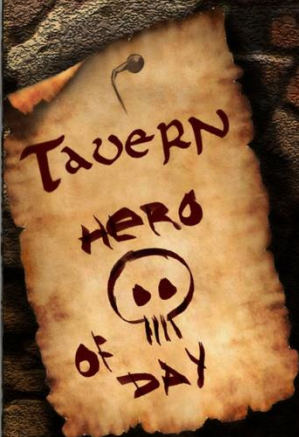


האדוואנטורס שאתם צריכים להאזין להם

SHATTERED SKIES

האדוואנטורס שאתם צריכים להאזין להם

ADVENTURES



TALES FROM THE LAUGHING DRAGON INN

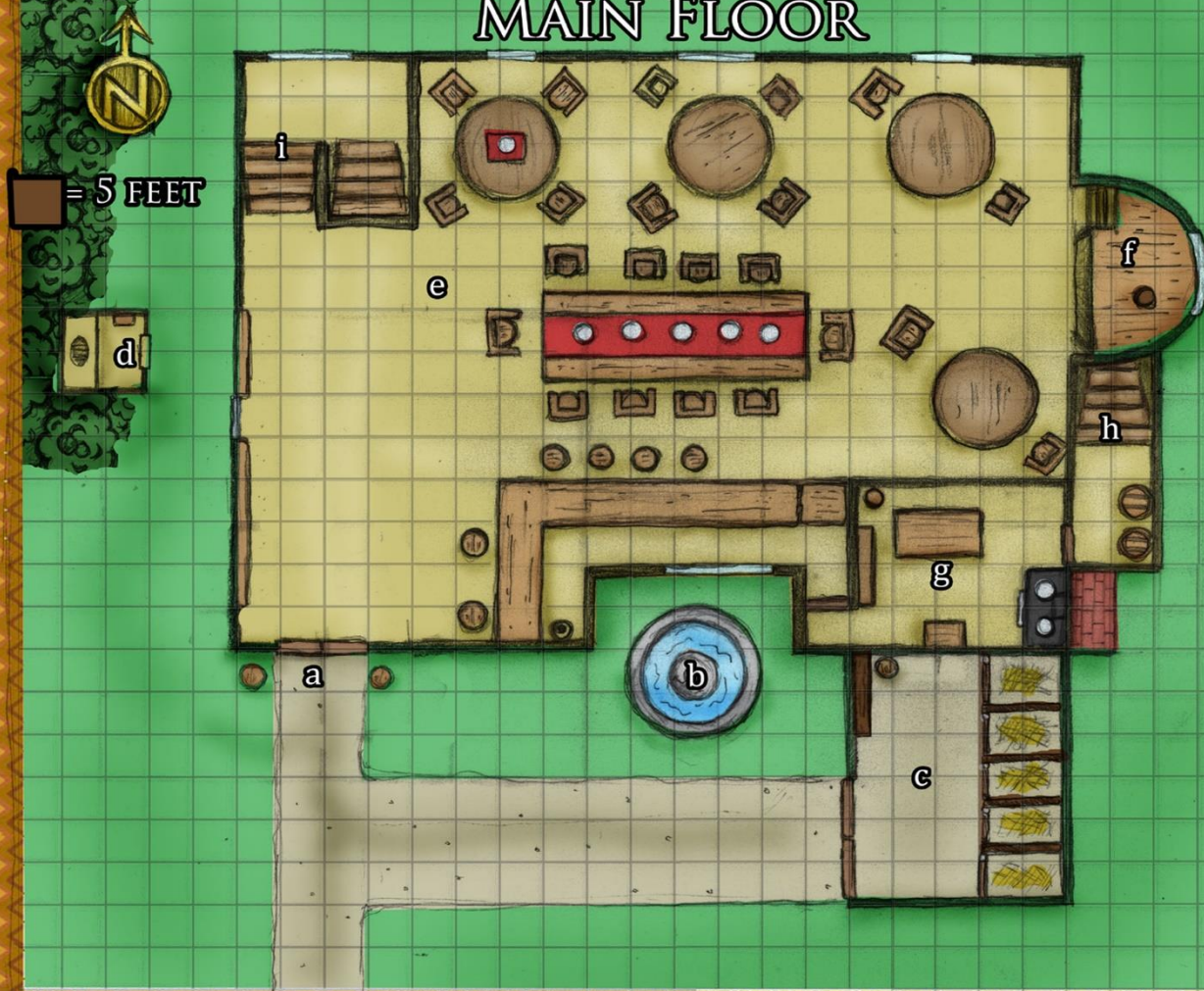


Five Adventures for 4-6 Players, Levels 1-10
For use with the World's Most Popular RPG

PATHFINDER
ROLEPLAYING GAME COMPATIBLE

OGL
3.5 SYSTEM COMPATIBLE

THE LAUGHING DRAGON INN MAIN FLOOR



a. Entry—Usually manned by two guards who ensure neer do wells do not enter

b. The Fountain of the Lucky Traveler. Patrons throw coins n the fountain to request blessings from the diety of roads. Those who steal from the fountain are cursed by the god.

c. Stables. Large enough to house 5 horses

d. The Outhouse. A tunnel chutes waste down into the sewer.

e. The main room. Features a closet to hang cloaks, and a shelf filled with personalized tankards. Several tables fill the room and a long bar sits before a wide window looking out on the fountain out front.

f. Entertainers Stage. Probs and instruments are stored beneath the stage.

g. Kitchen.

h. Stairwell to basement storage area.

i. Stairwell to upstairs sleeping rooms



SECOND FLOOR

BASEMENT

1-8. Guest Rooms. Each room has a bed, a footlocker, and a table to eat at. Most rooms have windows, but they are constructed to open only two inches. Linens are changed daily.

9-10. These rooms are for larger groups who wish to share a space. Each has two large beds, a small one-drawer stand, a small bookshelf, a round dining table and two stools. Windows in this room only open two inches. Inside each drawer is a book of prayers and songs dedicated to the Traveler.

A. This room is reserved for the owners Mywynn and his sister Tannileigh. The half-elves own a house in town, and so often rent this room to adventuring groups. There are two interior bedrooms that lock from the inside, a gathering room with a dining table, and locking wardrobe for cloaks. Armor stands can be rented for 2 additional silver a night.

B. Bathroom. A copper tub lies beyond a red privacy curtain. A

wardrobe for hanging clothes and a cabinet of wash cloths and towels share the space. The window to this room opens all the way, but has iron bars to prevent unauthorized entry.

Basement.

B.1 Store Room. The first room of the basement is the only one regularly used, Liquor, beer barrels, and dried food are stored here.

B.2 Tavern furniture, mostly broken, is stored here.

B.3 This room is almost never used. A stairwell once led even deeper below, but Mywynn boarded over it.



TALES FROM THE LAUGHING DRAGON INN

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PUBLISHING

PATHFINDER
ROLEPLAYING GAME COMPATIBLE



Welcome to the Laughing Dragon

Heading into town along temple road with the sun setting behind you, you hear the sounds of merriment spilling from the Laughing Dragon Inn. The splash of water falling from the Fountain of the Traveler lightens your weary feet as only a welcome from the God of the Road can. Nearing the inn, you can tell it's a busy night as a cacophony of voices rise, cheering on the entertainment. You push through the front door as the band plays its final notes and are welcomed by the sights, sounds, and smells of home.

THE LAUGHING DRAGON INN

HISTORY OF THE DRAGON

The Laughing Dragon Inn is one of the oldest buildings in the town of Brighton. Built by the town founder Jandor Birdsong, the Inn became his home after his petition to govern was denied by the king of Brynndell. He spent the remainder of his days, not a bitter citizen, but a jovial entertainer, creating a reputation for the establishment's merriment that remains to this day. For almost four centuries, the Laughing Dragon has been the most popular drinking spot in town, and the site of several famous adventures.

Located as soon as one enters town traveling from the west, the inn squats at the base of a large hill, atop which stands the keep of Brighton's Lord Mayor. A thick swath of trees embraces the rear of the inn, protecting it in cool shade during the height of summer. An enchanted fountain spouts pure water from the nostrils of a stone dragon before a large window that looks into the Inn's tap room. Over the years stables and an outhouse have been added to the grounds.

One hundred years ago, the ownership of the inn passed from Birdsong's heirs to a rowdy gnome gambler named Ryerksen. Uninterested in the day-to-day aspects of running the business, he allowed the building to deteriorate, and temporarily sullied its reputation by hiring a rotating staff of ne'er-do-wells and vagabonds. Eventually, Ryerksen tired of the inn and took up an adventuring career, selling out to Mywynn and Tannileigh Dankmeadow, two of his most popular entertainers. The siblings quickly turned the Laughing Dragon's fortunes around, refurbishing the exterior fountain destroyed during Brighton's ogre occupation, and hiring a competent chef and hospitable servers.

The siblings dream of one day purchasing the amphitheater outside of Brighton. The place has been shuttered for nearly a year following the death of its owner Herron Vale from a nasty fall. Their hope is that the widow Euphemina Vale will sell once she ends her mourning period. Rumors have begun to circulate that old Herron haunts the amphitheater, performing ghostly concerts in the dead of night.

A room at the Laughing Dragon typically includes dinner and a show and costs an expensive 1 gp per night. Without food or entertainment rooms are half the price, but these must be either arranged in advance, or purchased through haggling.



NIGHT-LIFE AT THE DRAGON

Every night sees a new entertainment at the Laughing Dragon, with every Latterday reserved for comedy troupes. Mywynn and Tannileigh play at least one song each night, almost never repeating themselves. The siblings are very open to hiring almost any amusement act, which has occasionally backfired, resulting in angry, sometimes violent crowd reactions. Brawls are unfortunately common at the Inn, so town guards routinely drop in.

Rumors fly at the inn as one might expect, and the following are examples of a few the PC's might overhear while gathering information among the customers.

Roll 1d6 and give the PC the corresponding information.

1. "Merchants traveling from Griffonport to Bryndell were found slaughtered to the man, their bodies arranged in a strange pattern."
2. "Be careful wandering through Ogre's Alley, that street is haunted."
3. "Sheriff Tate hates small-folk, going out of his way to harass halflings."†
4. "I saw the Jade Fox once, beautiful and graceful like an elf, but covered in green fur, with the head and tail of a fox!"
5. "A group of half-orcs have been seen around town lately. I hear they were thrown of Zuchar's for being too rowdy."
6. "I just had a baby boy! Drinks on me. I tell ya, I was so scared, I hallucinated that the midwife delivering him turned into an ogre."

THE LAUGHING DRAGON INN

TAVERN MENU

Dinners are included in the room purchase price, but can be bought separately for 2 sp. Drinks and desserts run 1 cp to 1 sp.

Food

- Roasted chicken with crusted weedwhip seeds. Served with broccoli and sautéed mushrooms.
 - Slow-cooked pork ribs with green beans and a potato.
 - Broiled amphisbaena steaks with sliced oranges, a bread loaf, and block of cheese.
 - Rock Crab – Served pre-shelled. Cooked with lemon, fresh sea salt, and drizzled with butter.
 - Electric Eel Soup – Consumed by the bold, with a dash of shambling mound trimmings and green chilli peppers and star anise.
 - Fried pheasant breasts with cornbread batter, served with fried potato slices.
 - Meat-cake topped with bright-pepper paste, served with a bread loaf and block of cheese.
 - Oatmeal, tea-boiled duck eggs, and orange slices.
 - Fried quartz-fish with bright-pepper sauce.
- The most popular drinks at the Laughing Dragon are locally crafted, though Dwarven Shroom-Stout is imported from the Kingdom of the Copper Crowns, far north of Brighton.

Drink

- Apple Pie-a strong cider made from distilled whiskey, apples, and cinnamon.
- Dwarven Shroom Stout-a rich beer crafted from underground mushrooms and dwarf secrets.
- Buriti juice – sweet, rich, thick. Guaranteed to quench thirst and fill the stomach.
- Maracujá Smoothe – crushed chia seeds, juiced maracujá, cupuaçu, açaí mixed into a smoothe cooled with alchemical ice for the warmest of days.
- Honey Beer-the staple of Brighton, and the surrounding kingdom. The abundance of honey farms has led to a wide variety of honey beer.
- Zuchar's Black-this dark creamy stout is made in town by the owner of the Ogre's Belly Tavern, but is so popular it's on tap throughout Brighton.

Dessert

- Açaí Paste – a rich fruit, accompanies fish well. This is mixed with buriti, cupuaçu, passion fruit, and chilled with alchemical ice.

- Cupuaçu and banana – A simple paste of cupuaçu, drizzled on a banana, sprinkled in chia seeds.
- Tapioca Bread – caraway seed, pink pepper, and create tasty breaded treat, sugared to taste.
- Nixie Treats – a fay-born taffy that is traded to us by nearby group of nixies. Tangy, chewy, and slightly intoxicating.



Made
03/16

THE LAUGHING DRAGON INN

INN STAFF

Cesar, Human Male. Cook. This attractive young man is very creative in the kitchen, and has turned simple tavern food into real cuisine. His dishes have even made a fan out of local noble Maartin Bhestos, who eats his supper at least four times a week at the Laughing Dragon.

Abigail, Human Female. Server. Short, buxom with red hair, Abigail came to the town of Brighton after leaving her work behind as a prostitute in Griffonport. She has a sharp laugh and dark wit, but her eyes carry a hard edge from the traumas she'd endured in her past.

Kara, Human Female (?). Server. Tall and tan, with giant brown hair, Kara is as simple as she is beautiful. Her exaggerated cleavage is her greatest asset, and she uses her sex appeal to earn better tips and forgiveness from customers whose orders she inevitably ruins. Gossip started by a rebuked suitor hints that Kara may actually be an ettercap polymorphed to resemble what the creature thought attractive human women look like.

Mitus, Human Male. Bartender. This young boy is barely old enough to drink, and yet he is a capable bartender during the times that Mywynn and Tannileigh are absent or performing. Each morning the lad sits at the fountain outside of the Laughing Dragon, depositing his gratuity earnings from the night before. The fountain serves as a shrine to the Lucky Traveler, god of roads and wanderlust.

Ghael, Half Elf Female. Housekeeper. Gaining in years, Ghael worked for the previous owner, the gnome scoundrel Ryerksen. She keeps to herself when not changing over rooms from previous guests, but enjoys too much drink on her off time. The drunkenness loosens her tongue more than she'd like, and she can spend hours reminiscing about her adventuring days.

Tustlebael Greenleaf, Gnome Male. Dishes and laundry. Tustlebael came to town five years ago to plunder the legendary riches of Bright Mountain. After his fellow adventurers were slaughtered by the sadistic "Beast of Bright Mountain Valley", he retired to live out a quiet life of toil far away from the Beast's territory. Twice he's saved enough gold to leave the kingdom, but his penchant for gambling has hindered his exodus.



Mywynn Dankmeadow-Male half-elf. Co-owner and entertainer. Mywynn's fortunes turned around the day he and his sister sang at the Laughing Dragon Inn. The previous owner sold the establishment for the adventuring gear the pair possessed. Mywynn is quite content with his new life as a businessman and looks to expand his fortunes by purchasing the shuttered amphitheater on the outskirts of Brighton. That venue's owner, Euphemina Vale, recently lost her husband so Mywynn has backed off pressuring her to sell to allow her a mourning period.

Tannileigh Dankmeadow-Female half-elf. Co-owner and entertainer. Growing up, Tannileigh and her brother lived a hard life. Born to a human shamed by the pregnancy, the children were abandoned in the Endiel Forest. As they struggled to survive, Tannileigh found the life of an adventurer much to her liking. She encouraged forays into old cairns, plundering enough wealth to fund a trip north. Mywynn resisted but eventually relented to his more charismatic sister. As they traveled, they entertained to earn a living, and here, Tannileigh discovered her true calling. She loved the applause and laughter of the crowd. When her brother took ownership of the Laughing Dragon, Tannileigh was initially ecstatic, believing this was her chance to become a star. Instead she found herself singing for farmers. Mywynn's plan to purchase the amphitheater, cementing their roots in Brighton has her feeling trapped, and she yearns for her adventuring days.




Dust to Dust

BY KENDRA LEIGH SPEEDLING

A One-Session Scenario for 4-6 players of 4th level.

Envy can turn even the most generous of hearts bitter, and a bitter heart can fester, rotting away until all that is left is cold hatred. When a prominent resident of the town of Brighton is murdered on the eve of a local festival, the town will need heroes to bring the perpetrator to justice. What they will discover, is a vindictive evil borne from the tragedy of rejection.



ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Six years ago, a talented wizard named Viravar Harx moved to the town of Brighton after inheriting a home from a distant relative and set up shop, offering his spellcasting services to anyone who could pay his reasonable rates. Word soon spread of Viravar's skill in the arcane arts, and his spells, scrolls, and magic items became very popular. After he was hired by the Lord Mayor himself to protect his home against intruders, Viravar's star rose further, and he even began taking on students.

This did not sit well with Brighton's other notable arcane spellcaster, a sorcerer by the name of Dervila Audenn. Prior to Viravar's arrival, it had been Dervila whose spells were admired and whose talents were sought after by the townsfolk. In spite of her jealousy of Viravar's power, she initially attempted to be polite to him, even offering her assistance with his magical endeavors. Viravar's condescending reaction—that he appreciated the offer, but he doubted he'd need help from a "village hedgewitch"—did nothing to endear her to him. Her bitterness grew as she saw her business dry up, the townsfolk preferring Viravar's wider variety of spells and greater power to her own magic.

