

Way of the Wicked

book two:
call forth darkness



A Villainous Adventure Path by
Gary McBride & Michael Clarke

Player's Map



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“The wicked envy and hate; it is their way of admiring.”

--Victor Hugo

ADVANCEMENT

This campaign uses the medium advancement track.

ACT ONE: FARHOLDE

Our villains arrive in the border town of Farholde. Characters should be 6th level by the time they discover the location of the lost temple “The Horn of Abaddon”.

ACT TWO: TAKING THE HORN

Our villains seize control of the ancient daemonic temple and learn the rite to summon Vetra-Kali Eats-the-Eyes. By the time they are masters of the temple, they should be 7th level.

ACT THREE: THIRTY ONE WEEKS

For thirty one weeks, our villains must defend the Horn of Abaddon. By the end of this ordeal, they should be 9th level.

ACT FOUR: FIVE DAYS UNTIL DARKNESS

The last five days before the unholy ritual is complete. The PCs should be 10th level by the time this adventure is complete.

WHAT NEXT?

10th level is where Book Three: Tears of the Blessed begins.

INTRODUCTION: DUNGEON, SWEET DUNGEON

When I first imagined an adventure path that featured villains instead of heroes, my first question was -- why would it matter? Why would roleplaying a bad guy present a substantially different gaming experience from simply being a greedy, self-serving adventurer? Here in this book, we answer that question.

In the first chapter of "Way of the Wicked" your players were still fundamentally adventurers. Though they adventured for a slightly different reason than your typical band of PCs, they performed very familiar tasks. They travelled from dungeon to dungeon fighting opponents, defeating traps and gathering loot. The dungeon may have been a prison they were breaking out of and the monsters were the guards, but still the familiar structure remained. In "Call Forth Darkness," that changes.

Before this chapter is over, your players will do things they've likely never done before in a fantasy roleplaying game. Instead of the usual PC classes and races, they will be playing demon-worshipping frog men, soul-hungry wraiths and imprisoned daemons bound begrudgingly to service. Rather than defeating traps, they will be setting them. In short, more than just being adventurers, in this chapter your players get to be the dungeon.

And what a dungeon we've given them.

Welcome to the Horn of Abaddon. For 222 days, your PCs are in charge of one of the wickedest places on the planet. For 222 days, your band of bad guys will be overseeing a ritual so blasphemous, so horrific that reality itself will rebel against them. And the PC's villainous coven is not afforded the luxury of performing this atrocity in secret.

The forces of good will soon learn of their wicked scheme and do all in their power to stop them. The good guys will not understand (at least at first) just how bad things are in the Horn. But they will definitely sense that this ritual is something they want to defeat by any means necessary.

This means for seven months, your pack of villains will be confronting the most dangerous monster of them all -- adventurers. Inside this book, we're giving you piles of descriptions and stat blocks for adventurers to besiege the Horn. We've written up no less than seven separate bands your PCs must deal with over the course of their career as masters of the dungeon.

Personally, I'd replace at least one of those adventuring parties. Throw it out. Instead, replace it with PCs from your players' own past. You remember that annoying enchanter who mind-controlled all your monsters? The druid who stayed in bear-form most of the last campaign? The rogue who talked his way out of every death-trap you threw at him? Bring 'em to the Horn. You've got 222 days for the players to receive a large dose of their own medicine.

I can sense some skepticism. Seven months? How can you possibly keep that interesting? This is a completely valid concern. Honestly, overseeing every detail of a complex dungeon defense for 222 days sounds about as interesting as doing your taxes.

Within these pages, we aim to dispense with all the boring details leaving you and your players to skip straight to the moments of sheer excitement and heart-pounding uncertainty. Further, at the back of this book you'll find an optional system for managing what the PCs' many minions are up to. Let me take a moment to emphasize that the system is optional. With a page of notes and some common sense, you could easily ignore it.

What this mini-game tries to accomplish is giving options that perhaps your players would not have thought of on their own while freeing them from the rigors of routine. Who cares what every boggard and brigand is up to? All we want to know is what did they accomplish for our masterminds this week? This system answers those questions.

But most importantly, whatever adventurers you choose to throw at them, whatever system you employ -- remember this. This dungeon is not yours, Game Master. This dungeon belongs to your players. Let them customize it to their hearts' content. Let them make it their own. And then, as they have done to so many of your dungeons before, unleash your adventurers to gleefully wreck the place. Revenge at last.

— Gary

BOOK TWO: CALL FORTH DARKNESS

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND: THE HORN OF ABADDON

Markadian I called the Victorious (usually simply the Victor) was the greatest king in the recent history of Talingarde. He united the kingdom and raised a dispirited people from despair and darkness. He reigned for forty-six years and is still lauded in every corner of the kingdom for his many great deeds. Some of his heroics are widely celebrated and well known by every child. Some are secret and deliberately hidden. The greatest secret of the Victor's reign without a doubt is the raid upon the Horn of Abaddon and the banishment of the daemon prince Vetra-Kali Eats-the-Eyes.

The Horn of Abaddon was once an ancient stronghold of primal evil. For centuries, it was the sanctuary of a foul cult who called themselves "The Sons of the Pale Horseman". The Sons were a thoroughly noxious organization that venerated sickness and disease above all else, seeking to bring the blessings of plague upon the world. For centuries, the cult dwelled in secrecy never facing any serious opposition from the local lords. The death-priests were not primarily focused on Talingarde after all. Their ambitions were wider than that. They used their hidden stronghold to inflict horrors upon the world.

After defeating the pirates of the western coast, the Victor learned of the Horn of Abaddon. The paladinking could not abide this darkness on the borders of his domain. He led a small retinue of loyal retainers against the Horn. He slaughtered the death-priests and their daemon servitors to a man. And there in the throne-room of the daemon prince, the Victor laid low the immortal master of the death-cult and shattered the daemon's coil of flesh. Vetra-Kali was banished in shame back to the daemon realms and the reach of the Pale Horseman was immensely shortened upon the material plane. Truly it was a great victory for the forces of light.

This triumph was not enough for the Victor. He could sense that the Horn of Abaddon was still a nexus of evil. He knew this darkness could rise again in time. And so he commanded his priests to fashion a great seal of silver. He personally placed the seal in the sanctum of the daemon prince. For seven days, he fasted and prayed that what he did then would never be undone. Blessed Mitra heard his prayers. The divine seal became a holy artifact. Hence forth, it would be almost impossible to once more call forth darkness from the Horn of Abaddon.

Almost.

Cardinal Samuel Havelyn was a scholar with a penchant for banned and blasphemous books. It was the Cardinal who, during his brief tenure as a prince of the Church of the sun god Mitra, learned of this secret deed of the Victor. The information about the Victor's great deed was purposefully kept concealed because as long as the holy seal remained lost and undisturbed, Vetra-Kali and his brood could never again trouble this world. The Cardinal found the tale fascinating but was, when first he found it, not yet so lost to darkness that he could ever imagine actually using it. After all, who would possibly benefit from this daemoniac horror being once more unleashed upon our world?

How times have changed. In time, Cardinal Havelyn became a full-fledged cultist of the devil-god Asmodeus. The Church discovered his blasphemy and tried him as a heretic. Burned at the stake with his books heaped at his feet, the Cardinal never had a chance during his lifetime to use the information he had uncovered.

But now, Cardinal Havelyn is risen as the lich Adrastus Thorn. Thorn believes that if the seal against Vetra-Kali could be broken, then the daemon prince could be summoned once more to our material plane and bound to a single act of service. And Thorn knows exactly what act of service he requires.

Vetra-Kali is a powerful and ancient leukodaemon, a harbinger of pestilence and a high servant of the Pale Horseman. Thorn believes that if the daemon prince could be bound, then Vetra-Kali could be commanded to call forth a pestilence so virulent it will bring Talingarde to its knees. If this was done in conjunction with the invasion of the bugbear horde of Sakkarot Fire-Axe, Thorn believes that even a nation as strong and devout as Talingarde could not weather these twin storms.

The first storm is already unleashed. Thanks to the Nessian Knot (the PCs), the Watch Wall is broken and Sakkarot rampages through the Borderlands. Already, the bugbear horde has fought three battles with the armies of the north – Lorringsgate, Ambryl and Tarrington Fields. Three battles fought and three victories won by the Fire-Axe! The war is going well.

But Cardinal Thorn can read the writing upon the wall. Already word has reached the south of Sakkarot's incursion. The royal house of Darius, the heirs of the Victor, muster their armies. King Markadian V called the Brave dons his armor and rallies his countless vassals. Soon, the king will gather an army that the Fire-Axe has little chance of defeating. And then, the plots of Cardinal Thorn will be overthrown and once more Talingarde will prevail. This Thorn cannot abide.

THE FATE OF THE FOURTH

The PCs were not Cardinal Thorn's first choice to raid the Horn of Abaddon. To this task he assigned his fourth knot -- The Phlegethian Knot. The fourth knot seemed perfectly suited to the task. Recruited from a corrupted barbaric fire cult, the members of the knot were the only Caer Bryr natives in Thorn's service. Led by the elven ranger Aiden Kael they were dispatched months before Cardinal Thorn recruited the Nessian Knot.

At first, they were successful. They located the lost Horn and communicated back a rough estimate of its whereabouts. And then silence. That was months ago and Thorn has become certain that Aiden's band is either dead or has betrayed him. Focused upon the task of starting the war, Thorn has had no time to devote any real attention to this errand. But now he has a plan.

Cardinal Thorn has decided that releasing this eldritch plague upon the war-torn nation is now a priority. And who better to send than not one but both of his newest and most successful knots -- the seventh and the ninth. After all, these were the two knots who together broke the Watch Wall and assassinated the borderland's best commanders. The victories of the Fire-Axe are directly attributable to their success. Where the fourth failed, surely they will succeed!

What Thorn does not know is why the fourth failed. From Thorn's research, he believes that the Horn is sealed and abandoned. This is not true and it is this very misinformation that got the Phlegethian Knot killed. Aiden Kael was cautious about approaching the Horn, deftly managing to sneak by the self-appointed guardian of the place -- a treant named Jurak the Elder.

But once inside, he believed it likely the site would be empty of any real threats. This caused the Phlegethian Knot to camp in the ruins of the Horn with only one guard posted. It was during their very first night inside the daemoniac ruin, just after they had reported to Thorn, that they encountered one of the Horn's newer inhabitants -- Ezra Thrice-Damned.

Ezra Thrice-Damned is a cunning and malicious wraith who still haunts the Horn. He came upon the Knot and ambushed them. He silently murdered the lone guard and then one by one devoured the sleeping Iraen. Drinking their very souls, three of the Phlegethian Knot have risen to become wraith servitors of Ezra.

Aiden himself managed only barely to escape the slaughter. He fled desperate into the upper reaches of the Horn. The elf's bad luck persisted and he blundered into another pair of residents: Vexor and Hexor.

Vexor and Hexor are both greater ceustodaemons (or guardian daemons). Defeated by the Victor during his raid, they were not permanently destroyed only disrupted. They have reformed still bound to their task as guardians and it was they who finally slew Aiden Kael and completed the annihilation of the fourth knot.

The truth is that the Horn remains a dangerous place. Creatures both vicious and malign have made it their lair, drawn by the lingering evil of the place. An entire tribe of Dagon-worshipping boggards infests the lower caverns, for example. Even some of the death cult's original traps remain intact and lethal.

Cardinal Thorn knows nothing of these dangers nor does he care. He is sending the two knots with only one command -- bring me the plague of Vetra-Kali! He cares not one whit what must be done to accomplish this charge. He cares only that the task is done and as quickly as possible.

WHAT MUST BE DONE

To accomplish Cardinal Thorn's plan, the PCs have a long road ahead of them. First, they must rediscover the Horn using the information sent to Thorn by the fourth knot. This task is covered in detail in Act I.

Second, they must take control of the Horn either slaying or (better) subjugating its denizens to serve as guards. Seizing the horn is described in Act II.

Third, once the Horn is theirs, the villains must learn the ritual whereby they can break the seal and summon Vetra-Kali Eats-the-Eyes to the prime material plane. This ritual is no trivial matter. To break the powerful holy artifact that keeps the daemon prince away requires 666 prayers (3 per day). The ritual is laid out in Act III.

For more than seven months, the PCs must hold the Horn from anyone who would try to stop them. Worse, as soon as the ritual begins, the Horn ignites with magical energy sending a visible beacon into the night sky that draws Vetra-Kali through the Astral. There is no hiding the Horn any more.

That is the crux of this adventure. Using whatever resources they can muster, the PCs must conduct the ritual and defend their dungeon from all comers for 222 days. They can gather an evil cult to aid them. They can enslave minions to guard the Horn. They can build wicked death traps. Or, they can rely upon their own prowess. To succeed, they will likely need to do all of these. Once the ritual is begun, the Horn sings into the void for its master to return. Will the PCs be strong enough to see the ritual through to its ultimate conclusion?

ACT ONE: FARHOLDE

This act covers everything that happens before the Horn of Abaddon is discovered.

EVENT ONE: TIADORA'S PLEASURE BARGE

Tiadora (a handmaiden devil and bound slave of Adrastus Thorn) contacted the PCs at the end of the last adventure. She has been commanded by her master to escort our band of villains to their next mission. She leads them to a ramshackle river barge "Halstyn's Folly" tied to Lake Tarik's bank. The captain and three man crew of this shallow-bottomed barge are all thoroughly under Tiadora's control (via her at-will *enthral*). They are certainly no threat. Tiadora will tolerate no delay. "The master commands you board. You will learn more later."

Accommodations are crude. There is only one cabin and Tiadora has already evicted the so-called captain and made that her own personal domain. The she-devil is not particularly adept at sharing. That means that the rest of the PCs must sleep with the crew on the deck of the barge. There is a roof but no walls and at night on the lake and rivers, it can be bitterly cold.

"The Folly" is bound for Farholde, a three hundred mile journey through the great scar that almost cuts the isle of Talingarde in twain. The barge is sluggish making less than twenty four miles a day. That means the PCs have twelve days to rest and enjoy the leisurely journey.

Tiadora (Handmaiden Devil)

CR 14

XP 38,400

hp 187 (see the Devil, Handmaiden entry in the Bestiary 2)

TACTICS

During Combat In the unlikely event that a PC either attacks Tiadora or somehow gets her involved in a fight, this is how she handles combat. Against outsiders, she is ruthless and sadistic inflicting death and pain quickly and without remorse. Against members of the knot, Tiadora leads with her *black tentacles* spell-like ability trying to entangle and render them helpless, hopefully effecting their surrender. However, if any attacker does one point of damage (through her damage reduction) this vain horror from the pit reveals her true nature and rips them to pieces.

Morale Without her master present, Tiadora will not fight to the death. If a fight ever looks truly threatening, she teleports away.

Tiadora herself is not idle. Though "The Folly" is adequately provisioned and never docks, every night the barge anchors within sight of a village or keep.

Tiadora uses her at-will teleportation power to visit each settlement and commit unimaginable atrocities to each in turn. These atrocities she performs, she does so in the form of a Knight of the Alerion, one of Talingarde's sacred defenders.

These are not random acts of cruelty (though the handmaiden devil does relish them). Tiadora takes the form of a knight and for one night murders and tortures helpless, innocent villagers claiming all the while to be searching for gremlin-like followers of Asmodeus. She kills loved ones, pillars of the communities and those who are obviously incapable of being guilty.



She perpetrates these massacres and leaves lots of witnesses. Thus does Cardinal Thorn hope to shake support against the current regime and the Church of Mitra in the Borderlands. Every morning, at the barge resumes its journey, Tiadora watches from afar as another settlement wails and mourns the results of her brutal visitation.

If anyone asks, Tiadora will answer a few questions.

Q: Where are we headed?

A: *We are bound for Farholde, the northernmost colony of Talingarde.*

Q: Why are we headed there?

A: *To bring Talingarde to its knees. The master will reveal more when he is ready.*

Q: Are you coming with us?

A: *I am tasked to escort you to Farholde and to introduce you to old friends of the master. Once that is done, I have other errands. Why? Will you miss me, dearest?*

Q: What are you doing at night? Why are we stopping so close to the villages?

A: *I am reminding the poor souls of Talingarde what hell is like. Do you have a problem with that?*

THE MASTER ARRIVES

On the twelfth night, Cardinal Adrastus Thorn finally shows himself. He teleports into Tiadora's cabin and spends a few moments getting a complete report from the devil. He then sends her to summon his ninth knot.

"The master is here and commands you attend him," Tiadora says grimly. *"He's in the cabin."*

Though in truth, Cardinal Thorn is actually a lich animated by hatred and Asmodeus' divine agency, he takes care to appear to be a living human. He once more takes on the form of a devilishly handsome bald man clad in black and burgundy robes. He wears black gloves and openly displays his silver unholy symbol of the Lord of Hell. He sports a wicked and knowing grin.

He greets his knot and is quickly to business: *"You have served me faithfully, my ninth knot, and I have rewarded you both in treasure and vengeance. Thanks to your efforts, the Fire-Axe has been unleashed. Even now he writes his name in blood across the Borderlands."*

"Three battles have been fought and three victories won. The villages of Ambryl and Tarrington Fields lie sacked. The fortress of Lorringsgate is in ruins. Each of you did your part in seeing these triumphs come to fruition. Do not think I have forgotten that."

"But our work is not yet done. Talingarde has not yet acquiesced to our unholy master nor tasted the full measure of our vengeance. So I have another mission for you. Tomorrow this barge will dock in Farholde, the northernmost town in all the realm. Farholde is a backwater of no real significance. Its lord has already left the place hoping for glory in the war. But it does border the Caer Bryr (pronounced care-briar), the largest unmapped forest on the entire island."

"Hidden within the Caer Bryr is the Horn of Abaddon, an ancient temple once occupied by a particularly loathesome death cult called 'The Sons of the Pale Horseman'. Almost eighty years ago the first Darian king, Markadian I called the Victorious overthrew the Horn and destroyed the Sons. No great loss, honestly."

"But what the Victor found within the temple is why we are here. He defeated a daemon prince called Vetra-Kali Eats-the-Eyes. So terrified of this monstrosity was the king, that he had the priests of Mitra craft a great silver seal to forever forbid the daemon from returning to our plane of existence. The seal remains to this day."

"I have learned the truth about this daemon prince. I have learned what the Victor feared. Vetra-Kali is an arch-deacon in service to the lord of pestilence. This immortal monster could create a plague so virulent that it will bring Talingarde to its knees."

"When the Victor attacked, the Daemon Prince was close to unleashing his masterpiece upon the world -- a pestilence known as the Tears of Achlys (pronounced ACK-Lis). I am uncertain of the specifics of this plague but if anything could terror in the heart of the Victor, then I want it. The Tears of Achlys will be our poisoned dagger into the heart of Talingarde."

"I already have agents in the great cities of this kingdom. With this pestilence, they could deliver blight and death to the very center of the realm. Caught between the twin storms of the Fire-Axe and Vetra-Kali's gift, we shall bring ruin to Talingarde. This gift you shall bring to me."

"It will not be easy. I have already lost one band of followers on this errand. I sent the fourth knot to find the Horn of Abaddon. They succeeded at that at least -- revealing to me that it was concealed within a great spire of stone less than a day's ride from Farholde."

"But then they vanished. I have heard no more from the elven ranger Aiden Kael since. He knew the Caer Bryr well so no normal hazard would defeat him. Perhaps the Horn of Abaddon is guarded. I cannot say. But it matters not! The Tears of Achlys must be mine!"

"I am undeterred by this setback. Where one knot failed, two will succeed. I will also send my seventh knot – the Knot Hibernial led by Elise Zadaria. I task you with finding the Horn and calling forth Vetra-Kali. Elise and her knot will aid you. Elise proved herself a capable assassin in our last venture. The seventh knot will remain in Farholde and see that anyone who tries to find the Horn and interfere with your work meets an unhappy end. Thus, you will have time to do what must be done.

"There is another who may be able to aid you. Once a thriving cult of Asmodeus existed in Farholde. It was led by a half-elvish noble – the Baron Arkov Vandermir. He is treacherous and decadent, but wealthy and well-connected. Tiadora will introduce you before she departs.

"I know not what aid the Baron can provide, but his family is old and long has dwelt in Farholde. Never trust him but know this – he's afraid of me and with good reason. If he does try anything remind him that you are in Farholde on my behalf. That should keep him in line.

"Find the Horn. Find the seal and shatter it. Call Vetra-Kali back to our world. Bind him to your will and force service from the monster. And then bring his gift to me. Can you do this, my knot? Have I found servants with might and will enough to see this task done?"

This adventure path assumes that the PCs say yes to Thorne's request. If the PCs for any reason balk at this mission, remember that Thorne is a wiley negotiator. He is perfectly willing to lie, cajole or threaten them into accepting this mission.

Feel free to tailor the speech above to suit your players' motivations. There are only a few key points that you need to make absolutely sure to hit:

1. Find the Horn, break the seal and summon Vetra-Kali into our world.
2. When Vetra-Kali is here, get the Tears of Achlys from him and bring them to me.
3. Tiadora will introduce you to the Baron Vandermir. Don't trust him but he worships Asmodeus too. He may prove useful.
4. The Horn is less than a day outside of Farholde in a spire of stone.
5. I've already sent other minions to seek the Horn of Abaddon. They failed me.
6. Don't fail me!

Once finished, Thorn will answer questions.

Q: Did Aiden Kael work alone?

A: No, he had a cult of dupes who served him -- mostly barbarians recruited from a primitive fire cult.

Q: Could Aiden Kael still be alive? Should we rescue him?

A: Kael is nothing! If he is alive, then he has either abandoned his mission or failed at it miserably. Either crime is sufficient to warrant his destruction.

Q: How do we break the seal or bind the daemon?

A: No idea. But I have confidence you can discern what must be done. Let nothing stand in your way!

Q: What is the seal exactly?

A: The seal is a powerful Mitran artifact. The Victor himself consecrated the blasted thing by praying and fasting for seven days over it, or so the story goes. Whatever the truth, it is certainly a powerful artifact of Asmodeus' most bitter enemy. Find a way to shatter it! I care not what it involves or how long it takes! Break the seal!

Q: Why would others be looking for the Horn?

A: There is a rumor that floats around Farholde that a lost temple called the Horn of Abaddon contains a great treasure. This draws treasure seekers to try and find the temple. So far they have failed to find it. I know this because of Kael's last report.

Q: Do we really wish to unleash a plague daemon?

A: Vetra-Kali is a tool. Nothing more, nothing less. Perhaps if you are clever, once you have his gift you can figure out a way to send him back.

Q: Should we kill Vetra-Kali?

A: Vetra-Kali is a powerful daemon prince. He would be a difficult adversary. But perhaps, if you could find a weakness, you could defeat him. Regardless, I care not. Slaying Vetra-Kali is of no import. Retrieving the pestilence is all that matters.

Q: How much are we being paid?

A: You're not getting greedy, are you? Do you remember Captain Odenkirk? He is a lesson in the dangers of greed. Serve me well and you shall be rewarded.

When all questions are done, Thorne hands them another clay seal marked with the unholy symbol of Asmodeus (similar to the one in Book One).

If you recover the Tears or need to report anything to me, break this seal. I will send Tiadora to wherever you break it within an hour or two. Now go with the blessings of the Prince of Hell and see this mission done!

EVENT TWO: RUMORMONGERING

Cardinal Thorn does not linger long aboard the craft. He is quickly gone, teleported away. The next day the barge docks in Farholde. Tiadora has already contacted Baron Vandermir and arranged for the PCs to have dinner with him tomorrow night. "Best to find something presentable to wear," she sneers. This gives the PCs some time to investigate Farholde, buy supplies, and so forth. Farholde is fully detailed in the Gazetteer (page 92).

RUMORS IN FARHOLDE

Rumors are to be had in every shop, tavern and inn in Farholde. Roll 1d20 to determine what the PCs learn:

1. Lord Welshire has taken the army and gone to join the war. What if monsters from the Caer Bryr attack? We're defenseless! (Partially true. The army is gone, but a small retinue remains in the watchtower and the watch is still on duty. Farholde is far from defenseless.)
2. On the northern edge of the Caer Bryr are those strange hills called the Karst. They say somewhere in those hills is lost a great treasure! (True. There is actually a great treasure hidden in the Horn of Abaddon.)
3. It's impossible those bugbear brutes could have broken the Watch Wall without help. Someone has betrayed us! (Oh so true.)
4. My poor Jeffy has gone to war. I hope he's alright! (A common sentiment about town. Many loved one have gone to fight the Fire-Axe and his horde. Pity them for if Thorn has his way, likely Jeffy will not be coming home.)
5. The Caer Bryr is full of living trees -- everyone knows that, but it's rare to see them so far north. Still, I've heard tell that one dwells not a day's ride from this very tavern! (True. This rumor originates from Jurak the Elder -- see Act Two, Event One.)
6. Did you hear about the elf staying at the Wandering Friar Inn that disappeared now three weeks back? Went into the Briar and weren't never seen again! (True. This refers to Aiden Kael -- see Event Five for details.)
7. Before Lord Welshire left, he had a priest of Mitra conjure up an angel to guard the town. If anyone gives us trouble, that angel will show 'em what for. (False. This is wishful thinking from a worried populace pure and simple. No angels protect Farholde.)
8. Did you hear Hallack Amon paid off his father's debts? It almost broke the poor lad. What will he do for money now that he's left Watch? (Why go adventuring of course! See Act Three, Event Two)
9. That Sergeant Hallack is a coward! He quit the army and now lets all his comrades march to war why he sits on his duff, drinking his cares away. (False and rather unfair. Hallack quit the army before the war even started and his only real care is that he paid off his father's debts.)
10. Have you seen Bianca DeVallya? She plays at Canton's Canter almost every night. She's an angel -- the most beautiful lass I've ever seen! (True. Bianca is very beautiful and the town's most skilled bard.)
11. Sister Marta saved my life. I'll never be able to repay that blessed angel of Mitra. (True. Sister Marta is a devout cleric of Mitra in town.)
12. Those strange hills in the Briar are haunted no two ways about it. Anyone who goes there isn't coming back! (Partially true. The Horn does have a wraith in it.)
13. The Bugbears are marching towards Farholde! We've got evacuate the city! (False. This is simple panic in a time of war.)
14. Old One-Eye's back. He's half-tiger, half-devil that old cat! Big as a house! (Partially true. A one-eyed dire tiger does hunt the northern Caer Bryr.)
15. Lorringsgate's ... gone! Can you believe it? First Balentyne and now Lorringsgate! Can anyone stop these monsters? (Yes, actually.)
16. The Knights of the Alerion have gone mad and are blaming the invasion on the temple of Asmodeus. They're burning anyone with a black cat at the stake! It's madness! There hasn't been a cult of Asmodeus in Talingarde for twenty years. Someone's organizing the bugbears, surely, but Asmodeans? Ha! (Ha, indeed. This rumor is due in part to Tiadora's rampage in Event One.)
17. Lord Welshire may have gone to war but at least Sir Valin still mans the Castle Farthyn. A knight of true noble blood, he is! Why, they say he is distant kin of the Victor himself! (True. Sir Valin is actually a distant relative of the Victor. That makes him crucial in Act Four.)
18. The Baron Vandermir is a strange one! The elf hardly ever leaves his manor these days. (True. Baron Arkov Vandermir is something of a hermit of late.)
19. The Baron Vandermir is the most generous man I've ever met. It's because of him this town has an orphanage. (Somewhat true. His generosity is self-serving.)
20. The kids at the Vandermir Orphanage are little more than thugs! I hear the corrupt old baron sometimes uses them for muscle. (True and by the by orphans make great minions.)

EVENT THREE: THE OLD GUARD

The next evening, the PCs again rendezvous with Tiadora. She is bedecked brilliantly in all white, looking like a travelling noble on the way to her wedding. She escorts the PCs through the bustling dock city of Farholde. She takes them to the nicest part of town, a gently sloping hill called Calliver's Green (see the Gazetteer for more details). This is a gated community and she approaches the guard confidently. "Baron Vandermir is expecting us," is all she says.

"Of course, my lady. This way," the somewhat nervous guard answers after consulting a list. If anyone manages to sneak a peak, the list reads, "Expect a lady in white and her retinue. Be polite. She has powerful friends. --V."

There are only six manors in this neighborhood and Tiadora leads the PCs to what is arguably the most impressive and opulent of them. The front door is secured by two guards wearing armor and livery. The guards are polite but firmly insistent that weapons are collected. *"No stranger may go before the Baron so armed."*

Baron Vandermir's Guards

CR 1/2

XP 200

Human warrior 2

LE Medium humanoid

Init +0; Senses Perception +4

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 10, flat-footed 18 (+6 armor, +2 shield)

hp 13 (2d10+2)

Fort +5, Ref +0, Will +0

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee longsword +5 (1d8+2/19-20)

dagger +4 (1d4+2/19-20)

Ranged heavy crossbow +2 (1d10/19-20)

TACTICS

During Combat These guards much prefer to fight with their longswords. They resort to crossbows only if need requires.

Morale The guards are loyal but not fanatical. They flee if half their number fall or if they take more than eight hp damage.

STATISTICS

Str 14, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10

Base Atk +2; CMB +4; CMD 14

Feats Alertness, Weapon Focus (longsword)

Skills Intimidate +4, Perception +4, Profession (Guard) +5, Ride +4, Sense Motive +2

Languages Common

Gear breastplate, heavy steel shield, longsword, dagger, heavy crossbow, 10 bolts, heraldic livery, signal horn, 2d6 gold

However, they do not search the PCs, only confiscating obvious armament. Further, they will allow anyone dressed in noble clothing to wear a sword at their belt.

A successful Knowledge (Nobility) skill check (DC 15) reveals that the livery is a variation on the heraldry of House Barca, the royal line deposed by the current Darian regime. A DC 20 result further reveals that the livery marks the guards as servants of the Baron of Westell and Mir, farming towns south of Farholde.

The PCs are greeted at the door by a formal butler and attended by a small squadron of servants who offer them brandy and hors d'oeuvres. The brandy is sublime and the hors d'oeuvres are a selection of tasty little beef skewers and crunchy spicy crayfish puffs. Finally, the PCs get to meet the Baron himself.

Baron Arkov Vandermir is a handsome half-elf dressed in burgundy and white. He looks quite young, even boyish, but he is more than a century old. His eyes betray a calculating, wicked soul.

The Baron is a conflicted man. On one hand, he hates the Mitrans and the House of Darius. He was too young to fight when his father, Baron Zaedor Vandermir and his distant cousin, King Jaraad of Barca were both slain at the Battle of Tamberlyn. When the Victor came to power he treated the House of Vandermir fairly allowing the new baron to keep his holdings if he would only renounce the worship of Asmodeus and swear fealty to the new king. A humiliated young Arkov had no choice but to do both. Now, the Victor is in his grave and still the Baron's thirst for vengeance remains unsated.

But the Baron also lived through the Asmodean purges of Markadian IV called the Zealous. He saw many of his fellows stripped of title and fortune and burned at the stake. The Baron was clever enough to avoid their fate and keep his fortune, his station and his life. He knows all too well the cost of associating with Cardinal Thorne, Tiadora and their ilk. Once he would have never dreamed of doing anything overt against Talingarde.

But the situation has changed in recent days, no doubt. With the breaking of the Watch Wall, the Darian regime is weaker than it has been since the Victor first came to power.



Still the Baron is swarmed with uncertainties. Markadian V called the Brave, the current king, marshals his forces and will soon march to war. No doubt the Fire-Axe will meet his defeat against the Victor's heir. Does the Baron really want to be on the losing side again? Markadian is unlikely to be merciful this time.

But the Baron also knows who Cardinal Thorn is. He knew Thorn back when he was Cardinal Samuel Havelyn and suspects what he has become now (a lich risen from his grave by Asmodeus' power to gain vengeance against Talingarde). He fears the Cardinal and knows that he cannot ignore this risen, vengeful creature or his chosen agents. So, what must he do?

This back and forth is the Baron's dilemma. At the start of dinner, he is completely resolved to not help the PCs and to send them packing out of his dominion. The PCs challenge is to, by dinner's end, change his mind.

They won't get another chance. The Baron believes it is dangerous to be seen too much with this 'type'. He is only giving them this one chance because of his respect for and fear of the Cardinal Thorn.

Once dinner is served and the servants are dismissed, the Baron becomes frank. *"You come to me as beggars, the last remnants of a forbidden faith. You will promise me much, of that I have no doubt. But all that I am likely to earn from helping you is the inquisitor's pyre. Tell me, why should I help the likes of you?"*

This is a chance for roleplaying. Let the PCs talk at length to the Baron. Despite his initial bluster, the Baron wants to help them. He has lived his entire life in the shadow of House Darius. His hate is a mile wide. To convince the Baron requires a successful Diplomacy, Intimidate or Bluff skill check (DC 25). Assign bonuses based on how well the PCs make their case.

To some degree, this skill check is a competition not just between the Baron and the PCs, but amongst the PCs themselves. Whoever first persuades the Baron will become the Knot's liaison. He will direct all communication to that individual.

There is another solution instead of persuasion -- murder. The PCs could kill the Baron and replace him using their *iron circlets* or other illusion magic. This is a risky strategy. The Baron has twenty armed guards in his service protecting his manor. He is also a capable sorcerer in his own right. Tiadora will not aid them in assassinating the Baron as she been ordered only to introduce them. Of course, if anyone makes the mistake of attacking Tiadora, she eats them. Literally.

Baron Arkov Vandermir

CR 9

XP 6,400

Male Half-Elf Sorcerer (Infernal) 7/Aristocrat 3

LE Medium humanoid

Init +5; Senses low-light vision; Perception +16

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 15 (+4 armor, +1 deflection, +1 Dex)

hp 38 (7d6+3d8)

Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +11; +2 vs. poisons and enchantment spells and effects

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk rapier +5 (1d6-1/18-20)

Bloodline Spell-like Abilities (CL 7th, concentration +13)

9/day -- *corrupting touch*

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 7th, concentration +13)

3rd (5/day) -- hold person (DC 21), suggestion (DC 21), tongues

2nd (8/day) -- *detect thoughts*, *hideous laughter* (DC 20), *scorching ray*, *touch of idiocy*

1st (8/day) -- *charm person* (DC 19), *hypnotism* (DC 19), *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *protection from good*, *sleep* (DC 19)

0th -- *arcane mark*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *daze*, *light*, *mage hand*, *message*

Bloodline Infernal

TACTICS

During Combat During Combat The Baron does not like combat, preferring intrigue to battle. But when forced to it, he is quick to use his enchantment spells to disable enemies. If combat looks hopeless, he uses his *dust of disappearance* to escape.

Morale The Baron flees if he loses more than 19 hit points gladly sacrificing his men to save himself. If flight is impossible, he surrenders and begs for his life.

STATISTICS

Str 8, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 22

Base Atk +5; CMB +7; CMD 17

Feats Deceitful, Eschew Materials, Greater Spell Focus (Enchantment), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Persuasive, Skill Focus (Bluff), Spell Focus (Enchantment)

Skills Bluff +29, Diplomacy +24, Disguise +11, Intimidate +24, Knowledge (arcana) +6, Knowledge (nobility) +7, Knowledge (religion) +6, Perception +16, Ride +6, Sense Motive +14

Languages Common, Elven, Infernal, Iraen

SQ Elf blood (count as both elf and human)

Combat Gear 2 *potions of cure moderate wounds*

Gear masterwork rapier, noble outfit, baron's coronet (a *circlet of persuasion*), signet ring (+1 *ring of protection*), other jewelry (250 gp worth), *dust of disappearance*, 200 gp in "walking around money"

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Corrupting Touch (Sp): At 1st level, the Baron can cause a creature to become shaken as a melee touch attack. This effect persists for 3 rounds. Creatures shaken by this ability radiate an aura of evil, as if they were an evil outsider (see detect evil). Multiple touches do not stack, but they do add to the duration. Baron Vandermir can use this ability 9/per day.

Infernal Resistances (Ex): Baron Vandermir has resist fire 5 and a +2 bonus on saving throws made against poison

And actually defeating the Baron is only the beginning of their difficulties. The Baron is a well-known figure about town. Yes, he has been something of a hermit recently, but everyone of any importance in Farholde has met the Baron. Impersonating him will not be easy. It is certainly easier to convince him to aid the PCs.

Story Award: Award the PCs a CR 6 reward (2,400 XP) for gaining the Baron's aid.

WHAT CAN THE BARON DO FOR YOU?

Having the Baron Arkov Vandermir as an ally in Farholde is incredibly useful. The Baron Vandermir is the richest, most well connected man in town since the Duke departed for the war. That said, his generosity does have limits. After all, he has agreed to help the PCs, not give them the full run of his family fortune.

First, he can provide the party with accommodations and a safe house. His manor is not only opulently appointed with every amenity known to man, it also has a secret tunnel that runs from Calliver Green to a small nondescript hovel at the base of the hill. The PCs can come and go at will without anyone observing their movements.

Second, he can grant the PCs almost total legal immunity in Farholde. As long as they are not caught red-handed doing some heinous deed his word that they were with him excuses every suspicion of their involvement in a crime. He is loathe to use this influence too much. After all, while the local magistrates are easy to deal with, blatant crimes may eventually draw Mitran inquisitors to Farholde.

Third, he has contacts among the shadier merchants who operate in and around Farholde. He can give the PCs access to poisons (though none more expensive than 1100 gp a dose) and more sinister magic items (though this still has the usual cost limits here in Farholde). He can also fence any items they've recovered that may be difficult to otherwise sell (for example -- he could help them sell Lord Havelyn's Bible from Book One).

Fourth, the Baron is a seventh level sorcerer specialized in the enchantment school. He is also a negotiator without peer. If the PCs need someone charmed, bribed or persuaded there are few more qualified people in all of Talingarde to aid them than the Baron.

What the Baron will not do is aid them in finding or clearing out the Horn of Abaddon. He has volunteered to help them, not fight their battles. He also has no desire to die in some cursed daemonic temple. In fact, it is unlikely that the Baron will ever leave his manor save for short shopping excursions during the entire duration of the PCs stay. The Baron was fearful of enemies before a knot of Cardinal Thorn's servants showed up. With them here, he's become positively paranoid.

In general, with the Baron as their ally, Farholde becomes a non-challenging environment for the PCs. Almost anything they want within reason is within their grasp. Without him, they are unconnected outsiders lost in an unfamiliar port city.

THE LEADERSHIP "PROBLEM"

As the PCs turn 7th level, they are for the first time going to be eligible for the Leadership feat. For villains, this feat is almost an irresistible choice. You get a cohort and minions to do your dirty work. Who could resist that? That problem here is that if everyone chooses this feat, you are going, in one swift stroke, to be doubling the size of your party (with cohorts) and that can really slow down a game. And everyone taking the same feat at the same level is also boring. Still, disallowing the feat wholesale seems inappropriate. After all, what is a villain without minions?

For some, this may not be a problem. Maybe your players don't want to take the feat or maybe you don't care if your party size doubles. If so, then game on! This sidebar is not for you.

If you do see a problem, let me propose a house rule that may fix the problem. Instead of each PC getting a cohort, the party instead gets one cohort that serves them all. This 'super-cohort' may be the PCs' level - 1 instead of the usual -2 limitation. The Cohort could either be someone they've already met in game (for example Grumblejack the Ogre from Book One) or could be someone who they meet through the Baron's contacts.

Everyone who takes the leadership feat still gets minions (give the minion management rules in the appendix some consideration for making this simpler as well) and at some point in the campaign each PC gets to create a contact.

WHAT IS A CONTACT?

It is a friendly, helpful NPC who appears at an opportune time. It could be as simple as "We're going to Farholde? I know a guy..." If the PC expends the contact benefit, then indeed, yes -- they know a guy. But more importantly, that 'guy' also has resources or information that are useful to the PCs. This could be an old criminal contact (remember that every PC once ran afoul of the law) or a family member or anyone willing to help.

This benefit need not be used in Farholde. Before this campaign is done the PCs will be visiting small towns and major cities. At any of those destinations this benefit could prove very handy indeed.

EVENT FOUR: THE AMBITION OF RAVENS

With the introduction to the Baron accomplished, Tiadora's mission in Farholde is complete. She reminds them of the small clay tablet given to them by Cardinal Thorn. *"Break it when you need to speak with the Master. Be sure not to waste his time. He can be most unforgiving about that. The Seventh Knot is already close at hand. They arrive tomorrow on a river barge named 'The Lucky Lady'. You should probably meet them and come up with a plan for seeing our master's will done. It matters not to me of course. Not my problem. Goodbye, dearest, and good luck."* And with that, she teleports away to her next assignment. A devil's work is never done.

The Seventh Knot does indeed arrive the next day. They too seem to think they've travelled here with Tiadora (and they have -- Tiadora was teleporting between the two barges). Elise Zalaria has already received her orders. *"It is my intention in the next few months to have spies set up in every inn, tavern and anywhere else adventurers and explorers might congregate. When you do find the Horn of Abaddon, contact me. For those groups I can't personally dispatch, I'll send a messenger with any information I can gather."*

Elise does her best to put forward a friendly face but she is actually livid. She has been assigned to be an assistant. The ambitious witch is furious at this perceived slight. Already she schemes to change the situation and to be the one who delivers the Tears of Achlys to Cardinal Thorn. But for now, she does her best to pretend to be satisfied with her role here in town.

If pressed on what her plan is, Elise will reveal that she plans to create for Farholde a serial killer. That serial killer (actually her knot using their *iron circlets* -- see Book One) will begin to hunt down likely adventurers and explorers one by one. She will try to make this murderous endeavor look like accidental deaths for as long as she can, but she is sure that facade will eventually fail.

When it does, the serial killer guise will allow her to terrorize anyone foolish to interrupt the work of the Ninth Knot. Farholde is about to be bathed in blood. She is certain Tiadora would be delighted. Her plan is a good one. It does nothing however to alleviate her jealously at not getting to take the lead on this assignment.

EVENT FIVE: FINDING THE HORN

It is perhaps startling how little exploration has been done of the Caer Bryr by the inhabitants of Farholde. There is a simple reason for this -- the Caer Bryr is phenomenally dangerous. When Farholde was conquered almost three centuries ago, a number of expeditions set out to explore the jungle. None of them ever came back.

Every few decades a new generation gets the brilliant idea -- let's explore the Briar! The results are usually much the same -- few survivors. What survivors do come back relate tales of an endless wilderness of monsters and barbarians. And so the people of Farholde keep to their hills.

The Horn of Abaddon is close to Farholde. A skilled horseman could ride directly there in less than a day. The reason the Horn is undiscovered (beside the fact that Caer Bryr is dangerous) are threefold. First it is guarded by a treant named Jurak the Elder who wants it to remain undiscovered. He commands the plants to grow over the entrances and challenges any who happen upon them.

The second reason is that the Horn is hiding in a forest of similar stone spires. Within a few days travel of the Horn there are at least a hundred similar natural structures. Detecting which one is the Horn of Abaddon is a time consuming and dangerous matter. It took the skilled tracker Aiden Kael weeks to accomplish the task.

And third, if you do make it inside, the Horn is not uninhabited. Those inhabitants are not fond of visitors. Between the boggards in the lower caverns, the wraith and the daemons -- visits to the Horn are often brief.

Aiden Kael prepaid for a room at "The Wandering Friar" in Newchurch. This can be discovered by rumor-mongering or by a dedicated search (Diplomacy DC 20 skill check). When the PCs arrive, his room is a week from being declared abandoned and cleaned out. If someone will pay Kael's 25 gp overdue bill, the innkeeper will let them into the room no questions asked.

Inside the room is Kael's map to the Horn laying out on a table weighed down by a common dagger. Besides a few worthless personal effects, his emergency funds are also hidden under the mattress in a sackcloth bag (containing 132 gp in mixed coinage). It is a DC 20 Perception skill check to find these funds.

If the PCs don't think to do this, they can still search the wilderness. Finding the Horn requires a DC 30 Perception check. The party can make only one per day and each failure eats up a day of searching. If they actually search close to the Horn, perhaps award them a bonus but also remember about Jurak (see Act Two, Event One below). The gnarled old treant does not care for visitors.

If your PCs are lagging on XP the wilds of the Caer Bryr is a fine time to "catch them up". Any forest encounter you can imagine is perfectly appropriate within this vast and uncharted jungle.

Story Award: Finding the Horn of Abaddon is a CR 6 reward (2,400 XP).



ACT TWO: TAKING THE HORN

The PCs take control of the Horn of Abaddon.

THE ENVIRONS OF THE HORN

The northern Caer Bryr is a temperate rainforest richly blessed with rain fall and broadleaf trees. The trees here are tall and broad. The thick-trunked baobab tree, unusual in such a wet clime, is common here and grows to enormous size. It is not uncommon to see trees hundreds of feet tall with trunks twenty feet across. To walk into the deep Briar is to enter the domain of giants.

Every flat surface is covered with brilliant green moss and lichens in every hue. Mushrooms of a million sorts proliferate and crowd every fallen log. Small animal life is dense -- squirrels, voles, mice and white-faced ghost monkeys. Birds dwell here in endless variety and dazzling panoramas of plumage are everywhere on display. It is a bountiful place rich and thriving with nature's splendor.

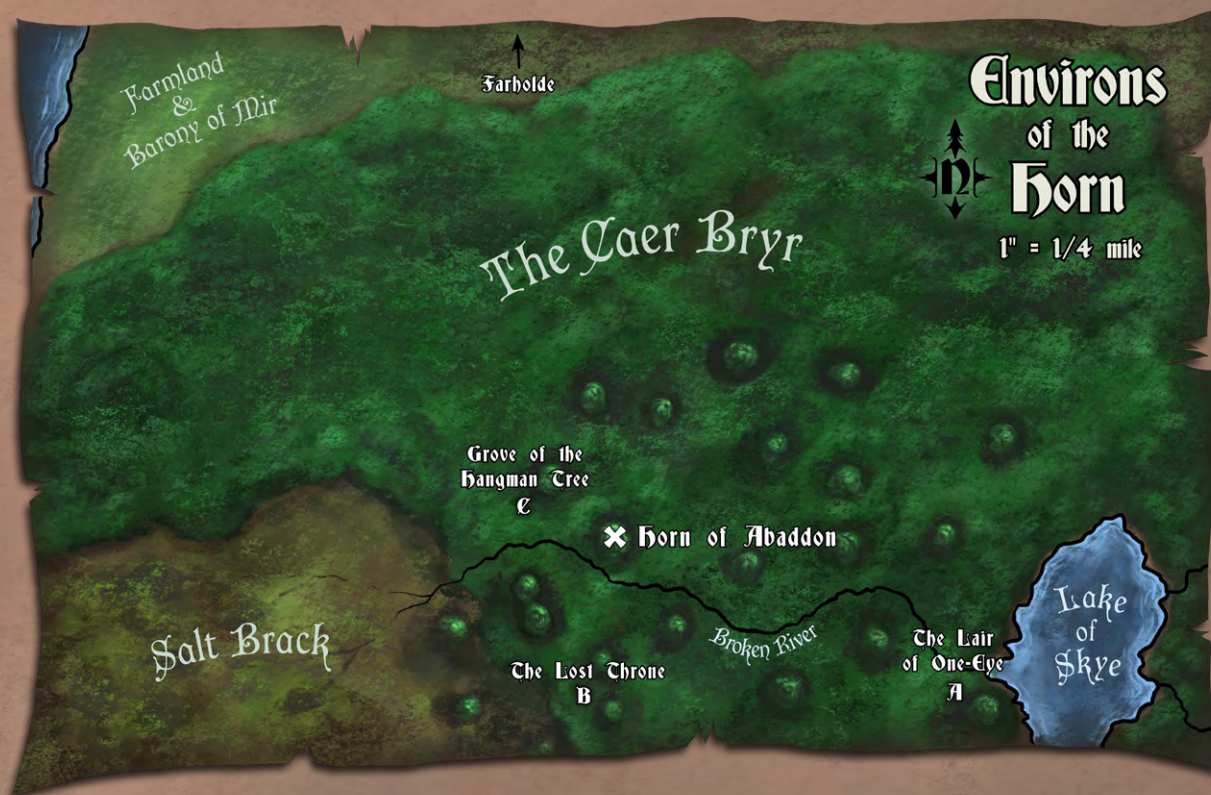
The Lake of Skye, rarely seen by civilized eyes, fractures into a thousand streams that course through the forest floor. These streams eventually stagnate and fail near the coast becoming the Salt Brack.

The Salt Brack is also blessed with life -- crocodiles, fish, lizards, snakes, frogs, toads, salamanders and birds teem there. The blue-cray, a particularly delicious and rare swamp lobster, can be found hidden in the mud of the Salt Brack if one is brave enough to hunt it. A good sized live blue-cray can command a 30 gp a head back in Farholde.

The Salt Brack is also home to great number of bog-gard tribes each more loathsome than the last. One particularly wicked example (the Bane-wogs, See Event Two below) has made the caves beneath the Horn their stronghold and temple.

Perhaps the single most famous feature of the northern Briar are the great stone spires. They proliferate everywhere in this jungle rising hundreds of feet above the forest floor. Often covered in foliage, they are the home to countless small animals. These are natural spires though the Iraen are full of stories about how they were carved by ancient giants. The beauty of these spires has drawn more than natural creatures. Fey and spirits dwell in and around the stone spires in great abundance.

Note: This terrain is inspired by real topography. If you would like to see these inspirations, go to google images and search for 'li jiang karst'. The upthrust mountains of China would be right at home in the Caer Bryr.



Act Two: Taking the Horn

EVENT ONE: MY SACRED CHARGE

Jurak the Elder has been guarding the Horn of Abaddon for centuries. At first, he merely inconvenienced the death cultists who made the spire their home. He attacked supply shipments and messengers, but was quick to melt into the woods when they turned their true might towards him. Unable to be defeated in the forest, but too weak to assault the Horn itself, he became a persistent nuisance. Then the Victor arrived.

The Victor's triumph came so rapidly that Jurak missed the battle. When he finally met the Victor, Jurak confessed his regret. The Victor answered, "Then make this your sacred charge. Jurak, protector of the forest, see that evil never again takes root here." Jurak has since vigilantly performed his duty. It is due to Jurak that the Horn is as empty as it is. Obviously, this self-righteous piece of walking lumber has got to go!

The PCs likely first encounter Jurak when they find the Horn of Abaddon or later when they leave for the first time. Jurak is unlikely to attack on sight unless they are endangering the forest or openly wear unholy symbols. Instead, he warns them away. "You have happened upon the Horn of Abaddon," he lectures, "a cursed place once of great corruption. It is my sacred charge to see that evil never again takes root here."



