; Author: Jason Bulmahn, based on material by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, and Skip Williams.

Pathfinder RPG Bestiary. Copyright 2009, Paizo Publishing, LLC; Author: Jason Bulmahn, based on material by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook and Skip Williams.

Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2. Copyright 2010, Paizo Publishing, LLC; Authors Wolfgang Baur, Jason Bulmahn, Adam Daigle, Graeme Davis, Crystal Frasier, Joshua J. Frost, Tim Hitchcock, Brandon Hodge, James Jacobs, Steve Kenson, Hal MacLean, Martin Mason, Rob McCreary, Erik Mona, Jason Nelson, Patrick Renie, Sean K. Reynolds, F. Wesley Schneider, Owen K.C. Stephens, James L. Sutter, Russ Taylor and Greg A. Vaughan, based on material by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, and Skip Williams.

Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3. Copyright 2011, Paizo Publishing, LLC; Authors Jesse Benner, Jason Bulmahn, Adam Daigle, James Jacobs, Michael Kenway, Rob McCreary, Patrick Renie, Chris Sims, F. Wesley Schneider, James L. Sutter, and Russ Taylor, based on material by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, and Skip Williams.

Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 4 © 2013, Paizo Publishing, LLC; Authors: Dennis Baker, Jesse Benner, Savannah Broadway, Ross Byers, Adam Daigle, Tim Hitchcock, Tracy Hurley, James Jacobs, Matt James, Rob McCreary, Jason Nelson, Tom Phillips, Stephen Radney-MacFarland, Sean K. Reynolds, F. Wesley Schneider, Tork Shaw, and Russ Taylor

Advanced Player's Guide. Copyright 2010, Paizo Publishing, LLC; Author: Jason Bulmahn.

Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Race Guide © 2012, Paizo Publishing, LLC; Authors: Dennis Baker, Jesse Benner, Benjamin Bruck, Jason Bulmahn, Adam Daigle, Jim Groves, Tim Hitchcock, Hal MacLean, Jason Nelson, Stephen Radney-MacFarland, Owen K.C. Stephens, Todd Stewart, and Russ Taylor

Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Magic. Copyright 2011, Paizo Publishing, LLC; Authors: Jason Bulmahn, Tim Hitchcock, Colin McComb, Rob McCreary, Jason Nelson, Stephen Radney-MacFarland, Sean K. Reynolds, Owen K.C. Stephens, and Russ Taylor.

Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Combat. Copyright 2011, Paizo Publishing, LLC; Authors: Jason Bulmahn, Tim Hitchcock, Colin McComb, Rob McCreary, Jason Nelson, Stephen Radney-MacFarland, Sean K. Reynolds, Owen K.C. Stephens, and Russ Taylor.

Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Ultimate Equipment © 2012, Paizo Publishing, LLC; Authors: Dennis Baker, Jesse Benner, Benjamin Bruck, Ross Byers, Brian J. Cortijo, Ryan Costello, Mike Ferguson, Matt Goetz, Jim Groves, Tracy Hurley, Matt James, Jonathan H. Keith, Michael Kenway, Hal MacLean, Jason Nelson, Tork Shaw, Owen KC Stephens, and Russ Taylor.

Pathfinder Roleplaying Game: Ultimate Campaign. © 2013, Paizo Publishing, LLC; Authors: Jesse Benner, Benjamin Bruck, Jason Bulmahn, Ryan Costello, Adam Daigle, Matt Goetz, Tim Hitchcock, James Jacobs, Ryan Macklin, Colin McComb, Jason Nelson, Richard Pett, Stephen Radney-MacFarland, Patrick Renie, Sean K. Reynolds, F. Wesley Schneider, James L. Sutter, Russ Taylor, and Stephen Townsend.

Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide. Copyright 2010, Paizo Publishing, LLC; Authors: Cam Banks, Wolfgang Baur, Jason Bulmahn, Jim Butler, Eric Cagle, Graeme Davis, Adam Daigle, Joshua J. Frost, James Jacobs, Kenneth Hite, Steve Kenson, Robin Laws, Tito Leati, Rob McCreary, Hal Maclean, Colin McComb, Jason Nelson, David Noonan, Richard Pett, Rich Redman, Sean K. Reynolds, F. Wesley Schneider, Amber Scott, Doug Seacat, Mike Selinker, Lisa Stevens, James L. Sutter, Russ Taylor, Penny Williams, Skip Williams, Teeuwynn Woodruff.