Dervila seethed for over two years, trying in vain to win business back from Viravar, before coming up with a plan. She would undergo a transformation—one that would not only make her more powerful than Viravar, but allow her to take revenge on him for stealing all of the town's acclaim. She began a vile ritual to become a penanggalen. Though it took several years to accumulate the victims necessary for the ritual—mostly unfortunate travelers—Dervila finally succeeded in her task, two weeks before the fall festival to St. Gran the Dust Warden. Though the town does not suspect anything, as she is able to appear as her normal self during the daytime, at night her head tears free from her body, and she is revealed as the horrifying creature she is.

But Dervila's plans are only half-complete. She plans to use the festival as a distraction, striking at Viravar while everyone else is enjoying the Lighting Ceremony outside the Laughing Dragon Inn. She knows he will be on an upstairs balcony, casting colorful light spells for the crowd. She means to use the brief moment in the midst of the ceremony when the lights go dark to kill Viravar and put an end to her rival forever.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The PCs are enjoying the festival of St. Gran the Dust Warden, a hero saint of Brighton, when a local wizard is discovered dead after the annual Lighting Ceremony. They are asked to investigate this murder and bring the one responsible to justice. As the PCs begin their investigations, it becomes clear that the wizard had one major enemy: a sorcerer who had long been jealous of his popularity. Once they arrive at her home, they encounter a golem guarding the workshop in her home before finding an underground lair beneath the building. They must fight the guardians of this lair on their way to confront the sorcerer.

When the PCs find the sorcerer, they make a terrible discovery: she has become an undead creature known as a penanggalen. After defeating the penanggalen, they report their success and are rewarded for their efforts by the grateful townsfolk.

SCENE ONE: FESTIVAL

Read or paraphrase the following to begin the adventure:

"The festival of St. Gran the Dust Warden is in full swing. All around town, shops have set up stalls in the streets, selling snacks and souvenirs. Children busily carve faces into gourds and pumpkins, while the fountain in front of the Laughing Dragon Inn is illuminated with colorful lights."

Allow the PCs to roleplay their experience of the festival for a short while. Feel free to invent whatever games or interactions you wish during this time. After they have had the chance to experience the festival atmosphere, announce that the townsfolk are gathering in front of the Laughing Dragon for the Lighting Ceremony, traditionally meant to give St. Gran the Dust Warden new allies in his fight against evil spirits.

DUST TO DUST

LEVEL 4

"The lights of the town's houses and streets go out, and slowly, the jack o' lanterns lined up along the road begin to glow as the town children light the candles within. Suddenly, as the street is illuminated once more, a scream comes from within the Laughing Dragon."

The scream is from Mywynn Dankmeadow, one of the tavern's proprietors, who has just discovered Viravar Harx's body. If the PCs do not hurry to investigate the scream, he emerges looking very upset and announces that he's found Viravar dead on the second floor. A DC 15 Knowledge (local) check recognizes Viravar Harx as a talented local wizard.

The townsfolk are shocked at this news, and the festival quickly begins to disperse. At this point, the PCs can either decide to look into this on their own or someone in town can request that they do so if they do not seem inclined to themselves. Either the town sheriff or the Lord Mayor would be good choices for this role.

SCENE TWO

If the PCs examine Viravar's body, a DC 15 Heal check finds that he appears to have been drained of blood. A DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check can tell that the wounds were made by some type of undead, though there is not enough information to identify the creature.

Asking around town with a successful Diplomacy check gives the PCs the following information:

A DC 10 Diplomacy Skill check finds Mywynn Dankmeadow, who tells the PCs that Viravar Harx was a well-known wizard in Brighton with a reputation for being somewhat haughty. In spite of his occasional airs, he was a respected resident of the town and his abilities were highly regarded.

A DC 15 Diplomacy Skill check allows the PCs to learn some of the town gossip regarding Viravar Harx. A local sorcerer by the name of Dervila Audenn was known to have a rivalry with Viravar, as he'd taken away quite a bit of her business since he moved to town. She is a longtime resident and rather sour

woman who lives on the outskirts of town. Oddly, no one has seen Dervila at the festival this year.

A DC 20 Diplomacy Skill check finds a half-elf man by the name of Estavian Brandt, who works at the Roadhouse Tavern just outside the town limits. He reports that several travelers who visited Brighton recently later mysteriously went missing, vanishing from the King's Road without a trace.

There are several ways the PCs can advance with their investigation. Due to the town gossip, they may wish to visit Dervila to question her. In this case, one of the townsfolk can easily point them to her house on the outskirts of town, across the road from The Ogre's Belly tavern. If they use *speak with dead* or another magical means of communicating with Viravar's corpse, he reports that the last thing he saw was; "a floating head, entrails dripping from its throat, its face too shadowy to make out."

Viravar did not believe he had any enemies, and will tell the PCs this. If the PCs attempt to track the killer, they will find no footprints, but a DC 25 Survival Skill check can notice a faint trail of blood droplets leading to the outskirts of town and Dervila's house. Note that detect undead or similar spells will only detect Dervila if she is in her penanggalen form, not her human form. However the PCs obtain the information, they should know to head toward Dervila's house next.

The PCs may wish to either keep investigating at night or rest until morning before continuing their search. If they seem inclined to do the latter, the town sheriff, Byron Tate, tries to impress upon them that this matter is urgent and the town does not want a murderer on the loose. However, he will not stop them from resting if they insist upon doing so. This does not risk that Dervila will escape, as she intends to stay in town and claim innocence of the murder, but does give Dervila the chance to perhaps build up an alibi, frame someone else, or obtain additional resources, at the GM's discretion.

SCENE THREE: DERVILA'S HOUSE

Once the PCs decide to investigate Dervila, they can easily locate her house on the outskirts of town.

"This small, single-story cottage has a well-tended garden out front. Curtains are drawn over the windows, and there is no sign of activity within."

There is no answer if the PCs knock on the door while investigating at night (DC 15 Disable Device Skill check to pick the lock or DC 13 Strength check to break). If they knock on the door during the day, Dervila answers in her human form; that of a tall woman with long brown hair. She attempts to bluff the PCs (+19), claiming to have stayed home during the festival due to feeling ill, and states that she doesn't know anything about the murder. If Dervila successfully fools the PCs into leaving, they can continue their investigation in town, perhaps coming across new evidence of her guilt to encourage them to return.

If the PCs refuse to leave, she will claim to be very busy and shut the door.

AREA A: LIVING ROOM

"This living room is simply furnished, containing a table and sofa. There is a door to the west and to the north."

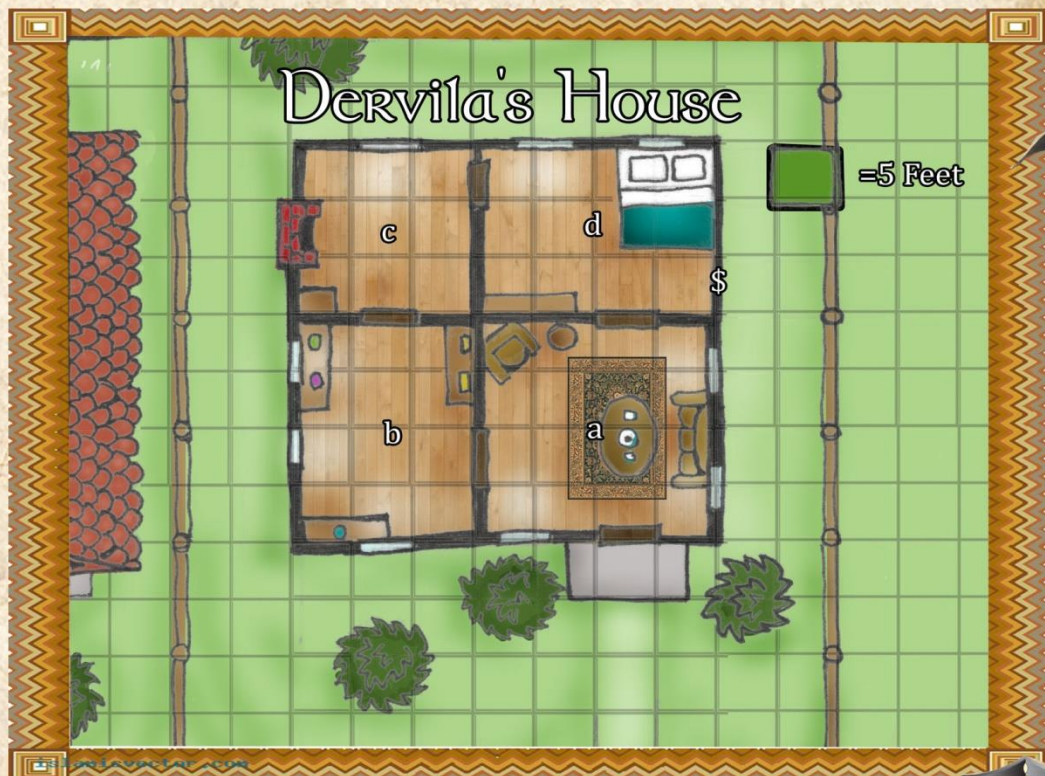
The door to the west is locked (DC 15 Disable Device Skill check or DC 13 Strength check). Development: If the PCs come here at night, this room is empty. If

If the PCs arrive during the day and knock on the door, or break in without knocking, Dervila is here. She will again attempt to use Bluff or Intimidate, convincing them into leaving, expressing anger that they have broken into her house. If the PCs seem hostile, she flees into her bedroom, exiting through the secret door to her lair. She hopes to either trick the PCs or, failing that, lure them down to her hideout where she can kill them without attracting notice.

AREA B: WORKROOM (CR 4)

"This room seems to be a workshop, containing multiple shelves filled with books and spell components, including all manner of arcane treatises."

Creature: Guarding Dervila's workshop is a junk golem, which attacks any intruders as soon as they enter.



DUST TO DUST

LEVEL 4

Junk Golem CR 4

XP 1,200

N Medium construct

Init -1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +0

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 9, flat-footed 19 (-1 Dex, +10 natural)

hp 42 (4d10+20); junk repair

Fort +1, **Ref** +0, **Will** +1

DR 5/adamantine; **Immune** construct traits, magic

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 2 slam +8 (1d6+4 plus disease)

Special Attacks disease

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 9, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 1

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 17

SQ discorporate

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Discorporate (Ex) A junk golem can break apart into its constituent pieces as a standard action, becoming a swarming mass of Tiny parts. It gains the swarm subtype, its space changes to 10 feet, and its reach changes to 0. In this form, it gains a swarm attack that deals 1d6 points of damage and inflicts disease, but loses its slam attacks. It can revert back to its normal form as a full-round action.

Disease (Ex) Tetanus: Slam—injury; save Fort DC 12; onset 1d6 days; frequency 1 day; effect 1d4 Dex damage. Each time someone takes Dexterity damage from tetanus, there's a 50% chance his jaw muscles stiffen, preventing speech and the use of spells with verbal components for 24 hours; cure 2 consecutive saves. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Immunity to Magic (Ex) A junk golem is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance. In addition, certain spells and effects function differently against a junk golem, as noted below.

A *shatter* spell causes a junk golem to discorporate and dazes it for 1 round.

A *grease* spell affects the junk golem as if it were

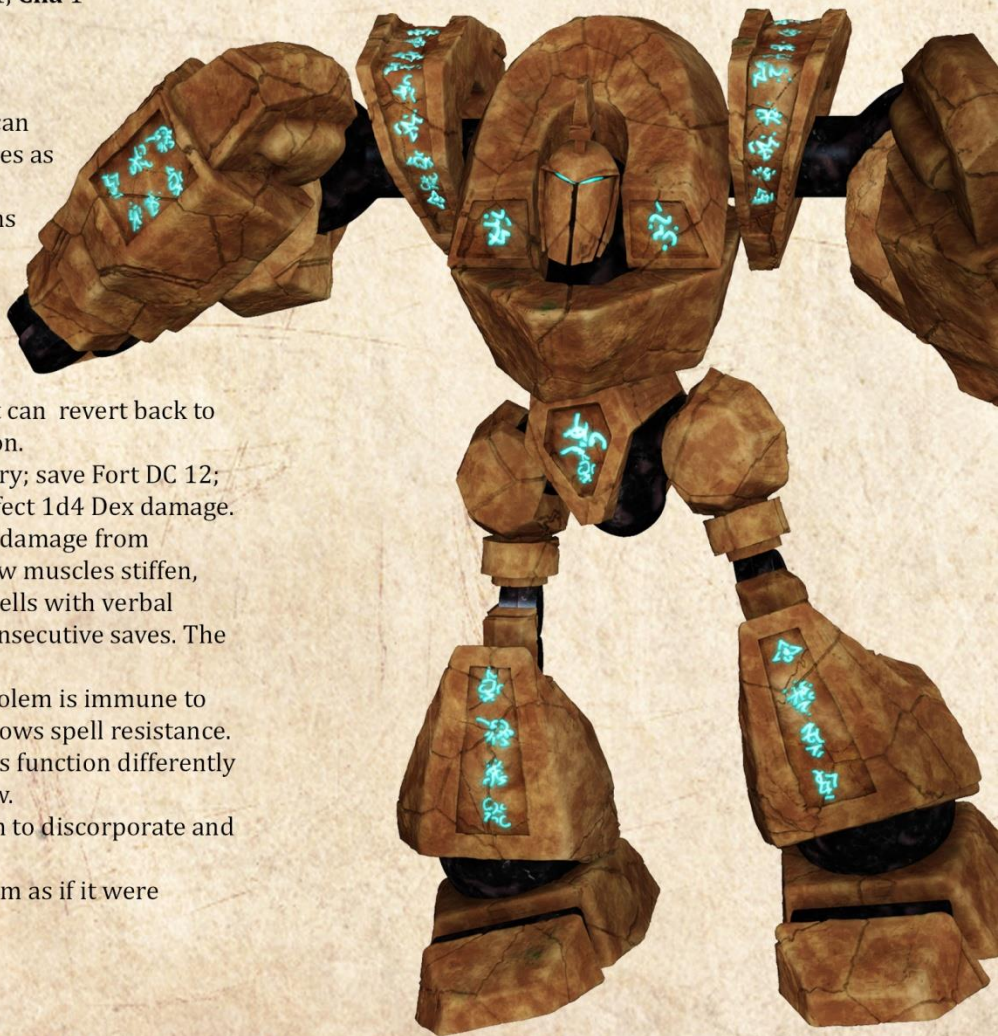
haste for 1d6 rounds and ends any slow effect on it.

An *arcane lock* or *hold portal* spell affects the junk golem as if it were a *slow* spell for 1d6 rounds and breaks any *haste* effect on it.

A *wood shape* or *rusting grasp* spell deals 2d6 points of damage to a junk golem.

Junk Repair (Su) A junk golem has fast healing 2 when in an area with a high concentration of debris, such as a refuse heap or the area created by another junk golem's discorporate ability.

Treasure: A DC 15 Perception check finds valuable spell components, gems, and books worth a total of 1,000 gp.



DUST TO DUST

LEVEL 4

AREA C: KITCHEN

"This room seems to be a workshop, containing multiple shelves filled with books and spell components, including all manner of arcane treatises."

The cupboards of the kitchen contain only rotting food. A DC 15 Perception check notices a trail of blood droplets leading to the bedroom door.

AREA D: BEDROOM (CR 4)

"This small bedroom has a quilt-covered bed in one corner and an armoire in the other. A faint smell of blood seems to waft up from the floorboards."

A DC 15 Perception check can find a secret door in the eastern wall by the bed. This door is not locked, but attempting to open it will trigger a trap.

Electricity Arc Trap

CR 4

XP 1,200

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

Trigger touch; **Reset** none

Effect electricity arc (4d6 electricity, DC 20 Reflex save for half); multiple targets (all targets in a 30-ft. line)



DUST TO DUST

LEVEL 4

SCENE FOUR: DERVILA'S LAIR

The door in the bedroom leads to a narrow flight of wooden stairs, winding down. Dervila's lair is a small complex of underground caverns. The caves are mainly stone and earth, and have no light sources within them.

AREA E: CAVE ENTRANCE (CR 4)

"This room seems to be a workshop, containing multiple shelves filled with books and spell components, including all manner of arcane treatises."

Creature: Three cave scorpions lurk here. Though they do not view Dervila as a potential meal, they hungrily attack any other prey they see.

Cave Scorpion (3) CR 1

XP 400

N Medium Vermin

Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; Perception +4

DEFENSE

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

hp 16 (3d8+3)

Fort +4, **Ref** +1, **Will** +1

Immune mind-affecting effects

OFFENSE

Speed 60 ft., climb 40 ft.

Melee 2 claws +2 (1d4), sting +2 (1d4 plus poison)

Special Attacks rend (2 claws, 2d4)

STATISTICS

Str 11, **Dex** 10, **Con** 13, **Int** -, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 2

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +2; **CMD** +12 (24 vs trip)

Skills Climb +8, Perception +4, Stealth +0 (+12 in caves); **Racial Modifiers** +4 Perception, +12 Stealth in caves

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Poison (Ex) Sting-injury; save Fort DC 12; frequency 1/round for 4 rounds; effect 1d2 Str; cure 1 save.

AREA F: CENTRAL CAVE (CR 5)

"The strong smell of vinegar permeates this gloomy cavern. A barrel in the eastern corner seems to be the source of this odor. To the west, a trail of blood droplets leads down a narrow tunnel."

A DC 15 Perception check finds a headless female corpse tucked carefully behind the barrel. This is Dervila's body, and can be destroyed by doing damage to it equal to her hit point total. Doing so does not harm Dervila, though it prevents her from assuming her "living" form ever again.

Creature: Two wights lurk here, victims of Dervila's ritual to become a penanggalen. They are under her control and do not attack her, but will attack intruders.