Jurak the Eldest, Treant

CR 8

XP 4,800

NG Huge plant

Init -1; Senses low-light vision; Perception +12

DEFENSE

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

hp 114 (12d8+60)

Fort +13, Ref +3, Will +9

Defensive Abilities plant traits; DR 10/slashing

Weaknesses vulnerability to fire

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 2 slams +17 (2d6+9/19-20)

Ranged rock +7 (2d6+13)

Space 15 ft.; Reach 15 ft.

Special Attacks rock throwing (180 ft.), trample (2d6+13, DC 25)

TACTICS

During Combat Jurak slams and tramples any foe he can reach and throws great slabs of ruined masonry at those he can't. He will retreat to summon aid if he believes he faces a superior foe.

Morale Jurak is fanatically devoted to keeping his sacred charge and fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 29, Dex 8, Con 21, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 13

Base Atk +9; CMB +20; CMD 29

Feats Alertness, Improved Critical (slam), Improved Sunder, Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (slam)

Skills Diplomacy +9, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (nature) +9, Perception +12, Sense Motive +9, Stealth -9 (+7 in forests); **Racial Modifiers** +16 Stealth in forests

Languages Common, Sylvan, Treant

SQ animate trees, double damage against objects, treespeech

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Animate Trees (Sp) A treant can animate any trees within 180 feet at will, controlling up to two trees at a time. It takes 1 full round for a tree to uproot itself, after which it moves at a speed of 10 feet and fights as a treant (although it has only one slam attack and lacks the treant's animation and rock-throwing abilities), gaining the treant's vulnerability to fire. If the treant that animated it terminates the animation, moves out of range, or is incapacitated, the tree immediately takes root wherever it is and returns to its normal state.

Double Damage Against Objects (Ex) A treant or animated tree that makes a full attack against an object or structure deals double damage.

Treespeech (Ex) A treant has the ability to converse with plants as if subject to a continual *speak with plants* spell, and most plants greet them with an attitude of friendly or helpful.

With a Sense Motive skill of +9, Jurak is not impervious to deceit. If the PCs claim to be here seeking a lost friend, for example he may even assist them. He knows about the boggards in the lower caves and would welcome help to root them out (see Event Two). However, once the Horn alights (see Act Three), the gloves will be off. Jurak will know there is evil in the Horn and will do all in his power to root it out.

Jurak is not without allies. He speaks regularly with the lillend Calliaste Shanda (see Event Three) and can summon her by passing messages through the trees (both Jurak and Calliaste can *speak with plants*). A fight against both of these powerful nature guardians and Shanda's eleven retinue would be a CR 10 battle – fearsome indeed!

EVENT TWO: THE BLESSING OF DAGON

Beneath the Horn, in the flooded lower caverns, dwell a tribe of loathsome boggards known as the Bane-wogs. These vile frogmen venerate the demon lord Dagon who they simply call Father (since in their cosmology, Dagon sired them). After having been driven from another swamp within the Caer Bryr by the Iraen, the boggards have come to believe (mistakenly) that the Horn is somehow sacred to Father. They have made the caverns beneath the Horn their home, sanctuary and temple.

There are two significant figures within the tribe: Kumanda Slays-Nine-Men, their chieftain, and Zikomo Hears-the-Father, their shaman. Kumanda's claim to fame is that he single handedly slew a patrol of nine guards out of Farholde some years ago. He still wields a finely made greatsword taken from the patrol's captain. A brutal bully, he tolerates no dissent among the Bane-wogs and considers even the hint of disagreement a challenge to his dominance.

Zikomo on the other hand is the tribe's only spellcaster and an oracle of the dark tapestry. He is also completely insane. Zikomo suffers from raving bouts of madness and delusions (exacerbated by his brewing of *vision-juice*, a potent hallucinogen made from local toadstools). The shaman sits alone in his shrine dreaming of world's end and of almighty Dagon rising from the sea to feed.



Kumanda Slays-Nine-Men

CR 7

XP 3,200

Boggard Barbarian 5

CE Medium humanoid (boggard)

Init +1; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 9, flat-footed 13 (+2 armor, +1 Dex, +3 natural, -2 rage)

hp 94 (3d8+5d12+48)

Fort +12, Ref +2, Will +2; +3 morale bonus vs. spells, supernatural abilities and spell-like abilities while raging

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

Melee mwk greatsword +11 (4d6+15/19-20), tongue +4 touch (sticky tongue)

Special Attacks terrifying croak

TACTICS

During Combat Combat Kumanda is a berserk ball of frog fury. He rages immediately at the battle's start and then leaps and stabs at any foe he can reach.

Morale In a rage, there is no stopping this angry boggard. Kumanda fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 22, Dex 12, Con 20, Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 12

Base Atk +7; CMB +11; CMD 22

Feats Cleave, Power Attack, Toughness, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (great sword)

Skills Acrobatics +4 (+21 jumping), Intimidate +9, Perception +12, Stealth +6 (+14 in swamps), Survival +8, Swim +10; Racial Modifiers +16 Acrobatics when jumping, +4 Perception, +8 Stealth in swamps

Languages Boggard

SQ hold breath, improved uncanny dodge, rage (16 rounds), swamp stride, trap sense +1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Hold Breath (Ex) Kumanda can hold his breath for 64 rounds before risking drowning or suffocation.

Raging Leaper (Ex) When raging, the barbarian adds his level as an enhancement bonus on all Acrobatics skill checks made to jump. When making a jump in this way, the barbarian is always considered to have a running start.

Sticky Tongue (Ex) A creature hit by a boggard's tongue attack cannot move more than 10 feet away from the boggard and takes a -2 penalty to AC as long as the tongue is attached (this penalty does not stack if multiple tongues are attached). The tongue can be removed by making an opposed Strength check as a standard action or by dealing 2 points of slashing damage to the tongue (AC 11, damage does not deplete the boggard's actual hit points). The boggard cannot move more than 10 feet away from the target, but the boggard can release its tongue as a free action. Unlike a giant frog, a boggard cannot pull targets toward it with its tongue.

Superstition (Ex) The barbarian gains a +3 morale bonus on saving throws made to resist spells, supernatural abilities, and spell-like abilities. While raging, the barbarian must attempt to resist all spells even beneficial spells cast by allies.

Swamp Stride (Ex) A boggard can move through any sort of natural difficult terrain at its normal speed while within a swamp. Magically altered terrain affects a boggard normally.

Terrifying Croak (Su) Once per hour, a boggard can, as a standard action, emit a loud and horrifying croak. Any non-boggard creature within 30 feet of the boggard must make a DC 13 Will save or become shaken for 1d4 rounds. Creatures that succeed at this save cannot be affected again by the same boggard's croak for 24 hours. Creatures that are already shaken become frightened for 1d4 rounds instead. The save DC is Charisma-based and includes a +2 racial bonus.

NOTE: For the purposes of their Stealth and Swamp Stride, the wet dark lower caverns of the Horn count as 'swamp'.

Bane-wog, Boggard Tribesman**CR 2****XP 600**

CE Medium humanoid (boggard)

Init -1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +4**DEFENSE****AC** 14, touch 9, flat-footed 14 (+2 armor, -1 Dex, +3 natural)
hp 22 (3d8+9)**Fort** +5, **Ref** +0, **Will** +1**OFFENSE****Speed** 20 ft., swim 30 ft.**Melee** spear +5 (1d8+3/x3), tongue -1 touch (sticky tongue)**Special Attacks** terrifying croak**TACTICS****During Combat** The bane-wogs much prefer to attack from ambush and with superior numbers. They use their terrifying croak hoping to panic their enemies and then strike en masse.**Morale** The boggards are, in small groups, a cowardly lot. They flee upon catching sight of any numerically larger group back to the village (C9 below) and try to gather more forces. Failing that, they flee or surrender if reduced to seven hit points or less.**STATISTICS****Str** 15, **Dex** 9, **Con** 14, **Int** 8, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 10**Base Atk** +2; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 13**Feats** Toughness, Weapon Focus (spear)
Skills Acrobatics +2 (+14 jumping), Stealth -1 (+7 in swamps), Swim +10; Racial Modifiers +16 Acrobatics when jumping, +4 Perception, +8 Stealth in swamps**Languages** Boggard**SQ** hold breath, swamp stride**SPECIAL ABILITIES****Hold Breath (Ex)** A boggard can hold its breath for a number of rounds equal to four times its Constitution score before it risks drowning or suffocating.**Sticky Tongue (Ex)** A creature hit by a boggard's tongue attack cannot move more than 10 feet away from the boggard and takes a -2 penalty to AC as long as the tongue is attached (this penalty does not stack if multiple tongues are attached). The tongue can be removed by making an opposed Strength check as a standard action or by dealing 2 points of slashing damage to the tongue (AC 11, damage does not deplete the boggard's actual hit points). The boggard cannot move more than 10 feet away from the target, but the boggard can release its tongue as a free action. Unlike a giant frog, a boggard cannot pull targets toward it with its tongue.**Swamp Stride (Ex)** A boggard can move through any sort of natural difficult terrain at its normal speed while within a swamp. Magically altered terrain affects a boggard normally.**Terrifying Croak (Su)** Once per hour, a boggard can, as a standard action, emit a loud and horrifying croak. Any non-boggard creature within 30 feet of the boggard must make a DC 13 Will save or become shaken for 1d4 rounds. Creatures that succeed at this save cannot be affected again by the same boggard's croak for 24 hours. Creatures that are already shaken become frightened for 1d4 rounds instead. The save DC is Charisma-based and includes a +2 racial bonus.**NOTE:** For the purposes of their Stealth and Swamp Stride, the wet dark lower caverns of the Horn count as 'swamp'.

The PCs could just destroy this tribe of boggards, but there is an alternative. Kumanda may be a fearsome man-slayer but he is a poor leader. He has led the tribe from one defeat to another. It is only a matter of time before he attracts the attention of the Talireans and gets his tribe wiped out. This tribe is ready for a new master. If the PCs slay Kumanda and convince the mad Zikomo they are messengers from "Father", they could become that master and gain a self-replenishing pool of minions.

Zikomo Hears-the-Father**CR 6****XP 2,400**

Boggard Oracle 4 (dark tapestry)

CE Medium humanoid (boggard)

Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +4**DEFENSE****AC** 15, touch 10, flat-footed 15 (+2 armor, +3 natural)**hp** 52 (7d8+21)**Fort** +6, **Ref** +2, **Will** +5**OFFENSE****Speed** 20 ft., swim 30 ft.**Melee** dagger +7 (1d4+2/19-20), tongue +3 touch (sticky tongue)**Special Attacks** terrifying croak**Oracle Spells Known** (CL 4th, concentration +7)2nd(4/day) -- *cure moderate wounds, dust of twilight, hold person*
1st (7/day) -- *cause fear, cure light wounds, doom, entropic shield, inflict light wounds*oth -- *bleed, detect magic, detect poison, guidance, mending, stabilize***TACTICS****During Combat** Zikomo leads with *hold person* immobilizing deadly enemies. He uses *interstellar void* to weaken dangerous foes. After that, he adopts a support role trying his best to remain out of melee. If forced into melee, he uses *gift of madness* to confuse his enemies and escape.**Morale** Zikomo is a drug-addled fanatic and to defend his tribe fights to the death.**STATISTICS****Str** 14, **Dex** 10, **Con** 14, **Int** 14, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 16**Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 17**Feats** Brew Potion, Extra Revelation, Improved Initiative, Toughness**Skills** Acrobatics +3 (+15 jumping), Craft (Alchemy) +8, Diplomacy +10, Heal +9, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (arcana) +9, Knowledge (nature) +5, Knowledge (planes) +9, Knowledge (religion) +9, Sense Motive +9, Stealth +10 (+18 in swamps), Survival +8, Swim +10; Racial Modifiers +16 acrobatics when jumping, +4 Perception, +8 Stealth in swamps**Languages** Abyssal, Boggard, Common**SQ** brain drain, gift of madness, hold breath, interstellar void, oracle's curse (clouded vision), swamp stride**Gear** dagger, leather armor, 4 doses of *vision juice***SPECIAL ABILITIES****Brain Drain (Su):** Zikomo can take a standard action to violently probe the mind of a single intelligent enemy within 100 feet. The target receives a Will save to negate the effect and immediately knows the source of this harmful mental prying. Those who fail this save are wracked with pain, taking 4d4 points of damage. After successfully attacking with this ability, Zikomo may use a full-round action to sort through the jumble of stolen thoughts and memories to make a single Knowledge check using the victim's skill bonus. The randomly stolen thoughts remain in Zikomo's mind for 3 rounds. Treat the knowledge gained as if Zikomo had used detect thoughts. This is a mind-affecting effect. Zikomo can use this ability once per day.**Gift of Madness (Su):** You tap into the unthinkable void between the stars and cause a single living creature within 30 feet to become confused for 1 round. A successful Fortitude save negates the effect. This is a mind affecting compulsion effect. Zikomo can use this ability 6/day**Interstellar Void (Su):** Zikomo call upon the frigid depths of outer space to bring a terrible chill to his enemies. As a standard action, one target within 30 feet is cloaked in the void and takes 4d6 points of cold damage. A successful Fortitude save halves this damage. Zikomo can use this ability once per day.**Hold Breath (Ex)** Zikomo can hold his breath for 52 rounds before risking drowning or suffocating.**Oracle's Curse(Ex)** Clouded Vision: Zikomo cannot see beyond 30 feet.

Once cowed and convinced of the PC's greatness, the boggards are loyal enough minions. They do their best to defend the Horn against invaders. Zikomo will send our runners throughout the boggard-haunted fens and marshes of the Salt Brack and every week new frogmen will flock to the Bane-wogs to aid in the defense effort. There are sixteen bane-wogs (plus Kumanda and Zikomo) in the tribe when our villains arrive. Every week 0-2 (1d3-1) more boggards arrive to reinforce the tribe. The tribe's maximum size is 32 boggards.

ENLISTING ZIKOMO HEARS-THE-FATHER

Zikomo Hears-the-Father is a talented boggard and is the key to gaining the aid of the Bane-wog rabble. He is the only boggard who speaks the common tongue and by far the smartest member of his tribe. Zikomo is a true believer in both his patron demon god and that boggards are Father Dagon's chosen children. He despises all humans and demihumans and chafes at their control. And yet, Zikomo is likely to cooperate with the PCs if they slay Kumanda. Why?

Zikomo spends a great amount of time lost in drug-fueled dreams and meditation. He is fiercely addicted to his home-made hallucinogen *vision juice* (and his statistics already reflect this). During these visions, Zikomo believes he has seen the future. He knows that the slayers of Kumanda were destined to come to the Horn and that they shall restore this cursed place to greatness. Remember that Zikomo mistakenly believes that the Horn is sacred to Dagon. By restoring the Horn, the shaman believes that the PCs will be creating a powerful nexus for Father Dagon. He does not care why they are doing this, he only cares that it is done.

There will be a time of trials before greatness is restored. Zikomo accepts that. The shaman also realizes that some of his tribe will perish in this time. He accepts this as well, as only those who are weak and unfit will die.

Vision Juice

Type drug (ingested); **Addiction** moderate, Fortitude DC 20
Effects 1 hour; fatigue, gain powerful visions as the augury spell, but only 60% likely to give a meaningful reply
Damage 1d3 Wis damage
Price 150 gp

He also relishes getting rid of Kumanda and at last becoming the unquestioned master of his tribe. Kumanda, Zikomo believes, is an idiot.

This is really the heart of Zikomo's ambitions. He will pretend to be loyal to the hated humans until they complete the ritual and restore the Horn. Then he intends to betray them and become sole master of a newly consecrated temple of Dagon. To Zikomo, the Horn of Abaddon and its environs are his world. He cannot imagine going to all the trouble to conquer this place, only to later abandon it. Even if they PCs tell him this is their plan, Zikomo will never believe them.

From the PCs point of view, this ambition works for them. Their mission is to summon Vetra-Kali and then depart. What do they care who ends up as the Horn's master? If Vetra-Kali is allowed to remain, Zikomo has no chance of dominating the Horn. He will either die by Vetra-Kali's hand or once more become a servant.

If the PCs betray Vetra-Kali then maybe Zikomo will have a chance to see his ambitions realized. The mad oracle will become the boggard messiah, delivering his raving gospel of demon worship and batrachian dominance to his inhuman disciples.

Story Award: Award a CR 7 reward (3,200 XP) for gaining the aid of Zikomo and the Bane-wogs.



EVENT THREE: THE FOREST'S ANSWER

The lillend Calliaste Shanda (pronounced Call-ee-ah-stay SHAWN-dah) came to the prime material plane centuries ago on an errand for one of the Empyrean Lords, the Prince of the Moon. That errand took her deep within the Caer Bryr and there the passionate Calliaste fell in love. The errand long complete, the immortal lillend has tarried here for just a few centuries reveling in the splendor of this grand and unspoiled wilderness. For her, the forest has a music of its own and she is enthralled by its ever renewing harmonies. The lillend has become one of the most powerful defenders of the Caer Bryr.

Calliaste Shanda, Lillend

CR 7

XP 3,200

CG Large outsider (azata, chaotic, extraplanar, good)

Init +3; Senses low-light vision, darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 17 (+3 Dex, +8 natural, -1 size)

hp 73 (7d10+35)

Fort +7, Ref +10, Will +10

Immune electricity, petrification, poison; Resist cold 10, fire 10

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 70 ft. (average)

Melee +1 longsword +12/+7 (2d6+8/19-20), tail slap +6 (2d6+2 plus grab)

Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.

Special Attacks bardic performance (20 rounds/day), constrict (2d6+5)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th; concentration +11)

3/day—darkness, hallucinatory terrain (DC 18), knock, light

1/day—charm person (DC 15), speak with animals, speak with plants

at will—alter self

Spells Known (CL 7th; concentration +11)

3rd (2/day)—charm monster (DC 17), cure serious wounds

2nd (4/day)—hold person (DC 16), invisibility, sound burst (DC 16), suggestion

1st (5/day)—charm person (DC 15), cure light wounds, identify, sleep (DC 15) or (at will)—dancing lights, daze (DC 14), detect magic, lullaby (DC 14), mage hand, read magic (DC 16)

TACTICS

During Combat Calliaste has no love for melee combat and prefers to use her spells, spell-like abilities and bardic performance to support her allies. She usually opens with *charm monster* hoping to turn her enemies' strength against them. If magic fails and her consorts are in danger of defeat, she will use her magical blade and constrict to great effect.

Morale Calliaste is not a fanatic but she is relentless against evil. If reduced to 24 hp or less, she will attempt to flee so that she may gather new allies and strike again.

STATISTICS

Str 20, Dex 17, Con 21, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 19

Base Atk +7; CMB +13; CMD 26 (can't be tripped)

Feats Combat Casting, Hover, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes

Skills Bluff +14, Diplomacy +14, Fly +11, Knowledge (nature) +9, Perception +13, Perform (song) +16, Sense Motive +13, Stealth +13, Survival +14; Racial Modifiers +4 Survival

Languages Celestial, Draconic, Infernal, Sylvan; truespeech

Gear 550 gp worth of exquisite jewelry

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Bardic Performance A lillend has the bardic performance ability of a 7th-level bard, granting her access to that ability's countersong, fascinate, inspire courage, inspire competence, and suggestion aspects.

Spells A lillend casts spells as a 7th-level bard. They favor enchantment and healing spells

Consorts of Calliaste (6)

CR 2

XP 600 each (3,600 XP each)

Male or female fey elf ranger 2

CG Medium fey (elf)

Init +5; Senses low-light vision; Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 15, flat-footed 13 (+3, armor +5 Dex)

hp 13 (2d10+2)

Fort +3, Ref +8, Will +2; +2 vs. enchantments; +4 vs. mind-affecting effects

Immune magical sleep; Resist cold 10, electricity 10; DR 5/cold iron

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 45 ft. (good)

Melee short sword +3 (1d6+1/19-20)

Ranged composite longbow +8 (1d8+1/x3)

Special Attacks favored enemy (humans +2)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 2nd; concentration +5)

3/day—dancing lights

1/day—faerie fire

TACTICS

During Combat The consorts prefer to fight from ambush with their bows.

Morale The consorts worship Calliaste as almost a goddess. They will do anything to protect her including laying down their own lives. However, if she is slain, they will flee. Such will be their sorrow at losing their goddess, they never return here.

STATISTICS

Str 12, Dex 20, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 16

Base Atk +2; CMB +3; CMD 18

Feats Precise Shot, Weapon Focus (Longbow)

Skills Climb +5, Craft (various) +5, Handle Animal +7, Knowledge (geography) +6, Knowledge (nature) +6, Perception +7, Stealth +14, Survival +7 (+8 tracking), Swim +5; Racial

Modifiers +4 Stealth

Languages Common, Elven, Sylvan

SQ elven magic, track +1, weapon familiarity, wild empathy +5

Gear Studded leather, Composite longbow with 40 arrows, short sword, backpack, 1 week of trail rations, waterskin, traveler's garb, winter blanket, wooden holy symbol, 2d6 gp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Camouflaged (Ex) The consorts can use Stealth to hide in any sort of natural terrain, even if the terrain does not grant cover or concealment.

Unusually for a lillend, Calliaste is a shape changer, being able to *alter self* at will. The lycanthropic Moon Prince rewarded her with this gift after Calliaste successfully served him. Her two preferred forms are an exquisitely beautiful black skinned elf with long flowing blonde hair and a dryad with skin of ebony wood and hair of long flowing green leaves. Using these forms she has collected a cadre of consorts, artists and lovers for whom she has become their muse and patron. When forced to fight, however, she still prefers her natural state.

In her form as a dryad, Calliaste befriended Jurak the Elder (see Event One above). She would be quick to come to his aid if called. Even if he is not given the chance to call the lillend, Calliaste speaks with Jurak at least once a week by whispering through the trees (using *speak with plants*). If Jurak goes missing, she is sure to investigate. Thus are the PCs likely to meet Calliaste and her band of fey-touched elven consorts. Such a meeting is unlikely to be cordial.

Calliaste's lair is many miles away from the environs of the Horn and once called, it will take her and her fey consorts three days to fly there. They will land some distance away and approach quietly, uncertain what dangers may threaten this once wicked place. If they know that enemies are about, they will try to fight from ambush. Otherwise, they will seek out Jurak and aid the treant however they can. If Calliaste finds evidence that Jurak has been slain, then she is immediately filled with loss and rage. She will not rest until she finds the culprit.

Fighting Calliaste and her consorts is probably inevitable. There is only way to avoid direct conflict without abandoning the Horn -- blame Farholde. The elven consorts who travel with Calliaste hate the Talireans.

At least one of them is old enough to remember the sack of Cannoch Naoi (see the Gazetteer below for details). A well fabricated yarn about how the Talireans hunted down and murdered Jurak the Elder is likely to be believed.

In that case, Calliaste turns her wrath against Farholde in general and the Church of Mitra in particular. She wages her own personal war against the murderers of Jurak. This course leads to the lillend and her consorts' deaths fighting with the sisters of the Abbey of St. Cynthia-Celeste or the soldiery of Farholde.

What a pity. Award the PCs full XP for such a demise.

If the PCs do fight Calliaste Shanda, there is a high probability the lillend will not be defeated in a single battle. After all, she can cast *invisibility*, fly at 70' a round and is quite stealthy. Her consorts will sacrifice their lives to give their goddess the chance to fight another day. Escape is likely.

Her first attack is almost certainly brazen and up front. She will be bent on avenging Jurak's death and that rage will make her incautious. After one defeat, she comes to her senses and becomes crafty.

She takes on the form of a beautiful ebony skinned elf and visits Farholde. She searches for allies. She likely finds those allies in the form of the Verdant Banner (see Act Three, Event Eleven). Brunhild Stormdottir in particular would leap at the chance to form an alliance.

The second time our villains meet Calliaste Shanda she may be the fifth member of that adventuring band.



The Horn of Abaddon



Sanctum of Vetra-Kali

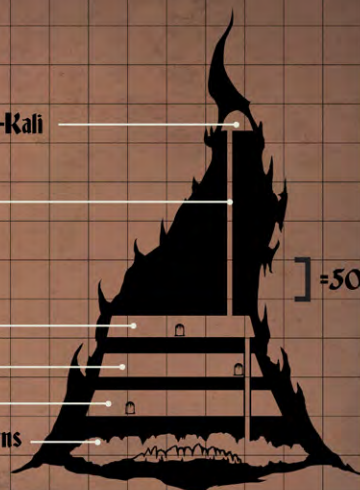
The Spiral

Level 3

Level 2

Level 1

The Lower Caverns



The Lower Caverns

□ = 10'



Sanctum of Vetra-Kali

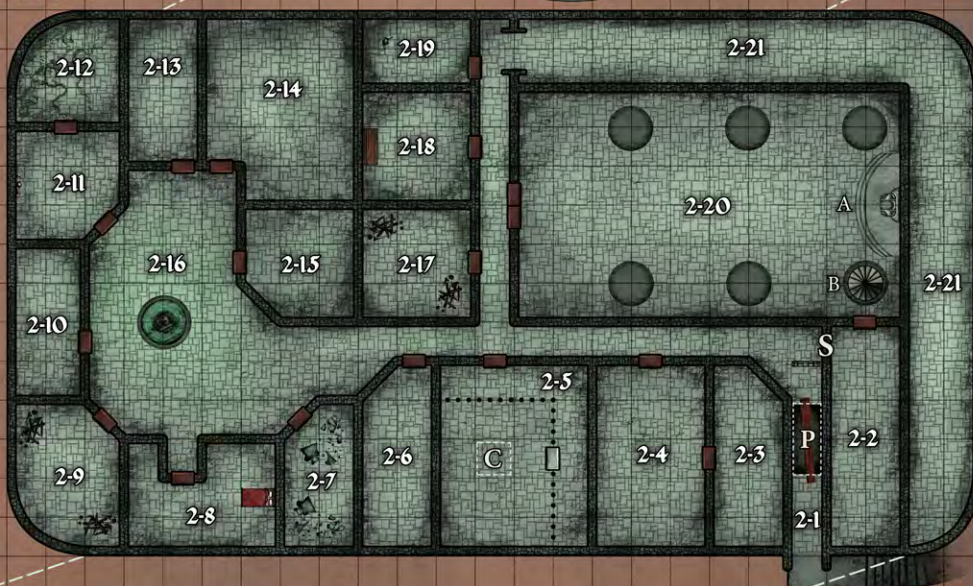
Level 3



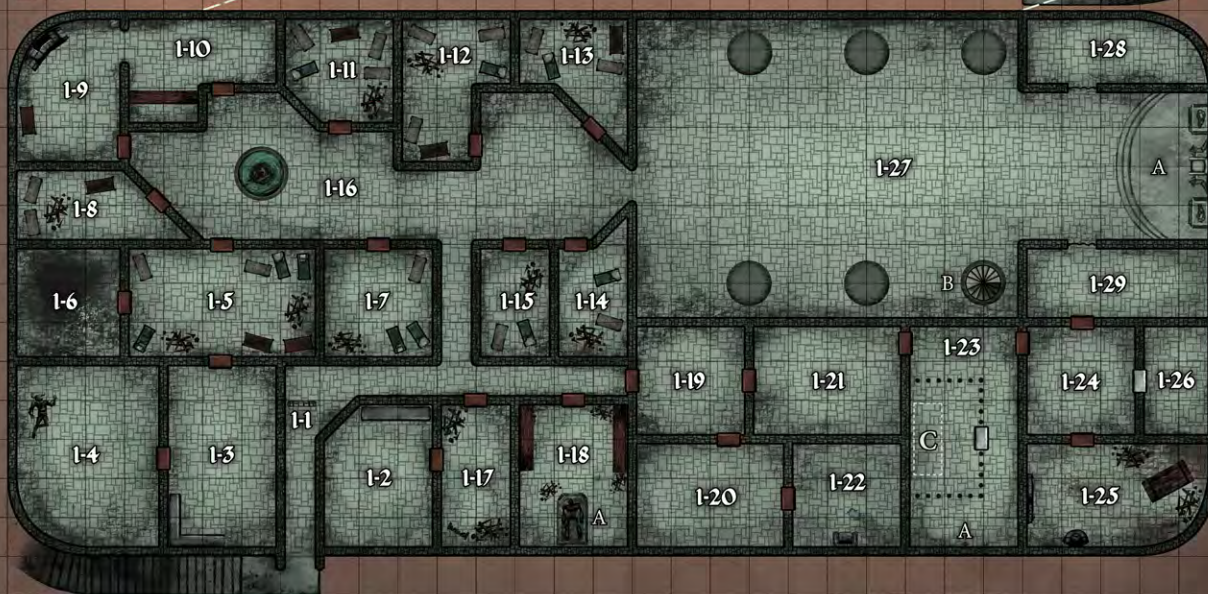
Level 2



□ = 10'



Level 1



Act Two: Taking the Horn

SECURING THE HORN

What follows is a room by room description of the Horn of Abaddon. Unusually for a dungeon, these room descriptions are not just concerned with how the rooms *are* but also what they might *become*.

Eventually, the PCs are going to own this dungeon. They are going to clear out its inhabitants (or enslave or ally with them) and make the Horn of Abaddon their base of operations. At that time, they are probably going to ask themselves -- how can I make my base more secure? There is no simple answer to that question. Instead, the PCs get to become dungeon designers. They get to customize rooms and create traps.

In your PDF bundle or at firemountaingames.com you will find a PC version of the map of the Horn of Abaddon. That version of the map lacks secret doors and room numbers. Print out that PC map. Use overlaid sheets of paper to slowly expose it as the PCs explore the map. Once they begin to modify the map be ready to mark it up. Make lots of notes about how the PCs are changing the map. Later you will use this map when NPC adventurers attack the Horn. And they will. Oh yes.

The author has tried to anticipate many of the things that the PCs might do. We have tried to give you the Game Master the information to answer the questions your PCs may ask. How much does that trap cost? How much poison can I buy in town? Where can I get a monster or a band of minions to guard this room?

Ultimately our efforts are doomed to failure. There is no way this author or anyone can anticipate all the weird, wonderful and wicked traps your players will concoct. So you've got to be ready to wing it! We want to reward innovation and cleverness. So we've created a point system called Security Points (SPs for short). When the PCs do something effective and interesting in order to secure the Horn, award them Security Points. At the end of the ritual, tally up the Security Points and consult this chart:

0-9 SPs: Ineffectual Security	0 XP
10-19 SPs: Flawed Security	2,400 XP
20-29 SPs: Adequate Security	3,200 XP
30-39 SPs: Effective Security	4,800 XP
40+ SPs: Amazing Security	6,400 XP

The most important rule with the security bonus reward is 'know when to ignore the points'. If your PCs do something amazing and creative to secure the Horn -- award them the amazing security bonus. Even if their point total is zero. It's just that simple. Ultimately, this is just a handy way to gauge how well your PCs are doing.

THE HORN OF ABADDON

THE LOWER CAVERNS

C1 - The Maw of Dagon

This broad open cave is the only visible entrance to the lower caverns. The many stalactites, stalagmites, and columns of wet living stone resemble nothing so much as fangs contained inside a large loathsome grin. The cave is covered by countless pools of standing fetid water and ubiquitous slicks of mud that make the entire surface of the maw count as difficult terrain from the entrance to the dotted-line more than forty feet in.

C1a - a pair of bored boggard sentries is stationed here. If they see a lone or wounded entrant into the caves, they will try to ambush and eat the unfortunate. If they notice a numerically superior or well-armed band, they instead take cover and at the first opportunity flee to C9 - the Bane-wog Village. There they alert their chieftain Kumanda Slays-Nine-Men. Kumanda gathers four warriors and moves to lay an ambush for the intruders, perhaps in C4.

Posting a guard here: 1 security point

Bane-wog Boggard Sentries CR 2

XP 600

hp 22 (see page 18 above)

Kumanda Slays-Nine-Men CR 7

XP 3,200

hp 94 (see page 17 above)

C2 - Pool of Acid

This small wet cave, through a bizarre natural process, sweats acid from its northern wall. The acid has pooled and anyone touching the seemingly clear water takes 1d6 acid damage. Double this damage if anyone foolishly drinks from pool. This pool is surprisingly deep and contains roughly 100 vials worth of acid (1000 gp worth). Better, the pool replenishes completely every month. That means that every week the PCs control the horn, they can harvest 250 gp worth of potent acid from this pool.

Selling the acid in Farholde is folly. The lone alchemist in town has nowhere near the demand to keep up with the rate this pool produces. You can sell at most 10 vials a month in Farholde. After that, there is simply no further demand.

What this pool excels at is the production of truly horrid and horrendous traps. The value of this acid may be directly applied to the construction cost of any trap that involves an acid component. This pool may never supply more than half the cost of any mechanical trap.

C3 – Empty Cavern

This perpetually dripping cavern is empty save for a murky pool populated with blind cave fish. A knowledge (nature) skill check (DC 20) confirms that this cavern would make an excellent lair for some dangerous water-loving beast. The nearby swamps are infested with crocodiles. If a pair could be captured and transplanted here (an excellent job for boggard minions) then this room could be turned into a CR 4 encounter.

Making area a CR 4 – CR 6 encounter: 1 security point

Making area a CR7+ encounter: 2 security points

Crocodile CR 2

XP 600

hp 22 (see the entry on Crocodile in the Pathfinder Bestiary)

C4 – Boggard Ambush Site

With its many stalagmites and shadowy corners, this cavern is a natural ambush site. The boggards love to smear themselves in the wet mud and hide in wait here (receiving a +4 circumstance bonus to their Stealth checks), jumping out to impale intruders with their spears. Unfortunately, the boggards have grown lazy of late and rarely station anyone here.

If the PCs take over the tribe (see Event Two above), then our villains can intimidate the boggards into keeping this chamber manned (a DC 20 Intimidate skill check; apply a +4 circumstance bonus if the PCs make an example of a boggard who abandons his post). Four boggards can effectively hide here, making this a CR 6 encounter.

Further, the ground in the middle of the room here is comparatively dry and soft. It would be a perfect place to dig up to a twenty foot deep pit trap. Any deeper and the soft soil grows too damp and simply collapses. The pit could be dug for free by simply conscripting the boggards (this takes a week). The boggards can also cut crude wooden spikes to install at the bottom. They will not suggest this, of course, as they remain lazy. You could also fill a pit with acid harvested from C2 (see above).

Intimidating the boggards into defending this place:

1 security point

Building a CR2+ trap here: 1 security point

Bane-wog Boggard Sentries CR 2

XP 600

hp 22 (see page 17 above)

Kumanda Slays-Nine-Men CR 7

XP 3,200

hp 94 (see page 16 above)

Spiked Camouflaged Pit Trap CR 3

Type mechanical; Perception DC 25; Disable Device DC 20

EFFECTS

Trigger Location; Reset manual

Effect 20-ft.-deep pit (2d6 falling damage); pit spikes (Atk +10 melee, 1d4 spikes per target for 1d4+2 damage each); DC 20 Reflex save avoids; multiple targets (all targets in 10-ft.-square area)

Cost Nothing! Can be done with free boggard labor. Failing that, 750 gp worth of labor

Acid-Filled Camouflaged Pit Trap CR 4

Type mechanical; Perception DC 25; Disable Device DC 20

EFFECTS

Trigger Location; Reset manual

Effects 20-ft.-deep pit (2d6 falling damage); acid pool (2d6 acid damage); DC 20 Reflex save avoid; multiple targets (all targets in 10-ft.-square area)

Cost 1,000 gp worth of acid (see C2) plus free boggard labor. Failing that, it takes 750 gp worth of labor.

C5 – Empty Cavern

This non-descript cavern is empty and mostly dry. It would make a terrible lair since it is natural crossroads. The floor is solid rock so building a pit trap here is impossible without magic.

Of course, the most important feature here is almost impossible to spot (DC 30 Perception skill check). There is an exquisitely crafted secret door in the southeastern wall that leads to a hidden spiral stair case. This spiral staircase is the key to entering the Sanctum of Vetra-Kali far above. The spiral staircase winds through two hollow columns in rooms 1-27 and 2-20 above until it terminates at the landing 3-12. This landing is the only way to enter the Sanctum without flight.

A trap could be built to defend the secret door. Of course, any trap built here must be careful to leave the exquisite camouflage of the door intact. Any failed Craft (Traps) skill check will reduce the DC to spot this door by 5. A natural one on such a skill check will reduce the DC by 10.

Building a CR2+ trap here: 1 security point

C5A – the southern passage into this chamber is very narrow. Medium sized creatures can still enter here, but this square counts as difficult terrain. Anything larger cannot pass here. Smaller creatures can pass through here without penalty.

C6 – Empty Cavern

This relatively dry cavern would make a perfect lair for any number of beasts. The floor is solid rock so building a pit trap here is impossible without magic.

Creating a CR4-CR6 encounter here: 1 security point

Creating a CR7+ encounter here: 2 security points

C7 – Empty Cavern

Another relatively dry cavern and again a perfect lair for a beast. As the two caves previous, this floor is also solid rock. There is a perch at the back that would make a fine place for the beast to sleep.

The dire tiger (see Act Three, Event Five below) would make a fine addition to this area. The beast would quickly turn C5, C6, and C7 into its personal den. It would be much too big to take the south passage (C5a) out and a small gate could be installed in the western passage to C8. The boggards would build a stout wooden one for free. An iron one would cost 1,000 gp and could be installed as an action by minions (i.e. would take a week).

Creating a CR4-CR6 encounter here: 1 security point
Creating a CR7+ encounter here: 2 security points

C8 – Mud Pits

Geothermal activity below the Horn of Abaddon has created a natural cauldron of boiling mud here. The hot mud is obvious and not particularly dangerous (though anyone who wades in does take 1d6 fire damage per round). If anyone casts detect magic here, the mud is actually faintly magical. The slow erosion of the magically-created Horn of Abaddon has made this pool so.

The Sons of the Pale Horseman knew a ritual to call forth four mudman servitors. This ritual is detailed in a mural in room 2-21 (see below). If it is performed here, four loyal mudmen emerge from the boiling mud. Together they are a CR 6 encounter that must remain within the pool of boiling mud.

Tainted by the residual evil of the place, the mudmen are NE instead of their usual N alignment. This means that if they are left alone, they try to kill everything mortal they can find preferably by slow boiling in hot mud. The ritual can only be performed once per year.

Across the mud pool there is a natural shelf and upon that shelf is an old mud-splattered metal chest. Currently the chest is empty and open, its lock ruined. It would be easy enough to repair the chest or perhaps replace it entirely with something valuable (or seemingly valuable). This would ensure that any adventuring party that enters this chamber tries to devise some clever (and likely dangerous) way to cross the boiling mud. This will put them at the mercy of the cruel corrupted mudmen.

Summoning the mudmen: 1 security point.

Baiting the trap: 1 security point

MUDMAN

CR2

XP 600

NE Medium outsider (earth, elemental, extraplanar)

Init +0; Senses darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 120 ft.; Perception +0

DEFENSE

AC 12, touch 10, flat-footed 12 (+2 natural)

hp 15 (2d10+4)

Fort +5, Ref +0, Will +3

DR 5/magic; Immune elemental traits, boiling mud damage

Weaknesses magic

OFFENSE

Speed 10 ft.

Melee slam +4 (1d4+3)

Ranged touch +3 (mud bomb)

Special Attacks engulf, mud bomb

TACTICS

During Combat The mudmen are not intelligent per se but they are cunning and eager to engulf living things and feed on their life energies. They wait until victims are close before attacking. Then they try to engulf and drag them into the boiling mud. Any creature who flees gets pelted with mud bombs.

Morale These creatures defend their mud pool to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 14, Dex 10, Con 14, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 1

Base Atk +2; CMB +4 (+8 grapple when engulfing); CMD 14

Feats Weapon Focus (mud bomb)^B

Skills Stealth +0 (+16 in mud pool); Racial Modifiers +16 Stealth in mud pool

SQ mud pool

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Engulf (Su) Once per minute as a standard action, a mudman can hurl itself at any creature of its size or smaller within 10 feet. If it succeeds on a ranged touch attack, the mudman immediately makes a CMB check to grapple the target (this does not provoke an attack of opportunity) with a +4 racial bonus. If the mudman fails to establish a hold, it drops into an adjacent square and is staggered for 1 round. If the mudman establishes a hold, it flows over its opponent, covering the creature with its muddy body--it can attempt a new CMB check to maintain the "hold" on the creature each round that follows as a free action. The creature is effectively blinded and must either hold its breath or suffocate as long as the hold remains. Each round the mudman maintains its hold, it deals 1d4+3 damage as it crushes and constricts its victims.

Magic Vulnerability (Ex) Mudmen are susceptible to *dispel magic*, as this spell disrupts their magical energies. A mudman subjected to *dispel magic* takes 1d6 damage per caster level (Fortitude save for half damage). *Transmute mud to rock* deals 1d6 damage per caster level to any mudmen caught in the area of effect and leaves them staggered until they can find a new mud pool. Other, similar spells may have similar effects.

Mud Bomb (Su) A mudman can hurl globs of its body mixed with its surrounding mud--this attack has a range increment of 10 feet. If one of these mud bombs hits a target, it grows semi-solid and tenacious, causing 1d4 Dexterity damage. If the cumulative Dex damage from mud bombs ever equals the target's actual Dex score, the target remains conscious but is immobile and cannot take any physical action (although see below) until the mud is removed or the target breaks free. Spell-like abilities or spells with only verbal components may be used if the trapped creature can make a DC 20 concentration check. It's a DC 20 Strength check (made as a full-round action) to pry accumulated mud off and remove all Dexterity damage caused by the attack--a creature that is held immobile can break free with a DC 25 Strength check made as a full-round action (this is the only physical action the creature can attempt encased in mud). The mud dries and crumbles to dust in 15 minutes, or in 1d3 rounds if a large amount of water (such as results from *create water*) is used to wash it away.

Mud Pool (Su) A mudman cannot leave the bounds of the mud pool it dwells in, although these mud pools may be of any size. A mudman's tremorsense extends throughout the entire mud pool, and it gains a +16 bonus on Stealth checks when hiding in a mud pool. A mudman forced out of its mud pool is staggered.

C9 – Boggard Village

Every boggard in the Lower Caverns lives here in seven crude mud and thatch huts. There are sixteen bane-wog boggards in total (plus Zikomo and Kumanda). It is rare for all of them to be here at any one time. Usually half of them are off hunting in the nearby swamps, catching birds, turtles, frogs and unwary Farholders for supper. Kumanda has a 60% chance of being here at any given moment. Zikomo (from C23 below) has a 20% chance of being here, usually ranting about Father and his power.

A – 2 boggards dwell here.

B – 4 boggards dwell here.

C – 2 boggards dwell here.

D – 3 boggards dwell here.

E – 1 boggard dwells here. This loner recently found an adventurer's corpse in the swamps and recovered 22 gp, a small garnet worth 50 gp and a *clamor box* (see the Advanced Player's Guide) in a small leather sack. He has hidden these treasures under the usual assortment of tattered skins and scattered animal bones that adorn every boggard hut. Searching the hut it takes a DC 20 Perception skill check to find this sack among the refuse.

F – 2 boggards dwell here.

G – Chief Kumanda Slays-Nine-Men plus his two consorts (2 boggards) dwell here. At least one of the consorts is always here. The village treasury is kept here, scattered among the many skins and bunches of grass and leaves. The "treasury" is a collection of large bones, broken weapons and armor, crocodile and snake skins and shiny rocks that have impressed Kumanda over the years. Among this worthless junk however, there are a few legitimate treasures. There are two large chunks of flawed but valuable amethyst worth 150 gp and 220 gp respectively; a fossilized mammoth ivory tusk worth 500 gp; and a *helm of comprehend languages and read magic*.

Anyone who slays Kumanda is entitled to claim his tent, his treasures and his consorts. While the two consorts are very desirable to boggards, it is unlikely they do anything for your PCs. Giving them to Zikomo will please the horny old shaman but not make him any less treacherous.

As the tribe replenishes itself once the ritual begins (and the temple starts glowing), more huts may well be built in this chamber. See Event Two above.

Zikomo alone does not live here with the rest of the tribe. His hut and the shrine to Father are in C23.

Bane-wog Boggards CR 2

XP 600
hp 22 (see page 18 above)

Kumanda Slays-Nine-Men CR 7

XP 3,200
hp 94 (see page 17 above)

Zikomo Hears-the-Father CR 6

XP 2,400
Hp 52 (see page 18)

C10 – Empty Cavern

An empty nondescript wet cavern. This crossroads is not suitable for a lair and the hard rock floor makes building pit traps impossible without magic. However a trap here could alert the boggards that someone is sneaking in through the "back door" to their village.

A trap to alert the boggards: 1 security point

C11 – Strange Fish

This is another wet cavern with a pool of water at its rear. This pool however has a faint glow to it and is surprisingly clear. This pool contains weird pale blue blind cave fish with delicate thread-like spines on their forefins.

A successful Knowledge (dungeoneering) skill check (DC 25) will recognize these fish as death-angel cave tetras. Their spines are a powerful paralytic poison that the fish use to stun their preferred prey – the tiny white shrimp that share their cave pools and feed on the luminous algae. Harvesting the venom is not too difficult if you know the poison is in the spines and use a net. Reaching for the fish by hand is an excellent way to get stung (DC 15 Reflex save to avoid).

This pool and its nearby side chambers that disappear under the rock actually support a breeding population. The fish could be all harvested for twenty doses of the poison immediately or this pool could be harvested sustainably for four doses of poison a month.

Death-Angel Spine Venom

Type poison, injury; **Save** Fortitude DC 15
Frequency 1/round for 2 rounds
Initial Effect 1d3 Con damage; **Secondary Effect** unconsciousness for 1d3 hours; **Cure** 1 save
Cost: 150 gp/dose.

C12 – The Cavern of the Blue Slime

This is seemingly yet another wet empty cavern notable only for its very distinctive blue slime mold that covers the western wall. The vibrant blue slime is neither poisonous nor dangerous but is visually striking. Otherwise, at first glance, this cavern appears uninteresting. Actually, this cavern conceals a great secret.

There is a miniscule little tunnel that leads from the base of the southern wall. It is very easy to miss (DC 25 Perception skill check). No creature bigger than tiny (or gaseous or incorporeal) can pass through this small passage to C13 beyond.

Zikomo Hears-the-Father though mad has been having visions about this cavern and knows that there is something crucial to the future of the Horn of Abaddon here though he does not know exactly what.

C13 – The Horseman's Last Redoubt

When the end came for the Sons of the Pale Horseman, it came quickly. Certainly the cultist Rinehart Kappelbrenner was caught unprepared. As his brethren charged towards the futile fight with the King and his knights, Rinehart instead ran. He knew the fight could not be won. He had already seen the daemon prince Vetra-Kali slain by King Markadian. He knew he was doomed. But always a clever lad, Rinehart had a plan.

He grabbed two *potions of gaseous form*, a small pack containing personal effects, food and water and one of the emerald eyes of Vetra-Kali. The jewel he obtained was the *Eye of Vigilance* and it functions as a *crystal ball* that could see anywhere within the confines of the Horn. His plan was to drink a *potion of gaseous form*, retreat to a small chamber in the lower caverns he had discovered years ago, and there wait out this slaughter. After the invaders were gone then he could escape and unite with other survivors...if there were any. When he returned the *Eye of Vigilance* to the priesthood he had no doubt they would hail him as a hero of the order.

It was a magnificent plan and at first, it seemed to be working flawlessly. Rinehart escaped to the lower caverns, drank the potion and made it into the concealed cavern. He reverted to solid form and used the *Eye* to survey the destruction wrought upon the Horn. It was then he noticed a terrible flaw in his plan. One of the *potions of gaseous form* had been smashed. Its contents had leaked out and the potion was ruined. He was trapped in this tiny chamber. He tried slipping through the gap and even resorted to shouting hoping a comrade would hear him. After a day of futile effort he knew he was doomed.

He lasted for weeks. Water dripped into the cave and he had a small store of food. He even had illumination via the cantrip *light*. His pack contained a prized holy book “The Dirges of Apollyon” and ink and quill.

He observed everything that was done by the Victor. He saw the Seal made and in that moment Rinehart Kappelbrenner had a dreadful epiphany. Some might say a vision this powerful and this terrible must have come directly from the Pale Horseman himself. Or perhaps it was simply a moment of genius by one of the most humble servants of this wicked temple. Whatever the reason, Rinehart knew what must be done to call forth his master back to the prime material plane.

The seal was not perfect. There was a way to break it. And he knew how. On the back pages of the “Dirges” he recorded his ritual. And then cackling madly to himself in smug satisfaction, he committed his soul into the arms of death and took his own life.

Today, a lime encrusted human skeleton leans against the south wall clutching a heavy leather bound book. This is perhaps the last surviving copy of “The Dirges of Apollyon” upon this mortal plane. It details the long history of the “Sons of the Pale Horseman” and recounts their efforts to transform this world into a daemon's playground. This rarest of tomes is made utterly unique by the last page of text within. This book makes plain the ritual necessary to call Vetra-Kali back to the mortal realms (the ritual is detailed below). And besides that, still glittering amongst the muck, is the First Eye of Vetra-Kali – *The Eye of Vigilance*.

Story Award: Award a CR 7 (3,200 XP) reward for finding this place, the book and the Eye.

The Eye of Vigilance (the First Eye of Vetra-Kali)

Aura strong divination (evil); CL 15th
Slot none; **Weight** –

DESCRIPTION

This jewel at first appears to be nothing more than an exquisite emerald worth at least 20,000 gp. Only if the jewel is steeped in the blood of a sentient creature does it reveal its true nature. *The Eye of Vigilance* was the magical focus used to create the Horn of Abaddon in the first place and so it is connected to every square inch of the structure. The bearer of this jewel may scry the Horn of Abaddon just as if he possessed a *crystal ball*. The *Eye* is also a critical component of the ritual to destroy the *Silver Seal* and return Vetra-Kali to the prime material plane.

If all three of the Eyes of Vetra-Kali are united in the statue of Vetra-Kali in the Sanctum, then the *Eye of Vigilance* functions as a *crystal ball* with *true seeing* again limited to the confines of the Horn itself.

DESTRUCTION

The Eye of Vigilance, like all the Eyes of Vetra-Kali can only be destroyed by permanently slaying Vetra-Kali Eats-the-Eyes on his home plane. If this is ever done, the jewel shatters into emerald shatters worth a paltry 2,000 gp.

C14 – Empty Cavern

An empty nondescript wet cavern. This would make a fine lair for some beast to guard the lower caverns.

Capturing or convincing some CR4+ beast(s) to make this cavern its lair: 1 security point

C15 – The Backdoor

This large wet cavern is dominated by two murky pools on either side of a comparatively wet walkway. The muck and slime that coats the floor makes the entire chamber count as difficult terrain (boggard swamp stride ignores this difficult terrain). This room also has strategic importance. It is a bottleneck that leads to the back entrance of the boggard village.