The Book of Experimental Might. Copyright 2008, Monte J. Cook. All rights reserved.

Tome of Horrors. Copyright 2002, Necromancer Games, Inc.; Authors: Scott Greene, with Clark Peterson, Erica Balsley, Kevin Baase, Casey Christofferson, Lance Hawvermale, Travis Hawvermale, Patrick Lawinger, and Bill Webb; Based on original content from TSR.

Cave Troll from the Tome of Horrors Complete, Copyright 2011, Necromancer Games, Inc., published and distributed by Frog God Games; Authors Scott Greene and Clark Peterson.

Dire creature template from the Tome of Horrors Complete, Copyright 2011, Necromancer Games, Inc., published and distributed by Frog God Games; Author Scott Greene

Flame-Spawned Creature from the Tome of Horrors Complete, Copyright 2011, Necromancer Games, Inc., published and distributed by Frog God Games; Author Scott Greene

Mallor Demon from the Tome of Horrors Complete, Copyright 2011, Necromancer Games, Inc., published and distributed by Frog God Games; Author Scott Greene.

Strangle Weed from the Tome of Horrors Complete, Copyright 2011, Necromancer Games, Inc., published and distributed by Frog God Games; Author Scott Greene, based on original material by Gary Gygax

Advanced Bestiary. Copyright 2004, Green Ronin Publishing, LLC. Author: Matthew Sernett.

Pathfinder Companion: Dwarves of Golarion ©2009, Paizo Publishing, LLC; Authors: David A. Eitelbach, Russ Taylor, JD Wiker, Keri Wiker, and Hank Woon

Adventurer's Handbook: Genius Guide Volume 1. Copyright 2010, Super Genius Games. Authors: Owen K.C. Stephens and Stan!

The Genius Guide To: Simple Monster Templates. Copyright 2011, Super Genius Games. Author: Owen K.C. Stephens

Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Horsemen of the Apocalypse: Book of the Damned, Vol. 3 © 2011, Paizo Publishing, LLC; Author: Todd Stewart.

Pathfinder Adventure Path #38: Racing to Ruin. © 2010, Paizo Publishing, LLC; Author: Tim Hitchcock.

Throne of Night Book Two-- The Earth's Wound. Copyright 2014, Fire Mountain Games LLC; Author: Gary McBride.

I hope that posterity will judge me kindly, not only as to the things which I have explained, but also to those which I have intentionally omitted so as to leave to others the pleasure of discovery.

--Rene Descartes

BENEATH THE GREAT JUMPING OFF POINT (OVERLORD VERSION)



8 miles across

main
passage

secondary
passage

minor
passage

THE
GREAT JUMPING OFF
POINT

THRONE OF NIGHT

THE EARTH'S WOUND

EXPLORE A LOST WORLD

Build an empire beneath the earth! You have forged a fledgling realm that stretches from the deep gnome town of Fasturvalt to the drow tower of Vothys, though the weird Fungal Jungle and beyond. But can you hold what you have built against the many threats that would seize your throne?

And more than simply defending what you already have, can you expand your empire? Can you conquer a lost world of elementals, orchids and dinosaurs? Can you uncover the many secrets of the mysterious region known as the Earth's Wound? Will you die in darkness or claim for yourself an ever greater Throne of Night.

Welcome to the second chapter of "Throne of Night," a subterranean sandbox adventure path.

Inside you'll find:

- "The Earth's Wound," a Pathfinder compatible adventure for characters 6th through 10th level written by Gary McBride
- Full color maps and illustrations by Michael Clarke
- Advice for running this campaign with an all dwarven party of noble explorers or an all drow party of wicked overlords
- An optional system for creating divine patrons to support your band of heroes.
- And more!

The quest to build your empire in the depths continues!