Wight (2) CR 3

XP 800

LE Medium Undead

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

DEFENSE

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

hp 26 (4d8+8)

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

Defensive Abilities undead traits

Weaknesses resurrection vulnerability

DEFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

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

Special Attacks create spawn, energy drain (1 level DC 14)

STATISTICS

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

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

Feats Blind-fight, Skill Focus Perception

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

Languages Common

SQ create spawn

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Create Spawn (Su) any humanoid creature that is

DUST TO DUST

LEVEL 4

killed by a wight becomes a wight itself within 1d4 rounds. Spawn are less powerful than normal wights, suffering a -2 penalty on all attack rolls, skill checks, and other d20 rolls and checks. In addition, spawn receive -2 hp per HD (4d8+0). Spawn remain under the control of the wight that created them until their master dies. At this time they lose all spawn penalties and become full-fledged wights. They do not retain the abilities they possessed in life.

Resurrection Vulnerability (Su) *raise dead* and similar resurrection magic destroys wights, and requires no spell components.

Treasure: A DC 20 Perception check reveals a small, unlocked chest buried in the soil in the western corner of the cave. It contains several items taken from Dervila's victims, which she believed too distinct to safely sell in town. Inside are two sapphire necklaces worth 500 gp each, an emerald ring worth 300 gp, and a silver brooch worth 150 gp.

AREA G: DERVILA'S HIDING PLACE

"This cave smells strongly of blood. Water drips down the stone walls of the cavern, and there is a murky pool of water in the western corner."

This is Dervila's hiding place, where she lurks at night when she is in her penanggalen form. After murdering Viravar, she fled here to hide and wait until morning, when she could emerge and profess ignorance of the crime.

Creature: If the PCs come to this cave during the nighttime, Dervila is in her penanggalen form; a human head with entrails dangling from her throat. If they delay coming here until daytime, she is in her human form, perhaps having fled here to hide after the PCs entered her house. Her bonded ring and ring of protection are woven into her hair in either case. If Dervila is in her human form, she makes an attempt to use Bluff against the PCs, hoping to distract them before she reverts to her penanggalen form, and attacks.



Dervila Audenn CR 6

XP 2400

Human penanggalen sorcerer 6

NE Medium undead (augmented humanoid)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 16, flat-footed 18 (+2 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +6 natural)

hp 57 (6d6+36); **fast healing** 5

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

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4;

DR 5/silver and slashing;

Immune undead traits; **Resist** cold 10, fire 10

Weaknesses light sensitivity, penanggalen weaknesses

OFFENSE

Speed fly 60 ft. (good)

Melee bite +6 (1d6+3 plus disease), slam +6 (1d4+3 plus grab and wither).

Special Attacks blood drain (1d4 Constitution), create spawn, disease (filth fever, DC 19)

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 6th; concentration +12)

3rd Level (4) — *hold person* (DC 19)

2nd Level (7) — *darkness*, *invisibility*, *scorching ray* (DC 18)

1st Level (7) — *charm person* (DC 17), *chill touch* (DC 17), *identify*, *magic missile*, *shield*

0 (at will) — *acid splash*, *daze* (DC 16), *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*, *resistance*

Bloodline arcane

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 17, **Con** –, **Int** 14,

Wis 12, **Cha** 22

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +6 (+10 grapple);

CMD 19

Feats Dodge, Eschew Materials, Improved Initiative, Iron Will

Skills Bluff +19, Fly +17, Knowledge (arcana) +17, Perception +12, Sense Motive +11,

Spellcraft +9, Stealth +15, Use Magic

Device +11; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Bluff, +8 Fly,

+8 Knowledge (arcana), +8 Perception, +8 Sense

Motive, +8 Stealth

Languages Common, Draconic

SQ arcane bond (ring), bloodline arcana (+1 DC for spells with metamagic feats that increase spell level), separate

Combat Gear scroll of control undead; **Other Gear** bonded ring (gold ring worth 200 gp), ring of protection +2, ruby earrings worth 100 gp

TACTICS

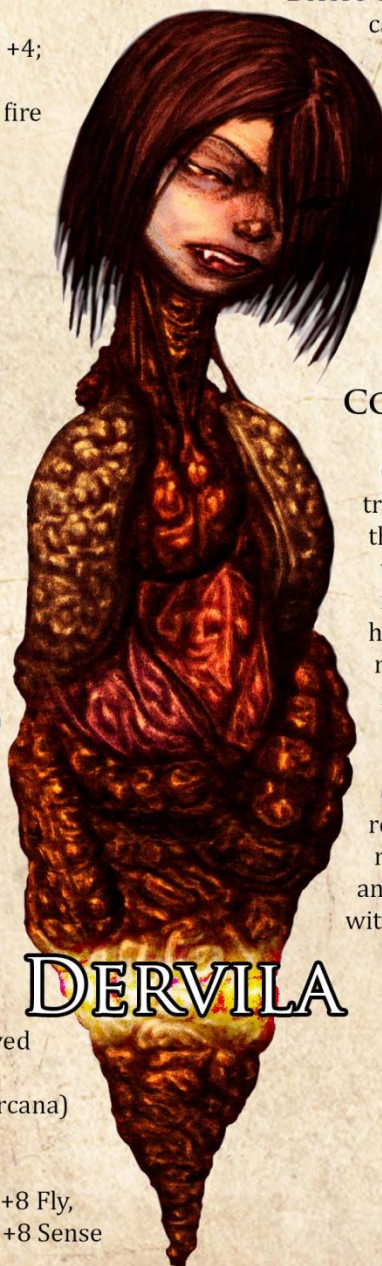
Before Combat If Dervila expects combat, she casts shield and darkness.

During Combat Dervila attempts to weaken enemies with hold person and scorching ray before moving in to attack with her bite and slam in melee. If there is an obvious spellcaster in the party, she will attack that person first. If reduced below half health, she casts invisibility and waits for her fast healing to heal her for a few rounds before attacking again.

Morale Dervila fights until destroyed.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Once the PCs have discovered Dervila's true nature and defeated her, they can report their findings to the townsfolk, including whomever may have requested that they investigate. The people of Brighton are horrified to hear of such a creature in their midst, and are extremely grateful that the PCs have destroyed her. In exchange, they insist that the PCs keep anything they may have found in Dervila's house, as well as offering 1,500 gp from the city coffers as a reward for their service to the town. If they remain in Brighton, their reputation grows, and they will be the first ones asked for aid with any future problems.



DERVILA

The Demons Paw

BY RODNEY SLOAN

A One-Session Scenario for 4-6 players of 4th level.

Hoping to please Shub-Niggurath, a cult gathers within the basement of the Laughing Dragon Tavern, ready to summon an infernal ally to aid them in seizing the town. The adventure concludes after the player characters have defeated the cultists, earning them a new and powerful enemy.



THE DEMON'S PAW

LEVEL 6

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

It wasn't fate that delivered the severed paw of a demon into Dieter Hagen's possession, but rather, the insidious machinations of the Elder Evils. Hagen had not had an easy life— orphaned as a child and scorned for his uncontrollable fits of stuttering—but that all changed when he discovered the gnarled and blackened hand while digging for clams along the Talmaara River. Unbeknownst to Hagen, the hand was far from dead, and worked at its own plans during the darkest hours of night.

Without obvious cause, Hagen began making friends—powerful friends—and his prospects started looking up.

About a month ago, Hagen revealed his strange possession to one of these new associates, Hector Valas. Smiling knowingly, Valas told Dieter to meet at the Laughing Dragon on the night of Wyre's Winter Weave Festival, and to bring the totem.

Valas knew, but wasn't telling, that Shub-Niggurath's resurgence through the paw had been foretold through dark prophecy. Through it, the cult would call forth a powerful champion to bring pain and suffering to Celmae.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

Whether by choice or by accident, the PCs find themselves inside the Laughing Dragon Tavern on the night of Wyre's Winter Weave Festival, with a fantastic lineup of entertainers promising an unforgettable celebration.

During the show, as an evil mist surrounds the Laughing Dragon without, a dark figure takes the stage. Her haunting melodies provide cover for several cultists to sneak into the basement and join an occult ritual to summon forth Burhuttra, a babau, whose hand Dieter Hagen now wears around his neck.

After getting past a trapped door and stopping the ritual or defeating Burhuttra, conflicting reports about the night's events spread about Brighton, earning the PCs infamy within the quiet town. Having crossed the Cult of Shub-Niggurath, the PCs will have earned the enmity of a powerful enemy.

SCENE ONE – DANCER IN DARKNESS

Already packed to the rafters, the PCs find it difficult to find a seat within the Laughing Dragon, but the drink flows steadily for those who have the coin, and the mood is festive.

"Silence falls as the first players takes the stage. A beautiful half-elf and her brother, both in copper and scarlet, take up fiddle and drum, and soon the crowd is tapping along to a stirring jig."

The siblings are also the inn's owners. Refer to the Laughing Dragon Inn map for encounter locations for this adventure.

Tanniliegh and Mywynn Dankmeadow CR 1/2

Hector Valas is already seated at a small table close to the kitchen door. As the performance begins, Hagen pushes through the crowd to join him. A successful DC 25 Perception check allows a PC to glimpse Hagen showing Valas a velvet bag—containing the paw—which he quickly hides back under his shirt.

During the first performance, an evil mist surrounds the Laughing Dragon, prevailing until sunrise or the cultists are defeated. The mist functions as an obscuring mist spell. The mist encircles the Laughing Dragon to a depth of 60 feet and is 20 feet high. It enshrouds everything except the Fountain of the Lucky Traveler and a 5 foot radius from any door or light shedding window.

At the end of the performance on stage, read or paraphrase the following.

"The pair bows to vigorous applause, and then hop down as a handsome man in a purple waistcoat strides onto the stage to raucous cheers. Lifting his drinking horn, he begins to sing a popular bawdy tune, and soon the crowd joins in."

Purple Perion

CN male human bard 3

See the local celebrity in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game NPC Codex*.

After Perion's song, the Darkmoon Dancer begins her performance.

"The lights grow dim as a sorrowful lament rises up around you. From the gloom of the darkened stage, a slender woman appears, raising a silver flute to her burgundy lips. With downcast eyes, she begins to play a somber tune."

Ametus, the Reaper of Riddles, created the Darkmoon Dancer to be his avatar on Celmae. By subtly manipulating powerful factions from within, this lone agent works to bring about the plans of her god to their ultimate fruition. Temporarily allied with the cultists, she aims to buy them the time they need to complete their summoning.

She uses her *fascinate* and *slumber* song bardic performances before casting *enthrall* on the crowd. If she deems that the ritual is complete, she uses *gaseous form* to fade into the night.

One minute into her performance, Valas attacks Hagen in the basement below, preparing him for ritual sacrifice. Hagen's scream as he is assaulted can be heard with a DC 16 Perception Skill check.

If the PC's investigate the sound, the Darkmoon Dancer moves to intercept them, which the PC's can discern with a DC 15 Sense Motive Skill Check. If she thinks the PC's will disrupt the ritual, or if they strike her, she attacks.

If combat breaks out, half of the crowd flees the inn while the other half hangs back to watch the fight.



IRK!

The Darkmoon Dancer

CR 7

XP 3,200

Fetchling sandman bard 8

CE Medium outsider (native)

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

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, +2 dodge vs. traps)

hp 44 (8d8+8)

Fort +3, **Ref** +8; +(2 vs. traps), **Will** +4; (+4 vs. bardic performance, language-dependent, and sonic)

Defensive Abilities shadow bending; Resist cold 5, electricity 5

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 rapier +10 (1d6/18–20) or

mwk whip +10 (1d3–1 nonlethal)

Ranged mwk blowgun +10 (1d2 plus blue whinnis poison)

Special Attacks bardic performance 22 rounds/day (countersong, dirge of doom, distraction, fascinate, inspire courage +2, steal spell, slumber song), sneak attack +1d6, sneak spell

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th; concentration +12)

1/day—*memory lapse* (DC17)

Bard Spells Known (CL 8th; concentration +12)

3rd (3/day)—*exquisite accompaniment*, *gaseous form*, *vision of hell* (DC 19)

2nd (5/day)—*allegro*, *darkness*, *enthrall* (DC19), *steal voice* (DC 18)

1st (5/day)—*charm person* (DC18), *chord of shards* (DC 17), *disguise self*, *sleep* (DC 18), *undetectable alignment* (DC 17)

0 (at will)—*daze* (DC17), *ghost sounds* (DC16), *lullaby* (DC17), *mending* (DC16), *message*, *summon instrument*

TACTICS

before combat She casts *undetectable alignment* before approaching the Laughing Dragon, disguised as a human and mimicking the disguise with her hat of disguise. She casts *darkness* and *ghost sounds* directly before going on stage.

During Combat She casts *steal voice* against enemy casters.

Morale Wishing only to buy time, she uses gaseous form to escape if things turn bad.

Base Statistics Without eagle's splendor, the bard's statistics are: **Bard Spells Known** reduce spell DCs by 2; **Cha** 18; **Skills** Bluff +14, Diplomacy +8, Disguise +15, Intimidate +8, Performance (dance, wind) +17, Use Magic Device +8.

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 16, **Con** 12, **Int** 13, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 22

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 17

Feats Blind-Fight, Prodigy (Performance [dance, wind]), Spell Focus (enchantment), Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +8, Appraise +5, Bluff +16, Climb +3, Craft (instrument) +5, Diplomacy +10, Disable Device +4, Disguise +17, Escape Artist +8, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (nature, local, religion) +6,

Linguistics +5, Perception +3, Performance (dance, wind) +19, Sense Motive +3, Sleight of Hand +15, Spellcraft +6, Stealth +16, Use Magic Device +10;

Racial Modifiers +1 Knowledge (local, nature), +2 Stealth;

Languages Common, Abyssal, Aklo

SQ master of deception

Combat Gear potion of eagle's splendor (2); potions of cure light wounds (2), potions of mage armor (2), doses of blue whinnis (3); **Other Gear** +1 rapier, masterwork whip, masterwork blowgun, blowgun darts (20), +1 studded leather, hat of disguise, masterwork flute, disguise kit, 991 gp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Master of Deception (Ex): A sandman gains a bonus equal to half her level on Bluff, Sleight of Hand, and Stealth checks. She may also disarm magical traps with Disable Device as a rogue's trapfinding ability.

Shadow Blending (Su): Attacks against a fetchling in dim light have a 50% miss chance instead of the normal 20% miss chance. This ability does not grant total concealment; it just increases the miss chance.

Slumber Song (Su): A sandman can use her performance to cause a creature she has already fascinated to fall asleep (as deep slumber, but with no HD limit). Otherwise, this ability functions like *suggestion*.

Sneak Spell (Ex) At 2nd level, a sandman adds +1 to the save DC of spells and bardic performance against opponents who are denied their Dex bonus. In addition, at 6th level she gains a +2 bonus on caster level checks to overcome spell resistance against such foes.

THE DEMON'S PAW

LEVEL 6

SCENE TWO – DARK RITES

The cult's ritual is fast approaching its completion in the basement below.

A. A HARSH WARNING

The door (hardness 5, 20 hp, Locked DC 25) leading to the basement stairwell has an envelope marked "invitees only" nailed to it. It contains a warning message inscribed with deadly explosive runes.

Explosive Runes Trap CR 5

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

EFFECTS

Trigger reading "Shub-Niggurath"; **Reset** none

Effect spell effect (explosive runes, 6d6 force damage, creatures within 10 feet but not close enough to read the runes receive a DC 14 Reflex save for half damage); multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft.-radius burst)

B. THE BASEMENT

Hector Valas, holding a squirming velvet bag aloft, stands in a circle with four hooded figures around Hagen's body, chanting terrible verse. The cultist's ritual of summon planar ally functions as the spell, but has a casting time of 10 minutes and requires the involvement of at least 2 cultists to complete.

Hector Valas CR 3

XP 800

Human Adept 5

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +4

DEFENSE

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

hp 27 (5d6+10)

Fort +2, **Ref** +5, **Will** +7

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk club +7 (1d6+6)

Ranged dagger +3 (1d4+4/19-20)

Adept Spells Prepared (CL 5th; concentration +7)

2nd Level—*bull's strength*, *mirror image*

1st Level—*cause fear* (DC 13), *command* (DC 13), *cure light wounds*

0 Level (at will)—*ghost sound* (DC 12), *light*, *stabilize*

TACTICS

Before Combat Hector casts *bull's strength*.

During Combat Hector casts *mirror image*, then attacks with his club. If he has trouble in melee, he switches to his wand of *burning hands*.

Base Statistics

Without *bull's strength*, Hector's statistics are **Melee** mwk club +5 (1d6+3); **Ranged** dagger +3 (1d4+2/19-20); **Str** 14; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 15.

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 12, **Con** 11, **Int** 9, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 17

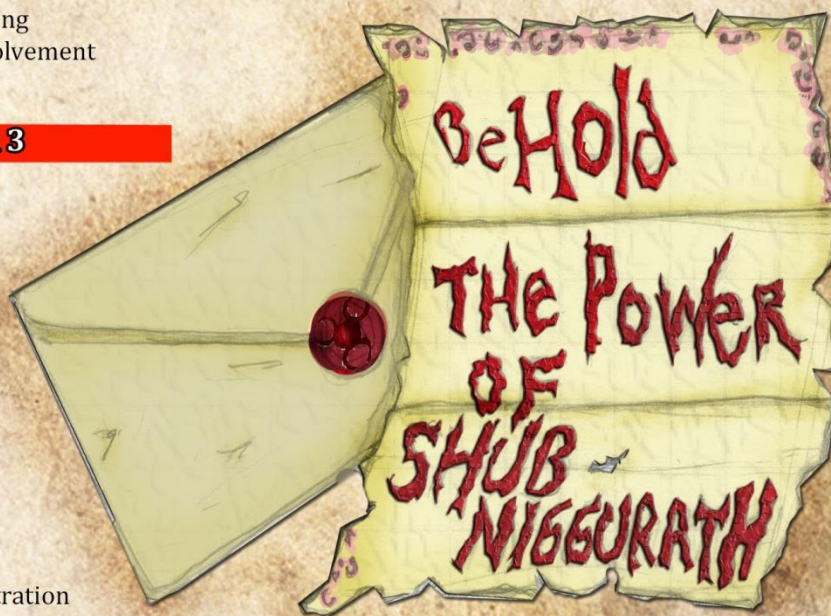
Feats Cleave, Light Armor Proficiency, Power Attack, Toughness

Skills Knowledge (local) +4, Knowledge (religion) +4, Linguistics +2, Perception +4

Languages Common, aklo, sylvan

SQ summon familiar (weasel)

Combat Gear scroll of cure moderate wounds, wand of *burning hands* (CL 5th, 9 charges), alchemist's fire (3); **Other Gear** chain shirt, dagger, masterwork club, cloak of resistance +1, belt pouch, spell component pouch.