It would be wise to defend this room. Four boggards could hide in the murky water and ambush anyone who crosses the walkway, using their stealth and sticky tongues to full effect. The lazy boggards however are loath to keep up such a regular defense. If the PCs take over the tribe (see Event Two above), then they can intimidate the boggards into keeping this chamber manned (a DC 20 Intimidate skill check; apply a +4 circumstance bonus if the PCs make an example of a boggard who abandons his post).

A – This is a particularly large and beautiful cave formation that emerges from the pool. Delicate crystals stud its exterior. These crystals could be used to aid in the repair of the Alchemical Golem (see room 1-18 below).

C16 – Fungus Farm

The floor of this cavern, save for a walkway around the edge is covered in a mix of mud and boggard manure. From this foul mixture grows a field of barely edible mushrooms that the boggards reluctantly consume when they can't get anything alive to eat.

C17 – The Breeding Pool

The next generation of boggards swims about and grows in this murky pool. The little boggard tadpoles are noncombatant and confined to the water. They actually look like strange little fish at this stage. Most of these tadpoles are the descendants of Kumanda Slays-Nine-Men and his consorts.

Though the tadpoles are helpless, the destruction of this pool would be a great blow to the morale of the Bane-wog tribe. If Kumanda and the tadpoles are destroyed, both of the consorts (2 boggard inhabitants of C9-G) and 1d6 admirers abandon the tribe.

A – A crude stone statue of a great bloated tentacled boggard watches the pool. This is of course a statue of Father as the bane-wogs perceive him. A successful Knowledge (religion) or Knowledge (the planes) skill check (DC 20) reveals this as merely a variation of the demon-lord Dagon.

C18 – Bone Pit

This wet cavern is full of bones of both animals and sentients. This collection was largely cobbled together from everyone the boggards have ever murdered plus dozens of bodies found scattered about dating from the destruction of the Sons of the Pale Horseman eighty years ago. An enterprising necromancer could sort through the bones and find 100+2d6 intact human, half-elven, elven and dwarven skeletons in this pile that could be raised by *animate dead* into skeleton minions.

C19 – Deadly Diamonds

At first glimpse, this room looks like a treasure cavern. Beautiful “diamonds” sparkle along the far wall. However, this sparkling beauty conceals a deadly and partially magical trap. Between the two dotted lines is a patch of flowstone so thin that any weight greater than ten pounds will cause it to collapse. Whoever steps on the slick patch will likely fall through this thin “cave ice” onto a floor of jagged stalagmites thirty feet below. There is a pool of strangely luminescent water that pools around the stalagmite's base. This pool is far too shallow to provide any protection against the fall.

Cave Ice Dead Fall CR 6

Type magic; Perception DC 25; Disable Device DC 20

EFFECTS

Trigger location; Reset special (see below)

Effect 30-ft-deep pit (3d6 falling damage); jagged stalagmites (Atk +15 melee, 1d4 stalagmites per target for 1d6+5 damage each); DC 20 Reflex avoids; multiple targets (all targets between the dashed lines)

If *detect magic* is used, the cave ice does possess a faint transmutation aura. This is because this cave actually does have a very shy inhabitant that even the boggards do not know of. A minor spirit of the earth named Xerakik hides in this cave. This shy little earth pixie never voluntarily reveals itself and remains invisible and hidden whenever it has visitors. However, Xerakik does perform one notable act. He uses his earth magic to repair his home recreating any delicate formation broken by bumbling intruders. Once per week, Xerakik may reform the cave ice. This is how the trap “resets”.

Xerakik, Earth Spirit CR4

XP 1,200

hp 18 (see Pathfinder Bestiary entry on Pixie except Xerakik is neutral alignment and speaks Terran instead of Sylvan)

The boggards know that there is something odd about this room and have investigated the strange lights that occasionally dance around this cave (this is Xerakik illuminating the 'diamonds' with his *dancing lights*). This usually leads to one more boggards crashing through the cave ice and then the ice seeming to regrow on its own. The diamonds by the way are simply translucent calcite crystals. Though they are quite lovely and remarkably delicate, they are also worthless.

C20 – Empty Cavern

An empty nondescript wet cavern. The southern pool used to have cave fish in it, but the boggards long ago ate these tasty little creatures. This is too travelled to make a good lair.

C21 – Fungus Farm

This is another boggard fungus farm, exactly as C16 above.

C22 – Holding Pen

The boggards have constructed a crude holding pen here. This is where victims captured in the swamp are dragged and held until the proper moment for them to be sacrificed to Dagon and then eaten. Currently it is empty save for a few scattered bones from an unlucky Iraen trapper the boggards captured weeks ago. However, if the boggards capture anyone, after they've been stripped of any obvious possessions, this is where they end up.

A – This is the crude door to the holding pen. It is made of salvaged bits of metal from the broken pit trap on the second level (2-1) that have been lashed together. There are no hinges or locks, it is simply wedged in place and tied to several holes in the rock. Then two boggard guards are stationed here and they stab anyone who gets too close to the door with their spears.

Bane-wog Boggards

CR 2

XP 600

hp 22 (see page 18 above)

C23 – Zikomo's Temple

This large and high-vaulted cave drips with water so constantly it seems as if it is perpetually raining. Fetid pools and luminescent algae combine to give the chamber an ominous greenish glow and a lingering stench. The chamber is dominated by a large and impressive mud and stick hut that is surprisingly sturdy. This is Zikomo's Temple to Father (who is in truth the demon-lord Dagon). The entrance is decorated with bones and leather strips cut from dozens of creatures (many sentient).

The temple itself is a single room almost thirty feet across. Inside, countless bones from those who have died upon Dagon's altar decorate the place. A crude stone block is encrusted with old dried blood. Above the block, drawn in vibrant luminescent paint distilled from rare marsh plants, is the mad spiral rune of Dagon himself surrounded by countless scribbles of daemoniconography copied from the Horn's exterior. A fire pit burns in the center of the temple.

Zikomo Hears-the-Father lives here. He spends most of his time meditating, lost in a haze of *vision juice*. Most of the boggards live in awe and terror of their mad shaman and so rarely visit. There are no guards here. It is widely believed in the village that Zikomo takes care of himself well enough.

If visited, Zikomo is in a trance when our villains arrive. He emerges from his trance long enough to stare at them glass-eyed and pronounce *"The cave of the blue slime conceals your future. Learns its secret or fail at ye master's charge."* Suddenly the drug induced fatigue seems to lift from him in one manic burst of energy. He leaps to his feat and starts dancing and screaming his terrifying croaks about blue slime and the fury of the master. The fire that burns at the center of the temple changes color to blue in response to his frenzied abyss-born prayer. Zikomo laughs like a mad fiend.

Zikomo is mad of course but his vision is astonishingly correct. To avoid failing at their mission to obtain the Tears of Achlys they must have the ritual to summon Vetra-Kali Eats-the-Eyes. That ritual is in a cave that can only be entered by passing through the Cavern of the Blue Slime (see C12 above).

Zikomo is a potential information tool. If the PCs are stuck on a puzzle have them consult with the mad boggard shaman. He will no doubt have some insane raving wisdom to impart. His wisdom is never clear and always as crazy as the drug-addled frog shaman who speaks it.

The temple is not without its own secrets. The great stone altar can be moved. Hidden beneath the stone is the treasure hoard of Zikomo: 2300 gp in mixed coinage stolen from countless travellers murdered by the bane-wogs. Mixed with the coins are a small bag of shiny jewelry and lumps of raw turquoise. The contents of the bag is worth another 1200 gp.

For more information about the mad boggard shaman Zikomo, see Event Two above.

Zikomo Hears-the-Father

CR 6

XP 2,400

Hp 52 (see page 18)

LEVEL 1

1-1 The Left Eye

Of the four conventional ways into the Horn, this is the easiest to get to. You simply walk up a wide set of stairs a hundred feet and arrive at the landing. Clearly, this area was supposed to be guarded. There are six arrow slits on both the east and west walls. Forty feet into the passage a solid stone half-wall rises that could provide cover to two medium-sized combatants.

But all of these defensive preparations are now for naught because this entry is unattended. Anyone who closely examines the passage can make a Perception skill check (DC 20). Success reveals that this room has seen many battles. There are small nicks and traces of long dried blood everywhere in the stonework.

Stationing guards behind the half-wall: 1 security point

1-2 Eastern Guardroom

This chamber is empty. A long stone bench built into the north wall and tell-tale broken bits of barrel wood hint that once guards holed up here, ready and provisioned to guard this entryway for prolonged periods. But now there is only emptiness and quiet.

Stationing guards here with missile weapons: 1 security point

1-3 Western Guardroom

This is another empty guardroom adorned only by an L-shaped stone bench in the southwestern corner.

Stationing guards here with missile weapons: 1 security point

1-4 Lower Storeroom

This room once held many months of provisions for the residents of the Horn, if perchance their temple was ever besieged. When the attack upon the Horn came, it happened so quickly no such stocks were needed.

A temple guardian, a minotaur, retreated in here during the Victor's assault and fought to the last. This minotaur had the honor of being impaled by the Victor himself using a spear taken from a fallen comrade. So powerful was the Victor's strike that the minotaur was pinned to the floor. There he remains to this day (location A), looking as if he died yesterday. He bears upon his arm a tattoo of a white horse skull with three burning green eyes. This is the symbol of the servants of Vetra-Kali.

As far as provisions, this room is empty, with anything not claimed by the Victor's men long ago stolen. However, a faint aura of transmutation magic does remain. Any food or drink stored here will not spoil. It is this magical effect that explains why the minotaur's corpse is in such excellent condition. The minotaur would be fine candidate for being transformed into a zombie by *animate dead*. The weapon pinning the corpse in place is simply a normal spear.

If *Speak with dead* is cast upon the minotaur it will answer questions in rough common. The minotaur's name was Gerion Joth. He was a proud and willing defender of the Horn of Abaddon. He was killed relatively early in the battle so he is unsure if Vetra-Kali fell.

He knows that there is a temple (1-27), a torture chamber (1-25) and an alchemical workshop (1-18) on this level. He was not entrusted with the secret of how to get to the sanctum of Vetra-Kali but he does know that the priests always went to the Lower Caverns when they had truly important business to take care of (the minotaur doesn't know that they used the secret stairway in C5, however). He knows nothing about the *Silver Seal*.

1-5 Pillaged Quarters

This ransacked room once quartered a dozen temple guards (with their officer enjoying the privacy of 1-6). When the temple fell, this room was ransacked and for the last eighty years it has changed little since that time besides gaining a coat of dust and countless cobwebs. There is nothing of great value here, but with a little work and some new bedding, this room could again comfortably quarter a dozen men.

1-6 Blasted Room

This room was once the quarters of a temple guard captain. This chamber gave him some privacy yet kept him close to his men. Now there is little evidence of this room's original purpose. There is nothing here but ash, blast marks and few burned bits of refuse.

A *fireball* or some other equally disastrous spell went off here eighty years ago as the Victor's retinue stormed the Horn. The blast annihilated a small group of acolytes taking refuge here. Now eighty years later, only barely identifiable shards of bone and ash remain in this blasted room to mark their demise.

This chamber is actually haunted by a brutal and dangerous psychic imprint of the slain but thankfully the spirit occupying only infrequently manifests (see Act Three, Event Ten below).

1-7 Pillaged Quarters

Once eight temple guards were quartered here. Now it remains ransacked, tossed into disarray and left to cobwebs. If searched carefully (Perception skill check DC 20) there is actually a small coin purse that was missed in the ransack. It holds 31 gp and an *elixir of truth*. Otherwise the room is unremarkable.

1-8 Stone Cutter's Quarters

This wrecked room once housed a dozen stonecutters who labored tirelessly in this wicked place. Now it is full of broken bunks and moldering personal effects. There is nothing of value here.

1-9 The Death's Head Tavern (west wing)

This was once a tavern used to keep their guards and servants content. The tavern is actually not in terrible shape for a building that has been abandoned for eighty years. When the attack came, this place was abandoned by the guard so no battle was fought here. The Victor's men did ransack it for all its gold, food and ale, but still it remains in passable shape if it was merely cleaned and restocked. If you bought 200 gp worth of common items in Farholde, this could again be a working tavern.

There is a fireplace in this part of the tavern that actually has a small vent that opens in the side of the Horn. This vent, though covered by a small metal grate, is actually another (very difficult and dangerous) way in. If someone climbed two hundred feet (Climb skill checks DC 15) and pried off the grate (Strength check DC 12), they could climb down the flue and into the fireplace. Only medium sized or smaller individuals could fit through these tight spaces.

1-10 The Death's Head Tavern (north wing)

This is the second part of the Death's Head Tavern connected to 1-9 by an open archway. The 200 gp noted above would also repair and refit this place as well.

A There is a bar here and a small grill.

1-11 Servants' Quarters

This wrecked room once housed a dozen servants of the temple. Now it is full of broken bunks and moldering personal effects. There is nothing of value here.

1-12 Guard's Barracks

Another wrecked room where soldiers once were quartered. There is nothing of value here.

1-13 Acolyte's Quarters (north)

Once acolytes of the lower temple were quartered here. Their quarters are now just as ransacked and abandoned as anywhere else. There is one thing in this room that is remarkable and it can be found if the room is searched (Perception skill check DC 20) – Brother Trask's journal.

One of the acolytes, Brother Zander Trask, kept a journal. The journal is frankly rather dull and poorly written. Trask was no great thinker and mostly it is a repetitive and boring record of the day to day drudgery of being a lowly acolyte of the temple. If carefully read and studied for three hours though three interesting facts can be gleaned.

1. Trask believed there to be something unusual about the south eastern pillar in the lower temple (room 1-27). He suspected it was hollow and had a secret door into it. (Note: There is no secret door on the first floor. But he was correct about it being hollow.)

2. Trask knew by rumor that two powerful daemons named Hexor and Vexor guarded the upper levels. He didn't know precisely where they were stationed, but he desperately wanted to get a look at them some day.

3. Trask had seen a priest (who thought no one was present) sit upon the throne and mysteriously vanish. He didn't know where the priest went but thought it very interesting. (Note: Trask witnessed the throne in room 1-27 being used as a teleporter).

Other than the lost journal, there is nothing of any interest or value here.

1-14 Acolyte's Quarters (south)

Acolytes of the lower temple were quartered here. This room is identical to 1-13 above, save that there is no lost journal hidden within. There is nothing of an interest or value here.

1-15 Servant's Quarters

This wrecked room once housed a dozen servants of the temple. Now it is full of broken bunks and moldering personal effects. There is nothing of value here.

1-16 Lower Courtyard

This large courtyard was once the central gathering place for the guards and servants who served the priests in the levels above. The courtyard buzzed with activity day and night. But those days are long gone. Now the place is empty, silent and dark.

The only hint of former glories is a magic fountain that still produces fresh water (it possesses a moderate transmutation aura). The fountain's centerpiece is carved in the form of Charon on his skiff. When water is needed the skeletal figure bleeds water like blood into the basin below. The great basin of the pool holds a hundred gallons of water and when it is depleted the basin is replenished at the rate of one gallon a round. Despite the fountain's sinister appearance and the fact it was created by a pestilence-worshipping daemonic death cult, the water is clean, fresh and potable. The fountain is part of the floor of this room and cannot be removed.

1-17 Armory

This chamber once stored the weapons and armor of the guards of the temple. Now it is empty holding little more than a few broken racks.

1-18 Alchemist's Laboratory

This was once the "Sons" alchemical laboratory where their many poisons and pestilences were brewed and perfected. Wrecked during the Victor's raid, broken glassware and alchemical equipment litter the floor. There are items of interest among the junk: schematics for an alchemical golem, three ounces of *stone salve*, an intact glass reservoir, and most importantly Artephius itself.

Lying upon the stone slab in the center of the chamber is a broken, ruined former defender of the Horn, the alchemical golem Artephius. Artephius was defeated by knights in service to the Victor and then dragged back here to be repaired by the last few remaining Sons of the Pale Horseman. When it became clear that repair was impossible before the Horn would fall, the priests abandoned the wrecked Artephius. Not one of them survived the day of the Victor's raid.

Later, the battle won, Artephius would be discovered by the Victor. "What wicked contraption is this?" the Victor asked when he first saw Artephius.

"An alchemical golem, sire," said one of the Mitran priests schooled in such matters. "I believe it's the one that killed Sir Orthus."

Victor smashed its braincase and skewered the still-living brain with one stroke of his longsword. "It shall trouble us no longer," the warrior king pronounced.

And then the golem was abandoned, left to lie upon its stone slab. But the Victor and his priest were mistaken. The golem is not irreparable. It may yet be called into service in defense of the Horn. Eight things need to be done to restore this golem to complete functionality:

1. **The Eye** – Artephius even if activated would be blind. Its single glass lens has been shattered. The lens is entirely present however and so could be repaired using the *make whole* spell. Failing that, a new lens matching the exacting specifications of the schematics could be bought in Farholde. It would cost 1000 gp.
2. **The Brain** – Artephius needs a new human, dwarven, elven, half-orc or half-elven brain. No other race will do – they are not the right size and attunement. It need not be from a living person. Someone who died in the last twenty four hours from natural causes will do. Of course, murder is always an option. Finding a brain will likely not be a problem for our band of villains. The difficulty is installing it. A successful Craft (Alchemy) skill check (DC 20) is required to install the brain. You get two chances to a make this roll. If both of them fail, the brain has died and a new one must be sought. If a natural one is ever rolled, then the installation seems to work. Of course, once Artephius is activated, it immediately attacks and tries to kill all organic life it meets, accepting no commands.
3. **The Heart Cog** – Artephius' mithral heart cog was stolen long ago, likely by one of the Victor's retainers. Without this critical component, Artephius will not activate. A new cog will have to be made. Fortunately, the exact shape is described in the schematics. 500 gp worth of mithral will suffice to make the heart cog. A smith in Farholde would do the delicate work for 10% of the mithral's value (50 gp). Regardless, a Craft (smith) skill check (DC 20) is required.
4. **The Reservoir** – Artephius needs a new glass reservoir where the four primal reagents can mingle and power the golem. The glass reservoir was smashed during the battle and now the pieces are missing so *make whole* is of no help. However, there is a spare reservoir amongst the smashed remains of the alchemist's gear. A craft (alchemy) skill check (DC 20) will identify the reservoir for what it is. Once that is done, installation is a simple matter requiring no skill check. If the PCs fail to find the reservoir, they could always have a new one made. A glass blower will be able to follow the schematic and reproduce the reservoir for 100 gp.
5. **The Reagent of Fire** – Artephius needs ten doses of *alchemist's fire*.

6. The Reagent of Ice – Artephius needs ten doses of *alchemist's ice* (sometimes also called *liquid ice*).
7. The Reagent of Acid – Artephius needs ten doses of a potent acid. The acid that pools in the lower cavern (C2) has more than enough to do the trick. Or it could be bought in Farholde.
8. The Reagent of Electricity – Artephius needs a large supply of lightning elemental blood. Luckily there is such a beast within the Horn (in the Sanctum S-1). The elemental, of course, isn't going to part with its blood voluntarily.

Once all the components have been assembled and the golem is repaired, Artephius will come to life by simply activating his heart pump. The heart cog begins to whirr and click and soon the pump distributes the four alchemical fluids throughout the automaton like blood. Electrical fluid bathes the brain floating in its case and sparks begin to dance around it. Artephius flickers with life.

The construct will stand up and immediately address whoever is closest to him. "Master, command thy servant." Artephius does not talk like a typical robot. Instead its voice is a sinister low whisper. The golem always speaks very archaically formally: "What is thy bidding?" "What dost thou require of thy servant?"

The construct never refers to itself in the first person. Artephius is always "thy servant" or "this vessel" or something similar.

Once restored, the PCs have gained a valuable servant in Artephius. Still, the construct is not a perfect servitor. Artephius is a once-destroyed golem originally built by a death cult left to rot in a corrupt temple of pestilence for decades and now restored by murderous wicked Asmodeans. The golem is a little off-kilter. Artephius will never attack its master but if left alone with any living mortal the golem deems his inferior (like minions or boggards for example) it has a 10% chance per day of slaying them without provocation in a murderous frenzy.

If the golem does murder someone it shouldn't have, then Artephius does not abandon its post. Instead it will attempt to lie. The astute reader may note that Artephius has neither intelligence nor any trace of a Bluff skill. The construct always lies the same way: "*They were attacked and slain by unknown enemies, my master.*" The golem repeats that phrase as if it explains everything. Artephius may be covered in blood and standing next to three minion corpses that have obviously been blown apart by lightning bombs, but still it sticks to that phrase.

Artephius, Alchemical Golem

CR 9

XP 6,400

N Large construct

Init +4; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +0

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 13, flat-footed 19 (+4 Dex, +10 natural, -1 size)

hp 96 (12d10+30)

Fort +4, Ref +8, Will +4

DR 10/adamantine or bludgeoning; Immune construct traits, magic

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 2 slams +19 (2d8+8 plus alchemy)

Ranged bomb +15 (8d6 energy damage)

Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.

Special Attacks alchemy, bombs, splash

TACTICS

During Combat When facing one opponent, Artephius prefers his powerful slam attacks. Against groups, Artephius will use his bombs to spread the damage amongst all his enemies. Artephius is a heartless combatant and has no problem splashing allies with his bombs.

Morale Artephius is a fearless combatant and fights to the death to fulfill his master's commands.

STATISTICS

Str 27, Dex 18, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 1

Base Atk +12; CMB +21; CMD 35

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Alchemy (Ex) When an alchemical golem strikes a foe, the attack has an additional random effect, chosen from the options below. The attack can deal 1d6 points of acid, cold, electricity, or fire damage, cause the target to become sickened (Fortitude DC 16 negates) for 1d4 rounds, or cause the target to become entangled (Reflex DC 16 negates) for 1d4 rounds. These save DCs are Constitution-based.

Bombs (Ex) As a standard action, an alchemical golem can throw a bomb as a ranged touch attack to a distance of 60 feet (no range increment). If the attack misses, treat it as a thrown splash weapon to determine where it lands. Anyone struck by an alchemical golem's bomb takes 8d6 points of acid, cold, electricity, or fire damage (determine type randomly). All creatures adjacent to the location where the bomb hits take 1d6 points of energy damage of the same type.

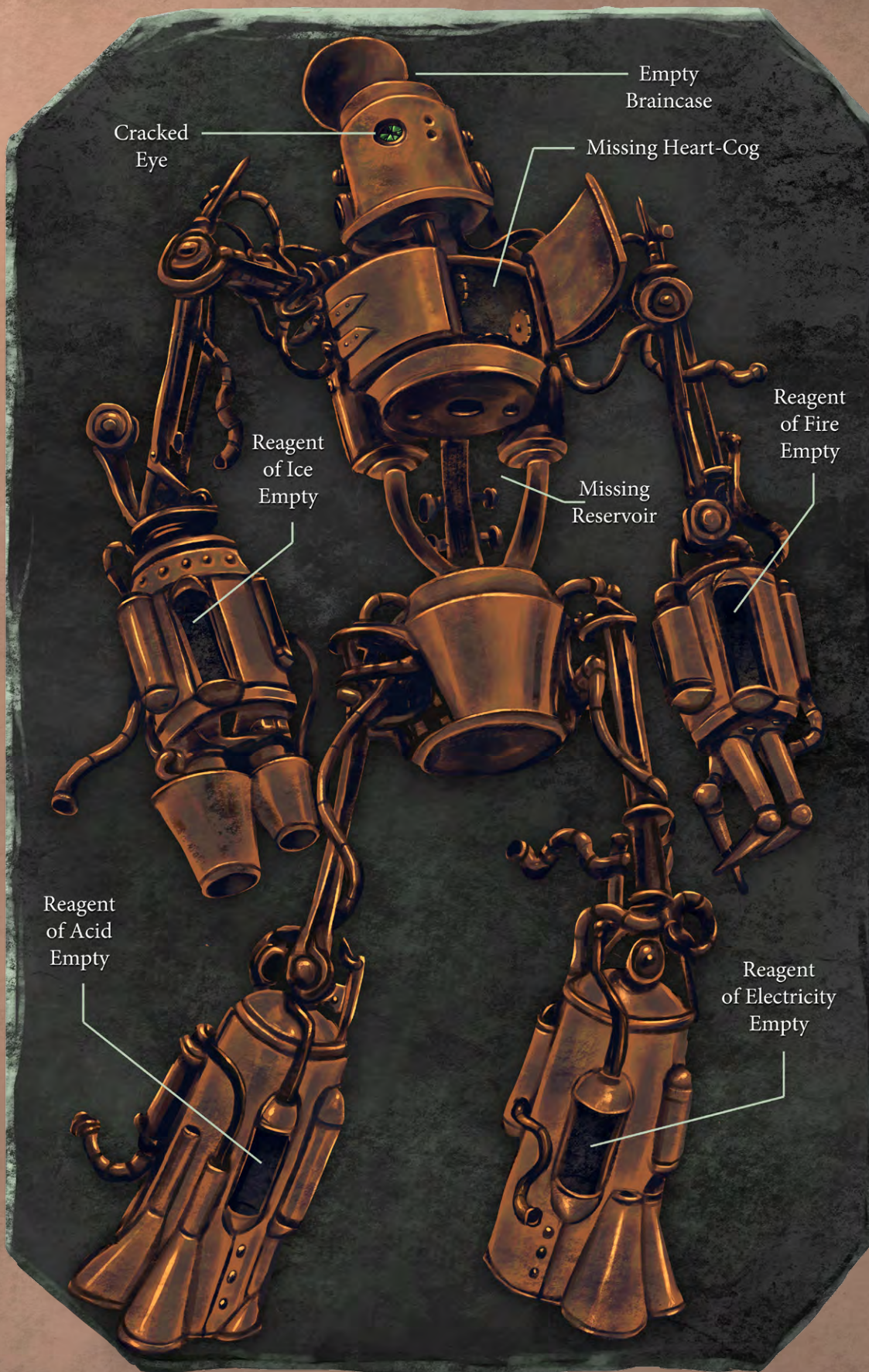
Immunity to Magic (Ex) An alchemical golem is immune to spells or spell-like abilities that allow spell resistance, save for spells with the sonic descriptor. Shatter damages an alchemical golem as if it were a crystalline creature.

Splash (Ex) Any strike on an alchemical golem with a non-reach melee weapon deals 1 point of acid, cold, electricity, or fire damage (determine type randomly) to the attacker. This amount increases to 1d6 points of damage if the attack is a critical hit.

There is no way to cure Artephius of these murderous rampages other than to destroy the construct. Better to leave the golem to guard an area alone. It certainly has no problem with solitude. The construct gets along fine with other constructs, undead and daemons. There is just something about the living that eventually infuriates this alchemical killing machine.

Or maybe Artephius just wants to see what they look like on the inside.

Story Award: Award the PCs a CR 9 reward (6,400 XP) and 3 security points for gaining Artephius' service.



Act Two: Taking the Horn

1-19 Guardroom

Guards were once stationed here who controlled access to the holding cells and torture chambers beyond this point. But now it is abandoned and empty save for a few broken pieces of furniture destroyed in the fighting and following ransack.

1-20 Sergeant of the Guard's Chamber

Once the sergeant of the guard, an unpleasant fellow named Bargus Thrax reigned over this block of the temple from his post here. Now it is empty.

1-21 The Trophy Room

Once grisly trophies hung on the wall of various enemies that the "Sons of the Pale Horseman" had disposed of through the years. The actual trophies are gone, burned in the same pyre as the Sons themselves. However, the wall is still discolored where the trophies long hung and the plaques beneath the trophies still remain.

There are twelve inscriptions:

"Laedrissia the Beautiful who believed she need not honor her promises to us."

"Markhan the Golden, the draconic protector of Los-sewyn. He slept then and now he sleeps forever."

"Kallister Feign, an illusionist too clever to keep his head."

"Lazarus M. Who mourns for you now?"

"King Croc, 23 feet snout to tail, delicious on a spit"

"Iris of Ghastenhall, dead from a broken heart and a poison dagger."

"The Great Serpent of Korokunga, slain for its venom"

"Lord Jurys Hallifax called the Just hid in his castle and hope we had forgotten. We hadn't."

"Snorri Five-Axe died on a sixth."

"The ears of Lord Kelerrian. If only he had sense enough to listen."

"Chief Gorgun Sakkathet, invincible in battle, careless in choosing his cup bearer."

"Ergun Nigma, The third scion left in the House of the House Hyrhul, second greatest swordsman in the land, the first to die."

None of the names are familiar to our villains save for the city of Ghastenhall is mentioned in the sixth inscription.

If the panels are closely inspected, ten of them are unremarkable. However, a DC 15 Perception skill check reveals that "Iris of Ghastenhall" actually has a small silver ring mounted beneath the name. The same color as the plaque, the ring is easy to miss. This unimpressive piece of jewelry, clearly intended for a very small finger, has a tiny inscription 'IoG' beside an ornate rose. The ring is worth 5 gp for its delicate craftsmanship, but if kept, could be of minor help in Book III: Tears of the Blessed.

The name plate of 'Ergun Nigma' or E.Nigma is actually a fake nameplate. If the nameplate is pulled it pops out. If it is turned three times to the left, twice to the right and once again to the left, a finely made secret safe opens. To detect the safe otherwise requires a DC 30 Perception skill check and a DC 30 Disable Device skill check to open it. Inside are 55 pp, a ruby worth 350 gp, and a set of *manacles of cooperation*.

Story Award: CR 5 (1,600 XP) for finding the safe.

1-22 Smithy

This chamber contains a forge in an almost functional state. There are bellows, a forge-fire and an anvil here all in fine shape. There is a bin for storing coal here as well, but over the years the coal has gotten wet from leakage through small cracks in the wall. Thus the coal bin must be cleaned of the foul soupy mess that current pollutes it. If the coal bin was cleaned and restocked and a set of smith's tools purchased in Farholde (5 gp or 55 gp for masterwork), this smithy would be perfectly functional once more.

If a skilled smith were in residence, this would make work to repair traps and fix torture implements much simpler. Instead of going to Farholde for every little thing, common items could be quickly made here.

1-23 Capture Cell

This chamber contains a cage made of stout iron bars that run from floor to ceiling. The cage was originally designed to capture those who blundered into the pit trap in 2-1 above. Now, everything is in disrepair.

The metal faux-stone pit trap cover is gone (part of it is being used by the boggards as a door in C22 above) so now there simply is a chute in the ceiling that leads to level 2 above. The lock has been broken beyond repair and so now the door to the cage simply swings open.

This trap is fixable. The lock could be replaced in Farholde: simple (DC 20; 20 gp), average (DC 25; 40 gp), good (DC 30; 80 gp) and superior (DC 40; 150 gp) locks are available for sale. The pit trap could be rebuilt. The PCs would need to decide if they want the simple version (nothing at the bottom), the capture-prisoners-alive version (a thick pile of soft skins at the bottom) or the take-no-prisoners version (iron spikes at the bottom).

Camouflaged Pit Trap **CR 6**

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

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** manual

Effect 50-ft.-deep pit (5d6 falling damage); DC 20 Reflex avoids; multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft. x 20-ft. area in room 2-1 above)

Cost 3,000 gp (half the usual cost of such a trap); the trap could be upgraded to automatic reset for another 3,000 gp in materials if someone can make a Craft (traps) skill check (DC 30).

Capture Trap **CR 6**

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

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** manual

Effect 50-ft.-deep pit with padded landing (2d6 falling damage); DC 20 Reflex avoids; multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft. x 20-ft. area in room 2-1 above)

Cost As Camouflaged Pit Trap above; plus 100 gp in furs, skins or blankets

Camouflaged Spike Pit Trap **CR 8**

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

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** manual

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 10-ft. x 20-ft. area in room 2-1 above)

Cost As Camouflaged Pit Trap above plus 2,000 gp for the iron spikes set into the floor

1-23A: In the southern wall are set three heavy iron rings. These are perfect places to hang manacles to hold prisoners. Of course, manacles and locks could be purchased in Farholde.

1-24 Prison Guardroom

This room, once used as a guardroom, is now empty. A DC 20 Perception skill test will notice a long dried spray of blood in the south eastern corner. This is where one of the Victor's knights ran through a soldier in service to the Sons of the Pale Horseman eighty years ago.

1-25 Torture Chamber

Once the pride of the priesthood of the Pale Horseman, this torture chamber is now in sore need of repair. Wrecked by the Victor's men, the chamber has remained a tangled pile of neglected metal and splintered wood for decades.

Still, it could be repaired. If 1,300 gp is spent here, this room will grant a +5 competence bonus to intimidation checks against anyone who spends more than ten minutes "sampling the wares". It will further grant a +2 circumstance bonus to Profession (torturer) skill checks. This initial skill check often does not involve any actual torture. Instead, it is simply necessary to strap someone in and show them what could happen. This alone will loosen the tongues of most.

For some though, threats are not enough. Actual torture is needed to extract information. A session of torture takes at least an hour and two skill checks must be made: Intimidate and Profession (torturer). The Intimidate skill check determines if information is extracted and the DC is determined normally (see the Core Rulebook entry on Intimidate; don't forget the +5 competence bonus for the repaired torture gear).

The Profession (torturer) skill check is to avoid mishaps. A DC 15 skill check must be made for every torture session. A failed skill check means the victim passes out from pain, takes 4d6 damage (possibly dying) and reveals no information regardless of the results of the intimidation skill check. A natural one on this skill check means the victim has broken free and grabbed either an improvised weapon or one of the torturer's weapons (50% chance of either). Regardless, failure means the session is wasted. Every successive session without allowing the victim an eight hour rest increases the DC by two. If the torturer makes the skill check, they can choose to inflict damage (anywhere from 1d6 to 8d6 points of damage – the torturer's choice).

The 1,300 gp can expended up to six times. Every time the money is spent, the number of "guests" this chamber can serve increases by one. This room is not large enough to torture more than six victims concurrently.

The torture equipment in this room (whether wrecked or repaired), together, weighs approximately three tons (6000 lbs).

1-26 Holding Cell

A stout iron door with a small barred window controls entry to this plain stone cell. The door once had a fine lock but that was smashed when the door was kicked in by a Darian knight. A replacement lock could be bought in Farholde: either a simple (DC 20; 20 gp), average (DC 25; 40 gp), good (DC 30; 80 gp) or superior (DC 40; 150 gp) lock. Inside the room are metal rings set in the wall that could secure manacles enough to restrain either fourteen medium size prisoners or ten medium sized prisoners and one large sized prisoner.

1-27 Lower Temple

This massive open hall with its vaulted ceilings dominates the first level. At the west wall, a single open archway feeds from the lower courtyard (1-16) into this place of gathering and worship. Six huge columns support the place. Upon every surface are carved baroque scenes of daemons and their humanoid allies marching together to conquer in the name of the daemon prince Vetra-Kali.

1-27A Throne of the High Priest

Here sits a large stone throne decorated with scenes of daemoniac victory over angels. It radiates a moderate conjuration aura. At its base in small script is the non-sense word 'Yah' in Abyssal (Perception DC 15 to find).

This throne is one of four linked teleporters. Sitting on a throne and saying the appropriate command word teleports you to one of the other three. Only three of these teleportation thrones are in the Horn. The other is in a nearby ruin (see Act 3, Event 7 below). The location of the four teleporters and their command words are:

1-27A	command word 'Yah'
2-20A	command word 'Rah'
3-9	command word 'Nen'
The Lost Throne	command word 'Vah'
Saying 'Yah' here does nothing.	

Story Award: CR 6 (2,400) for learning to use the teleporters.

1-27B The Hidden Stairs

This massive stone column is hollow behind two feet of stone. Inside are the hidden stairs that connect the Lower Caverns to the third level. If this column is carefully inspected (DC 20 Perception check) you can notice that it is hollow.

1-28 Acolytes Preparation Chamber

The priests and acolytes used this chamber to don their vestments and prepare for the horrific rituals performed in the Lower Temple. It is now empty.

1-29 Sacrifice Holding Chamber

Once this was where sacrifices intended for the grisly rites of the Lower Temple were held. Now, it is merely an empty chamber. The open archways is covered by a ragged silk tapestry. The tapestry is so soiled, it is difficult to make out the great white horse skull that adorns it surrounded by a ring of jagged daemoniac iconography that loosely translates, 'All must ride with the Horsemen.'

LEVEL 2

Note: Casting any spell with the evil descriptor is impeded on this level until the Knight's Shrine is desecrated. See 2-18 for details.

2-1 The Right Eye

The entryway to the second level is accessible via a small winding stairway that hugs the side of the Horn. This small stairway rises almost two hundred feet and is covered in places with thick ropy vines. The entire stairway counts as difficult terrain.

Once you arrive at the aperture, you are confronted with a forty foot long entryway that should be a death trap. Between the arrow slits (six on the right, six on the left), the pit trap and the half-wall at the corridor's end, this should be a true defensive hard point of the Horn.

Now, it is anything but. No one mans this defensive hallway. The once concealed pit trap is open and obvious, a twenty foot wide chasm with a wooden plank put across it by one of the more adventurous boggards who once ventured up here.

The pit trap falls in room 1-23 below. See that room for information about the pit trap if it is repaired.

Repairing the Pit Trap: 1 security point

Stationing guard behind the half wall: 1 security point

2-2 Eastern Guardroom

This empty guard room connects to the Temple of the Priests (2-20) by the only obvious door and to the entrance hallway by a secret door (DC 25 to detect). It is otherwise empty.

Station guards here with missile weapons: 1 security point

2-3 Western Guardroom

This empty guard room has nothing of value in it.

Station guards here with missile weapons: 1 security point

2-4 Barracks

This empty chamber once quartered a dozen temple guards charged with securing this level. Now it is empty, its contents and occupants long ago committed to a Mitran pyre. If carefully searched (DC 20 Perception skill check), there is a small scrap of half-legible paper written in abyssal. It reads:

"Evacuate now...get to the throne...upper levels lost...stairs a deathtrap...only way out...Yah."

This was a hasty commique from one captain to another in the last hours of the battle. It is a clue for our PCs that there is something special about the throne (room 2-20). The note refers to the fact that the throne (also being a teleporter) is the only way out of this level if the entrance is overtaken. It even includes the password 'Yah' to escape to the lower levels. The information came too late to save the lives of the guards. Tell-tale bits of blood spray and bone chips reveal their fate.

2-5 Capture Pen

This cage is directly above the entranceway to the third level (3-1). Unlike the other pit trap in 2-1, this trap is still in working order. It drops down into a cell with a good lock (DC 30). The lock current sits open with the key sticking out of it. Otherwise, this room is empty.

2-6 Barracks

This barracks once quartered eight guardsmen. Now it is empty.

2-7 Statuary Graveyard

Once the courtyard (2-16) was decorated with statues of priests and daemons. The knights smashed the statues and piled them here. A successful Perception skill check (DC 20) will note there is one extra stone head. This is the missing head of the statue in 2-19.

2-8 Captain's Quarters

This chamber once housed the private chambers of the guard captain of the Horn of Abaddon. Though most of the valuables and furnishings are gone, his bed still remains. This impressive oak four-poster bed is a mammoth piece of wood and a masterpiece of craftsmanship. One of the knights under the Victor was so impressed by the furnishing he ordered it preserved hoping to come back and claim it someday.

The knight died assaulting the Sanctum above but his order was obeyed even when everyone had forgotten exactly why he had given it. And so the bed sits here. The finely varnished wood shows no sign of wear. The beddings are rotten and moldering but if they are replaced, this is a magnificent bed.

It is worth 2500 gp but getting it out of the Horn back to Farholde would be a great labor. If you are using the optional system for managing minions in the appendices -- it would tak an action to get this to town and sell it.

2-9 The Beastmaster's Quarters

This room once quartered the Horn's Master of Beasts. This chamber was thoroughly ransacked and then set afire. It is now choked with ash and rubble. Still, if searched and cleared, there are three stout lengths of chain bound to iron collars with good locks (DC 30) large and strong enough to cage a wild beast (for example a dire tiger). There is also an intact mural that shows the Master of Beast's greatest triumph.

The mural shows two strange looking horned and clawed bear-like creatures being summoned from the nether planes and bound using plates of iron. A knowledge (planes) skill check (DC 25) will reveal that these creatures are Greater Ceustodaemons. A knowledge (arcane) skill check (DC 25) will reveal that the plates of iron are inscribed with their true names. Alas the mural is not detailed enough to reveal the true names.

This mural depicts the binding of Hexor and Vexor (see room 3-13 above for details). The iron plates are actually the fragmented amulets they wear about their necks. Possess the other half of their amulets and they will serve you.

2-10 Barracks

This barracks once quartered eight guardsmen. Now it is empty.

2-11 Antechamber of the Master of Acolytes

This chamber has a human skeleton nailed to the western wall by a spear with a broken haft. Written above the impaled skeleton is the phrase: "The Master of Acolytes, stealer of children. Let all who would turn to darkness see his fate and return to the light."

Other than this grim display, this room is empty.

2-12 Master of Acolytes' Private Chambers

Once this chamber housed the finery and furnishing of the Master of Acolytes. It was ransacked like everything else on this level. But in this case, the ransacking including smashing murals that showed the Master doing his wicked business and going amongst the people of Talingarde to steal children to serve the "Sons".

The knights were so vigorous in smashing the murals, that there is now a sizeable hole in the western wall. Through this hole has come the aggressive greenery of the Caer Bryr and now vines and creepers fill this chamber. The hole is clogged with foliage but still could allow someone of medium size to cut through and enter here.

Two of the Caer's more exotic inhabitants have already done this. A pair of verdurous oozes have crawled here. They have thrived by eating birds and other flying creatures using their control of vines to snatch them from the air and from their nests. They would relish larger prey.

Verdurous Oozes (2)

CR 6

XP 2,400 each (4,800 XP total)

N Medium ooze

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

Aura enliven (15 ft., DC 20), sleep aura (30 ft., DC 20)

DEFENSE

AC 5, touch 5, flat-footed 5 (-5 Dex)

hp 94 (9d8+54)

Fort +9, **Ref** -2, **Will** -2

Defensive Abilities split; **Immune** acid, fire, mind-affecting effects, ooze traits, slashing and piercing damage

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee slam +9 (1d6+4 plus 1d6 acid and grab)

Special Attacks acid, constrict (1d6+4 plus 1d6 acid), enliven

TACTICS

During Combat The oozes are mindless and remain in their nests of vegetation until someone comes within sixty feet in which case they become active. Then they use their enliven ability to entangle and then consume any living creatures.

Morale These mindless oozes fight to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 1, **Con** 22, **Int** --, **Wis** 1, **Cha** 1

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +9 (+13 grapple); **CMD** 14 (can't be tripped)

Skills Stealth -4 (+16 in forest and plains areas); **Racial Modifier** +0
Stealth (+20 in forest and plains environs)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Acid (Ex) A verdurous ooze secretes a digestive acid that dissolves flesh and metal quickly. Each time a creature takes damage from a verdurous ooze's acid, the creature's metal equipment and armor take the same amount of damage from the acid. A DC 21 Reflex save prevents damage to such items. A metal or natural weapon that strikes a verdurous ooze takes 1d6 points of acid damage unless the weapon's wielder succeeds on a DC 21 Reflex save. If a verdurous ooze remains in contact with a metal object for 1 full round, it inflicts 20 points of acid damage (no save) on the object. The save DCs are Constitution-based.

Enliven (Sp) The chemicals emitted by a verdurous ooze cause nearby plants to twitch into life. While in areas covered in natural growth, all squares within 15 feet of the verdurous ooze are affected as if by the spell *entangle*. The verdurous ooze has no control over this effect, and if dispelled the effect renews after 1d4 rounds. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Sleep Aura (Su) The chemicals emitted by a verdurous ooze have a stronger and opposite effect on living, non-plant creatures that come within a 30-foot radius. All living creatures within the area must make a DC 21 Will save or fall asleep for a number of rounds equal to the ooze's HD. Creatures immune to poison are also immune to this effect. Whether or not the save is successful, that creature cannot be affected again by the same verdurous ooze's sleep aura for 24 hours. This is a non-magical sleep effect. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Split (Ex) Slashing and piercing weapons deal no damage to a verdurous ooze. Instead, if the verdurous ooze would have taken 10 or more points of damage from a single slashing or piercing attack, it splits into two identical oozes, each with half of the original's current hit points (round down). Slashing or piercing attacks that deal less than 10 points of damage do not cause a verdurous ooze to split. Damage from multiple slashing or piercing attacks is not cumulative. A verdurous ooze with 15 hit points or less cannot be further split and dies if reduced to 0 hit points.

If the oozes are slain and the hole is not patched, this entry may be exploited by adventurers (see Act Three below). Fixing the holes takes one action (see the optional system in the appendices) or roughly one week of minion labor.

Patching the hole: 1 security point

2-13 Acolyte's Quarters

These quarters once housed eight acolytes. They are now empty.

2-14 Acolyte's Quarters

These large quarters once housed twenty acolytes. They are now empty.

2-15 Acolyte's Quarters

These quarters once housed eight acolytes. They are now empty.

2-16 Upper Courtyard

This large courtyard with its forty foot tall dome was once a center of social life here in the Horn. The death-priests of old would gather to debate the philosophical intricacies of pestilence, all the while plotting to unleash yet more virulent horrors upon the world. Those days are now long past. The only hint of this once powerful wicked society is the candelabra of three *continual flame* spells that burn an undying eerie green at the apex of the dome.

There is a magic fountain here that produces fresh water (it possesses a moderate transmutation aura). The fountain's centerpiece is carved in the form of a trio of exultant hydrodaemons that vomit forth the water into the basin below. The great basin of the pool holds a hundred gallons of water and when it is depleted the basin is replenished at the rate of one gallon a round.

Despite the fountain's sinister appearance and the fact it was created by a disease-loving daemonic death cult, the water is clean, fresh and potable. The fountain is part of the floor of this room and cannot be removed.

2-17 Priests' Quarters

This chamber once housed four priests of the Pale Horseman. Now, it is largely empty with only a few remaining wrecked pieces of furniture remaining. Most of the furnishings here were dragged out of the Horn and burned in the great pyre alongside the dead priest's corpses. There is nothing of any interest or value here.

2-18 The Knights' Shrine

After the raid upon the Horn, the Victor and his knights occupied the place for weeks. Largely the soldiery camped outside of the Horn, believing the place to be cursed. However a few knights stayed in the temple to assist in completing the purge of everything even vaguely associated with the Sons of the Pale Horseman. While they were staying here, those knights built a small ad hoc shrine to Mitra here in this chamber. The knights' courage and their sincere prayers to Mitra consecrated the shrine and it became a beacon of good in what is otherwise a wretched pit of lingering corruption.

Little more than a plain wooden table where many candles have burned down to nubs, there is also the drawn image of the sun on the wall. An inscription has been carved below that reading "Mitra lucet omnibus, Mitra omnia regit" – "Mitra shines on everyone, Mitra rules everything." This is one of the mottos of the Knights of the Alerion rendered in an old holy tongue. A successful Knowledge (religion) skill test (DC 15) will know this.

As long as this shrine remains consecrated any spell with the evil descriptor is impeded on this level. To cast an impeded spell, the caster must make a concentration check (DC 20 + the level of the spell). If the check fails, the spell does not function but is still lost as a prepared spell or spell slot. If the check succeeds, the spell functions normally. Desecrating the shrine is not difficult. The cleric spell *desecrate* will accomplish this as well defacing the shrine and offering a living sacrifice to Asmodeus or any other evil deity here (an animal will suffice). To realize what must be done here, a Knowledge (religion) skill check (DC 15) must be made.

While the consecration persists Ezra Thrice-Damned (see room 3-6) and the ceustodaemons Hexor and Vexor (see room 3-13) will not enter this chamber.

2-19 The Broken Statue

These quarters once housed six acolytes. But now all that remains is broken, headless statue. Even a cursory glance reveals that the statue is very detailed. A detect magic reveals that the statue's belt pouch detects strong evocation magic. If chipped away, inside the pouch is *The Withering Eye*, the third eye of Vetra-Kali.

This statue is nothing of the sort. It is actually one of the temple acolytes affected by a *flesh to stone* spell. If the statue's head is retrieved (it is in 2-7) and a dose of the *stone salve* used, the statue will revert back to flesh becoming the acolyte/torturer Halthus the Flyer. If the *stone salve* is used with the head missing, Halthus dies.

The Withering Eye (the Third Eye of Vetra-Kali)

Aura strong evocation (evil); CL 15th
Slot none; Weight –

DESCRIPTION

This jewel at first appears to be nothing more than an exquisite emerald worth at least 20,000 gp. Only if the jewel is steeped in the blood of a sentient creature does it reveal its true nature. *The Withering Eye* was the magical focus used to first summon Vetra-Kali from the lower planes to the prime material. It is thus attuned to Vetra-Kali and a powerful channel for daemonic energy. *The Withering Eye* when placed in the statue of Vetra-Kali *desecrates* (as the spell except it affects both undead and daemons) the entire Horn of Abaddon. The DC to resist negative channeled energy within this area gains a +6 profane bonus. Every undead or daemonic creature gains a +2 profane bonus on all attack rolls, damage rolls, and saving throws. An undead or daemonic creature created within or summoned into such an area gains +2 hit points per HD. Furthermore, anyone who casts *animate dead* within this area may create as many as double the normal amount of undead. The Eye is also a critical component of the ritual to destroy the Silver Seal and return Vetra-Kali to the prime material plane.

If all three of the Eyes of Vetra-Kali are united in the statue of Vetra-Kali in the Sanctum, then the *Withering Eye* not only *desecrates* the Horn but also grants all daemons within fast healing 1.

DESTRUCTION

The Withering Eye, like all the Eyes of Vetra-Kali can only be destroyed by permanently slaying Vetra-Kali Eats-the-Eyes on his home plane. If this is ever done, the jewel shatters into emerald shatters worth a paltry 2,000 gp.

No one is more surprised than Halthus that he's still alive. Last he remembers enemies were everywhere and his brothers were dying all around him. He even heard that Vetra-Kali himself had been slain. That's when he was hit by the petrification spell.

Halthus the Flyer

CR 5

XP 1,600

Male Human expert 5/fighter 2

NE Medium humanoid

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +11

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17 (+7 armor, +1 Dex)

hp 54 (2d10+5d8+21)

Fort +6, **Ref** +2, **Will** +5; +1 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +1

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee heavy flail +10 (1d10+6/19-20) or

mwk whip +11 (1d3+4 nonlethal)

Reach 5 ft. (15 ft. with whip)

TACTICS

During Combat Halthus loves to take prisoners for torturing later.

This sadist considers simply killing an opponent to be a waste.

Morale Halthus is a born backstabber who would sell his mother for a masterwork set of torturer's tools. He flees at 26 hit points.