PLAYER HANDOUT: MESSAGE IN AN ENVELOPE

THE DEMON'S PAW

LEVEL 6

Cultist of Shub-Niggurath (4) CR 1

XP 400

Human Adept 3

CE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +2

DEFENSE

AC 12, touch 10, flat-footed 12 (+2 armor); +2 vs. good

hp 16 (3d6+6)

Fort +4, **Ref** +1, **Will** +4; +2 vs. good

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee spear +1 (1d8/×3) or mwk cold iron dagger +2 (1d4/19–20)

Ranged dart +1 (1d4)

Adept Spells Prepared (CL 3rd; concentration +4)

1st Level—*burning hands* (DC 12), *detect good*, *protection from good*

0 Level (at will)—*detect magic*, *light*, *read magic*

TACTICS

Before Combat The cultists each casts *protection from good*.

During Combat The cultists each casts *burning hands* whenever they can catch two or more foes in the area. When they run out of spells, scrolls, and acid, they fight with thier spears.

Base Statistics

Without *protection from good*, the cultist's statistics are **AC** no bonus vs. good; **Saves** no bonus vs. good.

STATISTICS

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

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

Feats Combat Casting, Great Fortitude, Scribe Scroll

Skills Knowledge (arcana) +3, Knowledge (local) +3, Knowledge (planes) +3, Knowledge (religion) +4, Linguistics +1, Spellcraft +5

Languages Common, aklo

SQ summon familiar (toad)

Combat Gear scrolls of *burning hands* (2, CL 3rd), scrolls of *cure light wounds* (2), scroll of *obscuring mist* (CL 3rd), scroll of *sleep* (CL 3rd), flask of acid (2); **Other Gear** leather armor, darts (6), masterwork cold iron dagger, spear, belt pouch, masterwork manacles, scroll case, spell component pouch, 29 gp

The Demon's Paw CR 1/2

XP 200

fiendish crawling hand

NE Diminutive undead

Init +0; **Senses** blindsense 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +4

DEFENSE

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

hp 9 (1d8+5)

Fort +2, **Ref** +0, **Will** +2

Immune undead traits; **SR** 5

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

Melee claw +5 (1d1+1 plus grab)

Space 1 ft.; Reach 0 ft.

Special Attacks mark quarry, strangle

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 11, **Con** --, **Int** 2, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +0; **CMB** -4 (+0 grapple); **CMD** 7

Feats Toughness

Skills Climb +9, Perception +4, Stealth +12, Survival +4; Racial Modifiers +4 Survival
Languages Common, abyssal (can't speak)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Grab (Ex): the demon's paw can use its grab ability on a creature of up to Medium size.

Mark Quarry (Su): The demon's paw assigns a quarry by being anointed with a drop of the intended quarry's blood. If the demon's paw has no



THE DEMON'S PAW

LEVEL 6

current quarry, it automatically gains the next creature it damages as its quarry. Once attuned to a target, it becomes aware of the target's location as if under the effect of a continuous locate creature spell. The paw gains a +1 bonus on all attack rolls, damage rolls, and skill checks made to seek out and destroy the marked quarry. The mark quarry ability lasts until the quarry or the paw is slain.

Smite Good (Su): Once per day, the demon's paw may smite a good-aligned creature. As a swift action, the paw chooses one target within sight to smite. If this target is good, the creature adds its Charisma bonus (if any) to attack rolls and gains a damage bonus equal to its HD against that foe. This effect persists until the target is dead or the demon's paw rests.

TACTICS

Before Combat The paw claws at the red velvet bag, breaking free on the second round of combat.

During Combat The demon's paw makes a claw attack against the closest target to activate its mark quarry ability before attempting to strangle that opponent. It uses its smite good ability if able.

Morale Murderously wicked; the paw relentlessly pursues its targets.

Burhutra, Babau

CR 6

XP 2,400

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

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., see invisibility; Perception +19

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 11, flat-footed 18 (+1 Dex, +8 natural)

hp 73 (7d10+35)

Fort +10, **Ref** +6, **Will** +5

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

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 2 claws +12 (1d6+5), bite +12 (1d6+5) or long-spear +12/+7 (1d8+7/+3), bite +7 (1d6+2)

Space 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft. (10 ft. with longspear)

Special Abilities sneak attack +2d6

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th)

Constant—see invisibility



THE DEMON'S PAW

LEVEL 6

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

1/day—*summon* (level 3, 1 babau at 40%)

STATISTICS

Str 21, **Dex** 13, **Con** 20, **Int** 14, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 23

Feats Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Skill Focus (Stealth)

Skills Acrobatics +11, Climb +12, Disable Device +11, Escape Artist +11, Perception +19, Sense Motive +11, Sleight of Hand +11, Stealth +22; Racial Modifiers +8 Perception, +8 Stealth

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Draconic; telepathy 100 ft.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Protective Slime (Su): A layer of acidic slime coats a Burhuttra's skin. Any creature that strikes her with a natural attack or unarmed strike takes 1d8 points of acid damage from this slime if it fails a DC 18 Reflex save. A creature that strikes Burhuttra with a melee weapon must make a DC 18 Reflex save or the weapon takes 1d8 points of acid damage; if this damage penetrates the weapon's hardness, the weapon gains the broken condition. Ammunition that strikes Burhuttra is automatically destroyed after it inflicts its damage.

TACTICS

Before Combat The cultists offer Burhuttra her lost paw as a gift in exchange for her service. The paw fuses seamlessly with the demon's arm.

During Combat Burhuttra uses *greater teleport* and *darkness* to set up sneak attack opportunities.

Morale A patient hunter, Burhuttra leaves the fight to ensure her eventual victory if combat goes poorly.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Conflicting reports of the PC's deeds spread throughout Brighton. The common folk grow more cautious of the PCs, while the local cults begin earnestly plotting to eradicate the party.



Under the Revenant's Mask

BY THIAGO ROSA

A One-Session Scenario for 4-6 players, with characters 6-8th level.

The player characters must defend an enterprising cook from undead attacks lead by a vengeful masked figure during the night, and try to unravel the mystery behind such attacks during the day. Why is the cook being attacked? Will the players be able to stand against night after night of undead fury? Who is the mastermind behind such attacks? The answers to these questions - and more - lie under the revenant's mask.

UNDER THE REVENANT'S MASK

LEVELS 6-8

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Aurora is talented singer; Caesar is a hard working cook. They fell in love with each other by pure chance. Aurora's father, Doctor Damiel, is a respected alchemist in the city and wants his daughter to marry a noble. He is firmly against their romance.

Aurora and Caesar decided to get married in secret, but Damiel found out. Using a disguise self potion to pretend he was Caesar, and tried to scare his daughter so that she would give up the marriage. His plan worked too well: she was so scared she ran away. He followed her as she ran, scaring her even further, until she accidentally fell from a steep ledge and died.

Damiel planned on resurrecting his daughter and was studying how to do so alchemically, but before his studies were complete, Aurora came back on her own as a revenant, filled with hatred for Caesar, who she perceived as her murderer.

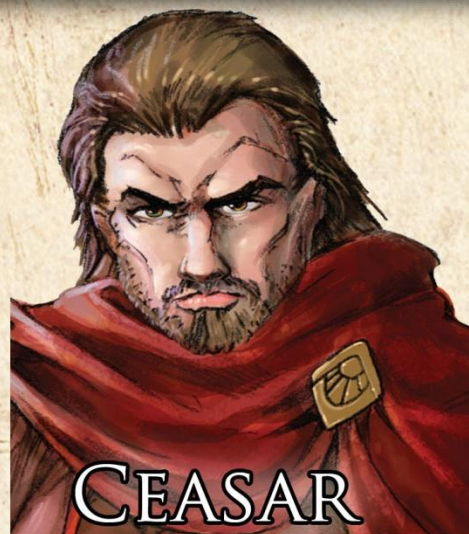
Seeing this as an opportunity to toy with the man he hates while he looks for a way to revive his daughter, Damiel has been creating alchemical undead. He convinced the revenant of his daughter that he is going to aid in her vengeance, giving her magical items, including a mask to stop Caesar from identifying her.

Still grieving the recent death of his beloved, Caesar tried to move forward and keep working, ignorant to the fact that she is coming after him tonight.

FIRST NIGHT

The adventurers find themselves at the Laughing Dragon Inn, probably between adventures. It's a very nice inn, especially for its price. The food is incredibly good. There are not many people inside, however. If asked about it, the staff may say people are still sad about Aurora and that's why the inn is mostly empty. She used to sing at the inn most nights, but has been missing for almost a week. The cook, Caesar, a young and handsome chap very focused on his work, seems particularly sad. If they ask around, they will know he was Aurora's lover.

After some time, maybe when the player characters decide to call it a night and retreat to their rooms or when they want to leave, the inn is attacked by see four zombies and a female figure clad in black leather armor, a billowing crimson cloak and a snake leather mask. They are intent on attacking Caesar and he begs



the adventurers to protect him. After the zombies are all defeated or the revenant loses half of her hit points, she escapes, screaming that she will be back the next night.

After the adventurers repel the attack, Caesar explains the problems he is going through and asks for their help. He is sure there is something wrong and has two suspects – Orin, a man with strange powers that crossed him in the past and Edgar, a noble who was interested in Aurora.

For the investigation, you can have the PCs visit one NPC/location per day and then make them defend the manor against an undead attack during the night.

Caesar

Human Expert 3

NG Medium humanoid (human)

An enterprising and talented cook, Caesar works at the Laughing Dragon Inn creating delicious meals for his customers. After he met Aurora and she began singing at the Laughing Dragon Inn, business boomed and the owners gave him a salary raise. Caesar began dreaming of marriage. When Aurora disappeared, he became withdrawn and depressed, working without the passion he once possessed. His sadness aside, Caesar is a kind, caring and even fun fellow, with lots of friends around Brighton. He is a handsome young chap, with olive skin, a mane of curly brown hair, a chiseled square jaw and penetrating brown eyes.

UNDER THE REVENANT'S MASK

LEVEL 6-8

ORIN, MERFOLK INFORMATION BROKER

By the docks, it only takes a successful Diplomacy check to gather information and locate Orin. The merfolk operates out of a ship, Delphim's Tempest, protected by several well armed thugs. If questioned about Caesar, Orin explains that they did tangle in the past over the purchase of unearthen treasure, but he doesn't dwell on it, calling it bad for business. A successful Sense Motive check or a *discern lies* spell reveals that he speaking the truth.

If the players treat him respectfully (succeeding on a DC 20 Diplomacy Skill check) and explain what is going on, he might be willing to help. For a price of 50 gp, he shares that he suspects Aurora's father has been stealing corpses from the town graveyard, and that he sold the alchemist a mask very similar to the described attacker. If they ask about Martin, he might also share that the noble is no saint himself, and that several woman he's romanced have left town suddenly.

If there is violence, Orin is a 4th level Mesmerist with several thugs and can handle himself quite well.

Orin the information broker

Male merfolk mesmerist 4

N Medium humanoid (merfolk, aquatic)

Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision, Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 17 (+5 armor; +2 Dex, +2 natural)

hp 35 (4d8+12)

Fort +5, **Ref** +8, **Will** +11

OFFENSE

Speed 5 ft. swim 50

Melee +1 cold iron dagger +4 (1d3-1/19-20)

Ranged dart +6 (1d3-1)

Special Attacks bold stare (disorientation), hypnotic stare (-2), mesmerist tricks 8/day (mesmeric mirror, psychosomatic surge, vanish arrow)

Mesmerist Spells Known (CL 4th; concentration +10)

2nd Level (2/day)—*aversion* (OaA) (DC 16), *suggestion* (DC 16)

1st Level (4/day)—*charm person* (DC 15),



demand offering OA (DC 15), mental blockOA (DC 15), vanish APG (DC 15)

0 Level (at will)—dancing lights, detect magic, mage hand, open/close (DC 14), prestidigitation, unwitting ally APG (DC 14)

STATISTICS

Str 11, **Dex** 14, **Con** 16, **Int** 13, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 14

Feats Extra Mesmerist Tricks OA, *, Improved Feint

Skills Bluff +13, Climb +1, Diplomacy +11, Escape Artist +5, Intimidate +12, Perception +2, Sense Motive +8, Sleight of Hand +5, Stealth +8, Use Magic Device +11

Languages Common, merfolk

SQ consummate liar*, legless: Merfolk have no legs, and therefore cannot be tripped, amphibious: Merfolk are amphibious, but prefer not to spend long periods out of the water. touch treatment 7/day (minor)

Combat Gear potions of cure moderate wounds (2), potions of invisibility (2), scroll of glitterdust;

Other Gear +1 chain shirt, +1 cold iron dagger, darts (6), cloak of resistance +1, 48 gp

* The effects of this ability are calculated into Orin's statistics.

UNDER THE REVENANT'S MASK

LEVELS 6-8

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Bold Stare: This ability improves Orin's hypnotic stare ability, allowing him to use the following ability with it.

Disorientation: Orin's hypnotic stare penalty also applies on attack rolls and damage rolls.

Consummate Liar: Orin's gains a +2 bonus on all Bluff checks. In addition, he qualifies for Improved Feint even if he doesn't have Combat Expertise.

Hypnotic Stare: As swift action, Orin's can target creature within 30 feet that then takes a -2 penalty on Will saves. He can maintain this effect against only one creature at a time, and it ends if the target moves out of range, Orin uses this ability against a new target, or he falls unconscious or dies. Orin's target is not even aware that he is using this ability unless he wills it. Penalties from multiple hypnotic stares do not stack. This is a mind-affecting effect.

Improved Feint: Orin can attempt a Bluff check to feint in combat as a move action.

Mesmerist Tricks: Orin can implant a hypnotic suggestion in an ally's mind up to eight times per day. Doing so requires him to touch the ally as a standard action, and a creature can be the subject of only one mesmerist trick at a time. Orin can trigger an implanted trick as an immediate action so long as the subject is within 140 feet.

Mesmeric Mirror: This trick creates a decoy duplicate of the subject when the subject is attacked or becomes the target of a spell that requires an attack roll. The triggering attack has a 50% chance of striking the decoy rather than the intended target. Once hit, the image disappears; otherwise, it lasts for 1 minute. This is an illusion (figment) effect.

Psychosomatic Surge: When the subject of this trick takes damage, it gains 1d8+2 temporary hit points that last for 1 hour or until discharged. If the damage would have reduced the subject to 0 or fewer hit points, the trick grants an additional 1d8 temporary hit points.

Vanish Arrow: When the subject of this trick is targeted with a ranged weapon attack, Orin can attempt a Sleight of Hand check opposed by the attacker's Perception to snatch the projectile before it's even fired, causing the attack to automatically miss.

Painful Stare: Once per round, when an attack that deals damage hits the target of Orin's hypnotic stare, he can cause the creature to take 2 additional points of damage. If Orin uses this ability to increase his own damage, it instead takes 1d6 extra points of damage.

Touch Treatment Seven times per day as a standard action, Orin can touch a creature and remove the fascinated or shaken condition. This ability is a swift action if he uses it on himself.

Orin's Thugs (4)

CR 2

XP 600

Human rogue 1/warrior 3

CN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; **Senses** Perception +1

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13 (+2 armor, +2 Dex, +1 shield)

hp 27 (4 HD; 1d8+3d10+7)

Fort +4, **Ref** +5, **Will** +2

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk short sword +7 (1d6+2/19-20) or dagger +5 (1d4+2/19-20)

Ranged dagger +5 (1d4+2/19-20)

Special Attacks sneak attack +1d6

STATISTICS

Str 15, **Dex** 15, **Con** 13, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 17

Feats Catch Off-Guard, Skill Focus (swim), Weapon Focus (short sword)

Skills Bluff +7, Intimidate +2, Knowledge (local) +7, Sense Motive +7, Stealth +9, Swim +9

Languages Common

SQ trapfinding +1

Gear leather armor, buckler, masterwork short sword, dagger

UNDER THE REVENANT'S MASK

LEVELS 6-8

MAARTIN, THE OCCULTIST NOBLE

In Brighton's richest district, Maartin Bhestos lives in his family's impressive manor. The player characters will be well received, with good food, drink and accommodations as he makes casual conversation and asks about their journeys.

If asked about his interest in Aurora, Maartin shrugs, casually admitting he was a fan of her singing, and wished to romance her, but her father wouldn't allow it. He insinuates that Doctor Damiel had an unhealthy relationship with his daughter, seeing in her a surrogate for his dead wife. In truth, Martin had vile plans for Aurora. He wanted to summon a devil to impregnate her with a half-devil child that he could train to bring the world to its knees. Afterwards, he planned on sacrificing her to his dark lord Shub-Niggurath. There is little chance the PCs will learn about this, however.

Martin is very straightforward answering everything the characters want to know. If the undead situation is explained thoroughly, he is able to identify the alchemical zombies and the revenant, imparting several pieces of information about them. If the PC's mention that the undead seems female, he wonders if Caesar might have killed Aurora, in which case she could have come back as a revenant. She couldn't get the magic items by herself, however, so someone else must be helping her.

If there is violence, Martin is a 7th level Cleric. His sycophantic nanny is a babau in disguise. They do not fight to the death, instead using whatever means they can to escape as fast as possible with their lives.

Maartin Bhestos, Cleric of Sub-Niggurath

XP 2,400

Human Cleric 7

LE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +0; **Senses** Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 10, flat-footed 19 (+9 armor)

hp 56 (7d8+21)

Fort +8, **Ref** +3, **Will** +9

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee mwk kukri +7 (1d4+1)

Ranged light crossbow +5 (1d8/19–20)

Special Attacks channel negative energy 5/day (DC 17, 4d6)

Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th; concentration +10)

6/day— *bleeding touch* (3 rounds), *touch of darkness* (3 rounds)

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 7th; concentration +10)

4th Level—*black goat's blessing* (DC 18), *poison* (DC 18)

3rd Level—*bestow curse* (DC 17), *contagion* (DC 17), *dark young's appendages* (DC 17), *dispel magic*
2nd Level—*blindness/deafness* (DC 16), *darkness*, *desecrate*, *eagle's splendor*, *silence* (DC 15)

1st Level—*cause fear* (DC 15), *deathwatch*, *doom* (DC 15), *magic weapon*, *shield of faith*

0 Level (at will)—*bleed* (DC 14), *detect magic*, *light*, *resistance*

0 Level Domain Spells; Domains Darkness, Death
TACTICS

Before Combat Maartin casts *deathwatch*.

During Combat Maartin casts *magic weapon* and *shield of faith*. Maartin orders his nanny, a disguised babau, to attack so he can use magic from a distance as he flees. He casts *darkness* to cover his escape, drinking his potion of *invisibility* if he is able. If forced out of the darkness, he disables targets with *bestow curse*, *blindness*, and *poison*, then drinks his potion of *gaseous form* to escape.

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 10, **Con** 14, **Int** 8, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 16

Feats Blind-Fight, Combat Casting, Command Undead, Heavy Armor Proficiency, Improved Channel, Spell Focus (necromancy)

Skills Heal +7, Knowledge (religion) +6, Linguistics +2, Perception +7, Spellcraft +5

Languages Common, Abyssal, Aklo

SQ aura

Combat Gear potion of *cure moderate wounds*, potion of *gaseous form*, potion of *invisibility*, flask of acid, smokesticks (2); **Other Gear** masterwork full plate, light crossbow with 20 bolts, masterwork kukri, cloak of resistance +1, unholy water, wooden unholy symbol, silver dust for *desecrate* (worth 25 gp)

UNDER THE REVENANT'S MASK

LEVELS 6-8

THE SECOND NIGHT

For the second night, Caesar knows what to expect a bit better. He closes the inn early, sends his staff home and asks the adventurers to help him bar the doors. It's hard even for a revenant to break through a strong wooden door (Str DC 25).

When the attack begins, Caesar tries to hide in his room. If no one stops him or thought to board the windows upstairs, Aurora climbs the walls thanks to her cloak of arachnida, and tries to kill him. You may use this opportunity to drop a few clues, like having Aurora say things like: "I loved you Caesar...why did you kill me", and so on.

Like the first night, if all zombies are defeated, or Aurora loses half her hit points, she tries to escape.

Following nights could play out mostly like the second night, except with barred windows. If you think the PCs are having too easy a time defending against the undead, add more zombies. You can also consider having Damiel use his infusion discovery to make Aurora more powerful with extracts. This gives another condition for Aurora to run away, running out of buffs.

DOCTOR DAMIEL, THE GREEDY ALCHEMIST

Even though Caesar does not suspect him, after speaking to Orin and Maartin, the players themselves should suspect Damiel. Finding his shop is easy; they just need to ask Caesar. Once the shop is found, they can question him. Damiel is an awful liar and he is under a lot of pressure, so if the PCs press the issue he will spill the beans and attack them. If it is during the day, Aurora will be recovering in a hidden room and will come to his aid.

It is also possible for the PCs track Aurora back to his shop after she retreats after one of the attacks. In this case, remember that he always has 7 zombies at time, but usually sends only four with Aurora.

It is very likely that fighting Aurora, Damiel and the zombies all at once is too much for the PCs to handle. In that case, if they have figured out what is going on, remember them that they could still convince Aurora that Caesar did not kill her.

NPC'S AND MONSTERS

For most of the adventure, the player characters will be fighting these zombies created by Damiel. They are faster and tougher than normal zombies and also resistant to positive energy.

Alchemical Zombie (CR 2)

XP 600

NE Medium undead

Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +0

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14 (+4 natural)

hp 21 (4d8+3)

Fort +1, **Ref** +3, **Will** +4

Immune undead traits, **Resist** channel resistance +2

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., climb 20ft

Melee slam +6/+6 (1d6+4)

STATISTICS

Str 17, **Dex** 14, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 18

Feats ToughnessB

Skills Survival +0 (+4 tracking by scent)

Special Attacks quick strike

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

Aurora, revenant (CR 6)

About two weeks ago, Aurora was a naïve young rebel and a talented singer (CG Human Bard 3). She loved her father despite constant disagreements, helped around in his alchemist shop, stood up for those weaker than herself and sang at the Laughing Dragon Inn almost every night. A fierce and beautiful woman, people were surprised when she decided to settle down with Caesar.

Now, Aurora is a pale corpse clad in black leather armor, with a snake leather mask. She uses the same stats as a standard revenant, except she has leather armor (increasing her AC by +2), a cloak of arachnida and an aspect mask (snake). She thinks Caesar killed her, so he counts as her targeted murderer.

UNDER THE REVENANT'S MASK

LEVELS 6-8

XP 2,400

LE Medium undead

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., sense murderer; Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 18 (+2 armor, +3 Dex, +6 natural) (+2 dodge bonus to AC vs attacks of opportunity)

hp 76 (9d8+36)

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

DR 5/slashing; **Immune** cold, undead traits, webs and web spells of any sort; **SR** 17

Weaknesses self-loathing

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee 2 claws +14 (1d8+7 plus grab) (+2 attacks of opportunity)

Special Attacks baleful shriek, constrict (1d6+7)

STATISTICS

Str 24, **Dex** 17, **Con** —, **Int** 7, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 19

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +13 (+17 grapple); **CMD** 26

Feats Cleave, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Step Up, Weapon Focus (claw)

Skills Climb +8, Intimidate +16, Perception +13

Languages Common

SQ reason to hate

SPECIAL ABILITIES

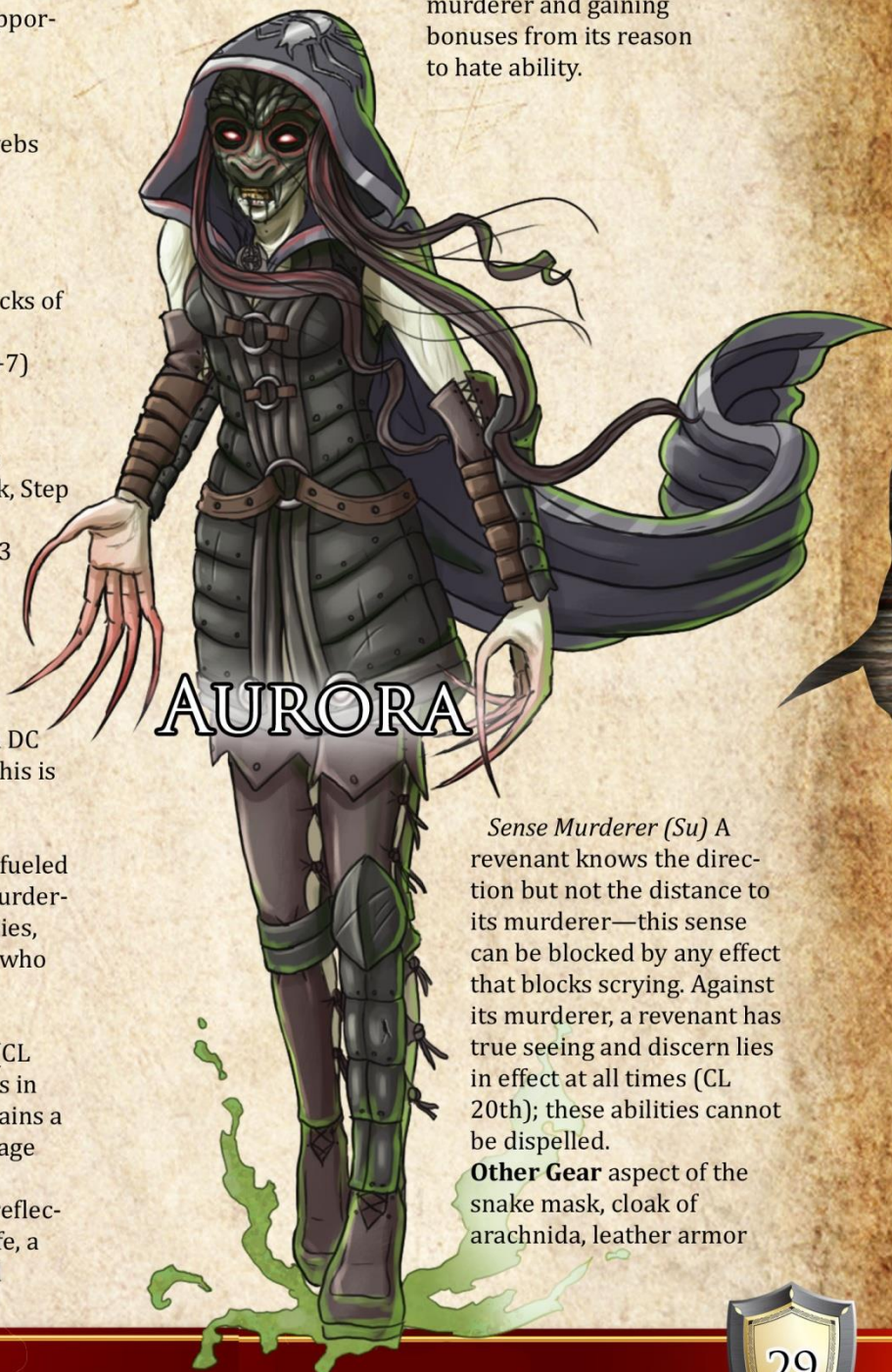
Baleful Shriek (Su) Once every 1d4 rounds, a revenant can shriek as a standard action. All creatures within a 60-foot spread must make a DC 18 Will save or cower in fear for 1d4 rounds. This is a mind-affecting fear effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Reason to Hate (Su) A revenant's existence is fueled by its hatred for its murderer. As long as the murderer exists, the revenant exists. If the murderer dies, the revenant is immediately slain. A murderer who becomes undead does not trigger a revenant's destruction. When a revenant encounters its murderer, it gains the benefits of a *haste* spell (CL 20th) that lasts as long as its murderer remains in sight. Against its murderer, the revenant also gains a +4 profane bonus on attack rolls, weapon damage rolls, grapple checks, and saving throws.

Self Loathing (Ex) When confronted with its reflection or any object that was important to it in life, a revenant must make a DC 20 Will save to avoid

becoming overwhelmed with self-pity. This condition renders the revenant helpless, and lasts until the revenant is attacked or sees its murderer. If a revenant resists becoming overwhelmed, the revenant becomes obsessed with the source that triggered the saving throw and does everything it can to destroy it, reacting to the trigger as if the trigger were its

murderer and gaining bonuses from its reason to hate ability.



Sense Murderer (Su) A revenant knows the direction but not the distance to its murderer—this sense can be blocked by any effect that blocks scrying. Against its murderer, a revenant has true seeing and discern lies in effect at all times (CL 20th); these abilities cannot be dispelled.

Other Gear aspect of the snake mask, cloak of arachnida, leather armor

UNDER THE REVENANT'S MASK

LEVELS 6-8

Doctor Daniel (CR 6)

Daniel looks like an old, grouchy storekeeper in his alchemist job. The truth is far worse. An ambitious, petty caricature of a man, Daniel has studied alchemy as his way to the top and is not scared to crush anyone else in order to advance. He wanted to get his daughter married to a noble, but her romance with Caesar ruined his plans.

As Daniel investigated Caesar, he grew to despise the man more and more. Despite working very hard day and night, Caesar was a kind fellow loved by everyone. Not only day, he was achieving notoriety and success through his association with Daniel's daughter. Seeing his daughter as a tool and Caesar as a symbol of everything he wasn't, Daniel's hatred festered quickly.

Trying to break the couple apart, Daniel disguised himself as Caesar and accidentally killed Aurora. When she came back as a revenant, he saw an opportunity to torment the man he grew to hate while he tried to advance his own plans. Daniel is always frowning, has short white hair with a big bald spot at the top. He thinks himself quite the evil mastermind, but he actually thinks rather small.

XP 2,400

Male human alchemist (reanimator, preservationist)
7

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +4; **Senses** Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+4 mage armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 46 (7d8+14)

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

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 rapier +12 (1d6+1/18-20)

Ranged bomb +8 (3d4+3 fire plus 6 splash, DC 16)

Special Attacks bomb 10/day, mutagen

Alchemist Extracts Prepared (CL 3rd)

3rd Level- lesser animate dead, bottled ooze

2nd Level- summon nature's ally II, bull's strength, cat's grace (2)

1st Level— summon nature's ally I, shield (2), negate aroma, expeditious retreat

TACTICS

Before Combat Daniel drinks the mage armor potion.

During Combat Daniel stays away from melee, going for bombs while his minions attack. He will engage in melee with his rapier only when he is out of bombs or if he thinks the poison can kill the target quickly.

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 14, **Con** 14, **Int** 16, **Wis** 12 (10 beast), **Cha** 8

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 19 (21 beast)

Feats Brew PotionB, Throw AnythingB, Weapon Finesse, Martial Weapon Proficiency (rapier), Dodge

Skills Craft (alchemy) +13 (+20 to create alchemical items), Spellcraft +13, Handle Animal +9, Knowledge (religion) +13, Knowledge (psionics) +13, Craft (trapmaking) +13, Disable Device +14

Languages Common, Elven, Dwarven, Goblin

SQ poison use, swift alchemy, swift poisoning, bottled ooze, spontaneous healing, infusion

Combat Gear +1 rapier, mage armor potion, 10 doses of greenblood oil (DC 13, frequency 1/rd. for 4 rds, damage 1 Con, cure 1 save)

Spontaneous Healing (Ex): Daniel can heal from wounds rapidly. As a free action once per round, he can heal 5 hit points as if he had the fast healing ability. He can heal 45 hit points per day in this manner. If he falls unconscious because of hit point damage and he still has healing available from this ability, the ability activates automatically each round until he is conscious again or the ability is depleted for the day.

Mutagen (Su): As a standard action, Daniel can drink a mutagen. Upon drinking, the mutagen causes him to grow more slender and more bestial, granting him a +2 natural armor bonus, a +4 alchemical bonus to Dexterity and a -2 penalty to Wisdom for 70 minutes.

UNDER THE REVENANT'S MASK

LEVELS 6-8

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

After the players finally confront Doctor Damiel, the adventure is concluded. The PCs themselves might be able to help Aurora come back to life, but if they can't do so, Maartin Bhestos is willing to help - for a price. This might send the PCs into yet another adventure, perhaps putting them against Orin and his goons to recover something they stole from Maartin.

Caesar and Aurora will be grateful towards the PCs forever. They can always count on free food when they visit and even a discount on alchemical items after Aurora gets her father's shop back on track.

DOCTOR DAMIEL






Take Me to the River

BY ANTHONY TORRETTI

A One-Session Scenario for 4-6 players of 8th level.

There are things in this world that predate the entirety of civilization. What happens when such things make an unexpected return to haunt the people of the present? Well, whatever you do, just stay out of the water.

Take Me to the River is a brief adventure for four-to-five 8th-level characters. It begins in Brighton's Laughing Dragon Inn, and all seems right until a controversial figure suddenly goes missing.



TAKE ME TO THE RIVER

LEVEL 8

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Many eons ago, indescribable beings skittered and crawled across the bottoms of primordial seas. As the waters slowly vanished, the surviving aberrations buried themselves in the mud and entered a deep hibernation. For thousands of years, they've slept; awaiting their predestined arousal.

Today, the town of Brighton is nestled along the shores of the Talmaara River. The residents are a rugged people, having survived a long history of ogre aggression from the west, but are nonetheless friendly and welcoming. Recently, however, a group of prospectors from the Steelpick Mining Company began panning and dredging large swaths of the riverbed right outside of town. While Brighton is no stranger to business and development, many are strongly opposed to the damage Steelpick is doing to the river. A local druid, Artinus, is particularly adamant in his opposition to the company's presence, and has been leaning heavily on the Lord Mayor to take action. Though the people of Brighton don't take kindly to Steelpick's disruptive presence, they are charitable enough to accept the lead prospector's coin in exchange for lodging at the Laughing Dragon Inn.

Tensions reach their boiling point, however, when the prospector's assistant goes missing. Prospector Jilan, too paranoid of the locals to seek their help, quietly approaches the first group of adventurers she finds in hopes of getting the assistance she needs.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The PCs are hired by the prospector of a fledgling mining company to investigate the disappearance of her assistant. She is convinced that the townsfolk of Brighton are somehow involved, particularly the druid Artinus. When the PCs ask around the Laughing Dragon Inn of his whereabouts, they learn that the prospector had stayed late drinking and vanished early in the

morning. The last person to see the assistant saw him heading towards the outhouse. Investigating the outhouse, the PCs hear movement in the sewage below. One at a time, the PCs clamber into the chute and descend into the sewers.