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 13, **Con** 14, **Int** 8, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +5; **CMD** +9; **CMB** 20

Feats Exotic Weapon Proficiency (whip), Intimidating Prowess, Persuasive, Skill Focus (Profession[torturer]), Toughness, Weapon Focus (flail), Weapon Focus (whip)

Skills Craft (traps) +4, Diplomacy +6, Heal +6, Intimidate +16, Knowledge (religion) +3, Perception +11, Profession (torturer) +19, Sense Motive +11

Languages Common

Gear banded mail, masterwork whip, *The Withering Eye*

That was eighty years ago. Now the death cultist is bewildered. The Sons are obviously destroyed and so he gladly offers his services to anyone who looks both evil and powerful. He is a skilled torturer and would gladly resume that duty. It is however unlikely he will serve the PCs for long. As a surviving death priest, he is likely to become the first sacrifice (see The Ritual below).

Halthus was a low ranking acolyte but still he has some useful information. He will gladly trade this information for a chance to serve new masters who are restoring the Horn. The Horn after all is his home. He constantly speaks about establishing a "New Brotherhood".

He knows that the thrones are teleporters though he doesn't know exactly how they work. He knows that there is a hidden staircase called The Spiral that ascends to the Sanctum of Vetra-Kali though he isn't sure how to get to it. *"Something hidden in the caverns, I think."*

He knows that the murals (2-21) show, amongst other things, rituals for summoning creatures from the lower planes to serve the priests. *"Not daemons though. Summoning daemons was always something special."*

And of course, he is in the possession of *The Withering Eye*. If asked, he's happy to relate how he ended up with the treasure. *"One of the high priests died in front of me. When he fell I saw the jewel lying loose. I grabbed it and ran. I didn't get far."*

Story Award: CR 6 (2400 XP) for unpetrifying the priest and recovering the second jewel.

2-20 Temple of the Priests

This is the smaller of the two temples (see 1-27) but is by far the grander. Six stately pillars rise to high vaulted ceilings. Images of winged carrion birds circle high above set into the stonework. stunningly beautiful, intricate murals cover every inch of the walls and floor of this place. At first glance, the murals appear quite lovely showing vast armies of supplicants, each exquisitely rendered in bas relief, walking arms outspread towards some unseen goal.

Only as you progress towards the throne and the eastern wall does the message of the murals becomes clear. The figures become more and more emaciated, worn and diseased. Around the throne can be seen cackling daemons herding them like sheep. Nearer the wall they are no longer supplicants but instead shambling undead marching in great legions. And on the eastern walls is the supplicant's destination -- a throne carved in the likeness of a great skull and above it reads (in abyssal) "Lead the flock into the arms of blessed Death."

If the throne (A) is searched carefully there is another easy to miss inscription (DC 15 Perception skill test) here -- "Rah." This is the key to using this throne as teleporter (see 1-27 above for details).

2-21 Hall of Murals

This long L-shaped corridor extends almost 220 feet. Every ten feet is a new mural carved in larger than life detail. Together these murals depict a detailed history of the Sons of the Pale Horseman. Some of the murals have been defaced, but there is simply so much adornment throughout the Horn that after a while the knights in the Victor's service simply could not deface it all. They instead contented themselves with annihilating its defenders.

Someone with a working knowledge of the Abyssal tongue and with patience could catalogue every major event in the Sons' history -- from their founding in a distant land, their expulsion, their search for a new home, their building of the Horn, the summoning of Vetra-Kali and then the many years of serving the daemon prince. It is actually an epic tale (though doubtless aggrandizing of the sons). But there is more here than simple history.

Anyone who takes the time to carefully read the murals will realize that there are detailed rituals described here. Transcribing them into useable forms is time consuming. For every day of labor, the transcriber can make one Knowledge (arcane), Knowledge (religion) or Knowledge (planes) skill check (DC 25). Success earns the researcher one of three rituals: *Call Forth the Hounds*, *Call Forth the Steed* and the *Cauldron of the Earth*. These rituals can only be performed once a year.

Call Forth the Hounds: If three guard dogs (25 gp each) are poisoned with a very specific preparation (costing 2400 gp in total) and then ritually slaughtered, they will rise as hell hounds in life-long service to whoever cut the guard dog's throat.

Call Forth the Steed: If a fine heavy warhorse (worth 300 gp) is slain and then set aflame with a very specific and exotic mixture of incense, powered gemstones and prayer strips (costing 3000 gp) then from the flame will emerge a nightmare who will serve whoever lit the pyre. The creature who emerges calls itself Carnitheria Rex and will serve faithfully for the life of its master.

Cauldron of the Earth: This ritual must be performed over a pit of boiling mud (C8 above). A specially prepared concoction of rare earths and powered obsidian (worth 1200 gp) must be poured into the boiling mud while reciting a prayer to the Lord of Evil Earth Elements. This calls forth four mudmen.

Hell Hounds (3) **CR 3**

XP 800 each (2,400 XP total)
LE Medium outsider (evil, extraplanar, fire, lawful)
Init +5; Senses darkvision 60 ft., scent; Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15 (+1 Dex, +5 natural)
hp 30 (4d10+8)
Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +1
Immune fire
Weaknesses vulnerability to cold

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.
Melee bite +5 (1d8+1 plus 1d6 fire)
Special Attacks breath weapon (10-ft. cone, once every 2d4 rounds, 2d6 fire damage, Reflex DC 14 for half)

STATISTICS

Str 13, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 6
Base Atk +4; CMB +5; CMD 16 (20 vs. trip)
Feats Improved Initiative, Run
Skills Acrobatics +8, Perception +7, Stealth +13, Survival +18; Racial Modifiers +5 Stealth
Languages Infernal (cannot speak)

Carntheria Rex, Nightmare **CR 5**

XP 1,600
NE Large outsider (evil, extraplanar)
Init +6; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 11, flat-footed 17 (+2 Dex, +8 natural, -1 size)
hp 51 (6d10+18)
Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +3

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., fly 90 ft. (good)
Melee bite +9 (1d4+4), 2 hooves +4 (1d6+2 plus 1d4 fire)
Space 10 ft.; Reach 5 ft.
Special Attacks smoke
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th)
1/day (self plus 1 rider only)—*plane shift*

STATISTICS

Str 18, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 13, Wis 13, Cha 12
Base Atk +6; CMB +11; CMD 23 (27 vs. trip)
Feats Alertness, Improved Initiative, Run
Skills Fly +13, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (planes) +10, Perception +12, Sense Motive +12, Stealth +7, Survival +10
Languages Abyssal, Infernal

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Smoke (Su) In battle, a nightmare exhales smoke that chokes and blinds foes, filling a 15-foot cone each round as a free action. Anyone in the cone must succeed on a DC 16 Fortitude save or become sickened until 1d6 minutes after leaving the area. This smoke acts as *obscuring mist* for the purposes of concealment. The smoke persists for 1 round. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Story Award: Award the PCs a CR 6 reward (2,400 XP) and 1 security point for summoning the hell hounds and binding them to their service.

Story Award: Award the PCs a CR 5 reward (1,600 XP) and 1 security point or calling forth the nightmare and binding the beast to their service.

Story Award: Award the PCs a CR 6 reward (2,400 XP) for summoning the mud men and setting them to guard the Horn.

LEVEL 3**3-1 The Center Eye**

No stairs rise to this grand archway. Instead, to enter here you must either fly or climb. To climb is no simple feat. This entranceway rises more than two hundred feet above the cavernous entry (C1) far below. The easiest way is to climb from the entrance to level 2 – the right eye (2-1). This still involves a ninety foot angled ascent (adequate handholds, DC 15 Climb skill check). It is far easier to fly or levitate to the entrance.

The landing platform is baroquely adorned with every surface decorated with countless daemons tormenting and triumphing over mortals foolish enough to oppose them. Prominent among these decorations to the left of archway is a bas relief of Vetra-Kali sitting cross-legged. His three eyes are buttons that if pressed simultaneously deactivate the pit trap that wards the entrance.

Camouflaged Pit Trap **CR 6**

Type location; Perception DC 25; Disable Device DC 20

EFFECTS

Trigger location; Reset manual

Effect 50-ft.-deep pit (5d6 falling damage); DC 20 Reflex avoids; multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft. x 10-ft. square); all targets end up caged in room 2-5.

Cost 3,000 gp (half the usual cost of such a trap); the trap could be upgraded to automatic reset for another 3,000 gp in materials if someone can make a Craft (traps) skill check (DC 30).

The pit remains deactivated until an identical bas relief on the other side of the wall is similarly pressed. This mechanism can be found with a Perception skill check (DC 25). A Knowledge (engineering) skill test will reveal how the mechanism works.

Once inside, the entranceway is a large hallway with five doors. The baroque decoration continues and everywhere is found bas relief carving showing the doings of daemons. There is a great deal of abyssal writing here as well. If a Knowledge (planes) skill check is made (DC 25; award a +5 bonus if the character understands the abyssal tongue) it can be understood that this hallway tells the tale of the ascension of the daemon prince Vetra-Kali Eats-the-Eyes.

It is revealed that Vetra-Kali is a leukodaemon who through his savagery and remorseless cruelty rose from the ranks to be appointed an Archdeacon of Pestilence in service to the Pale Horseman. This hallway exalts and praises the many ruthless deeds done by Vetra-Kali to gain this prominence.

Six green ominous flickering *continual flames* (one beside each of the single doors and two beside the double doors at the end of the hall) light this hall.

3-2 Blasted Chamber of the High Priest

This was once the personal chamber of the mortal leader of the Sons of the Pale Horseman. The last high priest then known as Ezra Twice-Damned dwelled here. Now it is empty save for ash and splinters. The chamber was wrecked by a tremendous explosion such as a *fireball*.

There is a secret door here but it partially cracked open. What was once a finely made secret door (DC 30 to find) now only requires a DC 15 Perception skill check. If this room were cleaned, the door patched and closed this could again be a well concealed secret door.

3-3 The Burned Library

This room once held one of the greatest collections of blasphemous and evil tomes ever assembled on this plane. Now it contains only ashes. When the Victor discovered this chamber, his words were terse: "To the fire."

His order was obeyed. Every scroll, tome and treatise was consigned to flame. All that remains is an inscription in Abyssal that reads "Behold the secrets of death. Use them for my glory."

There are no secrets here anymore. Only ashes and memories.

3-4 Guardroom

This empty chamber once housed guards of the upper temple. Now it is empty and holds nothing of value.

3-5 Fane of the Three Eyed Prince

As ornate and baroque as the entryway hall (3-1) is it pales before this expansive and vaulted chamber. This is the Horn's third temple -- reserved only for the High Priest and his elite retinue. Most of the Sons of the Pale Horseman never entered this temple and never experienced the strange rites conducted within. The fane is adorned with a riot of lurid color. Brilliant bas reliefs depict daemons of every sort engaged in countless acts of wanton evil, callous destruction and inhuman savagery. Rows of pews allow a congregation of the chosen to gather. The podium is doubtless where foul sermons of Abaddon's wisdom and bile were delivered to those gatherings.

At the front of the chamber are four shrines (A-D).

A – A white shrine decorated with bas relief depictions of open pits of the dead and lepers crying in anguish.

B – A shrine of red stone decorated with cruel iron weaponry and scenes of slaughter.

C – A shrine of black stone decorated with images of mortals wasting away from hunger and starvation.

D – A shrine of pale green stone adorned with a skull with two coins over its eyes and an inscription of jagged abyssal writing which reads "Behold a pale horse. Its rider is Death and all shall follow him."

E – A large bas-relief image of Vetra-Kali sitting cross-legged holding his greatest work, his masterpiece, a vial of some sort. Below the vial is inscribed a name 'The Tears of Achlys.' Vetra-Kali also holds three blades and a strange jagged key with an Abyssal inscription "Hail Vetra-Kali". The three eyed daemon prince pays homage to the four shrines, but there is no doubt that this fane is built primarily to honor him. Anyone who approaches this image of the daemon prince without saying "Hail Vetra-Kali" is afflicted by fearful visions (as the *fear* spell; DC 18 Will save to resist).

On all the other walls are litanies of the deeds of this monster. It was Vetra-Kali who crossed the great void and came to the prime material plane to establish the Sons of the Pale Horseman. It was he who oversaw the construction of the Horn of Abaddon and it is because of this that the Horn superficially resembles this horror from another world.

There is a secret door hidden in the east wall. It is well concealed (DC 30 Perception check to find) but radiates a strong conjuration magic. If the secret door is opened (by pressing all three of Vetra-Kali's eyes in unison) then it leads to a room shaped like the treasure vault (3-6) but full only of worthless discarded temple paraphernalia covered in cob webs -- wrecked pews, discarded masonry, piles of mouldering boards and the like.

If the secret door is opened while saying the words "Hail Vetra-Kali" in Abyssal then it instead opens to a small pocket dimension and the true treasure vault (3-6).

3-6 Treasure Vault

This room is not really a room. Instead it is a pocket dimension overlaid over another room of exactly the same size. This is the treasure vault of the Sons of the Pale Horseman and this is where the lion's share of their wealth remains.

This treasure vault is what the Victor and his men never discovered. It's hardly surprising -- they were not seeking riches. Instead, they sought to purge every last daemon and priest from the Horn of Abaddon and that they accomplished. And so for eighty years, the vault has lain undiscovered and quiet.

Wraith Spawn of the Thrice-Damned (3)**CR 5****XP 1,600 each (4,800 XP total)**

NE Medium undead (incorporeal)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., lifesense; Perception +10**Aura** unnatural aura (30 ft.)**DEFENSE****AC** 18, touch 18, flat-footed 15 (+5 deflection, +3 Dex)**hp** 47 (5d8+25)**Fort** +6, **Ref** +4, **Will** +6**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +2, incorporeal; Immune undead traits**Weaknesses** sunlight powerlessness**OFFENSE****Speed** fly 60 ft. (good)**Melee** incorporeal touch +6 (1d6 negative energy plus 1d6 Con drain)**Special Attack** create spawn**TACTICS****During Combat** The wraith-spawn prefer to stalk and ambush their chosen prey. They avoid both sunlight and fair fights as much as they can.**Morale** They will retreat if they take more than 30 hit points of damage. They slink back into the shadows hoping to regain their strength and strike again.**STATISTICS****Str** —, **Dex** 16, **Con** —, **Int** 12, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 21**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 21**Feats** Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative**Skills** Fly +7, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (planes) +7, Perception +10, Sense Motive +10, Stealth +11**Languages** Common, Abyssal**SPECIAL ABILITIES****Constitution Drain (Su)** Creatures hit by a wraith's touch attack must succeed on a DC 17 Fortitude save or take 1d6 points of Constitution drain. On each successful attack, the wraith gains 5 temporary hit points. The save DC is Charisma-based.**Lifesense (Su)** A wraith notices and locates living creatures within 60 feet, just as if it possessed the blindsight ability.**Sunlight Powerlessness (Ex)** A wraith caught in sunlight cannot attack and is staggered.**Unnatural Aura (Su)** Animals do not willingly approach within 30 feet of a wraith, unless a master makes a DC 25 Handle Animal, Ride, or wild empathy check.**The Eye of Hatred (the Second Eye of Vetra-Kali)****Aura** strong divination (evil); CL 15th**Slot** none; **Weight** —**DESCRIPTION**

This jewel at first appears to be nothing more than an exquisite emerald worth at least 20,000 gp. Only if the jewel is steeped in the blood of a sentient creature does it reveal its true nature. *The Eye of Hatred* was the magical focus used to dedicate the Horn of Abaddon to the Four Horsemen. It is thus sensitive to any outside interference. The *Eye of Hatred* pulses whenever any divine magic of Mitran origin is used within the Horn of Abaddon. The Eye is also a critical component of the ritual to destroy the *Silver Seal* and return Vetra-Kali to the prime material plane.

If all three of the Eyes of Vetra-Kali are united in the statue of Vetra-Kali in the Sanctum, then the *Eye of Hatred* not only pulses when such magic is used but immediately directs the *Eye of Vigilance* to show that magic being used.

DESTRUCTION

The Eye of Hatred, like all the Eyes of Vetra-Kali can only be destroyed by permanently slaying Vetra-Kali Eats-the-Eyes on his home plane. If this is ever done, the jewel shatters into emerald shatters worth a paltry 2,000 gp.

Ezra Thrice-Damned, Dread Wraith**CR 6****XP 2,400**

Advanced giant wraith

NE Large undead (incorporeal)

Init +8 **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., lifesense; Perception +12**Aura** unnatural aura (30 ft.)**DEFENSE****AC** 20 touch 20, flat-footed 16 (+7 deflection, +4 Dex, -1 size)**hp** 57 (5d8+35)**Fort** +8, **Ref** +5, **Will** +8**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +2, incorporeal**Immune** undead traits**Weakness** Sunlight powerlessness**OFFENSE****Speed** fly 60 ft. (good)**Melee** incorporeal touch +6 (1d8 negative energy plus 1d6 Con drain)**Space** 10 ft. **Reach** 10 ft.**Special Attacks** create spawn**TACTICS****During Combat** The Thrice-damned prefers to leave battle to his wraith minions. But he does relish the consumption of souls, so if he senses weakness he will strike.**Morale** The Thrice-damned is ultimately a coward. If reduced to less than half his hit points (28 hp) he attempts to flee. If flight is impossible, he will grovel for his life hoping eventually to create more wraiths and seek his vengeance later.**STATISTICS****Str** —, **Dex** 18, **Con** —, **Int** 20, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 25**Base Atk** +3 **CMB** +8 **CMD** 18**Feats** Blind Fight, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative**Skills** Bluff +12, Diplomacy +12, Fly +14, Intimidate +15, Knowledge (planes) +10, Knowledge (religion) +13, Perception +12, Sense Motive +12, Stealth +12**Languages** Common, Abyssal, Boggard, Celestial, Infernal, Sylvan**SPECIAL ABILITIES****Create Spawn (Su)** A humanoid slain by a dread wraith becomes a full ordinary wraith in 1d4 rounds. Spawn are under the command of the wraith that created them until its death, at which point they lose their spawn penalties and become free-willed wraiths. They do not possess any of the abilities they had in life.**Constitution Drain (Su)** Creatures hit by a dread wraith's touch attack must succeed on a DC 19 Fortitude save or take 1d6 points of Constitution drain. On each successful attack, the wraith gains 5 temporary hit points. The save DC is Charisma-based.**Lifesense (Su)** A dread wraith notices and locates living creatures within 60 feet, just as if it possessed the blindsight ability.**Sunlight Powerlessness (Ex)** A dread wraith caught in sunlight cannot attack and is staggered.**Unnatural Aura (Su)** Animals do not willingly approach within 30 feet of a dread wraith, unless a master makes a DC 25 Handle Animal, Ride or wild empathy check.

Well, not entirely quiet. About a decade after the Sons' defeat, their last high priest's tormented spirit gained enough vigor to manifest once more. This spirit coalesced as a wraith. Born of both raw hatred and the residual evil of this place, Ezra Thrice-Damned has two purposes – to slaughter and feed upon the souls of every mortal he encounters and to break the seal in the sanctum above (S1). It is the second purpose that may cause Ezra to ally with our cadre of villains. Ezra will never be able to break the seal for the holy artifact keeps him from being able to even enter the Sanctum. He needs mortals.

Ezra is not alone. He has three wraith spawn he created when he attacked the Fourth Knot. Aiden Kael escaped him, but no matter. Hexor and Vexor (see 3-13) heard the commotion and finished the job.

When Ezra consumed the souls of the three members of the Fourth Knot, he learned some about the Knot of Thorns. He learned that they were ambitious servants of Asmodeus and hoped to break the *Silver Seal* for their own purposes. He saw the potential to accomplish his own goals through them. He was certain that one day the Knot would return to the Horn and this would be his chance to overthrow the Mitran curse and at last be free.

Of course, he is planning to play the PCs for dupes and betrays them at the end. For a being as irredeemably evil as Ezra, that almost goes without saying. Once the seal is broken, he will lead whatever wraith minions he has accumulated up to the Sanctum. He will slay all the living creatures he finds there and it will be him who summons Vetra-Kali back to this mortal plane. He will drain the life out of the last sacrifice and howl the last prayer to his banished master. He will beg for forgiveness and finding it will be restored to once more lead a new order. That is Ezra's dream.

Besides Ezra, there is also the small matter of the treasure. Heaped about this room is the accumulated wealth of the Sons of the Pale Horseman.

Ornate silver belt studded with obsidian (*belt of giant's strength* +2)

A plain golden ring (*ring of mind shielding*)

An ornate teak wood box holding a glass lens (*a lens of detection*)

A walking stick of hard black wood adorned with silver fixtures and green semi-precious stones (*rod of elemental metamagic [acid], lesser*)

Two iron plates both carved in abyssal that read "Aticus" and "Andian" (Hexor and Vexor's control amulets)

A ton (yes, 2000 lbs) of solid silver furnishings -- plates, silverware, goblets, candelabra, circlets, jewelry and the like worth 10,000 gp total

600 lbs of similar golden items -- worth 30,000 gp

Six chests full of mixed coinage from dozens of nations worth 5,500 gp total (approximately 550 lbs of coin)

A carefully packed crate holding a dozen potions of *cure moderate wounds* (labelled as such in abyssal)

In addition to all of this, there is at the center a small podium that rises like a claw. Between its talons it clutches a single dark radiant emerald. This is the second eye of Vetra-Kali -- the *Eye of Hatred*. This jewel seethes with magic but does nothing until it is restored to the statue of Vetra-Kali in the Sanctum (S-1). With this jewel, the Horn of Abaddon is permeated with eldritch hate against Mitra and his followers. Anyone who casts a divine spell of Mitra in the Horn causes the jewel to glow. If the *Eye of Vigilance* is also present in the statue, it will reveal exactly where the offending spell was cast.

Ezra has long ago lost enough of his humanity that he cares nothing about this great glittering horde. If the PCs can convince Ezra to aid them they can have it for all he cares. The only treasure he will be hesitant to give up is the *Eye of Hatred*. The raw antipathy it radiates soothes the wraith. He will only give up the jewel if the bearer swears a blood oath to restore Vetra-Kali to this world.

This pocket dimension always glows with an ambient pale green light. Wraiths and daemons can enter it freely without needing to open the door or say the password.

Story Award: CR 7 (3,200) for finding the vault.

Receiving Ezra's aid: 3 security points

3-7 Antechamber

Priests once waited here to greet visitors. Now it is empty and devoid of anything interesting or valuable.

3-8 The Lightning Scarred Room

A great magical battle was fought here between the wizards of the "Sons" and the priests of Mitra. The deep gouges cut into the stonework reveal where powerful spells once blasted out again and again. Now, other than its scars, this room is empty and unremarkable.

3-9 Meditation Hall of the High Priest

This room has no furnishings. The walls and floor of this chamber are covered in abyssal script. The phrase "Receive the wisdom of Abaddon" is written prominently on the curved northern wall. There is a circle of such script in the center of the floor that is the nonsense word "nen" repeated over and over again. This is the third teleporter within the Horn. Saying 'nen' here does nothing. See 1-27a above for details.

This is also an excellent place to receive visions of the Outer Planes, in particular of Abaddon. The "Sons of the Pale Horseman" believed these visions contained great wisdom. Perhaps this is so. What is more certain is that meditating here is an excellent way to go insane.

Anyone who meditates here for more than eight hours must make a Will save (DC 16). If the save is failed, the character goes insane, becoming a homicidal psychotic. The character's alignment changes to chaotic evil and they gain a +10 competence bonus on Bluff check to hide their insanity. The recipient of this 'wisdom' now revels in dealing death and killing. If the character goes more than a week without killing a sentient creature, then the character must make another Will save (DC 16). The character must murder someone that day preferably in a gruesome and ritualistic orgy of slaughter. Every day they go without killing someone, they receive a progressive -1 penalty to any skill check not focused on finding or slaying a victim. However, while they possess this insanity, they also gain the bonus feat Iron Will. If they already have Iron Will, they instead gain Improved Iron Will.

If someone can successfully meditate here three times, then they gain Iron Will (or Improved Iron Will) as a bonus feat without turning into a homicidal psychotic.

3-10 Sacrifice Holding Cells

This long row of six cells (A-F) having stout steel doors and good locks (DC 30). Here the "Sons" kept their sacrificial victims and playthings until the moment was right to offer them to their daemon gods. Now it is empty.

3-11 Chamber of Delights

Once this was the great brothel chamber of the high priesthood. The rewards for serving Vetra-Kali were doled out here in sumptuous excess. When the Victor raided this hall, he ordered the erotic murals defaced and the great chamber purged of any hint of its original purpose.

Now it is simply a gigantic empty room. The only hint of its former uses are a few defaced murals. A close examination (DC 20 Perception check) will reveal hints of the wanton excesses once depicted here. Most disturbing are the hints that not everyone who visited the brothel was human or even humanoid.

3-12 Top of the Secret Stairway

The narrow spiral staircase that runs from the hidden chamber in the lower caverns (C5A) terminates here into a landing. This room is empty and bare. There are two badly deteriorated skeletons inside broken worthless suits of what was once masterwork full-plate. The ruined armor is covered in symbols similar to those that adorn the Horn itself. These are all that remains of the guards who stood in the way of the Victor as he fought his way towards the sanctum.

3-13 The Daemons' Charge

This rounded chamber has a high domed ceiling and is everywhere adorned with grisly bas relief depictions of the nightmare realm of Abaddon. A spiral staircase without railing rises at the western end of the room. A curved half-wall blocks direct access to the staircase.

Hexor and Vexor, Greater Ceustodaemons

CR 7

XP 3,200

NE Large outsider (daemon, evil, extraplanar)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *detect good*, *detect magic*, *see invisibility*; Perception +15

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 12, flat-footed 21 (+1 Dex, +12 natural, -1 size)
hp 84 (8d10+40)

Fort +11, **Ref** +5, **Will** +10

DR 10/good or silver; **Immune** acid, death effects, disease, mind-affecting effects, paralysis, poison, polymorph effects, sleep effects; **Resist** cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee bite +13 (2d6+6), 2 claws +13 (1d6+6)

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

Special Attacks breath weapon (30-ft. cone; 6d6 electricity damage; Reflex DC 19 for half; usable once every 1d4 rounds)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th; concentration +10)

Constant—*detect good*, *detect magic*, *see invisibility*

At will—*dimension door*

3/day—*dispel magic*, *fly*

1/day—*hold monster* (DC 19), *slow* (DC 17)

TACTICS

During Combat Hexor and Vexor are fearless combatants. They may look like savage brutes, but they are quite intelligent. They use their breath weapon as often as they can but otherwise enjoying mauling opponents. They use *hold monster* against particularly dangerous adversaries.

Morale Believing themselves to be indestructible while their amulets exist, Hexor and Vexor always fight to the death in the Charge. Anywhere else, they flee if they lose more than half their hit points.

STATISTICS

Str 22, **Dex** 17, **Con** 20, **Int** 15, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 19

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 24

Feats Alertness, Blind-Fight, Power Attack, Step Up

Skills Bluff +15, Intimidate +15, Knowledge (planes) +13, Knowledge (any) +13, Perception +15, Sense Motive +15, Stealth +10, Survival +15

Languages Abyssal, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft. (or anywhere within the Horn)

SQ bound to the amulet, drawn to service

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Bound to the Amulet (Su) When Hexor and Vexor were summoned to this plane, an iron amulet was made for both that contained their true names. While these Iron Amulets persist, Hexor and Vexor cannot be permanently destroyed. If slain, they will reform one month later, next to the Amulet. Whoever wields the amulet may command these daemons.

Drawn to Service (Su) When brought to another plane with a *planar binding* or *planar ally* spell (or any similar calling effect), greater ceustodaemons take a -5 penalty on the initial Will save and on their Charisma check to refuse service. Greater ceustodaemons also take a -5 penalty on saves against *binding*, *planar binding*, and other spells designed to bind a creature to a particular plane as long as the daemon is commanded to serve as a guardian for a single area or small complex.

Two greater ceustodaemons dwell in this chamber – Hexor and Vexor. It is their charge to guard access to the Spiral, ensuring that only those who serve the interest of their master Vetra-Kali enter the Sanctum above. They failed this duty once. They were defeated by the Victor. After their destruction, it took them almost a month to reform. Now they are resolved they will never again fail.

Still, Hexor and Vexor do occasionally wander. There is a 20% chance at any given time that one of them is absent from this room. The daemons only wander one at a time and always remain with range of *dimension door*. Inside the Horn, they are always in telepathic contact with each other. They are curious beasts and investigate anything different or unusual they discover within the Horn.

The pair of daemons leave the boggards (thinking them amusing) and the wraith (thinking him dangerous) alone. Anyone else they meet without an iron amulet, they attack. There is only one thing that can be said that will give them pause. “We are here to free Vetra-Kali.” They would do anything to see Vetra-Kali Eats-the-Eyes returned to this mortal plane.

Hexor and Vexor may appear like rampaging monsters but they are actually intelligent and cunning. Their voices are deep and gravelly. When they speak (and they speak only in Abyssal or Infernal) they are always curiously polite even when threatening. “I’m sorry, sir, but I’m afraid I need to disembowel you now,” is something either of them might say. They have a playful malice about them, reveling in destruction while always being flippant about the death and destruction they so casually deal out.

The iron amulets (found in the hidden chamber 3-6) lock together with the iron amulets worn around their necks to complete the Daemon’s true names in Abyssal (Hexoraticus and Vexorandian). These amulets give the wielder absolute power over the Daemons. The only way to permanently banish Hexor and Vexor from this plane is to destroy the amulets.

If slain, Hexor and Vexor reform after one month next to their amulets. Though death is not permanent for these irrascible daemons, they certainly don’t enjoy it. They will do their best to get revenge against their slayer. That accomplished, they immediately return this room after their reformation to return to their guard duties.

There is no treasure here. Award full XP for Hexor and Vexor and 3 security points if the PCs use the iron amulets to bind them to their will.

THE SPIRAL

This is the great spiral stair case that rises more than two hundred feet straight through the heart of the Horn of Abaddon. It connects the Daemon’s Charge (room 3-13) to the Sanctum of Vetra-Kali (S-1). Though steep and an arduous climb, the stairs are not trapped or in any way dangerous. They are lit every twenty feet by green flickering *continual flames* contained within rough iron sconces. The walls are decorated with images of the Horsemen ascending to higher planes and slaying celestials.



THE SANCTUM OF VETRA-KALI

This level is the very top of the Horn of Abaddon. It is accessibly only two ways – you come up the 240' long spiral stair case cut through the Horn's heart or you fly in through the balcony. Once the ritual is begun, the balcony is not a pleasant way to enter. The writhing green nimbus that dances around the top of the horn is actually a field of unholy energy similar to *unholy blight*.

Any creature passing through the field makes a DC 18 Will save. Good non-outsiders take 5d8 damage and are sickened for 1d4 rounds. Good outsiders who fail take 10d6 damage and are sickened for 1d6 rounds. Anyone non-good takes half damage. Anyone who succeeds takes half damage and is not sickened (so a non-good creature who makes their saving thrown takes quarter damage and is not sickened). This field can be suppressed briefly with *dispel magic* (DC 21). The nimbus visibly wavers for 1d4 rounds and harms no one. Then it reasserts itself. This nimbus does not extend down far enough to affect those who enter Level 3 via flight (room 3-1).

S-1 The Sanctum

This large domed chamber is baroquely decorated and everywhere adorned with jagged daemonic iconography and visions of spreading pestilence and mortal suffering. It is a grand chamber: eighty feet across at its widest, ninety feet long and rising at its apex to a dome fifty feet high. Low partition walls section off two ritual preparation chambers (A and B). And dominating the chamber is the statue of Vetra-Kali himself carved from hard green alabaster. He holds three knives and three bowls and leers eyeless over the altar before him. He presents a figure of brutal alien malice.

The green stone of the altar is stained black in many places, doubtless from the countless victims who met their end upon its block. There is a reservoir at the base of the statue and any water placed there is instantly polluted and transformed into *unholy water*. The statue radiates evil.



Huge Lightning Elemental

CR7

XP 3,200

N Huge outsider (air, elemental, extraplanar)

Init +12; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 17, flat-footed 10 (+8 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural, –2 size)

hp 85 (10d10+30)

Fort +10, Ref +15, Will +5

DR 5/–; Immune electricity, elemental traits

OFFENSE

Speed fly 100 ft. (perfect)

Melee 2 slams +16 (2d6+5 plus 1d8 electricity)

Space 15 ft.; Reach 15 ft.

Special Attacks metal mastery, spark leap

TACTICS

During Combat The elementals tactics are simple --

Morale This spontaneously formed spirit of magic fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 20, Dex 27, Con 16, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 11

Base Atk +10; CMB +17; CMD 36

Feats Dodge, Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Mobility, Weapon Finesse^B

Skills Acrobatics +21, Escape Artist +21, Fly +12, Knowledge (planes) +11, Perception +13

SPECIAL QUALITIES

Metal Mastery (Ex) A lightning elemental gains a +3 bonus on attack rolls if its opponent is wearing metal armor, is wielding a metal weapon, or is made of metal (such as an iron golem).

Spark Leap (Ex) A lightning elemental gains a +10 bonus on bull rush, disarm, overrun, and trip attacks when it charges a creature against whom its metal mastery ability applies.

Circling the dome in perpetual motion is a huge creature of living energy. This lightning elemental is a conglomeration of magical energy spontaneously achieving life. There is so much raw magic here that the elemental formed years ago and has been growing ever since.

Completely out of place is the heavy silver chains that bind the altar and connect to a heavy argent seal pressed with the holy sunburst of blessed Mitra -- the *Silver Seal*. The the chains and the seal are a powerful divine artifact and cannot be moved by any mortal agency. And as long as the seal persists, Vetra-Kali will never again manifest upon this mortal plane.

Anyone evil who touches the seal takes 10d6 good-aligned damage. A Fortitude save (DC 20) halves the damage. Any evil outsider who touches the seal must further immediately make a Will save (DC 20) or be banished back to their home plane. It radiates an overwhelming aura of good.

S-2 The Balcony

This open balcony overlooks the surrounding countryside. From here you can see the other strange jagged hills that rise around the Horn. The hills seem almost to be bowing as if each of these ancient stone giants recognize they are lesser than the grand and magnificent spectacle that is the Horn of Abaddon.

If someone were to be thrown off this balcony, they would fall 50 feet before smashing into the side of the Horn (taking 5d6 damage). At that point, this individual would have one chance to avoid falling further. They could try to grab onto one of the countless jutting lesser spires that thrust from the Horn. They should make a DC 18 Reflex save. If they succeed, they stop falling and can climb back to the balcony using the many handholds and ledges (DC 10). Fail and the victim plummets three hundred feet to the canopied forest floor below (taking 20d6 damage).

Story Award: Award a CR 7 (3,200 XP) reward for finding the Sanctum.

THE RITUAL

The gruesome ritual to break the *Silver Seal* and call forth Vetra-Kali is simple but exacting. Three times per day for 222 days, a prayer must be made. The first prayer is recited at midnight – *The Supplication to Darkness*. This prayer begs forgiveness that mortals have failed the daemon-prince and allowed his sanctum to be overthrown. The second prayer is recited at dawn – *The Cursing of the Light*. This prayer curses those who made the seal and begs for the dark powers to lessen its might. The third prayer is made at dusk – *The Call Across the Void*. This prayer calls to the daemon-prince and guides his spirit through the astral ever closer to the prime material plane. These three prayers are found as songs. When you strip away all the grim trappings, the “Dirges” is, at heart, a hymnal.

A prayer must be intoned carefully and precisely. This takes ten uninterrupted full-round actions. At the end of the prayer, the *Silver Seal* is doused in *unholy water* which sizzles and boils across the face of the divine artifact.

Each prayer must be repeated 222 times to break the seal and end Vetra-Kali’s banishment. If even a single prayer is missed, the entire ritual must be restarted. The prayers must be performed within the hour of the specified event and if interrupted may be tried again. For example, the midnight prayer must be done before one a.m.

Further, three humanoid sacrifices must be made during the course of the ritual. At the first Supplication to Darkness, one of death priests who failed Vetra-Kali (or one of their descendants) must be sacrificed upon the sealed altar. At the 111th Cursing of the Light a true follower of Mitra must die upon the altar. And finally at the last Call Across the Void one of the Victor’s blood must be sacrificed. Then and only then will the seal be shattered and will Vetra-Kali be once more manifest.

The Dirges specifies exactly how a sacrifice must be made to Vetra-Kali. The victim must be placed upon his altar and there have their heart cut out while still alive.

The heart is then placed in one of the three bowls that the statue of Vetra-Kali holds.

To perform the ritual the villains need eight components:

1) “The Dirges of Apollyon” (C13) -- This is the holy book that details the ritual.

2) 666 doses of unholy water (S-1) -- The statue of Vetra-Kali creates *unholy water* at will.

3) *The Eye of Vigilance* (C13) -- this jewel, restored to the statue, lets our villains scry (as the spell *scrying*) the entire Horn of Abaddon.

4) *The Eye of Hatred* (3-6) -- this jewel, restored to the statue, glows whenever a divine spell of Mitra is cast within the Horn.

5) *The Withering Eye* (2-19) -- this jewel, restored to the statue, *desecrates* the Horn (as the spell but for both undead and daemons).

6) a death priest or descendant (2-19) -- Halthus the Flayer, a petrified priest can be restored using *stone salve* (2-12). He has *The Withering Eye* in his pouch and can serve as the sacrifice. Failing him, there are doubtless other descendants of the “Sons” living in Farholde. The Baron could dredge up such a descendant if asked.

7) A devout follower of Mitra -- This is easy to acquire. Sister Marta Dian (of Hallack’s Crew -- Act 3, Event 2) or any of Harkon’s Hands (Act 3, Event 7) certainly count as do any number of nuns and priests in Farholde.

8) The bloodline of the Victor -- There is only one relative of the Victor in Farholde -- Sir Valin Darian, commander of the Hamarhall. Inside his castle he is a daunting target but he will in time come to our villains of his own accord(Act 3, Event 13).

RUNNING THE RITUAL

The ritual is a keystone of this adventure. It keeps the PCs in the Horn and gives them something worth defending. That said, while the ritual should be in constant danger of disruption, do not actually try to disrupt it until the last few days (Act Four). It would be wildly anticlimactic to have the ritual fail on Day 55 or Day 124.

The Sanctum is a very secure place. The Horn may be constantly under siege, but the Sanctum is inviolate until the last few days. And then everyone wants in. In those last five days we will test the PC's preparations to their limits. In a way, this is what the adventure hinges upon. Can the PCs make a dungeon deadly enough to thwart all that the forces of good throw at them?

Roleplay the first sacrifice and the three rituals (i.e. day one). After that, let the ritual fade into the background. Of course, the ritual is being done either by a PC or a by a minion. The PCs need not declare every time that they are performing the ritual. It would be beyond tedious to have the PCs say six hundred and sixty six time "we perform the ritual." The ritual should be a constant concern but not a tedious obstacle to your game's excitement.

Use the sacrifice in the middle (the follower of Mitra) to remind the PCs that ritual is still going on and then again let it fade into the background until the last five days. Play out every prayer of the last five days. Those furious final five days are a wild ride. All of creation is going to try to stop these blasphemous proceedings. A silver dragon, a paladin, terrors from beyond, elementals, celestials and more will raid the Horn in rapid succession. Against all of this, will our villains be able to see the ritual done?

What do you do if some group of adventurers gets lucky and disrupts the ritual early? After all, sometimes the dice do not cooperate. There is nothing to stop the PCs from restarting the ritual. But be cautious here. These sort of setbacks can be very demoralizing and make the game seem repetitious. 222 days may well seem an insurmountable challenge on its own. Making that longer is probably asking too much.

To keep the action moving, we will be dealing in weeks rather than days or hours. The PCs have to hold the Horn of Abaddon for 31 weeks and 5 days. Accomplishing that will be challenge enough.

THE DIRGES OF APOLLYON

Behold our shame that we, the Sons of the Pale Horseman, failed in our darkest hour to defend our prince the undying and ever malevolent Vetra-Kali Eats-the-Eyes. But I have seen it! I have seen the road to repentance! 666 prayers. Three per day will break the hated Seal. With each prayer bathe the seal in unholy water and intone the dirge.

*At the stroke of midnight each day call forth the **Supplication to Darkness**. Pray to the darkness so that we shall be forgiven. Upon the first midnight make the first sacrifice -- one of our own blood -- so that Vetra-Kali will know we are repentant.*

*At the first light of each dawn call forth the **Cursing of the Light**. Answer the spread of the shining lord's light with our unyielding defiance. Upon the 111th Curse make the second sacrifice -- a true believer of Mitra -- so that the cursed god of the invaders will know that we fear him not and that his power to hold our master at bay is ending.*

*At dusk as darkness returns each day cry forth the **Call Across the Void**. Recite the name of Vetra-Kali so that he may hear us and return. With the final Call offer the third sacrifice -- one of the Victor's own blood. By the same blood that caged him so shall our master be freed.*

Let ye with wisdom understand. Once the final prayer is uttered upon the 222nd dusk, Vetra-Kali will begin his long traverse across the great wheel. At the stroke of midnight on that day he will emerge into his Sanctum and the Seal shall shatter.

Blessed day! Be ready, my brothers. His eyes have been stolen from him. Return them and the Prince will honor ye with one task for each.

*For the **Eye of Vigilance** ask only for his mercy upon we mortals and plead that he do ye and yours no harm. For his wroth will be great.*

*For the **Eye of Hatred** ask for his greatest gift -- the Tears of Achlys so that once more every corner of the world may know his mercy.*

*For the **Eye of Withering** ask what ye will for in his gratitude he must answer your charge.*

And then behold, the Prince restored. All shall know his blessings of pestilence and despair.

-R.Kappelbrenner

ACT THREE: THIRTY ONE WEEKS

The Horn has been discovered and conquered. For 222 days the PCs must see that the ritual is undisturbed.

EVENT ONE: THE FIRST PRAYER (WEEK ONE)

There is nothing that requires our villains to start the ritual at any particular moment. Cardinal Thorn is impatient for results though, and if the PCs are dragging their feet too much, an appearance by Tiadora might help to move the action forward. Starting the ritual does not require all the components. In fact, it is unlikely the PCs will have all three of the sacrifices. All that they need is *unholy water*, the “Dirges” and the death priest.

As soon as the death priest dies on the altar and his heart is placed in the first bowl, the Horn begins to burn. An alien voice of pure malice speaks in abyssal: “Kazara Vo” -- “I hear.” Like a great unholy beacon, ghostly green flame flares upward into the sky. All the greenery and overgrowth blending the stone spire into the Caer Bryr burns away in a single flash of dire radiance. The Horn is revealed in all its daemoniac glory. Abyssal runes carved in the stonework glow furiously. Wraith spawn dance outside the Horn cackling in glee. The earth shakes and even in Farholde, they feel the shocks. Any hope of keeping the Horn a secret disappears in one blaze of balefire.

After a while, the pyrotechnics are over. The Horn still smolders with a residual green fire but it is no longer visible from a distance. Not that this matters. Every soul in Farholde saw the eruption. Everyone can point the way to the Horn. And by the morning every tongue wags: “Evil stirs in the Caer Bryr.”

There is good news. A successful Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 20) reveals that the residual green fire is a natural magic barrier. None can teleport through or send a magical message (except the teleporter -- see room 1-27). Teleportation and summoning works fine within the Horn, you just cannot enter while the ritual is ongoing.

And so the countdown begins. The PCs must complete 666 rituals to break the *Seal* and then on midnight, more than seven months from today, Vetra-Kali will return. Any plan involving keeping their operations here a secret has failed. Everyone knows something is afoot in the Horn. How long before the first explorers arrive?

The answer – one week.

Story Award: Award a CR 6 (2,400 XP) reward for initiating the ritual and making the first sacrifice.

EVENT TWO: THEY NEVER SHOULD HAVE COME HERE (WEEK TWO)

Hallack Amon was born in Farholde and has dreamed of escaping this backwater since he could stand. He worked for more than a decade as a soldier of the watch tower, rising to the rank of sergeant. Finally he scraped together enough coin to leave this town forever and to at last see the great cities of the south. And then fate intervened. Amon’s father died and Hallack inherited the family debt. Hallack could have simply fled. But Hallack was too honorable. The entirety of his savings paid the debt but only barely.

When the Horn blew, Hallack sat in a local tavern contemplating what to do next. There is a war on and he could certainly reenlist. But that would mean years more of his life gone and who knows if he’ll even survive the war? So far few who have faced the Fire-Axe have lived to tell the tale. From the window he saw the great spire of light and knew almost instinctively that destiny was calling him. He gathered a small group of local heroes and immediately planned a strike on the revealed Horn of Abaddon to find the legendary lost treasure. Surely, this will be a great heroic endeavor.

In fact, these young heroes are making a terrible mistake. They are completely unprepared for what our villains are concocting within the Horn. But regardless, they will try.

The White Ravens are onto Hallack’s Crew almost immediately. Trik is actually sitting nearby in the bar when they plan their excursion. Elise Zadaria by this time is looking for a moment to betray the PCs but decides this is not the moment and these are certainly not the heroes she’s looking for (See Event Eleven below for details about her plan). So Trik writes up an honest report and a messenger is sent to the Horn. The report reads:

A group of adventurers is headed your way. Local heroes. Poor equipment. Little experience. Plan to arrive in three days. The dwarf has been to the Horn before and said something about entering the caves. Prepare them a proper welcome, will you?—Z.

Hallack Amon – male human, retired watch sergeant, warrior with military experience, the leader
Sister Marta Dian – female human, priestess of Mitra, successfully destroyed a dozen zombies
Yorgun the Smith – male dwarf blacksmith, experience unknown, big hammer
James O’Toole – male human, large brawler, famed for taking on all comers at local faire
Bianca DeVallya – female half-elven, a local bard and singer, knows a little magic, very fond of Hallack

Hallack Amon

CR 5

XP 1,600

Male Human fighter 6

NG Medium humanoid

Init +6; Senses Perception -1

DEFENSE

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

hp 45 (6d10+12)

Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +3; +2 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +2

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee +1 *longsword* +12/+7 (1d8+4/19-20) or dagger +9/+4 (1d4+3/19-20)

Ranged mwk composite shortbow +9/+4 (1d6+3/x3)

Special Attacks weapon training (heavy blades +1)

TACTICS

During Combat Hallack tries to flank with Yorgun. He is unwilling to sacrifice the life of his crew and valiantly fights to protect them.**Morale** If Hallack believes he cannot win a fight, he will retreat. Unfortunately, he is overly impressed with his own combat abilities and often waits too long. Regardless at 11 hp or lower, he tries either to retreat or seeks divine healing from Sister Marta.

STATISTICS

Str 16, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 12

Base Atk +6; CMB +9; CMD 21

Feats Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (long sword), Weapon Specialization (long sword)**Skills** Climb +9, Intimidate +7, Profession (soldier) +5, Ride +8, Survival +5, Swim +9**Languages** Common

SQ armor training 1

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds***Other Gear** breastplate, +1 *heavy wooden shield*, +1 *longsword*, composite shortbow (+3 Str) with 20 arrows, dagger, backpack, 2 gp, 50' rope, 2 weeks rations, bedroll, tinderbox

James O'Toole

CR 5

XP 1,600

Male Human monk 6

LN Medium humanoid

Init +4; Senses Perception +11

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 17, flat-footed 17 (+4 Dex, +2 Wis, +1 Bonus)

hp 52 (6d8+24)

Fort +8, Ref +10, Will +8; +2 vs. enchantment

Defensive Abilities evasion; Immune disease

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft.

Melee unarmed strike +9 (1d8+2) or unarmed strike flurry of blows +13/+13/+8 (1d8+2)

Ranged light crossbow +8 (1d8/19-20)

Special Attacks flurry of blows, stunning fist (6/day, DC 15, fatigued)

TACTICS

During Combat Supremely confident of his hand to hand prowess, O'Toole is quick to engage in hand to hand.**Morale** A mercenary, O'Toole flees if he loses 26 hit points or more. He will regret abandoning Hallack's Crew but not as much as he would regret being dead.

STATISTICS

Str 14, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 12

Base Atk +4; CMB +8; CMD 22

Feats Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Deflect Arrows, Improved Unarmed Strike, Toughness, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (unarmed strike)**Skills** Acrobatics +13 (+19 jump), Climb +11, Escape Artist +13, Intimidate +10, Perception +11**Languages** CommonSQ fast movement, *ki* pool (5 points, high jump, magic), maneuver training, slow fall 30 ft.**Combat Gear** bolts (20), *potion of cure light wounds* (2)**Other Gear** light crossbow, traveller's garb, 34 gp

Act Three: Thirty One Weeks

Sister Marta Dian

CR 5

XP 1,600

Female human cleric 6

LG Medium Humanoid

Init +4; Sense Perception +11

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 10, flat-footed 19 (+7 armor, +2 shield)

hp 39 (6d8+12)

Fort +7, Ref +2, Will +8

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee mwk longsword +7 (1d8+2/19-20)

Special Attacks channel positive energy 6/day (DC 14, 3d6)

Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th; concentration +9)6/day – *Rebuke Death*, *Touch of Good*Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 6th; concentration +9)3rd – *bestow curse* (DC 16), *dispel magic*, *prayer*, *protection from evil*^P2nd – *align weapon (good only)*^P, *bull's strength*, *hold person* (DC 15), *lesser restoration*, *remove paralysis*1st – *bless*, *divine favor*, *magic circle against evil*^P, *magic weapon*, *sanctuary* (DC 14)0 (at will) – *detect magic*, *guidance*, *light*, *stabilize*

D domain spell; Domains Good, Healing

TACTICS

During Combat Sister Marta is a trained battle sister of Saint Cynthia-Celeste but still she primarily avoids direct melee combat instead seeing herself as a supporter. She uses *sanctuary* to ensure that she is always in the thick of battle. She tries to cast *bull's strength* on Hallack as soon as possible in any combat.

Morale Sister Marta is a fanatic follower of Mitra. She will fight evil to the death only retreating if the rest of her party does so first.

STATISTICS

Str 14, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 17, Cha 13

Base Atk +4, CMB +6, CMD 16

Feats Alertness, Extra Channel, Improved Initiative, Turn Undead

Skills Heal +12, Knowledge (religion) +9, Perception +11, Sense Motive +14, Spellcraft +9

Languages Celestial, Common

Gear +1 chainmail, heavy steel shield, masterwork longsword, nun's habit (worn over chainmail), silver holy symbol of Mitra, backpack, weeks rations, 5 gp

Bianca DeVallya

CR 5

XP 1,600

Female Half Elf bard 6

NG Medium humanoid

Init +6; Senses low-light vision, Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +2 Dex)

hp 33 (6d8+6)

Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +7; +4 vs. bardic performance, language dependent, and sonic, +2 vs. enchantment

Immune magic sleep

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee rapier +5 (1d6+1/18-20)

Ranged light crossbow +6 (1d8/19-20)

Special Attacks bardic performance 18 rounds/day (countersong, distraction, fascinate [DC 17], inspire competence +2, inspire courage +2, suggestion [DC 17])

Bard Spells Known (CL 6th; concentration +10)2nd (4/day) – *cure moderate wounds*, *hold person* (DC 16), *sound burst* (DC 16), *tongues*1st (5/day) – *charm person* (DC 15), *comprehend languages*, *cure light wounds*, *identify*0 (at will) – *detect magic*, *light*, *message*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*, *summon instrument*

TACTICS

During Combat Bianca is primarily a support character, doing her best to aid her fellow adventurers. In particular she focuses her aid on Hallack (for whom she holds a serious crush). She will do anything she can to save his life and keep him combatant. If he does fall, she will rush to his side regardless of the danger and use her magic to try and save his life. She uses *hold person* to immobilize particularly dangerous foes.