Traversing the sewers, several elder things burst from the sewage. After the creatures are slain, the PCs continue until they near the sewer's outlet.

There, they witness a group of Shub-Niggurath cultists attempting a "rebirth-ing ritual" by shoving the missing assistant into one of the elder thing's hibernation pods and sealing him inside. When freed, the assistant explains that the 'strange deposits' found at the mining site were actually elder thing hibernation pods. Frantic, he warns the party that they need to return to the camp before more elder things are awakened.

Emerging from the sewer's outlet and heading downstream, the PCs reach the Steelpick mining operation finding a massive brood-queen has already been awoken by the cultists and is wreaking havoc. Once the monster is dispatched, the party must destroy the rest of the un-hatched pods before more elder things emerge.

Returning with the assistant,

the prospector rewards them.

DRINKS WITH THE PROSPECTOR

Read the following to set the scene for players just arriving at the inn.

"The Laughing Dragon has an atmosphere as warm and jovial as its title. Jaunty music from the stage echoes across the smoky tavern as strangers offer you friendly greetings."

When the PCs are at the Laughing Dragon on a particularly busy evening, they literally bump into Lenam (CN male gnome expert 4) as he's bringing several full mugs over to his table.



TAKE ME TO THE RIVER

LEVEL 8

Apologizing nervously, he offers each PC a seat at his table and a beverage on him. Once seated, Lenam introduces the PCs to his boss, Prospector Jilan (LN female half-orc expert 8) and a couple other members of the Steelpick Mining Company crew. She talks about the company's work alongside the riverbanks outside of town. Lenam seems particularly excited about this subject, interjecting about "strangely dense" soil deposits that are "particularly promising". If pressed for further information, Lenam offers to show the party in the morning.

During the conversation, spontaneously interrupt the PCs with the following:

"Ohhh! There they arrreee!" a slurred voice shouts from behind your back. A lanky, bearded man stands there, wobbling in place and glaring over your shoulder at the prospector. "Yooouuu are the one destroying the river!" the man slurs between belches. "You kknnoow nature has a way of taking care of things..."

This man is Artinus, the eccentric local druid (LN male human druid 7). After berating the table for a few moments, he stumbles off muttering to himself. Lenam clears his throat and changes the subject, while Jilan excuses herself to retire for the evening.

PART 1: AN "INN"-VESTIGATION

When the PCs emerge from their rooms one morning, they're greeted to hushed murmurs of a mysterious disappearance. Prospector Jilan strides purposefully across the room towards the PCs and takes them aside, asking if any of them have seen Lenam.

She then explains that he usually starts early at the worksite, but the rest of the miners haven't seen him. In fact, nobody else in the Steelpick crew has seen him since the night before. Jilan asks for the PCs to help look around the Laughing Dragon for any signs of what happened, pointing out that the townspeople are resentful of her and more likely to cooperate with investigators unaffiliated with Steelpick. She casually mentions payment before leaving to speak with the Sheriff about the disappearance.

Nearly everyone from the night before is present at the Laughing Dragon. Some are still waking up, while most are sitting in the tavern mulling over breakfast. Key clues, their source, and the needed skill check are shown below. The tavern patrons are wary of being linked to Lenam's disappearance and, unless coaxed otherwise, withhold relevant information. A PC can tell if a particular NPC has a relevant piece of information with a successful DC 20 Sense Motive check.

THE WITNESSES

Mitus, the Bartender
Tannilegh Dankmeadow (Co-owner of the Laughing Dragon)
Mywynn Dankmeadow (Co-owner of the Laughing Dragon)
Random inn guest
Abigail and Kara, tavern servers.

CLUES

Lenam stayed late, ordering a drink during "last call" and leaving without paying his tab. (Source: Mitus, DC 10 Diplomacy check).



TAKE ME TO THE RIVER

LEVEL 8

Tannilieg Dankmeadow thought Lenam had drunk enough, and told him to go lay down. (Source: **Mitus**, DC 25 Diplomacy or Intimidate check).

TANNILIEGH DANKMEADOW, CO-OWNER OF THE LAUGHING DRAGON

At some point during the night, a sobered-up Artinus approached Lenam and spoke quietly with him. The exchange seemed friendly. (Source: **Tannilieg**, DC 20 Diplomacy, Intimidate, or Perform checks).

MYWYNN DANKMEADOW (CO-OWNER OF THE LAUGHING DRAGON)

Mywynn is used to dealing with rude and drunk customers, and is only Intimidated with a DC 30.

Lenam left his knapsack and a few minor items behind. (Source: **Mywynn**, DC 20 Diplomacy or Perform check).

Lenams sack contains 5 gp, his work boots, and some other mining gear. A locket wrapped in a cloth stands out. While not valuable, Prospector Jilan confirms it belonged to Lenams deceased mother, and he wouldn't leave such a keepsake behind.

RANDOM INN GUESTS

Most of the guests stay to themselves and don't want to be implicated by the investigating PC's, so they avoid interacting with them if possible. If questioned, most don't remember seeing Lenam leaving, but after asking 4 guests, the 5th can impart the following information. If the PC's rely too much on intimidate for answers, the guests begin leaving the inn.

After "last call", Lenam was seen leaving the Inn and heading towards the outhouse. (Source: Inn guest, DC 15 Diplomacy check).

ABIGAIL AND KARA, SERVERS

The tavern servers Abigail and Kara were hired for their good looks and easy-going natures, but they never-the-less, are skilled servers. they have had their

share of aggressively forward, inebriated customers, and waste no time in reporting rude or lascivious behavior to Mywynn.

Lenam was a bit grabby as he got deeper his cups. He went to use the outhouse and never paid his tab. (Source: **Abigail or Kara**, Diplomacy DC 15.).

GROUND SURROUNDING THE LAUGHING DRAGON

Foot prints of medium and small size can be seen in the mud heading back and forth between the outhouse and the inn (Source: **ground behind and alongside the inn**, DC 15 Perception check).

A single set of small, distinctive prints from specialty miner's boots, can be seen heading towards the outhouse, but not returning. (Source: **ground near the outhouse**, DC 20 Survival check).

INSIDE THE OUTHOUSE

Muddied, gnome-sized handprints can be found along the edge of outhouse pit, dragging down into the chute (Source: **outhouse interior**, DC 20 Perception check).

If the PCs listen closely and succeed on a DC 15 Perception check, they can hear the distant sound of movement echoing up through the outhouse hole.

DEDUCTION

The PCs should be able to piece together the clues to form the following sequence of events: Lenam was still drinking around "last call" when Artinus approached and apologized to him for his earlier outburst. Afterwards, Tannilieg cut Lenam off for the night. Lenam stumbled out to the outhouse, leaving his pack behind, but never returned. The scene inside the outhouse suggests that he was pulled down into the sewers.

TAKE ME TO THE RIVER

LEVEL 8

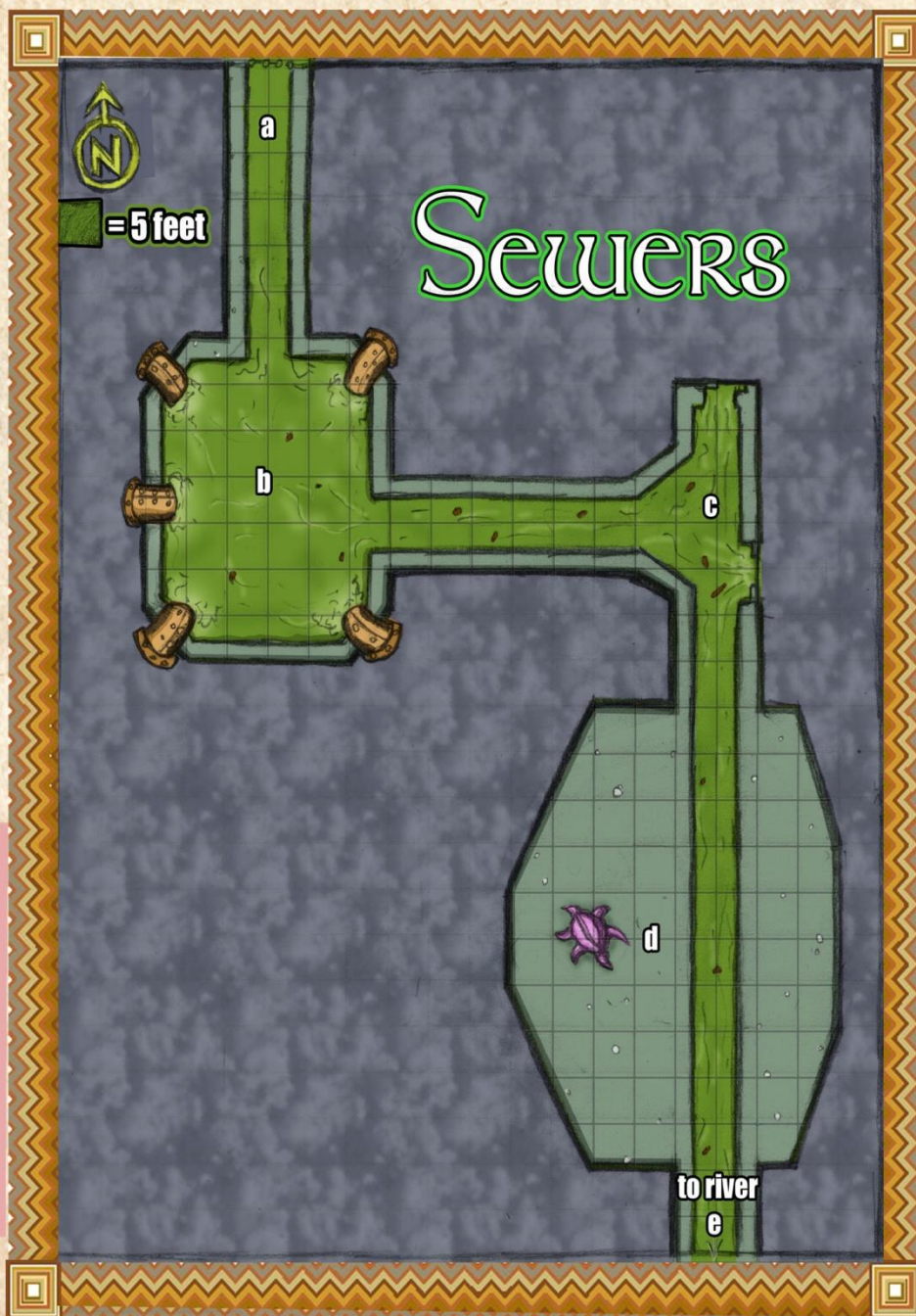
PART 2: MIND IN THE GUTTER

The outhouse chute is wide enough for one medium creature, and descends 10 ft. down at a near-vertical incline until it lets out into the sewer. The fit is snug enough for a creature to climb down slowly without the aid of rope, but a successful DC 15 Acrobatics check is required to keep one's grip on the waste-slicked sides of the outhouse chute. The sewer is a network of hewn stone corridors, about 10ft. high, with a constant flow of ankle-deep river water. The chute lets out near the top, making a complete descent about 20ft. While the river water dilutes the raw sewage considerably, it's still not pleasant. The flow of the water isn't strong enough to move anything weighing more than 5 lbs., but the depth makes the area difficult terrain. Unless noted otherwise in an area's description, the sewer has no lighting whatsoever.

A. UNDER THE INN

"The odor was apparent before you even descended, but now it greets your nostrils with an even greater intensity. The corridor seems to extend perpetually into the darkness towards both north and south, while the fetid water at your ankles flows gently in the latter direction."

During the day, light shines down faintly from the outhouse to keep this part of the system dimly lit. An iron grate 60 ft. to the north blocks most movement further in that direction. The hallway extends 80 ft. south in the other direction before opening up into a wider chamber.



TAKE ME TO THE RIVER

LEVEL 8

As the PCs make their way down the corridor, the elder things in the overflow chamber (B) listen intently for any intruders (Perception +13).

B. OVERFLOW CHAMBER

"The corridor widens into an open chamber. Several small stone pipes protrude out of the walls, pumping out wastewater and sewage at random intervals. The flow slows, but continues, through this chamber into another opening on the east wall."

This chamber is designed to collect excess river water in the event of heavy rains. The murkiness of the water conceals the increased depth (10 ft. deep as opposed to ankle-deep) and is unnoticed by the PCs unless one of them succeeds on a DC 25 Perception check. The depth is ankle-deep again at the other end of the chamber leading to area c.

If the elder things were aware of the PCs' arrival, then they are submerged in the water (for the purposes of their Stealth check, the water's murkiness provides concealment) and attack the PCs when they try to swim across. If they are not aware of the PCs', then they are surfaced and caught unaware.

Elder Thing

CR 5

XP 1600

LN Medium aberration (aquatic)

Init +2; **Senses** all-around vision, darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16 (+2 Dex, +6 natural)

hp 59 (7d8+28)

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

Immune cold; **Resist** fire 10

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 20 ft. (clumsy), swim 40 ft.

Melee 5 tentacles +7 (1d4+2 plus grab)

Special Attacks constrict (1d4+2)

STATISTICS

Str 15, **Dex** 14, **Con** 19, **Int** 20, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 17

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +7 (+11 grapple); **CMD** 19 (can't be tripped)



ELDER THING

TAKE ME TO THE RIVER

LEVEL 8

Feats Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Endurance, Great Fortitude

Skills Disable Device +9, Fly +4, Heal +10, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Perception +13, Spellcraft +15, Survival +13, Swim +20, Use Magic Device +10

Languages Elder Thing

SQ amphibious, hibernation, limited starflight, no breath

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Hibernation (Ex): An elder thing can enter a state of hibernation at will; doing so takes 1 minute. While in this state, it can take no actions and is effectively helpless, as if it were in a deep sleep. An elder thing can remain in hibernation for as long as it wishes—while in this state, it does not need to eat or drink, nor does it age. Time effectively stands still for a hibernating elder thing. If it is jostled or damaged while hibernating, an elder thing can attempt a DC 20 Will save. If it succeeds, it awakens in 2d4 rounds. Otherwise, it takes 1d4 days to awaken from hibernation. An elder thing can set the length of its hibernation when it first enters this state, so that it can awaken after a set amount of time has passed. When awakening at a set time in this manner, an elder thing needs only 1d3 rounds to rouse itself, with no Will saving throw necessary.

Limited Star-flight (Ex): An elder thing can survive in the void of outer space, and its wings allow it to use its fly speed in that environment despite the lack of air. Unlike creatures with full starflight, an elder thing's ability to fly in outer space does not allow it to reach unusually high speeds—an elder thing that wishes to travel from one planet to another typically calculates the distance and then hibernates for the majority of the journey, relying on its momentum and inertia to carry it to its destination while it slumbers along the way.

C. COLLECTION AREA

"The corridor widens once more into a shallow chamber fed into by a raised corridor from the chamber's north end. All the sewage collected in here seems to continue flowing east."

This chamber is immediately below the Mayor's Road in Brighton (DC 20 Knowledge (geography) or (local) check), and combines the street runoff from

the Catch Basin (D) with the sewage and river water from the rest of the sewer system. When the PCs enter, they are faintly able to hear low chanting (DC 15 Perception) echoing from the Catch Basin.

D. CATCH BASIN

"Sunlight from the streets above faintly illuminates this shallow basin. Recent runoff from the streets forms a small puddle in the center of this damp chamber."

The corridor leading to the basin is slick and slopes downwards towards the collection area (C). Treat the ground as being under the effect of the spell grease, with an additional +5 to the DC due to incline (for a total DC of 15). The cultists gathered in the basin are distracted by their chanting and take a -10 on Perception checks made to notice the approaching PCs.

When the PCs make it up to the chamber, they meet a peculiar sight. Four robed figures are gathered in a circle around what appears to be a large, shed carapace. A bound and gagged Lenam is nestled inside the carapace. As the PCs arrive they see the elder cultist push the two halves of the carapace shut. The other three cultists turn towards the corridor. They immediately attack if they see the PCs, while one tries to keep the carapace closed and sealed.

Cultist Elder

CR 6

XP 1200

Human Adept 6

LN Medium humanoid

Init +0; **Senses** Perception +3

DEFENSE

AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10

hp 27 (6d6+6)

Fort +7, **Ref** +2, **Will** +8;

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee quarterstaff +2 (1d6–1)

Adept Spells Prepared (CL 6th; concentration +9)

TAKE ME TO THE RIVER

LEVEL 8

2nd Level—*invisibility, mirror image*

1st Level—*bless, cure light wounds, obscuring mist*

0 Level (at will)—*create water, guidance, mending*

TACTICS

During Combat The cult leader casts *bless* on his cultist allies and *mirror image* on himself. If things go poorly for them, he casts *obscuring mist* and *invisibility* to escape.

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 10, **Con** 12, **Int** 9, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 12 (16 vs. bull rush or trip)

Feats Eschew Materials, Great Fortitude, Skill Focus (Knowledge [religion])

Skills Diplomacy +6, Knowledge (religion) +11

Languages Common, Aklo

SQ summon familiar (rat)

Combat Gear potion of gaseous form, scroll of cure moderate wounds; **Other Gear** quarterstaff, ring of sustenance, book of prayers to Shub-Niggurath, bone holy symbol, 38 gp

Cultists (3)

CR 8

XP 1,200

Human Rogue 5

LE Medium humanoid

Init +8; **Senses** Perception +9

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +4 Dex,)

hp 41 (5d8+15)

Fort +4, **Ref** +11, **Will** +1

Defensive Abilities evasion, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 short sword +9 (1d4+1/19–20)

Ranged mwk hand crossbow +9 (1d3/19–20)

Special Attacks sneak attack +3d6

TACTICS

During Combat The cultists use surprise and flank when possible to make sneak attacks, as well as use their slow reactions rogue talent.

STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 16

Feats Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Point-

THE CULT OF SHUB NIGGURATH

The evil religion of the Dark Mother has a long history in Brighton, and this strange ritual is part of it. In the wake of the battle, PCs can roll the following Knowledge checks to gain additional context.

Knowledge (Religion)

DC 15 – These cultists wear robes and insignia that are connected to the cult of Shub-Niggurath, a sinister goddess of eldritch horrors.

DC 20 – The cult of Shub-Niggurath is obsessed with the creation and spawning of new aberrations and abominations.

DC 25 – One popular ritual among the cultists is the “rite of rebirth”, where a living person is forced into the carapace, egg sac, or similar space associated with an aberration and forced to slowly suffocate and die. This ritual is done with the belief that this death leads to new aberrational life.

Knowledge (Dungeoneering)

DC 15 – The aberrations known as “elder things” have been known to hibernate in carapaces or “pods” for thousands of years, typically burrowed underground.

DC 20 – It is said that elder things came to this world from the void between stars eons ago. Because of these alleged origins, they are often treated as divine beings by cults of various dark gods.

DC 25 – Elder thing hibernation pods are a rare find, most frequently discovered in moist ground along the shores of various bodies of water such as rivers.

TAKE ME TO THE RIVER

LEVEL 8

Skills Acrobatics +14 (+10 when jumping), Bluff +8, Climb +10, Disable Device +14, Knowledge (local) +8, Perception +9, Sleight of Hand +12, Stealth +16

Languages Common

SQ rogue talents (finesse rogue, slow reactions), trap-finding +2

Combat Gear potions of cure light wounds (2), potion of invisibility; **Other Gear** masterwork studded leather, +1 short sword, masterwork hand crossbow with 20 bolts, masterwork thieves' tools, tindertwig (5), 60 gp

It takes 2 rounds, uninterrupted, for the cultist elder to finish closing the carapace, after which Lenam begins to suffocate over the next 3 rounds. The carapace can be broken open by dealing 15 points of damage to it, or by succeeding on a DC 20 Strength check.

If the PCs are able to get Lenam out of the carapace alive, he stirs awake and enters into a wild-eyed panic. When ungagged, read or paraphrase the following.

"Pods! They were pods!", Lenam squeaks in an exhausted panic. "Those dense deposits...I should've known! And the biggest one is still at the mining site!"

Lenam goes on to explain that he also overheard the cultists plotting to "awaken" all the other pods. He is determined to get to the site as soon as possible,



and offers to lead you through the sewer to where the sewer lets out.

PART 3: THE BROODQUEEN OF SHUB-NIGGURATH

The sewer eventually lets out along the riverbank near Brighton Road. Afterwards, it's a quick run downriver before reaching the mining site along the southern shore east of Merchant Row. When the PC's arrive at the site, read or paraphrase the following.

TAKE ME TO THE RIVER

LEVEL 8

An eerie silence fills the mining site, as the bodies of miners and cultists alike are strewn about. Standing tall in the shallows of the river is a large carapace, split open, with its occupant nowhere in sight. Other unhatched pods are scattered in the surrounding mud and can be seen squirming gently.

The Broodqueen has already emerged and is waiting by the miner's tents cloaked with its natural invisibility. It attacks as soon as the PCs get close to the unhatched pods.

The Broodqueen of Shub-Niggurath CR 10

XP 9,600

CE Large aberration (extraplanar)

Init +6; **Senses** blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +20

Aura stench (30 ft., DC 22, 10 rounds)

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 11, flat-footed 22 (+2 Dex, +13 natural, -1 size)



BROOD MOTHER

TAKE ME TO THE RIVER

LEVEL 8

hp 133 (14d8+70)

Fort +9, **Ref** +8, **Will** +12

Defensive Abilities tenuous natural invisibility; **DR** 10/magic; **Immune** cold, fire; **Resist** sonic 10; **SR** 21
OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

Melee bite +17 (1d8+8/19-20/x3), 4 tentacles +16 (1d6+4 plus grab)

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

Special Abilities blood drain (1d4 Con), devastation
STATISTICS

Str 26, **Dex** 15, **Con** 21, **Int** 17, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 20

Base Atk +10; **CMB** +19; **CMD** 30 (38 vs. trip)

Feats Combat Reflexes, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Multiattack, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (tentacle)

Skills Climb +33, Escape Artist +19, Intimidate +22, Knowledge (arcana) +20, Perception +20, Spellcraft +20, Stealth +15

Languages Aklo

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Devastation (Ex): As a full-round action, the spawn can assault a structure, dealing 4d6+16 points of damage to the structure in that round.

Tenuous Natural Invisibility (Ex): This functions like natural invisibility, except it is subject to invisibility purge and effects that outline invisible creatures (such as glitterdust and faerie fire). It cannot be dispelled.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Once the Broodmother is slain, Lenam points to the other pods and explains that the rest need to be destroyed before they hatch. The elder things are considered helpless while hibernating, and are easily dispatched with a coup de grace.

While the PCs are finishing off the elder things, Prospector Lilan and the town Sheriff arrive on horseback. They both assist the PCs, then assess the scene of the carnage in somber silence. The Prospector takes the PCs and Lenam to speak with the Lord Mayor, while the Sheriff gathers the militia to clean up the site and bury the dead.

At the Lord Mayor's manor, Lillan presents the PCs and explains their role in recovering Lenam, stopping

the cultists, and slaying the aberrations. The Mayor and his advisor are mortified by the news of the Cult of Shub-Niggurath's activities, and inquire as to what further assistance the PCs can provide in rooting out this threat. For their heroism, the Mayor offers the PCs rare coins and gems from the Manors own vault valued at 6000 gp. If the PCs managed to find Lenam and bring him back alive, Prospector Lilan fulfills her end of the deal and writes the PCs a Steelpick Ore Note good for another 6000 gp worth of precious metals. This note can be used like currency with merchants aware of the Steelpick mining company, or redeemed with Steelpick in exchange for various rare metals. Prospector Lilan also declares that Steelpick will cease its mining operations along the Talmaara river, which elicits an audible sigh of relief from the Lord Mayor.

From then on, the PCs are treated as town saviors. The Mayor and townspeople will accommodate any request in reason if it means that the PCs stay around for even a day further. The PCs are given a choice of free room and board at the Mayor's manor or at the Laughing Dragon, the latter of which commissions a tavern mural in their honor and offers them free drinks for life.

A Comfortable Skin

CHARLIE BROOKS

A One-Session Scenario for 4-6 players, with characters of 10th level.

Intellect devourers see other living creatures as short-term vessels to be discarded after brief indulgences. However, those who find a comfortable skin sometimes go to great lengths to stay in those bodies as long as possible. Such creatures have recently come to reside in the Laughing Dragon Inn.

"A Comfortable Skin" is an adventure for four 10th-level characters. Inquisitive characters with a knack for investigation will excel in this scenario.

A COMFORTABLE SKIN

LEVEL 10

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The Laughing Dragon has employed many entertainers over the years, but few were as popular as Kavan and Lirra Thresser and their adopted gnome son Barradan. Few also had as shady a history.

Kavan regularly stole from patrons to supplement his family's income. After a maid almost uncovered his stash of stolen goods, Kavan ventured into the inn's basement to find a new hiding place. There found a blocked stairwell and pried the boards away.

The stairs had been sealed for good reason, though. They connect to uncharted caverns beneath Brighton. A few days ago, an intellect devourer within these caverns made its presence known by possessing Kavan's body. His family soon followed, becoming new hosts to an intellect devourer brood.

The monsters have come to enjoy life in Brighton, but their flesh will soon rot away. To prevent this, "Kavan" tampered with a recent order of inn supplies, ensuring that several oils of gentle repose would be secretly shipped with the goods. This aroused the suspicions of the innkeepers Mywynn and Tannileigh, who were attacked and captured when they asked too many questions.

Unfortunately for the monsters, bandits waylaid the shipment. Moreover, their strange activity has raised some suspicions among inn regulars. The intellect devourers are in a bind, and they hope some seasoned adventurers can help them out.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The PCs track down some stolen goods bound for Brighton. The shipment only raises more questions which point to something odd going on in the Laughing Dragon. The adventurers must uncover the intellect devourers' secrets before the monsters kill anybody else.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The easiest way to get the PCs involved is to have "Kavan" offer them a reward for the recovery of the missing goods. Authorities could also ask them to hunt down the bandit group known as the Plundering Blades. Optionally, curious PCs native to Brighton may



KAVAN

notice something unusual about the Thresser family and poke around on their own.

SCENE ONE – THE PLUNDERING BLADES (CR 10)

With Mywynn and Tannileigh out of town on a "business trip," Kavan claims to have been left in charge of the Laughing Dragon. When a shipment of supplies has been waylaid by bandits, the entertainer is desperate for their retrieval. Approaching the PCs, he offers 2,000 gp for the shipment's recovery. This is a startling amount of money for such a simple job, but Kavan insists that the shipment is of the utmost importance.

The bandits are a group of mercenaries known as the Plundering Blades, who robbed the caravan with minimal bloodshed. PCs can track the bandits to their campsite with a DC 20 Survival check.

Creatures: There are six Plundering Blades in all. When encountered, four are taking an inventory of the goods. The others stand watch and shout a warning if anybody approaches.

A COMFORTABLE SKIN

LEVEL 10

Plundering Blades Bandit (6) CR 5

XP 1,600

Human Rogue 4/Ranger 2

CN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +4; **Senses** Perception +5

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 15, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +4

Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 42 (4d8+2d10+10)

Fort +6, **Ref** +12, **Will** +4

Defensive Abilities evasion, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 rapier +8 (1d6+3/18-20),

mwk dagger +8 (1d4+1/19-20)

Ranged mwk light crossbow +10 (1d8/19-20)

Special Abilities favored enemy (humans +2), sneak attack +2d6

STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 22

Feats Combat Expertise, Dodge, Improved Feint, Iron Will, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +11, Appraise +8, Bluff +8, Disable Device +11, Escape Artist +11, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (local) +8, Perception +5, Sense Motive +9, Sleight of Hand +11, Stealth +11

Languages Common

SQ rogue talents (finesse rogue, surprise attack), track +1, trapfinding +2, wild empathy +1

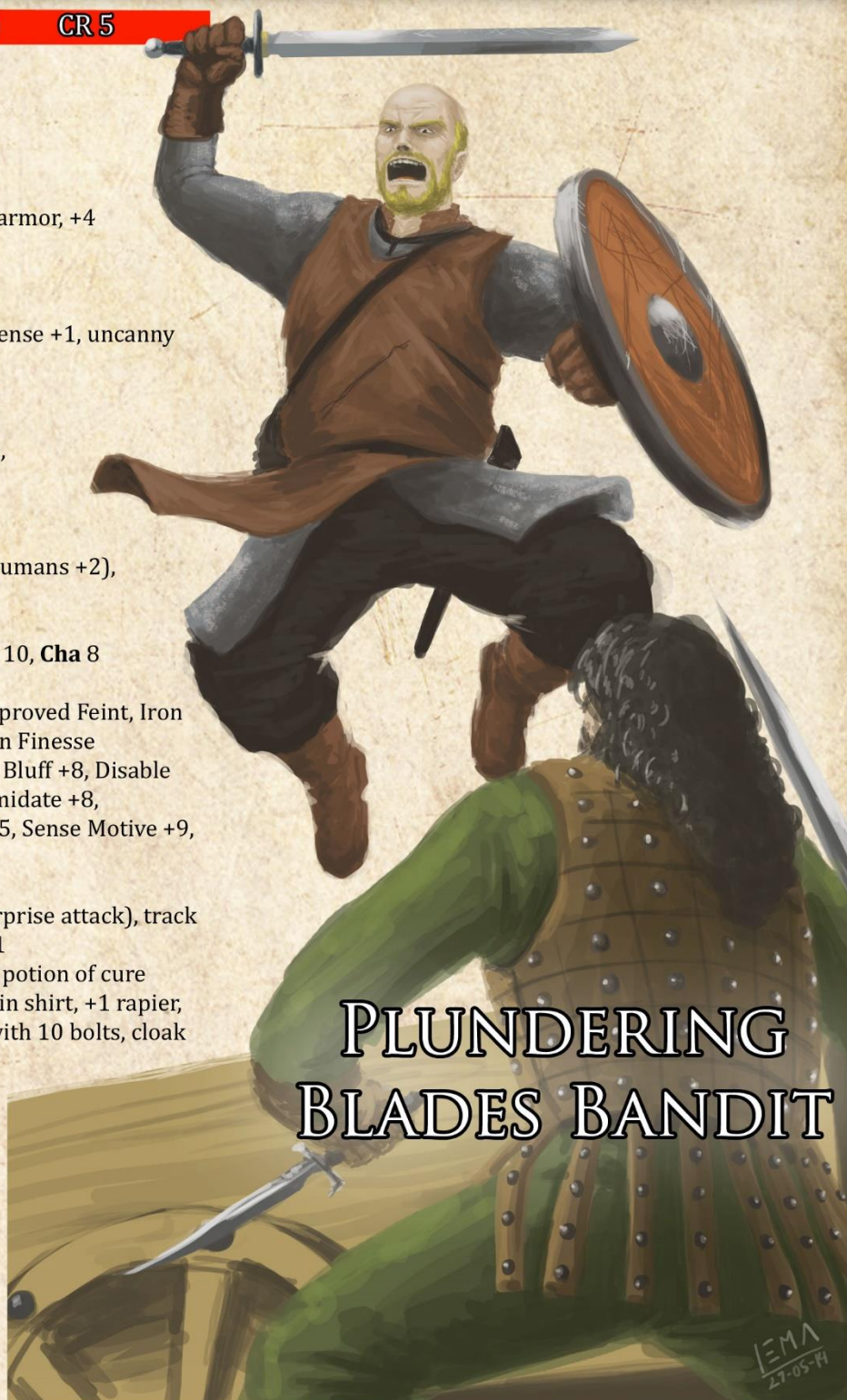
Combat Gear potion of cat's grace, potion of cure moderate wounds; **Other Gear** chain shirt, +1 rapier, mwk dagger, mwk light crossbow with 10 bolts, cloak of resistance +1

TACTICS

Before Combat If they have time to prepare, the bandits drink their potions of cat's grace.

During Combat The bandits use flanking and Improved Feint to set up sneak attacks.

Morale The bandits flee or surrender if reduced to 10 hp or fewer.



PLUNDERING BLADES BANDIT

A COMFORTABLE SKIN

LEVEL 10

Treasure: The shipment includes brewing tools, earthenware plates, clay mugs, and other mundane supplies. A DC 20 Perception check, however, reveals a false bottom inside one of the crates that contains nine oils of *gentle repose*.

Development: Interrogating one of the bandits gets them to reveal that they are acting as mercenaries, hired by a Brighton seamstress named Teera Greyth to steal the shipment without killing any merchants. The bandits were surprised to find so little of value in the shipment, having not yet discovered the hidden oils.

SCENE TWO – SEARCHING FOR ANSWERS

Kavan gladly pays the PCs for the return of the shipment, but becomes distressed if the oils of *gentle repose* are missing. Nonetheless, he only presses the matter with the PCs if he believes they took them. If questioned about the oils, Kavan feigns ignorance, insisting that Mywynn and Tannileigh placed the order.

The PCs may have learned that the seamstress Teera Greyth (N female human commoner 2) hired the Plundering Blades. If they don't seek her out, she comes to them when word gets around that the adventurers recovered the stolen merchandise. When she gets a chance, she hastily gives her side of the story:

"Just before Mywynn and Tannileigh left, things got strange. Kavan, Lirra, and Barradan went from being the friendliest folks in the world to people who look at us regulars like we're total strangers. Just before she left, I overheard Mywynn arguing with Kavan about the most recent shipment, so I figured I might get some answers there. I know it wasn't the brightest idea, but the mercenaries promised they wouldn't hurt anyone and I didn't know what else to do."

If asked about the changes she noticed, Teera points to examples such as Kavan forgetting patrons' names and Lirra's suddenly losing her appreciation for music. Barradan troubled her the most, though. Teera saw him



TEERA GREYTH

whispering to a rat, and she swears he went chasing after her cat the other day.

The Thressers' unusual behavior becomes more pronounced as time goes on. Eventually, it becomes increasingly clear that something is wrong inside the Laughing Dragon.

SCENE THREE – SOMETHING IN THE BASEMENT

Whether they receive the oils of *gentle repose* or not, the Thresser family acts more reclusive as they become obsessed with finding a permanent way of keeping their skins. They spend more time in the basement, lashing out at those who pry into their personal affairs.

Refer to the map of the Laughing Dragon (page A and B) as the PCs explore the basement level.

B.1: STORAGE ROOM

This room has lanterns on the wall, but the intellect devourers have snuffed out all light in the basement, using their blindsight to maneuver. A superior-quality lock (DC 40 Disable Device to open) has recently been added to the eastern door.

A COMFORTABLE SKIN

LEVEL 10

Trap: Even if the lock is bypassed, anybody who opens the door without first speaking a command word triggers a confusion trap set by Kavan.

Confusion Trap CR 4

XP 1200

Type magic; Perception DC 29; Disable Device DC 29

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** none

Effect confusion (DC 17); single target (first person to open the door)

B.2: HOLDING ROOM

Broken furniture has been pushed to the sides of this room to make space for some bedrolls. Two humanoid bodies with sheets draped over them lie against the northern wall.

The sheets cover Mywynn and Tannileigh, who are bound and unconscious.

Creatures: Unless the PCs have taken pains to lure the intellect devourers elsewhere, both Lirra and Barradan lurk here.