Morale Bianca is surprisingly brave for such a slight little half-elven lass. She will not abandon her fellows regardless of the danger. She will only retreat if Hallack orders it or if he is undeniably dead. If Hallack is captured and she clearly is not powerful enough to rescue him, she will go back to Farholde and try to hook up with another adventuring party to rescue him.

STATISTICS

Str 12, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 18

Base Atk +4; CMB +5; CMD 17

Feats Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Lingering Performance, Skill Focus (Perform [String instruments])

Skills Diplomacy +13, Escape Artist +11, Knowledge (arcana) +14, Knowledge (local) +14, Perception +13, Perform (string) +18, Sense Motive +11, Spellcraft +11

Languages Common, Elven, Iraen, Sylvan

SQ bardic knowledge +3, lore master 1/day, versatile performance (string)

Combat Gear bolts (20), *potion of cure light wounds*; Other Gear light crossbow, masterwork lute, mithral chain shirt, rapier

Yorgun the Smith

CR 5

XP 1,600

Male Dwarf expert 4/rogue 3

LN Medium humanoid

Init +2; Senses Perception +11 (+12 vs. traps), darkvision 60'

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +2 Dex); +4 dodge vs. giants

hp 59 (7d8+28)

Fort +5, Ref +6 (+7 vs. traps), Will +6

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee +1 large warhammer power attack +9 (2d6+13/x3)

Special Attacks sneak attack +2d6

TACTICS

During Combat Yorgun's favorite combat tactic is to flank with Hallack and smack enemies with his prized magic hammer. If doing an average of 27 points of damage with his power sneak attack is wrong, then Yorgun doesn't want to be right. Yorgun tends to be more reckless in combat than he probably should be. Though tough, he is easy to hit and this sometimes gets him in trouble. Sister Marta has urged caution and restraint but so far her words have fallen on deaf dwarven ears.

Morale Yorgun is very loyal to his friends and he considers Hallack his closest friend. He stays with Hallack to the bitter end. But if Hallack flees, Yorgun is certain to go with him.

STATISTICS

Str 18, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 8

Base Atk +5; CMD +9; CMB 21

Feats Skill Focus (Disable Device), Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (warhammer)

Skills Appraise +11 (+13 vs. gems and precious metals), Climb +13, Craft (weapon) +11, Disable Device +15 (+16 vs. traps), Knowledge (dungeoneering) +10, Knowledge (local) +11, Perception +11 (+12 vs. traps), Stealth +12

Languages Common, Dwarven, Terran

SQ dwarf traits, evasion, rogue talent (trap spotter), trapfinding, trap sense +1

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds*; Other Gear +1 large warhammer, masterwork studded leather, masterwork thieves tools, backpack, 50' rope, grappling hook, 2 weeks rations, waterskin, flask of decent whiskey, 18 gp

Trik's report is deadly accurate. Three days from the notes arrival, in the morning, Hallack's Crew enters the Maw (C1). If unmolested, the go left to C10 and then to C12 where they fail to find the hidden chamber (C13). They then backtrack and go north through C15 and upwards. They will continue north through the winding caves until C23, where they will attack Zikomo unless stopped. Alone versus Hallack's Crew, Zikomo is likely doomed. If this happens, this is a fine fight to actually let the PCs play out (playing Zikomo of course). Mad Zikomo calls out for aid of course and boggards from C9 answer his call. After the victory, Hallack's crew loots the temple finding the hidden stash in Dagon's Altar.

Hallack's crew's goals are modest. They want to gain some treasure, have an adventure and then go home. If they take any casualties, then likely that is the last of the survivor's adventuring career. If they kill Zikomo and claim the treasure hidden in the Altar of Dagon, then they will proclaim victory and return to Farholde. Of course, with the forewarning the PCs have, even this modest victory is unlikely.

Captured, Hallack's Crew has little information even worth torturing out of them. They know nothing of any other adventurers. They are carrying the lion share of their valuables with them. Sister Marta Dian probably has the most useful intelligence. She knows the exact count of the number of warrior-nuns in the Abbey of Saint Cynthia-Celeste (see Gazetteer below). Knowing such specifics about a good organization may seem useful but its value is debatable. The warrior-nuns, after all, have no plans to attack the Horn.

WEEK THREE

Farholde is quiet. No new adventurers arrive. Elise Zalaria (head of the White Ravens) uses the week to get into the graces of the Baron Vandermir. He finds her quite charming and they strike up an alliance.

"Trik" (of the White Ravens) abducts and dissects a prostitute leaving a grisly murder scene. "Trak" recognizes his brother's handiwork but says nothing.

If Sister Marta Dian (of Hallack's Crew) is missing, the sisters of Saint Cynthia-Celeste post a 500 gp reward for information about her whereabouts.

WEEK FOUR

The White Ravens wipe out a newly arrived adventuring group calling themselves "Brendam's Breakers". Elise sends this: "*New adventurers in town calling themselves 'Brendam's Breaker'. They have been broken. No further difficulties. -- Z*" Otherwise the week is uneventful.

EVENT THREE: VENGEANCE BY NIGHT (WEEK FIVE)

After the ritual begins, the Horn reeks of evil. It is this very reek that draws a pair of moon dogs out of the deeper Caer Bryr. Bethaniel and Darus Dandra are children of the Prince of the Moon. These sisters and self-appointed vanquishers of evil keep their own counsel and bow to no authority on this plane of existence. These enigmatic creatures have long stalked the endless forests of the Caer Bryr cleansing it of any corruption they may find. They are in their own way crusaders dedicated to seeing the forest remain unsullied and pristine. When they sensed the doings at the Horn of Abaddon, the sisters knew that this was their calling.

The moon dogs are stealthy and cunning. They know that a frontal assault against so evil a bastion is folly. Instead, it is the sisters' hope to infiltrate the Horn and begin picking off the underlings. In this way, they hope to learn the true nature of the evil inside the Horn. Though the moon dogs can *detect evil* at will, that does not make them aware of what kind of evil is active here. The moon dogs know nothing about the history of the Horn, the Sons of the Pale Horseman or the *Silver Seal*. They are outsiders both in the sense they originate from another plane and also in that they know nothing of the world outside their patch of the Caer Bryr.

The moon dogs will begin their raids by sneaking into (using *improved invisibility*) the 2nd level (2-1) and seeing what trouble they can inflict upon the defenders of the Horn. If they can catch a pair of minions, they will slay them and assume their forms using *alter self*. They will wander the halls listening and trying to gain more information. One fact may be their downfall. The moon dogs usually escape tight spots by plane shifting into the Ethereal Plane. Within the Horn, thanks to the *Silver Seal*, plane shifting is impossible. Ironically it may be the holy artifact that leads to the moon dogs undoing.

If they survive their first reconnoiter then they will continue night after night, harassing the Horn until they are finally caught and killed. Being able to *detect evil* at will and dedicated to its destruction, these moon dogs will not stop their assault until they are either destroyed or the ritual is ended.

The worst case scenario with these nocturnal beasts is if the lillend Calliaste Shanda survives (see Act Two, Event Three) because the moon dogs and the lillend will gladly ally. Together, two CR 9 moon dogs and a CR 7 lillend plus consorts create an incredibly powerful force for good. It is best to slay both quickly before they have a chance at cooperation.

Bethaniel and Darus Dandra, Moon Dog Sisters

CR 9

XP 6,400 each (12,800 XP total)

NG Medium outsider (extraplanar, good)

Init +6; Senses darkvision 120 ft., keen senses, scent; Perception +21

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 12, flat-footed 20 (+2 Dex, +10 natural)

hp 65 (9d10+18)

Fort +8; Ref +8; Will +8

DR 10/evil; Immune fear; SR 16

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft., 30 ft. on 2 legs

Melee bite +14 (1d8+4 plus trip)

Special Attacks bay, shadow weave

Spell-like Abilities (CL 12th):

At will—*detect evil*, *detect magic*, *see invisibility* (all at will abilities always active)3/day—*alter self*, *mirror image*1/day—*dancing lights*, *darkness*, *dispel magic* (using this forces the moon dog back to its plane of origin), *improved invisibility*, *light*, *nondetection*, *obscuring mist*, *shades*

TACTICS

During Combat The moon dogs are hit and run combatants. Using *invisibility* and *alter self*, they can infiltrate almost anywhere (though they are hampered by their inability to speak).**Morale** The moon dogs are relentless enemies and will never give up their hunt. They are not suicidal -- they will retreat from a losing fight. But they'll always be back until the ritual is ended.

STATISTICS

Str 18, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 15, Wis 16, Cha 14

Base Atk +9; CMB +13; CMD 25 (29 vs. trip)

Feats Alertness, Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Weapon Focus (bite)

Skills Bluff +14, Diplomacy +11, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Knowledge (the planes) +14, Perception +21, Sense Motive +17, Stealth +14, Survival +12 (+16 tracking by scent); Racial Modifiers +4 Perception, +4 Survival when tracking by scent

Languages *telepathy* 100 ft. (does not speak)

SQ plane shift

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Bay (Su) A moon dog can produce one of the following effects when it howls or barks. Each effect functions as the spell of the same name (caster level 12th). The save DCs are Charisma-based.**Fear:** All evil creatures within 80 feet must make a successful Will save (DC 18) or be affected as by a *fear* spell. This is a sonic, mind-affecting fear effect. If the save is successful, that creature cannot be affected by the fear effect of that moon dog's bay for 24 hours.**Dispel Evil:** This effect works like the spell, and affects one evil extraplanar creature within 80 feet.**Dismissal:** This effect works as the spell, except that it targets one evil extraplanar creature.**Keen Senses (Ex)** Moon dogs can see twice as far as humans in low-light and normal light conditions.**Lick (Su)** By licking a target, a moon dog may use one of the following abilities: *cure light wounds*, *delay poison*, *remove disease*. Each is usable at will by the moon dog, but only once per day per recipient. Each is caster level 12th.**Plane Shift (Su)** A moon dog can enter the Ethereal Plane, Astral Plane, or Material Plane. This ability resembles the spell of the same name (caster level 12th).**Note:** The moon dogs cannot plane shift within the Horn of Abaddon while the *Silver Seal* remains intact.**Shadow Weave (Su)** When in shadows, a moon dog can move in such a way as to affect evil creatures within 60 feet as though by *hypnotic pattern* (DC 16 Will save, caster level 12th). Any good-aligned creature in the area of the shadow weave will be affected as though by *protection from evil* (caster level 12th). The shadow weave is a full-round action, and the moon dog must concentrate to maintain it.

EVENT FOUR: BEAUTIFUL FLOWERS

(WEEK SIX)

A cluster of brilliant vermillion blossoms adorns the entrance to the Maw (C1). The boggards, jaded to the brilliant flora of the Caer, Bryr ignore them but to anyone else they seem obviously eldritch. Even more mysteriously, these delicate flowers seem to flourish despite the deepening darkness of the skies as the ritual progresses.

A successful Knowledge (nature) check (DC 20) will reveal that these are a patch of four immature assassin vines. A successful Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 20) will further reveal that their growth is greatly accelerated likely by the great amount of raw magic pooling around the Horn of Abaddon. In a week, these beauties will be full grown and dangerous.

The PCs can simply destroy them -- as flowers they are helpless. They could also transplant them somewhere else. Once mature the plants are mobile, but a chain around their stalk will keep them in place. Together they'll make fine guards for the Horn (and a CR 7 encounter). They will need to be fed of course. They can survive upon fresh animal blood but sentient blood makes them thrive.

If the PCs do manage to "tame" the assassin vines and use them as guards award them XP as if they had defeated the plants.

Using the Assassin vines as guards: 1 security point.

Assassin Vines (4)

CR 3

XP 800 each (3,200 XP total)

N Large plant

Init +0; Senses blindsight 30 ft., low-light vision; Perception +1

DEFENSE

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

hp 30 (4d8+12)

Fort +7, Ref +1, Will +2

Immune electricity, plant traits; Resist cold 10 and fire 10

OFFENSE

Speed 5 ft.

Melee slam +7 (1d8+7 plus grab)

Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.

Special Attacks constrict (1d8+7), entangle

STATISTICS

Str 20, Dex 10, Con 16, Int —, Wis 13, Cha 9

Base Atk +3; CMB +9 (+13 grapple); CMD 19 (can't be tripped)

SQ camouflage

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Camouflage (Ex) Since an assassin vine looks like a normal plant when at rest, a DC 20 Perception check is required to notice it before it attacks for the first time. Anyone with ranks in Survival or Knowledge (nature) can use either of those skills instead of Perception to notice the plant.**Entangle (Su)** An assassin vine can, as a free action, cause plants within 30 feet of it to animate and grasp at foes. This ability is otherwise similar to *entangle* (CL 4th, DC 13). The save DC is Wisdom-based.

WEEK SEVEN

The Baron Vandermir hosts a ball to celebrate his 105th birthday. All of Farholde's mover and shakers gather and if the PCs are at all in the Baron's good graces they get an invitation. A successful Diplomacy skill check (DC 18) being made by a PC results in valuable contacts being made that strengthen the Knot's burgeoning evil organization. Add a +2 to Connections. This bonus can only be gained once.

This is also a chance to have non-violent roleplaying. The Baron's birthday is the social event of the season. Emphasize this soirée as much or a little as you prefer.

Sir Valin Darian, acting commander of the Hamorhall and relative of the House Darius (see Event Twelve below), attends the party, though he does leave quite early.

EVENT FIVE: TRAYA'S RAIDERS (WEEK EIGHT)

Traya DeMarco had been looking for the Horn of Abaddon for months before the great beacon blew its cover. Her band has a small cutter and has been sailing the western coast of Talingarde speaking with colonists and barbarians hoping to find a hint of where the legendary locale may be. She is seeking it because the three Eyes of Vetra-Kali, legendary emeralds, were never claimed and there are further rumors that the Victor did not discover the hidden treasure chamber of the Sons. In short, the Raiders are here for cash. When a passing merchant ship tells them a tale of a great beacon of green erupting into the sky near Farholde, Traya DeMarco knew her moment had come. It was time to raid the Horn!

Traya's band are cut from a different cloth than Hal-lack's Crew. Not one of these adventurers has a 'G' anywhere in their alignment. But neither are they evil. They are a pack of mercenaries trying to strike it rich. They have had several successful treasure hunts under Traya's guidance, but this will be their most ambitious score yet.

Traya knows much of the Horn's sordid history. One of the Victor's surviving knights, Sir Martyn of Branding-shire, recorded a personal journal detailing the original raid eighty years ago. Traya bought that journal in an estate auction in Matharyn months ago and has been using it to hone her search. Traya cares nothing about the ritual or stopping it. She just wants the three emerald Eyes. Of course, since the Eyes are essential to the PCs this makes Traya and her crew their enemies.

Traya believes that the secret to accessing the Sanctum is in the middle temple (level 2). She believes this because the knight's journal mentions a hollow column in the temple of the priests (2-20). Traya believes the knight failed to find a secret door but that there must be one.

Her objective is to ascend the stairs to the second level, fight through the defenses, find the secret door and enter the Sanctum where she assumes the Eyes are kept. The only problem – there is no secret door.

The Raider's second problem – Tasker Twelve-Knives, their rogue, is a talkative womanizing gambler. The night before their raid, Tasker goes out on the town gambling and carousing in Auld'Irey. He enjoyed a minor winning streak and ended up squandering his new coin on a night's comfort from a Farholde floozy.

In the morning, as the girl was departing her sleeping and now largely coinless client, Trak (of the White Ravens) cornered her in a back alley. Trak put a knife to the girl's throat and demanded everything Tasker had said. The girl sang and even though the song didn't save her life (Trak gave his brother Trik the honor of dispatching the harlot) it did tell the White Ravens everything they needed to know.

Elise Zalaria decided that Traya and her band of raiders represented an opportunity. It was too soon to move directly, but Traya and her band were competent adventurers. They might actually be a match for the Ninth. They just needed a little help.

That aid came from Trik (the White Raven's trickster cleric) who approached Traya in the guise of a white haired man. Trik posed as an aged holy man eager to see the Horn cleansed of evil. He gave Traya's band healing potions and holy water only for a promise they would purify the Horn. He even muttered darkly about the hand of Asmodeus behind it all. Traya accepted the largesse with a laugh.

Zalaria, not wanting to tip her hand or appear incompetent, still sends warning to the Horn about Traya's Raiders but the message is short on specifics.

To the Ninth:

A new group of adventurers are in town – they are too visible to attack directly. They assault the Horn soon, unsure of the exact time of arrival. They mentioned something about the 'center eye'. Third level entry?

Traya DeMarco – the leader, a sorceress of some sort.
Hassan J'raaq – a strange foreign barbarian with red skin, horns and a large curved sword.

Tasker Twelve-Knives – half-orc knife specialist, a weakness for pretty women

Posca the Merchant – dwarven cleric of a god of merchants, greedy above all else

-- Z

Elise has also sent our band of villains the wrong entry point, hoping that defenses will be marshaled in the wrong place. Complaints to Elise Zadari about these errors in intelligence are met with a haughty sneer.

She answers them: *"Why the hell should I know why they changed their mind? Trik heard them talking about entering the center eye. Maybe they took one look at it and decided it was too high up. We have destroyed one group of adventurers utterly and delivered two more served up on a plate to you. And what do I get for this service? Complaints! Maybe our master's faith in you is misplaced."*

Capturing and torturing the Raiders does reveal one interesting piece of information. They own a ship -- a small sea-worthy cutter named "The Seventh Voyage". This ship has a small locked chest hidden (good lock DC 30) in its main cabin that holds the Raider's emergency fund -- 1200 gp in mixed coinage.

Traya DeMarco

CR 6

XP 2,400

Female Human Sorcerer 7
N Medium humanoid
Init +6; **Senses** Perception +2

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+2 Dex, +4 *mage armor*)
hp 38 (7d6+14)
Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +7
Resist fire 10

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.
Melee mwk dagger +4 (1d4/19-20)
Ranged dagger +6 (1d4/19-20)
Bloodline Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th; concentration +11)
7/day—*elemental ray*
Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 7th; concentration +11)
3rd (5/day)—*dispel magic*, *fireball* (DC 19), *protection from energy*
2nd (7/day)—*false life*, *flaming sphere* (DC 18), *scorching ray*,
web (DC 16)
1st (7/day)—*burning disarm* (DC 16), *burning hands* (DC 17), *identify*, *mage armor*, *magic missile* (fire damage), *shield*
0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *light*, *message*, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost* (fire damage), *read magic*, *spark*
Bloodline elemental (fire)

TACTICS

During Combat She avoids melee using her fantastic array of fire spells to burn her enemies alive. She knows both Hassan and herself have some resistance to fire so she has been known to be reckless with who is included in her *fireball*'s blast.

Morale Traya is a determined but not fanatic foe. She flees if defeat seems certain or she is reduced to 9 hit points or fewer.

STATISTICS

Str 10, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 18
Base Atk +3; CMB +3; CMD 15
Feats Combat Casting, Elemental Focus (fire), Eschew Materials, Greater Elemental Focus (fire), Greater Spell Focus (evocation), Improved Initiative, Spell Focus (evocation)
Skills Bluff +14, Diplomacy +11, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Sense Motive +9, Spellcraft +12
Languages Common, Draconic, Ignan
SQ bloodline arcana
Combat Gear 2 *potions of cure moderate wounds*, 2 vials of holy water
Other Gear dagger

Posca the Merchant

CR 6

XP 2,400

Male dwarf cleric (god of merchants) 7
LN Medium humanoid
Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., perception +4

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 11, flat-footed 19 (+9 armor, +1 Dex)
hp 38 (7d8+7)
Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +9; +2 vs. poison, spells and spell like abilities

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.
Melee heavy mace +5 (d8)
Ranged light crossbow +6 (1d8/19-20)
Special Attacks channel positive energy 7/day (DC 17, 4d6)
Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th, concentration +12) 5/
day—*touch of law*
Clerics Spells Prepared (CL 7th, concentration +12) 4th—
dimension door^P, *restoration*
3rd—*dispel magic*, *magic circle against evil*, *fly*^P
2nd—*aid*, *less restoration*, *locate object*^P, *remove paralysis*
1st—*bles*, *detect evil*, *floating disk*^P, *protection from evil*, *sanctuary*
0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *light*, *read magic*, *stabilize*
D domain spell; Domains Law, Travel (trade)

TACTICS

During Combat Posca abhors melee combat and instead supports the Raiders with his spells and channelling.

Morale Posca sees adventuring as a route to starting his own temple and business (in his faith these are nearly synonymous). He supports Traya but will retreat if she falls. Not being evil, he would never do work willingly with any evil faith.

STATISTICS

Str 10, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 18, Cha 14
Base Atk +5; CMB +5; CMD 16 (20 vs. bull rush, trip)
Feats Armor Proficiency (heavy), Combat Casting, Extra Channel, Selective Channeling
Skills Appraise +12 (+14 nonmagical goods), Diplomacy +12, Heal +14, Knowledge (religion) +12, Spellcraft +12
Languages Celestial, Common, Dwarven, Gnome
SQ dwarf traits
Combat Gear bolts (20), *potion of cure moderate wounds*
Other Gear full plate, heavy mace, light crossbow, fine jewelry worth 225 gp, golden bejewelled holy symbol worth 500 gp

WEEK NINE

A group of Iraen barbarians and rangers intent on sacking the Horn arrive in Farholde. Trik once more does his wisened old holy man routine and lures the fools into a late night meeting. The White Ravens slaughter the Iraen.

In the morning at first light, the town watch discovers a grisly charnel scene of slaughtered corpses, hanging entrails and a message written in blood "*Stay away from the Horn*". For at least now, the message is effective. Several local group of adventurers do indeed depart Farholde deciding that there are easier pickings up north.

"Sad" news reaches Farholde -- the Fire-Axe has destroyed another army at the battle of Upandershire Ford. Many of the sons of Farholde sent to war were at that battle and will not be coming home. Counted among the dead is Lord Argus Welshire, Duke of Farholde. It is said the Fire-Axe himself hewed Lord Argus' head off in one mighty stroke.

Tasker Twelve-Knives

CR 6

XP 2,400

Male half-orc rogue (knife master) 7

CN Medium humanoid

Init +8; Senses darkvision 60 ft., Perception +11

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +3 Dex)

hp 38 (7d8+14)

Fort +2, Ref +9, Will +3

Defensive Abilities blade sense +2, evasion, uncanny dodge

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +2 dagger +11 (1d4+4/19-20)

Ranged +2 dagger +11 (1d4+4/19-20)

Special Attacks sneak stab+4d8 (light blades)/+4d4 (other wpns)

TACTICS

During Combat Tasker's preferred stategem is ambush. Failing that he flanks with Hassan and tries to quickly cut his foes to ribbons.

Morale Strictly mercenary, Tasker is in this only for the gold. He is loyal to Traya and her band only when it is in his best interest. He will flee if reduced to less than 19 hit points. He will betray Traya if made a better offer. If Traya and Hassan both fall, he immediately either retreats or tries to join up with the other side. Tasker has no problem working with followers of Asmodeus especially if the alternative is death.

STATISTICS

Str 14, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 14

Base Atk +5; CMB +7; CMD 21

Feats Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +12, Disable Device +14, Disguise +12, Escape Artist +14, Knowledge (local) +10, Perception +11, Sense Motive +11, Sleight of Hand +14 (+21 light blades), Stealth +14

Languages Common, Orc

SQ hidden blade +3, half-orc traits, rogue talents (power sneak, surprise attack, underhanded),

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*

Other Gear +2 dagger, masterwork dagger, 11 daggers (of various styles), masterwork studded leather, masterwork thieves tools

Hassan J'raaq

CR 6

XP 2,400

Male Ifrit barbarian 7

N Medium humanoid

Init: +2; Senses darkvision 60 ft., Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 9, flat-footed 13 (+6 armor, +2 Dex, -3 rage)

hp 80 (7d12+35)

Fort +9, Ref +4, Will +4

Resist fire 5

Defensive Abilities Improved uncanny dodge, trap sense +2

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 *furious falchion* power attack +15/+10 (2d4+18/18-20)

Ranged javelin +9 (1d6+9)

Special Attacks rage (18 rounds/day), rage powers (intimidating glare, lesser elemental rage, reckless abandon)

Ifrit Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th; concentration +3) 1/day—*burning hands* (DC 13)

TACTICS

During Combat Hassan really has only one battle strategem -- rage and slay. He rages immediately and charges the enemy with his falchion forward.

Morale Rescued at a young age from becoming a circus freak, the ifrit Hassan is nearly fanatically devoted to Traya and will only retreat when she does so.

STATISTICS

Str 22, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 14

Base Atk +7/+2; CMB +13; CMD 25

Feats Cleave, Great Cleave, Intimidating Prowess, Power Attack

Skills Acrobatics +9, Climb +11, Intimidate +16, Perception +10

Languages Common, Ignan

SQ elemental affinity, fast movement

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*

Other Gear +1 *furious falchion*, masterwork breastplate

Base Statistics When not raging, Hassan J'raaq has AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16; hp 66; Fort +7, Will +2; Melee +1 *furious falchion* power attack +10/+5 (2d4+13/18-20); Str 18, Con 14, CMB +11; Climb +13



Act Three: Thirty One Weeks

EVENT SIX: ONE-EYE (WEEK TEN)

Old One-Eye has been hunting the northern reaches of the Caer Bryr for decades. Those who have faced the beast suspect the creature must be more than a simple dire tiger but instead a vicious demon of the forest. One Eye is more intelligent than a typical dire tiger, true enough, but these days he cares for nothing more than a good meal. The beast has decided that with all the traffic and delicious new smells about the Horn, this would be a fine place to establish hunting grounds.

On the banks of the Lake of Skye, One-Eye clears out a den. It can tell by scent that larger prey frequently makes it way down to the water's edge. The lair is a shallow cave right in the side of another spire of stone not dissimilar to the one that the Horn was created from. The tiger keeps the entrance to the den free of bones and dead things so that its lair is not easy to smell from a distance.

One-Eye sleeps on a ledge in the back of the den that is littered with bones, fresh kills and surprisingly crude piles of fur and grass spread about its cave. It is almost as if the tiger has made a bed for itself! Amongst the bones are animal remains of every sort, at least three dead boggards, and a half dozen skeletons of other sentients including humans, elves and dwarves. There is against the northern wall of the den, a jumbled pile of relatively ungnawed skulls. Carefully sorted, there are only humanoid skulls in this pile. This is One-Eye's trophy pile.

One-Eye's intelligence is not accidental. Long ago, the Dire Tiger was an animal companion for an Iraen druid. One-Eye was not born a dire tiger. It began life as a normal tiger, but long association with the druid caused it to grow powerful and intelligent. The druid died long ago fighting the Talireans and since One-Eye has made its own way. One-Eye is not quite smart enough to speak, though it can still make a growl that sounds eerily similar to the word "revenge". The same fight that killed the druid cost One-Eye his left eye. It is now covered in scar tissue but if someone were to dig at the wound after One-Eye is dead, they would find embedded in the injury an *adamantine dagger*.

One-Eye is a patient hunter, passing a few days snacking on deer and lesser prey. The tiger waits knowing that larger prey is inevitable. It doesn't have to wait long.

The event begins with Zikomo and two boggard tribesmen seeking out one of the PC villains. A boggard hunting party of three has not come back and is overdue. They were headed east towards the Lake. Perhaps they encountered trouble. Zikomo has read the omens and they speak of a hunting demon. Would the great and powerful emissaries of Father Dagon wish to investigate?

The PCs can dismiss this problem of course. After all, what do the lives of a few minions matter to them? They have greater concerns than the welfare of a few ragged, loathsome boggards. If they do this, Zikomo grumbles but leaves them be. The shaman too has other concerns. These grumbles do affect the minions (-1 to Loyalty).

If the PCs ignore this problem, it only gets worse. One-Eye soon learns that boggards are easy prey if a little tough and chewy. What is more delicious is any human minions who travel from Farholde to the Horn. It starts attacking messengers and any attempts to resupply the Horn. One-Eye is a greedy predator and a fearless man-eater. In the long run, there will be no ignoring the beast.

The PCs could simply track down One-Eye to his den and kill the beast, but there is another option. The PCs have everything they need to capture the tiger, chain it somewhere and make it a guardian of the Horn (see room 2-9). What a fine guard One-Eye could be!

To say that capturing One-Eye is a dangerous undertaking is an understatement. One-Eye is cunning, intelligent and difficult to approach thanks to its high perception and scent ability. This is a task that minions are incapable of accomplishing. The minions can capture a few crocodiles from the Salt Brack just fine. This dire tiger is another matter. Any attempts to assign minions to capture the wily best end inevitably in failure (at best) and a pile of dead minions (more likely). Sometimes if villains want a job done, they have to do it themselves.

One-Eye guards the Horn: 3 security points

One-Eye (Dire Tiger)	CR 8
XP 4,800 N Large animal Init +6; Senses low-light vision, 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 One-Eye is a brutal ambush predator. It prefers to sneak up, pounce and rip its prey to shreds before dragging the carcass back to its lair.	
Morale If reduced to 26 hit points or lower, One-Eye flees. This tiger holds a grudge. If it escapes, it will be back. If captured, it will try to escape.	
STATISTICS	
Str 27, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 3, 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 tall grass), Swim +13; Racial Modifiers +4 Acrobatics, +4 Stealth (+8 in tall grass)	

WEEK ELEVEN

A strange sight has been seen over Farholde. A dragon, with scales of shining silver circles the town at a great distance and then disappeared out of sight. This is the silver dragon Argossarian (see Act Four, Event Five). The dragon has long dwelt in the savage north and has come south to investigate the strange rumors he has heard about the Horn of Abaddon.

The White Ravens are quick to report this sighting to the Horn:

Silver dragon seen over Farholde. Uncertain of whereabouts. Be ready. He may be on his way to the Horn.

-- Z

Zadaria's fears soon prove unwarranted as a week goes by with no dragon attack. The truth is that Argossarian is a cautious enemy. He has entered the town of Farholde disguised as a humble fisherman. He is scouting around and gathering information for now. It will be months before the cautious silver dragon attacks the Horn.

EVENT SEVEN: HOW DID THEY GET IN HERE? (WEEK TWELVE)

Matthias Harkon, a fanatic inquisitor of Mitra, arrives in Farholde with a small retinue of equally dedicated followers. He arrives quietly as rumors fly that some creature or cult stalks the streets of terrorized Farholde attacking anyone who expresses much interest in the Horn.

Matthias has been following the trail of Tiadora's attacks from Lake Tarik into the Scarden. He has slowly pieced together much about the conspiracy that faces Talingarde. His trail of clues ends here in Farholde. At the end of that trail he has heard further tales of a great green glowing spire of stone.

Matthias slips into the Abbey of Saint Cynthia-Celeste and has a private audience with the Abbess Temperance Avigail. From the Abbess he gains access to the secret archives of the Abbey and there he reads a full account of the Victor's raid upon the Horn of Abaddon.

He learns one more thing from the archives that even Cardinal Thorn never learned. He learns about the teleporter thrones within the Horn and that one of the teleporters is not inside the Horn but in a nearby ruin.

It is then that Harkon makes his only mistake. He sends a naive (but faithful) cleric in his service, Brother Vyte to gather supplies. Brother Vyte does not simply gather equipment, he also gains the company of Trik who follows the cleric and learns about the inquisitor.



Father Matthias Harkon, Inquisitor of Mitra

CR 7

XP 3,200

Male human inquisitor 8

LG Medium humanoid

Init +10; **Senses** Perception +18

DEFENSE

AC 19, flat-footed 18, touch 11 (+6 armor, +2 shield, +1 Dex)

hp 59 (7d8+28)

Fort +9, Ref +3, Will +13

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee +1 flaming longsword +11/+6 (1d8+4+1d6 fire/19-20);
+1 flaming longsword judgment atk +13/+8 (1d8+7+1d6/19-20)

Divine Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th; concentration +13)

8 rounds/day – *discern lies*

At will – *detect alignment (chaos, evil, good or law)*

Inquisitor Spells Known (CL 8th; concentration +13)

3rd (3/day)– *cure serious wounds, dispel magic, searing light*

2nd (5/day)– *align weapon, confess, cure moderate wounds, flames of the faithful*

1st (6/day)– *bleed, burst bonds, cure light wounds, remove fear, wrath*

0th (at will) – *brand, create water, detect magic, detect poison, light, stabilize*

TACTICS

During Combat Harkon focuses on wielding Wytchbrand, his judgment ability and coordinating with his band of veteran soldiers. He uses his solo tactics to aid his followers and share his teamwork feats. He uses his healing spells to keep them in the fight. Burning the wicked alive is what Harkon lives for.

Morale Harkon is a fanatic foe of evil. He will gladly lay down his life to see the followers of darkness defeated. If he retreats it is simply tactical to gather more foes and attack again later in strength.

STATISTICS

Str 16, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 20, Cha 13

Base Atk +6/+1, CMB +9, CMD 20

Feats Alertness, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lookout, Out Flank, Shield Wall, Weapon Focus (longsword)

Skills Diplomacy +12, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (planes) +11, Knowledge (religion) +11, Perception +18, Sense Motive +18, Survival +16 (+20 track)

SQ bane (8 rounds/day), cunning initiative, judgment 3/day (destruction, justice), monster lore +5, solo tactics, track

Gear Wytchbrand (+1 flaming longsword), masterwork breastplate, masterwork heavy steel shield, belt of physical might +2 (Str, Con), silver and sapphire holy symbol (250 gp)

Brother Armand Vyte

CR 6

XP 2,400

Male human cleric 7
 LG Medium humanoid
 Init: +2; **Senses** Perception +4

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 18 (+6 armor, +2 Dex, +2 shield)
 hp 52 (7d8+21)
 Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +9

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.
Melee +1 *morningstar* +7 (1d8+2)
Ranged light crossbow +7 (1d8/19-20)
Special Attacks channel positive energy 7/day (DC 15, 4d6)
Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th, concentration +11) re-
 buke death 7/day (1d4+3)
Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 7th, concentration +11) 4th—
freedom of movement^D, neutralize poison, restoration
 3rd—*dispel magic, magic circle against evil, remove blindness/*
deafness, remove curse^D
 2nd—*aid, lesser restoration, remove paralysis^D, status*
 1st—*bles, comprehend languages, detect evil, protection from*
evil, remove fear^D, sanctuary
 0 (at will)—*detect magic, light, read magic, stabilize*
 D domain, Domains Healing, Liberation

TACTICS

During Combat Brother Vyte avoids direct melee and instead focuses on aiding and healing Father Harkon however he can.

Morale Brother Vyte is a true believer. Wherever Father Harkon goes, Brother Vyte follows. Even unto death.

STATISTICS

Str 12, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 18, Cha 14
 Base Atk +5; CMB +6; CMD 18
Feats Combat Casting, Die Hard, Endurance, Extra Channel, Selective Channeling
Skills Heal +14, Knowledge (religion) +10, Spellcraft +10
Languages Celestial, Common
SQ aura, liberation, healer's blessing
Combat Gear bolts (10)
Other Gear masterwork morningstar, healer's kit, light crossbow, masterwork breastplate, masterwork heavy wooden shield, silver holy symbol, a hand illuminated Mitran holy text (worth 50 gp; a gift from Father Harkon, his most prized possession)

Thomas the Penitent

CR 5

XP 1,600

Male human rogue 6
 CG Medium humanoid
 Init +5; **Senses** Perception +9

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 15, flat-footed 14 (+3 armor, +5 Dex, +1 shield)
 hp 45 (6d8+18)
 Fort +4, Ref +10, Will +4
Defensive Abilities evasion, trap sense +2, uncanny dodge

OFFENSE

Speed 35 ft.
Melee mwk short sword +8 (1d6+1/19-20)
Ranged mwk short bow +10 (1d6/x3)
Special Attacks sneak attack +3d6

TACTICS

During Combat In order to avoid being burned at the stake, Thomas has to follow the inquisitor around and aid him in his missions. And he does that, helping Harkon however he can by setting up flanking and scouting out enemy positions.

Morale If Harkon falls, Thomas is gone. Regardless if reduced to 12 hp or less, he tries to flee.

STATISTICS

Str 12, Dex 20, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 10
 Base Atk +4; CMB +5, CMD 20
Feats Fleet, Iron Will, Skill Focus (Disable Device), Stealthy, Weapon Finesse
Skills Acrobatics +14, Appraise +11, Bluff +9, Climb +10, Disable Device +19, Escape Artist +14, Knowledge (local) +11, Linguistics +11, Perception +9, Sleight of Hand +16, Stealth +16, Use Magic Device +9
Languages Abyssal, Aklo, Common, Celestial, Dwarven, Elven, Ignan, Infernal, Iraen
SQ rogue talents (fast stealth, finesse rogue, trap spotter), trap-finding +3
Gear masterwork studded leather, masterwork buckler, masterwork short sword, masterwork short bow, arrows (40), masterwork thieves tools, 2 sunrods, 4 gp, wooden holy symbol of Mitra

Veteran Soldiers of the Inquisition (3)

CR 5

XP 1,600 each (4,800 XP total)

Human Fighter 6
 LG Medium humanoid
 Init +1; **Senses** Perception -1

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 11, flat-footed 19 (+9 armor, +1 Dex)
 hp 63 (6d10+30)
 Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +4; +2 vs. fear
Defensive Abilities bravery +2

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.
Melee mwk halberd +13/+8 (1d10+9/x3)
 longsword +10/+5 (1d8+4/19-20)
 dagger +10/+5 (1d4+4/19-20)
Ranged composite longbow +7/+2 (1d8+4/x3)
Special Attacks weapon training (pole arms +1)

TACTICS

During Combat These soldiers are skilled halberdiers and practiced at tripping and taking prisoners for the inquisition. When they trip an opponent, not only do they fall prone but they provoke attacks of opportunity. With a -4 penalty to their AC while prone, these soldiers always chooses to power attack the fallen foe (acquiring a -2 penalty to hit and a +6 bonus to damage). Further, do fallen foes provoke from all enemies within reach.

Morale These soldiers are Mitran fanatics and will gladly lay down their lives in service to the inquisitor. For this service they have all been promised immortality in the Shining Lands.

STATISTICS

Str 18, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 10
 Base Atk +6; CMB +10 (+14 to trip); CMD 21 (+23 vs. trip)
Feats Combat Expertise, Greater Trip, Improved Trip, Iron Will, Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (halberd), Weapon Specialization (halberd)
Skills Climb +8, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (local) +10, Profession (soldier) +8, Ride +5, Sense Motive +5, Survival +5, Swim +8
Languages Common, Dwarven
SQ armor training 1
Gear masterwork halberd, longsword, composite longbow (+4 Str), 20 arrows, dagger, masterwork full plate, 2d20 gp

When Elise Zadaria learns that an inquisitor of Mitra is in town, she has a moment of uncertainty. Suddenly her rivalry with the Ninth Knot seems petty and unimportant. This inquisitor is too dangerous to be trifled with, she decides. She immediately sends a messenger to the Horn with a full and faithful account. As fate would have it, the messenger never arrives. What happened? See Event Eight below for the reason.

Father Matthias Harkon does not delay and soon strikes out for the ruin. The result of all this is at noon on the third day of the eleventh week, an inquisitor of Mitra, a cleric, a rogue and three veteran soldiers appear on the third level of the Horn with absolutely no warning. They arrive armed and ready for trouble and then begin doing their absolute best to take a prisoner and drag that unfortunate back to the teleporter to bring back to their camp and question about what is going on in the Horn.

The reason there is a fourth teleporter is this -- once the Horn of Abaddon was not simply the stone spire. The Spire is the main temple, yes. But once there was also a small keep some distance to the south. The keep was where the soldiers trained and prepared. The keep is now almost entirely gone. After it was destroyed the Caer Bryr has done its best to reclaim the place covering the wrecked stonework in creeper and jungle canopy. But even still the fourth throne is still there and it still works.

The inquisitor is a very dangerous foe. He has all four command words for the teleporter and understands their use. He will use this to great effect. As soon as he realizes either the purpose of the ritual or that a cult of Asmodeus is operating within the Horn, he becomes merciless. He will attack again and again until the very ends of his strength using the teleporters. He will endeavor to slay everyone and every creature he encounters and retreat back only if defeat seems eminent.

If the inquisitor himself is not killed but takes substantial losses, he will retreat back to Farholde and contact the Abbess of Saint Cynthia-Celeste. He will manage to persuade her that the danger is real. The Abbess is cautious. With the Duke of Farholde dead and so much terror on the streets, her order is one of the very few things keeping this small city from anarchy. She is unwilling to commit all her forces to the battle. But she does give the Inquisitor a few of her best warrior nuns to replace his casualties. Use the veteran soldier statistics for these hardened battle nuns.

The inquisitor is a relentless foe. He never ceases in his strikes until he is slain. He will attack again and again. He may retreat temporarily but he will always be back. The inquisitor is convinced that the entire course of the war may hinge upon what happens within this lost spire of stone. And if the war is lost, he senses in his bones, that the very soul of Talingarde may be in jeopardy.

About that, he is absolutely correct.

Story Award: Finding the fourth teleporter and taking it out of action (thus plugging a severe security hole) is a CR 7 (3,200 XP) reward and worth 3 security points.

EVENT EIGHT: THE MISSING MESSENGER (WEEK THIRTEEN)

Though Elise Zadari continues to wait for the right moment to betray the Ninth Knot, the moment is still not here. Trik had actually discovered that Harkon's Hands (see Event Seven) were preparing to assault the Horn and send a messenger to warn the PCs. Unfortunately the messenger never made it and then Thomas the Penitent stumbled upon the teleporter. The result: a complete blind-siding of the defenders of the Horn of Abaddon. They have to be wondering how that happened.

If the PCs talk to Elise, she is dismissive. *"A messenger was sent. What more could we do? If we could possibly send a magical message we would, but whatever is happening in the Horn makes that impossible. You know that. The only thing that matters is that you survived and the mission continues."*

If the PCs try to track the messenger, they have a stroke of luck. The messenger came to the Horn riding on a heavy horse that leaves deep and easy to follow tracks. If the PCs track down the messenger within two days, the DC to track him from Farholde is 16. It gets one higher every subsequent day and after five days it rains heavily making tracking impossible. Those hoof prints lead straight to the Grove of the Hangman Tree.

What happened to the messenger (a human thug recruited from the Vandermir Orphanage) is simple enough. He rode out of Farholde, decided to stop for lunch and tied his horse to a hangman tree. This wild, sentient plant was long ago corrupted by its proximity to the Horn. Jurak the Elder knew of the tree and did his best to keep the creature in check and under control. Likely by now Jurak is long dead and the hangman tree has returned to hunting anyone unlucky enough to get too close. The messenger and his horse are now lunch.

If the PCs do not destroy the monster, it will keep eating messengers, minions and boggards. As always, there is another possibility besides killing the tree. A spellcaster with cold magic could paralyze the tree and have minions transport it back to the Horn. There the tree could become a CR 7 guardian. It might be possible to build a heavy iron chain and bind the tree to a single location. Note however that the tree is super-humanly strong. Even the strongest bindings will be sorely tested.

The tree might be talked into service if anyone manages to communicate with it. If the PCs agree to feed it one medium-sized humanoid a week, it will voluntarily relocate to the Horn. It still requires sunlight but could easily guard the maw or either of the stairways.

At the creature's base there is some incidental treasure dropped by various digested victims: a 200 gp jade necklace, a ruby ring worth 350 gp, and 48 gp in mixed coin. The hangman tree cares for none of this and if it relocates leaves it behind.

Hangman Tree (The Daemon Tree)

CR 7

XP 3,200

NE Huge plant

Init +3; Senses blindsight 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +6

Aura hallucinatory spores (50 ft. radius, DC 19, passive 2d6 minutes)

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 7, flat-footed 20 (–1 Dex, +13 natural, –2 size)

hp 76 (8d8+40)

Fort +11; Ref +1; Will +5

Immune plant traits; SR 19

Weaknesses paralyzed by cold, slowed by darkness, vulnerability to electricity

OFFENSE

Speed 10 ft.

Melee 4 vines +13 (1d6+8 plus grab)

Space 15 ft.; Reach 15 ft.

Special Attacks constrict (1d6+8), swallow whole (2d6+8 bludgeoning damage, AC 16, hp 7)

TACTICS

During Combat At first the hangman tree pretends to be a normal tree until its victims get close. It then releases its Hallucinatory Spores. That done, it attacks with its vines hoping to grab and swallow anyone it can reach.

Morale The tree is far too slow to escape from an enemy and is just smart enough to know this. So, it fights to the death, because it lacks any other choice.

STATISTICS

Str 27, Dex 8, Con 20, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 10

Base Atk +6; CMB +16 (+20 grapple); CMD 25

Feats Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Step Up, Weapon Focus (vines)

Skills Perception +6, Stealth +0 (+16 to hide in forests); Racial

Modifiers +16 to Stealth to hide in forests

Languages Sylvan, Treant

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Constrict (Ex) Because it seizes its victims by the neck, a creature in the hangman tree's grasp cannot speak or cast spells with verbal components.

Hallucinatory Spores (Ex) As a standard action, a hangman tree can release a cloud of spores in a 50-foot radius spread. Creatures in the area must succeed on a DC 19 Will save or be affected as if by a *charm monster* spell for 2d6 minutes. Affected creatures believe the tree to be of some ordinary sort (or to be a treant or other such friendly tree creature). An affected creature becomes passive and refuses to attack the hangman tree during this time. This is a mind-affecting compulsion effect. The save DC is Constitution-based.

An affected creature can attempt a new Will save (DC 19, +1 per previous save) each round. A creature that makes its save cannot be affected by the hallucinatory spores of that hangman tree for 24 hours.

Paralyzed by Cold (Ex) Cold-based effects paralyze a hangman tree as if by a *hold person* spell.

Slowed by Darkness (Ex) Spells that generate *darkness* (such as *darkness* or *deeper darkness*) slow the hangman's tree (as the *slow* spell) for 1 round per caster level.

Vines (Ex) The vines of a hangman tree have 10 hit points and can be attacked by making a successful sunder attempt. Attacking a hangman tree's vine does not provoke an attack of opportunity. If the vine is currently grappling a target, the hangman tree takes a –4 penalty on its opposed attack roll to resist the sunder attempt. Severing a vine deals no damage to a hangman tree.

WEEK FOURTEEN

A fiery preacher in Farholde named Ezekiel Hawthorn is stirring up trouble in the local churches. He preaches a message of unity and resistance against the growing tide of darkness. His sermons mention details about the Horn of Abaddon and the wicked deeds being perpetrated there. He speaks of Mitra-given visions and omens of dark times to come. He goes as far to advocate forming a militia to storm the Horn. In short, this zealot has to go.

Assassinating Ezekiel is easy enough. Minions can do this (a Ruthless check; DC 12) or it can be done directly (Ezekiel is a LG level 3 expert). However, this makes him a martyr and reveals the truth of his words (–1 Secrecy).

Destroying his reputation (Espionage check; DC 12) by exposing some vice (real or created) is a better solution. This humiliates the preacher and demoralizes the movement (+1 Secrecy).

If nothing is done, in time Ezekiel leads a pack of peasants to the Horn. These pitchfork wielding fools do nothing but fatten a few bogbards. But this slaughter does cause backlash by the nuns (Survivability –2, Secrecy –2).

EVENT NINE: HALF WAY THERE (WEEK FIFTEEN)

This week is the 111st day of the ritual. This is the exact midpoint and now the second sacrifice must be made -- a devout follower of Mitra. Sister Marta (of Hallack's Crew) or Brother Vyte or even Inquisitor Harkon himself are all possible candidates to die upon the altar. But honestly, our villains could also abduct a devout old lady in Farholde who can barely walk. This is by far the least demanding of the three sacrifices.

At dawn on the 111th day the sacrifice must be performed. The second heart is cut out and placed in the bowl beside the statue. The first heart, black and shriveled, still beats in the first bowl sustained by black magic.

A voice echoes throughout the Sanctum -- the same alien and malevolent voice from the first prayer. This time it says (in Abyssal): "Tezathra Vo" -- "I see". If the three eyes of Vetra-Kali are in the statue, they flare with green light. Whoever actually cut out the heart receives a permanent +1 inherent bonus to their constitution score.

The Horn trembles and once more a great beacon of green light erupts into the dawn sky. The sun's rays are barely seen that day. All across this region darkness blankets the land for the entire day. Today the sun has failed. Vetra-Kali's return to his dominion draws nearer.

Story award: Award a CR 8 (4,800 XP) for successfully making the second sacrifice.

EVENT TEN: NIGHTMARES OF ASH AND BLACK FIRE (WEEK SIXTEEN)

A lot of people have died in the Horn and very few of them died well. They were either dragged screaming onto filthy altars to be disemboweled for the pleasure of remorseless daemons or slaughtered wholesale by ruthless fanatic invaders. Either way, the dead linger here in countless profusion. Usually, this manifests as minor poltergeist activity. Things move in the Horn when perhaps they shouldn't. Doors open and close without cause. Distant screams echo down dark corridors. But once in a great while, a true nightmare manifests itself.

A dozen cultists died in room 1-6 in one flash of eldritch fire. Their corpses were burned to ashes, fused into a grisly horrific charred mass. No one bothered to bury them. No one ever shed them one tear. And now eighty years later, these restless spirits celebrate that grim anniversary by forming into a howling nightmare and stalking the Horn destroying every living thing they can get their hands on. Infused with the pervasive daemonic taint of the Horn, they have become something monstrous indeed. This is the Ashen Nightmare.

The Ashen Nightmare is not a traditional undead. Instead it is a persistent bad dream – the psychic residue of a dozen evil souls bent on vengeance denied. It begins its rampage in the place where it died and from there hunts the living. It doesn't care who it hurts. The Ashen Nightmare has long ago given up on seeking vengeance on one particular group or the other. It simply wants death and pain. Everyone it touches shares in the visions of the brutal and torturous death that led to its creation. Even after the Nightmare has passed this visions may persist in the form of a horrid curse.

The Ashen Nightmare is not a persistent threat. This monster manifests only one night a year. Even if it is killed, it likely will manifest against next year. But that is of little concern to our cadre of villains. What does concern them is surviving one night with this beast and seeing that its predations do not disrupt the ritual.