Lirra and Barradan (intellect devourers) CR 8

XP 4,800

CE Small aberration

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

Perception +19

DEFENSE

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

hp 84 (8d8+48)

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

DR 10/adamantine and magic; **Immune** fire, mind-affecting effects; **Resist** cold 20, electricity 20, sonic 20;

SR 23

Weaknesses vulnerability to *protection from evil*

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee 4 claws +13 (1d4+1)

Special Attacks body thief, sneak attack +3d6

Spell-like Abilities (CL 8th)

Constant—detect magic *detect magic*

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

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

STATISTICS

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

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

Feats Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Toughness, Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +19, Disguise +11, Knowledge (local) +14, Perception +19, Sense Motive +8, Stealth +29, Use Magic Device +11; Racial Modifiers +8 Bluff, +8 Perception, +8 Stealth

Languages Undercommon (cannot speak); telepathy 100 ft.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

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

A COMFORTABLE SKIN

LEVEL 10

devourer emerges and is dazed for 1 round. Raise dead cannot restore a victim of body theft, but resurrection or more powerful magic can.

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

TACTICS

Before Combat If they have a round to prepare, the intellect devourers climb out of their host bodies. Otherwise, they are forced out if the bodies take 13 hp of damage.

During Combat The monsters move to area B.1 as soon as somebody sets off the confusion trap. They set up a flank and alternate between sneak attacks and uses of their spell-like abilities.

Morale If one of them is slain or the PCs start casting protection from evil, the intellect devourers become invisible and flee to area B.3 to seek help from Kavan.

Treasure: A treasure chest holds the last of Kavan's stolen goods: 2,000 gp (gone if the PCs claimed their reward), a jar of restorative ointment, and a scroll of sending. A second, smaller chest contains a pile of salt and 100 cp.

Tucked beneath Barradan's bedroll is a decapitated white rabbit, a crushed weasel, and a suffocated rat. The intellect devourer found inhabiting the tiny head of a halfling to be an exhilarating experience and has been conducting experiments to see if he could fit into an even smaller skull.

B.3: HIDDEN DEPTHS

Footsteps in the thick dust of this room implies that it was largely unused until very recently. Broken wooden planks lie next to a lightless stairwell leading down.

Creatures: Unless the PCs specifically time their entrance for a time when Kavan is elsewhere, the leader of the brood can be found here.

Kavan

CR 13

XP 25,600

Intellect devourer assassin 5

CE Small aberration

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

DEFENSE

AC 28, touch 23, flat-footed 19 (+3 deflection, +8 Dex, +1 dodge, +5 natural, +1 size)

hp 149 (13d8+91)

Fort +10, **Ref** +13, **Will** +11; +2 vs. poison

Defensive Abilities improved uncanny dodge; **DR** 10/adamantine and magic; **Immune** fire, mind-affecting effects; **Resist** cold 20, electricity 20, sonic 20; **SR** 23

Weaknesses vulnerability to protection from evil

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

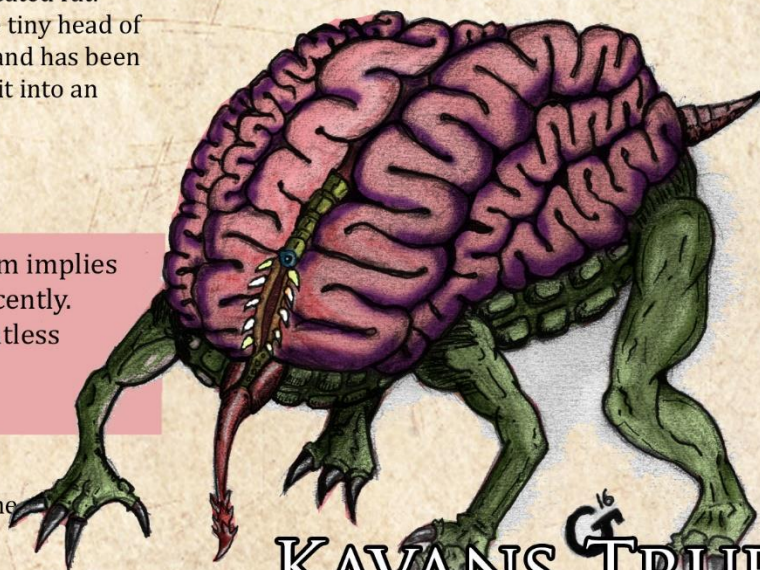
Melee 4 claws +18 (1d4)

Special Attacks body thief, death attack (DC 15), sneak attack +6d6, true death (DC 20)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th; concentration +13)

Constant—detect magic

At Will—confusion (DC 19, single target only), daze monster (DC 17, no HD limit), inflict serious



KAVAN'S TRUE
FORM

A COMFORTABLE SKIN

LEVEL 10

At will—*confusion* (DC 19, single target only), *daze monster* (DC 17, no HD limit), *inflict serious wounds* (DC 18), *invisibility*, *reduce size* (as *reduce person* but self only)

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

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 27, **Con** 23, **Int** 16, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 21

Base Atk +9; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 31 (35 vs. trip)

Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Master Craftsman, Mobility, Toughness, Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +24, Craft (traps) +16, Disguise +18, Knowledge (local) +19, Perception +25, Sense Motive +17, Stealth +31, Use Magic Device +21

Languages Undercommon (cannot speak); telepathy 100 ft.

SQ poison use

Combat Gear ring of protection +3, wand of dispel magic (40 charges)

TACTICS

Before Combat: Kavan crawls out of his host body and becomes invisible. If caught in his host body, Kavan is forced out if it takes 17 hp of damage.

During Combat: Kavan becomes invisible every other round unless the PCs use *see invisibility* or a similar effect to stop him. He uses his wand of dispel magic to counteract any protection from evil spells.

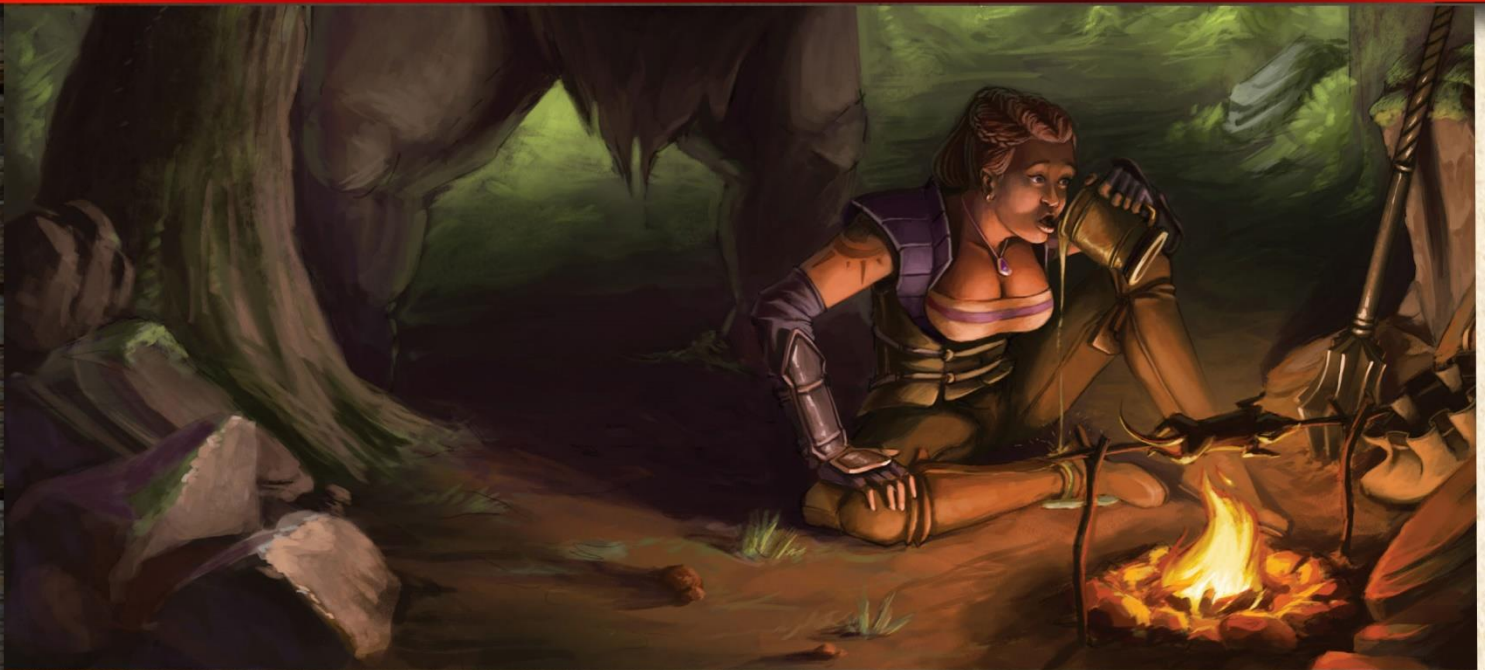
Morale Determined to take this new life for his own, Kavan fights to the death.



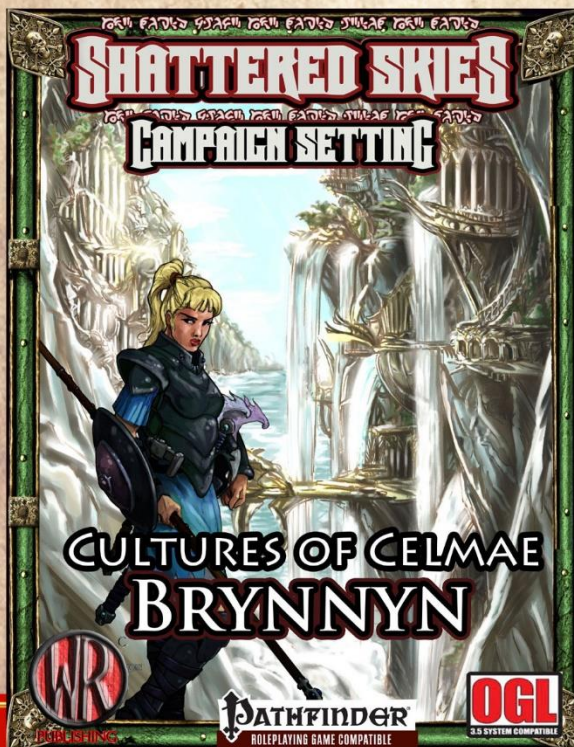
CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

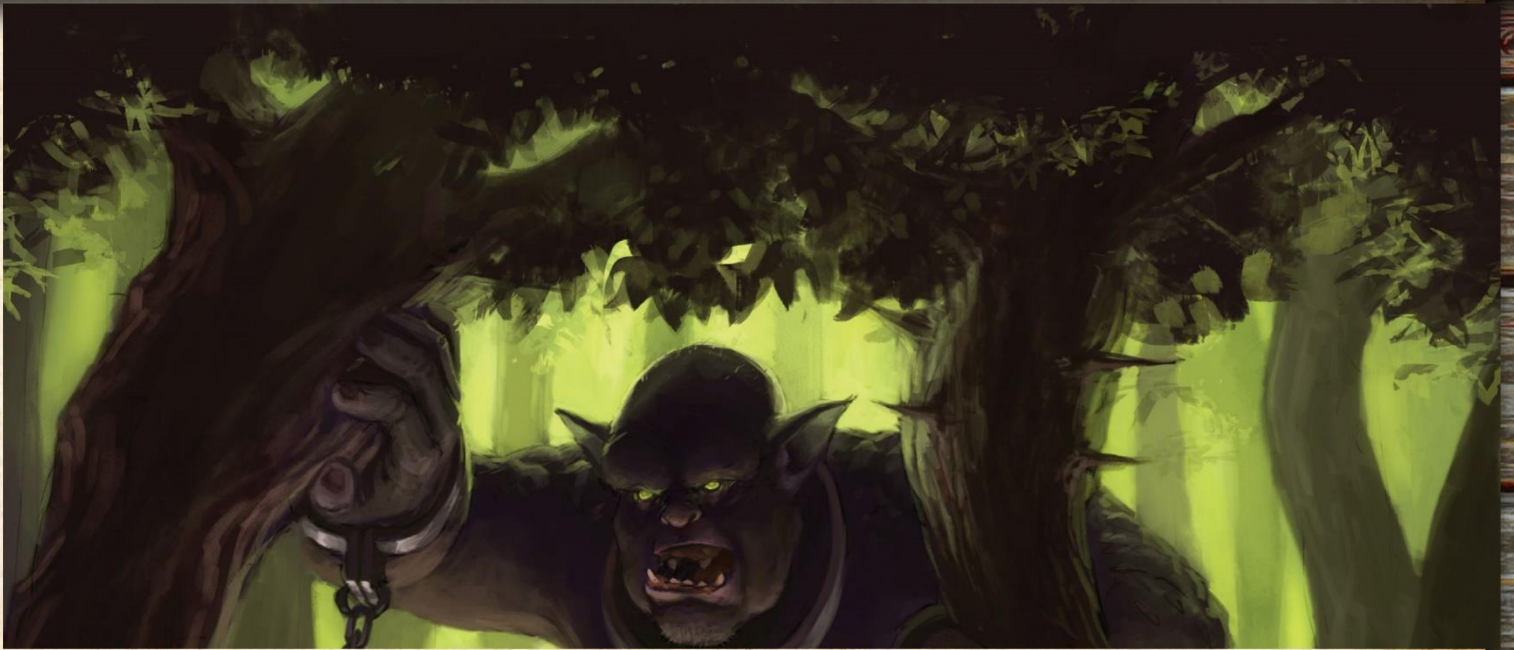
If rescued, Mywynn and Tannileigh offer the PCs their gratitude and a lifetime of free room and board at the Laughing Dragon.

The immediate threat of the intellect devourers ends with the death of the brood that invaded the inn. However, there is still the question of why the creatures captured Mywynn and Tannileigh alive. Are there more powerful intellect devourers out there, or something even more deadly? How deep do the tunnels go? These questions can help shape future adventures.

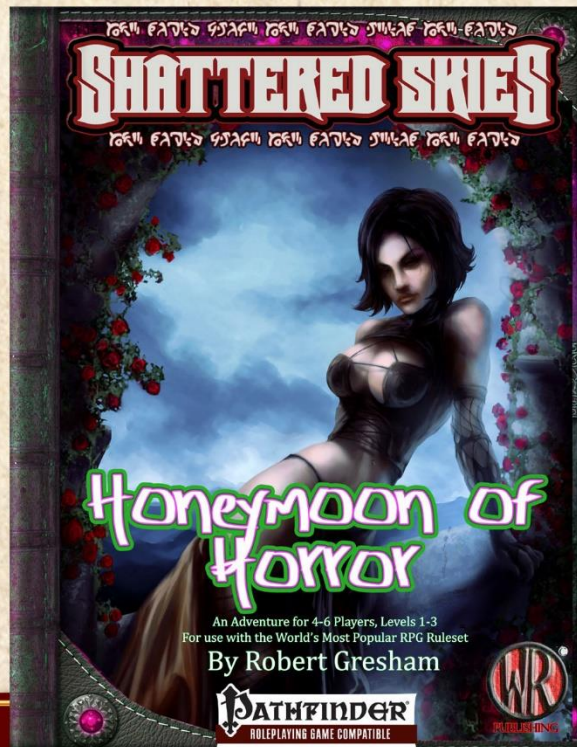
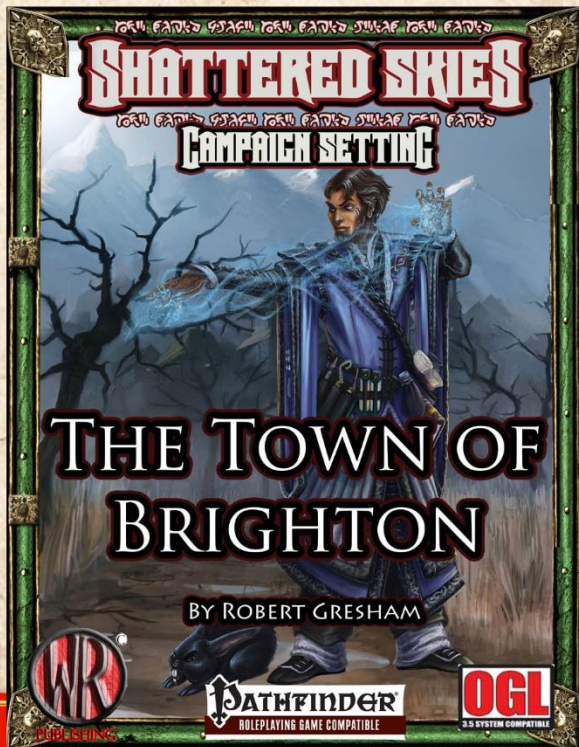


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BRYNNDELL!**





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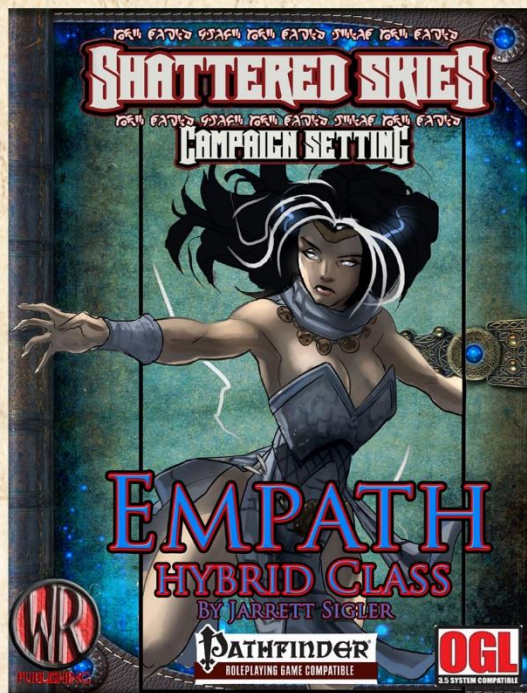
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