This monstrosity is a wily hunter, mimicking voices and using telepathy to draw hapless victims to it. This nightmare is intelligent so an astute enemy might wonder if it is possible to bargain with this beast. The Ashen Nightmare might very well pretend to consider offers of service or overtures of friendship, but it is always using this only as a ploy to inflict more harm upon living souls. In the end, there is no negotiation. This manifestation of raw hatred must either be destroyed or weathered until morning when the first light of the rising sun sends it back to sleep for another year.

The Ashen Nightmare

CR 8

XP 4,800

NE Large outsider (extraplanar, incorporeal)

Init +4; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +17

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 19, flat-footed 14 (+5 deflection, +4 Dex, +1 dodge, -1 size)

hp 90 (12d10+24)

Fort +10, Ref +8, Will +12

Defensive Abilities incorporeal; SR 19

OFFENSE

Speed fly 40 ft. (perfect)

Melee incorporeal touch +16 (6d8 negative energy plus nightmare curse)

Space 10 ft., Reach 10 ft.

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th; concentration +17)

3/day--deep slumber (DC 18), dimension door, nightmare (DC 20)

1/day--confusion (DC 19), fear (DC 19), phantasmal killer (DC 19)

TACTICS

During Combat It prefers to sneak up and catch its victims one at a time. It uses deep slumber to render as many enemies as possible helpless and then go straight to using its deadly touch attack.

Morale The Ashen Nightmare is very angry psychic residue. It fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str —, Dex 18, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 21

Base Atk +12; CMB +16; CMD 32

Feats Blind-Fight, Combat Casting, Dodge, Flyby Attack, Iron Will, Mobility

Skills Bluff +20, Fly +12, Intimidate +20, Knowledge (planes) +15, Perception +17, Sense Motive +17, Stealth +19

Languages telepathy 100 ft.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Nightmare Curse (Ex) The Ashen Nightmare's touch puts horrifying visions into the target's mind.

Curse—incorporeal touch; save Fortitude DC 21; frequency 1/day; effect 1d4 Wisdom drain and target is fatigued; cure 3 consecutive saves or dispel evil, dream, or remove curse.

WEEK SEVENTEEN

A low-level gang war erupts between the toughs of the Vandermir Orphanage and a Drowington based crime ring calling themselves "Thatcher's Crew". Bergill Mott, headmaster of the Orphanage (and possible cohort to the PCs) asks for aid. The Knot can handle this several ways.

"Wipe Them Out" -- Thatcher's Crew consists of twenty disorganized toughs (most first level). They are not even in the PC's league. A Ruthless action (DC 16) results in Thatcher's Crew being annihilated. Ruthless +1, Loyalty +1. A failure means a bunch of the Orphans get killed. Ruthless -1, Loyalty -1.

"We Have More Important Concerns" -- Do nothing and the problem does sort itself out but only with much violence. Ruthless -1, Loyalty -1.

"Let us Settle this Through Negotiation" -- An action plus a successful Diplomacy check by a PC (DC 25; add Connections) results in the gangs joining forces, but there remains much distrust. Success: +1 Action, +1 Ruthless, -1 Loyalty. Failure: -1 Loyalty, -1 Connections. Bribery to their gang leader (Mickey Thatcher himself), +1 per 50 gp.

EVENT ELEVEN: THE BANNER VERDANT (WEEK EIGHTEEN)

When the Banner Verdant arrived in Farholde, Elise Zadari (leader of the Seventh Knot) was finally certain she'd found her perfect puppets. Experienced adventurers, she was quickly able to discern they were at least as powerful as the Ninth Knot. Further, they styled themselves as defenders of the Old Faith (i.e. nature religions) and didn't have any Mitran priests in their ranks. That would make them harder to detect and defend against. They seemed perfect dupes.

Her plan is devilishly simple. Get the PCs killed by adventurers then take the Horn and complete the mission for Cardinal Thorn. This is how her knot will become his most accomplished and well regarded servants.

Her ambitions don't end there. She will rise in power still further until she can get close to the Cardinal Himself. And then she will destroy him and take control of the Nine Knots. When Talingarde is conquered it will not be ruled by the followers of Asmodeus. Instead, she will bring her new cult of the Endless Winter to the fore. Elise Zadari the Witch Queen ... she liked the sound of that.

Her plan has a few failings of course. She likely doesn't realize just how fragile the ritual is and that she will have to start over again. Of course, even if she did know this, it wouldn't stop her. Elise is so self-confident, she is certain she can find a way to bypass any difficulty.

And so, Trik (disguised once more as the white haired holy man) approached the Banner and cheerfully sold out the Ninth Knot. Trik reported how he had been troubled by visions for weeks since the great green beacon had begun to shine. Finally, Trik claimed, an angel had manifested itself and revealed to the holy man the true purpose of the wicked, diabolical ritual that even now is performed within the Horn. The angel had spoken in a voice like thunder: "Look for those beneath a standard of green, for they will do what no one else can."

After this grand bit of over-acting, Trik then delivered to them the angel's message. He told the Banner Verdant everything. He relayed to the adventurers everything the Seventh Knot has been able to glean over the past few weeks. He told them the Ninth Knot's names, abilities, magic items, strengths and weaknesses. He catalogued their minions and any known defenses. He did everything but give them the keys to the front door. In exchange for this information, Trik accepted no payment or reward. "For you to do this good deed is payment enough," proclaimed the faux holy man.

Fineas Greenhold

CR 7

XP 3,200

Male gnome sorcerer 8

CG Small humanoid (gnome)

Init +6; Senses low-light vision; Perception +4

DEFENSE

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

hp 60 (8d6+32)

Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +8; +2 vs. illusion spell and effects

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee mwk spear +4 (1d6-1/x3)

Ranged mwk spear +8 (1d6-1/x3)

Bloodline Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th; concentration +13)

7/day—*laughing touch*

Gnome Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th, concentration +13)

1/day—*dancing lights*, *ghost sound* (DC 14), *prestidigitation*, *speak with animals*

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 8th; concentration +13)

4th (4/day)—*charm monster* (DC 20)3rd (6/day)—*deep slumber* (DC 22), *dispel magic*, *hold person* (DC 22)2nd (7/day)—*daze monster* (DC 21), *false life*, *hideous laughter* (DC 21), *scorching ray*1st (7/day)—*charm monster* (DC 17), *entangle* (DC 15), *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *shield*, *sleep* (DC 20)0 (at will)—*daze* (DC 17), *detect magic*, *light*, *mending*, *message*, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost*, *read magic*Bloodline *fey*

TACTICS

During Combat Fineas would rather avoid combat if he can by practicing his favorite art-form -- lying. But if combat must occur, then Fineas is quick to use his enchantment spells to turn foes into friends and put enemies to sleep in great numbers. He generally leaves the actually killing to Madthorn.

Morale Fineas is legendarily loyal to his friends and so will never leave any of his companions behind. He will order a retreat if he thinks victory is impossible.

STATISTICS

Str 8, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 20

Base Atk +4; CMB +3; CMD 15

Feats Combat Casting, Eschew Materials, Great Spell Focus (enchantment), Improved Initiative, Toughness, Spell Focus (enchantment)

Skills Bluff +16, Knowledge (arcana) +13, Knowledge (nature) +12, Perform (drawing) +6, Spellcraft +13

Languages Common, Draconic, Elven, Gnome, Sylvan,

SQ blood arcana, gnome traits, woodland stride

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*

Other Gear masterwork spear, finely made brightly colored clothes, belt pouch, 124 gp, journal

What Trik did not realize is that after the meeting, he was followed by the elven ranger Vethia Dora. Vethia saw the clever priest of trickery duck into a hidey hole and change appearances. She followed a while longer and saw Trik meet with Elise Zadarua in a nearby inn. Vethia even heard Trik say, "It is done. The Ninth is finished." She managed all of this completely unobserved.

Vethia reported back and Fineas Greenhold, the team's leader and a capable artist, drew a sketch of Trik and Elise in his journal from her descriptions and recorded what had happened. Fineas wasn't sure what to make of this development but decided to cautiously try out the information given to them by Trik anyway.

Angus Madthorn

CR 7

XP 3,200

Male dwarf barbarian 8

CN Medium humanoid (dwarf)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 14 (+6 armor, +2 Dex, -2 rage)

hp 116 (8d12+64)

Fort +12, **Ref** +4, **Will** +6; +2 vs. poison; +4 vs. supernatural abilities; +6 vs. spells and spell-like abilities

Defensive Abilities improved uncanny dodge, trap sense +2; DR 1/-

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee +1 greataxe power attack +12/+7 (1d12+19/x3)

Ranged throwing axe +10 (1d6+6)

Special Attacks rage (22 rounds/day), rage powers (spell sunder, sunder enchantment, superstition, witch hunter)

TACTICS

During Combat Like most barbarians, Madthorn's combat tactics are straightforward -- charge and rage. Madthorn has a special hatred for spellcasters of all sorts (save for non-evil druids) and is quick to attack them as soon as possible.

Morale Angus is a fearless madman. While raging, he fights to the death. He only stops if Brunhild or Fineas orders him to stop.

Base Statistics When not raging, Angus Madthorn has AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16; hp 100; **Fort** +10, **Will** +4; **Melee** +1 greataxe power attack +10/+5 (1d12+16/x3); **Ranged** throwing axe +10 (1d6+6); **Str** 18, **Con** 18; **CMB** +12 (+16 sunder); **CMD** 24 (26 vs. sunder; 28 vs. bull rush, trip); **Skills** Climb +12, **Swim** +12

STATISTICS

Str 22, **Dex** 14, **Con** 22, **Int** 10, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +8/+3; **CMB** +14 (+18 sunder); **CMD** 26 (28 vs. sunder; 30 vs. bull rush, trip)

Feats Greater Sunder, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Toughness

Skills Acrobatics +10, **Climb** +14, **Perception** +13, **Swim** +14

Languages Common, Dwarven

SQ dwarf traits, fast movement

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*

Other Gear +1 greataxe, masterwork breastplate, throwing axe (5), backpack, backpack, 4 weeks rations, bedrolls, tent, cooking pot, 25 gp

Vethia Dora

CR 7

XP 3,200

Female elf ranger 8

CG Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +4; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +15

DEFENSE

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

hp 60 (8d10+16)

Fort +7, **Ref** +10, **Will** +4; +2 vs. enchantments spells and effects

Immune sleep

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee longsword +9/+4 (1d8+1/19-20)

Ranged +1 composite longbow (+1 Str) +13/+8 (1d8+2/x3)

Special Attack favored enemy (animal +4, vermin +2)

Ranger Spells Prepared (CL 5th, concentration +7)

2nd—*barkskin*, *protective spirit*

1st—*gravity bow*, *pass without trance* (DC 13)

TACTICS

During Combat Vethia provides support to her band with her deadly accurate barrages of arrows.

Morale Vethia is dedicated to the Banner, but will try and flee if victory looks impossible or if reduced to 15 or less hit points. She will be back however to try and sneak in and rescue friends if she believes they have been captured.

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 18, **Con** 12, **Int** 16, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +8/+3; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 23

Feats Elven Accuracy, Endurance, Focused Shot, Many Shot, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot

Skills Acrobatics +9, **Handle Animal** +12, **Heal** +13, **Knowledge** (dungeoneering) +14, **Knowledge** (geography) +14, **Knowledge** (nature) +14, **Perception** +14, **Spellcraft** +14, **Stealth** +20, **Survival** +15 (+19 to follow tracks)

Languages Common, Elven, Goblin, Orc, Sylvan

SQ elf traits, favored terrain (forest +4, underground +2), hunter's bond (companions), track +4, wild empathy +9, woodland strike, swift tracker

Combat Gear arrows (20), *potion of cure moderate wounds*

Other Gear +1 composite longbow (+1 Str), *boots of elvenkind*, *cloak of elvenkind*, longsword, masterwork chain shirt, 201 gp



Act Three: Thirty One Weeks

Brunhild Sturmdottir

CR 7

XP 3,200

Female half-elf druid 8

NG Medium humanoid (elf, human)

Init: +3; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +20

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +3 Dex)**hp** 52 (8d8+16)**Fort** +7, **Ref** +5, **Will** +10; +2 vs. enchantment spells and effects; +4 vs. Fey and plant-targeted effects**Immune** sleep**Defensive Abilities** resist nature's lure

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.**Melee** +1 *spear* +9/+4 (1d8+4/x3)**Ranged** +1 *spear* +10 (1d8+4/x3)**Special Attacks** bramble armor 8 rounds/day (1d6+4), enlarge 7/day, wild shape 4/day**Druid Spells Prepared** (CL 8th; concentration +12)4th—*command plant*^D, (DC 18), *cure serious wounds* (2), *dispel magic*3rd—*call lightning* (2) (DC 17), *cure moderate wounds* (2), *plant growth*^D2nd—*barkskin*^D, *hold animal* (DC 16), *lesser restoration*, *tree shape*, *wilderness soldiers*1st—*charm animal* (DC 15), *cure light wounds* (2), *enlarge person*^D, *entangle* (DC 15), *speak with animals*0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *light*, *read magic*, *stabilize*^D domain spell; Domain Plant (Growth)

TACTICS

During Combat Brunhild relishes a good fight and is quick to use her *call lightning* spells to take out powerful foes. She is the primary healer of the band and uses her healing spells to keep Angus dealing huge amounts of damage.**Morale** A close friend of Fineas and a founding member of the Banner, Brunhild would fight to the death to defend her friends.

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 16, **Con** 12, **Int** 12, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 12**Base Atk** +6/+1; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 21**Feats** Combat Casting, Natural Spell, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Skill Focus (perception)**Skills** Heal +15, Knowledge (nature) +14, Perception +20, Spellcraft +12, Survival +17**Languages** Common, Druidic, Elven, Sylvan**SQ** half-elf traits, nature bond (domain), nature sense, trackless step, wild empathy +9, woodland stride**Combat Gear** *potion of cure moderate wounds***Other Gear** +1 *spear*, masterwork hide armor, traveller's garb, backpack, 2 weeks rations, 50 feet rope, grappling hook, flint and steel, 45 gp

"Can we trust this information?" demanded the dwarven barbarian Angus Madthorn.

"It's clearly a double-cross of some sort, that's clear enough" explained Fineas, "but that actually means we can trust the information more not less. I have no idea why these fellows wanted to betray the 'Ninth' whatever that is. And frankly I don't care."

The gnome continued. "What I do know is something evil is going on in the Horn of Abaddon and I aim to stop it. And if we can find that lost treasure room along the way ... well, all the better."

"How noble of you," Vethia remarked.

"It does make sense," said the suspicious druidess who had so far remained silent.

"And besides, these expeditions don't pay for themselves!" said Fineas with a laugh and a twinkle in his eye.

And so with all haste The Banner Verdant prepared to assault the Horn. Unsure if their unusually acquired information would "age well" they left at dawn the next day provisioned for weeks of living in the wild. They told no one their plans and posted a watch that night in the rooms of their inn, aware that several other adventuring parties had met their end before they had even left Farholde.

Elise Zadaria, thinking her plan a complete success, sent no warning. If the PCs have set up any other means of garnering information in town, she does her best to foil that as well. She leaves nothing to chance if she can help it. She wants to catch the Ninth completely unaware. She is convinced she may never have another chance as good as this one to destroy her rivals.

The result, the PCs face their greatest threat yet. The Banner Verdant is four experienced adventurers, well equipped and accustomed to working together. They are neither fanatics nor fools but they do abhor what is going on in the Horn. They would see the ritual ended and hope to turn a profit while doing this particular bit of heroic derring-do.

It is impossible to make too many generalities on what the Banner Verdant will do. Having been briefed by an inside source, they will try to attack the weakest point of the Horn. Their goal is to disrupt the ritual and to find the treasure chamber. Their intelligence has convinced them that slaying or capturing the members of the Ninth Knot is essential to these two goals.

Vethia Dora (with her +20 Stealth) will try to scout ahead without engaging and confirm some small part of the intelligence provided by the Holy Man. She then reports back. When the Banner Verdant makes their assault, it will likely be in the form of hit and run attacks. They attack until they are low on resources or wounded and then retreat back to their hidden woodland camp (always approached using Dora's *pass without trace*). They continue to do this until they've found the treasure chamber and disrupted the ritual or until defeated.

Remember that the Banner's information is not necessarily flawless. If the PCs have been mistrustful of the Seventh Knot and have been feeding them false information about their defenses and followers, this is the moment when that paranoia pays off.

FINEAS GREENHOLD'S JOURNAL

What an interesting development today. We were approached by a so-called holy man full of talk about visions and angels and so forth. He claimed these spirits had driven him to stop the wickedness going on in the Horn and to rally us to our "destiny". Mentioned us almost by name the angels did! I'm flattered.

He delivered us his pitch and then gave to us an immense pile of information including maps, names and so much more. Really he did everything but gives the keys to the front door.

Of course I don't accept such gifts without a fair degree of skepticism. I had Vethia trail the "Holy Man" and our fears turned out to be justified. She saw this angel-speaker slip into a side alley and transform back into a dark haired and much younger human.

My tracker followed the human through the streets of Farholde and saw the young man rendezvous with a strange white haired woman with a white raven on her shoulder. He called her "Z".

They didn't say much to each other. All he said was "It is done. The Ninth is finished." I am unsure exactly what that means, but clearly we are being used in some sort of double-cross between various factions of the cult that occupies the Horn. Ah, evil-doers. They never change.

So, they want us to be their assassins, eh? Well, it's a job we don't mind doing. We'll be cautious about this information obviously. But I think it's likely to pan out. They wouldn't want their dupes to fail after all, would they? Of course, when we're done, I think we'll pay the "holy man" a little visit as well. Vethia is pretty sure the woman in white must be staying in the nearby inn -- "The Auld Briarhall" in Auld'Irey.

What a piece of work is my elven tracker! She tracked a shapechanger through almost a half mile of city, managed to eavesdrop on a private guarded conversation and reported back without even a ripple of trouble. Hah! Remind me to give that girl an almost even share of the treasure!

Tomorrow we attack the Horn. I can feel it my bones. This is the big one! After this, I just know that our wee little band will never be the same.

EVENT TWELVE: TALONS OF TREACHERY (WEEK EIGHTEEN – LATER)

With the defeat of the Banner Verdant, it is likely the PCs have Fineas Greenhold's journal. The journal contains incontrovertible proof that the White Ravens betrayed them. At this point, the PCs doubtless seek revenge. They can be direct, ambushing the White Ravens in Farholde or they can be more circumspect, perhaps contacting Cardinal Thorn and asking his permission.

If Thorn is contacted and shown proof, he is livid: "I have no time for this infighting! We are so close to victory! Nothing can stand in our way!" Cardinal Thorn has never fully trusted the Seventh Knot as they are not led by an Asmodean (Zadaria, if you recall, reveres a mysterious otherworldly entity called The Endless Winter). Thorn cannot abide treachery in his organization and orders the destruction of the Seventh Knot.

Tisaera and Melinoe, Erinyes Allies (2)

CR8

XP 4,800 each (9,600 XP total)

LE Medium outsider (devil, evil, extraplanar, lawful)

Init +6; Senses darkvision 60 ft., see in darkness, true seeing; Perception +16

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 17, flat-footed 16 (+6 Dex, +1 dodge, +6 natural)

hp 94 (9d10+45)

Fort +11, Ref +12, Will +7

DR 5/good; Immune fire, poison; Resist acid 10, cold 10; SR 19

OFFENSE

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

Melee +1 longsword +15/+10 (1d8+8/19–20)

Ranged +1 flaming composite longbow +14/+14/+9 (1d8+6/13 plus 1d6 fire) or rope +15 touch (entangle)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th)

Constant—true seeing

At will—fear (single target, DC 19), greater teleport (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), minor image (DC 17), unholy blight (DC 19)

TACTICS

During Combat The erinyes' tactics depend on how they are deployed. They make fine missile support. They can also use their ropes to entangle foes to prevent escape while others attack the helpless victims. With their flight and teleportation abilities, the erinyes prefer to avoid melee. Against the seventh, their *unholy blight* is useless and they know this. They may well use *fear* against one of the brothers (Trik or Trak) to split their opposition.

Morale Bound to service, the erinyes fight to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 20, Dex 23, Con 21, Int 14, Wis 18, Cha 21

Base Atk +9; CMB +14; CMD 31

Feats Combat Reflexes, DodgeB, MobilityB, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Shot on the Run

Skills Acrobatics +18, Bluff +17, Diplomacy +14, Escape Artist +12, Fly +19, Intimidate +17, Knowledge (planes) +8, Knowledge (religion) +8, Perception +16, Sense Motive +10, Stealth +15

Languages Celestial, Common, Draconic, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.

Gear +1 longsword, +1 flaming composite longbow [+5 Str bonus], rope

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Entangle (Su) Each erinyes carries a 50-foot-long rope that entangles opponents of any size as an animate rope spell (CL 16th, DC 20). An erinyes can hurl its rope 30 feet with no range penalty. An erinyes's rope functions only for the erinyes who made it and no other. The save DC is Dexterity-based.

Elise Zadaria, Leader of the Seventh Knot

CR 7

XP 3,200

Female human witch (winter witch) 8

LE Medium humanoid

Init +2; **Senses** Perception +2

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 14, flat-footed 18 (+2 Dex, +4 mage armor, +2 deflection, +2 natural)

hp 52 (8d6+24)

Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +11

Resist cold 5

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk dagger +5 (1d4/19-20)

Ranged mwk dagger +7 (1d4/19-20)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th, concentration +12)

Constant—*endure elements* (cold)

Witch Spells Prepared (CL 8th, concentration +12)

4th—*ice storm*, *inflict serious wounds* (DC 21), *wall of ice* (DC 21)3rd—*bestow curse*, *dispel magic* (2), *vampiric touch*2nd—*cure moderate wounds* (2), *inflict moderate wounds* (2) (DC 19)1st—*cure light wounds* (2), *inflict light wounds* (2) (DC 18), *mage armor*0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *light*, *read magic*, *ray of frost*

Patron Winter

TACTICS

During Combat Elise Zadaria does not believe in half-measures in combat. Any fight she is engaged in, she spares no resources. Anyone who approaches Elise as an enemy is first affected by her *beast of ill-omen* hex. She stays out of melee initially, letting Dostan rage and interpose himself. She leads with *ice storm* hoping to take out minions or lesser allies and then uses *wall of ice* to try and divide her enemies. *Bestow curse* and *dispel magic* are also used to disrupt key opponents. Elise can fly (for 8 minutes a day thanks to her *flight* hex) and she uses this ability to control where and when she fights her battles

Elise enters melee only reluctantly, but when she does, she is no slouch. A touch spell specialist (thanks to *frozen caress*), she starts with *inflict serious wounds* and then begins liberally applying *vampiric touch* to all her enemies. Elise does have some healing but is unlikely to use those powers on anyone but herself.

In any battle, Elise is willing to sacrifice any of her friends to emerge victorious or to escape. To her, all of her fellows are expendable resources (if valuable ones). She will not squander their lives needlessly but neither will she shed a tear for them.

Morale Elise realizes how ruthless Cardinal Thorn and his knots are and will never surrender to them. She fights to the death. Only if defeat seems inevitable will she drink her *potion of gaseous form* and try to escape. She will return even then, hopefully with new allies, to strike again.

STATISTICS

Str 10, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 18, Wis 14, Ch 14

Base Atk +4; CMB +5; CMD 17

Feats Combat Casting, Elemental Focus (cold), Greater Elemental Focus (cold), Greater Spell Penetration, Spell Penetration

Skills Bluff +14, Fly +13, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Knowledge (history) +15, Knowledge (nature) +15, Knowledge (planes) +15, Spellcraft +15

Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Infernal, Sylvan

SQ cold flesh, hexes (beast of ill-omen, flight, frozen caress, tongues), ice magic, witch's familiar (raven)

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds* (2), *potion of gaseous form*Other Gear masterwork dagger, *iron circlet*, *wand of vampiric touch* (26 charges), *amulet of natural armor* +2, *ring of protection* +2, *cloak of resistance* +3, holy symbol of magic unmelting ice (500 gp), noble garb, 240 gp, diamond ring (400 gp)

Dostan Alfson

CR 7

XP 3,200

Male half-elf barbarian 8

NE Medium humanoid (elf, human)

Init: +9; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +16

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 12 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, -2 rage)

hp 100 (8d12+48)

Fort +10, Ref +5, Will +6; +2 vs. enchantment spells and effects

Defensive Abilities improved uncanny dodge, trap sense +2; DR 1/-; Immune sleep

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft.

Melee +1 *greatsword* power attack +13/+7 (2d6+17/19-20)

Ranged javelin +12 (1d6+7)

Special Attacks rage (20 rounds/day), rage powers (no escape, sprint, swift foot, unexpected strike)

TACTICS

During Combat At first glance, with his cold silent stare, it is easy to mistake Dostan for an ignorant brute. The truth is that Dostan (while no genius) is quite an intelligent and tactical warrior. His rages are more moments of pure unfiltered battle focus. He is lightning fast with his prized magic greatsword barely visible in the midst of the fray. He rages immediately and does not relent until all the foes are dead. Unexpected strike means that any who approach are likely to precipitate a brutal blow. No escape means there is no fleeing once engaged with the mighty Dostan. Sprint means he can be wherever he needs to be upon the battlefield. His only weakness is magic and Elise (in the past) has always been there with *dispel magic* to keep him in the fight.

Morale Fanatically dedicated to his witch queen to whom he owes a life debt, Dostan fights to the death at Elise's word.

Base Statistics When not raging, Dostan Alfson has AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14; hp 76; Fort +8, Will +4; Speed 45 ft., Melee +1 greatsword +11/+6 (2d6+4/19-20); Ranged javelin +12 (1d6+3); Str 14, Con 14; CMB +10; CMD 24; Skills Climb +12, Swim +12

STATISTICS

Str 24, Dex 16, Con 22, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 8

Base Atk +8/+3; CMB +15; CMD 28

Feats Fleet, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Perception), Weapon Focus (great sword)

Skills Acrobatics +14, Climb +17, Perception +16, Survival +13, Swim +17

Languages Common, Elven, Infernal

SQ fast movement, half-elf traits

Trait "Strike first!" +2 trait bonus to initiative

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*Other Gear +1 *greatsword*, *belt of physical perfection* +2, masterwork chainshirt, javelins (5), *iron circlet*, travelers garb, 28 gp

He decides not to send Tiadora to aid the PCs as she is occupied. Instead, he sends two erinyes – Tisaera and Melinoe. They will serve the PCs for one week and cannot summon bearded devils. *"The Knot Hibernial is declared broken. In accordance with the Pact of Thorns, I release these traitors. They are no longer bound to my service or enjoy my protection. I send to you, my Nessian Knot, my furies. Make them suffer for their treachery and then return to the work at hand. Bring me the daemon's gift!"*

If instead the PCs deal with the White Ravens on their own and then contact Thorn and present proof, he is even more pleased. *"Your initiative is commendable."* He sends them a reward via Tiadora of 3000 gp in Talirean coinage for removing the treasonous rot. *"Now, finish your mission and bring me the daemon's gift!"*

Tallus "Trak" Rackburn

CR 7

XP 3,200

Male human ranger 8
LE Medium humanoid
Init +4; **Senses** Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +4 Dex)
hp 76 (8d10+32)
Fort +8, Ref +10, Will +4; +2 trait bonus vs. fear

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.
Melee battleaxe +10/+5 (1d8+3/x3)
Ranged +1 composite longbow (+2 Str) +14/+9 (1d8+3/x3)
Special Attacks favored enemy (humanoid [human] +4, humanoid [elf] +2)
Ranger Spells Prepared (CL 5th, concentration +7)
2nd—*bark skin*, *bloodhound*
1st—*gravity bow*, *residual tracking*

TACTICS

During Combat A missile specialist, Trak use a barrage of arrows to take down anyone who threatens either Elise or his brother Trik.
Morale Trak is deeply in love with the beautiful Elise Zadari and has been convinced that she loves him. Thus he is completely devoted to and would gladly die for his "love". The only order of hers that would give him pause is anything concerning his brother. Trak is also dedicated to his younger twin.

STATISTICS

Str 14, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 12
Base Atk +8/+3; CMB +10; CMD 24
Feats Endurance, Improved Precise Shot, Many Shot, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Toughness, Weapon Focus (longbow)
Skills Climb +12, Heal +15, Knowledge (nature) +12, Perception +13, Spellcraft +11, Stealth +14, Survival +13 (+17 to follow tracks), Swim +12
Languages Common, Elven
SQ favored terrain (urban +4, forest +2), hunter's bond (companions), tack +4, wild empathy +9, woodland stride, swift tracker
Trait "Fear nothing" +2 trait bonus vs. fear saves
Combat Gear arrows (20)
Other Gear +1 composite longbow (+2 Str), battleaxe, masterwork chain shirt, iron circlet, holy symbol (Asmodeus)

However, if the PCs attack the Seventh Knot and have no proof to show Thorn, he is instead furious at the Ninth Knot. "What are we, reckless murderers? You should have acted only when you were certain of their misdeeds. There is no one to replace the Seventh Knot. Now you must act on your own. Bring me the Tears of Achlys. Bring me the daemon's gift! Succeed and I shall forgive you your blunders and mindless paranoia. Fail and I will see you suffer!"

Either way, the time has come. It is time to destroy the Seventh Knot. Taking out the Seventh Knot will not be easy. These are four competent adversaries who are well aware of the PCs strengths and weaknesses. They have received the exact same training from Thorn. There is however a chink in their unity that could be exploited.

Ironically the cleric of trickery does not wish to betray anyone. Trik believes that all this backstabbing and betrayal is being done because Thorn ordered it. The Nine are being punished for their failures in the Horn.

Titus "Trik" Rackburn

CR 7

XP 3,200

Male human cleric 8
LE Medium humanoid
Init: +3; **Senses** Perception +4

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, +1 shield)
hp 44 (8d8+8)
Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +10

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.
Melee +1 shortsword+11/+6 (1d6+2/19-20) or +1 shortsword +9/+4 (1d6+2/19-20) and +1 shortsword +9/+4 (1d6+1)
Ranged light crossbow +9 (1d8/19-20)
Special Attacks channel negative energy 4/day (DC 15, 4d6), *scythe of evil* 1/day (4 rounds)
Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th, concentration +12); *copycat* 7/day, *master's illusion* 8 rounds (DC 18), *touch of evil* 7/day (4 rounds)
Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 8th, concentration +12)
4th—*confusion*^P (DC 18), *cure critical wounds*, *divine power*, *tongues*
3rd—*cure serious wounds* (2), *dispel magic*, *nondetection*^P (DC 17), *wrathful mantle*
2nd—*aid*, *cure moderate wounds* (2), *invisibility*^P, *undetectable alignment*
1st—*cure light wounds* (2), *disguise self*^P, *divine favor*, *sanctuary*, *shield of faith*
0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *guidance*, *light*, *read magic*
D domain spell; Domains Evil, Trickery

TACTICS

During Combat

Morale While an enthusiastic supporter of Elise, Trik is certainly not ready to die for the witch. If he hits 11 hit points, he runs and tries to convince his brother to do the same.

STATISTICS

Str 12, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 18, Cha 12
Base Atk +6/+1; CMB +7; CMD 20
Feats Combat Casting, Two-Weapon Fighting, Two-Weapon Fighting Defense, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (shortsword)
Skills Bluff +13, Diplomacy +12, Knowledge (religion) +13, Sense Motive +16, Spellcraft +13, Stealth +13
Languages Common, Dwarven, Elven
SQ aura
Trait "Deception is a tool; master it!" +1 to Bluff and Sense Motive
Combat Gear bolts (10)
Other Gear *Snik and Snak*, +1 shortsword (2), mwk chainshirt, iron circlet, holy symbol (Asmodeus)

Trik knows nothing about the specifics of the ritual. He only knows what information that Elise has been feeding him. If confronted with proof that Thorn does not want the Ninth destroyed or punished (being accompanied by two erinyes will suffice), he would be shocked that he has been so used. "The witch tricked... me?"

Furious at the revelation, he would gladly ally to take down Elise and Dostan. However, he would want desperately to try and convince his brother to leave the Knot Hibernial. Trik is certain of his success and destined to fail. Trak has also been deceived by the wily witch. Trak has fallen deeply, passionately in love with Elise Zadari. Trak will never knowingly betray her. That rift is an opportunity. While the two twins endlessly argue about what to do, they are not defending their mistress.



Elise coordinates her spy network from the inn “The Auld Briarhall” in Auld’Irey (see the Farholde gazetteer for information about this part of town). The inn itself is nice enough. It is a quiet place where the innkeeper has been well paid to say nothing and see nothing.

Elise is almost always there either awaiting another report from Trik, a paid messenger or an urchin spy. Dostan serves as her bodyguard and goes wherever Elise goes. Under normal circumstances Trak too would be there awaiting another chance to dote over the witch or receive his next assignment. But if his brother wants to talk about something important, he may be absent.

If our band of villains attacks and tries to kill Elise, they have to slay Trak and Dostan. These two are simply too loyal to be allowed to live. If Elise and Trak are dead, Trik will have lost everything he knows. Lost and distressed, his grief will be profound. The easy smile the rakish cleric of trickery is known for will be gone.

The PCs will have one chance to make Trik into something other than an enemy. One successful Diplomacy skill check (DC 25) will convince Trik that Trak’s death was regrettable but necessary. *“The witch controlled him,” he sobs. “She made him turn against us.”* With this, Trik will pledge his loyalty once more to Cardinal Thorn and now also to his new masters. Trik will be forever the servant of the Ninth Knot. He will make a worthy cohort.

YOU ALWAYS HURT THE ONE YOU LOVE: ROMANCE AND THE SEVENTH

Elise Zalaria and Trik were both set up in Book One as potential romantic interests. It is possible that over the course of the campaign this has developed. If so, then you’ve come to a moment of truth. With the Seventh and the Ninth set to come to blows, who will side with whom?

If the romantic interest is Elise herself, then she has clearly been using the PC. Maybe this is where the bulk of her information comes from. Or maybe she now makes an offer to the PC -- betray your friends and join me. Will the PC forsake the only true allies he/she has in this world for the love of one wicked witch?

Trik gets even more interesting. Trik has to choose between his brother (Trak will never betray Elise) and his love. Trik is the sort to avoid making this difficult choice until the last possible moment. And then, who can say? Trik is capricious. And a traitorous member of the seventh is an excellent way to acquire a cohort. Regardless, award full XP for “defeating” the traitor.

WEEK NINETEEN

A boggard tribesmen named Juko Five-Croaks has mastered enough of the Common tongue to approach the PCs. Juko says that the hunting has been bad and the tribe has suffered much with all the monsters and raids. They need food and better weaponry. The boggard delivers a 3500 gp shopping list to our band of villains (3000 gp covers 10 masterwork spears and the rest is for food).

The PCs can handle this several ways:

Refuse the request: The boggards grumble and complain. This affects the morale of all the minions in the PC's service. -2 Loyalty.

Acquiesce: Say yes. The boggards get better armed and fed, but there are rumors that the lords are getting soft. +1 Ruthless, -1 Loyalty.

Indulge Them: 3,500 gp? Why stop there! Spending significantly more money than asked for won't make the boggards any more effective but it will make them happier. +1 Ruthless, but it costs cash.

Make an example of Juko for his insolence: Slay him in front of the other boggards preferably in a dramatic and memorable way. Definitely the best solution. Fear keeps the boggards in line and as it turns out hungry boggards are more vicious. Loyalty +1, Ruthlessness +1, but it costs you one boggard minion. Oh, well.

WEEK TWENTY

The Abbess Temperance Avigail of Saint Cynthia-Celeste grows worried. She has, through divination spells and prayers, become certain that a foul ritual is happening within the Horn and that she is unsure if her sisters have strength enough to stop it. Likely she has heard nothing back from Inquisitor Harkon and Sister Marta remains missing. How many good people have died in Farholde in the last few weeks? She readies a dispatch to be sent by ship to Matharyn asking for aid from the Church of Mitra.

The PCs can learn about this aid (assuming they have spies in town) with a successful Diplomacy skill check (DC 25). If you are using the minion system at the back of the book, the PCs may add their minion's Competence to this skill test. If the PCs succeed, their minions have intercepted the message. No aid is coming. Add a +1 to your minions Secrecy and Survivability.

If you fail, the Knot is at least partially revealed. -1 to Secrecy and Survivability. Perhaps it is this message that draws the Paladin in Act Four. Or perhaps he is already here.

WEEK TWENTY ONE

With the Duke dead and fear everywhere, a crime wave hits Farholde. The watch is overwhelmed. Criminal Enterprise actions yield 20% more cash this week.

WEEK TWENTY TWO

Lady Shalyn Marsten, a powerful merchant in Farholde, sends a message to the PCs probably via a minion or a cohort. She wants a covert meeting. She has learned about these villains both through her own sources and her friend the Baron Vandermir (assuming he's still alive).

She isn't sure why the PCs are here but she is sure they are dangerous, well-connected and transient. She will use this to her advantage. Lady Marsten wants a half dozen rivals victimized by the current crime wave. With their deaths, she would rule the merchant guilds of Farholde. She pays 1000 gp per assassination. Her targets:

Targun Harbold (Ruthless Check; DC 12)
Max Strickland (Ruthless Check; DC 12)
Maria DeVandle (Ruthless Check; DC 16)
Tomacina Vanderville (Ruthless Check; DC 16)
Richard Marks (Ruthless Check; DC 16)
Harlyn Brackler (Ruthless Check; DC 20)

Each takes an assassination action (see Masters of the Wicked below). If all six are accomplished, award a +1 to Ruthlessness. After all, practice makes perfect.

WEEK TWENTY THREE

Argossarian the silver dragon has finally seen enough. He strikes against the Baron's manor. Argossarian believes that Baron Vandermir is the mastermind behind Farholde's troubles.

The PCs have one chance to save the Baron. A Diplomacy check (DC 30; add Competency) will give them one days advance notice. Unless he flees, the dragon (see Act Four, Event Five for Argossarian's stats) attacks the manor and slays Baron Arkov Vandermir. In the aftermath, the PCs may make a Diplomacy check (DC 25; add Espionage). If successful, they receive a full report. They learn the dragon's size (huge). The minions also report that the Baron tried again and again to mind control the dragon to no avail. The only time he hurt the beast -- a scorching ray.

WEEK TWENTY FOUR

Despite all adversities, a fair comes to Farholde. For one week Base Values and Purchase Limits are increased by 20% and Legal Enterprise yields 20% more. Also 1d6 new random minor magic items and 1 medium magic item are available for sale -- this week only!

EVENT THIRTEEN: KNIGHTS ERRANT (WEEK TWENTY FIVE)

For almost six months, Sir Valin has been in agony. He knows that something wicked unfolds at the Horn and yet his duty binds him to sit by and do nothing.

Sir Valin Darian, Heir of the Victor

CR 8

XP 4,800

Male human Cavalier 9
LG Medium humanoid
Init +2; **Senses** Perception +15

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 11, flat-footed 21 (+9 armor, +1 Dex, +2 shield)
hp 85 (9d10+36)
Fort +9, Ref +5, Will +5; +2 vs. fear

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.; mounted speed 50 ft.
Melee +1 lance mounted charge +22 (3d8+5/19-20/x3) or longsword
+13/+9 (1d8+4/19-20)
Special Attack challenge 3/day

TACTICS

During Combat Sir Valin much prefers to fight on horse and use his charge to great effect. Failing that, he will challenge the most impressive enemy and try to honorably fight the foe.

Morale For a good cause, the noble Sir Valin would gladly lay down his life. He will only retreat to save the lives of his men and re-group to fight another day.

STATISTICS

Str 18, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 10, Cha 14
Base Atk +9/+4; CMB +13, CMD 25
Feats Animal Affinity, Coordinated Defense, Improved Critical (lance), Mounted Combat, Ride-By Attack, Shake it Off, Spirited Charge, Toughness, Weapon Focus (lance)
Skills Diplomacy +15, Handle Animal +17 (+21 with his mount), Perception +15, Ride +17, Sense Motive +15, Survival +2 (+7 finding food and water, protecting against harsh weather)
Languages Common
SQ Aid Allies, Banner, Cavalier's Charge, Expert Trainer +4, Greater Tactician, Mount (heavy horse), Order (order of the dragon), Strategy, Tactician
Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*
Other Gear +1 lance, longsword, masterwork full plate, masterwork heavy steel shield, silver and sapphire holy symbol of Mitra (250 gp)

Marquesa, Sir Valin's Heavy Horse

XP 0 (included in Sir Valin's XP)

N Large animal
Init +5; **Senses** low-light vision, scent, Perception +11

DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 14, flat-footed 20 (+3 armor, +5 Dex, -1 size, +8 natural)
hp 84 (8d8+48)
Fort +11, Ref +11, Will +5; +4 vs. enchantment spells and effects
Defensive Abilities evasion

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft.
Melee bite +13 (1d4+7), 2 hooves +11 (1d6+3)
Space 10 ft.; Reach 5 ft.

STATISTICS

Str 25, Dex 21, Con 21, Int 2, Wis 17, Cha 11
Base Atk +6; CMB +14; CMD 28 (32 vs. trip)
Feats Endurance, Multiattack, Run, Skill Focus (Perception), Toughness
Skills Perception +11
SQ docile, link, Tricks (attack, come, defend, down)
Gear masterwork studded leather barding

When a group of seven knights of the Alerion arrived in Farholde, old companions of Sir Valin, finally he could bear it no longer. He appointed his most capable lieutenant to defend the Hamarhall and the knights rode for the Horn. They would trample whatever foulness has accumulated there. They have no plan more than this. Little did he realize that by going to the Horn, Sir Valin is delivering to his enemies the one thing they lack to call forth the daemon prince -- the blood of the Victor.

Knights of The Alerion(7)

CR 4

XP 1,200 each (8,400 XP total)

Human fighter 5
LG Medium humanoid
Init +1; **Senses** Perception +2

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 11, flat-footed 21 (+9 armor, +2 shield, +1 Dex)
hp 42 (5d10 +20)
Fort +7, Ref +2, Will +5 (+1 vs. fear)
Defensive Abilities bravery +1

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.
Melee long sword +11 (1d8+7/19-20x2)
dagger +9 (1d4+4/19-20x2)
Special Attacks weapon training (heavy blades +1)

TACTICS

During Combat The knights are honorable opponents to a fault. They disdain stealth preferring to openly declare themselves and pronounce doom upon their wicked foes. They attack fiercely using Cleave and Step Up feats to full effect.

Morale These knights are dedicated but not fanatics. If Sir Darian falls and more than half their number are defeated, they will retreat to gather more forces and strike again later.

STATISTICS

Str 18, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 10
Base Atk +5, CMB +9, CMD 20
Feats Cleave, Iron Will, Power Attack, Step Up, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword)
Skills Intimidate +5, Knowledge (nobility) +1, Knowledge (religion) +8, Ride +7, Survival +7
Languages Common
SQ armor training 1
Trait Child of the Temple: +1 trait bonus to Knowledge (nobility) and Knowledge (religion) and Knowledge (religion) is a class skill for the Knights of the Alerion.
Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds*
Other Gear longsword, lance, dagger, masterwork full plate, heavy steel shield, silver holy symbol of Mitra, trained war horse

Knight's Horses (7)

CR 1

XP 400 each (2,800 XP total)

N Large animal
Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 9 (+2 Dex, -1 size)
hp 15 (2d8+6)
Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +1

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft.
Melee 2 hooves -2 (1d4+1)
Space 10 ft.; Reach 5 ft.

STATISTICS

Str 16, Dex 14, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 7
Base Atk +1; CMB +5; CMD 17 (21 vs. trip)
Feats Endurance, Run
Skills Perception +6

EVENT FOURTEEN: THE WYTCH LIGHTS (WEEK TWENTY SIX)

For months now the Horn of Abaddon has been shedding its eerie light across the swamps of the Caer Bryr. Like moths to the flame, this wicked radiance has drawn the feared Wytch Lights to the Horn.

The four Wytch Lights (or Will-o'-wisps as they are sometimes known) are ancient abominations that have long hunted this area. They are often mistaken for ghosts or some sort of incorporeal undead but they are in fact nothing of the sort. If you can catch them, they are small physical blobs of raw malevolent magic. They hate all mortal life and thrive only when the living suffer in pain and tremble in fear. Where they come from or what they ultimately want is an enigma and one the Wytch Lights seems to have no interest in resolving. These utterly alien beings sense a kinship with what is being done in the Horn of Abaddon and they have come here curious.

The Wytch Lights arrive in the dead of night and attempt to fly up to the source of the radiance -- the top of the spire. They are repulsed by the magical turbulence that surrounds the place and scalded, instead enter the Horn through the Third Level's landing (3-1). They do this completely quietly and invisibly. They are smart enough to not yet want to fight enemies until they understand (in their own peculiar alien way) what is truly happening here in the Horn.

They are drawn straight away to the Fane of the Three-Eyed Prince (3-5). In particular, the *fear* effect that radiates from the image of Vetra-Kali fascinates them. They quickly understand how it activates and each hides behind one of four shrines. And there they wait. If no one enters the Fane, they will start to flash periodically hoping to use their light to draw the curious.

If anyone alive (they ignore undead and constructs) enters the Fane alone, they will attack en masse. In the case of a group, they prefer to wait until the *fear* effect is activated and thus they can gain their fast healing 5 supernatural ability. Thus they transform the Fane into a deadly death trap.

The PCs probably discover this when either they or a minion make the mistake of entering the Fane. As ambush predators the Wytch Lights can be vicious foes. The threat revealed, the PCs can handle this several ways. The simplest way is to figure out what has happened to the Fane by scrying and then to command all their minions to ignore this room. Really. This works. At least for a while. Eventually (after 1d3 weeks) the Wytch Lights get hungry and start increasing their hunting area.

Remember that the Witch Lights may be invisible but they are not incorporeal. They can be sealed up. Of course, this is the equivalent to bottling up a nest of hornets. It is only a matter of time before they get out.

The other way is negotiation. The Wytch Lights are intelligent and even speak common. Unfortunately, they are alien monsters who desire only fear and death from mortals. When they speak their voices are cold and soft, always eagerly demanding death and sacrifice. The only way negotiations can succeed is if the PCs lead with a sacrificial victim. A helpless victim will allow the Wytch Lights to feed. They will then be sated for a few hours and that opens a brief window of negotiation.

If the PCs will throw in a sacrificial victim to the Fane every three days the Wytch Lights will probably abide by some sort of agreement to not attack some easily identifiable group of mortals. If the sacrifice is ever late, the deal is off. Also, once the final five days begin, the Wytch Lights also violate any agreement. They simply must go to the top of the Horn. Nothing will stop them.

Wytch Lights as guards: 2 security points

Wytch Lights (Will-o'-wisp) (4) CR 6

XP 2,400 each (9,600 XP total)

CE Small aberration (air)

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

DEFENSE

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

hp 40 (9d8)

Fort +3, Ref +12, Will +9

Defensive Abilities natural invisibility; Immune magic

OFFENSE

Speed fly 50 ft. (perfect)

Melee shock +16 touch (2d8 electricity)

TACTICS

During Combat The Wytch Lights prefer to become visible long enough to lure their prey somewhere quiet. There they mob their victim and shock the unfortunate to death, all the while feeding on their fear.

Morale The Wytch Lights are minor spirits of death and fear drawn out of the swamps to feed on the raw pulsating evil of the Horn. They're not going to give that up. They fight to the death.

STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +6; CMB +0; CMD 24

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

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

Languages Aklo, Common

SQ feed on fear

SPECIAL ABILITIES

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

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

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

EVENT FIFTEEN: THE RAVENOUS (WEEK TWENTY SEVEN)

The Caer Bryr has a reputation for being the home of monsters. This reputation is not undeserved. All manner of strange and savage beasts dwell within and one of them, ravenous with hunger is today visiting the Horn.

The gorgimera flies up to the third level and lands without warning. He flies through the archway and into the center of 3-1 roaring fiercely as he does so. Anyone present in that chamber gets a blast of caustic gas and then gorgon breath in rapid succession.

Unless stopped, the gorgimera begins to rampage through the level attacking anyone it meets. It pauses only long enough to eat any prey it happens to kill. Even those turned to stone by its breath are not spared. The gorgimera attempts to shatter the statue and then the gorgon-head begins to take great bites out of the raw stone, eating the statuary as if it were a fine steak.

The gorgimera is not brilliant but it can be talked to. It speaks draconic and if someone actually tries to parlay with the beast, it is taken back. No one has ever spoken with the beast. They either fight or flee. The beast has a name—Trithraxus. If Trithraxus is promised a den and food, he could be convinced to become a guardian of the Horn.

Trithraxus, Gorgimera (Green Dragon Head)

CR 9

XP 6,400

N Large magical beast

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; **Perception** +6

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 10, flat-footed 17 (+1 Dex, +8 natural, -1 size)

hp 95 (10d10+40)

Fort +11; **Ref** +8; **Will** +4

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., fly 50 ft. (poor)

Melee 2 bites +14 (2d6+4), slam +13 (1d6+4), 2 claws +13

melee (1d6+4)

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

Special Attacks breath weapon (varies)

TACTICS

During Combat The gorgimera is a savage beast of almost uncontrollable rage. He prefers wide open spaces, swooping and breathing upon its prey. When forced into melee it becomes a ruthless killer focusing damage to take out one foe at a time.

Morale The gorgimera fights until it has 23 hit points or less left and then tries to flee to lick its wound and fight another day.

STATISTICS

Str 19, **Dex** 13, **Con** 19, **Int** 4, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +10; **CMB** +15; **CMD** 26

Feats Ability Focus (dragon breath weapon), Flyby Attack, Hover, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bite)

Skills Fly +2, **Perception** +6, **Stealth** +4; **Racial Modifiers** +2 **Perception**

Languages Draconic

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Breath Weapon (Su) A gorgimera has two breath weapons, each of which can be used independently of the other (thus it can breathe twice in a given round as a single standard action).

Dragon: The green-dragon headed gorgimera's dragon headed breath weapon is a 20-foot cone of caustic gas. The breath weapon is usable once every 1d4 rounds, deals 3d8 points of acid damage, and allows a DC 21 Reflex save for half damage. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Gorgon: A gorgimera's gorgon head breath weapon is usable once every 1d4 rounds (no more than twice per day), turns a creature to stone permanently, and allows a DC 19 Fortitude save to avoid. The save DC is Constitution-based. The breath weapon is a 30-foot cone.

Gorgimera as guard:
3 security points

THE QUIET MONTH (WEEKS TWENTY EIGHT- THIRTY ONE)

For one month things are largely quiet. No new adventuring parties arrive. This is the PC's chance to build up their defenses. It is also a chance to lull them into complacency. The battles are fought. The ritual is almost completed. What could go wrong now?



EVENT SEVENTEEN: IT'S NOT OUR FAULT (OPTIONAL)

This event has no timeline and may not happen at all. Adventurers as a group are not well liked in Farholde. A Sense Motive skill check (DC 15) will reveal this to anyone who spends time in town. Once bad things start happening, the PCs may get the idea to start framing the adventurers for these wicked deeds. During the thirty one weeks, if the PCs can frame adventurers for three crimes, any other adventurers who arrive in town will discover that Farholde is far less friendly. Prices will be increased. Rooms will be unavailable. Necessary gear will be impossible to procure.

The party must succeed at three Bluff skill checks (DC 20) or Frame Someone espionage actions (see the minion rules below) or perform actions that in the GM's opinion succeed at placing the blame on adventurers. Once successful, prices double. Inns are suddenly full. Everywhere, travelers are treated like venomous snakes. This has no real game effect but it does make life uncomfortable. Perhaps to represent this, take away a few healing potions from one of the adventuring to represent them not being able to buy them in Farholde.

Story Award: Award a CR 8 (4,800 XP) bonus award for pinning Farholde's troubles on adventurers.

EVENT EIGHTEEN: GRUMBLEJACK'S GLORY (OPTIONAL)

This event has no timeline and may not happen at all. Recall in Book One that Grumblejack the Ogre had small horns. This is because Grumblejack is not a pure-blood ogre. In fact, Grumblejack descends from ogres who once defended the Horn of Abaddon. Daemonic blood flows in his veins.

If Grumblejack enters the Sanctum of Vetra-Kali he will suddenly feel dizzy and start muttering about how he's been here before. He will complain that he is thirsty. Wine or water will not quench his thirst -- the ogre remains thirsty while in the sanctum.

If the PCs give him a drink of *unholy water* created from the statue of Vetra-Kali, Grumblejack changes. His half-fiend heritage is revealed, his horns grow much larger and he can magically fly. Grumblejack is no longer just an ogre. He is something mightier and he is grateful.

Story award: Award a CR 6 (2,400 XP) bonus award for discovering Grumblejack's true heritage.

Grumblejack, Daemonic Cohort of the Ninth Knot CR 6

XP 2,400

Male half-fiend ogre fighter 1

LE Large outsider (giant, native)

Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +5

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 9, flat-footed 24 (+9 armor, +6 natural, -1 size)

hp 48 (4d8+d10+25)

Fort +10, **Ref** +1, **Will** +5

Immune poison; resist acid, cold, electricity and fire 10; DR 5/magic

SR 17

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft. (40 ft. base), fly 80 ft. (good)

Melee large greatsword power attack +9 (3d6+15) or 2 claws power attack +8 (1d6+12) and bite +10 (1d8+6)

Ranged javelin +4 (1d8+6)

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

Spell-like Abilities (CL 5th)

3/day – *darkness*

1/day – *desecrate*, *unholy blight*

TACTICS

During Combat Grumblejack's great joy in life is smacking people with his gigantic greatsword. He does so whenever he can. Since he gained the power of flight, he loves to swoop in and smash "little'uns" into pulp.

Morale Grumblejack flees when he has 12 or less hit points left.

STATISTICS

Str 25, **Dex** 10, **Con** 19, **Int** 12, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 18

Feats Iron Will, Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (greatsword)

Skills Climb +12, Intimidate +10, Perception +10, Survival +7

Languages Common, Giant

Gear large masterwork greatsword, large full plate

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Smite Good (Su): Once per day, as a swift action, the half-fiend can smite good as the smite evil ability of a paladin of the same level as the half-fiend's Hit Dice, except affecting a good target. The smite persists until target is dead or the half-fiend rests.

ACT FOUR: FIVE DAYS TO DARKNESS

This act covers days 217-222 – the final five days of the ritual. The truth about this whole enterprise is that our villains have no idea what they're doing. They took over a dungeon on nebulous orders from a shadowy superior. They found a moldy set of instructions written by a dying madman for a blasphemous ritual and have since been merrily performing that ritual calling forth an otherworldly horror that they hope to bind and coerce into their service. Reckless is an understatement.

In the final five days, that recklessness comes due. In these five days everything goes horribly wrong. Can our band of villains manage, in spite of all adversity, to complete the ritual? Have all their preparations been enough? Have they created a dungeon deadly enough to weather this storm? This is where we find out.

EVENT ONE: THE HORN TREMBLES

Time: Day 217 – As the dusk ritual is complete

The small tremors (Event Nine) in Act Three presage this event. Now, the day of reckoning has arrived. The temple is wracked by a tremendous earthquake. The earth itself seems to rebel against the blasphemy being perpetrated in the Sanctum.

In the Sanctum there is a horrific ear-splitting scream and for a moment a shadowy apparition manifests over the *Silver Seal*. It reaches out its six clawed hands and grasps at the seal, scratching and clawing. The *Seal* is gouged and marred. The echo of unholy laughter is heard and the apparition fades. Vetra-Kali is close at hand.

Every creature in the upper three levels of the Horn, the Spiral and the Sanctum must make a DC 15 Reflex save as stone and masonry collapse throughout the entire dungeon. Failure results in 4d6 damage; success equals no damage. Creatures in the lower caves are slightly less affected. They still must make the Reflex save but failure is only 4d6. Incorporeal creatures are immune to this damage.

Though out the complex changes occur:

1-9 The entire west wing of the Death's Head Tavern breaks off and falls down the side of the Horn. It crashes in a pile of rubble at the base of the Horn. Anyone in that room gets to make a second Reflex save (DC 15). Success means no damage is taken as they leap clear just in time. Failure means you fall 50 feet and get covered in rubble (8d6 total damage).

1-16 The basin of the fountain cracks spilling a hundred gallons of water all over the courtyard. The fountain's magic is ruined.

1-23 The chute that connects 2-1 to 1-23 collapses. The pit trap is permanently destroyed and anyone in the cage is crushed beneath falling stone (10d6 damage).

2-2 Both walls of this guardroom collapse transforming this chamber into a deathtrap. Everyone here must still make a DC 15 reflex save. But instead of 4d6 damage, failure is 8d6 damage and they are buried. A Success inflicts only half damage and they are not buried.

2-5 The metal bars of the cage twist and warp creating a hole big enough for any creature size large or smaller to escape the cell.

2-15 This room collapses raining down stone on anyone unlucky enough to be here. They must make a second DC 15 Reflex save or take a further 6d6 damage (save negates). Anything in the room is crushed and buried.

2-20 The Pillar marked 'B' collapses smashing into the double doors. Any guards stationed on either side of the double doors must make a second DC 15 Reflex save or take a further 6d6 damage (save negates).

3-1 The Archway collapses sealing the third story (save for the section that leads to the sanctum).

3-2 The curved northeastern wall collapses opening a new entrance into 3-13.

3-7 This room entirely collapses raining down stone on anyone unlucky enough to be in the chamber. They must make a second DC 15 Reflex save or take further 6d6 damage (save negates). Anything left in the room is crushed and buried.

3-10 All the cell doors pop open in unison as the ceiling buckles and barely holds. All prisoners are free.

3-11 The entire north wall crumbles and falls into the valley below opening up a new entrance to the Horn.

S-1 The half-wall that separates S-1 from B collapses. Anyone standing within 10' of the wall who fails the first save instead takes 8d6 damage (save for half).

Miraculously, the Horn does not collapse. The magic that created the Horn of Abaddon is too strong to so easily allow its destruction.

Story Award: Award a CR 9 reward (XP 6,400) for surviving the quake.

EVENT TWO: ON THE WINGS OF EAGLES

Time: Day 217 – During the midnight ritual

With every prayer, the ritual is creating a bridge to Vetra-Kali through the astral plane allowing the daemon prince to return to the prime material. From this bridge, emanations of magic and evil ebb and flow, rippling through reality. One of those disturbances draws the attention of a dweller within the astral -- a good celestial named Brastius Star-Feather. Brastius is a flier upon the astral winds, an avoral agathion. Curious, the agathion investigates. He happens upon the rift in the astral. Seizing the moment, Brastius plunges through and finds himself high above the Caer Bryr just outside the sanctum.

Brastius Star-Feather, Avoral

CR9

XP 6,400

NG Medium outsider (agathion, extraplanar, good)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., detect magic, low-light vision, see invisibility, true seeing; **Perception** +23

Aura fear aura (20 ft., DC 17)

DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 17, flat-footed 18 (+6 Dex, +1 dodge, +8 natural)

hp 94 (9d10+45)

Fort +11, **Ref** +12, **Will** +6; +4 vs. poison

DR 10/evil or silver; **Immune** electricity, petrification; **Resist** cold 10, sonic 10; **SR** 20

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., fly 90 ft. (good)

Melee 2 claws +16 (2d6+3), 2 wings +10 (2d6+1)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th; concentration +12)

Constant—*detect evil*, *detect magic*, *see invisibility*, *speak with animals*

At will—*aid*, *blur* (self only), *command* (DC 14), *detect magic*, *dimension door*, *dispel magic*, *gust of wind* (DC 15), *hold person* (DC 16), *light*, *magic circle against evil* (self only)

3/day—*lightning bolt* (DC 16), empowered *magic missile*

TACTICS

During Combat Brastius prefers to stay airborne using his *lightning bolts* and *magic missile* to full effect. His focus is the altar. He desperately wishes to steal the *Eyes of Vetra-Kali* from the statue and to slay any who stand in his way. He will try to *hold* anyone who blocks his progress and withstands his lightning blasts. Melee is not Brastius' first choice, but he is a fearsome melee combatant with his four attacks.

Morale During his first assault, he will flee after taking 47 hit points of damage. During the second battle, he fights to the death sure that this is the last chance to stop this great evil.

STATISTICS

Str 17, **Dex** 20, **Con** 23, **Int** 15, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +9; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 29

Feats Dodge, Empower Spell-Like Ability (*magic missile*), Flyby Attack, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (claw)

Skills Bluff +10, Diplomacy +7, Fly +22, Handle Animal +9, Intimidate +15, Knowledge (any one) +14, Perception +23, Ride +7, Sense Motive +15, Spellcraft +11, Stealth +18; Racial Modifiers Perception +8

Languages Auran, Celestial, Draconic, Infernal; speak with animals, truespeech

SQ lay on hands (4d6, 7/day, as a 9th-level paladin), *true seeing*

SPECIAL ABILITIES

True Seeing (Su) This ability works like the *true seeing* spell (caster level 14th), except it only affects the avoral, the avoral must concentrate for 1 full round before it takes effect, and it remains as long as the avoral concentrates.

Sensing both the raw magic and evil of the Horn, he casts *dispel magic* removing the interference for a moment and bursts into the sanctum through the balcony (S2) hoping to disrupt whatever is going on. This rash action gives the PCs (assuming they are present) a chance to slay the avoral quickly.

If Brastius escapes the battle, he is more convinced than ever that the ritual he has observed in the Horn must be disrupted. The agathion flies for a day and finds an aerie of giant eagles in a nearby mountain range within the Caer Bryr. The eagles sense kinship with the celestial and an eagle shaman heals the Celestial's wounds. Brastius makes an impassioned plea to the Lord of the Eagles. He tells them all that he has seen and what transpires even now in the Horn of Abaddon. Much of his words ring true for the eagles have seen the beacon of unholy light and felt the strange tremors even in their aeries.

Successful, Brastius convinces the eagles of the rightness and immediacy of his cause and organizes a strike force. The Lord of the Eagles entrusts him with eight warriors who will accompany him to the Horn of Abaddon. Brastius returns on day 221 of the ritual with eight giant eagles accompanying him. He leads the aerial assault upon the sanctum during mid-day.

As soon as he gets within sight of the Horn he realizes that the situation here has only gotten worse. There can be no doubt -- this battle must be won. Brastius once more tries to disrupt the interference with *dispel magic* and leads the assault. This battle is to the death!

Giant Eagles (8)

CR3

XP 800 each (6,400 XP total)

NG Large magical beast

Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision; **Perception** +15

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 12 (+3 Dex, +3 natural, -1 size)

hp 26 (4d10+4)

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

Defensive Abilities evasion

OFFENSE

Speed 10 ft., fly 80 ft. (average)

Melee 2 claws +7 (1d8+4), bite +7 (1d6+4)

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

TACTICS

During Combat The eagles swoop and attack their foes, using their flyby attacks to full effect.

Morale As long as Brastius remains alive, the eagles fight till the bitter end. But if Brastius falls and more than half their number is dead, the remainder of the eagles will flee the Horn never to return.

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 17, **Con** 12, **Int** 10, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 22

Feats Alertness, Flyby Attack

Skills Fly +8, **Perception** +15, **Sense Motive** +4; Racial Modifiers +4 Perception

Languages Auran (cannot speak)

EVENT THREE: THE EARTH AWAKENS

Time: 3:55 pm, Day 218

A greater mud elemental spontaneously forms as raw, uncontrolled magic permeates the Horn. The elemental forms in the Lower Caverns (C8) emerging from the boiling mud pool. If the mudmen have been summoned it simply absorbs these willing supplicants to its glory. This creature of primal fury rampages among the boggards first (if there are any left alive). With its DR 10/--, the Bane-wog tribesmen are almost incapable of hurting this beast. After the earthquake, this is the last straw for the boggard tribe. Regardless of how the battle goes, the survivors flee the Horn.

Once the mud elemental annihilates the boggards it retreats to its mud field to heal (if it took any damage). While in the pool it regenerates 2 hp a round. The elemental is not unintelligent. It can sense the magic burning high above in the sanctum. With the magical energy gathering there, it could feed once more and ascend to elder status (becoming a fearsome CR 11 monster – see the Pathfinder Bestiary 2 for details).

The mud elemental emerges from the Maw (C1 via C4) and begins to slowly climb the outside of the Horn. It is headed straight for the Sanctum. If it cannot get to the Sanctum (say someone sealed the balcony with a *wall of stone* for example), then it will make its way back down the Horn to Level 3 and continue its rampage there.

If the elemental does make it to the Sanctum it begins to feed on the raw magic there accumulated by the ritual. If no one stops it, in twenty four hours it will have destroyed the statue of Vetra-Kali and disrupted the ritual.

Greater Mud Elemental

CR 9

XP 6,400

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

Init +4; Senses darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 30 ft.; Perception +16

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 13, flat-footed 17 (+4 Dex, +1 dodge, +9 natural, –2 size)

hp 123 (13d10+52)

Fort +12, Ref +14, Will +4

DR 10/--; Immune acid, elemental traits

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., burrow 10 ft., swim 30 ft.; earth glide

Melee 2 slams +20 (2d8+9 plus entrap)

Space 15 ft.; Reach 15 ft.

Special Attacks entrap (DC 20, 10 minutes, hardness 10, hp 15)

TACTICS

During Combat The elemental is not a sophisticated combatant. It slams and tries to entrap the nearest enemy until all foes are defeated.

Morale This newborn primal spirit of fury fights until it is destroyed.

STATISTICS

Str 28, Dex 18, Con 19, Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 11

Base Atk +13; CMB +24; CMD 39

Feats Awesome Blow, Cleave, Dodge, Great Cleave, Greater Bull Rush, Improved Bull Rush³, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack

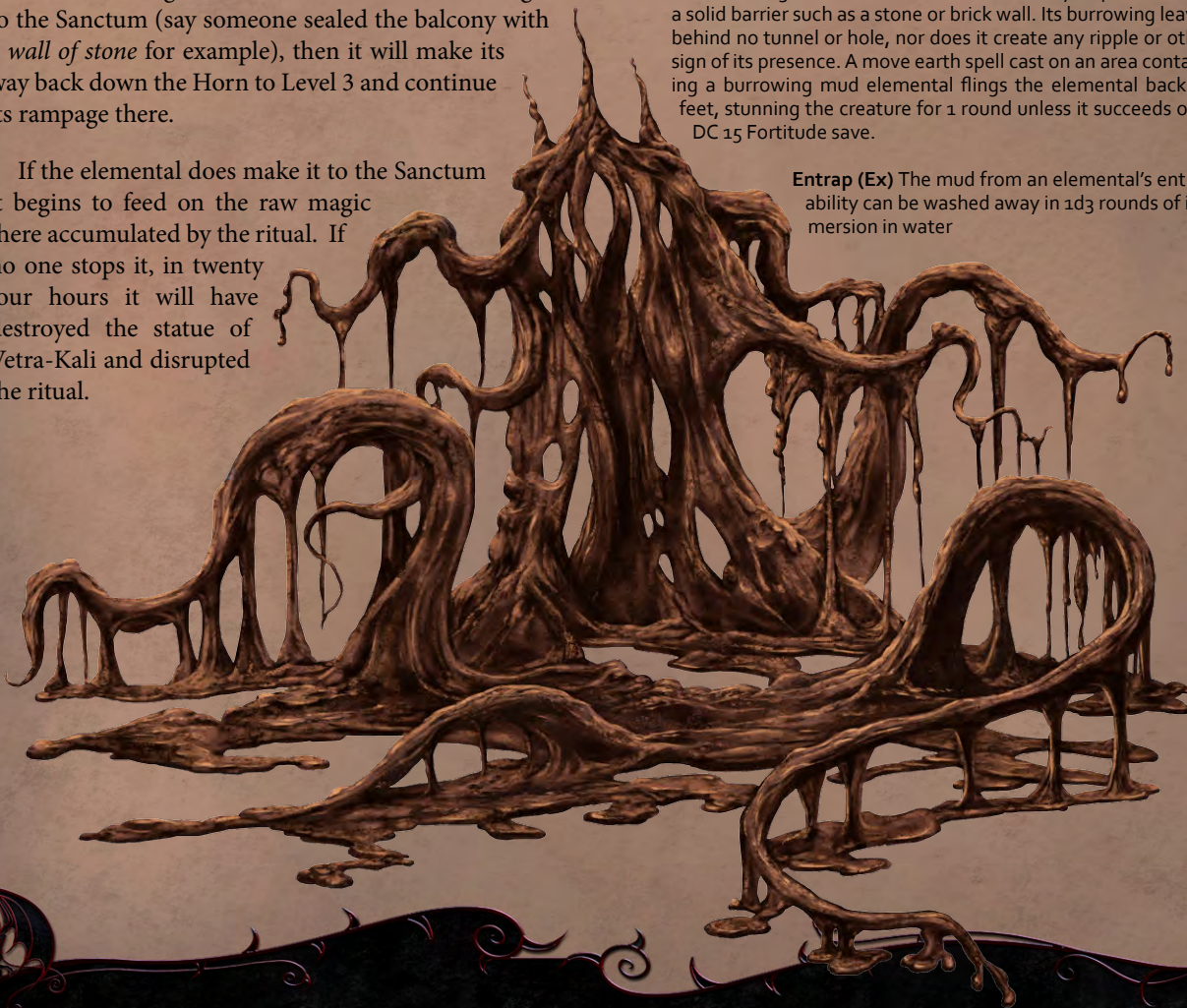
Skills Climb +25, Escape Artist +20, Knowledge (planes) +15, Perception +16, Stealth +12, Swim +17; Racial Modifiers +8 Swim

Language Terran

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Earth Glide (Ex) A burrowing mud elemental can pass through dirt, gravel, or other loose or porous solid matter as easily as a fish swims through water. It cannot use this ability to pass through a solid barrier such as a stone or brick wall. Its burrowing leaves behind no tunnel or hole, nor does it create any ripple or other sign of its presence. A move earth spell cast on an area containing a burrowing mud elemental flings the elemental back 30 feet, stunning the creature for 1 round unless it succeeds on a DC 15 Fortitude save.

Entrap (Ex) The mud from an elemental's entrap ability can be washed away in 1d3 rounds of immersion in water



EVENT FOUR: UNLEASH THE HOUNDS

Time: Just as the midnight ritual begins on Day 219

Vetra-Kali is not the only being barred from entering this world. The powerful magic of the ritual could be useful to liberate any number of others barred from our world. On midnight of the 219th day, from the corners of reality, emerge six Hounds of Tindalos. These loathsome non-Euclidean beasts are not here to save Talin-garde. They are here to slay anyone involved in conjuring this transdimensional rip (i.e. anyone in the sanctum) and to instead see that when the portal opens, it is not Vetra-Kali who emerges but a horrific entity trapped between the black spaces between the stars, their master -- a Leng spider.

The Hounds attack the sanctum in force and do their best to viciously rip apart anyone in the chamber. If they can overpower those who guard the chamber then they do not leave. Instead three of the Hounds each consume one of the Eyes of Vetra-Kali. They then surround the altar and begin to chant in some strange language (Aklo). If they are not stopped, then by the time of the next ritual (dawn) the ritual to restore Vetra-Kali will be disrupted. It will have been hijacked by these otherworldly horrors and their corrupt master.



Instead of any prayer for the remaining rituals, the three hounds who ate the *Eyes* will instead bathe the altar in green light emitted from their maws. And on the final day, it will not be Vetra-Kali who emerges from the rift but the Leng Spider. And the Horn will become its lair.

Hound of Tindalos (6)

CR7

XP 3,200 each (19,200 XP in total)

NE Medium outsider (evil, extraplanar)

Init +9; Senses darkvision 120 ft.; Perception +18

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 15, flat-footed 15 (+5 Dex, +5 natural)

hp 85 (10d10+30)

Fort +10, Ref +12, Will +8

DR 10/magic; Immune mind-affecting effects, poison

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee bite +15 (2d6+3), 2 claws +15 (1d8+3)

Special Attacks ripping gaze

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th; concentration +13)

Constant—*air walk*

At will—*fog cloud*, *invisibility*, *locate creature*

3/day—*dimensional anchor*, *discern location*, *greater scrying* (DC 20), *haste*, *slow* (DC 16)

TACTICS

During Combat These ruthless combatants attack without thought of their own safety. They first will use *dimensional anchor* upon all targets to make sure that no one escapes. After that, they alternate between using their *ripping gaze* and viciously attacking in melee combat. They focus on anyone directly involved in performing the ritual.

Morale These otherworldly beasts fight until they are destroyed

STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +10; CMB +13; CMD 28 (32 vs. trip)

Feats Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Vital-Strike, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +18 (+22 jump), Intimidate +16, Knowledge (arcana) +16, Knowledge (geography) +13, Knowledge (planes) +16, Perception +18, Sense Motive +18, Stealth +18, Survival +18

Languages Aklo

SQ angled entry, otherworldly mind

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Angled Entry (Su) Hounds of Tindalos move through the dimensions in ways other creatures cannot comprehend. They may use greater teleport (self only) once per round as a swift action and plane shift (self only) 3/day as a standard action (caster level 10th). A hound of Tindalos can use these powers anywhere, but its destination point must be adjacent to a fixed angle or corner in the physical environment, such as a wall, floor, or ceiling (as determined by the GM); temporary angles created by cloth, flesh, or small items are not sufficient. It cannot use these abilities to enter curved architecture or open outdoor environments.

Otherworldly Mind (Ex) Any non-outsider attempting to read the thoughts of a hound of Tindalos or communicate with it telepathically takes 5d6 points of nonlethal damage and must make a DC 18 Will save or become confused for 2d4 rounds. This is a mind-affecting effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Ripping Gaze (Su) 5d6 slashing damage, 30 feet, Fortitude DC 18 negates. A creature that succeeds on its save is immune to that hound's gaze for 24 hours. Damage caused by a ripping gaze can be defeated by damage reduction, but it bypasses DR/magic and slashing. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Leng Spider

CR 14

XP 38,400

hp 202 (see the Leng Spider entry in the Bestiary 2)

EVENT FIVE: THE DRAGON

Time: Just after dawn, Day 220

Argossarian is a young idealistic silver dragon who has long dwelt in the north hunting monsters and bugbears. For decades he has been a self-appointed champion of nobility and virtue. Argossarian's shadow is the last thing that countless bugbears and bandits have seen. But recently he has been troubled by what he has heard from his agents in the south. The flash of green light from the long forsaken Horn of Abaddon was the last straw. Argossarian the Silver has come to Farholde.

When he arrived, he could never have imagined how bad things had gotten. Farholde was a city gripped by fear. Would-be heroes were dying with their throats cut. Anyone who dared to venture to the Horn never came back. He knew there had to be a connection in town and for months he secretly searched for it.

He thought he had found the answer in Baron Arkov Vandermir. Imagine his surprise when either from the Baron's dying words or by ransacking his letter drawer, the dragon discovered that the Baron was just as terrified as everyone else. "What are they doing out there?" the Baron's journal read. "Can they really be rebuilding the Sons of the Pale Horsemen? Are they really that mad?"

IS ARGOSSARIAN TOO MUCH?

Argossarian is a CR 13 dragon, the most powerful creature the PCs have encountered by far. Your party at this point should be 9th level. Is this encounter too much? It doesn't have to be.

The PCs have several advantages. They have seen the silver dragon before flying over Farholde. That gives them advance warning. With a successful Knowledge (arcana) skill check (DC 23), they will know that silver dragons are vulnerable to fire. They can also garner this knowledge by having a minion observe the raid against Baron Vandermir.

This one piece of knowledge could turn the battle. If the PCs don't have any fire magic, ensure that some scrolls of *fireball* or even a *wand of fireball* (5 charges, cost: 1125 gp) goes up for sale in the markets of Farholde.

Further, learning that silver dragon's breath inflicts cold damage could also be useful. Having cold resistance would be incredibly advantageous. A *minor ring of cold resistance* (cost: 6000 gp) could also turn up in Farholde during the fair (Week 24).

Argossarian, Young Adult Silver Dragon

CR 13

XP 25,600

LG Huge dragon (cold)

Init +4; Senses dragon senses, fog vision; Perception +22

DEFENSE

AC 26, touch 8, flat-footed 26 (+18 natural, -2 size)

hp 157 (15d12+60)

Fort +13, Ref +11, Will +15

DR 5/magic; Immune acid, cold, paralysis, sleep; SR 24

Weaknesses vulnerability to fire

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., fly 200 ft. (average); cloudwalking, graceful flight

Melee bite +21 (2d8+10), 2 claws +20 (2d6+7), tail slap +18 (2d6+10), 2 wings +18 (1d8+3)

Space 15 ft.; Reach 10 ft. (15 ft. with bite)

Special Attacks breath weapon (50-ft. cone, DC 21, 10d8 cold), crush (2d8+10, DC 21), paralyzing breath

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 15th; concentration +19)

At will—*detect evil*, *feather fall*

Spells Known (CL 5th; concentration +9)

2nd (5/day)—*augury*, *cure moderate wounds*1st (7/day)—*alarm*, *divine favor*, *shield*, *true strike*0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *flare* (DC 14), *light*, *message*, *read magic*, *stabilize*

Note: A silver dragon can cast cleric spells as arcane spells

TACTICS

During Combat Argossarian focuses on whoever is conducting the ritual and does his best, even endangering his own life, to stop this abomination. He leads with his breath weapon hoping to fell his foes quickly and then uses his great melee prowess to fight his way to the altar. There he will ensconce himself and battle to the death or until he is sure the ritual is disrupted.

Morale Having come to understand how important this battle is, Argossarian fights to the death to disrupt the ritual.

STATISTICS

Str 25, Dex 10, Con 19, Int 18, Wis 19, Cha 18

Base Atk +15; CMB +24; CMD 34 (38 vs. trip)

Feats Hover, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Multiattack, Power Attack, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (bite)

Skills Acrobatics +15 (+19 jump), Diplomacy +22, Fly +14, Heal +22, Intimidate +22, Knowledge (local, nobility) +22, Perception +22, Sense Motive +22, Spellcraft +22

Languages Auran, Common, Draconic, Giant, Goblin

SQ change shape

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Change Shape (Su) A silver dragon can assume any animal or humanoid form 3/day as if using polymorph.

Cloudwalking (Su) A very young or older silver dragon can tread on clouds or fog as though on solid ground.

Fog Vision (Ex) A juvenile or older silver dragon can see perfectly well in fog and clouds.

Graceful Flight (Ex) A young or older silver dragon's aerial maneuverability is one step better than normal.

Paralyzing Breath (Su) Instead of a cone of cold, a silver dragon can breathe a cone of paralyzing gas. Creatures within the cone must succeed on a Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 1d6 rounds plus 1 round per age category of the dragon.

Argossarian was horrified.

Argossarian is eighty years old, born in the year of the Victor's raid. His mother, the might Wyrms Antharia Regina had weaned him on tales of the Sons' wickedness and the Victor's heroics. Could it really be that some fragment of their cult survived and even now was struggling to return the daemon prince Vetra-Kali Eats-the-Eyes to this plane?

Argossarian knew then that his moment had come. He will attack the Horn of Abaddon. He does not know what he will find there but whatever dwells in that cursed place, he will destroy.

When Argossarian arrives at the Horn, he circles and notices the newly formed breach in room 3-11 (see Event One above). He lands and attacks anyone unlucky enough to be in his way. In draconic form, Argossarian rips off the door to 3-10 and then shape changes into the form of a burly blonde-haired nordic warrior.

Through 3-10 heads to 3-8. He opens the door to 3-7 and discovers it blocked (also by the earthquake). He heads into 3-9 and is horrified by what he sees there. The dragon does not linger. He heads out into 3-1 and into 3-5.

Again horrified but failing to find the secret door, he moves on through 3-1 and into 3-2. Seeing the collapsed wall, he moves in 3-13 and takes the Spiral up to the Sanctum. This is his final destination.

In the Sanctum he resumes his draconic form and does his level best to wreck the place. Even if nothing delays him, he is too late to stop the dawn ritual. But he will do his best to guard the place for a day thus making the dusk ritual impossible unless the dragon is slain.

After all that he has learned and seen, Argossarian is in no mood to retreat. His at-will *detect evil* has been buzzing furiously ever since he got close to the Horn. Both through his auguries and his information gathering, he understands what is at stake. The dragon fights to the bitter end.



EVENT SIX: WHO CAN YOU TRUST?

Time: Day 221

This is the day when all the people who have a grudge against the PCs return. Did the PCs kill Jurak, Kuman-da, Callistae Shanda and all her consorts, every member of Hallack's Crew, every member of Traya's Raiders, the Moon Dogs, every member of Harkon's Hands, every member of the Banner Verdant, every member of the White Ravens, every knight who came with Sir Valin Darian, the avoral Brastius and the silver dragon Argosarian? Not defeat, but actually KILL. If the answer to any of those is 'no,' this is the day they strike back.

They're healed. They've gathered new friends if they could (perhaps a new party of 'survivors' has formed). They've learned hard lessons about how dangerous our villains are. And today they attack the Horn. Did the outside teleporter get shutdown? Then they use that as their way in.

This is also the day for betrayals. Ezra Thrice-Damned has been waiting for his chance to backstab the PCs. Why not now? He gathers all the wraiths he has created and attacks the Sanctum in force. Their goal, wipe out his so-called masters, take control of the Sanctum and complete the ritual himself. Ezra will once more be high priest of the Horn of Abaddon.

The Wytchlights can now sense the great magic in the Sanctum and wish desperately to consume this liquid evil. They assault the Sanctum. If allowed an hour unmolested in the Sanctum, they fully absorb the magic accumulated there (inadvertantly disrupting the ritual) and gain four hit dice and grow in size.

Trithraxus, the gorgimera is tired of working for cursed humans. He attacks eager to feed on their long-denied flesh.

Is Zikomo alive? He gathers the bog-gards and assaults the Sanctum. They will transform the Horn into the temple of Dagon it was meant to be.

Is the Baron Vandermir still alive? He helps finance any attempt to slay the PCs. They have brought nothing but ruin to his city and now he has become convinced that they are not true devotees of Asmodeus but are trying to reestablish the "Sons of the Pale Horseman."

A better question: who does not betray the PCs? Artephius the alchemical golem, Grumblejack the half-fiend ogre, the plant monsters and Trik (assuming he's now a cohort) will not betray the PCs. Good help is hard to find.

EVENT SEVEN: THE LAST PRAYER

Time: Day 222, sunrise

Without any warning, as the sun rises on the last day of the ritual, a small group of men gather at the entrance to the Maw. There is one last group of adventurers who will assault the Horn.

These are the "Sons of Balentyne". They are led by the son of Lord Thomas Havelyn who the PCs almost certainly slew in Book One. The young paladin has already had an exalted career. It was he that exposed and destroyed the Third Knot when they tried to assassinate King Markadian IV of House Darius (more details about this event will be revealed in Book IV). From the last survivor of the Knot, he learned that something was planned against the Watch Wall. With the king's personal blessing he travelled north. Alas, he arrived too late to save Balentyne or his grim, troubled father. His only comfort was that at last his mother and father were reunited.



Sir Richard Thomasson Havelyn

CR 9

XP 6,400

Male human paladin 10
 LG Medium Humanoid
 Init +1; **Senses** Perception +10
 Aura courage (10 ft.), resolve (10 ft.)

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 11, flat-footed 23 (+9 armor, +1 Dex, +3 shield)
hp 95 (10d10+40)
Fort +15, **Ref** +11, **Will** +15
Defensive Abilities divine grace +3; **Immune** charm, disease, fear

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.
Melee +2 *longsword* +17/+12 (1d8+6/19-20) or
 +3 keen *longsword* fully powered up (all spells cast and divine bond in effect and with *aid*) power attack smite +24/+19 (1d8+28 good-aligned damage/17-20; ignores all DR)
Special Attack channel positive energy (DC 18, 5d6), smite evil (4/day, +3 attack and AC, +10 damage)
Spell-Like Abilities (10th; concentration +12)
 At Will—*detect evil*
Paladin Spells Prepared (CL 7th; concentration +9)
 2nd—*bull's strength*, *vestment of the champion*
 1st—*bless weapon*, *divine favor*, *protection from evil*

TACTICS

Before Combat Before entering the Sanctum, Sir Richard pauses to cast *vestment of the champion*, *bless weapon*, *bull's strength*, *protection from evil*, activates his divine bond to make his sword keen and +3, and finally casts *divine favor*. During that time the wizard casts *stoneskin* and *bear's endurance* on Sir Richard. Brother Carthus casts *aid*.

During Combat Sir Richard smites first and asks questions later. He heads straight for the altar, hoping to disrupt the ritual and see that it's evil is stopped. Any who get his way earn his special attention. He prefers to focus on one enemy at a time. He wastes little time on banter but does issue his battle cry "For Balentyne! My father, know that this day ye shall be avenged!" Yes, he talks like that. Like father like son.

Morale Like his father, Sir Richard never retreats especially from evil. He will either be victorious or die. However, the wizard does not share Sir Richard's fanatic zeal. If Sir Richard falls the wizard is quick to use *teleport*.

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 12, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 16
Base Atk +10/+5; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 25
Feats Extra Mercy, Power Attack, Shield Focus, Toughness, Weapon Focus (longsword)
Skills Diplomacy +16, Knowledge (religion) +13, Sense Motive +15
Languages Common
SQ aura of good, divine bond (weapon +2), lay on hands (4d6, 8/day), mercies (sickened, diseases, curse, poison),
Traits Resilient -- +1 trait bonus to Fortitude saves
 Hatred of the Dark Prince-- +1 damage to devils and followers of Asmodeus
Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds* (2)
Other Gear +2 *longsword*, masterwork full plate, masterwork heavy steel shield, *cloak of resistance* +2

From the ashes of Balentyne he found other allies. Brother Carthus Donnagin, brother of Father Althus Donnagin, travels with him. They also travel with Meinhard Mott, the brother of Franz Mott, one of the watchtower's captains. Finally, there is the wizard. There is a possibility that Tacitus of Morimun escaped in Book One. If he did, he's here (but now level 10). If not, the fourth member is a cousin of Captain Ryan Varning -- Erik Varning called the Falconer.

Brother Carthus Donnagin

CR 9

XP 6,400

Male human cleric 10
 LG Medium humanoid
 Init +2; **Senses** Perception +4

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 18 (+6 armor, +2 Dex, +2 shield)
hp 65 (10d8+20)
Fort +8, **Ref** +5, **Will** +12

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.
Melee +1 *longsword* +10/+5 (1d8+3/19-20)
Ranged light crossbow +9 (1d8/19-20)
Special Attacks channel positive energy 7/day (DC 21, 5d6+10)
Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th; concentration +14); *touch of glory* 7/day
Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 10th, concentration +14)
 5th—*breath of life*, *commune*, *flame strike*^D
 4th—*divination*, *divine power*, *fire shield*^D, *holy smite*, *restoration*
 3rd—*daylight*, *dispel magic*, *magic circle against evil*, *prayer*, *searing light*^D
 2nd—*aid*, *augury*, *bless weapon*^D, *consecrate*, *lesser restoration*, *status*
 1st—*bless*, *detect evil*, *divine favor*, *protection from evil*, *sanctuary*, *shield of faith*^D
 0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *light*, *read magic*, *stabilize*
 D domain spell; **Domain** Glory, Sun

TACTICS

Before Combat If given the chance, Brother Carthus casts *aid* on Sir Richard, *bless weapon* on Mad Meinhard and *shield of faith*, and *protection from evil* on himself.

During Combat Brother Carthus is a true believer in Sir Richard having a destiny. He does all he can to keep the paladin alive and in the fight, even at grave risk to his own safety.

Morale Brother Carthus is fearless in the face of evil and will stand by Sir Richard to the bitter end.

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 14, **Con** 12, **Int** 12, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 14
Base Atk +7/+2; **CMB** +9 **CMD** 21
Feats Alignment Channel (evil outsiders), Channel Smite, Combat Casting Extra Channel, Improved Channel, Selective Channeling
Skills Heal +17, Knowledge (planes) +14, Knowledge (religion) +14, Spellcraft +14
Languages Celestial, Common
SQ aura, divine presence, nimbus of light, sun's blessing
Traits Indomitable Faith -- +1 trait bonus to Will saves
Combat Gear bolts (10), *wand of cure moderate wounds* (47 charges)
Other Gear +1 *longsword*, light crossbow, masterwork breastplate, masterwork heavy wooden shield, wooden holy symbol of Mitra (partially burned, recovered from Balentyne, still perfectly useable)

Tiadora's pleasure cruise turned out to be a fatal mistake. It left a trail of deadly bread crumbs that finally Sir Richard has followed here. "The Sons of Balentyne" first united simply for righteous revenge. But now they are certain there is more to do here than simply avenge their fallen family members. They are certain that all of Talingarde must be saved from these villains. They have guessed the purpose of the ritual -- to return Vetra-Kali to this plane of existence. They are unsure why evil-doers who they are fairly sure are worshippers of Asmodeus would want to do that, but they do not care. This unholy ritual must be stopped at all cost! Two of the members of the "Sons of Balentyne" are ready to die for this cause.

Erik the Falconer (Erik Varning)

CR 9

XP 6,400

Male human evoker 10

NG Medium humanoid

Init +2; Senses Perception +2

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+2 Dex, +4 mage armor)

hp 65 (10d6+30)

Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +9

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee quarterstaff +5 (1d6)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th; concentration +15); elemental wall 10 rounds/day, force missile 8/dayWizard Spells Prepared (CL 10th; concentration +15)5th—*cone of cold* (DC 22), *lightning arc* (DC 22), *teleport*4th—*detonate* (DC 21), *shout* (DC 21), *stoneskin* (2)3rd—*fireball* (2) (DC 20), *lightning bolt* (2) (DC 20)2nd—*bear's endurance*, *shatter* (DC 19), *scorching ray* (2), *web* (DC 17)1st—*burning hands* (2) (DC 18), *magic missile* (2), *mage armor*, *shield*0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *light*, *ray of frost*, *read magic*

Prohibited Schools illusion, necromancy

TACTICS

Before Combat Erik has *mage armor* almost always up and casts *bear's endurance* and *stoneskin* on Sir Richard (trying to keep the sometimes foolhardy paladin alive). Before entering the sanctum he also casts *stoneskin* on himself.

During Combat Erik is a disciple of the gospel of boom. He loves large impressive evocation spells and he expertly uses them every round. He keeps *teleport* in reserve however.

Morale Erik is neither a fanatic (like Richard and Carthus) nor a crazy person (like Meinhard).

STATISTICS

Str 10, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 20, Wis 14, Cha 10

Base Atk +5; CMB +5; CMD 17

Feats Combat Casting, Elemental Spell, Empower Spell, Greater Spell Focus (evocation), Greater Spell Penetration, Maximize Spell, Spell Focus (evocation), Spell Penetration

Skills Knowledge (arcana) +15, Knowledge (Dungeoneering) +15, Knowledge (Engineering) +15, Knowledge (history) +15, Knowledge (nature) +15, Knowledge (planes) +15, Knowledge (religion) +15, Spellcraft +15

Languages Aquan, Auran, Common, Draconic, Ignan, Terran, SQ arcane bond (hawk familiar), intense spells

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*; *scrolls of passwall*, *cone of cold*, and *detonate*; *wand of fireball* (7 charges)

Other Gear quarterstaff, 1000 gp in diamond dust, spell component pouch, 135 gp, belt pouch, fine robe

Fortunately, Sir Richard and Brother Carthus travel with one sensible person. The wizard takes a longer view of these things. He believes that even if the battle today is lost, there will be chances to try again. As a result, the wizard has an ace up his sleeve. He has learned in his research about the anti-teleportation shield that surrounds the Horn. Erik discovered a journal of a wizard who travelled with the Victor and using that journal discovered a method to bypass the shield. Erik (or Tacitus) can teleport out of the Horn. And he will -- taking his friends with him -- if things go bad. The wizard has a safe house prepared in Ghastenhall (where he keeps his spellbook by the way) and will teleport the entire party there if defeat looks eminent. Remember that Erik is a brilliant man and he knows when defeat is likely.

Meinhard Mott aka "Mad Meinhard"

CR 9

XP 6,400

Human barbarian 5/fighter 5

CG Medium humanoid

Init +2; Senses Perception +4

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 10, flat-footed 15 (+7 armor, +2 Dex, -2 rage)

hp 105 (10 HD; 5d12+5d10+45)

Fort +12, Ref +4, Will +4; +1 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +1, improved uncanny dodge, trap sense +1

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft

Melee +1 *vicious greatsword* +19/+14 (2d6+13/17-20 plus 2d6 vicious damage) Note: It does 1d6 damage to Meinhard as well every time he hits.

Ranged javelin +12 (1d6+6)

Special Attacks rage (14 rounds/day), rage powers (intimidating glare, strength surge +5), weapon training (heavy blades +1)

TACTICS

Before Combat Meinhard Mott is a superstitious sort and mostly does not care to have arcane magic used on him. Still, he gladly accepts any aid the cleric gives him. When he goes into battle against evil the cleric usually pauses to bless his weapon.

During Combat 'Rage and charge' sums up both Meinhard's battle strategy and philosophy of life. He is a born weapon-breaker and loves to shatter the prized weapon of his foe.

Morale Meinhard respected only one man in his life -- his brother Franz. They disagreed about everything. Meinhard certainly never cared for the flighty young trophy wife his brother got saddled with. But deep down he loved his brother. And now he's certain that the people before him caused his brother's death. Mad Meinhard is going to rip them open and carve his brother's names in their guts. No surrender! No retreat!

STATISTICS

Str 22, Dex 14, Con 18, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 12

Base Atk +10; CMB +16 (+20 sunder); CMD 28 (30 vs. sunder)

Feats Dazzling Display, Greater Sunder, Improved Critical (greatsword), Improved Sunder, Intimidating Prowess, Power Attack, Shatter Defenses, Weapon Focus (greatsword), Weapon Specialization (greatsword)

Skills Acrobatics +13 (+17 jump), Climb +10, Handle Animal +5, Intimidate +18 (+20 when raging), Perception +4, Ride +4, Survival +5, Swim +9

Languages Common

SQ armor training 1, fast movement

Gear +1 *breastplate*, +1 *vicious greatsword*, javelins (5), poorly maintained traveller's garb, 2385 gp in coinage and jewelry kept in a ratty sackcloth bag.

The paladin and the cleric will not be pleased with the wizard for forcing them to survive this fight, but they will get over it in time. Your goal is this -- try to have at least Sir Richard survive this fight. You could always hand wave it when he appears later in the adventure path that he was restored by a miracle of Mitra. But it is more satisfying if he gets away on his own. Regardless, win or lose, Sir Richard will be back.

Regardless, if the PCs can survive the Sons of Balentyne and still retain control of the Sanctum, they've done it. They have held the Horn! They have done their master's bidding even though the mission was insane. At last the time has come to complete the ritual and to call forth the darkness known as Vetra-Kali Eats-the-Eyes.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

With the arrival of midnight the ritual is complete. The *Silver Seal* shatters into dust exploding with considerable force doing 6d6 good-aligned damage to everything in twenty feet. Then the portal opens -- a swirling gateway into eternal night. From the portal echoes a familiar voice as alien and malevolent as ever. "Za'Vo!" -- "I am." From it emerges Vetra-Kali.

"My eyes," the daemon cries. "Where are my eyes?"

Currently blind, the daemon will trade a service for each of his emerald eyes. When received, he eats the jewels and then they appear glowing with green malevolence in his skull. Wise parties will use one service to ask the daemon to "do us no harm" as the "Dirges" recommend. For once Vetra-Kali has all three eyes in his skull, he decides to test his new might by killing something mortal. The first mortal creature Vetra-Kali encounters who he is not contractually obligated to pass over, Vetra-Kali slays. He covers himself in the warm mortal blood. "It is good," he caws in his high-pitched carrion-bird voice, "to be home."

Hopefully, the PCs also ask for the Tears of Achlys. "My gift to the world? You wish it? Do you swear that you will see it dispersed among the mortals?" Regardless of their answer Vetra-Kali will give up his plague in exchange for his *Eyes* but a promise to inflict this pestilence on Talin-garde earns a cackle of delight.

And then there is the third task. This can be anything the PCs like though Vetra-Kali is not omnipotent. He could create a medium magic item (worth 10,000 gp or less) for them or impart some sort of unholy blessing. He could grant the entire cadre of villains immunity to disease, for example.

Anything that Vetra-Kali gives will be tainted with his daemoniac majesty. For example, if Vetra-Kali makes you immune to disease you will occasionally be spontaneously contagious to others who do not share your immunity. Exactly what effect this has on the game is left to the Game Master's wicked imagination.

Story Award: Completing the Ritual is a CR 10 reward (9,600 XP).

With the openness of the third gift, there is the possibility of a double cross. The PCs could command the daemon prince "leave this plane of existence and never return." What Vetra-Kali cannot be commanded to do is give up his eyes. Regardless, a double cross does make sense. After all, our villains may be wicked but really, who wants an uncontrolled plague daemon running rampant on what will one day (hopefully) be their island?



Act Four: Five Days To Darkness

Vetra-Kali Eats-the-Eyes, Daemon Prince of Pestilence CR 15**XP 51,200**

NE Large outsider (daemon, evil, extraplanar)

Advanced unique six-armed leukodaemon

Init +13; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *deathwatch*, *detect good*; **Perception** +24**Aura** infectious aura (50 ft.)**DEFENSE****AC** 27, **touch** 18, **flat-footed** 18 (+9 **Dex**, +9 **natural**, -1 **size**)**hp** 189 (14d10+112)**Fort** +13, **Ref** +18, **Will** +16**DR** 15/good or silver; **Immune** acid, death effects, disease, poison; **Resist** cold 15, electricity 15, fire 15**SR** 24**OFFENSE****Speed** 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (average)**Melee** bite +18 (1d8+9), 3 claws +18 (1d6+9 plus *rend*), 3 *large* +2 *corrosive daggers* +21 (1d6+11 plus 1d6 acid and contagion)**Ranged** 3 *large* +2 *corrosive daggers* +21 (1d6+11 plus 1d6 acid and contagion)**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.**Special Attack** breath of flies, *rend* (3 claws, 1d6+13)**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 14th; concentration +19)Constant – *deathwatch*, *detect good*At will – *contagion* (DC 19), *dispel magic*, *greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only)1/day – *harm* (DC 21), *summon* (1d3 leukodaemon only, 100%)**TACTICS**

During Combat Vetra-Kali relishes hand to hand combat. The visceral experience of slicing his opponents to ribbons appeals to the daemon prince. So he flies at his enemies cackling madly and repeating the phrase “Eats the eyes!” over and over again. He uses his *breath of flies* power to attack large groups of foes. He uses *harm* if one foe proves particularly resilient to his blows.

Morale In his sanctum, Vetra-Kali has no place to run. The daemon prince fights to the death.

STATISTICS**Str** 29, **Dex** 28, **Con** 27, **Int** 20, **Wis** 25, **Cha** 20**Base Atk** +14; **CMB** +23; **CMD** 42**Feats** Alertness, Hover, Improved Initiative, Point-Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (dagger)**Skills** Fly +24, Heal +24, Knowledge (arcane) +22, Knowledge (planes) +22, Knowledge (religion) +22, Perception +28, Sense Motive +28, Stealth +22, Survival +21, Use Magic Device +22**Languages** Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft. Gear 3 +2 *large corrosive daggers*, *tears of achlys***SPECIAL ABILITIES**

Breath of Flies (Su) Once per minute as standard action, Vetra-Kali can unleash a cloud of corpse-bloated, biting black flies in a 20-foot cone. Those caught in the cone take 10d6 points of slashing damage. A DC 23 Reflex save halves this damage. Those who take any damage are also sickened for one minute. In addition, the flies linger for 1d4+1 rounds, congealing into a buzzing 20-foot square cloud centered on the cone's original point of origin. Any creature that ends its turn in this cloud must make a DC 23 Reflex save to avoid taking 5d8 points of damage and becoming sickened for 1 minute. This cloud of flies may be dispersed by any area effect that does damage or creates wind of at least strong wind force. All daemons are immune to this effect.

Contagion (Su) Any dagger Vetra-Kali wields is tainted with disease. If a creature is damaged by a dagger it must make a DC 21 Fortitude save or be affected as if by the spell contagion. Any creature need make only one save a round regardless of how many dagger hit it.

Infectious Aura (Su) All creatures within 50 feet of Vetra-Kali take a -4 penalty on Fortitude saves against disease effects.

However, if they do perform this doublecross Vetra-Kali shrieks in immortal rage. “*Traitors! Devil-whores! You have the smell of the failed god Asmodeus all over you! You think you’ve won? You think you’ve outsmarted me?! Taste my vengeance, impudent mortals!*” And with that, Vetra-Kali swallow’s the third eye, vanishes from this plane and the Horn begins to shake. Vetra-Kali has left and he has taken the magic that supports the much damaged Horn with him.

The Horn collapses. Not immediately. It begins to shake and sway. The sound of great columns of stone groaning and swaying can be heard. If the PCs say they flee immediately, they need roll nothing. They and all their minions who can flee, do so. But the Horn of Abaddon is no more. It collapses into a pile of wrecked stone and bad memories.

Bonus Award: Award a CR 10 reward (9,600 XP) for betraying Vetra-Kali.

SUCCESS

Only one thing defines success in the mind of Adrastus Thorn. Did the PCs acquire “The Tears of Achlys”? Nothing else matters.

With the tears aquired, the PCs have completed their mission. If Tiadora is summoned, she merely examines the vial carefully making sure it is genuine. “Well done, my lords,” she says without any trace of her usual sarcastic wit. “I will inform our master.” She then teleports away. She returns moments later with a pouch full of emeralds worth 20,000 gp. She hands the pouch to the PCs. “The master sends his regards. You work here in Farholde is done. You must make your way to the great city of Ghastenhall. There you will meet a fellow who will know how to best use the terrible weapon you hold in your hands. This letter gives the details.” The letter and the journey to Ghastenhall are detailed in Book Three “Tears of the Blessed”.

FAILURE

In the face of failure, Thorn is inconsolable. Remember that with the iron circlets he has been scrying the PCs on and off this entire time. He knows they’ve failed almost immediately. He teleports to them with Tiadora in tow. “Idiots! Buffoons! Incompetents! First the Third and the Fourth fail me and now my Seventh and Ninth repeat their disgrace. It is only be the Fire-Axe’s tactical brilliance that this plan sputters on at all! Argh, I can’t bear the sight of you. Get out of here. Get you to Ghastenhall. I care not how. Maybe there we can salvage some small part of this disaster.”

They teleport away.

TROUBLESHOOTING

This is a complex adventure and its easy to misremember everything the game may require of you. Keep notes on where everyone important is and then know when to ignore it. Strive for the dramatic rather than the accurate.

I DON'T WANT TO SUMMON A DAEMON!

This is a valid complaint. The party is likely largely lawful evil. Maybe they think performing a daemonic ritual is a bad idea. They're right by the way. It is a bad idea. Using the "Tears of Achlys" is not going to end well.

It doesn't matter. They signed the Pact of Thorns in Book One. They have to obey their master Cardinal Thorn and he is obsessed with getting the Tears of Achlys. He will not be dissuaded. So, the PCs may have genuine reservations but they must complete the ritual.

This is a tremendously open-ended adventure. The PCs can do almost anything they can imagine to defend their dungeon. But there is one plot hook they can't ignore. They must go to the Horn of Abaddon. Otherwise, we have no adventure.

THEY NEVER FOUND THE REDOUBT

The PCs have to find the Redoubt (C13). Inside that hidden chamber is the ritual. But it is possible that despite Zikomo yelling at them about the importance of the room with the blue slime, they may simply not search C12. What then?

If they really and truly miss it then have Ezra Thrice-Damned be able to sense the *Eyes of Vetra-Kali*. Perhaps when they meet him, he explicitly tells them "I sense a jewel in the lower caverns." He refuses to give up the *Eye of Hatred* unless they first recover the *Eye of Vigilance*. That should be enough to get a second search instigated.

THEY LEFT THE DEATH PRIEST A STATUE

They don't really need Halthus the Flayer, they just need the *Eye* in his pocket. The same solution as the missing the Redoubt works here. "I see the second *Eye* just below us on the second level. It is encased in stone."

If they bust Halthus to rubble getting the jewel, the ritual can still continue. A dedicated search around Farholde will turn up a few of the descendants of some of the Sons who are now converts to the worship of Mitra. These people have the privilege of being eligible to be sacrificed at not one but a two different points during the ritual. What an honor!

THEY KILLED SIR VALIN DARIAN

So the PCs have killed the one and only relative of the Victor in Farholde. Only too late did they realize his importance. The ritual is now impossible to fulfill. What can be done? This is not a problem -- this is an opportunity. If the PCs don't have access to *raise dead*, there is an NPC cleric who does -- Temperance Avigail, Abbess of the Order of Saint Cynthia-Celeste. She would gladly save Sir Valin's life. She even has the needed diamond in the Abbey vaults. Of course, what she would not do is then turn him over to pack of Asmodeans.

So, the PCs can make up for their failure by walking right into Abbey of Saint Cynthia-Celeste (don't forget your disguises and *undetectable alignment* spells!) and getting brave Sir Valin raised from the dead. And then abducting him so they can kill him again. The exact details of that heist are left to you, but suffice to say that if our villains can pull this one off, they will not soon forget this exploit.

BUNKERING IN THE SANCTUM

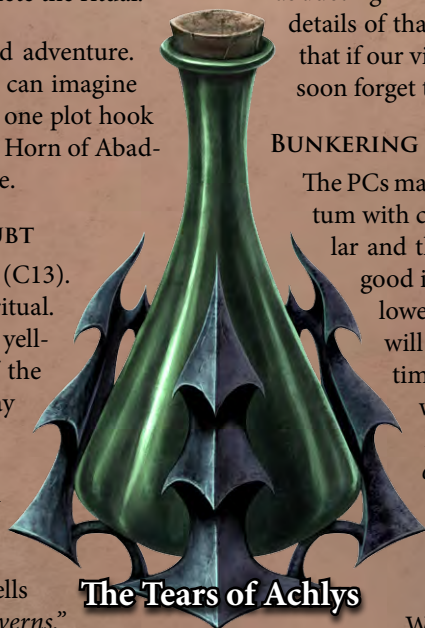
The PCs may have the brilliant idea to seal the Sanctum with conjured stone walls or something similar and then never leave. This may seem like a good idea, but it isn't. If the PCs abandon the lower levels, the various adventuring parties will eventually clear them. Given enough time they will find the Spiral and a stone wall or two will not stop them. Erik the Falconer has a scroll of *passwall*. *Wall of force* can be teleported past. They will crack any barrier the PCs throw at them. Feel free to explicitly tell this to high wisdom villains.

Why are the adventurers so persistent?

The good guys know something evil is happening in the Horn. The inquisitor, the silver dragon, the avoral and the paladin (just to name a few) will not rest till they find it. Given enough time they will ally into one unstoppable good-guy strike force. Bunkering is folly.

But more importantly, it's boring. Counting the days is far from villainous fun. It's best to have many relatively balanced small fights rather than one over-long apocalyptic onslaught. So, force the PCs to scatter their forces.

Bottled up servitors squabble. Minor tremors knock down stone walls. The sacrifices sicken and almost die before their appointed time from the lingering pestilent aura of the Sanctum. In short, find ways to make the PCs more active. The author has tried to aid you. Many events are designed to get the PCs out of their holes.



The Tears of Achlys

MASTERS OF THE WICKED: BUILDING YOUR OWN EVIL ORGANIZATION

Would it truly be a villainous campaign without minions? I think not. But keeping track of an organization can be a tedious affair. So, with this optional system we abstract the paper work and help you skip the bookkeeping and instead get back to the glorious business of evil.

HOW DO I BUILD AN EVIL ORGANIZATION?

Mechanically, the answer is take the Leadership feat. When you take the Leadership feat you receive a cohort as normal but instead of receiving followers, you become the master of an evil organization. If multiple PCs buy the Leadership feat they must choose whether they are each starting their own organization or if they are pooling to form a council of villainy.

There are advantages to both. Councils can hit higher target numbers but control can be an issue. Individual groups are weaker but there is no question of control.

THE SIX ABILITY SCORES

Much like a PC, an evil organization has six ability scores that define them. Every score ranges from -5 to +10. These scores modify both action and skill rolls.

Where a PC has Strength, Organizations are **Ruthless**. Ruthless is the ability to get violent things done. If Ruthless ever hits -5, your organization cannot take any violent actions.

Where a PC has Dexterity, Organizations have **Secrecy**. Secrecy is the ability to conceal your organization and its operations. If Secrecy ever reaches -5, your organization becomes a household name in Talingarde.

Where a PC has Constitution, Organizations have **Survivability**. Survivability is your organization's ability to survive adversity. If Survivability ever hits -5, your organization has ceased to exist.

Where a PC has Intelligence, Organizations have **Connections**. Connections is your ability to get nonviolent tasks done. If Connections ever hits -5, your organization can take no skilled actions.

Where a PC has Wisdom, Organizations have **Espionage**. Espionage is the ability to acquire information others don't want you to have. If Espionage ever hits -5, your organization can take no espionage actions.

Where a PC has Charisma, Organizations have **Loyalty**. Loyalty is your minions devotion to their masters. If Loyalty ever hits -5, your organization falls apart.

An organization's scores start at zero. Each master with a positive charisma modifier has that many points to spend increasing the scores. No score can initially be raised above +4. After creation, changes to charisma no longer effects scores. Scores change from game effects and when a master gains a level -- a master then adds +1 to a score of their choice. No score may ever exceed +10.

ACTIONS

Actions represent an evil organizations ability to get things done. Every week you command your evil organization to perform actions. The maximum number is determined by adding the leader's level + current Charisma modifier and then consulting this chart.

Level + Charisma Mod.	Actions per Week
9 or less	0
10	1
11	1
12	1
13	2
14	2
15	3
16	3
17	4
18	4
19	5
20	5
21	6
22	7
23	8
24	9
25 or more	10

If the evil organization is ruled by a council, every leader contributes his actions to a pool. That is the total number of actions an organization may take per week.

THE ACTION CHECK

When an action is performed, this usually involves an Action Check. This roll is the relevant score plus a d20. A Secrecy Check, for example, is d20 + Secrecy.

Every action check will have a target number assigned by the Game Master. To succeed an Action Check must equal or beat that number. A natural 1 is always a failure. A natural 20 often improves the checked score.

Target numbers are assigned by the Game Master based on difficulty given the current circumstances:

Target Number	Descriptor
8	Easy
12	Average
16	Difficult
20	Very Difficult
25	Almost Impossible

"YOU HAVE FAILED ME FOR THE LAST TIME"

Any time you are unhappy with any Action Check, you can execute the minion who failed you and demand that the other try again if they don't want to meet the same fate. You may reroll the failure. You can only reroll once per Action Check and executing the minion so callously does shake the other minions -- you take a -1 to Loyalty.

THE ACTION LIST

This is a list of actions an evil organization can attempt. It is not comprehensive and with GM permission other actions may be permitted. Level always refers to the level of the highest level PC leader of the organization.

Abduct Peasants (violent action): You need peasants (lvl 1-3 commoners) for your gruesome experiments or perhaps as monster chow. Roll a Ruthless Check.

Success: You abduct 2d6 Peasants

Failure: You abduct no one.

Natural 1: Failure and -1 to Secrecy.

Natural 20: Success and +1 Ruthless.

Assassination (violent action): Your minions attempt to kill someone. Roll a Ruthless Check. Important NPCs are often immune to this action.

Success: The target dies. -1 to Secrecy.

Failure: The target does not die.

Natural 1: The target does not die and minions are captured. -1 to Secrecy and Survivability.

Natural 20: The target dies and it looks like an accident. +1 to Ruthless.

Criminal Enterprise (violent action): Your organization uses crime to acquire funds. Roll a Ruthless Check.

Success: Level*1d6*10 gp is acquired.

Failure: You are revealed. -1 to Secrecy

Natural 1: Failure and -1 to Survivability

Natural 20: Success and +1 to Ruthless

Frame Someone (espionage action): Your minions plant evidence to convince the law that someone is guilty of some unsavory crime. Roll an Espionage Check.

Success: It works!

Failure: It doesn't work.

Natural 1: It doesn't work and your minions get caught. -1 to Secrecy and Survivability.

Natural 20: Success and +1 to Espionage.

Gather Information (skilled action): Your organization tries to gather three random rumors (see page 9) or tries to answer three questions that might be know about town. Roll a Connections Check.

Success: The questions are answered.

Failure: You receive 1 random rumor.

Natural 1: You learn nothing.

Natural 20: Success plus +1 to Connections.

Grave-Robbing (skilled action): Your organization violates graves to acquire corpses and skeletons for you.

Success: 2d6 corpses or skeletons are acquired.

Failure: You are revealed. -1 to Secrecy

Natural 20: 4d6 are acquired instead.

Natural 1: As failure, but a number of minions are caught and hanged. -1 to Survivability.

Guard Duty: You assign your organization to guard a location for a week. This creates an encounter equal to a CR of the level of the highest level master -2.



Hunt Beasts (violent action): You order the capture of wild beasts to guard your base. Roll A Ruthless Check.

Success: Roll 1d10. The minions catch:

- 1 - 1d3 Snakes, Venomous (CR 1)
- 2 - 1d3 Giant Spiders (CR 1)
- 3 - 1d2 Crocodiles (CR 2)
- 4 - 1d2 Snake, Constrictor (CR 2)
- 5 - 1d2 Giant Leeches (CR 2)
- 6 - 1d2 Giant Toads (CR 2)
- 7 - 1d2 Tatzlwyrms (CR 2)
- 8 - Giant Mantis (CR 3)
- 9 - Giant Scorpion (CR 3)
- 10 - Chupacabra (CR 3)

Failure: Minions catch nothing.

Natural 1: Monsters catch minions.

Survivability -1.

Natural 20: They catch a hydra (CR 4)

Indoctrinate: Your minions have grown quarrelous and forget their place. Teach them the meaning of obedience. Loyalty +1 up to a maximum of zero.

Lay Low: Your organization keeps out of the spotlight for a while. Secrecy +1 up to a maximum of zero.

Legitimate Enterprise (skilled action): Your organization uses legitimate means to acquire funds. Roll a Connections Check.

Success: Level*(1d4-1)*10 gp is acquired.

Failure/Natural 1: no consequences

Natural 20: Success and +1 to Connections

Recover: Your organization stays out of danger and focuses on recruiting new members. Survivability +1 up to a maximum of zero.

Spread Disinformation (espionage action): You organization tries to convince the populace of something isn't true.

Success: It works!

Failure: It doesn't work.

Natural 1: Failure and -1 to Espionage.

Natural 20: It works! +1 to Espionage.

Torture Captives (violent action): Extract information from "guests" of your dungeon. Roll a Ruthless check.

Success: You receive answers to three questions.

Failure: No results.

Nat. 1: The prisoner dies(50%) or escapes(50%).

Natural 20: Success and +1 to Ruthless.

Training (skilled action): Increase Ruthless, Competence or Espionage by +1 up to a maximum of zero.

Trap Building (skilled action): Roll a Connections check to fix a trap.

Success: Spend the money to build the trap.

Failure: The traps are not built.

Natural 1: Failure and half the cost is wasted.

Natural 20: Success and Connections +1

Trap Repair (skilled action): Roll a Connections Action Check to fix three traps.

Success: Spend the money to fix the traps.

Failure: The traps are not fixed.

Natural 1: Failure and half the cost is wasted.

Natural 20: Success and Connections +1

ORGANIZATION EVENTS

Every month roll a d20 for organizational events. This roll cannot be rerolled by executing a minion.

1: Disquiet in the ranks. Make a Loyalty Check.

Success: Lose an action next week

Failure: Desertions. All Scores -1.

Natural 1: Assassination Attempt. The Game Master puts together a level appropriate encounter based around the fact that your minions want you dead.

Natural 20: No penalties

2-6: No Events

7:Capable Leadership. Gain a bonus action next week.

8: Times are Hard. Your minions have suffered more losses than usual. Can they endure this time of trials? Make a Survivability Check.

Success: They endure. No effect.

Failure: Survivability -1.

Natural 1: Survivability -2 and Loyalty -2.

Natural 20: ...but they'd follow you into hell.

Survivability +1 and Loyalty +1.

9: Revealed! You are being hunted. Can they find your organization before its too late? Roll a Secrecy Check.

Success: You are everywhere and nowhere.

No effect.

Failure: The enemy are closer to the truth than you'd like. Secrecy -1.

Natural 1: Survivability -2 and Secrecy -2.

Natural 20: The tables turn and the hunters are the hunted. Secrecy +1 and Ruthless +1.

10: Recruitment Opportunity. Can you ever have enough minions? Make a Survivability Check.

Success: Your ranks grow. Survivability +1.

Failure/Natural 1: No effect.

Natural 20: Rapid growth. Survivability +2.

11: Rumors and Whispers. -1 to Loyalty.

12: Your Organization is a Shadow. +1 to Secrecy.

13: Infiltration Opportunity. You have a chance to get an agent amongst your enemies. Are you sneaky enough take advantage of it? Make an Espionage Check (DC 20).

Success: You have get an agent in their ranks. Espionage +1.

Failure: The spy is caught and executed. Survivability -1.

Natural 1: The spy is caught and talks! Secrecy -1 and Survivability -1.

Natural 20: You get a trusted spy in their midsts. Secrecy +1 and Espionage +2.

14: Talkative Minion. -1 to Secrecy.

15: You Give Them So Much. +1 to Loyalty.

16: The Cause Grows. +1 to Survivability.

17: Turf War. Other criminal organizations try to take your turf. Can you defend what's yours? Make a Ruthless Check (DC 20).

Success: You defend it well. Ruthless +1.

Failure: You lose ground. Ruthless -1.

Natural 1: Your organization receives a thrashing. Ruthless -1 and Survivability -1.

Natural 20: Those who dared challenge you are now your minions. Ruthless +1 and Survivability +1.

18: Unnecessary Squabbles. -1 to Survivability.

19: A Capers. This job could make you rich if you can pull it off. Make a Connections check (DC 20).

Success: Level*1d6*100 gp. Connections +1.

Failure: Bridges are burned. Connections -1.

Natural 1: A massive blunder. Connections -1 and Secrecy -1.

Natural 20: Masterfully done. Success plus Secrecy +1.

20: Rare Opportunity. You have a chance to really expand your power base. Make an Action Check of your choice (target number 15).

Success: Opportunity Seized! +1 to the score of your choice.

Failure/Nat. 1: Opportunity missed. No effect.

Natural 20: Success beyond your wildest dreams! +1 to all scores.

ORGANIZATIONS AS SKILL BONUSES

Organizations can aid PCs in one more way. They can provide circumstance bonuses to skill checks. For example, making an Intimidate skill check while being flanked by a half-dozen of the most ruthless, infamous criminal thugs in the city is definitely worth a bonus. In that case, you would add your Ruthless score to the Intimidate check. Being assisted this way can count as an action at the Game Master's discretion.

USING A COHORTS

A cohort can be assigned to aid your minions. Any cohort so tasked is unavailable for anything else that week. They are busy with underlings. A cohort adds their relevant ability score modifier to an Action Check. For example, Grumblejack the ogre could add his +6 Strength modifier to any violent actions. If an action aided by a cohort loses Survivability, the cohort must make a Fortitude save vs a DC equal to the task difficulty or die.

COUNCILS OF THE WICKED

A council is formed when a single organization has more than one master. The advantage is that the organization has only one set of scores. The disadvantage is that the masters may disagree. The council votes on any proposed action. In case of a tie vote, an action is lost to squabbling and indecision.

RECRUITING MINIONS IN FARHOLDE

Note: Everything before this point can be copied and given to players. This section is for the GM only.

The default method of acquiring minions is via contact with the Baron Vandermir (see Act One, Event Three). His orphans (see the Gazetteer below) making a perfect recruiting pool. The orphans are mostly human (though the occasional half-elf is not uncommon) and are capable of performing all of the various minion actions.

If the PCs don't ally with the Baron or don't trust him, they could recruit toughs from Drownington. These lazy thugs balk at real work (like Legitimate Enterprise), but a persuasive leader can whip them into shape.

If the PCs wrangle an alliance with the boggards (see Act Two, Event Two), they receive one bonus 'Boggard' action a week for every eight boggards alive in the tribe. Since the maximum size is 32, that means a fully 'stocked' boggard tribe can provide four actions a week. The boggards are terrible at espionage and skilled actions (assess a -4 penalty if you allow the actions at all), but are perfectly capable of doing violent tasks. Hurting things is a venerable boggard tradition after all. Of course, these actions are lost when Zikomo betrays the party in Act Four.

GAZETTEER: FARHOLDE

Note: This article builds on the *Talingarde Gazetteer* found in Book One: Knot of Thorns.

Farholde

CG small city

Corruption +0; **Crime** -4; **Economy** +1; **Law** +3; **Lore** +0; **Society** +3

Qualities insular, strategic location, superstitious

Danger 5

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government autocracy chosen by the monarchy in Matharyn

Population 9,500 (7,500 humans; 1,100 half-elves; 650 elves; 125 dwarves; 90 halflings; 35 other)

Notable NPCs

Lord Argus Welshire, Duke of Farholde, Commander of the Castle Hamorhall (LG male human aristocrat 3/fighter 6 – absent, he is off leading the garrison in war against the Fire-Axe)

Sir Valin Darian, Knight of the Alerion, 2nd in command of the Castle Hamorhall (LG male human cavalier 9)

Baron Arkov Vandermir (LE male half-elf aristocrat 3/sorcerer 7)

Abbess Temperance Avigail of the Order of Saint Cynthia-Celeste (LG female human cleric 9)

Hugo Hallynbeck, mayor and reeve of Farholde (CG male half-elf expert 5)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 4,400 gp; **Purchase Limit** 25000 gp ; **Spellcasting** 4th level divine, 4th level arcane

Minor Items 4d4; **Medium Items** 3d4; **Major Items** 1d4

Farholde is the northernmost colony of Talingarde. This small city is a backwater, largely isolated from its parent nation by distance and danger. No King of Talingarde has visited Farholde since the Victor sat upon the throne. And yet, Farholde is a keystone of the realm's defense. Without control of the delta that feeds into Lake Scardynn (pronounced SCAR-den) there would be no credible defense of the Borderlands.

Of course, today that matters little. The Watch Wall is already broken far to the east and war burns bright across the Borderlands. The bugbear horde relentlessly presses south towards the city of Daveryn far away from distant Farholde. Castle Hamorhall, Farholde's great bastion, is almost empty. Its commander and garrison have left to join the war effort leaving behind only a skeleton defense. Farholde seems now more isolated than ever.

And yet, here in this backwater, the fate of tens of thousands of Talireans will be decided. This could be Farholde's moment of triumph, where alone it met a great evil and brought it low. Or, this could be its darkest hour, where less than a day's ride from its walls, the city did nothing as a monster was born.



A CITY OF FLOODS

The key to understanding Farholde is water. Almost every structure in the city of Farholde is built on one of nine hills. In fact, its old Iraen name is actually Cannoch Naoi (pronounced Can-nock Noi as in noise) which means literally Nine Hills. The reason for this arrangement is simple – Farholde floods.

Almost every year in the spring, Lake Scardynn, brimming with mountain runoff, overflows its banks and floods Farholde. These floods are usually predictable and brief. They have never in memory crested any of the nine hills.

These floods are a boon for Farholde. They deposit rich lake sediment all over the delta plane and create rich arable land for the growing season. No one in Farholde worries about leaving fields fallow or fortifying their soil. The mighty Scardynn handles all such labor. But these floods also mean if you build a structure beneath the floodline, you had better be prepared for it to be underwater for at least two weeks a year.

Besides agriculture and the garrison, Farholde has another important industry – fishing. Though the sea is rough and dangerous and few bother to fish its open waters, Lake Scardynn is deep and densely populated with salmon, sea cat and amberscale. Even the occasional sturgeon is caught and both their meat and caviar are prized delicacies.

The prize every captain dreams of catching though is the rare giant crayfish. No one knows why these monsters sometimes appear or why they grow gigantic, but specimens longer than seven feet have been captured in Lake Scardynn. The creatures are dangerous and more than one over-ambitious young fisherman has lost an arm to the beasts. But when one is brought back to town, buyers pay premium coin for delicious giant cray-steaks that barely fit on dinner plates. Grilled and served with melted butter there is no greater delicacy.

The quays where the fishing boats dock are stout stone affairs designed to survive weeks underwater. They jut out in to the delta all along the southern bank. The northern bank has only one – a broad military quay where soldiers and supplies are unloaded to provision the Castle Hamorhall. Usually the quay is home to dozens of war galleys and supply barges, but now they are all gone transporting their troops to the eastern front.



A CONQUERED CITY

Farholde did not always belong to Talingarde. Less than three hundred years ago, it was a small hill fort controlled by a barbaric Iraen chieftain. How long the Iraen lived and ruled there, scholars can only guess but a farmer tilling a field still might find a crude iron arrowhead or a broken bit of pottery that shows the march of countless centuries.

The half-elven king Accarius IV called the Architect personally led the army that besieged the Iraen hill fort Casrhalla (pronounced Kaz-ra-halla rhymes with Valhalla) and through might of arms took control of Farholde. Though he burned down the original fort, he rebuilt a castle upon its foundations. This was the first establishment of the Hamarhall, named for its distinctive shape. It became one of the first nine watchtowers of the Watch Wall which guarded the frontier.

Accarius' troops made permanent camp atop the nine hills and it is this camp that is direct descendant of Farholde today. Some of the oldest street names like 'Quartermarch' and 'Kingscamp' hint at this origin.

The Iraen tribesmen are not memories. They inhabit the Caer Bryr in great numbers and even a few still make Farholde their home. Some worry that the forest-dwellers merely wait for a chance when Talingarde is weak enough that these barbarian may take back what was once theirs.

The truth is that the forest-dwelling Iraen nowadays prefer their secluded glens. As for the town-dwelling Iraen, so interbred are they with the Talireans, that they are virtually indistinguishable. Their greatest contribution is the proliferation of unpronounceable place names, red hair and green eyes.

THE CITY IN THE JAWS

With a little imagination, you can see that the delta is actually a great monster closing its jaws upon Farholde. The town seems like little more than a morsel this great beast will soon devour. Though simply a coincidence of geography, this is an apt analogy.

North is the savage frozen frontier – the land beyond the Watch Wall. It is the domain of the bugbear tribes, the mighty Naatanuk and the enigmatic ice elves. More than once, Hamarhall has been besieged by these barbarous neighbors. Every time the Talireans have fought them off. If the invaders tried to bypass Hamarhall, the fortress deployed its war galleys armed with batteries of ballistae and battering rams. These warships made quick work of any crude flotilla the bugbears could cobble together.

To the south is the Caer Bryr (usually simply called the Briar by locals), an endless and alien jungle. The forest teems with barbaric tribes with different religions and tongues, weird ruins of inestimable antiquity and vicious super-predators that do not distinguish between men and prey. There are a thousand stories told of the dangers that lurk in the Briar and the terrifying truth is that a great percentage of them relate something close to fact.

In the middle of these wild perils lies Farholde – a thin strand of Talirean civilization. The people of Farholde do not decry their place or their fate. Instead, they take pride in their resilience. Farholde is just shy of three centuries old. For three centuries, bugbear hordes and Briar-born beasts have done their best to wipe it from the map.

Farholde remains.

NOTABLE LANDMARKS OF FARHOLDE

1. HAMARHALL

This grim castle of grey stone overlooks the Scardynn delta from high Hamarhill and remains the most obvious sign of royal might. Usually garrisoned by one hundred soldiers plus officers and support personnel, this castle is not too different from the Watchtower Balentyne (see **Book One: Knot of Thorns**). For the duration of the PC's stay, the castle has lost much of its defensive significance and its garrison is much decreased. Sir Valin Darian (see Act Three, Event Twelve for his statistics) commands twenty overworked soldiers who do their best to maintain patrols and a presence on the walls.

Fresh from burning Balentyne, the PCs might see Hamarhall as a potential target. In truth, attacking the castle is a mistake. Though it will be easy to conquer the tower manned only by Sir Valin and his twenty soldiers (use statistics from Book One, Act Four), all this will accomplish is alerting the citizenry that the town is in danger. The Abbess (see below) and retired soldiery will form an alliance of desperation. A militia will be organized and the town will actually become more secure.

2. THE ACCARIAN BEACON

Where Lake Scardynn meets the sea rises King Accarius' other less famous building project. The lighthouse guides ships into the port through the jagged, rock-strewn breakwaters. It is also anchors one point of the great sea-chain that can be raised to block access to the Scardynn in times of war.

The keeper and guardian of the beacon is actually a hereditary position bestowing a minor noble title. Sir Bonder of the Beacon holds the position today, charged with securing the beacon by a three hundred year old royal decree. He uses that decree to justify maintaining and arming his own gang of toughs. Known officially as the Beacon Watch, everyone in town calls them the Beakers. The Beakers used to be kept in check by the Duke's men, but now Lord Argus and his garrison are gone.

Sir Bonder, an ambitious and ruthless man, has been recruited by Arkov Vandermir into his personal circle. Though not a worshipper of Asmodeus, Sir Bonder is potentially corruptible. This is detailed in Act One, Event Three.

3. CALLIVER GREEN

This gently sloping hill is amongst the highest points south of the Scardynn delta and has become home to the wealthiest residents of Farholde. Access to the Green is blocked by a small private guard post. Without a pass granted by a residents, access is not allowed.

Only six estates stand on the hill: Welshire Hall (the personal estate of the duke himself), Vanderhall (Baron Arkov Vandermir's estate), Beaconhelm (the estate of Sir Bonder of the Beacon), Hallynsgate (home of the mayor and reeve, Hugo Hallynbeck), Cranstyn Spire (owned by Farholde's wealthiest merchant – the lady Shalyn Marsten) and Far Ghasten (an empty but meticulously maintained manor owned by the powerful Ghastens of Ghastenhall).

The six estates surround a large picturesque communal green. This lush private park, once venerated as a holy place by the Iraen, still boasts a great and ancient yew tree, its knotty trunk more than sixteen feet across at its widest. This tree gives the hill its name – Calliver (pronounced Cowl-liver similar to caliber) is a bastardized version of its older name Cannock Ivar, which means literally the Hill of the Yew. Once druids prayed to this old tree, but now it is far more likely that you will find some young noble scion picnicking beneath the vast spread of its countless branches.

4. ABBEY OF SAINT CYNTHIA-CELESTE

Usually called simply the Abbey by locals, this large walled manor house is home to a devout order of Mitran nuns. The nuns are a common sight about town dressed in their dark blue and white habits. These “brides of light” are a chaste and cloistered order, but still must frequently leave their abbey to conduct their business. They are a relatively young order, their founder having been martyred only a hundred and fifty years ago.

Saint Cynthia-Celeste was a powerful cleric of Mitra who frequently ventured into the north. Her greatest achievement was single-handedly defeating a powerful ice devil (a gelugon) known only as Skathyl. Skathyl had manifested on this plane and threatened the peace by unifying an army of northern monsters. It was Saint Cynthia-Celeste who lead a party far to the north and slew the beast. Unfortunately, the saint herself was dealt a mortal blow in the fight and was brought back here by her distraught devotees. Her incorruptible body lies enshrined in a perpetually guarded sarcophagus looking as if she died yesterday. Skathyl's weapon (a large and wickedly ornate +1 *frost glaive*) though is on display in the Abbey's shrine wrapped in chains of silver.

The Order is well regarded throughout Farholde thanks to their many good works. Led by the Abbess Temperance Avigail (the most powerful divine spellcaster in Farholde), the sisters are quick to offer aid. Their magic resources are limited. Though the order has more than three hundred sisters within its walls, less than twenty of them have the ability to use divine magic.

Owing to their founder being a devil-hunter, every sister of the abbey receives some basic military training and they maintain an armory. While this is not well-known about town, now that the garrison is gone the sisters of Saint Cynthia-Celeste are actually the largest fighting force in Farholde. They could must more than a hundred trained fighting nuns backed by divine spellcasters if Farholde were directly endangered.

5. THE VANDERMIR ORPHANAGE

Baron Arkov Vandermir established this orphanage ostensibly to help the most needy of Farholde's children. In truth, the orphanage's actual purpose is to give the Baron muscle. The older boys are taught to fight and steal. Those who excel at this brutality are eventually recruited into the Baron's personal retinue. This gang of toughs does Arkov's dirty work. While the Duke was here, the Baron had to be discrete. But now, the Baron is determined to use all his might to secure his position as the most powerful person in Farholde.

The Orphanage itself is an imposing structure teeming with children of all ages. The buildings are well maintained and the children certainly seem well taken care of. The headmaster, Bergill Mott (LE male human wizard [enchanter] 4) is careful to ensure that the orphanage puts forward a fine official face. Master Mott sees that the orphanage's worst offenses are confined to darkness. Still, it is difficult to contain several score young enterprising thugs and the hill around the orphanage has become a famously crime-ridden neighborhood.

6. BRYRWATCH ("THE TRIDENT")

This small watchtower just outside of Farholde rises on the highest promontory south of the Scardynn delta. It over looks both the edge of the Caer Bryr and the lake. Manned by guards with piercing signal horns, it could alert the town if anything dangerous emerges from the woods. It has a very distinctive shape with two smaller turrets jutting out of the main tower, hence its nickname "The Trident". One turret faces towards the river and one towards the forest.

Like everything else connected with the military, Bryrwatch is garrisoned now only by a skeleton crew. A half dozen soldiers man the small three-floored tower.

7. AULD'IREY

Built upon the largest of the nine hills, this is the oldest section of Farholde and the only part of the town surrounded by a wall. When the hill fort that became Hamorhall fell, there was across the river a small Iraen town. The town surrendered without battle and was captured intact. Auld'Irey (pronounced all-DIARY), a corruption of "Old Iraen", is the rebuilt remains of that settlement.

Today Auld'Irey is the mostly densely populated portion of Farholde. Every available plot has been developed and buildings are stacked upon buildings. The majority of commerce is done here and the lionshare of Farholde's shops, taverns and inns are located in this quarter.

This quarter is not just filled with shops. Many people live here and the oldest houses in Farholde are located here. Once Auld'Irey was the nicest place to live in Farholde but recently that honor has been usurped by the manors of Calliver Green (see above).

Auld'Irey is also where the headquarters of the town watch is located. This ensures that this quarter is the most patrolled and safest public section of the city.

8. TEMPLETON RISE

Located at the highest point in Auld'Irey is the center of all trade in Farholde -- the Templeton Rise. Originally, a pagan Iraen temple, a temple to all the Talirean gods (including both Asmodeus and Mitra) supplanted it. When the Darian dynasty overthrew the Barcan kings, that temple was abandoned and sold to the Marsten family, rich merchants. The family remains the current owners and this is the hub of their mercantile empire.

The lady Shalyn Marsten (the Marsten family a century ago bought a very minor noble title -- thus she is the "lady Marsten") presides over her dominion from this perch. The building is an open hall where goods are traded in bulk. Various merchants maintain stalls where sellers can take their wares in hopes of finding a buyer. At the far end of the hall is the only permanent fixture, the Marsten Offices. The place is loud and furious during business hours as auctions are held one after another.

9. NEWCHURCH

Newchurch is the name of the neighborhood, the hill it sits on and the common title given to the Mitran church at its center. The church was commissioned by the Victor during his visit to Farholde (the same visit during which he raided the Horn). It was this commission that caused the old temple (now the Templeton Rise) to be abandoned and later sold to the Marstens.

The church itself, formally known as the Hall of the Sun Victorious, is perhaps the most majestic building in all of Farholde. It rises in baroque splendor to dominate its hill. Its great central spire, crowned with a Mitran sunburst, can be seen from almost any point in town. The church once had a large staff of clergy. Most of them are gone. They went with Lord Argus to war, serving as healers and spiritual support for the troops. What remains are just a few junior laymen who conduct services and keep the place in order.

10. DROWNINGTON

This is the low-lying middle between Auld'Irey, Newchurch, Estell and Jasperhill. Being one of the lowest areas around the delta, no one sane would live here and yet it is crowded with temporary structures, water-logged shanties and traveller's tents. This transient community is definitely the bad part of town.

It exists because the town watch has repeatedly proven it is loathe to come down here. This is understandable, it is not easy to get to Drownington from Auld'Irey. The bridge that connects Auld'Irey to Newchurch is separated by a wall. The eastern gate that connects Auld'Irey to Estell has no access to Drownington. You have to leave through the north gate and trudge through hundreds of yards of muddy bog to make it to Drownington. The guard rarely bothers. Thus, there is effectively a small lawless zone right in the middle of Farholde. This is Drownington. And if someone needs to avoid officials and doesn't mind the occasional flood, anyone can setup shop here.

Drownington is a maze of transients and cast-offs. Fights and muggings are common. Illegal goods unthinkable to trade up on the hills are openly trafficked here. Desperate prostitutes peddle their wares besides drunken river sailors too broke to afford lodging above.

11. LORD DROWNINGTON'S MANOR

There is only one permanent structure in Drownington built on a slab of rock that is mostly above the flood line (by almost four inches!). There stands a stout stone bunker that has barely survived a hundred floods. A crudely made sign in front reads "Lord Drownington's Manor". Equal parts bar, brothel, fight club, black market and thieves' guild, this is without a doubt the most dangerous place in Farholde.

The Manor is run by a large, unpleasant man named Rubal Thraam (CN male human fighter 4/expert 2). Bald, scarred, mean and possibly the world's most creative wielder of profanity, Rubal was once a captain in the Duke's garrison until he was caught running a prostitution and gambling ring to "increase morale". Rubal was able to avoid being arrested and shipped to Branderscar prison by pinning some of the most heinous acts on underlings. Still, he was dishonorably discharged and ended up here. Rubal killed the last owner in a knife fight and now runs the place as his personal fiefdom.

A night without a knife fight or bar brawl is considered tame at the Manor. But if you want to really know what's going on in Farholde, it's also the best place to hear unfiltered rumors. Just be careful not to steal from Rubal or threaten his girls. Rubal never forgets a grudge.

12. WRECKER ISLE

This large accumulation of pebbles and debris in the river delta is largely seen as navigation hazard these days. In truth, it hides an ancient secret. Buried in the hard earth at the center of the island is the ancient barrow honoring a long-dead druid named Sallain The-Spider-Waits. Completely covered by loose stones and river detritus, the barrow is well concealed. This spirit is the reason that creatures occasionally grow gigantic and fearsome in the delta and the lake beyond -- those creatures are living avatars of the druid-ghost's seething multi-century anger at Farholde's invasion by the Talireans.

This spirit has no direct part to play in this adventure path and is as unlikely to aid agents of Asmodeus as it is to forgive the Talireans. Still, finding the barrow and either destroying or subjugating the spirit might make an interesting side quest. That is left to the Game Master to develop.

13. WESTELL

This low hill has a small rural community that marks the beginning of a collection of loosely affiliated farms that stretch south towards the Caer Bryr's edge. Baron Arkov Vandermir owns a great deal of this farmland and thus possesses a near monopoly on Farholde's food supply. He has used this to grow wealthy indeed. Even though Westell and the Barony of Mir further to the south are the source of his wealth, he prefers to be an absentee landlord and rarely visits.

14. CORGAN'S LANDING

This is a large slab of stone built on the banks of the Scardynn almost two centuries ago. Though it has settled some, it remains comfortably above the flood line. Thus, it is completely filled with warehouses, businesses and offices of all sorts. It is also the home of the Harbormaster's House.

The current harbormaster, Captain Charles Ritkin (LG male human warrior 5/expert 2), is a retired member of the duke's garrison. He is honest, forthright and relentless in enforcing the king's law on the harbors of Farholde. When the war started, he almost reenlisted but was talked out of it by the duke himself. "I need you here, Charlie, keeping my city running," the duke commanded. Harbormaster Ritkin takes this duty very seriously.

Alas that the assistant harbormaster does not. Mallory Ritkin (CN male human rogue 2/expert 2) is Charles' nephew and the retired captain has a total blind spot towards the youngster. Mallory is a corrupt gambler and womanizer who has used his position to live far above his means. He is also completely in the pocket of Baron Arkov Vandermir.

Farholde

Forests
of the
Savage North



1" = 1/4 mile



Gazetteer: Farholde

DEEPER SHADES OF DARKNESS

Though the PCs are unquestionably villains, the “Way of the Wicked” campaign still assumes a fairly typical party with a good mix of classes and races. What about some more experimental player options? Presented below are five possible options with notes about how to modify the campaign to better fit these atypical configurations.

THE LAST CULT

The Asmodean Purges begun under Markadian IV called the Zealous are complete. The last few hold outs have been captured and the last cults have been broken. The infernal scrolls are all burned. The sacrificial altars are all defiled. The horns of hell are broken. The PCs know that they are the last remnants.

At campaign's start, they are being shipped from across Talingarde to Branderscar to face the inquisition of Mitra. They already know the sad truth – there is no one left to sell out. All their brethren are captured or dead. But there is hope. Whispers persist that one last high priest survives hiding in some secret refuge beyond the Watch Wall far to the north. Surely, this dark savior will not abandon the last of his flock in their most desperate hour.

In this variant, everyone plays clerics of Asmodeus. Cleric is an incredibly versatile class. The difference between clerics of evil, fire, law, magic, and trickery is considerable. Yet all of these are domains of Asmodeus. The players will need minions of course. Already as written, they can recruit Grumblejack the ogre, but there will need to be other minions available that allow them to flesh out skills and abilities outside their class.

Multiclassing would be allowed but every character must have more levels of cleric than any other class. Prestige classes that increase clerical spell casting do not count towards this limitation. A cleric 2/rogue 1 would be permissible as would a cleric 5/loremaster 7. A cleric 1/rogue 2 however would not be allowed under this house rule.

At every turn, emphasize this campaign as an (un)holy crusade. They are servants of the devil god and work tirelessly for his exultation. Together they will rebuild the temples that the Asmodean Purges pulled down.

This variant is a particularly simple one to implement. Almost no changes are necessary. Cleric is such a powerful and versatile class that there is little they cannot handle.

THE BLACKFIRE TRIBE

Instead of criminals, the PCs are the captured last remnants of the Blackfire goblin tribe. Every PC must play a goblin. The magistrates of Talingarde haven't bothered to try these weedy little monstrosities with anything. Instead, they are to be publically executed to show the people that the regime works tirelessly to hunt down any dangers that may threaten the populace.

The Blackfire tribe was always an odd one. Instead of being neutral evil, the PCs are lawful evil. The Blackfire tribe always was surprisingly well organized for goblins. But now with their last chieftain slain, those damnable ‘tallies’ seem to have won the day. Is there any way to bust out, hook up with a new boss and make the ‘Tallies’ sorry they ever messed with the Blackfires? We will find out.

Tiadora doesn't visit under the pretense of being a heartbroken wife. Instead, she takes a form of a fiery shadow goblin and infiltrates the prison to deliver a scrap of cloth full of magic pictures. Cardinal Thorn has heard rumors that these goblins hold Asmodeus sacred and he needs goblinoids to safely deliver weaponry to Sakkarot. He tried sending humans – they were eaten.

Instead of a campaign about would-be dark lords, this is a campaign much more about the underdogs triumphant. Everyone always underestimates goblins. They are annoyances to be put down. Who could believe it was a small pack of goblins that infiltrated Balentyne and broke the Watch Wall? Who could ever imagine that it was goblins that seized the Horn of Abaddon and captured the fearful Tears of Achyls? And in the end, who could imagine that Talingarde was brought low not by any great lord of evil, but by a few dedicated little monsters?

THE KNIGHTS OF NESSUS

Thorn will broke no rivals in his dominance over magic. Instead, he seeks to found an order of warriors in service to Asmodeus. There are places in this new order for warriors who face their foe directly and more subtle assassins. The PCs will be Thorn's sword and dagger. With these finely honed weapons, he will make Talingarde bleed.

No spellcasters are permitted – only barbarians, cavaliers, fighters, gunslingers, monks, ninja, rogues and samurai. Further no character may multiclass into a spellcasting class. Any prestige class that grants spells or spell-like abilities is also prohibited. A spell-less ranger class variant has been published that would be appropriate for this campaign. This is not necessarily a low magic campaign -- magic items become true treasures.

This variant requires some modification. Adjust the treasure so that spellcaster friendly items are replaced with those appropriate to the more martial classes. Also remember that any challenge that requires spellcasting is going to be inappropriate for this party. Magic items are still allowed so the party will have some magic, it will just be all item based. Magic healing is likely to be particularly prized.

This campaign is a chance to play a campaign where at last the fighter and the rogue will not be eventually outshined by the wizard and cleric. If nothing else, that alone should be a welcome change. Dark brothers of sword and dagger, unite!

THE COLLEGE OF THORNS

Once the greatest college in all of Talingarde was dedicated to Asmodeus. And then the Church of Mitra came to power and its great library was burned. Any who resisted this fanatic luddite regime joined their books on the pyre. That was decades ago. In secret the College of Thorns yet persists and you are the last of its members.

The college though was betrayed by one of its own members -- the Magister Tacitus of Morimun (see Book One). And now you languish in Branderscar.

This is not the end. You will escape and reclaim the lost secrets of arcane magic and punish Talingarde for its audacity. This time it will not be you who faces the fire. This time, it will be their sorrow that will shake the pillars of heaven.

This is a campaign where everyone gets to play wizards. Everyone must be a specialist wizard. Since everyone will have two prohibited schools, that means no one wizard will have the answer to every problem. They will still need to cooperate. Like the Last Cult above, multi-classing is allowed but restricted.

This variant requires some modification. Cohorts and minions become very important as wizards need protection while they weave their powerful magic. Perhaps from the beginning, Cardinal Thorn sends a couple of soldiers to accompany them on their journey to the north.

This campaign deemphasizes the idea of Asmodeus as patron. Instead the wizards have their own very personal and secular reasons for destroying Balentyne and punishing Talingarde.

What is certain is that this coven of sinister wizards will quickly chafe under their current master. After all, how long can evil wizards tolerate being in the service of a mere ... cleric.

THE INFERNAL THAIN

Before the Talireans came, Talingarde was once ruled by dwarves. Everyone knows that. But what most do not know is when the Talireans arrived, they came as invaders. They besieged dwarven city after city until the great empire of the dwarves was broken. The few poor dwarves you see on the surface today are the servants who turned upon their masters and bowed before the humans. However, some houses of dwarven nobility still survive. This nobility, long corrupted by their worship of Asmodeus (whom they conceive as being a horned bronze-skinned dwarf) have a name -- Duergar.

You are the last duergar house left in Talingarde. You have been discovered by the inquisitors of Mitra and dragged into the hated sunlight. They claim they will deliver justice upon you. Justice?! What do these invaders and usurpers know of justice! After half a millenium of oppression -- what a joke!

In the night as you rot in your cell, a shadow in the form of a beautiful bronze-skinned dwarven female enters and delivers a banner covered in ancient dwarven script. *"You are not alone," the shadow whispers. "Beneath the manor house the greatest of your kin await your escape."* This is how the duergar are delivered the 'veil'.

Cardinal Thorn is not human. He is a duergar lich who dreams of reestablishing an Asmodean dwarven empire upon Talingarde. But first the hated Talireans and their surface dwarf lackeys must be purged. How shall this be done? Through the fire of war will you purify Talingarde. You will destroy them wherever they hide and then one of you will reclaim the title of Infernal Thain. But which one will rule when all is said and done?

The campaign needs little modification. Tiadora and Thorn must change and the Second Knot (Thorn's guards who appear in Book V) should be duergar. Brother Thrane in Book III should be a traitorous dwarf who believes in the return of the Infernal Thain. And the army that comes from the mainland should be dwarven as well.

Using the *iron circlets* the duergar appear as normal dwarves and that is how they will move about Talingarde performing their missions. The duergar can take a feat, Sun Tolerance, that neutralizes their light sensitivity. You may even consider giving this to your PCs as a bonus feat.

SUN TOLERANCE

You have no love for the hated sun, but you have grown resistant to its effects.

Prerequisite: You suffer from light sensitivity.

Benefit: You suffer no penalty from light sensitivity.

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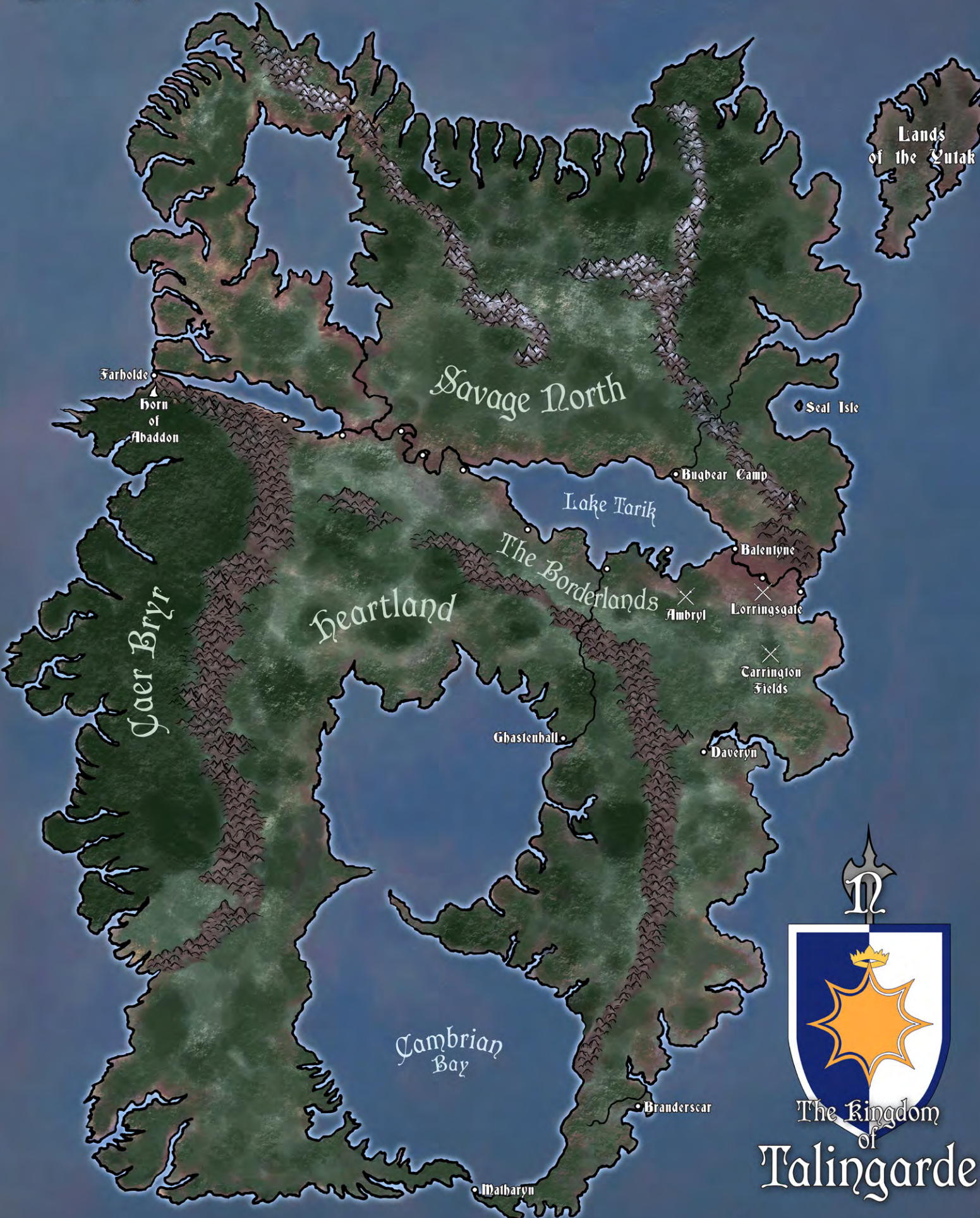
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*Hail Asmodeus, God of Lawyers, Master of Contracts
"He who is the author of a war lets loose the whole contagion of
hell and opens a vein that bleeds a nation to death."*

—Thomas Paine



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of
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